



Prayer is mission

PRAYING FOR A WORLD THAT KNOWS JESUS



“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” Colossians 1:19-20

Mission is God’s work. He sent his Son to reconcile all things to himself. He redeems and purifies us as his people. He calls us to take our place in that same mission.

*Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®.
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Praying big for mission

"Since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying" (Col 1:9)

Prayer is essential to Mission – it should always be our first response.

And God's Word is filled with many encouragements to pray big prayers to our great and gracious God.

I hope this booklet will sit alongside your missionaries' prayer letters, to help you pray big, kingdom focussed prayers, for them and the peoples of the locations where they work.



Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Fairhurst". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mark Fairhurst

Executive Director - CMS QNSW

Prayer is mission

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.” John 15:16

Prayer is central to mission

We do not simply pray ‘about’ mission, Prayer is Mission. In prayer, we ask our Father to glorify his name by making his disciples fruitful – we involve ourselves in his work and he promises to answer.

Because Prayer is Mission, global cross-cultural mission should be central to the prayers of us all. It is no mistake that when Jesus taught his disciples to pray, his first concern was the extension of God’s kingdom:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”



How can we make mission central to our prayers?

- Jesus gave his disciples the Lord's Prayer to guide their prayers. Use it daily, and as you pray, remember your missionaries and the work of the gospel where they serve.
- Use the CMS Prayer Diary to give you a daily focus. Use the left-hand page to guide your prayers for the whole country.
- [Operation World prayers](#) (see QR code below)
- [CMS Kids Activity Sheets](#) (see QR code below)



Adopt a country to give focus to your prayers. Operation World has some great resources.



Use the CMS Kids Activity sheets to pray as a family.

Your kingdom come

"I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe."

Ephesians 1:16-19

When Paul prayed, he prayed big! He wasn't unaware of the needs of people, but his heart for them was set on God's kingdom purposes. This fuelled his prayers.

It is good to pray for people's immediate needs. But even more, our prayers should be focused on God's eternal purpose for them!

Jesus' focus in the Lord's Prayer

First "Your kingdom come", then "Give us today our daily bread".



When we begin with 'Your kingdom come', praying for our 'daily bread' will take on God's kingdom focus as well.

So, as we pray for a missionary's struggles, we also pray that their hope in Christ will grow, their faith will persevere, and our love for them will be real and active.

How do we 'pray big'?

- Use the Bible's prayers to guide your prayers: John 17; Acts 4:23-31, Eph 1:15-21 and 3:14-21, Phil 1:3-11, Col 1:3-14, 4:2-6, 1 Thess 3:9-13, 2 Thess 1:11-12, 2:16-17, 1 Tim 2:1-8; Philemon 4-7, Heb 13:20-21, 1 Pet 3:3-9.
- Pray the Bible (see next page)



Pray the Bible

This is what you need to do.

We will pray with God's eternal purposes on view and his concerns filling our prayers when we let the Bible set the focus for our prayers.

Read the Bible before you pray and, ask yourself:

- What does this teach me about God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and his work in my life?
- How does the passage encourage me?
- How does the passage challenge and rebuke me?
- What evidence do I see of the Lord's work in these areas, in my life, and the lives of missionaries and Christian friends?



Let this lead you to praise God, for his work in you and them, just as it did for Paul (e.g. Philippians 1:3-6).

Then, let the answers to these questions fill your prayers – for yourself, your missionaries and your Christian friends. They need to grow in these areas just as much as you do! Their growth in Christ is even more important than the specific need that may be on our minds.



PrayerMate is a great help in keeping prayer lists. But my first 'list' is a list of Bible verses that have challenged me (many of them quoted in this brochure).

So, as I pray for the specific needs of people, it also reminds me to pray the theme of that Bible verses for them.

*Note: PrayerMate is a free resource that can be used to help with prayer.
Image used from the PrayerMate website.*

Workers for the harvest

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" Matthew 9:36-38

This is the Lord's neglected prayer!

How rarely do we pray it in our home groups and church services. Yet Jesus commands us to pray, urgently! The words 'Ask the Lord of the harvest' literally means 'Beg the Lord of the harvest'.

At present CMS has over 200 missionaries working worldwide. We could send as many again tomorrow and still not fill all the requests for help we have received.

It's not just 'missionaries'

As we pray for the Lord to raise up new missionaries, pray that the Lord will also raise up local workers where our missionaries serve.



How do we pray for labourers?

- Pray the Lord's (neglected) prayer daily!
- Make yourself aware of the gospel need in the country you are praying for – and pray for labourers for the harvest there.

Did you know that your support of CMS also supports over 70 students studying in Bible Colleges around the world?



In 1872, following several years of falling numbers of enquirers and falling finances, CMS called a Day of Intercession for Mission. Christians came together and prayed for missions, the people to go and the finances needed. CMS history records;

The result was immediate; more men offered...in the next few months than had offered in as many years before." And God, in his grace, provided the funds to send them all.

Worthy of the Lord

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God." Philippians 2:9-11

The personal life and character of a missionary is as important as their gifting and their formal ministry. This is also true of us and our churches. It's the reason Paul's prayers are filled with requests for their growth in godliness and righteousness.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

The foundation of this life and character is our relationship and dependence on Jesus.

The most important prayer we can pray for missionaries is that their relationship with Jesus will be lively and strong.

We are weak vessels, it is as we recognise this and lean on the Lord, that he makes us strong (2 Cor 12:1-10).



Our prayers for missionaries are a vital part of this spiritual battle (2 Cor 1:8-11; Phil 1:19; Rom 15:30-33).

How can we pray for the spiritual lives of our missionaries?

- Use the Bible's challenges to godliness to inform your prayers: Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:16-26); Spiritual Battle (Eph 6:10-20); Growth in Godliness (Col 3:1-17); Servant Ministry (1 Thess 2:1-12); Godly witness (1 Peter 3:8-17)
- Pray for the family life of missionaries (Ephesians 5:21-6:4) and for their children's growth in the Lord.
- Pray for friendships with local Christians, who can be an encouragement to the missionaries.
- Pray for the 'pastoral friends' of each missionary (CMS requires each missionary to have a pastoral friend in Australia, who will be regularly asking them how they are going spiritual, emotionally and relationally).



Open doors and open mouths

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.” Colossians 4:2-6

We send missionaries to locations where gospel ministry is hard. The local language will always be their ‘second’ language, and understanding the culture takes a lifetime.

Seeing the ‘open doors’ for the gospel, and having the language to speak the gospel deeply and clearly into people’s lives does not come naturally. Yet, missionaries long for these opportunities and crave our prayers for the Lord to open them.



In secure locations, missionaries need great wisdom in knowing when they can speak about their faith, and courage to speak when they can.

"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

1 Peter 3:15-16

How can we pray for open doors and open mouths for our missionaries?

- Ask the Lord to lead the missionaries to those whose hearts he is opening to him.
- As you read missionaries' prayer updates, add the names of those they talk about to your prayer lists. Commit yourself long-term to them, just as the missionaries have!
- Ask the Lord to give the missionaries the right words to say when he opens a door of opportunity to them. Let them know you are praying this for them – it will be a real encouragement for them to persevere.





Praying with you

BIG PRAYERS FOR A BIG WORLD

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