

SPRING 2022

ECM LIFE

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION BRITAIN
NEWSLETTER



PRAYER
CHANGES EVERYTHING

ECM BRITAIN

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION BRITAIN
IS AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL,
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EQUIP,
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AND MULTIPLY
FOLLOWERS OF
JESUS



THROUGH
DISCIPLESHIP
AND



CHURCH
PLANTING
ACROSS
EUROPE

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DIRECTOR'S LETTER

KENT ANDERSON

Does God answer prayer? As a well-taught Christian I would, of course, say 'yes'— but sometimes it just doesn't feel like that's the case. So a little over ten years ago I decided to put this question to the test.

I started a simple experiment. Every day I would write down my prayers. I would then come back regularly and tick off the ones that were answered. Sometimes God would do what I asked for and at other times He wouldn't. I treated a 'no' as an answered prayer as much as a 'yes'. So both responses were ticked off in my book. But unanswered prayers were left in the book for further prayer.

This went on from month to month and year to year. Most weeks I'd write down around 30 prayers. When a book was full, I'd copy over the remaining unanswered prayers into a new journal and keep praying. I now have quite a pile of prayer journals.

I started this on 29 June 2011. So this has been a long and rigorous test. And what have I found?

The answer is simple: **God answers prayer.**

In all of that time I have made around 300 requests that God hasn't answered. That is only one unanswered prayer per fortnight! And many of the remaining prayers are the toughies like for salvation and healing.

I can affirm what it says in 1 John 5.14: "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."

That is why we ask you to pray for ECM and our workers. We know that God responds when His people call upon Him. Thank you for each and every prayer that you raise up on our behalf!





LOSING CONTROL

A PASTOR'S REFLECTION ON PRAYER IN THE LIGHT OF THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE

BY PASTOR GEOFF MCILRATH

As I write these words our continent is experiencing an earthquake of such magnitude that it will likely reshape the European landscape for years to come. Who knows what the full extent of the damage will be? And who knows for how long the after-shocks will continue? What is clear is that it is now the turn of our pandemic-weary generation to deal with a different kind of threat, as 'Ukraine' replaces 'COVID' in our search engines. Millions of our fellow Europeans are already negotiating this new reality.

“What one thing above all others can you do that will impact those who are just getting on with the everyday grind of missionary work? Pray!”

As God’s people, our reaction to this latest crisis is instinctive. We turn to prayer. We sense the need to invite God into a situation that so obviously lies outside our control. And this is what crises do – whether at the level of an individual facing a health scare or a continent facing war, they uncover the illusion that we are actually in control in the first place. We’re not. We’re too small for that. Crises can be great counsellors!

I serve as a member of the ECM Ireland council, as pastor of a local church, and as a writer of gospel literature*. Through these roles, it is my privilege to partner with many missionaries and mission organisations throughout the world. And one of the results of this is that I get a behind-the-scenes look at how the work of mission happens.

Can I let you in on a secret?

Missionaries and mission societies are not in control! Not the good ones, anyway! For they operate on a daily basis by the principle that our occasional crises reveal – none of us are big enough for this! And because they know it and really believe it, they turn to God in prayer. Mission work is the story of what we can’t do but God can, and God does.

So, what one thing above all others can you do in this current crisis that will genuinely make a difference? Pray! What one thing above all others can you do that will impact those who are just getting on with the everyday grind of missionary work? Pray!

Brothers and sisters, we are not in control – not any of it. Embrace it, and turn to the One who is. Invite God in. He is big enough for all of this!



A prayer for Ukraine

Geoff has reminded us of the need to intercede for Ukraine. Please join us in praying:

Father Almighty, we proclaim that You are in charge regardless of what we see in the world around us. Jesus, we declare that You are Lord of love and peace, even if people reject Your way and turn to violence. Holy Spirit, we pray that You will move in the lives of Your children and show them how to shine Your light during this dark time. We turn to You and beg for peace in Ukraine. We pray for You to confound Satan’s schemes and use even this crisis to bring the lost to Yourself. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*Millions of Geoff’s ‘Why?’ booklets have been translated and distributed around the world

WHEN YOU PRAY...

We asked ECM Britain workers across Europe about how prayer affects them and their ministries. Here's what they told us.



Blessed by prayer
DELYTH SUTTON IN SPAIN



I learnt last summer that God is able to supply my every single need. And when He decides to give, He can do it in abundance.

Spring last year I was checking in with Sarah Hay (ECM Britain's HR Manager) and she asked me how I was doing. I needed to rest but didn't have anything planned for a holiday. So Sarah suggested we pray about this. Three days later I attended a friend's retirement celebration in the countryside. It was here that God showed me His love and care for me.

Two friends from the town came up to me and said, "Delyth, would you like to come

on holiday with us? We want to go to La Palma" (this is the Spanish island whose volcano erupted in September last year). Without thinking twice I told them that I had been praying about this and it was God's provision for me so I'd love to go with them.

Later on when, we began to add up costs I thought, "Oh Lord, have I made a mistake? "How can I afford this?" And then God confirmed His goodness yet again as two special gifts were given which covered the entire cost of the holiday! What's more, apart from it being a magical holiday, and being able to testify to my friends, I was able to raise support to send to a pastor on the island after the volcano erupted.



“When you call me, and come and pray to me, I will listen to you.

Jeremiah 29:12



Coincidence or answered prayer?

SALLY PAGANO IN THE UK

This is a great exercise to try if your faith ever needs a top-up.

My family was around the dinner table one day complaining about things that weren't going right. So I asked them, "Have you heard the quote from William Temple, the former Archbishop of Canterbury? He said, 'When I pray, coincidences happen, and when I don't, they don't'. How about I pray for you and we can see if things change?"

I got rolling of eyes and, "Okay Mum, WHATEVER!" So I said, "Great, I will pray." And I DID. But since I really want my family to know that God is interested in our lives, I thought I'd get all my believing friends to pray too — just as a kind of insurance policy.

Not long afterwards my husband and I were going through a particularly difficult time and, having exhausted all our finances, were still short by £800. I said, "I will pray." My husband looked at me as if I was from another planet.

We were, at that very moment, walking out of a bank after being declined a loan. Three steps later his phone went off. It was our accountant. "You won't believe it!" My husband said after the call finished. "Our accountant says he's been doing our tax returns and we have a cheque coming for £800." The exact amount we needed! Coincidence or answered prayer? You decide!

Most recently, my eldest son was unsuccessfully applying for jobs and coming up against all sorts of barriers. He was getting really despondent. So I told him, "I am going to pray for you, and I am going to get everyone I know to pray for you, and I am going to do it over the next two weeks." His response? "Mum, right now I think anything would help." (Note the advancement from rolling eyes here) Within two weeks he got a job in the very field he wanted to be in! When he got the post I asked the same question: "Coincidence or answered prayer?" His response was, "Mum, that was definitely answered prayer."

So start praying and let those 'coincidences' start happening!



Persistent prayer

DAVID AND LINDA JAMES
IN AUSTRIA

We live in a close-knit community of 15 houses where everyone moved here between 14 and 16 years ago. For years we have regularly prayed for our neighbours and sought to share our faith with them, but despite good friendships there was little interest in faith.

Three years ago we intensified this prayer, and two years ago Covid suddenly hit. This resulted in close neighbours becoming the only contact many were having with real people (rather than on a screen). It also opened people's hearts, with a greater willingness to discuss deeper issues, such as society, health, illness and dying. What we had initially perceived as so many ministry opportunities being cancelled, meant that we were travelling far less and were, therefore, home more and able to spend more time with our neighbours.

When the lockdown measures in Austria allowed, a group of us would regularly meet in a garden. Suddenly, in one gathering of about ten of us, someone who worked in a care home said, "I think people who have faith die more peacefully than those who don't". What an amazing opportunity for us to affirm the hope of the resurrection. Opportunities like this (but not quite so well set up) continue to this day. We try to challenge values by displaying an alternative Christian lifestyle and often tell people we are praying for them when they are facing challenges. One of our most frequent prayers is that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on our neighbourhood, and that the Lord will draw some of these good friends to himself.



Practical prayer

SARAH DEACON IN SLOVENIA

In August 2021, I was preparing to move back to Slovenia that September. I had been searching for somewhere to live in Ljubljana. This was the top of my prayer list and many of my supporters and people in my church were praying for me. I was struggling to find a suitable flat in any part of the city within my budget that had a separate living area, an office space and (surprisingly) an oven in the kitchen. Then out of the blue I received an email from a friend in Ljubljana who knew of a flat that might be suitable. On paper it sounded like it might work. My friend did all the work for me. He spoke to the landlords and he went over to take photos of the flat for me. I agreed to it all, not really having



another option but also because it did sound like an answer to my prayers.

I saw the flat for the first time when I moved in in September. God not only answered my prayers but went above and beyond what I expected and had asked for. It is bigger than I expected, with more features than I expected, in a better location than I expected and within my budget! Added to this, my next-door neighbours are friends from my church. I have been so blessed by my new flat and I hope to use it to be a blessing to others. Every day I am reminded that God does answer our prayers, however big or small, and that I need to keep turning to Him because He is a God who loves to bless us.



Quick answer to prayer

JIM AND CHRISTINE
MEMORY IN SPAIN

Whilst preparing for a six-month stay in the UK last year, we asked our supporters to join with us in praying for somewhere in central England for us to live, from where we could work, but also visit family, friends and supporting churches. The very next day we were contacted by a couple who needed their empty student house occupied for that same time in Kegworth, just off the M1 near Nottingham. It was just what we needed at just the right time for us... and them. What an amazing God we have!



Hopeful prayer

PETER AND KATE
KNOWLSON

A big concern for us as we look to transition into retirement is how to continue to support the growth in the church plant we have worked in for over 20 years in southern Spain. We have been praying that God would show us the way forward and many of you have been praying with us.

Therefore we were very excited when the Spanish ECM director rang us to say there is a couple who are interested in coming to serve in the church in Peñarroya. This has been the best encouragement we have had in a long time! The Ceballos family are raising support and hope to be with us by August. Praise God!

Prayer resource

We missionaries also need to pray and one thing Peter and I have found really helpful is using the PrayerMate app. There are lots of ideas on how to pray more regularly and plenty of space to add your own ideas. An added bonus for us that ECM's Prayer Diary can be added to use in the app. It's a wonderful addition to our morning cup of tea. Take a look!



Prayers of freedom

DAVID DELAMEILLIEURE
IN BELGIUM

"I was in prison, and you came to visit me."

Matthew 25:36b

The chaplain met Amir* when he was being held in an isolation cell after having recently attempted suicide. Not long after his arrival in Belgium, Amir had ended up in prison. Traumatized by experiences in his homeland and now stuck in a foreign country, he had reached a low point in his life. The chaplain prayed for Amir, and he experienced calmness in the midst of his fear.

Shortly thereafter, Amir was given a Bible in his own language. During the many lonely hours, he began to read and felt the soothing presence of Jesus. When he was finally allowed to leave the isolation cell, he participated in an Alpha course and watched a film about Jesus. Little by little Amir opened his heart to Jesus.



“*The Lord hears his people
when they call to him for help.
He rescues them
from all their troubles.*

Psalm 34:17 (NLT)

Although there are no official figures, chaplains say there is a significant Muslim population in Belgian prisons. Often these are young men who do not feel at home in either the culture of their parents or Western culture. Lost between seemingly conflicting identities, faced with discrimination and financial problems, they often end up in prison.

Pray for chaplains that they may bring the light of the gospel of Jesus to those who are in bondage. May God lead them to people like Amir who are open to the message of liberation in Jesus. Pray for the Muslims in prison that they may meet Jesus in their hour of need.



Groaning prayer

ROLAND AND
CAROLIEN SMITH IN THE
NETHERLANDS

How do we pray with the threat of war, or for someone who is in chronic pain, or for a family member who is mentally ill and whose condition is worsening?

At times like this the words don't really matter as much as we think they should. What matters is that we have deliberately inserted ourselves in the painful place where we partly feel the pain and distress that other people are feeling. We groan with creation as we long for justice, healing and the restoration of all things, and the Holy Spirit offers our groans and anguished emotions as prayer to God. The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us, who feel spiritually feeble and lacking in confidence. We also lack confidence because we know our motives may be mixed. But God does not receive our prayer because our motives are pure, but because of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is as if the rather murky or unclear motives that leave us are transformed by the work of Christ, interceding for us, into fragrant incense as they reach the Father. So the sighing, tears, hand-wringing and mumbling all make perfect sense to God and are as much prayer as any prayer can be.

(Inspired by The Message of Prayer by Tim Chester)

If you want to pray for ECM's latest prayer needs, sign up for our free monthly Prayer Diary (on the response slip). It's available by post or email.



A NEW WAY TO PRAY OLD TRUTHS

SOMETIMES IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO KNOW HOW TO PRAY



Many of you are already praying for our workers in Europe. Thank you! But how can you pray effectively during those times when you don't always know what's going on in their lives?

There is no better place to start than with God's word. We know that when we pray in line with the promises of God that He will do whatever we ask Him (1 John 5.14).

Here is an example of how to do that based on Psalm 23 (scripture shown in bold type).

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

-  Pray that they will know Jesus, the good shepherd, ever more closely.
-  Pray for them to have all that they need for life and ministry.

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.

-  Pray that they will have times of rest and refreshment.

He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

-  Pray that they will know the Holy Spirit's guidance in all they face.
-  Pray that all that they do will be to God's glory.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;

-  Pray for them to know God's presence during times of trouble.
-  Pray for them to be kept safe from anxiety and worry.
-  Pray for them to be protected from the evil one.

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

-  Pray for them to know God's comfort and peace.
-  Pray for them to trust the Lord's strength, rather than their own.



You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

-  Pray that they fear God, not those who oppose their work.
-  Pray for their physical needs to be met day after day.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

-  Pray that they will know the abundant life that Jesus promised.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,

-  Pray that they will experience the depth of God's love and goodness.
-  Pray for them to continue on as faithful servants of our Lord.

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

-  Pray that they will find ways to worship God forever.
Amen.

It really can be that simple. But don't stop with Psalm 23. There are lots of other passages of the Bible that you can base your prayers on. Why not let us know if you find another one that you like?

Thank you for praying for our workers. The fruit of our ministry is dependent on the intercessions of people like you.

FOUR WAYS TO LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY



Think of someone who's had a lasting influence in your life. Perhaps a grandparent, a pastor, a teacher, a close friend.... Who they were back then has affected who you are now.

It's exciting to think that you, like them, can contribute to the lives of others in a way that will outlive you. And you can start building that legacy today. But how? A great way to start building a legacy that will endure is to stop. Stop and ask yourself, "If I were to die today, what would I want people to say about me?" Write those things down. Then just start living out that list!

For many that will include:

- 1** I want to pass on my values to those I love. Having an impact on the next generation is one of the most important things you can do.
- 2** I want to help make the world a more loving place. Volunteer in a food bank. Coach a youth sports club. Mentor someone. Just be generous.
- 3** I want to see more people know Jesus. Nothing you do on earth is more important than helping others join you in heaven.
- 4** I want to be a good steward. Writing a will that takes care of your loved ones and supports the causes you believe in means that your earthly belongings will be used in line with your values.

For more information on leaving a legacy, come to www.ecmbritain.org/legacy or ask for our legacy leaflet on the response slip.



NEW YEAR, NEW WEBSITE!



We are delighted to announce the launch of our new website. With added features, a fresh and contemporary image, updated content and improved navigation, we hope that you will enjoy it all the more.

The site makes it even easier to explore service opportunities across Europe, make online donations, subscribe to our prayer diary, find out about our values and our work, and so much more. Find it all at: www.ecmbritain.org

Please take a look, and don't hesitate to let us know what you think!

PLEASE SEND ME

- ECM Life Magazine post email
- ECM Britain Monthly Prayer Diary post email
- ECM Britain Legacy Leaflet post email

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Redhouse Road, Northampton NN3 6AQ**



PRAYER PROMISES

- Thank you for your prayers because:
"The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry..." **Psalm 34.15**
- *"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."* **James 5.16**
- *"The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth."* **Psalm 145.18**



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