

1st Wednesday Prayer Hour – May 2016

MMI keeps the first Wednesday of the month as a day for corporate prayer. The hour set aside is 9.00am-10.00am, but for those who are not able to join in prayer then, please use these notes to pray for an hour at some time during the day.

Read: Acts 10 v 43– 48

On May 15, Christians all over the world will celebrate Pentecost, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Christian Church. But this event is to be seen in relationship with two more, without which the dimension of this new Church would not have been complete.

The 1st Pentecost relates to the event described in Acts 2 happening in Jerusalem. Peter talks to his next of kin, his own people about salvation, 3000 receive the Holy Spirit and are baptized thereafter.

The 2nd Pentecost happens some years later in Act 8 v12-17 through Peter (and John) among the Samaritans considered as half heathens Jews.

The 3rd Pentecost, eight years later in Acts 10, finalizes the shape and mission of the first church, when Peter; the strong Jewish minded disciple of Christ, the one who attacked a Roman soldier with his sword, has to meet up with an unknown officer called Cornelius, to sit down with him in his house and eat his unclean food. Only then Peter realizes that circumcision has to be replaced by baptism, that exclusion will be followed by inclusion, that tradition has to open up to renewal.

Cornelius, the occidental occupier on oriental territory, also has to face the unexpected consequences of this most unusual encounter. If he expected to be accepted by the Jews and their religious rituals, he suddenly faces the presence of the Holy Spirit and the never heard of good news of Jesus Christ.

I'm inspired by both men. Everything worldly seems to divide them: origin, social rank, political views, and religious traditions. But they accepted to meet. They accept to be out of control in this meeting. And they accept the life changing consequences of their encounter.

As a military man, I don't like to be out of control. As a believer, I disagree with some worldly values and also sometimes with brothers and sisters in faith. But I know that like Peter and Cornelius and with the help of the Holy Spirit I do not have to fear this Other who is with me as we are all "ONE IN CHRIST".

Read: Psalm 139 v 7-12; about the attributes of the Spirit: "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.."

Reflection: Spend a few minutes in reflection on what God may be saying to you through these passages. It may be that you will wish to spend a few minutes in prayer for those of your family or work or mission field who do not yet know the Lord or who are at present in particular need.

Praise: Let us start by thanking God for the creation of a Central Republic of Africa MCF in a country still under the fallouts of a civil war. Thank the Lord for the stamina and resilience given to Maurice Goeleyen in Bangui to fulfil this commission.

Let us then turn to Pray for –

Augustin and his ministry in Cameroon – for continuing safety and protection and for him and his fellow retired military evangelists, their outreach to the troops deployed in the North of the country. That by demonstrating God's love in action others will come to faith in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

The Chaplains training in Yaoundé– that participants will each receive their necessary visas and approval to attend and that the 2 weeks training (16 – 27 Sep) will be a blessed and fruitful time of encouragement and teaching.

Onesime (Chad) as he finalizes the official recognition of a Chadian MCF next term and supports the Churches to propose names for the newly recreated Chaplaincy.

Inspiration for a person, to develop a Togolese MCF.

Protection for Maurice, who needs special protection following the formation of the MCF in CRA. Pray also Maurice will receive the necessary visa and approvals to attend RIMP in France, in June.

The Lord to open doors for contact with military Christians in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, where we know there are Christians but do need to reconnect with the right contacts.

In Europe for the Ukrainian Chaplaincy Conference 11 – 13 May, that this may lead to the formation of a multi-confessional Chaplaincy in the Ukraine. Pray for Mark representing MMI and the UK Chaplain.

MMI Prayer Day 4th June: Pray for our Prayer Day on Saturday 4th June taking place at Winchester Vineyard church. Come if you can – if you can't and would like to pray on the day contact the office for advanced copy of prayer fuel! Pray for a good number of people to come and support us in prayer.

SIMM course 6-10 June: We are expecting the Chief Chaplain of Namibia and two delegates from Nigeria to be at SIMMS and are continuing to pray our Indian delegate will be granted a visa to attend on appeal.

Ian Bartholomew: Ian is chair of the S Asia RPPG. He is still unconscious in a Nairobi hospital. Anna his wife is with him. Please continue to pray for his recovery, particularly that the infection goes and he is able to be repatriated by medical flight to the UK. Pray for continuing strength for Anna.