

PARTNERS IN PRAYER- "God We Exalt You!"

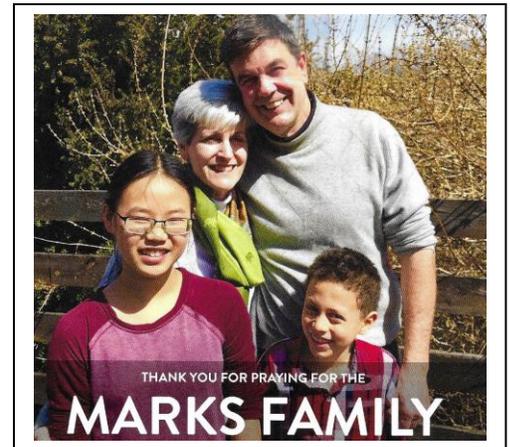
June 12th, 2022 Reunion with Steve and Kelly Marks Family!

Dear Prayer Team,

*"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace,
that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of
need."*

Hebrew 4:16 (NKJV)

Have you ever looked at the clock after working intensely on a project and been amazed at how quickly the time has flown by? I was just thinking that two years ago Steve, Kelly, and family were being commissioned and I was with Pastor John Niederhaus as we took them to the Philadelphia Airport. Time has flown by so quickly! And yes, we did see them for a quick moment in 2020 but now they are returning home. Do you know what my favorite part of Sunday morning will be this week? When we all say: "Welcome Home!" And everyone says: "It's good to be home!" Including Steve, Kelly, Anna, and Joe! I hope this Sunday is a celebration and exaltation of all the goodness of God! I pray that the Holy Spirit will use these next three weeks to give us a time of celebration and family reunion. So pray that our people will not miss out.



I've enjoyed catching up in my extra reading and I spent some time reading Puritan John Bunyan's book entitled: **Prayer**. Simple title, with a very wonderful meaning. He is sharing the importance of using the "Throne of Grace which is prayer" for all believers. As he describes that this privilege of powerful prayer is intended for all of us he writes this: "Now the exhortation of prayer for each Sunday believer is this... 'Let us come!' Now the person here called upon to come to the throne of grace, are not all or every sort of men, but the saved believers. We are called to more earnest heed to the Word and to the throne of grace. From whence we may conclude that everyone is not capable of coming thither, (i.e., unsaved people) no not everyone is capable of coming, but as Children of God we all are! We have cause to arrive jubilantly! Let's run as Children to prayer as a reunion of the Mercies of God!" (pg. 102).

So, loved ones, we are coming today to pray and celebrate and hear all the great things God is doing through us, this little flock on the rock, all the way around the world! We are making a difference. We are useful to Jesus. In Steve Mark's 2022 letter to us he told about witnessing to a Burmese man at the hospital. Steve had been studying John 15 on living the abiding life in Jesus and asked God to let his life show the fruits of the Holy Spirit. As he witnessed, this is what he said: "I noticed that he always wears his amulet, a metal icon to protect him from evil spirits. With the help of Google Translate, I

explained that as Christians we have the Holy Spirit who is in us and is more powerful than all evil spirits together, so we have nothing to fear.” Then later that day Steve admitted something we all must admit: “I am limited with my Thai language abilities. I was a terrible evangelist with a second-grade level of the Thai language. Truth be told, I am not much of an evangelist, even in my native English, but then again, God can even use an old horse doctor like me.”

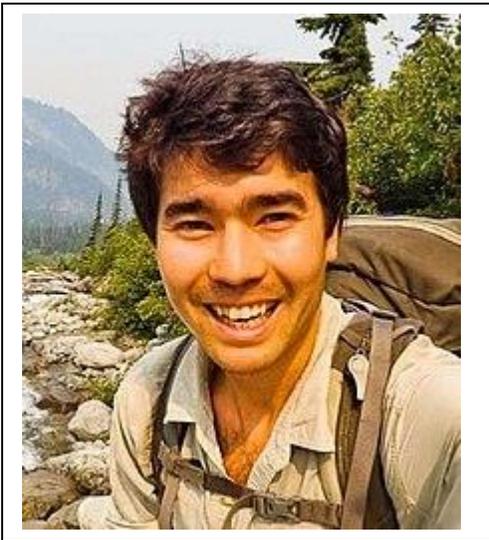
Did you catch that? Yes, God can use all of us. We need to be willing and open and continue to abide in the presence of Jesus so His Spirit will show through our lives. We don't have to have the greatest of words, just willing to let God use us, because He promised He would.

In the last few weeks, God has been directing my thoughts to our current place in redemptive history. That might sound a bit strange but take a moment to consider this. We are on the front lines of getting this world ready for Jesus to return! We are all global disciples when we glorify God by telling people about what He is doing in least-reached parts of the world like Thailand, and also here along the 611 corridor.

So, I've thought about this question all week: “Do you love Jesus enough to die for Him in order to be a witness?” Many of us may remember the five missionaries who died at the end of Auca spears while reaching the tribe in the Ecuadorian jungle. Nate Saint, who has ties to some of our area churches, said this: “We know that there is only one answer when our country demands that we share in the price of freedom- yet when the Lord asks us to pay the price for world evangelization, we often answer without a word. We cannot go; we say it costs too much.”

I don't know if you are familiar with John Chau. He is a young man who felt the call of God to an unreached people group in the Andaman Islands off the coast of India. I want to use the next three **Partners in Prayer** to share his story. It is very much like the story of Jim Elliot and Nate Saint. But when people heard of his desire to reach this violent people group, there were many who questioned his commitment. Why? Because the Sentinelese people were known to be violent toward anyone outside their island, and the Indian government made a law that anyone approaching the island would be committing a crime and would be imprisoned. That is how terrible a reputation these island people had. But John didn't want that to stop him. So, what I want to tell you at the beginning of his story is that he committed an international crime and landed several times on North Sentinel Island in the Andaman Island group in the Bay of Bengal in an attempt to reach this people group. And not only did he break the international laws doing it, but he also was killed by those people on November 15, 2018. Did John waste his life? Did he try to do something that he should never have considered? Was he just crazy? Let's start his story.

If all had gone according to John Chau's plan, we would never have known his



name. He intended to remain invisible to the world whether he lived or died. John felt a call from God, real or by something imagined, to "Go into the entire world and proclaim the gospel to the whole of creation." But instead, in November 2018, news outlets around the world were running the story of a foolish and criminal 26-year-old American man who had been killed trying to make contact with a remote tribe on North Sentinel Island, a tiny speck in the Bay of Bengal between India and Southeast Asia. Many news reports and opinion pieces implied that John had broken the law to contact a people group known to be violent toward outsiders. What they didn't know was that

John had prepared for years to reach the Sentinelese with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

A life of Preparation

John Allen Chau was born on December 18, 1991, in Scottsboro, Alabama, the third and youngest child of Lynda Adams-Chau, an organizer for Chi Alpha, and Patrick Chau, a Chinese American psychiatrist who left China during the Cultural Revolution.

Throughout his childhood, Chau loved camping, hiking and travelling, and excelled at various clubs, charities, and other extracurricular activities. He attended a church much like ours at Palisades Community Bible Church. Chau was raised in a Christian home and his family appears to have been members of the Assemblies of God, an international Pentecostal church whose members sometimes speak in tongues. He attended Vancouver Christian High School, a close-knit school with just 90 students across seven grades.

A natural overachiever, he thrived. In the Royal Rangers, a Pentecostal scouting organization, he achieved a gold medal of achievement, a rank equivalent to Eagle Scout; one of the medal requirements is reading or listening to the entire Bible.

He loved hiking, camping and travel, and he meticulously documented his exploration on social media. On Facebook, he was fond of quoting Jim Elliot, one of five missionaries killed by an Auca Indian tribe in Ecuador in 1956.

His Surrender to College Missions.

His journey began in 2008, the year he turned 17, when he became what he described as "an apprentice to Jesus." He admired numerous explorers and missionaries including David Livingstone and Bruce Olson. He later attended

Oral Roberts University in Oklahoma. Chau participated in missionary trips to Mexico, South Africa and Iraqi Kurdistan. After taking his first mission trip, he began to pray about spending his life serving as a missionary. This is what he wrote to God in his journal: "I know that God used that time to mark my life." In his prayers, John asked God where He wanted him to go, echoing Isaiah's affirmation- "Here I am! Send me!"

When he first learned about the Andaman Islands as part of his missionary trips, he began to pray about these people. He began to sense that God was calling him to these people. "Once I said 'yes' to Jesus," he said in a video for a church that supported his work, "I was committed. I was all in." Every decision John made for the next nine years was in preparation for going to North Sentinel Island, living among the Sentinelese and sharing the gospel with them. "He had conditioned his body, his mind, his spirit," said his former room-mate from college. "He was one of the most prepared men I've ever met." Knowing that the conditions he would be going into would not have hot running water, he took cold showers to help his body adapt. And since little was known about the Sentinelese language, he took a linguistics course through a branch of Wycliffe Bible Translators, hoping it would help him communicate with the islanders. In addition, he undertook medical training and became certified as a wilderness EMT (emergency medical technician) so he could provide the Sentinelese with basic health care. He was vaccinated against all manner of diseases, knowing their immune systems would be vulnerable to outsiders. He underwent laser eye surgery so he wouldn't have to worry about keeping his contact lenses clean.

John was so focused on preparing to serve on the island- an aerial view of North Sentinel hung on his dorm-room wall. He constantly approached missionaries and professors on the dos and don'ts of first contact with indigenous people. Because of his love for soccer, John became involved with a ministry that ran a soccer program for immigrants from Myanmar. (The country right next to Thailand where Steve and Kelly serve.) He was not the most prolific leader, but he grew in his love for people and simply wanting to serve them at self-sacrifice. He did that for two years.

In addition for his ministry, he also stepped up and did intercity witnessing. John was not afraid to go into the worst parts of Tulsa. One classmate, after witnessing John witness to street prostitutes, said this when they got into the car to leave: "I'd get in my car and I'd pray, 'God, make me more like John.'"

After graduation John reached out to the ministry "All Nations," which had overseen one of his college mission trips. A member of the executive leadership team, Pam Arlund, took notice that John's email was the second mention of the Sentinelese people she had seen in a week. And prior to that, she had never heard of them. "Was God at work to reach this unreached island?" she wondered.

His Application to Missions

Pam invited a coworker to sit in on calls with John to help determine whether he was the right person for such a dangerous mission trip. “I would describe John as both intense and winsome,” she said, “He had intensity for the Lord, and yet he was very comfortable to be around.” As their conversations continued and deepened, “All Nations” leaders were impressed with John’s passion to do everything in his power to prepare for the mission to which he believed God had called him. He was interviewed on Christian Radio as he shared his desire to reach this people group. His interviewer said: “Here are 20 books on cultural anthropology that you really need to read before even considering such a dangerous mission effort.” He replied, “Okay, I have read half of them already and will be finished with the rest in two weeks.” All this to say, that John Chau wasn’t just some crazy out-of-his-mind young man, who didn’t know how to count the costs and just try to walk right into a dangerous situation. He was following God’s leading to be prepared as much as he could be, and he was following the leadership and advice of church leaders and educators to make the decision if God would lead him to actually go into these people. He was willing to serve and do what God wanted him to do every step of the way. He wasn’t some crazy young reckless man who was giving an embarrassing reputation to the American people. He was a man of prayer. So now in 2015 he wondered, “What’s next?”

The Outrage about his Death

So here, I want to stop my story. We will continue to find out about John and his meticulous planning to try and serve Jesus next week. But you need to understand that John was martyred by the people of that island. We may never have known what would happen. But this is the aftermath of the media and response of the world for what they called “reckless endangerment.” Chau was criticized by *Survival International* among others for visiting the island despite the possibility of introducing pathogens to the native Sentinelese, to whom it could have been deadly since it was likely that the natives had not been previously exposed to diseases from outside the island. His mission agency, “All Nations,” the evangelical organization that trained Chau, was criticized on social media for describing Chau as a martyr while expressing condolences for Chau's death. Chau's father also blamed his son's death on the missionary community for insinuating an extreme Christian vision within Chau. The media portrayed him to be just some wacky Christian with no training or preparation, who just kayaked into danger breaking every international law. According to a report by *The New York Times*, the missionary training by “All Nations” included navigating a mock native village populated by missionary staff members who pretended to be hostile natives, wielding fake spears.

In response to Chau's death, M. Sasikumar of the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, questioned the legal charge of murder and what he

perceived as a romanticized version of the incident in the media. He wrote that the incident should instead serve as a warning that the "eyes-only" policy with regard to the Sentinelese needs to be more strictly enforced, and include the local fishermen in order to prevent a repetition.

Such an outrage from the United Nations caused many to question the idea of "missions" or even what right does anyone have to share religious propaganda to others of another culture. Michael Schönhuth, Professor for Cultural Anthropology at the University of Trier, Germany, found the media response to Chau's killing of cultural interest. He wrote that the narratives that emerged were part of a larger discussion regarding the proper relationship between the modern world and the remaining isolated indigenous peoples. Schönhuth wrote that the online presence of the Evangelical missionaries whose numbers had grown over the preceding twenty years, and in which Chau was an active participant, presented a narrative in which they were bringing civilization to a primitive people, and that the likelihood of missionaries being killed was not a deterrent, but an affirmation of the need for the "uncontacted people" to be rescued from a savage existence.

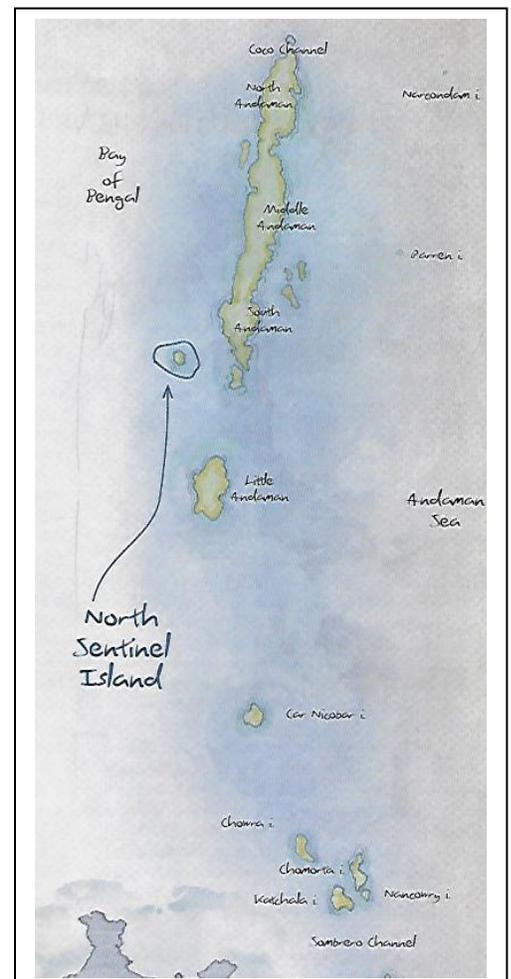
Schönhuth faulted the media for playing into this narrative, ignoring the history of exploitation of the people in the region, which presented an alternative narrative in which the killing of Chau was self-defense. Schönhuth suggested that the media hype must be reinterpreted to allow for such alternatives to be understood. So the question we all face is still the hardest of all questions to ask ourselves: "Would we die for Jesus? How much do we really love Him?"

There is a song with words and music by Baynard L. Fox entitled: "Go Tell the World." Read the words carefully and ask yourself "Do I love Jesus?"

"I'll tell the world, that I'm a Christian,
I'm not ashamed, His name to bear;
I'll tell the world, that I'm a Christian,
I'll take Him with me anywhere.

I'll tell the world, how Jesus saved me,
And how He gave me a life brand new;
And I know that if you trust Him,
that all He gave me, He'll give to you.

I'll tell the world, that He's my Savior,
No other one, could love me so;
My life, my all is His forever,
and where He leads me I will go.



For when He comes, and life is over,
For those who love Him there's more to be;
Eyes have never seen the wonders,
That He's preparing, for you and me.

Oh, tell the world, that you're a Christian,
Be not ashamed, His name to bear;
Oh tell the world, that you're a Christian,
And take Him with you anywhere."



I'm not asking you to do something crazy and dangerous. But I am asking you to think of someone who you need to tell about Jesus. Remember what Steve Marks always says, which I have no doubt he will say today: "We are all called to be missionaries." So, if you are not called to die for Jesus, then what is keeping you from telling your friends, family, or even others, "I really love Jesus, and He really loves you." What are you afraid of? These were some of John Chau's last words: "You guys might think I'm crazy in all this, but I think it's worth it to declare Jesus to these people." Do you think it's worth declaring Jesus to the people in your life who need you right now?

Let's pray,

"Oh, we exalt You our awe-inspiring and loving Father. We know without Jesus we can do nothing. We even have difficulty loving You rightly. Lord, forgive us for the inconsistency of our commitment to You. Master, with all that we are, we desire unbroken fellowship with You. Even now, shape us to fit perfectly into Your presence, which we might dwell in oneness with You, that we might live empowered by the impulse of Your will. We ask that we are fruitful in the Spirit today. That we have courage to share Jesus because He is our everything, not because of fear, or guilt or any other reason to motivate us to share. Help us to love as a church here at PCBC along this 611 corridor, so we are making a difference in hearts and lives. We may never give our lives for another, but we can give our witness and love to Jesus to all who are near and dear to us. We can live Jesus through the power of the abiding and indwelling Spirit so that the fruit of the Spirit shows and people come to Christ. We ask, in the Master Branches' Name and through the Holy Spirit's help, Amen."

**Celebrating the family reunion today, because "It's good to be home!"
Pastor Corvin <><**

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English, but then again, God can even use an old horse doctor like me." ... Steve Marks (Seeds of Harvest, May 2022).

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