



Mar/Apr 2015

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ASKing Point

is a bi-monthly communication on behalf of ASK Network International. It is an invitation to join the network of prayer throughout the nations, ASKing and agreeing regarding key issues on God's heart. It is a tool for prayer, a place for testimony to God's faithfulness in answering, and a gift of worship to the Living God.

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ASKing for the Holy Spirit in order to ASK in the Spirit. Part 1: Effective ASKing

One of the most commonly cited verses on prayer is James 5:16 *"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."* Everyone wants to know what makes for effective asking. In our mind, the word effective implies that something is successful, that something is working. Indeed, something is "working" but what, and who? Clearly, there seems to be a conditioning of the possible effectiveness of asking by the designation of the asker as *"righteous."* Clearly, unrighteousness does not make for effective asking. If there's no integrity, the intensity of our asking is hollow. But as true as that is, it would be understandable to read this verse as though effectiveness ultimately had to do with our state of righteousness while we are asking. The problem is with the use of the word *"effective"* (NIV, NRSV) which in our 'cultural' ears immediately seems to be about results and getting things done. However, the emphasis here is not on **what** needs to be done according to our asking, but on **how** it is being done and **who** is ultimately doing it.

- For certain, it is not the righteous asker. We can all think of reasons why we are not up to asking. This is precisely why James gave us Elijah as an example, *"a man of like passions as we are."* (5:17) So whatever feelings you have, Elijah had them! Though a mighty prophet he was also prone to weakness. He was defiant one moment for God, then depressed for himself. But despite a shared fallen-ness and fallibility he was able to ask of God effectively on Mount Carmel, where his weakness was not the last word - the Spirit's working was.
- The translations that use the word *"effectual"* (AKJV, KJ21) help us get nearer the point here. The Greek word used (energeo) explains itself in the key contexts in which it is used. It conveys the idea of something "working in" or to put it another way, something "inwrought". This is how Paul describes faith in the believers' lives (Gals.5:6 *"faith expressing itself"*), the word (1Thess.2:13 *"the word of God which is at work in you who believe"*), grace (Ephs.3:7 *"grace given me through the working of his power"*). They have been "inwrought" and if not by them, by who? What is this "inwrought" "power" of Ephs.1:19: *"the power is like the working of His inner strength"*? Paul makes it clear in another massive statement about asking: *"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is **at work in us...**"* (Ephs.3:20) That which is "inwrought" in us when we are asking, the power that is effectual, and that consequently makes our asking effective, is exactly what Paul has just talked about and asked for: *"I ask that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power **through His Spirit** in your inner being."*

Paul and James are totally agreed. So are the saints who knew that our ability, our power to ask was *"dependent on the measure of the Holy Spirit received by us, dwelling in us and working through us."* (E.M.Bounds) There is no effective asking without the "inwrought" working of the Holy Spirit. Asking and the Holy Spirit? They are inseparable, indivisible, because of what is "inwrought" in the asker by the Spirit of asking.



Thus, it follows that in order to ask effectively, we need the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Without that reception, asking will just be a recitation. No work can be spiritual unless it is energized by the Holy Spirit. Paul understood this and makes it a basic working description of his ministry. *“Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which works in me mightily.”* (Col. 1:29) Paul’s work is “his working”. He presents himself similarly to the Ephesians, explaining that his ministry was *“by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power.”* (3:7) Did you hear that again? So it is no surprise that the expression of our ministry that is our praying, is the praying of the Holy Spirit through us. Listen to how one man of prayer puts it: *“Would we pray efficiently and mightily? Then the Holy Spirit must work in us efficiently and mightily. All labor for Christ which does not spring from the Holy Spirit working in us, is nugatory and vain. Our prayers and activities are so feeble and result-less, because He has not worked in us and cannot work in us His glorious work. Would you pray with mighty results? Seek the mighty workings of the Holy Spirit in your own spirit.”*

So to ask **in** the Spirit we must ask **for** the Spirit. It’s interesting that the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus when he was asking of His Father in the waters of baptism, and after he had just spent 40 days asking and fasting in the wilderness. It was after 10 days of asking the Father that the Holy Spirit fell upon the 120 disciples in the Upper Room at Pentecost. *“We must seek the Holy Spirit by prayer. We urge the seeking of the Holy Spirit. We need Him, and we need to stir ourselves up to seek Him. The measure we receive of Him will be gauged by the fervor of faith and prayer with which we seek Him.”* (E.M.Bounds) And I might add, that the measure we receive will be evident in the manner in which we then ask. The relationship between the Holy Spirit and prayer is inviolable. We ask for the Spirit and ask in the Spirit. This is not complicated. Again, listen to an old wise asker: *“How complex, confusing and involved is many a human direction about obtaining the gift of the Holy Spirit as the abiding Comforter, our Sanctifier and the one who empowers us! How simple and direct is our Lord’s direction — ASK! This is plain and direct.”* (E.M.Bounds) So when it comes to praying in the Holy Spirit, let’s ASK! 🌐

In response to this teaching go back through the article and pray each scripture for yourself, your church, The Church, and for ASK Network in the nations.

The second part of this teaching will be available in the next edition of ASKING Point.

Stuart McAlpine
International Director
ASK Network

ASK Network News

The Ecclesia Conference in Ottawa, January 30-31, was hosted by Red Leaf Prayer Ministries and brought together a significant gathering of prayer ministries. Stuart McAlpine represented ASK Network as one of the guest speakers; he was very well received and we look forward to having him back! The focus of this conference was preparing the body of Christ in prayer for the 2015 elections. Did you know one of the meanings for “Ecclesia” is to “gather”... sound familiar?

ASK Canada is in its infancy, and as Stuart addressed the relationship between gathering and the gates, it resonated. We cannot hang a gate where there is nothing but gaps! The gate-keeping begins in the gaps. He expounded well on the relationship between gathering and the gates (Mathew 16:18).

This teaching aligned with a word that Chuck Pierce delivered to Canada in October 2014—to “hang our doors in this year” and to discern where the breaks are in each of our provinces. It is so amazing to watch the Lord at work equipping us in this hour as the body of Christ. May the Ecclesia press us into that place of intercession to shift a nation back to God. To God be the Glory.

Thank you for your prayers for Canada!

Sue Huston
ASK Director, Canada



Sue Huston

ASKing for the Nations



Unreached People Group:

QATAR

Qatar is a tiny peninsula in the Persian Gulf bordered by Saudi Arabia. The discovery of oil and natural gas in its soil has catapulted this sovereign Arab nation into great wealth. Using Qatar's affluent economy to invest in the Middle East and the West, Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani maintains diplomatic relationships with nations. This "soft power" allows Qatar to have ties with governments that oppose one another such as Israel and her enemies, Hamas and Hezbollah. Similarly, Qatar has been a close ally to Britain and the U.S., but has been known for funding jihadist and terrorists in Syria and Iraq.

Like a rudder of a ship, Qatar leads and impacts affairs in the Middle East through finance and news media. Qatar's Arabic television news network Al-Jazeera has regional and global influence. The American Foreign Policy Council World Almanac of Islamism states that Al Jazeera has been moving toward "Islamization" and "is increasingly taking the initiative in influencing events rather than just reporting on them." AFPC calls Al Jazeera "a sort of electronic Da'wah (missionary activity)."

In addition, Qatar strives to set its mark on the global scene in art, education and technology. Qatar's royal family proudly presents an elite Museum of Islamic Art and the "Education City" where six leading US universities have campuses. Although in the experimental stage, Qatar's Sahara Forest Project seeks to develop the technology that would use seawater and sunlight to transform its desert into a green ecosystem.

Qatar's mistreatment of migrant workers is drawing global attention. With the construction of 2022 World Cup stadiums, hundreds of thousands of workers from Nepal, India, the Philippines and other nations were recruited with promises of opportunity and money. Because their employers charged an exorbitant recruitment fee and confiscated their passports, the migrants became indebted and enslaved subjected to gruesome work and living conditions. It has been estimated that a worker dies every other day.

Ask for "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

- Much like the rich young ruler, the Emir and his people have respect for Jesus but do not know true eternal life. Through Jesus' eyes of love, **please ask for revelation of God's love and mercy to break the yoke of false righteousness, greed, and exploitation.** Mark 10:17-27, John 17:3
- **Pray for deliverance and restoration** for those who been trafficked, enslaved and abused without legal recourse to find refuge in Jesus. Psalm 62, Zechariah 9:11-12,16-17 

SAUDI ARAB OF QATAR

Population: 337,000

Primary Religion: Islam

Language: Gulf Arabi

Background

Saudi Arab culture was traditionally composed of nomadic tribes and village farmers living on the edges of the Arabian Desert. Historically, Saudi Arabs in Qatar were herdsmen, camel raiders and pearl fishermen, living a harsh existence in a barren country. With the discovery of oil and gas fields in the 1940's, Qatar is today the richest nation in the world per capita. The majority of Saudi Arabs in Qatar follow the Wahhabi (Salafi) movement within Sunni Islam, seeing themselves as the preservers of the true Islamic faith and passionate about preserving pure monotheistic worship. There are no known Christians among Saudi Arabs in Qatar.

ASK...that God would give Saudi Arabs dreams and encounters with Jesus as the true path to God's kingdom. Ask that Jesus would become the focus of true worship for Saudi Arabs. Ask that those exposed to the truth of Jesus would be bold to proclaim him as Messiah. (Hebrews 12:1-13)



Sudan gained independence from the shared control of Britain and Egypt in 1956. At that time it was the largest state in Africa, and one of the most diverse with desert in the north, grasslands and mountains in the center and tropical bush in the south. In July 2011, Sudan was split into two countries when the people of the south, mainly Christian or Animist, voted for independence and become South Sudan.

Islamic-oriented military regimes have held power in the north since the time of Sudan's independence establishing political, social and economic domination. The majority of the population is Sunni Muslim with Sharia law forming the basis of the legal system. The President, Omar al-Bashir, controls all aspects of life in the nation. Blasphemy laws are used to persecute Christians and as seen in the recent case of Miriam Ibrahim, death sentences are passed down because of alleged apostasy. Extreme persecution of the 1.9 million believers living in Sudan has caused the ministry Open Doors to rank Sudan on its 2015 listing of the top 100 World Watch Nations in the number 6 position.

The Darfur war in western Sudan has become one of the world's bloodiest conflicts with an estimated 2.3 million displaced since 2003, forcing millions into refugee camps. Almost 4 million people in Darfur depend on outside help because of displacement, starvation and disease. President al-Bashir has been accused by the International Criminal Court for war crimes against humanity and for genocide of the non-Arab tribes in Darfur. Recently the Janjaweed, a Sudanese militia group recruited mostly from indigenous Muslims, has been accused of ethnic cleansing against non-Arab villages. In October 2014 there were 221 women and girls in Tabit, North Darfur raped by Sudanese army forces in their homes, streets, and in front of their loved ones during a mass rape. Children and men were beaten and killed by the army. More than 3,000 villages were burned in Darfur during 2014 according to UN experts, and almost 500,000 people were displaced through attacks in the campaign to push African tribes from their land. In the first three weeks of this year another 70,000 have been displaced.

ASK for:

- Abolishment of apostasy laws and for Christians in the midst of persecution. Isaiah 10:1-2 "Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees... and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people." Matthew 5:10-12
- The International Court to be used as God's instruments of justice to press charges against the President. Psalm 72:4 "He (they) will bring justice to... the people ...and break in pieces the oppressor."
- For the atrocities in Darfur to stop, and to send His peace. Psalm 57:2-3 "I will cry out to God Most High...He shall send from heaven and save... He reproaches the one who would swallow (them) up...(and) send forth his mercy and truth." Psalm 29:11 

MASALIT OF SUDAN

Population: 419,000

Primary Religion: Islam

Language: Masalit

Background

The Masalit are a non-Arab ethnic group living in Sudan's northern Darfur Province, near the border of Chad. They were farmers and herders until drought claimed their livestock and agriculture, forcing them to begin settling in lands traditionally held by Arab people groups. War erupted over land and ethnic disputes, and to this day, Masalit existence is marked by violence and uncertainty. The Masalit began converting to Islam during the 1600's and are now an almost entirely Muslim people group. They are increasingly becoming more orthodox in their faith. There are no known Christians among the Masalit.

ASK...that God would bring peace and stability to the Masalit of Sudan. Ask that God would raise up intercessors and laborers to press in for His harvest among the Masalit, that they would soon come to know Jesus Christ as the source of all life. (2 Chronicles 7:12-18, Romans 12:9-21)