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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.

www.ASKnetwork.net

The Gift of Gathering

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Genesis 49:10

Would you like to be a gatherer? Someone who draws people together for some specific Jesus-exalting, Kingdom-advancing, born-in-the-heart-of-God endeavor? Start here. God is the premier gatherer. He will use you simply to issue the invitations.

Here is what we are learning on our multi-decade adventure of gathering people to pray.

Ask God Questions and Listen –

What does He want to do about it? Who does He want to do it with? How does He want to do it?

Most of us would like a James Earl Jones voice telling us what to do. The voice of God though, is often just a spontaneous stream of conscious thought. Sometimes it's just a holy hunch.

About a year ago I visited a place I lived in briefly as a child. It is a tiny city that has an enormous impact on the world. While prayer driving with a beloved friend, I noticed church after church no longer actually a church. One had become a new age bookstore, another a cult center that impacted millions around the globe. Another lay empty, and another (once the largest church in town), had untethered itself from the gospel. Nehemiah might have sympathized.

“Whatever you agonize over you are called to reform.”

I took a picture of an empty outdoor amphitheater and said casually on Facebook, “Imagine this place filled with people worshipping Jesus?” People responded; “Let’s go for it.” Out of that simple impulsive holy hunch, Most High Reigns in Ojai was born. www.MostHighOjai.info A global call to pray the Psalms over a tiny city with a huge megaphone to the world’s ear. This year we have seen the hand of God in that city in significant ways. People are praying in Mozambique, South Africa, Canada, England, Burma and America, for a city they’ve never even seen. God’s people are willing in the day of His power.

Be Intentional

Be an invitation issuer, don’t wait to be issued an invitation. Once you have a few confirmations, be intentional in pursuing it. Ask God to map out a strategy. Remember Jehoshaphat’s story in 2 Chronicles 20, even though God intends to do the fighting, there were specific steps they were to take. *God likes practicality that makes a floor for the miracle to dance.*

Get major influencers involved at the beginning. We went to all the pastors in town, and cast the vision. We asked them to discern, “Is this really from God?” When they said yes, we asked them to not only bless us but be majorly involved.



Cast the Net Large

Don't limit who God might add to you. Cast the net large and trust God will direct the fish to it. In our case, we went after the whole body of Christ. God has given us some wonderful praying friends in streams of the Body of Christ, where most Evangelicals never cast a line.

Catch People's Imagination

Once when inviting senior pastors from all over Ventura County, to prayer walk another small city named Santa Paula, I said "Imagine a city with fault lines crackling down Main St. ... a city where communication lines have fallen, unity is non-existent, and gangs rule. Imagine the people of God flowing as one river to their city."

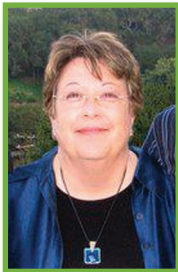
As a result, a large gathering of senior pastors from outside the city showed up to prayer walk. Led by Adelita Garza, Catholics and Protestants walked every street, and prayed over every home and business for nine months. That city while still needing the touch of Jesus, is markedly changed.

Be creative in catching people's imaginations. Use art, use fresh words, divorce yourself from tired phrases and descriptions.

Go With the Willing

Go with the people God touches. Don't spend your energy trying to gather the unwilling. Go with the willing. Just as Jesus' sheep know His voice, the people God is gathering to you will know yours. Go with them.

Realize while you want everyone, you only need those willing. A good principle of taking a land, or any objective really is brilliantly said by Author/Strategist Peter Drucker who deeply loved Jesus. Peter said famously, "Build on islands of strength."



God is gathering people to His magnificent Son. Nothing gives Him greater delight. We simply hand out His hand written invitations addressed before the foundation of the world. Be bold! Be stunned at who God gathers!

Fawn Parish

We thank Fawn for this inspiring article. We recognize her credibility to encourage us to gather, as she herself has done this most effectively in many arenas over many years. The ASK group she attends is of significant size and faithfully meets weekly.

ASK Network News

At the recent gathering of Continental Directors, Charles & Miriam Kaloki shared great encouragements about what they have seen RECOVERED in the church through ASKing in the nations of Africa where ASK Network is growing.

- **God's Purposes.** ASKing is moving from need based to seeking God's purposes and agendas.
- **Gathering**—unto God, not a social gathering but a recovery of true fellowship.
- **Power and presence** of God. The Holy Spirit is being out poured to many ASKing and God's presence is being witnessed. ASKers are having encounters with God with spiritual gifts, callings and ministries being recovered. ASKers are living very victorious lives.
- **Evangelism and missions.** ASKers lives are becoming a more genuine expression of life and witness to the world. Many are reaching out to the lost in evangelism and missions.
- **Joy, praise and worship** unto God. We have seen much joy as many come to the place of ASKing. There is a revival of praises and worship to God as people connect with Him. 🌐



Botswana

Unreached People Group:

Botswana is a landlocked nation in the southern part of Africa that shares borders with five other countries and therefore is in a position to influence the peoples around them.

The economy of Botswana is the strongest of any nation in the African part of the Common Wealth being fueled by the discovery of diamonds after the colonization period. Because this supply is not renewable, the government has recently begun to explore diversifying with tourism and is encouraging farming by paying farmers, providing seeds, and plowing their fields. Free education through university level and health care are also the result of the strong economy. There is a tendency toward laziness with so much help from the government but with the Kalahari Desert covering 80% of the nation severe droughts make farming difficult.

“Christians” make up a majority of the population but sadly much immorality, drunkenness and a high proportion of illegitimate children are resulting in a breakdown in families, even in the church. The resurgence of ancestral worship along with other false teachings is invading the church making a fertile environment for the rise of Islam.

As a relatively small country with only 2 million people, HIV/AIDS was the second leading cause of disability and the leading cause of death in Botswana as recently as 2013 giving it the undistinguished position of the second highest prevalence of AIDS in the world. Over 100,000 AIDS orphans exist in the country. Polygamous relationships, sexual networking involving numerous concurrent and overlapping sexual partners, culturally particularly with men, population displacements and unemployment due to conflicts and droughts have all promoted the HIV/AIDS spread in Botswana.

Let’s ASK God for His purposes in Botswana to prevail. “Ask for the old paths where the good way is...and walk in it; and you will find rest for your souls.” Jeremiah 6:16

ASK:

- For a reversal of the moral decline in the church with a reviving of congregations to live Christ-like lives and be influencers for God in their nation and surrounding nations. “But we all...being transformed...by the Spirit of the Lord...have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth...” *2 Corinthians 3:18-4:2*
- For government leaders to have God’s wisdom in dealing with the economic issues, AIDS victims, orphans and effective preventative programs for the uninfected. “If you are wise and understand God’s ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom...pure, peace loving, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy, good fruits, no favoritism, sincere...” *James 3:13-18*

HAN CHINESE OF BOTSWANA

Population: 3,000

Primary Religion: Atheist

Language: Mandarin

Background

For two decades, trade has been on the rise between China and Africa, and today China is Africa’s leading trade partner. Han Chinese are migrating to African nations to engage in a variety of endeavors, from establishing big businesses to providing inexpensive labor to build roads, railways and low-cost housing. Their presence is not always welcome. Africans voice concern that Han Chinese are taking jobs from locals, wooing wives away from African husbands, and causing environmental damage with poor business practices. In Botswana, a number of local churches have been reaching out to the Han Chinese immigrants in their communities, and many are now choosing to follow Christ.

ASK...with thanksgiving that the good seeds planted among Han Chinese by Botswanian Christians would produce much fruit throughout Africa, China and the world. (Philippians 1:3-11, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5)

ASKing for the Nations



Turkmenistan borders the Caspian Sea in Central Asia, between Iran and Kazakhstan. The Karakum Desert, one of the driest places on earth, comprises 80% of the nation. Strips of land around the borders are irrigated, creating a habitable environment and supporting cotton crops, a major export. Turkmenistan also claims the world's fourth largest reserve of natural gas. Despite the abundance of this wealth-producing resource, the majority of its people remain impoverished.

Regarded as the most ethnically homogeneous nation in Central Asia, Turkmenistan's population is composed primarily of Turkmen, with smaller population of Uzbeks, Russians, Kazakhs, Tatars and others. The median age is 26 years old.

Turkmenistan has been at the crossroads of civilizations for centuries. It was conquered by Persian empires, Alexander the Great, Muslim armies, the Mongols, Turkic warriors and the Soviet Union. In 1924, Turkmenistan became a Soviet republic. It gained independence when the USSR dissolved in 1991.

Self-described as a secular democracy, Turkmenistan's government actually practices an authoritarian rule. Its first president, Saparmyrat Nyyazow, made himself the center of a personality cult, established a lifetime rule and eradicated threats to his authority. Following his sudden death in 2006, Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov assumed power and remains in power today.

According to Human Rights Watch, "Turkmenistan remains one of the world's most repressive countries, with a disastrous human rights record. President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, his relatives, and their associates maintain unlimited control over all aspects of public life. The government thoroughly denies freedoms of association, expression, and religion, and the country is closed to independent scrutiny..."

Muslims constitute 95% of Turkmenistan's population, though most have a low practice of the Islamic faith. Meanwhile 3% practice Eastern Orthodoxy and 2% identify as non-religious. Only 0.1% of Turkmenistan's population is evangelical Christian. These believers face incredible isolation, intimidation and persecution.

ASK:

- For the safety of believers in Turkmenistan, that God would hide His kingdom work from the enemy's schemes. *Psalm 91:1-6*
- For strength of faith among believers, and keen discernment to see God's strategic purposes for their nation. *Matthew 16:13-20*
- For soft hearts to receive Christ among Turkmenistan's unreached people groups. *Luke 24:30-32*
- For just, compassionate leadership to replace the oppressive rule currently prevalent in Turkmenistan. *Proverbs 21:1-2, Micah 6:8, Psalm 35:1-10* 🌐

Unreached People Group:

TURKMEN OF TURKMENISTAN

Population: 4,268,000

Primary Religion: Islam

Language: Turkmen

Background

The Turkmen are the largest people group in Turkmenistan. For centuries, they lived as nomadic herdsman. When Soviet rule in the past century introduced the socialization of farmland, Turkmen customs and traditions weakened, and many settled into cities. Loyalties to tribe, clan and family are strong, reinforced by the practice of marrying only within one's tribe. Nestorian Christians introduced Christ to Turkmen in the 4th century, but Arab influence throughout subsequent centuries soon replaced Christianity with Islam. Most Turkmen today identify highly as Muslims, but do not hold to Islamic practice. Folk Islam, mysticism and other religious practices are prevalent. There are few known believers among Turkmen, and they are severely persecuted.

ASK...that God would strengthen persecuted believers and give them continued courage to share the love of Christ within their communities (Ephesians 6:19-20). Ask that Jesus would reveal himself as the God of hope to Turkmen suffering under oppressive rule (Romans 5:13).