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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

Just ASKing: restoring the soul of prayer

We are delighted to announce the publication of **'JUST ASKING: restoring the soul of prayer'**, a theology of asking. See Page 2.

George Mueller, of Bristol in England, renowned for his care for over ten thousand orphans, wrote in his journal:

It struck me that I had never asked the Lord for anything concerning it (the Orphan House) ... and then I fell on my knees and opened my mouth wide, asking Him for much ... I prayed that He would give me a house.

And God did. Likewise, a fresh focus on the nature and necessity of "asking Him for much" will unclog the channels of our silted communication, and release a fresh and forceful flow of abandoned but specific asking of God. However, very little, if anything, is actually said about asking in most books about prayer. It is always assumed. A rare author who included a chapter about it in his book on spiritual formation, asked: "Does it appear too self-serving to devote an entire chapter to prayer as request?" So how self-serving is my entire book going to appear? I agree with the author's answer: "Not according to Jesus." In another rare book that devoted an entire chapter to asking, Jim Packer and Carolyn Nystrom observed that:

for adults to practice the petitionary mode of prayer in a way that honors God and leads to the joy of seeing answers, more is needed.

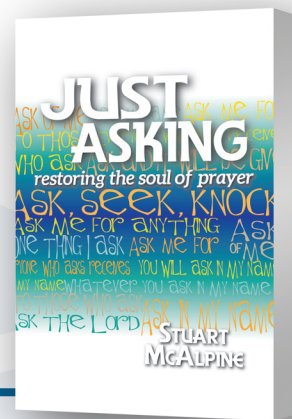
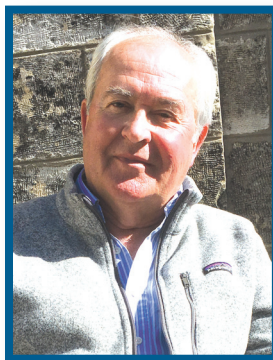
That shared conviction was an encouragement to my task.

Prayer is asking, but sadly, the word prayer becomes generalized in many people's minds and practice. All sorts of expressions pass for prayer that maybe are not prayer but more like recitations, observations, incantations, reflections, or spiritual-sounding conversations with oneself. Fundamental to a biblical understanding of prayer is asking. All of Jesus's teaching about prayer is all about asking. "ASK!" is His one-word compendium on prayer. It is when our confidence in asking erodes that prayer dissipates into general and tentative conversation. We back off the specific asking. Sometimes we do need to state the obvious – prayer is about asking. Deny that, dilute that, diminish that, and we will find that the bones of our prayer life will start to suffer from spiritual osteoporosis. Prayerlessness is a failure to ask and keep on asking.

When you begin to ask about asking, it is not surprising that a number of questions present themselves. Why ask at all? What is the point and purpose of it? Is

uncertainty about this the reason why we do not ask that much, for much? If God is going to do what He is going to do, is our asking just a therapeutic exercise to help us to talk about what we think that we need? Does our asking actually secure help or is it more an exercise of self-help? Is asking a condition of God's answering? What does my asking assume about God? What does my asking imply about me? Before I ask anything of God, are there things that God asks of me? Am I the only one doing the asking in this relationship? Are there things that God actually asks me to ask about and for? Are there things that God says we should not ask for, and we are wasting our time if we do? Are there kinds of asking that are welcomed but still may not be answered? What provokes our asking? Why do we stop asking? Is asking presumptuous? How and why does God respond to our asking? If He does respond to what I ask for, do I assume that He does so for the same reasons that I asked for it? Are there conditions to our asking or does anything go? Can we really ask whatever, whenever, wherever for whoever, or is it not quite as unconditional as that suggests? Are there things that encourage and help our asking? Are there things that hinder or subvert asking? When asking does not seem to be answered, what are we meant to conclude about it? There is plenty to ask about asking.

This book's purpose is to convince us that prayer is about specific asking, and to the extent that we do not specifically ask, we are not praying. I am asking boldly for exactly the same thing that P.T. Forsyth asked for one hundred years ago, in *The Soul of Prayer*: "What we ask for chiefly is the power to ask more and to ask better." Indeed, more is needed. We encourage you to get this book for yourself, for your prayer groups and especially for your pastors. Will you do that? Just asking!



Available as an e-book from www.westpress.com/bookstub (Promo code 10500000342985); amazon.com; www.mcalpinepartners.com

ASK Network News

ASK IN Africa

The gathering of ASK just concluded in Lusaka, Zambia, October 25-28 will have national impact. It was so well attended and well received, with scores of pastors committing to engage the network and see ASK established in all the provinces. Testimonies at the end of the conference affirmed the life-changing effects. There were extended, very strong ASKing sessions and the Lord gave significant revelation about strongholds, and also about significant advances. The last afternoon was spent prayer walking strategic city and national sites. Stuart McAlpine (ASK International Director) ministered alongside Charles Kaloki (ASK African Continental Director), Elliot Borchardt (ASK Southern Africa Regional Director) and other national leaders. They were able to meet with Tilyeni Kaunda (President Kenneth Kaunda's son) who is the President of the opposition party UNIP. He regards Flemmings Mtonga (ASK Zambian



Charles Kaloki (Africa), Popapo (Tanzania), Stuart McAlpine, and Elliot Borchardt (South Africa and Southern Region)

Director) as his bishop. Your prayers were immeasurably answered beyond what we ASKed or imagined. Thank you!

ASK RETURNS TO India

After a very fruitful visit in March, another team is returning to the same region, southwest of Calcutta. STEP Ministries India have opened their hearts and campus to ASK Network. Leaders from four provinces will be attending: Assam, Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal. The ASK team will be teaching from Monday thru Friday, November 12-16. Thank you for covering this event with your prayers!



Unreached People Group:

SHABAK OF IRAQ

Population: **34,000**

Primary Religion: **Islam**

Language: **Shabaki**

Background

The Shabak are an ethnic minority group living in the Ninevah plains of northwestern Iraq. Most are villagers and farmers who identify as Shi'a Muslims, but their religious practice is a unique blend of Islam, Christianity and traditional beliefs. Despite intense pressure to assimilate into Arab or Kurdish cultures, and increasing persecution, they hold strongly to their ethnic distinction. In recent years, the Shabak have suffered from large-scale violence following the US-led invasion that overthrew Saddam Hussein's regime. The advance of ISIS into Mosul has further threatened the Shabak. Hundreds have been killed and thousands more have fled their homes as a result of these crises. There are only a handful of known followers of Jesus among the Shabak.

ASK ... God to end the violence against the Shabak and bring them to a place of peace. Ask that Jesus would be revealed as their source of life, place of belonging and Savior. (Micah 4:1-5, John 10:7-10)



Iraq's Middle East location is very strategic and is considered the cradle of civilization. It was here that mankind first began to read, write, create laws and live in cities under an organized government.

Iraq was part of the Ottoman Empire until the Hashemite Kingdom gained independence from the UK in 1932. In 1958, the Iraqi Republic was created and controlled by the Ba'ath Party with Saddam Hussein as its president until the 2003 US led invasion. Elections were held in 2005. The US presence in Iraq ended in 2011 but the Iraqi insurgency intensified as fighters from the Syrian Civil War spilled into the country. This birthed ISIS/ISIL which captured regions of the north and west. On December 9, 2017, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared victory over ISIL after the group lost its territory. In recent elections, Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr pledged to support the Christian community. He was elected with public support for his anti-establishment and anti-corruption leadership, also distancing himself from Iran, which threatens his rule.

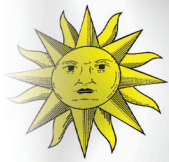
Home to many ethnic groups, around 95% of the country's 37 million citizens are Muslims, with Evangelicals at 53,371. Iraq ranks as the eighth most challenging country to live in as a Christian (2018 World Watch List).

The Church is characterized by fragmentation — denominationally, ethnically and politically. Outreach to the Muslim majority remains a terrifying prospect to most. Yet courageous ministry by Christians has profoundly touched many Muslims, including those from extremist backgrounds, with the peace, love and hope Christ offers. Even so, church growth has come nowhere near offsetting the loss endured by Christian flight.

Praise God for the election of a leader who vows to support the Christian community and fight corruption in a country with heavy Christian persecution.

Let's ASK For:

- Sadr and his party to stand by their word, and make good decisions for the people of Iraq. May they remain in office and not only support, but also protect and give voice to the Christian community. *Those who walk righteously and speak what is right, who reject gain from extortion and keep their hands from accepting bribes, who stop their ears against plots of murder and shut their eyes against contemplating evil— they are the ones who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress...* Isaiah 33:15-16
- The Church to be re-established in unity with a Christ-centered focus that responds to hatred and persecution with boldness, forgiveness and love. *Bless those who persecute you... If your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him a drink, for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.* Romans 12:14, 20-21



for the Nations



Uruguay



Unreached People Group:

JEW OF URUGUAY

Population: **17,000**
 Primary Religion: **Judaism**
 Language: **Spanish**

Background

Significant Jewish immigration to Uruguay occurred in the early 20th century, largely in response to the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe. Most immigrants were Sephardic or Ashkenazi Jews who settled in Montevideo, Uruguay's capital city. Most made their living as peddlers, but over the years became craftsmen, artisans, businesspeople and politicians. At its peak, the Jewish community in Uruguay numbered around 50,000 people shortly after World War II. In the years since, many Jews have left Uruguay due to its political insecurity and economic crises, as well as the draw of returning to Israel. The Jewish community in Uruguay continues to decline today—its aging population experiences more deaths than births or new immigrant arrivals. There are no known followers of Jesus as Yeshua among the Jews of Uruguay.

ASK ... that Christians in Uruguay would find ways to introduce Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah to their Jewish neighbors. (Isaiah 25:6-9)



Uruguay is a country in the southeastern region of South America bordering Argentina, Brazil and the Atlantic Ocean. Uruguay is home to an estimated 3.5 million people, of whom 1.8 million live in the metropolitan area of its capital city, Montevideo.

The indigenous Charrua people inhabited Uruguay until the Portuguese colonized it in 1680. Montevideo was founded as a military stronghold by the Spanish in the early 18th century, signifying the competing claims over the region. Uruguay won its independence between 1811 and 1828, following a four-way struggle between Spain, Portugal, and later Argentina and Brazil. A military coup in 1973 established a civic-military dictatorship but relinquished power to a civilian government in 1985. Today Uruguay is a democratic constitutional republic.

Uruguay is ranked first in Latin America in democracy, press freedom, its middle class and prosperity. It tops the unique rank in the absence of terrorism and ranks second in the region on economic freedom, income equality, and per-capita income. It is regarded as one of the most socially advanced countries in South America. Marijuana is legal for citizens, as well as abortion to 12 weeks and same-sex marriage.

Uruguay has long been a secular society with very little interest for anything religious. Complete separation of church and state was introduced with the constitution of 1917 and included legally renaming religious holidays. Even as recently as 1990, Uruguayans continue to refer to Holy Week as "Tourism Week." On religious preference, approximately 45% of the population self-identify as Roman Catholic and 10% as non-Catholic Christian. However, only 105,248 citizens regularly attend mass. This figure would represent less than 4 percent of the population.

Afro-Brazilian Spiritism is the fastest growing religion in Uruguay. The largest non-Catholic religious bodies are cults and sects of questionable orthodoxy. Most adhere to a "do-it-yourself" spirituality influenced by New Age thinking.

Let's ASK For:

- All religious deceptions to be exposed and the demonic powers behind them be defeated through the prayers of His church. *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God...* 2 Corinthians 10:3-6.
- In a country very resistant to the gospel, the Evangelical Alliances recently doubled the number of congregations and believers. ASK for the church growth to increase significantly in the future. *I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.* 1 Corinthians 3:6-8