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Table of Contents

ASKing for a Voice . 1

Network News . 2
Meet Charlie and Anita Cleverly

ASKing for the Nations . 3
Report from Laos Mlabri People Group

ASKing for the Nations . 4
Report from Saudi Arabia Mahra People Group

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 a Voice

The Song of Songs contains this intriguing appeal from the Bridegroom to His Bride, the Church: "... let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet." (Song of Solomon 2:14) If a new leader joins our team, I always ask the question: 'Has she/he found their voice?' It is not automatic, and yet it is a need today in a world where cultures are collapsing. John was 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness' and so are we. He prepared people for the first advent of Christ; we have the privilege of being a voice to go before the Second Coming of Jesus. But have you found your voice?

This article pleads that in the place of Asking, Thanksgiving, Weeping, Listening and Learning, Comforting, Consoling, Pleading, and Preaching, we the Church would find our voice. In considering this, we know that "... the tongue of the wise brings healing." Proverbs 12:18 With this in mind, let me share some scriptures that can help us.

FINDING OUR VOICE ...

- IN THE PLACE OF ASKING — In 1 Samuel 1:13, Hannah is halfway to home, and when she uses her voice to Eli, it seems her asking for a child is nearer to being answered. The Psalms are packed with pleading and asking: Psalm 116:1. Acts 4:24 shows the Church, which was born in a prayer meeting, having at last 'a voice'.
- IN THE PLACE OF THANKFULNESS — This is a key that seems to turn the lock of heaven and open a door of blessing. When Solomon and his leaders engaged in disciplined thankfulness at the dedication of the temple, the Glory came down. 2 Chronicles 5:12-14
- IN THE PLACE OF TEARS — Sometimes thanksgiving and weeping are mingled, and you don't know where one ends and the other begins: Jeremiah 31:15. At the massacre of the innocents this cry was taken up, and God knows we are living in such days: Jeremiah 9:21.

HEARING THE VOICE OF THE LORD...

One key to having something to say is to hear first God's voice: Numbers 7:8; Psalm 95:7. At the Mount of Transfiguration, the rebuke to Peter was "this is my Beloved Son ... Listen to Him!" Ancient Ignatian prayer practices: the prayer of Collection; prayer of Quiet; prayer of Union and Communion may help us to 'listen'. Listening is what turns John the Divine from a prisoner into a prophet: Revelation 1:12. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "Many people are looking for an ear that will listen to them. They will not find it among Christians who are talking when they should be listening."

Continued on page 2

STAMMERING IS COMMON AS WE FIND OUR VOICE...

Even having heard, the experience of several Bible heroes is still not to find their voice: Moses says, “Since I speak with faltering lips, why would Pharaoh listen to me?” Jeremiah, even though he is ‘appointed to speak’, says ‘... I do not know how to speak.’ He needs to be coached into confidence that God has ‘put My words in your mouth’, Jeremiah 1:6-10. Esther, Gideon, Jonah and Paul also needed help to speak. Pray that God remove restraint and grant a VOICE.

FINDING YOUR VOICE...

- **BEGINS IN THE DESERT** — Pray that as we learn the capacity to lean on God in the wilderness we can ‘come up from the desert leaning on the Beloved’ — with a voice! John 1:23
- **CONTINUES IN SIMPLE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CHRIST** — Finding our voice will involve telling our story. Pray God places on your heart a burden for lost people and particularly those in your family and circle – that we might recover our voice. Mark 8:38
- **IN PREACHING WITHOUT FEAR** — Pray for preachers to find a winsome, irresistible, authentic voice, with authority. Rom 10:14
- **IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE** — Pray that on media platforms across the world, Christians arise who know how to have that ‘Christ-like prophetic sound-bite’ that causes pause for thought. Proverbs 1:20
- **BEFORE KINGS** — Pray for Esthers, Daniels and Pauls to arise who have earned the right to speak and that they have a voice before kings. Luke 21:12
- **TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH** — ‘Their Voice has gone out to the ends of the earth’ (Romans 10:18). ‘You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and ... to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Pray that across the airwaves of this global village and gossiped on street corners a sound of heaven comes as Christ promised and as Paul prophesied.
- **AND INTO HEAVEN** — The last area to ASK for is the Second Coming. Do we have a voice for this ultimate ASK? Do we long for this, pray for it, prepare for it? Are we lovesick? Let us ask God for perspective and language to live in the light of the Second Coming. Revelation 22:17


By Charlie Cleverly — Continental Co-Director, ASK Europe

ASK Network News



Charlie and Anita Cleverly

Charlie & Anita Cleverly are Continental Directors for ASK Europe. They have ministered in and had a heart for Europe for decades, pastoring both in France and England, and currently lead St. Aldates Anglican Church in Oxford, where they have served for the past 11 years. It is a church full of history, and where Charlie found the Lord as a student. They have a passion to become a ‘House of Prayer for all nations at the heart of Oxford’ — a community where the incense of prayer and worship rises continually to God, and where people find the presence and healing power of Christ and take it back out to the world.

Anita served as the first UK Leader for ASK Network and, now as European leader. She just returned from Russia where she teamed up with Lucy Kowalski and Matthew Key to encourage and strengthen the growing work there. Both Charlie & Anita are authors. They have four children and their eighth grandchild is on the way. Pray for them as they prayerfully build ASK Network in the nations of Europe. 

ASKing for the Nations



Unreached People Group:

MLABRI OF LAOS

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Population: | 35 or fewer |
| Primary Religion: | Ethnic Religions |
| Language: | Mlabri |

Background

The Mlabri are the smallest ethnic group in Laos. They are known as “slaves of the yellow banana leaves” because of their custom of living in temporary shelters made of wood and banana leaves. When the leaves turn yellow (every 5 to 15 days), the Mlabri move to a different location to hunt for food. The Mlabri are a matrilineal society and woman typically changes mates every 5 or 6 years. As animists, Mlabri believe they are not entitled to cultivate the land. They believe evil spirits inhabit trees, and fear rainbows. There is no Scripture in the Mlabri language and very little Christian witness.

ASK...that God would show the Mlabri people that He sees them and that He loves them. Ask that God would strengthen the few missionaries reaching out to the Mlabri people, giving them insight and bridges to introduce the good news of Jesus. (Psalm 23, Isaiah 53:4-6)


Officially known as the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Laos is one of the poorest nations in Southeast Asia. Mountainous and landlocked, it shares borders with Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar and China.

With a population fewer than 7 million, Laos has 49 ethnic groups, the three largest (Lao, Khmou and Hmong) constituting three-quarters of the population. Most tribes are small, some having just a few hundred members. A communist state since 1975, Buddhism remains the official religion and has found a home here since the 8th century. Today it is often mixed with animism.

The Lao Evangelical Church and Seventh-Day Adventists are recognized and registered with the government. Most other denominations are underground and persecution is prevalent. Christians can disappear, especially if they are active leaders (particularly in the rural areas), be put in jail, re-educated and forced to sign renouncements of faith. Believers have also been cast out of villages, leaving them without home and land. Religious leaders have requested to meet with the government to allow them to register other churches. Policy on this is still unclear.

In the last decade, the nation’s rapid development has brought challenges to the country including increasing outside pressure from other nations, an influx of foreign workers that has displaced locals, and increasing debt as they strain to develop infrastructure. Crime, prostitution, sex trafficking, gambling and drugs are on the rise.

ASK for:

- Unity among the believers from registered and underground church ... that they know they are all in Christ. *“I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree ... and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.” 1 Corinthians 1:10*
- Grace for the persecuted to stand firm in their faith, able to withstand pressure to renounce His name. *“Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power ...” Read the full account of Stephen in Acts 6-7*
- A government increasingly filled with Wisdom and the Fear of the Lord as they steward the nation’s growth and make decisions regarding religious freedom. *“... and the government will be upon His shoulders.” Isaiah 9:6; “Pray ... for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” 1 Timothy 2:1-2*
- Pray for the voice and witness of the Church to grow in this season of great change. *“We ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, that you may live a life worthy of the Lord ... bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.” Colossians 1:9-10* 

ASKing for the Nations



Saudi Arabia

Unreached People Group:

MAHRA OF SAUDI ARABIA

Population: 34,000
Primary Religion: Islam
Language: Mehri

Background

The Mahra are one of the smaller groups of Arabs in Saudi Arabia, living in the southeast near the borders of Yemen and Oman. Primarily Sunni (Orthodox) Muslim, the Mahra are semi-nomadic warriors, a low position in Saudi Arabian society. Mahra tribes are ruled by sheiks, who are considered experts in Islam and in relating to the outside world. Sheiks are responsible for administering justice, protecting the tribe, sustaining tribal status and providing land for Mahra herds to graze. Social life is important to the Mahra, with daily coffee times to gather and organize the community. There are very few known Mahra believers.

ASK...that the good news of Jesus would reach the Mahra people. Ask that God would reveal himself to Mahra sheiks and that entire families and tribes would encounter the transforming power of Jesus. Ask that obstacles to the Mahra's reception of the good news be removed. (Isaiah 35)

Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of the prophet Muhammad and Islam. A large Christian population was expelled 1,300 years ago when Islam gained control. Two of Islam's holiest shrines are in the cities of Mecca and Medina, and Saudi Arabia is sometimes called the "Land of the Two Holy Mosques." Saudi Arabs see themselves as preservers of the Islamic faith and the majority believe in a strict interpretation of Sunni Islam known as Wahhabism.

The modern Saudi state was founded in 1932 with the present absolute monarch King Abdallah ascending the throne in 2005. It has been in the ruling families' best interest to preserve stability in the nation and they have consistently combated the violence of some of the Wahhabi extremist groups like al-Qaeda. This lack of tolerance for any opposition to the ruling family has caused unrest and many citizens are now demanding civil rights, including rights for women who do not have freedom to vote or to drive. The Islamic principle of modesty in dress expressed by wearing the hijab (black garment covering the body) is also being challenged.

The fasting month of Ramadan is one of the greatest religious observances in Islam and takes place this year from July 9th to August 7th. The Night of Power will fall during the last week and is among the holiest of days during Ramadan. This is the night when Muslims are most open to dreams and visions and many will be asking Allah to reveal himself to them.

Saudi Arabia continues to restrict any kind of indigenous Christian presence or the possession of non-Islamic religious materials. Christian radio, television and websites are a few of the avenues available to communicate the Gospel.

ASK God for:

- Hungry hearts to be prepared to seek media outlets that are bringing God's good news of mercy and grace. *"You will seek Me and find Me, when you seek Me with all your heart."* Jeremiah 29:13
- Followers of Jesus to give good testimony of Christ as they live in the power of the Holy Spirit. *"For our gospel came not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit ... and you became imitators of us and the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction but with the joy of the Holy Spirit."* 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6
- Muslims to become dissatisfied with a works-based religion and have a revelation of God's love and forgiveness as revealed in Jesus. During Ramadan pray that God will open their hearts to receive Him. *"...through this Man (Jesus) forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you and by Him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you can not be freed by the law..."* Acts 13:38-39 