

ASKING POINT

Network

*He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just.
A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He. Deut. 32:4*

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Praying for the poor
In a time of global economic instability

"The righteous care about justice for the poor." Proverbs 29:7

Who suffers most in times of recession and financial hardship? The poor do.

Behind the headlines of our papers lie the fates of millions who already have little. As Proverbs 10:15 says: *"The wealth of the rich is their fortified city, but poverty is the ruin of the poor."*

The economic crisis is not limited to one part of the world. Greece is in financial crisis against the backdrop of Europe fighting to save the euro. In India on November 22 the rupee fell to an all time low against the dollar. The Tokyo Stock Exchange, which once counted for one-third of the world's stock market capitalization; is now only seven percent. Similarly recessive statistics come from every other continent. In America, where millions have neither homes nor healthcare coverage, the economic indicator of house prices continues to plummet. Although many African nations have rising economies the numbers of those who live in poverty are still among the highest in the world.

As we ponder the magnitude of power of the global economic systems, we may have concerns for our nations, our own households and the funding of ministry throughout the body of Christ; but may we pause and pray for those who will be most affected--- the poor of the world. May we cry out to God for his mercy to be made manifest. *"I know that the LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy."* Psalm 140:12

ASK the God of heaven and earth to:

- **Cause nations' governments to be mindful of their poorest citizens.** *[God] raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honour. "For the foundations of the earth are the Lord's; upon them he has set the world."* 1 Samuel 2:8
- **Soften hearts of men and women everywhere to give to the poor.** *"He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done."* Proverbs 19:17
- **Bring revelation of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour:** *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."* Luke 4:18-19
- **Provide supernaturally for those suffering from lack of food and water:** *"The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the LORD will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them".* Isaiah 41:17

...receive from Him
anything we ask, because we obey
His commands and do what pleases Him...

1 John 3:22



Hope of the nations:

Syria

"In His name the nations will put their hope." Matthew 12:21



FAST FACTS ABOUT SYRIA

Population: 22.7 million

Official language: Arabic

President: Bashar al-Assad

Total people groups: 39

Capitol: Damascus

Religion: 90% Islam

Government: Ba'athist Single Party State

Unreached people groups: 23

Archaeologists have demonstrated that civilization in Syria is one of the most ancient on earth. A great Semitic empire, spread from the Red Sea north to Turkey and east to Mesopotamia from 2500-2400 BC.

Damascus is reported to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. Josephus, the historian, says that it was founded by Us, the grandson of Shem. It is first mentioned in the Bible during the time of Abraham and was the location of Paul's conversion. During that time it was the home of 50,000 Jews. Today it is the capitol of Syria.

The history of the Bible documents Antioch in Turkey as the place where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. Acts 11:26 Saul and Barnabas were commissioned by the church to take the gospel to the Gentiles in Antioch in Acts 9:1-9

In A.D. 635 Damascus was captured by Moslems and made a seat of the Mohammedan world.

President Bashar al-Assad inherited Syria's harsh dictatorship from his father. There was hope of reform with Bashar in office but in April 2011 he set in place a crackdown and began firing on demonstrators who wanted political reform. This nine month uprising has brought about the deaths of more than 5,000 people and an estimated 15,000 to 40,000 people detained by Assad.

The Syrian conflict is caused in part by their ethnic divisions. The Assad family and much of the nation's elite, especially the military, is controlled by the Alawite sect, which is a very small group in a population that is seventy-four percent Sunni Muslims.

The strike by Syrian businesses is causing an eroding of Assad's main support base from merchants and bringing stress to their ailing economy. In the event of a further collapsing of the economy, Assad's position would be greatly weakened.

A growing number of defections by soldiers has been reported to have reached almost 10,000. The UN has said that Syria is on the verge of civil war. Even Syria's close neighbors of Jordan and Turkey have begun to criticise Assad. More nations, and even the Arab League, are placing sanctions on Syria. With the release of documented reports of abuse by the security forces, this is a most difficult time for Syrians.

Pray:

- **that thousands would have a "Damascus Road" experience, and like Paul come to see that Jesus Christ is Lord and Saviour.** Acts 9:1-9
- **Antioch and Damascus would again become cities where the gospel is preached with great power and conviction making many disciples.** Acts 11:19-26
- **the church in Syria would stand strong and the seat of Islam, Damascus, along with Antioch would become strongholds of Christianity once again.** Acts 15:22-35
- **unrighteous rulers would be removed from governing Syria and replaced with those who are blessed of the Lord.** Proverbs 24:24-25; 29:2; Mt. 5:3-10