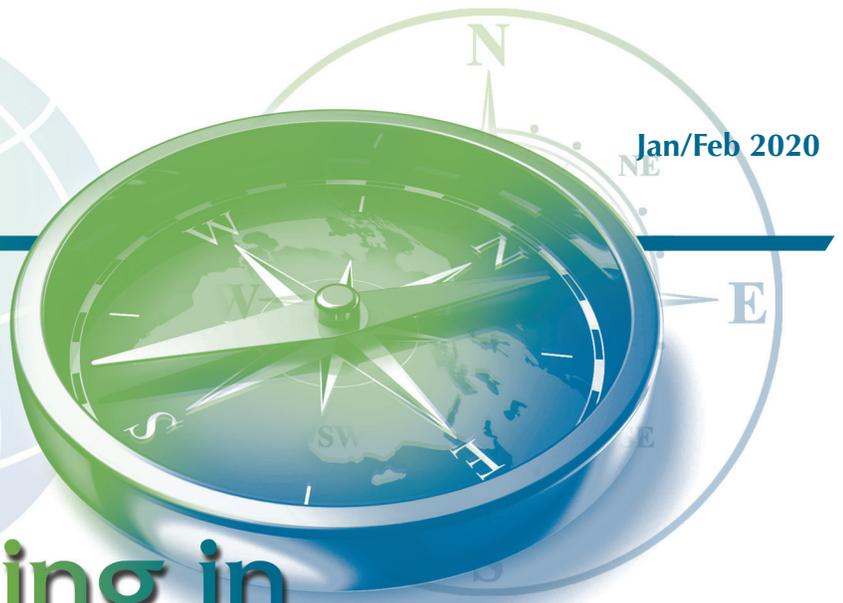


ASKING POINT NETWORK



ASKing in

2020

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Setting our Compass to True North

A friend shared with me recently a dream he had in which he was driving a very large car, travelling down a road at considerable speed. He saw himself as a small boy barely seeing over the steering wheel and feeling somewhat anxious about making a mistake. He saw a police officer ahead motioning for people to get over and stop at a rest stop where they could stop and have a coffee. After pulling off the road and enjoying a coffee, he had time to pause and think about his situation. He suddenly realized that by adjusting the seat, he would be at a greater advantage point to see much more clearly. He then awoke from the dream and realized the importance of pacing himself, taking time to have a break and reflect on what he was experiencing and observing and allow the Lord to speak to him.

As he shared this dream, I realized it depicted some very important principles — the need to pace ourselves, take time to hit the ‘pause’ button and intentionally draw aside with Father to hear what He might want to speak and reveal to us. He may want us to be positioned differently in order to grasp more fully what He wants to show us.

What Father has been Speaking...

Several in ASK Network have been sensing for the past several months a need to enter into a **season of alertness and attentiveness to what Father is asking of us**; to prepare for what lies ahead. As He has spoken to ASK in previous times — “Get ready, get ready, get ready!”

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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Matthew 24 has been highlighted for many as a marker and a sign to take heed. The concluding verses of this chapter describe how no one knows the day or hour of Jesus' return. However, Jesus does provide reference points to guide us. Earlier Jesus challenges the leaders of the day about their inability to read the spiritual signs of the times. It was limited to the natural. *"When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah."* Jesus then left them and went away." Matthew 16:2-4.

The Father longs that we'll not be caught unaware but be prepared for what is coming.

Our Posture in this Season...

Another key passage for this season is Jeremiah 1:12 *"Then the Lord said to me, 'You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word.'" The word 'ready' relates to "watching, waking, hastening, anticipating; to be sleepless, alert, vigilant; on the lookout; to care for watchfully". In this context as watchmen (Psalm 127:1), we are to remain in a posture of alertness and readiness.*

John 15:13-17 says *"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you. **No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is going; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.** You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another."*

ASKing in the above context implies intimacy and a posture of ASKing for anything the Father would share with us. He longs for us to ASK the right questions and discern what He is revealing — that we'll not be caught unaware but be prepared for what is coming. Like the wise virgins, our oil will be ready for the arrival of the Bridegroom.

Perceiving What We are Seeing...

We live in an environment of persistent voices vying for attention, many of which are ungrounded, false and based on untruths. Social media constantly seeks to seduce us in ways of thinking and feeling that are contrary to God's Word and heart. Wittingly or unwittingly, we are enticed to come under a 'different spirit' that has the ability to influence our spiritual eyes and ears. "False" prophetic voices are readily available to reinforce these ungodly influences, appealing to our souliness and 'itchy ears'. A political spirit or other spiritual entity seeks to distort the larger perspective of God's dealings and ways in the nations.

Having our 'seats raised' repositions us. Things do not always appear as they are. Systems within systems or systems behind systems are intended to advance the plans of man, yet the Lord is seated upon His throne (Psalm 2) and His plans will go forth on behalf of all nations.

As we survey the world, we are witness to increasing lawlessness evident by protests, the martyring of many, oppression, the withholding of the basics of life and the changing of the laws of the land contrary to God's Word (abortion, euthanasia, same-sex marriage). Economic and political uncertainty are commonplace in many nations. The rise of diseases, artificial intelligence, science and medical advancements beyond the scope of God's intended creative order are mounting. Anti-Semitism is also on the rise and oppression against Israel on all sides grows. Exposure of leaders inside and outside the church will continue as God addresses sin. The ongoing shaking in the natural — water, earth, wind and fire are evidence of the beginning of birth pangs for His return (Matthew 24:8).

These realities should not catch us off guard, but alert us to what lies ahead. Fear would seek to grip our hearts. But we are not of this world (John 17:6-19), we are called to live differently.

Preparing to Enter into the New Year ...

As we enter this new year, we must filter what we observe and process with the Word. Our ASKing must be subject to the leading of the Holy Spirit. 'Guardrails' and markers or reference points provide us the means to interpret what voices may say, many in stark contrast to His Word and revelation by the Holy Spirit. Father never contradicts His own character or ways. Caution needs to be applied when our own agendas are super imposed on the agenda of the Lord.

Discernment, a vital guardrail, is an important lens through which all we are hearing, seeing and perceiving is screened. We are instructed in Hebrews 5:14, "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Discernment is developed by applying and using it. The ability to discern is strengthened by sharing with others what one is sensing and helps facilitate our walking in accountability with each other. In turn, we grow together in seeking to understand the heart of the Father while walking in the community of believers that may, at times, be different than ourselves. "Iron sharpens iron." Collectively, we grow together in our understanding of what is being revealed and spoken.

ASKing Father for help in each of the above-mentioned areas is vital. Let us enter the New Year with humility and a teachable heart and spirit. This posture includes alertness and readiness, a desire to listen attentively, to be ready to obey as He speaks and remain constantly available. Our desire is to be ever aware of His presence and to walk in the fear of the Lord as never before.



May our voices echo the words spoken by Samuel as a young boy in 1 Samuel 3:10 — "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening".

By Ray Borg
Ray & Arlene Borg, North America Continental Directors

This year in ASK Network you are invited to join this intentional seeking of the Lord together. Each edition of ASKing Point will include a 'trumpet call' as in the article above—a call to be 'watching and praying'. We will gather around the Scriptures and meditate, ponder and pray allowing the Holy Spirit every opportunity to speak to us. We invite you to share with us anything you sense the Lord is saying.

Meditation Scripture for January-February 2020: Psalm 1 & 2

Ask:

- **Pray:** Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.
- **Wait** on the Lord, taking time to intentionally seek Him.
- **Write** down anything you sense the Holy Spirit is saying. Weigh it.
- If you sense the Lord has said anything of significance, **share** it with others or submit it to us at admin@asknetwork.net.



VATICAN CITY

Vatican City, the smallest country in the world, formally became a sovereign state on February 11, 1929, following the signing of the Lateran Treaty by the Holy See and the fascist government of Benito Mussolini.

Encircled by a two-mile border that separates it from Italy, Vatican City does not have an official language. However, as it is the seat of the Roman Catholic Church, which claims a membership of nearly 1.2 billion people, it is common for Vatican City's few citizens to speak multiple tongues, including English, German, Spanish, French, and many more.

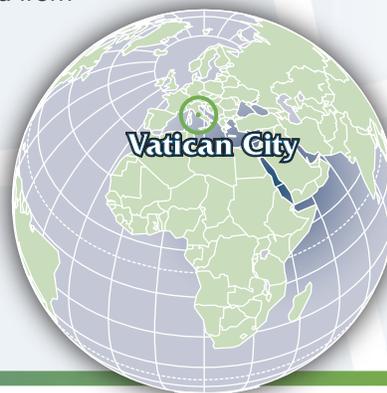
The independent city-state, which is governed by an absolute monarchy, has a population of 800, though only approximately 500 of them carry full citizenship. Of those 500 who carry full citizenship, an estimated 135 of them are members of the imperious Swiss Guard, which has served as the pope's private security force for more than 500 years. In addition, of those who carry Vatican City citizenship, nearly half of them do not reside in the state itself.

Vatican City citizenship does not come by birth. Rather, the King of Vatican City, who is also the Bishop of Rome (i.e. the pope), grants citizenship via appointment. The King of Vatican City reserves the right to revoke citizenship at any time, which makes it the most exclusive citizenship in the world.

Despite having fewer citizens than the Empire State Building has tenants, Vatican City exercises an enormous amount of power and influence throughout the world. A visit or even a direct word from the pope is an international news event.

ASK God for a spiritual and emotional overhaul for Vatican City: (Ephesians 2:1-10)

- **Spiritual reorientation:** Pope Francis' tenure as Supreme Pontiff has further exacerbated the already bitter infighting between the conservative and progressive factions of the Catholic Church. Pope Francis' forward-thinking approach has contrasted poorly with Pope Emeritus Benedict's traditionalism, leading to even bitterer squabbling, backbiting, and dysfunction. Meanwhile, the laity languishes in limbo, badly served by leadership that is distracted by earthly pursuits and political struggles. Pray that the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church rediscover their core mission of serving in the shadow of Christ. Pray that the spirits of control, authority, and earthly pursuits lift from Vatican City so that the light of His Son may shine on those who have dedicated their lives to the spread of his Joy and Word.
- **Moral reorientation:** The Catholic Church suffers terribly from the grave evil of clergy sex abuse. It has shattered the faith of even those not harmed directly. It has driven Christians young and old from Christ, vowing never again to place their trust in religion or persons of faith. The Holy See, meanwhile, downplays the seriousness of the matter. It also resists taking meaningful steps toward restorative justice. Pray that the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church soon recognize the enormity of the evil that its members have unleashed on the faithful. Pray that Catholic leadership treats the matter with the attention and gravity it deserves. More importantly, pray that those who have been harmed by the cancer of clerical abuse open their hearts to Christ and that they do not turn away from His saving message.



TAJIKISTAN



Unreached People Group:

SHUGHNI OF TAJIKISTAN

Population: **38,00**
 Primary Religion: **Islam**
 Language: **Shughni**

Background

The Shughni live in the high mountain valleys of the Pamir Mountains in southern Tajikistan. They are agriculturalists and pastoralists, and known for their textiles and pottery. In the eleventh century, they converted to the Ismaili sect of Islam. This sect is also known as the “Seveners” due to their belief that important historical and supernatural events occur in series of seven. Unlike other Muslims, Ismaili have no mosques or official imams, but gather in private houses of prayer and are shepherded by itinerant clergy. The Shughni appear to be completely isolated from the Gospel message.

ASK ... that God would visit the Shughni people in supernatural ways—through dreams, visions and other cosmic encounters. Ask that every Shughni heart would be drawn to the wonderful mystery and power of God expressed through Jesus, that they would embrace Him as their Savior and Shepherd (Acts 2:17-21, Psalm 23).

Tajikistan is a small landlocked country in Central Asia, population of about 9 million with 27 unreached people groups. Christians are 0.3% of the population with Evangelicals only about 0.1%.

Once a republic of the former Soviet Union, Tajikistan became independent in 1991. From 1992 to 1997 it endured a civil war between Islamic fundamentalists and a coalition of secular and moderate, non-political Muslim forces. The latter won and still make up the current government. Tajikistan’s constitution declares the country a secular state. It also provides for freedom of (or from) religion. Following independence a number of foreign Christian missionaries entered the country and alongside local believers began outreach. Today fewer foreign missionaries operate under the radar. There are now indigenous Tajik led churches in the major population centers.

As the poorest of the former Soviet republics, many Tajik men can’t find suitable work so they work as migrant laborers most of the year in Russia. Although Tajikistan is rich in potential natural resources like hydropower and minerals, it lacks adequate development funds.

Churches, mosques and religious communities must register with the government, submit annual activity reports and are not permitted to interfere in state affairs. Registration is to control, restrict or delay church formation and building construction and limit publication or importation of religious literature. Children under 18 are not usually allowed to attend public worship services or receive religious education but may receive religious education at home. In practical terms, government control and persecution are overwhelmingly focused on Muslim fundamentalism. There are also areas of the country where militant Islam exists, albeit beneath the surface. In such areas family, persons, or even local government agencies can make life very difficult for believers.

Let’s ASK:

- for the protection of Tajikistani believers. *Psalm 91*
- for church leaders to be encouraged to grow deeper in their faith and ministry and to intentionally seek new disciples among the unreached people groups in their country. *“...be God’s servant, fully mature and perfectly prepared to fulfill any assignment God gives you... proclaim the Word of God and stand upon it no matter what! Rise to the occasion and preach when it is convenient and when it is not. Preach in the full expression of the Holy Spirit with wisdom and patience as you instruct and teach the people... overcome every form of evil. Carry in your heart the passion of your calling as a church planter and evangelist, and fulfill your ministry calling. 2 Timothy 3:17; 4:1-2,4-5*
- for the Lord to prepare the soil of the Tajik’s hearts to receive the Good News. *For men’s hearts are just like the soil that drinks up the showers which often fall upon it. Some soil will yield crops as God’s blessing upon the field. Hebrews 6:7 The Passion Translation*

