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Dear Associates and Friends,

October 2012

“[The Book of Hosea](#)” is this month’s presentation by Dr. Ernest L. Martin. As the first book of the Minor Prophets, the Book of the Twelve, it sets the stage for the rest of the prophecies. The men who gave the prophetic messages compiled into the Minor prophets likely preached warning and repentance to the two nations of Israel and Judah just as much as did the major prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Do not think that they are less important or weaker personalities. All we can know is that fewer of their prophecies have been put into the Old Testament canon.

Hosea was contemporary with Isaiah and Micah, and all three of them witnessed the elimination by Assyria of the independent kingdom of Samaria as the northern tribes of Israel were attacked, decimated, and the remnant exiled from their native land where they had resided since the time of Moses. Hosea foresaw that happening (Hosea 5:13–14, 7:11–13, 8:9–14, and 10:6ff). The cause was that they tried to placate both Assyria and Egypt. Egypt was weak and Assyria was a predatory kingdom bent on conquest.

### *ASK’s Mission Revisited*

Occasionally it is useful for institutions, even small ones like ASK, to review why they exist and what their goals are. Dr. Martin originally wrote an encouragement to associates of a different organization in 1974, soon after he had left a long-term relationship as a leader in a growing denomination. He felt at that time that the denomination was not fully teaching the complete Gospel of Christ (Romans 15:19).

Some of you that he wrote to at that time are still reading, supporting, and helping spread Dr. Martin’s biblical research and teaching. His words are as relevant today as they were back in 1974.

**“We want to show the worth of the Bible — its beauties, its prophecies, its doctrines — to the whole world. We are not attempting to be policemen over the Word to see that it is obeyed. True, it should be obeyed; but we feel that people who see the real value of the Bible, and who are guided by the Holy Spirit, will adopt it as their guide through their own free will. God wants His people to obey Him willingly and not out of restraint. We want to use everything in our ability to show that the Bible has the answers in the problems of the world and that it is a book deserving the attention of all.**

**All of you in fellowship with [ASK] are taking part in this with us; and importantly, you can have a personal part in exalting the Bible in your own house and community. What you should do is learn as much about the Bible — its design, its prophecies, its doctrines — as possible, and share them with others around you. Make the Bible appear interesting to them. There are scores of interesting things about the Bible which will fascinate people, even if they do not believe it. What we need to do is to get people interested in studying The Book. By doing so, all of us would be getting people in contact with the most stable, beautiful, and uplifting book in existence today.**

**We all want to see people liberated from the oppressions of men (whether they are in bondage in false religious systems or political regimen), and the best way to do this is to let them be knowledgeable of the Scripture which can free them from the shackles of men. If all of us are in fellowship together, having this desire to exalt God’s Word in every way, we will be carrying out a much-needed task at this time.**

**Our ministry (yours and mine) is found in 2 Corinthians 5:18–20. We are to show how God so loves us, and the world, that He has already reconciled the world to Himself by the death of**

Christ on the tree of crucifixion. How can we perform this ‘ministry of reconciliation’ if people are not looking to the Bible for answers? The Bible is the key to everything. I am not talking about simply distributing Bibles. No, not at all. There are millions of Bibles around to be had. What we must do, individually and collectively, in a step-by-step manner, is to show how interesting and beneficial the Bible really is so that people will want to study it and depend on it. People can then find Jesus Christ and God the Father, and we will be helping to perform the ‘ministry of reconciliation’ which all of us have been called to accomplish.

The ministry of reconciliation is more than God simply being reconciled to mankind through the death of Christ. It is equally:

- a ministry of reconciling people back to God (2 Corinthians 5:20);
- a ministry of reconciling people to accept themselves (Galatians 5:14);
- of reconciling people back to their families and friends (Romans 13:10);
- of reconciling people in their communities and nations (Titus 3:1; Romans 13:1–7); even
- of reconciling people with their enemies (Matthew 5:44).

God is the One who will eventually accomplish all of this through Christ by reconciling the totality of the world, and eventually the entire universe to himself. We all have a part to play in this ministry — each person has his individual responsibility. This is not a responsibility of ‘praying and paying,’ but rather, it is something tangible for each of us to work for. It is a life-long undertaking — a job so big that we as human beings could never accomplish it of ourselves. But God will accomplish it, and we can be a part of His team in that achievement. These are the goals of [ASK]. This is why we do what we do.

All of our efforts are directed toward fulfilling this ministry of reconciliation to the best of our ability as God gives us guidance and direction. Without the Bible we would not know God’s will for us today. This is why a love of the Bible is essential and a primary requirement for understanding the proper goals and purposes for us as a group and individually.

Thank you very much for your support of [ASK]. We appreciate your sharing in our efforts.”

Ernest L. Martin, December, 1974

Keep these words in mind as you read Dr. Martin’s 1996 presentation “The Book of Hosea.”

## **Thank You**

We all have much to be thankful for in life. Let me list a few things. We are thankful for God’s grace of salvation for you, me, and every human being through Christ’s birth, life, crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension. God not only seeks to save each human being, He shall accomplish that goal, as we would expect from God who keeps His promises.

Christ’s righteousness makes us righteous before God, now and in the future when we shall see God: **“Happy are the clean in heart, for they shall see God”** (Matthew 5:8, Concordant Literal Version). This is not just a nice poetic statement that Jesus was saying to the crowds. This will happen, as will all the other “beatitudes” that He spoke in His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5–7 (and Luke 6:20–49).<sup>1</sup> These are indeed things to be thankful and happy about.

We at ASK are also thankful for your generosity, your prayers on our behalf, your suggestions, your questions, your worries for us, and your comments to us throughout the years. You hold up our arms so we can continue to produce the kind of information that informs you in return about God’s Word and His Gospel. Thank you all so very much.

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<sup>1</sup> Be sure to insert “Happy” where the King James Version puts “blessed.” Happy is a more precise translation of the Greek root *makarios*. See my article, “[How to Be Happy](#).”