

**DAY 20** – Is it possible for a Basque Catholic to be a genuine believer in Jesus Christ? YES! With God, all things are possible! I knew one young mother, a lay-leader in the Catholic Church of Lazkao, who I believe was a believer in Jesus Christ. I heard that in her conversations with me, and I saw it in her countenance. She read and studied the Scriptures on her own as well as helping in the church in Lazkao. QUESTION/PAYER – Is it ever right to say that God cannot do something, work in a given situation, other than contradicting His own nature? (See Ezekiel 37:1-14)

**DAY 21** – Lewis teaches, through “Screwtape Letters” that Satan is okay with Christianity so long as they are kept in a state of mind he calls “Christianity And”. God says essentially the same thing from His perspective. What is the first of the Ten Commandments? (See Exodus 20:3) What did Jesus teach in his explanation of the Parable of the Sower – Mark 4:14-20? The Lordship of Jesus Christ does not allow for rivals/competitors. QUESTION/PRAYER – How have rivals to Christ in your life affected your walk with Him?

**DAY 22** – The religious world of the Basques CAN have a place for Christ, but there are a LOT of other places as well. And without a personal discipline of Bible study, their understanding of Jesus may well be very limited at best. It would be very confusing and very difficult to follow “that kind of Jesus” as Lord of your life. The Basques have a saying to describe the time of dusk in their deep forests – a time when shadows take the shape of objects and objects become shadows. “The time between dogs and wolves”. That phrase could also be used to describe their syncretistic religious world. PRAYER – In terms of religious worldview, move the Basques out of the time between dogs and wolves!

**DAY 23** – Not only did the Spanish Catholic Church teach against competing faiths, they also persecuted those faiths. Muslims and Jews were expelled from Spain simply because they were not Catholics. Protestants were imprisoned and even martyred for their faith. And this is not ancient history. During the Franco years (1935-1975) this was done consistently. In some regions of Spain, the persecution continued even after Franco was removed. QUESTION/PRAYER – How would you view Catholics if your friends or family had been imprisoned or killed by them in the name of preserving the Catholic faith?

**DAY 24** – The Catholics also persecuted Basque “pagans”. In March, 1611, the Inquisition “discovered” that in the little Village of Zugarramurdi, 158 people out of a total population of 390 were witches and another 124 were under suspicion. Until the hysteria was quieted, some of these “pagans” were burned alive! QUESTION/PRAYER – How would you feel about a syncretistic Catholic Church that decided some of your community (or even family) were “witches” based solely on the testimony of their “enemies” and ordered to recant or be burned alive. If you were accused, would you recant or face the possibility of that type of death?

**DAY 25** – Today, most Basques view paganism as curiosity of their past history. I did have an apprentice witch” in one of my language classes so there are some who still seek after that type of power. Basque culture, paganism included, is a huge point of pride for most Basques. QUESTION/PRAYER – How do you point out the error of Basque paganism without being viewed as attacking Basque culture? How could you lobby for change (renouncement of those aspects) among the Basque people) without being viewed as “superstitious” or “foolish” in your own perspective?

**DAY 26** – Some spirits are more powerful than others. (See Daniel 10:13 and Luke 24-26). Could there be a territorial spirit controlling the Basque Country? In “The Twilight Labyrinth”, Otis has identified three factors in determining the relative strength of a given stronghold: (1) the explicitness of the original pact or welcome (think St John’s Day) (2) the nature of the evil spirits involved (3) the amount of time a particular pact has been in force (a LONG time in the case of the Basques). The Basque scenario would certainly qualify using these three factors. QUESTION/PRAYER – How can one stand opposed to a territorial spirit?

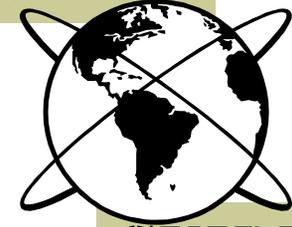
**DAY 27** – The generally accepted “leader” of the Basque gods is Mari, a female witch. The pantheon of “gods” is extensive and varied. Most Basques today would say that there is nothing to these “gods” – just old stories. Nevertheless, stories abound of their haunting presence. QUESTION/PRAYER – How can you measure the power of these “stories” among the Basque people?

**DAY 28** – Jose Miguel Barandiaran is perhaps the best known scholar of Basque culture and religion. He was also a Catholic priest (died in the past 15 years). He recounts the interview he had with an elderly woman in his hometown of Ataun. Have you ever seen Mari, the Basque witch? Yes, many times. Have you ever seen Maria (the mother of Jesus)? Of course. Is there any possible way of confussing the two ladies? Of course not! Why not? Because Mari is always dressed in black and appears in a time of darkness and even storm. She is evil. Maria is always dressed in white and flooded in light. Maria is good. But what about their faces, their features? The old lady concentrated on that idea and then suddenly went into shock. When revived after several minutes, she was extremely upset and mumbling to herself – “My God, my God! The two ladies are twins!” QUESTION/PRAYER – How powerful and deceptive are these “old Basque gods”?

**DAY 29** – Why does spiritual darkness linger where it does? Otis, after extensive, worldwide study of darkness, offers four possible explanations – religious festivals and pilgrimages, cultural traditions, adaptive deceptions (syncretism), or unresolved social injustices. He goes on comment – “History has shown that any one of these practices is capable of maintaining a climate of spiritual oppression and despair, and their combined potency is nearly irresistible”. QUESTION/PRAYER – How many of these four can be found in Basque culture today?

**DAY 30** – In this guide, I have attempted NOT to give you simple prayer suggestions (with the exception of DAY 22). My hope is that you will pray through these “questions” and seek God’s wisdom for some of the answers. As you hear God speak to you, I would ask you to share that with me to see if, collectively, we can begin to understand why darkness has lingered for so long among the Basque people and how we can pray, collectively, against the forces that have blinded so many eyes ...and hearts among the Basque people.

# PRAYER



## GUIDE #2

**DAY 1** – Why are the Basque people unreached? They were among the very first people to inhabit the European continent, yet they are still considered an unreached people group. Why? Or, as George Otis, Jr. states the question in his book entitled, “The Twilight Labyrinth”, “Why does spiritual darkness linger where it does?” This is the question we hope to address with this second prayer guide. QUESTION/PRAYER – Why does spiritual darkness linger where it does?

**DAY 2** – The following quote is NOT easy. We will be on this idea for the next three days. “The worldview of most non-Westerners is three-tiered: The cosmic, transcendent world on top, a middle layer featuring supernatural forces on earth, and the empirical world of our senses resting comfortably on the bottom.” -- Paul Hiebert, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Hiebert concludes his article by exploring the unique tendency of Western society to ignore the reality of the middle zone. QUESTION/PRAYER – Does U.S. culture understand the significance of the “middle layer” – the intersection of the supernatural within “our bottom world”?

**DAY 3** – What about you? You certainly recognize the Triune God. You also understand that Satan is our enemy. Their’s is the cosmic world. Ours is the bottom world. How do you understand the middle layer?...” a crossover realm that hosts such phenomena as magic and witchcraft, territorial deities and divine signs and wonders”? QUESTION/PRAYER – Why must the “middle layer” exist in our worldview? (See 1 Peter 5:8, Ephesians 6:10-18)

**DAY 4** – Most of us don’t understand that “middle layer” very well. But what is worse, many of us refuse to consider it at all. QUESTION/PRAYER -- As a follower of Jesus Christ, why should I be concerned about that so called “middle layer”? What about those people around me who are not Christ-followers? Should they be concerned? (See 2 Corinthians 4:4)

**DAY 5** – All peoples have some form of religion (even if they choose to believe that there is no God – quite a mental stretch!). Those people who do not believe in the One, True God – the Triune God – are considered “pagans” by those of us who do. QUESTION/PRAYER – How would you define “pagan”? How would you pray for them?

**DAY 6** – Don Richardson, in his book entitled “Eternity in Their Hearts”, coined the phrase “the Melchizedek factor”. Melchizedek comes from two Canaanite words – “melchi” “king” and “zakok” – righteousness”. His compound name for God – “El Elyon” are also both Canaanite words for God – both of which worked their way into the Hebrew language and Biblical text. Melchizedek was not a Hebrew. QUESTION/PRAYER -- Was Melchizedek a believer in the One True God in your opinion? See GENESIS 14.

**DAY 7** – If Melchizedek was a “pagan”, How did he learn about “El Elyon”? The book “Eternity in Their Hearts” was written to point out that over 90% of the world’s folk religions are permeated with monotheistic (one God) concepts. In other words, even with the pagan, God has placed “a testimony” in their hearts! (See Acts 14:16-17) QUESTION/PRAYER If God has done this for most of the people groups, why has spiritual darkness lingered for so long among so many of them?

**DAY 8** – Do the Basque people have their own special name for God? What do they call God in their language? Jainko – literally, “the Lord from above” – the ‘Being’ Superior to all created things.” QUESTION/PRAYER – Why don’t more Basques embrace Jainkoa as their God?

**DAY 9** – PRAYER SUGGESTION – Go to your public library and ask for the book “Eternity in Their Hearts” by Don Richardson. It is “must reading” as you begin to pray for unreached people like the Basques. In most cases, God has already placed “a witness” within their culture!

**DAY 10** – There is a spiritual battle going on for the unreached people groups of the world. That battle is described, among other places, in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 and Ephesians 6:12. QUESTION/PRAYER – Do we have a role to play in this battle? If so, what is that role?

**DAY 11** – Why is there so much confusion in our world today, among the Basques and so many others (people from our country included!) C.S. Lewis explains the problem well in his book entitled “Screwtape Letters”. Lewis writes, from the perspective of the Enemy (Satan) “What we want, if

men become Christians at all, is to keep them in the state I call ‘Christianity And.’ You know, Christianity and the Crisis, Christianity and \_\_\_\_\_”. QUESTION/PRAYER – How difficult would the combination of Christianity and Spanish Catholicism and Paganism be to navigate? That is the situation of the Basques.

**DAY 12** – For thousands of years, Basques were pagans. Eventually, the majority did embrace Spanish Catholicism (NOT the same as U.S Catholicism). They were among the last of the “Spanish” groups to do so. The mission strategy of the Catholic Church worldwide is that of syncretism – embracing the prior traditions of a people group and then “christianizing” those traditions. QUESTION/PRAYER – What problem(s) do you see in taking pagan practices and trying to make them “Christian”?

**DAY 13** – The following is a quote taken from a book entitled “Esentziak” (Basque for “essentials”). “CHAPELS. They are the oldest and most primitive expression of traditional Basque religiosity...They were primitive temples, built with scant resources, whose rustic walls absorbed an immense heritage of beliefs and traditions and offered a HARMONIOUS COEXISTENCE to practices of pre-Christian cults, the devotion to martyrs and saints of the Catholic calendar as well as the underground world of legends and fantastic creatures of traditional Basque mythology.” In a phrase, “Christianity And”. QUESTION/PRAYER – How can those two traditions coexist in a harmonious manner?

**DAY 14** – We arrived in the Basque Country (back in ’92) on June 24<sup>th</sup>, the Eve of St. John’s Day. This is what Basques do on that night in many Basque villages, towns and even cities. They build a large bonfire in the center of town, prepare a procession of Basque musicians and effigies of “Basque gods” on staffs, march up to the fire, and burn those effigies. What does it mean? Are they, as “Catholics”, renouncing and then destroying those “gods”? That is what I assumed, but I guessed wrong. The idea is that as the effigies are burned, their ashes are scattered across Basque Country as an invitation to continue in their midst for another year. But, of course, that is merely “tradition”, and no one takes it seriously today. QUESTION/PRAYER – What problem do you see in “celebrating” this old, Basque tradition?

**DAY 15** – There are any number of examples of this type of syncretism in “Basque Catholicism”. Add to that the fact that most Basques are NOT encouraged to purchase and certainly NOT to study the Basque Bible on their own. When the new translation of the Basque Bible came out in the mid-nineties, our priest in Lazkao shared that he was planning to purchase 3 copies – one for himself (because he was the priest), one for the “main church” in town, and a third for the Basque chapel. QUESTION/PRAYER – Where would you be in your relationship to Christ without personal Bible study?

**DAY 16** – Catholicism, for most people in the Basque Country, is nothing more than “cultural Catholicism” Most Basques infants are baptized in the Catholic Church (because it is the thing “to do” there). Most young children want to go through “first communion” (it is the time when they receive the most gifts from family – bigger than Christmas or birthday). Most young people go through “confirmation” because that enables them to be married in the Catholic Church (if they choose to do so). And when you die, it is good to be Catholic because in many places, the Catholic cemetery is the ONLY cemetery. And, of course, on the anniversary of your death, you want your family to pay for a “mass for the dead” on your behalf. QUESTION/PRAYER – How would you evaluate this type of church involvement?

**DAY 17** – If you ask most Basques (other than the senior adults) how many times they attend church, they may well answer three or four times. three or four? Christmas, Easter, and a couple other times? No. A funeral or two and a church wedding or two. No weekly habit? No monthly habit? For most Basques, although they are “Catholic”, the answer is no. QUESTION/PRAYER -- How important is the habit of participation in church to your personal faith?

**DAY 18** – When the Reformation broke out across Europe, the response of the Catholic Church to that “revolt” was called the Counter-Reformation. I assumed that the church in Rome drove the Catholic response. Wrong! The church in Spain drove that response. They taught, as part of their response, that there were four religious possibilities. One could be Catholic, Muslim, Jewish, or member of a cult group. QUESTION/PRAYER – Where would Evangelicals, or even Protestants, be included in that short list of four?

**DAY 19** – The Basque Country, in the past 30 years, has moved from the “most Catholic” to the “least Catholic” region of Spain. If you ask Basques what is their religious preference, the most common response is that they are atheist. That answer does NOT mean that they have decided not to believe in God. It means that they are not Catholic, not Muslim, not Jewish, and not a member of a cult group and that they are not real interested in discussing the matter any further. QUESTION/PRAYER – What will it take to convince the Basques that there is a fifth religious possibility?