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## **FEBRUARY 2015**

***"Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you,  
and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.  
Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven.  
For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets." Luke 6:22-23***

**Dear Friends,**

Reading today's headlines is sobering. "Report: Global Persecution of Christians Reached Historic Levels in 2014;" "IS executing 'educated women' in new wave of horror says UN;" "Boko Haram leader claims massacre in Baga (Nigeria), threatens more;" "A national anti-conversion law to save India's Hindus;" "Central Sulawesi (Indonesia), new wave of Islamist violence: murders, kidnappings, mutilations." These are but a few of the recent new accounts concerning religious liberty around the globe. And many of our Advocates live in the countries facing increasing pressures.

### **Challenges in Asia**

You may remember that last year, Global Council Chairman Min Choon Lee was arrested by the Islamic police in Malaysia. Thankfully, the Bibles that were seized during that raid on the Bible Society headquarters were finally returned. However, a Federal court in Malaysia dismissed the Catholic Church's legal appeals in the seven-year battle to continue to use the Bahasa-Malay term "Allah" in their newspaper. Despite the ridicule that Malaysia has received over this legal skirmish, and despite Christians' use of the term Allah for over four centuries, these kinds of struggles may only be the beginning. Pray with us for Min Choon and his colleagues in Advocates Malaysia.

A similar struggle for religious liberty and democracy in Nepal also began in 2007, and the government's numerous unsuccessful attempts to rewrite its constitution continue. The latest deadline was January 22, 2015, but the many parties have not been able to iron out differences. Christians in Nepal are trying to include favorable religious liberty provisions for minority faiths, too often in the face of stiff opposition from the Hindu parties. Please pray for our Advocates Nepal lawyers in this battle.

In India, the Christian Legal Association (CLA) lawyers, led by President Pramod Singh and others, faced an uphill battle, yet they won some key cases concerning the anti-conversion laws on the books in several states. However, the new government, led by ultra-nationalist Hindus, is now pushing for a national anti-conversion law. This comes alongside their campaign of forced "reconversions" to Hinduism. Please pray for Pramod, Global Council member Robin David, and their CLA colleagues across India as they continue to challenge the constitutionality of these laws and fight the introduction of new laws. In addition, they will host the 14<sup>th</sup> Advocates Asia Conference in Delhi, October 22-24, 2015.

### **Challenges in Latin America**

Many Christians have seen their rights under the Colombian constitution dismissed because they conflict with the rights of the indigenous tribe to which they belong. Tribal rights is a highly politicized issue, and many are afraid to engage it. Unfortunately, these issues are often overlooked when news elsewhere gets top billing. Please pray for our colleagues in Colombia, including those from Open Doors and Christian Solidarity Worldwide, who are trying to figure out how best to challenge these injustices.

Despite these pressures, our colleagues in Colombia will be hosting a national Christian lawyers' conference in Santa Marta, March 13-15. Our own Ruth Ross will be one of the featured speakers at that gathering on the northwest coast, and religious liberty will be one of the key topics of discussion. Colleagues from Brazil are just as active as ever, raising religious liberty issues through conferences and speaking events. And FIAJC continues to move forward with its plans for the 11<sup>th</sup> Advocates Latin America Conference in San Salvador in September 2015.

### **Challenges in Europe**

This month the 13<sup>th</sup> European Religious Liberty Forum is in Istanbul. Co-hosted by Advocates Europe President Latcho Popov and Julia Doxat-Purser from the European Evangelical Alliance, the Forum brings together a unique group of religious liberty advocates from across the continent, reporting on the previous year's challenges and developing ways to advance together in tackling the challenges. We greatly appreciate your prayers for the safety of our colleagues there, as we are more than aware of the rising Islamic attacks recently in Paris and Belgium, followed by rallies for and against the Charlie Hebdo incident.

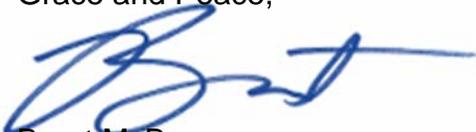
Other religious liberty incidents in Europe include legal decisions in the UK in which an NHS nurse who prayed for a Muslim colleague and otherwise treated her as a friend and was suspended from her job for nine months. In Sweden, officials have denied the asylum claim of an Iranian convert to Christianity. Our colleagues from ADF and Jubilee Campaign have filed amicus briefs at the European Court of Human Rights, and a decision is still pending.

### **Challenges in Africa**

While the world's media was up in arms, rightly, about the attack in Paris, Boko Haram was continuing its slaughter of innocent lives in Nigeria. According to some reports, as many as 2000 people were murdered in the town of Baga, near the border with Cameroon. Please pray for our colleagues in CLASFON who are trying to fight legal battles in Nigeria to bring an end to this terror.

Enclosed is our February/March 2015 prayer calendar. We greatly appreciate your key role in praying with us for our Advocates across the globe. Thanks again for your continued financial support as well. May the Lord bless and keep you in His perfect . . .

Grace and Peace,



Brent McBurney  
President and CEO



## PRAYER CALENDAR – FEBRUARY/MARCH 2015

### **Mondays: Advocates Africa**

- Please continue to pray for the planning of the **11<sup>th</sup> Advocates Africa Conference**, August 12-16, 2015 in Cape Town, South Africa. The Global Council plans to hold its annual meeting in conjunction with this event.
- Please continue pray for the safe release of the kidnapped school-girls in Nigeria. Boko Haram continues to attack and kill Christians, burn churches, and terrorize. Pray for **CLASFON** lawyers who are regularly facing these challenges.
- Please pray for peace in DRC where civil unrest surrounding upcoming elections has deteriorated into violence across the country.
- Praise God for the safe birth of a daughter for Advocates Africa's West Africa Coordinator, **Komi Devotsu** and his wife Rachel.

### **Tuesdays: Advocates Asia & Oceania**

- Please pray for the **Rule of Law Institute Mongolia**. Baasankhuu Oktyabri indicates that they have outgrown their current office space and are looking for larger offices. Pray for the details of these transactions.
- Australia's Global Council representative, **Mark Mudri**, asks that we please pray for wisdom and effectiveness in legislative implementation and cultural acceptance of the Nordic model to combat sex-trafficking. Praise God for answered prayers for efforts of Advocates Bob and Bibi Moles and successful landmark "Miscarriage of Justice" law. The first prisoner in 20 years was finally released. Pray for other states of Australia to follow suit. Praise God for developing relationships between Advocates in Germany and Australia.
- Please continue to pray for **CLA India** and their fight against anti-conversion laws. Attacks against Christians and reconversions to Hinduism are on the rise.

### **Wednesdays: Advocates Europe**

- Please pray for the **13<sup>th</sup> European Religious Liberty Forum** in Istanbul, 20-22 February 2015. Twenty-four are scheduled to attend from across the continent. The ERLF is co-led by Advocates Europe's **Latcho Popov**.
- **Christ und Jurist** (Germany) is presenting a workshop and holding a meeting for Christian lawyers at a congress for Christian leaders (up to 3000 attendees) 25-28 February 2015 in Hamburg. Please pray also for their ongoing planning efforts for their National Congress in Wiesbaden, 8-10 May, and law student Summer College in Darmstadt 7-13 September. They hope to provide the students a spiritual foundation for their future work as jurists.
- Please continue to pray for the Christian Lawyers Association and their new Rule of Law Institute in Ukraine. Fighting resumed recently and the nation needs God's peace.

## Thursdays: Advocates Latin America (FIAJC)

- Please pray for David Perez and his colleagues of **Advocates Colombia** as they hold a national Christian lawyers' conference in Santa Marta from 13-15 March, 2015. Ruth Ross and Jeffrey Ventrella (ADF) are the speakers.
- **FIAJC's** new Global Council representative, **Elizabeth DeLarios** asks that we pray for peace in Guatemala where official reports indicate 13 violent deaths per day. Presidential elections are scheduled for September and corruption there is out of control. (2 Chron. 7:14)
- Please continue to pray for the **FIAJC** leadership and for God's financial provision for the ideas they have to make a difference, particularly in confronting violence. Pray also that God will raise up a worker for the region to help them follow up on initiatives that are planned.
- Please continue to pray for the planning of the 2015 bi-annual conference, scheduled for September 3-5, 2015, in San Salvador, El Salvador.

## Fridays: Advocates North America & Caribbean

- **Advocates Caribbean** President, Justice Alice Soo Hon, asks that you "please pray that they will become a stronger force in the fight against the introduction of gay rights and abortion. We need more laborers. Too few hands for the work set before us. Also pray that the supremacy of God will not be removed from our Constitutions and that the freedom of worship will not be eroded."
- Praise God for a new Executive Director for the **Christian Legal Fellowship (Canada)**, Derek Ross. Please pray for Derek and his wife, Alison and their twin sons (Ruth Ross' grandsons), as they take on this new ministry to the lawyers of Canada.
- Please pray for **Christian Legal Society (USA)**, Executive Director David Nammo and the staff of CLS as they continue Seeking Justice with the Love of God.

## Saturdays: Advocates Global Council & Board Members

(New members in bold)

- **Global Council: Exec. Committee:** Chairman, Min Choon Lee\* (Malaysia); Vice Chair, Teresa Conradie\* (South Africa); Secretary, Gregory Vijayendran (Singapore); Treasurer, Mark Mudri (Australia); At-Large, Latchezar Popov (Bulgaria); **Members – Africa:** Dr. Bankole Sodipo (Nigeria); Mike Chibita (Uganda); **Asia:** Robin David (India); Dongsu Sim (South Korea); **Europe:** Eliseo Gomez (Spain); Peter Gegenwart (**Germany**); **Latin America:** Gerardo Amarilla (Uruguay); **Elizabeth DeLarios (Peru)**, Daniel Varela (Paraguay); **Middle East:** vacant (please pray for new representative); **North America/Caribbean:** Justice Alice Soo Hon (Trinidad & Tobago).

\*Also AI Board Members

- **AI Board:** Acting Chairman and Treasurer, Sam Logan (USA); Secretary pro-temp, Ruth Ross (Canada); Calvin Beresh (Canada); Jeffrey Brauch (USA); Matt Bristol (USA); Teresa Conradie (South Africa); Timothy Klenk (USA); Hee Eun Lee (South Korea); Min Choon Lee (Malaysia); Peter Rathbun (USA); Roger Sherrard (USA); Ken Starr (USA); and Morse Tan (USA).

## Sundays: Advocates Staff & Family

Please pray Ruth Ross and her husband Pat (currently working in Colombia); Romi Kobayashi; and Brent McBurney, his wife Elizabeth, son Ian and daughter Sarah Louise.