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**"I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; From where shall my help come?  
My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth." Psalm 121:1-2**

**Dear Friends,**

Kyrgyzstan is known as the "Land of the Mountains." The central Asian nation's average elevation, at 9,803 feet, is number two in the world behind only its neighbor, Tajikistan. Its geography is dominated by the Tien-Shan and Pamir mountain ranges and the beauty is stunning. And it was also the sight of last month's Central-Asian Christian lawyers' conference. However, as the Psalmist writes, even though we might lift up our eyes to the mountains, our help comes from the Lord.

Our gathering of 26 lawyers from seven different countries—including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan—was an incredible time of seeking Him who made heaven and earth. We prayed together, enjoyed great fellowship, and encouraged each other professionally, equipping our sisters and brothers on issues of how to deal with corruption, serving the community, and living within predominantly Muslim nations. Each of us left the conference with a greater sense of God's calling for us as lawyers.

Please continue to pray for lawyers like Firuza and Alexandra from Tajikistan who face challenges not only of being women lawyers, but Christians. Or lawyers like Pavel and Daniel from Kazakhstan who serve not only as lawyers, but pastors and leaders in their community. And Kyrgyz leaders like Asel and Toktorbek who are daily challenged with the issues of courts that expect bribes.

Please pray also for our new friend Krishan, a young Christian lawyer who works in Dubai. I met Krishan on my way home from Kyrgyzstan and was encouraged to know that God has placed a young man like him in the midst of the UAE, in a position of authority. Krishan grew up in Australia, his mother is Qatari and his father Sri Lankan, and he is a natural leader. I am hopeful that a new Christian lawyer fellowship will arise in the Gulf States under his leadership.

Enclosed with this letter is Part Two of the story of the Rule of Law Institute Bulgaria. We trust that it will encourage you this month. Even as I've returned from the Land of the Mountains, I know that my help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. And that He uses your prayers and financial gifts to help make a difference in the lives of Christian lawyers in Central Asia, the Middle East, Bulgaria and around the world.

May the Lord bless and keep you in His perfect . . .

Grace and Peace,



Brent McBurney  
President and CEO



## **“RULE OF LAW INSTITUTE” DURING THE PERIOD 1994-2007 AND THE ACCESSION OF BULGARIA INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Latchezar Popov, Esq., Chairman of the Rule of Law Institute**

In 1995, the Rule of Law Institute was established to encourage lawyers and other professionals to promote the rule of law and ethics in the Republic of Bulgaria. Up till now, we have linked over 100 Bulgarian lawyers, judges, prosecutors, magistrates, investigators, and law students together with most of them associated with the Rule of Law Institute (RLI). RLI has major structures in the three largest cities of Bulgaria - Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna; and also there are affiliated co-workers in the cities of Pleven, Blagoevgrad and Burgas. These cities are the locations of the District Courts.

Since 2002, RLI has been a member of Advocates Europe, Advocates International, and the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Furthermore, RLI has been a member of the Union of Jurists in Bulgaria since 2005 and the Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum since 2006. From 1998 to 2007, RLI was the Bulgarian coordinator for the “Balkan Human Rights Network” established in 1998 with the headquarters in Sarajevo – Federative Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Through RLI, our associated lawyers unite their efforts under the values of Christian ethics and find, organize, encourage, and assist in the growth of national leaders, lawyers, and law students all over the country. We strive to strengthen the professional relationships among them, while developing partnerships with representatives of other professions such as journalists, businessmen, spiritual leaders, and scientists. Our guiding principle is the universal Golden Rule: “Treat others as well as you want to be treated.” The Institute works in the fields of rule of law, human rights, religious freedom, mediation and peacemaking, and the integration of faith and profession. RLI encourages and assists State Institutions, public organizations, and individuals in the process of setting Bulgarian legislation in conformity with the legal principles and regulations of the European legislation, and implementing this legislation in concrete cases.

Below I mention a few of the major achievements during the period.

In letter № 33 – 57/8, dated 29th November 2000 and signed by the Chairman of the “Commission on human rights and confessions” to the 38<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, RLI received recognition from the National Assembly for our participation and contribution to the abolition of visa regime for Bulgarian citizens to travel in Europe.

In April 2000, the Chairman of RLI gave a Report about Bulgarian legislation in the field of Religious Freedom at the 56th session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. In a certificate dated 10th April 2004, given to RLI by the Democracy Commission U.S.A., RLI was recognized for its contribution in the elaboration of the Law on Confessions, and for the protection of religious rights and freedoms, and for spreading knowledge among the society about this Law.

RLI organized major national conferences, seminars, and lectures, while giving legal support for drafting this new Law on Confessions/Creeds Act, adopted in Bulgaria in 2002.

RLI works in the field of human rights, rule of law, and ethics, in cooperation with the Union of Jurists in Bulgaria, the Bar Association, and other non-governmental organizations for asserting and maintaining high standards of the rule of law and ethics. Some of these projects are: “Monitoring the Religious Freedom,” “Peacemakers,” “Human Rights, Business, and Ethics,” National Conferences of RLI, “Jurist Exchange Program,” “Weekly Prayer Meeting,” “Open House,” “Leadership and Mentoring,” and several local projects.

For the last twenty years, the Institute has organized conferences and seminars with over 1,500 lawyers, spiritual leaders, students, and professionals in participation.

Through the jurists exchange program, 70 people have been sent to international events. Fifteen law students have been welcomed to work as our interns at the RLI office. These interns have come from the United States, Great Britain and Peru, and represent universities such as Oxford, Georgetown, Pepperdine and Regent University.

In 1999, RLI issued 1,000 copies of the book "*Lawgiver*" written by Gerald Thompson and trained RLI members for the Biblical Jurisprudence using this book.

In 2002, RLI issued 5,000 copies of the manual entitled "Police Manual on Human Rights," with the support of the Ministry of the Interior of Bulgaria and the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

Also in 2002, the Institute published the book: *Confessions and law. Monitoring on religious freedoms in the Republic of Bulgaria – reports and proposals for a draft law and amendments in laws; signals about violated religious freedoms* with a grant from the Democracy Commission of U.S.A.

In 2004, RLI published the book: *Confessions and law. Monitoring on religious freedoms in the Republic of Bulgaria with reports, statements and opinions, expressed during the National conference, Sofia, 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2003*, and organized training seminars in Sofia, Plovdiv, and Varna.

In 2004, with the cooperation of the Danish Center for Human Rights, the Balkan Human Rights Network and the Ministry of the Interior of Bulgaria, RLI issued 15,000 copies for the citizens of Bulgaria and NGOs entitled: *The rights of citizens and police. Guide-book about the relations between citizens and police.*

In 2006, RLI issued 1,500 copies of the book "*Christian Leadership*" by Samuel Casey and Vickie M. Collins. Because of great interest, RLI reissued 1,500 new copies of the book "*The Lawgiver*" by Gerald Thompson.

The director of the Police Academy at the Ministry of the Interior stated in his recommendation dated 10th February 2003 that he considered the partnership with RLI successful, and recommended the Institute as a correct partner and trustful organization in the field of spending money for projects related to the rule of law and human rights.

The books issued by RLI were delivered to libraries, institutions, NGOs, and citizens around the country.

In his letter dated 23rd January 2003, the Director of the Bulgarian National Library expressed his gratitude to RLI for giving 10 units of the book: *Confessions and law. Monitoring on religious freedoms in the Republic of Bulgaria – reports and proposals for a draft law and amendments in laws; signals about violated religious freedoms*; and he informed us that original copies of this book have received large amounts of interest from the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., the New York Public Library, the library at Stanford University, the British Library in London, Bodleian Library at Oxford University, the National Library in Paris, and the Russian State Library in Moscow.

RLI was the initiator and co-organizer of the "First National Prayer Breakfast" in Bulgaria, which was held on 23rd December 2005 in Sofia. More than 100 representatives of the Sofia municipality, non-governmental organizations, political leaders, and representatives from the religious denominations were gathered for a prayer and communication on the topics: "Birth of Christ" and "Bulgarian Family".

After the accession of Bulgaria into European Union in 2007, new challenges and achievement arose and stood before RLI, which will be the subject of our Part Three for "His Story" to follow in Bulgaria.

**This is Part Two of a three-part celebration of the  
20th Anniversary of the Rule of Law Institute, Bulgaria.**

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