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**"So teach us to number our days,
That we may present to You a heart of wisdom." Psalm 90:12**

Dear Friends,

We invite you to take a look back with us over the past quarter century. In the grand scheme, 25 years doesn't seem very long. The United States of America turns 240 this year. The Lawyer's Christian Fellowship (UK) turns 165. The Christian Legal Society (USA) turns 55. However, God has done some astounding things through Advocates International during the past quarter century. Here are just a few highlights.

It was just over 25 years ago when Sam Ericsson followed God's call to serve lawyers and legal professionals around the globe, and thus began a new chapter in His-Story. In 1991, when Sam took his first trip to Russia, there were ten countries with Christian lawyer fellowships. Today there are fellowships in 127 nations, with the newest addition to the AI network launching itself in South Sudan. While many of these new fellowships emerged following visits from Sam, it is clear that God used lawyers from neighboring countries as the spark for igniting the flames for some, including Advocates St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Advocates Guyana, which were both birthed through Advocates Caribbean.

Training Judges

Over the years we have been engaged in encouraging and equipping advocates through judicial conferences, including 1994 in Albania when we were able to give black robes to each of the 180 judges who attended, and in 1995 when the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and five other US judges joined us in Armenia. Over the years, we hosted many judges from numerous nations here in the USA, and relationships formed through the AI network resulted in a series of justice conferences in the Democratic Republic of Congo beginning in 2008, with a 5th planned in 2017.

The most recent judicial conference was in December 2015, when Roger Sherrard made his 50th visit to Albania, where he was able to address the judiciary and continues to assist in the struggle to bring about an independent judiciary. We hope to include a full report on this gathering next month.

Training Lawyers: Globally & Regionally

In addition to training judges, we helped to facilitate and train lawyers and other legal professionals through our five Global Convocations and through the many regional conferences. Beginning in 1998, the 1st Global Convocation in Chicago, Illinois, was attended by 45 delegates from 26 nations. By 2008, over 541 delegates from 106 nations, plus over 500 lawyers, law students and judges from the USA attended Advocates' 5th Global Convocation. These historic gatherings helped to spawn the regional Advocates networks, bringing together advocates across the globe.

In 2000, Advocates Africa held its first conference in South Africa. 2001 was a year of multiple firsts: Advocates Asia met in South Korea, Advocates Europe met in Portugal, and Advocates Oceania met in Australia. In 2002, Advocates Latin America (now *FIAJC*) held its 1st regional conference in Costa Rica. Advocates Caribbean held its 1st regional conference in 2007. This year, Asia will be holding its 15th regional conference in Australia, and the Caribbean will hold its 5th in Guyana. 2017 will mark the 12th regional gatherings for both Africa (meeting in Ghana), and Latin America (meeting in Brazil). Advocates Europe will gather informally again this year at the Christ und Jurist Congress in Stuttgart, Germany.

Advocacy & Beyond

Beyond the training conferences, advocacy on behalf of the persecuted church; religious liberty; rule of law; the sanctity of life; family & community; peace & reconciliation; and justice for the poor, are an ongoing part of the DNA of Advocates International's quarter century. From the earliest days, Advocates spoke out on behalf of persecuted pastors in Indonesia, prisoners in the former Soviet Union, and Christians in Saudi Arabia.

Today, Advocates continues to work in partnership with numerous other groups engaged around the globe. I now serve as Commissioner on the Religious Liberty Commission of the WEA and on the leadership team of the Religious Liberty Partnership. We participate regularly at the Religious Liberty Roundtable in Washington, DC. The Global Council, established in 2008 to help AI oversee the regions and the Global Resource Teams, continues to meet quarterly by telephone and face-to-face once each year, with our next meeting to be held in Brisbane, Australia in September.

Throughout this year, as we celebrate our 25th anniversary, we will share some highlights from the past as well as the present. We are always grateful for your prayers and financial gifts for Advocates International. The support of friends like you over the past 25 years allows us to continue encouraging and equipping Advocates to do justice with compassion around the globe.

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

Grace and Peace,



Brent McBurney
President and CEO