

MARCH 2019

“Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.” James 1:27

Dear Friends,

While religious freedom is one of the key areas of ministry focus for Advocates, it is by no means the only focus. Protecting the Family is one of the seven pillars of AI's work. Since February of 2016, when I attended the Global Forum for a World Without Orphans (WWO) in Chiang Mai, Thailand, to convene the legal track for the Forum, AI has been seeking ways that we can connect Christian lawyers around the globe to be key players in this incredible effort to help orphans and vulnerable children.

In 2017, several friends from WWO, including Anja Goertzen, a Christian lawyer from Paraguay, joined us in Accra, Ghana at that year's Advocates Africa Convocation. The relationships that were formed and strengthened in West Africa are beginning to bear incredible fruit. On the back of this letter is a part of Anja's update.

They also joined together with us at the 2017 Advocates Latin America conference in Rio and in October 2018 at the 50 Nations/1 Fellowship conference in Berlin. We continue to work closely with Anja and her colleagues, and our hope is that Advocates will play a continued key role in bringing lawyers into this critical work.

This month I travel to Europe to meet with two dozen religious freedom advocates from across the continent, immediately followed by a trip to Abuja, Nigeria for the Religious Liberty Partnership Consultation. Thanks for your prayers for safe travels.

Thank you for your prayers and your continued financial support that help us meet the needs of the ministry and allow us to help Advocates around the world to pursue justice.

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

Grace and Peace,



Brent M. McBurney
President & CEO



Email from Anja Goertzen

We are incredibly grateful for what is happening in Ghana, not only within individual organizations responding to needs of vulnerable children and families, but also especially for the growing of collaborative platform to develop a nation-wide movement in Ghana, to activate and equip the church as the Body of Christ, as well as to connect and collaborate with Government, business and other key sectors.

The **primary existing needs/challenges observed in Ghana** have been 1. to form a secure platform for this broader cross-sector national collaboration, and 2. to work alongside the Government in developing a national system, to ensure best practices for child placements.

In response to the first, we are pleased to share that a **core leadership team has been formed to spearhead this national collaborative movement** towards family-based care in Ghana (working with the GWO existing group of partners and initiatives). The 3 incredible people on this core team, with complementary roles/experience, are: Kingsley Kwayisi (Reverend minister, Calvary Baptist Church), Naa Adjorkor Mohenu (Bethany Christian Services Ghana director, lawyer), and Emmanuel Nyarko-Tetteh (child development and family relations consultant). This team has been working to connect with existing Ghana Without Orphans partners/initiatives to build on and increase the growth of a shared vision for OVC (orphans and vulnerable children) in families. I am copying these to this email.

In that regard, on behalf of this national team we would like to share **the 4 areas of focus this movement in Ghana to advance family-based care** will be having in the next 2 years that we believe are of mutual interest to you all:

Strategic:

- 1. Raise awareness in the church** on the importance of family care, by developing partnerships with 100+ churches and para-church ministries
- 2. Raise awareness in the general public** with national promotion of strategic dates such as Foster Care Month (to promote foster care and provide resources across sectors) and Orphan Sunday (to mobilize churches/orgs to become involved in family-based care ministries locally).

Infrastructure Development:

- 3. Develop strategic partnerships** with NGOs (such as Bethany, Compassion and others), professionals and businesses to strengthen the actions of the church in Ghana towards increasing all aspects of family-based care

Family Strengthening:

- 4. Advocate for orphans and vulnerable children by training lawyers and judiciary authorities** in child protection and family based care, with best practice models, by legal specialists from SFAC Charity (UK) and developing policies/laws for child protection, in partnership with Christian Lawyers Fellowship of Ghana.

In response to the second primary challenge mentioned earlier (work alongside the Government developing a national system, to ensure best practices for child placements), this fourth area has been prioritized by the Ghana core team, as it is truly optimal timing and urgently necessary on a national level. This specialized judicial training will likely take place in the second half of 2019, towards Ghanaian Court and Government authorities, as well as lawyers, to help implement/improve the new laws and policies that have been developed.

On behalf of AFFEO (working alongside the WWO global movement) as liaison to Ghana movement, we wanted to share these amazing updates on behalf of Ghana team with you all! As Anita mentioned, there may be a possible gathering with Ghanaian and Western NGOs in Accra in 2019. We look forward to sharing more information as soon as possible.