

## NOVEMBER 2018

**“Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. . .” Matthew 6:12 (NLT)**

**“For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility. . .” Ephesians 2:14**

### Dear Friends,

Forgiveness is one of the most powerful ways to bring unity. God offered His eternal forgiveness through Christ, adopting us as His heirs. He taught us to forgive those who sin against us. Yet how often do we get to witness forgiveness that breaks dividing walls?

What happened last month in Berlin, Germany at the **50 Nations—1 Fellowship** conference—co-led by the *Lawyers’ Christian Fellowship* (UK) and *Christ und Jurist* (Germany)—was one of the most moving and powerful gatherings I’ve attended. On a scale of 1-10, it was an 11.

Over 200 lawyers, judges, law students and others from across Europe came together for a gathering that was definitely unlike previous lawyer conferences or Advocates events I’ve attended. There were no workshops on the law, but rather, the focus was on forgiveness, reconciliation and relationship building and how to encourage the establishment, growth and strengthening of Christian lawyer fellowships.

Starting Wednesday evening, the conference planning team broke bread together and then spent significant time praying for the next few days. We sought the Lord and prayed for one another and all those coming. It was a sweet time of fellowship and we sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit.

We began Thursday with small-group prayer walks around central Berlin that included stops at the Wall, Checkpoint Charlie, the North Korean Embassy, and the Holocaust Memorial. Several other groups did prayer walks in Spandau and on site at the conference center. Turning our focus to the Lord and others helped to guide our hearts for the weekend.

On Friday morning, we worshipped together and then Judge Peter Gegenwart, my good friend and member of the Global Council from Germany, was the keynote speaker. What he shared and the response to it was incredibly moving. I wish you were there with us.

Peter shared that his grandfather became guilty as a judge during the Nazi regime. Peter then asked—on behalf of himself, his family and his nation—for forgiveness. Our good friend from South Africa, Teresa Conradie, Chair of the Global Council, came to the

podium and offered forgiveness on behalf of her own family and nation. Her grandfather had died during World War II while fighting in Europe. It was a powerful demonstration of our need for giving and receiving forgiveness and there was not a dry eye in the room. Many were openly weeping.

On Friday afternoon, we loaded onto four buses and visited Sachsenhausen Labor Camp. While there, one of the German lawyers, Ingo Friedrich, shared passages from his great uncle's book about being held at that very camp. Then we laid a wreath at the Holocaust memorial site and Peter prayed the enclosed Prayer of Repentance. Many, on behalf of their nations, offered forgiveness and then asked for forgiveness for what their nations had done to others. It was a very moving time. We then prayed for one another and sang Amazing Grace together.

Throughout the weekend, each European country represented shared about their own Christian lawyer fellowships (or lack thereof), and specific prayer needs they faced. We then gathered in prayer groups to encourage each of them, including a number who were the only representative from their nations.

The timing of this conference contained two divine co-incidences. First, the Global Council held its annual meeting on Saturday, exactly 10 years after its initial meeting. Then on Sunday, during the planning team's de-briefing and prayer time, we learned that we were meeting exactly 10 years to the day that Sam Ericsson first met Martin Franke and the German lawyers---for whom he'd been praying and searching for over a decade---at the 5<sup>th</sup> Global Convocation. God keeps a calendar!

Thanks for your continued prayers and financial support for Advocates as we pursue God's plans for carrying out the vision and mission He gave us. Thanks to the work of our new VP Pat Talbot, we are excited to share with you, in the coming weeks, our new online educational resources for Christian lawyers around the world.

As the year comes to a close, we are, as Sam Ericsson used to say, looking at cupboards that are almost empty. If you've never given to Advocates, please consider us in your year-end giving this year. We greatly appreciate the support that allows us to encourage, equip and enable Advocates to always be prepared to offer and grant forgiveness.

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

Grace and Peace,



Brent M. McBurney  
President & CEO





## **PRAYER OF REPENTANCE: SACHSENHAUSEN, OCTORBER 2018**

As Germans we confess our sins and the sins of our forefathers. From 1933-1945 we heaped immeasurable guilt upon ourselves as a nation. We take responsibility for both this and the subsequent fate of our people.

We confess and identify with the crimes committed against our fellow Jewish citizens as well as against Sinti and Roma (the Gypsies), the politicians, clergy and laity who opposed the Nazi regime, forced laborers, prisoners of war, handicapped people, homosexuals, Jehovah Witnesses, all those who resisted the Nazi regime, allegedly “non-Aryans”, and every other victim of persecution.

We as a people listened to deliberate propaganda and fake news; we responded to inflammatory talk in schools and public life. In so doing, we helped pave the way for the dehumanization of our fellow citizens. As lawyers we are called to stand up for justice, human dignity and the rights of every citizen and failed abysmally. As representatives of the legal profession, we acknowledge that we—that is, our predecessors—willingly did wrong and presented injustice as justice. We denounced our fellow citizens, humiliated, tortured and murdered them, enriched ourselves at their expense, robbing them, confiscating their property and forcing them to sell for a pittance. We trampled underfoot their faith and all they held dear. We denied them medical treatment. All this culminated in their wholesale murder without any protest on our part.

They were deported to labour camps and concentration camps and murdered. Before the advancing Allies, survivors were forced on “death marches.” Pitifully clad and with almost no food, they staggered on in freezing conditions.

To this day the survivors and their descendants still suffer from trauma, nightmares, intense anxiety and fears of persecution. We cannot begin to imagine even remotely the pain they endure.

Today anti-Semitism and xenophobia still exist. They are actually on the rise, often appearing under the guise of anti-Israel rhetoric and/or criticism of the state of Israel and/or hostility towards Israel and racism.

In deep shame and contrition we come before the Almighty, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to confess this guilt and ask forgiveness in the name of Jesus Christ.

Almighty God, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, have mercy upon us. Forgive us our terrible guilt. Help us to take a stand against any repetition of these atrocities. Give us wisdom, strength and the courage of our convictions to stand up for the victims and their descendants and all those dear to them. We especially ask You to fill us with Your love. Amen.

Judge Peter Gegenwart, *Christ und Jurist*