

DECEMBER 2019

Dear Friends,

**“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” *Isaiah 43:19***

Throughout 2019, the AI Board of Directors sought the Lord’s guidance regarding the overall mission of Advocates and how we best serve the Body of Christ through our ministry to legal professionals who are following Jesus Christ in their daily lives. Following input from around the world, we are now excited to announce our new mission and vision statements.

Our new mission statement is simple and straightforward:

“Inspiring and Mobilizing Advocates Globally to Do Justice With Compassion.”

Our new vision statement is bold and far reaching:

**“All peoples thriving in hope, peace, and justice, within societies committed
to freedom of religion or belief and the rule of law with integrity.”**

The process included challenging questions, and important feedback from the AI community. We remain committed to our efforts to address the six primary issues, set forth at the 2008 Global Convocation: to promote religious freedom; justice for the poor; rule of law and ethical integrity; human life and dignity; peace and reconciliation; and strong families and communities. Our Advocates continue to face challenges on these issues within their nations, and our efforts to encourage, equip and enable them to tackle them remain as strong as ever.

Inspiring and Mobilizing

As we move into a new year with renewed conviction about the calling God has given us, we are encouraged to have friends like you who pray with us and for us. We are grateful for those who continue to invest in this ministry financially, especially as we move forward with new initiatives like the Institute for Christian Legal Studies. New resources are being developed that help us to reach the next generation of Christian legal professionals.

One key effort is to provide resources that better prepare our Advocates to keep legal doors open for the spread of the Gospel, whether from within their own nations or from abroad. For example a proposed new law in Mozambique could limit how churches are able to operate. These include requirements for minimum size of a church—60,000 members—and even a minimum of three years of certified training for pastors. In a nation like Mozambique, these proposals could close many churches. Pray with us for the efforts of Advocates there as they fight adoption of the new law, and prepare the pastors and church leaders for what could happen.

All Peoples Thriving

Advocates frequently works alongside other global organizations such as the World Evangelical Alliance. Just last month, I, along with our team in Indonesia, attended and served at the WEA General Assembly, with the theme “A Decade of Disciple Making: 2020-30.” Pat and Kathy Talbot, and numerous members of ICLS, served as hosts at that gathering with over 850 delegates from 92 nations. A number of our Advocates from Sri Lanka, Costa Rica, the UK, Ghana, Kenya, and Indonesia attended, as well as some of the clients of our Advocates. We made key connections with church and ministry leaders and lawyers from across the globe, and further strengthened critical collaborative partnerships.

2020 is shaping up to be a busy year for AI staff. In January, I will be speaking at the 2nd KILN (Kingdom International Legal Network) conference in Nadi, Fiji. The theme of this year’s conference is “Re-imagining Legal Culture; Pursuing Trust & Truth.” The inaugural conference in 2018 included over 100 lawyers from 8 nations across Oceania.

In March I travel to Europe for the European Religious Liberty Forum in Tirana, Albania, and the 12th GKPN in Rome, Italy. In April I return to Europe for the annual Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP) Consultation in Kiev, Ukraine. While there, I plan to meet with our Advocates in the Christian Legal Association of Ukraine.

In October, Latcho Popov and the team from Advocates Europe are planning a religious liberty conference in Kishinau, Moldova, which will include our colleagues from across Central Asia. In November, our friends from Trinidad will be hosting the 7th Advocates Caribbean conference.

AI’s VP, Pat Talbot, continues to travel across Indonesia and SE Asia, helping to establish new fellowships. We are hopeful that Advocates Asia will be able to gather, but please pray for a host fellowship and for the leadership team of AA as they are seeking a new generation of leaders to rise up and take charge in that vast region.

This year we faced unexpected financial challenges and we hope to end the year in the black. I remind you of our matching challenge gift which is currently \$40,000 per year, for the next four years. If you have never given, would you consider joining our team of faithful supporters at \$50 or \$100 a month? We invite you to double your gift by the end of this year. When you invest in the work of Advocates, you become a partner in inspiring and mobilizing Advocates globally to do justice with compassion. Thank you.

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

Grace and Peace,

Brent M. McBurney
President & CEO



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PS: As you consider year-end donations, please be mindful that Advocates can accept **gifts of stocks** through Fidelity Investments, DTC#: 0226; AI account #: Z44881848. All financial gifts are tax deductible and are greatly appreciated. Thank you.



2019 Year-End Report

January – AI launched our new Asking for the Advocates Prayer Initiative. That remains an ongoing effort to gather our colleagues by region to pray for their needs.

February – We continued working closely with collaborative partners across the globe, particularly this month with our colleagues at World Without Orphans.

March – Advocates held its first ever Board of Directors Retreat. Brent McBurney attended the 16th European Religious Liberty Forum, joining together with colleagues from across the continent to discuss the challenges they face in regards to religious freedom. Brent also attended the 11th Global Kingdom Partnership Network gathering in Dallas, continuing to work closely with church leaders from around the globe. Finally, to end a very busy month, Brent attended the annual Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP) Consultation, held in Abuja, Nigeria. By focusing our attention on the problems in Africa, this year’s consultation was the largest yet, with over 120 participants from 29 nations.

May – AI Vice President Pat Talbot helped to launch yet another chapter of the Indonesia Christian Legal Society, speaking to lawyers, law professors and students on “*A Lawyer’s View of the Evidence of the Resurrection of Christ and Biblical vs. Social Justice.*”

July – The second Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom was held in Washington, DC and was attended by over 1000 delegates representing over 100 nations. Thanks to a generous donor, Advocates was a key sponsor for key off-site side events. One of the speakers at this year’s Ministerial was Ms. Yamini Ravindran, from Sri Lanka, who spoke about the Easter bombings in her nation. Please pray with us for her safety as she has become the target of increasing governmental surveillance since that event.

August – the 13th Advocates Africa Conference was held in Mombasa, Kenya and the Global Council also met there. Changing Times, Unchanging God was the theme, and Advocates Africa celebrated its own 20th Anniversary, honoring many of its heroes over those 20 years, including a special plaque posthumously for Sam Ericsson.

September – Brent McBurney and AI Board chairman, Professor Jeff Brauch, were both speakers at the Christian Legal Fellowship’s national conference in Toronto, Canada. Brent also traveled to Zurich, Switzerland, where the RLP Leadership team finalized its registration as a Swiss association. He also encouraged the Advocates from both German and French speaking parts of the nation to be more engaged.

October – The Rule of Law Institute of Macedonia was inaugurated in Skopje, Macedonia.

November – When the Advocates Latin America conference was unexpectedly postponed, Brent McBurney was able to travel to the World Evangelical Alliance General Assembly in Jakarta, Indonesia. Joined by Pat and Kathy Talbot, and a sizeable team from Indo CLS, the Advocates International team was able to serve a gathering of over 800 delegates from 92 nations.