

JULY 2021

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light”.

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for the kind wishes which I have received from many of you upon my appointment as President and CEO of Advocates International. I am humbled by the confidence which the Board has placed in me and am enormously excited about the journey ahead!

First, I want to join the Board in thanking Brent McBurney sincerely for his leadership over the past ten years. As Chairperson of the Global Council, I worked closely with Brent, and I have a deep appreciation of him. With his usual gracious spirit, Brent continues to assist me while I am finding my feet in this transition period – I am truly indebted to him!

The well-established mission of AI is ***“Inspiring and mobilizing advocates globally to do justice with compassion”***. Like for many of you, Sam Ericsson was a major influence in my life.

In October 1999, I was a last-minute replacement at the AI Convocation for Reg Joubert, the erstwhile Executive Director of the Christian Lawyers Association in South Africa. Reg was one of a small number of Christian Lawyers who had attended the first AI Convocation in Chicago, IL the year before.

Arriving at Dulles airport I felt hopelessly inferior when I found out that the other delegates who were with me on the flight was a High Court judge from Armenia and a Constitutional Court judge from the Czech Republic – I was sure that my attendance was a cruel joke!

What I did not realize was, that I was being cast as a character in what Sam used to call His-story!



My life was radically changed over the course of the next ten days as the group travelled to San Antonio in Texas for the Convocation and back to DC where we were introduced to Justice Sandra Day O'Connor! I was completely spoiled for the ordinary and could never again return to just being an ordinary attorney in private practice.

Sam's inspiration mobilized me over the next eleven years to become whole heartedly involved in what I call "Christian Lawyering". In tough times I still find myself using his words: "*sometimes disappointed, never discouraged*". When I lack zeal and passion for a task, I remember that Sam said that the word "enthusiasm" comes from the Latin word "*enthusiasmus*" – meaning "*divinely inspired or possessed by God*". It goes on: "*There are only two kinds of days – good days and great days.*"

Sam and Bobby's mindset about their finances and belongings have influenced my husband Deon and my way of thinking: "*Never owner, always steward*" "*You have time, talent and treasure – use it to advance God's Kingdom!*"

Sam used the parable of the good Samaritan to explain who the Christian lawyers are that God is calling to serve. According to Sam the Samaritan was not the hero of the story – the innkeeper was. The Samaritan left and entrusted the innkeeper with the long-term care of the injured man. The innkeeper then had to use his network, local knowledge, and some of his own resources to care for the injured man. In our context the "innkeepers" are the Christian lawyers across the globe. You are the ones with the local knowledge, you speak the language, you have a better understanding of the challenges in your own country.

On the very last occasion when I visited Sam in hospital in September 2010, (the photo above) he told me that his vision was that Advocates International should become truly international. He asked me to be a steward of that vision.

The earnest prayer of my heart is that God will enable our generation to be faithful stewards of the finding values of Advocates International while we use our enthusiasm, time, talent, and treasure to advance God's Kingdom agenda in our times.

I implore and rely on all innkeepers across the globe to join me in expanding the mission of Advocates International!

Warmly in Christ



Teresa Conradie
President and CEO, Advocates International

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