

## AUGUST 2021 - FAITH IN FEARSOME TIMES

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

### HEBREWS 11:1 (NIV)

Dear Friends,

As I write this newsletter, South Africa has in the past week been ravaged by violence, unrest and looting reminiscent of Apartheid days! Said to be a response to the imprisonment of former President Jacob Zuma, this civil unrest has led to the loss of 212 lives while causing unprecedented damage to hundreds of shops, banks, pharmacies, and restaurants which in turn affects the livelihood of millions of people. Fear and despair reigns in many communities!

At the same time, the third wave of Covid 19 infections has brought the total number of deaths to more than 66 000 in our country. As Covid deaths globally exceed 4 million, scientists are discovering new variants of the virus all the time! The pandemic has significantly contributed to unemployment, poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. Globally restrictions keep us from being able to meet with each other as we wish to.

Islamic militants continue to cause fear and terror in many countries across the globe. The death toll in the recent flooding in Western Europe has reached 180 and many people have been displaced. Haiti's president, Jovenel Moise, has been assassinated, mass kidnapping in Nigeria continues. Globally governments are lacking the ability to deal effectively with all the fearsome things which are taking place.



The list of frightening things that are happening unfortunately goes on and on and we are constantly being shocked by events which we could never have predicted. And then social media further contributes to the spiraling fear with fake news and conspiracy theories! **Fear and terror have become a daily companion for many.**

**Without any doubt we are indeed living in frightening, unthinkable times.** I often think: *“If we could only know God’s perspective on all of this we would know how to respond”.*

As lawyers, we work with **facts and evidence** to give us confidence and understanding. **“Seeing is believing”** is part of our thinking. It is **unthinkable** to have assurance in what we cannot see.

And yet, that is exactly what God expects of us - **“to believe without seeing”**. God wants us to have faith in Him despite not being able to discern His perspective, despite being unable to see what He has planned for us. Assurance (confidence) in evidence that is not visible to us!

The author of the letter to the Hebrews says that faith is **the confidence, the reality, the substance of things that we hope for.**

When mentoring younger Christian lawyers, I often encourage them to aim to integrate their faith with their profession. Heb 11:6 *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”.*

The question then arises whether our version of faith indeed pleases God. Even if we unequivocally believe that God exists, do we earnestly seek Him? Is our “faith” not possibly tainted by fear, doubt, and skepticism?

While experiencing the first nine plagues in Egypt the Israelites were not required by God to act in any specific manner. I am though sure they would have been frightened and alarmed by the dreadfulness of each one of the plagues. Then God gives an order for them to take a lamb, put its blood on the doorframes, eat the lamb with bitter herbs and bread without yeast, eat it with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand.

Trusting in God’s promises, an estimate of 600 000 men and their families obediently acted in faith on God’s instructions and their lives were saved and they could escape from Egypt!

The prayer of my heart is that each one of us will, in these terrifying times, obediently put our trust in God and in His promises, having confidence in Him for the things we hope for, being sure of that which we cannot see.

Yours in Christ



Teresa Conradie  
President and CEO, Advocates International

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