



APRIL 2022

“God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there.” Genesis 21:17

Dear Friends,

In this coming month Christians across the globe will again be celebrating the most significant event of our faith - the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In 1981 the well-known songwriter and performer, Scott Wesley Brown, wrote the beautiful song “*This little Child*”. The first two verses go:

*Who would of thought that long ago, so very far away
A little child would be born and in a manger laid
And who would have thought this little child, was born the King of kings
The Son of just a carpenter for whom the angels sing
**And who would have thought that as He grew and with other children played
This child with whom they laughed and sang, would die for them some day**
And who would have thought this little child could make a blind man see
Feed the hungry, make rich the poor, and set the sinner free
**Oh who would have thought this little child, was who the prophets said
Would take away the sins of man and rise up from the dead***

*Many years have come and gone, yet this world remains the same
**Empires have been built and fallen, only time has made a change
Nation against nation, brother against brother
Men so filled with hatred killing one another***
*And over half the world is starving, while our banner of decency is torn
Debating over disarmament killing, children before they're born...
**Yet in the midst of this darkness there is a hope, a light that burns
This little child the King of kings someday will return***

While celebrating Easter, we can easily forget that Jesus was once a vulnerable child, needing protection from his parents. Not much is written in Scriptures about Jesus’ childhood, but we know that the environment in which He grew up was complicated by many religious and political issues.

Even before His birth, his earthly father, Joseph, chose not to reject him but to marry his mother and give him the protection against cultural humiliation. Our Biblical understanding is that Jesus’ birthplace was Bethlehem, a city long associated with the family of David. But Jesus would not stay long in His ancestral city. Shortly after His birth, Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to do for him what was required by the Law (Luke 2:22-38). Within months, the family had to journey by night to Egypt to escape the murderous rampage of King Herod (Matthew 2:13-18). In Egypt, the family found a sanctuary until Herod’s death, when the family returned home.

On both occasions when the Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, first to tell him to go to Egypt and then, after Herod's death, to go back to the land of Israel, Joseph was entirely obedient. I have little doubt that Joseph's primary consideration was for Jesus' safety and well-being.

In this Easter season, there are again millions of vulnerable children who have fled their homes. The first who come to mind are those who have been displaced by war and violence. Do leaders who contemplate armed conflict ever consider beforehand the plight of the children who would be impacted by the war? Or are children simply dismissed as unavoidable and ill-fated casualties in the bigger picture leading to the battle? Can our leaders not therefor be compared to those who sacrificed their children through fire to the pagan god Molech to achieve their selfish objectives?

I can barely imagine the fear of Ukrainian children hiding in shelters while their cities are being bombed. The anxiety of leaving family members, friends, and pets behind is unthinkable. There must be an immense sense of loss of community - not knowing whether you would ever return to your home.

God is not silent about our children. His care, compassion, and protection for them are seen throughout Scripture. He calls for us to be obedient as Joseph was. While the plight of the children of Ukraine is currently in the media, the same is true of the children of Afghanistan, the DRC, Syria, the Tigray region of Ethiopia, Myanmar, the Central African Republic, Venezuela, and many other countries. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that more than half of all refugees globally are children.

As lawyers, we are qualified and well positioned to assist children in situations of conflict. Our training equips us to engage with the UNHCR and immigration authorities to ensure that child refugees are not deported back to the countries they fled from but considered for visas. In regions where young boys are kidnapped and trained as soldiers, we should be set on achieving their release and supporting their reintegration into society. We ought to be working alongside aid organizations to guarantee that aid reaches the children and is not intercepted by corrupt officials.

World without Orphans and A Family for every Orphan, our treasured strategic partners, are doing invaluable work across the globe. You can be assisting them with orphan care, adoption, and foster care programs and any legal challenges they might be experiencing. Please let me know if we can connect you to them.

Just like Joseph, let us be attentive and obedient to the call of God our Father and hasten to help children affected by armed conflict.

Warmly in Christ



Teresa Conradie

President and CEO, Advocates International



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