



MAY 2022

“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

Romans 5:3-4

Dear Friends,

My husband Deon and I have had the wonderful opportunity in April to spend three weeks in Eastern Europe.

We first attended the consultation of the Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP) in Warsaw in Poland and then visited our AI associates in Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, and the Czech Republic. With it being Easter during that time, we could observe several Easter celebrations. I was again struck by how the death of Jesus Christ and especially His resurrection has impacted the world over the past two thousand years! At the same time, I have new appreciation for the millions of Christians who have been persecuted for their faith.

It was a time in which I was again reminded of the terrible misery people have suffered at the hands of others. On the other hand, I saw joy and hope and evidence of incomparable character.

The RLP is a collaboration of around 50 international member organisations. An annual consultation brings together the presidents and CEOs of these organisations together with other key global leaders. Strategic issues relating to international religious freedom take place and opportunities are created for collaboration. What struck me was everyone's passion and commitment to support each other to help persecuted Christians. Advocates International is honored to work alongside so many men and women who do not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. AI is collaborating with some of these organisations on several projects across the globe.

This part of the world has seen some of the greatest human tragedies in the past century! We visited Auschwitz – Birkenau near Krakow in Poland. From May 1940 to January 1945 1.3 million people (most of them Jews) were sent to this camp by the Nazis. Of these, 1.1m either died in the gas chambers or from starvation, executions, disease, and exhaustion. Some were even killed by medical experiments.

Krakow is also the city where the German industrialist Oscar Schindler saved the lives of around 1 100 Jews by employing them in his factory. Similarly, Irena Sendler, a Polish social worker rescued the lives of 2 500 children by smuggling them out of the ghetto in Warsaw and placing them with non-Jewish families or in convents. I have again been reading *The Hiding Place* of Corrie ten Boom, the brave Dutch woman and her family who hid away several Jews in their home in Haarlem in the Netherlands. Corrie was incarcerated under terrible circumstances in the Ravensbruck camp where her sister Betsie died. Several of her other family members did not survive after being arrested. Her responses to these intolerable challenges inspire me anew every

time I read them! One of them: *“Dear Jesus...how foolish of me to have called for human help when You are here.”*

The “Iron Curtain” became the name of the 7000 kms of physical barriers of fences, walls (e.g., the Berlin Wall), mine fields and watchtowers that divided East and West Europe. It was erected at the end of the WWII by the Soviet Union to prevent their people and its satellite states from contact with the West and its Allied states. At Devin Castle, just outside of Bratislava, in Slovakia we visited the Iron Curtain Memorial on the shores of the Danube River. It commemorates the 600-700 people who died during their attempts to escape. Andy van der Bijl, who became known as “Brother Andrew” risked everything to bring the gospel to those behind the Iron Curtain. His ministry “Open Doors” still serves the persecuted Church today and was also represented at the RLP consultation.

This part of Europe is being hugely affected by the tragedy taking place in the Ukraine. In every city we could see Ukrainian women and children who had fled their country. We had the opportunity to speak to some of them and tell them that we are praying for them. On the other hand, we were blown away by the compassion and support the communities of Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic, and Poland are extending to the refugees. If you can prove Ukrainian identity, you can use public transport for free, get free meals and use hugely discounted accommodation. Several of our advocates are assisting Ukrainians with relocating women and children to safe places, immigration papers and other legal challenges. My prayer is that the Church in Eastern Europe will be able to maintain this culture of care and compassion and that many lives will be impacted by the acceptance of Jesus’ salvation.

One of the things which impressed and encouraged me during my visit to Eastern Europe is that many of the Christian Lawyers we met with are still young. On the one hand it demonstrates to me God’s commitment to Eastern Europe and on the other hand, a new realization of our responsibility to train, equip and encourage these younger lawyers.

After two years of not being able to meet in person, we are enormously excited **to invite you to the Faith and Law convocation, which is taking place from September 15-18, 2022, at the Cambridge Union Society in Cambridge, UK.** Conference hosts are The Lawyers’ Christian Fellowship (LCF, UK), Christ und Jurist (C+J, Germany), and Faith & Law Around the Globe (FLAG). We are hoping to have several of our Global Council members and others present. The promotional video for the convocation can be viewed at [\(43\) 2022 Faith & Law Convocation "Our Time is Now" - YouTube](#) We will send more information about registration to you soon.

Warmly in Christ



Teresa Conradie

President and CEO, Advocates International



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