

DECEMBER 2022

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.¹⁰ As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:9-11

Dear Friends,

As always, our hearts are filled with thankfulness for your faithful financial partnership! We deeply appreciate your generosity and commitment to our mission.

After writing my last newsletter, I had the wonderful privilege to travel to Liberty University in Lynchburg VA. I was invited by our esteemed board member, Morse Tan, the Dean of the Liberty School of Law. During my visit, our board chairman, Prof Jeff Brauch (himself a former Dean of Regent University School of Law), spoke to the Liberty law students at their convocation. Using the example of Gideon, Prof Brauch, in an inspiring message, encouraged the students to, despite being scared and intimidated to know that they were created “For such a time as this”.

While at Liberty I had the marvelous opportunity to meet with Prof Barbara Massie Mouly. Prof Mouly attended the very first meeting of Advocates International which Sam Ericsson convened nearly thirty years ago. I am excited to be working with Prof Mouly to develop international student externship and research programs like the ones we do in collaboration with Regent.

From the US I travelled to Ethiopia to meet with and encourage the Board of the Ethiopian Christian Lawyers Fellowship (ECLF). It was just a few days before the Ethiopian government and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front entered into a ceasefire agreement. I encouraged the board to engage in the peace process with extraordinary courage and care for all the people of Ethiopia. I was heartened by the response of their chairperson, Misgana Kifle and former chairman, Dr Tibebe Gashu asking that we assist with training members of the ECLF as mediators, facilitators, and monitors of the peace process.

All of us who knew her were deeply saddened by the passing of Christine Kipsang on November 5, in the Shah hospital in Nairobi after a brave fight against cancer. Christine was a beautiful woman, one of the best Africa had to offer! She was an executive member of the Kenya Christian Lawyers Fellowship (KCLF) representing the coastal region of Mombasa. In their tribute to her, the KCLF describes her as a dependable pillar, a source of wisdom, hope and humor, passionate about mentoring young lawyers, and always available to take up pro bono cases. We extend our sincere condolences to Christine’s family and the KCLF. We trust that you will be comforted by the knowledge that Christine lived her life to the fullest and in accordance with God’s purpose for her. She leaves a legacy of several young lawyers who were inspired and mentored by her.

At the end of another year, I invariably reflect on the year that has been. My thoughts go to the many ways in which I was blessed, the amazing people I met and spent time with, the world events which we had no control over, the ways in which I spent my time and the ways in which I wasted my time, the many things which I could finish and all the things I couldn’t complete.

In my January newsletter I wrote: *“For me it is both fascinating and daunting that God our Father has already written in detail all the volumes of the book that He has written of each one of us. He is wanting us to discover it with a full understanding of the substance and to have the peace of*

knowing that we are living in accordance with His will during every minute of our earthly lives. With this uncertain new year lying ahead of us, we need to comprehend afresh from God what He has written in the 2022 volume of the book that He has written about us”

When writing that newsletter, none of us could have predicted the war in the Ukraine, that Queen Elizabeth II would pass away and the UK will have three Prime ministers in one year, that US inflation would rise to a 41-year high, that Sri Lanka would suffer an unprecedented economic crisis, that the former Japanese Prime minister Shinzo Abe would be assassinated in broad daylight or that Roe v Wade would be overturned by the US Supreme court. No one could have imagined the damage that Hurricane Ian would cause in Florida, that thousands of people would die in the heatwaves and droughts in Europe or that Pakistan would suffer a series of devastating floods.

We also could not have known what would happen on a personal level. Events which brought great joy or great sadness - losing loved ones, new family members being born, getting a new job, or losing an existing one, health difficulties, emotional challenges, and family problems. In extreme cases our Christian brothers and sisters were martyred, imprisoned, or had to flee for their lives in this year.

Can we really say that, although we now know what God had written in the 2022 volume of the book that He has written about us, that we appreciate and understand it? Do we resent what happened to us in 2022 or do we embrace and appreciate it even if it was painful and challenging?

In Isaiah 55 we first read the invitation to those who are thirsty to come to the waters, those who have no money to come, buy, and eat. Isaiah goes on to say that God will make an everlasting covenant with us, and encourages us to seek the Lord while He may be found and call on Him while He is near. For me a covenant with God speaks of an eternal guarantee that He is forever there if we want to find him and call on Him. He does not go missing in our times of distress, loss, disappointment, or pain.

He then says that God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts and His ways higher than our ways. My understanding is that God knows that we will not always comprehend or be pleased about His thoughts or His ways, but that He wants us to trust Him with both the processes we are going through and the outcomes. He says that the word that goes out from His mouth will not return to Him empty but will accomplish what He desires and achieve the purpose for which He sent it.

May you take courage at the end of this year that, even if you struggle to comprehend or appreciate what has happened in your life, you will rest in knowledge that God's word for your life will not return to Him before it has accomplished what He desires and wants to achieve.

I wish you and your families a blessed and peaceful Christmas season.

Warmly in Christ



Teresa Conradie

President and CEO, Advocates International



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