

JANUARY 2023

‘And they overcame and conquered him (the great dragon, Satan, the serpent) because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, for they did not love their life and renounce their faith even when faced with death’

Revelation 12:11

Dear Friends,

We were blown away by the measure of your generosity during the 2022 yearend giving! Your financial contributions serve as great source of encouragement to us, and we cannot thank you enough! The Board and I undertake to do everything within our ability to apply your gifts in a faithful manner which will serve God’s Kingdom agenda for Advocate International. Please pray for us for wisdom and discernment as we do this.

I write this newsletter to you from the shores of the beautiful Lake Victoria in Uganda. My husband Deon, and I are here to celebrate the wedding of Benezieri, the eldest son of our dear friends, Justice Mike and Prof Monica Chibita. The Chibitas and Conradies have been friends for the past 23 years since meeting each other at the very first Advocates Africa conference in Hekpoort in South Africa in 1999. What a blessing the Chibitas have been to us – bringing children up together, celebrating successes, praying fervently for each other, and mourning the loss of one another’s loved ones. Our lives would indeed have been much poorer had it not been for the many friends we have met through the AI network over the years! I would like to encourage our younger generation of advocates to cherish and nourish your friendships with other Christian lawyers across the globe.

In what feels like a blink of an eye, we again stand at the beginning of a new year. My prayer for you and your family is that you will experience God’s love, joy, peace, provision and grace every day of 2023! I look forward to journeying alongside you in the next 12 months.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon from 604-561 B.C., is one of the most infamous rulers recorded in Scripture who did much harm to God’s people. He acquired his infamy by overthrowing the nation of Judah, destroying and plundering the temple and carrying thousands of Jews into captivity in Babylon. By plundering the temple Nebuchadnezzar wanted to demonstrate his belief that his gods are superior to the God of Israel.

The Babylonians put strong pressure on the young Jewish captives to break with their old religion and culture. In the book of Daniel, the whole narrative in relates *a series of contests* between false gods of human invention and the one true sovereign Lord and Creator of heaven and earth.

They began by giving the young men Babylonian names (containing names of Babylonian gods) to replace their Hebrew names (which contained the name of the Hebrews’ God). Again, and again Daniel and his friends’ loyalty to God is put to the test by the rulers and authorities of Babylon. The first challenge is described in the first chapter of the book of Daniel. Daniel and his friends refused to eat and drink anything that would defile them (Daniel 1:8, 11-12). The food initially given to them to eat may have been unclean or filled with fat, making them unfit for someone who obeys God’s laws. We know that Daniel and his friends overcame through the favor of God. The other challenges that followed include the interpretation of dreams (chapters 2 and 4), the golden image and fiery furnace (chapter 3) and the handwriting on the wall (chapter 5). In every case, the servants of God prevailed over kings, idol-worshippers, and magicians while being able to demonstrate their God’s superiority.

Through this series of trials of their faith, Daniel and his friends remained loyal to the true God leaving a legacy of faithful obedience to God despite the grave challenges.

Across the globe there are hundreds of thousands of Daniels, Shadrachs, Meshachs, Abed-Negos – Christians who want to live and prosper in their countries and contribute to the wellbeing of their homelands. Their governments are though hostile and oppose their religion, wanting to demonstrate that the reigning religion in the country is superior to Christianity. At risk of their lives, they are required to “bow before the golden image”. Like Daniel and his friends, these Christians, as well as the missionaries in these countries, have been selected by God by His own hand to fulfill a Kingdom purpose right where they are. The missionaries would have left the safety and comfort of their own countries to bring the gospel to others.

We read in the book of Revelation that these ones will overcome and conquer Satan “*because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, for they did not love their life and renounce their faith even when faced with death*” While this is certain, it does not mean that we as Christian lawyers can just be indifferent and go about our daily lives in a routine fashion. Sam Ericsson used to say that **we are the ones to build the guardrails** so that these Christians will not be arrested, killed, deported, kidnapped, humiliated, disenfranchised or separated from their loved ones.

Sometimes there is no other way than to evacuate Christians from where they are in danger. The ideal though is that Christians should be kept safe in their own countries not only to be able to be a witness but also to contribute to the wellbeing and prosperity of the countries they live in.

This year we are thus launching **THE DANIEL PROJECT**. In partnership with other organisations working in the persecuted church arena, we want to design a strategy to have our advocates across the globe **be a network of guardians for missionaries and persecuted Christians**.

We accordingly need to identify those in our network who are prepared to be such a guardian, for them to get to know the missionaries and persecuted Christians in their countries, be familiar with immigration laws, religious laws, family law etc. to ensure that they can be on “speed dial” when their services are needed.

As a first step to achieve this, we are working with Regent and Liberty Universities’ Law Schools to put together reliable information about the status of religious freedom in all the countries in the world. We are liaising with the other members of the Religious Liberty Partnership to be able to prioritize those countries on which we should focus first. The first prize is of course to influence legislation in these countries for the laws to protect religious minorities. In some instances it might be necessary for us to use the international human rights bodies and tribunals to achieve this.

We covet your prayers for this very ambitious project. Kindly let me know if you would like to be involved in whatever manner.

Warmly in Christ



Teresa Conradie

President and CEO, Advocates International



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