

FEBRUARY 2023

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; ² for He founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.

Ps 24: 1-2 (NIV)

Dear Friends,

In the blink of an eye, we are in the second month of the year! Thank you again for your kind financial contributions which we received in this past month – we remain deeply appreciative of your generosity.

For a nonprofit organization to be successful, it not only needs strong and dedicated leaders but also volunteers who give selflessly of their time. I write to you from a remote part of the Kruger National Park in South Africa where my husband Deon and I are hosting Gary and Elaine Homberg. The Homberg's have been faithful volunteers with Advocates International since Sam Ericsson founded Advocates in 1991. Gary and Elaine are my hosts whenever I am in Virginia – my home away from home! Deon asked them how many AI people they have hosted in their home in the past thirty years. Because their guests have been so many, they could not tell us a number but could tell some good stories about some of them.

Most of our volunteers are from Immanuel Bible Church – the church which Sam attended at the time AI was founded. Like the Hombergs, they have assisted with AI convocations, took care of transporting and hosting guests, and did whatever else needed to be done. Some of our volunteers joined us in later years. Other than Gary and Elaine, the volunteers who are responsible for folding and mailing our newsletter are – Ben and Carol Cantrell, Milly Woleslagle, Rosie Reilly, Katherine Hogye, Bill and Addie Law, Carol Curran, Ruth Nieboer, Carlos and Sylvia Alvaro and Maggie Cates. I always stand amazed that these people, most of them highly qualified and during their careers held esteemed positions, are prepared to assist us with such a menial task – it tells you everything about their humility and servant hearts! Our faithful, never-complaining volunteer accountant is Alan Waldron. His skill and experience are a great measure of comfort for me as far as our accounting goes – we simply cannot do without Alan!

The free pizza which we serve to our volunteers once a month can never express our appreciation for their time, passion, and loyalty. Please thank God with me for them and please remember to keep them in your prayers.

In my January newsletter I wrote about the Daniel project, an initiative which we are launching to raise up a network of our advocates who will act as guardians for missionaries and Christians who are persecuted or are at risk. Little did I know that one of these guardians himself will be attacked by armed terrorists in Pakistan during January. He has been receiving severe threats over the course of the past two years. For his safety,

we cannot mention his name, but he writes: *“The bullets didn’t touch me – two missed and one shot went into the wall before the gun jammed”* We praise God for keeping him safe and salute him for his courage and determination to stand by his faith whilst also protecting others. Let us not neglect these brothers and sisters in prayer while we have the luxury of being able to worship God without any threat of persecution.

Many of you know Bobby Ericsson, the widow of our founder Sam Ericsson. I recently wrote that I visited Bobby in Texas in October last year. I was so blessed to see her and was inspired by her positive attitude to life despite being severely impacted by Parkinson’s. We have established a CaringBridge page for Bobby. CaringBridge is a platform in which one can stay connected with family and friends during a health journey. Bobby and Sam’s daughter, Monica Welsh, will update the page from time to time to keep us updated on how Bobby is doing. Bobby’s site will be accessible from February 10, 2023. I am sure Bobby will appreciate to hear from you.

In the beginning of January, I had the joy of meeting in Kampala with Chairlady Anne Muhairwe and her board of the Uganda Christian Lawyers Fellowship. We had a wonderful time together and kicked off the planning for the Advocates Africa conference which will be held in Uganda from August 9 – 13. Please save these dates – the website for the conference will be up and running shortly.

Often, when I face challenges, I wish that I had God’s perspective on what is happening. Then I must remind myself that this is what faith is about – trusting God without knowing the beginning from the end. What I find extremely comforting in the times we live in is that Scriptures tell us that *“the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world and all who live in it”* (Ps 24:1-2). Not only did He create everything but everything belongs to Him and He takes care of all of creation and those who live in it.

We also have the promise that: *“But the time is coming when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea”* (Habakkuk 2:14)

Until such time, let us be devoted to that aim with our time, talent, and treasure to advance what God is doing on earth.

Warmly in Christ



Teresa Conradie

President and CEO, Advocates International



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