

APRIL 2023

“Guide me, O my great Redeemer, pilgrim through this barren land; I am weak, but you are mighty; hold me with your powerful hand.

***Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through.
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer, ever be my strength and shield,***

***When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of deaths, and hell’s destruction, Land me safe on Canaan’s side.”***

(Extracts from Hymn 127, Methodist Hymnal)

Dear Friends,

We thank you from the depth of our hearts for your prayers and financial contributions to Advocates International. We are grateful for every amount which we receive, both big and small!

When we as lawyers confess to be Christians, our conduct is put under the microscope, and we must meet even a higher standard than other lawyers need to. We recently learnt with great sadness of the passing of the Honorable Justice Kenneth Kakuru, of the Court of Appeal / Constitutional Court of Uganda. I met Justice Kakuru for the first time in 1999 in Hekpoort in South Africa at the very first Advocates Africa meeting. He was then an advocate in private practice and a pioneer and trailblazer for environmental law and human rights in Uganda and on the African continent.

I fondly remember his big smile and passionate commitment to the environment and natural heritage in Africa – at the time, he was challenging an intended construction of a dam wall close to the Bujagali Falls in the river Nile. Before he was appointed to the bench in 2013, he was a director of Greenwatch, an environmental rights advocacy NGO and an Associate Professor at the Grotius School of Law at the Uganda Pentecostal University.

I was privileged to watch online the special session of the Ugandan Court of Appeal to honor Justice Kakuru. Every eulogy contained words such as *“meritorious and distinguished service, dedication, humility, impeccable record, integrity, discipline, a backlog fighter in the courts, 100% attention to decisions which were delivered on time, both fiercely independent and fully accountable”*. Our sincere condolences go to his wife Charity, his children, friends, and colleagues. Justice Kakuru set a standard for all Christian lawyers of how to serve with excellence and commitment - we honor his memory!

At the end of February, I was privileged to be invited to a Religious Freedom and Rule of Law conference for Southern Africa in Cape Town, South Africa. This inaugural conference was jointly presented by the Institute for Global Engagement and Freedom of Religion South Africa. Participants included government officials, religious leaders, and academics. The program focused on how good governance and sustainable peace can be built in a multifaith and multiethnic context. It was a remarkable conference with speakers from across Southern Africa, China, the US, Singapore, Indonesia, and Taiwan.

At the conference, I was delighted to at last meet Justice Rollin van Broekhoven, a retired US Federal judge who now teaches in law schools in China. I got to know of Judge Rollin through our board member Tim Klenk who was his roommate at university and our former board member, Matt Bristol who was a classmate of his. We were expecting a very academic lecture from Judge

Rollin on the concept of the Rule of Law. Instead, he asked the audience at the beginning of his presentation, why we thought that he, at his advanced age, was still traveling the world and teaching. In reply to his own question, we were deeply touched when he played the beautiful hymn “I the Lord of sea and sky”. The chorus goes “Here I am Lord, Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go Lord if you lead me. I will hold Your people in my heart.”

I am looking forward to visiting Nepal and India this month. In Nepal, I will be attending the Religious Liberty Partnership Consultation. The consultation is a unique platform which brings CEO’s and other key leaders together to discuss key issues of religious liberty and explore ways of working together. I shared something of our Daniel Project with you before. I am looking forward to discussing the different aspects of the project with other leaders and talk about possible collaboration. While I am in Kathmandu, I will be meeting with several members of Advocates Nepal – I am excited to be meeting these amazing men and women who have been faithfully serving God and not giving up on achieving full religious freedom for all in their country.

In India I am hoping to meet as many of our advocates as possible. Although the Indian constitution provides for freedom of conscience and religion, we know that the members of minority religions consistently face severe challenges in being able to freely profess and practice their religion. I am hoping that I would be able to encourage our brave advocates in India – please pray with me for divine appointments.

My single most favorite hymn is “Guide me O, my great Redeemer.” It was composed in 1745 by William Williams (1717-1791). According to historians, Williams wanted to become a medical doctor before his conversion in 1738 when he heard a sermon by the revivalist preacher Howell Harris, a fiery Welsh layman who had been influenced by the Methodist movement in England. It was through this sermon that Williams discerned his calling to go into the ministry and went on to become a traveling minister and the most famous hymn writer of Welsh Methodism. In this hymn, Williams interweaves the events described in Exodus with the struggles he himself had been experiencing as a pilgrim in his own ministry. For the past 278 years this hymn has brought comfort to thousands upon thousands of Christians reminding us that God provides for us in every one of our needs:

When we are weak, God is mighty and holds us in His powerful hand. He provides “Bread of heaven” in the barren land. He gives streams of provision and healing and leads us both day and night with a “fire and cloudy pillar”. He remains our only Deliverer, our strength and shield against any attack. From the beginning of our lives to when we “tread the verge of Jordan” he lets our anxious fears subside – even our fears of “death and hell’s destruction”.

My prayer for you and for myself as we face challenges of many kinds, is that we will remember that the great Redeemer holds us in His powerful hand and will “land us safe on Canaan’s side”.

Warmly in Christ



Teresa Conradie

President and CEO, Advocates International



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