

MARCH 2024

***“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isaiah 6:8)***

Dear Friends,

We were blessed with some very generous donations in February for which we are genuinely grateful! We are equally appreciative of those gifts which are not given from a place of abundance and surplus but from limited means. In both instances, we cherish your wish that your gifts will be used wisely to advance the mission of Advocates International. Our network remains our greatest treasure – amongst others, your financial support enables me to travel and meet with our advocates across the globe to encourage them not to give up and inspire them to do justice with compassion right where they are.

Some of you might have noticed from our correspondence in the past two months that we moved our offices from University Drive to a new office a few minutes away at **3900 Jermantown Road, Suite 300, Fairfax, VA 22030**. They are beautiful offices and although they remain small and compact, there is a bit more room to seat three people and provides more storage space for us.

As an alternative to mailing to our physical address, we have also acquired a post box - **PO BOX 3405, Fairfax VA 22038-3405**.

If you donate to Advocates International through a **donor advised fund**, we would appreciate it sincerely if you could **please inform the fund of our change of address**.

In Isaiah 6 we read about Isaiah’s commission. According to this account he “saw” God and was overwhelmed by His divine glory and holiness. Isaiah became agonizingly aware of God’s need for a messenger to the people of Israel, and, despite his own sense of inadequacy, he offered himself for God’s service: **“Here am I! Send me.”** It was no light undertaking; he was to condemn his own people and watch the nation crumble and perish. Isaiah was only too aware that, coming with such a message, he would experience bitter opposition, willful disbelief, and ridicule which he would need to withstand and for which he would have to be inwardly fortified. Across the globe God is raising up His faithful, those who have counted the cost and are still prepared to be available to fulfil God’s purposes.

In the next few months, I would like to introduce you to some of our advocates who have answered God’s call and declared: **“Here am I. Send me!”**

The persecution of Christians in Sudan has been and continues to be some of the worst in the world! Despite their independence from the Muslim controlled Sudan, life remains tough for the people of **South Sudan**. Two and a half years after independence in 2013, South Sudan descended into a brutal civil war. The country’s elite and ruling class seem to be managing well but for ordinary civilians, much of the past decade has been marked by brutally violent conflict and on-going human rights violations! Others, including tens of thousands of internally displaced persons and millions of refugees who are still unable to return home, have very little to be optimistic about. The civil war between the two rival factions of the military government in Sudan has destabilized the region and continues to adversely affect the people of South Sudan.

After not ever having any South Sudan delegates at an Advocates Africa conference, I wrote in my August 2023 newsletter how overjoyed we were when Rose Jackson and Waiwai Gabriel

Marx from the South Sudan managed to attend the AA conference held in Uganda in July 2023! Gabriel and Rose returned home and with eight other Christian lawyers, established the **South Sudan Christian Lawyers' Fraternity (SSCLF)**!

Despite being the youngest fellowship in Africa, they are going from strength to strength. Monthly fellowships are being held for advocates and weekly fellowships for Christian law students. University fellowships are now being established at the University of Juba School of Law, the Bishop Gwynne University, and the Starford University. In addition, the SSCLF is intending to begin a legal aid program.

South Sudan is surrounded by countries where persecution of Christians is extreme. SSCLF can be the beachhead from where initiatives to represent the persecuted in the region can be launched. It is therefore imperative that we do everything in our ability to not only pray for our South Sudanese advocates but support them in practical ways. SSCLF recently expressed a need for guidance and mentorship for the fellowship and specifically for materials and study guides for their students. **Please let me know if you can assist the SSCLF in any way.**

The Daniel Project is growing in leaps and bounds! The Board of Advocates Africa designated two of its members to focus on the Project – Ms. Eno Akpan from Nigeria and Mr Mesfin Addis Sumamo from Ethiopia. Eno and Mesfin, together with past AA President Sunny Akani of Nigeria and current President Kimathi Kamencu now form the core group with me to direct the Daniel Project.

One of the first initiatives was to establish a **WhatsApp group in Africa** with all those advocates who want to be trained and make themselves available to represent the persecuted. The WA group is used to identify and verify instances of religious persecution and to ensure that an advocate is made available for the victims as soon as possible. The WA group continues to grow and amongst many others, include 56 Nigerian Christian lawyers who have committed themselves to the Project.

We were recently hugely encouraged with evidence of the first results of the Project! Since he converted from Islam, Evangelist M* has been preaching Christianity to rural communities in Central Nigeria. In the middle of February, through the WA group, we became aware that he had been arrested on false charges of conspiracy and murder - it was unclear where he was being held. Within days, in collaboration with some of our partners, it was not only possible to find where M* was being held but get him released on bail and taken to a safe location. Our advocates in Nigeria will represent him in his upcoming case and will support his wife and family.

God asks every one of us: *"Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"*. While God does not require everyone to serve in the trenches in far flung corners of the earth, He still requires of each one of us to respond to that question and make ourselves available for His commission for us. I pray for His grace that we can all discover His purpose for us in His Kingdom and step into it.

Warmly in Christ



Teresa Conradie - President and CEO, Advocates International



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