

MAY 2024

“Then he said to me, “This [continuous supply of oil to the lampstand] is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel [prince of Judah], saying, ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit [of whom the oil is a symbol],’ says the LORD of hosts.”
(Zechariah 4:6)

Dear Friends,

In these past weeks, I have had telephone conversations with several of our regular donors expressing our gratitude for their faithful support. While many other non-profit organizations have other streams of revenue, **Advocates International is entirely reliant on donations.** There is a common notion that all lawyers are wealthy and can fund themselves, but this is not true for most of our international advocates in the trenches. **Not only do many of them act pro bono on behalf of most of their clients, but they must personally fund expenses** such as travel and accommodation to attend cases and the making of copies and paying for transcriptions of records.

Whenever you read about the cases our advocates are involved in, I want to ask you please to **prayerfully consider making an automatic monthly donation.** Recurring donations allow us to budget properly and know that we can sustain the work we do globally. **You could either use the QR code at the bottom of this letter or donate through our website.** Thank you in advance for your generosity – it is an immense encouragement to those who are fighting on the front lines!

- **My most important news is the relaunch of our social media!** We're thrilled to unveil our latest initiative aimed at breathing new life into our social media presence, ushering in a dynamic era of digital communication. Guided by the expertise of our internal communications team, we're embarking on a journey to propel our vision and mission into the hearts and minds of a younger audience. **We invite you to join us on this exciting venture and show your support by following us on Instagram, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, and Facebook.** By doing so, you'll stay updated with the latest news, insights, and network-related information. For added convenience, our Instagram bio serves as a gateway to all our social media platforms and directs you seamlessly to our database and website. Let's connect, engage, and inspire together! **Be sure to follow us on:**

Instagram: @advocatesinternational
(<https://www.instagram.com/advocatesinternational/>)

Facebook: Advocates International
<https://www.facebook.com/DoingJusticewithCompassion?mibextid=rS40aB7S9Ucbxw6v>

LinkedIn: Advocates International
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/advocates-international>

X: @advocatesintl
<https://twitter.com/advocatesintl>

Other news:

- While I was in **Rome, Italy**, at the end of March, I had the wonderful opportunity to meet with two Christian lawyers, **Elisabetta Scomazzon** and **Maria Giovanna Rigatelli**. Other than enjoying their wonderful company and a delicious lunch of authentic Italian food, I was encouraged to hear about what their group, consisting of professionals from different disciplines, was doing to promote family values and justice in Italy.
- **Christ und Jurist Österreich held their inaugural gathering at a conference which took place from April 12-14 in Vienna, Austria.** Geraldine Marzak-Lopez reported that there were 29 participants and that the feedback they received from those attending was very encouraging! We welcome the

Austrian Fellowship into our family and pray that God's Kingdom agenda will be advanced greatly in Western Europe because of their efforts!

- In April, I attended the **Religious Liberty Partnership Consultation in Toronto, Canada**. It was once again an invaluable opportunity to meet with leaders of other organizations in the religious liberty space. Amongst others, there were excellent presentations on **global trends in religious freedom, secularism, and the changing landscape of religious freedom in Canada and the USA**. In the fast-changing world of digitization, the talks on **artificial intelligence and cybersecurity** served as a sobering reminder that the enemies of God use information shared digitally to further expose the persecuted. We were given examples of how irresponsible use of social media had led to the persecution and ultimate death of some Christians. **We regularly consider our protocols and policies to ensure that we do not expose our advocates or their clients to unnecessary risk in our communications.**
- **Deborah Audu, a 16-year-old girl from a remote village in Kaduna State, northwestern Nigeria was a Sunday School teacher before she got abducted and forcefully married to a Muslim man.** Deborah's parents are peasant farmers, and her church has only meagre financial means. Our brother, Sunny Akanni Esq has taken on the case pro bono. This is only one of the tens of religious persecution cases Sunny's law firm handles pro bono. Deborah's case has now been moved to another jurisdiction which means that Sunny and his colleagues must travel and stay over to represent her. Sunny writes: *"We kindly request you to solicit on behalf of Deborah **some financial assistance to help us pursue her case in court to regain her freedom and faith** since the police do not seem interested as a result of the predominance of Islam in the area."*

In my 37-year career as an attorney in private practice, I was part of several religious liberty cases, some of which were ultimately decided in the Constitutional Court of South Africa. **I distinctly remember how many times we felt completely overwhelmed by the magnitude of a case, humanly speaking, with all the odds against us!** I can only begin to imagine how intimidated a Christian lawyer must feel in a country where Islam or Hindu Nationalism is predominant.

In Zechariah 4 we read that Zechariah sees the vision of a golden lampstand with a bowl of oil on top of it and **two olive trees on either side of the bowl, continuously supplying the bowl with oil**. When he asked the angel what the trees represented, the angel said that the continuous supply of oil is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit (of whom the oil is a symbol) says the Lord of Hosts."

I imagine our advocates worldwide representing the voiceless and persecuted, covered from both sides with a continuous supply of the word of the Lord and not applying might or power but the wisdom, grace, favor, and discernment of the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts!

Warmly in Christ



Teresa Conradie - President and CEO, Advocates International

PS: Don't forget that Advocates accepts **gifts of stocks** through Fidelity Investments, DTC#: 0226; AI account #: Z44881848. All financial gifts are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated.