

JUNE 2024

“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.” (Romans 13:1 NIV)

Dear Friends,

From the depth of our hearts, we thank you for your faithful giving! We are especially grateful to each one of you who responded to our request to install a recurring monthly donation to Advocates International. Our donors continue to play an irreplaceable part in combatting persecution and injustice globally. We have made it as easy as possible for you to give – **either by using the QR code at the bottom of this letter or by donating through our website.**

- Over the past 33 years Advocates International has been blessed by the support of thousands of people. As time went by, the contact details of many of these have changed. **During June we will be launching a huge drive to reconnect with these precious folks.** Our faithful volunteers will be assisting us in calling those on our database, not only confirming their contact details but, more importantly, hearing from them how we could pray for them. There are 5 600 telephone calls to be made over the next few months! If you live in Northern Virginia and would like to assist us with this effort, kindly contact our office manager, Ligia Vallejo on 571.319.0100 or send her an e-mail on lvallejo@advocatesinternational.org.
- While I was in the US recently, **I had the opportunity to speak at two Adult Bible Fellowship (ABF) meetings of Immanuel Bible Church in Springfield, Virginia.** At the Faith and Culture ABF I was hosted by Bill Horn and at the Ambassadors ABF by Barry Oxford. Both Bill and Barry have known Advocates International since Sam Ericsson founded it in 1991 and joining them in these meetings was a great encouragement to me. Those who attended the meetings were moved by the stories of Christians in Africa facing severe persecution and how our attorneys are working tirelessly in the Daniel Project to represent the persecuted and are advocating to achieve religious freedom. Several people asked to be included in our mailing list while others have offered their services as volunteers.
- **Christian Daily International (CDI)**, which was launched in December 2023, was the vision of a group of Christian people who are committed to professional journalism that is full of grace and truth. It is a daily online international Christian newspaper which strives to capture news globally and help people of faith to interpret the world from Christian perspectives (www.christiandaily.com). Our communications team recently met online with the leadership of CDI, which included the Executive Editor, Rev. Timothy Goropevsek, Gordon Showell-Rogers and the legendary Jeff Sellers, who is also editor of Morning Star News. We explored several opportunities to collaborate. CDI would want the assistance of the lawyers in our network to verify the accuracy of news. They are also asking for news stories and in-depth articles from our network. We believe that this opportunity can greatly assist us in creating awareness of the plight of those suffering injustice and persecution and will also promote the valuable work our lawyers are doing.

Finally, CDI would like to identify and train Christian journalists – I am sure there are many budding journalists in our ranks who would like to be trained. **Please let us know if you want us to put you in contact with CDI.**

Commentators have called 2024 “the ultimate election year” with voters in at least 64 countries heading to the polls this year. The lives of 49% of the population of the world will be determined by the outcome of these elections in their countries this year. In many instances these are make-or-break elections which will shape the destiny of several democracies. In some of these countries religious nationalism has been an explicit guiding force behind governance, often to the detriment of religious minorities. The outcome of the elections in these countries can often mean life or death, imprisonment or freedom to Christian believers.

As I am writing to you, it is a day before we go to the polls in South Africa. Many regard these elections as the most significant since 1994 when Nelson Mandela became our president. Over the past 30 years many people believe that the miracle of 1994 has slipped through our fingers. *“The threatened miracle of South Africa’s democracy”* is a video worth watching on YouTube. It reminds us of the complexity, pain and beauty of what happened in South Africa in the run-up to the miraculous 1994 elections and cautions us against what happens when greed and corruption sets in, and the electorate becomes indifferent.

As believers we often fail to understand how it can be possible that *“the authorities that exist have been established by God.”* Our disillusionment and dissatisfaction with our elected leaders wrestle with the knowledge that God reigns sovereignly over our lives and over the destiny of our nations. Asking that God’s Kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven, is indeed a politically loaded prayer!

God is interested in politics and elections, and He calls on us to be as well. Firstly, He wants us to pray for peaceful, free and fair elections where voters are allowed to cast their ballots without interference or intimidation. We need to pray for the election of righteous leaders who care for the people irrespective of their own faith convictions. Once our leaders have been elected, God wants us to commit them to Him in prayer and fasting (Acts 14:23) – also for our own sake. Paul writes in 1 Tim 2:1-2: *“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.”*

Secondly, He wants us to participate. To be able to vote is a privilege many around the globe do not enjoy. Voting is part of our stewardship responsibility, using the resources we have been gifted with in a way that honors God. Not voting is just another kind of voting as it will influence the outcome of an election. Like a grain of salt makes a difference, our votes do as well (Matt 5:13). Voting is a significant way to obey God’s command to seek the good around us and the good of our nations - Jeremiah 29:7, *“Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”*

Let us not be indifferent or lazy in 2024 in our participation in elections and in praying and fasting for elections across the globe! May God hear our prayers and raise up wise, righteous and compassionate leaders across the globe this year.

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Warmly in Christ



Teresa Conradie - President and CEO, Advocates International

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