

# ADVOCATES

INTERNATIONAL®

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JANUARY 2013

**“Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.” Lamentations 3:21-22**

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! Another encouraging year is behind us, an encouraging year lies ahead. We are so grateful for the prayers and financial gifts of so many that will allow us to move forward in 2013 with great hope.

## **Hopes and Challenges**

2012 was a year full of new hopes with the addition of five new fellowships: Advocates Barbados, Advocates Guyana, Advocates British Virgin Islands, Indonesia Christian Legal Society, and the Association of Mozambican Christian Lawyers. Welcome aboard to all of our colleagues. We can’t wait to see how many more fellowships will join the AI network in 2013.

However, 2012 was also a year with many challenges. Christians in many countries face increased persecution, including: church bombings in Nigeria by Boko Haram; false blasphemy charges in Pakistan, too often resulting in interminable jail sentences when accusers fail to appear in court and judges refuse to throw out bogus cases; a rise in persecution throughout the Middle East as the “Arab Spring” revealed an uprising of radical Muslim governance.

## **Answered Prayers**

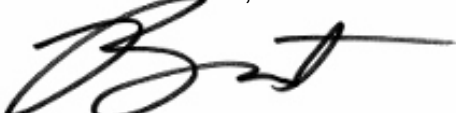
Thankfully, we serve a mighty God who is still on His throne, and a heavenly Father who hears and answers our prayers. As you may recall, after ten years of prayers and efforts, our friends from Cuba were finally able to join us in the USA for the first time. An increasing number of younger Christian attorneys are stepping into leadership roles. And after 20 years of building relationships and training judges, God is still moving in Albania. Included with the back of this letter is a report from AI board member, Roger Sherrard, highlighting his December visit. Also enclosed are Roger’s remarks to the Judicial Conference. Please continue to keep Albania in your prayers.

And please continue to join with us each day as we pray for each Advocates region. This month’s enclosed Prayer Calendar includes the 2013 goals and special needs from each region.

Thanks again for all your prayers and continued financial support. We couldn’t do what we do without your involvement. You and your family remain in our prayers and we wish you a blessed and hope-filled 2013.

May the Lord bless and keep you in His perfect . . .

Grace and Peace,



Brent McBurney  
President and CEO

*Doing Justice with Compassion*

**Memorandum to: Brent McBurney, President, Advocates International**  
**From: Roger Sherrard**  
**Re: Albanian Judicial Conference**  
**Date: December 20, 2012**

1. Judge Paul Magnuson and I were in Albania last week for the annual Judicial Conference. It was another exciting time. The Conference itself was a celebration for the Judiciary because it has taken Parliament over two years to pass a law implementing the Constitution and funding the Conference.
2. We were excited to see the attitude of the Judges. The focal point of the conference was to elect Judges to the High Council of Justice, which oversees selection, assignment, evaluation and discipline of the Judges. Each of the candidates spoke positively about improving the Judiciary and selecting judges based on merit and character. The most encouraging sign was the younger judges. They indicated a mature and professional attitude. Those we met and those who addressed the Conference were oriented toward eliminating corruption and being stronger advocates for an independent judiciary. In the past, judges have had to concentrate on basic survival - getting budgets passed with bare bones funding. It was a far cry from 1992 when the Chief Justice said that his greatest need was paper on which to write decisions.
3. The proverbial elephant in the room is corruption. While we know there are many honest judges, there are some who are not and others regularly face pressures from politicians who believe they can have ex parte access to judges and put political pressure on them. Every candidate for the High Council emphasized the need to deal with this problem.
4. At a Supreme Court dinner the Justices reminded us of their thanks for all our support for them over the past 20 years, symbolized by the robes we presented them in 1994. (You may recall that the then Chief Justice Brozi advised the Judges of Albania that if they attended the Conference, we would present them with judicial robes. We had no budget for robes to give to 300 judges. So when Charlie Wiggins, called to say he had found 30 black choir robes while cleaning at his Mother's church, we put out an "all points" notice for the team to canvas churches. We ended up with over 200 robes, but were 92 short, until the last day of the conference when exactly 92 robes arrived in a package from an unknown source.) So, to add a little levity to the dinner last week I advised them that we had a confession to make: the robes we had given them were used and came without a warranty. They responded that the warranty was not needed because the robes are still going strong.
5. For several months it has seemed appropriate to consider a book similar to our Federalist Papers explaining specific provisions of the Albanian Constitution. Experts in specific areas will write/edit chapters on their areas of expertise. While there last week we had two meetings with lawyers, judges, and constitutional law professors. The more we discussed this project, the more others saw the need for such a work. We hope to announce the project at Law Day, May 10, 2013.
6. On our last day we had breakfast with a fine young lawyer who was recently appointed to a high position in the government. He reported that during the selection process, while being interviewed, he told one of the country's leaders that the most valuable thing he had was his good name and that he would not compromise it to carry out partisan objectives. Our friend got the job. After I recited the Proverb that a good name is more valuable than gold or silver, another, older Albanian lawyer said, "rubies too!" The young people with whom we are working, are now moving into positions of influence. We need to pray for them. That God will give them wisdom and keep them strong, like Daniel.
7. Thank you for your support and encouragement. It is an honor to see the Lord's hand working in Albania.

Your brother in Christ,  
Roger Sherrard  
Attorney at Law

**REMARKS BEFORE THE NATIONAL JUDICIAL CONFERENCE**  
**December 13 and 14, 2012**  
**Tirana, Albania**  
**by Roger D. Sherrard, Esq.**

Madam Chief Justice, Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, Ministers, Ambassadors, and most importantly my friends, the judges of Albania. You and Albania have traveled a long way since the events of 1991 and my first visit here in 1992. That year the Vice President and Speaker of the Assembly Peter Arbtori stated that the West was setting a banquet table before Albania but its people did not know what foods to eat or in what order to eat them. Twenty years later we should ask how far we have come.

We have seen significant progress in not only the judicial facilities but the work of judges to be better to give quality decisions to citizens. I would encourage every person here to visit the Tirana Court of Appeals to see first-hand the progress being made on several fronts to improve the judiciary. I give high marks to Judge Malaj and the judges on that court for the improvements they have made and are continuing to make to improve their effectiveness. You have come a long way and have laid a foundation for I have always believed you can achieve - having a highly professional judiciary which provides just and fair decisions to its people.

BUT as we all know, there is another reality, the proverbial elephant in the room. On the flight from the U.S., I sat next to an Albanian who has become a U.S. citizen returning to visit his family. When he found out the purpose of my visit, quite frankly it hurt to hear the lack of confidence he has in the judiciary. I believe his criticisms, which we have all heard, are exaggerated, but when I see surveys or hear complaints from other citizens the difficult truth is that while there have been many improvements in the judicial system, public distrust of the judiciary is your greatest challenge and undermines everything you do. Many in the judiciary as well as the lawyers you see every day want to end the corruption but are discouraged and afraid to act. Many forget that corruption takes on many faces and often involves a skillful use of fear and threats, often implied, by those who seek to subvert the judiciary and its independence. Because a strong and independent judiciary is the cornerstone of a healthy democracy, we should consider ways to strengthen the judiciary and protect it from those who prefer otherwise.

The men and women in this room have the skill, expertise and ability to change this public perception and to give Albania a strong, professional and independent judiciary. It is time.

It is time to overcome your fears, discouragement, and no longer tolerate acts of corruption when you see or suspect them. It is time to join with your colleagues, friends, politicians and family to make commitments that you will no longer tolerate activities

which undermine the judiciary. It is time to be strong and courageous and for the country to tell your leaders, in and out of the judiciary, that you. While there are many fine proposals and recommendations to strengthen and improve the Albanian Judiciary, until you commit to this idea, you will not see real progress. But if you do, you will find many who have not bowed knee to these practices who will come to your side and be encouraged.

If you want more details, read my speech given a year ago and on the 20th anniversary of the constitutional court last June.

In 1993, I had the privilege of meeting Father Zef Pelumbi, a Franciscan priest who spent twenty-five years in prison because he would not renounce his faith. Having known that he had suffered greatly during his imprisonment, I asked him a question, “What about good and evil?” His answer was instructive of the Albanian mentality. Father Zef said, “Overcome evil with good.” Then like every other great teacher, he gave an example.

He, with other prisoners were resurfacing a roof at the top of an apartment building in Tirana during the summer. It was hot, and a guard who had been particularly mean to him climbed a ladder to bring the prisoners down from the roof at the end of the day. As the guard climbed the ladder it started to fall back from the top of the building. Father Zef was standing near the top of the ladder and every man would have understood had he not reached out to save the guard from falling four stories to his sure death, but Father Zef extended his hand and pulled the guard back to safety. He then reported that the guard was never mean to him again, and restated “overcome evil with good.”

### **Conclusions**

It is within the grasp of Albania to have a strong, effective and independent judiciary. The table that Speaker Arbënorë mentioned has been set. Albanians have enjoyed the fruits of liberty for 20 years. You now know what to eat and when to eat it. You know what needs to be done. You do have an excellent Constitution, although it may still need some “adjustments.” If you fail to act, the banquet may come to an end, and the food and fruits of liberty may spoil. But if you act to preserve for the future these hard-won fruits, then you and your children and grandchildren will thrive for generations to come. I am confident you can do this. It is time.

Dr. Sherrard has been an advisor to Albanian leaders on judicial practices. He was awarded the Medal for Special Civil Merits for introducing to Albania the best practices for its judicial system.



## PRAYER CALENDAR – JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2013

Pray with us for these key 2013 goals or events in each region

### Mondays: Advocates Africa

Please pray for the planning of the 10<sup>th</sup> **Advocates Africa Conference**, scheduled for August 6-11, to be held at the Speke Resort Munyonyo in Kampala, Uganda. The conference theme is “**Bringing Forth Justice to the Nations**” (Isaiah 42:1-4), and the conference will be co-hosted by two nations. In an effort to better encourage the French-speaking African advocates (21 countries), Rwanda’s **Lawyers of Hope** will co-host along with the **Uganda Christian Lawyer’s Fellowship**. The agenda will include numerous workshops in French translated into English. Finally, because of the tremendous success of Christian Legal Aid clinics in Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda, we also plan to re-launch the Global Resource Team on Human Rights for the Poor and Needy with workshops.

Pray for continued strengthening and encouragement of the Christian lawyer fellowships across the continent, but particularly in Malawi (re-emerging group), Mozambique (new fellowship), and Mali, Togo and Burkina Faso (board elections). Pray also for believers in Egypt (new constitution), Nigeria (terrorist attacks), Mali and Congo (civil wars), where unrest and violence are the new norm.

### Tuesdays: Advocates Asia & Oceania

Please pray for the planning of the 11<sup>th</sup> Advocates Asia Conference, scheduled for April 4-6, to be held at the SkyCity Marriott in Hong Kong, in conjunction with the “**Transforming the World Through Faith and Law**” Convocation which includes the AI Global Council and Global Resource Team Summits and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Campus Crusade for Christ International FLAG Convocation, April 6-9. Please pray especially for the large delegation from Australia that is already planning to attend the Hong Kong conference. Mark Mudri has indicated that they expect as many as 15+ advocates from Down Under who will join their colleagues from across the globe.

Please continue to pray for the growth and encouragement of new fellowships, particularly **Indonesian Christian Legal Society**, and the work of the **Rule of Law Institute of Mongolia**.

### Wednesdays: Advocates Europe

Please continue to pray for these requests from **Latcho Popov**:

- 1) Development in Western Europe networking, currently done by the German "**Christ und Jurist**" and our Board member Peter Gegenwart. Germany received details for the leadership of nine countries and neighbors in Western Europe and established contacts with some success.
- 2) Long-suffering, patience and strong standing of the countries in Eastern Europe (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Turkey) most of them with young Christian movements or persecuted churches.
- 3) Rule of Law Institute Projects for strengthening Christian virtues in Bulgaria: **a)** distribution and follow up of books and materials: “*The Peacemaker*,” a Peacemaker brochure “*49 Capacities of the Christian Character*” and the book “*When Christians Act Like Christians*”; **b)** establishing 24-hour Christian TV Broadcasting. (We located a possible sponsor and await his response); **c)** On-going work to fight corruption in Bulgaria.
- 4) May the Lord also help us with two events in 2013, namely **European Religious Liberty Forum** gathering in Istanbul and GTF-RLI AI conference in Hong Kong in April.
- 5) **Christian Concern** continues to battle same sex marriage validation in the UK.

## Thursdays: Advocates Latin America (FIAJC)

Please pray for the Spiritual Leadership Retreat scheduled for May 16-18 in Montevideo, Uruguay. This is a key event for the future of **FIAJC** and following the encouraging gathering of part of the leadership team in October at the CLS Conference, we hope to see a re-engagement by fellowships across the region. Brent McBurney and AI Board Chairman Matt Bristol plan to attend.

Please pray for the strengthening of **Advocates Brasil** and its potential partnership with YMCA which is committed to getting back to its origin as a Christian organization. Gilberto Ribeiro continues to lead there.

## Fridays: Advocates North America & Caribbean

**Christian Legal Fellowship (Canada)** – Please pray for **CLF's** new Executive Director, **Russell Browne** and **Ruth Ross'** new role as General Counsel, and the transition of leadership for both of these godly advocates. Please pray for the planning and execution of the 2013 **CLF** Law Student Conference (February in Montreal) and the **CLF** National Conference (September in Vancouver). Finally, continue to pray for the legal efforts by **CLF** as intervenor in two constitutional challenges to Canada's euthanasia laws. The cases are *Carter v. Canada* (British Columbia) and *LeBlanc v. Canada* (Quebec).

**Christian Legal Society (USA)** – Please pray for **CLS** new Executive Director David Nammo who is still in his first year at the helm. **CLS** continues to serve law students and attorneys; the poor and needy through Christian legal aid clinics; and through the legal work of the Center for Law & Religious Freedom. Challenges in each of these areas are only increasing and your prayers are cherished.

**Advocates Caribbean** – Please continue to pray for the fellowships throughout the region as they face battles for the sanctity of life and marriage, both of which are under attack. According to **Justice Alice Soo-Hon**, "In Trinidad and Tobago, the Prime Minister and her cabinet approved a gender policy which includes both gay rights and abortion. The Government stated quite clearly that they are moving forward on this issue. We need wisdom, strategies and help." Please continue to pray for the **Watchmen on the Walls** effort that was launched at the Barbados conference last September.

## Saturdays: Advocates Global Council & Board Members

**Global Council: Exec. Committee:** Chairman, Min Choon Lee\* (Malaysia); Vice Chair, Teresa Conradie\* (South Africa); Secretary, Gregory Vijayendran (Singapore); Treasurer, Ruth Ross\* (Canada); **Members – Africa:** Justice Rose Mbah Acha (Cameroon); Judge Mike Chibita (Uganda); **Asia:** Robin David (India); Dongsub Sim (Korea); **Europe:** Latchezar Popov (Bulgaria); Nicolas Duval (France); Mats Tunehag (Sweden); **Latin America:** Gerardo Amarilla (Uruguay); Nina Balmaceda\* (Peru), Gilberto Ribeiro (Brazil); **Middle East:** Botrus Mansour (Israel); **North America/Caribbean:** Justice Alice Soo Hon (Trinidad & Tobago); **Oceania:** Mark Mudri (Australia).  
\*Also AI board members.

**AI Board:** Chairman, Matt Bristol; Vice-Chair, Ruth Ross; Treasurer, Sam Logan; Secretary, Chip Zimmer; Nina Balmaceda, Teresa Conradie, Timothy Klenk, Min Choon Lee, Roger Sherrard, and Ken Starr.

## Sundays: Advocates Staff & Family

Please pray for Romi Kobayashi; Brent McBurney, his wife Elizabeth, son Ian and daughter Sarah Louise.