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Dear Friends,

“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,” Matthew 28:19

Last Sunday was one of the most significant in the life of my family—our son was baptized, along with five others from our church. As I stood worshiping with our congregation during the baptism, I thought about believers from across the globe who, when they are baptized, often become the targets of significant persecution. They are men and women, boys and girls, whose lives are radically changed by their very willingness to publicly proclaim their allegiance to Jesus.

Sadly, recent news out of Africa demonstrates an increase in persecution. Attacks on churches continue in Nigeria, while a new spate of church bombings began in Kenya. Christians working in Sudan are being interrogated and forced to leave. Believers in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and other North African nations continue to face persecution. The good news is that advocates like Emad Felix, and his colleagues from Advocates Egypt, continue to stand strong for their faith and are willing to step into the breach on behalf of the persecuted. Although they are not crushed or abandoned, they do covet our prayers.

The prayer requests from our advocates in Asia don't slow down either. Believers falsely accused of blasphemy in Pakistan remain in legal limbo because of pressures from mobs. Pastors in Sri Lanka are still attacked with impunity. Government efforts to close house churches in China are on the increase. Believers in India are still targeted by radical Hindu mobs. Kazakhstan implemented a new law requiring “re-registration” of churches. In each of these countries, our advocates are struggling for justice, often in the face of corruption, and they need our prayers.

Later this month I travel to Istanbul, Turkey for the Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP) Consultation and the European Religious Liberty Forum (ERLF). First, the RLP meeting brings together the CEOs of RLP member organizations to further strengthen our coordinated efforts on behalf of the persecuted Church. The RLP is actively engaged in collaborative efforts to repeal blasphemy laws and apostasy laws, and among others, to establish an “early warning” system that will help us to better gauge the level of religious persecution in countries and whether it is increasing. Please join with us in praying this week (March 6) for the RLP Blasphemy Law Task Group's efforts to raise awareness of these issues at the UN Human Rights Council meetings in Geneva, Switzerland.

Second, the ERLF meetings are convened under the direction of Latcho Popov and AI's good friend, Julia Doxat-Purser from the UK. The ERLF, meeting annually for the past decade, brings together those actively engaged in religious liberty efforts across the continent of Europe, encouraging one

Doing Justice with Compassion

another and learning from one another regarding the current levels of religious freedom. Please pray with us that God will use this time to strengthen His church through these saints.

During the first week of April, I travel to Hong Kong where Advocates is co-sponsoring the “Transforming the World Through Faith & Law” conference along with Faith and Law Around the Globe (FLAG) and the University of Hong Kong. With a little more than a month to go, attendees from 27 different countries are registered and are excited about the agenda which includes workshops on religious freedom training, rule of law, corruption, peace & reconciliation, Christian legal aid for the poor and needy, among others, including sessions on evangelism in the legal marketplace and spiritual growth. Please pray with us for safe travels for all who are planning to come, for smooth processing of necessary visas and for the Lord’s provision for all those who need to be at the conference.

Enclosed is a letter from Latcho Popov with a brief update about the ongoing work of the Bulgarian Rule of Law Institute. In addition to serving as the President of Advocates Europe and as a member of the Global Council, Latcho continues to provide critical legal and spiritual training for lawyers and other leaders in Bulgaria. Latcho and I will be together in Istanbul and then again two weeks later in Hong Kong. We are grateful for his servant’s heart and ask you to continue to pray with us for Latcho and the work of Advocates Europe and the RLI.

We are so grateful for the prayer support that girds all of our advocates around the globe. Enclosed is our Prayer Calendar for March & April. Thank you for praying around the world with us each day of the week.

Thank you also for the financial support that enables us to bring encouragement to advocates and to equip them for the challenges they face—challenges that many of us cannot fathom. As I reflected on a story about a martyr in Turkey retold in the 2012 book *Sorrow & Blood: Christian Mission in Contexts of Suffering, Persecution and Martyrdom*, and a worship song he wrote, I thought about my own son’s baptism. As my son came out of the water, the worship team played the song “Trading My Sorrows.” The lyrics are simple:

I’m trading my sorrow | I’m trading my shame | I’m laying it down for the joy of the LORD.
I’m trading my sickness | I’m trading my pain | I’m laying it down for the joy of the LORD.
CHORUS: And we say, yes LORD, yes LORD, yes yes LORD! (REPEAT 2X)
I’m pressed but not crushed, persecuted not abandoned | Struck down but not destroyed,
I’m blessed beyond the curse for his promise will endure | And HIS joy’s gonna’ be my strength,
Though sorrow may last for the night | HIS joy comes in the morning.

In a world full of persecution and troubles, may everything about our lives say “Yes LORD!” and may the LORD bless and keep you in His perfect. . .

Grace and Peace



Brent McBurney
President & CEO

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you for your faithful support in helping us further God's Kingdom through AI's work and mission! Brent McBurney has asked me to encourage you by sharing some of our recent efforts to make a difference in Bulgaria.

Last year, I worked on how to share our faith more effectively, and on how to improve our character to be Christ-like. Our Bulgarian Rule of law Institute (RLI) published "The Peacemaker" brochure In Bulgarian. Also, RLI, Accountability Ministries Colorado, and Advocates International sponsored the printing of 600 Bulgarian copies of the wonderful book titled "When Christians act as Christians; God's calling for Christ-like Civility" written by my friend Jeffery Rosenau.

This year, we published a brochure titled "49 Qualities of the Christian Character" from the "Character First" ministry. Also, in our Institute's Tuesday gatherings, we discuss the book "Your Personal Encourager" by Selwyn Hughes. We were impressed with how the introduction of the last book reflects on God's love. The author concludes that God loves us as we are, and that ultimately He loves us so much that he couldn't leave our character be the same as He found it.

Our campaign focusing on the Christian character will culminate with a national conference (round table) on March 30, 2013. The event will take place right between the "Religious Liberty Forum" in Istanbul and the Conference of Advocates International in Hong Kong. The event will take place in the quarters of the Bulgarian Union of Jurists. For many years, RLI is a corporate member of the Union, and is considered its Christian section. The goal of this conference is to cause retrospection of the development of the Christian character in our nation and within the Christian lawyers coming from different professional backgrounds. We will also reflect on the last twenty years of democracy, and on the prospects and vision before the Christian jurists for the next five to ten years. Among our speakers are a few nationally renowned Christians professor, constitutional judge, missionary and future young lawyer.

I love the study of the Christian character topic. It has been good to reflect on it through the rushing pace of our dynamic and tensed life, as I was overwhelmed with this need. The attendees and the speakers found this topic very pertinent for the times, especially in our country of transition and recent governmental uncertainties. The feedback and reflections on the topic and materials for this Conference are excellent, and our brothers and sisters in Christ confess the topic is very timely and necessary for making a difference in our nation.

Thank you very much for your vital support of our efforts, and many blessings to you and your ministry in Christ!

Sincerely,

Latcho

PS. On the back are a few photos from our annual banquet celebration.

Rule of Law Institute Bulgaria: Annual Banquet
December 14, 2012





PRAYER CALENDAR – MARCH & APRIL 2013

Mondays: Advocates Africa

- Please continue to pray for ongoing planning for the 2013 Advocates Africa Conference “**Bringing Forth Justice to the Nations: (Isaiah 42:1-4)**,” August 6-10 in Kampala, Uganda. Please pray also for the AA host country representatives, Edward Sekabanja (Uganda) and Vital Nsengiyumva (Rwanda). Pray specifically for efforts to provide an agenda that will serve our colleagues from Francophone African nations through French language workshops and speakers.
- **AA’s** North Africa coordinator, **Emad Felix**, asks us to continue praying for Egypt. He writes:

“The situation in Egypt is very bad and the Muslim Brotherhood in control of the state has started a new revolution in Egypt against non-muslims. Pray for us.”

Let us remember our Egyptian brothers and sisters, and ask for protection for them during these difficult times. This past week has been one of the most violent in Egypt since Mohammed Morsi came to power.

- **CLS South Africa:** Pray for a student retreat that is being planned during the April university holidays. A farm has been made available to students for this retreat. Pray that the students who attend will be encouraged and that God would challenge them during this time.
- Please pray for the **UCBC Lawyers and Judges Conference** to be held **April 22-26, 2013** in Beni, DRC:
 - For the Christian Congolese lawyers who are leading the initial city groups of Christian lawyers and judges in Beni, Butembo and Bunia following the 2010 conference. That they would build strong, indigenous foundations for justice in their local circumstances.
 - For God's will in the creation of a law school at the new Christian, bilingual university in Beni (Universite Chretienne Bilingue du Congo - UCBC), so that young lawyers will be trained with a vision to transform this region with Christian values.
 - **Praise Report:** 11 African countries signed the Congo Peace Accord on February 24.

Tuesdays: Advocates Asia & Oceania

- Please continue to pray for the 11th 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. Pray for those who still require travel visas and that all who need to be there will have the financial provisions to join us.
- **Mark Mudri** and our friends from Lawyers Christian Fellowship in **Australia** wrote to ask for our help and our prayers. The Australian Government is proposing to introduce a "Human Rights" law which goes so far as to make it an offence to offend someone. The LCF will be sending a letter to all parliamentarians stating its opposition to the bill. Let us also uphold our Australian brothers and sisters in prayer as they fight this.
- Please continue to pray for advocates in Pakistan who are defending Christian brothers and sisters in their blasphemy trials. So many are falsely accused of blasphemy, and then are stuck in legal limbo as the judges refuse to dismiss the bogus charges.
- Please pray for new contacts in Cambodia and the possibility of a new fellowship in that country.

Wednesdays: Advocates Europe

- Pray for the **European Religious Liberty Forum** meeting in Istanbul, March 22-24. Pray for safe travels for those attending and for fruitful discussions.
- Pray for the **Rule of Law Institute's** National Conference, March 30, in Sofia, Bulgaria. It is scheduled to take place at the headquarters of the Bulgarian Union of Jurists.
- Pray for the upcoming National Conference of **Christ und Jurist** (Germany) that will take place May 10-12 in Hofgeismar, Germany.

Thursdays: Advocates Latin America (FIAJC)

- Please continue to pray for the Spiritual Leadership Retreat scheduled for May 16-17 in Montevideo, Uruguay, with continuation on May 18-19 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This is a key event for the future of **FIAJC** and following the encouraging gathering of part of the leadership team last October at the CLS Conference. We hope to see a re-engagement by fellowships across the region.

Fridays: Advocates North America & Caribbean

- **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. Please continue to pray for the **Watchmen on the Walls** effort that was launched at the Barbados conference last September.
- **Christian Legal Society (USA)** – Please continue to pray for **CLS** Executive Director David Nammo who is still in his first year at the helm. Pray for just decisions in several Supreme Court cases in which **CLS** filed amicus briefs: *United States v. Windsor* and *Hollingsworth v. Perry*. These cases both deal with the definition of marriage at both the Federal and State levels.
- **Christian Legal Fellowship (Canada)** – Please pray for the legal efforts by **CLF** as intervenor in constitutional challenge to Canada's euthanasia laws. Oral argument in *Carter v. Canada* (British Columbia) is scheduled for **March 4-8**. Please pray for **CLF's** new Executive Director, **Russell Browne**. Please continue to pray for the planning of the **CLF** National Conference (September in Vancouver).

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: Chairwoman, Ruth Ross; Vice-Chairman and Treasurer, Sam Logan; Secretary, Chip Zimmer; Nina Balmaceda, Matt Bristol, Teresa Conradie, Timothy Klenk, Min Choon Lee, Roger Sherrard, and Ken Starr. Pray too for potential new board members. The next board meeting is scheduled in April.

Sundays: Advocates Staff & Family

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