

# ADVOCATES

INTERNATIONAL®

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APRIL 2013

Dear Friends,

**“Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’  
If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.  
If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.” John 15:20**

What a tremendous encouragement it was to meet with religious liberty advocates gathered last week in Istanbul for the European Religious Liberty Forum (ERLF) and with our collaborators in the Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP).

Immediately before the RLP meetings began, Roshini Wickremesinhe and Godfrey Yogarajah, our advocates from Sri Lanka, received emails from their office about a pastor and his family whose home was surrounded by an angry mob led by Buddhist monks. The police were called out and the situation was ultimately resolved peacefully, but it was a stark reminder of why we were gathered—those who call on the name of Jesus are persecuted, as He was.

AI's involvement in the RLP helps us to keep our finger on the pulse of the work on behalf of the persecuted church and to keep our advocates plugged in when they can be of service in their country or region. One of the important efforts of the RLP is the Early Warning Task Group, which is setting up a system to follow trends in religious persecution in various countries. Our advocates in Kenya, Nepal and Turkey, along with other RLP partners, are providing key input to track the levels of governmental and cultural persecution.

Each year, the RLP releases a special statement on one global hot-spot. This year's statement on the situation in Syria will be posted on the Advocates website in the next few weeks. Representing the voices of a broad coalition of 40+ member organizations, such statements can provide an effective message to the international community, and we'd ask you to pray with us for the body of Christ and others in Syria in the midst of great suffering.

Perhaps the greatest personal encouragement from my time in Turkey was meeting the Christian lawyers who are engaged with legal fellowships in their countries. During the ERLF, Latcho Popov and I led a special meeting with these lawyers. They represented Austria, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, France, Georgia, Romania, and for the first time, Turkey (after 10 years of prayers).

French attorney Nancy Lefevre shared with me how important the fellowship of Advocates France has been to her and her colleagues there. Nancy is a bright lawyer, mother of four, and a relentless advocate for religious liberty. The first Turkish Christian to be involved with Advocates Europe is a law student named Egesu, who gives us great hope for the future of

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Turkey. She was so encouraged to be a part of the gathering. Please continue to keep these young women and the others involved with Advocates Europe in your prayers.

Please also keep the lawyers from Latin America in your prayers as they prepare for their 11<sup>th</sup> regional conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina in May. It has been over two years since their last conference, and we know that this gathering will be critical for their development. One of Advocates' friends has given a special gift to help provide scholarships for the conference, and we'd like you to consider joining him to help meet some of the need. Each gift of **\$120** will cover the registration and hotel (double room) for one delegate.

Thank you for your continued prayers for the ***Transforming the World Through Faith and Law*** conference in Hong Kong. The conference runs from April 4–8 and we have a great lineup of workshop speakers. We are expecting over 150 attendees from across Asia and around the globe.

Finally, we are excited to let you know that Advocates will be moving our offices from Fairfax to Alexandria. We'll be sharing further details about our move at the end of April. With our current smaller staff, we realized that we needed smaller office space. In preparing for our move, we realized that we are still using computers from 2005. Our IT providers told me that machines much newer than ours are usually turned into scrap material for parts. Upgrading our computers will cost about **\$2,000**, so please consider a special gift to help with those costs.

Thanks again for praying along with us each day of the week using the Advocates prayer calendar, and when you receive the Prayer Alert emails. Your prayers are coveted and we know that they are effective, especially for persecuted believers like the pastor and his family from Sri Lanka, and the advocates who do battle on their behalf.

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

Grace and Peace

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brent McBurney  
President & CEO