

DECEMBER 2017

**“Let us consider how we may spur one another
on toward love and good deeds.” Hebrews 10:24**

Dear Friends,

What does “encourage” really mean? According to Merriam-Webster encourage is a verb whose definition includes the following:

- 1: to inspire with courage, spirit, or hope: HEARTEN;
- 2: to spur on: STIMULATE
- 3: to make (someone) more determined, hopeful, or confident (*MW Learner’s Dictionary*)

For Advocates International, “encourage” means so much more. 2017 has been a year full of encouragement, and we are grateful for the prayers and financial support of friends like you.

In January, we hired our new Office Administrator, Daniela Ancalle, and said Sayonara to Romi Kobayashi. In February, we joined with Advocates Europe in the Canary Islands. March included meetings in Malta for an Advocates Middle East/North Africa planning session; in Lima, Peru for the Global Kingdom Partnership Network; and in Istanbul for the European Religious Liberty Forum. In April, the Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP) Consultation was held in Brasilia, Brazil.

In May, Advocates was highlighted in a Christianity Today magazine article, “*Blessed Are the Lawyers*”, and we participated in the World Summit in Defense of Persecuted Christians in Washington, DC. In June, I was a keynote speaker in Seoul, Korea at the “Life, Family and Honor” Global Conference. In August, we served at a law student conference in Bangkok and at the historic 12th Advocates Africa conference in Accra, Ghana, where we witnessed the first sitting head of state in attendance at an AI gathering. In September, I traveled to Europe for meetings with the RLP leadership team in London, law students in Germany, and Advocates in Albania. In October, we joined colleagues from across the USA at the CLS national conference in California.

Finally, in November we traveled to Rio de Janeiro to attend the XII Convención InterAmericana de Juristas Cristianos—CIAJC. In Brazil, there was plenty of inspiration and spurring one another on toward good deeds.

We began our time together with the annual Global Council meeting, joining dear friends from five continents (our friends from Asia had to cancel at the last hour), sharing our concerns and praying for one another. The Council elected Teresa Conradie as our new Chairwoman, as well as a new Executive Committee, and Mark Mudri’s devotional reminded us of the importance of succession planning and the need to pass the mantle, as Elijah did for Elisha. Daniela joined us and that was a great encouragement. She brought a great spirit and hope with her exuberance and youth. She epitomizes what we desire in bringing the next generation into the family of AI.

The CIAJC was attended by Advocates from 12 nations across Latin America, and we were joined by Advocates from Australia, South Africa, Bulgaria, Germany, Spain, England, and the USA. The conference discussions about religious freedom, human rights, orphans, missionary work and theology, among other issues enlightened and encouraged all who attended. I reminded our Advocates about the importance of seeing the legal profession as their mission field, using their legal talents and gifts to reach those who might never darken the doors of a church, let alone consider their need for a Savior. We also bestowed AI's Good Samaritan Award on Uziel Santana, President of FIAJC.

One of the most encouraging aspects of gatherings like this are the "MBM's"—meetings between the meetings. One such MBM was a breakfast meeting with our friends from Colombia. Teresa Conradie, Mark Mudri and I joined in as they discussed the tremendous challenges facing lawyers in Colombia, including a lack of training in integrating faith into practice. One dream they have is to open a Christian law school that can provide such teaching. There is much to be done, but much like our tremendously fruitful meeting in 2012 with one lawyer in Indonesia, we believe that this small meeting can lead to fruitful outcomes in Colombia.

Other MBMs were equally impactful. Daniela enjoyed meeting the Global Council members in person. Serving our brothers and sisters via emails, video-conference calls and telephone is necessary, but we are greatly heartened when we come together face-to-face, breaking bread over meals together, praying for one another and just getting to know each other. One GC member likened the Council to the heart of AI.

We are indeed heartened to face 2018 knowing that you continue praying for us. We invite you to join us next year for the **50 Nations-1 Fellowship** conference in Berlin, Germany from October 4-6, where we hope to see at least one Advocate from every nation in Europe come together—along with the Global Council—to be encouraged.

One final definition of "encourage" from Merriam-Webster:

4: to give help or patronage to: FOSTER

As we come to the close of this encouraging year, including another Four Star rating from Charity Navigator, we are grateful for your financial gifts that enable us to carry out the vision to be a worldwide fellowship of advocates bearing witness of Jesus Christ through the legal profession.

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

Grace and Peace,



Brent M. McBurney
President & CEO

