

JANUARY 2018

**“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.”
Philippians 1:3-5**

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! As I begin my eighth year as President of Advocates International, and reflect on the past seven years, I'd like to share one of the most encouraging stories.

I always remind our Advocates to consider the legal profession their mission field, for which they are specially trained. They study for years to learn to think, speak and understand the law and other legal professionals. The workload of an attorney, law professor or judge is familiar—the challenges and successes. They are uniquely suited to reach an unreached people's group called lawyers. I shared this story below about a law student named Sophie in the September 2015 newsletter:

The conference, “Religious Liberty: a Touchstone for True Freedom in a Modern World,”—attended by our Advocates from the legal profession, as well as South African pastors and other non-legal advocates—opened on Wednesday night, which is when I first met Sophie.

Sophie and four of her fellow law students from Taiwan who are studying in South Africa this year found out about the Advocates Africa conference on the internet and decided to attend. When I met her, I was curious to know how students from Asia ended up in Africa, but admittedly, I did not think to ask whether they were followers of Jesus Christ. By the time they had experienced all God had planned for the conference, they would be.

On Thursday night, during a closed plenary session, we heard some incredibly powerful testimonies from victims of religious persecution. It was a humbling experience hearing from these heroes of the faith who exemplify John 12:24. One widow lost her husband and two children. Another widow, kidnapped along with her husband by Al Qaeda terrorists, was released, but her husband was killed. A student who survived the Kenya university massacre shared his experience by telephone because he could not get a visa to travel to South Africa. Advocates was able to help provide scholarships for each of these special guests to the conference. Each praised God for His faithfulness in the midst of trials.

Friday morning's sessions included powerful personal testimonies from Justice Eberhard Bertelsman, a Judge of the High Court of South Africa and Patrick

Kuwana, a businessman from Zimbabwe, both of whom shared how Jesus radically changed their lives.

On Saturday morning, following the second session, I met Professor Bankole Sodipo and several of his colleagues from Nigeria in the hotel lobby, talking animatedly with Sophie and the other two young ladies from Taiwan. I learned later that they were sharing the Gospel and that the three law students prayed to accept Jesus.

A bit later, I saw Sophie and her two girlfriends sitting in the corner of the lobby with longtime Advocates friend Art Lees, who was sharing with them, in their own language, how the Chinese alphabet includes much of the Biblical narrative. Please pray with us for Sophie and her fellow students as they begin to learn more about following Jesus. Pray also the strengthening of relationships between the Church and the legal profession that began at the conference.

It is such a great joy to continue to see how God can use us in this mission field of the legal profession, and we know that your prayers provide a tremendous covering for what we do. Your financial investment into the work of Advocates International allows us the opportunity to be salt and light in a profession that many consider dark and sinister.

As I learned in November from our colleagues in Colombia, in their country, they do not necessarily teach lawyers how to be ethical, but rather, simply how to make money. That is one of the biggest challenges we face. We will continue to work with them as they seek to open a Christian law school to begin to remedy their situation.

Please also continue to pray with us for the Advocates for the Nation team in Nepal as they next seek to overturn the new anti-conversion law set to take effect on August 1, 2018. The new law, signed by the President, basically criminalizes Christianity. A good friend of Advocates who visited Buddha Ghising and Ganesh Shresta late last year shared that despite this great challenge, the Nepali Christians are going to obey all that our Lord has commanded, even in the face of opposition.

Thank you for your continued prayers and financial gifts in 2018. They are an investment that helps to bring the Gospel to the legal profession and to help the lawyers try to keep the legal doors open for the Gospel.

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

Grace and Peace,



Brent M. McBurney
President & CEO

