

Report on activities August and September 2024

Janet Epp Buckingham
Director, Geneva Office to the UN, World Evangelical Alliance
September 2024

Thank you for your ongoing financial support and your prayers.

The last two months have been a flurry of activity! Our daughter, Julia, got married on August 17. Two weeks later, Don and I were on a plane to Geneva! We have made a good transition despite Don having a bicycle accident on September 9, cracking two ribs and having a separated shoulder. He is making good progress towards recovery.

We have obtained most of the documents we need to live in Geneva. We have rented an apartment as of 1 October. So, on the logistics, we are feeling very positive about our move.

I have had a very busy September with the Geneva office. The main body we advocate to in Geneva is the Human Rights Council. It started its fall session on September 9 and will sit until October 9. There have been many sessions to attend and engage with. We have the opportunity to make six short oral statements. This is an opportunity to speak to high level diplomats from most countries of the world! We have made statements on India, Sri Lanka, situations of religious minorities in conflict (Sudan, Afghanistan and Nigeria) and the situation of incarcerated workers. We still have statements on Eritrea and Yemen coming up.

While I was not in attendance, the UN Pact for the Future was adopted on September 22 in New York. Early drafts did not include any mention of religion. I am delighted to report that the faith Impact Group, that I had a major role in forming, was been very successful in getting our language included in the most recent draft of the Pact. It is the first time that an aspirational UN document has had explicit language about faith-based organizations.

I am working with my team on some behind-the-scenes diplomacy for released of jailed Christians in several countries. Please pray that we find favour.

I will be participating in a 1 ½ day conference in Berlin on October 8-9 on the persecution of Christians around the world. It will be a great opportunity to hear directly from those in countries where there is persecution and to meet with government officials who can put pressure on those governments.

At the beginning of August, Don and I started a 2-year program with the Renovare Institute in spiritual formation. We will be travelling to Seattle on September 28 for a one-week residency for this program. We have already sensed God's transformational work in our lives. We would appreciate your prayers that we can spend this week focusing on "Who is God?" which is the theme for the week. With so many changes in our lives, we need to really be able to focus for the week!

Thank you for your prayers and support.

