

"...He sent me to proclaim release to the captives..."



PARL

PUBLIC AFFAIRS & RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

...to set at liberty those who are oppressed..."



PARL is the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department for the Seventh-day Adventist worldwide church. It was recognized as a department of the world church in 1902. PARL is like the foreign affairs ministry in a government or the external affairs department in many corporations. We work mainly with governments, international organizations, and religious authorities. Our field of activity deals with human rights legislation, geopolitics, protocol, and government. The PARL staff could be, without too much exaggeration called “the diplomatic corps” of the church. We are the ones who build bridges, try to solve conflicts, improve legislation, defend those who are persecuted for their faith, and promote and protect religious freedom. In the last few

years, we have developed our presence at the United Nations, the United States government, the Christian World Com-munions, and non-governmental orga-nizations, and we have given strong sup-port to the International Religious Liberty Association.

In these different areas, we build a global network of friends and experts belonging to different religions and beliefs, but shar-ing with us the most fundamental values of human rights and human dignity. Our department is the official voice and pres-ence of our church in the global market. Being ambassadors of the church gives us the enormous privilege and responsibility to also be Ambassadors of the Kingdom of God in this world.



OUR WORK ON CAPITOL HILL

The Adventist Church is on the forefront of advancing the cause of religious liberty and human rights in Washington. From Capitol Hill to the State Department to the White House, our representatives vigorously work to promote the free exercise of religion and a reasonable separation of church and state in the United States, and the cause of religious freedom around the world. In addition, our office works on issues as diverse as reducing the use of tobacco products, fighting the trafficking in persons, and working tirelessly to stop genocide. Ellen G. White stated that in these last days, we have inherited the torch of "truth and religious liberty." Every day our team on Capitol Hill works to ensure we honor that trust and that the torch of liberty shines bright.



Explaining the Adventist religious liberty position on national television.



Senator John F. Kerry of Massachusetts speaks in support of the Workplace Religious Freedom Act at a news conference. Standing behind him are James Standish of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (left) and Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania.



John Graz and James Standish on the set of the Hope channel's religious liberty show "Faith & Freedom".

Senator Bill Frist, majority leader in the U.S. Senate with James Standish.



Visit of Ambassador Ivan Vujacic of Serbia and Montenegro (center) to the World Headquarters. To his left is Dr. Jan Paulsen.

Interns working with the Adventist religious liberty office on Capitol Hill.



OUR WORK IN INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS

Dr. Bert B. Beach is general secretary of the Council on Interchurch Relations. In this capacity, he leads out in our church's contacts with other Christian churches and other religions. He regularly represents the Adventist Church at religious conferences and meetings. He also hosts various religious leaders when they visit the General Conference headquarters.

CHRISTIAN WORLD COMMUNIONS

The Conference of Secretaries of the Christian World Communion is not an organization, as such, but a meeting in which news is exchanged and views are discussed. Some members of the Conference, such as the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Salvation Army, are worldwide organizations. Other members, such as the Lutheran World Federation, are umbrella organizations which bring together organizationally churches of the same confession. The Secretaries of these bodies meet annually for an informal meeting to exchange information and have Christian fellowship. Adventists have participated in the Conference for several decades. Dr. Bert B. Beach was Secretary for 32 years, and Dr. John Graz is the current Secretary.



Meeting with religious leaders in Central Asia.

International Congress on religious freedom in Almaty, Kazakhstan.



Colonels Earl & Benita Robinson (Salvation Army) with Dr. Bert Beach (general secretary for the Council on Interchurch Relations for the Adventist Church) pictured here at the World Headquarters after a series of dialogues to foster understanding and respect for religious differences.



OUR WORK AT THE UNITED NATIONS

The office of United Nations Liaison provides a channel of communication and influence at the United Nations, working with the main organization and its 48 different subsidiaries such as the World Health Organization, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and United Nations Children's Fund.

The Church has held consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC) for several years, and the Church is consulted on a wide range of subjects including religious freedom, human rights, health, and education. In this way the Church is represented on a number of different committees of substance, participates in international conferences and conventions, and informs the representatives of the permanent missions of the Church's programs and activities. Much of the work of the Church is appreciated and endorsed since it parallels the aims and objectives of the UN as outlined in the UN Charter.

The UN Liaison also provides a mechanism to contact country representatives on matters of concern to the Church. The UN Liaison's work is an essential part of the Church's witness to the wider world, and it provides updated and relevant information on programs and plans of the international community.

THE INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ASSOCIATION (IRLA)

Chartered in 1893, the IRLA is one of the oldest associations defending religious freedom for all. Its primary focus is to conduct seminars and conferences internationally to provide education and training for addressing religious freedom and intolerance issues.

The IRLA was organized by Seventh-day Adventist leaders to oppose any restrictive legislation. In 1946, the IRLA opened its membership to anyone interested in promoting religious freedom. Members represent many faiths, such as Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims.



◀ Ambassador Evan Jeremy Paki (Ambassador of Papua New Guinea to the U.S.) with Dr. Jonathan Gallagher (United Nations Liaison director for the Adventist Church) during a visit and discussion about diplomacy and the importance of the Adventist Church's interaction with governments and international agencies.

▶ Religious leader the Swami Agnivesh at a religious freedom conference in Budapest, Hungary, with Dr. Gallagher.



▶ IRLA Board of Experts in Washington D.C.

▶ Lee's eyes are covered to protect her identity. Lee's father has been in prison since she was five. He was imprisoned for preaching the gospel.



▶ United Nations delegates and representatives gather at the UN Assembly Hall for discussions on international issues.

▶ Hon. Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago with Dr. Graz and Dr. Gallagher



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