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Hand Me the Hazelnuts

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Barry Black speaks for Consecration

Andrews University's School of Graduate Studies & Research welcomed Barry Black, chaplain of the U.S. Senate, as the featured speaker for this year's Graduate Student Consecration service on Saturday, Jan. 18, in the Howard Performing Arts Center.

"Philosophically, Seventh-day Adventist education is holistic," says Christon Arthur, dean of the School of Graduate Studies & Research. "Therefore, our students should experience intellectual stimulation, social interaction, emotional well-being and spiritual renewal."

Black's sermon was titled "The Blessing of Adversity." Niels-Erik



Barry Black, U.S. Senate chaplain and alumnus of Andrews University, spoke for Graduate Student Consecration on Jan. 18.

Andreasen, University president, and Andrea Luxton, provost, also addressed students during the service.

Black was elected the 62nd chaplain of the Senate on June 27, 2003. Prior

to Capitol Hill, he served in the U.S. Navy for more than 27 years, ending his distinguished career as the chief of Navy chaplains.

In addition to opening the Senate each day with prayer, Black provides counseling and spiritual care for senators, their families and staff — a combined constituency of more than 7,000 people. He also meets with senators about spiritual and moral issues, assists with research on theological and biblical questions, and facilitates discussion and reflection small groups among senators and staff.

Becky St. Clair, media communications manager, Division of Integrated Marketing & Communication



Church history professor Nick Miller meets with members of the International Religious Liberty Association in Athens, Greece, in January. He chaired a recent meeting of the Experts discussing religious liberty and secularity.

Professor chairs committee in Greece

During the first week of 2014, the International Religious Liberty Association, a multi-denominational religious liberty advocacy organization, held its annual Meeting of Experts in Athens, Greece. Nicholas Miller, associate professor of church history and director of the International Religious Liberty Institute at the Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, is a regular member of the IRLA Experts and served as chair of their drafting committee.

The current topic of the Experts consultation is the relationship between religion, secularity and religious freedom. Papers were presented on the tensions

and even conflicts between religion and secularism and how these dynamics impact and, at times, threaten religious freedom.

"The consensus of the group was that while there are religious-friendly versions of secularity, in the west a more religion-unfriendly version of secularism is becoming increasingly prevalent," says Miller.

This religious insensitivity can be seen in restrictions against wearing religious garb in France, forbidding religious homeschooling in Germany, restrictions on speech and counseling in relation to sexuality in Canada and America. Secular governments tend to define religion narrowly, as only encompassing worship and ritual.

"The experts on the committee called for a greater understanding of the importance of respecting not just freedom of religious worship, but of religious practice generally," Miller reports. "The ministry of churches and religious people extends beyond the church and synagogue door to encompass various kinds of educational, health and social welfare ministries. These activities in the public square also deserve religious freedom protections."

Miller worked closely with David Little, professor emeritus of Harvard Divinity School, to do the primary drafting of a document on this topic to be released later in 2014.

Other Experts members involved in this project include Ganoune Diop and John Graz of the General Conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department; Rosa Maria Martinez de Codes, former Spanish Justice Department official, associate professor at Universidad Complutense de Madrid and president of the IRLA; and Robert Seiple, first United States ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom under Bill Clinton, 42nd president of the U.S.

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