



## Adventist News Network

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### **Business Sessions Take a “Creative” Approach to Pressing Challenges**

Silver Spring, Maryland ... [Bettina Krause/ANN] The upcoming world Session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, June 29 to July 9, will focus not just on business items, but creatively look at how to answer several pressing issues for the nearly 14 million-strong movement.

These issues include: high rates of members leaving church fellowship; the challenge of reaching out to secular societies; the urgent need for dedicated leaders to serve a growing church; and the absence of a strong church presence in large—and growing—cities of the world.

The business meeting, known as the “General Conference Session,” brings together church members from around the world every five years. Two thousand of which vote on important issues facing the church in the coming five years.

This is a rare opportunity, says Pastor Jan Paulsen, world church president. “The business agendas of sessions have come to be viewed as somewhat routine and predictable. But this time we are deliberately saying: ‘Let’s come together as representatives of our international family and creatively reflect on some significant issues—matters of critical importance for the health of our church, and our ability to engage more effectively in mission.’”

Two agenda items—Profiling Adventist Leadership and Challenges to Mission 2005-2010—will highlight these concerns.

A series of five presentations and discussion periods will explore the essential qualities of Adventist leadership. Issues such as integrity, response to diversity, acting with responsibility, and ecclesiastical authority will be discussed against the background of extraordinary church growth, and the increasing need for high-quality, committed leaders.

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Five one-hour discussion periods will focus on the church and spiritual life, the church and society, the church and apostasy, the church and the cities, and the church and secularism.

“Recent studies have identified these as areas of serious concern,” says Pastor Michael Ryan, a world church vice president and director of the Office of Strategic Planning. “We have an extraordinary chance at this Session to prayerfully consider these challenges, and to gather input from world church leadership about how we can move forward in the next five years to address these concerns.”

For each topic there will be a brief presentation, but the largest portion of time will be reserved for comments and discussion by delegates. The discussion will be recorded, distributed, and will become part of the thinking and planning of church leaders as they come together for Annual Council, one of the church’s two annual business meetings, later this year, says Ryan.

“The time devoted to these presentations and discussions has just one purpose—to prepare and strengthen our church for the mission with which we have been entrusted,” says Paulsen. “Until our Lord returns, this will always be our most pressing responsibility.”

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