

Official press release from the  
World Headquarters of the  
Seventh-day Adventist Church



## Adventist News Network

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June 29, 2005

### **Adventist Church Session to Vote On New Fundamental Belief**

Silver Spring, Maryland, United States – Delegates to the 58<sup>th</sup> General Conference Session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will consider and vote on a new “fundamental belief” statement during the upcoming July meeting in St. Louis, Missouri. This would be the first addition recommended by the world church’s executive committee since the original beliefs document was approved at the church’s 1980 world Session in Dallas, Texas.

“Growing in Christ,” the proposed new statement, addresses several areas of Christian belief and practice that many church leaders and theologians believe do not receive adequate attention in the present statement of core Adventist beliefs.

The power of Christ in confronting and vanquishing demonic powers is highlighted, and the freedom of believers from past deeds and influences is affirmed. Specific spiritual practices, including personal Bible study, prayer, worship and witness, are described as supporting the believer’s new life in Christ. The proposed belief also explains that through loving service to others and witnessing to God’s salvation in people’s lives, Christians will find every moment and task sanctified.

As the Seventh-day Adventist Church continues its exponential membership growth around the world, church leaders and Christian educators are confronting a challenge not widely seen before: Putting the Christian faith and Adventist message into context for those who have no background in Western notions of religion and culture.

This is crucial as it affects evangelism in what is known as the “10/40 window,” an imaginary rectangle of countries between 10 and 40 degrees North of the equator, where a majority of the world’s Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists reside.

“As a church, we’ve set a priority on reaching those who live in the 10/40 window—nearly 70 percent of the world’s population,” says Michael L. Ryan, vice president for

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strategic planning and director of the church's Global Mission initiative. "Most of these people go to bed each night fearing evil spirits. Their first question to us invariably is, 'What will your Jesus do about the evil spirits?'"

Ryan added, "If we're going to be a people of hope, we also have to be able to show people where to find it—and that's why these spiritual resources and practices that point to Jesus have been identified in the new statement."

Another purpose of the new statement is to address questions from those coming into the Adventist Christian faith from animist, spiritualist and other backgrounds. Another is to formally present concepts many believe are essential to a fulfilling Christian life, including prayer, Bible study and service.

"This new statement will sharpen the Adventist understanding of the nature of a constant growth in Christ," declares Angel Manuel Rodriguez, director of the church's Biblical Research Institute and member of a three-man panel that worked on the new doctrine. "This is indispensable at a time when some church members are more interested in theological discussion than in the spiritual impact of those doctrines in their daily lives," he adds.

Other members of the group who prepared the draft were Ryan and William G. Johnsson, editor of the *Adventist Review*, the church's official paper.

Commenting on the new draft during the discussion at the church's Spring Meeting of the Executive Committee in 2004, Richard Osborn, president of Pacific Union College, a Seventh-day Adventist school in Angwin, California said "A lot of young people are more interested in the spiritual side [of our beliefs], rather than in the theological impact. There is a lot of spirituality among our young people, but not a commitment to the denomination. This statement will give even greater credibility to the entire fundamental beliefs of the church."

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[Draft in revision – to be supplied]