



Adventist News Network

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St. Louis, Missouri to Host Seventh-day Adventist Church 2005 World Session

Silver Spring, Maryland, United States – The world session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will bring an international flavor to St. Louis, Missouri, the heart of the United States of America. The gathering will be representative of the 25 million-strong Adventist family from around the globe, and will meet under a theme of “Transformed in Christ.”

Convening the session will be Pastor Jan Paulsen, world president of the church, who shared his expectation that the meeting will be a “time of wonderful fellowship and spiritual refreshment.” Referencing the theme of the St. Louis gathering, he said that it “provides the spiritual focus of the Session—it will be a celebration of what Christ has performed in our lives, and a reminder that we also have been called to be agents of transformation within our communities.”

The Session, to be held June 29 through July 9, 2005, is primarily a business meeting for the global church family. Denominational leaders are elected, church business is attended to, and policy decisions are often made. Because the core “business” of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that challenge will permeate activities at the St. Louis 2005 convocation, Paulsen said.

“At the heart of all that we will do, and all our decision making, there is really only one objective: to better prepare and equip our church for the mission God has given us,” Pastor Paulsen said. “We are essentially a witnessing community, living in anticipation of the return of our Lord, Jesus Christ.”

Organized by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the highest administrative body in the church’s worldwide system, the quinquennial world session will be the 58th for the denomination since its first General Conference Session in 1863. The St. Louis convocation marks the first time Adventists have held their worldwide gathering in the United States in 15 years. Daily attendance at the event is expected to average more than 10,000 people; on the two weekends, more

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than 70,000 are expected to attend.

Some 2,000 voting delegates from all over the world will gather at the America's Center in downtown St. Louis to participate in meetings that will determine many of the church's administrative actions for the next half decade. They will receive reports on the church's growth in those parts of the world where the Christian message is "reaching the unreached," and have the opportunity to meet fellow believers and church workers from other lands.

Around the world, Adventist Christians are among the fastest-growing churches today. Adventists work in 203 of the 228 countries and areas recognized by the United Nations, and communicate in more than 717 languages. Seventh-day Adventists operate one of the largest Protestant educational networks in the world, with 5,605 elementary through university level schools worldwide. Of those, 99 are colleges and universities, and more than 1,000,000 students attend Adventist institutions each year.

Hundreds of personnel will assist Session managers Linda de Leon and Sheri Clemmer, in staging the event. The world church is working with leaders from its North American Division as well as the America's Center staff and the St. Louis Convention and Visitor's Bureau to handle the massive arrangements involved in bringing delegates and visitors to the event, housing them, and feeding them. As during previous such events, Session participants will become patrons of perhaps the largest vegetarian restaurants to be operating at that time anywhere.

Participants of such world convocations have often favored the international evening programs, which feature reports from all over the world. Other special events associated with the Session will aim at creating a global awareness and sensitivity to the world community, which is a part of the Adventist mission to the world.

In a certain sense, the theme "Transformed in Christ," suggests an objective for Seventh-day Adventists to "transform the world," one church leader said.

Organizers are planning to use the media to bring the St. Louis 2005 event to viewers of Adventist Television Network and other communication delivery organizations, including Adventist World Radio. Regular reports will be available to delegates of the session and church believers around the world through the church's weekly magazine, Adventist Review, and the worldwide press coverage of the Adventist News Network.

The meetings are open to the general public. More information can be found at www.adventist.org

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