

## 57th General Conference Session 2000

**PLACE:** SkyDome and Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, Canada

**DATES:** **June 25 - June 29 (Sunday - Thursday)**  
World Ministers Council  
**June 29 - July 08 (Thursday - Sabbath)**  
General Conference Session

**THEME:** *Almost Home*

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### World Church President Calls For Special Prayer

With just three months until the Church's World Session in Toronto, Canada, Dr. Jan Paulsen, president of the world Church, is calling for a special prayer season that "the gathering in Toronto will be marked by the blessing of God and that the Holy Spirit will preside over this world gathering."

"As we near the time of the Toronto convocation, may each Adventist congregation, each Adventist family and every believer spend time presenting before God the work of the Church and its worldwide family of believers," said Paulsen.

In a statement for the Session 2000 News, the world Church leader said that the "Toronto Session is to be a celebration of a strong, dynamic church where all are valued as God's children, where youth are real players and not 'bystanders in waiting,' where the members are recognized as central to its mission, and where all are recipients of God's mercies and His spiritual gifts."

"The General Conference Session is more than a business meeting—it's an occasion to celebrate the truly international nature of our Church, to come together as members of a world-wide family of faith, and to recognize that our bonds of faith, love, and mission are stronger than our differences of language, nationality, and culture."

Dr. Paulsen extended a special invitation to Church members from Canada, the host country. "The Toronto convocation offers a marvelous celebration of fellowship for our believers in Canada, and the thousands of visitors from some 200 countries of the world. We hope that many of our believers in Canada will find their way to the SkyDome. Daily devotionals and inspiring reports from the world divisions in the evenings, as well as special spiritual celebration during both weekends, will provide an opportunity for spiritual refreshing and a renewal of our Christian commitment," said Paulsen.

The Toronto meeting will be "a special" for Canadian Seventh-day Adventists, and especially for the Toronto area. The Seventh-day Adventist work began in Toronto in 1883, when pioneer George Brown began selling Adventist publications in a shop on Yonge Street in the city center. One hundred seventeen years later, the convening of the General Conference Session 2000 will mark another significant milestone in the history of the Adventist Church in Toronto and Canada, as an estimated 65,000 Church members from more than 150 countries around the world meet in Toronto to do appropriate church business, celebrate, and worship together.

On two Sabbaths, July 1 and 8, the World Session planners are preparing a festival of praise, prayer and spiritual messages. The messages and the musical presentations from around the world will focus on the hope and nearness of Christ's return. [Ray Dabrowski]

### Theme Exhibit

One feature of the Theme Exhibit will be a first for a General Conference Session. Victor Issa of Loveland, Colorado, an internationally acclaimed sculptor who is a Seventh-day Adventist, has been commissioned to prepare a work of art depicting the Second Coming of Christ in life-size castings. A preview of the work is striking in that it captures the expectancy, joy, and the idea of being "caught up" to

Christ as the heavenly hosts descend toward the earth to claim the righteous. It will be unveiled during the evening program of the first day of the Session.

Interestingly, this remarkable work of art is being presented to the Session and the World Church as a gift funded by Canadian Adventists. Following the Session, the sculpture will be moved to the headquarters building in Silver Spring, Maryland, as a constant reminder to visitors entering the General Conference, that we are eagerly looking forward to the return of Jesus. Just like the sculpture of the Good Samaritan at Loma Linda University campus has become a symbol of loving care as depicted in Jesus' parable, we anticipate this major work, consisting of approximately 12 characters, will become a symbol of the Church's anticipation of the second Advent. Be sure to visit this work of art in the Exhibit area. [Gerry Karst]

### **Introduction of Special Guests**

As has been the custom for many decades at GC Sessions, there will be a number of special guests or observers attending portions or all of the General Conference Session in Toronto, Canada, June 29 to July 8.

Some of these distinguished guests will represent governmental authorities and will even include at least two heads of state.

There will also be church leaders representing Christian World Communions and some other international or national religious bodies. A number of church representatives from Canada and the United States will attend. In all, we expect to have between 20 and 30 such special guests, some for only one day, but others for several days. [Bert B. Beach]

### **Media Opportunities--Tell Us About Your Newsworthy GC Session Plans**

The 10 days of GC Session 2000 will be crowded with activities and events as an estimated 65,000 Adventist Church members from more than 200 countries come together in Toronto. The sheer scale of Session 2000 makes it a newsworthy event. But the Communication departments of the General Conference and the North American Division want to direct media attention to much more than just statistics. We want the local and international press to catch a glimpse of the

vibrant, diverse Adventist community that will be celebrating and worshiping together in Toronto.

To do this we need to be aware of as many noteworthy Session-related events and programs as possible. We're also compiling a list of people who would make interesting subjects for feature articles, or who can speak to specific issues for TV, radio or newspaper interviews.

The GC and NAD Communication departments need to hear from you if you are:

- planning any special, newsworthy Session event
- inviting noteworthy people or groups to participate in a Session-related activity

Send your information, before March 31, to Bettina Krause, e-mail: 74532.2611@compuserve.com, phone (301) 680-6306; or Celeste Ryan, e-mail: celestepryan@compuserve.com, phone (301) 680-6314 [Bettina Krause]

### **GraceLink Training Convention**

GC Sabbath School and NAD Children's Ministries are bringing to Toronto an exciting training convention for children's leaders, June 22-25. The event will conclude before the start of the ministerial pre-session and will showcase the new GraceLink Sabbath School curriculum for children. Visitors to the Session, their spouses, and anyone involved in the spiritual development of children will want to attend.

Seminars will include presentations in English, Spanish, French, and Chinese. Participants choose from 60 different seminars taught by top speakers from around the world. Topics include: learning styles, faith development of children, understanding grace, and teaching children with special needs. Each level of the new GraceLink Sabbath School curriculum will be demonstrated and discussed. For more information about speakers, topics, registration, and location, link to <http://northamerica.adventist.org/cm> or phone AdventSource 1-800-328-0525 or 1-402-486-2579.

[Noelene Johnsson]

### **Adventism in Toronto**

In 1883, George Brown established a reading room at his residence at 505½ Yonge Street, Toronto. It appears that he had searched for several months and was unsuccessful in locating even one Adventist in the city. However, one year later, Brown reported that an

elderly couple and their daughter had begun to keep the Sabbath. It appears that they were all that remained of an estimated 2,000 Miller enthusiasts in Ontario who were expecting Christ's return on October 22, 1844.

The first church building was erected in Toronto in 1911 by J. T. Errington, a self-supporting minister. This prepared the way for the organization of the first church in Toronto on September 25, 1915, with 13 charter members. After several changes in location, this eventually became the Awde Street Church. Though no longer in existence today, many Ontario Adventists still have fond memories and trace their Adventist roots to this early congregation.

Membership growth has at times been slow and difficult. The war years resulted in some members moving elsewhere for jobs. Then came the 1940s when Clifford Reeves brought his evangelistic team to the 3,000-seat Massey Hall. This "big" thinking in evangelism has brought many well-known evangelists to town, such as George Vandeman, Charles Bradford, E. E. Cleveland, and Henry Feyerabend.

Another significant event was the opening of North York Branson Hospital in 1957 in the Willowdale area, then on the northern edge of Toronto. Expanding services, numerous health-related training programs (nurses, medical interns, lab technologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, etc.) saw the hospital grow to a 464 bed full-service hospital by 1966. Health promotion was an integral part of Branson Hospital ministry. Facility expansion and improvement continued through the 1980s; however, the 1990s brought significant changes as many hospitals saw major shifts from in-patient services to out-patient services. As a result in 1998, the Ontario government identified 12 Toronto hospitals for closure or merging. Branson Hospital was instructed to merge and be operated by North York General Hospital as an ambulating facility. This transition is still being implemented and has significantly changed the Adventist presence of Adventist health care. Currently, the new Adventist Health Care Board is studying long range plans for the current site and existing facilities, as well as other health-related opportunities that identify with the health-care philosophy of the Adventist Church.

As the membership and number of churches grew, so developed a need for Adventist education. In 1953, Crawford Adventist Academy (originally known as

Toronto Junior Academy) was started. With almost 500 students, Crawford Adventist Academy is now the largest K-12 Adventist School in Canada. Crawford's staff and students diligently pursue its motto of "Commitment to Excellence". The school is a microcosm of the city through the diverse cultural heritage representing over 30 nationalities.

Evangelism is the heartbeat of the 50 churches and companies in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Membership growth leaped forward in a major way since the 1960s as more and more immigrants chose Toronto as their new home, especially from the islands of the Caribbean in the '60s, from Asian countries, the Philippines in the '70s and Hispanics from Central and South America in the '80s. This has brought hundreds of committed, Christ-loving Adventists into the GTA. Their enthusiasm for witnessing has added to a previously well-developed base for evangelism.

Today, there are numerous ethnic churches and companies, the first of which was the Ukrainian Church, which was started in 1929. Now there are Chinese, Estonian, Filipino (5), Ghanaian, Hispanic (3), Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean (2), Portuguese (2), and Yugoslavian churches. As well, there are a number of churches that are facilitating smaller groups through Sabbath School classes, such as Finnish, Romanian, French and East Indian.

To find a church is not difficult. You can choose from the smallest, Toronto Estonian (nine members), to some of the largest congregations in Canada, including Willowdale (1,216); Toronto Perth (1,102); and Toronto West (926). One of the challenges that Toronto churches face is finding adequate facilities for new or existing congregations. Currently, almost half of the Adventist congregations in Toronto are in rented facilities. Due to high real estate costs and minimal available land in the core areas of Toronto, several congregations have in the past few years sacrificially purchased vacant warehouses and are in various stages of renovating them into places of worship and fellowship. Location and times of services for Adventist Churches can be found at [www.ont-sda.org](http://www.ont-sda.org).

While there are many distinctly ethnic churches, most congregations have a cultural mix of members. This adds greatly to the life and activities of the churches. Many Adventist churches have program schedules that can keep you "at church" all day Sab-

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bath, much of Sunday and most evenings of the week. Youth groups, A. Y., choirs, music fests, Pathfinders, Adventurers, anti-drug parades, rallies, workshops and outreach seminars are just some of the numerous activities and groups. The energy, enthusiasm and fervor of Toronto Adventists permeates such events as tent evangelism, small groups and street ministries all year long. Of note is the "Touch of Love" program where 30 of the Adventist churches in the GTA work together and feed hundreds of street people every day of the week.

A major public evangelistic thrust is now in progress, as the Toronto churches are collectively preparing for evangelistic meetings, June 3 - 24, 2000 at the 6,000-seat Coliseum with Walter Pearson, Jr. as the speaker.

Adventism in Toronto is alive, vibrant, progressive and varied. There is room for you! So come, worship and serve God and humanity with us. [Dirk Zinner]

## Hunger Pains?

Have you been wondering where you will be able to purchase a reasonably priced meal in Toronto during the 57<sup>th</sup> General Conference Session? Wonder no more.

The GC Session Planning Committee has made provision for the Metro Toronto Convention Centre to offer food service. For a period of 10 days, Halls A, B, and C in the North Building of the Convention Centre will be turned into what may well be the world's largest vegetarian restaurant.

Breakfast service will be á la carte. You will be able to choose from a variety of breakfast items.

Afraid of all those long lines for the noon meal? You can choose to eat at a different time than others! Starting at 10:30 a.m., a plated meal consisting of entree, carbohydrate, vegetable, salad, dessert, and drink will be available for just C\$7.50. Hot meal service ends at 8:00 p.m. After you pick up your tray you will have the opportunity to share a table with a delegate from Angola or a visitor from Peru. This is a wonderful opportunity to become acquainted with fellow believers from around the world, share experiences, and leave Toronto with a new friend.

Still hungry? If all that didn't satisfy your appetite, check out the extensive snack bar offerings in Exhibit

Hall D, open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Please be aware that because of exclusive catering contracts in both Metro Toronto Convention Centre and SkyDome, you will not be allowed to take food or beverages into the facilities. If you are attending for the day, you will want to leave your picnic lunch in your car and plan to eat in a local park, not in the meeting facilities.

Meal tickets can be purchased on site at the entrance to the dining area or on Level 600 of the Convention Centre South Building. Those who wish to avoid waiting in line and want to beat the rush may purchase meal tickets in advance. [GC Session Management]

## Advance Meal Ticket Sales Information

Meal tickets are dated June 29-July 8, 2000 and are for lunch and dinner only.

The ticket amount is C\$7.50 (Canadian Dollars) per meal. Advanced sales of meal tickets are transacted in United States Dollars. The GC Session Finance Committee will set a fixed monthly rate of exchange between US Dollar and Canadian Dollar to determine the US equivalent of the meal ticket. Tickets are non-refundable. Lost tickets will not be reimbursed.

Meal tickets may be ordered by contacting:

Danny Orillosa, GC Session Treasurer  
General Conference Treasury  
12501 Old Columbia Pike  
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600  
E-MAIL: 102555.2014@compuserve.com  
FAX: (301) 680-6290  
PHONE: (301) 680-6217

PHONE: Call the number indicated above. Have your credit card handy.

MAIL: Send self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address indicated above. Check or money order must be in US funds and made payable to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Tickets will be sent when payment is received. [GC Session Management]

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## Shuttle Bus Service

Shuttle bus service will be offered by Pacific Western from the following airport hotels to SkyDome:

- Best Western Carlton Place
- Delta Toronto Airport
- Holiday Inn Select
- International Plaza
- Regal Constellation
- Wyndham Bristol Place

The fare is C\$11 one way. [GC Session Management]

## Transportation From Airport to Downtown Hotels

On arrival in Toronto, you will find a well organized system for speeding you to your downtown hotel. The Toronto Airport Express can be located in each terminal. Follow signs to ground transportation. Rates are:

### Adult Fares:

- One way (downtown) C\$13.75
- One way (connector hotels) C\$16.75
- Return (round trip) for downtown C\$23.65
- Return (round trip) for connector hotels C\$28.65
- Children 11 and under accompanied by an adult travel free (maximum two children per adult).

For complete details, please call Airport Express: 905-564-6333 or visit their web site at: [www.torontoairportexpress.com](http://www.torontoairportexpress.com)

The Toronto Airport Express bus departs every 20 minutes from all terminals at Toronto Pearson International Airport and services over 30 downtown Toronto locations. No reservations are required. The Airport Express will take you safely to your downtown hotel.

[GC Session Management]

## Transportation Discounts

Discount coupons on the Toronto Airport Express can be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

GC Session Management  
12501 Old Columbia Pike  
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Be sure to indicate the number of coupons you need. One coupon is required for each passenger. The coupons give C\$1.00 off the bus fare for either one way or return trip.

Coupons will not be sent in response to e-mail requests. You must send a self-addressed, stamped envelope. [GC Session Management]

## Toronto Car Rental

If you are planning to fly to Toronto, and wish to rent a car, check out the discounts from the following companies:

Alamo	(800) 732-3232	134060/BX
Avis	(800) 331-1212	B501460
Budget	(800) 527-0700	T186500/VX49
Dollar	(800) 800-4000	W10724GC1018
Hertz	(800) 654-2200	34824
National	(800) 227-7368	5650899

## Website

Have you visited the official website for GC Session 2000? The website contains information you can't afford to miss. Visit us today at:

[www.adventist.org/gc2000/](http://www.adventist.org/gc2000/)

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**57<sup>th</sup> GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION UPLINK SCHEDULE**

Beginning Thursday, June 29, there will be a 3 1/4 hour presentation on each week night. This will feature the evening mission report, a sermon, and wrap-up of the day's news.

Sabbath, the morning sermon, afternoon and evening programs will be uplinked.

**World Minister's Council:**

Tuesday	June 27	06:00 p.m. -	09:00 p.m.	18:00 - 21:00
Wednesday	June 28	06:00 p.m. -	09:00 p.m.	18:00 - 21:00

**General Conference Session:**

Thursday	June 29	06:00 p.m. -	09:15 p.m.	18:00 - 21:15
Friday	June 30	06:00 p.m. -	09:15 p.m.	18:00 - 21:15
Sabbath	July 01	10:30 a.m. -	12:30 p.m.	10:30 - 12:30
		04:00 p.m. -	05:30 p.m.	16:00 - 17:30
		06:00 p.m. -	09:15 p.m.	18:00 - 21:15
Sunday	July 02	06:00 p.m. -	09:15 p.m.	18:00 - 21:15
Monday	July 03	06:00 p.m. -	09:15 p.m.	18:00 - 21:15
Tuesday	July 04	06:00 p.m. -	09:15 p.m.	18:00 - 21:15
Wednesday	July 05	06:00 p.m. -	09:15 p.m.	18:00 - 21:15
Thursday	July 06	06:00 p.m. -	09:15 p.m.	18:00 - 21:15
Friday	July 07	06:00 p.m. -	09:15 p.m.	18:00 - 21:15
Sabbath	July 08	10:30 a.m. -	12:30 p.m.	10:30 - 12:30
		04:00 p.m. -	05:30 p.m.	16:00 - 17:30
		06:00 p.m. -	09:15 p.m.	18:00 - 21:15

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