

About This Information Bulletin ...

As I am writing these words, the 57th Session of the General Conference Session is about 53 weeks away! So, the countdown is on... When, on top of this, one adds the Year 2000 countdown, the current year is slowly disappearing... Now about this bulletin.

What you are reading is an information bulletin which—on behalf of the Session Planning Committee—the Communication Department of the General Conference will bring to you in the first week of each month until June 2000. It is intended to supply news and information to all Division and Union communication directors and Adventist magazine editors. We anticipate that our members-at-large will be informed about the Session, its significance, facts, and program details. It will bring this important event in the Church's life closer to the members in the pew. We hope that each Division and Union will use a variety of delivery systems to share the information with the general Church public.

With this first, more or less general information issue, we planned to bring to you more detailed and varied materials that would refer to preparations for the GC 2000 by those who are involved in Session planning. Here are a few examples: What is anticipated in the program of the Session? Will the Session be uplinked and on the Internet? What to expect regarding external-Session activities such as youth programs, Walk Around the World, and other events? What about the music at the Session? What is in store for the women attending the Session? What is the program for the World Ministers Council? Etc.

We will also endeavor to bring the city of Toronto, our Church in the city and the Church in Canada closer to our members as they contemplate joining us at the Session. We will want to inspire our church members to bring the Session before the throne of God in prayer.

You are invited to spread the news. And you are invited to help us bring the information to you and to the Church. [Ray Dabrowski]

57th General Conference Session - 2000

PLACE: SkyDome and Metro Toronto Convention Center, Toronto, Canada

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

THEME: *Almost Home*

Introducing the Official Brochure for the 57th General Conference Session

The official brochure for GC Session 2000 is available to you right now! You can access it through the official web site: www.adventist.org and go to GC Session or request a copy by e-mail at: gcsession@gc.adventist.org

Here are some of the items presented in the brochure:

- ◆ *What You Will Need for Entry to Canada*
- ◆ *Importing Goods into Canada*
- ◆ *Bringing a Vehicle into Canada (driver's licenses and vehicle insurance)*
- ◆ *Canadian Currency, Money Exchange and use of Credit Cards and ATM Cards*
- ◆ *Goods and Services Tax (GST)*
- ◆ *Provincial Sales Tax and Visitor Rebates*
- ◆ *Medical Services and Health Insurance*
- ◆ *Units of Measure, Electrical Voltage and Connections*
- ◆ *Weather*
- ◆ *Transportation*

The brochure also contains features on: Toronto, GC Session (Opening and Closing), Simultaneous Interpretation Services and Meal Services. There is a description of the classification of attendees, plus information about registration and seating.

One of the most important features of the brochure is the Hotel Accommodations. The brochure includes a Housing Application form that you can fill out and send by mail or fax to the GC Session Housing Bureau in Canada (see address at bottom of form). This application form is also available through the official web site: www.adventist.org and go to GC Session.

**General Information, Hotel Accommodation,
and Obtaining a Brochure, Contact: Annabelle Kendall**

Phone: (301) 680-6216 **Fax:** (301) 680-6290

E-mail: gcsession@gc.adventist.org

Why Have a General Conference Session?

Jonathan Gallagher, News Director, General Conference

“What’s the point? Just a lot of talk for no purpose.”
“We could save the money and do some evangelism!”
“Do we really need to have these sessions? Can’t we do without them?”

—These are just a few comments on Session 2000 that have reached the Communication department here at the General Conference. So why indeed?

Maybe the most important question is to ask what a General Conference Session is *for*.

Yes, we spend time electing personnel to different positions. Yes, we conduct various aspects of church business that may be important. Yes, it’s a good time to meet old friends and make new ones.

But if that’s all a Session is for, then we miss the point! For if we truly believe that God is directing this Church, that we are following a vision that leads to present salvation and future glory, then Session can be filled with meaning.

We need to look beyond the day-to-day business, the debates and discussions, the elections and the pageantry. We need to recapture the sense of destiny, of being a people with a clear identity and a definite role to play here on planet Earth. If nothing else, Session 2000 identifies the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a global people of God who are here with a mission. For in truth and in fact, the upcoming Session in Toronto should be more than an internal business convention, but an open demonstration of who we really are.

If we are honest, we can all recognize times when we have found aspects of church business boring. But perhaps that’s because we’re focussing on the nuts and bolts too much, or to change the imagery, we can’t see the forest for the trees.

Session is the perfect time to portray the Church to the world. From a communication standpoint, this is a great opportunity. A representative community of the world Church will be coming to Toronto, and what better chance to share with the city and the media who we are and what we’re doing? The Church, especially the host organizations in Canada, can use the Session event as a news “peg” to feature the various aspects of our mission, especially those that are directly relevant to the community.

With Session 2000 less than a year away, it’s essential to make plans to use this opportunity to share the Adventist perspective—to make a real impact and to make what we say meaningful to our audiences. Using Session events, we can show who we are. Even the business sessions demonstrate the representative structure of the Church organiza-

tion, the opportunity to debate and to arrive at consensus, to reveal a Biblical model for behavior and practice.

Public events—marches, parades, concerts etc—as well as the pre-activities of youth volunteers, community service, and outreach should all demonstrate that Adventists are caring, compassionate, loving people who know their Lord. While we do not hold sessions for the PR benefits, we must not be blind to such opportunities either!

At the heart of the reason for Session 2000 is the desire to know the will of the Lord so that the Church can progress into the future with enthusiasm and effectiveness. It provides the opportunity to confer together, to develop unity and fellowship, to keep the body of Christ on track. While the 2,000 delegates may seem a large number to some, we need the counsel of all parts of the world to maintain a relevant witness.

We need to learn from each other, to be informed. Session 2000 will help with just that—the reports from around the world, the inspiration from the many kindreds, tongues and peoples that make up the Church.

We need to support each other—to recognize our differing needs, to help each other with resources, concepts, programs that work. Session provides just that kind of opportunity for information exchange and personal interaction.

We need most of all to regain the vision *together*, of a Church that is one in Christ, of a people that are “marching to Zion.”

Back in 1863, the first General Conference Session organized the Church, elected officers, adopted a constitution. Doesn’t sound much. But it gave focus and direction for the Church that has now arrived at its fifty-seventh Session. Most of all it inspired the few believers to work together, to operate efficiently, to focus on the important matters facing the Church.

Session 2000 needs to have the same focus and vision. Expensive, maybe. But how do you put a price tag on unity, on the bonding of fellowship, on the consensus reached in difficult areas. How do you evaluate the opportunity for spiritual growth and development as a movement?

Why have a General Conference Session? In one word: *opportunity*.

An opportunity to meet and share and develop together. An opportunity to tell people who we really are. An opportunity to plan and counsel and regain the vision.

But most of all: an opportunity for God to work through this Church to fulfil His will.



GC Session 2000: Program

Daily Schedule for Business Days:

0800-0815 Musical Prelude
0815-0930 Devotional Message
0930-1200 Business Session
1200-1400 Lunch
1330-1500 Business Session or Session Committees
1500-1700 Business Session
1700-1845 Supper
1830-1845 Musical Program
1845-2100 International Festival of Mission

Friday Evening Schedule June 30 and July 7:

1830-1845 Musical Program
1845-2100 Vespers

Sabbath Schedule July 1:

0830-0900 Musical Program
0900-1030 Sabbath School
1030-1215 Divine Service - Speaker, G Ralph Thompson
1215-1430 Lunch
1430-1445 Musical Program
1445-1545 Lay Participation
1545-1600 Musical Program
1600-1730 Global Mission
1730-1900 Supper
1830-1900 Musical Program
1900-2100 International Festival of Mission Featuring:
North American Division, Trans-European Division

Sabbath Schedule July 8:

0830-0900 Musical Program
0900-1030 Sabbath School
1030-1215 Divine Service - Speaker, GC President
1215-1430 Lunch
1430-1500 Musical Program
1500-1700 Youth on Parade
1700-1845 Supper
1845-1930 Musical Program
1930-2100 Parade of Nations
2100-2115 Closing Challenge

Division reports: (18:45 - 21:00)

Sabbath July 1

North American Division, Trans-European Division

Sunday July 2

Euro-Asia Division, Southern African Union Conferences,
Northern Asia-Pacific Division

Monday July 3

South American Division, Euro-Africa Division

Tuesday July 4

Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Eastern Africa Division

Wednesday July 5

Southern Asia Division, Inter-American Division

Thursday July 6

South Pacific Division, Africa-Indian Ocean Division

Women's Ministries at the Session

“Joy in the Journey” will be the theme for the special ministries meetings sponsored by Women’s Ministries during GC Session 2000. These meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend and will be held each morning in the Convention Hall following the main session devotional meeting time. The meetings will be held Monday through Thursday, July 3-6.

The programs will consist of presentations on the theme of the day, reports from various divisions of the world, drama, prayer emphasis, and special music. Translations will be available in at least the three primary languages of Spanish, Portuguese, and French. Other groups may have translation by special arrangement.

Two afternoons, July 4 and 6, there will also be seminars that will be of interest, especially to women, and some also of special interest to Women’s Ministries directors.

At this time the individual speakers and presenters have not yet been finalized so please watch for further details later. [Ardis Stenbakken]

Volunteers Needed

If you are friendly, interested in meeting people, enjoy helping others—we have a volunteer position for you.

During the General Conference Session, “Hospitality Services” will meet and greet visitors and delegates from around the world, provide information, give directions, and assist in the many ways necessary to make a large gathering a pleasant experience.

If you are interested in helping provide this assistance, you may obtain a copy of the volunteer application form by contacting us as follows:

Ralph Janes, Session Liaison, e-mail rjanes@sdacc.org

Tina Keys, Secretary, e-mail tkeys@sdacc.org

at The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada

Telephone 905-433-0011 Fax 905-433-0982

If you have access to the Internet you may visit us at www.sdacc.org/gcvolunteer to download a hardcopy or complete an on-line version of the application form.

[Ralph Janes]

Questions & Answers

**Q: What about the GC Session logo?
What's it like?**

A: *The Toronto 2000 Session logo will be the same as the Church's logo which was adopted for the World Church during this quinquennium. By doing so, the General Conference is giving prominent exposure to the Seventh-day Adventist Church's corporate identity. The Session theme is: Almost Home.*



How Are You Receiving Session 2000 News?

Session 2000 News is a monthly publication available to you in the following formats:

- 1) fax copy
- 2) e-mail text copy
- 3) e-mail PDF copy
- 4) mail
- 5) viewing through the official web site:
www.adventist.org

Let us know how you would prefer to receive the newsletter. Contact our office at:

Phone: 301-680-6306 or 301-680-6308
Fax: 301-680-6312
E-mail: Rodriguezd@gc.adventist.org and
BrannanH@gc.adventist.org

FACTS AND PEOPLE YOU NEED TO KNOW:

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Session 2000 News On the Web!

**Have you visited the official web site for Session 2000?
The web site contains information you can't afford to miss:**

Official GC Session Brochure

Fact Sheet

Session Program

Visitor Information

Housing Application/Accommodations

Exhibitor and Organizer Information

GC2000 Preview (pictures)

Music: Coordinators, Guidelines, and Applications

Footsteps of the Pioneers Tour, July 2000: Tour Letter, Itinerary and Application

Visit us today at www.adventist.org