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Pages Perspective

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A Page's Perspective

BY KRISTEN DENSLow

Upon alighting from the Andrews University mini bus on June 27, twenty-five students peered across the steaming city of St. Louis and wondered what it would have in store for them over the next two weeks. These students were selected by an application process to serve at the General Conference (GC) business session as pages and were assigned to several different departments, including Session Management, Communication, Nominating Committee, and Secretariat.

The group spent their days in St. Louis traversing the dome on foot while enviously eyeing those possessing Segways. According to statistics carefully tracked by one page, the students accrued an average of 6.6 miles of walking per day.

When I first found out I had been selected as part of this group, I had absolutely no idea what to expect. I had been to sessions in the past, but never in such a capacity. I was assigned to the Communication department, located in the sixth floor press box overlooking the Edward Jones Dome. From our perch, we were able to observe the frenetic activity that is the GC Session.

We trekked through the massive dome on missions and exchanged smiles with other khaki, black, and white clad pages who were frantically attempting to register guests, manage delegates, and distribute materials. We assisted media representation from around the globe—sometimes by using hand signals for lack of other communication devices—to make sure they got their stories and photos to share the session with their brothers and sisters back home. We copied, faxed, took notes, and answered phones while observing the communication hub of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Being an active part of the session in St. Louis was very different from my previous experiences as an observer. Instead of casually dropping in on the evening meetings and scoping out exhibits, I was involved in the very process of making the church happen. It is absolutely fascinating to watch a business session involving over 2,000 delegates. I was able to watch these delegates discuss and vote on a number of issues, including the addition of a 28th Fundamental Belief. I observed delegates heatedly debate the policies of the church and then fellowship together as a group on Sabbath.

As a life-long Seventh-day Adventist Christian, sometimes it is easy to forget how exciting it really is to be a part of a unique church like ours. Spending two weeks in St. Louis gave me an incredible perspective regarding the church.

Despite being a group with vast differences, the church is able to function in the unity of its mission. It is a rare experience to see people of all different cultures and backgrounds come together on common ground. People from India, Zimbabwe, Germany, and Brazil worked together, deliberating over issues that effect every single one of them. I met fascinating individuals from all over the world, each with their own story. We bonded over a shared set of beliefs and a sincere love of Jesus Christ.

Looking back over the session, I can honestly say it was a privilege to take part in such an endeavor. I realize now how blessed I am to be part of such a diverse church with such unique people. After almost two weeks watching the church at work, I was able to worship on Sabbath morning with 70,000 people—each with a different background, but united in Christ.

Kristen Denslow is an English major at Andrews University.