

The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Religious Freedom

Organized on May 20, 1863, in Battle Creek, Michigan, the Seventh-day Adventist Church currently has 12,035,801 baptized members. It is estimated that the Adventist community, numbers at least 25 million. The Adventist Church has a presence in 204 of the nations and regions recognized by the United Nations. The Annual Statistical Report for 2001 reveals that the Church employs 170,840 persons world-wide. The Adventist Church runs 6,613 institutions, including: 692 healthcare institutions, 174 hospitals, 6,046 educational institutions, and 94 colleges and universities whose attendance records show well over one million students currently are attending world-wide. The other institutions include orphanages and a number of other entities designed to provide humanitarian assistance.

Since its beginning, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has defended religious freedom for all. Under its patronage, several religious liberty associations have been established. The International Religious Liberty Association IRLA, founded in 1893, became a non-sectarian association in 1946. Its current president is Dr. Denton Lotz, General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance.