

THE 2007 NORTH AMERICAN URBAN FORUM

“Race & Reconciliation: Melting Pot or Mosaic?”

“To help the poor, to minister to them in their slums, to sympathize with them in their poverty, and afflictions, and irreligion, was the natural outcome that came to my soul through believing in Jesus Christ.” (William Booth)

- By 2007, more people will be living in cities than in rural areas for the first time in history.
- By 2015 there will be fifty cities in the world of over a million and twenty-one cities of over 10 million.
- Worldwide cities gain one million people a week.
- Within thirty years, one in three people will live in slums.
- 40% of the Canadian population resides in six urban centers (Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal).
- In North America over 50% of all churches are located in small town or rural areas. 25% are located in cities with a population over 10,000. The remaining 25% are located in the suburbs.

The second bi-annual Urban Forum will take place from January 9-12, 2007 at The Salvation Army’s Continuing Education Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The Forum is a 614 network event in partnership with the USA Southern Territory. In June 2005, the first Urban Forum was convened with the theme of: “Transformation and Incarnation: Doing Church in the City.” It gathered delegates from Canada and the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia. While 2005’s Forum was primarily a venue for Salvationist practitioners, 2007 will see a number of delegates in attendance from other denominations and organizations.

The 2007 Forum is entitled the North American Urban Forum and will be focused on ministries within Canada and the US. The theme for 2007 is: “Race & Reconciliation: Melting Pot or Mosaic?” Plenary speakers include Robert Lupton from Atlanta (“For Theirs is the Kingdom”), Shane Claiborne from Philadelphia (“The Simple Way”, “The Irresistible Revolution”), Ray Eldred from Winnipeg and others.

The Forum provides an opportunity to discover resources, learn new ideas and be stretched in thinking as well as to meet and network with urban practitioners from across the continent. Sessions include worship and prayer together lead by Marty Mikles; Interaction with plenary speakers; Presentation of papers with response and dialogue from delegates; *Open Space* sessions to explore, discuss and argue various aspects specific to the urban context; *Storytelling* sessions in which new and innovative ministries are highlighted; *Faith & Culture* sessions during which the delegates will interact with films and music videos on race and reconciliation themes. The program will also include a field trip to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Museum.

A European Urban Forum is planned for the Fall of 2007, to be hosted in Leeds, England as a partnership project between the 614 network and the NEO network, ALOVE UK.