City of Toronto New Bylaws Could Affect Adventist Churches

Call for Pastors and Members to Attend City of Toronto’s Town Hall Meetings

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The City of Toronto is poised to introduce a new Bylaw that will prevent churches and other religious organisations from planting churches in Industrial zones within Toronto.

The high cost of real estate in Toronto has prohibited many churches from building churches so they turned to converting suitable industrial buildings into places of worship. In its present form, the new Bylaw will bring a halt to this practice, thus forcing new churches out of the Toronto area.

The proposed Bylaw suggests that existing ‘lawful places of worship’ in those industrial zones will be permitted to continue. However, it raises questions as to the definition of ‘lawful places of worship’ and whether a particular faith group will at some time in the future be faced with eviction.
Pastor Mansfield Edwards has called on pastors to mobilize their church members to attend two town hall meetings planned by the City of Toronto, in order to voice their opposition to the proposed Bylaws. The meetings will be held on Thursday, September 19, at Etobicoke Civic Centre Council Chambers, 399 The West Mall; and on Friday September 20, at North York Civic Centre Members Lounge, 5100 Yonge Street. Both meetings will run from 4 to 8 p.m.

**Canada Christian College has launched a vigorous campaign to oppose the new Bylaw. Christians are encouraged to pray, rally contacts, sign petitions and call every City Councillor, sign open letters from their pastors, attend town hall meetings and visit Councillor Offices. Visit the website see [War on Churches](#).**

Churches renting from the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) will also find themselves severely affected by a proposed change in fees for permits. From January 1, 2013, faith based organisations will have to pay a 43.7% increase to rent space for use of classrooms, halls, and gymnasiums.

However, it’s the compulsory janitorial fees, amounting in some cases to an exorbitant level that makes the total increase prohibitive for most churches using TDSB premises.

Pastors and members are strongly encouraged to sign petitions, call trustees and write letters of concern and protest to them.

It would appear that the actions of both the City of Toronto and the TDSB could result in significantly reducing the presence and influence of churches in Toronto.

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*Halsey Peat*

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