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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South American man bikes to world religious conference in Atlanta

ATLANTA — George Silva didn't wait until the last minute to embark on his journey to a major religious convention in Atlanta. He began pedaling last August – in Brazil.

The 49-year-old biker is expected to complete his 8,600-mile odyssey Thursday morning at the Georgia Dome, site of the world session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. His itinerary covered 11 countries through northern South America, most of Central America and five southern-tier states in the U.S.

The biker and runner will be greeted at about 10 a.m. between the Georgia World Congress Center and the Omni Hotel by fellow church members from around the world. Church officials have arranged for police to block streets during Silva's final approach on Capitol Ave. S.E. and Magnum St. S.W.

Silva, who is married and has two teenage children, converted to Christianity after attempting suicide in his youth. This is his seventh in a series of cycling "missionary trips," totaling more than 18,000 miles, on which he proclaims his belief in the soon return of Jesus.

For this trek, he departed Boa Vista, Brazil, on August 12, 2009. His route covered portions of Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and the United States. From Mexico he crossed into Texas, then Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia.

About the General Conference Session:

The 59th General Conference Session is a business meeting of the global Seventh-day Adventist Church from June 24 to July 3, 2010 in Atlanta. Occurring every five years, General Conference Session gathers representatives from the church around the world to elect leadership and determine the focus of mission. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a mainline protestant denomination with over 16.3 million members in 206 nations around the world. The church's headquarters is in Silver Spring, Maryland.

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