

**23rd ANNUAL MISSISSIPPI STATE YOUTH CONFERENCE
DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY
CLEVELAND, MS
MAY 29-31, 2015**

We are elated to announce that we have been invited to convene on the beautiful campus of Delta State University in the city of Cleveland, MS. Delta State is one of the nation's premier universities and enjoys a national and international reputation for academic excellence. The theme for the 2015 Mississippi State Youth Conference is, **"Powered Up: Powered Down For What? Christian Youth Living Life on Holy Spirit Maximum (Galatians 5:13-26).**

We anticipate a fantastic time of Christian fellowship on this great campus of Delta State University at the 23rd Annual Mississippi State Youth Conference. **This is the initial packet. As additional information is received, we will send updates on: pricing for hotels, contact info for each committee, and free time activities.**

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!!!
REGISTRATION FEES**

Registration fees for the youth conference will be \$75.00 for the youth (13-20) and for qualified counselors. The registration fee includes: food, housing, t-shirts and pageant admission. The fee is a firm commitment and cannot be changed. **NO YOUTH WILL BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE PROGRAMS WITHOUT REGISTERING WITH THE CONFERENCE.** The State Directors must make definite commitments to the University; **THEREFORE THE DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION WILL BE APRIL 15, 2015. A LATE REGISTRATION FEE OF \$10.00 WILL BE CHARGED FOR PERSONS REGISTERING AFTER APRIL 15, 2015, MAKING THE TOTAL REGISTRATION FEE \$85.00. REGISTRATION CANNOT BE COMPLETED UNTIL THE TOTAL REGISTRATION FEE IS SUBMITTED IN FULL ON OR BEFORE THE DEADLINE.** All payment of registration funds must be made by way of cash, cashier's check, money order or church check, made payable to The Mississippi State Youth Conference. Do not send personal checks. Accommodations on campus may be limited to specific number. Therefore, those who register first will be considered first. **DUE TO OUR HAVING PRE-PLANNED ARRANGEMENTS, THERE WILL BE NO REFUNDS AFTER REGISTRATION. REGISTRATION FOR THE CONFERENCE IS DESIRED OF EVERYONE WHO ATTENDS. FOR THOSE WHO REGISTER AND PAY THE FULL FEE THERE IS NO ADDITIONAL COST FOR ANY CONFERENCE ACTIVITY. HOWEVER, FOR THOSE WHO ATTEND ONLY FOR THE PAGEANT, A FEE OF \$10.00 WILL BE ASSESSED. THIS FEE EXCLUDES PARENTS OF THE CONTESTANTS; HOWEVER, THE NAME OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF CONTESTANTS COMPETING MUST BE SENT IN WITH REGISTRATION PACKETS.**

OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATE YOUTH CONFERENCE

- To become acquainted with saints from other geographical areas within the state who share the same interests.
- To share ideas with one another.
- To help guide youth in the direction of God by providing mature Christian teachers.
- To give youth the privilege of self-expression and the opportunity to exhibit their God-given talents.
- To instill youth with the desire to have Christian companions.
- To motivate youth to serve God.
- To enlighten one's outlook with self-determination and self-esteem.

****SPECIAL NOTICE****
ATTENTION!!! ALL COUNSELORS & PARENTS!

Because a good understanding prevents a misunderstanding, please note that the rules and regulations of the Mississippi State Youth Conference will be strictly enforced. Conference officials strongly suggest that counselors copy and distribute this list of guidelines to all participating adults, youth and parents:

- Water-guns, radios, cassette players, headphones, CD players, televisions and all other electronic devices are not allowed at the Conference. If any such items are found, they will be confiscated by Conference Officials and held until the day of departure.
- All males, youth and adults, must wear ties to Sunday morning services. They will not be allowed to participate in the services if they are not wearing a tie. Knee length shorts are allowed for Friday's activities only. Please note that the dress code will be strictly enforced.
- All females, youth and adults, must wear knee length dresses, knee length skirts or pantsuits to all of the Conference programs and Sunday morning worship services. Again, knee length shorts are allowed for Friday's activities only. Please note that the dress code will be strictly enforced.
- Unruly behavior during the Conference and especially during the Pageant will not be tolerated. Offenders will receive one warning. If the unacceptable behavior continues, the offender's parents will be notified and they will be sent home immediately.
- It is mandatory for all youth and counselors to attend the Conference workshops, classes and evening sessions. There will absolutely be no loitering allowed on the campus. Except in cases of illness, no one will be allowed to remain in their dormitory room while a program is taking place.
- There will absolutely be no visitation between males and females in the dormitory rooms. Visitation in the dormitories will only be allowed in the lounge or lobby. If a male or female is found in the dormitory room of a person of the opposite sex, their parents will be notified and both parties will be sent home immediately.
- Each Conference participant is expected to clean his/her own dormitory room upon departure. Counselors, parents and each congregation will be held financially responsible for damages or lost dormitory keys. The cost for lost keys is \$25.00. Congregations and parents will be charged accordingly for rooms left in a filthy or unacceptable condition.
- Eating is not allowed in the Bologna Performing Arts Center (BPAC), where the majority of the Conference's events will be held.

IF WE ALL WORK TOGETHER AND FOLLOW THE RULES, WE WILL SURELY HAVE A BLESSED TIME AT THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE. MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS EACH OF YOU!

COUNSELORS' GUIDELINES

In view of the importance of conduct issues, the role of the counselors becomes **extremely pronounced and important**. The role of a good counselor, during the weekend of the conference is very rewarding. As we know, this will certainly not be a vacation because of the welfare of the youth whose responsibility we have assumed for this weekend. In order to make it easy for you to do your duty while at the conference and to prevent critical reflections upon the cause of Christ, it will be necessary to closely screen the youth that you bring to the conference.

IF DURING THE YEAR PRECEDING THE CONFERENCE, A YOUTH HAS NOT DEMONSTRATED HIGH CHRISTIAN MORAL STANDARDS AND CHARACTER, WE ASK THAT SUCH YOUTH BE LEFT AT HOME. PLEASE GIVE CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE ENCLOSED DECORUM SHEET AS A GUIDELINE FOR YOUR BENEFIT. IF A YOUTH IS NOT ENDORSED BY THE LOCAL LEADERSHIP, THE MINISTER, THE ELDERS, OR THOSE IN CHARGE OF THE CONGREGATION, WE ASK THAT THIS YOUTH BE LEFT AT HOME.

We would like to urge everyone attending the conference to make plans to remain through Sunday morning worship services. We would like to close with a mass worship service. Please make plans to be in attendance until the conference ends.

COUNSELORS

- **SHOULD THOROUGHLY BRIEF THEIR YOUNG PEOPLE ON ALL THE RULES AND REGULATIONS BEFORE COMING TO THE CONFERENCE.**
- **SHOULD KNOW, AGREE AND FOLLOW ALL RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE.**
- **SHOULD ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUTH DURING THE ENTIRE CONFERENCE, ATTEND ALL SESSIONS, AND SEE TO IT THAT THEIR YOUTH DO THE SAME.**

- SHALL BE ASKED TO LEAVE IF THEY ARE NOT COOPERATIVE.
- SHOULD BE 100% TOGETHER ON ALL RULES AND REGULATIONS AND SHOULD KNOW THE YOUTH THEY ARE WORKING WITH.
- SHOULD SET AN EXAMPLE FOR THE YOUTH IN FAITHFULNESS AND ALL OTHER CHRISTIAN GRACES IN THEIR LOCAL CONGREGATION AND AT THE CONFERENCE.
- UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD ONE COUNSELOR CONFRONT ANOTHER COUNSELOR IN THE PRESENCE OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE REGARDING THAT YOUNG PERSON'S CONDUCT.
- ALL COUNSELORS SHOULD BE UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THEIR LOCAL CONGREGATION AND THE LEADERSHIP WILL BE NOTIFIED IN CASES OF MISCONDUCT ON THE PART OF THE COUNSELOR.
- NO SMOKING, DRINKING OF ALCOHOL, DRUGS, OR VULGARITY WILL BE ENGAGED IN EITHER BY THE COUNSELOR OR YOUTH.
- SHOULD INFORM THEIR YOUTH THAT UNLESS THEY ARE WELL-DISCIPLINED AND COMMIT THEMSELVES TO BECOME MEMBERS OF THE GROUP THEY WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND THE MISSISSIPPI STATE YOUTH CONFERENCE.
- SHOULD WORK DIRECTLY WITH THE YOUTH IN THEIR LOCAL CONGREGATION IN ORDER TO BE ALLOWED TO COUNSEL THEM AT THE CONFERENCE.
- SHOULD BE HOUSED IN DORMITORIES AND/OR HOTELS TOGETHER (WITHIN CERTAIN AREAS) OF THEIR YOUTH.
- SHOULD, BEFORE RETIRING AT NIGHT, SEE THAT ALL YOUTH FOR WHOM THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE, ARE IN THEIR ASSIGNED DORMITORY/HOTEL ROOMS.
- WILL BE ABSOLUTELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONDUCT OF THEIR YOUTH.
- SHOULD BE INFORMED OF ANY PHYSICAL PROBLEMS A YOUTH MAY HAVE.
- SHOULD SEE THAT EACH YOUTH BRINGS A BIBLE.
- SHOULD BRING WITH THEM THE HEALTH INSURANCE CARD FOR EACH YOUTH THAT THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR.

DECORUM

- All youth must be under the guidance of a counselor.
- All male youth attending the conference must have a male counselor and all female youth attending the conference must have a female counselor. AS THIS IS A WEEKEND OF EXERCISING CARE, CONCERN AND VIGILANCE OVER THE WELFARE OF OUR YOUTH THAT WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR, WE ARE ASKING THAT A COUNSELOR BE ASSIGNED FOR EVERY FIVE (5) YOUTH, MALE AND FEMALE.

- NO YOUTH WILL BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE PREMISES ALONE NOR WITHOUT HIS/HER COUNSELOR PRESENT.
- ALL YOUTH MUST CARRY THE NAME OF HIS/HER COUNSELOR WITH THEM AT ALL TIMES.
- Disorderly conduct, such as pillow fighting, profane language, playing on elevators, running up and down stairs/hall, or talking out windows will not be tolerated. This will be strictly enforced during the entire Conference.
- If youth's behavior is inappropriate, their parents and congregation will be notified of such. Youth will be sent home at his/her own expense.
- THE USE OF ALCOHOL, DRUGS, SMOKING OR VULGARITY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED NOR TOLERATED. VIOLATORS WILL BE SENT HOME.
- ALL YOUTH ARE TO BE IN THEIR DESIGNATED DORMITORY BY 12:00 MIDNIGHT.
- ALL YOUTH ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND ALL SESSIONS. BADGES MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES.
- If a youth is ill and unable to attend a session, he/she should report to his/her counselor. The counselor will take necessary steps for his/her care and will remain with the sick youth.
- All attendees are asked to wear their 2015 official t-shirt on Saturday to the sessions not including the pageant. Knee-length shorts are only permitted for Friday's activities.
- All participants are expected and must respect authority. The Mississippi State Youth Conference directors and respective counselors will deal with petty offences. Directors will make final decisions.
- Destruction of property is prohibited.
- Report all lost articles to the LOST & FOUND department.

SPECIAL HOUSING NOTES

Males and females will be housed in separate dormitories. The dormitory rooms are equipped with single beds and are designed to sleep one person in each bed. When we will have vacated the University premises, we wish to be welcomed to return. Because of this desire, it is expected that our conduct be above reproach. Please see that your room is left perfectly clean. WE ARE ASKING THAT ALL COUNSELORS GIVE SPECIAL ATTENTION TO ROOM CLEAN-UP BEFORE VACATING THE DORMITORY AREA.

PLEASE NOTE THAT NO CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 12 WILL BE ALLOWED TO SLEEP IN THE DORMITORIES. Special accommodations are available for youth under 12,

their parents/guardians, and/or counselors. You will be responsible for reserving your lodging accommodations at the hotels. When calling the hotels, mention that you are registering with the Mississippi State Youth Conference. The hotels that have been set aside for the Conference includes: The Comfort Inn, Cleveland, MS, Econolodge of Cleveland, Cleveland, MS and The Hampton Inn, Cleveland, MS and Holiday Inn Express, Cleveland, MS. Non-smoking double-rooms have been reserved for the Conference for those who have youth under the ages of 12. (See enclosed flier for hotel information).

ESSAY GUIDELINES

High school seniors from each congregation are encouraged to write an essay for this year's conference. We would like to encourage all youth, especially seniors, to excel in written communication skills. What better way to start than by writing an essay for the Conference. Guidelines are provided to help each youth present a quality essay on the current Mississippi State Youth Conference theme, **"Powered Up: Powered Down For What?-Christian Youth Living Life on Holy Spirit Maximum (Galatians 5:13-26)**.

- o Maximum essay length is 500 typewritten words. Essays will not be returned.
- o Your essay must be on the current youth conference theme.
- o Your essay will be judged on:
 1. Creative Content - Use a unique perspective or point of view.
 2. Idea Development - Was the idea developed to its fullest extent? Can the reader understand and appreciate the author's rationale?
 3. Writing Style - Includes format, spelling, punctuation, grammatical and typographical errors.
 4. Essays must be neat, including margin balance.
 5. Essays must be typed (double-spaced, using a 12 size font and a 1-inch margin).
 6. Essays must relay clear, understandable thought.
 7. Thoughts or quotations from sources other than your own creation must be noted as such.
 8. All essays must be submitted by or before May 16, 2015. No essays will be accepted after the deadline date nor on the day of registration.
 9. Four copies of the essay must be submitted.

**SEND ESSAY ENTRIES TO:
MISSISSIPPI STATE YOUTH CONFERENCE
1202 North Street
Cleveland, MS 38732
ATTN: ESSAY COORDINATOR**

PAGEANT GUIDELINES

Guidelines for the Annual Mississippi State Youth Conference Pageant

It is the purpose of this part of the youth conference to stimulate and promote that inner Christian ability in every youth to a higher ground. Through Christian competitions, each one should recognize the talent GOD has given us for the strengthening of the Body of Christ and for His honor and glory.

I. REGISTRATION

- A. The counselors of all youth competing must mail the complete and appropriate information to: The Mississippi State Youth Conference, Attention: Pageant Coordinator.
- B. The counselors should do all registering. No youth should or will be allowed to compete if he/she is not under a counselor. Youth should be actively involved at their local congregation. Youth may have letters of recommendations from the community, school, counselor, etc., but the spiritual leadership of said youth's congregation has final decision as to whether or not said youth may represent that congregation at the state and national conference. The minister or elders have the final authority as to said youth's participation and representing that congregation.
- C. Registration may include letters for contestants from church counselors, ministers, school counselors, or principals. **NOTE: Bonus of three (3) additional points will be given for sending not less than two (2) letters of recommendations, five points for all three recommendations.**

II. AGE/QUALIFICATION

- A. The age qualification is from 13 to 20 years (See Division section).
- B. Married youth, as well as, youth with children (both male and female) are disqualified from participating in MSYC pageant.

III. DRESS

- A. If a contestant desires to wear a special outfit for his/her talent competition or performance, this is allowable. Youth should be dressed in said outfit when time to go on stage. After performance, there will be time to change into formal attire. Judges will be notified that costumes or special dress are part of the performance. Dress should not be too extreme, lewd, or offensive.

- B. Formal wear can be worn throughout performance, if desired. Formal attire for this year's conference for all young ladies competing in the pageant is white dresses and formal attire for all young men competing in this year's conference is black tuxedos or black dress suits. This attire has been designated by the National Youth Conference and has been incorporated into the Mississippi State Youth Conference. When winners are announced, contestants should already be dressed in formal wear, ready to accept awards. We recommend that all young men wear ties with formal wear.

IV. DIVISION

- A. There will be two (2) divisions: Division A (ages 13-15) and Division B (ages 16-20). Please make sure that all contestants are the correct age for the category that they are competing as this can cause problems for them should they advance to the National Conference.

Division A: Miss Mississippi State Congeniality
Mr. Mississippi State Congeniality

Division B: Miss Mississippi State Youth Conference
Mr. Mississippi State Youth Conference

- B. Reign of Winners:

1. Reign of winners in Division A, will be for one year. Those who do not win in this division may compete again in this division until he/she either wins at the national level or exceeds the age limit. Youth may aspire for Division B, upon reaching the required age.

2. Reign of winners in Division B, will be for one year. Those who do not win in this division may compete again in this division until he/she either wins at the national level or exceeds the age limit.

V. INTRODUCTION OF YOUTH COMPETING

- A. Counselors must mail registration form (see attached form) in by or before April 15, 2015 to Mississippi State Youth Conference, Attention: Pageant Coordinator, with the necessary information: position competing for, telephone number, birth date, local congregation, talent to be displayed, speech topic with all information legible (easy to read). This will ensure proper introductions.
- B. When it is time to compete, the moderator will introduce the contestant, only as "Contestant Number _____", and the contestant will then formally begin their performance. **WE SPECIFICALLY REQUEST THAT THE CONTESTANT NOT TELL HIS/HER NAME NOR WHICH CONGREGATION THEY ARE REPRESENTING! EX. "GOOD EVENING... I AM CONTESTANT**

NO. __ AND THIS EVENING I WILL BE SPEAKING ON THE SUBJECT.....” If the talent is to be displayed first, the youth should notify the judges that this is being done. If the speech is given first, the youth should say at the completion of the speech, “And now for my talent, I would like to...” and then proceed to display their talent.

VI. JUDGING

- A. There will be five (5) judges selected by the Delta Area Churches of Christ, and approved by the Mississippi State Youth Conference Board. The selection of the judges will be coordinated by Sis. Barbara Davis. The judges will be members of the Churches of Christ.
- B. Judges will decide winners by marking their points on the score sheet for individual contestants. Scores will be computed during the performance of contestants. Upon reaching the completion of computation of scores, the winner’s name will be placed in a sealed envelope to be announced at the program’s finale.
- C. Judges should be knowledgeable in the following: Christian values; music performance; drama; and speech delivery. Also, judges must be able to stay throughout the entire phase of the program, so as to listen to all contestants and judge fairly. Judges should be non-partisan to ensure fairness at every level of competition.
- D. Each contestant will be judged on the following:
 - 1) Personal appearance. **Indecent exposure is prohibited. No points will be earned for such appearance. This includes no low necklines, no halter-type dresses, tops, etc., no high splits above the knee, and no tight fitting attire. Please note that the dress code will be strictly enforced and judges will have knowledge of what is presentable and suitable attire and will judge accordingly.**
 - 2) Speech, content, delivery, originality and spiritual message.
 - 3) Poise
 - 4) Personality
 - 5) Special talent displayed (with a spiritual message)
- E. A point system will be used whereby a contestant may receive from one (1) to five (5) points in each category:
 - 1 point - poor**
 - 2 points - fair**
 - 3 points - good**
 - 4 points - very good**
 - 5 points - outstanding**

A total of 25 maximum points may be obtained, plus the extra points for registering letters on time. In the event of a tie, judges will render the tie breaking decision. Each contestant will be called on again to appear before the audience and judges. A relatively easy question on current affairs will be asked each finalist. The contestant will then have to respond. The judges will determine which contestant gave the best response. **We are asking that the previous year's winners be present to turn over their reign as well as assist in the crowing of the new winners during the awards ceremony.**

F. **ALL DISAGREEMENTS, DISPUTES, OR OBJECTIONS SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PAGEANT COORDINATOR AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD ONLY. THEY WILL INVESTIGATE AND MAKE THE FINAL DECISION.**

VII. CONTESTANTS PERFORMANCE

- A. Contestants **MUST** compete by presenting **A SPEECH ON THE CONFERENCE THEME AND A TALENT. SPEECHES MAY ALSO BE ON ANY OF THE SUB-TOPICS.** The talent competition may include a dramatic reading, music performance, composition, craft display, etc. Judges will allow contestants six (6) minutes to present his/her speech and talent using the time to contestant's best advantage. However, contestants will be penalized points for going over the time limit. One point will be subtracted from a contestant's score for each minute over the time limit. **NOTE: EACH SECOND WILL COUNT AS OVER-TIME.**
- B. Contestants should strive to have as much individual performance as possible. No other person(s) may vocalize in said performance or have an active part to lend additional performance credit to the contestant competing. Only one person is competing as an individual and not as a group, partners, etc. Check with Sis. Barbara Davis if there is doubt as to how another person(s) may be used. All extras must be silent and active as little as possible.
- C. **PROPS:** A voice recording on a tape recorder and recorded background music may be used **in moderation**. Props should be kept to a bare minimum, if at all. Youth should not have to decorate the stage with props in an attempt to impress the audience and judges. If a youth does use props in performing, there will only be one (1) minute allowed for set-up of props and one (1) allowed for removal of props. The removal must be done smoothly, quietly and handled cooperatively. Only one minute can be afforded, and anyone going over one minute for set-up or removal will lose one (1) point for every 30 seconds overtime. **NO EXCEPTIONS UNLESS OTHERWISE DEEMED BY THE COORDINATOR OF THE PAGEANT.** Props should be cleared with Sis. Barbara Davis and the Conference Coordinating Committee prior to April 15, 2015, by sending information to the registration mailing address. Additionally, it is ***mandatory*** that each contestant submit an essay of a maximum of one hundred and fifty (150) words and a minimum of one-hundred and twenty-five (125)

words explaining why they are aspiring for their said title. Again, this is designated at the National Youth Conference level and was incorporated in the MSYC, effective in 2008. Failure to register or comply with the aforementioned requirements will lead to your disqualification and not being able to participate at the State Conference. All letters and registration forms must be postmarked by or before April 15, 2015. **THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS. ****NOTE: NO LETTERS WILL BE ACCEPTED AT THE STATE CONFERENCE.**

All registration information should be submitted to:

***MISSISSIPPI STATE YOUTH CONFERENCE
ATTN: SIS. DEBORAH MOORE, REGISTRATION
CHAIRPERSON
1202 North Street
Cleveland, MS 38732***

Special Notes

Children under the age of 12 are not allowed to be housed on campus. Special hotel accommodations for the youth and counselors/parents have been arranged at the three hotels listed below. Please note: You will be responsible for making your own hotel reservations. When making reservations, please let them know you are with the Mississippi State Youth Conference. Reservations must be made between January 1, 2015 and May 1, 2015 to be guaranteed a room.

**Comfort Inn
Hwy 61 North
Cleveland, MS
Phone 662-846-1525**

**EconoLodge
Hwy 61 North
Cleveland, MS
Phone 662-843-4060**

**Hampton Inn
Hwy 61 North
Cleveland, MS
662-846-2915**

**Holiday Inn Express
Hwy 61 North
Cleveland, MS
Phone 662-843-9300**