

# GROWING PAINS

western eye ●

One of the largest churches in North America, Louisville's Southeast Christian Church in has refitted its sanctuary in order to accommodate its unprecedented Easter congregation. **Tim Goodyer** reports



**FOUNDED IN 1962 WITH A** modest 53 members, Louisville's Southeast Christian Church has since grown to become one of the largest churches in North America. From its initial location in the Hikes Point area it moved to the Goldsmith Elementary School and had a congregation in excess of 300 in 1968. The church started construction of a 550-seat sanctuary in January 1967 and completed three phases of construction by June 1978, also adding education space, a nursery and an all-purpose building. By Easter 1976, regular attendance had reached 1,000 and, in 1983, the church began the search for a new, larger building. This opened in April 1987 with attendance still growing, reaching 10,000 for the first time in Easter 1990. In 1992

the church was on the move yet again, with the groundbreaking for a new building at 920 Blankenbaker Parkway held on 25 September 1994. This is now its permanent home.

The current facility opened in 1998 and features a sanctuary that seats 9,600, with more than 24,000 people attending the first Christmas Eve services. By 1999 the average weekly attendance climbed from 10,500 to 13,000 and, by April 2004, attendance at the Easter services had risen to 29,424. In previous years, in an effort to have the entire congregation in place for a single service, the church had conducted the Easter services at Freedom Hall – home to the University of Louisville men's basketball teams – but the congregation at these

**The vast Southeast Christian Church arena.**

services had grown to exceed even the Freedom Hall's capacity. As a result, the church now runs multiple services in its own main sanctuary. When the time came to update the sanctuary's audio system, the church board of directors called on Duncan Edwards, an ADI Group consultant, who arranged a number of rigorous demonstrations and comparisons of line array systems currently on the market before concluding that an Adamson System would best meet the needs of the church.

Given the popularity of the Easter services, the board of directors requested that the installation be complete in time for this year's extensive celebration, which allowed Adamson less than three weeks to build and ship the order from receipt. To ease the situation, Adamson's demonstration stock was temporarily installed and left in place for the services that occurred before the delivery could be properly completed.

In order to determine the optimum system configuration, Mr Edwards used Adamson Shooter software to model the space. The program runs under Windows and can determine the ideal number of speaker boxes and the location of



the rigging frame for a given space. The design, as predicted by the software, specified four main arrays of 16 Adamson Y-10s and two Y-10 Subs, with Two SpekTrix Waves at the bottom of each array, flown high in a wide horizontal arc in order to cover the width of the auditorium. Four hangs consisting of six SpekTrix and three SpekTrix Waves each, are used for under balcony coverage and four SpekTrix Waves are used as front fill with five SX18s and one MH121.5 at each side for fills. Only two T-21s were needed to provide the necessary bass reinforcement, and these have been concealed under the stage.

In addition to the Adamson installation, the South East Christian Church, is the first to install Lab.gruppen's new C Series of amplifiers, which were specifically made for the permanent installation. In all, 13 C68:4s, 13 C28:4s, 20 C48:4s

and two Lab.gruppen fP6400s are used to power the various Adamson speaker systems.

The installation was carried out by Nashville-based Spectrum Sound with Mr Edwards acting as one of the consultants. Along with its installation work for various American churches, performance theatres and stadia, Spectrum also offers hire and sales services counting the renovation of the sound system at the 1,800-seat Central Christian Church in Las Vegas and the system at the 10,000-seat Tennessee Technological University sports arena among its recent projects.

With the new system in place, the Southeast Christian Church is free to concentrate on the many other aspects of its work, including the Country Lake Christian Retreat Center it operates near Henryville, Indiana, and recordings such as Michael W Smith's second album of contemporary worship music, *Worship Again*, that was recorded live at Southeast Christian in 2002.

[www.southeastchristian.org](http://www.southeastchristian.org)  
[www.spectrumsound.net](http://www.spectrumsound.net)  
[www.adamsonproaudio.com](http://www.adamsonproaudio.com)



**Left: The stage in use.**

**Centre: The Adamson demonstration system initially installed in the hall.**

**Right: The central installation, showing projection screens and line array cabinets.**