



PROCLAIMING **Jesus** PASSIONATELY

LUKE 4:18



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT RON AGUILERA

FYI (For Your Information...)

*A weekly e-newsletter for employees and friends of the
Illinois Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*

March 3, 2021



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

“That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.” Psalm 1:3

I love the psalms. There are praise psalms, lament psalms, penitential psalms, wisdom psalms...written by a variety of individuals. Psalm 1 is a wisdom psalm. A wisdom psalm contrasts two ways of life: one that leads to blessedness and one to cursedness. This psalm is a reminder that life works better with God than without Him.

In verse 3, the author uses the metaphor of a tree; if a tree is going to be beautiful and productive, it needs a source of water. So, imagine with me a tree planted by a spring of water...this is a healthy tree. It is contrasted to chaff. The opposite of a mighty tree is chaff (verse 4). Do you know what chaff is? Did you have it for breakfast this morning? Chaff is seed covering, plant debris. It has to be separated from the seed before the grain is sold at the market. Nobody wants to buy chaff because it is dead. It is worthless. You would have to separate chaff from seed. The way they would separate it is they would take baskets of grain and toss them in the air, and the wind would separate it. The chaff would be blown away by the wind.

Notice the contrast in verse 3. There's the person who is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither, and whatever they do prospers. Compared to chaff that is worthless, dead. It is the stuff that the wind blows away. Do you get the picture? You can be like a tree that bears fruit, or you can be like chaff. The choice is yours.

Here is what I have learned, if you want to wind up like a tree, you have to lower your engagement level with some activities and raise your activity level in another. Psalm 1 says we have to 'stop walking in the counsel of the wicked,' stop "standing in the ways sinners take," stop "sitting in the



Seventh-day
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*You can contact me
by writing:
Illinois Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists
619 Plainfield Road
Willowbrook IL 60527*

*by email:
president@ilsda.org*

*by phone:
630-686-2628*

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company of mockers.” Some of you might be wondering what this ancient imagery means. What does it mean today? It can mean that we need to stop hanging around some people, or we should put some distance between ourselves and some media, or environment...even good things. 1 Corinthians 10:23 says, “All is lawful, but not all things are edifying...”

The psalmist says, “If you want to be a tree planted by streams of water, delight yourself in the law of the Lord and meditate on it.” We should delight, meditate. You don’t read it to get through it, but you seek to absorb it. It becomes a daily practice. And we live life as Jesus did. What a great reminder!

I KNOW SOMETHING GOOD ABOUT...

...Roger and Debbie Henderson and Tim Pittenger. They are our leadership team down at beautiful Camp Akita. They have been preparing and beautifying the camp for use. They recently hosted four local fire departments for ice rescue training and are ready for bookings from our churches. Feel free to make plans to use Camp Akita in 2021!



COVID 19 UPDATE

The latest update is all 11 regions of the State of Illinois continue to be in Phase 4. This means there can be gatherings of up to 50 people or 50% room capacity (whichever is less). About 80% of our churches in Illinois have opened. The Illinois Conference Office has also reopened by appointment. As we move forward, we encourage you to continue to practice all safety protocols (wearing masks, social distancing, cleaning, etc.) and to pray for one another as we move forward God’s mission in Illinois.

NEWS

Last year, after the retirement of Ron Huff, the Illinois Conference Executive Committee voted to ask Lori Aguilera to serve as interim Superintendent of Education, as we considered the effects of COVID-19. This past week, the Illinois Conference Executive Committee and Standing Nominating Committee voted to remove the term “interim” and ask Lori Aguilera to continue to serve as Superintendent of Education for the Illinois Conference.

Also, the Conference Executive Committee voted to ask Katrina Baun, Principal/Teacher of our Gurnee School here in Illinois, to serve as the Associate Superintendent of Education for the Illinois Conference, effective July 1st. I want to thank both ladies for their willingness to serve.

RESOURCES

☞ Pastor Douglas Na’a, the director of It Is Written School of Evangelism - SALT, is facilitating a free 10-week online discipleship program on Sunday nights at 7:30 p.m. It all starts this coming Sunday night, March 7, and concludes on May 9. Douglas will facilitate each one-hour session. If you, or anyone in your church, wants to participate, please register at: <https://tinyurl.com/5un9wnxv>

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- ☞ Improve Your Church's Safety Online. Safety Sabbath® is an opportunity for Seventh-day Adventist Churches to create a safer environment for their congregation. Sign up today to receive tips on how to prepare for Safety Sabbath and a resource kit to help you protect your congregation. You can participate in Safety Sabbath whether you are meeting in person or virtually. This year's program on March 27 will focus on:
- Protecting against cybercrime
 - Avoiding liabilities from streaming services online
 - Adapting child protection policies to an online environment
- For more information, go to: Safetysabbath.org

DID YOU KNOW. . .

. . . the Illinois Conference theme for this year, 2021, is *Proclaiming Jesus Passionately*? Let's do all we can to proclaim/share Jesus with those who need to know Him.

"You should have a clear apprehension of the gospel. The religious life is not one of gloom and of sadness but of peace and joy coupled with Christlike dignity and holy solemnity. We are not encouraged by our Saviour to cherish doubts and fears and distressing forebodings; these bring no relief to the soul and should be rebuked rather than praised. We may have joy unspeakable and full of glory. Let us put away our indolence and study God's Word more constantly."

—Ellen White, *Evangelism* page 180



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