



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

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2019



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Birth announcements are wonderful ways of spreading joy. I remember when my wife and I first realized we were going to have a daughter. We send out announcements celebrating the good news. I was thinking about this recently as I reread one of the most celebrated bible passages at Christmas, where Isaiah announces the arrival of a child: *“To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”* Isaiah 9:6, 7

For me, three things set Isaiah’s announcement apart.

1. This announcement is sent really early. Some birth announcements go out soon after the baby is born, and others a bit later. But every single birth announcement I’ve ever sent, seen or received was sent after the baby was born. This one is different. It’s sent before the birth — seven hundred years before. The prophet Isaiah delivered it to the people of Israel while they were facing a threat from the growing superpower of Assyria, which would eventually destroy the northern kingdom of Israel and lead many Jews into captivity. Isaiah addressed this situation by promising the coming of a future King, to sustain them through dark times.

2. Isaiah announces a royal birth. I’ve never received a royal birth announcement, but I imagine it’s fancier than most, especially when it announces the birth of the future King. Isaiah announces a royal birth: “the government shall be upon his shoulder” (Isaiah 9:6). In Luke’s Gospel, we

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overhear another announcement of this same king: “the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32–33).

3. This child has four different names, each telling us what he will do. Most babies have just one name on their birth announcement. But Isaiah announces the birth of a baby with four names: “his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” One name wasn’t sufficient to describe this special child. Also, these names tell us what the baby will do. This baby is different. “Wonderful Counselor” indicates that Jesus will be a supernatural source of extraordinary wisdom — amazing news for those who need guidance. “Mighty God” indicates that Jesus will be divinely strong and powerful — amazing news for those who are weak. “Everlasting Father” indicates that Jesus will care for his people forever, as a father cares for his children — amazing news for those who are alone and unappreciated. “Prince of Peace” indicates that Jesus will bring deep well-being and right relationships — amazing news for all of us who lack peace with each other and with God.

As we remember the reason for the season, may we not forget that God did deliver on this promise. Jesus was born seven hundred years later and fulfilled every promise announced. God came among us in the person of Jesus. He took on flesh to give us wisdom, protection, fatherly care, and peace as we enter into relationship with him... and He is coming back soon! This is truly GOOD NEWS!

This will be the last FYI of 2019! The next one will come out on Thursday, January 2

LAST CALL! 1 Spot Left!

It is not too late. We need to fill the bus. **One place left.** Sign up now. The Illinois Conference is hosting a **Seven Churches of Revelation** trip to visit Greece and Turkey March 22-April 1, 2020. The highlights include Istanbul, Turkey, the seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation (which are found in both Turkey and Greece), Athens, Greece, and a three-day cruise with stops on the Greek isles of Patmos, Crete, and Santorini. (We will be on Patmos on Sabbath). For more information and the registration form, please visit the home page of the Illinois Conference website: www.ilcsda.org. Scroll down through the details to the links to the forms and documents at the end. To enroll, send your application directly to Gospel Travel. If you have any questions, contact Wanda Martinez at 919-577-0043.



NEWS



Check out our Facebook page at Illinois Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

☞ Hope Channel International, Inc. and Southwestern Adventist University have partnered to create a thought-provoking six-part documentary series titled, *The Dig*. Experience the thrill of discovery with Christian geologists as they unearth the bones of ancient animals in a remote and rugged location. Meet the students and journey with them as the science leads them to deeper faith. The series premieres on **January 3, 2020, at 9 pm EST on Hope Channel.**

☞ *Journey Through the Bible Bookmarks Now Available*

This Christmas give a child a life-changing gift. Encourage the children in your life to spend time with Jesus every day with the Journey Through the Bible bookmarks. Each bookmark has a 30-day, easy-to-read Bible reading plan. They come in both English and Spanish. The bookmarks are great for personal devotions, family worship, classroom reading, and so much more. For more information, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/waoyx4f>

ADVENTIST GIVING

This on-line system allows you to return your tithe and give your offerings online while you do your online banking, are on an extended business trip, on vacation, or even if you are unable to attend church due to illness. But most important of all, if you desire to give back to the Lord of all your firstfruits as soon as you have them, you can do it immediately through AdventistGiving (You can get more information from your pastor or the Illinois Conference treasury department.)

RESOURCES

- ☞ *Praying Along the Way* is a reminder that we can talk personally with God like we would with a friend. This book features 24 original free-verse prayer-poems, beautiful artwork for coloring, and pages for journaling your daily prayer experience. Planned for busy people, its daily lines for petition and gratitude can cover an entire year. Makes a great Christmas gift! For more information, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/vw3o8pr>
- ☞ Have you check out It Is Written TV. Here is a summary of the current episode: *The story is hidden in plain sight, the effects of a long-running spiritual battle made evident. Planet Earth groans under the weight of sin, and its oceans, atmosphere, agriculture, and more are threatened for reasons many people are not considering. Join John Bradshaw for "Prequel of the Bible: Part 4–Earth's Rapid Decline."* For more information: <https://tinyurl.com/rnde3x6>

DID YOU KNOW . . .

. . . the most popular Bible verse during 2019 has been Philippians 4:6? According to the creators of Bible App, more users (over 400 million) logged on to view this verse than any other during the year. In the New Living Translation, this verse reads: *"Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done."*

"It is when we come into difficult places that He reveals His power and wisdom in answer to humble prayer. Have confidence in Him as a prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God. He will reveal Himself to you as One who can help in every emergency. He who created man, who gave him his wonderful physical, mental, and spiritual faculties, will not withhold that which is necessary to sustain the life He has given. He who has given us His word--the leaves of the tree of life--will not withhold from us a knowledge of how to provide food for His needy children."

Ellen G White—*Ministry of Healing*, p. 199.