



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



July 24, 2019



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Did you know Camp Meeting has been around for many years? And, not just in Illinois, or the Adventist church, but beyond. When I tell my non-Adventist friends about Camp Meeting, I most often get a quizzical look. It seems odd by most American standards; to spend a few days at an outdoor camp, sleeping in a cabin or tent, worshipping a couple of times a day in an open-air structure with a grass floor. The songs we sing were written long before I was born and the sermons last much longer than usual. Seems odd to many.

Did you know Camp meetings are a uniquely American institution developed during the early years of the Second Great Awakening? At the time, they were a new method for evangelism and revival that sprang up all across the country. Camp meetings often provided a place for those who lived in unsettled areas to worship and gather as a community for a short period of time—typically during the late summer. They began in temporary structures, such as tents and wagons.

Francis Asbury once called camp meetings “a battle ax and weapon of war” that broke down walls of wickedness throughout America. He believed they were a great means of grace. And in 1811, he estimated that these spirit-filled gatherings brought together one-third of the total American population. More than 200 years later, thousands of people continue to make the pilgrimage each summer to camp meetings that have withstood the test of time.

Ellen White said, “A great work is to be accomplished by our camp-meetings. The Lord has specially honoured these gatherings, which He has called Holy convocations...as they hear the message of truth, and come in contact with those who believe it, many are impressed...opposition and



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indifference are swept away, and with candid interest they listen to the words spoken.”

The Adventist church believes they are still needed today. Here are some reasons why:

One: They provide an opportunity for Sabbath rest. The first thing most people feel when they attend a camp meeting is that they have passed from busyness to tranquility. Camp Akita is hidden away from noise, billboards and rush hour traffic. Many who attend take the week of camp meeting as vacation from work, and when no one else is worrying about being productive or efficient, you won't feel the need to either.

Two: They aid in the slow work of cultivating true community. Today, the average worker stays in their job less than five years. The average homeowner sells their home in less than ten years. Sure, in five to ten years, great relationships can be built. But like cast iron skillets, the best relationships are formed slowly over time. Camp Meeting offers that opportunity.

Three: They are a foundation that helps with recalibration. Questions like, “Who am I?”, “Where am I headed?”, and “What’s the purpose of all of this?” aren’t anything new. Yet in a VUCA world (VUCA is a concept that originated by students at the U.S. Army War College to describe the Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity of the world after the Cold War) these questions are more challenging than ever and it’s easy to lose one’s bearings. Camp meetings are the antithesis of VUCA. Many of them are now 100+ years old and they exude steadiness, embody regular life-shaping rituals, and offer simplicity and rest. The fruit of this formation is evident at many camp meetings. Simply visit and ask around, “How has God used camp meeting to shape your life?” I am thankful for the time to get away and be spiritually refreshed. I hope you have an opportunity to be blessed too.

I KNOW SOMETHING GOOD ABOUT...

...Michael and Erika Campos. Michael is the Illinois Conference Youth Director. Here is an excerpt from an email I received...

“I wanted administration to know how valuable and appreciated Camp Akita is. Also, I wanted to let them know what a wonderful job Michael and Erika Campos are doing as camp directors. They live there in a little cabin all summer long with their kids, and are busy day and night serving the needs of the campers and staff. Michael meets with the staff every morning at 7am and gives a wonderful devotion and encourages the staff to make each camper feel loved and important. Erika does all the behind the scenes paperwork and communications. Michael and Erika are also investing in the lives of these young college kids for Christ...”

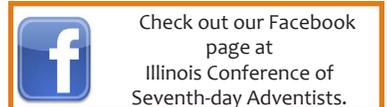


Thank you, Michael and Erica. You are valued and appreciated!

ILLINOIS CONFERENCE FACEBOOK PAGE

I invite you to subscribe to the Illinois Conference Facebook page to receive the daily video devotional that is posted there every day. I think it will be a blessing to you. Feel free to share this with your friends and family. Check it out at:

<https://tinyurl.com/y5f5p6hg>



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NEWS

- ☞ I am happy to announce that Pastor Brad Gienger has accepted the invitation to serve as the pastor of the Champaign, Paris and Danville district. Pastor Gienger and his family's first Sabbath in their new district will be August 10th. Pastor Gienger comes from the All Nations church in Bloomington-Normal. The All Nations church will now be part of the Springfield District.
- ☞ Pastor Ira Bartolome is the new pastor at the Downers Grove church. He and his family's first Sabbath will also be August 10th. Pastor Ira joins the Illinois Conference from the Centralia church in the Washington Conference.
- ☞ It is an exciting season ahead for the Goshen Seventh-day Adventist Church family. They will be celebrating their 35th Anniversary throughout the entire month of August 2019. Their theme is "Celebrating 35 Years of Dedicated Service". The Goshen Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized in 1984 by a group of newly baptized members along with members of a small group of Adventists from the country of Belize. Since its inception Goshen has been a mission driven congregation, always active in the city of Chicago through mission by means of community outreach initiatives including clothing drives, meals for the homeless, Loads of Love (a ministry that helps the community pay for laundry), Community Children's Party, Community Baby Showers, iWork Chicago (our community job fair), March Against Violence, and our continued partnership with the Angel Tree Network. Goshen is a church that pushes past the four corners of our church building, engages with our community, and reaches people where they are and meets the need. This historic month-long celebration will feature exciting spirit filled worship services, highlighted events and fun activities that everyone can be a part of. You can visit their website at www.goshensda.com for more information.
- ☞ Pastor John Lewis reports that he and his wife, Cheri, are leading out in youth Bible studies on Friday nights. Alex and Aline are brother and sister that have been attending and they made the choice to be baptized on July 6th. Congratulations!



RESOURCES

- ☞ Free Course: Creating a Positive Digital Footprint
Do you manage a social media account or website for a church or ministry? Join this course from the Adventist Learning Community for steps to creating and managing a positive online presence. This course is presented by Dr. Michael England, a professor of education at Southwestern Adventist University. For more information, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/y3klu5ax>
- ☞ It Is Written has a new program series, *Conspiracy: More Than A Theory*. Watch the trailer for this five-part series at: <https://tinyurl.com/y25x2psr>

DID YOU KNOW . . .

...Camp Akita has a new Pathfinder Pavilion? Many thanks to all who worked to make this possible.



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“With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our co-operation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in whole-hearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God’s love.”

E. G. White—The Desire of Ages, p. 297.

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