

FYI.

FROM ILLINOIS CONFERENCE
PRESIDENT, RON AGUILERA



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

"So now that you know God (or should I say, now that God knows you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual principles of this world?"

Galatians 4:9

Recently, I was reading a book about Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was a dangerous but effective way to help slaves escape their life in the South, between the late 1700s and early 1860s. Through a secret network of safe houses ("stations") run by "stationmasters," the "conductors" helped to guide the slaves along their journey. The destinations were in northern states where slavery had been abolished, as well as places in the far West, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

By some estimates, 100,000 slaves were freed by means of the Underground Railroad. If caught, the punishment was swift and harsh. But because freedom was so precious, the risks were worth it. But, once you got started, there was no turning back.

I was thinking of the parallels between physical slavery and being enslaved by sin. We also have been offered an escape route. The destination is God's eternal kingdom, and the reward also includes freedom, a life of freedom in Jesus, for the here and now. This plan is not dangerous for us, but it was certainly costly for Jesus. Our freedom was, and is, so precious to our Savior that the risks and price were worth His coming to this world to achieve it. And for us, that freedom is such a precious gift, why would we "want to go back again and become slaves once more"?

As you reflect on this, may it be a reminder of the freedom from slavery Jesus offers us, and may it cause us to rejoice and follow Him faithfully today!

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NEWS

Church Visit

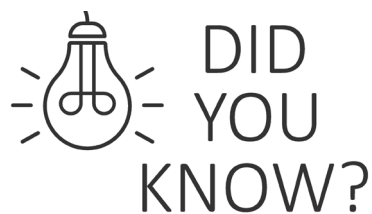
I had the opportunity to preach at my home church this past Sabbath, the Burr Ridge SDA Church. Thank you to Pastor Ralph Shelton for the invitation. It was good to fellowship with my friends and fellow members!

The Great Adventure

We are planning now to have Camp Akita open this summer. Plan now to attend Summer Camp 2022, "The Great Adventure". Look for more information on our website soon. In the meantime, the youth department is looking for young people, 18 and older, to join our Summer Camp team. Visit campakita.com/apply to submit your application today, or contact our Youth Department via phone (630) 716-3555 or email youthdept@ilcsda.org!

Following Jesus Faithfully Banners

Just a reminder that banners displaying our 2022 Conference theme, Following Jesus Faithfully, are available to each church. Please contact the Ministerial Department for more information. The banner are available in multiple languages and settings (like city skyline of Chicago and downstate Illinois), and even for children.



Did you know that for more than 40 years, February has been Black History Month?

The precursor to Black History Month, however, is a lot older. Black leaders in 1926 dedicated the second week in February to the recognizing the history of African Americans, a week chosen to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 12) and Frederick Douglass (Feb. 14).

RESOURCES

Oakwood University to Launch 4-Part Series on Black History

Join Dr. Leslie Pollard, Oakwood University president, for a 4-part Black History Month series starting Friday, Feb. 4 at 8:30 PM Eastern. "Windows on the Word" is designed to highlight contributions to the Adventist mission and faith worldwide. This series will follow along with the Social Justice in the Word of God study guide, available in print or PDF formats.

<https://tinyurl.com/m5cm56md>

Podcast Explores How the Church Works

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America is at a crossroads. Younger Adventists in particular are questioning whether the church is relevant to their personal lives and the world they experience. In response, the Adventist Learning Community has launched "How the Church Works," an 11-part podcast that examines Adventist history, identity, and legacy, and Adventism's relevance in our changing world. Listen to podcast at: <https://www.howthechurchworks.com>



It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is love, a love that embraces all humanity.

- Ellen G. White
The Mount of Blessing, p. 75



GALLERY

