

Nothing to Fear

This is the third installment of a multi-part series taken from Bob DuPuy's book, *Nothing to Fear : The Story of Seventh-day Adventism in the Dakotas*, published in 1983.

CHAPTER 1: OPENING THE SIXTH SEAL - Part 1

In the early, pre-dawn hours of November 13, 1833, the stars fell.

The massive meteor shower, estimated at more than one billion "shooting stars", remains unparalleled in recorded history.¹ Appearing to radiate out in all directions from a single point in the sky, the constellation Leo, the starry spectacular recalled to many minds a Biblical prophecy that, just before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the end of the world, the stars would fall, "even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."²

It was a sobering spectacle. Groups of people gathered in churches, schoolhouses, and homes. Some dropped to their knees to pray; others ran to neighbors to confess wrongs. Stolen articles were suddenly returned on this "night of restitution " as it came to be called. Many believed that God was writing in the sky that the day of judgment was at hand.³

A frightened Henry J. Pickering, editor of *The Old Countryman*, a New York City weekly chronicle dedicated to "flash, frolic, and fun", witnessed the event and published this stern warning: "We pronounce the Raining Fire which we saw on Wednesday morning last an awful type... of the great and dreadful day which the inhabitants of the earth will witness when the SIXTH SEAL SHALL BE OPENED. Many things now occurring upon the earth tend to convince us that we are in the 'latter days.' This exhibition we deem - to be a type of an awful day fast hurrying

upon us. This is our sincere opinion; and what we think we are not ashamed to tell."⁴

But for some, the sign was more hopeful than fearful. Frederick Douglass, prominent black orator, public official and journalist, was still a slave when he saw in the startling events a promise of deliverance.

"The air seemed filled with bright descending messengers from the sky... I was not without the suggestion, at that moment, that it was the harbinger of the second coming of the Son of Man; and in my then state of mind I was prepared to hail Him as my friend and deliverer. I had read that the "stars shall fall from heaven", and they were now falling. I was suffering very much in my mind... I was looking away to heaven for the rest denied me on earth."⁵

Tribes of the Sioux Indians that night watched the stars fall from the sky over the present Dakotas. While they knew nothing of the significance of the prophetic "harbinger", the aerial fireworks left such a profound impression that they recorded it for posterity on buffalo-hide calendars.

The Indians reckoned the year from winter to winter and named each year or "winter count" by the event most outstanding in the mind of the tribal chronologist.

Several of these buffalo-robe calendars identify the winter count of 1833-34 by the spectacular meteor shower. The Blaze, a Sans Arcs Dakota, drew six stars over the crescent moon and called it "Many-StarsFell-Winter". Lone Dog, of the Upper Yanktoni tribe, named it "The-StarsFell-Winter" and represented it by a shower of stars surrounding the new moon. Cloud Shield, an Oglala Dakota used a solid rectangle of stars to picture the "It-Rained-Stars-Winter." American Horse, also an Oglala Dakota, added a diamond-shaped figure for the moon and called it "The-Stars-Moved-Around-Winter". The Swan, a Minneconjou chief, drew a remarkably detailed picture of the meteors, including the fiery tails of the shooting stars. Battiste Good depicted stars falling around a tipi to designate the "Storm-Of-Stars-Winter".⁶

The Indians were among the very few "Dakotans" who witnessed the falling of the stars. The first white settlement in North Dakota, Pembina, had been abandoned in 1823, and a lonely settlement at the mouth of the Bad River, on the site of present-day Fort Pierre, South Dakota represented white civilization in the southern half of the area. The only other inhabitants were a handful of fur traders and trappers.¹

And strictly speaking, in one sense, the Indians were not even Dakotans, but Louisianians.

In 1682 French explorer Robert Cavalier Sieur de la Salle had sailed down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico taking possession of all the land drained by the river for King Louis XIV, naming it Louisiana.⁸ Then, in 1738, the first white visitor to the boundaries of present North Dakota, French fur trader Pierre Gaultier

de Varennes Sieur de la Verendrye, presented to the chief of a Mandan Indian tribe a lead plate bearing a Latin inscription claiming for France ownership of the Missouri Valley, firmly integrating much of what is now the Dakotas into the massive French possession of Louisiana. Five years later, LaVerendrye's sons Francois and Louis-Joseph buried a similar lead plate during their visit to the site of present-day Fort Pierre, South Dakota.⁹

The disastrous (for France) 1763 Treaty of Paris gave Spain ownership of all of Louisiana for the next thirty-seven years, until the Little Corporal, Napoleon Bonaparte, persuaded the King of Spain to cede it back to France in 1800, the apparent beginning of a neo-French empire in the New World.

When word of the secret pact leaked out, President Thomas Jefferson, peace lover and non-interventionist that he was, found himself in a predicament. The port city of New Orleans had become a vital outlet for the produce of America's West, and the inevitable dash with Napoleon over the rights to the port would probably lead to a bloody war.

Jefferson sent James Monroe to Paris to join forces with our minister, Robert R. Livingston, in offering Napoleon \$10,000,000 for New Orleans and as much land to the east as possible.

In the meantime, however, reverses in the Island of Santo Domingo, and a pending resumption of his war with England were turning Napoleon sour on colonies. In the midst of negotiations Napoleon suddenly offered all of Louisiana to the befuddled Livingston, instead of merely New Orleans.

So, Louisiana (and the Dakotas and everything in between) became the property of the United States at a cost of \$15,000,000 on April 30, 1803.¹⁰

Within three years, Lewis and Clark traveled up the Missouri to the Dakotas and on to the Pacific, bringing back glowing reports to a nation about to become reinfected with the desire to "go west". Dakota would never again be the same.

But the Dakota Indians that crisp November night understood no more of these political harbingers of dramatic events to come than they did of the meaning of the spectacle taking place above their heads.

Harbingers are often that way. Their significance can only be seen from the perspective of history. One man, however, grasped perhaps more fully than his contemporaries the significance of the falling of the stars that night. Seventeen years earlier, William Miller, a New York farmer, had begun an intensive study of the Bible in response to the challenge of a skeptical friend to prove that it was worthy of trust.

1. Denison Olmsted, "Observations on the Meteors of November 13th, 1833," *The American Journal of Science and the Arts*, XXV

(1834), 363; W.J. Fisher, "The Ancient Leonids," *The Telescope*, 1 (October, 1943), 83.

2. Revelation 6:13.

3. LeRoy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1954), IV, 297.

4. Henry J. Pickering, *The Old Countryman* as reprinted in the *New York Star* and quoted in the *Portland (Maine) Advertiser*, November 29, 1833, 2.

5. Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, (New York: Pathway Press, 1941), 117.

6. Garrick Mallery, "Picture Writing of the American Indians," *Tenth Annual Report (of the U.S. Bureau of Ethnology) to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution*, 1888-1889, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893), 723; G.L. Wilson, "The Falling Stars Among the Indians," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 25, 1899, 3.

7. "North Dakota," *The Encyclopedia Americana*, (1976) XX, 447,448; "North Dakota" "South Dakota," *World Book Encyclopedia*, (1977) XIV, 396; XVIII, 540d.

8. Wallbank, Taylor, Bailkey, *Civilization Past and Present*, (Chicago: Scott Foresman and Company, 1962), 368.

9. *Encyclopedia Americana*, loc. cit.; *World Book Encyclopedia*, loc. cit.

10. Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant*, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1966), 189-190.

Next time from *Nothing to Fear* : Chapter 1, "Opening the Sixth Seal" - Part 2 by Robert K. DuPuy

Hot Springs Church Hosts Reclamation Weekend

Elder Mark Weir recently travelled to South Dakota and held a "reclamation" seminar at the Hot Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church. As the name indicates, the emphasis of the weekend was on how to reclaim members who have left the church or have not been in attendance for a long period time. Elder Weir's Sabbath sermon, titled "Lost", spoke of seeking and saving people. In the afternoon he expounded on why people leave the church and what needs to be done to help them want to come back. The members who attended were encouraged by the messages and now feel motivated to action.



"The Hot Springs Church members in attendance were warm and friendly - an interactive group." says Weir. "They were eager to be involved and help their church become a place that is winsome and welcoming."

Article by Jodi Dossenko with Pr. Sam Thomas; Photo by Jacquie Biloff

When Jesus Shows Up

Recently I have been captivated by a television series called *The Chosen*, a dramatic depiction of the Life of Christ that can be accessed through an app that goes by the same name. I personally find it a striking and beautiful telling of the greatest story ever told. The actor who plays Jesus is phenomenal. But the thing that has stuck me the most is how the show's creators take a good deal of time setting up the backstories of some of the main characters. Peter. Mary Magdalene. Matthew. Nicodemus. By the time these characters meet Jesus, the possible reality of their story and the world around them makes that encounter resonate powerfully. Everything changes when Jesus shows up.

In my mind, Peter for instance, was a generic fisherman with little to no life before Jesus. He happily fished, whistling the days away until he heard the voice calling him to “cast his net on the other side”. That is after all where his story begins in Luke’s gospel. But even though we don’t meet him until that point in scripture (excepting John 1), the reality is that Peter had a backstory. We don’t know what his exact struggles were, but *The Chosen* explores the possibilities. Keeping remarkably faithful to the historical and cultural realities, as well as the testimony of the rest of scripture, the show paints a struggle of the life of a fisherman being crushed under the weight of Roman taxation; or of a Pharisee navigating the extreme political complexities of the Sanhedrin; or a tax collector dealing with the hatred of his countrymen and the pressure of his Roman overseer.

The point is, life was real. The struggles were real. Political and religious tension was real. Jesus showed up in the middle of real life.

It leaves me wondering, do I still believe that Jesus shows up in real life? Is the political, religious, or whatever tension around me too big a problem for the gospel today? Am I looking for the movement of the Messiah, or is my focus locked on the very real problems around me?

Everything changes when Jesus shows up.

Worship Thoughts by Pr. Robert Carlson;

photo used with permission by The Chosen



Construction Class Receives Hands-on Training

When the topic is Dakota Adventist Academy, one name often comes up in conversation - Thompson. Having been here from the planning and building of this facility, Tommy and Ella Mae are well known and cherished for all their contributions

to Adventist secondary education in the Dakotas. Though they have moved on from their house on Thompson Lane, they are still influencing students this school year.

The Thompson's former home is now the classroom of the school's Construction class where a remodeling is underway. Working with the support of the Conference, this year's Construction II and III classes are getting hands on building opportunities! They have completed necessary demolition, which was initiated by Conference maintenance director, Marlin Miller.

Incorporating some design ideas from the students has enabled slight modifications and updates to the standard late seventies' era floorplan. Moving walls to open up the space will lend a modern feel to the house. Two of the biggest changes the class has opted for are removing the wall between the kitchen and living room to allow for an island to be added in the kitchen, and adding a doorway from the main bathroom into the master bedroom resulting in an on suite. These are small changes that will make a major difference.

Students are getting a lot of hands-on experience with their classwork. They are learning about structure, esthetics, flow, electrical, drywall and much more.

High school students who are looking for this type of vocational training are urged to contact Dakota Adventist Academy for more information.



Article by Tracy Peterson; photos by Ryan Peterson.

With COVID-19 cases on the rise across the Dakota Conference, please be responsible in your interactions with others including at our church services. Just this month, we have lost several Dakota members as a result of the virus. For the protection of others, please be conscience of mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing. Contact your pastor for ways to be active in ministry during this time.

Youth Get-together, Christmas Edition

Praise Jesus for technology! The youth department is hosting a virtual get-together for youth, ages 13-17, via Zoom on December 12, 2020. This get-together will be a special event, as it is going to be a Christmas edition! We will create some beautiful worship, enjoy each other's company, and even have a gift exchange! If you fall into this age category and would like to participate, use the link below register online and be included in the celebration. If you have enjoyed get-togethers in the past, you won't want to miss this one. A Zoom link will be distributed to the registrants via email.

Registration link: dakotayouthandyoungadults.org/get-together



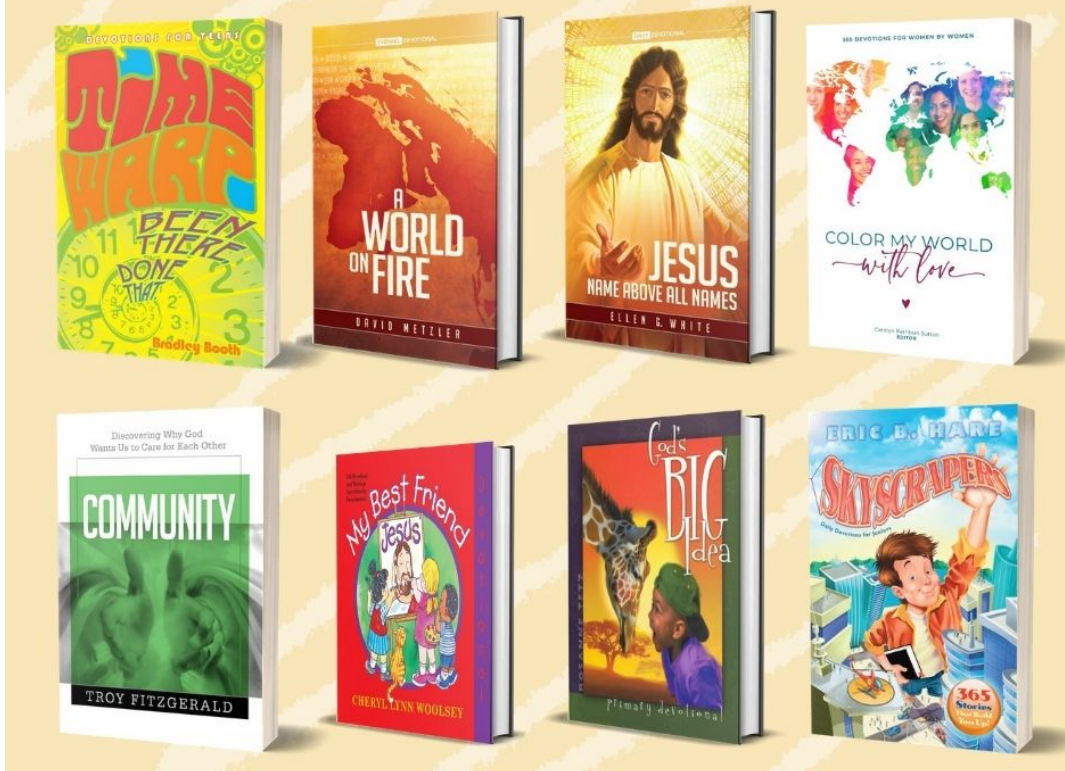
Invitation extended by Prs. Ricky & Brooke Melendez

ABC Located at Dakota Conference in Bismarck

Tuesday - Thursday: 3:00 - 5:30 pm (If you happen to be in town during other hours, please stop by, we will try to accommodate.)

Friday: ABC & office closed

2021 Devotionals Now Available!



[Click here](#) for details on 2021 devotional books. Prices are good in person at the Dakota Conference ABC or by phone through the Kansas/Nebraska ABC: 402.488.3395.

Dakota Conference Calendar

Offering schedule is in purple.

November -

- 21: Local Church Budget
- 23-29: DAA Home Leave
- 25-26: Office Closed for Thanksgiving
- 28: Dakota Challenge

December -

- 5: Local Church Budget
- 6: Executive Committee - Conference Office (9am)
- 12: North American Division - Adventist Community Services (NAD ACS)
- 18: Celebration of Praise - DAA ****CANCELLED**
- 19: Central North Dakota Regional - DAA ****CANCELLED**
- 19: Local Church Budget

- 20-Jan 3: DAA Home Leave
- 23-31: Conference Office Closed
- 26: [Dakota Challenge](#)

For more scheduled events, please see the calendar on the Dakota Conference website: www.dakotaadventist.org/events

Blessed & Kept

May your day be quiet— even when it isn't
May it be peaceful— even when it isn't
May your day be joyful— even when it isn't
Today may you have patience— even when you don't
May you be loving— even when anger seems the best response
Today may you be kind— even when kindness is the last thing you want to be
May you be gentle— even when those around you prod your frustration

May this be your day because you believe in the one who transcends your circumstances; transcends your emotions and gives you in spite of it all a peace that surpasses understanding. A peace that makes no sense at all.
May you be surprised by your reactions to the stresses of the day.

May your day be peaceful— because He has given you peace
May it be joyful— because his joy is greater than your sadness
May you have patience— because he who is within you has overcome far greater before and is with you now
May you be loving— because he has given you a spirit of grace
May you be kind— because his kindness flows through you not by strength or force of will but by nature
May you be gentle— because your frustration is channeled toward a better future for those who frustrate you

May this be your day because Jesus desires it for you. And simply acknowledging that desire is enough to carry you through.

Written by Pr. Casey Bartlett.

To follow Casey's Podcast *Blessed & Kept* click [here](#).

November 19 Dispatch Photo



Photo by Kristin Gottfried near Lake Ashtabula in North Dakota.

If anyone has local church news or stories to share, please send event information, news suggestions and/or articles and pictures to: j.dossenko@gmail.com

Dispatch Mission: To build a climate of encouragement and blessing through the sharing of witnessing and evangelism activities. If you have news to share or would like to be added to the **Dakota Dispatch** mailing list, please email Jodi Dossenko at j.dossenko@gmail.com. Bison [Copyright](#)

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[!\[\]\(c507f772dba2b921f86777f01218e570_img.jpg\) Dakota Youth and Young Adults / Camps](#)

[!\[\]\(4729e517bc6a7cd81c8025b9646574fb_img.jpg\) Dirt Kicker Charity Run](#)

[!\[\]\(cbe80b694ebd74fcfe136a095b608235_img.jpg\) Dirt Kicker Run Facebook](#)

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