

DAKOTA DISPATCH

Sharing the unchanging love of Jesus in a changing world.



Nothing to Fear

This is the twentieth 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 6: In the Providence of God - Part 4

The history of the Bowdon County church, as prepared for its seventy-fifth anniversary in 1973, gives a fascinating account of the beginnings of the church, that is probably accurate in substance even though a few details seem to have become embellished as the story has been told through the years:

"Two Adventist families (possibly the John Werners and the Adolph Knittels; Knittel married Werner's daughter, Caroline) came to the Bowdon area... and, as the story goes, they had the church service in each other's homes. At the same time there were 13 Baptist families in the Bowdon area. They worshipped in the various homes on Sunday.

"The Seventh-day Adventists were lonesome and wanted to become acquainted and make friends with the Baptists. Therefore, on one Sunday morning they hitched up their wagons and visited the Baptist meeting. After the services, the Baptist brethren discussed the matter of the Adventists and decided they did not want them in their services and agreed if they came again, they would throw them out.

"The next Sunday the Adventists came again. The deacon of the Baptists then asked them to leave. The Adventist brethren said, 'We don't mean to do any harm, we are lonesome and would like to make friends.' However, they were sent away. It is difficult to visualize a spiritual worship service after such an encounter.

"As the deacon and his wife drove home, nothing was said. At bedtime they retired, but neither of them could sleep. About three in the morning, as they tossed about, he asked, 'Can't you sleep either?'

"She replied, 'Do you think what we did yesterday was right? These Adventists want to get to heaven also, and we throw them out of the church. Surely this cannot be right in God's sight.'

"The deacon's conscience had given him enough trouble so that by now he was irritable and said, 'Perhaps it wasn't right, but I'm going to show them they are wrong about Saturday being the Sabbath.'

"Not able to sleep, he arose, sat down by a small table and began to search the Scriptures to get the evidence against the seventh-day Sabbath. For two days and two nights he never went to bed but searched until he had convinced himself that the seventh day was indeed the Sabbath.

"Studying, the Bible continued for several months until one Friday morning the deacon announced to the family at breakfast: 'Today we will do our Saturday work, for tomorrow we will go to the Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath School.'

"On Sabbath morning they hitched up their wagon and when they arrived at the Adventist home they could hardly believe what they saw. There they found the twelve wagons of the other Baptist families, none having talked to any of the others of their convictions. As they compared their experiences they discovered to their amazement that every Baptist family had the same experiences as the deacon and his wife."

In 1898 the Bowdon church was organized following evangelistic meetings by Valentine Leer and Conrad Reiswig in 1897.²³

In the late 1800's, the men and boys of the Wentland family from the area south of Sykeston, where a group of German immigrants had established a new community, appropriately naming it "New Home", spent the winter working at a lumber camp in northern Minnesota. The wife of a lumberman, who was a Seventh-day Adventist, sent literature home with the Wentlands, which Wilhelm Wentland read, studied, and began to preach to the local German Baptist church of which he was lay pastor. From this beginning the New Home church was eventually formed with David Funk, Sr., as church elder.

The new church had 39 adult members and by 1900, met in an abandoned sod house until their numbers grew so large that they moved to a larger sod house close to the present site of the New Home church.²⁴

About the same time, German churches were established at Lincoln Valley (November 22, 1900) and probably at Harvey and at Sheyenne, eight miles southwest of Harvey.²⁵

The Germans took their religion seriously and found their highest Sabbath pleasures at the house of worship. Sabbath School began at eleven a.m. after the essential farm chores were completed. At noon there was a one-hour intermission for dinner - frequently kuchen and bratzel (unique German pastries), fruit, bread and butter, and breebs (a coffeelike grain beverage). After dinner, the children played while the men and older boys fed the horses or, later, warmed up the Model T's on cold days. Then the bell rang, calling all to the church service, about one p.m.

In addition to preaching, the early German church services were characterized by extensive audience participation, including singing that was on occasion more vigorous than melodious, personal testimonies, and the recitation of Bible verses or chapters, and prayer - sometimes all praying aloud at once if the hour was late.

Even in the Sabbath School lesson, according to one account, "They got so enthusiastic about the truth that each had to try to out talk the other to be heard."

In church the men and women sat on opposite sides of the sanctuary. When the children were old enough to sit alone, they took their places on the front rows of their respective sides, the youngest on the first row with the older ones behind them, all under the watchful eyes of mother and father. Services lasted until three or four p.m. when it was time to return home for supper and the evening chores.²⁶

Because the German immigrants tended to settle in communities as they had done in Russia, rather than scatter as individual homesteaders, and because the Germans seemed less affected by the "moving spirit", the German Adventist churches tended to be larger and more stable than their English-speaking and Scandinavian counterparts.²⁷ As a result, the Adventist church in North Dakota began very early to have a German orientation.

Indeed by the Carrington camp meeting of 1902, 250 of the 350 people attending were Germans, and the work among these immigrants had really only begun.²⁸

As for Philip Reising, when he returned from Russia, he learned that Ellen White's Great Controversy had been published in German and began planning his second missionary journey. In 1889 Reising returned to the Crimea, but death cut short his evangelistic work. The priests who prepared his body for burial lined his casket with his beloved books and papers, a fitting tribute - whether done in reverence or revenge - to Milltown's noble missionary.²⁹

Perhaps it was of Philip Reising, and of the phenomenal success of Adventism among the Germans of the Dakotas that Ellen White was thinking when she wrote, "Many of these foreigners are here in the providence of God, that they may have opportunity to hear the truth for this time."³⁰

23. History of the Bowdon Country church, prepared for its seventy-fifth anniversary, 1973.

24. History of the New Home Church, *op. cit.*; Letter from Rankin Wentland Sr., grandson of Wilhelm Wentland, 1976.

25. An old, but not original clerk's record book of the Lincoln Valley church gives its organization date as November 22, 1900. See Chapter 7, for the rationale of placing Harvey and Sheyenne in this same period.

26. History of the Bowdon Country church, *op. cit.*; reminiscences of Molly (Mrs. Alex) Miller of Manfred, North Dakota, from an interview with Manfred pastor Richard Byrd, 1978.

27. The fact of larger size is obvious from contemporary records which also speak frequently about churches that suffered from the exodus of substantial groups of members. This was by and large, not characteristic of the Germans, nor of the Russians who came later. See appendix A for a discussion of the social factors which helped give such stability to the German settlements.

28. *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 22, 1902, 18, 19.

29. Jacob J. Reising, *op. cit.*, 2; *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 1, 1889, 11. Reising's date of 1897 seems less accurate than the *Review* account.

30. Ellen G. White, *Christian Service*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1947), 200.

Next time from *Nothing to Fear*:

Chapter 7, "To the Lord be all the Praise" - Part 1 by Robert K. DuPuy

If you are a new subscriber or have missed the earlier installments, you can find all issues of the Dakota

Dispatch on our website: <https://www.dakotaadventist.org/communiques/dakota-dispatch>

The first installment of *Nothing to Fear* starts in the October 22, 2020 issue.

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Matthew 6:12

This summer I got to spend a week of my time as my grandson's main caregiver while his parents took a trip out of town. As almost always happens in these situations I go in thinking I will entertain, enjoy, and instruct - and as always happens, I am the one who learns.

My lesson this time was so big, I thought I ought to share it in case it benefits someone else as much as it has benefitted me. I do not doubt that there is no adult alive who has not had this same lesson presented, more than once, yet we generally miss the significance.

It was a hot day and we were playing in the pool. It was a kid pool with water maybe a foot and a half deep, and I took up a good quarter of the ground space in the pool. My grandson, wanting to splash me came in on a flight off the deck, landing with both knees on my ankles. The laughter was in his eyes and in his voice and he was having a time of his life, but I yowled, only for an instant, in pain. Immediately the smile on his face was replaced with horror as he realized that what was supposed to be fun, or funny, did not turn out as planned. In situations like this, one of two things will happen - the person who has hurt someone pulls away, or he springs up and runs towards the one he has hurt, immediately apologizing, seeking to restore the relationship. He did not know how to react, and I had startled him, so he did the first. I could see the sorrow in his eyes and I heard him mumble his apology, and as quickly as I could, I tried to assure him that I was alright, but he remained subdued. For the remainder of the time in the pool and even into the afternoon he interacted less with me. He did more things on his own that day and I could feel his sadness, but there was nothing I could think of to say to broach the subject. We still did things together – we went to shoot baskets, we ate together, we played x-box and hockey. Suddenly he jumped up, threw his arms around me and told me that he loved me. Then sobbed out that he was sorry he had hurt me in the pool. I stroked his head and held him, assuring him that I was fine and that I had already forgotten about it.

From that moment, everything went back to as it had been. The strain between us was gone and the natural openness of the previous days returned. And here's the crazy thing – although it took him until evening to feel forgiven, I had already forgiven him the moment the bad decision was made; at no time had I stopped loving him.

How many times have I jumped into something, thinking that what I would do would be a good idea, or at the very least, harmless, only to have it go wrong? The minute I hurt someone else I am hurting my Heavenly (Grand)Father and He has immediately forgiven me, yet I remain the one in a strained relationship with Him because I haven't forgiven myself. I may repair the relationship with the one(s) that I have hurt – or I may not; they may not allow me to do so. But either way I often neglect making the relationship right with Him. How He longs to help me understand how deep His love for me runs (Romans 8:35-39).

What keeps you away from your church community or the relationship that you once had? He is waiting... whatever might be holding you back from feeling the assurance of His love, throw your arms around Him and tell Him you are sorry. He already knows. You've been long ago forgiven.

Worship thoughts by Anthony Oucharek, Dakota Adventist Academy principal.

The Goodrich / Mandan / McClusky / Turtle Lake church district invites you to:

OUTDOOR CHURCH

Fort Mandan, Fahlgren Park: Washburn, ND. Located 2 miles west of the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center on McLean County Hwy 17. Watch for signs.

August 14, 2021

10:00a - Sabbath School

11:05a - Worship Service

Speaker: Elder Mark Weir

Potluck Lunch to follow

1:45p - Music Program &

Teacher Dedication

There are picnic table benches for seating though you may want to bring your own chair(s). Paper products are provided (plates, cups, plastic ware, napkins).



Serving Sierra Leone - James and Rachel O'Hare Fernando use lessons from Union to heal patients.

James Fernando's mother jokes that he got his degree in camping. As an international rescue and relief major at Union College, James did spend quite a lot of time roughing it, as well as studying science, learning rescue techniques, practicing patient care and developing problem solving skills. Now a mission doctor in Sierra Leone, James and his wife, Rachel, are continually grateful for his "camping degree."

"A lot of the things I learned in the IRR program may not have been as useful stateside, but they've really helped here. I've found a good use for my education," James says of the program that gave him a variety of rescue certifications and taught him to provide medical care in less-than-ideal conditions. "Practicing medicine in this environment is a whole different world than what we learned in medical school."

Finding a calling

James and Rachel's lives intersected at Union College, but their goals were taking them on diverging tangents. James had come to Lincoln because of his passion for mission trips. To him, the International Rescue and Relief Program was the perfect key to open doors to medical school and then the world.

Rachel was a future physician assistant with plans to stay much closer to home. When they started dating, she didn't share James' yearning to be a missionary. In fact, she recalls watching friends embark on student missionary journeys and being decidedly not jealous of their travels. "I have very clear memories of thinking that was not for me—that I was not called to go overseas," she says.

She credits James' excitement for the mission field and her college experience for helping shape her plans. "My time at Union was a time of spiritual growth and making my relationships and my religion my own," she says.

“Union is very mission oriented, and the spiritual atmosphere was strong. It fostered growth in me. The relationships we built there changed our lives.” Over time, serving as a missionary became not just his dream but a shared calling.

After graduating, the two married and moved to Loma Linda University where James completed medical school. With overseas missions their ultimate goal, they signed up for the Deferred Mission Appointee program. Funded by the university and the General Conference, the program enables young graduates to pay for their education while working for the Adventist church in underserved areas of the world.

Shortly after James completed his residency, the Fernandos received a call. They signed on for a five-year stint, and within weeks they were on a plane to their new home at Waterloo Hospital in Sierra Leone. James serves as a family medicine doctor while Rachel is a physician assistant in the female and children’s wards.

Finding a new home

Life is hard and money is tight, even in the best of times in Sierra Leone. Waterloo Hospital is run by Adventist Health System, and it receives no government support despite serving nearly 10,000 patients a year.

“More than 70 percent of our patients can’t pay their entire bill,” James says. “Paying staff is hard, and sometimes we have to delay payments. We’re on the absolute edge of viability.” He adds that country-wide inflation further raises prices, making it harder to meet financial obligations. Patients are often very ill and require intense treatment as financial concerns keep many from seeking early medical intervention or preventative care. However, the hospital never turns away patients based on their inability to pay.

Still, the Fernandos find joy in the little victories, and they appreciate the network of support they’ve found. “Going to Union really helped us connect with people of a similar mindset,” James says. “We lean on those contacts with mission-minded people.” Along with their friends and Union connections, they’re also grateful for the systemic support they receive as Adventist missionaries. As the only Adventists in the entire country not of African descent, they’ve watched missionaries from other denominations struggle without the support and connections they enjoy.

Time, too, has made their lives easier and more comfortable. “We fit in so much better than we did when we arrived in 2019,” James says. “We have a good community, social support and the language is easier for us.”

Along with patient-care duties, one of James’ main goals is educating local health care providers about best practices. “Here, you can buy basically any antibiotic over the counter, even dangerous medications that are no longer used in the United States,” he says. “Education is the thing that will outlast us here if we can pass on that knowledge.”

Sharing their faith is also an important aspect of their outreach. In a country that’s 70 percent Muslim, he and Rachel hope to share the gospel with others. “We want our lives to be a resource for others and an influence for the church,” he says. “There are a lot of opportunities here.”

Finding personal joy in the midst of pandemic

The early months of 2020 brought new challenges. With COVID-19 related lockdowns and border closings, the Fernandos were given an ultimatum by the US embassy: get on the last flight out of the country or be prepared to stay no matter what happened.

“I’m a doctor, and I’m at a hospital—but I’m running away when things get tough? It was a super-difficult decision,” James says. “But it was time for us to go on leave, and all of the Westerners we knew were leaving. There’d be no support for who knew how long. We’re planning to be here long-term, and we didn’t want to burn out early in our careers with a traumatic experience.”

Reluctantly they boarded the repatriation flight, eventually making it to Rachel's hometown of Bismarck, North Dakota, for a three-month stay with her parents. The Fernandos were itching to get back to help their adopted community.

But a new—and exciting—complication to their service arose. Two days before their flight, the couple found out Rachel was pregnant with their first child. After repacking their bags with maternity items, the Fernandos flew back to Sierra Leone to resume their mission despite the continued uncertainty and changes brought by the pandemic.

Rachel, enjoying what she calls a “fun, charmed pregnancy with no morning sickness or pain,” worked 10-hour days alongside the rest of the hospital staff. She was also enjoying reactions from those around her. “People here make a lot of comments on your size and that you’re gaining weight,” she says. “Complete strangers would yell at me, ‘Belly, belly! Belly-woman!’ I kind of liked it—people were excited and happy for us.”

Five weeks before her due date, Rachel returned home, with James expecting to join her before the baby arrived. But Rachel went into labor a month early, leaving James scrambling to get a last-minute COVID test and a ticket out of Sierra Leone. He arrived at the hospital 52 hours after their son, Liam, made his appearance. After a week in the NICU, the whole family reunited at their temporary home.

The Fernandos' experience in an American maternity ward was full of reverse culture shock. Infant and maternal mortality rates in Sierra Leone are some of the highest in the world. Just three days before Rachel went into labor, James was on the other side of the world working through the night, unable to save the premature baby of a nurse who had gone into labor early.

“The first thing I did when I got back in the States was go to the NICU to see my baby,” James says. “Everything was calm and the equipment worked. I thought of our nurse’s baby that was almost the same gestational age as ours. There was zero chance her baby would have died in the States, but we couldn’t save him.”

Rachel agrees that the grief for their adopted country is heavy despite their personal joy. “It’s so common that people almost expect to lose a child,” she says. “I’m thankful we have all we need, but there’s guilt that my baby made it because I’m here and my friend’s baby didn’t because she was there.”

The couple are choosing to focus on the lives they can save when they return soon as a family of three. It will be challenging raising an infant with mosquito nets, no hot running water and no disposable diapers, but the Fernandos say they’ll find ways to ease into family life while caring for their patients.

And Rachel knows the lessons they learned at Union will continue to echo in their daily work. “Pastor Rich Carlson always said, ‘If it’s important to God, it will be clear in His word,’ and those words have come into play in my life a lot,” she says. “In the Great Commission, it’s pretty clear what God is telling us to do. Not everyone is asked to leave home, but God made it clear to us that He wanted us in Sierra Leone, and He led us here.”

Read stories and follow the Fernandos' journey in their words: <https://farflugfernandos.blogspot.com/>.

To learn more about Waterloo Hospital and to support its mission, visit <https://adventisthealthsystem.sl/>.



Article by Lauren Schwarz - reprinted with permission by Union College. To read more stories from Union College, visit their website at: ucollege.edu.

Photos submitted by James and Rachel Fernando.

Rachel is the oldest daughter of Charlie and Joann O'Hare. The O'Hares began their pastoral career in the Dakotas and pastored several districts over a span of years before Charlie took the role of trust services director at the Dakota Conference office.

Choosing Jesus, Again

Ro Ray and his wife are among some 117,000 Karen refugees in our country who have fled Burma to escape violent persecution. When growing up Ro Ray was baptized into the Adventist Church. However, when he was a teen he walked away from God, became involved in drinking, drugs and all that that lifestyle can bring.

When I first was invited into Ro Ray's home I received a very warm welcome from him, his wife, and son. After we talked for a short time I turned my attention to their boy and asked if he had ever thought about being baptized. As I was explaining the meaning of baptism - speaking about what it meant to feel guilt for the bad things we've done, and how, by telling God that we are sorry for those things, the guilt we have would be gone because we were then forgiven - Ro Ray interrupted and asked, "Pastor, can I be rebaptized?" I was caught off guard by his request, Ro Ray is a church elder. He then went on to explain that though baptized when a boy, and was now a church elder, there was a period of his life that he felt guilt over. That he now wished to be rebaptized and washed clean of all of it.

Our conversation in his home took place several months ago. The reason for the delay was because he wanted his daughter, Paw Lay (a senior at DAA), to be present for his baptism. So, on Sabbath, July 24, 2021, 35 year old Ro Ray reentered the watery grave and emerged a new man - FREE from the guilt he carried with him all those years!

When I entered Ro Ray's home and was speaking to his son I had no idea that the Spirit of God was speaking to Ro Ray's heart! I was reminded that in a very troubled world we can be confident of this one thing, that "He [who] made the moon to mark the seasons, and the sun [to know] when to go down" (Ps. 104:19) is still working at steady pace, at this very moment, in the hearts of men and women - that His truth is marching on! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!



Article by Pr. Dave Moench from the Huron / Mitchell church district in South Dakota. Photos by Belinda Hofer, member of the Huron congregation.

It is Not Too Late to Register for Dakota Adventist Academy

Summer is in full swing, the temperature is just plain hot, but school is right around the corner. Though it has been quiet on campus without students, there has been a lot of work happening in preparation for the start of the school year.

On campus, the bathrooms by the Auditorium have been completed, the football / soccer field is being watered, classrooms are getting set up and organized, camp week is being planned, all in preparation for the return of the life's blood of the campus - our students.

As the recruiter for the school, everyone asks me what enrollment numbers are looking like. My answer is always the same, until registration day I will not know what our final student population will look like. I can say with certainty that we will have more students on campus than last year. What we really need are prayers. Prayers for the potential students; prayers for the parents that don't want to spend time away from their children; prayers of financial support for the ones that have the desire to attend, but not the funds to make it a reality; and mostly, prayers for God's presence to shine on Dakota Adventist Academy's campus.

We are welcoming three new staff to the ranks at DAA. Amanda Garrett will be a part-time cafeteria assistant.

Zak Adams will be splitting his time between teaching art and serving as assistant boys' dean. Pastor Rob Carlson will be teaching upper grades' Bible classes as well as keeping the position of school chaplain.

God has set us up to have the very best school year possible. It is not too late to register your son or daughter to be amongst the students that will be blessed by being a part of Dakota Adventist Academy.

Check us out at: www.mydaa.org

Online registration is available

at: www.mydaa.org/admissions/apply-online/



We all hope to see you soon!

Article and photo by Tracy Peterson, DAA recruiter and barn manager.

33rd Annual Dakota Conference Women's Retreat

When: September 24-26, 2021

Where: Mandan, North Dakota

Featured Speaker: Suzie Sendros

Suzie (Suzanne) is excited to share her personal story of finding God's unconditional love. Although she is a sixth generation Seventh-day Adventist born into a missionary and evangelistic family, she considers herself a first generation Christian who discovered God for herself. Suzie not only has a passion for serving others, but most of all, Jesus, her Savior and friend. In her previous career she spent ten years in marketing for Advent Health, and led out in women and family ministries for the Forest Lake Church in Orlando, Florida.

Suzie and her family currently reside in Denver, Colorado, where she enjoys serving the Rocky Mountain Conference through volunteer work, homeschooling her two little boys, hiking, and leading out with the praise and worship team at the Campion Academy Church.



Sendros holds an undergraduate degree in Intercultural Communications from Southern Adventist University, and a Masters of Business Administration from Webster University. Suzie's husband, Isaac, is the Chief Executive Officer for Avista Adventist Hospital, but she considers herself a leader and the Chief Executive Officer for the Sendros Family.

Early Bird Sessions:

Painting with Kathy (\$20) - Join Kathy Tebelius as she guides you to paint a fun picture to take home.
Traditional Choir (free) - Practice and perform hymns during the retreat with Linda Oswald and Janna Wright.

For more information and to register visit: dakotaadventist.org/ministries/womens-ministries

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

Dakota Conference Calendar

Offering schedule is in purple.

July -

- 25-Aug 1: Teen Retreat (ages 14-17) at Northern Lights
- **31: Dakota Evangelism**
- 31: Outdoor Church at Beaver Lake, ND

August -

- 2-5: Pastors' Retreat at Northern Lights
- 5: Dakotans Pray via Zoom (7pm)
- **7: Local Church Budget**
- 9: MAUC Nominating Committee in Lincoln, NE (1pm)
- 10-11: Teacher In-services at Conference Office
- **14: NAD Christian Record**
- 14: Outdoor Church in Washburn at Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, ND
- 15: DAA Registration
- 20-21: Spiritual Feast at Flag Mountain
- **21: Local Church Budget**

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

Blessed & Kept

May you trust the promise.

Death is victory.

May you remember that you have been resurrected.

Your old way of life and all it's struggle to prove your worth is dead.

May you live fully alive.

May the death of your old self give you a profound sense of freedom.

May you live like a child of God

May you live like a disciple of Jesus

May you live this way because that is who you are.

May you stop seeing yourself as a sinner.

That identity is dead.

May you live your resurrected self.

May you see yourself with God's eyes

As a holy, righteous, dearly beloved human who is fearfully and wonderfully made.

May you trust that the death of Jesus was victory enough for you.

May your life today be a total rejection of the devil's lie that says you're not good enough yet.

May you declare with every thought, action, and breath

I am a child of God.

Written by Casey Bartlett.

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

July 29 Dispatch Photo



Photo taken by Penny Gottfried in Stutsman County, 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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