

Nothing to Fear

This is the sixth 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 2: THE HARBINGERS - Part 2

Countless thousands of eager homesteaders swarmed into the Great Plains, each seeking his fortune on a place of his own, establishing the economy of the family farm - "the backbone of democracy."

To be sure, there were thousands of homesteads whose dry, barren soil proved unlivable, like one unsuccessful gamble in western Oklahoma which inspired a famous folk song:

*Hurrah for Greer County! The land of the free,
The land of the bedbug, grasshopper, and flea;
I'll sing of its praises, I'll tell of its fame,
While starving to death on my government claim.*

But to its credit, the Homestead Act gave thousands of families the opportunity to own what they could never have afforded to buy.

Also lured by the offer of free land were immigrants from western Europe, seeking freedom from aristocratic caste and state church, and the opportunity to secure land and better their condition. Letters sent home by immigrants already here - "America Letters" - described in glowing terms the richer life in the United States; low taxes,

three good meals a day and no compulsory military service (Catherine's "forever" exemption in Russia was rescinded in the 1870's when universal military service was extended to non-Russians).¹²

As desire for immigration reached a high tide, two major breakthroughs in transportation appeared, fortuitously and providentially on schedule, to bring people and land together. Transoceanic steamships made it possible for the immigrant to come quickly, in ten or twelve days, instead of as many weeks. He was still jammed into unsanitary quarters, with a shockingly high death rate, but the nightmare was more endurable, because it was shorter. And the British-invented railroad locomotive with its ingenious Yankee adaptation, the "cowcatcher", was ready to rattle, bump, and lurch the new Americans to their new homesteads.

After an inauspicious beginning, (In a famous nine-mile race staged in 1839 between a horse-drawn car and the "Tom Thumb" locomotive, the noisy iron horse was winning when an engine belt slipped and the gray quadruped clattered on to victory amid wild cheers from foes of mechanical progress.) railroad tracks soon crisscrossed America, connecting the eastern and western extremes of the country in 1869, as locomotives of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific lines kissed cowcatchers at the "wedding of the rails" of the first transcontinental railroad.¹³

With the westward trail now blazed, four other transcontinental lines were completed before century's end. One of them, the Northern Pacific Railroad, stretching from Lake Superior to Puget Sound via the northern half of the Dakota Territory, reached its terminus in 1883, opening thousands of new homesteads to the torrent of immigrants now arriving on American shores.¹⁴

Among the earlier immigrants, arriving before many of the conveniences, were the Andrew Olsens and the Ole Hegland Sernes, farmers from Christians and in southern Norway, who settled in the township of Oakland, Jefferson County, Wisconsin in 1859. They hoped to find in America not only financial blessings, but the spiritual light for which they were searching.¹⁵

Feeling oppressed by the coldness and formality in the Lutheran state church, they had attended revival meetings, and had become convinced that some of their church's teachings were not in harmony with the Scriptures.

At the close of one of these meetings, the minister dropped the remark that "if we are to follow the Bible strictly, we must all keep Saturday and not Sunday, because there is no proof in the Bible for Sunday-keeping."

After settling in Oakland, Wisconsin, the immigrants joined the Methodist church, but

when the minister, praying in church one Sunday morning, called that day the “Holy Sabbath”, the words of the Bible came to their minds: “The *seventh* day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.”

The Tarel Johnsons and Soren Loes, who had come from Norway in 1849, first settling in Illinois, now arrived in Oakland with similar convictions, due in part to their acquaintance with Gustav Melberg, a Swede, who was a Sabbath-keeper.

Toward the close of 1854, the four families decided to come together for Bible study, and if they found the seventh day to be the Bible Sabbath, to start keeping it. In the spring of 1855 they held their first Sabbath meeting in the home of Andrew Olsen.

Waterman Phelps, an English-speaking Adventist minister, learning of the Sabbath-keeping group, visited Oakland in April, 1858 and, despite the language barrier, conducted a baptism in May and organized a church in December, 1861, the first Scandinavian Adventist church in America and quite possibly the first foreign language-speaking Adventist church in the world.¹⁶

It was not until 1864, however, that the church was visited by a minister who could speak to them in their native tongue, Elder John G. Matteson, a Dane who, while a Baptist minister in Poy Sippi, Wisconsin had literally read himself and 40 members of his congregation into the Adventist Church through Adventist literature. He and his family moved to Oakland in 1866.

With a love for his people and a firm belief in the power of the printed page, Matteson asked the Review and Herald Publishing Association to start printing Scandinavian books and tracts. Turned down because of lack of funds, Matteson returned to Wisconsin where the growing group of Danish and Norwegian believers raised \$1000 for the project. Matteson returned to Battle Creek to begin printing his first book entitled Life and Death.

A success from the start, Matteson's printing venture soon led to demand for a monthly periodical. On January 1, 1872, the Review and Herald began publication of a missionary magazine, *Advent Tidende* (Advent Herald), the first Seventh-day Adventist foreign language periodical.

Just a year later Scandinavian Adventists began to migrate into the Dakota Territory, bringing with them their faith and copies of the *Advent Tidende* to use in sharing it.¹⁷ Three men who were to become prominent in the Adventist work in the Dakota Territory, O.A. Olsen and AD. Olsen, both Dakota Conference presidents, and M.M. Olsen, who served for years in both North and South Dakota, were sons of Andrew Olsen and members of that first Scandinavian Adventist church in Oakland,

Wisconsin.

12. Ibid., 324-325.

13. Ibid., 521-522; "Railroad," World Book Encyclopedia, XVI (1977), 113-115.

14. Ibid.

15. This account is based on Louis Martin Halswick, *Mission Fields at Home*, (Brookfield, Illinois: Pacific Press Publishing Association, book is undated, PPPA has no record but suggests c. 1945), 26-3L

16. The earliest foreign speaking church (other than Oakland and the Poy Sippi church organized in 1863) of which we can find record was Tramelan, Switzerland, organized by Michael Czechowski in 1867. See the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, *op. cit.*, 1281; or Maxwell, *op. cit.*, 158-164. While it is true that AC. and D.T. Bordeau began evangelistic work among the French in 1857 in Vermont, leading to the organization of the Vermont Conference in 1862, we have no record of a French church organized prior to the church at Oakland. (See *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, *op. cit.*, 894.)

17. "South Dakota Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, *op. cit.*, 1222.

Next time from *Nothing to Fear* :

Chapter 3, "Come to Dakota and Help Us" - Part 1 by Robert K. DuPuy

SonShine Students Enjoy Field Trips

SonShine Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School in Minot, North Dakota, has been having a particularly good year. Even though only three students are enrolled, they have been enjoying some great outings, including: Berry Acres, The Empire Train to Stanley, and ice skating at Maysa Arena.

Berry Acres is a fun fall outing consisting of a maze, zip-lines, and the ever-popular corn pit. Students and teacher, Tami Todd, chose pumpkins for their desks, flew along the zip-lines, and found their way out of the maze in record time. The students loved this outing and came home with corn everywhere.

In October, SonShine school rode the Empire Train to Stanley, North Dakota. They boarded in Minot and traveled one hour to their destination in Stanley. This was a first-time ride for all the students, and the passengers enjoyed watching the beautiful scenery as they sped along. The town has the last remaining Whirl-a-Whip machine in the world at Stanley Drug. Students were excited to give it a try and said it was the best ice cream they ever had. The group also visited the park, where they ate lunch and had some fun on the playground.

On January 11, the student body went to the Maysa Arena to ice skate. It was during a public skate time and only a few other people were present. One of the girls had never skated before and was struggling, but the one boy student was extremely helpful and patient with both his little sister and the other older girl. When a woman fell on the other side of the arena, Landon quickly skated over to see if she was alright. The teacher was so proud of his care for a random stranger. Everyone had a great time and learned that trying new things can be ok after all.



Article & photos by Tami Todd, head teacher.

A Humble Beginning

Kurt Warner is one of the greatest NFL quarterbacks, especially when you think about his journey to the National Football League. After going undrafted he was invited to training camp by the Green Bay Packers but was cut just a few weeks after signing. Warner then stocked shelves at a grocery store for \$5.50 an hour. All of this happened before he got a real shot in the NFL. Warner took advantage of that opportunity and won two Most Valuable Player awards along with a Super Bowl Championship. After his retirement, Warner was elected into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. A man who stocked shelves at one point, won awards and championships for

being one of the best at his position of quarterback.

Jesus talks about humble beginnings with a parable in Matthew, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches” (Matthew 13:31 NLT). Even something small like a mustard seed can grow into something amazing. A humble or small beginning does not mean something is insignificant or useless - this could be exactly what is needed. Jesus’ ministry started out small and we know how influential that was. The beginning does not matter, it is about the journey along the way and how you grow from that humble beginning. If someone can go from stocking shelves in a grocery store to winning a Super Bowl, we too can be influences in leading others to Christ.

Worship Thoughts by Pr. Jason Woll

Online Classes Supplement Student Needs

For a small school, Dakota Adventist Academy has the staffing to allow 47 different courses to be offered. In spite of the wide range of courses, students sometimes need to complete recovery classes to make up credits in order to graduate. Many times, teachers are able to fit them into their live classes, but sometimes the student’s schedule is too tight, or the needed classes overlap with their current classes. In other cases, a student may transfer in from another state or school system - and like those doing recovery credits, they may need to fit in a class that does not cooperate with their schedule. Finally, there are students who are just interested in taking a class that is not offered at DAA.

For these occasions, DAA partners with Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces (ALEKS), Griggs International Academy, North Dakota Center for Distance Education (NDCDE), Greenways Academy, the Central Regional Area Career and Technical Center (CRACTC), and/or the Bismarck Career Academy and Technical Center to offer solutions our students need. This year, 22 DAA students are enrolled, or planning to enroll, in 14 different classes through at least one of these mediums.

The breakdown of classes and headcounts are:

ALEKS:

Geometry - 1

Career Academy:

Certified Nursing Assistant - 3

CRACTC:

STEM (pre-engineering) - 1

Welding and Fabrication - 2

Greenways:

Algebra - 1

Biology - 3

Korean - 1

Griggs:

none this year

NDCDE:

Digital Information Technology - 1

Cybersecurity - 3

Forensic Science - 1

Game Design - 1

Health and Wellness - 1

Introduction to Programming - 1

Principles of Information Technology - 9

DAA has found ways to offer the variety of classes found in a large school with the advantages of a smaller school atmosphere. As students and parents are looking to make plans for the next school year, it is important to “spread the word” that DAA has the class options they are looking for.



PHOTO BY COLTER ROFFLER



PHOTO BY ANNA MCCARTHY

WONDER

2021 Dakota Camps

FLAG MOUNTAIN

cub camp, ages 8-10 | June 16-20 | \$200
junior camp, ages 11-13 | June 20-27 | \$275
teen retreat, ages 14-17 | June 27-July 4 | \$275

NORTHERN LIGHTS

cub camp, ages 8-10 | July 14-18 | \$200
junior camp, ages 11-13 | July 18-25 | \$275
teen retreat, ages 14-17 | July 25-Aug 1 | \$275
family camp | Aug 5-8 | price varies per family

registration opens January 20 online at: dakotayouthandyoungadults.org/camps

return to wonder



Lehr Church Partners with Area Churches

A few members got together last year to help package gift bags for inmates at the State Penitentiary in Bismarck, North Dakota. The Lehr congregation was one of five churches involved in this outreach project. Between the Bismarck, Mandan, Bowdon, Manfred, and Lehr congregations over 800 "goodie bags" were packaged for delivery to inmates prior to Thanksgiving. Aside from some snacks, each bag

contained a Bible study lesson, a copy of *Steps to Christ*, and one of several other books as well. Some of the bags also contained personal and handwritten notes of encouragement.

Amidst everything going on in the world, we tend to forget about the souls living behind bars who, like so many, need to be introduced to our Lord.

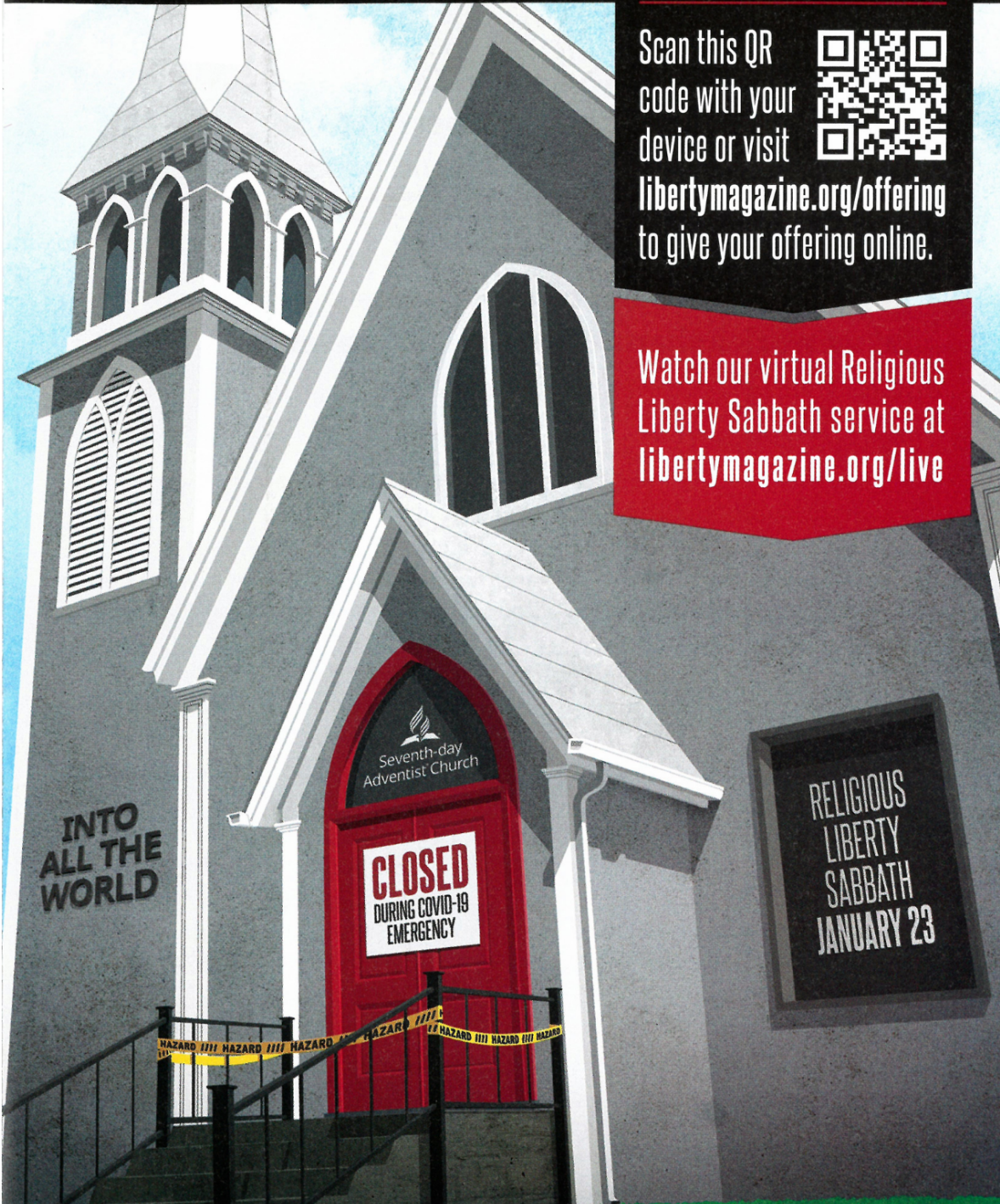


PACKAGING GIFT BAGS



Pictured in the photos: Chris Hofer, LeRoy and Marion Schweigert, Lyle Miller, Connie Aman, Jo Vilhauer, and Sandy Werth.

Article by Chris Hofer; photos by Sandy Werth and Paulette Bullinger.



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A TESTING TIME

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY OFFERING
JANUARY 23, 2021

FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

“We are not doing the will of God if we sit in quietude, doing nothing to preserve liberty of conscience. Fervent, effectual prayer should be ascending to heaven that this calamity may be deferred until we can accomplish the work which has so long been neglected. Let there be most earnest prayer and then let us work in harmony with our prayers.”

(Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 714).

These words were written in 1889, months after a national Sunday law had been introduced before the U.S. Congress to much public acclaim. Adventists and a few others spoke up resolutely, and the crisis was averted.

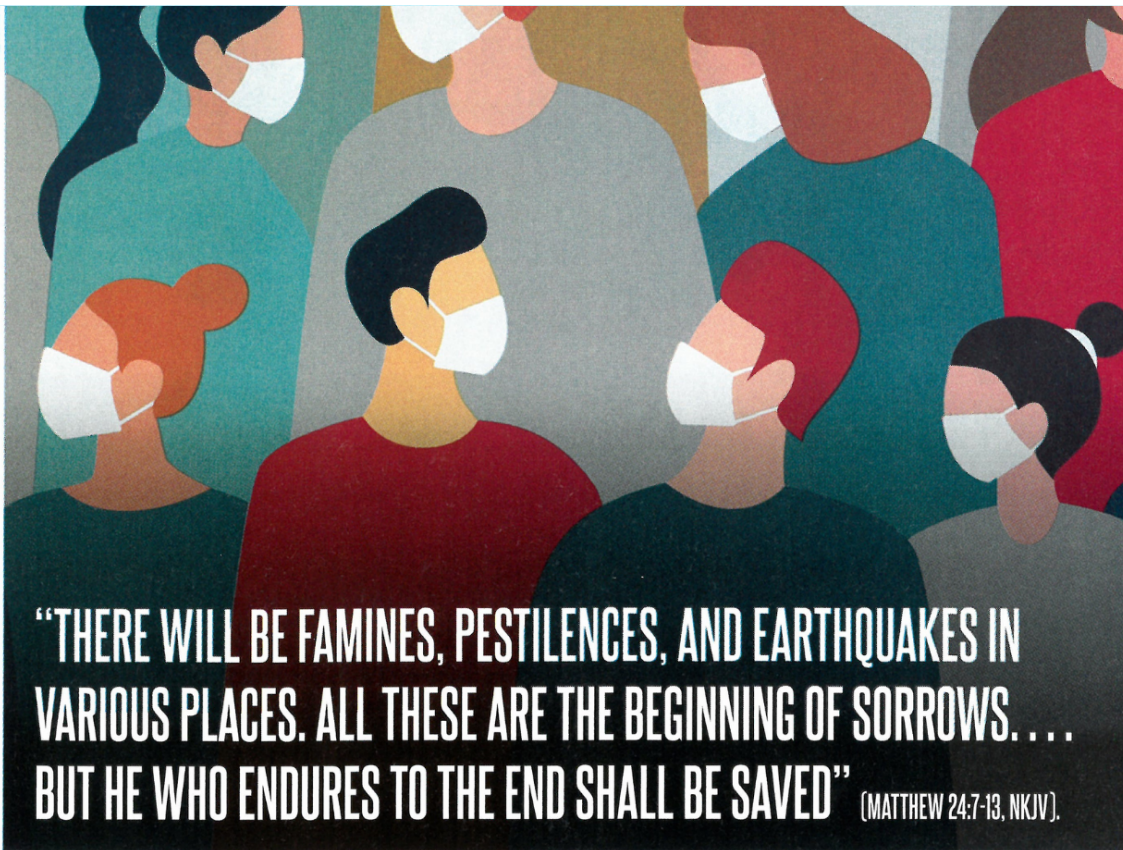
We are today in the midst of an international crisis of the first magnitude. COVID-19 is a proven killer, made more malign by its randomness and insidious transmission. In the United States particularly, life has been disrupted, perhaps permanently. An economy has been shut down and millions may have lost jobs forever. Social agitation has led to rioting and heavy-handed government response. An economy on respirator since 2008 and now gasping after trillions in relief funds--soon may come the fulfillment of a prediction that money will be worthless. And before our eyes, civil liberties are vanishing beneath the necessity of action. And religious liberty is threatened

in a palpable way. Our nominally religious society neglected to include religion as an “essential service.” Generally, faith groups went dormant in the emergency; and those that challenged the situation have been vilified as disloyal and antisocial. Yet in this moment of crisis we need to uphold the banner of freedom, religious freedom, as never before.

Each year *Liberty* is placed before you, and we ask our church community to empower our religious liberty efforts with financial support. It is always vital. But this year the need is palpable. We ARE in a testing time.

The very nature of the emergency and the lines of causality it produces is a reminder that time is short. Historic changes are taking place by the day. Remember, “the night cometh, when no man can work,” as Jesus foretold.

Thank you for responding so generously to our shared opportunity. We will “proclaim liberty throughout the land.”



“THERE WILL BE FAMINES, PESTILENCES, AND EARTHQUAKES IN VARIOUS PLACES. ALL THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS. . . . BUT HE WHO ENDURES TO THE END SHALL BE SAVED” (MATTHEW 24:7-13, NKJV).

- Send *Liberty* to judges who wonder about justice.
- Encourage liberty service.
- Defend those who are bruised.
- Pray for those already before councils and “kings.”

*Bible texts credited to NKJV are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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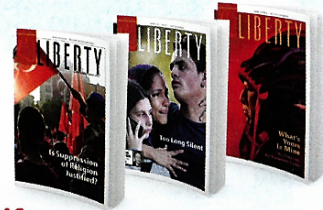
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All subscriptions will begin with the May/June issue of *Liberty*.

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.

January -

- 16: Local Church Budget
- 18-21: Pastors' Meetings - Bismarck, ND
- 23: NAD Religious Liberty
- 30: Local Church Budget
- 31: Children's Ministry Training - via Zoom

February -

- 4: Dakotans Pray - via Zoom (7pm CT)
- 6: Local Church Budget
- 7: Tentative K-12 Board - via Zoom (10am)
- 13: NAD Evangelism
- 15: Office Closed - Presidents' Day
- 17-21: DAA Home Leave
- 20: Local Church Budget
- 27: Dakota Challenge
- 27: Mid-America Union Pathfinder Bible Experience

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

Blessed & Kept

May you strive undeterred for the better world God promises.

May your response to destruction be edification.

Just as God, when the world was destroying itself, chose one family through which to pour out blessings on the whole world in Abraham,

May you, in response to attacks on norms and institutions we long thought protected, choose not to engage in the same destructive thinking.

May you instead look for the vulnerable among us, and give of yourself for their well-being.

May you do for one, what you wish you could do for all.

The restoration of our world does not come from governments or systems, it comes from loving-kindness for our neighbor.

May you look on those whom your mind tells you are your enemy and see your

neighbor.

May the destruction of the few be overwhelmed by the goodness of the many.
May you be a living demonstration that love will prevail.

Written by Casey Bartlett.

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

January 14 Dispatch Photo



Photo taken in Black Hills, west of Rapid City, South Dakota off Rimrock Highway by Kief Hansen.

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

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