

The legacy of Dorothy Davis Cook

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NUR301: Worldview Perspectives: The Christian Nurse

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March 6th,2023

Introduction

The missionary nurse I found worthy of being noticed is Dorothy Fay Davis. She was born in Hugo, Colorado on March 29th in 1912. Raised in a Christian home, she spent the majority of her childhood in Alhambra, California. She attended Pasadena College, now known as Point Loma Nazarene University. Graduated from there as well in 1934. She believed that her college gave many people to the mission field, including herself. Following her years in college, she continued her education at the Nazarene Samaritan Hospital in Nampa, Idaho. This Hospital opened for the purpose of preparing nurses for medical missions. Graduated from Nazarene in 1938 and completed her bachelor of science degree at Northwest Nazarene College. She was appointed to Nazarene missionary service on November 22, 1939.

Swaziland

Davis spent six weeks at sea crossing the Atlantic Ocean, at that time that was World War two battlefield. After that journey, she arrived in Africa June 4, 1940. Her first year of service was in the north of Swaziland. The village of Endzingini is where Harmon Schmelzenbach opened the first African missionary program for the Church of the Nazarene, it's also where missionary nurse Lillian Cole built the first Nazarene Hospital. Along with taking care of orphans and seeing clinic patients, she started learning the language of the people called Zulu. She started realizing the importance of prayer in a missionary's life

At the request of the king the Hospital was moved from Endzingini to Bremersdorp, which was more centrally located in the country. The missionaries recognized the value of training nationals to care for their own. The first Swazi trainee was pulled into the hospital garden to be an extra pair of hands in surgery. The trainee did so well that that was how they started a nurse's aide program. The Program was four years and it included midwifery. Davis felt

the call to teach nursing, so she was transferred to the Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital and Nazarene nursing school in Bremersdorp to serve as a “sister” and later she took leadership of the swazi nursing program. The King was supportive of Davis’s service to the people. Swaziland was a member, unfortunately of the British empire until 1968 and so this made the nursing program have to be up to British standards. These standards influenced both Davis's own further education and the nursing regulatory process that she helped formulate.

Building a Foundation

In the beginning of 1943, Davis put herself on night duty in the hospital so that her mornings and afternoons would be free for teaching and clinic visits. She was well known for always integrating nursing education with Christian education. Her students were grateful that she did not only teach the nursing aspect but also included Christ. Throughout those years Davis expanded her credentials both in nursing and in ministry. Her professional growth and development included learning about, and then teaching about, new diseases and causes of ill-health common to Swaziland. These included syphilis (the most common cause of morbidity and mortality), malaria, bilharziasis, leprosy, tuberculosis, trauma (from drinking, fights, and automobile crashes), burns from cooking fires and lightning, malnutrition, and pregnancy-related complications. In an effort to remain current with advancing nursing science knowledge, Davis subscribed to the American Journal of Nursing.

Davis completed all requirements in Zulu study and in 1946 she became a certified nurse midwife. All her education met the British standard requirements. She resisted pressure to train in the white hospitals and completed her training at McCord-Zulu hospital in Durban, South Africa. Because of her many accomplishments and her midwifery skill, she was the one many called upon to deliver very high-risk patients in homes and in the hospital. In focused preparation

for serving as the principal of the Nazarene nursing school, Davis next completed her sister tutor training in London, England, in 1951. This too was a requirement of the British government. Back in Swaziland, creative teaching was a necessity for Davis. It was not part of the Swaziland custom to wash your hair, But when the people started accepting Jesus as their savior they all wanted to have their hair washed. Davis used that moment in time to teach the nurses in training how to conduct a bed bath. To continue to aid in her teaching endeavors, she wrote four nursing texts, which became the golden standard for nursing in Swaziland and other surrounding countries. While the professionalism was growing under Davis so was the complexity of science and procedures. Davis believed nursing is a life long learning process, so she became the first editor of the Nazarene Nursing News. The publication gave Swazi nurses the opportunity to add articles that will further nursing education.

While Davis was teaching nursing in Swaziland, she was also building a spiritual foundation by preaching and opening churches. By 1948 she had completed all study and experience requirements and was ordained as an elder in the Church of the Nazarene while on furlough in California. Back in Swaziland she held services in the hospital wards and daily in the nursing school chapel. For a time she was in charge of all Nazarene Sunday schools in the country. Nurse Hope Dlamini reported that before Davis and students opened the antenatal and child welfare clinic for the day, Davis held a service.

Going Home

Dorothy Davis dared to do the impossible and became the Mother of Swazi Nurses. She had adopted the women of Swaziland, but finally in 1972 it was time to leave them to carry on. She had actively protected, nurtured, and trained the girls, some of them from birth, who would be registered nurses. She comforted and guided them through their homesickness, their study and

romances, their successes and failures. She worked hard to instill in them a sense of self-esteem, self-worth, and a strong moral character. Davis prayed for and with each of her children, mentoring them in biblical ways and into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. For her service, by order of Queen Elizabeth II, she was honored with the Member of the British Empire award. Also for her service, an entire issue of the 1971 Swaziland Nursing Journal was dedicated and devoted to her. The Dorothy Fay Davis Silver Medal was established to annually reward the nursing student from the three territories who received the highest score on final examinations. Finally, she received the Church of the Nazarene Distinguished Service Award.

Conclusion

Overall, Dorothy Davis Cook accomplished so much in her life, She just kept putting herself in every position possible, so she was able to spread and teach everything she learned to others who also need that knowledge. She went against certain standards because she knew where she would make the most useful impact. She is one of the most selfless people and everyone who had the chance to work with her and learn with her should feel honored. Her missionary work is one that should be followed and a lesson to other missionary programs around the world. Her becoming a minister and also being a nurse, is the epitome of what a christian nurse should try to emulate.

References

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