

A Praying Mother

Sarah Neumann has been described at various times by all her children as a pious, “God-fearing” woman, who was relentless in praying for her children’s well-being and eternal security. At the time of her funeral, the Greendale MB Church, where she had been a member, wrote the following under her photo: “Mrs. Neumann, in the minds of many members, will be remembered as a praying mother.”

In 1935, when the oldest siblings travelled to Yarrow, from Gem, Alberta, for brother Henry’s wedding, they found employment and remained to work. Sarah, reportedly, spent New Year’s Eve on her knees in prayer for her sons’ salvation, vowing to remain there until she received the Lord’s assurance that they were saved. When she got up, she had accepted the Lord. A week later she received a letter from the Holy Spirit had driven them that boys with a story of how the same evening, to attend an evangelistic meeting in Yarrow, and that all three—Jake, Dick, and David had made personal commitments to Christ.

But prayer alone did not always suffice. She was also known to confront her children directly about their spiritual well-being. Peter offers a personal account that illustrates that point, when at age 10, he broke a leg and found himself in the hospital.



At his hospital bed, his mother told him a story he has never forgotten. The story she told him was this: “In a dark and shady forest there lived a family of deer: a doe and her two fawns. One of the fawns was often disobedient and would occasionally leave the safety of the forest to explore a clearing nearby. One day a hunter spotted him and shot an arrow, narrowly missing his mark. The fawn scampered back to his mother and soon forgot the incident. A short while later he met the same hunter who once again missed his quarry. Unfortunately, the fawn persisted in disobeying his mother and the third arrow found its mark.” Perhaps, Peter thinks, she thought he had less time than some of her other children. But Peter didn’t think he was ready.

The second arrow, that his mother foretold, found Peter when he was fourteen years old during an impromptu rodeo with his friends. The ‘rodeo’ entailed strapping on a pair of spurs to make a docile saddle horse buck. Two pick-up riders would swoop in to pick you up before you fell off. It was ‘dangerous fun.’ On this day, one of the cowboys, perched on the barn roof, spotted a couple of errant milk cows in a wheat field. Off to the horses they flew. Peter was without a

saddle, and the mare he was riding was fat. When she leaned to avoid a gate, there was no way he could stay on her back. He felt a handful of mane...just enough to swing his body under her pounding hooves.

He woke, again, to the sight of his mother's worried face. (His own was minus some teeth and lots of ugly stitches. He remembers being wretchedly sick from the ether.) "That's the second arrow, Peter," his mother had said. At this point Peter re-considered his relationship with God. He acknowledged his sinful nature and accepted God's gracious forgiveness, but he had difficulty talking about it. He also admits that he was nervous about that third arrow.

"Canadians Through Miracles"

- David F Loewen

Heinrich Dietrich (1885–1955) and Sarah (Wiebe) Neumann (1890-1958), had moved to Greendale in 1948 via Gem, Alberta and Bredenbury, Saskatchewan, after having immigrated, in 1926, from Rosenwald in the Barnaul Settlement, Asiatic Russia.