

Defining Moments in My Story

There have been many topics that have played a major role in the history of my family in the past century; a few of these topics are immigration, education, and faith. These are all very important subjects that probably figure into many family histories, but they have their own meaning in my family.

My family has immigrated a lot, so it is a topic that has played a large part in defining my family's story. My Pake, (my grandfather on my mother's side) first immigrated to Canada from the Netherlands in the early 1950's. His family decided to immigrate to Canada because they had heard so many good stories about it, and because the Lord had called them to go to Canada. My Beppe, (my grandmother on my mother's side) also emigrated from the Netherlands.

In 1983, Pake and Beppe and their children moved to Papua New Guinea on a mission trip. That is where my mother and father first met. My mom and dad got married in 1988 and moved to the United States of America, where my dad is from. It was here that my sister and I were born. We moved to Canada in 2004, and have stayed here since.

None of my great-grandparents on my mother's side ever went to college or had much formal schooling. My Beppe's father only ever went up to grade six in his schooling. Pake and Beppe, however, had much more education than that. Pake went to Hamilton District Christian High school, here in Canada. That is where he met my Beppe. After they graduated, they went to Calvin College, in Michigan, to become teachers. At Calvin College, Pake got his Masters degree in English, and Beppe got a teachers certificate.

Both Pake and Beppe had always wanted to be teachers. Beppe had wanted to be a teacher ever since she was six. By the time Beppe was fifteen she was teaching Sunday school,

and by the time she was sixteen she was teaching at vacation bible school. After she got her teachers certificate, Beppe went on to become the principal of Holland Marsh District Christian School, and after that several others.

My Mom took education so seriously she decided to start homeschooling my sister and me. She started when I was going into grade one and my sister was going into grade three. Mom wanted us to have a better way to learn that wasn't as stressful as ordinary school, and that was more peaceful. Also, God had told her to homeschool us.

Faith is probably the topic that has shaped my family the most. Everyone in my family is a Christian. My family on my mother's side has been Christian Reformed for many generations. My mother, grandparents, great-grandparents, and probably even my great-great-grandparents were all in some way Christian Reformed.

All my great-grandparents loved the Lord entirely. It affected everything they did during their lifespan. If they hadn't loved God, then they might never have gone to Canada, like God wanted them to. When my Beppe was only fourteen, her parents wanted her to go to a Christian school very badly. They wanted it so badly that they sent her from their home in Kingston, Ontario, to Hamilton ON, so she could go to Hamilton District Christian High school.

After Pake and Beppe had been married for a while, God told them to take their four teenage children and go on a short term missions trip. They spent two years in PNG, working with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

The topics of immigration, education, and faith are important to a lot of people. Their effect is not restricted to my family. However, they have had their own special effect on my family. They brought my family to Canada, brought my grandparents to the same school, and

my parents to PNG at the same time. These topics sent my family to PNG and brought them back to Canada. These topics have defined and shaped my family into what it is today.