

Alumni Focus

Ed and Karen Peters

Quick facts:

Married in 1993

Years at NBC: Ed – 1988-1991

Karen – 1989-1991

3 daughters: Jocelyn, 14; Charity, 11; Brookelin, 10

Hometowns: Ed – Osler, SK

Karen – LaCrete, AB

Current Jobs/Occupations: Ed – Old Dutch Foods Distributor

Karen – Homemaker

Places you've lived since you left NBC: A lot, but always together!

J: Ed and Karen, thanks for taking the time for this. I smile when I think back 15 years, because I remember attending youth group with you two as the youth leaders. And here I am today, in conversation with you, wanting to learn more about what God has done in your life in all those years since. Did you have your lives mapped out at all back then?

E&K: Specifically? No. We were both prepared for the pursuit of God together. Looking back though, part of our wedding vows expressed our general "roadmap": "With God's strength, I will be sensitive and obedient to the commands of Christ and live in such a way that you, our children, and others will be challenged to a life of faithfulness to Jesus Christ also."

J: You recently moved from Prince Albert, SK to Wainwright, AB last fall. How did God lead you in that direction, and have things turned out like you thought or hoped they would?

E&K: It was our weakness, really, that brought us here. Sometimes we get to a place where we have nothing left to give, and God graciously provides a respite.

Wainwright is, for now, our "resting place" simply because this is where Ed found work (that's God's direction). In spite of our weakness, we were able to see some of the potential challenges and disappointments of moving to a place where we and our children knew no one, where we were not close to either of our families, where the job may not be suitable, etc. Our expectations, grounded in reality, have helped us adjust fairly well, and have also helped us to focus on what is constant in our lives-- that being the Lord Jesus.

J: There are often a lot of changes that come with moving. Was there any part of your lives you found the hardest to leave behind?

E&K: Our investments. We had spent over 11 years in Prince Albert (1991-1994 and 1999-2007) and had poured huge amounts of energy into the work we did. Any farmer, or homeowner, will understand how you hope the people to come behind you will care about the land as much as you did. They will also recognize how helpless you are to make any improvements once you've relinquished control. Should we think, "We've sowed the seed, it's just starting to head out, and now hail? Why did we bother?" So the hardest part is trusting God to keep producing a crop

J: I know you were involved with Northern Canada Evangelical Mission (NCEM) in the past for a number of years. I've read many people's testimonies of how God led them into 'being a missionary'. I think we can forget that God is just as capable to lead someone out of that. How does your experience as missionaries or understanding of what it means to be a missionary change the way you approach life in this next chapter?

E&K: Aside from the philosophical part of that question (Are all Christians "called" to be missionaries, or is there a special "calling"?), there are some very practical aspects to life as the modern missionary. Very few people can be involved in full-time missionary work without being "sent". Most missionaries need people other than themselves to recognize a spiritual need among a people group, and agree to do what it takes to meet that need. This means there must be those who send (ie. "support"), as well as like minded people to be missionaries together (ie. mission agency). Either way, to be effective as missionaries we need to be intentional as a group, and make sure that resources are prioritized and available.

We have seen for years that we have been given much in the way of opportunity to know the Lord as Savior, and know His Word, Bible school and ministry experience-- it would be nothing but poor stewardship if we were not involved in reaching out to those in spiritual need in whatever context we're in.

Personally, we believe that keeping ourselves debt-free is one of the best ways to be available to God when we are faced with an opportunity in ministry (full-time or not) and we are always working toward that end.

J: How has your search for a new church family gone? Is there anything in particular you've looked for as you've searched for a local church to call home?

E&K: When we realized that we would be moving from Prince Albert, there was a certain amount of trepidation for me (Karen), though I had come to terms with the fact that my life as a wife and mom would for the most part change very little.

However, I did struggle with future unknowns and how this would affect me personally. When Ed told me he'd found work in Alberta (at first we thought we'd be moving to Lloydminster), I thought with some dismay, "I haven't lost anything there." There are times when the Lord's presence is so close, so clear, and in that time He so clearly said to me, "There is a church that needs you." I found that such a hopeful message in my time of questioning our purpose for the future. When we considered the options for churches in this community, one stood out as likely having a doctrinal stand most close to that which we hold so that was our first choice. After a few weeks we discovered that the church is also in pain with physical illness and family breakdown. After our own personal weariness, I said to the Lord, "I don't know if I can handle this church's pain!" Of course, God's message came back to me, "There is a church that needs you."

Our children have opportunity to be involved and develop their spiritual gifts. We have met people with whom there are connections to previous times in our lives. We know we are blessed to have this measure of Christian fellowship.

J: It seems like there is overwhelming pressure placed on young people nowadays to get an education that helps them get a job in the workforce. Do you feel there is still a good 'return on investment' in attending bible school today even though it's often a considerable cost, as well as money spent that doesn't necessarily translate directly into employment? How do you share those values with your own children as they grow older?

E&K: We have often looked back and been thankful for a time in life where we were free to pursue the study of Scripture. The demands of family living do not leave one free for that pursuit just as the scripture teaches that the demands of being married do not leave one free to serve the Lord as wholeheartedly as when we are single. That being said, we would be remiss as parents if we left our children's Bible training to Bible Schools. Jason, we were raised, as you were, valuing hard work in some ways simply because it was a necessity for our survival. There are youth who do not relate material provision with sweat commodity. We have to be careful that we don't separate the need for money and the need for Christian living. It's not an either/or, we must have both. Our generation is privileged to have the opportunity for Bible school. Hopefully our children will have that same opportunity, but as parents who have had that privilege we have the obligation to teach our children both Christian doctrine, and employable skills. We've chosen to attempt this by homeschooling our children.

J: Looking back to your time as students at NBC, can you remember any areas of your life God really developed to prepare you for the rest of your life? To fast forward, what areas of your lives do you really see God working at the present?

E&K: Ed, especially, values the faculty who shaped his thinking as a Christian man:

Mr. Dunn, whose sound theology coupled with a mind that understood world events in a broad way; Mr. Rempel, who mentored him personally, and in many ways was a father figure to him. Hermeneutics, Old and New Testament Survey, Church History all stand out as basics in a sound approach to scripture and theology.

Right now, we are enjoying the Bible for ourselves, without having to think of how it applies to teaching others. We are not necessarily coming up with answers from going through scripture, but gaining a fresh awareness of what's actually there and how that depicts God. It is a time for us to believe that God is sufficient, He is at work, He is not silent. We may be weak, but God is not, and who is it about anyway?

J: Thanks for sharing with me a glimpse into your lives. It's been a joy to touch base like this! Who would've thought it back in youth group 15 years ago!