

The Derksen Brothers and the Canadian Revival (1971)

Sam and Arnold Derksen had been feuding for thirteen years. Although the brothers attended the same church, they had not spoken for two years. When Sam walked down one aisle of the church, his brother walked out the other, or vice versa. All their bitterness had erupted because of their mutual involvement in the music program of the church. They had different ideas, different tastes, and above all, a different evaluation of each other's ability. They were so adept at concealing their mutual hatred that many people did not even know the hostility existed.

Sam believed reconciliation was hopeless. They had tried to patch up their differences before and failed. There was no reason to think that their bitterness could be resolved now. But God was at work.

One night, following the evening service, Arnold went to the basement of the church with the pastor and a deacon. The three men suggested that Sam join them. He agreed to do so, since he was deeply convicted about his attitude. But when he asked Arnold to forgive him, the reply was icy, "Well, it's about time!" Sam was disillusioned. The episode confirmed his suspicions that they could not be reunited.

Rather than let the brothers go, the pastor and deacon prayed. A few moments later, God shattered Arnold's haughty spirit. He broke under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and confessed his sins, crying to God for mercy. A member sitting in the auditorium said that he could hear the men praying, crying and beating on the downstairs wall. A few moments later, the brothers asked each other's forgiveness, wept and embraced. They emerged walking hand-in-hand as they approached their waiting families. There was hugging, kissing and laughing.

The next night, the brothers sang a duet. Later, they traveled to a nearby city in the same car to share what God had done in their lives. They rejoiced and thanked God that He had delivered them from the bitterness of the past. Even the skeptical had to admit they had seen a miracle. The impact of these changed lives triggered an explosion of repentance, restitution, and love.

Yet, the Derksen brothers could not have predicted what God was about to do. Even the most optimistic did not realize that this was the beginning of a revival that would affect thousands of people in Saskatoon and other cities in Canada. The movement popularly referred to as the "Canadian Revival" was on.