

Unengaged No More

A Praying Grandma Rocks the World

By Todd Rasmuson, *Pastor for Global Outreach*
Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN

*Dedicated to my church, my family, and all the Grandmas
who have prayed for me over the years.*

Chapter 1

She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.—1 Timothy 5:5

Time for tea. The kettle on the stove whistled for a response. A used Lipton tea bag rested nearby on an antique saucer, plenty of life remaining to plop it into service.

Gremma's droopy eyelids called for a bit of caffeine, especially to start the day. Her Swedish bones of 92 years had risen with the dawn again, a life of training from ages of Iowa farm work. But now Gremma's labor of love found application in new tasks. She no longer collected eggs, bottle fed baby calves, and weeded the gardens.

Gremma had moved into the town of Eagle Pond when Harland died, and she spent several hours a day in her lime-green, cushioned rocking chair. The comfort from the cushion and the strength in the wooden armrests reminded Gremma of her pioneering grandmother who left Sweden to live in America. When the winter days got cold, her mother's multi-colored knitted afghan, draped over the chair's back, was ready to serve. A little table stood alongside with a green candy dish, a panic button for medical assistance, a well-worn Bible, a pad of paper, and a pile of missionary newsletters.

When that stack of papers mixed with the fuel of prayer from a heart of faith, a spiritual fire erupted to battle with evil.

Those in heaven called Grandmother Christina a "prayer warrior." Gremma wouldn't call herself a warrior. She just prayed, knowing that prayer was used by God to thwart the plans of Satan.

When one of her six great-grandchildren asked, "Gremma, why do you pray?" Gremma replied, "Well, honey, I love to talk with God, and I believe he uses prayer to do amazing things."

Gremma grew up as Christina Olson, but for the past 20 years, most in the town of Eagle Pond called her "Gremma," a nickname that started with her first grandchild, Jay, who couldn't quite

pronounce “Grandma.” “Gremma” stuck. Even some of her closest friends replaced “Christina” with that name of endearment.

With her Iowa State Cyclones cup steaming with weak tea, Gremma shuffled into the living room and slowly planted herself in the rocking chair, re-adjusting her pink polyester pants and the flower-patterned blouse that politely covered her advancing mid-section. Age and a Midwestern diet had caught up with her. Cream of mushroom soup casseroles followed by Flavorite sandwich cookies from the refrigerated Christmas tin had graced Gremma’s table over the years, filling the hungry tummies of her family and guests. These days, Gremma didn’t cook as many casseroles, except for the funerals that seemed to be all too regular. Still, she loved those Flavorite sandwich cookies; a bit of white frosting flattened between a round, chocolate cookie on one side, a vanilla cookie on the other. Tasty, especially with tea, and about half the price of Oreos.

Although Gremma’s cooking patterns had changed, her hairdo had not. Every Thursday, her thinning hair got the weekly bouffant, a puffing from back-combing and 30 minutes under the hair dryer at Shirley’s Snips. Brown dye covered the grey as needed. It was a stylish ’do in the 50s, and it felt as right to Christina as did belonging to a community of “the widows,” many of whom kept Thursday hair appointments to share the news of Eagle Pond. The social time kept Gremma connected to news of weddings, funerals, and accidents. Last Thursday, Gremma’s spirit had felt the burden of various trials endured by others, and when she returned to her little one-story two-bedroom house, she had added two more people to her prayer list.

With the next hair appointment a few days off, Gremma cherished her extra prayer time this morning with her Father who loved her. Her graceful, rocking motion kept a gentle beat as words of praise to God flowed freely from her heart and onto her lips. Memorized Scripture blended into her prayers.

“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.” She began with the Lord’s prayer before adding her own words, “O Lord, come in power, grace, and truth to the people of Eagle Pond. I lift up Verna to you, adjusting to raising a difficult child; and Della, whose son was seriously hurt in a motorcycle accident. Also, dear Jesus, may you bring hope and joy in your name to the Jaro people of East Africa. Come, oh Lord, come.”

Gremma was online in prayer at the speed of Infinity G.

Jesus, as always, heard Gremma’s prayer immediately. He smiled. He loved to hear his child talk with faith, and he delighted in her heart that loved him. Every word uttered in faith by his little Christina brought a pleasing aroma to him and would be used for final victory upon the Earth. Not one syllable of faith is wasted.

Victory on Earth had not yet come, however, and Satan, too, listened as Gremma prayed. In his disguise as an angel of light, Satan radiated handsomeness, his magnificent cream-colored wings helping him glide to and fro upon the Earth. But something in his appearance was off. Instead of a holy glow, Satan's eyes betrayed ages of lust, a longing for power that would never be fully satisfied. The destructive influence given to Satan by God was just that: Given. The days were evil, and God had given Satan influence on Earth for this time. Satan would make the most of it.

Satan quietly spoke as he stared at Gremma rocking back and forth, "The time has come for me to consider this old lady in Eagle Pond."