

We have been informed by those who have knowledge in the field of human behavior, that the first few years of life are in some way, the most significant. Every child should be a "wanted" child and the degree to which a child is wanted is reflected in personality behavior in future years - particularly in the matter of self-image.

I was born on the 28th day of January in the ^{year} 1907 in La Grange, Illinois. Between this time and the birth of my sister, Esther Linnea Johnson on March 12th, 1912, in Kenosha, Wisconsin, I was an only child, whether or not I was a "wanted" child in the fullest meaning of that word. I do not know. I do know that home was always "home" to me, and that I have wrestled all my life with a sense of inadequacy and an almost total lack of self-confidence. I am sure that the fault does not lie here. Both mother & Dad were committed to the Christian faith and both were individuals of the highest moral integrity.

A strong bond of affection existed between me and my father. I respected him for

the uprightness of his life. Never did I see him engage in any habit or action which I could not approve of. And I loved him much. He had a great love for children, and children loved him. The feeling of loving warmth tinged as I recall the many times I would as a child ~~also~~ crawl into his lap and sit there awhile.

Mother had immigrated from Sweden as a child of eleven. Born on ~~one~~ ^{about one} of five sisters to Johan Anderson and Emma Louisa Peterson in 1881 (8/15) in Skanninge, Sweden, she was chosen with her sister, Ellen, to go to America when economic conditions in Sweden made it most difficult for her mother to keep the family together. Her father had died in 1888 leaving his wife with five girls to raise. Mother + Ellen came to Rockford to stay with an uncle, brother to her mother.

The years following my birth in 1897 must have been difficult. My parents, in a deep desire to own a bit of land and raise their family on a farm, purchased a

small farm near Little Falls, Minnesota.
But farming was difficult with these
consecutive summers of drought. In
1911 my family moved to Kenosha, Wisconsin
where my father secured employment
with the Thos. B. Jeffrey company, later
West Motors and then American Motors.
Ethel, my sister, was born in March 12
1912.

So it is that Kenosha, Wisconsin, was to be
my home town until after high school
graduation. Two protestant Swedish
speaking churches, the Lutheran and the
Baptist, ministered to the small Swedish
community in Kenosha. My parents
attended the Swedish Baptist church where
they joined the congregation and attended
regularly. Swedish was the language used
by the congregation. Many of the Swedish
sermons I listened to as a child and
I heard the theological vocabulary of the
Bible so well that these terms still
linger with me. I remember often going
through my father's pockets, ^{at the end of a service} to find his watch
or some other item to fiddle. It helped
to pass the time away. We as a family
always sat in the same church pew -

Sunday after Sunday, The Third pew
from the back on the left hand side.

The commitment of our family to the church
was total. Pupils in our Sunday school
who attended faithfully with a minimum
of seven absences for the year were given
a diploma as a reward the first year,
and a seal for their diploma the next
six years if they were faithful in their
attendance. I still possess my diploma
with its six seals, representing seven
consecutive years of constant S.S. attendance.
Some cold windy days father would
take us thru the snow drifts to church,
sometimes pulling my sister on the sled.
We did not own an automobile, we
walked wherever we went, as did most
everyone else.

We never had so-called family devotions
in our home, but grace at mealtimes
was standard. The church and our
pastor were always given total and
whole-hearted support. Never were either
criticized in the talk Sunday noon was
in family conversation. Father did serve
on the Deacon Board of the church but

He was never a so-called "leader" in the church's life. Yet none were more faithful in the support of the church. In the years when Pentecostalism was influencing so many Christians, leading to many so-called splits in Protestant Church, our congregation suffered along with so many others. But when some members left the congregation to form another, Dad would not go with them. His commitment was to his own church and pastor.

Esther grew, as I did, in loving respect to the church and to the things of God. She was gifted with a fair degree of musical talent, studying the piano and arriving at a good degree of proficiency in her playing. She was often used in the worship services of the church, and in her high school years played the pipe organ for the congregational services. I had spent a little time in the study of the violin. Many were the hours we spent playing together, Esther and I. Happy hours they were, and what pleasure they afforded our parents, also, who loved to hear us make music.

The memories of school days seem to be all but black-out for me. While we lived in Little Falls, Swedish was the language in our home and I have been told that I knew very little English when I began school. I was four when we moved to Kenosha. But English became very quickly the language of our home life in Kenosha. Mother, particularly, became very adept at reading and writing. She carried on an extensive correspondence with many friends and her family in Sweden. Many have spoken of the encouragements received from her letters.

Both Esther + I attended Bain School in Kenosha for our first six grades, Lincoln Jr. Hi for the next three, and Kenosha High School, graduating in 1925 and 1930. I have no recollection of being a so-called "leader" in school. Rather, it seems, I was an average student and a quiet unaggressive lad. I don't remember having any "fights". I do remember backing off from one which I was being encouraged to tackle by other classmates. As I remember it, there wasn't any real reason to fight. I had no

wrongs to right, no grievances to avenge
no hatred for my would be opponent,
Has this been a fatal flaw in my
character — The lack of aggressiveness?
There have been many conflicts in life
but they have been inner conflicts,
wrestled with in the lonely hours. By
God's grace there has been little
confrontation in the years of public
ministry. We have served in peace
amongst our congregation, and have
left each in peace.

Our home was not characterized by
a worldly sophisticated atmosphere or
appearance. My parents purchased
a new ^{with house} home on the south west side of
Kenosha. There was no furnace in the
home nor inside bathrooms, these were
added later. The wood stove in the
kitchen served for heat and for cooking.
An on the stove burning water ^{located in the kitchen} provided
heat for the rest of the house. Cold has
always bothered me from my earliest
years. But what was lacking in warmth
in the house was compensated for by
warm clothing, warm bedding, and by
worned bricks ^{in bed} for our sleeping comfort.

Following H. R. graduation, the traditional thing was to "look for a job". Very few H. R. grads from our school would go on to seek a college education. It was hard by thought of for the children of factory workers in the mid 20's. And so I applied for a job at what was then the Nash Motors Company and was employed in the Sundry department as it was called. Here it was that auto parts were shipped to distributors around the country. In the Sundry dept. we packaged and mailed the boxed parts. It was a job at which I learned ~~to~~ to identify ~~to~~ many of the parts used in the manufacture of an automobile. Later, when it was learned that I could type, I was given the job of typing bills of lading and express bills.

~~But~~ I worked for Nash Motors for a year but became restless and as the fall season began to approach, I began to think of further schooling. I applied to Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin — but somehow received no necessary confirmation of acceptance. It was then that a layman of our church, Fr. Harold Mahoney, spoke to me of taking a

years study at Moody Bible Institute. The line of reasoning was that I have a whole life before me. Would it not be good to give one year to prepare in a spiritual way for the years ahead - one year given to the study of God's word, to the strengthening of my faith and to prepare for service in my home church as a Christian by name.

It seemed good reasoning and since Lawrence College seemed closed for me, I applied to M.B.I. and became a "Moody Student", remaining there for three years until graduation in August 1929.

The three years at M.B.I. were years of joyful maturing in my life. The study of the Scriptures, the life shared with kindred hearts and the personal life of faith which we learned to live there are memories I am thankful for. Most of the Christian leaders of the day visited M.B.I. I remember hearing Dr. J. Campbell Morgan preach in the Moody church on North Ave. & Clark Street, a church which had been built and completed a year or

year before I began studies at HBS.
The pastor, Dr. Peter Philpott preached on
Sundays in such a warm hearted
manner that he has always seemed
to be my ideal pastor. I attended the
last class that Dr. R. A. Torrey taught
before his death. Dr. James H. Gray gave
us our diplomas at graduation time.

Theological liberalism was becoming
more & more entrenched on the American
scene in the 30's. Fundamentalism
was in its infancy. The Bryan - Scopes
so-called "Monkey trial" was held
in Tennessee in the mid 30's. At
HBS we were conscious of these
trends and were urged and taught
to "contend earnestly for the faith";

Teaching at HBS was by
indoctrination. The Bible was the
authoritative source of doctrine
and practice. Graduating from
HBS meant that tho we were not
widely educated, we did know
the Bible quite well and we were
confident in what we believed. That
confidence has never left me thru
years of further study.

Through the so-called "Practical work department" at M.B.S. students we exposed to all types of service experiences: V.S. teaching, song leading, speaking, ministering in jails and hospitals and preaching on street corners. I think of myself as being very shy, a characteristic which was somewhat overcome as in fulfilled these assignments. It was however, never fully overcome and ^{the} fear of facing people has never left me, despite the years of preaching to my congregation.

Music has always been a very special interest. At M.B.S. I graduated in the Bible-Music course. I remember with much satisfaction our classes in sight-reading and in composition taught by such teachers as T. H. Bittles and Mr. Holzworth. It was my privilege to have my entry to the class song competition chosen ~~the the music~~ I gave me the honor of leading the class song at the graduation exercises.