

It was at M.B.S. that I became acquainted with some young men of the F.F.C. The Swedish department of M.B.S. was the actual or the Bible Institute of the F.F.C.A. I was not very knowledgeable about denominational affairs so my future relationship with the F.F.C. amongst whom I have served in a life time of ministry was not born in a rational manner. Several future leaders of The F.F.C. were students in the Sw. dept. of M.B.S. with whom I formed friendships which were to last a life time. Arley Begg, Levi Olson, Carl Steelberg were some.

~~One student in particular~~
I was particularly drawn to comradeship with one student, Alfred Bjorklin whose home was in Jonell, Minn. It was a friendship providentially given to me of the Lord for our lives were to be knit together for our mutual benefit in many ways.

upon graduation from M.B.S., I had no place of employment waiting for me. I went home to live with

my parents for about a year. I secured work with The Simmons Company, making mattresses and box springs. But the depression had set in and many of the employees were being dismissed. Again I thought of further schooling and resigning my job, I enrolled in Lewis Tech in Chicago, West side.

While at Lewis Tech, I received a letter from A. B. asking if I would be interested in joining him in home missions work in northern Minnesota. He, too, was without a place of Christian ministry, at the time. I felt I should certainly join him and so in the spring of 1930, we began a Gospel work in the area of Whipsholt, Minnesota some 13 miles east of Walker on Hwy. 534.

I was to spend the next ten years in northern Minnesota, related to the work in Whipsholt and Walker. ~~the~~ meetings were first held in homes and school houses in the Whipsholt area. That first summer Bible Schools were held with the aid of two or three

Nov. W. Bible School students, particularly
Rosa Parkman and Mabel Lindgreen."
A roving evangelist came to the
community to preach for a couple
weeks. God blessed the preaching and
teaching of His Word and there was
a community-wide turning to God.
Both young and old were converted,
a revival work of God's Spirit
which had lasting results — a
work which I had longed to see
repeated in later years but never
saw. A congregation of people was
gathered together and a building
was erected which was to serve as
a gathering place and a home for
workers. A layman, Mr. John Soudin,
came to assist in the building and
was almost single handedly
responsible for the building.

Once again I became restless
and thought to venture on a
securing a college education, which
I did by matriculating at Coe College
in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I had written
for catalogues from several colleges.
Coe I do not know how Coe was

chosen except, perhaps, the tuition cost seemed manageable and a scholarship was offered me. I attended Coe for two full years of study and two summer sessions, graduating in 1936 with a B.A. degree with a major in physics. Physics was chosen as a major because of an inherent love of the subject. But also because it was a science major. The conflict between a science and the Bible religion was quite heated. I felt that if I was to preach the Gospel, ~~it~~ my faith should be tested, so I needed to prove to myself that a Christian could also be knowledgeable about things in the scientific world but still maintain a strong Christian faith. It has proved to be so these years. All my reading and contemplations these years has strengthened my faith in God rather than diminished it.

While I attended college, A.B. sustained the work in Whipholt. One of our ventures was to hold a series of tent meetings in Walker one summer. They resulted in a group of Christians gathering together to form a fellowship which later became the Calvary A.F.C. of Walker. We met in a rented room in the old Chase Hotel (since demolished). Nurses from the State T.B. sanatorium in Abbeville, S.C. came to worship with us. The revival spirit that was first experienced in Whipholt now prevailed in Walker and a warm and tender work of the Holy Spirit was accomplished in the congregation in Walker.

A.B. & I divided the work between us now that the Walker folks were holding regular worship services. The Walker work became my responsibility while he ministered in Whipholt. It was at this time that A. received a call to pastor the Hager, Wm. Church, a call which he accepted, leaving me in Whipholt/Walker. A. later applied to the foreign missions

Board for service in Venezuela - He
married Ruth Rosengren of Lacey, MN,
and left for the foreign field with
his wife to spend a lifetime of
service there.

My wife, Esther, attended MHS
following her H.S. graduation. It was
there that she met Edwin Nelson
whom she was to marry in 1956 (July 17)
Edwin + Esther went ~~to~~ northern
Minnesota to pastor a small F.F.C.
in Zumbkey, a few miles south
of Blackduck. It was a difficult
field so when the call came from
the Harper WA F.F.C. they accepted
the call and moved to the West Coast.
A.B. had left that field for his
missionary work in Venezuela.

Being alone now in W. + W.,
I sought to serve the two fields,
travelling the distance between them -
(13 miles) as was necessary. Preaching
was done Sunday mornings in
Whipst and Sunday evenings in
Walker. A mid week prayer meeting
was held on a week with of each
location.

The people we served in the two congregations were a faithful and a warm hearted people. None were well off in financial terms. But we were all young Christians. Singing and testimony meetings were a regular part of our worship services. Messages were simple Bible expositions eagerly received and seemingly blessed of God. Quite a number of our young people committed themselves to Christian service and went on to serve — several as pastors. There are times when I have felt the nine years spent in northern Minnesota were wasted years. But when I remember the people there and their response to the Gospel and the love and mutual respect we shared, it seems the years were not really wasted — rather invested.

It was toward the end of the 30's that a change began to take place in my life, while attending a District Conference in the St. Paul ETC I saw and met the one whom I was to marry, Rachel Oshead, she sang in the church choir when I first saw her. I was immediately attracted to her and that attraction, which quickly deepened in love, has remained with us thru our whole married life. I have often said that the things which are of greatest significance in my life have all been given to me by a gracious Providence, the gift above all others for which I am thankful to God is my wife, Rachel. Words can never express all that she has meant to me thru the years.

We had very few hours with each other before our marriage, almost all our courtship being by correspondence. Our marriage took place in Rachel's home in St. Paul Sept. 14, 1838. Rev. C. W. Nelson, Rachel's pastor performed the ceremony. Rev. Mrs. Milton Nelson, our District

Sept. and his wife, sang. For our
honeymoon we travelled to Niagara
Falls. There were days filled
with foreboding on the world scene.
Having lunch one noon in Cleveland,
the radio was bringing us one of
Hitler's speeches. There was tension
in the air and the following year
war would break out in Europe. The
depression of the 30's would end and
the world would never be the same
again.

Our wedding day had been
set for early August but two
events caused a months delay.
Coming down from the W/P area
for the wedding I found that Rachel
had been hospitalized and was
facing an appendectomy which was
performed the following day. The
day following I received word from
my mother that my father was
dying. He had been ill with cancer
for several months. I immediately
took the train for Kenosha. It seemed
not to be Jodi's will I should see

train again for he went to be with
the Lord while I was travelling home.
I was with Mother for those so
difficult days.

The last time I was with father
was in June when I had come home
to visit with Mother & Dad, and to
attend the FPCA conference which that
year was held in The Summitdale Hotel
in Chicago. I was to be ordained
to the ministry at that conference.
Rachel came down by train to show
that experience so she and my
father's parents met for the first and only
time. The day of my ordination
was also the day I gave Rachel her
engagement ring.

So often it seems we can go
through our most significant crises in
life without realizing the significance
of them. The summer of 1938 was
the summer of crises for me tho I
do not seem to have realized it at the
time. I was ordained to the
Christian ministry in June, taking a
step which bound me to the ministry
for the remainder of my life. There was

no turning back now. In June Rachel and I committed ourselves to marriage, again a point-of-no-return in my life. In August Dad went to be with The Lord and Mother was to be left a widow. She was to live the lonely life of widowhood for the next forty years and to be in my care for most of them.

Mother sold the home in Kenosha two years after Dad's death and from then onwards lived partly with Ed and Esther and partly with us. Esther contracted MS early in their married life, a disease which was eventually to incapacitate her and confine her to a wheel chair. It was in those years that Mother ministered to her. Ed was faithful to her, too, and never wavered in his care of her. Esther lived until the month of December in 1980, growing progressively worse. Mother spent her last fifteen to twenty years in our home. There was always room for her. She appreciated the interest shown her by her grandchildren. She was so

proud of them and loved them so much.

Eric ~~Johnson~~

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