

For some time now it has been our hope that we set down in written form some of the events of our long life together - Rachel, my beloved wife and myself. Since our adult years have been spent in the Christian ministry, it will be in order to mention somewhat of our call to the ministry, somewhat of the grace of God which kept us at it thru the years, and somewhat of the principles, values, and commitments (Theological & practical) that have guided us thru life.

We are both first generation Americans, which means that our parents were all immigrants from the "old country", Sweden in our case. Our children (and their children) are of course Americans, ~~but~~ but we ~~have~~ stand between them and our parents who came from Europe. It has been an enriching experience broadening our perspectives and giving us, as it were, two sets of roots, the "old country" by proxy and the new by birth. In both our parental homes Swedish was spoken in our childhood and Swedish ways were presented and became so much a part of our childhood experiences.

So many memories of heart warming experiences were common to both of us that we ^{were} not raised in the same vicinity, Christmas was always special with special Swedish dishes prepared for the holidays. It was a time for family get-togethers. Church services were the center of all the Christmas activities — The S. S. Christmas program, the Christmas choir concert, and most of all, the early morning Christmas worship called "Julotta". The service was held at 5:30 or 6:00 a.m. and was an all Swedish language service with Swedish hymns and, ~~for~~ the Christmas season by the pastor. One hymn always sung at "Julotta" was the grand Swedish Christmas hymn, "Var bekväm — — —" "Be quiet, hallowed morning. The hymn was sung slowly, majestically, in the grand style. The Julotta service brought back nostalgic memories of childhood Julotta services in the "old country". The emotional level of the congregation was so high — the message of the Savior coming, the joy of being together as a Christian congregation, and probably the sacrifice (?) of getting up so early on a cold Christmas morning — made it a central Christmas celebration for all.

We were both born into Christian homes. Our parents were the children of the revival movements which swept over Scandinavia in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The revival movement was mostly amongst the common people, pietistic, and its followers were called "läsare" (readers). The people did not find the spiritual satisfaction in the State Church. Meeting in small groups, after persecuted, they found a new spiritual life in personal commitment to Christ and in sharing this new found life with others in the community. Meeting ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ ^{their} homes. They were characterized by their longing for a truly holy living, and spent their meeting time together in reading the scriptures and prayer.

Like our parents were young when they emigrated to America, they came as children of God-fearing parents, the children of the revivals in Sweden. Coming to America they tended to gravitate toward each other in Swedish communities.

Chicago, both on the north and south side of the city, had significant Swedish groups. The Twin Cities of Minnesota ~~and~~ ~~it~~ held other such groups. Peaches-

parents came to Milaca, Minn. where they met, shared the life of other Swedes, assisted in the forming of the F.F.C. in Milaca, and were married there, in _____

My father, Eloff Johnson, came to the Roseland area of S. Chicago with his parents and four sisters. My mother, Jennie Anderson, was sent to America with a sister at the age of 12 yrs. The young girls first came to the Rockford area where relatives had settled in the Rockford-Belvidere area. She took her schooling there, was confirmed, and grew thru her adolescent years. Later she took employment in wealthy homes on Chicago's South Side and attended the two or three Sw. churches there (Mission - Methodist) there she met my father and they were married in 1905.

Both our parental homes were Christian homes, committed to God and the church. Life in our homes might be characterized as sometimes rather rigid and legalistic. But so it was with the homes of others we associated with. Being both Swedish and Christian it was not difficult for us

to think of ourselves as a "separated people". We ~~did~~ were not taught to think of the Christian life as burdensome and negative, tho it often seemed to be so. We did know that there was such a thing as a true Christian life, and we wanted to live it. It has been thrilling these years to have seen so many of our generation with whom we could share a common commitment to Christ and His Church, and to count ourselves as one with them in the Christian fellowship.