His name was Jonas: a biography of Jonas Swensson

Emmet E. Eklund

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HIS NAME WAS JONAS

A BIOGRAPHY OF JONAS SWENSSON

Emmet E. Eklund
The life of Jonas Swensson (1828-1873) presents a reversal of the common notion that sons of famous fathers often live in the shadow of their fathers’ fame. For Jonas Swensson was overshadowed by the fame of his illustrious son, Carl Aaron.

Both the fame of his son and his own early death, at age forty-five, have tended to obscure the noteworthy accomplishments of Jonas Swensson. Yet Swensson played a significant role in the shaping of the Augustana Lutheran Church in the last half of the 19th century. His contributions to parish and higher education, mission, congregational life, and the theology of Augustana were considerable. It is to this end in part that this book has been written: to identify the significant contribution Swensson made to the formation of the unique character of the Church which he served as pastor, secretary, member of the catechetical committee and as president for the last three years of his life. As such, the book is also an important record of the early Augustana years.

It is hoped that a measure of justice may be done to Jonas Swensson’s memory by the publication of this book.
HIS NAME WAS JONAS
A Biography of Jonas Swensson

Emmet E. Eklund

Augustana Historical Society
Rock Island, Illinois
1988
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This book is dedicated to
two esteemed mentors,
Conrad J. Bergendoff
and
Emory K. Lindquist,
for whose
guidance, instruction, and inspiration
I am deeply grateful.
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Among the many persons for whom I must express deep gratitude, two deserve special acknowledgement. As others who have written on various aspects of the 102 year history of the Augustana Lutheran Church as well as the previous decade before this Church was formed, I am greatly indebted to Erik Norelius for his highly valuable two volume work: *De Svenska Luterska församlingarnas och Svenskarnes historia i Amerika*. Especially important for this work were the sixty pages (1:186-225) of biography on Jonas Swensson (1828-73). This material had been previously published as a series of articles in the years 1873-75 in *Augustana*, the official publication of the Church. The original material in *Augustana* began to appear very shortly after Swensson’s death, December 20, 1873.

The second person to whom I am greatly indebted is the late Evald B. Lawson (1904-65). His deeply felt belief in the importance of Swensson to the history of Augustana led him to zealous and high quality research on this early leader in the church’s life. Without Dr. Lawson’s enthusiasm and determination, the emergence of Swensson’s life in a book may not have occurred. This same interest led him to do extensive work in the collection of material and the authorship of numerous articles. Of special importance is his publication: *Two Primary Sources for a Study of the Life of Jonas Swensson*. This includes translations of the *Notebook* of 1846-1851 and the *dagbok [daybook]*. Regarding the *dagbok*, see Appendix I. The private nature of works such as these gives an insight into the character of a person such as few other sources do.

Humanly speaking, it is regrettable that Dr. Lawson’s early death prevented him from carrying out his plan to complete a book on Jonas Swensson, a desire which he deeply coveted. His widow, Ruth, in a letter to the author (August 20, 1982) gave eloquent utterance to this truth: “Ben was looking forward to his retirement so he could write the history of Jonas Swensson and others. God had other plans.” His motivation for such a publication was far less, we may believe, for personal glory than for the deep conviction that Swensson must not be forgotten. Also, Evald Lawson’s deep love for the Christian Church as he saw its particular form in the Augustana Lutheran Church inspired him to accomplish his extensive work on Swensson. Whatever merit this book may possess must in no small part be regarded as a tribute to the valuable work of Evald Benjamin Lawson.

Other persons I gladly and gratefully acknowledge. Arthur B. Carlson’s doctoral dissertation, “Pastoral Care in the Faith and Practice of Four Selected Swedish Clergymen,” was very valuable especially in his analysis of Swensson’s ministry as counselor.

Three great grandsons, Eldon Swensson of El Paso, Texas, and the brothers, Dr. Erland Carlsson, Lindsborg, Kansas and Lars Carlsson of Lacey, Washington, have shown admirable interest in this enterprise. The support of these men has given both encouragement and a sense of responsibility for the completion of this work. All of these gentlemen
have provided helpful material in the form of biographical sources composed by members of the family as well as genealogical material and photographs. The Carlsson brothers have the unique heritage to be able to claim among their great grandfathers two leaders of early Augustana. Erland Carlsson’s son, Eben, married Anna, Jonas Swensson’s daughter. Eben and Anna were the paternal grandparents of the Carlsson brothers.

Another relative, Ruth Svensson, a resident in Göteborg, Sweden, generously gave an interview to the author in December 1983 in that city. She was able to describe from her own background the larger family from which Jonas Swensson came.

To my good friend and seminary classmate who was the former associate archivist of the Lutheran Church in America, Joel Lundeen, I am grateful for permission to use numerous letters between Jonas Swensson and three other pioneer leaders of Augustana: T.N. Hasselquist, Erik Norelius, and Erland Carlsson. Because this vast correspondence has been recorded on microfilm, I was, through Dr. Lundeen’s kindness, able to have this material sent to me from Chicago.

To the library staff of Luther Northwestern Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, I am grateful for its willing assistance and the generous manner in which it made available to me the resources of this fine institution. The librarian, Norman G. Wente, and his assistants, Ray Olson and Paul Johnson, greatly eased by their friendly cooperation the drudgery which at times accompanies research.

On visits to the archives of the Lutheran Church in America, Elisabeth Wittman gave fine assistance with much of the Swensson correspondence. Especially valuable was the material in relation to the erection of the church building in Andover, Illinois which still stands as a remarkable monument to the faith of the Andover congregation during Swensson’s ministry there. Lydia McDonald, colleague of Ms. Wittman, likewise gave capable and friendly service.

On our visit to the Hessel Valley congregation with its church edifice located so beautifully in northwestern Pennsylvania, we enjoyed not only the warm hospitality of Ruth and Myrtle Johnson but also their eager interest in this project. They made available important records from this first field of Swensson’s ministry in America.

Some miles to the north of Hessel Valley is the First Lutheran Church of Jamestown, New York, the congregation which along with the one at Hessel Valley Swensson organized in 1856 and served into the year 1858. Pastor Arthur Henne and his secretary, June Carlson, were most helpful. In the archives of First Lutheran Church, to our surprise, are quite extensive records from the parish in Andover, Illinois which Swensson later served (1858-73). This remains an historical problem in that the records of Andover in some manner found their way back to this first parish Swensson served. Valuable help was also given by Edith Malmstrom, a member of First Lutheran Church.

Elizabeth Rumics together with other members of the library staff at Upsala College, East Orange, New Jersey were most cooperative. They made available the large amount of material which Dr. Lawson had col-
lected and important articles he had written.

A special word of thanks is given to Ruth Lawson, the widow of Dr. Lawson, who so willingly permitted access to her late husband’s important work. She also established communication for us with the library staff at Upsala.

Nearly a thousand sermons and meditations of Jonas Swensson are preserved in the archives of Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas. The month of June 1982 was spent in the examination of that material. Here the full cooperation of the assistant librarian, Laura Whayne, was generously given.

Had it not been for a generous grant from the Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance Company it would have been much more difficult to publish this work. Not only in this instance, but for all the financial contributions toward education and scholarship which this organization has given, much thanks is deserved from many such as myself.

I continue to be indebted to two of my former teachers who also in this work, directly or indirectly, have continued to be my mentors and sources of encouragement: Dr. Conrad Bergendoff, president emeritus of Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois and Dr. Emory Lindquist, president emeritus of Bethany College and also of Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas. To them I dedicate this book. Dr. Lindquist from his own splendid research on his fine book, Shepherd of an Immigrant People: The Story of Erland Carlsson provided important correspondence, especially between Erland Carlsson and Jonas Swensson.

To the readers of the original manuscript who gave such careful and helpful suggestions, I give thanks. Again, Dr. Bergendoff gave of his unique abilities to this phase of the work. Along with his skills were combined those of Ross Paulson, professor in the department of history, and John Caldwell, librarian, at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. In addition to his role as reader, Dr. Paulson was editor. The carefulness of attention and generosity of time which he gave to his responsibility have earned from me much admiration and gratitude for his excellent work.

 Appropriately, I conclude this statement of acknowledgement with love and thanks to my wife, Marion Lorimer Eklund. She has given wise counsel and suggestions and has typed the manuscript. She is an invaluable companion in the work of research and writing.
On visits to the sick and travelers, amongst the poor and destitute, and in the large cities of California, both in the San Francisco and Los Angeles, I have met with many Christians who are fully convinced of the necessity of advance into the spirit of benevolence, and to the furtherance of the cause of Christianity. In every part of the United States, I have been introduced by means of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and have been most cordially welcomed by the friends of the Gospel. On these visits, I have been enabled to do much good, and to spread the seed of truth and kindness among the people. My labors have been greatly blessed, and the results have been most gratifying. In New York, the congregation which I now lead, is very large, and is one of the most energetic and active in the country. The members are fully convinced of the importance of the work, and are most faithful in their support of it. The mission is well conducted, and is making great progress. I have been enabled to do much good, and to spread the seed of truth and kindness among the people. My labors have been greatly blessed, and the results have been most gratifying.
Introduction

"Pastor Jonas Swensson was a good man but the best thing he ever did was to give to the Church and the State his great son, Rev. Carl Aaron. Another said all Rev. Jonas did which was considerable was far outstripped by the accomplishments of his glamorous son, Carl Aaron."

This may well be a reversal of the common judgment that sons of famous fathers often suffer from being in the shadow of that fame. They must strive all the harder in order to achieve an identity of their own.

That Jonas Swensson was overshadowed by his son, Carl Aaron, may be indicated by tributes given to Carl following his death (February 16, 1904). He was hailed as one of the foremost Swedes in America. This judgment has been popular and generally accepted. However, to demean Jonas in relation to Carl is unfortunate and unjust.

Jonas Swensson has been much obscured in large part because he died so young at the age of forty-five (December 20, 1873). Other pioneer leaders (T.N. Hasselquist, Erland Carlsson, Erik Norelius and Olof Olsson) were to survive him. The death of Hasselquist, the first of these men to die, occurred (February 4, 1891) seventeen years after Swensson’s death. To these leaders has been given the credit for the later and better known development of the Augustana Lutheran Church. Yet, as noted in this work, Swensson played a significant role in the shaping of what Augustana was to become. His contributions to parish and higher education, missions, congregational life, and the theology of Augustana were considerable. It is to this end in part that this book has been written: to identify the significant contribution Swensson made to the formation of the unique character of the Church which he served as pastor, secretary, member of the catechetical committee, and as president for the last three years of his life.

Books or monographs have been written about each of the pioneer leaders (with the exception of Swensson) who, as ordained ministers, came from Sweden in the twenty year period between 1849 and 1869 (Norelius is the one exception among the fathers of Augustana. He came to America in 1850 and was ordained by the Synod of Northern Illinois following his studies at Capital University in the years 1851-55.) Sam Rönnegård, Emeroy Johnson, O. Fritiof Ander, Emory Lindquist, Oscar N. Olson (who wrote a monograph on O.C.T. Andrén), and Ernst W. Olson have each contributed worthy works to the benefit of the Church. Now, it is hoped a measure of justice may be done to Swensson’s memory by the publication of this book. Although already noted in the acknowledgements, let it be observed that it is to the credit of the late Evald B. Lawson that he exerted himself with great devotion and ability to the end that Jonas Swensson should be adequately remembered.

Though this book is a biography of Jonas Swensson, the emphasis is on his preparation, his sense of vocation, and his life as all this related to the
The consciousness of his name and chiefly associating it with the sense of vocation. On three different occasions he was struck by the relationship between what his parents had named him and the sense of calling. The first was at the time of his confirmation. The pastor, Joseph Bode, chose as his text for the confirmation day verse 29, John 21. "Then that disci-
ple whom Jesus loved saith unto him, Lord, who is it?" The second was when he heard the same verse in the Swedish language. The passage in the Swedish language was, "Simon Jona, Simeon, lego illum?" The striking similarity between the names and the sense moved him deeply and emphasized an indelible impression upon his memory.

The second instance of Simon's association of his name to the divine call occurred in the summer of 1846, from which time he did not turn from the conviction that God had called him ever since. In the spring of another similar instance his name occurred. Again the close relation between his name and the theme. He said, "I have been a very great deal of time with God, and a heavy burden addressed by God struck me, that I must go in a different way. The name is not the subject a disciple, but the subject, if it is a subject, of a prophet. I was conscious of many forces of spiritual anxiety, not in the name of the, but in the name as related to his sense of calling.

Before I reached my way to the Lord was in retreat in what I felt to the sense of the calling. Several times during the day I went out, not upon my knees, but in a way to the Lord our assistance in the manner, but most of all when I was in the dullest moment of the day. After a certain time I started answering the call, and I felt that it was not good to come to the earth to preach. But I saw that the answer was not good without me. A person who had not properly every did the duties of his office. This seemed to me fear, and I knew that he who ought to rest now after his office would have done. It was not that he did not want to take upon me. We could not escape from the Lord's calling the place of his
Chapter I

Early Life and Education

Jonas Swensson, organizer of the first Swedish Lutheran congregations of the nineteenth century in eastern United States and second president of the Augustana Lutheran Church,1 was born August 16, 1828 in Våthult, Småland, Sweden. His parents were Sven Månsson and Katharina Jonasdotter.

1. Jonas’ Ancestry, Childhood and Youth

His father, a farmer, was kyrkovarden.2 As such, Månsson occupied a position similar to a church warden in the Church of England. He aided in the administrative functions of the parish and was an assistant to the pastor. Early in his life, Jonas came under the nurture of the Christian Church and the impact was more than formal. He acknowledged “that he had received an earnest and Christian upbringing in the home.”3

There is some confusion about the origin of Sven Månsson. One source indicates that he was born on August 28, 1784 in Fällen in the province of Småland, about twelve miles southwest of Växjö.4 However, a grandson, Earl B. Swensson, wrote a family history which gave a different version of Månsson’s background: “According to my mother’s (Hanna Olson Swensson) knowledge, Sven Månsson was a Frenchman who came over with Bernadotte when the latter was made Crown Prince of Sweden.”5

A possible explanation of French background was alluded to by Josephine Meredith, the mother-in-law of Carl Swensson Vestling who was a great grandson of Jonas Swensson. In a letter to Evald Lawson (president of Upsala College 1938-65), she wrote: “Another story is that Rev. Jonas was the son of a farmer/blacksmith whose wife was the daughter of a soldier.” The name of Katharina Jonasdotter’s father was Jonas Davidson of Snollebo, the farm where Jonas was born. Davidson was born in 1760. Conceivably, it was from his mother’s side that the French connection may have come. Even this must be left to the realm of speculation.6

Jonas Swensson was born on August 16, 1828, the next to the youngest child in the family. He had three brothers: Johannes, Peter, and Carl and three sisters: Josepha, Maria, and Marta. Jonas alone emigrated to America.

The Swensson home provided a rich Christian nurture. To his mother,
Jonas paid high tribute. "Especially did he acknowledge that his God-fearing mother with her exhortations and prayers exercised a great influence upon him." When Jonas was eight years old, his father died. His mother was left with seven children and limited financial resources. From the time of early childhood, Jonas desired to study for the ministry. With the death of his father, however, and a widowed mother with a large family, study possibilities for the young boy seemed to disappear. Still, even as a boy, Jonas had a deep faith in the providence of God which was to be an abiding characteristic of his life. Despite the apparent impossibility for study, Swensson, nevertheless, believed God had a particular mission for him. He continued to express the belief "that God had a way for him and seemed to have called him to be a witness for His cause."

A second trait emerged during those early years, a sense of anxiety. Of God's grace he had no doubt, but at times he had deep anxiety both regarding his faith and whether he had truly been called to be a pastor. This seeming contradictory anxiety in one who had deep Christian faith emerged at least as early as at the time of his confirmation. He was confirmed in 1843 when he was fourteen or fifteen years old. For a period of two years after that event, he became "increasingly indifferent and venturesome in sinning." (Since he was so sensitive and introspective, he may have exaggerated the depravity into which he thought he had fallen.) Nevertheless, his conscience was not asleep; he was uncomfortable from the chastening which it exercised upon him. Norelius wrote that this sense of anxiety was never absent from Swensson's temperament. "Even during his years of growing up and youth, serious recollection never allowed his conscience to slumber into a sense of certainty."

With prospects for study apparently nonexistent, Swensson turned to avenues by which he could earn his livelihood. For two years, he learned and worked at the trade of blacksmithing. For this work, he seemed to have both the inclination and the skill. Since to be a blacksmith requires considerable strength and endurance—"The Lord has given me a strong body so that from childhood I have been familiar with hard work."—Swensson was facile with his hands and thus became a good cabinet maker as well. Many years later, in 1868, when the new church at Andover where he had served as pastor for nearly a dozen years was almost completed, he constructed the pulpit for the new edifice.

But the strong inclination toward academic study Swensson could not continue to resist. After two years, he suddenly lost interest in his work as a blacksmith. He decided to enter Vaxjö Seminary. In the spring of 1846 at the age of eighteen, he began his studies to become a teacher. His residence there was short-lived, however, for he soon discovered that he could no longer avoid the call into the ministry. He returned home early that same year and entered into conversation with his confirmation pastor, Josef Bexell. Surprisingly, he received little encouragement. Bexell strongly advised him against further thought of ministerial studies. Perhaps Bexell considered Swensson's financial poverty as an insur-
mountable obstacle. Or he may have wanted Swensson to be certain in his own mind so that he could endure the rigorous discipline and sacrifice which would be incurred.

On later reflection upon Bexell’s counsel, Swensson interpreted it as God’s will. He wrote:

I have been and will always remain grateful to the Lord and also to Bexell, whom the Lord used as a means; for no matter how difficult this period of testing was for me, I would not have been without it for all the world since it was of immeasurable value to me for the future. If I had received immediate encouragement then I would have rushed into it without knowing that I was sent. However, during this period I gave deep thought to the whole matter and came to the assurance that the Lord had called me to be a pastor. This certainly, to be sure, came only with the progress of time, the only way possible. This assurance came to rest on such a secure foundation that in days to come—even in the periods of most bitter anguish—I never once doubted that I was called to the office of the holy ministry.  

Swensson, because of this experience with Bexell, saw his call was from God alone, not from any human source. This conviction was a lifelong belief that he expressed again and again.

2. Theological Education

Jonas began his theological studies under Pastor Bexell. After Swensson had made a firm decision to study for the ministry, Bexell was no longer obstructive. He gave Jonas books and on July 8, 1846, Bexell began to teach him Latin.

i. Studies at Bredaryd

Following his instruction from Bexell, Swensson’s education for the ministry was in four stages. During the first four months of 1847, he was a student of the assistant pastor in the neighboring town of Bredaryd which was about fifteen English miles southeast of Jonas’ home at Váthult. His experience here was both positive and negative. Negatively, Swensson’s academic experience was a disappointment. “During my residence [there], the academic guidance was exceedingly poor.” Also Swensson found in his teacher only a negative spiritual disposition. “My preceptor and his whole family were inimical to a living Christian faith, which caused me further concern and perplexity, especially since in the beginning I had no light [by which] to walk wisely.”

Unsatisfactory as his academic life was, this period at Bredaryd was very significant for his spiritual life. During his stay there, Jonas experienced a deep conversion. Insofar as such can be analyzed, at least three factors worked upon Swensson as instruments in God’s hands. The first of these was the experience with his confirmation pastor, the influence of which continued at Bredaryd. While there he experienced an intense
spiritual struggle between moments of peace and periods of deep spiritual anguish. In retrospect he wrote:

I was to feel the power of the unrest of my conscience and find the true peace which I previously knew that I lacked, but which I did not seek. In a word, here a new life was to begin for me. The dart, which pierced my conscience when I parted from Bexell, now became imbedded. More and more I beheld my sinful condition, and the anguish of my conscience often reached great depths, and I had no peace, either day or night. Often when I cried to the Lord tears streamed from my eyes and fell to the floor. If at times I was given a calming relief, it soon disappeared again, and the anguish was renewed each day.¹⁵

The expression, ‘‘I was to feel the power of the unrest of my conscience and find the true peace which I previously knew that I lacked but which I did not seek,’’ gives a probable clue to the approach of Bexell in Swensson’s statement: ‘‘The dart, which reached my conscience when I parted from Bexell, now became imbedded.’’ It appears that Bexell belonged to the old pietism with its strong emphasis upon the function of God’s law. Through Bexell’s influence, it seems divine law jolted Swensson’s passivity toward seeking peace to the anguish of his conscience which led him even to the shedding of tears.

Secondly, Swensson was not without friends in Bredaryd. In contrast to the hostility he perceived from his instructor, he wrote gratefully of the ‘‘encouragement (and even material help) from many Christian friends in the neighborhood.’’ Among these was an old farm hand, Arvid Zachrisson, who ‘‘was an agent who pointed him to the Savior.’’¹⁶ The contrast between Bexell and Zachrisson is important. Zachrisson may have been a convert under the impact of Rosenian pietism with its greater emphasis upon the Gospel. Both were needed in the Christian conversion which Swensson experienced. On the one hand, conscience must be awakened to the lost condition of humanity alienated from God by sin. To this end, Bexell served as a means. To be left in that condition, however, would be to suffer deadly despair. To address this condition was the purpose and the power of the Gospel as incarnate in Jesus Christ. Zachrisson’s witness led Swensson to confidence in the grace which the Gospel proclaims.

Finally, Anders Nohrborg’s (1725-67) influence entered into Swensson’s life at this time and was to remain a formative and guiding power. Of the spiritual struggle he experienced in early 1847, Swensson wrote:

Here I experienced the truth of Nohrborg’s words that even if one has much knowledge before, as I really did, yet one is in darkness when the conscience awakens; then it becomes a personal matter, and one needs guidance. For it was impossible for me then to appropriate to myself that knowledge that Jesus saves sinners.¹⁷

Persuasive evidence of Nohrborg’s influence on Swensson is present both by Swensson’s frequent references to this notable preacher and the
similarities in their thought. They made a strong emphasis on sanctification (holiness of life) or the ethical dimension of Christian faith; they rejected the emphasis on emotions and the "new evangelism"; they shared a deep regard and love for the Church as defined by the Bible and the Lutheran confessions.

At the end of April in 1847, Swensson left Bredaryd and the unsatisfactory tutelage he felt he had received there. "I regarded my stay there as doing nothing for my studies." Yet, in the few months he lived there, he had a crucial religious experience. From that time, both his vocational and spiritual life were determined.

From the end of April to the last of August he lived at his parental home near Vathult. He remembered those days as among the happiest in his life. After the inner tumult at Bredaryd where he suffered the unsympathetic attitude of his teacher and the teacher's family, he now enjoyed the companionship of loving family and friends.

This summer I can truthfully call the happiest I have ever known. I enjoyed comfortable surroundings, and I received many encouragements through daily associations with Bexell and many other friends whom I met. Inwardly I knew peace and joy. These were days of bliss; many times I marveled that they lasted so long—but other days were to come.

Psychologically one knows that in the rhythm of life after a period of struggle which issues in a reconciliation of conflict, there follows a period of quiet and peace. This Swensson enjoyed during the summer he spent at his childhood home. Above all, for Swensson, this sense of well-being was a manifestation of God's grace. All other factors were but God's instruments through which His graciousness was communicated.

Something of pathos is present in his statement: "This summer I can truthfully call the happiest I have ever known." This seems to be true. There was never again in Swensson's life insofar as observation allows us to see such a carefree time as those halcyon days at Vathult in the summer of 1847.

ii. Studies at Jonköping

At the end of 1847, Jonas left home for the first time when distance necessitated long absence. He had the sense of sadness which many feel at that time of life. More than two and a half decades later, a day after his oldest son, Carl, left for Paxton to enroll at Augustana College, Jonas wrote:

Although it is only one day since the wagon rolled away and took you from us, I am writing a few words so that you may know how it went with us. For a good while, there were tears in the eyes of all of us, yet these were tears of peace and quietness....I feel very much your situation when I think of myself twenty-six years ago when I began school in Jonköping.
Swensson was nineteen when he enrolled in the Jönköping Trivialskola. Since grammar, dialectics, and rhetoric were taught at such schools, we know these were parts of the curriculum. The instruction he had received from Josef Bexell and his own native ability enabled Swensson to enter, upon examination, an advanced class. In the ‘Notebook of 1846–1851,’ Swensson wrote on September 2: ‘I appeared before Rektor S.J. Filén to be examined in Greek and Latin. I was enrolled in the Rektor’s class, and of the six who took the examination I ranked second.’ By December 10, he could write: ‘Had examination. Was promoted to the upper ring, ranking sixth.’

Swensson distinguished himself in Jönköping as a student who was diligent and made ‘fine progress in his studies.’ Along with other assistance he was awarded a stipend of thirty kronor.

The academic year Jonas spent at Jönköping was important not only academically, but also spiritually. For the first time, he encountered what came to be known as the new evangelism. C.O. Rosenius, who was an important figure both in the nineteenth century revival in Sweden and in the formation of Augustana’s spiritual life in America, was representative of this emphasis. Rosenius emphasized lay leadership including the use of lay preachers, and he tended toward an appeal to the emotions. The new evangelism placed its emphasis upon the gospel to the neglect of the law. Rosenius, however, did not deny the role of the latter as some later figures would do.

The new evangelism, with the spiritual certainty it so confidently espoused, aroused for Swensson a new spiritual struggle. To allay his anxiety, he once again turned to Nohrborg’s writings. The latter’s high regard for the Church, an ordo salutis (Order of Salvation), and his opposition to emotionalism found a friendly response in Swensson.

Frequently throughout his ministry, Swensson made critical comments about the new evangelism. Of Augustana’s early leaders, he was the most severe opponent of that Christian emphasis. ‘For the neo-evangelical he had no sympathy either in Sweden or America. It may be that occasionally he went too far in his suspicions of the movement.’

iii. Studies at Växjö

Jonas spent the summer of 1848 in the home of Dr. Norstedt where he served as tutor to his host’s sons. He lived there from June 2 until August 14 when he traveled to his parental home in Snollebo. Following a two week visit with family and friends there and in the neighboring parish of Vilstad, he went to Växjö where he arrived on August 29. This phase of his education began September 2–4 when he took the entrance examination into the Växjö Gymnasium. Of the twenty who took the examination, Swensson ranked eleventh. His studies continued there until his graduation on June 14, 1850. He was then twenty-one years of age.

Neither physically nor spiritually were those easy years for Swensson. The ill health which he suffered most of his life plagued him. He had an especially severe bout with his old illness of rheumatism which he had
contracted as a child. From May 13 to May 29, 1849, he was confined to his bed. So vivid was the memory of this illness that twenty-four years later in a letter to his son, Carl, then a student at Augustana in Paxton, he wrote of his illness of recent days and compared it with the pain at Växjö: "It was so painful every night from Wednesday to Sunday. I have not had such severe aches and sweating since I was sick in Växjö in 1849."26

Severe as the physical suffering was, it did not compare with his spiritual unrest. "His spiritual life during that period was one of much alternation. Now dark, now light; sometimes cold and feeble, sometimes warm and lively." Norelius further noted Swensson's trait to "pay much attention to his feelings and judge his spiritual situation on that basis."27

On the one hand, Swensson poses an apparent contradiction. Even though he had come to terms in his rejection of the new evangelism with its emphasis upon feeling and had been steadied in his conviction of the truth as he saw it in the more unemotional orientation of Anders Nohrborg, he still may have had some doubts. At the same time, Swensson never excluded the place of emotion in his own spiritual development. He accepted the place of feeling but relegated this aspect of personality to its proper place within the context of an intelligent, churchly, sacramental, and confessional theology.

On the other hand, it was just this sensitivity to the place of feeling which equipped him to be an effective counselor, or more accurately, a sjalasorjare, one who cares for and nourishes souls. This balance he held is verified by Nils Forsander who was professor at Augustana Theological Seminary from 1890 to 1915 and a student assistant to Swensson during the latter's last years. Forsander wrote:

Both as preacher and catechist Swensson was a faithful and tender sjalasorjare who with God's word and under his gracious guidance sought to influence the understanding, feelings and wills of his listeners and to bring them to a true repentance and living faith in Christ. He was also much concerned about the weak and the elderly who could not attend worship services and meetings. These he zealously visited.28

Jonas Swensson regarded pastoral counseling as the outgrowth of his preaching and teaching ministry. His view seems to require something stronger than the modern view of "counselor." The latter seems to denote one who attends almost solely to feelings. Hence, the term sjalasorjare, one who cares for and nourishes souls, better applied to Swensson. Among his peers and in the century in which he lived, he must have been regarded highly in that role. Some nine decades later, A.B. Carlson, chose him along with Henric Schartau, C.O. Rosenius, and Erland Carlsson as model counselors—better yet, as those who well filled the role of a sjalasorjare.29

The years at Växjö, however, were by no means all negative. For young Jonas, they were good years both vocationally and academically. As with every young ministerial student, it was a high experience for him when he preached his first sermon. He preached on July 29, 1849 at Hemmesjö,
about five miles southeast of Växjö. According to his journal entries, he had mixed feelings about his adequacy on that occasion. In “The Notebook of 1846-1851,” he wrote: “I preached for the first time. It took place in Hemmesjö, and everything went very well.” But he had other thoughts as he recorded his reflections in the “dagbok.” “I was overcome by fear, so I could not give much thought to the purpose of the sermon.” Most likely the first of these statements was prompted by the encouragement he received from the congregation to which he preached. The popularity which was to mark his preaching before too long may well have been presaged by his first sermon at Hemmesjö. His fear which was noted in the second statement is a normal feeling for most young students who prepare and give their first sermons.

Swensson continued to preach in a number of places including his childhood parish at Våthult. From December 25, 1849 until he took his final examination on September 3, 1850, he preached sixteen times in twelve different places.

Beside his preaching, he took positions as tutor for the son of P. Nyman in one instance; in another, for the sons of Baron Rappe. Both the preaching and tutoring supplied him well for his financial needs during his school years. He looked on this as another sign of God’s providence.

At Växjö another experience occurred which evoked in Jonas faith and wonder in God’s divine care. O.W. Hubbard wrote of this event which he heard from Jonas’s son, Carl, many years later:

My mother’s people were well acquainted with Jonas Swensson and Maria Blixt who later became Mrs. Jonas Swensson. . . . My mother’s eldest sister, Maria Svenson, served as a nurse girl for baby Sigurd who later became Sweden’s great humorist. ["Sigurd" was the pseudonym for the humorist, Karl Joseph Alfred Hedenstierna.] [On one occasion] when the Hedenstierna family entertained a large group of prominent people, this young girl . . . had the courage to plead the cause of the poor student, Jonas Swensson . . . . A goodly sum of money was then and there raised for his benefit and my mother’s father walked to Vexio [sic] to deliver the money to Jonas Swensson. . . . Dr. [Carl] Swensson told of how he told this story to Sigurd and how he and Sigurd embraced each other in tears over the event.

For Swensson, the Växjö years were also rich academically. He made fine progress as a student. G. Hilding Rundquist of Växjö in response to Dr. Lawson’s request for information about the scholastic achievements of Jonas wrote: “The memorandum which I have attached is evidence that he had great natural gifts, energy, and persistence in spite of severe physical difficulties.” His only deficiency seemed to have been in Hebrew. “It is scarcely surprising that he has not come so far in Hebrew.” Apart from this, Rundquist wrote: “That he advanced in two years of reading from eleventh to second place [in a class of twelve] speaks eloquently for itself; likewise, the many awards of various kinds which were given to Swensson.”
His course of studies at Vaxjö was of a classical character. Included were courses in Christianity, languages, mathematics, science, and history. The level of work was identified in most instances by the terms "approbatus" or "cum laude approbatus" which indicate academic work of high quality.

The only difficulty Swensson had academically was the reluctance of the school to certify him for the final examination. Because of his "unusual zeal and exertion he was able to shorten [the time of] his residence."32 Because he did not remain for the usual period, the grade of his certification was lowered. Nevertheless, because of the record he had achieved, he was able to leave on September 11, 1850 for Uppsala University where he would continue his educational program.

iv. Studies at Uppsala

Between September 17 and September 24, 1850, Swensson took examinations for entry into Uppsala University. Seven fields were covered: Old Testament exegesis, church history, proenotionibus theologicus (presuppositions for a theological system), dogmatics, morals, symbols, and pastoral theology.33 Thus were covered the usual three fields of biblical studies, church history, and theology. By the end of the first semester, he had passed courses in all these fields with the evaluation of approbatus (with approval); in one instance, the adjective "facile" (proficient) was added to the church history grade, and in three instances, dogmatics, morals, and proenotionibus theologicus, "laude" (with honor) was added.34

Spiritually, the months at Uppsala were a struggle as they had been in Jonköping and Vaxjö but out of different circumstances. At Uppsala, it was not the new evangelism he encountered at Jonköping or his shifting moods as at Vaxjö. Rather, his spiritual struggle arose from his studies. Diligent as he was in his academic pursuits, he felt that he had become negligent in his devotional life. "The word and prayer were seriously neglected. The greatest temptation was to allow my studies to claim too much time." He also attributed his spiritual lethargy to other activities. "Idle diversions also stole in upon my spare moments. I did not give myself to watchfulness, my errors were many and grave, and my way to the throne of grace seemed so lacking in power, finally appearing even impossible. I lacked inner peace, and my conscience troubled me."35

It is difficult to believe that Jonas lived in grave immorality at Uppsala. The diligence with which he pursued his studies would have left little time for "idle diversions" of a doubtful or gravely immoral character. More likely, Swensson's negative self-evaluation was due to his very sensitive conscience and his keen perception of the need for God's grace. Nevertheless, it was his belief that "the greatest spiritual enfeeblement was experienced during my stay at Uppsala."36

Finally, in the spring, I realized by the grace of God how serious things were, and I was filled with anguish and fear. I felt I had completely
fallen away, and that deliverance was impossible. Then the Lord in his infinite mercy revealed to me that I should hasten to Jesus, even with all my misery.\textsuperscript{37}

His academic career apparently progressed in a fashion similar to that at Jönköping and Växjö. On June 18, he received his certification from the university with honors in deportment and for effort. He could look back with satisfaction and gratitude. He had worked hard, perhaps too hard for the good of his health. Carl Evald, a biographer of Swensson, wrote: ‘‘Danger was certainly associated with such cramming as it may be judged by the fact that after his studies, his health for the rest of his life was more or less fragile as a consequence of his passion for his studies and his over-exertion in that pursuit.’’\textsuperscript{38} Evald may have overemphasized the effects of Swensson’s studies on his health. Already as a child, he had suffered rheumatism. The later illness of his heart may well have been caused by rheumatic fever. Still, the zeal with which he sought his education at Jönköping, Växjö, and Uppsala likely had a negative impact on his already fragile health.

His progress in his studies had been rapid. ‘‘Many of his former acquaintances were not a little astounded when the apprentice smith, after five years’ absence, now came back as a person ready to be ordained as a pastor.’’\textsuperscript{39} One source makes the almost unbelievable claim for the young student. ‘‘It was very easy for him to learn; he completed his schooling in five years. This was indeed remarkable, as only one other man in Sweden had done this in the last two hundred years.’’\textsuperscript{40}

His years spent as a student had also been fruitful for his faith in terms of his trust in God’s grace and providential care. Of the former, he wrote:

In spite of the iniquity of my heart and my careless spirit, and even though I have been in the midst of many temptations, he has preserved the spark of life which certainly was close to be extinguished. Thus, I can say that it is by the grace of God alone that I have been preserved, and with great wonder I look back upon this period, considering how great God’s love has been to me, keeping me from falling away.\textsuperscript{41}

Of the latter, his faith in God’s providence, he perhaps remembered the unlikely prospects he had had as a young man to be able to finance his education. Now, looking back, he marvelled at what he perceived to be God’s near miraculous intervention on his behalf. Upon reflection regarding God’s providential care, Jonas wrote:

The Lord cared for me in material ways so that I never suffered real need even though I had no funds of my own when I went away to school. My resources were, to be sure, often spent, but the Lord always sent help either through loans or through the assistance of Christian friends.\textsuperscript{42}

For Swensson there was no doubt from whom financial aid ultimately came. He may have received much immediately from Christian friends and others, but it was God who in the first place provided and inspired those gifts.
The question arises, what was the impact of his education at Uppsala upon his theology? The answer to this question is given in a statement which he was required to write under the direction of H.G. Hultman, docent in theology, for the course entitled “Proenotionibus Theologicus.” Swensson entitled his paper, “Theologiens Proenotioner,” which means “Presuppositions of a Theologian.” The chief source he employed was Larobok i Theologien för Gymnasierne [Learning Book in Theology for Upper Secondary Schools] by A.E. Norbeck.43

Swensson began this forty-five page handwritten document with an apologia (Defense of Doctrine). This section dealt with basic topics of theology including the nature of religion, God, Christ, scripture, Christian doctrine, philosophy, and faith. The paper lacks organization so one must skip from one section to another in order to obtain Swensson’s complete statement on some of these topics.

One can divide the substance of the paper into two sections. In the first part, Swensson affirmed the divine character of Christianity, the triune God as the only true God, and the authority of scripture. From within this cluster of beliefs, he defined the norm by which he judged other religions. His list included: Zoroastrianism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism. In each instance, he pointed out some feature which in his judgment condemned that religion as false. He considered all non-Christian religions to be naturalistic with the exception of Judaism. He rejected all others on his belief that all were pantheistic and possessed only the quality of immanence. Primarily, he had a twofold criteria by which all fail as true religions: their disbelief in the triune, personal God and their claim that all humanity has an adequate moral sense. Swensson refused to grant this claim because only with atonement can the awareness of what is right and wrong be known. With these assertions, he brought to a close the first part of his statement of faith.

Swensson devoted the second section to the relation of faith to the fundamental aspects of personhood: feeling, will, and knowledge. His basic conviction was that all of these must be kept in balance; any one of them alone cannot express the essence or the totality of Christianity.

Without any discussion of feeling, he went on to the second facet of personhood, will. Here Swensson gave special attention to the moral life. It must be founded upon God rather than separated from Him as Swensson interpreted Immanuel Kant’s (1724-1804) thought.

Finally, he related knowledge to faith in a traditional manner. Faith is superior to knowledge and true knowledge must flow from faith.

For Swensson, scripture was the authority:

Whereas the Old Testament is characterized by power, the New Testament is more by love. Nevertheless, the prophets form a link between the Old and the New Testaments. The prophets are necessary in that they bring together into a complete whole the divine revelation and present that which is fulfilled in the New Testament. And this is required for the New Testament. Finally, the necessity of divine revelation is to show unconditionally that the world is fallen and that God is love.
The theological statement of twenty-two year old Jonas Swensson showed that his education had been of a commendable character. In the areas of liberal arts and theology he had been led to an awareness of both the historical and contemporary scene in philosophical and theological thought. His acquaintance with ancient scholars such as Cicero and the historian Eusebius as well as his knowledge of thinkers of the modern age such as Kant and Schleiermacher (who died when Swensson was a boy of five or six years of age) are evident.

By the time Swensson completed his education at Uppsala, his basic theological position had been established. The Lutheran Confessions became increasingly important to Swensson, especially in his ministry in the United States. In these statements of faith, he found again and again strong weapons in his conflict with groups which he saw as threats to the faith he knew and loved as interpreted by Lutheran doctrine.

His scholarly disposition was shown in the contents of his library. What remains (72 volumes) in the archives of Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas is oriented toward theology. These include works of both Scandinavian and continental thinkers who were prominent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: P.A. Ahlberg, Oscar Ahnfelt, Peter Fjellstedt, August Hermann Francke, Anders Nohrborg, Jacob Otto Hoof, William Löhe, D. Heinrick Müller, Erik Pontoppidan, Carl Olof Rosenius, Peter Lorenz Sellergren, and Phillippi Jacob Spener. Swensson’s library revealed a scope of interest and a degree of openness to many emphases. Even though he was critical of new evangelism, he did not ignore such as Ahlberg and Ahnfelt who were sympathetic with that movement. Hoof, a revivalist preacher, had been influenced by Roman Catholic mysticism and preached so convincingly that he led his followers even to dress differently. He encouraged the employment of lay preachers, a practice not favored by Swensson. Pontoppidan, whose approach was close to that of Swensson, was a Norwegian, and Löhe was a German with an emphasis on liturgical renewal and practical service. While most of the works were in Swedish, there were also books in German and Latin. Swensson had ability in language study. One source indicated: “He had good knowledge of six languages, but he did not feel secure with his English.”

In America he read not only what was related to his life and work in this country but subscribed to journals from Sweden. These included: Bibelvänn [The Friend of the Bible]; Theologisk Tidskrift [Journal of Theology]; Forsamlingsvänn [The Friend of the Congregation]; Vaktaren [The Watchman].

Herein lies an irony of the human situation. Under a different set of circumstances, Swensson might have become a scholar of some repute. The fact of genetics points to that prospect. His cousin, Martin Johansson (1837–1908), was a docent in New Testament exegesis in Växjö. Later, he was adjunct professor in pastoral theology and continued teaching in Växjö until 1877 when he moved to Uppsala University where, as a doctor of theology, he became professor of dogmatics and moral theology. In 1888, he was made bishop of Härnösand which position he occupied until his death two decades later. He helped edit the Theologisk Tidskrift and
served on a Bible commission which had as its task the translation of the New Testament. He wrote two works: “De nya Evangeli-perikoperna” [“The New Pericope of the Gospels’’] and “Det Lutherska kyrkobegreppet” [The Lutheran Conception of the Church’’].

Other relatives of the Swensson family shared a warm Christian commitment. Josephina, a daughter of Jonas’ brother, Peter, became a missionary to India. She died while she was in service there.

Jonas’ son, Carl, through the accident of history became far better known, and in his son’s shadow, Jonas Swensson has suffered an injustice. Carl was called “one of the foremost Swedish-Americans” and “one of the best spokesmen and interpreters of Swedes in America.” Jonas was never given such tributes. Neither did Sweden see fit to confer upon Jonas the Royal Order of the North Star which it did upon Carl, nor did Uppsala University confer an honorary degree upon Jonas as it did in 1893 when Carl received the honorary Ph.D. degree. By contrast, Jonas, along with his fellow pastors who emigrated to become founders of the Augustana Lutheran Church, was looked upon negatively both by the Swedish government and the Lutheran Church in Sweden for his departure from his native land. No doubt Carl deserved the honors he received: he was a gifted man who could count among his talents skill as an orator. Yet, one who was able to observe the comparable ability of father and son said that in at least one area of human ability, as a pulpiteer, Jonas Swensson, who was “a powerful and sound preacher,” delivered sermons “with greater depth than did his son, Carl.”

During his ministry of four years and five months in the Church in Sweden, Jonas displayed signs of scholarship by the thoroughness with which he prepared his sermons. “In his younger years, for the most part, he wrote out his sermons in full.” In 1854, he published a small booklet of twenty-nine pages which was designed to counsel spiritually troubled people. By this means, Swensson felt he could minister to a larger number of people. A second edition was published in 1858.

But Jonas was to choose—or, in his view, was chosen—to pursue a vocational path which would preclude the opportunity for distinctive scholarship. There are indications that he regretted the limited time he had for other than his parish, and, later, presidential tasks. On August 26, 1869, he wrote to his cousin, Martin Johansson: “I can say without exaggeration that I have more work than three pastors in Sweden although it seems to them that they have much to do.” Two years and seven months later, Johansson received a letter from Jonas, again from Andover, with this wistful sounding statement: “In Sweden I could sit the day at the writing desk; here there are not many days but what there are interruptions, especially during the winter.”

Perhaps during his ministry in Sweden, he thought seriously of the world of learning where he could express his scholarship. But the future had something other in store for the young theologue, the one called Jonas.
NOTES

1For most of its history, the Augustana Church was officially called the "Augustana Synod." At its organizational convention at Jefferson Prairie, Wisconsin (June 5–11, 1860), its constitution was entitled: "Constitution of the Scandinavian Ev. Lutheran Augustana Synod in North America" (G. Everett Arden, *Augustana Heritage: A History of the Augustana Lutheran Church* [Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Press, 1963], p. 84, fn. 23). Even as late as 1935, "Synod" and "Church" were made synonymous. When Dr. P.O. Bersell was installed as president on October 2, 1935, he said: "There is something distinctive about the Augustana Synod, even in the family of Lutheran churches in America" (Ibid., p. 330). In 1948, the distinction was correctly made that "Church" refers to the community of believers who identify themselves according to the scriptures and the beliefs which flow from that source whereas "Synod" is a reference to the Church in meeting to determine policy by and for a particular church body. The name was changed officially to "Augustana Lutheran Church." I shall use this description unless a specific quotation includes the term "Synod.”

2According to the practice of that day, Jonas took the first name of his father for his surname. Hence, as the "son of Sven," he became Jonas Svensson which in the United States became "Swensson." In a sermon of his published in the first volume of *Korsbaneret* (1880, pp. 122 ff.), he is referred to as "J. Svensson." On the other hand, in a letter translated by Dr. Evald B. Lawson which Swensson wrote aboard the ship Minona, June 27, 1856, Jonas used the name Swensson (Lawson, "Some Jonas Swensson Items," *The Augustana Quarterly* 14 (1935): 157–79. A relative in Goteborg, Sweden, Ruth Svensson, uses the original spelling. (Had this arrangement been followed in America, the founder of Bethany College would have had the name Carl Aaron Jonsson or perhaps Carl Aaron Johnson). Apparently, Jonas' first name came from that of his mother, Katharina Jonasdotter. Erik Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska forsamlingsarnas och Svensknarnes historia i Amerika* (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1890), 1:200; Evald B. Lawson, *Two Primary Sources for a Study of the Life of Jonas Swensson* (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Historical Society, 1957), p. 23. (Norelius’ biography of Swensson, 1:186–225, first appeared in its essentials as a series of articles in *Augustana*, then the official publication of the Augustana Lutheran Church, during the two years immediately following Swensson’s death, December 20, 1873. The material in the later *De Svenska Luterska forsamlingsarnas... historia i Amerika* differs very little from this version of more than a decade and a half earlier.)

3Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika*, 1:187.

4In response to a request from Eldon B. Swensson, great grandson of Jonas Swensson, "Prosten" Sven-Gunnar Sundberg of Gislaved, Sweden on April 23, 1979 provided this information on the basis of parish records. (A *prost* in Sweden is described as a rural dean who has responsibility for a defined ecclesiastical area of parishes.)

5Earl Swensson, "Jonas Swensson (1828–1873)," typewritten, n.d.

6Letter to Evald Lawson, June 8, 1957, p. 5. What is intriguing about this French connection is a pewter goblet which Mrs. Jonas Swensson brought to America. It is now in the possession of her great grandson, Lars Carlsson. He has had this vessel examined by the Nordic Heritage Museum in Ballard, Washington. The verdict of this agency was that it is not of Scandinavian design. Its origin may have been from France.
7Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:187.


9Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:188.

10Letter from Andover, Ill., August 26, 1869 to his cousin Rev. Martin Johansson.


12In this case, the name seminary referred to a school with a broad educational program which included more than theological studies. According to Funk and Wagnall's Standard College Dictionary, the term seminary may refer to "a school of higher education."

13Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:188-89; Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 14. In a statement quoted by Carl A. Evald, Swensson at a later time said: "Don't be a minister if you can help it." Swensson in this oblique way was urging that one going into the ministry must be sure of the divine call. Interestingly, as a student at Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas (1941-45) with the intention of studying for the ministry, I along with other pre-theological students heard this same statement from Dr. Ernst Pihlblad (1873-1943), then president of Bethany. (He was a member of the first graduating class of that College in 1891.) He said the same advice was given by Carl Aaron Swensson, son of Jonas and founder of Bethany, to Bethany students who were planning on the ministry. Regarding the dagbok from which Norelius took his information, see Appendix I.

14Ibid. 1:189. In his "'Notebook of 1846-1851,'" Swensson identified his teacher as A. Nilsson. (The Swedes seemed reluctant to give first names—only initials!) It does not appear that Nilsson's attitude toward his student was entirely without interest. Upon Swensson's departure from Bredaryd (also referred to as Hafrida. Hafrida may have been a second congregation which has since been absorbed into Bredaryd for present maps do not show Hafrida), Nilsson gave his departing pupil a Hebrew grammar.

15Ibid., 1:190; Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 16.

16Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:191.

17Ibid., 1:190; See also Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 16. The influence of Nohrborg was to effect a unifying power in Swedish religious life. His Postilla (a collection of sermons) was "the dogmatic foundation of the positions of both H. Schartau and C.O. Rosenius as such is the bond of unity between those who are far apart in their religious outlook." (Rurik Holm, "Nohrborg, Anders," Svensk Uppslagsbok [Andra omarbetade och utvidgade upplagen; Malmo: Forlagshuset Norden AB, 1960], 21:121).

18Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:191.

19Ibid.; Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 17.

20September 5, 1873, Andover, Illinois, Jonas Swensson Collection, Bethany College.

21Bonniers 3-Bands Lexikon (Tredje omarbetade upplagen; Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Forlag, 1979), 3:362

22Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:191.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, p. 195. In his fine history of the Mission Covenant Church (now known as the Evangelical Covenant Church), Karl Olsson quoted this statement (By One Spirit [Chicago, Ill.: the Covenant Press, 1962], p. 185). On quite solid grounds, it can be argued that in an impressive way, Rosenius’ emphasis on the new evangelism permitted Waldenstrom, the founder of the Mission Covenant, to draw from Rosenius his own theology. Rosenius, however, rejected the final conclusions of Waldenstrom’s teachings.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:192; Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 11; November 19, 1873.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:192.


Letter from O.W. Hubbard, M.D., Batavia, Illinois, to Emory Lindquist, Lindsborg, Kansas, November 10, 1941.

February 15, 1958, Jonas Swensson Collection, Upsala College.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:191.

‘‘Utdrag af Protocollet öfver Student-Examen vid Kungl. Academien i Upsala den 24 September 1850.’’

‘‘Utdrag af Theologiska Facultetens vid Kungl. Academien i Upsala Protocoll den 27 Februari 1851.’’

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:193; Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 19.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Andover Minnes-Album, p. 30.

Mrs. Luther Swensson, p. 1.

Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., pp. 18-19.

Ibid.

Interestingly, Viktor Rydberg (1828–1895), one of Sweden’s luminaries who in his attempt to unite humanism and Christianity drew upon himself severe
criticism from the Church because of his polemic against the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, said of Norbeck: "For my spiritual development, I am in greatest debt to Dr. Norbeck." Rydberg, who was born the same year as Swensson, was also a student at Vaxjö Gymnasium so it could be possible that they were acquainted with each other. Of interest is the influence of Norbeck, an impact which was expressed so radically differently by Rydberg, on the one hand, and Swensson on the other. See Thure Månsson, "Norbeck, Anders Eric," *Svenska Man och Kvinnor* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Forlag, 1949), 5:472 and "Rydberg, Abraham Viktor," 6:425-8; "Rydberg, Viktor," Bonniers 3-Bands Lexikon, 3:129.

44Earl Swensson, p. 2

45Letters to Martin Johansson: December 8, 1869, p. 1; January 18, 1871, p. 2; August 26, 1869, pp. 1, 18, Jonas Swensson Collection, Upsala College, East Orange, New Jersey.


50Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika*, 1:217

51Några Uppmaningsord till om sin salighet bekymrade själar, framstallda i ett Bref till några Christeliga vänner från En Ordets Tjenare (Göteborg: Anders Lindgren, 1854), p. 3.

52March 26, 1872, Jonas Swensson Collection, Upsala College.
Chapter II

His Ministry in Sweden

On June 18, 1851, Swensson received his certification from the university. On June 19, he left Uppsala with feelings of relief, satisfaction, and gratitude. On June 21, he wrote: "Today I left Stockholm to journey home to Snollebo happy to know that my schooldays were now over." He spent the summer at his home and preached in his home church at Våthult as well as the neighboring parishes of Båraryd, Burseryd, and Sandvik.

On October 7, 1851, Jonas successfully passed his examinations for ordination. On the following day, he was ordained along with four other candidates (O.H. Rogberg, S.O. Aspelin, J.G. Engstrand, and J.N. Tellander). The service was held in the session room of the Växjö Cathedral with Bishop G. Huerlin presiding. Jonas was twenty-three years old. In response to that event, he exclaimed: "May I never forget the day."

1. His First Pastorate

On October 9, 1851, the day following his ordination, Swensson went to serve as komminister [assistant pastor] in a dual parish, Södra Unnaryd and Jalluntofta. The kyrkoherde [senior pastor] was Arvid Andrén. He had already served twenty-two years of what was to be a fifty year pastorate. Andrén was described as a stern man, not especially personable, and not averse to referring to his komminister and others who worked for him as "drang" [hired man], the lowest position in the Swedish social order of that day.

One wonders if Swensson might have had certain tensions with his superior and could scarcely match the high view he held of his call into the ministry with Andrén’s calling him a "hired man." Andrén brewed and sold brännvin until he came under the influence of Peter Wieselgren (1800-1877) and his temperance movement. Andrén was not drawn to the religious revival then going on in Sweden, a movement in which Swensson was to participate actively. Nevertheless, Arvid Andrén was a highly respected clergyman.

With deep soberness, the young Swensson reflected upon what faced him in his first field of labor. He prayed: "Thou only, O Lord, knowest what will be accomplished here for myself and for others! May everything be done to Thy glory and to the salvation of my soul. Grant me also some who allow themselves to be led to Thee. I am a complete stranger."
Although the personalities of Andrén and Swensson as well as their religious emphases were very different, Swensson seems to have been well treated by Andrén and the younger pastor respected his superior. He remarked that he was well received when he arrived at the parsonage. Further, he observed that "God’s Word has been preached here in a living way." During a period of severe illness, Swensson recorded in his "dagbok" that Andrén had been very concerned and solicitous over his assistant’s condition.

Swensson’s personal feelings at Södra Unnaryd and Jalluntofta were very similar to those he had shown from the time of his religious experience at Bredaryd. He swung between times of peace and periods of anfakningar [anxieties], the latter extending for longer periods than the former. Norelius described this characteristic of Swensson as lifelong. "Such alternation between light and darkness marked his whole life." Two factors contributed to this condition. One was the very nature of Swensson’s religious experience. His personality led him to be sympathetic to a decisive religious experience such as he had in the summer of 1847. Norelius showed psychological insight into the state of Swensson’s struggle: "Such belongs more or less to the experience of all God’s children. Their lives are an alternation between light and darkness, between sorrow and gladness." In his theological view which agreed with that of Swensson, Norelius regarded this as God’s permission to Satan to test the faithful. "They experience something of that which was Paul’s when ‘he felt upon his cheeks death’s breath from Satan’s angels.’"

A second factor was his constant bout with ill health. When ill, he understandably was depressed. Upon recovery, he rejoiced not only because he felt better but more importantly, because he believed God in restoring his strength still had use for his ministry. From February until late spring of 1855, he was so ill that death was expected. He had diagnosed his illness from an earlier time as tuberculosis. At such times, he actually desired death and took as his model Paul’s words: ‘I desire to depart to be with Christ for it is very far better (Phil. 1:23).’ This attitude was frequently expressed throughout his ministry. A religious experience similar to that which he had felt in the summer of 1847 occurred:

On the evening of Sunday, the eighteenth [February], while I lay in such bodily weakness that those present thought I would die any moment, I experienced an inner feeling, and even a conviction that I was to get well again. It was indeed a remarkable moment for my future, if everything is to be fulfilled which was then presaged within me. In that moment it seemed to me that not only would I get well but that my old lung trouble would vanish, and that my present illness would constitute a turning point in my whole life. . . . I pray that my recovery may be of help to his Church and that I may receive blessing in my ministry."

But these times of peace and joy were short-lived in contrast to his periods of anxiety. Even at the moment he expressed gratitude to God for
his recovery, he interspersed the longing: "When one has seen the home so near, almost felt that deliverance had been accomplished, then it is not so easy to think of the continued sojourn and to be placed on the battlefield once again."

This preoccupation with death on the part of a young pastor not yet thirty years old may easily lead to the conclusion that here is a person with a serious psychological abnormality. His expressions at times certainly border on that possibility. On February 4, 1855 he wrote:

I went into the church with the thought that it was for the last time; however, I experienced a deep peace. First I had three burials, and I was deeply moved, for my own illness was much in my thoughts, and I hoped that soon I could enter rest and that the three shovels of earth would fall over my remains.

One may ask whether Swensson possessed a strong death wish similar to the Freudian description of that human urge. This aspect of human personality is associated with the desire to escape from the vicissitudes of events which are marked by suffering. On the surface, it appears one could make a case for this in Swensson’s feelings about death.

Yet, to conclude that his preoccupation with death is similar to the Freudian view is a serious misunderstanding of both the time and place in which Swensson lived as well as his Christian faith. Certainly his life had much suffering about it, but death for him was not an escape from something; it belonged to what for him was a transition to something wonderful. His Christian faith included a strong eschatological hope, typical of that day, but in large measure unfamiliar and unaccepted in the contemporary world of today. Heaven was neither an illusion nor an escape mechanism but of one piece with the whole of the Christian faith which sustained him. His unconditional trust in God rather than any Freudian death wish is the authentic explanation for the view he held of his own death.

The spiritual struggles which included the problem of ill health in no way paralyzed his ministry. He preached; he taught; he counseled. In each of these areas of his ministry, he served in a highly capable and committed manner.

The seriousness with which he took his responsibility to preach is shown in a collection in the Upsala College Library, East Orange, New Jersey for the years 1851-52. Each sermon Swensson wrote in his small handwriting covered both sides of paper which would be equivalent to four and one-half inch pages. Generally he based his sermons on two texts. For example, on December 30, 1855 in Sodra Unnaryd, he preached on John 15: 5-6 and II Corinthians 6: 14-15. Usually one text would be from the Gospels, the other from the Old Testament, or the letters and apocalypse of the New Testament. With his sense of orderliness, he probably sought to cover texts according to the pericope.

His preaching was theocentric and Christocentric. Without neglect of the law, his emphasis was upon the saving grace of God through Jesus Christ. In one of two published works is a long sermon written from An-
dover to his former congregation in Södra Unnaryd. He wrote: "Look always both in good and bad times to Jesus Christ; learn not to regard God other than in Jesus Christ that you may thus have certain peace and live in a holy childlike confidence with the heavenly Father."13

In Sweden, Swensson was supportive of the revival even though he rejected the extreme emotions which sometimes characterized it. Nevertheless, as a young pastor in Sweden, Swensson had been regarded as a preacher of the revival. Södra Unnaryd congregation interestingly had been affected by two extreme emphases. One was that represented by J.O. Hoof who has been described as "a John the Baptist preacher of repentance in the province of Vestergötland [sic.]."14 His followers were loyal to the worship and the ministry of the church in Sweden and read both from Luther's and Hoof's *postilla* [collection of sermons]. But, following the readings, there would be long prayers which would lead to the ecstatic jumping which earned for the people the name "hoppare" ["hoppers"]. In addition, they wore dark clothing and their life-style was simple. All adornments, modern clothing, painted houses and furniture, tapestry, curtains, and the like were regarded as sinful. To weave a garment with a red thread made a person guilty of mortal sin. There were families who cast their silver which had been inherited into Bolmen Lake near Södra Unnaryd so they would not be imprisoned by the sin of avarice.15

As an opposing force to the ecstatic behavior of the "hoppare", some pastors encouraged a contrasting emphasis, that of Henric Schartau (1757-1825). One of Swensson’s predecessors, Adjunct J.N. Forssander, was especially diligent in bringing Schartau’s more structured, orthodox Lutheran practice into the parish to offset the confusion created by the Hoofians. In reference to the disturbance which the Hoofians had created, Forssander wrote: "The spiritual need which is created during a time of confusion can scarcely be better counteracted by any other human writings than those of the spiritually rich writings of Schartau."16

Sympathetic as he was to the religious revival in Sweden, Swensson could not agree with the excesses of the followers of Hoof. The work of Forssander had prepared the soil for Swensson. Somewhat ironically, Swensson himself at an earlier age had been influenced by Hoof. As one writer has written, "It would not be too far-fetched to identify the ‘Swedish Christianity’ of Jonas Swensson when at his impressionable age with his intense thirst for knowledge, the Vathult boy was associated with the circle of Jacob Otto Hoof’s disciples. Swensson was a bearer of this spiritual heritage from Västgötabygd."17 But Swensson in his later youth had also been influenced by Anders Nohrborg who had a critical view of over emphasis on emotions. As Lars Oscarsson wrote:

The pastor who more than any other was God’s instrument to bring back again the people of the revival to a more sound and temperate spiritual life was Adjunct Jonas Swensson. During his nearly five year pastorate in Unnaryd, he worked untiringly for a living and confessionally faithful Christianity."18
Swensson was a popular preacher in Sweden. Even though the diocesan system discouraged members from going to hear preachers in other than their own parishes, this did not prevent many of surrounding congregations from attending Swensson’s church. Even more offensive to the diocesan arrangement was the practice of preachers to go on preaching missions to many parishes. This Swensson did and so resembled the practices of both Fjellstedt and Rosenius. Thus Swensson was an important person in the religious revival in Småland, Sweden.

Swensson’s engagement in the revival included not only preaching but also teaching. He was highly skilled in pedagogy which was demonstrated in his biblical and catechetical teaching. Many from his own parish and neighboring congregations came to listen to his Bible studies. This ability became highly evident in his ministry in the United States. As a teacher he was to make important contributions to the Augustana Church.

He also acted as counselor both verbally and by correspondence. He willingly counseled people on a person to person basis. The desire for his pastoral guidance was, however, so heavy that he also used the written word in this aspect of his ministry. He wrote numerous letters addressed to persons outside of his own parish who were seeking resolution to spiritual anxieties. As already noted, he wrote a document of thirty-one pages entitled: “Några uppmaningsord till om sin salighet bekymrade sjalar, framstålda i ett bref till några Christeliga wanner från en ordets tjena’r’ [Some Exhortations to Blessed Troubled Souls Presented in a Letter from a Servant of the Word].

This publication allows an examination of his counseling approach. A.B. Carlson has analyzed this work and identified five characteristics of Swensson as counselor and the nature of his relationship to his counselees. First, Swensson claimed no authority or unusual gift of his own which equipped him to serve in this pastoral capacity. “He sought no ecclesiastical power nor posed as a religious authority. His ministry to individuals he viewed as given of God and, therefore, a serious responsibility.”

Secondly, as a sjalasörjare Swensson considered himself to be a fellow traveler or pilgrim with those he counseled. “He regarded himself as a brother in the faith. The role of pastor was borne with dignity but without becoming a barrier for pastor-parishioner communication.”

Thirdly, Swensson was sensitive to the burdens of others. That which the counselee labored under was basically the theologically defined rather than the psychologically diagnosed. “Man apart from God remained in the terrible darkness of sin. He is unaware of it as long as he feels satisfied and secure.” Swensson further observed: “When the sinner, encountered by the call of God’s grace, begins to awaken out of the sleep of sin, one will turn from one’s way of sin and turn around [repent].”

Fourth in his counseling procedure, Swensson advised the anxious and troubled to hear and obey God’s Word. This should be accompanied by prayer. He quoted from Jesus (John 16:23): “If you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name.”
Finally, Swensson saw his ministry as counselor, as all other aspects of his ministry, within the prophetic role. "Swensson was a fearless spokesman for God." Although he disclaimed any superior quality or authority within himself, he had no doubt as to the divine authority in whose behalf he spoke. "See to it, therefore, that you receive the strength of grace and with vigilance and confidence use this which the Lord communicates to you." Counseling never became a separate ministry for Swensson. With his understanding of a wholistic ministry rooted in Word and Sacrament, it would have been unimaginable for him to hang a shingle: "Jonas Swensson, Counselor." His counseling ministry was one of a piece with his total vocation.

Little doubt exists regarding both the ability and faithfulness of Jonas Swensson as a pastor in Sweden. His gifts as preacher, teacher, and counselor drew people from beyond his own parish. He performed his ministry with diligence and sensitivity. The question arises: "Could Swensson have enjoyed living out his ministry in the land of his birth?" The answer is debatable. If he desired promotion in the Church of Sweden, prospects for such were cloudy if he looked at the examples of other pastors. Both Esbjörn and Carlsson may well have emigrated to America because of their friendliness to the revival which obstructed promotion for them in the Church in Sweden. It must be emphasized, however, this was not their only reason for emigration.

Nevertheless, the theological climate was not favorable to the desires of those who were sympathetic to the religious revival. Also, Swensson "in spite of his youth, ...was one of the churchly prominent figures in the pioneer stage of the life of the freedom movement [kyrkliga frihetslivets forgrundsgestalter] in western Småland," an association which scarcely would have recommended Swensson as a favorite son of the official church authorities.

Whether Swensson would have enjoyed his continuing ministry in Sweden is finally not a moot question. For him, another future was forming. The first inkling of this radical change about to take place in his life was disclosed in an entry in the *dagbok* on May 12, 1855: "A notice in *Vaktaren* stating that a Swedish congregation in America planned to call me has given rise to much inner conflict." The "inner conflict" which Swensson mentioned was not to be relieved until Midsummer's Day more than a month later when he received a letter from Peter Fjellstedt, great friend of the Augustana pioneers and a leader in the Swedish religious revival. In that communication was included the call to serve among Swedish immigrants around Sugar Grove, Pennsylvania and Jamestown, New York.

Typically, once again Swensson suffered *anfåktelse* [anxiety]. On June 24, three days after he had received the call to America through Fjellstedt, he wrote in his *dagbok*:

I have received a letter from Dr. Fjellstedt containing a call to a Swedish congregation in North America. I really thought that nothing
would come of this call; but if it did come, I had thought of declining it immediately. That was my feeling, but I had such an anguish of soul that I could not be quiet. Flesh and blood are against accepting it.\textsuperscript{30}

Between June 24 when he wrote the above and July 3, his mind and will changed toward accepting the call to America. In his \textit{dagbok} on June 28, he wrote: “While giving a Bible exposition, I felt a powerful comfort in the face of all difficulties when I spoke on the words: ‘For if we die with him, we shall also live with him.’ But I still am uncertain concerning the Lord’s will in this matter.” Three days later on July 1, he recorded that while he was preaching in Jälluntofta “and especially while giving a Bible exposition, I felt a powerful comfort to face all the difficulties related to its acceptance.”\textsuperscript{31}

Finally, the example of a missionary to Africa brought peace to Swensson. On July 3, he wrote that in the \textit{Stockholms Missionstidning} [Stockholm Mission Paper] No. 6, he had read about the great difficulties a missionary by the name of Hahn had experienced in a mission station in South Africa. “While reading of these trials and difficulties I experienced a stronger urge, together with much comfort, that I should accept the call.”\textsuperscript{32}

\section*{2. The Man Who Left Sweden}

Several factors influenced Swensson to leave the comfort and security of a parish in Sweden for the hardships and rigors of the American frontier. One was the respect he held for Peter Fjellstedt who by 1855 had gained renown as one of the foremost preachers in the Swedish revival as well as one who had no superior in the encouragement and promotion of missions in lands outside of Sweden. The fact that Swensson took so seriously the letter from Fjellstedt indicated the importance of this noted Swedish religious figure on Swensson’s decision.

A second factor may well have been a moving letter he received from America signed by Andrew Peter Gallm (probably an Americanized form of Anders Peter Hjelm). The communication was from Sugar Grove, Pennsylvania and carried no date. The contents of the letter, however, indicate quite conclusively it was written in 1854 or 1855.

The writer began: “Having been informed of your name we are taking the liberty of writing a few words with the request that you come here and preach God’s holy word for us.” Hjelm gave the information that there were about a hundred Swedes in “Sugar Grove County, State of Pennsylvania.” Swensson must have been moved when he read: “It burdens us to think that we do not have the preaching of the Word here in the purity of the evangelical Lutheran teaching.” The building of a church edifice was in progress and they hoped to have that completed by autumn. Then came the emotional appeal: “Dear Pastor, for the sake of God and the souls of men, come to us, for we must seek the lost and guide those who have strayed away, for with the battle over the teaching and religion many have fallen away to the Methodist sect.” The reason
for this loss to the Methodist sect was: "We do not have a good shepherd: the blind cannot lead the blind." The spiritually hungry Swedes in the Sugar Grove/Jamestown area are willing to "thankfully pay the costs, and if you would like to remain with us, then we will pay a yearly salary upon which we can verbally agree." 33

From an economic viewpoint, the uncertain financial future which the residents of northwestern Pennsylvania/southwestern New York wilderness could offer him must have given Swensson cause for pause. The security of a Lutheran parish in Sweden must have appeared superior to what faced him on the American frontier. Nevertheless, the "Macedonian call" of the letter was more persuasive in Swensson's decision. "We humbly ask you to be so good as to send us a few words in answer, telling us whether or not we can expect to see you here. God grant that these lines may not be in vain. That is the prayer of your friends and countrymen." 34

Another factor—the third—was the appearance for the third time 35 of the significance Swensson saw in his name in relation to vocation. As he reflected upon his decision to go to America, he wrote to Erland Carlsson (June 27, 1856) while traveling to America on the Minona:

I thought to myself, that in case a call should eventually come, I would answer negatively. Now about a year ago the call reached me (June 24). Then the problem was upon me again. I thought of answering no; for I did not want to go away, like unto Jonah, flesh and blood fearing difficulties. I tried to find many reasons to justify me in giving a negative answer; but I was cast in the depth of the sea, in dreadful anguish and inner conflict, which was not stilled as long as I sought to escape the call. 36

Fjellstedt, the letter from Hjelm, and the association of his name were all powerful factors in Swensson's decision to leave Sweden. Yet these conditions, singly or taken together, would not have been sufficient to convince him to accept the call. It was the fourth factor—the conviction that ultimately the call was neither from Sugar Grove and Jamestown nor from Fjellstedt, but from the Lord. During his Jonah-like struggle, he resorted to prayer both privately and together with friends. He wrote to Erland Carlsson (June 27, 1856) that this was his only refuge. "To consult further with humans in such a matter would have profited but little. After a few weeks I was powerfully convinced that the call was from the Lord, and my own natural will had to beat a retreat." With that "retreat" came peace. "I decided to accept the call, whereupon peace filled my inner self and I was given boldness to meet my difficulties which should face me. The assurance of the Lord's will has strengthened me constantly ever since." He could scarcely have known how truly his expectations would be fulfilled in the difficulties ahead of him. Illness, loneliness, poverty of a character he had not known in Sweden would be his experience in America.

Although by early July Swensson had decided to accept the call to Sugar Grove, a full ten months passed before he and his new bride
boarded the *Minona* on May 20, 1856. Even for those days with slower transportation, the lapse of so much time seemed long. Swensson himself seemed uneasy about this delayed departure and wrote on October 13, 1855 in his *dagbok*: "When I read in the papers today how they are waiting for pastors in America, and not least in Sugar Grove, where I have been called, I really felt badly that I had not tried to arrange things so that I could have left this autumn."  

The passage of almost a year between his acceptance of the call and his emigration from Sweden can be seen within the context of special preparations and the experience of Swensson’s affirmation of the providence of God. First, there was the matter of his marriage. He had been engaged to Maria Blixt from Södra Unnaryd since September 1855. He hesitated, however, to consummate the relationship because of his fear there would not be adequate facilities for them at Sugar Grove. Then, in October he read that the Swedish emigrants had already built a church and had purchased twenty-five acres and built a parsonage. In an exultant confession of faith, he exclaimed:

> Now I see that it is good to trust in the Lord and not to depend upon man. Without knowing how I will be received, I have decided to accept the call, since I have found it to be the Lord’s will; without having any earthly prospects even to have a home I decided to get married, since I found it to be in accordance with the will of God; thus I also trusted in him.  

About six months before he was aware that a home awaited them in America, on March 29, 1856, he and Maria were united in marriage by Pastor Arvid Andrén, the *kyrkoherde* under whom Swensson was serving. Not surprisingly, Swensson saw Maria as God’s gift to him. Aboard the *Minona*, he wrote to Erland Carlsson: "I thank the Lord that He has chosen such a helpmeet for me with whom I can be one in the Lord and who is willing to share with me suffering and sacrifice." Even after years of severe trial especially because of the illness of both Jonas and Maria, Swensson wrote that he had received from the Lord his spouse. The relationship between husband and wife was always very tender.

Secondly, there was the problem of money. On September 12, 1855, he recorded in his *dagbok* that he had received a letter in which he had been informed of the high cost of travel to America. It seemed impossible for him to raise so much money especially since his wife would accompany him. "This caused me great anguish and turmoil for several hours. But at noon, when I sang Psalm 244, I received assurance that the Lord would help and provide, which relieved me greatly." Swensson’s faith in God’s providence was justified by a series of events. Accompanied by much emotion, he preached his farewell sermon at Södra Unnaryd on April 6, 1856 at which time the Swenssons received an offering of 250 *riksdaler*. He preached in several other churches where he had previously spoken because of his involvement with the revival movement. From these he also received offerings. Swensson could not withhold his gratitude and sense of wonder at God’s providence:

> 26
O, how wonderful are the ways of the Lord. The outlook for securing funds for the journey has seemed dark. However, by the grace of the Lord I have been able to comfort myself in this that the One who has called me will also provide. Now I see how the Lord keeps his promises, and how he has provided the means without my concern; for without seeking a loan I now have over 808 Rd.\textsuperscript{43}

But Swensson’s financial needs still made him vulnerable to anxiety. The journey from Södra Unnaryd to Göteborg required fourteen days with stops at his home, Svenljunga, and Orsås. On April 22, they arrived at Göteborg, Sweden’s most important seaport, from which they were to sail for America. Notwithstanding the helpful and pleasant time he had there with Peter Fjellstedt and other church leaders, the unexpected long delay in the Minona’s departure placed great demand upon the financial resources of the Swenssons. Also, the purchase of supplies necessary for the journey further depleted the amount of their money. Swensson began to worry that their financial resources would be insufficient. Then, one night he had a dream that he had received a letter in which were “two red paper notes” (two twenty-five riksdaler notes). The next morning, his anxieties unallayed by the dream, he went to Fjellstedt. The older man was just ready to leave for Östergötland. Before Swensson could say anything about his need for travel money, Fjellstedt gave him two twenty-five riksdaler notes “exactly like the ones he had seen in the dream.” Swensson felt humiliated that he had trusted insufficiently in God’s providence. “I have to be ashamed of my lack of faith; but I will praise the Lord’s love.”\textsuperscript{44}

Finally, on May 16, twenty days after their arrival in Göteborg, the Swenssons stepped aboard the Minona.\textsuperscript{45} Still, departure for America was not imminent. Four days they lived on board ship before they pulled away on May 20 from their native shores which they would not see again. That day he wrote movingly in his dagbok:

Now we are about to begin the long journey across the Atlantic. Certain concerning the will of the Lord, I can now with confidence leave the fatherland and calmly meet the difficulties of the journey. Since this is very likely the last time I shall see my native country, I desire to thank the Lord for all the goodness and love he has shown me, for in spite of my waywardness he has drawn me unto himself and wonderfully guided and preserved me. It is difficult at this time to find words for my thoughts. I also thank the Lord for the grace he has shown me in temporal things, for in loving manner he has supported me. But especially I thank him for a faithful helpmeet who is one with me in the Lord and who is willing to share all the difficulties. I do not know what difficulties and dangers await me. Thy will be done, O Lord, whether I go toward life or death. But, O Lord, if I am to live, preserve Thou me in Thy grace and bless my ministry unto the salvation of many lives. If my life is to end during this journey, then take me home to thee, and be Thou then, O Lord, the protector of my faithful wife, and be her comfort and strength both in spiritual and
temporal ways. Remember, O Lord, with Thy favor the land which I am leaving and bless the Church in that land. Have special mercy upon the souls which Thou didst entrust with me and preserve them in Thy grace." 

The journey across the Atlantic was uneventful. Jonas and Maria arrived in New York harbor on the evening of July 5, 1856 forty-six days after they sailed out from Goteborg. He preached on board ship a few times but "lamented the shocking godlessness of the seamen and the lack of all receptivity to the Gospel." 

So, Jonas Swensson arrived in America. What was he like—he who during seventeen years was to leave a significant imprint upon the Augustana Lutheran Church? For one thing, under the impact of his own religious experience, he tended to be judgmental of others. As he reflected upon the parish he was leaving, he wrote following his farewell sermon: "Parting from a congregation which had been my only field of labor to date in the ministry and where the Word by the vast majority had been scorned was difficult." His separation between believers and non-believers was confidently made as he continued:

It was even more bitter to leave the little group of believers there. I was strengthened by the assurance that I was called by the Lord to depart from this place; still I believe that, all my sorrows notwithstanding, my happiest and most pleasant days were at an end, for I had experienced many seasons of refreshing in the fellowship of the little group of believers with whom I felt a great inner unity.

The norm for Swensson's division of the congregation into those who scorned the Word and those who constituted "the little group of believers" was most likely a common religious experience of conversion. It has already been noted that he was regarded as a leader in the revival movement albeit of the moderate type. An emphasis upon a religious conversion would have been employed as a test to distinguish between true believers and others. This would change for Swensson as a criterion of judgment in America although it remained a part of his standard. Why did this change occur?

One obvious factor might be called "maturing in the ministry." As pastors discover flaws in their own faith, their judgments of others become more tolerant. As a consequence, Swensson became one who because he himself required mercy, so he became more merciful in his assessment of the faith of others.

Secondly, from the beginning of his ministry, he was committed to the scriptures and the Lutheran confessions. He interpreted the former in the light of the latter. Increasingly, the confessions rather than personal religious experience became more normative for him.

His unpleasant encounters with the more radical movements in America later persuaded him that religious experience as the ultimate standard of judgment was too unreliable. Already in Sweden, his fears over the direction taken by new evangelism and the revival disturbed
him. In the long letter which Swensson wrote to Erland Carlsson aboard the Minona, he said:

The Hedbergian movement was influential in a majority of the spiritual stirrings of recent years. Through its looseness in teaching and life an open door to all manner of sectarianism was created. Mormonism has also won many adherents; but even more threatening is the Baptist movement.\textsuperscript{50}

When Jonas Swensson, committed and gifted young pastor, preacher, catechist, counselor stepped ashore in New York City together with his wife, Maria, little did he know the difficulties that lay before them. Yet, he was sustained by his faith in the God who would lead and preserve them. And within the providence of God, the future Augustana Lutheran Church was to receive benefits which only the man called Jonas could confer.
NOTES


2Ibid.

3Erik Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska församlingsarnas och Svenskarnes historia i Amerika*, (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1890), 1:193.


5Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika*, 1:194; Lawson, *Two Primary Sources...*, p. 20.

6Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika*, 1:194.

7Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika*, 1:201; Lawson, *Two Primary Sources...*, p. 24.

8Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika*, 1:203. See above, p. 5.

9Ibid., 1:199.

10Ibid., 1:202; Lawson, *Two Primary Sources...*, p. 25.

11Ibid.

12Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika*, 1:200-201.

13*Bref i Andeliga Amnen* (Jönköping; D.F. Bergmans forlag, 1862), p. 50.


15Oscarsson, p. 96.

16Ibid., pp. 94-95.

17Rune Bornsjö, “En nybyggarpåst,” (No record of periodical/newspaper or date of publication), p. 337.

18Oscarsson, p. 95.

19Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika*, 1:196.

20See below, pp. 67-68.

21See above, p. 13.


23Ibid., p. 227.

24Ibid.

25*Några Uppmaningsord till om sin salighet bekyrmda sjalar, framstalla: ett Bref till några Christeliga vanner från En Ordets Tjenare* (Göteborg; Anders Lindgren, 1854), p. 11.

26Oscarsson, p. 114.

27*Några Uppmaningsord...*, p. 18.
“Kyrkolederes minne firas i Småland och U.S.A.”, 1956. This is a clipping from the Swensson collection at Upsala College. No indication is given from what newspaper it was taken. The contents of the article, however, show that it was written in 1956 on the one hundredth anniversary of Swensson’s arrival in the United States, an observance which was celebrated by the Augustana Lutheran Church. A companion article written by Evald Lawson was entitled: “He Arrived 100 Years Ago: A Tribute to Jonas Swensson, Pioneer Churchman,” 

The Lutheran Companion 102 (July 18, 1956): 12-14.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska ... historia i Amerika, 1:204-205; Lawson, Two Primary Sources ... , p. 26. In modern Swedish, words that begin with “w” have been changed to “v.” There are modern dictionaries that have no separate section for words beginning with “w.” What few words begin with “w” are included in the “v” section. Both spellings for the periodical Waktaren will be employed in this book according to the spelling in each source.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska ... historia i Amerika, I: 204-205; Lawson, Two Primary Sources ... , pp. 26-27.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid., pp. 158-59.

For the other two times when his name was associated with his sense of divine calling, see Introduction, pp. xii-xiii.


Norelius, De Svenska Luterska ... historia i Amerika, 1:206; Lawson, Two Primary Sources ... , p. 27.

Ibid.

June 27, 1856, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives; Lawson, “Some Jonas Swensson Items,” p. 162.

Letter to Erik Norelius, December 4, 1869, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska ... historia i Amerika, 1:206; Lawson, Two Primary Sources ... , p. 27. “Psalm” refers to hymns in the Swedish “Psalmbok” which corresponds to a hymnal.

The riksdaler was minted in Sweden beginning in the seventeenth century. The last of this coin was produced in 1871. Its value was about one-fourth that of an American dollar. See Svensk Upplagsbok (Malmo: Forslagetshuset Norden AB, 1952), 24:143.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska ... historia i Amerika, 1:208; Lawson, Two Primary Sources ... , p. 29.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska ... historia i Amerika, 1:208.

The captain of the Minona was a man named Rhyden. On board ship were about 130 emigrants, the greatest number of whom intended to go to Minnesota and would thus pass through Chicago. Norelius, De Svenska Luterska ... historia i Amerika, 1:526.

Ibid., 1:208-9; see also Lawson, Two Primary Sources ... , pp. 29-30.
47 Letter to Erland Carlsson while on board the ship Minona, June 27, 1856, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives; Lawson, “Some Jonas Swensson Items,” p. 163.


49 See above, p. 21.

Chapter III

First Parish in the United States

"What should I do here? It seems to me that I would have been of greater usefulness in Sweden." So wrote Swensson in his dagbok, July 19, 1856 just two weeks after his arrival in New York and ten days after he came to Jamestown, New York. This is no surprise. Sociologists would identify Swensson's statement as an expression of "culture shock." The contrast between what he had known in Sweden and what met him here was extreme. One can point to a number of important factors.

1. "Culture Shock"

The religious situation was so different in America from that in Sweden. Swensson at first had difficulty to come to terms with separation of Church and State as provided for by the first amendment of the Constitution. On July 13, three days after his arrival in Jamestown, he wrote: "Even those here who are Christians seem to me to be queer. I fear that the freedom which obtains here in all things has been perverted in many into an undisciplined spirit."1

Ironically, his first contact in the United States was at a Methodist service on July 6. This service was held on the Bethel ship which was anchored in the New York harbor. This ship was used by a Swedish sailor, Olof G. Hedstrom, who had been converted to Methodism and now used this vessel for missionary purposes. His main interest was to minister to emigrants from Sweden. Of this encounter Swensson wrote: "Here we had an unpleasant feeling. Now I really feel the heavy difficulties presented by sectarian power and looseness."2

Not all contacts with Methodists were unpleasant. Four days later in Jamestown, the Swenssons stayed at the home of the Methodist pastor, Jacob Bredberg, who had formerly been a pastor in the Church in Sweden in the diocese of Skara. Of that experience, Swensson wrote: "We were at the home of the Methodist pastor, Bredberg, and there we felt fine. I conducted Bible study in the evening with peace and joy."3

There was also the isolation. No Swedish Lutheran pastors were within the vicinity. Likewise, when it was necessary for Swensson to be away from home, he was concerned for the welfare of his wife, Maria. The sense of isolation may well have contributed to the deterioration of her health. In his dagbok for August 13 of his first year in Hessel Valley and Jamestown, he wrote: "It is difficult to have to depend upon others."
I experience this now in regard to transportation. I desired that my wife might accompany me, but I cannot take her with me, inasmuch as someone else is doing the driving."  

Closely related to isolation was another factor—loneliness. On August 26, 1869 from Andover, Illinois, Swensson recalled these early years at Hessel Valley and Jamestown:

It was not without deprivation that I came from Sweden in the light of the many Christian friends there; to come to this spiritual wilderness was certainly costly. The nearest fellow pastor I had was 500 miles away in Chicago [Erland Carlsson]. Although there were many large American and German Lutheran congregations in Pennsylvania, I was largely unacquainted with them.  

In late September and early October of his first year, he went to meetings of the Mississippi Conference and the Synod of Northern Illinois. Erland Carlsson invited Jonas and Maria to be guests in the Carlsson home from where Swensson and Carlsson would travel to Galesburg and Dixon, Illinois where the meetings were to be held. Mrs. Swensson would remain in Chicago. In his response to Carlsson’s invitation, the obvious joy of respite from their loneliness is shown. “Thanks, a thousand thanks for your most loving letter! You said that the last letter you received from me brought you gladness; but this can be said in double measure about yours to me.” Then in a figure of speech, he described the loneliness he had known since his departure from Sweden. “I have gone here as in a desert ever since I left Göteborg not meeting anyone with whom I could speak a word in spiritual confidence with the exception of my wife.” He affirmed the friendship with Carlsson which he valued so highly: “Certainly it is good to have friends who have gone before and who are also interested in spiritual things but oh how good it is to have a brother upon the earth with whom one can share especially in such spiritual poverty here.” Swensson was not forgetful of what this visit would mean to the two wives: “It will be good to have this companionship especially so that our wives can meet and be edified together as sisters in the faith.”

On October 27, 1856 upon their return to Sugar Grove, Swensson wrote:

Your house became for us our second home here. If we were not so far away we would visit you often. When one lacks such opportunity, one realizes the true worth of what it means to meet a real brother. I cannot tell how heartily happy I was to get to converse with you. Previously every one in America, even if one was of the Christian faith, seemed to be so peculiar. I had almost begun to think that I could not find a true Christian spirit as in the old fatherland. So I am strengthened and encouraged by the agreement between us. May the Lord in His grace allow us to accompany each other and strengthen us under the conditions of this time.

There was, moreover, a distinct contrast between the financial and pro-
fessional security he had known in Sweden and the opposite conditions in the United States. True, because of his support of the revival movement, Swensson may not have enjoyed promotion to higher clerical positions. Still, he had the comfort and security of a benefice which was provided for pastors in the Lutheran Church in Sweden. Of this, he was not unaware. On April 7, 1856, he wrote in his dagbok: "It was painful to leave this home [Södra Unnaryd] where I enjoyed so much of temporal good."

A far different set of circumstances faced the Swenssons in Sugar Grove and Jamestown. Nothing more definite regarding the financial arrangements could be made than "we will pay a yearly salary upon which we can verbally agree."

Here was an early indication to Swensson of the different situation in America with its politically free church from the conditions in Sweden. There, arrangements for the pastor's salary were assured by the State. Here, it was a matter of negotiation between the congregation and the pastor with little power for the latter to shape significantly the conditions of the parish relationship. Interestingly, however, the method by which the pastor's salary was to be provided was governed by what the Swedish immigrants had known in Sweden, a church tax. The great difference, dictated by the first amendment of the American constitution, was that whereas in Sweden the tax was determined and collected by the State, in the United States these functions were exercised by the congregation.

Illustrative of this situation was the meeting of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in the area known as Swedesburg, September 20, 1856. It was agreed "that every family in the settlement shall pay six dollars per year and every family outside the settlement, three dollars." This interesting distinction may have been suggested by the parish idea in Sweden where the responsibility of the local congregation was determined by geographic boundaries rather than by members who had committed themselves to the faith, activities, and requirements of the parish. Men who had no households and who were servants were to pay one half the designated amount and women servants one half as much as men of that status. "Widows are rated the same as women servants," but if their poverty was too great, this requirement was to be waived. "Payment is to be made in three equal installments. The year is to be counted from July 11, when the pastor arrived."

This financial arrangement could scarcely give great assurance for a guaranteed salary. The uncertainty of crop success as well as the more unpredictable ability or willingness of the people to live up to the stipulation gave not a little concern to a pastor—a dramatic difference from what pastors had known in Sweden.

The rural character of the United States in those days was reflected in other than cash support which the congregation offered Swensson. On January 31, 1857, it was decided that facilities were to be made for the pastor to have at least one cow and so a cow barn "35 feet long, 24 feet wide and 14 feet high, divided into three rooms" was erected. On May 2,
it was decided “the crop on the church yard shall go to the pastor for the present year.” Greater certainly was provided Swensson when on July 25, 1857, it was agreed to raise the pastor’s salary to $500.17

Another element in the culture shock for the Swensson’s was the difference in popularity Jonas had enjoyed in Sweden and, if not opposition, at least indifference in the United States. In Sweden, as already noted,18 both his preaching and teaching attracted many. Large numbers of people came on Sundays to hear his sermons in the morning and to stay to listen to his Bible expositions in the church or his own room. “People would often come from ten or twelve congregations, some of whom journeyed distances of five, ten, or fifteen miles to hear the Word of Life preached and to be instructed in the way leading to eternal blessedness.”19 His son, Carl, wrote of the status his father enjoyed in Sweden: “In Sweden he had been honored by everyone. Many of his hearers had come from areas far away to listen to the word from the lips of an honest pastor.”20

Far different was the situation in Pennsylvania and New York. Carl Swensson wrote: “In Pennsylvania my father must have felt indescribably desolate.”21 Arthur Henne, a recent pastor of First Lutheran Church in Jamestown, has described the situation which Swensson met in his first congregations in the United States. “What congregation there was resembled from the reports we have a ragged flock without much order or sense of purpose, riven by factions, hardened in their moods by the tough life earned from the soil and forest.”22

Finally, there was the character of the frontier itself. In no small way, this was the overarching reality from which all the other elements flowed—free church, isolation, loneliness, uncertainty of economic conditions, and indifference to the mission which Swensson represented.

The physical fact to which Henne referred when he spoke of the “tough life earned from the soil and forest” was crucial. The soil around Chandler Valley was by no means as fertile as that Swensson would find in his second parish in Andover, Illinois. The former was more like the Småland area from which Swensson had come, but at least that area in Sweden had known the centuries long civilizing influences of western culture. Not so here.

The forest confronted Jonas and Maria with even more of a challenge than did the poor soil. Carl Swensson wrote: “When my parents arrived, the primeval forest still remained. Jonas and Maria Swensson helped fell the trees and roll the logs to be burned.” Some of the trees were huge. Jonas told of one which was so large that a whole week was required before the fire reduced it to ashes.23

More important was the influence of the frontier upon the thought and feelings of its residents. The historian, Frederick Jackson Turner, saw the frontier not so much as a region as a process. Sidney Mead has summarized well Turner’s viewpoint of history: “Turner’s thesis hinges on the reduction to primitive conditions on the frontier, followed by rebuilding and incorporating new elements derived from the local situation.”24

Turner’s view of the frontier process consisted of a rejection of history
and substituted the primacy of feeling over intellect. The rigorous demands and even threats of the frontier led the pioneers to live more at the level of emotion than reflective thought. Without reflective thought there cannot be an adequate appreciation or comprehension of the importance and meaning of history.

As Swensson and others of his colleagues in Augustana encountered the frontier, they had to make accommodations. Yet, to their credit, they remained faithful to the essentials of their faith. It was precisely this faithfulness which caused Augustana to become "Augustana." These early pioneers—laity and pastors—could not accept the Lutheranism they encountered in America—a Lutheran faith which they perceived to be diluted by the frontier isolation from confessional Lutheranism as well as by the corrosive influence of frontier emotional revivalism on the Lutheran churches in America. On October 9, 1856 while he was in attendance at the meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois at Dixon with which he at that time became affiliated, Swensson wrote in his dagbok: "During the course of the sessions the looseness of the American Lutherans in doctrinal matters was apparent. They want to minimize the importance of the confessions."25

The observation Vilhelm Moberg made of Swedish immigration in the St. Croix Valley, Minnesota led him to write: "They changed the land—and the United States of North America changed them."26 Certainly, this was true also of Swensson and his colleagues; yet, the emphasis had to be upon the first: "They changed the land," as they counteracted frontier individualism. Swedish history and society as well as the traditions of the Lutheran Church had implanted in these people a strong sense of community. Instead of fundamental reliance upon frontier revivalism for recruitment and nourishment of the Christian Church, Augustana pioneers developed parish education and established colleges and a seminary. Rather than an emphasis upon religious experience of a subjective frontier type, the Lutheran confessions became both a context and norm by which the experience of Christian faith could be tested and nurtured. For them, history was crucial, and one of the important bearers of their historical past was the confessions.

More than once, Swensson was to ask the question: "What should I do here?" The conviction that it was the Lord who had called him together with his sense of history which commitment to the Lutheran confessions had given him sustained him through the moments of doubt. From these sources he received the directive to do what had to be done—to dedicate his talents faithfully to his tasks.

2. The Community and Swensson’s Ministry to its People

Although there were settlers in Sugar Grove when the Swenssons arrived, the region was still a rugged frontier. Furthermore, the predominance of non-Swedish residents only increased the feeling of isolation for Jonas and Maria.

When the Swenssions arrived in Sugar Grove township in 1856, the
village of Chandlers Valley had been in existence for almost half a century. It had been founded by people who had come from England to Connecticut. The first immigrants in the area of Chandlers Valley were William and Anna Chandler for whom the Valley was named. Jamestown, too, as its name suggests, was founded by non-Swedish people. In 1806, James Prendergast who studied and practiced medicine arrived at the southern end of Lake Chautauqua. In March 1827, the city was named for him.

The account of the first Swedish settlers who came to the Chandlers Valley/Jamestown area includes many immigrant stories which are marked by deep pathos. In the summer of 1846, a company of seventy-five Swedes from Kisa, Ostergötland, Sweden sailed on the ship *Virginia* under a Captain Johnson. Their intention had been to go from New York to the first permanent Swedish settlement in Iowa, New Sweden, which had been founded by a fellow countryman, also from Kisa, Peter Cassel. Misfortune met them in Albany, New York where they were robbed of almost all their funds. They were, as a consequence, able to travel only as far as Buffalo. Later some of the group went on to Iowa while others traveled to the Chandlers Valley and Jamestown area to found the first Swedish settlement in that region. Among those immigrants was Frederick Johnson from whose parish in Sweden (Hesselby) the Hessel Valley congregation took its name.\(^{27}\)

In the absence of Lutheran pastors in the Chandlers Valley/Jamestown area, there were those who were eager to minister to the first Swedish settlers. The first Swedish minister to visit Jamestown was the peripatetic O.G. Hedstrom. He made his first visit to Jamestown in June 1851 and conducted services among the Swedes. A year later, in 1852, he organized the first Swedish Methodist Church four years previous to a similar event for the Lutherans.

More disruptive to the Lutheran faith than the work of the Methodists was the activity of Bengt Gustaf Bergenlund or as he at the time he labored in the Chandlers Valley/Jamestown area wrote his name “Berglund.” He was ostensibly a school teacher from Ignaberga, Kristianstads län (comparable to a county in the United States). He landed in New York on January 10, 1853 and traveled to Jamestown. From there he wrote to T.N. Hasselquist, pastor from Sweden who worked among the Swedish settlers in the Galesburg, Illinois area, for information as to what conditions must be fulfilled in order to become a Lutheran pastor in America. He also asked about the administration of the sacraments and closed his letter with the observation that the Swedes in the area “desire worship services in the Swedish language according to the Swedish handbook. Above all, they miss in the American worship services the confession of sin and the articles of faith. I have been here three weeks and some of them at least seem to hunger for the word of life.”\(^{28}\)

With some hesitation, Hasselquist explored Bergenlund’s request. In the summer of 1853, Hasselquist traveled to Jamestown, held a Swedish service for his fellow countrymen in the Presbyterian Church, and met with Bergenlund.\(^{29}\) On the basis of his investigation, Hasselquist decided
the man could be of service to the Church. In October of the same year, upon examination by the Synod of Northern Illinois in the areas of dogmatics, theology, church history, biblical exegesis, the Greek and German languages, he was given a license to preach.30 Difficulties soon arose and in the spring of 1855 Bergenlund left the Chandlers Valley/Jamestown area. That there had been peculiarities in his conduct of worship and ministerial procedures were indicated by Norelius. For example, sometimes he wore large gloves while he was conducting the worship service.31 Bergenlund’s behavior prompted action at the seventh annual convention of the Synod of Northern Illinois held September 23 to October 4, 1857 in Cedarville, Illinois. It was noted that the difficulties of “Bro. Berglund’s...character and usefulness” which had prevented his ordination by the Ministerium for several years “and whereas he has not overcome said difficulties, it is now the conviction of this Ministerium that he cannot be useful among us.” On the basis of that conviction, it was resolved that Bergenlund’s license would not be renewed and that “his name be dropped from the list of our ministers.”32

Swensson began his work as a minister immediately upon his arrival in his new place of labor. The nights of July 9 and 10 were spent at the Methodist parsonage and in the evening of the latter day, Swensson wrote in his dagbok: “I conducted Bible study in the evening with peace and joy.”33 (Swensson was never happier than when he could preach and teach).34 The next day, Jonas and Maria journeyed to Sugar Grove where they stayed with Anders Peter Hjelm.35 On July 13, he wrote in his dagbok: “I preached here for the first time and conducted a Bible study. I had peace...” He could not refrain, however, from adding: “I felt lonely for the old Christian friends.”36

How did Swensson appear to his colleagues with whom he worked during his ministry in the United States? When Norelius first met Swensson in September 1856, the former wrote: “I yet remember very well the first time I met him at the depot in Mendota (Illinois). Swensson appeared healthy, tall, manly, yet with an unassuming nature. There was something so sincere about him that one could not help but be quickly grasped by a confidence in him.”37 A daughter-in-law, Mrs. Luther Swensson, described her husband’s father as “a large fine looking man with a big voice and a very dignified manner in the pulpit and otherwise. He was a very fluent speaker, more of a teacher than a poet in his sermons.”38 Another person wrote: “Rev. Jonas Swensson was a minister forceful in his preaching and of a strong character. His voice was said to have been stentorian.”39

In later years, Carl Evald wrote: “Pastor Jonas Swensson was a preacher such as few are. He was equipped with what is customarily called in the Roman language, ‘Eloquentia corporis [physical or bodily eloquence].’”40 Evald gave a more complete description when he wrote:

He had the figure of a nordic fighter and was equipped with a mighty if not especially melodic voice but with a sound which inspired
respect like the ringing of a tempered bell. Because of his rich words and exuberant manner of preaching, the old churchmen in Chicago referred to him as the auctioneer, but his preaching consisted not only in word alone but possessed power in heartfelt thoughtfulness which was a sign of sharp logic.41

Swensson was also described as being physically active in the pulpit. Lawson reported that one of the parish members of Sodra Unnaryd who heard his farewell sermon on April 6, 1856 previous to his immigration to America said: “It was well that we had the new pulpit ready because the old one would never have held up.”42

Apparently, Swensson did not mute his bodily activity in his preaching in America. The Vasa congregation, of which Erik Norelius was pastor at the time, was host to the convention of the infant Augustana Church in 1862. The building of its place of worship had been begun in April of that year and Synod met in June and July (June 26-July 1). Even with the modest dimensions of the structure (forty feet long and twenty-six feet wide), the builders scarcely had time to complete walls and roof. The temporary pulpit was of plain board covered with wall paper. Of that occasion, Norelius reported his fear “that both pulpit and preacher would come tumbling down as the powerful Rev. Jonas Swensson waxed eloquently in a sermon during Synod week.”43

So Jonas and Maria began their ministry in America. What met them was a state of chaos. Especially vexing was the problem of housing. They were forced to live in the Hjelm home for four days because the house which had been built for them had been rented to someone else. On July 15, they moved to a house which was rented from a “Yankee.” Two days later, however, the “Yankee” desired to use the building himself during harvest. So a second time, the young immigrant couple had to move, again as guests of another family, the Peter Lindholms.44 When they moved into their own home—one which Carl Aaron, their oldest son, saw later and described as “small, simple, unpainted, and decrepit”—is not clear but apparently not many weeks passed before they could enjoy a settled life. Norelius compared their house to “a small torparestuga in Sweden.”46

Not only did Swensson have to endure the chaos of the frontier in spiritual and physical conditions. This was also true of the organization of the parish—or parishes to which he had come. There is some evidence that a congregation had been organized by Bergenlund in 1854. A history of the Hessel Valley Church in fact uses that date. Norelius wrote: “Some semblance of a congregation was already there since the time of Bergenlund when he visited the Swedes in Jamestown [which would include Hessel Valley]… It is probable that he [Swensson] found the organization so defective that he felt called upon to effect an orderly reorganization.”47

3. The Formation of a Constitution to Establish Order

Faced with this situation, Swensson moved with dispatch to bring order to this manifestation of frontier disorder. Before the end of the
month in which the Swenssons arrived in the area, a meeting was held on July 26, 1856 to form a constitution and organize a parish.48

The task which faced Swensson in the formation of a constitution as a basis upon which the congregation was to be organized was not easy. There was no adequate precedent for Swensson to follow. On the one hand, the frontier conditions made it impossible to impose on the new congregation the polity with which Swensson was familiar in Sweden. On the other hand, he had to be imaginative in the formation of a constitution that would create order in the disarray of the frontier.

In America, Swensson and his fellow pastors were determined not to follow the episcopal order of polity. These people were children of the Fjellstedt-Rosenius-Wieselgren revival tradition which the Church in Sweden had opposed. These American leaders associated the episcopal form of polity with its hierarchial system. Nor did their experience in America improve their image of episcopacy. Certain events had occurred to make these early pioneers highly suspicious of anything associated with that form of polity. For one thing, Swensson and his colleagues were well aware that the earlier seventeenth century Swedish settlement in Delaware beginning in 1638 had built at least three church buildings and ministered to as many as seven other settlements in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.49 By 1831, with the death of Nicholas Collin, the last of a succession of thirty-five clergy which the Church in Sweden had sent out over a period of 193 years, Swedish Lutheranism came to an end and had been swallowed up by the Episcopalians.50 From the Delaware experience, Swensson and the others had reason to mistrust the Episcopalians.

More contemporary to the suspicions held against episcopacy was the situation created by Gustaf Elias Maurius Unionius (1810-1902), son of a Swedish family of comfortable financial means. He had been educated at Uppsala in law, medicine, and the humanities. In 1841, together with his young wife, he left Sweden for America where he founded a Swedish colony in Pine Lake, Wisconsin. This he named New Uppsala. There seems to be no grounds for doubting his sincerity, but his fervent devotion to the Protestant Episcopal Church in America and his attendant missionary zeal in its behalf presented further grounds for suspicion on the part of the nineteenth century Lutheran immigrants.

Equally convinced that the Lutheran Church in Sweden and the Episcopal Church posed no significant differences in their essential character and that the episcopal polity was the only genuine sign by which the true church could be identified, he studied for the Episcopal priesthood. Both by conviction and act, he declared himself unsympathetic to the pietistic evangelical movements from which the founders of Augustana had come. He saw it as his mission to attempt to bring these, his fellow Swedes, into the fold of the American Protestant Episcopal Church. His New Uppsala settlement failed and in 1849, he became the first pastor of the newly organized St. Ansgarius Church in Chicago which was established as "an evangelical Lutheran congregation...in communion with the Protestant Episcopal Church in the
United States of America." From this center, he traveled to various Swedish Lutheran communities. Plainly Unonius’ activities only increased the anxieties and suspicions of the pioneer pastors of the future Augustana Church.51

That Swensson could move quickly to the important and necessary task to form a constitution was made possible because of what had been accomplished by Esbjörn, Hasselquist, Norelius, and especially, Erland Carlsson. Norelius began his treatment of the formation of the constitution for congregations with a brief but incisive statement:

Our congregational constitution has a history. It has not been ready-made by way of theory and later enjoined upon the congregation to be obeyed but it has grown up as an expression of their sense of communion. ... The one who especially gave form to this outlook [as incorporated in the constitution] was without a doubt Erland Carlsson.52

Norelius perceptively noted two questions which these early Swedish Lutheran immigrants had to ask themselves in the formation of Lutheran congregations on the American frontier. First, a question of theological character: “How shall we obtain a pastor who preaches God’s word and administers the sacraments?”53 On the one hand, no longer could they rely upon an episcopal polity as they had known in Sweden to provide them with pastors. On the other hand, pastors who preach “God’s word and administer the sacraments” according to the Lutheran confessions were in short supply on the frontier.

The second question was a practical one, one which dramatizes the radically new situation which faced them. “How shall he [the pastor] be supported; how shall he be compensated?”54 These Swedish Lutheran immigrants had moved from the church-state arrangement in Sweden to the wholly voluntary system in America necessitated by the first amendment of the constitution of the United States. No longer could they depend upon coercive power whereby all the citizens were assessed through compulsory taxation for the comfortable support of parish pastors as in Sweden. Now primarily by way of persuasion these pastors of future Augustana must employ the voluntary approach. Only as people could be motivated to give voluntarily could a pastor be supported. Often his pay was to be very meager indeed.

Two polity possibilities were rejected: episcopal and congregational. Their loyalty to the Lutheran confessions and their views of the nature of the Church and of the ministry precluded a system which placed the ultimate authority in the individual congregation as congregationalism does. Also congregationalism required that a congregation should be made up only of members who had been converted. The criterion for membership was based on religious experience.

The Swedish Lutheran congregations which would constitute Augustana were formed on the basis of those “who were baptized, confessed that the Holy Scriptures are God’s word, the only rule and guide for faith and life, and that the Augsburg Confession and Luther’s Small Catechism express a true summary of God’s word.” To this was attached the promise
of the members "with God’s help to stand on the word of God and the Lutheran Confessions."

The importance of this conviction can scarcely be overestimated in the shaping power it gave to Augustana. Christian experience was not denied but it was to be identified and defined in relation to the Word of God, the sacraments as means of grace, and the Lutheran confessions which were accepted as a trustworthy interpretation and summary of the Word of God. The freedom of the individual was respected but the fullness of that freedom was understood to be in fellowship with a communion, theologically identified by the Lutheran confessions. From within these boundaries, the constitution of Augustana congregations was to emerge.

The constitution, beside the experience on the frontier, grew out of three other sources: classical Christianity, classical Lutheranism, and the Synod of Illinois. From classical Christianity, the framers of the congregational constitution took the three ancient creeds (Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian). From classical Lutheranism, via the Church in Sweden, they took the affirmation of the unaltered Augsburg Confession (a protest against the view of the Northern Illinois Synod which considered the Confession to be "mainly correct") "as a short but true summary of the chief doctrines of Christianity, understood according to the development thereof, which the rest of the Symbolical books of our Lutheran Church contain." The primary authority was "the Holy Scripture." It is "God’s revealed word" and "the only sufficient and infallible rule and guide for the faith and life of mankind."

To the Northern Illinois Synod, the framers of this document looked for organizational skills and for guidance to organize the congregation into legal form according to the laws of the state in which it existed. From this source, they adopted a presbyterian type of polity. Authority remained in the hands of the congregation, but the congregation delegated power, without surrender of its authority, to elected officials designated as deacons and trustees.

In essence, the constitution was divided into two parts and is so distinguished by the last, the tenth article. It reads: "It is distinctly determined that Articles I, II, IX, X together with the 1st and 2nd paragraphs of Article III of this constitution may never be changed." That is, what could not be altered was the relation of the congregation to the state (which concerned its name and could be changed only with the consent of the state legislature) and its theological commitment. Allegiance to the scriptures and the ancient and Lutheran confessions (Art. II); the proper calling of a qualified pastor and his obligation to remain faithful in his preaching and teaching in accordance with the demands of Article II (Art. 3, par. 1 and 2); and, in case of division, the retention of church property by that group within the congregation which had remained faithful to Article II (Art. IX) were prescribed. These represented unchangeable legal conditions and theological affirmations of the constitution.

The second essential division, while also firm in its provisions, was somewhat conditional. This portion had to do with parish tasks (exclusive
of preaching and teaching); support and tenure of the pastor (Art. III, par. 3-5); description of church officers and their responsibilities (Art. IV); description of the Church Council (pastor anddeacons, Art. V); reception and duties of members (Art. VI); and conditions which governed parish meetings (Art. VII) and elections (Art. VIII).\textsuperscript{58}

Difficult as Swensson’s task was, the groundwork and guidelines had been set for him to follow in the formation of a constitution for the parishes of Hessel Valley and Jamestown. Chronologically, however, a problem arises in that the constitution for congregations referred to above did not take final shape until a meeting in Chicago of the united Chicago and Mississippi Conference, March 18-23, 1857, nearly thirteen months after Swensson had drawn up a constitution for his own parishes in the East.\textsuperscript{59}

The resolution of this problem is not difficult, however. It will be remembered that Norelius described the constitution for congregations as having “grown up within the congregations as an expression of their sense of communion.” There was a period of fluidity during which these Swedish Lutheran immigrants, in a pragmatic fashion, adapted themselves to their new situation. This was not a hastily executed achievement but the product of a patient and wise process.

Some two years previous to Swensson’s formulation of the Hessel Valley/Jamestown constitution, Erland Carlsson set his hand to writing the document which Norelius described when he referred to the congregation of which Carlsson was pastor: “The Immanuel congregation in Chicago . . . with reference to organization, cult, and constitution became unconditionally the model for all the other Swedish Lutheran congregations in America.”\textsuperscript{60}

In light of Swensson’s close friendship with Carlsson, the Chicago pastor must have given Swensson guidance. The Book of Minutes in which this constitution was written was entitled: “The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Hessel Valley, Sugar Grove Township, Warren County, Pennsylvania. Begun in 1857.” Jamestown, N.Y. had also been written on the flyleaf, but was deleted. Immediately below this main heading was written: “Excerpts from the minutes kept at a general meeting of Swedes in the neighborhood of Sugar Grove, July 26, 1856.”\textsuperscript{61}

The minutes opened with the statement: “First, the following fundamental by-laws were adopted as sufficient for a congregation about to be organized: (Art. 1, 2, 3, 4 have since been adopted, partly unchanged and in part changed, in the congregation’s later constitution).”\textsuperscript{62} This opening statement is not entirely clear as it stands. With what were articles one to four concerned? Since they are not printed here, a clue is needed as to what these stated. Fortunately, a lead is furnished by the statement from another source: “These deal with doctrine.”\textsuperscript{63} Although the enumeration of articles may differ slightly from those of the earlier one written by Carlsson (only three articles in the latter instance enunciated the doctrinal basis), it is fairly safe to assume that Swensson both out of his own strong conviction as a Lutheran and from his friendship with Carlsson would have stated these beliefs which in the more devel-
oped and polished form of 1857 were so explicitly formulated.

Following the initial statement, the constitution for the Hessel Valley area congregation included three articles numbered five to seven and here the constitutions formed under Carlsson and Swensson differed widely. The Carlsson constitution included an article on discipline; Swensson's did not. Carlsson's made provisions for the election of congregational officers; Swensson's did not—a matter which was settled at subsequent meetings.

The most important difference, however, was Swensson's preoccupation with worship life for these Swedish Lutheran immigrants. For this section of the constitution, Swensson turned to another source, the Lutheran Church in Sweden. Here there is fine balance between his devotion to the worship life in Sweden and the freedom to adjust the service to the new situation of the frontier. Article five was written as follows:

Regarding the public service we desire that it shall neither be bound entirely by the present Swedish ritual, nor that freedom be given to the pastor to conduct it as he pleases; but as we now recognize no other church handbook in our Swedish Evangelical Lutheran congregations in America, we can make only general resolution with the desire, that until there exists some Swedish church handbook, which is fully in accord with the Holy Scriptures and our church's confessional writings, and shall be accepted by other Swedish congregations in America, the following [directions] shall be followed as adopted for this purpose.

This balance between the prescriptions of the Swedish order of service and freedom to depart from it is demonstrated in a comparison between the first and second parts of the fifth article. In the first of these statements, Swensson wrote: "The public service shall be conducted with a liturgical part and the sermon, in the main in harmony with the Swedish handbook." The service was to include: "a confession of sins, Bible selections and the Apostolic creed, the sermon and after the sermon the prayer and the benediction and closing with a song as the Swedish handbook directs."

Yet, a slavish obedience to the Swedish order of worship was avoided. The second part of Article five allowed the officiating minister to "pray in his own words instead of using the printed prayers; in place of the Epistles, he may read a chapter or a part of a chapter out of the Old Testament or from the Acts of the Apostles and he may choose his own text for the sermon." The pastor was, however, required to read the old prescribed texts before the sermon as well as the old collects found in the book of the Gospel lessons.

Options were allowed according to other portions of the constitution so long as the choices were made within certain observances. For example, free choice of texts was allowed except for the holy days (Christmas, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Pentecost along with New Year's Day, Epiphany, Harvest Sunday, and Midsummer Day). During the Lenten
season there ‘’shall be preaching on the suffering of Christ so that the history of Christ’s passion shall be covered before Easter.’’ A similar balance was observed in the pastoral acts of baptism, confirmation, marriage, and burial where the form according to the Swedish Church’s handbook should be retained. ‘’Nevertheless those changes which are considered necessary may be made in the forms until the time above mentioned’’ [refers to the allusion that the present Swedish handbook was not satisfactory but it was the only work available until a new edition would come out from Sweden].67

4. Swensson’s Pastoral Contributions in the Hessel Valley/Jamestown Area

The central emphasis upon spiritual nurture and worship made in the constitution indicated what the main emphasis of Swensson’s ministry would be. He would conduct his ministry much as he had done in Sweden with emphasis on preaching, teaching, and counseling.

As he entered into the work in the Hessel Valley/Jamestown area, it is no doubt true that “the congregation...resembled a ragged flock without much order or sense of purpose.”68 Still, there were counteractive factors. For one thing, the letter from Andrew Peter Hjelm from Sugar Grove with the strong appeal to Swensson to leave Sweden and come to be the pastor of these Swedish Lutheran immigrants was significant. At least this was evidence that there was a group of people who truly wanted to be nourished by the Gospel according to their Lutheran faith.69 They also showed a willingness to sacrifice for the support of a pastor.

Then there was the constitution itself together with the leadership of Swensson. He indeed was a sharp contrast to the unreliable Bergenlund who had served these people so badly.

The number of the people whose names were written at the time the constitution was formed on July 26, 1856 was about 140. In two instances, the term “family” was used so that an exact accounting cannot be made. At this time, it is not clear whether a distinction was made between Jamestown and Hessel Valley. Probably not. However, by 1857, Jamestown was described as “an annex to the congregation in Chandlers Valley, Pa.” with about sixty-five members.70

Not only Hessel Valley and Jamestown but also Wrightsville and Ashville, Pennsylvania and Mayville and Frewsburg, New York became Swensson’s responsibility. Between Mayville and Wrightsville, the farthest points of Swensson’s geographic pastoral concern, was a distance of about twenty-five miles. During the course of his some twenty-five months ministry (July 11, 1856-September 6, 1858), three separate congregations from their common date of organization came into being (Hessel Valley, Wrightsville and Jamestown).71

There is no reason to believe that the essential message of his sermons differed from what it had been in Sweden. His framework continued to be the law and the gospel. Humanity’s inability to save itself because of
willful sin was dependent upon God’s grace, first, through the law, to lead one to repentance and then, through the gospel, to enable one to receive Christ. God’s forgiveness was effected through the crucified and risen Christ.

One factor, however, did change—the visible evidence of the thorough preparation which marked his sermons in Sweden was greatly diminished. That this condition should have developed is easily understandable. The much greater pressure of work imposed upon him on the frontier with the need to create “order out of chaos” simply allowed him too little time to do as he had done in Sweden.

Norelius wrote of the contrast between his sermon preparation in Sweden and in the United States: “In his younger years, for the most part, he wrote out his sermons completely; but he was not bound to his manuscript. After he came to America, he almost never had time to write out in entirety any sermon, and his outlines which he usually employed were in general very short.” In spite of this curtailment of sermon preparation time, the quality of his sermons by no means declined.

He also maintained a vigorous schedule of teaching. In this schedule, there was a difference from what he had known in Sweden. In his native land, this function of his ministry was carried on largely in his own parish with people coming to hear him. Whereas in Sweden, crowds came to hear him, in the United States, especially in the Hessel Valley/Jamestown area, the number who were interested was small indeed. This, however, did not deter Swensson. In his dagbok for September 24, 1856, he wrote: “I gave a Bible exposition in Mayville. The Swedes there seem to be most concerned about matters pertaining to this temporal life.” The next day, he wrote: “Gave a Bible exposition in Salem. The Swedes there are in sad condition spiritually. There is strife because of the Methodists, and also there seems to be much ungodly living.”

He continued to work as a counselor. The records are scanty regarding this aspect of his ministry. At least one letter, however, has come to light. It was written to Swensson from a lady who simply signed her name Mary. She wrote on October 18, 1858 after she had moved from Sugar Grove. She sent Swensson five dollars in appreciation for his ministry to her. She rejoiced in her relationship to God and wondered how she, so undeserving, could enjoy God’s mercy. She thanked Swensson for the conversations she had had with him and complained: “Since I have moved here, I cannot find anyone who sufficiently treats my problem.” She wished she could speak to him again.

The importance of this letter is the evidence it gives of the character of Swensson’s counseling. He did not strive to make one feel better or to facilitate positive emotions. He had one goal as a Christian pastor: to lead people, through the power of the means of grace, to a reconciliation with God through his forgiving love.

These two years were not easy ones for the Swenssons. Lannes wrote: “Swensson seems to have been somewhat discouraged all the time during his stay here.” The evidence for this verdict is strong. One would suspect from reading his dagbok for those days that more than once he
asked the question which he had first uttered when he came to the United States: "In the evening I was in considerable distress for the morrow. I was plagued with a spirit of impatience concerning the question as to why the Lord should have sent me to this place where the work is so fruitless and where there seems to be no real hunger for the Word of God." Certainly there were grounds for such pessimism. Sometimes his mood was close to despair. In 1857, he had a congregational meeting in Jamestown. Of that occasion, he wrote: "In the evening I was so depressed that I nearly decided to leave the place."  

On the whole, his health appears to have been better here than it had been in Sweden or was to be in the years ahead. His illness grew steadily worse during the final fifteen years of his life which were spent in Andover. However, he was not without pain in Sugar Grove. In an undated entry in his dagbok, he wrote: "I was so weak in body that I had to remain seated during the meeting."  

That he did not give up and leave his first congregations in the United States was certainly not due to encouragement from his friends. On September 9, 1857, Erland Carlsson wrote to Swensson: "From the beginning I have been of the opinion that you ought to resign the position and apply your powers in the West where the field is so large and the prospects in general so promising." Carlsson no doubt wrote from motives other than a pessimistic view for the prospects of the Hessel Valley/Jamestown congregations. In this same letter, he offered to Swensson the position of his associate in Chicago.  

Again the integrity of Swensson was displayed. Discouraged as he may have been, he believed the Lord had called him to this place. Norelius described his response to Carlsson’s offer: "Had this news come a couple of months earlier he would have been inclined to take it; that he did not do so was because he had a hint from the Lord that this was not the time that he should leave his congregations." This overpowering conviction that his calling was from God and not from men once again directed his decision not to move to Chicago.  

It would not be fair to suggest that his first two years of ministry in the United States were marked by unrelieved gloom. On November 1, 1857 he recorded: "Today I have with considerable ease preached in Jamestown. It seems that the Word is being received." And on November 29, he showed his joy: "Today I felt a great power while preaching in Jamestown, and I conversed with some who were concerned about the salvation of their souls. May there be some progress!"  

Especially in Jamestown where the congregation was destined to outgrow Hessel Valley many times, spiritual growth appeared evident in the final period of Swensson’s ministry there. For example, on March 14, 1858, he was able to write: "Today I celebrated Holy Communion [in Jamestown]. I was much encouraged and experienced much power while preaching the Word. Many came to enquire [sic.] about the way to life and seemed in deep anguish."  

In spite of signs of encouragement which he saw in his ministry, Swensson was not happy. Signs of his homesickness were evident. He
seemed to feel he really could do more good in Sweden. Rumors arose that he was planning to return to his native land.

The threat of Swensson’s return to Sweden was not an idle one. O.C.T. Andrén, who had arrived in the United States from Sweden on July 18, 1856, was the pastor of the Swedish Lutheran Church in Moline, Illinois. He assumed the vice-pastorate of the Andover church following Bergentlund’s disruptive ministry there which had been terminated in 1857. To Swensson Andrén wrote:

> A rumor has reached us that you are inclined to return to Sweden.... If the situation in Sugar Grove has come to such a pass that you cannot remain, then, dear Brother, come to us and accept the call to Andover.... Dear Brother; do not leave us yet! The Lord needs you. We need you. The congregations need you. The Andover congregation yearns for you.84

In a similar plea of urgency, Gustaf P. Fair, chairman of the Church Council at Andover, in a letter dated the same day as the call was extended to Swensson wrote:

> It has come to our attention that Herr Pastor would gladly return to Sweden this summer. For this reason we wish to communicate with Herr Pastor and express with a heart-felt wish and prayer whether it would not be possible for Herr Pastor to change this plan and instead come to be our pastor.85

Fair continued with the information that several calls had been made to various pastors in Sweden but to no avail. The Andover congregation had been especially disappointed by the refusal from a Pastor P. Peterson in Sweden who had given them every reason to believe he would come.

To convince Swensson to stay in the United States may have been no easy task. His son, Carl Aaron, said his father never forgot Sweden. So strongly did Carl believe this, he wrote: “My father had a strong hate for America.” This is rather strong language. Still, according to Carl: “My father could feel nothing other than an alien in the new world. He was and remained a Swede.”86

Certainly the earnest pleas of Andrén and Fair must have left a deep impression on Swensson. Also, the few pastors from Sweden who were willing to come to America must have troubled him. Another reason for his pull to Illinois was no doubt the pleasure of closer geographic proximity to fellow Lutheran clergy. He had felt strongly the loneliness of his isolation in the Chandlers Valley/Jamestown area. In Andover, he would be less than thirty miles from Andrén in Moline and about 150 from his good friend, Erland Carlsson, in Chicago.

> "After much deliberation, many prayers and much struggle, he had come in the month of August [he had received the call in the beginning of June] to the conviction that he ought to accept, which he did."87

It was not with a free spirit that Swensson left his first pastorate in America. When he informed his people there that he would leave and move to Andover, he was saddened and even thought of abrogating his
decision to leave. He wrote in his *dagbok*: "It pained me to see those poor people without a shepherd, and I was almost ready to waver in my decision...I felt deep sympathy with those who had begun to seek the Lord." 88

Swensson was disturbed by the sense that his work in the East had been a failure. Yet the verdict of others and of the years were to render a different assessment:

In general, Swensson complained full of sadness that he had failed in his first parish in this land; yet, he granted that now and then he perceived that the Lord through his preaching awakened several persons out of their sleep in sin and toward repentance which made them worthy before God and through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Also, he was God’s chosen agent in that region to lay the groundwork for orderliness for the church there. Henceforth, that church would be a blessing to many Swedish American Lutheran people. The difficult work of his establishment of a foundation in that rough land was significant not only for the Church, but also for the preparation of himself which thereby nourished him to continue his work in the Church in an increasingly widening field in the far west. 89

Some of Swensson’s doubts about his ministry in his first pastorate must have been allayed when twelve years later as president of the Augustana Lutheran Church he made the one and only visit back to that area for the purpose of presiding over the organization of the New York Conference. One can sense his joy in the letter he wrote to his wife from Sugar Grove on November 15, 1870: “On the whole, my visit has been pleasant. Of those who began with the Lord, I have found none who has gone astray; rather, they strive forward." 90

On September 6, the same day he preached his farewell sermon in Jamestown, the Swenssons left the area and traveled twenty-five miles north to Dunkirk on the southern shore of Lake Erie. The next day, they boarded the train for Chicago and on September 8 traveled to Geneva where the Swenssons met their good friends, the Erland Carlssons, who lived there. Swensson left his family at the Carlsson home while the two men traveled to Princeton where the United Chicago (Norwegian) and Mississippi (Swedish) Conferences met September 10-14.

Swensson had good opportunity to meet fellow pastors those days in September. Following the meeting in Princeton, he attended the eighth annual meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois which met in Mendota from September 15 to 20. There were two important events at that meeting. First, permission was given for the organization of the Minnesota Conference. Thus was launched an important ecclesiastical unit of the future Augustana Lutheran Church which during its 104 year history made highly significant contributions as the largest conference of that Church. 91

The second occurrence disturbed Swensson greatly. A conflict between the Americanized or Neo-Lutherans and the confessional Lutherans had appeared several years earlier in 1851 when Esbjörn had been active in the
Portrait of Jonas Swensson
Portrait of Maria Blixit Swensson
Swensson children with Aunt Hannah: Carl Aaron, Anna Maria, Johan Samuel, and Petrus Luther
Children of Carl Aaron Swensson at Bethany College founders statue
process of the formation of the Synod of Northern Illinois. In the intervening years, the conflict between the confessional and Neo-Lutherans had not subsided. At the meeting which Swensson attended, “a motion was made to appoint a committee to collect the various amendments and changes that had from time to time been made and embody them in the constitution.” Further, authority was granted the committee “to propose such amendments and additions to the constitution as the expanded and still growing interests of this Synod seem to require.” Hasselquist was a member of the committee.

To the confessional Lutherans, this action appeared as a deliberate design to bring the document which governed the Synod of Northern Illinois more in line with the thought of the Neo-Lutherans. Certainly this was Swensson’s view and he was not pleased with what he had witnessed. He remarked: “Carelessness and inertia regarding the churchly at Mendota were oppressive.” In that statement is recognized the churchly and orderly character of one who would quickly be a foremost proponent of the Lutheran Church as defined in its confessions, especially the Augsburg Confession and Luther’s Small Catechism.

Thus was soon to begin the final period of Swensson’s ministry during which he would make significant contributions to the shaping of the Augustana Lutheran Church. He would become known as the leader whose name was Jonas.
NOTES


2"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."

3Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:209.


5Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:209.

6Ibid. See also Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 30. Bredberg displayed a different deportment to Swensson than the one he had showed to Norelius in whose judgment Bredberg "caused considerable confusion in [Sugar Grove]." Norelius lived with Bredberg for a period of six weeks when the former first came to America. He described Bredberg as hypocritical. Bredberg was friendly with O.G. Hedstrom, the owner of the Bethel ship, but behind Hedstrom's back, Bredberg spoke of him as a fool. Norelius also said that he drank and was profane in his speech.

7At first it was designated in Swensson's correspondence as Sugar Grove. When the constitution was written for the congregation, it was called "Hessel Valley, Sugar Grove Township, Warren County, Pennsylvania." I.O. Nothstein, ed., Selected Documents Dealing with the Organization of the First Congregations and the First Conferences of the Augustana Synod and Their Growth until 1860 (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Historical Society, 1946), p. 90. The name "Hessel" was chosen "since three Johnson brothers, Carl, Frederick, and Anders, important members of the colony, were from the parish of Hesselby, Småland [Sweden]." Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church... Pioneer Period, p. 90. From henceforth, references to this congregation will be "Hessel Valley;" its geographical location will be Sugar Grove. Now, Sugar Grove is known as "Chandlers Valley," as Sugar Grove refers to the township of Chandlers Valley, Pennsylvania. Lawson, "From the Early Days of the Chandlers Valley Colony," The Augustana Quarterly 20 (October 1941): 2-3.

8Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:210; Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 31.


11September 18, 1856, from Erland Carlsson Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives, Chicago.

12Ibid. In 1856, an event occurred which must have made even sharper both the loneliness and sense of isolation which Swensson felt in America. On November 17, four months after his arrival in the United States, his mother, Katharina Jonasdotter, died. Hence, an important link with Sweden, his native land, was...

13 Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:207; Lawson, Two Primary Sources... , p. 29.

14 Letter from A.P. Hjelm, Sugar Grove, Pennsylvania (undated but most likely 1854 or 1855), Swensson Collection, Upsala College Archives. Swensson as well as the other ordained men from Sweden had had no experience in voluntary support of the churches. In Sweden, they had received a salary guaranteed by a tax-supported church. To obtain a financial base in America, they copied something of the Swedish system by imposing a levy upon each member. In 1857, Swensson's annual salary was made more stable by fixing the annual salary at $500. Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church... Pioneer Period, pp. 222-23.

15 According to the earliest minutes of the Hessel Valley congregation, the group referred to itself as the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Swedesburg. In 1846, when the first Swedish immigrants settled in this area, they chose the name "Swedesboro" which soon became "Swedesburg." Twelve years later, Jonas Swensson wrote in the church records: "Since so many places have the name Swedesburg, which this settlement has been called, the congregation has decided to change the name to Hessel Valley." Lawson, "From the Early Days...," p. 7. See also "A History of the Hessel Valley Lutheran Church Chandlers Valley, Pa. 1854-1954" (No data regarding place, author, or date of publication), p. 8.

16 Nothstein, Selected Documents... , No. 11, p. 93.

17 Ibid., pp. 94-96, 98.

18 See above, p. 22.

19 Letter from Lorents (?) Larsson and others from Sodra Unnaryd sent as a tribute to Swensson at the time of his death. Swensson Collection, Upsala College Archives. Probably the letter was sent to Erik Norelius. Lawson, "Some Jonas Swensson Items," p. 176. The statement of miles must be in terms of American measurement. Since the Swedish mile is 6.2 English miles, these figures would mean, if Swedish miles were used, that persons would journey from over thirty to ninety miles which appears somewhat exaggerated. Yet, one must leave the possibility that since the letter came from Sweden, the Swedish mile was meant. If so, the popularity of Swensson was indeed quite astonishing.


21 Ibid.


23 I Sverige... , p. 6.


25 Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:211; Lawson, Two Primary Sources... , p. 33.

27 Julius Lincoln wrote that when these people came to Buffalo, they had only twenty-five cents among them. They spent this for sausage and bread. For the dramatic story of the settlement of the Hessel Valley (also Chandlers Valley) and Jamestown, see: A. J. Lannes, Civic and Industrial Progress of the People in Jamestown 1848-1914 (Jamestown, New York: Bergwall Printing Co., 1914); Minnes-Album i ord och Bild utgivet af Forsta Svenska Evangelisk-Lutherska Församlingen i Jamestown, Chautauqua County, N.Y. med anledning af dess Femto-Ars Jubilium den 1-5 August 1907:8-10; Andover Minnes-Album. So. Ev. Lutherska församlingen i Andover, Illinois. Sextioår-festen 1910 (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1910), pp. 1-14; Evald Lawson, "The Old Church in the Valley," The Augustana Quarterly 20 (1941): 323-24; Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 27; Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:32, 206.

28 Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:163-64. Throughout the discussion regarding this person the name Bergenlund will be used except where it appears otherwise in quotations.

29 Ibid.; Minnes-Album... Jamestown... 1856-1907, p. 12.

30 "Minutes of the Third Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Northern Illinois." Held at Galesburg, Knox County, Ill., October 13-16, 1853 (Chicago: 1853).

31 Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:67-69 passim.

32 Nothstein, Selected Documents..., No. 10, p. 133.

33 Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:209; Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 31.

34 Even when Swensson was very ill, seldom was he absent from his pulpit though he was forced to suspend other of his pastoral duties. On one occasion when he was suffering from several of his ailments, he wrote to Hasselquist: "I am still weak and not able to do much. I preached Sunday. I began with an almost unbearable pain but the glorious text enlivened my spirit so that I overcame the pain. I was strengthened both in body and soul. When I finished my body was strong but the gout had begun to draw toward my shoulder. The Lord lead me to do His will whether my stay here will be long or short." April 19, 1873, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

35 See above, p. 24.

36 Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:209; Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 31.

37 Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:210.

38 Mrs. Luther Swensson, "Reverend Jonas Swensson (1828-1873)." Typed, p. 3.

39 Lannes, Civic and Industrial Progress..., p. 19.

40 Carl A. Evald, "Pastorn och Synodalpresidenten Jonas Swensson," handwritten, n.d., p. 87. This is the original copy from which was published the article by the same title in Minnes-Album... Jamestown... 1856-1907. The latter does not include this statement.

41 Ibid.

42 "Våthultspojken som blev president i Augustanasynoden," Vaxjo Stifts Hem-

43Emeroy Johnson, Eric Norelius: Pioneer Midwest Pastor and Churchman (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1954), p. 98. The first name of Norelius is spelled with both a "c" and a "k." I have chosen to use the name spelled with a "k."

44Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., pp. 30-31.

45C.A. Swensson, I Sverige: ..., p. 4.

46Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:527. A torpare was similar to a crofter. He lived on a piece of land, sometimes on that of a peasant if not a nobleman's holdings. He paid rent by giving so many days of labor. The torpare was of a lower class than that of the peasant. Florence E. Janson, The Background of Swedish Immigration 1840-1930 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931), pp. 5, 97.

47Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:528.

48See Appendix II.


50G. Everett Arden, Augustana Heritage: A History of the Augustana Lutheran Church (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Press, 1963), pp. 20-21. There is an irony here in that only eighteen years after Collin's death, the first of the Augustana pioneers, Lars Paul Esbjorn, came to the United States in 1849. One cannot help but ask the questions: would the presence of the earlier Swedish Lutheran churches have given strength to the nineteenth century Swedish Lutheran immigrants? Or, would nearly two centuries of life in the United States have so Americanized them that Augustana's pioneers would have felt as alienated from them as they did from their fellow Lutherans in the Synod of Northern Illinois?


52Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 2:239, 241. This is essentially true. Yet, the earlier work of Lars Paul Esbjorn cannot be ignored.

53Ibid.

54Ibid.

55Ibid., p. 240.

56Nothstein, Selected Documents..., No. 10, p. 120. (See also Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 2:241.)

57Ibid., pp. 121-25.

58Ibid.

59Ibid., pp. 118-26.

60Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 2:240.

61Nothstein, Selected Documents..., No. 11, p. 90.

62Ibid.

63Minnes-Album...Jamestown...1856-1907, p. 17.

64Ibid., pp. 93-95, 97-98.

65Nothstein, Selected Documents..., No. 11, p. 90.

66Ibid., p. 91.
Ibid. See Appendix III.


Henne, p. 3.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:217.

"As preacher... he had a striking similarity to Nohrborg and his sermons particularly in the later years were especially solid." Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:217.

Lawson, Two Primary Sources... , p. 31-32. The reference to Salem is a puzzle. No mention of either a town or a congregation by that name appears in the Augustana minutes or history of that time. It is significant that Norelius made no mention of that place.

Swensson collection, Bethany College.

Lannes, Civic and Industrial Progress..., p. 18.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:211; Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 33.

Ibid., 1:211-12. See also Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 33-34.

Ibid., 1:213. (Cf., Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 36.)


Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:213.

Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 35.

Ibid.

Letter in Anders (undated but must have been in mid 1858 since the writer assumed Swensson had already received the call to Andover dated May 23, 1858 [Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 35]), p. 57.

Quoted in a letter from Rupert A. Hull, Andover, Illinois, November 7, 1940 to Evald Lawson.

I Sverige..., p. 4. This may have been an exaggeration for at least toward the end of his ministry Swensson had grown to appreciate the freedom which Augustana enjoyed such as the Church in Sweden could not. At the same time, he continued to be critical of the American religious freedom as he saw it practiced in the United States.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:213.

Ibid., 213-214; Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 36. The entries are undated but they appear between those of August 16 and September 6, 1858.

Minnes-Album... Jamestown... 1856-1907, p. 52.

Jonas Swensson Collection, Upsala College, East Orange, New Jersey. From the congregations Swensson founded, two future leaders of the Augustana
Lutheran Church originated. One was Swensson’s own son Carl Aaron (1857-1904) who is remembered as the founder of Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas. The second was L.A. Johnston (1855-1918) son of Frederick and Charlotta Johnson, among the founders of the Swedish settlement in Sugar Grove. Johnston served as the seventh president of the Augustana Lutheran Church (1911-1918).

91Nothstein, Selected Documents... , No. 10, p. 150.

92For the details of the origin of this conflict see Minutes, Synod of Northern Illinois, 1851, p. 11, quoted in Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church...Pioneer Period, p. 244.

93Minutes, Synod of Northern Illinois, 1858, p. 22, quoted in Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church...Pioneer Period, p. 255.

94Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:214. Swensson had previously come to regard the American (Neo-Lutherans) as loose in their doctrine.
Chapter IV

Jonas Swensson’s Ministry in Andover, Illinois

September 19, 1858 was memorable for the Swenssons. On that day, Jonas was installed as the pastor of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church in Andover. He must have been encouraged. He wrote in his dagbok: “The church was filled to capacity with listeners and the day was very festive. With Hebrews 13:17 as a text, [Erland] Carlsson gave the installation address in which with the greatest seriousness he pointed out both for me and the congregation what our mutual duties were.”

And so began the final period of Swensson’s ministry which would last fifteen years and three months ending with his early death. During these years, he was to serve not only as an effective parish pastor but also as secretary and then president of the Augustana Lutheran Church which was to be organized at Jefferson Prairie, Wisconsin some twenty months following his installation at Andover.

1. A Comparison Between Hessel Valley/Jamestown and Andover

One irony marked Swensson’s beginnings at Andover. When he came to Hessel Valley/Jamestown, he was confronted with a chaos which had been created by Bergenlund. Out of that chaos, Swensson brought order. At Andover, too, disturbance had been caused by the same man. O.C.T. Andrén, vice-pastor at Andover, had assumed that this condition might discourage Swensson from accepting the call. He wrote to Swensson: “The conditions in Andover have changed much since Bergenlund was excluded from the ministry. Peace and harmony have returned among the Christians, and during my many visits I have had joyous hours.” Andrén’s assessment seemed to be largely correct, but the final elimination of the disorder remained for Swensson. He had to bear harsh criticism from those who had supported Bergenlund, but by his ability and understanding, Swensson corrected this unpleasant situation. “Immediately after Swensson’s arrival in Andover from a certain direction, slander began against him so that both to his face and behind his back, they said that he was dead and a hypocrite. However, they came to see that by his life, he won the complete trust of sincere Christians.” It was not only by the life he lived but with
power and wisdom from on high, led by the sword of the Spirit, he
won victories for his King although he did not claim credit for conver­
sions but left that to the Lord. He continued in season and out of
season according to the apostolic exhortation both in preaching and
exposition of the Bible along with his home catechetical examinations
and ministry to the ill.\textsuperscript{3}

When Jonas and Maria moved to Andover, they were still, to be sure,
residents in frontier America. As with other pioneers, he had to be
resourceful in the procurement of needs which later generations would
take for granted. No faucets, for example, could be turned on to obtain
water but wells had to be dug. Even as late as the final year of his life, he
wrote to his son, Carl: “I have had to procure well diggers. The well at
the barn has gone dry and we can scarcely get enough for drinking. There
is a lack of water all over. I have dug down fourteen feet but there has not
come any water. I must dig deeper if I can get someone to do it.”\textsuperscript{4} Other
conditions were of a similar frontier character. Still, the differences be­
tween the first and second pastorates were significant.

The Swenssons encountered a far different environment in Illinois. In
the township of Andover in southwestern Henry County lies some of the
most fertile soil in the world. Swensson’s predecessor, Lars Paul Esbjorn,
the first pastor in Andover, also faced harsh conditions, but he did not
need to contend with forests and marginal soil as Swensson had en­
countered in Hessel Valley/Jamestown. Rather, the rich prairie land
beckoned to Swedish immigrants where, in a few years, they would
develop farms and in a remarkably short time gain for themselves finan­
mental security such as they had never known in Sweden.

Another mark of the more settled conditions at Andover was the
housing. From the beginning, better arrangements were made for the
Swenssons in Illinois. More settled conditions prevailed in Andover
where the congregation had been established for nearly a decade. Just
eleven days before Swensson’s installation as pastor of the congregation,
a parish meeting had been held at which it was resolved that “as soon as
Mr. Önner is able to get his house done, he will let out 2 rooms on the
first floor and 1 room on the upper floor, together with space in the cellar
for four dollars a month, and Mr. Önner has promised that Pastor
Swensson may live there until the congregation makes some other ar­
rangement.” The contrast between the unpredictable conditions of the
more fluid frontier around Sugar Grove and the greater reliability and
stability of the Andover community was clearly shown. Furthermore, the
reference to the congregation that it would make some other arrange­
ment was no idle statement. At that same meeting, it was not only decided
unanimously “that a building shall be started as soon as possible . . . ,”
but the specifications for the parsonage were also disclosed:

Resolved that the house shall be 30 feet long, 20 feet wide and 14
feet high, and that it shall be built of brick, and to agree with the brick
company here to deliver good and usable bricks at $4 ½ a thousand.
The resolution to use brick for the house was adopted for the reason
that it was found that the cost would be about the same as for a frame building.⁵

The contrast in the organization of the two parishes is striking. In Hessel Valley/Jamestown together with Wrightsville a membership of 190 was claimed.⁶ The congregation at Andover was much more clearly defined. "The congregation has more than 400 communicants" wrote Andrén. One source gave a more specific number of 358 members.⁸

Also, unlike Hessel Valley/Jamestown where Swensson had to direct the formation of a constitution, that important task had been accomplished at Andover. True, the early records of that congregation do not mention any constitution. Yet, O.N. Olson made the plausible inference that Esbjörn, on the one hand, was opposed to the episcopal form of polity which had caused him no little discomfort in the Church in Sweden. On the other hand, both because of the influence upon him of the Methodist, George Scott, in Sweden and the free frontier spirit as typified in the Methodism of Olof and Jonas Hedstrom, he was led to organize the first Swedish Lutheran church in Illinois according to a more congregational polity.⁹

There is, however, a record of the constitution of the congregation at Moline, Illinois which Esbjörn also organized "and here we find what must be considered the earliest draft of a constitution for congregations." Olson further assumed that on the basis of that fact, "it is probable that the same constitution was adopted in all the congregations organized by him [Esbjörn]."¹⁰

Irrefutable evidence exists that a constitution was in place at Andover when Swensson arrived there. For example, at a parish meeting held on December 23, 1857, the minutes read: "In accordance with the third paragraph and seventh art. of the constitution of the congregation the election of a chairman was taken up..."¹¹

One could assume that with a far more stable congregation at Andover, Swensson's financial situation would have greatly improved. And, in a certain sense, it did. That his economic state for the time was better, he did acknowledge. He wrote to his cousin, Martin Johansson, on August 26, 1869: "In Andover I have had a better income than in Sugar Grove but things cost more to buy here."¹²

No specific monetary amount was stated in the call to Swensson. Only indefinite statements such as appeared in the minutes for September 8, 1858 gave a clue to this important matter:

Resolved that whatever is left over of pastor's salary [dues] for the 3rd quarter shall be used to buy wood and lime for the parsonage, and that each deacon shall collect this money from the members in his section this coming week and shall remind all in a friendly way to do all they can to pay this money.¹³

This was scarcely an assuring statement. Indeed, faith in the providence of God must have been a vital necessity.
Three months later, a more definite formula was given for the payment of the pastor's salary. At the annual meeting of the congregation on December 20, it was resolved for the next year, 1859, "that each communicant member shall be levied one dollar for each quarter. This is to be handled by the deacons and accounted for to the trustees who shall pay it to the pastor." Yet, so much depended upon the good will of the people that this created the element of uncertainty which has been a fact of church life throughout the history of the Church in the United States. Not until 1868 was a definite salary decided upon for Swensson. From that date until his death in 1873 he received $1500 a year—or was supposed to do so.

Although now paid considerably more than he had received in Sugar Grove and the earlier years in Andover, he still at times found himself in stringent economic circumstances. One should not fault the Andover congregation too severely for this situation. The heavy burden imposed by illness was a contributing factor to Swensson's financial difficulties. To Martin Johansson he wrote: "The continual sickness has been costly. During the first years here, my debts also increased."

Finally, Andover provided for Swensson and his family a release from the intense loneliness which they had known in Sugar Grove. Now he was in close proximity to fellow pastors, Lars Esbjörn at Princeton, T.N. Hassequist in Galesburg, and O.C.T. Andrén in Moline. Not too far away in Chicago was his good friend, Erland Carlsson. Even Erik Norelius in Red Wing and Vasa, Minnesota was closer than his nearest colleague (Carlsson) had been when he lived in Sugar Grove.

It may have been the loneliness he remembered during his first two years in the United States which made Swensson so appreciative of fellowship with his fellow pastors. Often he would express his gratitude for this companionship. An eloquent example of such was in a letter to Norelius when he wrote:

A hearty thank you for our pleasant fellowship in Paxton. It is good to meet and dwell together for a time. Had it not been for the fellowship of the brethren to strengthen me in my poor health, I would not have been suitable for the accomplishment of anything, but the community of brethren enlivens and strengthens me. So, I am for the most part able to uphold my work. There should not be such long delays between the pleasant days together.

This benefit alone was a great advantage the move to Andover conferred upon the Swenssons.

2. Swensson As Parish Pastor in Andover

Although Swensson's ministry to the Church greatly expanded beyond parish lines, he nevertheless counted his pastoral responsibilities at Andover to be primary concerns. He believed God had called him to this mission to be pastor to Swedish immigrants and this represented a large field. Not only did he minister to the members of his own
congregation, but he assumed the spiritual nurture for the localities of Berlin (later the name was changed to Swedona), Orion, Cambridge, Woodhull, and Ophiem. In fact, a church building was erected in 1858 at Berlin and a congregation organized there the following year. Consequently, almost immediately, Swensson had a two-point parish.\(^{18}\)

\section{i. Hard Work, Hardships, Heartbreaks}

To establish order for the work at both Berlin and Andover, a meeting was held February 28, 1859 at which time the division of membership allocated 295 members to Andover and 183 to Berlin.\(^{19}\) Already, in the five months Swensson had served as pastor, the membership of the two-point parish had grown by 120 members from 358 to 478.

At this meeting, it was agreed that Swensson was to preach two Sundays at Andover and every third Sunday at Berlin with the exception of Christmas matins which were always to be held in Andover. But it was also stated: "If the pastor finds it possible and wishes to preach in both places on the same day he may do so, alternating with fore- and afternoon services in the above named order."\(^{20}\) His ministry to both parishes continued from 1858 until 1867 when Berlin received its own pastor, Andreas Andreen (1827-1880), father of Gustaf Andreen (1864-1940) who served as the fourth president of Augustana College and Theological Seminary for over three decades from 1901 to 1935.\(^{21}\)

One wonders how often Swensson restricted himself to the lighter schedule. "It was usual for me," he wrote, "to preach more than 300 times a year. I did not even have a half day of idleness."\(^{22}\) In addition to this heavy schedule of preaching, he was zealous in all his pastoral duties.

His work imposed upon him considerable travel. To preach at Orion required a trip of eight miles northwest of Andover and a similar duty at Cambridge (county seat of Henry County) necessitated a distance of six miles east. Eventually, thriving congregations were established in all these communities: Cambridge in 1875; Ophiem, 1889; Orion, 1870; and Woodhull, 1868. Only two of these, Orion and Woodhull, were organized during Swensson's lifetime, but he had laid the foundations for the others. As the church in Andover grew and Swensson's own tasks increased, other men such as students from the seminary and lay preachers could take over the work in the other congregations. Norelius wrote of Swensson's ministry in Andover: "In all of these places, Swensson was alone to preach and to maintain pastoral care over a large area." Norelius differentiated more precisely the manifold responsibilities which Swensson felt called upon to fulfill as well as the difficulties he had to endure in the execution of these duties:

When one takes into consideration that generally Swensson preached twice every Sunday and often three times, that at certain times of the year, he held home catechetical examination in every district of his congregation, made numerous sick calls, attended
meetings of synod, conference, and other similar gatherings, made preaching tours to vacant congregations, had his ample share of concern for the economic state of the congregations, and all this work under the almost continual illness in his own family, then one can understand that this was too much for one person.23

The illness within the family to which Norelius referred was a singularly heavy burden upon Swensson, especially that of his wife. As was common among the immigrants, the loneliness and rigors of the frontier took an especially heavy toll among the women. Maria Blixt Swensson almost from the beginning of her life in Andover suffered ill health. Forsander wrote that Mrs. Swensson became ill in 1860 and remained more or less ill until her death [August 20, 1874, eight months to the day following Jonas’ death].24 The demands upon Swensson from his wife’s illness were extremely difficult. In 1863, he wrote:

My wife’s illness continues. During the day, I am so taken up with my duties that I seldom have any unoccupied times. At night, for four months I did not have my clothing off for more than two nights nor did I have any rest at night because of the constant need to care for my wife.25

This was not an isolated instance. Mrs. Swensson’s illness was a combination of physical sickness and what appears to have been depression. Swensson wrote movingly to Norelius on December 4, 1869: “Always two people have to sit by her bed or otherwise she is so afraid.”26 Her condition required the constant presence of her sister, Johanna Blixt,27 who thus could have time for nothing else. During these periods, Mrs. Swensson could tolerate no visitors. At times she was very disturbed and altogether confused.

The nature of Mrs. Swensson’s illness laid a heavy burden upon her husband. To Hasselquist on February 3, 1869, he wrote: “It is difficult when I have to go to the office to do my duties and so often I leave my wife crying, complaining, and once in awhile she is in a reproachful disposition.”28

Her illness of spirit was accompanied by physical ailments. Often she was so weak she could sit up for only ten or fifteen minutes at a time. On September 29, 1873, Jonas wrote to his son, Carl, at Paxton: “For a couple of days last week she suffered from this affliction but now she is better although very weak.” What that affliction was appears to have been identified in another letter from father to son (November 19, 1873): “Mama is poorly. The bleeding has stopped but she is so weak that she will not be able to sit or stand for some weeks. You are acquainted with her affliction.”29

Not only did his wife suffer ill health, but Swensson constantly referred to his own sickness. Also, the children suffered illness again and again. Of this, he wrote: “Eight years is not such a short time. For eight years our home has seldom been without illness; at times it has been the affliction of my wife, at times, the illness of the children and at times, several at the
same time.’”30 Nor did the illness in the Swensson family abate. ‘‘For the last eleven years, I have nearly always had someone sick in the home but the last three and one-half years have been the worst with my wife so bedridden, unable to sit up by herself and so very nervous.’’31

The decade of the 1860’s was burdened for Swensson not only with much illness but also with the death of three small sons. His little three year old son, Jonas Nathaniel, died August 2, 1865. On August 4, he wrote to Hasselquist:

It is so quiet; not a comfortless quiet, yet not bereft of the pain which my heart has received. Yesterday I was at the grave . . . . That whom God has given, He has also taken away. My child, Jonas Nathaniel, now rests in the grave after three years residence in the ‘‘valley of moaning.’’ One ought not to sorrow over such a grave; yet, how tenderly one feels the bond. My comfort and my hope is still that the bond is not broken.32

But the agony of death’s visitation to the Swensson family had only begun. On February 25, 1867, another son was born to Jonas and Maria. They also named this little boy Jonas Nathaniel.33 That same year on December 28, Swensson wrote to Norelius: ‘‘Our smallest son has been ill a great deal, but now he is much better. Sickness seems to be a constant companion in our family.’’34 The good news that the small son was better was short-lived. Three months later he died, and Swensson again was moved to write on the day following the death of the second Jonas Nathaniel in much the same tone as he had written three years before at the death of the first Jonas. This time, however, he also confessed his confidence in the sacrament of holy baptism:

Praiseworthy is His Name that He has given us the promise and the means of grace for these little ones. Oh, how mysterious is not holy baptism when one sees a little one go. The bond of nature one certainly feels but after this life, one steps out of one’s boundaries, out of all evil. To step out of this time with its temporal travail, I can do nothing else than praise the blessedness which stands before us. May the Lord help us in the last hour.35

Here again the same elements of limited worth placed upon this historical existence and the great joy and anticipation of life beyond death are present. He affirmed his faith in baptism as a sacramental power. His year old Jonas Nathaniel had died within the covenant which God had established with him in baptism. This may well have been the basis of Swensson’s sense of victory. Therefore, he could exclaim in the midst of deep human sorrow: ‘‘I can do nothing else than praise the blessedness which stands before us.’’

Death was to strike a third time in the Swensson family. Again in 1868, just fourteen months after the birth of the second Jonas Nathaniel, David Jonathan was born on April 25, 1868. Little is said of the death of this little boy, but there is the cryptic statement concerning his death: ‘‘Died
August 6, 1868, 8:30 a.m. following forty hours of a violent illness." This suggests that David Jonathan’s death was sudden and unexpected. Little wonder that Maria suffered not only physical but also emotional illness. It is noteworthy that the letter in which Swensson described to Hasselquist his wife’s depression was written February 3, 1869 within months following the death of their two children in 1868.

Under these circumstances of hard work, hardships, and heartbreaks, one asks the question: "How could Swensson endure such difficult years?" Primarily, the answer must lie in his Christian faith. Although there were again and again times of anxiety, he was always able to leave the trying experiences within the context of his belief in God. In a letter of January 18, 1869, Swensson wrote: "It seems to me that the Lord intends to show me in many ways that I ought to retire from any public work. The constant sickness in my family afflicts me a great deal." He referred to this as a temptation. Interestingly, Swensson interpreted this temptation in relation to the divine call which he so fully believed had brought him into the ministry and to the places where he had accepted the invitation to become pastor. Of God’s grace in his personal life as the one who was faithful to him, he had no doubts.

Hasselquist answered that letter and in a response on February 3, Swensson typically expressed his faith in surrendering himself to God: "I want to be in the hand of the Lord. I see well enough that I do not have the strength in myself to even fight such temptation; but most of all I know the Lord has called me to this office and I know I also give myself to it." In spite of his anxieties, Swensson was described as a pleasant person:

Although he was a strict disciplinarian, and systematic and orderly, he was not a dictator type. There was never any nagging, fussing, or scoldings. His home was a happy home. He played with his children—horseshoe, checkers, ball, and such games. Much was made of Christmas and birthday celebrations. His good relation to his family contributed to a strong home life which in turn became an important support for his times of hardship and heartbreaks.

His temperament also enabled him to relax. Norelius wrote: "He had no thought of sparing himself. He considered it a duty to give himself and all his strength in the service of the Church. No protest would persuade him to take some months of needed rest." But, in the midst of his vigorous labor and personal sorrows, "after eight or nine hours work in the Church with preaching and catechization as on the day of confirmation, he would sit up until midnight together with Christian friends, talking, singing, playing." Thus refreshed, "one could find him already up at four o’clock grooming his horses so that after breakfast he could travel out in his parish to do his pastoral duties." These times of singing and playing must have been pleasant for all involved. Swensson, along with his other talents, was musical:
He led the singing and his good voice could be heard distinctly above the rest. It was in Berlin, now called Swedona, that Rev. Swensson preached, played and sang with great enthusiasm. It seemed to me he played by heart for he would begin playing immediately—no time wasted. I noticed especially how well he played but never found out if he played number notes or those used now... Swensson would go from pulpit to the organ and play. I never heard Swensson play the guitar but that fact does not surprise me as he was very musical."

That he played the guitar was asserted by Evald Lawson: "Swensson was much interested in playing the guitar, and I presume the mandolin which you mention was in reality the instrument he used in singing in his own home on Sunday afternoons."

Swensson also had a good sense of humor. Many instances of this characteristic have been expressed. For example, many people can appreciate his criticism of the postal service. Norelius apparently had not received a certain letter from Swensson who replied that it had likely "found its grave in some post office which is not so remarkable when not so long ago a letter was found in a postal bag which had lain there for several years."

A delightful interchange developed between Hasselquist and Swensson over the mix-up in hats which had occurred at a meeting they had both attended. A short time later, Swensson wrote: "My head was hurting and that was unusual. The hat was too small. I never thought any mistake had been made until yesterday when I was to go to Berlin. When I put on the hat, I discovered it was not mine. I came to the conclusion that it was yours." Swensson teased Hasselquist that the latter had lost in the trade in that he may have gotten quantity but not quality. He suggested that when they soon were to meet in Rochester, New York at the meeting of the General Council, they could correct the problem.

They did not, however, meet in Rochester. On November 16, 1871, Swensson again wrote to Hasselquist: "If we had met then we could have exchanged either heads or hats. Now I cannot help that the doctor's hat protects the president's head."

It was well that Swensson had a sense of humor in view of the controversies which faced him in Andover.

**ii. Parish Controversies of the Sixties**

Few congregations escape the unpleasantness of controversies and Andover was no exception. Two in particular caused Swensson much trouble, one, in fact, so unpleasant that he seriously thought of leaving. One was from the outside, the Methodists. The other was from within the parish and was related to the building of the new church edifice.

Although Swensson was critical of other non-Lutherans including Baptists and Congregationalists, it was with the Methodists he had the greatest conflict. His predecessor, Esbjörn, had had a sorry experience with the Methodists, especially their missionary zeal in the region. When
Esbjörn came to the United States, his destination was Andover. He had been detained, however, in Chicago because of illness. (He had also the sadness of losing to death the second of twin sons; the first one had died at Göteborg before the family left Sweden.) His party which numbered 146 persons when they left Sweden had been badly decimated by death. The survivors went ahead of him to Andover. When Esbjörn finally arrived there, he discovered that many of his party had been persuaded by Jonas Hedstrom to join the Methodist Church in the neighboring town of Victoria.\footnote{45}

The relation between the Methodists and the Swedish Lutherans was further harmed by the work of Bergenlund. Whether the accusation against Bergenlund as one who encouraged members of the Andover congregation to become Methodists is true cannot be ascertained for certain. Yet this was the charge which was placed against him. "He early showed his true colors and was openly inclined toward Methodism with which he gladly worked."\footnote{46}

A number of incidents between the Methodists and Swensson occurred during his first years in Andover. On July 3, 1859, he wrote in his dagbok; "Came home late at night . . . . The Methodists had been visiting in some of our homes this afternoon and stirred up trouble." In 1860, the Methodists appeared to have been especially active. On January 17, again in his dagbok, he wrote: "Home here the Methodists are battling away as if they were to overthrow heaven and earth, but heaven and earth shall nevertheless not pass away."\footnote{47}

On April 22, 1860, he recorded that the Methodists were running "from house to house in order to shepherd souls. Today . . . our church was filled with hearers . . . . After setting forth the difference between their and our teaching, by God’s grace I preached God's Word without party strife."\footnote{48}

In Swensson's view, the Methodists worked where they had no right to do so. On April 30, 1860 after he had conducted confirmation instruction at Berlin, Jonas made a call upon a hired man who was ill. It was not the first time he had visited that person. To his displeasure, Swensson found a Methodist preacher there by the name of Anderson. According to Jonas, Anderson had told the sick man that if he died, he would go to heaven. "I knew that he [the man who was ill] had lived an unrepentant life. I was amazed at such unscrupulousness that with death before one’s eyes, someone else could express such fake comfort to a person who had lived with no repentance."\footnote{49}

An interesting debate occurred between Swensson and a Methodist preacher—likely Anderson. The occasion for such an interchange was that following one of his sermons, Swensson took time to call attention to the differences between the Lutheran and Methodist teaching. He did this on the basis of a book which contained the Methodist confessions, a copy of which he had at hand. The Methodist preacher heard of this and became angry. A few days later as Swensson was conducting a catechetical examination in a home, two Methodist preachers came to that place. Waiting until Swensson was finished with his instruction to quite a
large group of people, the two men confronted Jonas with the accusation he had misrepresented Methodist doctrine. One of the Methodists took out a copy of the same book on Methodist doctrine which Swensson had used a few days earlier. Following a period of conversation, the clerical defender of Methodist teaching read the portion which made statements regarding righteousness by faith, baptism, and the eucharist. However, only the general statements were read. To Swensson it must have seemed as if one were to read the commandments out of Luther’s Small Catechism without reading his explanations. Swensson asked whether something more was included regarding Methodism’s understanding of these doctrines. His opponents had to admit that they had not given the full picture of Methodism’s beliefs as Swensson had given to his congregation. The people present supported their pastor by affirming he had given to the congregation the full picture of Methodism’s beliefs as stated in the book from which he quoted. “Naturally with shame the Methodist pastors had to depart because Pastor Swensson had only said what their own confessions stated.”

The differences between Lutheranism and Methodism as Swensson explained them are not disclosed; yet, one may with some certainty assume what they were. In the matter of justification by faith, the Arminian flavor of Methodism would have been objectionable to Swensson’s Lutheran emphasis on righteousness by faith alone. Likely he would have felt the revival approach, so effectively used by the Methodists, savored too much of an emphasis upon what the human agent effected in one’s salvation to the detraction of grace.

Swensson’s religious emphasis was opposed to stress upon emotions. None of the other early pastors of Augustana seems to have been so suspicious of exaltation of feelings. Insofar as he felt preaching for the arousal of emotions to be too human centered, he would also have been critical of the Methodist views on baptism and the eucharist which also stressed the subjective response of the human being. To Swensson, only what God in Christ brought to the sacraments validated them. He likely felt that the Methodist approach played down this understanding of these basic sacraments according to the Lutheran Confessions.

For Swensson, the revivalism he found in America was of a piece with the new evangelism he had encountered in Jonköping during his studies there. The influence of Nohrborg upon him and his negative reaction to neo-evangelism had shaped him to take a similar stance toward revivalism in this country.

One other feature of the Methodist orientation closely related to both neo-evangelism and revivalism was what Swensson perceived to be an inadequate emphasis upon the law. It is in this light that one can understand his criticism of the Methodist pastor who had visited the hired man who was ill. In Swensson’s thinking, this non-Lutheran clergyman by neglecting the work of the law to lead one to repentance committed an unforgivable act.

Finally, the lack of liturgical structure would be offensive to the orderly Jonas Swensson. To him, the Methodists were a cause of confusion.
Some years after his arrival in Sugar Grove, he reflected upon the situation he had found there. He wrote to his cousin and stated that among the Swedes was "ungodliness and a spiritual and churchly confusion" and that "many of the people did not know the meaning of a churchly community." Swensson attributed this to the impact of the Methodists.52

Following the debate between Swensson and the Methodist preachers, the verdict was rendered that the Methodists won no further success. A letter from Swensson to Hasselquist on February 10, 1862 corroborated that view: "They [the Methodists] are zealous but none of our members was won over."53

Still, the threat Swensson saw from the Methodists would not go away. Their zeal, their revival approach as well as the inadequacy, if not the error, of their theology caused him discomfort. On August 8, 1871, he again wrote to Hasselquist. In view of a necessary trip to Iowa after he had become president of the Church, he was disturbed over the absence of a pastor in Andover. "Who then shall look after my congregation and my family? The congregation cannot be left alone for just during the days I am away, the Methodists are going to have a camp meeting here."54

It would appear, however, that the impressive growth of his own congregation should have assured him that actually the threat of the Methodists need scarcely have been a major concern for him. Ironically, it was just this impressive growth of the Andover congregation which contributed to the second major controversy Swensson endured during the 1860's.

As already noted,55 in the first five months of Swensson's ministry in Andover, there was a numerical growth which amounted to over thirty-three percent increase. During the next few years, following the division of Andover and Berlin into two congregations, the older parish made impressive membership gains. Two years after Swensson's arrival in Illinois, the Augustana Lutheran Church was established at Jefferson Prairie, Wisconsin (near Clinton), June 6 to 11, 1860 when eleven Swedish and seven Norwegian pastors held the meeting of organization. At this initial gathering, five Swedes and three Norwegians were ordained which brought to a total twenty-six pastors who were present. There were also nine Swedish and five Norwegian laymen. Thirty-six Swedish and thirteen Norwegian congregations were represented. These forty-nine parishes numbered a total of 4967 members of whom 339 were members of the Andover congregation.56 Not only was Andover the largest of the forty-nine parishes at the first meeting of Augustana, but also its continued growth was evident.57 In the mid-1860's Andover was the second largest congregation in the Augustana Lutheran Church outranked only by Immanuel Lutheran Church in Chicago where Erland Carlsson was pastor.

Swensson's success in bringing new members into the congregation thrust him into a task which would not have exerted a similar pressure in Sweden—the need to lead his parish in a building program. This presented to him his second controversy. At first, the attempt was made to expand the hearing facilities in the old church building which encompassed
both a ground floor and a basement. Modern engineers in the light of the development of sound equipment may ponder the degree of ingenuity shown by the congregation. At its annual meeting in 1865, it was decided that a hole should be made in the floor so that "the sound from the upper floor" could enter into the basement and thus give opportunity to those at the lower level to hear what was spoken in the upper floor of the church.  

This solution was only temporary. Before long the problem of building a new and larger edifice had to be faced. Accordingly, the decision to do so was made. Actually, even before constructing the opening in the upper floor of the old church, it had been decided on September 28, 1864 that the following spring the project should begin. The seriousness of their intention was shown by the selection of a building committee which consisted of Swensson, C.J. Brodine, J.H. Bjorkegren, Hans Mollenhoff and Gustaf Fair. These men were charged with the responsibility to obtain building plans and cost estimates. And the congregation "dreamed no small dreams" for they instructed the committee to plan "a church large enough to accommodate one thousand persons."  

In a letter to Norelius, Swensson disclosed what the dimensions of the Andover edifice were to be if it was to provide facilities for 1000 people. The nave, chancel, and sacristy were to cover an area of 100 feet in length, sixty feet in width, and twenty-five feet in height. The tower would measure sixteen by sixteen and rise into the air 118 feet.  

The rapid congregational growth necessitated the erection of a large building. With dispatch, the committee went to work and on November 23, 1864 at a special congregational meeting, it was decided that the structure should be made of brick; that the committee should proceed to "engage some skillful and experienced persons to make the brick and the trustees were to provide the wood for the fire in the manufacture of the bricks." It was also decided to make a contract with "Mr. Chas. Ulricson, Peoria, Illinois to draw up plans for the new church." The congregation, however, did not hire Ulricson without supplying their own ideas. "The ceiling and windows were to be built in the shape of a vaulted arch. The tower was to be built with a gable on the south, and entries into the church should be made on the east and west walls." Solicitation for funds from the parish members was also begun. By May 12, 1865, it could be reported at the annual congregational meeting that $5,978.84 had been collected. Eventually the total amount that was collected from the parish amounted to $38,927, the cost of the building.  

Soon controversy arose when a quarrel broke out regarding the material with which the building was to be constructed. Even though the decision to use brick had already been made on November 23, 1864, five persons at a congregational meeting in January, 1866 requested that a special meeting be held to reconsider whether brick or wood should be used. This meeting was called for February 14, but because of bad weather, only forty-two members were present. Five days later on Sunday, February 19, the postponed meeting was held. At that time, the original decision to build with brick was reaffirmed by an overwhelming vote of 136.
Only thirty-five supported the proposal to use wood. By October of that year, Swensson informed Norelius: “We have made about 550,000 bricks.”

A far more serious issue arose regarding the symbol which should be placed on the tower. The architect, Charles Ulricson, had placed in the plans an urn for the top of the tower which was aptly described as "an empty sign" or "a sign which said nothing." Because there was not time for a congregational meeting to be called, Swensson, who insisted there should be a cross on top of the tower, together with the building committee had a "beautiful golden gilded cross" placed at the highest point of the church. This aroused a "dreadful commotion" in the congregation. A strong demand was made that it be taken down because the presence of the cross would indicate the church was Roman Catholic. According to the account, the revolt was led by "five members of the congregation some of whom were under the influence of alcohol." According to the constitution, the request of five members for a congregational meeting must be granted, and this was held October 15, 1867. This gathering was described as "a sorry meeting."

Those who were opposed to the cross were a significant minority; yet, "for the sake of peace," it was decided to remove it. Now, however, either by design or actual fear, Swensson and the majority who favored the retention of the cross were given an advantage. The question arose: "Who should take it down?" The building foreman refused to do so. And according to the account of this incident, "the enemies of the cross did not dare to remove the cross because it was so near to heaven."

As the supporters of Swensson reflected upon what they had allowed to happen, they asked for another congregational meeting. Swensson, partly because he was so discouraged over the issue and partly because he had to meet a train and bring to Andover participants in a Reformation service which was to be held there, did not preside at the meeting on November 6, 1867. Pastor Andreas Andreen of the neighboring Berlin parish acted as presiding officer.

Two important decisions were made on that occasion. First, by a majority of fifty-nine to twenty-one, the congregation rescinded the motion of the previous meeting and the cross was retained. A compromise was made, however, to place under the cross a copper globe which two members of the congregation, Johannes and Carl Johan Samuelson, promised to purchase. Just what the meaning of the globe should be was not explained. Most probably, it symbolized the world.

Secondly, perhaps with a sense of remorse for the failure to support their pastor earlier, they passed a resolution to take up a free will offering to pay all of their pastor's debts. Many who had been opposed to Swensson now showed their support to relieve him of this burden.

Although the architect had been not a little responsible for the controversy of the cross because of his suggestion that the adornment at the apex of the tower should be an urn, Ulricson threw his full support to Swensson. On November 2, 1867, four days before the meeting when the
congregation decided to retain the cross, he wrote to Swensson:

If those few who now oppose the symbol of our faith adorning the summit of God’s holy temple, and they do not believe in that symbol, they are, as I intimated, but hypocrites, safer out of the Church than in it, and God will make them powerless, their threats will be naught, and shame will be their reward.65

Following the decision of the congregation, Ulricson again wrote that he was glad at the result of the meeting of November 6 but disappointed that the decision was not represented by a larger majority of votes. What perturbed him more was the motion which was passed to place a globe under the cross. Economically, this would simply be a waste of money. He hoped Swensson would be able to dissuade such action.

Because of the controversy over the cross, Swensson was greatly shaken even in confidence as to his calling into the ministry—possibly the only time when such doubt occurred. To Hasselquist, he wrote: "It now appears as if the work here in Andover is vain. I do not know whether I should try to do anything more here or actually resign from my office of the ministry." In this letter, Swensson could not resist identifying his opposition with doubtful morality. "They who demanded the cross be taken down never come to the city unless they visit the saloon. Some of them are there days without end."66

The deep disappointment of Swensson is clear in that he seemed to say he considered resignation not only from the pastorate at Andover but also from the ministry itself. That he did not take such action may have been due in part to the ultimately fine support and act of affection he received from the congregation. Much more likely was the strong conviction which he had stated again and again that it was from God, not humanity, he had received his call.67 Thus, only God, not humanity, could withdraw that sense of divine vocation. Three months later, he wrote again to Hasselquist a bit more hopefully; yet, one can sense the scars were still present. "The strife over the cross cannot be forgotten; yet, I hope it will die away."68

While the most difficult issue was over the cross, there were other problems during the building program. In the spring of 1865, the manufacture of the bricks had been delayed by much rain. Also there was at times lack of sufficient money, and Swensson believed the Methodists were also hindering the work. "If the Methodists do not harm us now, that will be a wonder."69 How the Methodists were a problem was not disclosed.

In due time, the new structure was completed sufficiently so that the congregation could use it. In November, 1868, the congregation was able to enjoy the fruits of long years of dreaming and work which had begun in September of 1864 with the decision that work on the new church building should begin the following spring. The big day, November 15, 1868 was described:
A large crowd of people gathered around the old church. Pastor Swensson gave a final meditation based on Psalm 25:8-14 as a farewell to the old church. It was a heart-gripping moment for the large congregation to say good-bye to it. For more than fifteen years the congregation had worshipped God there.

This parting service was followed by the procession of the congregation to the new edifice and, as they marched, they sang hymns. In the new building, Swensson preached on Psalm 45:4-18. "It was a great day in the history of the congregation, a day which will not soon be forgotten." 70

The time of the dedication of the new church was not clearly identified. Yet, its beauty was acknowledged in the synodical paper, *Det Rätta Hemlandet Och Augustana* in the December issue in 1869: "The congregation at Andover was the first to decide to build a large church of brick which is a real ornament in the community and a credit to the congregation. It is not fully completed and therefore not dedicated, although it continues to be used." 71

After all the work and trouble, Swensson was proud of the lovely structure that had been built on the fertile land of Illinois. Some time later as president of the Church, he participated in the dedication of the new edifice at Red Wing, Minnesota. To his wife on June 17, 1871, he wrote: "Their new church is beautiful, yet not so beautiful as ours." 72

iii. The Central Thrust of Swensson's Parish Ministry in Andover

Hardships, hard work, heartbreaks, and controversies were all a part of Swensson’s ministry in Andover. Yet, to pay attention to these factors alone would give only a partial picture of his rich ministry. Far more central features characterized his work which statistics in part reveal. Under his ministry, the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran congregation grew impressively. The growth in membership from 1858 to 1866 has already been noted. 73 As in his previous pastoral work, his fundamental emphasis may be described around the three functions of preaching and the administration of the sacraments, teaching, and counseling.

No aspect of his ministry gave more joy and satisfaction than to preach and administer the sacraments. More than once, he expressed his delight in the administration of this aspect of his ministry. He even seemed to receive strength to overcome his frequent physical pain. Typical of these experiences was one he shared with Hasselquist in a letter written on January 4, 1871:

Still, I have been able to preach. That is about the only thing which seems to replenish my lessened strength. When I have set forth the Word of Life to a congregation of people, there has been no little inner strength created within me. Thus it seems that this broken vessel is again stimulated. Last Sunday when I administered the holy communion, a large number came forward. I longed very much to be among the guests. God’s Word has during the past year demonstrated itself as a Word of Life and a seed of life in not a few hearts. 74
Nils Forsander, student assistant to Swensson in Andover and later professor at Augustana College and Theological Seminary for a quarter of a century, observed that the way Swensson had prepared his sermons in Sweden had equipped him to preach with "clarity and order which always thereafter characterized him as a preacher even when later he spoke extemporaneously or with the guidance of an outline." Although Forsander was negatively critical of the length of Swensson's sermons, he could only give commendation for the character of the man as well as the substance of the sermons Swensson's congregation heard:

As preacher Pastor Swensson was richly equipped both because of his spiritual and natural gifts. His preaching was not a demonstration of eloquence, but he was always biblical, Lutheran, instructive, serious, and rich in spiritual experience. He preached both law and gospel and emphasized the difference between them as well as the correct connection between them.76

Throughout his ministry, Swensson was regarded as perhaps the most able preacher of the early pastors of the Augustana Lutheran Church. "He was a highly gifted preacher."77 This was a judgment with which there was general consensus. The integrity for which he was known and his hatred of hypocrisy and sham were the same qualities which disclosed themselves in the openness with which he showed anxiety before he ascended the pulpit. Once in the pulpit, he demonstrated the art of fine preaching even though he had the tendency to speak too rapidly. While he exhorted, he also gave encouragement according to the promises of God and held up the joy and gladness of the Christian life in contrast to the dreariness and frightening inadequacy of life apart from God. Overarching the life of faith was the hope of eternal life beyond this existence of travail. "One had the unconditional impression of his preaching that he had one goal in mind: concern for the salvation of souls to bring them from sin and Satan to Jesus on the road of holiness."78

That Swensson also had fine gifts as a teacher was shown already in Sweden where many journeyed from surrounding parishes to hear his Bible studies. His interest in Christian education ran the gamut from teaching in the parish to the preparation of men for the ministry. He held high standards at every level.

A unique situation beside voluntary support of churches in the United States in contrast to a tax supported church in Sweden confronted the Swedish Lutheran immigrants in America—parish education. In Sweden, Christian education was conducted in the schools of the land. Not until 1851, the year in which Swensson was ordained and just five years before he emigrated, did the Sunday School come to Sweden. Then it was brought by a non-Lutheran, Per Palmqvist, a Baptist.79 The hostility of the Lutheran Church in Sweden at that time toward the Baptists would scarcely have made them amenable to adopt the Sunday School approach.

It is not clear that Swensson began a Sunday School in the Hessel Valley/Jamestown parish.80 He was undoubtedly instrumental in estab-
lishing this in Andover. No statistics for the presence of a Sunday School there appeared in the minutes of the Andover congregation until 1862. That Swensson had been in Andover at least three years before such a program was instituted should not be interpreted as a lack of concern on his part. Rather, this delay likely demonstrates the unsettled condition of the frontier.

Once established, Swensson with characteristic zeal devoted energy and time to the Sunday School. "After he had finished the examination over the lessons in Sunday School, he would catechize all the children together for a quarter of an hour and explain simply and clearly a short biblical text." 

In the parish, Swensson won high reputation as a teacher. In the art of catechization, "All who had the opportunity to observe acknowledged Swensson’s unusual skill as a catechist, and the instruction he communicated to his confirmands in their preparation for the eucharist was very lucid and of sound character." He expended great energy in preparing the youth for confirmation. His classes were large. The range in number from thirty-three to fifty-four in itself indicated a great responsibility. Associate this with the careful and thorough preparation he gave to the students and one becomes almost incredulous at the work he did as a catechist.

Each year, the instruction began in the autumn and continued until the end of June the following year. Once a week, he would spend a whole forenoon with his students. The session began with the singing of a hymn and prayer by the pastor. This was followed by the reading by one of the students of a chapter from one of the gospel accounts. Swensson interspersed explanations of the text. Next were lessons in biblical history and the catechism. The session ended with the class members reading together with the pastor a prayer followed by the Lord’s prayer, the pronouncement of the benediction, and a closing hymn.

Preparation of the adolescents for their first communion did not end with the class sessions. Two more aspects of Swensson’s program were applied before the important day of confirmation. First, he would meet with each student privately and have a “short, searching, spiritually concerned conversation.” Secondly, he visited the home of each confirmand. He devoted an entire afternoon in each home in the exercise of a home examination on Luther’s Small Catechism.

How did the parishioners and their children respond to such stringent requirements? One could assume some would find the program burdensome. Such does not appear to have been the case. Swensson was described as a person whose presence did not instill fear; rather, his company was enjoyed. Of the home examinations, it was reported that these meetings "soon won the acknowledgement that they were both useful and loved."

The day of confirmation was a festive one "not only for the Andover congregation but also for many people who gathered there from daughter congregations." The day was marked by an examination over the
studies which was followed by Swensson’s exhortation that they who were soon to be confirmed were to remain faithful to their Lord: “With humble prayer, employ the holy means of grace that you might have the assurance of grace and as children of God receive power to overcome temptation from the flesh, the world, and the devil.”

Although Swensson himself had deep reservations about emotions, the feelings of his confirmands were deeply stirred on their confirmation day as their pastor spoke to them. “During these exhortations it often happened that the confirmands fell into weeping. This had an effect upon the congregation.” Forsander concluded: “Oh that we still had among us confirmation instruction with such serious exhortation to true repentance and a living faith in the free and undeserved grace in Christ Jesus!”

Swensson was much loved not only by the older members of the congregation but also by those whom he confirmed. At his funeral, his confirmands showed their deep sorrow. “When all those who had been instructed and confirmed during his fifteen year residence in Andover and remembered the precious seed the departed pastor had sown among them, their crying became a loud moaning.”

The combination of his love for youth and his skill as a teacher earned him the plaudits of an historian of the Augustana Lutheran Church: “[He was] perhaps the Synod’s most able pedagogue and catechist.”

Swensson was also a good counselor. Since he was “strict with himself, he was also strict in his relationship with others. He disliked intensely hypocrites and the self-righteous.” One associate related more closely this trait of Swensson in his ministry of counseling: “[Pastor Swensson] devoted himself to ‘soul care’ but spiritual chatterers and talkers found no hearing with him.” From the point of view of the counselee, Swensson was “a man of stability, strength, conviction, and purpose …. His openness of mind and heart fostered trust and reliance.”

While Swensson was pastor at Andover, the Civil War was fought in the United States. There are, understandably, no letters available which he wrote to soldiers from his congregation. A sampling of letters shows that soldiers in the army did write to their pastor at home. Nils P. Wenstrand wrote on July 18, 1863 from Bolivar, Hardeman County, Tennessee. In the letter were two dollars as a contribution to Swensson’s salary. He expressed his longing to again be in church where his pastor served and to participate with the congregation in the worship of God. “My soul longs to dwell with those who go up to worship the Lord.” Not since April 6, 1862 when the regimental pastor had held a public worship at Pittsburg Landing had he been able to attend a worship service.

Another letter came to Swensson from Bolivar, Tennessee which was dated March 1, 1863. The writer was Tehnar Hans Westerlund. He also sent money to apply to Pastor Swensson’s salary. He included greetings from other members of the congregation: Peter Westerlund, Gustaf P. Far, A.P. Frittiof, and one called Engell. Three of these four also included money for the pastor’s salary. One senses in the letter the deep spiritual
impact Swensson had made on Westerlund and, one may assume, on the others.94

P.L. Hawkinson wrote to Swensson from Chicago on June 28, 1865 some two months after the surrender of the Confederacy. He made a request in behalf of a deceased soldier, Claus Peter Olson, who had fought in the eleventh Ohio Battery. Hawkinson wrote that he had sent papers for Olson and written in his behalf to the Probate Judge at Cambridge. He asked Swensson to take care of the necessary procedures related to these matters.95

That fellow pastors had confidence in him as a counselor was shown in at least one instance. One colleague, Gustaf Peters (1832-1918), on May 7, 1861 wrote to Swensson from Moline, Illinois about one of his members who had been sick for five years. Although this sufferer believed God loved him, he could not understand why his suffering was greater than that of others in the congregation. Peters wrote to Swensson: “He believes that if a Christian fellow brother in some other place could only hear something about his situation, then the Lord would work through that brother to give him a little comfort. Will you, therefore, dear brother speak to him?”96

Jonas Swensson was a man of faith who prevailed over the death of loved ones, miserable health of himself and his wife, and controversy through his unconditional trust in God as revealed in Christ; he was preacher, teacher, counselor, not by his own choice, but according to his conviction that God had called him. He served his church free from the temptation to serve for glory from the people, for he was called of God. Had Swensson chosen what he would have wanted to be remembered for, it would have been as a faithful parish pastor. Evald Lawson wrote of this man named Jonas:

A careful study of Jonas Swensson materials convinces me that [he] was one of the most outstanding and capable of our early Swedish pastors. He was meticulous in his work, and his church records remain models of accuracy and neatness. Swensson’s work in Andover from 1858 to the time of his death in 1873 was heroic in its dimensions. Although he served as President of the Augustana Lutheran Church the last three years of his life, his primary interest was not ecclesiastical organization; rather, his love was to preach and teach, to be a pastor to the people of his Church.97
NOTES


4October 15, 1873.


6When the deacons and trustees in an undated letter (most likely written in 1856 or early 1857) wrote to the American Home Missionary Society in which they were making an appeal for financial aid, they informed the Society that Sugar Grove had eighty-seven members, Wrightsville, eighteen, and Jamestown, eighty-five.


8Mrs. Luther Swensson, "Reverend Jonas Swensson (1825-1873)," typewritten p. 2. This is also the figure recorded in the *Andover Minnes-Album... 1910*, p. 22, which was likely the source for Mrs. Swensson’s biography.


12Swensson Collection, Upsala College.

13Nothstein, *Selected Documents...*, No. 10, p. 43.

14*Ibid.* "Quarter" refers to one-fourth of the year.

15*Andover Minnes-Album... 1910*, p. 33.

16August 26, 1869, p. 10, Swensson Collection, Upsala College.

17July 5, 1873, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives, Chicago, Illinois.

18*Andover Minnes-Album... 1910*, p. 32; Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika*, 1:215.

19Nothstein, *Selected Documents...*, No. 10, p. 46.


22 Letter to Martin Johansson, August 26, 1869, p. 8, Swensson Collection, Upsala College Archives. (Norelius wrote that Swensson preached every other Saturday until 1866. *De Svenska Luterska . . . historia i Amerika*, 1:215.)


26 Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.

27 Johanna Blixt accompanied Jonas and Maria to America and lived with them. Following the death of Maria, August 20, 1874, ""Aunt Hanna"" as she was affectionately called, assumed the responsibility for the care of the Swensson children. The children ranged in age from Carl, the oldest, who was sixteen, to the youngest, Luther, who was eight years old. In later years, she ""worked in a store in Lindsborg [Kansas] where she lived until she died [December 7, 1913] and was buried there. Everybody loved her and respected her."" Letter from Josephine Meredith to Evald Lawson, June 8, 1957 in Swensson Collection, Upsala College; C.A. Swensson, ""An Untitled History of the Jonas Swensson Family,"" handwritten, n.d.

28 Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

29 Swensson Collection, Upsala College.

30 Letter to Hasselquist, February 3, 1869, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

31 Letter to Norelius, December 6, 1871, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.

32 Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

33 In a letter to Hasselquist, February 26, 1867, Swensson wrote that his wife had borne a healthy son they had named in memory of the three year old son who had died. Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

34 Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.

35 Letter to Hasselquist, March 12, 1868, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

36 C.A. Swensson. ""An Untitled History . . . ,"" p. 4.

37 Letter to Hasselquist, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

38 Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

39 Letter from Eva Carlsson (granddaughter of Jonas Swensson), McPherson, Kansas, to Evald Lawson, East Orange, New Jersey, December 1, 1945, Swensson Collection, Upsala College Archives.

40 *De Svenska Luterska . . . historia i Amerika*, 1:216.


42 Letter from Upsala College, East Orange, New Jersey to Mr. and Mrs. Lester Swensson, Manhattan, Kansas.

43 February 24, 1871, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.
October 16, 1871, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

O.N. Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church in America, 1890-1910* (Published under the auspices of the Executive Council of the Augustana Lutheran Church; Davenport, Iowa: Arcade Office and Letter Service [lithograph], 1956), pp. 118, 123. Jonas Hedström, a brother of Olof Hedström (See above, p. 33), was a Methodist missionary who worked in Victoria, Illinois, about twenty miles southeast of Andover, where he established the first Swedish Methodist congregation in that part of Illinois.

T.N. Hasselquist and C.A. Swensson, "Svenska Evangeliska Lutherska forsamlingen i Andover och dess historia," *Korsbaneret, 1880* (Chicago: Enander & Bohmans Forlag), 1:61-119. While the article does not carry the names of the authors, internal evidence (p. 89 for Swensson, p. 92 for Hasselquist) indicates these two men had at least something to do with the writing of this article. Others may have been involved; e.g., Olof Olsson whose initials, O.O., appear along with C.A.S (Swensson) as editors.

Lawson, *Two Primary Sources...*, pp. 37-38.

C.M. Esbjorn, "Jonas Swensson’s Dagbok" (handwritten, n.d.). Entries for March 9, April (no day noted) and apparently April 22—no year noted—and 30.


See above, p. 6.

Letter to Martin Johansson, August 26, 1869, Swensson Collection, Upsala College Archives.

Hasselquist and Swensson, *Korsbaneret*, 1:82.

Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

See above, p. 62.


*Andover Minnes-Album...1910*, p. 37.


October 10, 1866, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.


Swensson Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.

October 19, 1867, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

E.g., see above, pp. 3, 25.
January 21, 1868.

Letter to Hasselquist, August 15, 1865, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

Hasselquist and Swensson, Korsbaneret, 1:86; Andover Minnes-Album... 1910, p. 41.


Swensson Collection, Upsala College.

See above, pp. 62, 69. The congregation continued to grow as shown in the congregational statistics: 714 communicant members in 1867; 835, 1868; 943, 1869; 999, 1870; 1009, 1871; 1012, 1872. See Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1867-72.

Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives. The interesting statement; "I longed... to be among the guests" was a reference to a rule that a pastor could not give himself communion. It is not clear why this prohibition existed. That restriction was never in force during my memory of churchly practices of the Augustana Lutheran Church.

Lifsbilder..., 2:10.

Ibid., 2:17.


Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:217-218.


Minnes-Album i Ord och Bild utgivet af Forsta Svenska Evangelisk-Lutherska Forsamlingen i Jamestown, Chautauqua County, N.Y. med anledning af dess Femtio-Ars Jubileum den 1-5 Augusti, 1907, p. 120. "From the church records... of the early days, it is difficult to tell from the notations when Sunday School began here." Julius Lincoln.

Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1862, p. 32.

Forsander, Lifsbilder..., 2:19.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:220.

Forsander, Lifsbilder..., 2:19.

Hasselquist and Swensson, Korsbaneret, 1:79.

See above, pp. 61-62.

Ibid., 2:19-20.

Ibid., p. 20.

Hasselquist and Swensson, Korsbaneret, 1:93.

Oscar N. Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church... 1860-1910, p. 52.


A.B. Carlson, "Pastoral Care... Four Selected Swedish Churchman," p. 236.

Swensson Collection, Bethany College.
October 16, 1871, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

O.N. Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church in America, 1890-1910 (Published under the auspices of the Executive Council of the Augustana Lutheran Church; Davenport, Iowa: Arcade Office and Letter Service [lithograph], 1956), pp. 118, 123. Jonas Hedstrom, a brother of Olof Hedstrom (See above, p. 33), was a Methodist missionary who worked in Victoria, Illinois, about twenty miles southeast of Andover, where he established the first Swedish Methodist congregation in that part of Illinois.

T.N. Hasselquist and C.A. Swensson, “Svenska Evangeliska Lutherska församlingen i Andover och dess historia,” Korsbaneret, 1880 (Chicago: Enander & Bohmans Förlag), 1:61-119. While the article does not carry the names of the authors, internal evidence (p. 89 for Swensson, p. 92 for Hasselquist) indicates these two men had at least something to do with the writing of this article. Others may have been involved; e.g., Olof Olsson whose initials, O.O., appear along with C.A.S (Swensson) as editors.

Lawson, Two Primary Sources . . ., pp. 37-38.

C.M. Esbjorn, “Jonas Swensson’s Dagbok” (handwritten, n.d.). Entries for March 9, April (no day noted) and apparently April 22—no year noted—and 30.

Ibid.

Hasselquist and Swensson, Korsbaneret, 1:81-82.

See above, p. 6.

Letter to Martin Johansson, August 26, 1869, Swensson Collection, Upsala College Archives.

Hasselquist and Swensson, Korsbaneret, 1:82.

Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

See above, p. 62.


Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1861, p. 38; Ibid., 1862, p. 32; Ibid., 1863, p. 33; Ibid., 1864, p. 32; Ibid., 1865, p. 36; Ibid., 1866, p. 53.

Andover Minnes-Album . . . 1910, p. 37.

Ibid., p. 35.

Ibid., pp. 35-36.

October 10, 1866, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.


Hasselquist and Swensson, Korsbaneret, 1:85.

Ibid., 1:85-86; Andover Minnes-Album . . . 1910, pp. 40-41.

Swensson Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.

October 19, 1867, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

E.g., see above, pp. 3, 25.
January 21, 1868.

Letter to Hasselquist, August 15, 1865, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

Hasselquist and Swensson, Korsbaneret, 1:86; Andover Minnes-Album... 1910, p. 41.


Swensson Collection, Upsala College.

See above, pp. 62, 69. The congregation continued to grow as shown in the congregational statistics: 714 communicant members in 1867; 835, 1868; 943, 1869; 999, 1870; 1009, 1871; 1012, 1872. See Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1867-72.

Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives. The interesting statement; 'I longed... to be among the guests' was a reference to a rule that a pastor could not give himself communion. It is not clear why this prohibition existed. That restriction was never in force during my memory of churchly practices of the Augustana Lutheran Church.

Lifsbilder... , 2:10.

Ibid., 2:17.


Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:217-218.


Minnes-Album i Ord och Bild utgivet af Forsta Svenska Evangelisk-Lutherska For­samlingen i Jamestown, Chautauqua County, N.Y. med anledning af dess Femtio-Ars Jubileum den 1-5 Augusti, 1907, p. 120. ‘From the church records... of the early days, it is difficult to tell from the notations when Sunday School began here.’ Julius Lincoln.

Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1862, p. 32.

Forsander, Lifsbilder... , 2:19.

Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:220.

Forsander, Lifsbilder... , 2:19.

Hasselquist and Swensson, Korsbaneret, 1:79.

See above, pp. 61-62.

Forsander, Lifsbilder... , 2:19-20.

Ibid., p. 20.

Hasselquist and Swensson, Korsbaneret, 1:93.

Oscar N. Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church... 1860-1910, p. 52.


A.B. Carlson, 'Pastoral Care... Four Selected Swedish Churchman,' p. 236.

Swensson Collection, Bethany College.

81
In another instance, a Johannes Magnusson wrote on July 18, 1863 about a legal problem.

Chapter V

Jonas Swensson, Churchman at Large
Prior to 1870

Although Swensson’s first devotion was to his work as preacher, teacher, and counselor, the fine ability he had along with his deep commitment to the vocation he sincerely believed he had received from God constrained him and attracted others to call upon him to also serve the Church at large. This he did with willingness and distinction even though it meant severe strain on his fragile health.

Before Swensson was elected president of the Church, he had won the respect of his colleagues—but not on the basis of a great deal of oral participation in church discussions. “During the whole time previous [to his election as president] he seldom took part in the public discussions and debates. For the most part he sat as a silent listener.” Norelius, however, noted that if on that basis one had come to the conclusion that Swensson “lacked interest in the deliberations of the Synod or was lacking in skill to publicly express what he thought in a powerful manner, one would have made a big mistake.” When he perceived the occasion was appropriate, Swensson could in “vigorous fashion say what he meant and persuasively recommend the measures and the steps he considered to be necessary and effective. This quality was well recognized and consequently, it was with the greatest confidence that he was elected president.”

Previous to his ascendancy to the presidency, he participated in four areas of important responsibility: he was secretary of the Church; he was a chief architect of parish education; he was involved with Augustana College and Theological Seminary; he was instrumental in the establishment of a children’s home for the church-wide constituency.

During the first decade of Augustana’s history, Swensson served as secretary of the Church for six years at four different times (1861-62, 1865, 1867, 1868-70). He was serving in that capacity at the time he was elected president. True to his character, he administered the office with orderliness. Norelius wrote of his work as secretary: “No one followed with, nor showed, such interest in the deliberations as he and during the several years he served as secretary, he was much at home with the Synod’s statutes, order, and work.”

Swensson had grave reservations about Sunday Schools. He wrote that he had mixed feelings about them “but in general, they are penetrated by a tone about which there is much to complain. They do not
bear the expected fruit.'" Swensson would have preferred parochial schools.4

Swensson was concerned about the low quality of Christian education he believed Sunday Schools communicated. He also saw them as a threat to the Lutheran Church, especially in the cities for there it was the children and youth received the greatest exposure to American life, not least of which was the English language. His view of what the pupils in American Sunday Schools received came close to ridicule. "In these places one is amused and must smile at the amusing stories or representations." Swensson, however, did not dismiss his anxiety with simple sarcasm. Within the historical context of his time, he felt that the Augustana church had valid reasons for concern. In the non-Lutheran Sunday Schools to which the children of the Swedish Lutheran immigrants were attracted, it was felt they were drawn to "drink in the spirit and the teaching which fight against the faith of the [Lutheran] Church."5

Swensson sensed the difficult situation in which Augustana was caught. On the one hand, he had no illusions about the continuation of the Swedish language in America. "To set oneself against transition to the language of the land would be foolishness." Still, on the other hand, he counseled for a slower pace of change, "a middle way," because Augustana Lutherans had neither suitable materials in the English language nor teachers grounded both in the Lutheran faith and capable in the language of the United States:

> When English is begun in the Sunday School, it is often difficult to find teachers of the right mind. This will happen because the people who do not belong to the Lutheran Church will be employed as teachers who are highly unacceptable, who use books which lack any solid Christian content. Thus it will happen that not only the language but the spirit itself will be changed in that our church's more sober and deeper spirit must yield to a superficial and frivolous character. Consequently, it will often occur that when the English language is adopted in order to retain children and youth within the Church, it will instead lead against this end. Rather, it leads to the building of a bridge to go over to another denomination.6

Thus, since the time was not ripe for Augustana to adopt the English language for its instructional purposes, he saw the need to prepare suitable materials for the instruction of children and youth in the Swedish language.

The heart of Christian instruction lay in Bible history and the Catechism. Quite obviously, at least the latter of these was not found in non-Lutheran Sunday Schools. Even in some of the Augustana churches, according to Swensson, these areas received inadequate emphasis. "I cannot do other than think that it is a big mistake which will bear sad fruit because of the neglect of Bible history and the Catechism in many Sunday Schools where not only are they thrust into the background but have completely disappeared."7
Central for Swensson to Christian faith and life was the congregation at worship where the Word was preached and the sacraments celebrated. Here, too, he found the Sunday School to be an obstacle to the Church. When children were sent to the Sunday School instead of worship services, a serious error was committed. The objection to the presence of children at the service because they could not understand it was unconvincing to Swensson. ‘‘If children from the earliest years are taught to attend worship and to pay attention to its significance, they can in accordance with their age grasp something.’’ On the other hand, if these earlier years are neglected as opportunities to accustom children to the importance of congregational worship, then when they come to more mature years, they will not feel at home at the public worship and ‘‘for them there will be nothing festive [about the service]. For many, both the worship and the church will become foreign.’’

To remedy the inadequacy of Christian education in Augustana, Swensson riveted his attention on catechetical material. He found nothing at hand which was suitable. Because of the need to use the Swedish language, even American Lutheranism could not supply the need for materials of instruction.

Swensson had early indicated his displeasure with what was available from Sweden. While aboard the Minona which carried his wife and him to America, he in his long letter of June 27, 1856 to Erland Carlsson made inquiry about a number of matters related to resources for congregational life in the United States. Among these was the Catechism. He asked: ‘‘Is Lindblom’s [Catechism] used? It would be well to have something better, for its shortcomings need not be mentioned.’’

The mention of Lindblom was a reference to the official Catechism of the Church in Sweden which had been prepared by J.A. Lindblom (1746-1819), Archbishop of Sweden from 1805 to his death. He was a favorite of King Gustav III (1746-1792 [king from 1771 to his assassination]), and as such he promoted the movement of the Enlightenment which reflected the orientation of the King. To those of Swensson’s warm piety, the rationalism of Lindblom’s Catechism made it highly undesirable. ‘‘[It] was considered tainted with rationalism in evangelical circles to which the early pastors of the Synod belonged.’’

In 1865, Swensson became a member of the committee to provide a catechism which would be suitable for the preparation of Augustana youth for confirmation and first communion. None appears to have been more critical or diligent in this task than Swensson and upon him rested much of the responsibility for the work. This task would continue on through his presidency until his death.

At the annual convention of the Augustana Lutheran Church before Swensson became a member of the committee, the Church had accepted a draft of what had been done toward the production of a catechism. It was further decided that this material should be circulated among the pastors for their criticism and suggestions. Swensson was not hesitant to give his critique. He wrote to Norelius that he thought what had been done was too complicated. He wanted a simple version. The chief objective
of the committee was to choose appropriate biblical passages to supplement the explanations of Luther’s Small Catechism. Swensson’s critique in his letter of August 4, 1865 to Norelius was in relation to the selections from the Bible which the other committee members, Norelius and Peters, had made. Swensson felt the biblical passages chosen were too complicated and also that too many had been selected. The Catechism “should enable the children by themselves to grasp the meaning of the chief texts and thus experience their power. If there are too many, the children will have difficulty in achieving understanding.”

Swensson’s critique went deeper than matters of arrangement and selection of material for the Catechism. He was also theologically concerned. Of the first article of the Apostles’ Creed, he wrote that he had taken up the issues of the nature, the qualities, and the trinity of the Deity: “I think that . . . in relation to the term ‘Father,’ I have justified the text which the committee selected, for He is called ‘Father’ not because He creates and upholds but because He had a Son whom He has given to us and through whom He is also our Father.”

Of God’s providence, he wrote: “In relation to God’s care, I have introduced the difference between God’s care for the unfaithful and the faithful, a difference which the scriptures always observe which ought not be overlooked.” Apparently, in Swensson’s view, the difference lay in the role of the angels. “I have made an introduction regarding the angels at this point [in the Catechism]. The scriptures do not speak about the creation of angels but about their duties. I believe the best place is to state that here [in the Catechism].” In his theology, it was the task of the angels to take care of the faithful.

About the second article he did not have much to say. He noted that he had taken up Christ’s office, His humiliation, and exaltation.

He wrote much more regarding the third article but he confessed that he had a problem in bringing together in a coherent manner all of the elements embodied within the meaning of that statement of faith. He gave the approach he used for this portion of the Catechism. “I have sought to follow the order of the work of the Holy Spirit and have selected several Bible passages without contradicting the text [of the Article] since the development of the Article must lead to the passages.”

Always Swensson strove to produce for the Church a catechism simple in style and coherent and orderly in arrangement. Finally, in 1868 at its convention, the Church accepted the final draft and the committee was dissolved. The manuscript was printed for use as a catechism in Augustana churches.

To Swensson was given the credit for the final production of this Catechism. “J. Swensson, even though his name does not appear on the title page, was the author of the explanations of the Catechism which was accepted by the Synod in 1867. The contents are well chosen and include a wide collection of Bible passages as answers to the questions in Luther’s Small Catechism.”

Norelius also acknowledged that it was Swensson’s work which ultimately brought this version of the Catechism up to a standard accept-
able for publication. Writing of Swensson’s choice of Bible verses, he paid tribute to his colleague: “This selection is an excellent train of thought, a very complete teaching of Christianity set forth throughout with exacting coherence.”

Still, this Catechism did not prove entirely satisfactory. It was Swensson himself who proposed a revision in his last report as president of the Church. The earlier selection of scripture passages had been of value, Swensson stated: “To impart to the young a coherent knowledge of Christianity, and in order to make the instruction more effective, something more is needed [than simply a collection of biblical passages].” Swensson continued: “We have waited to receive a version of the Catechism from Sweden which we could use, and certainly it would be good in that respect if we could come into the same arrangement with the mother church, especially as long as immigration continues.”

Previous to this statement, he had been in correspondence with his cousin, Martin Johansson, in Sweden. In a letter not precisely dated but written in late 1872, Swenson wrote: “I wish that you would buy me a copy of the Catechism which last came out from the catechetical committee and send it to me right away.”

Apparently, the copy Swensson received—if he did receive it—was not satisfactory. The fact Swensson referred to it as “the Catechism which last came out from the catechetical committee” indicates Sweden’s version of that work was also still in the process of formation. The pressing needs of Augustana made it impossible for the Church to wait for the finished version from the Lutheran Church in Sweden. As a consequence, in response to Swensson’s presidential report, a new catechetical committee was established, the members of which were: T.N. Hasselquist, Jonas Swensson, Erland Carlsson, Olof Olsson, and Erik Norelius.

For six years, the committee worked diligently and, in 1879, the Catechism was published.

The entire catechetical text had been reworked, comparing various versions, changing, revising, deleting and adding phrases, paragraphs, and whole sections until the committee was convinced that the final draft spoke the language of children and not of erudite theologians. The result of their labors was a version of the Catechism which admirably suited the educational needs of the day. In simple but well-chosen Swedish, with a readable style, the explanations set forth in the language of youth the great truths of the Lutheran Church. In the average Augustana congregation of this period, the Catechism was the primary center around which the entire parish educational program revolved, and confirmation with its introduction into adult church membership was predicated upon an assumed mastery of the entire text of the Small Catechism.

Augustana congregations enthusiastically accepted the new version. “It became the most widely used publication issued by the Augustana Press, with 250,000 copies having been sold by 1910. A slightly revised
version and an English translation of this textbook were published by the Synod in 1902."\(^{21}\)

So, by 1879, the simplicity and the adequacy for which Swensson had striven in the writing and publication of a catechism were achieved. Ironically, Swensson had died by the time of the publication. Yet, to the end of his life, he worked on improvement of this important work. His pioneer efforts and deep concern contributed to the final version. Lawson was scarcely guilty of overstatement when he wrote: "His influence... in preparing materials for catechetical instruction was considerable."\(^{22}\)

In view of his interest in education, it is not surprising that Swensson had a keen interest in Augustana College and Theological Seminary. The need for a high standard for men to be ordained into the office of the ministry had been clearly expressed by him before he became head of the Augustana Church.

Both regarding the character and the preparation of persons who desired to become pastors, Swensson was a strong proponent for high quality. On one occasion, an applicant of whom he disapproved had been accepted by the Seminary. The student had come into a questionable relationship with a woman by the name of Anna Palmgren. "Did Carlsson recommend him?" Swensson asked. "I want to propose a new rule. Anyone who recommends someone unsuitable shall pay for him and be responsible for the damage he does to the school."\(^{23}\)

On another occasion, he urged Hasselquist to examine carefully candidates for entry into the ministry before they were accepted by the Seminary. "Certainly the need for pastors is great but not so great that we should not exercise care as to whom we accept."\(^{24}\) Within the contents of this letter, Swensson made clear that he would require above all that applicants to the Seminary have the "Spirit of Christ."

He was no less insistent on the academic requirements: "What an important task the school has! It must not only communicate knowledge in order to develop the student nor teach the Word in its worldly sense but also in its spiritual and churchly meaning." Slightly more than a year later, he wrote again to Hasselquist: "It is quite evident, on the one hand, the need for pastors is great. Yet, on the other hand, for the Synod to obtain pastors without preparation, without knowledge, without education cannot be done without eventual ruin to the Church."\(^{25}\) He was willing to expose the Augustana Church to losses due to an insufficient number of pastors rather than witness its deterioration due to poorly educated ministers as well as those of doubtful character. It is not surprising, therefore, that early in its history, his peers saw fit to elect him to the Board of Directors of Augustana College and Theological Seminary in 1866. He was reelected to a second four year term in 1870.\(^{26}\)

As a member of the Board but also as pastor of the second largest supporting congregation, Swensson took the role of contributor to the welfare of the struggling infant institution and defender of it. One time he wrote: "Yesterday I sent a little parcel containing some cheese and beans to the Education Society in Galesburg to go to Paxton [where the
school was then located]. This gift is from the Andover congregation to be acknowledged accordingly."\textsuperscript{27}

He rose up in defense of the school whenever he believed unfair opposition was directed against it. Regarding the Norwegian minister, Paul Andersen, he wrote: "Had he been indifferent regarding the successes of our educational work, that would have been bad enough; but a clear and manifest opposition which he displays is worse." Swensson was aroused against Andersen on three counts: first, according to him, Andersen was guilty of counseling non-support for Augustana College and Theological Seminary. "I cannot forget his self-satisfied spirit when he triumphantly appeared in Rockford and said, 'We no longer have any Norwegian students in the Seminary. So we have nothing to do with it.'" Secondly, "he tried to persuade the only Norwegian there to go to another seminary. I believe, however, he did not succeed because I heard afterward that the student went back to Paxton. This was not the first time he tried to draw away Norwegian students from our seminary." Finally, Swensson perceived Andersen as an obstructionist in Augustana's efforts to obtain a Norwegian professor for the sake of its Norwegian students. "He always works against the procurement of a Norwegian professor for the Seminary even though he claims he cannot sense any interest in the Seminary because there is no Norwegian professor there. I well remember how at every Synod, he has opposed our efforts to bring such to the School."\textsuperscript{28}

From Sweden the pioneer pastors of Augustana had received a model of good education. The quality of their education points to an important aspect of Augustana's history. The fine ability of Hasselquist, Carlsson, Andrén, and Swensson has been acknowledged more than once. They were all well educated and their concern for a well educated ministry and laity was reflected in their insistence upon the organization of college and seminary early in the history of the Augustana Church. This melding of the intellect with their Christian faith gave a unique character and commendable substance to Augustana piety.

Following his death, Swensson, together with one other pastor, was singled out as having made a significant contribution to theological education in Augustana. In his article, "The Influence of the Pioneer Pastors from Sweden on Theological Education in the Augustana Synod," C.E. Lindberg, then dean of the seminary, wrote: "The pioneer pastors, Rev. O.C.T. Andrén and Rev. Jonas Swensson, exercised an influence on theological education indirectly, the former after his return to Sweden working for financial support of the Augustana Seminary and the latter as president of the Augustana Synod."\textsuperscript{29}

Finally, Swensson organized the first church-wide children's home. Pioneer life on the frontier brought many life-threatening hazards, chief of which were illnesses such as cholera and typhoid. At times, the mother of small children or both parents fell victims to illness, and their children were left without necessary support. For the care of such orphans, the Church in the name of Christian compassion accepted responsibility.
It was not upon themselves, however, that the Swedish immigrants first depended for this ministry. They rather turned to that remarkable Lutheran pastor, philanthropist, and missionary, W.A. Passavant. Among the several institutions of mercy he organized and/or to which he lent his assistance was the Orphans’ Home and School Farm at Zelienople, Pennsylvania. In a letter to Norelius, February 18, 1858, Passavant wrote: “We have a dozen young Swedes and Norwegians and they are our most hopeful children.” Augustana expressed its appreciation for this ministry of Passavant by voting in 1862 at its annual convention in Vasa, Minnesota, June 26 to July 1: “to urge its congregations every year on Thanksgiving Day [likely the day set aside for the expression of gratitude to God according to the Church year rather than the national which at that time had not become an established holiday] when this can occur or on some other suitable day to take an offering for the Orphans’ Home near Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.”

Noble as the Zelienople ministry was, the distance from Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota prohibited the most effective ministry to orphans. Also, one may suppose that the Norwegians and Swedes were concerned this early in their history to nurture their children in the faith according to their own ethnic traditions.

After an effort to establish such a home at Paxton, which proved to be unsatisfactory, it was Jonas Swensson who took the helm for such a project. Swensson together with his congregation obtained a building in Swedona and on October 31, 1867, the first child, Edward Berg from Galesburg, was received. In January of 1868, Mr. and Mrs. S.P. Lindell were engaged to care for the children. During the first year, fifteen children became residents of the home.

In the interim between 1867 and 1870, Swensson demonstrated a keen concern for the orphanage. He felt the burden with some chagrin that from neighboring pastors he received such little help in the presence of great need. “There has been much illness from typhus fever both in the Children’s Home and in the community. At the Home, eight children, Superintendent Lindell, his wife, and one servant had been ill. One boy had died.” The anxiety for this condition rested almost solely on Swensson. “[Andreas] Andreen [pastor at Berlin] who is only one-half mile from there simply will not bother about the Home. He has not visited there once during this time of illness. [S.P.A.] Lindahl [Woodhull] takes much interest in the Home but he lives a long distance from there and he has no horse.” The pastoral sensitivity so characteristic of Swensson would not allow him to neglect the dire need at the Children’s Home even though it added to his already heavy burden as the pastor of a parish of 835 communicant members.

It was decided that a farm should be purchased as an important income-producing source for the Home. Here, too, Swensson was the primary moving figure. On June 1, 1870, Swensson wrote to Hasselquist who was then in Sweden. He reported that he had worked for seven whole days to obtain the property the cost of which was beyond the capacity of the Church to pay. Negotiations were carried on by
Swensson. It was called the "Dan Madres farm" which was legally described as the "southwest quarter of section 18 township, 15 Northern Range 2, and comprises 160 acres." The preliminary price for this property was between $6500 and $7000. By his efforts, Swensson finally procured it for the Church at the considerably lower price of $5100. No doubt he was able to procure the farm at that price because the supreme court had declared it should be sold by auction in an action between a guardian and the owner of the farm, a Danish widow. Swensson painted a bright picture of the farm which had on it "a moderately large house somewhat deteriorated, a large, nearly new barn, a garden with thirty or forty fruit trees, good soil with about three acres of good woods. . . . The farm is one mile west of Andover in a beautiful location." The action of Swensson was accepted by the Church at its meeting June 15-22, 1870 over which Swensson presided. With that action, the Andover Home became the first official orphanage of the Church.

Thus one man served the Church well as secretary, as chief architect of parish education, as concerned member of the board of Augustana College and Theological Seminary, and as founder of the Andover Home. His name was Jonas—Jonas Swensson.
NOTES

1By "Churchman at Large" is meant the ministry Swensson performed apart from his own parish as he fulfilled a variety of assignments in the "church universal," particularly the Augustana Lutheran Church.


3Ibid.


5Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1872, p. 17.

6Ibid.

7Ibid., p. 18.

8Ibid.


10Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church... 1860-1910, p. 51.

11The katekeskommittee consisted of Norelius, Gustav Peters and Swensson. An interesting oddity appeared in this instance. Swensson's name appeared as "John Swenson." In the Protokoll for 1866, with the same men as members of the kommittee, his name appeared as 'J. Swenson' (p. 51).

12Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.

13Ibid.

14Ibid.


16Nil Forsander, "Jonas Swensson," Lifsbilder ur Augustana-Synodens historia (Rock Island Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1925), 2:25. Forsander was in error on the date. It was not until the next year, 1868, that the work of the committee was accepted and the manuscript printed. In 1867, the Church accepted the report of the katekeskommittee that the catechetical work was in progress. The Church charged the committee to continue its work (Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1867, p. 9).

17Norelius, De Svenska Luterska... historia i Amerika, 1:220.

18Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1873, p. 9.

19Ibid.

20Arden, Augustana Heritage..., p. 103.

21Ibid.

23 Letter to Hasselquist, January 24, 1867, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

24 Ibid., January 10, 1867.

25 Ibid., December 8, 1866; January 2, 1868.

26 Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1866, pp. 32, 51; 1870, pp. 30, 49.

27 Letter to Hasselquist, December 11, 1864, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

28 Ibid., February 2, 1865.

29 The Augustana Quarterly 7 (June 1928): 126.

30 Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1862, p. 13. The discrepancy between Zelienople and Pittsburg is explained by the former’s proximity to the larger city which was better known to the Augustana Scandinavians.


32 Letter to Norelius, December 4, 1869, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.

33 Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1869, p. 54.

34 Ibid., 1870, p. 17; Andover Minnes-Album . . . 1910, p. 48.

35 Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

36 Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1870, pp. 16-18; Andover Minnes-Album . . . 1910, p. 48. In actuality, Erik Norelius had begun an earlier home for orphans in Vasa, Minnesota in the autumn of 1865. The Andover institution, however, was the first church-wide home under Augustana auspices. See Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church . . . 1860-1910, p. 86.
Chapter VI

Jonas Swensson as President

For the first ten years of its history, one man, T.N. Hasselquist, had been president of the Augustana Lutheran Church. In 1867 and again in 1868, he had asked in vain for the Church to relieve him of at least one of his three offices (president of the Church, professor and president of the College and Seminary, and pastor of the church in Paxton). In 1870 during Hasselquist's absence on a trip to Sweden, a successor was elected—Jonas Swensson.

In important ways such as concern for education of pastors and centralized rather than diversified authority in the governance of the Church, the new president was in strong agreement with Hasselquist. Augustana was to discover, however, in its new president a man with powerful convictions in other areas such as the office of the ministry and orderliness in church life.

Every institution has its watershed events or times in its history. For the Augustana Lutheran Church, one such point was 1870. The development of congregations which were to form the Augustana Lutheran Church continued steadily from 1848. Between 1848 and 1850, two congregations of Swedish Lutheran immigrants were formed: New Sweden, Iowa and Andover, Illinois. In June 1860, thirty-six Swedish Lutheran congregations formed the Augustana Lutheran Church. By 1870, the number of congregations had increased almost fourfold to 142, and the number of pastors since the beginning of Augustana increased from twenty-seven to seventy.\(^1\) The rapid growth of the Swedish Lutheran Church in America required a more defined organization to carry out its work. Also, the tension between the Swedes and the Norwegian minority was growing. Finally, the increasing number of Swedish immigrants imposed upon Augustana the need to map its future.

1. Main Decisions of 1870

Although many issues were decided in the year of 1870, three emerged as of central importance: the reorganization of missionary activity among Swedish Lutheran immigrants, the decision to become a part of the General Council, and the division between Augustana Norwegians and Swedes.

In 1870, the mission program to Swedish immigrants in the United States was reorganized to make this ministry to a greater extent the
responsibility of the conferences. Heretofore, individual pastors had been largely responsible for nearby settlements. At its organization meeting in 1860, Augustana had formed a central home mission committee consisting of three members: T.N. Hasselquist; one Norwegian pastor, O.J. Hatlestad; and one Norwegian layman, later ordained in 1868, Ole Paulsen. This committee augmented the work of the settled pastors by sending out traveling missionaries who included Erik Norelius, P.A. Cederstam, Peter Carlson, C.A. Hedengren, Peter Beckman, and S.G. Larson.  

By 1870, it was obvious this approach was inadequate. The urgency to create a better system to reach the many Swedish Lutheran immigrants was stated in Hasselquist’s presidential report in 1869:

Think of it brethren! Out of the fifty or sixty thousand Swedish nationals who have emigrated, only about twenty thousand are connected with us, and a few other thousand united with other churches, which leaves a formidable remainder of some twenty to thirty thousand countrymen who are being lost in worldliness, sin, and unbelief... Can anyone do for them what we can, we who speak their language and who have been fed with the same spiritual food, and therefore understand more intimately than others what they have lost and what they need? No! Let us in God’s name redouble our zeal, our sacrifice, and, above all else, our prayers that the Lord of the harvest will send forth faithful laborers into his harvest. The night is at hand. Woe unto us if our work is half done.  

Hasselquist’s concern was justified by the desire for spiritual nurture on the part of many Swedish Lutheran immigrants. Some were lost because there was not an adequate supply of pastors and missionaries. The element of pathos was present. For example, after Swensson became president, he wrote to Hasselquist about an inquiry from one, C. Wallen, Bucklin, Linn County, Missouri. Work had begun in Bucklin and a congregation had been formed there in 1869 or 1870. Wallen, a catechist, was taking care of the work in Bucklin. He was asking for advice as to whether he could after New Year, 1872, begin school at Augustana, Paxton. Swensson recommended Wallen for such education “because I believe he is one of our better catechists.”

On August 3, 1872, members of the congregation, likely the deacons, wrote to Hasselquist and inquired whether it would be possible for Wallen to be ordained in the autumn: “This is the wish of all of us. We cannot request anyone else because circumstances are so difficult. Another person would not be able to endure the hardships here.” This request was sincerely based on the spiritual condition the writers of the letter perceived to be in their Bucklin congregation, a condition “which appears to our eyes to be so discouraging. But the Lord has sharper eyes than we. He looks at the heart and sees its need. How He can feed His children we do not know but what we do know is there is a sighing of misery in our hearts.” The letter closed with the deep desire for “a
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proclaimer of the Word who rightly shares the Word of truth and consolation.... We can do nothing other than pray God and the Professor to help. We leave everything in God’s hands.’ The name of C. Wallen never appeared on the roster of Augustana pastors and the congregation disappeared from the rolls.

Swenson as president felt the heavy burden of lack of pastors. In a letter to Norelius, he spoke of this pressing need in Indiana; Michigan, ‘where the Episcopalians are trying to take the field;’ Illinois, where although the lack of pastors was less ‘it is still impossible to visit all the vacant congregations even though some pastors are hardly home even every other Sunday [because of their work in adjoining settlements], and there are places where hundreds of Swedes live and congregations could and ought to be organized if only we had the men;’ Iowa, ‘where there are thousands of Swedes and eight or nine congregations of significant size that do not have any pastor in their vicinity;’ Dakota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Kansas. ‘We have many faithful Swedes who have been lost, who are as sheep without a shepherd; their number is great and increases.’

In the face of great need, the missionary program was reorganized. One feature was the more precise division of the Church into conferences with greater responsibility for the mission activity. Since 1851, the Scandinavians who belonged to the Synod of Northern Illinois had been divided into two large conferences, the Mississippi Conference and the Chicago Conference. The latter was made up of the Norwegians of the Synod of Northern Illinois and the former comprised the Swedish contingent of that body. In 1870, the west division of the Mississippi Conference was divided into the Iowa and the Kansas Conferences (which included, at first, the states of Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri and eventually, Texas, and Colorado). The east division of the Mississippi Conference was separated into the Illinois (consisting of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and southern Wisconsin) and New York (which comprised New York and Pennsylvania and eventually all of New England and the states along the eastern seaboard) conferences. The fifth conference, Minnesota, had been organized in 1858.

The new plan for missionary work in the Church incorporated features both of centralization and dispersion of power. The overall supervision of mission activity was lodged in a Central Home Mission Board of eight members: four pastors and four laymen. From among themselves, they elected a chairman, a secretary, and a treasurer. Responsibility for the selection of traveling ministers, catechists, and colporteurs (lay assistants who distributed religious literature) was vested in this central body. The committee was required to make a report to the Church at each of its annual conventions.

The dispersion of direction for missions was delegated to the five conferences. The president of each conference was responsible for his area to the Central Committee. In addition, he was one of five members of the mission committee in his conference which, beside himself, was composed of four elected members: two pastors and two laymen. It was expected
that each conference was to hold a meeting once a month for the cause of missions. If, however, this was not possible—e.g., too extensive an area—the conference was to be divided into mission districts wherein one meeting a month was to be held. Each conference was to meet not less than on a semi-annual basis for the sake of missions. From the conferences also were to come recommendations for capable people who could serve the missionary cause.

Finally, each congregation was urged to offer monthly prayers for missions and to devise a systematic method of gathering missionary funds. Important in this latter task was the organization of women's sewing societies. All money so collected was to be sent to the treasurer of the Conference Missionary Committee. The disposal of these funds was determined in consultation with the Committee of the Church.8

The years immediately following this arrangement proved that the new missionary program for Augustana would be effective. The growth in membership in the Augustana Lutheran Church and in the number of new congregations was impressive and more so because this was a period of declining Swedish immigration to the United States due in part to the worsening economic conditions in this country which culminated in the panic of 1873. The peak year between the end of the Civil War in the United States and 1879 was 1869 when 32,050 Swedish immigrants arrived. During the years 1870 to 1873, this fell off sharply. In 1870, there were 15,430 immigrants; 1871, 12,985; 1872, 11,838; and in 1873, 9,486.9

The effectiveness of Augustana's new mission arrangement can be seen in other statistics. In 1873, Augustana grew by 3167 from the previous year.10 Had Augustana not already made a more effective approach to bring these people into its congregations, the number of immigrants would have made little difference to the expansion of the Church.

A comparison of the years 1870 through 1873 in growth of membership, establishment of new congregations, and financial resources bears witness to the wisdom of the 1870 decision. In that year, Augustana recorded a total communicant membership of 18,819 in 142 congregations. Forty-two of these congregations with a membership of 2443 were designated as non-Swedish. During the next three years, notwithstanding the loss of nearly fifteen percent of its membership due to the separation of its Norwegian sector, Augustana had grown to 26,861, a forty-three percent growth.11 The growth of congregations was also notable. Between 1870 and 1873, the number of congregations grew from 143 to 187 or an increase of almost thirty-two percent.12

Although economic conditions worsened in those years, missionary funds grew through collections from churches and the local sewing societies. In 1870, the churches contributed $752.64 to home missions and $434.45 to the foreign missionary endeavor. In 1871, the amount given for missions rose more than threefold to $4082.16 ($3415.99 for home mission, $666.17, for foreign). The funds for the following two years were less but still somewhat above what the response to the missionary need had been previously (1872: $2376.07 for home missions; for foreign, $357.35;
1873, the year of a severe financial panic: $1415.77 for home missions, $247.61, for foreign). These statistics show that the growth of Augustana under the new missionary arrangement during Swensson’s presidency was a significant improvement over the previous system.

A second decision crucial to Augustana’s future was made in 1870 at its annual meeting in Andover, June 15-22, when it was decided to join the General Council. The momentous character of that action was described by Arden:

The decision was a deliberate and carefully considered move to identify with a particular type of Lutheranism in America, in association with which the Augustana Synod absorbed deep and abiding influences, and experienced a basic orientation which would go far in determining its ultimate direction and perhaps even its final historical destiny.

It was not difficult for Swensson to lend a positive influence in the relation of Augustana to the General Council. Both previous to 1870 and in the decision itself, he had spoken favorably about the association of the two groups of Lutherans. He carried that same attitude into his presidency. Although questions remained regarding the relationship, for Swensson it was enough that the Confessions were followed. In his comments on doctrinal controversies, he wrote:

As long as the General Council holds to and insists on faithfulness to the basic teachings and confessions upon which it is founded and upon the conviction that these are truly Lutheran, we will stand with them and participate both in the struggle and the blessing of a true Christian and churchly union.

Among the issues which required further clarification were altar and pulpit fellowship. At the meeting of Augustana at Paxton, June 24-July 1, 1873, the Church announced what the General Council had decided the previous year. On the question of eucharistic (altar) fellowship, the Council declared, on the one hand: ‘‘Heretics and errorists are to be excluded from the Lord’s Table. The responsibility of an unworthy approach to the Lord’s Table does not rest alone upon those who make the approach, but also upon him who invites them.’’ On the other hand, there was a singular tolerance and respect for the sincerity of the individual believer:

It is the judgment of our Church...that...‘‘beyond all doubt wherever there are many pious and holy people in all churches who have not accorded and do not yet accord in all respects with us, who walk in the simplicity of their hearts and although not thoroughly understanding the points involved, but in no respect approving the blasphemies which are uttered against the Holy Supper, as it is dispensed and taught in our churches according to the institution and testament of Christ’’ [are followers of the true faith].

On the other issue, that of pulpit fellowship, there was no such leeway.
In fact, at first glance, there is room to suggest more than an element of intolerance in its declaration that, on the one hand, the pulpit in its purity should be conscientiously guarded and no one was to be "admitted to our pulpits, whether of Lutheran name or any other, of whom there is just reason to doubt whether he will preach the pure truth of God's Word as taught in the confessions of our Church." On the other hand, "Lutheran ministers may properly preach wherever there is an opening in the pulpit of other churches, unless the circumstances imply, or seem to imply, a fellowship with error or schism, or a restriction on the unreserved expression of the whole counsel of God." 17

A more careful examination of the total statement will likely eliminate the intolerance it seems to express. From a practical point of view, it was not likely that non-Lutheran pastors would invite clergy from a Lutheran church to preach if their convictions were not in substantial agreement. In the ecclesiastical and theological climate of that day, it was highly unlikely non-Lutherans would have been any more willing to offer the opportunity for Lutheran pastors to preach in their churches. The rule, therefore, became one of "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran ministers only and Lutheran altars... for Lutheran communicants only." At a later date, the Council declared: "Inasmuch as the General Council has never annulled, rescinded, or reconsidered the declarations made in Akron, Ohio [eucharistic fellowship and exchange of pulpits] in the year 1872, they still remain, in all their parts and provisions, the action and rule of the General Council." 18

Another important issue was secret societies. The position of the General Council received full support from Augustana. Regarding such organizations, the Council declared although "mere secrecy in itself... [is not] immoral, yet it is so easily susceptible of abuse, and in its abuse may work... great mischief in family, church and state." Persons were counseled whether the benefits "they believed were connected with secret societies might not be equally reached in modes not liable to the same abuse." The heart of the declaration rested in the unconditional affirmation that any societies which claim "moral and religious ends" but which are not based on the authority of God's Word as contained in the Old and New Testaments "and [that] do not recognize our Lord Jesus Christ as true God and the only mediator between God and man, and assume to themselves what God has given to His Church and ministers, and require undefined obligations to be assumed by oath should not be joined by either the clergy or laity." 19 These statements place secret societies in very unfavorable light.

In his presidential report to the Church in 1872, Swensson recounted how one parish in the adoption of the new constitution for Augustana congregations encountered opposition against it from one of its members, a free mason. He was able in the beginning to gather around him enough members to vote down the document. However, when "the issue was properly presented at the congregational meeting and discussed, it was finally brought to a vote and there was only one vote against the constitution." 20
The following year, Swensson again sensed the need to express himself against members of secret societies who sought church membership. Among the enemies of the Church, Swensson noted, were the many "societies of unbelief and secret organizations which are openly furiously fighting against Christianity." He especially cited an organization which had recently come into existence (1867). "This year we must especially be reminded of a relatively new society, the Grange of Patrons of Husbandry, which has sought to intrude several of our congregations." He expressed confidence, however, that Augustana could successfully meet this threat. "We have reason to thank the Lord who led our Synod to take a definite position against these as early as we did."21

Throughout its history, Augustana according to its congregational constitution forbade its members to join a secret society or to continue membership in such although subsequent modifications were made in this rule in the years 1894, 1907, and 1939.22

In relation to another point—chiliasm (the view that an interval of time would precede Christ’s second coming in which Christ would rule with the saints on earth to oppress evil persons)—Augustana also joined with the General Council’s rejection of this theological position. "The General Council had neither had, nor would consent to have, fellowship with any synod which tolerates the ‘Jewish opinions’ or ‘chiliastic opinions’ condemned in the seventeenth article of the Augsburg Confession."23

In later years, there would be conflicts between Augustana and the General Council on such issues as differences in attitudes on consumption of alcoholic beverages, disciplinary measures against lodge members in some quarters, location of a seminary, and Augustana’s fear of the General Council’s invasion into Swedish territory with the organization of the Synod of the Northwest in Minnesota territory. During Swensson’s presidency, none of these differences appeared acute with the exception of the seminary location and even this question was dealt with amicably.

The establishment of a joint seminary was the dream of W.A. Passavant. In 1869, he introduced in General Council deliberations a resolution to establish a theological seminary in the Chicago area "where the future ministry of our English, German, and Scandinavian churches may be educated together in the unity of the common faith confessed and maintained by this body."24 This proposal grew in attractiveness so that by 1873 Augustana in convention at Paxton noted sympathetically that Passavant had by that time gone so far as to prepare a plan and made possible the acquisition of valuable property on the north side of Chicago.25

This proposal came at a time in Augustana’s history when the idea seemed very attractive. The removal of the College and Seminary from Chicago to Paxton in 1863 had seemed so promising, but before long the prospects for its success dimmed. "Less than five years on the Paxton prairie the pioneers saw clouds rising on the horizon portending changes in both the fledgling institution and the supporting churches."26 Swensson early perceived the difficulties ahead if the institution remained in Paxton. On February 3, 1868, he wrote to Hasselquist: "That it [College and Seminary] must be moved I have seen for a long time."27
Why, then, in face of the attractive offer from the General Council, did not Augustana merge its theological endeavor with that of the Council? By 1873, arrangements to move to Rock Island had progressed so far that the fascinating offer from the Council had to be rejected. The purchase of land in the Mississippi River town of Rock Island, Illinois together with monetary contributions had advanced to the point that on November 10, seventy days following the close of the 1873 Synod, the cornerstone was laid for the first building at the new College and Seminary location.  

In addition to the issue of a joint seminary, other instances of cooperation and the presence of a fraternal spirit between Augustana and the General Council were clearly evident. None of these was more important than the mutual undertaking of missionary activities outside of the United States.

From its beginning, Augustana had showed noteworthy interest in missions. In spite of its limited means, as early as 1861 at its first convention, a foreign mission board consisting of Jonas Swensson, Erland Carlsson, and Erik Norelius had been formed. The committee was charged with the responsibility to gather funds for missionary work in foreign lands. In 1862, the committee reported a total income of $223.61. Of that amount $100 has been sent to the Swedish Missionary Society to be used for the mission in India, $100 to the Hermansberg Mission [sponsored by Pastor Claus Harms of Hermansberg, Germany. It served a field in Natal, India]. The deep commitment of Augustana to missions was restricted only by limited financial means which prohibited it from supporting such work by itself. Hence, it directed its efforts and means through established agencies which carried on missions in designated areas. With its decision to join the General Council in 1870, Augustana then directed some of its funds through the Council toward its work. In 1871, Augustana contributed $100 to the field in India which was under the auspices of the General Council; $300.14 in 1872; $134.64 in 1873 (the year of the financial panic).

Other aspects of the General Council association were of benefit to Augustana. In 1871, the Church recommended that wherever the English language was used in worship, "the Synod enjoins that the 'Church Book' of the General Council be employed." Already, a decade after its organization, Augustana sensed the inevitable need to minister to its people in the English language. In fact, Erland Carlsson at one point stated: "I believed that the Swedish language would be dead in America in twenty years, and therefore I prepared myself for the change and studied the English language." Swensson in his 1872 presidential address expressed the same view although he cautioned against too rapid a transition. The perception of these people is quite remarkable. Carlsson’s prediction was not to be fulfilled, at least formally, for half a century when, in 1908, the Association of English Lutheran Churches within the Augustana Lutheran Church was organized. However, twenty years earlier in Rock Island, Illinois, the first English Augustana congregation was organized. So was given some credence to Carlsson’s view.
In the face of a dearth of English materials, it is important to note that the General Council gave valuable aid to Augustana in the language transition by its "Church Book." In the following years, the influence of the Council would be highly important in this aspect of acculturation.

Not always were the two bodies harmonious especially in the area of home missions. To Augustana, especially in Minnesota and the upper Mississippi Valley, it appeared as if the Council were guilty of proselytization. The years of conflict, however, lay in the future beyond the time of Swensson’s presidency. Indeed, a survey of the association of Augustana with the General Council during Swensson’s tenure as president shows that the Council contributed significantly to Augustana’s benefit.

The third important event in 1870 was the exodus of the Norwegians out of the Augustana Church. Herein lies an irony. On the one hand, by the decision of Augustana to join with the General Council, it showed its desire for Lutheran unity in the United States. On the other hand, the separation of the Norwegians and Swedes suggests a tendency in the opposite direction. It would be wrong, however, to conclude that this Church, composed largely of Swedish Lutheran immigrants, was a group which did not know its own mind.

In its relation to the General Council, Augustana’s decision to become a member of that Lutheran body was predominantly theological. In view of its own commitment to the Lutheran confessions, especially to the Augsburg Confession and Luther’s Small Catechism, Augustana found in the Council strong support for its position. The decision of Augustana to join the General Council was viewed, at least by some of the Norwegians, as an act based on theological grounds they could not accept. Previous to the 1870 convention, Swensson wrote to Norelius of the reluctance of the Augustana Norwegians to enter the General Council:

I do not believe the question of joining the General Council will arouse much heat among the Swedes. The Norwegians, in so far as I can in general ascertain, will not join. It appears they would perhaps rather be with Missouri. If this issue could be discussed first at the meeting and union be decided, then the Norwegians will probably secede. With that, the question of property would be decided.34

One can detect in Swensson an apparent bias against the Norwegians—a view not necessarily valid in the relationship of the Norwegians and Swedes in Augustana. In the same letter to Norelius of March 6, 1869, he wrote: “It would be better if separation occurred in peace. I really become very tired of the Norwegians in Carver. They have strange ideas.”

Swensson had not felt the relationship with the Norwegians gave encouragement for a continuing participation to work together in Augustana:

Regarding the separation of the Norwegians from us,... it is a shame that Christianity cannot demonstrate its strength, that two nations cannot agree. Yet, I cannot oppose their departure if they do so
with good will. For many years experience has taught us that in general, the Norwegians and the Swedes do not want to coalesce.\textsuperscript{35}

Swensson’s view of the Norwegians appears to have been more bitter than that of the other Augustana leaders. This may have been due to earlier personal experiences. He directed sharp darts against two Augustana Norwegian pastors. One was C.J.P. Peterson who had come into Augustana in 1861. By 1866, he had been dropped from the ministerium of Augustana after the Church held a special Synod meeting April 24-27 in Chicago. Peterson was persistent in following his own ideas and was obdurate toward correction and counseling. Beside inflexibility, he was charged with insubordination as he insisted on wearing the ministerial garb of the Norwegian State church and using its ministerial handbook, liturgy, and ceremonials. He was charged with the use of underhanded activity to win his objectives and with disregard for the congregational constitution.\textsuperscript{36}

Of Peterson, Swensson wrote: ‘That [he] came into our Synod I regard as unfortunate. He has never listened to you and in his heart he has apparently the whole time belonged somewhere else.’\textsuperscript{37}

His most severe strictures, however, were against Paul Andersen. Swensson seemed to disregard the help Andersen had given earlier to Augustana. When Esbjörn was confronted with the dilemma which faced him when the American Home Missionary Society required that he admit none to church membership and the eucharist unless they were born again, and when Esbjörn wrestled with his own conviction that confession of faith according to the teachings of the Lutheran Church should be the norm, then it was Paul Andersen in 1850 who gave counsel to Esbjörn which the latter followed. Andersen was then pastor of a Norwegian Lutheran church in Chicago. With reference to communion, Andersen advised Esbjörn to report to the Home Missionary Society that the Scandinavians ‘had been members of the State Church at home and were not to be compared to those in this country who were outside of the church.’\textsuperscript{38}

Andersen had come from Norway as a young man and had studied at the Presbyterian Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin. For a time, Andersen thought of joining the Presbyterian Church, but in 1848, he became pastor of the Norwegian Lutheran Church which was organized that year in Chicago. He and Erland Carlsson worked together in a fraternal spirit, although in style they differed. Andersen, indifferent, if not hostile, to church forms, on one occasion chided Carlsson who followed the Swedish Lutheran Liturgy and wore the Swedish clerical garb. He said jestingly to Carlsson: ‘He would pour tallow on his robe so that the mice would eat it up. He considered absolution ‘popistic’ and liturgy ‘ceremonial slavery.’’\textsuperscript{39}

Perhaps Swensson’s harsh criticism stemmed in part from Andersen’s low church views and his leanings toward the Presbyterian Church perhaps from its impact upon him while he was a student at Beloit College. Swensson had little sympathy for the Reformed teaching which
he identified with the new evangelism and revivalism he had encountered in America. He was critical of any form of what he perceived to be ultra-evangelism with its emphasis upon feeling. Furthermore, the tendency to downgrade the office of the ordained ministry, the Church, and the sacraments made Swensson highly suspicious of what he believed to be Reformed influence. "The ultra-evangelical movement, ... though it very likely has much good, also brings about much ruin through its spiritual laxity in teaching and life and through its leaning toward certain Reformed teaching." 40

Swensson’s harsh words against Andersen were prompted by what he had heard from Andersen as a preacher. "A more unspiritual mind I have not found within our Synod ... . How often has he not sought to eliminate preaching of God’s Word and spiritual exercises not only at our Synod but also at our conferences." 41

Theologically, Swensson also had reason to have doubts about some of the Norwegian pastors in the Synod. C.O. Hultgren, who was then a student at Augustana College and Seminary when it was located in Chicago, observed as early as 1863 that there was dissatisfaction among the Norwegians in their relationship to the Swedes in the Augustana Church. "I have heard from the Norwegian students of our Synod that they desire a union with the State Pastors of Norway." 42 This created an interesting situation for Swensson. Among the Norwegian bodies was the Norwegian Synod which was close to the state church of Norway. Moreover, this Synod was also sympathetic to the Missouri Synod and joined with it in the organization of the Synodical Conference in 1872. 43 Thus, on the one hand, Swensson was critical of whatever Reformed influence he sensed in Paul Andersen who had association with another group of Norwegians, the pietistic Haugeans. On the other hand, he could not tolerate the Missouri Synod position and thus Swensson would have been critical of those Norwegians within the Augustana Lutheran Church whom Hultgren described as desirous of "a union with the State Pastors."

Against the background of his bias, Swensson made an accusation against the Norwegians:

How many Norwegian pastors really want to serve in our Synod? There may be exceptions. Nevertheless, as we have worked with them and given them for the most part what they propose, when something goes against what they want, immediately they grumble and show hatred. That cannot go on. If they choose to go, let them go in peace, especially now since they have decided to form their own Synod. 44

Swensson could not resist a sarcastic conclusion:

To lose Weenaas [the Norwegian professor at Augustana] as a teacher who is a capable man is unfortunate; but certainly they need at least one capable person among them. I do not wish them misfortune and although I do not want to reject them as incapable, it is a known fact that in general they lack energy and administrative ability. 45
Although the ethical character of Swensson’s utterances may be doubtful, they do point to the fact that other than theological reasons led to the separation of the Norwegians and Swedes and actually loom larger than the issues of doctrine. The statements Swensson wrote to Hasselquist display the problem of nationalism. Associated with this was the dissatisfaction the Norwegians felt in that they were the minority group. Certainly this was felt in relation to the location of the Seminary in Illinois where the Swedish population, especially around Paxton, was considerably larger than that of the Norwegians. Victor Setterdahl, a student, observed in 1865 that there were eighteen Swedes and only four Norwegians at Augustana College and Seminary.\(^46\)

Probably no single factor was more important than the issue of language—always a major factor in the adjustment of non-English speaking immigrants into the United States. The fact of large numbers of emigrants from Norway and Sweden, the need to minister to each group in its mother tongue—a cherished experience in the lives of newcomers to a foreign land suffering homesickness for the country they left—reached proportions which made separation inevitable.\(^47\)

Swensson’s unfavorable assessment of the Norwegians does not appear to reflect the attitude of Augustana as a whole. The separation of the Norwegians from the Swedes was one of those instances in a potentially explosive situation where a model of Christian amity prevailed. The friendly separation had been prepared for by the realization that there were ethnic and nationalistic differences which had to be taken into account.\(^48\)

Following the acceptance of the resolutions regarding the future relationships between the two bodies, a brief farewell ceremony closed with “brotherly handshaking and deep emotion.” The people prayed and sang Martin Luther’s hymn, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” with the line “the Word they still shall let remain” as a ringing affirmation of their common Lutheran heritage. The Norwegians then left the new church edifice at Andover and retired to the old church—now the Jenny Lind Chapel—to erect the formal structure of an ecclesiastical organization.\(^49\)

On one issue Swensson was correct. Five months before the separation, he had written to Norelius: “It is uncertain how it will go with the separation of the Norwegians. They are not united among themselves. It appears that some of them want to vote against separation if they cannot find a way to unite. There is some disunity regarding their educational work.”\(^50\) Swensson’s assessment was remarkably accurate. There were those who felt so close to the original Augustana Church that they registered their protest against the decision to separate. Among congregations which so acted were those located in Leland, Illinois; Newburg, Minnesota; Decorah, Iowa; and Jefferson and Yorkville, Wisconsin. The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran congregation in Chicago felt so strongly that it sent a letter to the Synod in session over the signatures of seven deacons and trustees. Following a statement in which they expressed their conviction that “a withdrawal at this time [is] inexpedient and derogatory to the best interest both of the several individual congregations, connected
with the said Augustana Synod, and also to the Church at large, they declared: "The old Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Chicago, whose deacons and trustees we are, do hereby enter our most solemn and earnest protest against such withdrawal."\(^{51}\)

The lack of unanimity among the Norwegians prohibited the formation of a unified church body. Two separate groups were formed: the Norwegian Danish Augustana Synod and the Norwegian Danish Conference. Their separate existence continued until 1890 when both merged with the larger United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America.\(^{52}\)

A radical reorganization of the missionary program to Swedish Lutheran immigrants in America, membership in the General Council, and separation of the Norwegians and Swedes in the United States were major events which made of 1870 a crucial year for the young Augustana Lutheran Church.

### 2. Other Issues President Swensson Confronted

The three and a half years of Swensson’s presidency was a time of historical events which influenced Augustana. Also, theological controversies were encountered. Moreover, moral issues impinged on the Church. Finally, the relocation of its college and seminary, though not completed at the time of his death, had nevertheless been decided upon and the process was underway for the completion of that action.

Among the events in the United States which affected Augustana, two deserve special attention: the Chicago fire of 1871 and the panic of 1873.

From the early Sunday evening of October 8 to the early Tuesday morning of October 10, 1871, the disastrous Chicago fire occurred with an estimated loss of $200,000,000.\(^{53}\) Two Augustana congregations, Immanuel of which Erland Carlsson was pastor and Gethsemane were destroyed.\(^{54}\)

In 1869, not quite two years before the conflagration, Immanuel had moved into a lovely new building which with the organ represented a cost of $34,000. Following the fire, there were those of the congregation who saw the situation as hopeless. It was suggested that those who held the mortgage be allowed to take the land and the insurance and that a new congregation be organized. To this the redoubtable Carlsson responded: "If you intend to go into bankruptcy, I will no longer be your pastor. But if you will be honest and put your trust in the Lord, I will do my utmost that we may both build a new church and pay our debt [$22,600]"\(^{55}\)—a goal which was achieved.

President Swensson understandably, not only as elected leader of Augustana, but also because of his warm relationship with Carlsson felt deeply the loss sustained by his friend and the congregation. From the experience, he drew a theological lesson: "How perishable is not everything human and earthly. How quickly and terribly has not the glory of Chicago come to an end." He drew an eschatological inference as he went on to say: "This is how it will be sometime when the elements are melted by the heat and the earth with that which is upon it will be
burned up. Then God will show the kingdom which cannot tremble. God’s city shall yet be joyful.”

Swensson’s eschatology, however, did not allow him to wring his hands and do nothing. In his presidential message in 1872, he urged that ‘‘we the more fortunate brothers in the faith may reach to them a helping hand.’’ The Church challenged ‘‘each and every pastor and leaders of the congregations to ask themselves as well as their members whether they had done their duty, or if possible might there not yet be something more which could be spared to help [the Chicago churches].’’ In his final message to the Church, Swensson could report the remarkable progress of the Immanuel congregation. It had succeeded in building its new church which was soon ready, and the project had been accomplished with only an increase of $3000 to $4000 to the old debt.

The negative effects of the breakdown of the economic system in the United States in 1873 excluded few, and the Swedish Lutheran immigrants suffered along with the rest of their fellow countrymen. The decline in contributions for missionary work hampered the ministry of Augustana. Typical of the difficulties the Church faced was revealed in a letter Swensson sent to Hasselquist regarding the gathering of funds for the College and Seminary. The campaign to gather funds for the purchase of land in Rock Island for the relocation of the institution had not gone well. ‘‘Had not the business crisis come, I believe that we would by now have gathered the money.’’

Swensson’s personal financial status also suffered. Not until the late sixties had he enjoyed a modicum of financial security. In 1868, he received the largest salary of his career and the amount of $1500 was not to be exceeded during the remainder of his life. When the time came to send his oldest son, Carl, to Augustana, sufficient funds were not available. The year was 1873, and the financial panic only exacerbated the scarcity of money and, of course, Swensson’s declining health added to their problems. To Carl, he wrote: ‘‘It has been well for me that the Education Committee has shared expenses with me because of my illness, so you can be free from financial anxiety. If possible, I want to pay at least for this term.’’

There was a good deal of pathos in the financial stringency the Swenssons experienced. On September 29, 1873, the father wrote to his son in Paxton: ‘‘I have received only $25.00 of my pay [no doubt due to the economic panic that affected all the churches and their people] since you left [on September 4].’’ He did send ten dollars with the explanation: ‘‘The money is actually from mamma. She received $10.00 for her birthday [September 22. She was born in 1831.]’’ The Swenssons were not alone in suffering from the dire economic conditions in the United States at that time. The financial pressures of the panic of 1873 were general.

Although difficulties with Episcopalians and Methodists did not cease, new theological controversies arose. Of these, the most serious was what came to be known as the Waldenströmian Controversy.

The leader of this movement was Paul Peter Waldenström (1838-1917). A capable graduate of Uppsala University from which he graduated with
honors, he was ordained into the Lutheran Church in Sweden in 1864. He became an associate of Carl Olof Rosenius, one of the chief leaders of the nineteenth century pietistic religious revival in Sweden. Upon Rosenius' death in 1868, Waldenström became his successor as editor of the influential and widely read journal, Pietisten. In an 1872 issue of that paper, he published a sermon (never formally preached) for the twentieth Sunday after Trinity. In this statement, he expounded five points which comprised his view of the doctrine of the atonement: through the fall of humanity no change occurred in the heart of God; neither cruelty nor wrath in the heart of God obstructed humanity's salvation as a result of the fall; the change which occurred in the fall was in humankind alone in that humanity became sinful and thereby fell away from God and the life which is in God; as a result, an atonement was needed for human blessedness but not an atonement which appeased God and rendered him once more gracious, but an atonement which took away human sin and again rendered mortal beings righteous; finally, this atonement took place in Jesus Christ.  

The basic conflict which arose between the Waldenströmians and the Swedish Lutherans both in Sweden and America was the relation of God's righteousness to God's love. To these Lutherans, Waldenström gave too little place to the former attribute of God. Certainly God was love but He was also righteousness. This was closely related to the holiness of God which human sin had violated. Sin had transgressed the relationship with God and only God could redeem this brokenness. Nothing less than the costly sacrifice of God in Christ could accomplish reconciliation. Waldenström's view of the atonement was both too shallow and too subjective—too shallow in that it minimized the reality of God's wrath toward human violation of His righteousness and too subjective in that change was solely in the human being and not in the heart of the suffering God nor in the relationship between God and mortal beings.

Although this theological conflict did not receive a formal definition until 1872, its basic spirit and thought had manifested themselves several years earlier. In the United States, one of the places where this proto-Waldenströmian orientation appeared was in Immanuel Lutheran Church in Chicago where Carlsson was pastor. It took the form of a mission society and was a fervent expression of the neo-evangelism (also noted as hyper-evangelism) which Swensson so firmly opposed. Even at this early stage, the mood, if not the thought, of Waldenströmianism was making itself evident. The shadows of the movement were already apparent as early as 1864 with the arrival of Martin Sundin, a recent immigrant from Sweden, who joined Carlsson's congregation. Sundin urged that a mission society be organized within the congregation in which Carlsson cooperated. This occurred July 5-6, 1869 and was the first of many such societies to be organized in the United States. Among the leaders at that meeting was C.A. Björk who some years later took an active part in the founding of the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant Church.

In 1867 and 1868, a sizable number of like-minded people of the lasare
(reader) movement came to Chicago from Jönköping. They became known as Mission Friends—a harbinger of what the name of the church they would organize would be. On December 25, 1868, a second mission society was formed in Chicago with the name of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Missionary Association of Chicago. In the following month of January, the Association purchased lots and by October, 1868, a new mission house had been erected.61 This was an omen of things to come when in many communities where Swedish Lutherans had congregated, a Mission Covenant church would be found close by, sometimes within a city block or two or on the same or adjoining section of land in rural areas.

In the beginning, the relationship between the Missionary Association and Carlsson was friendly. He even participated in the dedication of the new mission house. Still, even as early as 1868, he had anxieties. “The work and anxiety have almost overcome us here. Petitions are circulating in Chicago to form a church to be called Rena Evangeliska Luterska Kyrka i Chicago (Pure Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chicago).”62 The relationship deteriorated. Words and actions between the two groups became less and less charitable. Two years after Carlsson had expressed his concern to Hasselquist, the mission group was incorporated on March 21, 1870 as the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Mission. The separation from the Immanuel Lutheran church was complete.63 During the seventies, the conflict between Augustana Lutherans and the members of the Association, who later became a part of that denomination known as the Mission Friends, spread. In some places such as Galesburg, Illinois and Lindsborg, Kansas, the strife was especially bitter.64

It is not surprising, therefore, that although Waldenströmianism had not yet received its formal statement, its presence was well known at the time Swensson gave his first presidential address. Along with his criticism of the proselytism by the Episcopalians, he also turned his attention to the group “which had made itself liable as a separatist society in Chicago under the name of Mission Society.” At that point, Swensson expressed satisfaction that “under the special grace of God, their attempt to divide has turned out to be fruitless and in several places where divisions have occurred, order and unity have begun to appear.” Still, Swensson deplored such separatist efforts. “It is lamentable that such ruinous attempts to divide should be made in the name of Christ; for it is to be feared that many simple souls will be seduced but also completely destroyed in the spiritual sense.”65 When the movement received its theological formulation, Swensson was well equipped to address the issue. In a letter to Hasselquist on June 29, 1872, Swensson showed his acquaintance with the issue: “It is a strange view which claims no reconciliation is made on God’s side or that God is not in need of reconciliation because He is unchangeable and is never wrathful over any human being.” Swensson then moved from an affirmation of God as wrathful and related this to reconciliation or atonement: “In Waldenströmianism there is neither any word of wrath in the godly sense that God’s relationship to humanity is not changed through atonement nor that God has accepted an individual human being when he believes.” He feared what the consequences might be of such one-sided
preaching with its emphasis upon love and neglect of God’s righteousness which was violated by human sin and so would call forth God’s wrath. He ended the letter: ‘May the Lord help us if this happens to our Lutheran Zion.’

Less than five months later, Swensson again wrote to Hasselquist on November 23, 1872: ‘At one of our monthly meetings, it was actually asserted that no atonement is needed on God’s side because He is changeless and has never been wrathful against humanity and his relation to humanity cannot be changed but that it is humanity which must be reconciled.’ In sarcasm, he exclaimed; ‘Wonderful extremes!’ He continued his letter with a rejection of the new evangelism against which he had had a vendetta ever since his school days in Jönköping (December 1847-June 1848):

I’ve often said that spiritual extremes meet even though they go out from different sides of the Truth. So these meet on this issue in the new evangelism which seems to lay so much importance upon the subjective that the objective is rejected in the atonement itself.

Interestingly, Swensson associated rationalism with Waldenström’s view. In the letter just noted, he said that rationalism in Waldenström’s school of thought had done away with the objective view of the atonement. This may have arisen from Waldenström’s rejection of the Lutheran confessions and his utterance which became famous when he was confronted by a theological doctrine which he questioned: ‘Where is it so written?’ The Bible apart from such theological statements as the Lutheran confessions was Waldenström’s sole basis of authority.

Swensson referred to the ‘conflict over atonement’ which was causing much strife in Sweden in his final presidential report. Here too he attacked the role of reason. He regarded the object of his attack as a new heathendom which was worse than the old because the latter had never heard of Christ but the former had. The old heathendom was unChristian; the new, anti-Christian. The old was the worship of idols; the new is an enmity toward God. He wrote:

A Christianity which places blind reason as judge over God’s word is already a step toward unbelief. A Christianity which makes humanity as great as possible and Christ as little as possible already bears within itself the spirit of the anti-Christ. When a Christianity which under the name of freedom would throw away all bonds which God’s word places upon humanity’s sinful will and its blind reason which leads astray, there is already the beginning of spiritual dissolution by which humanity does that which is incapable of faith. The Christianity which tears apart God’s word and throws away that portion which reason considers distasteful already bears within itself the seed of denial.

Swensson also attacked Waldenström’s teaching on love. To Hasselquist, he wrote of a letter he had received from Welinder (probably P.P. Welinder who was a leader in the religious revival in Sweden). Swensson
referred to it as a 'love-filled letter' and sent it on to Hasselquist. 'In
this [letter] one can see the disguised teaching on the atonement by Waldenström which has emerged in Sweden.'\textsuperscript{70} Here Swensson criticized an
overemphasis upon love to the neglect of the righteousness of God
which thus distorted both.

Swensson was regarded by Hasselquist as a capable apologist for the
Lutheran view against Waldenströmianism. Following Swensson's death,
Hasselquist wrote: "A great sorrow came to us during the joy of
Christmas. The Lord called from us the solidly grounded and immovable
brother, J. Swensson .... It is truly sad to lose such a faithful man as he in
this time of perplexity.'" As professor at Paxton, he promised: "You can
be sure that I shall impress nothing else but the old Lutheran teachings
upon the students as long as I am able.'" He disclosed what constituted
'this time of perplexity'; "The Swedish Church's Mission Friends have
quickly fallen in on the side of Waldenström and even reprint his
writings. We not only have to fight but we also suffer heavy losses as a
church through Waldenström's writings which are the most deplorable I
have ever read.'" In reference to Swensson, he wrote: "During such time
it is an unusually heavy loss to see the thinning of our leadership. But
what the Lord does is well done; that we want to believe even though we
cannot see it.'\textsuperscript{71}

While the doctrine of the atonement was central to the controversy,
there were other issues between Waldenströmianism and Augustana
which were also important. Among these were the nature of the Church
and the ministry. The Mission friends desired a closed communion or
what could be called a believer's Eucharist. It was their belief, along with
other neo-evangelicals, that the efficacy of the Eucharist depended upon
the character of the celebrants and the communicants. If these were not
sufficiently pure in faith and life, the Eucharist would confer no benefits.
Plainly, this was related to belief in the "pure" church of reborn believers
and was one of a piece with that view.

Swensson, along with his colleagues, could not abide this theology of
the Mission Friends and of the neo-evangelicals. It was too subjective.
Swensson insisted that both the ministry and the Eucharist are valid
because of the Word and promises of God. Therein was the objective
view: what God had done rather than human effort, feeling, intellect, or
will gives authenticity to that which God has instituted.\textsuperscript{72} The leaders of
Augustana were convinced of what they saw as the true church as stated
in the Augsburg Confession: "To obtain [justification] faith God instituted
the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the Sacraments"
and "It is... taught among us that [the] one holy Christian Church... is
the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in
its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the
Gospel.'\textsuperscript{73} The differences remained irreconcilable; the followers of the
Waldenströmian view organized a separate church body.

Toward the Church in Sweden, Swensson was more tolerant than he
was toward Waldenströmianism. The evidence of his appreciation for the
Swedish Church was persuasively shown in what he took with him into
the Church which became Augustana. Here, he was at one with the other leaders.

In worship life, it was the liturgy from the Church in Sweden which they adopted. Although critical of the 1819 Psalmbook of Johan Olof Wallin because of what they perceived to be its rationalism, it was, nevertheless, a revision in 1849 of that work by Bishop J.H. Thomander and Peter Wieselgren, then pastor at Halsingborg, which Augustana adopted. As early as 1856 while traveling across the Atlantic, Swensson wrote to Erland Carlsson: "If I had not been too late in thinking of it I would have taken with me a number of the Thomander-Wieselgren edition which, it cannot be denied, is much to be preferred [to the Wallin work]; however, I could not obtain any in Göteborg." It was this book of worship which Augustana employed either in its original form or adaptations of it until 1895.

As to doctrine, the heritage from Sweden was highly evident. In 1869, he wrote to Martin Johansson: "We have learned that the doctrine and the Confessions of the Lutherans are more valuable than we realized before." Although Swensson did not place the Confessions above scripture—indeed, scripture as the Word of God was always superior—nevertheless, he counted them as indispensable. He regarded them, too, as a gift from God. "As I have seen the rest of the church groups not only on paper in their church periodicals but have come into closer contact with them, more and more I have learned to see what is an imperishable treasure the Lord has given us in our Lutheran Church."

For Swensson, the Confessions were normative not only as the touchstone of what the true faith is but also as the measure by which the character of other faiths was to be known. He wrote: "What good the Episcopalians have in their confessions they have taken from the Lutheran confessions but later they diluted them with Reformed and Roman Catholic ideas." The historical accuracy of Swensson may be debatable but not the high regard he placed upon the Confessions.

This firm grounding in the scripture and the Confessions, Swensson brought with him from his nurture in the Lutheran Church in Sweden. And it must be remembered that it was upon the Small Catechism which it received from the Swedish Church that parish education in Augustana was founded.

But Swensson was also critical of the "mother church" and some of his utterances were sharp. He directed his discontent both against pastors in Sweden and the Church. When it is remembered that between the years 1849 and 1869 only six ordained pastors came from the fatherland to help the all too few pastors who struggled within Augustana to minister to the flood of immigrants, the Church in Sweden could scarcely have been an object of admiration. In a letter to Hasselquist in 1871, Swensson wrote: "Since the Mother Church has not sent out a single pastor [since Swensson and Andrén had come in 1856], pastors who are here must learn not to lean upon her. Thereby the Lord has led us to raise up an educational institution here so that youth can be educated for the holy office of the ministry."
Neither could he understand how the Lutheran Church in Sweden could support the Episcopalian proposal the latter had made in Sweden. The issuance of the *cleri commitialis* by the 1865-66 *Riksdag* [legislative assembly] directed immigrants "to affiliate with the Episcopalian Church if no Swedish Lutheran Church existed in the place where they might settle." This prescription the Church in Sweden attempted to soften by declaring that the emigrants could become Episcopalians in the United States "without in any way having to depart from their religious belief or practices." This was scarcely commendable concern from the Church in Sweden for its fellow countrymen in the United States. Moreover, the suggestion that a Lutheran could join an Episcopalian Church without a threat to one's Lutheran beliefs gave little sense of ease to the confessed Swensson. That the Episcopalians thought as they did was no surprise:

That they seem to have won the ear among Christians in Sweden seems remarkable to me, yet it almost enrages me. Have not the Lord Theological doctors and licentiates in Sweden read enough Church History and theological symbolics to recognize the difference between the Episcopalian Church and the Lutheran?

He wondered whether the "poor church at home" had not had enough schism "to better treasure our Church confessions and their genuine faith of gold." He said he would urge the immigrants "not to cast aside and mix iron and slag with the gold of the confessions of faith." Swensson was also critical of some of the pastors in Sweden. The contrast between the comfortable, secure living of pastors there and the still somewhat chaotic life of the frontier in the United States discouraged Swedish ministers from coming and serving in the Augustana church. One example was the attempt of the Swedish congregation at Campello (Brockton), Massachusetts to obtain a pastor identified simply as Ekstrom. He had received a request from this congregation to come to be its pastor. He set down the following conditions: he would receive 2000 riksdaler for cost of transportation for himself, his wife, three children and two servant girls and, if he should die, the congregation would pay the cost for his family to return to Sweden. Swensson reported; "The congregation has answered that it cannot accept these conditions; at the same time, it has informed me that the Synod might be willing to accept these conditions and take him for another place." But President Swensson was no more favorably disposed to Ekstrom than was the Campello congregation: "I do not perceive that the Synod can accept these conditions." The heavy demands of this Swedish pastor who would be accompanied by servant girls pointed to a style of life far different from that of Augustana pioneers. The accustomed life of comfort and security led Swensson to be highly critical of many of the members of the Swedish clergy.

Although, in general, the Swedish Lutherans of Minnesota enjoyed a good relationship with the rest of Augustana, there were also tensions. As early as 1859, Swensson wrote in his *dagbok* following his attendance
at the meetings of the Chicago and Mississippi Conferences held in Geneseo in September: "Our Swedish brethren continued to impress me as before, with the exception of those from Minnesota, among whom there seems to be dissension. The cause is possibly to be found in the varying backgrounds from Sweden, the old and the new, and possibly also in a lack of humility."

Some thirteen years later in a letter to Hasselquist, Swensson, then president with the burdens of the office, wrote: "The letter from Norelius and the plans of Minnesota made me sad. It is strange how willful Minnesota is toward the people as is also its unsteadiness and duplicity."

What were the causes of this tension? Swensson suggested a variety of backgrounds from Sweden may have been one reason. But certainly this would have been true of Illinois as well. He did state that theologically Minnesota "was oriented toward Missouri. There are found some of the leading men with strong leanings in that direction, especially Norelius." He wondered whether Minnesota might turn away from the General Council and become a part of the Synodical Conference. If the latter, "it will not be so easy for them to do this because of the language. So few of them understand German. Perhaps they would remain by themselves."

Swensson's own view of Missouri was scarcely positive. He regarded its rigid orthodoxy and talk of pure doctrine as unworthy of Lutheran thought.

Another factor may have been the age and size of the Minnesota Conference. It was the oldest conference, organized in 1858. Early in Augustana's history, it grew to be the largest. By the last year of Swensson's presidency, of the five existing conferences (Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota and New York), Minnesota claimed 26,891 communicant members in seventy-one congregations. Illinois, the second largest, consisted of forty-nine congregations with 10,974 communicant members. With fifty-nine percent of Augustana's 45,364 communicant members and forty percent of its 187 congregations, it is understandable why Minnesota may have chafed at the location in Illinois of both the presidency of the Church and its schools.

Certainly an important cause of the sometimes strained relationship between these two sectors of Augustana was geographic distance. This led to isolation. It was difficult for Augustana Lutherans from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Dakota Territory to travel to the one school the churches owned or to communicate with the administration in the distant state of Illinois. (There were only seven congregations in Wisconsin and two in the Dakota Territory).

This geographic factor may well have had an important influence in a difference of view as to whether the Church should diversify in its organization or become more centralized. In the reorganization of the work of missions among Swedish Lutheran immigrants in 1870, both of these features were incorporated. It was not long, however, before Minnesota expressed its discontent with the administration of mission funds under the 1870 plan. One third of all funds collected was to be directed to the Central Board which would then allot them as it saw fit. The
Södra Unnaryd Church, Sweden (exterior)

Home of Maria Blixit Swensson in Södra Unnaryd, Sweden
Sodra Unnaryd Church, Sweden (interior)

Snollebo farm where Jonas Swensson was born, Våthult, Småland, Sweden
First Parsonage, Hessel Valley, New York (from Rönnård, Ultrandranas kyrka (Stockholm, 1961), p. 48.).
Andover Church, Andover, Illinois
Minnesota Conference complained. The question was asked whether such an approach was justifiable in view of the fact that the "Minnesota Conference has a much larger and more extensive mission field than any other conference." Therefore, it argued that it should be permitted to retain all funds collected in the conference for use in its own area."88

The conflict between centralization and diversification also arose around two other issues: the publication of church journals and the establishment of schools. Beginning in July 1856, Hasselquist began the publication of a periodical entitled: *Det Ratta Hemlandet (The Right Homeland).* In subsequent years, the name of the paper was changed from time to time.

To certain leaders outside of Illinois, the need for such publications at a more local level was felt. Consequently, in 1872-73, Norelius published *Luthersk Kyrkotidning (Lutheran Church Paper)* which became a competitor with Hasselquist's paper. In 1873, Olof Olsson in Kansas also began a paper entitled *Nytt och Gammalt (The New and The Old).* Norelius expressed the desirability for a greater variety of such enterprises. He wrote to Olsson: "We were not dissatisfied with *Augustana och Missionaren [the former Det Ratta Hemlandet]* for what it is, but there was need of a local paper and this led to the publication of *Luthersk Kyrkotidning.* You must have felt the same need in Kansas."89

On this issue, Swensson took the position opposed to that of diversity as advocated by Norelius and Olsson. To Olsson he wrote:

> I have always believed that we poor Swedes in this land who hold the same faith and confession ought to hold together in our work. The scattering of strength is the occasion for weakness, but holding together gives strength.... What if Kansas had its own paper, none can hinder Iowa from doing the same.... Soon every congregation would have its own paper.... None can hinder them; but how shall that be with our mutuality?"90

In this same letter, he struck out at Minnesota. "So long as they [Minnesota] were weak, they gladly wanted a thing or two.... but now they believe themselves strong and would gladly be for themselves."

Swensson, together with Hasselquist, succeeded in merging the publications of Norelius, Olsson, and Hasselquist into one paper which was re-named *Augustana.* This name was retained for more than eighty years until its demise in 1956 because of the decreasing ability of the Augustana Lutherans to read Swedish. Norelius and Olsson were each offered $200 as compensation for their papers, a gesture which Olsson refused. He did not like the inference he felt was given that he surrendered his paper because of financial difficulties rather than out of "a voluntary decision for the good of the cause."91 In the end, Olsson was mollified and became co-editor with Hasselquist and Norelius of the new paper.

The issue of the school was far more serious. As long as Augustana College and Seminary was located in Paxton, the distance from Minnesota made access to the institution difficult. It was, in fact, an inconvenient location even within Illinois. After Jonas' son, Carl, had made his
first journey from Andover to Paxton in September 1873 to begin his studies at Augustana, he described the experience. From Andover, he had traveled to Galesburg where he arrived at 5:00 in the afternoon. From there, Knoxville was the next destination where he arrived at 8:00 the following morning. From there, he went to Bloomington via Peoria. In Bloomington where he had arrived at noon, he had to wait until 3:30 when he "took a freight train. An express train was available but not until 9:00 in the evening." He arrived in Paxton at eight in the evening. Thus from Galesburg to Paxton, a distance of less than 150 miles, it took Carl twenty-seven hours! Little wonder that Norelius was offended at the decision to move the school to this town about one hundred miles south of Chicago.

The plan to move the College and Seminary from Chicago to Paxton had emerged following the 1861 convention. William H. Osborne, president of the Illinois Central Railroad, offered to the College and Seminary board the sale of 1000 acres of good land around Paxton, Illinois at the price of six dollars per acre (about half its value) and a one dollar commission on each of 30,000 acres the board could sell and fifty cents commission per acre on the second 30,000 acre allotment. At the convention of the church in 1862, this plan was adopted and in the autumn of 1863, the educational institution was moved from Chicago to Paxton.

Against the Paxton move, the "independent regional spirit" of Minnesota expressed itself. Consequently, at its conference convention at East Union, Minnesota in 1862, the decision was made to open a school in that state. This was done in the autumn of 1862 at Norelius' home in Red Wing with him as the professor. This was the beginning of the St. Ansgar Academy which in 1875 moved to St. Peter and became Gustavus Adolphus College.

Even so early, the proponents for centralization showed their anxiety. Erland Carlsson wrote to Swensson: "The brothers in Minnesota are beginning a great foolishness to establish a school for learning. I fear what the consequences will be if the congregation in St. Paul supports that. The success and development of our school and church will be injured."

So, the tension between centralization and diversity took form early in Augustana's history. For centralization were the Augustana members of Illinois led by Carlsson, Hasselquist, and Swensson. For diversification was Minnesota led by Norelius. On some issues in the future, other areas such as the Swedish Lutherans in Kansas would side with Norelius as Olof Olsson did on the issue of church publications.

Before too many years, it became obvious that Paxton was not a favorable location for Augustana College and Theological Seminary. Beside the difficulty encountered in transportation, the community support of Paxton was lukewarm. The decision to move the institution to Rock Island was made in annual convention at Galesburg in 1872. This action plainly required considerable funds. At this point, the two views of centralization and diversity came into conflict.

The Minnesota School was also in need of funds. Members of that conference saw the church-wide appeal for money as a threat to what was
needed also for their new educational institution. However, according to Swensson, delegates from Minnesota had voted to gather monies for the Rock Island relocation of Augustana College and Seminary. On February 27, 1873, Swensson wrote to Hasselquist in reference to their northern brethren: "At the Synod they were so united regarding our work and the whole matter of moving to Rock Island." Then Swensson, not a little adept at sarcasm, added: "It seems to me that the Minnesota Brethren on their way home cooked together something other than what they expressed and voted for at Synod."

That which the "Minnesota Brethren on the way home cooked together" was the desire to delay the deputation of an agent to Minnesota to gather funds for the Rock Island project. Norelius had requested that at that time, Minnesota would be excused in lieu of its own intentions to strengthen financially its own school.

The day following his letter to Hasselquist, Swensson responded to the request of Norelius. He argued three points. First, as he had written to Hasselquist, he reminded Norelius: "The Minnesota brethren were as eager as anyone at the Synod meeting in Galesburg to move the College and Seminary to Rock Island. The pastors and delegates then talked strongly for the gathering of $30,000 so that the institution could be moved to Rock Island."

Secondly, Swensson sought to answer the complaint of the inconvenient geographic distance which the Paxton location had imposed upon Minnesota. Now with the school moving to Rock Island, it would be much more convenient for the Minnesota people to attend since this place is "closer to the Minnesota line."

Finally, Swensson defended not only the advantage but the necessity of centralization as it related to the schools. He conceded that he could wish for more schools and that such could be under the administration and control of the separate conferences. But this was not the time: "Let us first obtain a strong college by working together so that it can be kept alive rather than divide and establish many which would divide our strength. Before long, there would be only a condition of waste."

Swensson was clearly worried. Some months earlier, he had heard of the possibility of the separation of Minnesota from Augustana: "Minnesota will come with its disturbing plans to establish its own synod and its own educational work in Minneapolis. It is clear we cannot give to this our support. We would be weakened." He even implied a willingness for the sake of unity that Rock Island could be reconsidered: "I do not say unconditionally that the school should move to Rock Island but since the Synod so unanimously expressed its desire to move to that region, then I think we ought to make the attempt before the matter is abandoned."

Swensson was not dreaming up something melodramatic. The threat was real. About two weeks before Swensson’s letter to Norelius, at the Minnesota Conference meeting, February 5-10, Norelius had declared:

The time may not be far distant when the Minnesota Conference will become an independent synod. If we now put forth all our efforts
to endow Augustana College in Rock Island and then we become a separate synod soon we could not expect to get any of our money returned, because this would ruin Augustana College. It is also obvious that if we now endow Augustana College it will be useless to immediately do something for the Ansgar School.

The seriousness of the conflict between Augustana and its Minnesota constituency cannot be underestimated. The controversy was real. But there were other stronger factors which kept the Church together. The need for cohesion among a relatively small group of immigrants in yet a frontier and alien culture was essential for survival. More importantly, the common confessional Lutheran faith held them together. Nor can one overlook the wisdom in the leadership and the close fraternal spirit among the leaders: Carlsson, Hasselquist, Norelius, Swensson. For all of them, the welfare of the Church was of primary concern—a concern which would be ill served by a separation. Even though Carlsson had expressed worry over the establishment of a school in Minnesota, in the year of its origin, Augustana in its annual convention voted to "express joy to Minnesota in the establishment of a school." However, it also expressed the desire that "it be placed in a proper relationship to the synod similar to that of the Seminary." Apparently, the Church was saying that graduates from St. Ansgar planning on the ministry should attend Augustana Seminary. To this, Minnesota subscribed and regularly at annual conventions submitted a report on the state of the School. The Church, however, contributed nothing to the support of the Minnesota School.

Against this background, it is not surprising that no separation took place. At the convention in Andover in 1873, it was decided that "the Directors of Augustana College and Seminary in consultation with the Minnesota Conference decide the best time to send an agent into the Conference for the ingathering of money [for the College and Seminary]."

The tension between Augustana and Minnesota—sometimes joined by other conferences—was not destructive but healthy. The proponents of each approach respected those of the other, and Augustana prospered in this difference of views under that greater unity of Christian faith as defined by the Bible and interpreted by the Lutheran Confessions.

On the American scene, no moral issue loomed larger than that of slavery. It is therefore surprising that Swenson had relatively little to say about it. Some of the leaders made statements, especially Esbjörn and Hasselquist. Both may have been influenced by Peter Fjellstedt, great friend of the Swedish Lutheran immigrants, who as early as 1847 inveighed against slavery at its source, the slave trade. His solution was to carry the Gospel to Africa and so make "our brothers in Africa Christian... If Africa's children become Christian, then they will cease to sell each other and will find right ways in their own land to earn all that is needed for this temporal life."

Esbjörn had not been in the United States long before he wrote a long
letter back to Sweden in which he stated both the advantages and disadvantages of life in his adopted country. One of the latter had to do with slavery. Without citing his authority, he wrote that in this land there were as many slaves (3,176,589) as there were Protestants. He regarded slavery as totally inconsistent with the principle of freedom: "America with its religious freedom is not cleansed from the blood of its sons who from the earth cry to God." Hasselquist expressed similar sentiments as a journalist.103

Swensson too must have felt an abhorrence for slavery. Nevertheless, he was reluctant to raise this issue within the context of the Church. He may have felt this would be a mixing of politics with a moral issue and that the political implications were too controversial to be brought up in the Church. He wrote to a fellow pastor, John Johnson of Princeton, that he did not wish to open his church for a political speech: "I don’t think we pastors should mix so much in politics"—a mild warning to Johnson who was disposed to do so.104

Other questions troubled Swensson more among which were drunkenness and divorce. On the issue of drunkenness and temperance, Swensson could not have belonged to a Church which was more decisive in its position than was Augustana. In a later generation, it took a position quite different from the Lutheran Church in general. "As far as prohibition was concerned only Augustana, various Norwegian bodies, and the General Synod had supported the anti-liquor forces behind the eighteenth amendment."105

So strong was Augustana’s views on temperance that at times it might appear that it was a part of the ordo salutis. Two of the earliest leaders, Esbjorn and Hasselquist, were significantly influenced by Peter Wieselgren, the noted temperance leader in Sweden, and had close association with him. Later, Hasselquist had occasion to be in frequent correspondence with Wieselgren. In his report to the American Home Missionary Society on February 28, 1850, Esbjorn wrote: "A temperance society has been organized at Andover of 43 members." Interestingly, this report preceded by eighteen days the organization of the congregation itself which occurred March 18. On that day, only ten members became a part of the congregation. It is significant that at that moment, the temperance movement seemed to have had more appeal than the Lutheran Church in that community. It may well be that the impact of the American temperance leader, the Presbyterian Robert Baird, was a contributing factor to that phenomenon.

Swensson made many statements about drunkenness. His zeal against it was similar to that of any active member of a temperance society. He must have been active in the organization against the manufacture and consumption of alcoholic beverages which Esbjorn had organized in Andover in 1850. On October 8, 1866, he wrote to Hasselquist: "I have today sent in a complaint with the names of over seventy witnesses against a saloon. This is the third time I have done so. If this does not help, I do not know what to do."106

Two days later, he gave more details of the situation in a letter to
Hasselquist. After writing about the fairly large immigration which had arrived in the area during 1866 and noting that there had been some tuberculosis and cholera spread among the newcomers, he said that these illnesses had diminished since the harvest and then added:

There is another pestilence which increases by way of the newcomers. It is drunkenness. It is horrid. We have in the midst of town one of those shameful saloons operated by a Swedish widow who has in an overbearing manner held it open on Sundays and parish days [meaning of parish days uncertain].

It was against this widow and her business that Swensson directed a petition. "Twice before," Swensson wrote, "she has been arrested and disciplined." 107

On February 3, 1869, Swensson wrote on the same topic but, in this statement, he reflected on what was happening to the temperance movement in Sweden: "Drunkenness is making dreadful advances; the newly arrived Swedes are the worst." 108 Typically, intense reform movements tend to be short-lived. The strict discipline which such require before long becomes distasteful and people prefer to return to more relaxed ways. This happened to the temperance movement in Sweden. "The results [of the movement] were amazing, though temporary. The tide of reform had ebbed by 1870." 109

Although a decrease in zeal against drunkenness occurred in Sweden, it certainly did not for Swensson. He did not make temperance a part of the way of salvation; yet, drunkenness was more than a cultural aberration for him. On one occasion he reported that the proclamation and instruction of God’s Word was effective, but he went on to say: "Ungodliness also comes forth, especially drunkenness." 110

In his final two presidential addresses, he denounced the excessive use of alcoholic beverages. "From many directions we hear about sin and ungodliness among the youth, especially drunkenness along with its dizziness and licentiousness." In his last report to the Church in annual convention, he stated: "Drunkenness... seems to be on the increase. I need not mention how terrible this vice is both physically and spiritually." 111

In both of these statements, Swensson appealed to the use of the Word of God as the antidote. For instance, in 1873 he wrote: "May we consciously become all the more awakened to serious effort against this dangerous enemy, and may it not be forgotten that this effort even for physical temperance must be grounded on God’s Word and be led by it if it is to be successful." 112

This statement of Swensson’s arouses an interesting query regarding his relation to temperance societies. No doubt can be held about his fervent opposition to drunkenness, but was he a supporter of temperance societies? His statement that even physical temperance "must be grounded on God’s Word" may indicate a lukewarm attitude toward such organizations and thus explain the absence of references to such in his writings.

In a letter to Hasselquist on January 10, 1867, Swensson wrote: ""I
found it necessary after a New Year’s Day service to warn the congrega­
tion both against the Good Templars and drinking.”113 The International
Order of Good Templars, organized in 1851 in Utica, New York, was a
temperance society114—a fact which should have appealed to Swensson.
However, it was also a fraternal order with secret ritual and insignia. This
would have been objectionable to Swensson even though the order did
have a religious orientation. A more likely explanation for Swensson’s
silence regarding the temperance society within the Church was the
primary importance he placed upon the Word of God. As his statements
so clearly show, he believed that if the Word were adequately and clearly
taught, moral issues such as drunkenness would be solved by the power
of the Gospel.

Other issues regarded to be of a moral and social character such as card-
playing, dancing, and theater-going aroused Augustana’s disapproval.
At the convention of 1868, these amusements were judged to be “con-
trary to the Word of God and true Christianity.”115 Swensson, however,
even though he likely agreed with this position, did not make many
statements regarding these activities. His concern was with drunkenness
and, above all, with the theological view toward Christian doctrine. His
determination to discern between true and false doctrine superseded
even his anathema against the use of alcoholic beverages.

One other issue, divorce, posed a problem for Swensson as it did for
Augustana. Since Swensson was so adamant in his opposition to drunk-
keness, one might suppose that he would have had a similarly cate-
gorical attitude against divorce. Obviously, he did not favor it but neither
was he so clear in his mind as to what should be done in the church’s
ministry to divorced persons.

The issue of divorce and remarriage emerged at the 1870 convention
when the church council of the congregation at Red Wing sent a letter to
the Church regarding a divorce and a remarriage which had occurred
there. Three questions were asked: first, how should a Christian congre-
gation consider a divorce on grounds other than adultery? Second, how
should a Christian congregation look upon the reentry into a second mar-
riage by either of the divorced spouses while the other remained alive?
Finally, what should be the nature of the repentance a Christian congre-
gation should require of either the divorced spouses or the one who had
remarried while the first spouse lived? The committee responsible for
composing an answer on the questions reported to the convention that in
response to the first two queries on the basis of Matthew 5:32; 19:5-6, 9;
and Luke 16:18, the only ground for divorce should be adultery. On the
third question, that of required repentance, the committee said time had
not permitted the formulation of an answer. This task was postponed un-
til the next convention.116

Three days after the close of the Synod, Swensson sent a letter to
Hasselquist who was in Sweden. He related the Red Wing situation in
which he disclosed that the cause of the divorce had been mistreatment.
Swensson indicated his disagreement with the attitude of the conven-
tion. He implied that the conclusions based upon the passages of scripture
'do not apply to every situation. In this case [the Red Wing incident], there was the factor of mistreatment. This was not considered by the Church. Under these circumstances, it seems to me foolish to demand the dissolution of the second marriage.' He believed the second marriage was valid ‘‘even if it had begun wrongly.’’117

The issue was discussed again at the next annual convention at Chicago Lake, Minnesota (June 8-14, 1871). The Church remained indecisive on the whole question of divorce. Unable to come to decisions on all the questions posed by the Red Wing church council, the Church delegated the president to write to the theological faculty at Uppsala, Sweden and also to the faculty of the recently established seminary (1864) in Philadelphia—which had begun in opposition to the Gettysburg Seminary with its ‘‘American Lutheranism.’’

At the next annual convention (Galesburg, September 23-October 2, 1872), the matter of Swensson’s dispatch of letters to Philadelphia and Uppsala was recalled. The president, who had such a reputation for orderliness, had been hindered from performing this duty because of ‘‘poor health and many duties.’’ Therefore, the Church ‘‘decided for the present to do nothing about the matter.’’118

Before the next convention, Swensson wrote the letters. At the 1873 meeting, he read the letter from the theological faculty in Uppsala and reported that no reply had been received from Philadelphia. In view of no response from the Lutheran Seminary in Pennsylvania, it was decided ‘‘the discussion of this subject should be delayed until the next Synod meeting.’’119

Late in 1872, the requested statement from the Uppsala faculty came under the date of November 6 and over the signature of K.H.G. von Scheele, later to be bishop of Visby, 1885-1920. (In 1910 he represented the Church in Sweden at the observance of Augustana’s fiftieth anniversary.120) He wrote that at its September 9 faculty meeting, Dr. C.A. Hultkrantz (1823-77), professor of dogmatics and moral theology and a proponent of separation of Church and State, was designated to formulate a response to Swensson’s question. That statement having been composed was approved by the faculty and von Scheele drew from the minutes of the faculty the contents of the letter to Augustana.

First, Hultkrantz stated that marriage existed before the Christian Church as an order of creation. It was not an institution by virtue of revelation. Since marriage belonged to the order of creation and is regulated according to civil law, the Church has no authority to rule over it. Neither can it make divorce a sin nor a part of the order of salvation. Hultkrantz did not thereby counsel irresponsibility for the Church in the dissolution of marriage. What he did was to make a distinction as to where the Church must exercise its influence. ‘‘The punishment against which the Church must direct its influence is the sin which led to the divorce but not the divorce itself.’’

Second, Hultkrantz said on the basis of scripture according to Deuteronomy 24:1, Moses did not consider divorce contrary to moral law. ‘‘If she finds no favor in his eyes because of some indecency in her,’’ then a
man may write a bill of divorcement. Also from Jesus (Matthew 5:22, 3:41), Hultkrantz argued that Jesus was pointing his followers to what God intended from creation the marriage relationship to be. On the basis of these arguments, especially Deuteronomy 24:1-5, Hultkrantz concluded that having been released from marriage, "one had the full right to enter again into a second marriage." And the grounds of divorce could be other than adultery.

Between December 17, 1872 and January 22, 1873, Swensson composed an eight page letter to his cousin, Martin Johansson. Although in response to a letter from the latter dated November 11, he acknowledged that he had received the letter from the Uppsala Theological faculty. (He still had not heard from the Philadelphia Seminary.) Swensson agreed with Hultkrantz’s argument on the basis of Deuteronomy 24:1-4:

> It has always been my view that the later marriage should not be dissolved in order to renew the former. I have handled the question in this manner for many years in my congregations and did so even before this question now arose. The citation from Deuteronomy definitely supports this view. In spite of the modern looseness in marriage and even though I have been firm regarding guilt in marriage and remarriage, yet, I have always considered the later marriage not as a continuation in adultery but as a real marriage which may continue with no less guilt than the former.121

Swensson made no reference to Hultkrantz’s second argument where the attempt was made to sympathetically relate Jesus’ view with that of Moses. Perhaps he felt that the Swedish theologian had not persuasively supported his assumption—and with some justification.

In summary, on ethical issues, Swensson took ambiguous positions. On the practices of card-playing, theater-going, and dancing Swensson said little. His opposition to drunkenness remained adamant. On the Civil War and slavery, Swensson took a less definite position than others such as Esbjörn and Hasselquist both of whom wrote on the political and economic issues related to that period of history.122

The most surprising utterances of Swensson were on the issue of divorce. When one considers his strong biblical stance on important issues and his belief that the scriptures "are the only sufficient and infallible rule and standard of faith and practice,"123 one wonders at the flexibility he showed on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. To be sure, he did follow the Old Testament but from his usual faithfulness to biblical counsel, his inadequate consideration of the teaching of Jesus appeared to be inconsistent. Did he depend more on the practice of the Church in Sweden? Perhaps; if so, here is another example of how important was his reliance for guidance upon the Mother Church.

In summary, Swensson had won high respect in spite of such ambiguities in the Church which he so greatly loved. Carl Évald, son-in-law of Erland Carlsson and immediate successor to his father-in-law as pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Chicago, wrote:
In every instance, credit must be given to him for the stamp of churchliness which he gave to our Synod. This became more and more characteristic of our Church in spite of the not so few efforts in the opposite direction. Indisputably he was for our Synod what Muhlenberg said of Prost Acrelius in the service of the [seventeenth and eighteenth centuries] Delaware mission: "An ornament to our Church." 124

Evald may well be accused of hyperbole in his tribute to Swensson. Still, making allowance for exaggeration, the fact is well documented that as preacher, catechist, educator, pastor, counselor, churchman, and president of the Augustana Lutheran Church, the one called Jonas left his stamp on that body and on individuals in Sweden and America.
NOTES

1Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1860-1878 (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concerns Tryckeri, 1917), 1860, p. 28; 1870, pp. 52-59.


4This ambiguity arises from a discrepancy in Augustana Synodens Protokoll. The information for 1872 places the beginning date in 1869; subsequent reports place the event in 1870.

5December 19, 1871, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

6Signed by John Larsson, I.F. Johnson, G. Fridin, Jan Skoglund, and N.G. Johnson, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

7February 24, 1871, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.


10Admittedly, the ratio of one to three cannot be accepted without consideration of such factors as the addition of members in 1873 from among immigrants who had arrived earlier than 1873 but who had not until that year become members of an Augustana congregation. One other observation is in order: the Augustana Lutherans were not the only ones to gather Swedish immigrants into their church. Busily engaged also were the Protestant Episcopalians, Swedish Baptists, Swedish Congregationalists, Swedish Methodists, and others. Also, a goodly number simply stayed out of the churches they found in the United States.

11Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1870, p. 56. The non-Swedish members were Norwegians with the exception of 659 who were identified as Scandinavians. These may have been congregations—only four were so reported—where Swedes and Norwegians were of equal number. Or, these may have been congregations of Danish immigrants of whom there were a few who belonged to Augustana.

12Ibid., p. 55; 1873, pp. 57, 59, 61, 63.

13Ibid., p. 40; 1871, pp. 17-18; 1872, p. 49; 1873, pp. 29-30. E.g.: “Sewing Societies which work for missions have arisen in several of our congregations.” 1871, p. 18.

14Arden, Augustana Heritage... , p. 143.

15Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1871, p. 42. In the year before Augustana joined the General Council, Swensson wrote on August 26, 1869, to his cousin, Martin Johansson, to whom he expressed his approval of the General Council which had been organized two years earlier, in 1867: “It holds fast to God’s Word, the Old and New Testament, as the only infallible rule for faith and life together with the Augsburg Confession which is a short but true summary of Christianity.”

20*Augustana Synodens Protokoll*, 1872, p. 13. The reference to the new constitution for congregations was submitted to the Church in convention and accepted at the 1870 meeting in Andover (June 15-22), a step that may in part have been necessitated by the decisions to reorganize the mission program, to join the General Council, and to allow the Norwegians to separate. On the decision regarding the new congregational constitution, see *Ibid.*, p. 35.
21Ibid., 1873, p. 13.
22Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church... 1860-1910*, p. 42.
25*Augustana Synodens Protokoll*, 1873, p. 41.
27Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.
32*Ibid*. This statement was not dated. There is strong evidence that this was Carlsson's view in the early sixties.
33Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church... 1860-1910*, p. 44.
34March 6, 1869, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives. Swensson's final statement on property is interesting. Is he suggesting that if the Norwegians leave, they would thereby surrender to the Swedes on the issue of ownership? If so, Swensson might be credited with cleverness but a bit questionable in political tactics.
35Letter to Hasselquist, February 3, 1869, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.
36*Augustana Synodens Protokoll*, 1866, pp. 5-16.
37Letter to Hasselquist, February 2, 1865, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.
38 Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church... 1846 to 1860*, pp. 126-27.


41 Letter to Hasselquist, February 2, 1865, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

42 Letter to Swensson, June 8, 1863, Swensson Collection, Bethany College. Hultgren became pastor of the Hessel Valley/Jamestown parish upon his ordination in 1864, six years after Swensson left the area. After the division into two parishes, Hultgren from 1872 until 1895 was pastor of the Jamestown congregation which he served for a total of thirty-one years.


44 Letter to Hasselquist, February 3, 1869, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

45 *Ibid.* His mention of Weenaas referred to August Weenaas, the Norwegian professor who was engaged to teach at Augustana College and Seminary in 1867 in consideration of the needs of the Norwegian students. He became an important advocate for the separation. Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church... 1860-1910*, pp. 11-12.

46 Letter from Paxton, Illinois, September 25, 1863. It is not clear to whom the letter was sent but most likely to Swensson. Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

47 For further details of the relationship between Norwegians and Swedes see: Swensson’s letters to Martin Johansson, January 18, 1871, pp. 9-10, 13-14, Swensson collection, Upsala College; Swensson’s letter to Hasselquist, November 16, 1871, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives; Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church... 1860-1910*, p. 38.

48 This relationship refers only to those Norwegian Lutherans who had become a part of the Augustana Lutheran Church. The Norwegian Synod, also known as the Wisconsin Synod, was inclined toward the Missouri Synod and was not looked upon favorably by the Swedish Lutherans. The Norwegians of that group reciprocated in kind toward their Swedish Lutheran brethren in the United States. See Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church... 1860-1910*, p. 12.


50 January 17, 1870, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.


52 Nelson, *Lutherans in North America*, pp. 189, 339-40. Weenaas, a prime mover in the separation between the Swedes and the Norwegians, did not deal harshly with the Swedes. On the whole, he complimented them for their work. What loomed large in Weenaas’ mind was the minority status of the Norwegians. He was critical of the quality of education, especially as represented in Hasselquist, at Augustana College and Seminary. In addition, he felt that the Augustana Norwegians had a mission to fulfill. They were to be a “mediating center in the Norwegian American Lutheran Church, which would take a mediating position between the extreme orthodoxy of the Norwegian Synod and the Pietism of a small group led by Elling Eielsen on a Lutheran foundation and work toward an


55Lindquist, Shepherd of an Immigrant People..., p. 66.

56Letter to Hasselquist, October 16, 1871, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

57Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1872, pp. 7, 40-41; 1873, p. 6.

58January 4, 1873, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

59Bethany College Archives.

60Karl A. Olsson, By One Spirit (Chicago, Ill.: The Covenant Press, 1962) p. 110; Emmet E. Eklund, Peter Fjellstedt: Missionary Mentor to Three Continents (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Historical Society, 1983), pp. 42-43. The first half of the sermon appeared in the March 2 issue, 1872, of Pietisten; the controversial half was published in June of that year in the same journal, p. 672.

61Lindquist, Shepherd of an Immigrant People..., pp. 152-53.

62Letter to Hasselquist, Chicago, March 11, 1865, quoted in Lindquist, Shepherd of an Immigrant People..., p. 153. Not until 1885 did the formal organization of the denomination which embraced these teachings occur under the name of the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant of America (now the Evangelical Covenant Church of America). Strife, however, arose between the proponents of these two views of the doctrine of the atonement shortly after the publication of Waldenstrom’s printed sermon.

63Lindquist, Shepherd of an Immigrant People..., pp. 155-56.

64Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church... 1860-1910, p. 34.

65Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1871, p. 9.

66Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

67Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.


70June 9, 1873, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.


72See Olson, The Augus[anta Lutheran Church... 1860-1910, p. 34; Lindquist, Shepherd of an Immigrant People..., p. 152.


Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church...1860-1910, pp. 70-73.

Andover, Illinois, August 26, 1869, Swensson Collection, Upsala College.

Ibid.


January 4, pp. 9-10, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives. Swensson erred slightly. Olof Olsson had come to America in 1869. Between 1849 until 1869, however, only six pastors came to serve the Swedish Lutheran immigrants and their church, Augustana. Swensson was essentially correct in his complaint.

Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church...1860-1910, p. 38.


Letter to Hasselquist, November 16, 1871, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.


February 27, 1873, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

Ibid.

Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1873, pp. 57-63.

See above, p. 96.

Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church...1860-1910, p. 77.

May 5, 1873, in Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church...1860-1910, p. 76.

August 29, 1873, letter provided by Emory Lindquist.

Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church...1860-1910, p. 76.

Letter, September 5, 1873, Swensson Collection, Bethany College Archives.

Bergendoff, Augustana...A Profession of Faith..., pp. 25, 29.

Arden, Augustana Heritage..., p. 102.

October 15, 1863, Swensson Collection, Bethany College Archives.

Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

February 28, 1873, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.

Letter to Hasselquist, December 28, 1872, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.


Ibid., 1873, p. 44.

"Slafhandeln" [Slave-holders], Lunds Missions-Tidning (May 1847), pp., 6-7, quoted in Eklund, Peter Fjellstedt..., p. 133.


Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

October 10, 1866, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.


Letter to Hasselquist, January 4, 1871, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

*Augustana Synodens Protokoll*, 1872, p. 19; 1873, p. 11.


Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.


*Augustana Synodens Protokoll*, 1868, p. 25.


June 25, 1870, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

*Augustana Synoden Protokoll*, 1872, p. 32. However, Swensson must have already written the letters because before the convention, he had received a reply dated June 27, 1872 which was too late for consideration by the convention. Likely the reference to Swensson’s delay indicated he had been tardy in the administration of this commission.

*Ibid.*, 1873, p. 43. At the first convention following Swensson’s death (Rockford, Illinois, June 24-July 1, 1874), the Church decided that the question “must be left to the individual pastors and church councils to decide according to the best understanding of God’s Word.” *Ibid.*, 1874, p. 44.

Olson, *The Augustana Church . . . 1860-1910*, p. 94.

Swensson Collection, Upsala College Archives.


Conrad Bergendoff, "The Sources of the Original Constitution of the Augustana Synod, 1860," (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Historical Society Publica-
tions, no. 5, 1935, Article II of the congregational constitution. See also Arden, Augustana Heritage..., p. 86.

Chapter VII

The Summation of a Life

In the history of the Augustana Church, the life of Jonas Swensson looms large. An identification of his contributions has been too long neglected. A brief recounting of his accomplishments can only enrich the understanding of Augustana and what it in turn has brought into larger Lutheran bodies.

1. The Contributions of Jonas Swensson

Reflection on the life and work of Jonas Swensson indicates his many contributions to the life of the Augustana Church. These were both non-theological and theological. Of the first of these, a brief summary will be sufficient. The theological contributions, however, deserve more systematic treatment.

When one probes more deeply into the inner character of his administration, distinctive qualities emerge: the popularity of his evangelical preaching, the high reputation he won as a catechist, his sensitivity as a counselor, his concern for the education of the ministry, his resolution to serve effectively the flood of immigrants which came to the United States during his presidency. His ecumenical spirit as expressed in his positive relation to the General Council commends what he accomplished toward Lutheran unity. However, qualifications have to be made regarding his ecumenical spirit. He rejected, on the one hand, the positions toward the Lutheran Confessions of the General Synod which he first considered too lax and, on the other hand, what he considered to be the unacceptable rigidity within the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods.

Among his contributions one has been mentioned and was observable again and again—his sense of orderliness. On one occasion when financial difficulties were being encountered in the operation of the Children’s Home during the Panic of 1873, W.A. Passavant wrote words of encouragement to Swensson: ‘‘You are a man of such business ability and order that I am sure, if one door is shut, you will if possible find another open.’’

In a similar vein, Norelius paid tribute to his friend: ‘‘Swensson was neither haughty nor one who spared himself from privation; and he was himself a man of excellent orderliness and strictly churchly.’’ Norelius’ association of Swensson’s penchant for orderliness with the churchly inevitably related this personal quality with his theological considerations,
e.g., his emphasis upon the necessity for ordination. (This theological dimension will be discussed later.)

Orderliness so characteristic of Swensson was expressed both as a personal trait and in his work in the Church. In his personal habits, this trait was shown, for example, in the way he classified and prepared his sermons. In the archives of Upsala College are records of his sermon preparation. For each one he preached, five items were noted: the text used, a summary of the sermon, the year it was preached, the Sunday it was preached (not according to the date but the Sunday of the church year, e.g., first Sunday in Advent), and the place where it was preached.

In addition, he grouped his sermons according to the general occasion for which they were prepared and delivered. One category comprised those for the regular Sundays of the church year; another, for special days such as Candlemas, Day of Annunciation, St. Michael’s Day, and All Saints Day. A third group was classified under the heading of “casual talks.” Here he noted in addition to the features listed for regular Sundays, the occasion for which the talk was given, e.g., an installation sermon. Other groupings were: talks given for eucharistic prayers, confirmation meditations, private meditations (apparently preached in homes for small groups), and Bible studies. He also designed a chart by which he selected hymns appropriate for certain texts.

The growing incursion of the English language into the Augustana churches created the need for bilingual pastors. As president, Swensson was concerned about the ability of those about to be ordained to interpret correctly the biblical texts from one language into the other. He wrote: “Here where there is so much cursed strife, there is the need to prove the interpretation of texts. Since so few of our pastors write in the Swedish language, they express false meanings. A no more helpless person in this regard is Brother Benson.” As a remedy for this difficulty, Swensson urged that those who were seeking ordination as well as those who were ministers “ought to at least write out their sermons in order to be able to make clear affirmations.” In spite of his heavy schedule, he went on to say: “I also write out my sermons.” As already noted, he did not consistently follow this practice at this time of his life. Yet, evidence from the collection of sermons he left indicates that he still on occasion, at least, wrote them out.

His personal habit of orderliness was transmitted into his congregational activities. When he came to serve each of the two parishes in the United States, the conditions were unsettled especially at Hessel Valley and Jamestown. There, as well as in Andover, Swensson had been preceded by B.G.P. Bergenlund who had created disorder in both places. Yet, in each instance, Swensson in a relatively short time brought order to bear upon congregational life. In addition, at Hessel Valley and Jamestown, he wrote a constitution which became a source of stability not only because of the guidance it gave for the organization and governance of the congregation, but also for the structure it gave to the worship life of its members.

At the last convention over which he presided, a formula for the orderly
reception of members into a congregation was adopted. Less than seven weeks before his death, Swensson complained to Hasselquist that the General Council was not adequately concerned about the reworking of the handbook for ministerial acts. That the project “never came any farther is terrible. This is really an important matter.” Prospects from the Church in Sweden were no more encouraging. “Instead of a new handbook, they have done patchwork on the old one at the Church Meeting. . . . With this patchwork, it is difficult to get anything well done. I wish that we could get a wholly new handbook.” His concern centered especially on the celebration of the sacraments. Of the formula for baptism, he wrote: “It is impossible to read this long and watered down formula with the solemnity which ought to attend the administration of a sacrament. It is imperative that we must go still further to establish the worth of baptism in the congregation.” Of this irritation he wrote, “I have scarcely heard any two of our pastors administer alike the sacrament of baptism.” Regarding the administration of the Eucharist, he wrote, “The long exhortation after the sermon before going to the Eucharist is so entirely out of place that we must think of a completely new location for this in the service where it can be read and heard with more meaning.”

The integrity between his personal orderliness and the communication of that quality to the Church served to benefit the Augustana Lutheran Church. What was written of his work in Hessel Valley was also true of other areas of his life ministry: “It is with thankfulness to Rev. Jonas Swensson that we today look back at the time when that talented and kindly man took hold, brought order out of chaos, and truly began the activities of Lutheran work in this broad field.”

On three related doctrines, Swensson expressed himself in a manner which may well have shaped Augustana’s view on these issues. No claim is made that he was solely responsible for forming the Church’s view on what it was to teach. Yet, the strong influence Swensson exerted must have been a factor in the shaping of Augustana’s position. The doctrines were the nature of the Church, the nature of the ministry, and the nature of the call.

Of Jonas Swensson’s love for his Church, there can be no doubt. As the Waldenströmian controversy grew in its threat to the unity of the Church, he wrote to Hasselquist:

I am willing to offer up my strength and my life in my office as pastor for the general good of our Church if the Lord so wills. I love our Church more than anything I know. Tonight, I feel especially bowed down over the prospect that it may break asunder. In consequence, I feel like resigning all my duties at least for a time if this would make the situation better.8

This devotion to the Church was not the result of some romantic view of it. Early in his ministerial career he had come to a clear understanding of where he stood on this doctrine. Later the heat of debate must have sharpened his view, but more important was his early association in his native land with the Church of Sweden. In 1862 he wrote back to friends
in Sweden his *Bref i Andeliga Amnen* [Letter about Spiritual Matters]. In this
document he told his friends that even though the Church in Sweden
was not all it should be in godly order, still they should not withdraw
from it:

Certainly it is true that in the existing Church in Sweden, the State
Church, there are great and sad deficiencies, but a true Christian is
not entitled to leave so long as there is the pure Word of God and the
sacraments are administered according to the Word and institution of
Christ.\(^9\)

The confessional basis for Swensson’s view is clearly from the seventh
article of the Augsburg Confession: “[T]he one holy Christian Church . . .
is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its
purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the
Gospel . . .”\(^10\)

Certainly there was a relation between Swensson’s repugnance toward
the new evangelism with its subjective emphasis upon personal religious
experience and toward its belief that true Christians could be identified.
Theologically, this translated into a controversy regarding the nature of
the Church. On the one side was the claim that the Church consisted only
of true believers who could be identified. On the other side stood those
who accepted the Church as visible in its outer form and invisible in
terms of true believers who could be known only by God. The implication
of that difference seemed to have been present in Swensson’s
counsel in his *Bref i Andeliga Amnen*.

In the United States, the debate was joined both in relation to the proto-
Waldenströmian mission societies which first appeared in Chicago in the
1860’s and on the personal level of Swensson’s relation to Olof Olsson.
The position of the mission societies was clearly shown in 1868 when a
petition was circulated by society members to organize over against the
Immanuel Lutheran Church a “Pure Evangelical Lutheran Church in
Chicago.”\(^11\) Against this view stood Augustana where the possibility of
identifying the “pure” or “invisible” church was rejected.

The debate between Olsson and Swensson was more sharply ar-
ticulated. Olof Olsson (1841-1900), who became one of Augustana’s most
capable and prominent leaders, was a man of great sensitivity. He had
been greatly influenced by the revival in Sweden and, unlike Swensson,
was sympathetic to the new evangelism. As a young man, he formed a
close friendship which endured throughout his life with Carl Johan Nyvall
who led in the organization of the Mission Covenant Church in Sweden
in 1878.\(^12\)

In 1869, Olsson immigrated to Lindsborg, Kansas where, with a group of
like-minded people, he was determined to organize a pure church based
on the Lutheran Confessions. Though he wanted to become a part of the
Augustana Lutheran Church, Olsson delayed the request for members-
ship. He may have felt uneasy as to what the response to an application
for membership by a “pure” church might be.

Olsson did not mince words. He feared as has already been noted what
he saw as a centralized tendency in Augustana. He was hesitant to become a member of a body which might be too rigid for his free-church inclination. In a letter to Hasselquist, he expressed his anxiety:

I have feared that the rules [for membership in Augustana] would be so rigid that personal freedom would be stifled. I have felt that you desire to establish such uniformity that no diversity in thinking would be permitted and that every brotherly exchange of different thoughts would be hushed by pointing to the ordination vow.14

Olsson, however, did not allow his reservations to close the door to fellowship with Augustana. "I do not wish to say anything else, but I think I will come clear with your Synod and it will be fine to meet you as a brother."15

The decision, however, as to whether Olsson and the congregation he had organized in Lindsborg should become members of Augustana became the responsibility not of Hasselquist but of Swensson. Swensson was secretary of the Church at that time and as such he received applications for membership. Since he was elected president of the Church in 1870, he presided at the meeting when the decision was made on Olsson and the Bethany Lutheran Church in Lindsborg.

Swensson showed his typical concern for confessional loyalty by commissioning A.W. Dahlsten in the neighboring congregation in Salemstorp to investigate the constitution of Olsson's congregation.16 Dahlsten carried out these instructions and communicated back to Swensson a favorable report. Also, Swensson's impression of Olsson became more positive before the convention in 1870 on another issue. "[Olsson] has learned to know the General Synod for which he now has distaste. His congregation has accepted our constitution with some insignificant changes."17

The "insignificant changes" included a statement regarding confirmation. Even though Swensson was insistent upon the confessional basis of a congregation, he combined with that an admirable tolerance in other matters. He was sensitive to those areas where legitimate adjustments could be made without compromise of primary convictions.18

At the 1870 convention, Bethany Church was accepted as the twenty-seventh of thirty-four congregations received into Augustana that year.19 Swensson's positive attitude toward Olsson, however, did not imply any acceptance of Olsson's inclinations toward the pure church idea. In his 1872 presidential address, he said: "We cannot expect to see upon earth pure congregations which consist only of true Christians."

However, it must not be assumed thereby that Swensson had no boundaries beyond which a congregation could go. He continued:

Neither can a congregation justify itself as possessing a Christian spirit and in parish matters exercise power if it elects ungodly and unbelieving persons to administer and lead in the affairs of the congregation. Then evil will be produced which will not be easy to overcome and for a long time the true development of a congregation will be hindered if not altogether destroyed.20
There must have been times when opponents of Swensson may have accused him of striving for a pure church notwithstanding his statements to the contrary. Yet, there was a consistency in his position. The touchstone was the Confessions with the implication that from the Confessions and their basis, the Holy Scriptures, should flow the holy life. In his last presidential report, Swensson wrote:

> Our congregations are not pure but neither are they Babylon from which they [members] must flee which our opponents assert, for in them is found the holy community, and as long as the Lord by his grace preserves among us his pure word and unadulterated sacraments, it [the Church] shall not only be maintained but it shall increase and improve.\(^{21}\)

This conviction was inscribed into the constitution for congregations which was first written in 1857 and which remained the basis for subsequent versions. Paragraph five of Article V stated:

> Should the distressing situation arise that any of the congregation’s members abandon, misinterpret, or openly oppose the holy faith and doctrine of the congregation, or fall into sinful and ungodly life, such as drunkenness, lewdness, swearing, quarrelsomeness, malicious slander, or some other sin which give occasion for general offense and the grief of God’s congregation; it shall be the duty of the Church Council to exercise church discipline in such cases (Matt. 18:15-18; I Cor. 5).\(^{22}\)

The sensitivity and tolerance Swensson showed as a counselor enabled him to remain true to the Confessions and the behavior expected from such commitment and still reject the pure church idea. This is not to deny the borderline instances which commonly face those who must be responsible for church discipline.

The discussion on the nature of the Church between Olsson and Swensson did not cease in 1870. When Olsson first published his *Nytt och Gammalt* journal, he sent a copy to Swensson to comment on Olsson’s New Year’s Day sermon which was printed in that issue. In it Olsson had defined the Church as the place where there are found the disciples of Jesus. He elaborated on his meaning: “If there are not found any disciples of Jesus, then this Church is not God’s Church; it is only an outer human society but no Church of Christ.”\(^{23}\)

Swensson’s objection to Olsson’s view centered on the latter’s emphasis upon the inner and the outer church and the inference that the true church—which was the inner one—could be identified. Swensson saw this as dangerous. He countered with Luther’s view: “Christ’s Church is wherever God’s word is taught purely and clearly and the sacraments administered according to the word and institution of Christ.”\(^{24}\)

Swensson used three illustrations to support his view: Elijah’s belief that he alone was the only faithful believer in Israel whereas God showed him 7000 others who had not “bowed the knee to Baal”; the experience of pastors as *sjalavård* [carer of souls] who “have had the sad experience...
to discover how mistaken we were regarding one or another person; and how at the death bed there has been discovered victorious faith where before we had seen none.’’ Swensson concluded: ‘‘The invisible church is rightly called invisible because we human beings upon the earth cannot see its boundaries.’’

In at least two ways Swensson showed flexibility in his doctrine of the Church. One was in the forms of worship. Although he desired order, he also saw the wisdom of departure in certain situations from norms which he cherished. Much as he was drawn to the liturgy and ‘‘ceremonies’’ of the Church in Sweden, he considered it wise to allow changes on the frontier of the United States.

The other instance dealt with forms of church government. Although Swensson was highly impatient with the Episcopalians, his dissatisfaction lay with their proselytism rather than with episcopal polity. Likely in a mood of joviality, he on one occasion wrote to Hasselquist: ‘‘Now I have reported at length on my work: it is appropriate that the ‘Bishop’ should know something about what his poor country komminister does.’’ In general, one does not apply to a friend what one considers to be a derogatory term even in a light-hearted way.

More solid evidence, however, is available which demonstrates his tolerance on the subject of church polity. He could even defend the office of bishop on biblical grounds.

As far as I am concerned regarding the Episcopalians, we could willingly put up with the office of Bishop when it is validated as a human institution for the sake of good order; but as soon as they want to make of it a special office instituted by God and elevate the teaching to a dogma which shall be a condition for a true Christian Church if not a condition for salvation, then we want nothing to do with the placement of the office of bishop. We could really have a bishop as we now have a president. The name of bishop would be more biblical than the newer term president, but a bishop in the Episcopalian meaning we do not want.

Swensson knew whereof he spoke. His penchant for good order is indicated. The episcopacy may well have commended itself to him in this respect. Also, its biblical basis would have appealed to him. Still, the theological distinction between a humanly instituted office and a divinely instituted bishopric which made ecclesiological and soteriological claims was completely rejected by Swensson.

For the Augustana Lutheran church, he considered synodical polity adequate:

We consider the synodical arrangement to be just as good for church order and to be an order just as much in keeping with the Bible as the Episcopalian. To believe that one is according to God’s Word as well as the other can be justified. Should any have precedence, it is not the Episcopalian but the synodical.

Although Swensson in the closing statement gave priority of authen-
ticity to the synodical type of church government, what is impressive is, first, his openness to other types of polity and, second, his customary appeal to biblical authority. As to the form of polity, Swensson believed that each historical or cultural situation would govern the type of church government best suited for that place and time. In a revealing letter to his cousin Martin Johansson, he wrote that he could not accept the State Church arrangement: “The state wants to make the Church its servant and of late it appears as if it wants to make the Church completely slave [under the recently inaugurated Church Meeting according to the Swedish constitutional reform of 1865-66].” Neither could he accept the free church system in the United States which he said “misused the freedom they had in license and the dizziness of the cry of freedom.” For him, the best polity was what Augustana had developed for its particular needs which was “the ordered freedom which I love and in which our Church has its place out here and to this I am heartily committed.”

In spite of their differences regarding the doctrine of the Church, the relation between Olsson and Swensson was one of warm friendship. On July 8, 1873 Swensson wrote to Olsson: “It made me so happy in the innermost being of my heart that I could become better acquainted with you.” The meeting about which Swensson wrote was the annual convention of the church at Paxton. At that meeting, Olsson and Swensson showed a harmony of mind on the issue of secret societies against which Swensson as president made a strong statement. He had been prompted to state this position by Olsson who had encountered the “problem with the Grange in Fremont. [The Society] had a ritualistic order of membership and was classified as a secret society. Both the synodical and the congregational constitutions prohibited members from affiliation with secret orders.”

With something of irony, two situations developed following Swensson’s death. First, in spite of their differences on the view of the Church, it was Olof Olsson who was called to become Swensson’s successor at Andover. So eager was the congregation to obtain his ministry that after his first refusal, he was given a second call to which he also gave a negative answer.

The second situation was the relation of each of these men to teachings of Waldenström. In his tribute to Swensson, Hasselquist depicted his deceased friend as a champion against Waldenströmianism. Following Swensson’s death, the fight against that ecclesiastical and theological outlook had no more articulate or determined opponent than Olof Olsson.

Closely related to the doctrine of the Church will be one’s doctrine of the ministry. The two cannot be separated; yet each must be considered as distinct. The necessity to confront their relationship, however, will arise in different contexts and, for Augustana, the question arose in relation to the missionary work among Swedish immigrants. The shortage of persons to carry out this activity had apparently raised the issue as to both the nature of the ministry and the authority of the congregation in relation to the call and the commission of the ministry.
In 1870 at that important watershed convention in Andover, the proposal to form theses for future debates grew out of the report from the Mission Committee. The shortage of workers in Minnesota was particularly emphasized. The question arose as to what constituted a valid call in the relation of the congregation to the office of the ministry. This was shown in the central attention which was given to the fourteenth article of the *Augsburg Confession*: “It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call.” Yet, as the debate progressed, inevitably the nature of the office of the ministry itself arose. Surprisingly, however, no explicit mention was made of the fifth article of that same *Confession*: “To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments. Through them, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel.” Unavoidably, however, during the course of the discussion, the affirmation of both articles five and fourteen became central in the interchange.

At the 1870 convention, two Minnesotans, Erik Norelius and Per Sjoblom, were charged to arrange for the assembly of the next annual convention a number of theses as a basis for consideration of the meaning of *Confessio Augustana* article fourteen. At the next convention, the two men presented five theses:

1. It is not only permissible but a good work for the Church to offer the service of the holy office of the ministry. I Tim. 3:1 [The saying is sure: If any aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task].

2. The office of the ministry is one of God’s ordained and established offices in the Christian congregation [related to Article five, *Augsburg Confession*].

3. Through regular call and its confirmation through ordination, a person is installed into the office of the ministry [related to Article fourteen of the *Augsburg Confession*].

4. A regular call occurs a) through one of several congregations; b) through the church council. Ordination is by those who previously hold the office [affirmation of a ministerium within but separate from the lay membership of the Church].

5. In an emergency, every Christian is bound to preach the gospel and administer the Sacraments [an affirmation of the universal priesthood of believers].

At the convention in Chisago Lake, theses one, two, three and part of four were discussed but pressing matters with other affairs of the Church made it necessary to postpone discussion on the remaining theses. It was decided that they would be discussed at the next convention. Little more success was enjoyed at either the 1872 or 1873 convention. In 1873, the decision was made that since there was not time for sufficient treatment of the statements "the synod charged its president or the one whom he should appoint to preach on the fourteenth article of the *Augsburg Confession*"...
fession at the next synod and after this, the synod shall determine what material shall finally be discussed." By the next convention Swensson had died, and there is no record of any further discussion on these theses.

Consideration of these statements was taken up, however, in a debate between Norelius and Swensson. In four issues (June 1, July 15, August 1 and 15, 1872) of his Lutersk Kykotidning, Norelius discussed the doctrine of the ministry. He drew both from Acts 1:21-22 where is recorded the calling of Matthias to replace Judas, and Titus 1:5-9 where Paul requests Titus to appoint elders in Crete. According to Swensson, Norelius was in these examples subscribing to a "delegation theory." That is, the calling of a pastor was delegated to the congregation. In the same article, Norelius used Acts 6:1-6 when the Hellenist Christians came with complaint that their widows were being neglected in the daily ministration to their needs. The apostle in response granted to this congregation of complainants the right to select seven deacons—an office which developed into the lowest of the three orders of the ministry—to correct the fault.

In a long letter of thirty-two pages written to Norelius during a period of thirty-six days (August 1-September 5, 1872), Swensson rejected the "delegation theory" and supported his own view of the ministry which he considered to be a gift of God. At an earlier time, he had set forth his views:

I hold that the office of the minister is from the Lord himself who has set the office in the congregation not as a mediating office but for the upbuilding of the congregation so that the congregation becomes a perfect man in Christ and the office and the congregation are not a conception of two subordinates but coordinates.

Ultimately, in different wording, this became the position of the Augustana Lutheran Church. It was the viewpoint defended by Swensson against Norelius' "delegation theory."

Swensson employed a number of arguments to defend his position. First, he stated that Norelius had misinterpreted Titus 1:5-9. Norelius had no basis on this portion of scripture for his view. Rather, Paul by no means had delegated the appointment of presbyters [pastors] to the congregation but commanded Titus to do so. Moving to the verses following Titus 1:5-9, Swensson pointed out that the congregation, which was described as "insubordinated, empty talkers, deceivers, etc.,” (Titus 1:10-14) was scarcely capable to accomplish so important a task:

The argument that Titus was less capable than the congregation to execute that task is scarcely convincing. Furthermore, since Titus had been with Paul in the preaching of the Gospel at Crete, he certainly was more competent to select and appoint presbyters for the congregation in Crete than was the congregation itself.

Swensson continued by drawing a parallel between Crete and the Augustana situation. He reasoned that, just as in Crete, a congregation so recently converted from heathendom was not likely to be capable of
selecting its pastors, so, although in less stark terms, were the new mission churches in the United States scarcely equipped to assume the responsibility to select their pastors.

In his second argument against Norelius, Swensson inferred that what his Minnesota friend was advocating was the right of the congregation to ordain men into the office of the ministry. That Swensson claimed would result in dire consequences. First, good order would be sacrificed. Second, the right to ordain also would give the right to withdraw the ordination. “This would make the minister a pawn of the congregation.” Swensson claimed that was the error of the Norwegian Wisconsin group. Third, if the delegation theory were right, then “ordination is valid only in that congregation; when a pastor leaves from there, he loses his ordination.” He wrote: “The independence of a ministerium in the office of the ministry has the right and the duty to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments beyond the confines of a single congregation (although not without the permission from the pastor of another congregation).”44 On this right to preach in congregations of which one is not the pastor, Swensson used the illustration of “Professor Smith [whom he does not identify] who because he was ordained could go out and preach and administer the sacraments even though that particular congregation had not called him.”

His third main argument appealed to history for a separate office of the ministry. In the Reformation, the Reformers who had been ordained in the medieval church did not seek reordination. “It was not the ordination and the nature of the ministry as such against which the Reformers had objected but the distortion of power which had developed around what had become a priestly and intermediary status.”45

Fourth, he referred to scripture, both the Old and the New Testaments. In the Old Testament, he pointed to the priesthood beginning with Aaron as a separate order from the people. In the New Testament, Swensson referred first to the event of Pentecost. He stated that the office of the ministry and the creation of the Church occurred the same day. He drew the conclusion: “The office of the ministry without the congregation is not really an office and a congregation without an office of the ministry is not really a complete congregation.” Thus in different words he affirmed the coordinate relationship between the two entities of the Church.46

Using the argument similar to the one employed in relation to Titus 1, he noted the significance of Matthew 28:18-20 when Jesus gave the Great Commission to the eleven. It was not reasonable that Jesus would give the same authority to those who had been with him as disciples and those who had not been with him on such intimate terms. “Jesus could not have meant that all should go out to teach and to baptize . . . . when Jesus said ‘go,’ it is best to believe that only those to whom he said ‘go’ should do so.”47 Swensson looked upon the office of the ministry as a gift of God. “The office of the ministry is a gift of the Lord to the congregation, not for the congregation to hoard or to manage as it pleases but this gift is for the benefit and upbuilding of the congregation.”48
The fifth argument brought him into a discussion of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. In relation to the Great Commission, Swensson pointed to this teaching when he set forth the tasks of the congregation. "All Christians should participate [in the Great Commission] by sending, supporting, and praying for missionary teachers." He was critical of Norelius and complained that the Minnesotan had collapsed in his "delegation theory" the distinction between the office of the ministry and the priesthood of believers. Attention was drawn to I Peter 2:9 (You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood...). Swensson charged that both Roman Catholicism and the "delegation theory" err on this point but in somewhat opposite directions. The former made its mistake by making the office of the ministry a spiritual priesthood. He faulted Roman Catholicism because it defined its ministry almost solely as priestly and mediatorial to the exclusion of the prophetic. Thus was denied the right of any other sector of the Church to express the priesthood of believers.\(^49\) The "delegation theory" erred in its failure to attribute unique significance to the office of the ministry.\(^50\)

For his view, Swensson also appealed to Luther. He called attention to the Reformer’s commentary on Psalm 110:4 ("The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizadek"). He quoted from Luther:

> After we have become Christians through this Priest and His priestly office [Christ], incorporated in Him by baptism through faith, then each one, according to his calling and position, obtains the right and power of teaching and confessing before others this Word which we have obtained from Him.

This is a description of how the priesthood of believers is created—through baptism. But not all are to occupy the office of the ministry. Again quoting from Luther, Swensson wrote:

> Although we are all priests, this does not mean that all of us can preach, teach, and rule. Certain ones of the multitude must be selected and separated for such an office. And he who has such an office is not a priest because of his office but a servant of all the others who are priests.\(^51\)

This was Swensson’s view of the ministry. Related to the Church, he saw it as comprising two coordinates: the priesthood of believers and the office of the ministry. Both were gifts of God—the priesthood of believers which as the one coordinate of the Church was God’s gift to the world and the office of the ministry, the other coordinate, was God’s gift to and within the congregation.

What factors led Norelius to adopt the "delegation theory?" Several may have been present. First, there was the pressure of the frontier with its shortage of workers to minister to the Swedish Lutheran immigrants. Minnesota which received the largest number was especially hard pressed. He wrote: "How shall one deal with this [shortage] when the need for pastors is so great and there are so many congregations which lack
The presence of congregations and the absence of pastors led Norelius to give priority to the congregation. His own personal experience in West Point, Indiana may have influenced him. As a young man of twenty-two years and as yet unordained, he was called by this parish in April 1855 to stay and preach to them. This he did. He also preached in four different places on a regular basis. This experience may have led him to write in his Lutersk Kyrkotidning seventeen years later: "Accordingly, if someone is called through the congregation to preach once, twice, or more, this is an orderly call." This statement shows that Norelius tended to collapse the distinction between the call and ordination.

Second, Norelius' close contact with the Germans and Norwegians may have been a factor. Swensson thought those Lutherans shared Norelius' view of the ministry. Norelius had been educated in the German school of Capital University at Columbus, Ohio. Also, there were many more Germans and Norwegians in Minnesota, where Norelius lived, and Wisconsin than in Illinois.

Third, was the instance of the tension between the emphasis on diversification of authority which Norelius supported and that of centralization which Swensson advocated.

Finally, could there have been a little of the rivalry between Illinois and Minnesota expressed here? Perhaps in a bit of wry humor, though not entirely clear in his meaning, Swensson wrote in this long letter to Norelius:

Holding to the Roman principle, one comes after many wanderings back again to Rome if one makes a circle around the globe. One goes westward from Rome and comes back from the east. Our difference may perhaps be therefore clarified in that Minnesota lies a good deal further west than does Illinois.

After several years of discussion, Swensson's rather than Norelius' view of the ministry became that of Augustana. Not until 1894 was this view written into the constitution that the Synod (Church) "consists of all pastors and congregations that are in regular and organic union with it." The laity had equal representation with pastors at the annual conventions but ordination was administered by the community of pastors, the ministerium.

A troublesome issue had at last been solved. The pastoral office was recognized as in principle independent of the congregation, not as an order, but as existing in and for the congregation in intimate relationship, not created by the congregation but by Christ, the head of the Church. This is the Lutheran middle way between an ecclesiastical hierarchy on the one hand and congregationalism on the other.

Although this constitutional provision did not become such until twenty-one years after Swensson's death, the meaning of it according to O.N. Olson accurately represents Swensson's view. All this he had stated. Swensson's view was important. By the force of his mind and
personality, he left an imprint of his thought upon Augustana. The future decision of that body to adopt the view of the ministry which he had espoused spoke eloquently for him whose name was Jonas.

Swensson's view was that the call was comprised of the inner call and the outer call. In this trinity of related doctrines—the Church, the ministry, and the call—it can in general be stated that the outer call is related to the Church and the inner call to the individual who occupies the office of the ministry.

The inner call—the conviction that God calls one into the office of the ministry and that that call or summons has an irresistibility which one can escape only at great risk to one's integrity—was central in Swensson's own ministry throughout his life. During the struggle as a youth with the call, even in light of Bexell's counsel that he ought to forget the divine pull, he could not turn his back on what would be his vocation. In his dagbok, he wrote on January 26, 1853 in his second year as pastor in Södra Unnaryd and Jälluntofta: 'That the Lord has called me, of that I am certain;...I have had a living experience of Jeremiah 20.' The inescapability from the call was similar to that of the prophet Jeremiah.

His confidence that God had called him into the ministry extended also in its force to the places where he was to serve in America including the office of the presidency. In a moving letter to his wife on September 25, 1872, he wrote from Galesburg at the time he was elected for the third time to that office:

I said that I could not hope to accept the election at least without thinking about it until after noon, until I could be certain in my mind that the call was of the Lord. Difficult as it was to accept, I must still offer myself for the sake of the Lord. At noon’s recess, I sought counsel with some of the brothers and we prayed. In common with the Lord, one after the other said I must accept and with tears in my eyes, I accepted the election. Thus, I am still president.

Swensson considered this inner call as a necessity not only for himself but for all who were to enter the office of the ministry. For one to seek this without the inner call left one unequipped to adequately fill the office. This was revealed in a letter he wrote to Hasselquist August 15, 1865. He discussed the application from an assistant (komminister) pastor by the name of Bokgren. Though an application to become a pastor in a parish in Sweden was a common practice, Swensson regarded that as improper. He wrote:

Certainly it is true that we need more pastoral strength and will rejoice if the Lord is pleased to send them to us, but we cannot be happy about those who send themselves.... Certainly it is good to discover the willingness to offer oneself to the service of the Lord when the Lord calls. We cannot other than desire that God would work more of this Spirit. It is equally true that such who come and recommend themselves are not suitable to do the Lord's work. When the Lord calls and sends, then it is good to willingly obey.
Augustana shared Swensson's view of the inner call. Throughout its history of 102 years, young men applying for entry into the Augustana Theological Seminary were expected to give evidence that they had received an inner call. That Swensson stressed this view gives strong indication that he influenced Augustana on this issue also.

There must also be the call from a congregation. This was the outer call which went together with ordination. The outer was not valid without the inner even though the ministerium enjoyed an independence from the congregation.

An important dimension of the requirement for the outer call from a congregation was the need to protect local parishes from interlopers. Swensson stated this clearly when he observed that although, on the one hand, a pastor by virtue of his ordination into the office of the ministry was free to go to preach and administer the sacraments, still, on the other hand, he could not do so without permission of the pastor who had been called to that particular parish.

Yet, there was a far more important basis for the outer call in Swensson's mind. It was related to his doctrine of the Church in which was the priesthood of believers. As such, God worked through this fellowship to provide the outer call. It, like the inner one, was also of God. He brought together the divine origin of both the inner and the outer call in a letter to his son, Carl:

> It seems to you that you have not had a special calling into the office of the ministry. If the Lord in time comes to you so that you feel you should decide in your heart to offer yourself to the service of his office of the ministry, that is the inner call. Then if you live to the time you receive an outer call from God's church, then you need have no doubt that you are of God called into the office of the ministry.

Again, as in the other doctrines discussed in this chapter, Swensson was not alone in his view of the call to the ministry. It no doubt had been emphasized in the Swedish religious revival from which Augustana's clerical and lay leadership had come. Yet, and again, Swensson certainly exerted a strong influence.

### 2. The Last Months of Swensson's Life and His Death

T.N. Hasselquist wrote in *Augustana* a description of Swensson's funeral which occurred the day after Christmas in 1873. In the article, the author referred to "the strange illness of the heart with which the departed for so long had to bear." Six years earlier Swensson had described how that "strange illness" behaved. "I was again attacked by pain around the heart. It was like a struggle with death. This lasted for three hours. I was frightened for I was unconscious." These spells came with increasing frequency as Hasselquist observed: "One could perceive that these attacks which came more and more often and made him unconscious for long periods would little by little gnaw off the thread of life."
At the last convention in Paxton over which he presided as president, Swensson experienced one of those attacks which Norelius graphically described:

He was very weak and had one of those severe slaganfall [defined as apoplectic stroke]. During the seizure, three men had all they could do to hold him during that little time. After that he sank into unconsciousness during which time he sang a verse of a hymn with the repeating of some Bible passages, one in Swedish, one in Greek, and one in Latin. This attack occurred in the forenoon. In the afternoon, he went to the church and in the evening, he delivered the Synod sermon.\textsuperscript{65}

Even though such a vivid manifestation of his illness must have caused great anxiety, Swensson’s colleagues dared to believe that several years of life yet remained for him—and not without reason. The rapid recovery he made after each of these seizures gave hope to his friends. “Because of his natural strength which manifested itself from time to time, it was hoped that his illness would be conquered. Even regarding the attack [at Paxton] it was not expected that the end was so near.”\textsuperscript{66}

In addition, his colleagues had been aware of his illness for so many years that they believed he would survive for an indefinite period. As early as 1860 Erland Carlsson wrote out of deep concern for his good friend: “In order not to suffer pain in your chest as well as your nervous system, quit or at least be sparing in the use of tobacco.”\textsuperscript{67} Modern knowledge well supports Carlsson’s counsel as to the deteriorative effects of smoking on the heart and all the more so when that organ is diseased as Swensson’s was. Others too were disturbed by this habit of Swensson’s. In the Minnes-Album of the church at Andover which covered the history of the congregation from 1850 to 1910, the writer wondered if Swensson’s smoking of “his pipe so assiduously was really the best for his heart.”\textsuperscript{68}

Swensson did not believe he would survive long. On a loose page found in his dagbok, he gave evidence of his last days when he wrote:

How can my strength endure? And how is it with my tragic end that I should be patient? My strength is not of stone nor is my flesh of copper. Nothing helps and I have no place to find aid. Alas, Lord, how long! When shall I come that I might see the face of the Lord! The Lord shall release me from all evil and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever! Amen. Yes, Lord, oh that you may soon rescue me for your heavenly kingdom; you know that I am a useless servant; but save me for the sake of your grace! You see that on earth I am a useless creature. I cannot carry out my office; I am frustrated about everything. Oh, Lord, I would rather be a watchman of the door in your eternal house than to be useless on earth. God, My Deliverer, help me! Oh, Lord, do you not have room for me in your heavenly home? The earth has no refuge, that you truly know; you had nothing on which to lay your head.\textsuperscript{69}
Swensson did not deny himself the possibility of finding a cure for both his wife’s and his own manifold illnesses (at various times he had complained of rheumatism, tuberculosis, gout, heart disease, and typhoid fever). Regarding his wife, Norelius wrote: “He risked the employment of first one and then another quack doctor [for his wife’s cure] who were recommended but who shortened more lives than they saved.”

He was not immune to seeking doubtful remedies for himself. Following his attack at the Paxton convention upon his return home, he embarked on a water cure. Swensson described this as “taking the water.” At the time he told of the cure, he had been so involved for some time:

I aim to finish this [“taking the waters’’] next week. I have tried to follow the prescription as much as possible and have done it at home. Whether it is working to help my health, I cannot yet say. During the time that it has been followed I have been weaker than before so that I am unfit for work. They who have tried taking the waters say this is how it must be if the procedure shall be effective. I arise in the mornings between four and five. Carl goes and gets the water. I write about an hour until he comes back. Then I begin to drink. I must be in motion walking about for the whole forenoon as well as a couple of hours in the afternoon. I cannot write or do anything else after that because the water makes one unable to read or study. In later afternoon I am so tired that I cannot do anything except to lie down. I do no work. My neighbors have preached for me on Sundays.

It is highly likely that it was following his taking of the water cure when he wrote the jeremiad found in his dagbok. As dear as preaching was to him, to have to surrender that aspect of his office was very difficult.

By late autumn of 1873, the son Carl expressed anxiety over the health of both his parents: “Now farewell dear parents. May God uphold and guide you in your suffering. If He wills, may He again make you well, but, if not, may He allow us to meet again with Him.” At the end of that month on November 29, Jonas wrote to his son: “How I want to see you and receive assistance from you; yet, I do not want you to come too soon so as to interrupt your studies.” Carl acceded to his father’s wish, but before he arrived home, the Swenssons endured a terrifying experience.

Jonas had been counseling a neighbor by the name of Alfred Clementson who was mentally disturbed. In Swensson’s judgment, Clementson’s trouble was not only mental but also spiritual—sjalabekymmer (troubled soul). On the night of December 4 at eleven thirty, the Swenssons heard a sharp knock at the door. The servant girls went to the door, opened it, but discovered no one there. They assumed it was the work of “some rascals” and calm settled over the household again. At four o’clock in the morning, Swensson was just rising when he heard a dreadful scream. There was a strong wind which distorted the sound so that Jonas thought his wife in her illness was calling for help and she, in turn, thought it was her husband who was calling for aid. Soon they realized the disturbance was something else.

The scream was followed by a loud knock at the kitchen door. Before
the servant girls could dress themselves, the door was knocked open and the demented man was moving toward Mrs. Swensson's room. The girls and the second son, John, exerted great strength to keep the man out of the room. Despite the cold weather, the deranged man was naked.

Swensson talked with him. Clementson told him that his own father, mother, and mother-in-law had died for his [Swensson's] sake. And he informed the pastor that both he [Swensson] and himself must die for the sake of Jesus Christ. "Now I feared," wrote Swensson, "that he had committed murder and intended to do so again."

Relief came finally with the arrival of Clementson's father who, contrary—and fortunately so—to his son's report was very much alive. The father, however, could not exercise control over his son and was forced to go for help. All in all, this night of terror lasted almost two and a half hours. Later it was discovered that between the two appearances at the Andover parsonage, Clementson had appeared at the Children's Home about a mile and a half away. He had caused disturbance there also but had not forced entry.

How contributory this event was to the imminent death of Swensson may be difficult to assess. Certainly it could not have been positive in its impact upon the Swenssons who were already very ill. In the letter to Hasselquist in which he recounted the frightening experience, he wrote of his wife, his sister-in-law and himself; "My wife was so disturbed that I am very fearful of her condition. Her sister was so affected that she has been suffering from a hemorrhage. God help us!... I thought I was so much better and then came this misery which my wife had to endure."

Carl seemed to attribute to that night the possible acceleration of his father's demise. On December 13, he wrote to Hasselquist: "Papa and I have worked the whole forenoon with matters related to the Children's Home. Although he has been in bed, Papa has written letters, counted money, etc. Papa's illness as well as Mamma's have been caused by the frightening night they experienced the previous week."

Fifteen days after the experience with Clementson, Swensson succumbed to death.

During the night between December 19 and 20, he had pain in his back which they sought to counteract by rubbing on some medicine. Around two o'clock in the morning, the pain increased but now when the massaging had begun, there was heard a rattling in the throat. Now he who was ill was in the valley of death. Around 4:35 all was quiet and over.

Later that day, Carl sent the following message to Hasselquist: "It is my sorrowful duty to announce that Papa without any death struggle entered quietly and peacefully into the heavenly joy following two weeks of severe illness. Mother and we are much overtaken by sorrow. May God help us."

Shortly after Swensson's death, his body was brought to the old church where during the following five days he could "for one more time be visited." The day after Christmas, the funeral was held. In the morning
the casket was placed outside the black draped door of the parsonage. People began to gather early. A total of fourteen pastors was present. At one o’clock in the afternoon eight of the pastors carried the casket to the church. It was estimated that 2500 people were in attendance. From his favorite psalms (hymns), three were sung at the service. Hasselquist preached from Psalm 126:5-6 (‘‘May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy! He that goes forth weeping, bearing the seed for sowing shall come home with shouts of joy bringing his sheaves with him’’) ‘‘which truly corresponded to the life work of the departed one.’’ A final opportunity to view Swensson in the glass covered casket was given. The service ended with the procession to the cemetery with members of the church council acting as pallbearers.

Numerous tributes were given to Jonas Swensson among which were expressions from congregations he had served. From Sodra Unnaryd and Jälluntofta came an undated letter signed by Lorents Larsson and others. It gave a description of his zealous activity there:

This dear teacher, now passed beyond, was engaged in many battles and strifes during his time here. Such difficulties also faced him when he was to prepare his sermons for the Sabbath days. Seldom would he sleep much the night before the Sabbath remembering the words of the Lord, Go where I send you and preach what I command you. Thus he never dared to take his own words but prayed and cried unto the Lord for help and for guidance of the Spirit of God, until He showed his mercy unto him. At times it could happen that he would not receive that which he was to preach before God’s people until well-nigh on to the time when the service was to begin. . . . The day came when he was to leave us. The parting was sad and he was much missed, but he left a sweet memory behind him, certified from many hearts and lips.

The congregations in Hessel Valley, Pennsylvania and Jamestown, New York sent an unsigned tribute. The writer described his teaching as ‘‘mild and sweet’’ but ‘‘mixed with salt.’’ His preaching ‘‘entered deeply into the soul which previously had been tightly closed unto grace. . . . When he was first here we disdained his preaching. Then we were to see that numbers of people gathered about him.’’ Even though he might preach for two hours at a service of worship in the morning and give a three hour Bible exposition in the afternoon, ‘‘on the way home people said: ‘Today it was like a five hour fall of rain to hear Swensson.’’’ They wrote:

If this watchman on the walls of Zion noticed anyone who had been gripped by the Word, he immediately sought him out, and exhorted, both privately and publicly, not to stop with the awakening but to allow the Spirit of God to complete his work to a full conversion and living faith in Jesus. . . . Now rest in the west, thou good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord and find the reward of your labor.
Hasselquist spoke for the local congregation of Andover, Swensson’s third charge. He wrote:

It was impressive to witness the love and the devotion which Pastor Swensson won from this large congregation. He did not win this by claiming any special distinction or spiritual superiority; neither did he win such by an affected manner in the attempt to assert some kind of spiritual power. But lying hidden therein, he possessed that “constancy of faith” which he expressed to his congregation especially through his preaching but also in various ways through other forms of communication. He displayed that same steadiness and stability, thus preventing spiritual schism. Above all, that which especially effected such devotion for him was the orderly, clear, and complete knowledge of blessedness with which he had a special gift to communicate to those whom he prepared for the Eucharist. Such ability and knowledge steadies minds and is the noble seed which more often than we believe yields a harvest from darkness into light more glorious than that which is ascribed to emotion and violent feelings.

The congregation at Andover in a very concrete way paid tribute to the memory of its beloved and respected pastor by the purchase of a lot and the erection of a house for Maria Swensson and her children, all of whom were still minors (Carl, sixteen; John, fifteen; Anna Marie, ten; and Luther, eight). During the first year following the death of husband and father, the congregation also provided five hundred dollars for the support of the family. Mrs. Swensson, however, enjoyed this gesture of love from the parish for only a short time. On August 20, 1874, eight months to the day following her husband’s death, she died. The two younger children required special care. Luther was cared for at the Children’s Home which his father had founded. The only daughter, Anna Marie, may also have lived there for awhile but in time, she resided in the home of the good family friends, the Erland Carlssons. Carlsson became Swensson’s successor in 1875. Romance developed between her and Carlsson’s son, Ebenezer, who became a successful pharmacist in Lindborg, Kansas. Thus marriage brought together these two prominent families from which flowed such important influence and leadership for the Augustana Lutheran Church.

Not only the local congregation but the Augustana Church was also impelled to pay tribute to its second president. At the fifteenth annual convention of the Church at Rockford, Illinois six months after Swensson’s death, it was decided that the newly elected president, Erik Norelius, should be responsible for conducting a memorial service. The resolution calling for such a service also stated:

Although we as a Synod subscribe to God’s Holy will and wise providence to receive the loss and testing He sends us, we can also do nothing other than express our deep pain and sorrow over the severe loss in the death of our dearly beloved president, Pastor Jonas Swensson.
Long and faithfully he worked among us. The unusual nature and great gifts of grace he had received and through prayer, work, suffering, and testing, he developed into a charming Christian, a true brother, a faithful and gifted shepherd for his congregation and an able, wise, and powerful president for our Synod.\textsuperscript{87}

On the closing day of the convention, the memorial service was held. Messages of sympathy were given both by Norelius and Erland Carlsson. When a person dies, the utterance of tributes is relatively easy. The bad is forgotten, or at least ignored; the good is emphasized. When, however, persons are remembered for the good they did six and a half decades after their death, one may confidently assume those persons possessed character and deserved richly the commendation of their posterity, especially their spiritual descendants. This is doubly so when one dies young as did Jonas Swensson. He was remembered in later years, and among those who recalled his rich contribution to Augustana was L.G. Abrahamson who wrote in the June 27 issue of \textit{Augustana} (1939):

\begin{quote}
In Pastor Jonas Swensson, whose untimely death occurred in the autumn of 1873, God gave to our Synod a teacher whose work was of great significance to it. When we consider the founders of our Synod, it is beautiful to see how with their gifts and talents they complemented one another. Without one of Pastor Swensson’s singular gifts, there likely would have been inherent faults in the work of organizing [Augustana]. All evidence about him agrees that he was of an honest and serious piety in his personal fear of God. By God’s grace he was endowed with great natural gifts. He was a highly gifted preacher, steadfastly rooted in the faith of our evangelical Church, and during his short time as Synod president, it is documented that he was a wise and strong leader of the Church. He was a worthy gift of God and the Swedish Church to our Synod.\textsuperscript{88}
\end{quote}

He whose name was Jonas is counted among the saints about whom scripture declares: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth. Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”\textsuperscript{89}
NOTES

1 December 3, 1873, Swensson Collection, Upsala College Archives.

2 Erik Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska församlingarnas och Svenskarnes historia i Amerika*, (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1890-1916), I: 212.

3 Letter to Hasselquist, June 2, 1873, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives. This is a somewhat surprising statement. Had English made such incursions so that the Augustana pastors already by 1873 were losing their proficiency in the Swedish language?

4 See above, e.g., pp. 38-46, 58-59.

5 See above, pp. 41-46.

6 Letter to Hasselquist, November 5, 1873, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.


8 December 28, 1872, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives. On the Waldenstromian controversy, see above, pp. 108-111.


11 See above, pp. 109-111.


13 See above, p. 116.


15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., pp. 33-34.

17 Letter to Hasselquist, June 1, 1870, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

18 E.g., his attitude on forms of worship in the United States as compared with the formula in the Church in Sweden. See above, p. 45.


20 Ibid., 1872. p. 12.

21 Ibid., 1873, p. 9

22 I. O. Nothstein, ed., *Selected Documents Dealing with the Organization of the First Congregations and the First Conferences of the Augustana Synod and Growth until 1860* (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Historical Society, 1944-46), No. 10, pp. 122-23. The biblical citations from Matthew give counsel that an offender should first be approached privately, then by a few persons, then by the larger group. If correction
is not achieved, excommunication becomes the only course of action to follow. I Corinthians 5 is more severe.

23 In a letter to Olsson on April 29, 1873, Swensson quoted this statement from Nytt och Gammalt in response to Olsson’s sermon. I am indebted to Emory Lindquist for placing at my disposal this letter from Swensson to Olsson.

24 Ibid. For one instance of this teaching of Luther, see: Jaroslav Pelikan, ed., Luther’s Works. Selected Psalms II, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), 13:90.

25 Letter to Olsson, April 29, 1873.

26 See footnote 18.

27 November 19, 1864, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

28 Letter to Martin Johansson, January 18, 1871, Swensson Collection, Upsala College Archives.

29 Letter to Hasselquist, January 4, 1871, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

30 August 26, 1869, pp. 16-17, Swensson Collection, Upsala College Archives. See Appendix III.

31 Letter obtained from Emory Lindquist.

32 See above, p. 99.

33 Lindquist, Vision for a Valley, p. 59.

34 Andover Minnes-Album. Sv. Ev. Lutherska forsamlingen i Andover, Illinois.: (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1910), p. 50; letters from Carl Swensson to Hasselquist, January 9, 1874; from Olsson to Hasselquist, February 17, 1873; and from S.P. Lindahl to Hasselquist, March 19, 1874.

35 See above, pp. 110-111.


37 Ibid.

38 Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1871, p. 25.

39 "Bishop," "presbyter," and "minister" were nearly synonymous in the New Testament.

40 Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1872, p. 31; 1873, pp. 17-18.

41 June 15, pp. 204, 222.

42 Undated letter to Martin Johansson but written between the time of the other letters: June 8-14, 1871 and November 6, 1872, Swensson collection, Upsala College Archives.

43 Letter to Norelius, August 1-September 5, 1872, pp. 2-3, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.

44 Ibid., pp. 2-4.


46 Ibid., p. 7.


48 Ibid., p. 11.
49Ibid. From Luther, he drew the following statement: ‘‘[To the office of the ministry belong] three things: preaching, sacrifice and prayer.’’ The function of preaching ‘‘has come through the prophets.’’ The Roman Catholic Church, however, had made the office of the ministry largely a sacrificial function. The preaching had been all but eliminated or if practiced, did not preach the word aright. Ibid., p. 23 (from Luther’s Works, 13:315.) From a Swedish version of this commentary, Swenssson cited the same words which are found in Pelikan’s translation which is here employed.

50Letter to Norelius, August 1-September 5, 1872, p. 21, Norelius Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.

51Ibid., quoted from Luther’s Works, pp. 333, 332.

52Luthersk Kyrkotidning (August 15, 1872), pp. 254-55. The issue as to whether Augustana acted wisely is now rather a futile debate. By lowering its ministerial standards, it may have held on to more of the Swedish immigrants. But, in so doing, it would have become a different Augustana.

53Norelius, De Svenska Luterska...historia i Amerika, 1:499.

54July 15, 1872, p. 222-23.

55August 1-September 5, 1872, p. 22.


58Norelius, De Svenska Luterska...historia i Amerika, 1:197; Evald B. Lawson, Two Primary Sources for a Study of the Life of Jonas Swensson, (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Historical Society, 1957), pp. 20-21. The reference to Jeremiah records that prophet’s feeling that the Lord had deceived him and had made him a laughingstock. So disturbed had Jeremiah become that he decided to no longer speak in behalf of the Lord. Yet, he could not carry out this thought. ‘‘If I say I will not mention him, / or speak any more in his name,/ there is in my heart as it were a burning fire/shut up in my bones,/ and I am very weary with holding it in,/ and I cannot’’ (Jeremiah 20:9).

59Swensson Collection, Upsala College Archives.

60Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

61November 4, 1873, Swensson Collection, Bethany College Archives.

62Hasselquist, ‘‘Hogtidlig begrafning’’ [‘‘Highly Festive funeral’’], January 1873, p. 10.

63Letter to Hasselquist, May 5, 1869, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

64Hasselquist, ‘‘Hogtidlig begrafning,’’ p. 10.

65Norelius, De Svenska Luterska...historia i Amerika, 1:223-24.


67February 16, 1960, Carlsson Collection, Lutheran Church in America Archives.

68Andover Minnes-Album...1910, p. 46. With a touch of humor in spite of the likely dire consequences from this habit, Norelius wrote: ‘‘When Jonas Swensson rode between Andover and Berlin, pipe lit, one could not avoid to notice the
similarity between this conveyance and a locomotive shooting forth smoke. He was in a great hurry since he had to preach at both places.' Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska . . . historia i Amerika*, 1:221.

69*Ibid.*, 1:224. See Appendix I regarding the loose page in the *dagbok*.


71Catherine L. Albanese, Professor of Religion at Wright State University, has through capable research noted that the water cure was popular during that time in the United States. Lecture, "Physic and Metaphysic in Nineteenth Century: Medical Sectarians and Religious Healing," 139th meeting of the American Society of Church History, New York, December 29, 1985.

72Letter to Hasselquist, August 2, 1873, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

73Weakened as he was by one of his many bouts with illness, he wrote to Hasselquist to send him a student to help him but not to preach. "Not to preach is not easy for me for that is what enlivens my frail tent." (May 24, 1871, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.) Some weeks after taking the waters and less than a month before his death, he related that even though he was miserably ill with pains in both legs and was unable to rest either day or night, nevertheless, "on Sunday I lay upon my knees and preached." Letter to Hasselquist, November 24, 1873, Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

74October 31-November 1, 1873, Swensson Collection, Bethany College Archives.

75Swensson Collection, Bethany College Archives.

76This account is reconstructed from two letters: one from Swensson to Hasselquist, December 5, 1873 and one from Maria Swensson of the same date to her son, Carl, who was still in Paxton prior to his return home for the Christmas holidays. Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives; Swensson Collection, Bethany College Archives.

77Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives.

78Hasselquist, "Hogtidlig begravning," p. 11.

79Hasselquist Collection, Augustana College Archives. Carl's statement that his father had been severely ill for two weeks preceding his death adds credence to the assumption that the unsettling experience with Alfred Clementson hastened Swensson's death.

80These psalms are from the 1849 version, *Den Swenska Psalmboken*, by J.H. Thomander and Peter Wieselgren who revised the Wallin *Psalmbok* of 1819. The titles of the psalms employed were: 221: "Af hjertat hafwer jag dig kar" which has been translated under the title: "O Lord, Devoutly Love I Thee." The third stanza sung at Swensson's funeral begins: "Send, Lord Thine angels forth at last/To bear my soul, when life is past/Where heavenly joy aboundeth." This hymn appears as no. 465 in *The Hymnal and Order of Service* (lectionary edition; Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1925); no. 487: "I hoppet sig min fralsta sjal fornojer," trans., "In Hope My Soul, Redeemed to Bliss Unending" (no. 602 in *ibid*); and no. 488 "Snart ligger bojan krossad I grafwens morka klyft." I have been unable to find an English translation of this hymn. The opening lines noted in rough translation are: "Soon lie crushed the bonds, in the grave's dark gorge."
81 This narrative of Swensson’s funeral is taken from Hasselquist, “Hogtidlig Begrafning,” pp. 11-13 and Andover Minnes-Album...1910, p. 46.


83 Ibid., p. 177.


86 Genealogical chart of the descendants of Jonas and Maria Blixt Swensson, source unknown, Swensson Collection, Upsala College; Lindquist, Shepherd of an Immigrant People..., p. 172.

87 Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1874, p. 40


89 Revelation 14:13 (Revised Standard Version).
Norelius took much information from a dagbok (daybook) which Jonas Swensson kept at least from 1846 to 1860. Very disturbing to Dr. Lawson was the loss of the book for the years after 1851. His diligent search as well as the efforts of others to find it have proven thus far futile. Not only Norelius, but also Carl Evald and C.M. Esbjorn used this source (See Lawson, Two Primary Sources..., p. 7). Evidence points to Dr. Evald as the person who last utilized this important dagbok. He depended upon it for the chapter he prepared for the Minnes-Album Forsta Lutherska forsamlingar Jamestown, New York 1856-1907, pp. 47-56. By 1935, Lawson was convinced that Evald had lost it. In a letter written to Professor George Stephenson of the University of Minnesota, January 29, 1935 from White Plains, New York, he wrote: ‘‘Did you know that his dagbok, which would have been a great source for our early history, was lost by Dr. C.A. Evald (or Hoffsten? [It is not clear how Hoffsten—apparently Rev. C.E. Hoffsten—was involved]). Dr. Lincoln told me last summer that Dr. Evald used this book when he wrote a chapter on the early days for the book published by First Church, Jamestown at the 50th anniversary, but that it had never been returned to him.’’ (Dr. Lincoln presumably had borrowed it from Augustana Archives.)

So persistent was Dr. Lawson in his search that two years later, he prompted the following reply from Dr. [Julius] Lincoln, then in Chicago: ‘‘Dr. C.A. Evald agreed to return the previous book to me, but never did so. It is my recollection that I wrote to him about the matter and received the reply that it was lost. Then Dr. Evald’s sickness, death [Mar. 13, 1909] and removal of family to other quarters’’ compounded the problem (November 6, 1937). Dr. Lincoln suggested in that same letter: ‘‘If Mrs. Evald will permit a thorough search in the ‘attic’ the missing dagbok might be found there.’’
Appendix II

July 26, 1856 is the date which is generally reckoned as the beginning of both of the congregations at Hessel Valley and Jamestown as well as the one at Wrightsville. For some reason, on the cornerstone of the church in Jamestown (First Lutheran), the date of 1857 is chiseled. The confusion is compounded by the following statement from the Minutes Book of ‘‘The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran congregation in Hessel Valley, Sugar Grove Township, Warren County, Pennsylvania. Begun in 1857.’’ Yet, immediately thereafter, the statement is written: ‘‘Excerpts from the minutes kept at a general meeting of Swedes in the neighborhood of Sugar Grove, July 26, 1856’’ (Nothstein, Selected Documents . . . , No. 11, p. 90).

The evidence for 1856, therefore, is stronger. Julius Lincoln argued cogently that, first, there is a record of a congregational meeting held in Jamestown, August 18, 1856. Secondly, there is for October 18, 1856, the record of the death of a member of the congregation in Jamestown. Thirdly, for November 6 of the same year, it is written that Pastor Swensson ‘‘conducted a general meeting with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jamestown where three deacons were elected.’’ Consideration was also given as to whether lots should be purchased with the thought that as the congregation was able, it would build a Swedish Lutheran Church edifice. (Minnes-Album . . . Jamestown . . . 1907, p. 14).

On the basis of the minutes of the July 26 meeting, Lawson came to the same conclusion: ‘‘It is plain that Swensson organized into one congregation the folk living in the various sections of the colony. The same date, July 26, 1856, avails for all of these. On the title page we read: ‘‘Signatures of the members of the Swedish-Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sugar Grove, Warren Co., Pa. together with those who in the surrounding area unite themselves with the same evangelical Lutheran pastor [läsare].’ Begun 26 July, 1856. ‘‘There are separate pages in the record for the entries from Hessel Valley, Chandlers Valley, Teel Hill, Busti, Ashville, Youngsville, Sugar Grove, Wrightsville, Jamestown, and Frewsburg (Lawson, ‘‘The Old Church in the Valley,’’ p. 326). The fluidity of the frontier in an area at that time so sparsely settled is plainly evident here.

There may be two reasons why the year 1857 appears on the cornerstone of First Lutheran Church, Jamestown. First, the statement of the title page of the afore-mentioned Minutes elevates Hessel Valley (that is, Sugar Grove) as the central congregation toward which all the other settlements gravitated. This may have created the impression the other congregations including Jamestown were not yet established congregations. Secondly, at the meeting of July 26, 1856, it was agreed that Swensson should hold services in Hessel Valley every other Sunday, one Sunday in four at Wrightsville and one Sunday in four at Jamestown. Just a year later, the people at Jamestown demanded that services be held more frequently there and since nothing had been heard from Wrightsville, it was agreed that now, as in Hessel Valley, services would
also be held every other Sunday in Jamestown except the eighth Sunday which would be reserved for Wrightsville (Nothstein, Selected Documents..., No. 11, pp. 92, 96). Perhaps the increase of worship services to equal the number held in Hessel Valley in 1857 gave to Jamestown a sense that that was the year of its true beginning. The solution to this problem must remain a matter of conjecture (Minnes-Album...Jamestown...1907, pp. 14, 22-23).
On the tenth anniversary in 1870 of the organization of the Synod, Erland Carlsson, the chief architect of the congregational constitution, reflected, as a member of a committee to revise the constitution (the revisions were minor), upon the early days: "When we as pastors and people came to this land, we were not well acquainted as to how a free church should be organized." By way of reminder, Carlsson recalled that at a meeting of the Chicago and Mississippi Conferences March 18-20, 1857, a satisfactory document was finally accepted. That constitution was based on two basic principles: first, the governance of the Church "should not place too much power in the hands of some few for this would restrict both individual congregations [This was directed against too strong a synodical government] and members in their Christian freedom which would restrict a healthy development of their spiritual life and would cause them to suffer; yet, also there should be good Christian order and guidance so that indiscretion and individualism does not disrupt the whole." Secondly, "there should be adherence to a historical churchly development rather than resort to many changes in new usages and orders which awaken disquiet and strife within the congregation." Carlsson recognized that the many-sided experiences of more than a decade since the original constitution had been formed showed the need for change and, "if possible, for improvement. Nevertheless we should observe a Christian conservatism and not take the radical way; otherwise more injury than benefit will accrue and that which has been improved would soon need correction." Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1870, pp. 34-35 [Italics mine.].
Appendix IV

The Lutheran reticence to rely on human judgment as to the fitness of a person to celebrate the Eucharist prevented Augustana’s leaders, including Esbjörn, from fully subscribing to the Reformed view of the American Home Missionary Society. Hasselquist was more forthright in his statement to that organization which also gave him valuable financial aid. In his report to the Society on March 2, 1854, he wrote: “I will only promise to do what I can, i.e., to examine candidates for membership as accurately as possible to get an assurance of their earnestness. I dare not in many cases say that a person is really born again, if there are many outward evidences of it. I fear often to keep one away whom God, perhaps, has elected and likes often to assure of his new birth because he can harbour ‘a guile spirit.’” Jeremiah 17: 9, 10; II Timothy 2: 19. “I have heard many confessions in many churches, but much of what is called ‘get religion’ and ‘experience religion’ is not of more value than what our Saviour describes in Matt. 13:5, 6, 20, 21. Here you have my answer, open heartedly given; what I have said will, perhaps, deprive me of your favor and of that support I really need, but I will not deceive you.”

One must admire Hasselquist for the frankness he expressed. Similarly, one must also have the same feeling toward the Society for it did not cut off support for Hasselquist. Perhaps its personnel also realized how difficult it was to distinguish between true and false Christians. More importantly, Hasselquist helped pave the way for Augustana to accept into its congregations Lutheran immigrants who presented the prästbetyg by a Swedish pastor (confirmation that they were members in good standing in the Church in Sweden) which they had brought with them from Sweden. This became the common practice.

Swensson, who would never have subscribed to the Society’s requirement that only “born again” Christians could be received into a Christian congregation, also received help from this agency. The sacramental view of the Church was too central in his theology for him to surrender on this point. Yet, he received help from the Society until the spring of 1858 prior to his departure from Hessel Valley and Jamestown parishes in the autumn of that year. Here was another instance of the admirable flexibility, understanding, and missionary concern of the American Home Missionary Society.

The central observation is to emphasize the fact that, in spite of its differences and difficulties with the “mother Church,” it was to that ecclesiastical community rather than to the denominations in the United States to which Augustana turned for the norm of true Christian experience and faith. A prästbetyg from a parish in Sweden was sufficient evidence of the authenticity of a person’s Christian faith and would thus allow one entry into an Augustana congregation. That position was reaffirmed nineteen years after Hasselquist’s frank response to the American Home Missionary Society. At its annual convention in 1873, a form of service was designed for the reception of new members. The formula opened
with the sentence: "You have been a member of the Church in Sweden.''
This was followed with the announcement that a request had been made by the person(s) to become a member(s) of this particular congregation and with the invocation of the name of the triune God. An affirmation of the applicants' faith in Christ and a statement that they had been baptized made unnecessary "to require from you any new confession" and "we only wish to know if also in this land you want to remain in the old imperishable faith and teaching." That "imperishable faith and teaching" was that the holy scriptures was "the only sufficient and infallible rule and guide for humanity's faith and life [which] together with the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism constitute a short but true summary of the chief teachings of Christianity." The service concluded with the pastor's announcement that the person(s) about to become member(s) did have in hand the prastbetyg, the promise of the person(s) to be faithful to the responsibilities of church membership especially to the means of grace (Word and Sacraments), and the expression of welcome into the congregation (Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1873, pp. 54-56).

The order for reception of members on the basis of the Swedish prastbetyg was in a sense an action after the fact. Already, as inferred by Hasselquist's statement, this practice was followed even before the establishment of Augustana. After it became an organization, its yearly statistics from the very beginning divided its newly received members into two categories: prastbetyg and by confession. For example, in 1860, the first year of Augustana's existence, 107 were received under the first classification, 116 under the second. In the year the formula for reception of members was designed and accepted, 823 were received on the basis of the prastbetyg, 2547 by confession (Augustana Synodens Protokoll, 1860, pp. 26-27; 1873, p. 64). These figures did not include members received through confirmation. On the basis of the large number who were received by confession, Augustana could scarcely be accused of indifference to the missionary imperative to which it had responded.
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