Pietism and Methodism in Sweden

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THE Protestant Reformation is often viewed, but not altogether understood, against the background of an emerging nationalism in Europe with its associated economic transitions, and the rebirth of learning. There is obviously no way of isolating the revolutionary upheaval of the Reformation either from its antecedents or its total environment of the sixteenth century. The same is true of the rise of Pietism, Methodism, and their related impact on the world of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in England and Sweden. The intent of this paper is to evaluate and appreciate the extent of the contribution Pietism and Methodism made to the religious life of Sweden.

By the eighteenth century, the Swedish State and the Lutheran Church were so merged together that it would be inconceivable to think of one without the other. Working in conjunction with the government, the church had constructed an organization which supposedly was to safeguard and disseminate pure doctrine, and which through mandatory catechising of a community would give the church strict control over the total enterprise of religious indoctrination. On the surface this would appear to be an ideal situation. But much to the contrary the established church ran too much like a well oiled machine and through its various ministrations with automatic precision stamped out a society that had an awareness of religion without the practical evidences of its effects. As early as the year 1686 the State Church was placed completely under the domination of the government. A State Church handbook was adopted in 1693, the hymnal in 1686, and a system of religious education developed for youth. Such a combination evoked a patriotic implication that meant to criticize the Lutheran Church was criticism of the State. In the year 1723 a commission was appointed in Sweden to investigate the heresy of Pietism. As a result a law against heretics, "The Conventicle Placate," was passed which forbade laymen to gather in a home for a service and the observance of the Lord's Supper without the presence of the parish priest. This law remained on the books until 1858. Enforcement of the law could mean for a violator a sentence of a fine, imprisonment, or actual banishment.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, Sweden was influenced by French atheism and German rationalism. These became fashionable in Sweden and such influences led to a revision of the State Church handbook and psalm book. This new handbook, tainted with rationalistic philosophy, appeared in 1811. This caused much unrest and unhappiness among some of the clergy and some of the people who continued to be conservative in their convictions. Another ingredient that induced the continued spread of Pietism in thought and life in Sweden, was the national problem of drunkenness. There were 170,000 distilleries in Sweden, plus an unknown number of stills that were in operation for home consumption. It is estimated that by 1830 the per capita consumption of intoxicating liquor was thirty-four quarts.[1] Drunkenness was openly blamed for the growing demoralization of people, especially among the working class, for

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[1]Florence Janson, *The Background of Swedish Immigration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), p. 173.

increased poverty crime, and for the nation's general stagnation. Because many clergymen gave no outward appearance of opposition to drunkenness, and because many entered the pulpit in a condition which made them unfit to preach, sincere Christians became all the more distressed and in turn were attracted to Pietism. And then, in Sweden as in England a century before, preaching was often a coldly formulated dissertation on doctrine that had little or no practical significance for the people. As in England, so in Sweden a century later, preaching left a large segment of the population in the midst of a personally unrelated and relatively unsatisfying State Lutheran Church orthodoxy. George Stephenson, in his book, **The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration,** comments on this situation by saying that local pastors knew far more about liturgics, symbolics, and dogmatics than they did about pastoral theology. The church was in the grip of frigid mechanical forms which quenched the spirit and gave the people the dry husks of formalism. The omission of any part of the liturgy was regarded with horror.[2] It almost goes without saying, that some sort of reform or separation was inevitable in nineteenth century Sweden. The soil in which Pietism grows and matures existed in Sweden at this particular time and Pietism was to be that movement that brought about reform but eventually separation from the established church.

A thesis of this paper is that the elemental emphasis of Pietism is a return to the Biblical portrayal of man as a sinner, Christ as Redeemer, and Justification by Faith as its key doctrine. To this can be added the fact, that Pietism in Germany and Sweden was basically experiential rather than doctrinal and that the impact Wesley made upon England was also experiential rather than doctrinal. This is not to say that such men as Spener and Francke in Germany had no doctrinal interests. After all they were men of considerable academic attainments and with their roots deep in the soil of German Lutheranism it would be absurd to rule out their almost inherent interest and absorption with doctrine. In England, John Wesley was not a systematic theologian, but we would be in error to minimize his contribution to theology. He did, however, like Francke and Spener see the imperative and importance of Christianity as an experience of God's grace and forgiveness by faith in Christ. The appeal of the Wesleyan Revival, as well as Pietism in Germany and later in Sweden, was not to weighty and abstract theological discourses on politics or church law, but rather there was the simple appeal to the sinner that by God's grace and love he could be joyously freed from the guilt of sin. This was God's offer to all men, in contrast to Calvinistic determinism, and this theme is to be found in both Wesleyan and Pietistic hymnody.

Nagler chooses to define Pietism, as related to Spener and Francke in Germany, as a reaction against the orthodoxy of the Lutheran Church. Perhaps Weinlick's definition is more detailed and more illustrative of the Pietistic movement that had its origins in Germany, that had an influence upon Methodism, and which made a meaningful impact on Swedish religious life. Wienlick writes:

> One of the great forces of the era was Pietism, a spiritual renewal arising within German Lutheranism in the seventeenth century and spreading to other nations. Though in a narrow sense the term Pietism is associated with Germany, it is a type of Christianity not confined to any place or period; for it means a Christianity of experience as opposed to emphasis upon creed and outer conformity.[3]

With this in mind we can say that Pietism springs out of the religious needs

[2] George M. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota, 1932), p. 5.

[3] John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), pp. 7-8.

of the people which in turn are related to the social, economic and political situation of the day. In its origin, Pietism was a reform movement within the confines of the established church and was not intended to be a separatistic movement. Even Zinzendorf was convinced that his Moravian Brethren were within the Lutheran Church laboring for its purity and not for separation. Early in the eighteenth century Pietism entered Sweden from Germany. The printed page aroused interest in a more Christ-centered and personally devout type of faith and life. Visitors returning from the continent also brought word of the work of Francke in Halle. Weinlick, in his biography of Count Zinzendorf, says that workers from Herrnhut had been visiting Pietistic societies in Sweden since 1731. We also know that in 1735 Zinzendorf went to Copenhagen to certify his Lutheran convictions to the King and the clergy in Denmark. He left Denmark and sailed to Sweden where he visited the Bishop of Lund and another local pastor who had asked to see him.[4] After returning to Herrnhut, Zinzendorf received word from Stockholm forbidding him to settle in Sweden. To this, Zinzendorf wrote a lengthy and detailed report to Sweden's King. As Weinlick says, "It was another of the Count's supreme efforts to convince the powers that be that there was room within Lutheranism for what he was trying to do."[5]

The sixteenth century revolution we term the Protestant Reformation had as its key theme that men are not justified before God by inherent goodness, by works of personal merit, or by the authoritative word of the church, but by faith alone. Lutheranism has undoubtedly given a valid and permanent contribution to Methodism through Luther's discovery of this vital Biblical truth. Although John Wesley was critical of some of Luther's writings, the fact still remains that it was through Luther's commentary on Romans and his commentary on Galatians that John and his brother Charles realized the futility of a religion of works and the necessity of justification by faith in Christ. The Methodist, Philip Watson in his book on Luther's theology pointedly remarks:

> John and Charles Wesley did not, of course, become Lutherans, nor yet Moravians; and Methodism both had and has its own peculiar ethos. Yet deeper than all differences is the essential spirit, in which the Wesleys are more nearly akin to Luther than to any other great exponent of the Christian faith and life.[6]

Watson goes on to express the conviction that the Evangelical Revival was fundamentally a renewal and extension of the work of Luther and the Reformation. Wesley's Aldersgate experience then was an enlightening one in which Luther's comments in the preface to his commentary on Romans introduced him to a God of love who seeks by grace to justify men through faith. As Edgar M. Carlson significantly points out in his book, **The Reinterpretation of Luther,** Luther's theology revolves around the gracious will of God that in love searches for man's faith.[7] John Wesley's heart was "strangely warmed" by his encounter with a God who lovingly stands ready to give men justification by faith. What actually happened at Aldergate will, I suppose, always be open to question. From the Pietistic viewpoint, if Aldersgate was not John Wesley's point of conversion it was at least the monumental experience that Wesley sought and found with the help of the Moravian Pietists. A study of Wesley's life clearly indicates that many factors merged to form his spiritual experience. While in Georgia the German Moravian Spangeburg, and then later in England his conversations with the Pietist Peter Böhler, emphasized

[4] Ibid., p. 123.
[5] Ibid., p. 123.
[6] Philip S. Watson, *Let God Be God* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949) p. 3.
[7] Edgar M. Carlson, *The Reinterpretation of Luther* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1948), p. 29.

the personal acceptance of God's justifying act in Christ. They helped Wesley grasp the fact that faith, although a gift from God, becomes a human response to the redeeming deed provided by Christ for man's salvation.

There were differences that arose among Wesley, the Moravians, and Count Zinzendorf in particular, but their significant contribution of the personal application of salvation by the experience of faith cannot be minimized or overlooked. There were points of disagreement and the mystical element in continental Pietism was something that Wesley could not tolerate. In addition to this Wesley urged repentance but not the morbid and extreme experience of repentance as was true of the Pietism at Halle under Francke's teaching. Wesley feared that mysticism which becomes too introspective and possesses too much individualism. This is why he could not support Molther's teaching regarding "Stillness" that ruled out the significance of the church, attendance at the sacraments, and even beneficial good works. The individual was merely by faith alone to wait for the blessing of justification. Wesley was too active a man to be held back in his work, nor was he willing to give the church and the sacraments a place of insignificance, and he above all feared an unreal mysticism. Whatever differences existed between Wesley and the Moravians, we still must conclude with Nagler that Pietism was instrumental in helping Wesley break away from the legalism of his former piety and this transformed the ritualist of Oxford into the great Evangelical Preacher of the eighteenth century.[8]

Comment has already been made on conditions in Sweden that prompted the rise of Pietism and the establishing of laws to stem the tide of interest in this movement as a force within the State Church. In Sweden the Protestant Reformation may have marked a departure from Roman Catholic doctrine but not from its organization and autocratic role. Until well along into the nineteenth century every child had to be baptized within eight days of birth and if the parents refused to allow this, then action could be brought against them in the civil courts. As late as the middle of the nineteenth century, every confirmed person by law was to go to Communion at least once a year in order to enjoy the rights of citizenship in Sweden, to be a court witness, or to marry.[9]

Threats, warning and legislation could not terminate the Pietistic movement and the spiritual awakening that was to come to Sweden. From both America and England, Sweden received the pulsating enthusiasm of economic, social and religious movements. This included the appeal for immigration to America, the rise of new industry, Pietism, and the Methodist movement. Our interest revolves around the religious spirit and mood in nineteenth century Sweden and the Pietistic and Methodist movements.

The first Methodists in Sweden were English workmen employed by Samuel Owen, who had been invited to Stockholm in 1806 as a specialist in the construction of new steam engines. Samuel Owen built the first power units for Swedish steamboats. He was a strong supporter of temperance and the Methodist Church. To satisfy the spiritual needs of his workers, he built a Methodist Chapel and brought ministers from England to care for their spiritual needs. Joseph Stephens had ministered to these English workers from 1826 to 1830. But the real impact of Methodism upon Sweden was to be reserved for a young Methodist preacher, born in Edinburgh, who was to labor in Sweden from 1830 to 1842. His name was George Scott. So vital was his ministry to his own people and to the Swedes that he

[8] Arthur Nagler, *Pietism and Methodism* (Nashville: Publishing House M. E. Church South, 1918), p. 180.

[9] Stephenson, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

is often referred to as the "progenitor" of the free church movement in Sweden. As one writer says of Scott, "He had not only spiritual zeal but also a dynamic personality and on both religious reform in Sweden and the further stimulation of emigration to America he was to exercise a wide-spread influence."[10] Scott was a disciple of John Wesley and as a Methodist revivalist preacher he spoke not only to his own countrymen but also to the Swedish people who came in great numbers to hear him. Within one year he had mastered the Swedish language and as a result preached to large crowds. During his stay in Sweden, Scott became aware of the spiritual needs of the Swedish people and also one of their conscientious helpers. Although often critical of the standards of the people and the practices of the State Church, he still held the people and the established church in high regard.

Scott soon associated himself with the Swedish Bible Society, but the main effort of his work was in the area of temperance. The problem of excessive drinking in nineteenth century Sweden has already been mentioned, but its seriousness cannot be exaggerated. George Scott gave himself unreservedly for the promotion of temperance with the approval of his employer, Mr. Owen. Temperance was to be one of the main results of this revival period as it was both in America and Europe. Temperance agitation had existed in Sweden prior to 1826 but Scott gave the movement the voice and the push it needed. One of Scott's first moves was with the assistance of a temperance aid, to publish a booklet entitled **Information About the Recently Organized American Temperance Society.** His next move was a reprint in Swedish of the **Six Sermons on Temperance** by Reverend Lyman Beecher. This, coupled with Scott's fervent sermons on temperance, struck a new note of moral examination and religious concern among the Swedish people. Gradually Scott became known in Sweden and although the law forbade the Swedes to go to a foreign chapel they still came to hear him preach. Undoubtedly Scott made a positive contribution to the moral rejuvenation of Sweden in this century. By 1834 the temperance campaign was well under way and had even gained the support of Crown Prince Oscar who presided over a large rally in Stockholm. In 1836 Scott welcomed an American, the Reverend Robert Baird, a Presbyterian who was touring Europe in the interest of temperance. Baird had written a book regarding the temperance movement and while in Paris the book was translated into French. Scott, who by this time had gained the acquaintance of Sweden's King, introduced Baird to him. Having received a copy in French of Baird's book, the King obtained permission to have it printed in Swedish and ordered a copy sent to every clergyman in Sweden. The clergy could hardly ignore the King's interest in temperance even if the Methodist Scott was a leading figure in its advance. Before the end of 1836 a young Swedish pastor from Smaland, named Wieselgren, became a fiery temperance leader. Based on the American model he organized a Swedish Temperance Society. While Scott was in England, in 1837, he wrote a letter to Wieselgren in which he expressed confidence that the temperance movement in Sweden was now on solid ground and gaining energy.[11] In 1840 Robert Baird returned to Sweden and he and Scott made a preaching tour of the country. This tour had far-reaching consequences although they found some opposition from the State Church. The clergy as a class often frowned on the temperance movement that worked from outside of the State Church and because they were assisted

[10] Benson and Hedin, *Americans From Sweden* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1950), p. 67.

[11] Gunnar Westin, *George Scott Och Hans Verksamhet I Sverige* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1928), pp. 225-226.

by Pietists and Methodists the movement was often accused of fanaticism. Even Wieselgren was often wrongly criticized for the part he was playing in temperance. It is interesting to note, however, that in 1840 a Swedish Temperance Society meeting was held in the Southern part of Sweden in the State Lutheran Church of Jonkoping. Chief speakers included both Wieselgren and George Scott. One of the by products of this movement was the fact that many State Church pastors who were interested in the temperance advance and who did not reject Pietism, eventually came to the United States and formed the Swedish Lutheran Church in America. One such pastor was Paul Esbjorn, who left Sweden with a group of countrymen bound for America in 1849. Esbjorn had been influenced by Scott and Wieselgren and took this temperance enthusiasm with him to the new land. When the party of approximately one hundred and forty reached America, Ebjorn, who had made an appeal for financial aid from the Methodists, learned from O. G. Hedstrom that he could only receive aid from the Methodists if he was willing to become a Methodist. Esbjorn was unwilling to do this and instead made another appeal and was granted aid from the American Home Missionary Society of the Congregational Church for his work among the Lutheran Swedish immigrants of Illinois.[12]

Before continuing with Scott's work in Sweden it would be profitable to take a brief look at the nineteenth century Swedish dissenters which neither rationalism nor legislation could stamp out. Stephenson believes that the nineteenth century awakening in Sweden was in effect a second religious reformation in Sweden.[13] This he feels was just as profound and as radical as that which took place in the sixteenth century. This movement in Sweden, as was true in England, touched the common people and was not so much a new statement of doctrine but rather the experience by faith of Biblical truth. The similarity to the Wesleyan Revival is obvious.

For the most part these dissenters were loyal Lutherans although some did embrace Methodist, Baptist and Morman teachings. These Lutheran Pietists were usually regular in their church attendance, read Lutheran devotional materials, and insisted they had as much right to meet for spiritual enjoyment such as Bible reading and prayer, and hymn singing, as did others who assembled undisturbed to dance, play cards, and drink. By the year 1840, these dissenters were grouped under the general term "Lasare" or readers. The term originated out of the practice of meeting in homes for Bible study, prayer, and singing. As we have previously seen, Pietism or Herrnhutism, had entered Sweden almost a century before this. A man by the name of Anders Rustrom, who was banished from Sweden in 1765, was their main spokesman. It would be outside of the framework of this presentation to trace the chronological history of the Lasare movement other than to give its characteristics and final result.

As in America, the 1840's saw an amazing manifestation of strange and often peculiar religious responses. Smaland was the scene of what some termed a disease known as "preaching sickness" and this spread to other provinces where people came under the spell of revivalistic preaching. The most influential of this type was a preacher named Jacob Otto Hoof. Records indicate that George Scott was in close touch with the work in this area and that one woman was reported to have venerated Scott as the Savior returned to earth. In addition Scott wrote to a friend in America that thousands gathered to hear preachers and many were being converted, stolen goods were returned, people became temperate, and he believed a revival was about to spread

[12] Janson, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
[13] Stephenson, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

over the entire country.[14] As in America during the celebrated camp meetings, so in Sweden there were services where people shouted, jumped, rolled, barked like dogs, sang, and jerked. Unfortunately all such phenomenal outbursts were equated with the Lasare movement and as such soundly condemned. This oversimplification led many State Church leaders and pastors to warn their congregations that such preachers and people were filled with the devil and not the Holy Spirit. Again we have something akin to what happened in some of John Wesley's meetings in England with shouting, great weeping, and associated manifestations. Wesley did not encourage these displays of emotion but on the other hand he did not entirely reject them and it seems obvious that Wesley and his preachers set in motion the religious responses of a long slumbering people. The same was true in Sweden.

When Scott was at the height of his work, Sweden was embarking upon a much needed spiritual awakening. As in England, so in Sweden, we see during this period the rise of lay preachers who in spite of civil and ecclesiastical opposition gave spiritual nourishment to starving people. They traveled from parish to parish, held meetings either in homes or out of the way places, where they were free from interference. Although there were some pastors and people of rank who participated in this awakening, the majority for the most part were from the common class and this brought ridicule upon the Lasare movement. Some Pietists were strongly influenced by a Lutheran pastor named Henric Shartau who recognized defects in the established church but who at his death in 1825 still frowned upon separation. On the other hand there were Pietists who were influenced by Methodism and with the passing of the years continued to develop a free spirit.

Carl Olof Rosenius, 1816 to 1868, was reared in an area in Sweden where Pietism was strong but the ideas of George Scott were particularly influential in his life. Scott did not advocate a separistic movement in Sweden and so could not be properly called a foe of the State Church. In reality, Scott was a friend of the State Church and attempted to strengthen the ministry of the established church rather than to bring about its destruction. In turn, Rosenius believed that the old church could be reformed from within, thus carrying on the opinion of Scott. Rosenius felt this could best be done through the activity of laymen who could breathe life into a dying body. Thousands stayed in the State Church at this time who under different leadership may have joined the dissenters. At this time devotional literature from America flooded Sweden and Rosenius' preaching and writing reflect these American ideas of freedom which were able to reach the heart and mind of the common man. Among Scott's many enterprises was the fact that he was editor of "Pietisten" and "Missions - Tidningen." Rosenius' attempt to reform the church from within led him on May 7, 1845, to organize the dissenters into the National Evangelical Foundation. One purpose of this organization was to educate and direct itinerant preachers or colporteurs, another was to make wide distribution of Bibles, and devotional literature, and also to guide the work of laymen within the State Church. Actually Rosenius' work and even that of Scott was paving the road for the free church movement in Sweden. Rosenius had labored with Scott in the Bethlehem Chapel in Stockholm and with him breathed a free spirit even though he contended that his ministry was to reform the church of his birth. Rosenius' successor was Paul Peter Waldenstrom, an ordained minister in the State Church and professor of Greek, Hebrew and Christianity at Gavle College. Through his preaching and writing, Waldenstrom seemed to sum up the differences between the dissenters and the State

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

Church. These included a belief that for doctrine a man must go directly to the Scriptures and not to creeds, and an equal insistence upon a personal subjective commitment to Christ as Savior. The latter eliminated the popular concept of the church as the mediator of salvation. A split was bound to take place and so the Swedish Mission Covenant Church was formed in Sweden in the year 1876. In 1885, what is known today as the Evangelical Covenant Church of America was formed.

During this time when Rosenius was leading the dissenter group he found many casting suspicions upon his plans and his leadership. By 1860 he was persecuted as had the Lasare and Scott before him. The pulpit, press, and theater, united in this attack upon him. Stephenson quotes a letter written by Rosenius to Scott in which he tells of how the converted singer, Jenny Lind, refused to appear on the stage and how ashamed she was of the ungodliness of her own people. The letter goes on to inform Scott how she joined the despised Lasare and how the two of them were mutually drawn together by a common faith and experience.[15]

Unfortunately the name George Scott is not as well known as it should be among those who were participants in the free church movement and among those who now make up the Covenant Church. Scott did not attempt to proselyte for his cause or attempt a schism in the existing church, but he did face frankly the defects and weaknesses of the church. Stephenson writes:

> Just as Wesley and Whitefield translated the message of the Gospel into language comprehensible to men in the factories and mines of England, so did Scott awaken a new religious life among the humble people in the capital of Sweden, and his influence was soon extended to all parts of Sweden.[16]

Scott was reaching men and women with a challenging and satisfying message that they did not hear in the established church. By permission of the King foreigners were allowed to erect places of worship but a law forbade Swedish citizens from attending these services. Toward the end of the 1830's Scott had become such a popular preacher in Stockholm that the church forbade Scott to preach to Swedish citizens, and yet the crowds continued to come and he complained that he knew of no way to keep them out. Law or no law this continued and Scott realized a larger building was needed to house his audience. In 1837 Scott returned to England and there raised sufficient funds to build what was called the Bethlehem Chapel. In his zeal Scott became more and more bold in his denunciation of the people's sins and the failures of the clergy. As was to be expected there were clergymen who looked for an opportunity to retaliate and to have him removed from the land. Scott was to bring about his own downfall and yet any incident would have been used for this purpose. In the year 1841 Scott visited America to collect funds for his missionary work. To put the message across Scott painted some dark pictures of life in Sweden and when separated from the full text of his message there were remarks that could be used to offend the Swedish people. Scott did offend many and more fuel was added to the fire of opposition that was already burning against him. Upon his return to Sweden he found that his enemies were more vindictive than ever and threats were made against his life and his family. The situation was most unhappy. On Palm Sunday, 1842, a mob assembled at the Haymarket and broke up the service while Scott was preaching and it was a miracle that he escaped without being killed. Scott was now alienated from the King and the people. His only choice was to announce discontinuance of services in the chapel and he soon left for England. In a letter dated May 16, 1842, Scott writes to the Committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society regarding the events leading to the ter-

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

mination of the Stockholm mission. Scott was particularly disturbed by the many papers that at first had supported his work and spoke of maintaining religious liberty in Sweden and then now urged that he return to England and that his work cease. In this letter he also urged:

> An outrage against a British subject has been committed as appears by the proceedings of March 20th and 21st and the British authorities can at least insist that the rioters be brought to justice.[17]

At the end of this same letter Scott suggests that if matters are clarified with the Swedish government and people he is more than willing to return to the den of lions. George Scott was an interesting personality about whom more should be known and written. He was a man of zeal. Perhaps his zeal became a bit too intense while he was in America and lacking certain tact he brought about his own downfall which may be attributed to exuberance and thoughtlessness. In reality Scott had a sincere desire to minister to all who had spiritual need and this included the Swedes as well as the English. Upon his ordination in 1830, Scott was prompted to write his spiritual experience up to that date. The implication of his writing is that he did not have a Methodist home background. But early in his youth he did meet Methodists and their beliefs made a strong impact upon him. At first he was leary of class meetings but this apprehension was soon ended. He indicates that he had been in attendance at various class meetings and came to believe they were legitimate and that on July 2, 1827, he was admitted to a love feast and there he entered the enjoyment of God's favor.[18]

In conclusion a word can be written regarding Methodism in Sweden following Scott's expulsion in 1842. We cannot rightly refer to Scott as the founder of Methodism in Sweden, although it must be conceded that he prepared the way. Interestingly enough, Swedish Methodism was to be an American product and enterprise.

When considering Methodism's foundation in Sweden the name of Olaf Gustaf Hedstrom takes on primary importance. Hedstrom was born in 1803 and as a youth enlisted on the crew of a ship bound for South America. Financial problems cancelled the expedition and he abandoned the ship in New York. Having been trained as a tailor, Hedstrom quickly found work and an American bride. Before long he was converted to Methodism. He became so zealous and enthusiastic with his new found faith that in 1833 he returned to Sweden to share his convictions with his aged parents. His brother, Jonas Hedstrom returned with him to America and he became the founder of Swedish Methodism in the West. Olaf Hedstrom's first pastorate was in New York where he served for ten years. But his most influential ministry was destined to be from 1845 to 1875 when he served as pastor of the Bethel Ship, the John Wesley, which was in New York harbor. This was a floating mission to Scandinavian seamen and came to be a refuge for thousands of immigrants to the new land America. Here Scandinavians found a place of encouragement, evangelism, and information regarding places of possible settlement in the United States. Hedstrom also worked in cooperation with the American Bible Society for the distribution of Bibles. In 1850, one of the Bethel Ship's most famous converts was Sweden's great singer, Jenny Lind. Another convert, Olaf Peterson, went to Norway on a preaching tour, and another convert, John Larsson, was sent officially in 1854 to Sweden as a missionary.

Another important name in Swedish Methodism is Victor Witting, who was born at Malmo, March 7, 1825. An adventure seeking lad he became a sailor and thus gained passage to America. His spirit of adventure attracted him to California and the frantic search for gold. This latter venture was without

[17] Westin, *op. cit.*, p. 352.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

success. Returning to Illinois, greatly disappointed, Witting faced more misfortunes and by the time he returned to New York he was penniless. At this point he came under the influence of Hedstrom and in 1858 Witting entered the Methodist ministry. He became editor of "Sandebudt," a Methodist paper in America, which was first published in Rockford, Illinois, July 18, 1862. On a subsequent trip to Sweden Witting was persuaded by Bishop Calvin Kingsley to accept the appointment of superintendent of all Methodist missions in Sweden. From November of 1867 to 1876, Witting served in this capacity.

The first step of formal organization took place in Stockholm on January 8, 1868, with fifty-seven persons in the first congregation. By September of 1868 there were seven organized congregations, one hundred and fifteen preaching places, four hundred and twenty-four members, and five Sunday Schools with thirty-four teachers and three hundred and fifty-four children. A paper came out in 1869. In addition to this Methodism published a large number of books and tracts which were put into circulation by colporteurs.

But Methodists came to experience the same hostility and opposition given to Scott and the Pietists. Mobs often distrubed their meetings and threatened the lives of their leaders. One preacher, Johannes Nilsson, served a prison sentence of eleven days for defying parish authorities. To add to the dispute a letter was published from George Scott critical of the separation in Sweden caused by American Methodism. Baptists had little to do with Methodists at this time for they were classed with Lutherans because of infant baptism.

The year of 1876 saw the first yearly conference organized at Uppsala, Sweden. The nation was divided into districts, each having a presiding elder. Under the law of 1873, Methodist ministers were given permission to perform marriages. In that same year a seminary was established at Orebro and this was eventually moved in 1924 to Gottenburg. The Swedish Methodist Church is under an American Bishop whose seat is in Stockholm.

The vital awakening in eighteenth century England under the Wesleys has an interesting relation to the developments in Sweden in the nineteenth century. Several areas of comparison would merit continued and more detailed investigation. One of the most worthwhile of these additional studies would be a comparison of Charles Wesley's hymns and the hymnology that evolved out of Sweden's awakening. This hymnology is best preserved today in the fellowship of the Evangelical Covenant Church of America.

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