
Carl Olof Rosenius and Swedish Emigration to America

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Translated by Dean M. Apel

Carl Olof Rosenius (1816-1868) was the central figure of Sweden's nineteenth century revival movement. His influence not only in the Scandinavian countries but also in America's Swedish settlements was immense. His tenure as urban missionary in Stockholm, 1841-1868, coincided with the beginning of one of the most important events of Swedish history, i.e., the migration to America in which more than one million Swedes—20% of the entire population—would leave the country, a migration which continued through the late 1920s. That Rosenius was at the height of his career during the beginning of this migration is more than a random coincidence because it was people who had been influenced by the revival movement which made up the majority of the first mass emigration in 1846 and which brought about the clearest and most significant breakthrough for the exodus in question. Many prominent reader priests, who during these decades followed this exodus, were recruited from revival movements and were leaders for both large groups of emigrants and for the building up of ecclesial institutions among Swedes in the new country.¹

In what follows, we will attempt to show how in a variety of ways Rosenius influenced the emigration and how his impact found expression in homes, folk movements, and institutions. In 1841, the same year Gustav Unonius (1810-1902), “the first emigrant,” set his feet on American ground, Rosenius had through his work not only contact with but even support from an American mission society for his work as an urban missionary. Therefore, from the emigration's very first step Rosenius was interested in following what happened on both sides of the Atlantic.

The goal of this article is to illuminate how Rosenius' significance expressed itself in connection with the America emigration during all its phases but with a special emphasis on its earliest phase. During this phase, the foundation was laid for the continued, larger migration. The important church historical role of Rosenius in this connection has been documented. Nevertheless, Rosenius' impact is seldom mentioned and often neglected even though a variety of groups influenced by Rosenius' revival were part of the emigrants and this, among other things, resulted in the

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establishment of the Rosenius-influenced, low church Augustana Synod. In a conclusion, I will briefly consider the long-range significance of Rosenius in America.

English and American influences

In the nineteenth century, strong English and American forces influenced Sweden. After the Napoleonic wars, England became a leading superpower because of the Industrial Revolution, among other things. In a similar fashion, the U.S. became a leading superpower later in the same century. The influence affected not only politics and economics but in even deeper ways ideology and religion.² Already in the eighteenth century, British and foreign Bible societies had spread tracts and Bibles in Sweden.³ This work was successful after free church workers from Scotland, John Paterson (1776-1855) and Ebenezer Henderson (1784-1858) had arrived in Sweden in 1807 and started working with literature distribution with the Evangeliska Brödräfsamling (The Congregation of Evangelical Brothers, a.k.a. the Moravians) in Stockholm. They took the initiative to start an Evangelical Society in 1808 and the Swedish Bible Society in 1815.⁴ It is interesting to note that two

1. This essay appeared originally in *Carl Olof Rosenius Betydelse—regionalt, nationellt och internationellt*, edited by Daniel Lindmark, (Umeå: Skrifter från Luleå stiftshistoriska sällskap 8, 2018). We are grateful to the Luleå Diocese Historical Society for permitting its translation and publication here.

2. Sten Carlsson, *Svensk historia: II. Tiden efter 1718* (Stockholm: Svenska bokförlaget/Bonniers, 1964), 433-434; Gunnar Westin, *George Scott och hans verksamhet i Sverige*. (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelsens bokförlag, 1929), 74-92.

3. Westin, *George Scott*, 76.

4. Anders Jarlert, *Romantikens och liberalismens tid*. Sveriges

important figures of the new reader revival movement in Norrland, Carl Olof's father, Anders Rosenius (1780-1841) and his friend Pehr Brandell (1781-1841) together with other new readers in Piteå had contact with the Evangelical Society as early as 1808 and 1809⁵ and were chosen as members in 1812.⁶ During the 1820s, Anders Rosenius worked to spread the Evangelical Society's periodical and other print materials and sent financial donations to "English missionaries" and to Herrnhut⁷ as well as to the Swedish Bible Society. In 1825, Anders was received as a member of the Swedish Bible Society.⁸ So the young Rosenius grew up in an environment that, in addition to being characterized by Lutheran pietism and Moravianism, also had a clearly positive posture to English, Methodist mission. The American influence on Sweden followed the English influence even in the religious sphere. That influence was largely tied in with the migration to America and was communicated not the least by Swedish Americans who returned to the homeland.⁹ A result of this is that Swedish free church traditions derive from American sources of inspiration.¹⁰

George Scott's work and significance

Of decisive importance for Carl Olof Rosenius' development and work was the contact and cooperation with the Scottish, Methodist pastor, temperance advocate and revival preacher George Scott (1804-1874). In 1830 Samuel Owen (1774-1854), owner of Kungholm's mechanical workshop, had called Scott to be the pastor for his English workers there. Scott was a particularly energetic and dynamic person who quickly enlarged the scope of his work and came to be of great significance for developments in a variety of church areas, not only in Sweden and England, but also for contacts in America. Already by 1831, he preached in the Swedish language and his goal eventually became to "revive" and renew the Church of Sweden. The strict laws which restricted any exercise of religion outside the confines of the Church of Sweden and which still existed then, meant that Scott faced great difficul-

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ties and risks. So, one of his important and successful strategies was to attract influential friends and fellow workers.¹¹ Scott was quickly granted an important position. As pastor for the English embassy in Stockholm and a good friend of the minister, Lord Bloomfield (1768-1846), the representative of the world's leading superpower at the time, Scott made contact with many in Stockholm's diplomatic circles, the royal court, and in the Swedish government. His close friendship with the most important minister in the Swedish government, the justice minister, Count Mathias Rosenblad (1758-1847), became significant for Scott's work. Rosenblad was an old Moravian and had been for a long time a member of the Evangelical Brotherhood in Stockholm and an honorary member of the Evangelical Society from its beginning.¹²

Scott's many efforts and tireless zeal were expressed in many different ways: In 1834 he became the chairman of the Evangelical Society and the Bible Society got a new start through Scott's efforts. He started several periodicals: *Budbäraren* (the Messenger) in 1832, *Missionstidningen* (Mission News) in 1835, *Fosterlandsvännen* (Homeland's Friend) in 1836¹³ and *Pietisten* (The Pietist) in 1842. Scott was influential in the formation of the Swedish Mission Society in 1835¹⁴, the bylaws of which received royal sanction. Mattias Rosenblad became the first chairman. In 1835, Scott also was influential in the formation of a society for the establishment of schools for small children and in 1837 for the Swedish Temperance Society of which Crown Prince Oskar (1799-1859) was the honorary chairman. Scott became personally acquainted with the heir to the throne as well as with several bishops, including Archbishop Carl Fredrik av Wingård (1781-1851), who also participated in the work of the society.¹⁵

kyrkohistoria, 6. (Stockholm: Verbum, 2001), 107-113.

5. Albert Nordberg, *Olof Palmgren: En norrbottnisk läsarechef*. (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelsens bokförlag), 1936, 25-34. John Holmgren, *Norrlandsläsiert: Studier till dess förhistoria och historia fram till år 1830*. Samlingar och studier till Svenska kyrkans historia, 19. (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelsens bokförlag), 1948, 191-192. Westin, *George Scott*, 33-35.

6. They became members at the same time as their soon-to-be bishop F.M. Franzén (1772-1847). Sven Lodin, *Carl Olof Rosenius i unga år* (Stockholm: Evangeliska fosterlands-stiftelsens bokförlag, 1933), 141-142.

7. Bengt Sundkler, *Svenska Missionssällskapet 1835-1876: Missionstankens genombrott och tidigare historia i Sverige* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1937), 25.

8. Lodin, *Rosenius i unga år*, 141-142.

9. Sten Carlsson, "Chronology and Composition of Swedish Emigration to America" in *From Sweden to America: A History of the Migration* edited by Harald Rundblom and Hans Norman. *Studia Historica Upsaliensia*, 74. (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1976), 114-148; Ulf Beijbom. *Mot löftets land: Den svenska utvandringen*. Stockholm: LTs förlag, 1995.

10. Carlsson, *Svensk Historia: II*, 434.

11. Westin, *George Scott*, 339.

12. Westin, *George Scott*, 83-84, 167-290; Sundkler, *Svenska Missionssällskapet 1835-1876*, 57-59.

13. *Fosterlandsvännen* (The Homeland Friend) was Sweden's first temperance periodical. Westin, *George Scott*, 342.

14. At the first annual gathering of the Swedish Mission Society in 1836, the festival speech was presented by no one less than Erik Gustaf Geijer (1783-1847). Scott considered the speech to be "an excellent address." Westin, *George Scott*, 353. According to reports in *Missionstidningen*, already in 1836 and 1837 respectively, Pehr Brandell and Anders Rosenius sent donations to the Swedish Mission Society gathered from North Sävar and Burträsk respectively. Westin, *George Scott*, 331, 529.

15. Westin, *George Scott*, 311-386; Sundkler, *Svenska*

In 1838 Scott succeeded in procuring permission to build the English church in Stockholm in spite of much opposition.¹⁶ The church was dedicated on October 24, 1840, and besides Scott, Pehr Brandell, the lead pastor of the Nora Parish and a legendary leader of the revival movement in Norrland, and Johan Henrik Thomander (1798-1865), church law expert and future bishop in Lund, a man whom both Scott and Rosenius trusted, were present to officiate.¹⁷ Scott considered it a great success to have been able to employ the services of two students, Anders Wiberg (1816-1887) from Hälsingland and Carl Olof Rosenius from Västerbotten. "With these two students from the reader circles of Norrland as fellow workers, the intensive work of the English chapel will receive national and Lutheran legitimation."¹⁸

After a short time as a student at Uppsala University, Rosenius had undertaken service as a tutor on Länna farm south of Stockholm. Separated from his Christian friends, he experienced a crisis of faith during the summer of 1839. In a letter from his friend P.A. Huldberg (1816-1887), a book printer in Falun¹⁹, Rosenius was encouraged to contact George Scott who three years earlier had assisted him in "his spiritual anxieties."²⁰ Rosenius took the advice, received help and guidance from Scott and soon became his close friend and fellow worker. Already on the Sunday after Christmas in 1840, Rosenius was entrusted with preaching in the new English church. In the spring of 1840 when Scott journeyed to America to gather offerings to build his church, a journey that lasted until later that fall, Rosenius was given the greater part of the responsibility for Scott's expanding work.²¹ Church historian Gunnar Westin has

Missionssällskapet 1835-1876, 47-54.

16. Stockholm's consistory and archbishop J.O. Wallin (1779-1839) opposed Scott's plans and application to build a church. In their thinking, such a church was not needed. The application was nevertheless approved by the council on 9 December 1838 which was a great victory for Scott. That it was approved in spite of King Karl Johan's hesitation to oppose his archbishop probably depended first of all on the strong support of Scott's friend Mathias Rosenblad, who was the minister of justice 1829-1840 and was influential with the king. Westin, *George Scott*, 407-494.

17. Westin, *George Scott*, 495-504; Lars Österlin, *Thomanders kyrkogärning*. Samlingar och studier till Svenska kyrkans historia, 37. (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelsens bokförlag, 1960), 392. Thomander motioned in the Parliament 1859-1858 to establish a Mission of the Church of Sweden as an umbrella organization for the Evangelical Society, the Swedish Bible Society, the Swedish Mission Society and the Evangelical Homeland Mission. Karl Axel Lundqvist, *Från prästvælde till lekmannastyre: Evangeliska fosterlandsstiftelsen som inomkyrklig lekmanarörelse i Skelleftebygden 1875-1923: Speglar i riksperspektivet* (Skellefteå: Artos, 2008), 66-67.

18. Westin, *George Scott*, 523-549.

19. In 1838, Huldberg had journeyed through Norrland and gathered letters of adherents of the readers' movement which he later published in book form: *Bref i Andeliga ämnen från så kallade Läsare, särdeles bland Allmogen i Norrland*. (Letters in Spiritual subjects from so-called Readers, especially among the Norrland Peasants). Many of these were written by C.O. Rosenius. Lodin, *Rosenius i unga år*, 20-23; Westin, *George Scott*, 507-509.

20. Westin, *George Scott*, 535, 571.

21. Sven Lodin, *C.O. Rosenius, hans liv och gärning*, (Stockholm: Evangeliska fosterlands-stiftelsens bokförlag, 1956), 107-121.

Rosenius' successes in his work would have been unthinkable without Scott's pioneering work. That this work would develop and so significantly affect both Sweden and Swedish America was not only the result of the young Rosenius' giftedness, but also of his continued relationship with Scott.

commented on this: "When Scott won over C.O. Rosenius to his work, he won his greatest victory in our land."²² At the same, it must be emphasized that Rosenius' successes in his work would have been unthinkable without Scott's pioneering work.²³ That this work would develop and so significantly affect both Sweden and Swedish America was not only the result of the young Rosenius' giftedness, but also of his continued relationship with Scott. The contacts with and the cooperation established with the influential American Robert Baird (1789-1863) at whose invitation Scott made his American journey were also foundational.²⁴

Robert Baird, Scott, and Rosenius

Even before the connection with Sweden, Robert Baird had achieved a long list of merits. He was an academic teacher, a pastor, an author, a temperance and revival preacher, and an agent for the American Bible Society in 1827 and for the American Sunday School Union in 1829. In connection with his wide-ranging travels in Europe between 1835 and 1846, he visited Sweden in 1836, 1840, and 1846. In 1839, he was in New York to establish the Foreign Evangelical Society, one of many mission organizations which were established by American Christians in the nineteenth century with the goal of spreading evangelical, revival Christianity throughout the world. During his first visit to Sweden, Robert Baird had already authored a temperance pamphlet, the publication of which in Swedish and its spread through the parishes of the land were funded by King Karl XIV Johan (1763-1844). It was therefore believed that Baird enjoyed the special patronage of the king.²⁵

In 1840, Baird made his second visit to Sweden. He participated in a two-week tour of Hälsingland and preached at large temperance and revival meetings. In Hudiksvall²⁶ on 26 and 27

22. Westin, *George Scott*, 529.

23. Lodin, *Rosenius i unga år*, 385.

24. Westin, *George Scott*, 544-547.

25. Westin, *George Scott*, 335-337.

26. A similar meeting had been held in Jönköping on 1 and

August, he spoke to an audience of 5000 of which there were thirty-some priests. Besides George Scott who, among other things, was Baird's interpreter, even the temperance warrior Peter Wieselgren (1800-1877) also preached. The chairperson for the meeting was the governor in Härnösand, Hampus Mörner (1775-1855), an enthusiastic adherent of the temperance movement with a spirituality influenced by Pehr Brandell.²⁷ A reader priest, Lars Paul Esbjörn (1808-1870), the factory priest from Oslättsfors near Gävle, was the secretary for the meeting. The temperance movement was an integral part of the religious revival in those days²⁸, and in one of his speeches Baird described its large scope in America, that it had two million members. In America 4000 breweries had been shut down as a result of the movement's successes. In another speech, he painted in the brightest colors the religious situation and freedom of religion in America. He emphasized the great significance of lay people as the fellow workers of the pastors in Christian mission work with Sunday schools and the spread of Bibles, tracts and other literature. Baird made a great impression on those gathered to hear him. The return trip was something of a victory parade through Hälsingland. Everywhere along the journey's route, people had gathered to see and hear Baird. When they arrived in Norrala, between 1200 and 1400 people had stood and waited for them. Large meetings were also held in Njutånger, Enånger, Norrala, Söderala, Skog, Hamrånge, Hille, and Gävle. It is highly likely that on this journey Scott met juryman Jonas Olsson (1804-1896) in Söderala, who was known as the leader of the reader movement in Hälsingland. Peter Wieselgren said after this journey "the farmers in Hälsingland speak like small Wallins but with Luther's spirit." (Wallin was an important hymn writer, preacher, and priest in nineteenth century Sweden) In following years, the Hälsingland temperance movement was very successful. Of the seventy priests working there, forty were friends of the movement. The number of members increased by 4300 and many of the thirty-nine temperance societies were named after Robert Baird.²⁹

Around 1840 Hälsingland was described as "the blooming herb garden of Norrland's reader movement."³⁰ The freedom to gather in small groups called conventicles was greater here than

2 July 1840. Scott, Wieselgren, and Per Nyman (1794-1856) and representatives from eleven regions of South and Central Sweden had participated in that meeting. This meeting laid the foundation for the mission work which would radiate out from that city. Of special significance was Scott's meeting with the sailor F.O. Nilsson who became his fellow worker and colporteur on Sweden's West Coast and later a pioneer for Baptists in Sweden. Westin, *George Scott*, 458-463, 522-523.

27. Henrik Gladh, *Lars Vilhelm Henschen och religionsfrihetsfrågan till 1853*. Skrifter utgivna av Svenska kyrkohistoriska föreningen: II. Ny följd, 6, (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1953), 92.

28. George M. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration: A Study of Immigrant Churches*, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1932), 17.

29. Westin, *George Scott*, 467-470; Sam Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn och Augustana-synodens uppkomst*. (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, 1949), 42-50.

30. Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 37.

Rosenius' friends, Scott, Baird and Wieselgren were especially well known and popular in Hälsingland's revival and temperance circles at the beginning of the 1840s. Without a doubt, their work there contributed to a strong and increasing interest for and knowledge about America among the population.

in any other place in Sweden.³¹ The Hudiksvall meeting in 1840 was probably the Hälsingland reader movement's greatest manifestation.³² Rosenius' friends, Scott, Baird and Wieselgren were especially well known and popular in Hälsingland's revival and temperance circles at the beginning of the 1840s. Without a doubt, their work there contributed to a strong and increasing interest for and knowledge about America among the population.

During his American sojourn in 1841, George Scott participated on 11 May in the Foreign Evangelical Society's annual meeting in New York and there he was invited to speak on the situation in Sweden. The annual meeting decided afterward to provide 200 dollars every year so that Scott could employ two urban missionaries in Stockholm. Rosenius became one of these³³ and in this way he was employed as a missionary of Robert Baird's mission society in 1841. After Baird's first visit to Sweden, Scott had also received "a right considerable sum," with promise of more gifts, from the American Tract Society in Boston which made possible the spread of hundreds of thousands of small pamphlets and tracts as well as ideas from the U.S.³⁴ The prospects for the continued success of Scott's work in Stockholm and Sweden appeared bright. George Scott communicated the financial contributions to Rosenius and Rosenius' reports to the society. From 1849 to 1864, there are thirty-four such reports preserved, of which eighteen are addressed to "Dr. Baird."³⁵

31. Gladh, *Lars Vilhelm Henschen*, 92-93.

32. Sam Rönnegård, *Utvandrarnas kyrka: En bok om Augustana*, (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, 1961), 31.

33. Westin, *George Scott*, 627-629. See also the book chapter by Lars Olov Eriksson, "Rosenius som stadsmissionär" (Rosenius as an Urban Missionary) in Daniel Lindmark, editor, *Carl Olof Rosenius betydelse—regionalt, nationellt och internationellt*, (Umeå: Luleå stifts-historiska sällskap 8, 2018).

34. Westin, *George Scott*, 619-620.

35. In 1849, the society was reconstituted with the name, the American Christian Union, and with Robert Baird as the secretary. From 1849 to 1864 there are thirty-four reports from Rosenius preserved and published. Of these eighteen are addressed to Dr. Baird. Gunnar Westin, editor, *Ur den svenska folkväckelsens historia och*

Scott's work, which had continued for a long time and was successful, had nevertheless also elicited critique from various corners, not the least from certain newspapers. In the beginning of 1842, the critics aimed new accusations against Scott. They asserted that Scott had spoken disparagingly of Sweden in America. In spite of Scott's attempts to defend himself from these accusations, the campaign against him increased in strength and degenerated in a dramatic way on Palm Sunday, 20 March 1842, when a shouting crowd forced itself into the English church during the worship service in progress and interrupted Scott's sermon. As a consequence, Scott felt that he was forced to close the church and after another month left the country.³⁶ That this could happen in spite of the many important contributions he made to the introductory phase of the folk movement epoch shows how great the opposition of the state church and the liberal newspapers in Sweden were to the movement.³⁷

George Scott's hasty exit from Sweden caused, of course, a great upset and grief among his many friends. Rosenius attempted to hold together the scaffolding of the work that his friend Scott had started.³⁸ Rosenius' close contacts with Scott and Robert Baird continued for more than twenty years. Scott and Baird had not only exercised an extraordinarily large impact on the revival movement in Sweden, but even increased knowledge and communicated a positive picture of America to the same revival folk. In the following years, this promised to be an important factor in the background for the inception of the nineteenth century mass emigration from Sweden to America and, as we shall see, the establishment of an ecclesial organization influenced by Rosenius in America's Swedish settlements.

The first mass emigration from Sweden to America, 1846

The idyll of Hälsingland, "the blooming herb garden of Norrland's reader movement," came to an abrupt end. A little more than six months after George Scott had felt forced out of the country, his friend and the leader of the readers in Hälsingland, the juryman Jonas Olsson i Söderdala,³⁹ was visited by the farmer and flour merchant Erik Jansson (1808-1850) of Österunda i Västmanland. In a surprisingly brief period of time, Jansson succeeded in convincing Olsson of his doctrine of complete freedom from sin and of his prophetic election and became for Olsson a prophet and pastoral counselor.

tankevärld II: C.O. Rosenius' brev till hans vänner i Amerika (Stockholm: Evangeliska fosterlandsstiftelsens bokförlag, 1931).

36. Westin, *George Scott*, 642-654.

37. Gunnar Hallingberg, *Läsarna: 1800-talets folkväckelse och det moderna genombrottet* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2010), 44.

38. Gunnar Westin, *Ur den svenska folkväckelsens historia och tankevärld [I]: C.O. Rosenius' brev till F.G. Hedberg*, (Stockholm: Evangeliska fosterlandsstiftelsens bokförlag, 1930).

39. Already in the 1830s, Olsson made annual visits to Stockholm in order to sell salmon and there came in contact with Scott whose sermons made a strong impression on him. Emil Herlenius, *Erik-Janssens historia* (Jönköping: Lundgrenska Boktryckeriet, 1900), 4.

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The result was that Erik Jansson took over much of the reader movement in Hälsingland.⁴⁰ He toured the parishes and gathered large groups of people for meetings. He was most successful in Alfta where nearly all the adherents of the revival movement followed him. It was in Alfta on 11 June 1844 that the first bonfire was held in order to burn the writings of Luther, Arndt, Nohrborg, and others. These events and the violent force that the authorities used to capture Jansson as well as the consequent legal proceedings received much attention and were discussed throughout Sweden.⁴¹ In late fall 1844, Jonas Olsson and his brother Olof travelled to Stockholm to appeal to King Oscar I to allow Erik Jansson to preach his doctrine.⁴²

In a letter to Maja-Lisa Söderlund (1794-1851) in Storkåge, dated 12 November 1844, Rosenius commented on Erik Jansson's doctrine in the following manner:

O, my dear old friend, it is an unsettled time. Party divisions have emerged in the North and South so that the blind masses stand there clueless and stare. In Hälsingland, Erik Jansson enthuses and teaches that a true Christian must not experience any sin (n.b. no sin in the flesh) nor any spiritual distress, but instead constantly experience personal holiness and peace. He

40. Another Söderalite who followed Erik Jansson to Bishop Hill and became one of the colony's leaders was Sven Svensson, the cousin of Pastor Jonas Söderblom in Trönö, Archbishop Söderblom's father. Anna Söderblom, *En Amerikabok*, (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, 1925), 184-185.

41. Kjell Söderberg, *Den första massutvandringen: En studie av befolkningsrörlighet och emigration utgående från Alfta socken i Hälsingland 1846-1895*. Umeå Studies in the Humanities, 39, (Umeå: Umeå universitet, 1981), 138-146, 165; Nils Runeby, *Den nya världen och den gamla: Amerikabild och emigrationsuppfattning i Sverige 1820-1860*. Studia Historica Upsaliensia, 30, (Stockholm: Svenska bokförlaget, 1969), 214-222.

42. Cecilia Wejryd, *Läsarna som brände böcker: Erik Jansson och erikjansarna i 1840-talets Sverige*. Skrifter utgivna av Svenska kyrkohistoriska föreningen: II. Ny följd, 54, (Uppsala: Svenska kyrkohistoriska föreningen, 2002), 100-101.

also teaches that one ought to burn or at least give up reading all books except the Bible. They have in fact burned the writings of Luther and others. And here in Stockholm the party divisions are many, but more moderate and passive. Lord, Lord, what are You doing with all this? Sometimes I become so anxious over all this that I want to die!⁴³

Just a few days after Rosenius wrote these lines, the Olsson brothers found him and wanted to present their opinions to him. The ensuing conversation lasted three hours when Rosenius was forced to leave for a meeting. In letters to friends, he has reported much from this conversation and how strange it was to experience how “these now to all appearances thoughtful and respectable gentlemen argued for these doctrines right in my face.” Against the doctrine of freedom from sin, Rosenius referred to, among other things, the spiritual armor which Paul describes in Ephesians 6.⁴⁴

On the way to Stockholm, the Olsson brothers had received legal advice and help from Uppsala magistrate Lars Vilhelm Henschen (1805-1885). Henschen was very involved in the question of freedom of religion and had, among other things, taken a clear stance for George Scott when he was being accused. Henschen now tried to use the proceeding against the Janssonites in his efforts to abolish the law against small religious gatherings outside of the auspices of the official church (*Konventikelplakatet*). He has been described as “liberal and a reader” and had his own spiritual awakening in 1830 while he was working in the legal profession in north Ångermanland and came in contact with Brandell’s revival there. Henschen had been a friend of George Scott for many years and later also with Anders Wiberg and Carl Olof Rosenius, even if he did not receive as much support as he would have liked from them later in his struggle for the freedom of religion.⁴⁵

The attempt to liberate Erik Jansson by legal means failed. Instead he was liberated by his followers by being kidnapped and taken away. The possibilities for him to continue his work became more and more limited so that he could no longer appear publicly. He was forced instead to be hidden among his followers. In the fall of 1845, the difficulties led to his decision to emigrate to America and Olof Olsson was sent to America as “pathfinder.” Dressed as a woman, Erik Jansson went among his friends and preached that it was God’s will for them to sell all their possessions, pool all their assets in a common fund and emigrate to America to build “the New Jerusalem.” Thereby in January 1846, the first mass emigration from Sweden to America began. About 1500 Janssonites, mostly from Hälsingland, departed. The Janssonites

43. Amy Moberg, *Teckning af Carl Olof Rosenii lif och verksamhet, hans wänner tillegnad*, (Stockholm, 1868), 121.

44. Moberg, *Teckning af Carl Olof Rosenii lif och verksamhet*, 122-123.

45. Gladh, *Lars Vilhelm Henschen*, 11, 45-46, 78-89, 169, 255-256; Lodin, *C.O. Rosenius, hans liv och gärning*, 196-203. Rosenius led small spiritual groups in Henschen’s home in Uppsala on at least two occasions in 1842 and 1946. Gladh, *Lars Vilhelm Henschen*, 86, 215

In the fall of 1845, the difficulties led to his decision to emigrate to America. ... Dressed as a woman, Erik Jansson went among his friends and preached that it was God’s will for them to sell all their possessions, pool all their assets in a common fund and emigrate to America to build “the New Jerusalem.” Thereby in January 1846, the first mass emigration from Sweden to America began.

became pioneers in Illinois where they built a colony at Bishop Hill⁴⁶ about 250 kilometers southwest of Chicago. Because of the difficult conditions and circumstances and because of Erik Jansson’s dictatorial leadership style, a large number of the sect left the colony and settled in other surrounding locations.⁴⁷ Other former Janssonites became pioneers in the earliest Swedish colonies in Chicago and Minnesota, areas which later became the largest Swedish areas in America. News of the origin of the sect and the subsequent emigration spread throughout Sweden and caused a powerful increase of information about America. It has been suggested that it was the Janssonites who “in a dramatic, nearly explosive matter, set in motion the greatest Swedish migration, the emigration to America. It is the emigration of the Janssonites which constitutes the true start of the emigration” and which blazed the trail for nearly one million Swedish emigrants in their footsteps. That the breakthrough for the America emigration happened in Hälsingland, where Rosenius’ friends and fellow workers, Robert Baird and George Scott, who had prepared the way with their preaching about America as the promised land of religious freedom, is therefore no coincidence.⁴⁸

Group emigrations led by pastors in the footsteps of the Janssonites

The reader priest Lars Paul Esbjörn was one of the many who had been strongly impressed by Robert Baird’s positive description of the religious environment in the United States. He wanted to “practically experience the operations of this system which many Christians so warmly talk about for which they long for.” He started studying English and even took a great interest in Baird’s

46. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 56-73.

47. Olov Isaksson, *Historien om Bishop Hill*, (Stockholm: LTs förlag, 1995), 54.

48. Rönnegård, *Utvandrarnas kyrka*, 91.

book *Om religionsfriheten i Förenta Staterna (Religious Freedom in America)* of which a Swedish translation was published in 1847-1848. The news that many Janssonites had left the sect and settled in areas around Bishop's Hill⁴⁹ affected Esbjörn deeply. They were people from his own area in Sweden who had been affected by the spiritual epidemic which had so hardly plagued "the blooming herb garden of Hälsingland's reader movement." Esbjörn wrote,

Since after the Janssonite emigration in 1846 many Swedes went to the new world in the following years but without any priest following them, I felt challenged to move there myself in order to help them spiritually so that they and their children might not fall into heathenism or because of the lack of spiritual help become torn away from their own church and find themselves in one of the new world's more or less heretical sects.⁵⁰

In spite of Archbishop af Windgård's initially very negative judgment about the idea,⁵¹ Esbjörn succeeded in persuading him to grant a sum of 300 Swedish dollars from the Swedish Mission Society as well as permission from his royal highness the King to remain as a priest in the archdiocese. Esbjörn understood this to mean that he would work as a priest of the Church of Sweden among his fellow countrymen in America.⁵² In the summer of 1849, he and his family left Sweden as the leader for a group of 146 people. Esbjörn settled in Andover, twenty miles from Bishop Hill. Early on things were very difficult: illnesses and deaths in the family and economic privations. Through Robert Baird's connections, Esbjörn was supported for a few years by the American Home Missionary Society.⁵³ Because he also received contributions from the Swedish Mission Society, he continued to have correspondence with Peter Wieselgren and Peter Fjellstedt, influential church leaders in Sweden, who after Rosenius became the most beloved among the Swedes and the most significant for the beginning and development of a Swedish Lutheran church in America.⁵⁴ His letters were often published in diverse periodicals⁵⁵

49. Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 75, 130-131.

50. Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 75-77.

51. "An uncertain settlement in a foreign part of the world would be somewhat inadvisable, especially if it led to the encouragement of others to leave the station in life to which God had called them and in which they ought to remain quietly." Gunnar Westin, *Lutheraner, anglikaner, reformerta: Kyrkohistoriska uppsatser*, (Uppsala: Lindblads, 1935), 136.

52. Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 80-86; Runeby, *Den nya världen och den gamla*, 265.

53. Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 102-104; Rönnegård, *Utvandrarnas kyrka*, 155-156; Gunnar Westin, editor, *Emigranterna och kyrkan: Brev från och till svenskar i Amerika 1849-1892*, (Stockholm: Evangeliska fosterlandsstiftelsens bokförlag, 1932), 19.

54. Peter Fjellstedt was himself sorely tempted in 1857 to accept a call to be a professor at the newly founded Illinois State University in Springfield. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 36-37.

55. For example, in 1852, Fjellstedt published in his magazine *Biblevännen* (Bible friend) letters which speak in glowing terms of the USA, its population, laws, temperance, and education system. As ballast, he also published letters from Esbjörn in which the latter writes "that many who emigrate find themselves in unspeakable misery."

Esbjörn started with an intensive work to build congregations and churches among those who left the Janssonites and among other Swedish new settlers. Already on March 10, 1850, the new church was consecrated, Jenny Lind Chapel, which became the "mother church" for more than 1000 Swedish-American churches in North America.

with the result that Esbjörn and Andover became well-known names among the emigrants from Sweden, that Andover was "overflowing with people."⁵⁶

Esbjörn started with an intensive work to build congregations and churches among those who left the Janssonites and among other Swedish new settlers. Already on March 10, 1850, the new church was consecrated, Jenny Lind Chapel, which became the "mother church" for more than 1000 Swedish-American churches in North America. It was built with contributions from the famous singer who was also a friend of Rosenius and where a letter of recommendation from Robert Baird had paved the way.⁵⁷ One of the congregations that Esbjörn had founded was situated in Galesburg, thirty miles south of Andover and Bishop Hill. Esbjörn had difficulty finding a Lutheran priest to place there. When therefore the school teacher Gustav Palmkvist (1812-1867), who also belonged to the circle around Scott and Rosenius,⁵⁸ arrived in Andover in 1851, he was persuaded by Esbjörn to become the priest in Galesburg. However, what Esbjörn did not know was that Palmkvist had begun to harbor Baptist leanings. When in 1852 Palmkvist openly embraced the Baptist faith, Esbjörn feared that not only his Lutheran congregation in Galesburg would be obliterated but also that other congregations would be infected by the Baptist faith.⁵⁹ Because of this situation, it became clear to him that he must attempt to get good fellow workers from Sweden. Through his contacts in the homeland, Esbjörn succeeded and it was for him his most significant achievement for emigration history. He succeeded to get two very good reader priests to emigrate, namely Tuve Nilsson Hasselquist (1816-1891) and Erland

Runeby, *Den nya världen och den gamla*, 274, 281.

56. "Swedes in the homeland had received a fixed point at which to aim in the great land to the West. If you could make it to Esbjörn and Andover, then all would be well." Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 174.

57. Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 160-162.

58. Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, 20.

59. Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 225-227.

Carlsson (1822-1893).⁶⁰

Tuve Nilsson Hasselquist, from Osby in northern Skåne, was a priest in, among other places, Åkarp and belonged to a group of priests critical of the church, a group that gathered around H.B. Hammar (1814-1862) in Mjällby and C.A. Bergman (1800-1889) in Vinslöv.⁶¹ In the same way that Esbjörn enjoyed a great deal of trust among revival folk in Hälsingland, Hasselquist was highly regarded as an orthodox teacher among revival folk in Skåne.⁶² Robert Baird was also a well-known name and his book *Om religionsfriheten i Förenta Staterna (On Religious Freedom in the United States)* had been translated into Swedish by Bergman.⁶³ Hasselquist's contacts with Fjellstedt and Wieselgren⁶⁴ convinced him in 1852 to emigrate, which happened when he led sixty emigrants from northern Skåne. Hasselquist was a gifted and powerful leader and created high expectations to clear up the situation in Galesburg.⁶⁵ At the initiative of Esbjörn, in 1855 Hasselquist started the periodical *Hemlandet, Det Gamla och Det Nya (The Homeland, the Old and the New)*, which became Swedish-America's first periodical and for decades exercised a great influence as the cohesive force between the congregations. A few years later he began to publish *Den rätta hemlandet (The True Homeland)*, a periodical completely dedicated to ecclesiastical and spiritual edification, at the beginning with much material from Rosenius' *Pietisten*. Hasselquist used these periodicals to create a feeling of ethnic unity among Swedish-Americans.⁶⁶

60. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 167-177. Esbjörn made many attempts to enable eminent reader priests and theologians to come to his aid. In 1852, he wrote to his friend Peter Fjellstedt: "Come over and help us, at least for a few years." Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 254. In 1857, the question was voiced again in a letter between Hasselquist and Fjellstedt, i.e., that Fjellstedt might come to America to serve as a theology professor at Illinois State University in Springfield. A very important priest in the history of the Swedish nineteenth century revival was P.A. Ahlberg (1823-1887). Among other things, he was the founder of the colporteur school in Småland which later moved to Vetlanda, Örebro, Stockholm and Johannnelund and gradually sent many students for service in the Augustana Synod or for continued studies at the synod's institutions of higher learning. In 1854, Ahlberg indicated that he had received three letters of call from Esbjörn and was ready to emigrate "if only I can become completely convinced that the Lord needs me, a useless servant, in such a place." Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, 74. Both Fjellstedt and Ahlberg, however, stayed in Sweden and worked in the colporteur school and the Swedish Mission Institute, among other things. Sundkler, *Svenska Missionssällskapet 1835-1876*, 220-224.

61. C.A. Bergman was one of Rosenius' many pen pals. In a letter to Dr. Baird, 24 December 1852, Rosenius reproduces a long passage from a recently received letter from Bergman about the current revival in Northeast Skåne. Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, 67-73. Hammar and Bergman were, among other things, leaders in Kristianstad's Tract Society, which was founded in 1855 and the summer meeting of which (the Vanneberg meetings) could draw 7000-8000 participants. Knut Kjellberg, *Folkväckelse i Sverige under 1800-talet: Uppkomst och genombrott*, (Stockholm: Carlssons bokförlag, 1994), 158-162.

62. Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, 24.

63. Gladh, *Lars Vilhelm Henschen*, 117.

64. Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, 47-51, 55-56, 58-59.

65. Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 229, 231, 257.

66. Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, 29-30; Maria Erling &

Hasselquist started a Lutheran congregation in Chicago for which it was urgent to find a Lutheran priest as soon as possible. ... The invitation was extended this time to reader priest Erland Carlsson from Älgult in Småland. ... Carlsson's work in Chicago had a great impact not only in the church sphere, but also in social welfare of which many newly arrived emigrants had great need of help.

On his outbound journey, Hasselquist started a Lutheran congregation in Chicago for which it was urgent to find a Lutheran priest as soon as possible. Recruiting took place in this case as well through contacts with Wieselgren and Fjellstedt in the Swedish Mission Council. The invitation was extended this time to reader priest Erland Carlsson from Älgult in Småland. He arrived in Chicago in 1853 the leader of 176 emigrants, which became the spearhead of a large emigration from Småland.⁶⁷ Carlsson's work in Chicago had a great impact not only in the church sphere, but also in social welfare of which many newly arrived emigrants had great need of help, because of, among other things, an outbreak of cholera.⁶⁸ Through reports in the Swedish press and perhaps especially through his own guide for emigrants,⁶⁹ Erland Carlsson as a person became something of a Swedish waystation in the Midwest, which contributes to an explanation of why immigration to Chicago became so strong from southern Sweden and especially from Småland.⁷⁰ Three years earlier, the young Erik Norelius (1833-1916) from Hassela in Hälsingland had emigrated together with a group of both Janssonites and Hedbergians.⁷¹ As the first to receive his entire seminary training in America, he later became

Mark Granquist, *The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008), 28-32.

67. Eric Norelius, *De svenska lutherska församlingarnas och svenskarernas historia i Amerika: Ett bidrag*, (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1916), 55-56; Jan Redin, "Långasjöborna i Chisago county" in *En Smålandssoken emigrerar: En bok om emigrationen till Amerika från Långasjö socken i Kronobergs län* edited by John Johansson et al, (Långasjö: Långasjö emigrantcirkel, 1967), 570-571.

68. Ulf Beijbom, *Swedes in Chicago: A Demographical and Social Study of the 1846-1880 Immigration*. Studia Historica Upsaliensia, 38, (Stockholm: Lärmedelsförlaget, 1971), 253-254.

69. Erland Carlsson, *Några råd och underrättelser för utvandrare till Americas förenta stater*. Faksimilutgåva, (Växjö: Föreningen Emigrantinstitutets vänner, 1987).

70. Beijbom, *Swedes in Chicago*, 337-338.

71. Concerning the Hedbergians, see note 96.

a pioneer in Vasa in Minnesota and the fourth of the Swedish Lutheran Church in America's eminent pioneers.⁷²

The Augustana Synod and the Homeland Society (*Fosterlandstiftelsen*)

As spiritual leaders in the early phase of Swedish America, the pioneer priests were particularly active and eminent. Like many of the early emigrants, they had a relatively critical view of the state church and many of them wished therefore to form a church in America which would be as unlike the church from which they came as possible. At a church meeting in Jefferson Prairie, Wisconsin, 5-11 June 1860, on Esbjörns initiative, the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod was founded by eighteen Scandinavian priests (including twelve Swedes) and fifteen laymen. T.N. Hasselquist was chosen as president.⁷³ Because of the great lack of priests, Esbjörn had also proposed the establishment of an Augustana Seminary in Chicago. This proposal was also approved. He himself became the one responsible for the training of priests⁷⁴ and also succeeded to procure economic support from Sweden when the government granted two annual offerings in all the churches of the Church of Sweden, two years in a row, for this project.⁷⁵ Contacts between the Augustana Synod and the similarly newly established Homeland Society (*Fosterlandstiftelsen*—EFS) in Sweden were already extensive from the beginning of the 1860s. One important expression of this connection was that Esbjörn, Hasselquist, Norelius, and Olsson (to whom we will return in a moment) participated in EFS annual meetings on several occasions throughout the 1860s. There was also a lively correspondence especially between Hasselquist and the leaders of EFS.⁷⁶

In March 1862, the Augustana Seminary decided to call P.P. Waldenström (1838-1917) to Chicago as a teacher together with Esbjörn who aimed to decrease his workload there. Shortly thereafter, Esbjörn himself travelled to Sweden in order to meet Waldenström personally and to persuade him to accept the call while at the same time spreading information and interest about the school. Although Rosenius insistently encouraged Waldenström to take the position and Waldenström himself desired to

72. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 171-177; Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 254-255; Erling and Granquist, *The Augustana Story*, 9-14, 17, 20-26.

73. When it was founded, the Augustana Synod consisted of thirty-six Swedish and thirteen Norwegian congregations and about 5000 members. By 1870, the Norwegians had left the synod and established their own denomination. By that time, there were 30,000 members remaining. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 194-195, 226; Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 275-281.

74. Since 1841, the Swedish congregations had been connected to the Northern Illinois Synod. Because Esbjörn was a very capable teacher and theologian and the only Swedish priest at the time who could speak English, he had since 1857 worked as a professor at Illinois State University in Springfield. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 194-195; Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 264-275.

75. Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 287.

76. Twenty-some letters are annotated and published in Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, 605-610.

Like many of the early emigrants, [the pioneer priests] had a relatively critical view of the state church and many of them wished therefore to form a church in America which would be as unlike the church from which they came as possible.

do so, the answer was nevertheless “no” because his father strongly opposed it.⁷⁷ In spite of this setback, Esbjörn was very encouraged by his visit in Sweden. He was invited to give lectures and to preach everywhere and at the same time was able to collect the offering for Augustana Seminary, the offering that had been approved by his Royal Majesty. And this offering was often large. Esbjörn was sympathetic and interested in the low church approach which Rosenius and EFS represented. For him, the revival movement was an important theological front of the Church of Sweden in the battle with its rationalism. Like Rosenius, he was also a clear opponent of the free church tendencies within the movement. Esbjörn participated in the EFS annual meeting in Stockholm on 13 June. He participated in the business meeting and gave a gripping lecture on the condition and the needs of the Scandinavian congregations in America. One of the results of his participation at the annual meeting was that EFS for several years provided financial support to the work of the Augustana Synod, something which is apparent, among other places, in board minutes and correspondence.⁷⁸ The following year, 1863, Esbjörn nevertheless left

77. In the same way as with Fjellstedt, one can only speculate about the fate of the Augustana Synod had Waldenström taken the call to teach at the Augustana Synod, a call which, by the way, was signed by T.N. Hasselquist, the denomination's president at the time. When 25 years later, Waldenström visited America, Hasselquist used all his powers to warn his flocks against this “hesiarch” and many Augustana congregations were closed to him. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 106-107; Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 293-296, 311.

78. The EFS Board decided on June 18, 1861, “to support an Augustana Synod missionary in New York City for about 2000 crowns annually.” Allan Hofgren, *Med Gud och hans vänskap: Evangeliska fosterlandstiftelsen genom 100 år*, (Stockholm: Evangeliska fosterlandstiftelsens bokförlag, 1956), 92. However, sometimes the actual support was only half that amount. And some years it did not come at all. In 1867, And. Hökerberg wrote on behalf of the society, “It causes us pain, namely, that the Society has not been and is not in the position to send any financial support to our brothers in America. Because a large part of our land suffers need and affliction, we have been forced for a time to undergo significant building projects for our mission institute and for domestic mission. These projects have used all available funds and we have even been forced to take loans to complete them. If the Synod were willing to receive a shipment of books from our publishing house, a shipment worth about 500 crowns, it would be dear to our heart to participate in your work at least in that way.” Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, 153-154. The offer was gratefully

America and returned to Sweden for good, where he worked as head pastor in Östervåla in Uppland, 1864-1870.⁷⁹

The fellow worker who was closest to Esbjörn in America and who, more than any other, would perpetuate Esbjörn's approach within the Augustana Synod, was Erik Norelius. In 1868, he travelled to Sweden largely with the same aims that Esbjörn had six years earlier. In addition to a visit with Esbjörn which was much appreciated,⁸⁰ he also held successful speeches about the Augustana Synod in, among other places, Lund and at the EFS annual meeting in June in Stockholm. At the EFS annual meeting, he met not only a great number of well-known people, but also a young priest from Värmland. Long afterwards, Norelius described their meeting in this way: "I had received the task of looking for suitable priests for America during my sojourn in Sweden, and it came to me [when I met him] that I had before me good prey for the Augustana Synod." The young priest was Olof Olsson (1841-1900), from Sunnemo in Värmland, who little more than a year earlier had received a call from Hasselquist and the Augustana Synod to come to America, but who had instead been thinking about becoming a missionary.⁸¹ The result of the meeting was that Olsson changed his plans and in 1869 travelled to America as the point person for a group of 250 immigrants. There he founded the Swedish settlement Lindsborg in Kansas and came to contribute greatly to the Augustana Synod, among other things, as a theology professor and president of the synod.⁸²

In 1870, Hasselquist, the president of the synod at the time, journeyed to Sweden. In connection with that journey, he had been honored to preach at the opening worship of the EFS annual meeting held at Blasieholm Church.⁸³ After the worship service, he explained that the reason for his trip was to inform the Swedes in the homeland of the need for spiritual work among their emigrated countrymen which he estimated to be 200,000 souls, of which less than 16,000 belonged to the Augustana Synod. He said frankly that the Church of Sweden had not only refused to provide these Swedish Americans with motherly care, but also that they looked

accepted. Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, 160-163.

79. One reason was a controversy with T.N. Hasselquist who against Esbjörn's will had managed to get the seminary moved from Chicago to a recently acquired rural area in Paxton. This proved a failed experiment. In 1875, a new center for the Augustana Seminary was established in Rock Island where it has continued up to now as a university, although the seminary merged into the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in 1962. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 325-327; Rönnergård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 292-293.

80. Esbjörn's own son likened the relationship between the two to that between Paul and Timothy. Rönnergård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 292-293.

81. A letter from Olsson to Hasselquist, 18 Feb 1968. Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, 163-164.

82. Rönnergård, *Utvandrarnas kyrka*, 183-184. Olsson was musically talented. After a strong experience of Händel's Messiah in London in 1879, he took the initiative to see that the work began to be performed in America. At the premiere in Lindsborg, Kansas, in 1892, Professor Joseph Osborn, L.P. Esbjörn's son, directed, while Olof Olsson, now professor at the theological seminary in Rock Island, was the organist. Rönnergård, *Utvandrarnas kyrka*, 177-179.

83. Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, 268-269.

In 1869 [Olof Olsson] travelled to America as the point person for a group of 250 immigrants. There he founded the Swedish settlement Lindsborg in Kansas and came to contribute greatly to the Augustana Synod... as a theology professor and president of the synod.

on them disapprovingly.⁸⁴ Hasselquist also decried the need of gifted and well-educated priests from Sweden since the Augustana Synod did not, as of yet, have sufficient educational resources.⁸⁵ He was also able to visit his friend L.P. Esbjörn in Östervåla before the latter died on July 2, 1870.⁸⁶

How Rosenius influenced the pioneer priests and the role of these priests in the American emigration

The pioneer priests in the earliest time of the Swedish settlements in America, i.e., Esbjörn, Hasselquist, Carlson, Norelius, and Olsson, had been leaders for large groups of emigrants, the first four in the aftermath of the Janssonites. They were very influenced by Rosenius⁸⁷ and this fact was of great significance in how they built up the church work among the Swedish immigrants. This was most obvious in the Rosenius influenced Augustana Synod and its pastoral training and in the appointment of pastors. Starting in 1875 the Synod's theological seminary and college was located

84. Church historian Gunnar Westin, has explained this in the following way: "The chilly relations with which the official church leadership regarded the Augustana Synod in the beginning depended largely on the fact that the leadership in Sweden rightly considered the Augustana Synod to be a creation of more or less insurgent readers who had gone their own way in the new settlements in Illinois and Minnesota." Westin, *Lutheraner, anglikaner, reformerta*, 143.

85. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 234-235. Until 1870, there were only six priests in the Augustana Synod who had been ordained in Sweden. In 1890, there were only eight of a total 291. The men who left the homeland in order "to serve the Lord within the Augustana Synod" were largely colporteurs, school teachers, and students of the mission schools such as the Fjellstedt School in Stockholm (which later moved to Uppsala), Pa. Ahlberg's school in Kristdala (later in Örebro), and the EFS school, Johannelund, in Stockholm. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 226. The education and work of the colporteurs has been investigated by Stefan Gelfgren, *Ett utvalt släkte: Väckelsen och sekularisering: Evangeliska fosterlands-stiftelsen 1856-1910*, (Skellefteå: Norma, 2003), 73-171.

86. Rönnergård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 301.

87. Oscar N. Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period 1846 to 1860* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1950), 22-24, 79.

in Rock Island.⁸⁸ The trailblazing work of the pioneer priests has also been praised on several different occasions. In Sweden, the most attention-grabbing occasion happened in connection with the consecration of archbishop Nathan Söderblom in 1914. Then the representative of the Augustana Synod compared God's call to Abraham to leave Canaan's land to the call for Esbjörn, Hasselquist, and Carlsson to emigrate to America in order to through the Augustana Synod lay the foundation "for a spiritual home that houses your children, and will house the coming generations."⁸⁹ The new archbishop who came out of the revival movement in Hälsingland and whose father, lead pastor Jonas Söderblom, was strongly influenced by Carl Olof Rosenius' "comforting teaching,"⁹⁰ had always taken care to nurture the connections between his own church and its "American daughter," the Augustana Synod.⁹¹

The best known of the pioneers in Sweden, Tuve Nilsson Hasselquist, sent home many copies of the periodical *Hemlandet* (the Homeland) in order to make known the work of the Swedish Lutheran church in America.⁹² But none of this seems to have had much enduring impact. The thesis with which I introduced this essay, that the church historic role that Rosenius played in the America emigration has been seldom mentioned and often overlooked, can be illustrated with one example: In the 400-page book *Med Gud och hans vänskap* (*With God and His Friendship*), which was published in connection with the EFS centennial in 1956, not one of the pioneer priests whom I have described is even mentioned in spite of the fact that the name index in the book includes about 1500 names. Robert Baird is named four times, but only as a recipient of letters from Rosenius. The Augustana Synod is named three times, once in connection with the Board's decision to contribute funds and twice in regard to the mission in Tanzania.⁹³

88. Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, 29.

89. Erling and Granquist, *The Augustana Story*, 207; Söderblom, *En Amerikabok* 198-224.

90. Jonas Jonson, "Jag är bara Nathan Söderblom, satt till tjänst," (Stockholm: Verbum, 2014), 20.

91. Dietz Lange, *Nathan Söderblom och hans tid*, (Skellefteå: Artos & Norma, 2014), 377. In 1923, Söderblom strengthened these connections by visiting America for nearly three months with his wife. Söderblom, *En Amerikabok*.

92. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 234.

93. Hofgren, *Med Gud och hans vänskap*, 27, 31, 91-92, 105, 349, 353. The biography of Rosenius which was published in the same year (Lodin, *C.O. Rosenius, hans liv och gärning*) does not give especially much room to Rosenius' significance for the America emigration. Thanks to contact with Oscar N. Olson, whose book *The Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period 1846 to 1860* was published in 1950, Lodin managed to write a few lines on the subject in the last pages of his book. Lodin writes that the Swedish emigrants came to the United States from several religious orientations and that no one was more significant than Rosenius. "The founders of the Augustana Church were strongly influenced by him and his influence on preaching was, as Oscar N. Olson, Rock Island, indicates in a letter to the author, both deep and lasting. Even today, it remains as a productive undercurrent in the spiritual heritage." He also briefly mentions T.N. Hasselquist, the Augustana Synod and the publication

The Free Church Movement and the early emigration

The name Augustana was an expression of the part of the revival movement that wanted to protect its Lutheran identity. But there were also relatively small groups of Swedish-Americans with a background in the revival movement who chose to leave Lutheranism for Baptist and Methodist movements. These groups also had close connections with the early emigration to America.⁹⁴ The Baptist pioneer Anders Wiberg from Hälsingland had, as mentioned, belonged to the circle around Scott from 1839-1842. He was ordained in 1843 and began to serve the church in Forsa, the same year that Erik Jansson moved there and began the work, a move that had devastating consequences for the reader movement in Hälsingland. It is not likely that Wiberg would have regarded Jansson with any positive enthusiasm.⁹⁵ He continued to have contact with, among others, Scott, Rosenius, and Henschen. As a "Henschen disciple," he thereby came to be strongly impressed by the utopian vision of America as an ideal societal form, a vision that Henschen had communicated to the part of the revival movement which was critical of the state church.⁹⁶ At the end of the decade, Wiberg grew nearer to the separatists in Hälsingland, among which the Finnish priest F.G. Hedberg (1811-1893) had won a great influence after the Janssonites had emigrated. In contrast to Pietism, which he understood as a law religion, Hedberg had above all valued Luther's teaching about faith alone and the words of absolution.⁹⁷ When Wiberg in 1850 returned to Stockholm he was both a convinced Hedbergian and a separatist. He had also read Baird's book about religious freedom in America and had discussed emigration with friends in Hudiksvall. Persecution against Hedbergians in Hälsingland in the same year resulted in the formation of a group of emigrants, about 100 in number, who decided to follow the example of the Janssonites and leave the country. Erik Norelius, whom we have previously described, was in this group, which consisted of many Hedbergians. The group asked Wiberg to go with them to America as their priest, but Wiberg did not think he could accept the offer, so instead proposed Gustaf Palmquist. Palmquist promised to come and emigrated, as mentioned, in the following year.

of Rosenius' writings in Swedish, Norwegian, and English. Lodin, *C.O. Rosenius, hans liv och gärning*, 329-330.

94. Mark Granquist. "Rosenius in America: His Influence on American Religion—Historical and Contemporary" in *Carl Olof Rosenius: Teolog, författare, själavårdare*, edited by Lars Olov Eriksson & Torbjörn Larpers, (Skellefteå: Artos Academic, 2016), 113-115.

95. Many years later (1850), when Rosenius invited Wiberg to his home, it is said that he accused his friend of being "a Erik Jansson man," but he probably did not mean it seriously. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 81.

96. Gladh, *Lars Vilhelm Henschen*, 119, 204-206. Sven Hansson, *Uppsålateologerna och Svenska kyrkan 1840-1855*. Skrifter utgivna av Svenska kyrkohistoriska föreningen: II. Ny följd, 33, (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1980), 119.

97. Rosenius did not share this "hyper-evangelical" point of view and for fourteen years (1844-1857) wrote letters to his friend Hedberg, letters which contain a comprehensive debate about law and gospel, sin and grace. Westin, *C.O. Rosenius' brev till F.G. Hedberg*.

During his time in Stockholm, Wiberg preached and administered the sacrament in the private homes of the separatists. He did not like the “open table” at Holy Communion, i.e., a table where even nonbelievers were able to take communion. Because he did not have any employment, he received economic help from friends, among others, Rosenius and the Palmquist brothers. In fact, Rosenius opposed separatism (and Hedbergianism) but probably aimed to help his friend, whose ability and upright character he recognized, in order to try to “save him to remain in the church.” During a journey to Hamburg, Wiberg came, however, in contact with some Baptists, who encouraged him to read more Baptist literature and in 1851 he asked to resign his ordination as a priest. He also began to eagerly spread propaganda about emigration in reader circles and travelled himself to America in 1852, the same year that his large book about baptism was published. On the way to America, he was baptized in Copenhagen by the exiled Baptist pioneer and earlier fellow worker of George Scott, F.O. Nilsson (1809-1881). Wiberg returned to Sweden as a Baptist missionary in 1855 and two years later founded the Swedish Baptist Society, within which Gustaf Palmqvist became one of his close associates.⁹⁸

Since the Methodist George Scott had such a great, though indirect, significance for the establishment of evangelical Lutheran organizations such as EFS and the Augustana Synod, it may seem ironic that organized Methodism did not get a foothold and was not even established as a church in Sweden until 1868 and then only in opposition to the expressed wishes of the original missionary. Scott’s posture had always been not to create schism or separatism within the Church of Sweden,⁹⁹ an ambition that was fully shared by Rosenius, whose strong influence ought to be regarded as one reason for Scott’s attitude. The founder of the Methodist Church in Sweden was Victor Witting (1825-1906). Born in Malmö, he emigrated to America in 1847 with a group of Janssonites. He spent eighteen months at Bishop Hill, but left the colony and became a Methodist like many other Janssonites.¹⁰⁰ He became a member in the Methodist congregation in Galesburg, began preaching and in 1855 became the pastor of the Methodist congregation in Andover. He lived in Sweden from 1867-1877

98. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 80-87; N.V. Nordström. *Svenska baptistsamfundets historia*. Del 1. Andra rev. uppl. Stockholm: B.-M.s bokförlag, 1936, pp 141-147; Rönnegård, *Utvandrarnas kyrka*, 131-145. In a letter to Dr. Baird dated 22 March 1853, Rosenius writes: “For my part, I am often torn between anxiety and joy, discouragement and praise. You, no doubt, are aware that the so-called separatist movements remind us of their presence here. Questions of conscience concerning baptism, administration of the Lord’s supper, participation in public worship services, etc. have inflicted me with much anxiety, as has been the case with others as well.” Westin, *C.O. Rosenius’ brev till hans vänner i Amerika*, 75.

99. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 262, 122; Erik Nyhlén. *Svensk frikyrka*, (Stockholm: Prisma, 1964), 203.

100. Peter Källman (1823-1900) from Voxna Works in Hälsingland, who was a prophet anointed by Erik Jansson, also became a Methodist and a successful revival preacher and at the same time a leader of Methodism in the American Midwest. Rönnegård, *Utvandrarnas kyrka*, 70.

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and founded the Methodist church there in 1868.¹⁰¹ Because of Wiberg and the Palmquist brothers the Baptist movement in Sweden had a real background in Swedish Lutheranism with a Hedbergian orientation within the reader movement, but Swedish Methodism’s early leaders emerged from the Methodist Episcopal Church in America and lacked Swedish theological education.¹⁰²

In the middle of the 1860s, Rosenius’ health was severely diminished. On Pentecost Day in 1866, just as he was beginning his sermon at Johannes Church in Göteborg, Rosenius experienced his third and most serious cerebral hemorrhage. He was helped down from the pulpit by his youngest brother, Martin, and by his friends Peter Fjellstedt and Peter Wieselgren who was the cathedral priest in the city. In February 1868, Rosenius died at the age of only 52 years.¹⁰³ He was succeeded as editor of the periodical *Pietisten*¹⁰⁴ by P.P. Waldenström. During the 1870s, the revival movement on both sides of the Atlantic was affected by a violent crisis through Waldenström’s atonement doctrine. The crisis spread quickly because the periodical had such a wide readership both in Sweden and among the Swedish emigrants in America. The result was an explosion within EFS and difficult disagreements within the Augustana Synod, especially in Lindsborg, Kansas.¹⁰⁵ The free church movement also became more radical and separatist.¹⁰⁶

101. Victor Witting, *Minnen från mitt liv som sjöman, immigrant och predikant: Samt en historisk afhandling af metodismens uppkomst, utveckling, utbredning bland svenskarne i Amerika och i Sverige från dess början 1845 till dess organiserade i konferenser 1876 i Sverige och 1877 i Amerika*, (Worcester, 1904); Rönnegård, *Utvandrarnas kyrka*, 71-72.

102. Gunnar Westin, *Den kristna friförsamlingen i Norden: Frikyrklighetens uppkomst och utveckling*. 2nd Edition, (Stockholm: Westerberg, 1958), 70.

103. Lodin, *C.O. Rosenius, hans liv och gärning*, 293, 307.

104. According to church historian, George M. Stephenson, the influence *Pietisten* had in Sweden during Rosenius’ time is comparable to the influence of the 95 Theses in Germany during Luther’s time.

105. Rönnegård, *Utvandrarnas kyrka*, 171-172; Erling & Granquist, *The Augustana Story*, 43-46.

106. Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, 31; Stephenson, *The*

The Swedish-American denominations and Rosenius

In distinction from many parish priests of the Church of Sweden who rejected religious influences from America, Rosenius, like many within the free churches, considered the U.S. as the most Christian country in the world and was not ashamed to admit his debt to American mission friends for their inspiration, example, and material support.¹⁰⁷ The Augustana Synod became the largest and strongest denomination among Swedish-Americans and within a century one of the leading Lutheran churches in North America.¹⁰⁸ It had “preserved its Rosenius-influenced low church character and has held fast to its confession.”¹⁰⁹

From the late 1870s, there have also been different groups with links to the Swedish Mission Covenant Church. In 1885, the Swedish Evangelical Free Church was formed and in 1886, the Swedish Mission Covenant Church. A significant proof of Rosenius’ great influence among Swedish American denominations is that most of them in one way or another claimed to be descendants of his spiritual heritage, which is apparent in the bitter theological battle between the Augustana Synod and the aforementioned denominations over which group could most rightly invoke Rosenius, a debate which was partly a reflection of the contemporary Waldenström-influenced “atonement controversy” in Sweden. But even among Baptists and Methodists with different views of baptism and sanctification, there were many who valued the writings of Rosenius. Already early on, many writings of Rosenius had circulated in America’s Swedish settlements. Many immigrants had bound annual volumes of *Pietisten* with them from the homeland. As already mentioned, excerpts from *Pietisten* were published in Hasselquist’s periodical *Det Rätta Hemlandet*. And Eric Norelius and Olof Olsson commented positively on Rosenius’ writings, which the leaders of the Swedish Free Church and the Mission Covenant Church also did. Rosenius was attractive to all revived Swedish-American Christians, not only Lutherans. There was a good market for Rosenius’ writings in America. Numerous works of Rosenius were translated into Norwegian, published and distributed in America. One extremely popular book among Norwegian immigrants was *Klar och usvigelig Veiledning till Fred* (Clear and Exhaustive Guide to Peace)—a collection of Rosenius’ texts which was continuously published in new editions until 1929.

The earliest leaders of Augustana, Esbjörn, Hasselquist, and Carlsson, had tried to use English within the synod. But with the great increase of Swedish-speakers in the congregations because of

Religious Aspects, 233.

107. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects*, 39.

108. Rönnegård, *Lars Paul Esbjörn*, 280, 314. In 1962, the Augustana Synod merged with three other Lutheran churches (the ULC—German; the Finnish ELCA; and the AELC—Danish) to form the Lutheran Church in America. At that time, the Augustana Synod had 600,000 baptized members. Erling & Granquist, *The Augustana Story*, 337.

109. Berndt, Gustafsson, *Svensk kyrkohistoria*, (Stockholm: Diakonistyrelsens bokförlag, 1957), 212.

Rosenius, like many within the free churches, considered the U.S. as the most Christian country in the world and was not ashamed to admit his debt to American mission friends for their inspiration, example, and material support. The Augustana Synod became the largest and strongest denomination among Swedish-Americans and within a century one of the leading Lutheran churches in North America.

the influx of immigrants in 1865-1914, it was hard to implement English as the standard language.¹¹⁰ The Synod’s congregations were for a long time the largest and most important organizations among the Scandinavian immigrants in America and had a great influence on preserving the language and the culture of the homeland. The Scandinavian languages were therefore still widely used in 1918 among the immigrants from Scandinavia. But about 1930, they were swept away by English, partly because of the xenophobia that spread in America after World War I. Scandinavians were suspect because of their ties to Germany and therefore their languages were also suspect. Translations of Rosenius to English began to be published in 1923, the first with the title *The Believer Free from the Law*. The second was a translation from Norwegian of *Veiledning till Fred. Daily Devotions* was published twenty years later and in three different translations! In 1978, the Romans Commentary was published. Other new editions of Rosenius in English were published in a series of short books: *Forgiveness of Sins* in 2000 and *The Prayer of Faith* in 2010. In 2015, an anthology of Scandinavian pietists was published, *Scandinavian Pietists: Spiritual Writings from 19th Century Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland*, in which Rosenius was represented. A dozen Rosenius hymns were published in the Augustana Synod’s *Hemlandssånger*. After the transition to English, there were only three or four Rosenius hymns left and none in the 2006 *Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELCA)*.

The question posed in the introduction about Rosenius’ significance for the emigration to the USA may thus be generally answered: it was in many ways indirectly very great. Through his writings and hymns and as a spiritual leader and source of inspiration, he played an extremely important role for numerous immigrants in their new homeland. What is the significance and role of Rosenius in contemporary America? According to Mark Granquist, professor at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota,

110. Erling & Granquist, *The Augustana Story*, 98-105.

such a wide-ranging question is so far still open. A group which for the most part comes from the Evangelical Covenant Church has since 1986 published *Pietisten: A Herald of Awakening and Spiritual Edification*, a newsletter which is published semi-annually and has a web presence,¹¹¹ “a healthy dose of piety inspired by him,” i.e., Rosenius. To be sure, this group does not represent the “mainstream of religious publishing,” but shows that it is possible to communicate the works of Rosenius to a contemporary circle of readers in America.¹¹²

Summary

Carl Olof Rosenius grew up in an environment with early and positive contact with English Methodist mission. Already in 1840, he had close cooperation with two of the most important representatives from English-American mission organizations whose contributions were decisive for the mass emigration from Sweden to America starting in 1846. Through his writings, above all the periodical *Pietisten*, he became the central figure of the nineteenth century Swedish revival. Thus, Rosenius became a deep well of inspiration for the pioneer priests who, in the footsteps of the first mass emigration, led large emigrant groups from different parts of Sweden and thus contributed to further emigration. Among other things, these pioneer priests established the Swedish Lutheran Augustana Synod with its Rosenius-inspired low church character. With his writings, Rosenius reached even beyond the Lutheran denominations in the Swedish-American settlements. His writings are still published and read in the U.S.

About the author and translator:

Kjell Söderberg, born 1941, received his PhD in History from Umeå University 1981, worked as a history, social studies, and music teacher at Strömbäck Folk College from 1996 to 2006 and as a researcher at the Demographic Data Base, Umeå University from 1983 to 1991. He was a delegate to the Church of Sweden's Churchwide Assembly, on the Church of Sweden's education board 1989-2006, and worked on various committees and consultations to establish religion and theology programs at Umeå University. He has also served as the chair of Härnösand and Luleå Dioceses' Board of Education and Research. He has served as chair of the Luleå Diocese History Society and still serves as that society's contact person.

Translator Dean Apel, PhD LSTC, is pastor of Assaria Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Central Kansas where the Rosenius influence was once powerful among Swedish Lutheran congregations.

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111. <http://www.pietisten.org>

112. Granquist, “Rosenius in America,” 111-126.