

# The Augustana Heritage Newsletter

Volume 8 Number 1 Fall 2012



## Highlights of the AHA Gathering VIII, 2012

by David E. Baker, Executive Director

Wow!! What a Gathering! Almost 1,200 people, including close to 600 who were registered for the entire weekend, plus an additional 500 for the opening evening with Garrison Keillor and another almost 100 commuters for Saturday and/or Sunday, filled Christ Chapel on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, for the 8th Biennial Gathering of the Augustana Heritage Association June 21-24.

Under the theme "A Living Legacy" members and friends of the Association gathered to worship, celebrate, renew old friendships and establish new ones, learn more about the heritage we have in common and how it is being carried forward in the church and world today, sing hymns, listen to great music, be well fed and cared for, be both entertained and pampered, and go home inspired. What more could anybody want?

While every aspect of the weekend was a highlight for someone, the three that received the highest marks on the Evaluation Sheets that were turned in following the Gathering were, #1, the Closing Worship Service Sunday morning; #2, the Gustavus Food Service (wouldn't you



know it?); and, #3, the Jenny Lind Concert Saturday evening. These three were, in the opinion of the individual evaluators, especially outstanding...and rightly so.

Other highlights of the weekend, according to the cumulative results of the Evaluation Sheets, were the Saturday Morning Commuter Day Worship Service, the on-site registration process, the Hymn Sings, the Sunday Morning Open Forum

with David Swartling et al., and the ease of getting around the campus, all in all a very positive response to all of the activities and events of the weekend.

As an Association, we owe a great debt of gratitude to the administration and staff at Gustavus for their hospitality and graciousness to us, not only during our stay there, but in the weeks and months leading to the Gathering. From President Ohle to the Food Service, from the Campus Pastor to the registrars, and from the secretaries to the grounds keepers, all gave an extra effort to make sure that this was a most memorable and pleasant Gathering, and so it was.

By the same token, the members of the Local Planning

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Gustavus Adolphus College

## Graphic Motif for Gathering VIII

*A distinctive new piece of sculpture provided a unifying artistic motif for Gathering VIII at Gustavus Adolphus College. The sculpture, pictured at the left, is a substantial bronze piece, 30 inches high and 22 inches wide. The sculpture was placed at the entrance to Christ Chapel, greeting participants at each plenary session and each worship service of the weekend. The sculpture takes, overall, the form of a cross. However, the subtle and complex design also incorporates a plowshare and a ship mast. Those symbols are explained in the text below, reprinted from the Gathering program. A deep blue glass stripe runs up the centerline of the vertical element of the sculpture. This blue line symbolizes the water of baptism. It stands in bright contrast to all the dark metal forming the remainder of the piece. (Unfortunately this striking blue line does not stand out clearly in a black-and-white photograph of the sculpture.) The complex symbolism of this Augustana sculpture gave people occasion to study the work, and to note how its various themes were brought to expression in the intricate shapes of the work.*

*A stylized color sketch of this distinctive sculpture appeared as a logo on the front of the Gathering program, and also on the cover of the bulletin for each worship service. A monochrome*

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*The Augustana Heritage Association defines, promotes, and perpetuates the heritage and legacy of the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church.*

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### **Special Notice**

*Please note that this issue of The Augustana Heritage Newsletter has been edited by Vance Eckstrom, appointed interim editor by the Executive Director of AHA, David Baker, due to the temporary incapacity of the regular editor, Ron Englund. We appreciate Vance's willingness to serve in this capacity and look forward to Ron's return with the next issue.*

# Highlights of the AHA Gathering VIII, 2012

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Committee, which included several members of the GA staff and which was co-chaired by Marie Benson and Terry Denley, also deserve our thanks. And who could forget the magnificent contributions made by Jack Swanson...aided, as I understand it, by his wife occasionally on the foot pedals, if you can believe it...the glorious notes of the great organ swelling through the Chapel and inducing us to sing?

It was, indeed, a grand and glorious weekend and one not to be forgotten. While there will be other opportuni-

ties for Augustana folks to get together in the future, there will never be another Gathering like this one. I can guarantee you that. For this was, as was earlier decided by the AHA membership at the previous Gathering in Rock Island in 2010, the last "traditional" Gathering...that is, a 4-day event with lots of speakers, interest groups, etc....and, in keeping with the mandate that we "finish strong," we did exactly that. Thanks be to God!

## Graphic Motif for Gathering VIII

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version of the sketch marked other materials, such as the notepad included in each participant's packet.

Full-size castings of the work have been given to Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, and Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas.

The following text was included in the Gathering program as an explanation of the distinctively-shaped sculpture.

The Augustana sculpture was created in 2012 to honor the spirit of the Augustana Synod and to serve as a lasting tribute to the spirit of the Swedish Lutheran Church in the United States, which was the foundation for numerous congregations and colleges.

Greg Mueller, Sesquicentennial Sculptor at Gustavus Adolphus College, wove three design themes into this piece:

- a ship mast symbolizing the immigration of thousands to a new land, for the Augustana Church's service to the world through global missions, and for the sailors who risked their lives and trusted their faith and their ability to navigate the seas just as personal piety is a daily devotion of self-navigation
- a hand plow representing *Ecclesia plantanda*—"the church must be planted"—and the labor and prayer that went into the planting of the seeds of the Augustana Church in the generally rural parts of the Midwest
- and a Cross: the plow and the mast both reflect a cross form with the blue glass for the baptism into a Christ-centered life.



Gustavus Adolphus College

### God's Church

Translation of Berta Andersson's poem, "Guds Kyrka"

*God's Church, we read  
As ship indeed,  
Bound for the shores abiding  
Does head for home,  
Though night may come,  
The Lord as helmsman guiding.  
O Christian ship,  
O pilgrim ship  
No matter how the waves roar,  
With sureness you  
Sail swift and true  
To reach in safety heav'n's shore.*

Greg Mueller, Gustavus's Sesquicentennial Sculptor, grew up in the St. Peter area and holds a bachelor's degree from St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., and a master of fine arts degree from Montana State University School of Art in Bozeman, Mont. In the 1990s, he worked as studio assistant to the late Paul Granlund, Gustavus's longtime sculptor-in-residence. Mueller most recently served as an assistant professor specializing in sculpture and 3-D design in the department of art and art history at Bloomsburg University in Bloomsburg, Penn. Prior to that, he taught sculpture for six years at Bowling Green State University School of Art in Bowling Green, Ohio. [used by permission]

# Notes from Augustana Heritage Association

## Executive Director David E. Baker

### What's next?

Now that 2012 AHA Gathering VIII is history, what's next for the Augustana Heritage Association? That is a good question and, I'm happy to report, thanks to the recommendations of the Future Committee through the Board of Directors at the recent AHA Business Meeting at Gustavus June 23, there is some good news and there are several good answers.

Specifically, we can look forward to the following within this new biennium:

1. An AHA-sponsored trip to Sweden, the Sweden Heritage Tour, September 10-23, 2013
2. An AHA Festival on the campus of Midland University in Fremont, Nebraska, June 13-15, 2014
3. Opportunities to remember Augustana-founded agen-

cies and institutions in our estate plans

4. The continuation of *The Augustana Heritage Newsletter* for the foreseeable future
5. Beginning planning for an annual AHA Lectureship at locations yet to be determined

As you plan your own activities these next two years, I strongly urge you and encourage you to include, if you can, all five of these items in your planning. Join us on the trip to Sweden, put the AHA Festival in Fremont on your calendar, review your estate plans, read the Newsletter when it comes, and plan to attend the first annual AHA Lectureship beginning in 2016.

See you there!

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At the pre-Gathering meeting of the Board of Directors of the Augustana Heritage Association Wednesday afternoon and evening and Thursday morning, June 20 and 21, the Board:

1. reviewed with strong affirmation the plans and arrangements for the upcoming Gathering;
2. reviewed and revised the price list for AHA publications;
3. designated any donations received for free books at the Gathering to the Chilstrom Chair for New Testament Studies at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago;
4. authorized the officers of the Association to be signers on the Association's bank account;
5. received reports from each of its committees;
6. discussed with the Director of the Swenson Center in Rock Island the possibility of future collaboration;
7. approved for presentation to the Association at its biennial Business Meeting June 23 the recommendations of the Future Committee;
8. authorized a one-time grant of \$1,000 to the Augustana

Institute at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia for their lectureship;

9. approved for presentation to the Association at its Business Meeting June 23 the budget for the next biennium;
10. determined that, pending approval by the Association at its Business Meeting June 23, the event tentatively being planned for June 13-15, 2014, on the campus of Midland University in Fremont, Nebraska, be called an AHA Festival;
11. authorized its Publications & Projects Committee to inquire into the possibility of publishing a revised and updated edition of or supplement to the Conrad Bergendoff book of biographies of Augustana pastors; and
12. approved a resolution of thanks to Herb and Corinne Chilstrom for composing the new devotional book, *Every Morning New*.

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At the biennial Business Meeting of the Augustana Heritage Association Saturday afternoon, June 23, reports were received from the President, Don Sjoberg; the Executive Director, David Baker; the Treasurer, Jerry Leaf; and the Chair of the Future Committee, Hal Nilsson.

Six people, including three incumbents, were elected to the Board; the minutes of the previous meeting in 2010 and the recommendations of the Future Committee through the Board of Directors were approved; and a budget for the next biennium was adopted.

The six people elected to the Board, all for 4-year terms, were Hal Nilsson, Helene Leaf and Terry Denley, incumbents; and Dave Hurty, Sonya Lindquist and Janet Novak.

Going off the Board were J. Roger Anderson, after having served for 8 years; Herb Chilstrom, after having served for 12 years; and John Norton and Dot Palmquist, each after having served for 4 years.

All members of the Board were thanked for their service and special words of appreciation were extended to the President, the Executive Director, the Secretary and the Treasurer.

The next biennial Business Meeting of the Association will be held on Saturday afternoon, June 14, 2014, at 4:15 p.m. on the campus of Midland University in Fremont, Nebraska. Plan now to attend!

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At the organizing meeting of the new Board of Directors of the Augustana Heritage Association Sunday afternoon, June 24, Dave Hurty, Sonya Lindquist and Janet Novak were welcomed as new members, while Hal Nilsson, Helene Leaf and Terry Denley were welcomed as returning members. A motion of appreciation to the four people going off the Board—J. Roger Anderson, Herb Chilstrom, John Norton and Dot Palmquist—was adopted, and new officers were elected.

Elected as the Association's new president was Hal Nilsson, the new vice president Ann Kohler, the new secretary Helene Leaf, and reelected treasurer Jerry Leaf. All four positions are for 2-year terms and, except for the treasurer, are limited to two 2-year terms each.

New committee assignments were also made, a quick

evaluation of the just-concluded Gathering was given and appreciation expressed to the members of the Local Planning Committee for their fine work.

In addition, authority was given to the Executive Committee to determine the final amount of money to be sent to the Jenny Lind Chapel Endowment Fund and the next meeting of the Board was set, if possible, for Friday afternoon to Sunday morning the last weekend in April, 2013, on the campus of Midland University in Fremont, Nebraska.

As AHA moves into the future, please remember the Board in your prayers, that its discernment of the future of AHA be an appropriate and solid one and that in all things God be glorified and our heritage affirmed.

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September 10-23, 2013, the Augustana Heritage Association will be sponsoring a Sweden Heritage Tour. For nearly two weeks participants will tour this motherland of the Augustana Lutheran Church, visit places from which founders of the Augustana Synod came, meet with current leaders of the Church of Sweden, and see many of the sights that make this country of so many of our forebears the attractive and inviting one it is.

By September of 2013, it will be 12 years since AHA last sponsored a tour, which was led by Donovan Palmquist, the first Executive Director of AHA. Now it is time to go again and I invite all interested friends and members of AHA to join us and increase, thereby, your knowledge and appreciation of the rich and storied heritage we share.

The full price of the tour, \$4,999, includes round trip economy class airfare from Newark or other pre-arranged departure site, 12 nights of accommodation in first class hotels or Lutheran guesthouses, daily breakfasts, eight dinners, ground transportation by deluxe motorcoach, sight-seeing and entrance fees, luggage handling (one piece per person), experienced English-speaking tour guides for arrival and departure assistance, local touring in Uppsala and Stockholm, gratuities to drivers and guides (\$60 per person),

airport and foreign departure taxes (\$522 per person) and all the travel information needed by each traveler.

For further information, contact either Group Travel Directors in Minneapolis, telephone 952-881-7811 or 800-747-2255 or email at [groups@gtd.org](mailto:groups@gtd.org) or myself at 530-432-8935 or email at [dngbaker@comcast.net](mailto:dngbaker@comcast.net). I'd love to talk with you about the trip and answer any questions you might have about it. The folks at Group Travel, likewise, will be happy to hear from you and provide you with whatever information you might need. A brochure outlining the tour's itinerary and providing other information was included in the tote bag received by all registrants at the recent AHA Gathering at Gustavus.

To reserve a place on the tour, which is expected to fill quickly, a reservation and deposit of \$400 per person is needed to fulfill the group deadline requirements. Space is limited and reservations are being accepted on a first come first served basis. A second payment of \$1,000 will be due May 8, 2013. Final payment will be due July 8, 2013. Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express cards are accepted. Reservations can be made online at [www.gtd.org](http://www.gtd.org) G#13091 or by mail to Group Travel Directors, 2000 West 98th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55431.

Please notice the four-page color brochure enclosed with this issue of *The Augustana Heritage Newsletter*, with further details regarding the Swedish Heritage Tour in September 2013.

## Web site of the Augustana Heritage Association

The AHA sponsors a web site—though many members are not aware of this source of information. Presentations from the 2012 Gathering at Gustavus Adolphus College are now posted on this site: sermons, plenary sessions, and many (though not all) of the special interest groups. Presentations from previous Gatherings are also posted on this site.

To access these texts, go to [augustanaheritage.org](http://augustanaheritage.org), and click on Publications, Essays. Much other AHA-related information is also available on this site, including past issues of *The Augustana Heritage Newsletter*.

# Augustana: A Theological Tradition

One of the plenary sessions of the June AHA Gathering bore the above title. The session was chaired by Arland Hultgren, and included three presenters: Theodore N. Swanson, Harold C. Skillrud, and Dale R. Skogman. Their presentations, presented here, are also posted on the AHA web site.

## Augustana's biblical heritage by Theodore N. Swanson

The question of how Scripture is to be interpreted lies at the heart of many of the skirmishes of the cultural and political wars being waged today: creationism vs. evolution; gay marriage; life and death issues such as abortion and the death penalty; public policy on issues as diverse as immigration and the budget.

Do we, as children of Augustana, have a heritage that we can draw upon as we seek to study and use Scripture as “the revealed Word of God and the only infallible rule and standard of faith and practice,” as the Augustana statement of faith declared?

First of all, consider the Bible we knew and used. It wasn't the whole book. While I don't know which biblical books were read and studied in the sod hut on the Nebraska prairie where my maternal grandmother was born, I do know what Bible was heard in church. It was the lectionary of the Swedish Psalm Book of 1819.

To be sure, the Service usually began on an Old Testament note, with the cry of the seraphim in the temple in Isaiah's vision: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory,” and ended on an Old Testament note, with the Aaronic benediction from Numbers 6.

But in between, the New Testament was read and preached. In the three series of Epistles and Gospels in the Psalm Book and their English counterpart in the first English hymnal from the turn of the century, only five Old Testament lessons appear as the Epistle for the day: four from Isaiah: for Christmas Day, Epiphany, Annunciation, and the day of John the Baptist; and one from Malachi for Candlemas, all regarded as prophecies of the New Testament event observed on the day.

That changed with *The Hymnal* of 1925. Now there are forty-one Old Testament lessons as Epistles, mostly from Psalms and Isaiah,<sup>1</sup> not quite ten per cent of all the lessons in the lectionary. In addition, twenty Psalms are printed in a section of Psalms for Responsive Reading. Of the Gospels, Matthew is favored, with 36% of the Gospel readings; Mark trails badly, with only 7% of the total. It was only with the *Service Book and Hymnal* of 1958, Augustana's last hymnal, that the Old Testament finally gained a reading of its own for each Sunday and holy day, together with only the one historic series of Epistles and Gospels.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, we were a people formed by the New Testament, with the help of what were often regarded as prophecies of Christ in Psalms and Isaiah. The only Old Testament law we knew was the Ten Commandments. We focused on the life and work of Jesus and the teachings of Paul. We joined the Pocket Testament League, and carried with us the New Testament,

often with Psalms included. Maybe the book of Isaiah should have been there as well. That was our working canon.

## Scripture as the Word of God

But how did we conceive of Scripture as the revealed Word of God? I suspect that most in the Augustana Synod would have agreed with the view of Scripture put forward in the series of tracts issued between 1909 and 1915 called *The Fundamentals*: that Scripture is infallible, verbally inspired, inerrant in the autographs, and to be interpreted literally. Higher criticism, that movement of the Enlightenment asking the questions of the Bible that would be asked of any other book concerning date, authorship, historical setting, and the intention of the author, and which began by questioning the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, was thought to be destructive of divine truth. The theory of evolution, which contradicted the creation stories in the first chapters of Genesis, was—and still is—anathema to many Christians. Geology, which posited a great age for the earth, far beyond Archbishop Ussher's calculation of creation in 4004 B.C., was suspect. In a 1922 article in *The Augustana Quarterly*, Augustana Seminary New Testament Professor Sven Youngert spoke of the “destructive criticism” of John Hobbes, Baruch Spinoza, and Richard Simon, the men who first questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. In a 1925 article in the *Quarterly*,<sup>4</sup> the editor, J. A. Almer, declared: “The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is settled securely.... The day of experimental biblical criticism is drawing to a close.” It was a premature obituary.

Verbal inspiration was taught by Conrad Emil Lindberg, Professor of Dogmatics at the Seminary from 1890 until his death in 1930. In his *Christian Dogmatics* of 1923, he did reject mechanical verbal inspiration, in which the Holy Spirit dictated every word, in favor of dynamic verbal inspiration, in which “the Holy Spirit did not impart any new linguistic knowledge nor did he alter the literary ability of the writers, but cooperated with them....”<sup>5</sup> That was the teaching at Augustana Seminary.

## Geology and the colleges of Augustana

In the Augustana colleges, however, geologists were allowed to have their say. Joshua Lindahl taught geology at Augustana College from 1880 to 1888, leaving to become state geologist of Illinois. He was succeeded by J. A. Udden, an 1881 graduate of Augustana College, who taught at Bethany before coming to Augustana. Joshua Edquist taught geology at Gustavus Adolphus from 1887 to 1926. When Udden resigned at Augustana in 1911 to teach at the University of Iowa, his place was taken by his son, Anton Udden, and eventually, in 1924, by Fritiof Fryxell, a 1922

graduate of Augustana. In 1929, under Fryxell, a department of geology offering a major in geology was established at Augustana, the first department of geology in any Lutheran college in the United States. Indeed, other Lutheran colleges said of the Augustana colleges, “you teach the age of rocks; we teach the Rock of Ages.”<sup>6</sup>

Fryxell and my dad were classmates at Augustana College and good friends. In early 1929, Dad wrote to Fryxell in the wake of publicity surrounding the discovery of the skeleton of a mammoth on one of Fryxell’s field trips. He asked what stand Fryxell took in teaching geology at Augustana. Fryxell wrote a seven page reply,<sup>7</sup> in which he said among other things:

I have come around to about this point of view. My God-given reason tells me that the fundamental principles upon which Science rests *must* be so; else it would be fine irony for the Creator to have given me a reasoning apparatus. Thus, since my earliest college days, I have been convinced of the futility of trying to deny evolution, the great age of the earth, the remoteness of the stars, and such fundamental concepts upon which Science stands agreed.... But I am equally convinced of the truth of religion, as attested by my Christian experience. And so I valiantly seek to serve the truth in these two fields, convinced that there can be no conflict between truth and truth.

Fryxell goes on to quote what my dad had said in his letter: “This beast you have discovered in Prophetstown is supposed to be 20,000 years old. According to what we have been taught the world isn’t that old. This is what I would like to get at.” Fryxell referred Dad to some books on geology to learn how to date the ice retreat of the last glacial epoch, but he also wrote of talks he had had with newer seminary faculty members who taught that the world was much older than 20,000 years. He admitted that Blomgren, my dad’s Old Testament Professor who had retired in 1926, had had “peculiar ideas,” and that Lindberg was “naïve about such matters.”

## Changes in Augustana

With regard to historical criticism, at the Seminary the situation changed with the massive shift in faculty that occurred at the beginning of the 1930s, with the coming of Conrad Bergendoff as Dean and Professor of Dogmatics, A.D. Mattson to teach Ethics and Sociology, Carl Anderson to teach Hebrew and Old Testament, and Eric Wahlstrom to teach Greek and New Testament.

Under Anderson and Wahlstrom, “historical criticism” was no longer a pejorative phrase at Augustana Seminary. We called Anderson *Hoshek*, Hebrew for “darkness,” but felt the light of faith that shone through his classroom prayers and the passion that characterized his teaching. And as my intern supervisor Lloyd Burke once remarked, the notes from Wahlstrom’s classes were the ones you threw away last. But well worth keeping and reading today are Wahlstrom’s books, *The New Life in Christ*, his study on Paul, published in 1950, and *God Who Redeems:*

*Perspectives in Biblical Theology*, published in 1962. Nor was teaching the Bible left to Anderson and Wahlstrom alone. Other members of the faculty were asked to teach a course or more in English Bible. A.D. Mattson taught Minor Prophets and Daniel. Hjalmar Johnson came in 1944 in order to teach Philosophy of Religion and English Bible; he taught Job, Psalms, Galatians, Pastoral Epistles, Catholic Epistles. Other faculty members taught other books, all employing historical-critical methods. As a result, Augustana Seminary was twenty years ahead of many other Lutheran seminaries in embracing historical critical methods of studying the Bible.

During this thirty-year period from 1930 to 1960, the year of Wahlstrom’s retirement and Anderson’s death, the teaching of Lutheran theology at the Seminary moved from 17th century Lutheran orthodoxy to Luther himself. These were the years of the rediscovery of Luther. In biblical studies this meant rediscovering the insight of Luther that Jesus Christ is the center of Scripture, that that which is truly important in Scripture is, in Luther’s phrase, *was Christum treibet*, “what preaches, or, what drives, pounds home Christ.” If the Bible is the Word of God, it is because through the Bible Christ, the living Word, the Word made Flesh, comes striding into our lives. That’s why Luther could grade some biblical books as more important than others: Romans, Galatians, 1 Peter and the gospel of John in the New Testament; Psalms, Isaiah and Genesis in the Old. That’s why he gave others, such as James and Esther, a failing mark. We don’t have to agree with Luther on his evaluations—I think he erred on James; faith without works is dead—but we can agree in principle that the primary Word of God is the Living Word, Jesus Christ. As Luther once observed, the Bible is the manger in which Christ is laid. And there may be a lot of straw in the manger.

It is perhaps significant that in 1960, the Centennial Lecture at the Seminary was given by Professor Ragnar Bring of Lund University, Sweden, on “Luther’s View of the Bible.”<sup>8</sup> He pointed out that just as Christ’s real presence is given us in, through and under the elements of bread and wine, so the Bible gives us Christ’s presence in, through, and under the words of the Bible. God’s revelation requires earthly means, which can and should be studied historically and philologically. He points out that Luther’s understanding of the Old Testament as a message of God’s action with his chosen people and others enabled Luther to understand the New Testament in a new way. And, in learning to read the New Testament properly, “he could understand the Old, not as a book of moral rules, but as the history of salvation as preparation for Christ.”<sup>9</sup>

I prefer the Augustana statement of faith that the Bible is “the revealed Word of God” to the wording of the ELCA statement, which speaks of “the inspired Word of God.” It emphasizes that through Scripture, Christ, the Word of God, is revealed, shown, exhibited to us. Indeed, we should view the phrase “the Word of God” as an objective genitive: the Word, both as Scripture and as Christ, is the word of what God is doing on our behalf. Ultimately, the Bible is

not a book of rules, and should not be taken as such. It is a message: the good news that reveals to us that God is alive and active, and that God has acted for us in Jesus Christ. It is a message that we need to hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest in our own day. I hope that is our Augustana biblical heritage.

*Theodore N. Swanson graduated from Augustana College and Augustana Theological Seminary. Dr. Swanson was a parish pastor for many years in Boston and Chicago. He later completed a Ph.D. at Vanderbilt and became an Old Testament professor teaching at seminaries in the United States and overseas, including teaching many years in Jamaica and India.*

## How Augustana Seminary shaped LSTC by Harold C. Skillrud

Without question, the most cherished institution in the Augustana Lutheran Church was Augustana Theological Seminary. A favorite mantra was, “As goes the seminary so goes the Church.”

Throughout its 102 year history the seminary played a major role in the life of the Augustana Church. Witness the fact that every time the Augustana Synod met for its annual Convention, seated at the very front of the assembly were all members of the theological faculty. These were the “theological experts,” a sort of Lutheran magisterium, who were called upon if there were ever a need to interpret a matter or give an opinion. Those of us who entered the seminary during that era will well remember the fact that every one of those seminary professors was present for our Matriculation Exercises. Again, at the end of our four years of seminary, when the time came for our day-long series of examinations, which included academic, spiritual, and practical, every single member of the faculty was present for that review, the examination, and the eventual placement for our first Call. And finally, when we were ordained as a class, as was the practice in Augustana, and in our case that was in the Greek Amphitheatre in Griffith Park in Los Angeles, California, those same faculty members were present. They were all stationed around that extensive altar rail, because there were 80 of us ordained that year. They had a major role in the “laying on of hands.” I shall never forget that it was the hand of Dr. Paul Lindberg, along with my pastor father-in-law, that was placed on my head.

That was Augustana Theological Seminary. It had a very special place in the life of the church. As a separate institution its last school year was 1961-62.

### The move to Chicago

Its successor, the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, officially came into being on September 4, 1962, when the Articles of Consolidation were signed by Charles F. Carpentier, Secretary of State of Illinois. Initially, there were four seminaries in the consolidation, including Augustana, that formed the new school. For five years following 1962, three of these merging seminaries continued to meet on the

## Endnotes

1. Ten in Series 1, twenty in Series 2, eleven in Series 3. Of the forty-one, eighteen are from Psalms, eleven from Isaiah, three from Genesis, the remaining nine scattered among seven books.
2. No Psalms are included in the Old Testament readings, but Isaiah comes in first in the number of readings with twenty-eight of the total of 102.
3. *The Augustana Quarterly*, 1:1922, pp. 217-18.
4. *Ibid.*, 4:1925, pp. 372-73.
5. Conrad Emil Lindberg, *Christian Dogmatics and Notes on the History of Dogma* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1923), p. 397.
6. I am indebted for this insight to Thomas Tredway, *Coming of Age: A History of Augustana College, 1935-1975* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana College, 2010), p. 46.
7. Letter to C. Bertram Swanson, March 25, 1929 (in the writer's possession).
8. Ragnar Bring, “The Centennial Lecture—Luther's View of the Bible,” *Augustana Seminary Review*, 12:1960, no. 2 & 4, pp. 3-14.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Maywood campus, while the former Augustana Seminary continued to use the Rock Island campus. Then in 1967, when the new buildings had been completed at 1100 East 55th Street, in the heart of the University of Chicago campus, the first classes entered.

Yesterday noon I had the privilege of sitting at the noon meal with a retired pastor who had been a member of that senior class. I said to him, “How in the world did that transition go for you? You spent two years on the campus in Rock Island, one year on your internship, and then in that critical last year, you moved to Chicago to a new location, merging with students from other seminaries, and embarking upon your senior year.” His response was very positive. “It was the most exciting, thrilling, meaningful year of my life.” Now that's exactly what we had hoped would happen when the Lutheran School of Theology came into being. Many of you, I am sure, have visited that campus. If you have already celebrated the 50th anniversary of your ordination, you received a warm welcome from LSTC, as the seminary hosted you for your 50th anniversary celebration. Some of you spent additional years of study at that place. It's a wonderful story, to see how LSTC has developed and continues to this time.

### How the change came about

There's a lot of history that preceded that date in 1962 when LSTC was formed. Essential to its formation was the merger that formed the Lutheran Church in America that occurred that same year. You may remember that it was back in 1955 that the United Lutheran Church in America made a bold move. They invited every Lutheran body in the United States to come together to form one Lutheran church. Actually there were only three bodies that responded. Augustana was one of those, and that was just three months after the invitation was extended. Likewise, the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, (the Happy Danes) and the Suomi Synod, (the Finnish Lutherans) signed on. These four church bodies formed what was called the JCLU, the Joint Commission on Lutheran Unity. That commission created the recommendations that led to the eventual for-



mation of the Lutheran Church in America.

A major task for that commission was the consideration of the appropriate number and location of theological seminaries. Many throughout the church felt there were too many seminaries for this church to support. However, loyalties everywhere were deep and profound, and very few constituencies were willing to consider any changes in their particular seminary. The decision that came forth from JCLU in 1957 was a major one. It recommended that theological seminaries be primarily supported by regional synods. This was to be a radical shift for members of the Augustana tradition, which was accustomed to national support. Regional support of colleges and other institutions was seen as acceptable, but among Augustana constituents was a fear that seminaries would suffer by this decision.

Dr. Karl E. Mattson, then President of Augustana Seminary, with real insight and prophetic vision, saw what a problem regional support by synods was going to be for a seminary in Rock Island. He predicted that many students would no longer apply there when many other opportunities for theological study would be available in other parts of the country. He wisely acknowledged that enrollment would likely decline. How accurate he was! During the ten years that preceded 1962, the average size of the incoming class in Rock Island was 52. But, in the five years that followed the formation of the Lutheran Church in America, there was a drop of 44%. An average of only 25 students entered the seminary in Rock Island each year during that five-year period. The handwriting was on the wall. It became very clear to Dr. Mattson and to others early on, that Rock Island was not going to be the place to which every potential student in the LCA with an Augustana background was going to come. Consequently, a major decision had to be made.

Fortunately the leadership in the Maywood seminary came to the same conclusion. It was perfectly clear that two strong Lutheran seminaries in the state of Illinois, supported by four Midwestern synods, would be extremely competitive, and would probably jeopardize the entire enterprise. To the credit of Dr. Armin Weng, Maywood's President, he sent a letter in 1958 to Dr. Mattson which essentially read, "Why don't we get together, and talk?" A positive response from Augustana came just one week later. Obviously there was an urgency that everybody recognized. So the two seminaries, together with the AELC and Suomi Synod seminaries that had already relocated to the Maywood campus, formed an inter-seminary committee, and began conversations.

### **The university-setting option**

Early on the conclusion was reached that the new seminary should not be located on either campus of Rock Island or Maywood. This provided the opportunity for a major impulse to arise out of Augustana. It was an educational ideal that early Swedish pioneers had brought to America. It must be acknowledged that Dr. G. Everett Arden, Augustana's Professor of Church History, had kept this legacy alive before the Church. This educational ideal was that theological education take place on a university campus where theological students could be exposed to all

areas of learning and thus be better prepared to minister in the name of Christ to all persons and all aspects of life. In Dr. Arden's book *The School of the Prophets* he pointed out that the founders of Augustana Seminary came from a land and a church that had provided theological education in a university context, thus training a ministry that would be relevant to the needs of the age as well as the needs of the church. The early Swedish pioneer pastors in America were university graduates as illustrated by the fact that the first five ordained pastors who came from Sweden in the 19th Century to serve in the American church were university trained people. Dr. Arden pointed out further:

A statute adopted by the Swedish Parliament in 1831 had provided that every theological student, prior to presenting himself for ministerial examination before the diocese in which he will serve, must furnish to that diocese an affidavit certifying that he has been matriculated in the university by the theological faculty and has been examined in all the required courses and has been approved as possessing such competence in dogmatics, moral theology, introduction, symbolics, exegesis, church history and pastoral theology, that he can be admitted to candidacy for the ministerial examinations by the diocese.<sup>2</sup>

Now, in our day and age we may not think it so strange that rigorous academic training is required, but when one goes back to the 19th Century, especially during the frontier era here in America, there were many clergy functioning with very little formal education. Among many Protestant denominations there was such an eagerness to establish congregations that many ministers were permitted to function with more zeal than knowledge. Not so in the Augustana Lutheran Church. Our forebears, having been university trained in Sweden, insisted that a similar academic practice be continued in America. Admittedly, in the light of necessity, there were some lay people who had limited training and were still set apart for ministry, but they were the exception rather than the rule. This exceptional practice was phased out as soon as possible.

In the light of this emphasis on the educational idea it was not strange that the Augustana representatives joined with others in pressing for a decision to locate the new seminary on the campus of a recognized university.

Parallel to what the inter-seminary committee was proposing, Dr. Conrad Bergendoff, the newly appointed theological education director for the LCA, made a thorough survey and study of the place of the seminaries in the Church. As the former President of Augustana College, which had attempted to inculcate this educational ideal on a smaller scale through the existence of Augustana College and Theological Seminary prior to the 1948 separation, he included this educational ideal in his initial report and recommendations to the first convention of the LCA when it met in Pittsburgh in 1963. He recommended that every theological seminary in the Lutheran Church in America should relocate to a university campus. The understanding was that students, set in the heart of an academic environment where they would be exposed not only to theologi-

cal training but to all other academic disciplines and areas of life as well, would greatly enhance their preparation for ministry and help them become well-rounded, trained pastors. Delegates to that convention, who were former members of the Augustana Lutheran Church, welcomed his recommendations. Others were not so sure.

### The ideal in practice

Therefore, it was out of the heart of Augustana's educational ideal that the LSTC proposal was made. I do not mean to imply that others did not also support it, but the dynamic incentive that fostered it came out of Augustana. Leading the charge in this decision making process was President Karl E. Mattson who observed:

As the Lutheran Church more and more enters into the maelstrom of modern life, it will need pastors who can face modern America with power. America must be addressed in the name of Jesus Christ if we are to keep and to adapt our Christian heritage. Where can a young man [*this precedes the ordination of women*] be trained so that he becomes such a man? The answer came easily. The best place for such training is a university environment since it is here that the various movements and tendencies which shape the future meet and engage in such dialogue if he is to speak forcefully to modern America. Insights such as these elicited the decision to locate in a university setting.<sup>2</sup>

This educational ideal, fostered by Augustana's founders, and so clearly enunciated by Drs. Mattson, Bergendoff and Arden, informed the decision by LSTC founders to locate the new seminary on a university campus. The University of Chicago was chosen as the logical place. As it developed, Chicago was the only location where that ideal was implemented in the LCA. Indeed, it is true that the Philadelphia Seminary gave some thought to this possibility, and even launched a fund appeal to support it, but it all eventually came to naught, and the money was spent on the original campus.

There were several efforts to include more seminaries in these plans. Dr. Robert Marshall, highly respected President of the LCA, called together a committee to study theological education in the Northeast, with the hope that some sort of cooperation between Philadelphia and Gettysburg could be created. I served on that committee and was saddened by the lack of willingness to achieve some common ministry

similar to the creation of LSTC. Nor was there much enthusiasm here in the Midwest for a further inclusive expression involving Northwestern Seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota, or Hamma Divinity School in Springfield, Ohio, despite LSTC's efforts to involve them. To their credit, both of these seminaries did ultimately merge to form Lutheran-Northwestern in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Trinity Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. A fifth LCA seminary did join LSTC, by action of the Lutheran Church in America Convention's vote on June 27, 1966, when Central Seminary of Fremont, Nebraska, merged with LSTC, just in time to have its faculty and students participate in the first school year in Chicago.

When you broach the question, "How did Augustana shape LSTC?" there are many answers to that question. My good colleague, Dr. Theodore Swanson, stated in his lecture the quality of theological scholarship that certainly was a strong factor. But, primarily, I would submit, was the educational ideal which burned brightly over the 102 year history that was Augustana. We can thank our early founders who brought this accent from their native Sweden and transmitted it onto the new soil of America. We can thank Augustana's leaders throughout the decades that clung to this ideal. We can thank the committees that formulated the merger plans and pushed for their implementation. Above all, we can thank God for blessing this school and the ministry its graduates have contributed throughout the world. We now look to Dr. Nieman and his colleagues as we entrust to them the mission of the future in seeking to serve Jesus Christ and the world through this very special seminary, the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

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### Endnotes

1. *LSTC: Decade of Decision*, Harold C. Skillrud, 1969, p. 10.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 73

## Pastoral ministry: an Augustana perspective by Dale R. Skogman

Arland Hultgren and I graduated from Augustana Seminary in 1965. Augustana Seminary had merged into the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago and would operate on two campuses until it consolidated in Hyde Park in 1967.

If I were to describe my state of mind as I graduated from seminary, one phrase echoes and re-echoes through my consciousness: "BURN, BABY, BURN!" President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated while we were on internship. Racial strife was rampant in cities across America. Classmates and parish pastors were marching on behalf of justice. Martin Luther King, Jr., was seeking to build bridges

of reconciliation in a nation full of rage. Augustana Church in Omaha, Nebraska, gained national recognition with the documentary "A Time for Burning."

As I graduated from seminary it was very clear to me that my primary focus was not to be on pension plans, days off, sabbaticals, and personal comforts. The church was not there to serve me and my classmates, but we were to serve the church whatever the cost in terms of personal sacrifice, expenditure of energy and faithfulness to the Gospel.

The nation was soon enmeshed in the quagmire known as "the Vietnam Conflict," and I was called to serve congre-

gations whose pews were filled by members of “The Greatest Generation” who had served valiantly during World War II. There was little tolerance for a flag-burning generation who sought my counsel as conscientious objectors and/or threatened flight to Canada to avoid the draft. On more than one occasion I presided over the funeral of young men, boys really, who were casualties of the Vietnam conflict.

In this context I thanked God again and again for the grounding, the training, the conviction that had been instilled in me during my years at Augustana Seminary. The seminary grounded pastors in well-rounded theological and biblical training which enabled many of my colleagues like Ted and Arland on this platform to go on to become seminary professors. Yet I always perceived that the primary emphasis of the seminary was *to train pastors for parish ministry and to train them well*.

As a point of reference it might be interesting to know who some of the seminary administration and faculty were during my seminary years. Karl Mattson was the seminary president and Theodore Conrad was the dean. Serving on the faculty were Arthur Arnold, Hjalmer Johnson, G. Everett Arden, Arnold Carlson, Theodore Swanson, A.D. Mattson, Paul Swanson, Arne Bentz, Leroy Norquist, and Bob Tobias.

### Pastoral ministry basics

What then are some of my observations of Pastoral Ministry from an Augustana perspective? Arland and I posed this question last fall to a number of our seminary classmates gathered in reunion and there was remarkable unanimity in our recollections about our training at Augustana:

- Pastors were not trained to be lone rangers serving in isolation from one another. We were part of a ministerium and the support, fellowship and cooperation with colleagues in ministry was assumed. Strong bonds were formed between ministerial colleagues and their families that were invaluable in facing the joys and challenges of parish ministry.
- Within Augustana, pastors were not afraid to express strong convictions on scriptural, theological, and social issues. “Knock down, drag out” conflicts arose concerning such issues as retention of divorced pastors on the church roster, smoking and consumption of alcohol, dancing at our church colleges, labor unions, just wars and, in later years, the ordination of women. These issues were dealt with in heated debate permeated with a spirit of Christian charity.
- When the church in assembly spoke, pastors and parishioners upheld and supported the democratic process of decision making. When a decision was made by the church body pastors abided by the decision and didn’t encourage their congregations and parishioners to leave the church body.
- Among Augustana pastors there was a vision of the church beyond the local congregation. World Mission, ecumenism, and wider participation within the whole body of Christ in the world was encouraged and pursued. World missionaries were frequent guests within the parsonages and congregations of Augustana giving a personal dimension to global outreach. Among my seminary classmates it was as though we were all personal friends of

missionary Minnie Tack as we would have saved our pennies, nickels, and dimes during our Sunday School years to advance the cause of world mission in Augustana.

- There was a respect for leadership. The synod and conference presidents held positions of honor and were welcome visitors within congregations.
- Pastors were encouraged to be “theologians in residence” within the local congregation and community. As better educated members of the communities in which we served, we were admonished to bring an educated biblical and theological perspective to bear on the issues of the day.
- Good order was emphasized in worship with common liturgy and hymnody shared throughout the synod.
- A strong social consciousness was ingrained in our pastors. Parish pastors were called to minister not only to the spiritual needs of their flock and community but to a vast variety of social ministries as well.
- Biblical literalism was not taught in the seminary. Pastors were provided with the skills to analyze, probe, and dissect scriptural texts to determine their context, intent, and meanings.
- Preaching within Augustana was to be rooted in the scriptures, discerning the original meaning of the text and applying it to contemporary society with conviction including words of challenge and comfort. Introduction, three points, summary, and conclusion was the standard format embraced by many Augustana pastors in their preaching.

In conclusion it is my personal assessment that Augustana Seminary saw as its primary mission the training of pastors to serve the whole church locally, synodically, nationally, and worldwide. In addition to strong theological and biblical grounding, pastors were given a deep rooting in the practical issues of ministry. Augustana was a forerunner in initiating an internship program where pastors received “hands on” experience for parish ministry under the mentoring of a supervisor. This model, having proved its merit, was embraced by many other church bodies.

In a nutshell, Augustana pastors were equipped and sent forth to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ effectively with conviction and fervor and to save the souls of those whom they encountered in all times and places. These pastors went forth in times of peace and war, prosperity and depression, among congregations experiencing boom and bust, but the message of God’s enduring love remained the same through the years. Forty-seven years after leaving seminary the mandate laid upon me and my classmates is still clear: “burn, baby, burn,” or in the words of St. Paul: “Whatever gain I had I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.”

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# The Augustana Synod in Light of American Immigration History

by James D. Bratt



Gustavus Adolphus College

*The following presentation was given at Plenary Session IV of the AHA Gathering at Gustavus Adolphus College on June 23, 2012.*

*Dr. Bratt is Professor of History at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. He received his B.A. from Calvin College and a Ph.D. from Yale University, where he studied under Sydney E. Ahlstrom, the leading historian of American religion in his generation. Professor Bratt has an interest in religion and ethnicity. He taught for nine years at the University*

*of Pittsburgh before returning to his alma mater, where he has just completed his 25th year of service.*

I was honored to be asked to speak to the Augustana Heritage Association's Gathering VIII despite my outsider status and despite my modest knowledge of the in's and out's of Lutheran and Swedish-American history. From the history of my own tribe—namely, Dutch Americans—where I can claim some expertise, I know how important a command of the inside lore, of the flavors and food ways and passwords and seamlessly acquired little rituals, can be to a real comprehension of any particular group. On that score, it is bad news that, after several tries, appreciating lutfisk as a delicacy seems destined to remain a perpetual mystery to me; while, from my side, I lack sufficient space here to unfold for the children of Lars and the stepchildren of Ole the mystical significance for old Dutch Calvinists of the ham-bun wedding reception in the church basement.

Yet I am not without hope, for to listen to Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion* in West Michigan is to hear someone talking about your own neighborhood. You can substitute Dutch Reformed for any species of Lutheran referred to on that show and still find the stories to be true. Our Catholics are much like his too, all wrestling with Our Lady of Perpetual Responsibility. As for Keillor's tag-line, it's true that Dutch Calvinists well know that the good looks of the men-folk can simply mask a fickle, wandering heart, and that, given the doctrine of total depravity, all our children are well *below* average. But our women are strong and do tend to carry the day. So it would seem that our two groups have enough in common to make effective communication possible.

That was an assurance driven home to me at the very start of my career as a professional historian by an illustrious graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College and a proud son of the Augustana Synod, Sydney Ahlstrom. One of the most distinguished historians of American religion in his

generation, Professor Ahlstrom was, to my everlasting good fortune and gratitude, also my *doktorvater*—a twinkly-eyed genius who belonged to four different departments of the Yale faculty, yet turned out to be the product of small-town (Cokato) Minnesota who could therefore take in hand a most anxious Midwestern boy from a church-related liberal arts college and instill in him (me) the confidence that I really could make it at a big-shot Ivy League university. He did that in part by insisting that I, and each of the others gathered around his seminar room, came from an interesting community with a story worth telling. And tell them many of us did. Definitive works on different varieties of Jewish, Roman Catholic, and African-American religious experience came out of that seminar—and on different Protestant immigrant traditions too.<sup>1</sup>

More than that, Professor Ahlstrom taught us that *all* Americans were immigrants, and that all American history was therefore ethnic history in a way—also the histories of those long-established east-coast types who often assumed ownership of the whole country and whose forebears the history books back then talked about as “settlers” or “founders.” They were immigrants too, Professor Ahlstrom explained, drawn by the same aspirations, subject to similar vicissitudes, as those who came later. This truth amply justifies the theme of this conference and its predecessors, for in looking into the heritage of the Augustana Synod, we are looking into the central dynamics of American history. Now if American history equals ethnic history, then my assignment of considering Augustana in the context of immigration history becomes very wide indeed. For most of my piece, therefore, I will confine myself to the more traditional view of immigration history, taking up the broader scope toward the conclusion of my remarks.

Augustana was first of all an immigrant church, and the prevailing theme about immigration history encountered by those of us who started graduate school in the 1970s was *Americanization*. This theory assumed that the United States was characterized by a uniform and distinctive character, culture, or way of life; that new arrivals sooner or later came into conformity with this pattern; and that this was a very good thing. America was a “new world” with new opportunities that Europeans were desperate to share, and the members of any new group who championed assimilation were therefore celebrated as “progressives,” the heroes of the story. But in the 1970s—in the shadows of Vietnam and Watergate and disco culture—it was not so clear to us budding historians that the United States was an entirely wonderful place. We looked instead for how “old world” modes and values persisted in the new, and concluded that resistance to American conformities could make good sense. This historiographical inclination has helped gener-

ate the elevation of *diversity* to its present ruling status in so many sectors of American society.<sup>2</sup> Yet, our very insistence on diversity might be in part a nervous recognition of how powerful the forces of conformity and rootlessness are in American life. A fair appraisal of the whole process and legacy of immigration might therefore be to balance—better, to see as intertwined—these two countervailing forces: the continuing power of inherited traditions rooted abroad and the unexpected turns these traditions can take, the interesting consequences that ensue, when inheritance enters a new environment.<sup>3</sup>

To set the story up that way is still too general, however. “Europe” (or today, “Latin America” or “East Asia”) is far too broad a category of origin; even reference to a single nation of origin—Sweden, in Augustana’s case—can be too generalized. *Which* Sweden—which parts of Sweden or which impulses in Swedish life, particularly religious life—constituted the cultural DNA of those who established and joined the Augustana Synod in America? Likewise, which “America”? Midwestern, not Southern: that entails a lot. A Midwestern core with coastal, and Texan, peripheries: that nuances the picture. “Which” also connects to “when,” for the United States changes dramatically over time, not least in response to all the new people arriving here.

The bottom line of this theoretical tour was expressed well 120 years ago by one of my own Dutch immigrant subjects: “We are not and will not be a pretty little piece of paper upon which America can write whatever it pleases.”<sup>4</sup> Acculturation is a two-way, not a one-way, street. We read the same lesson in the annals of Norwegian and German immigration, among Jews and Catholics of various national origins, and also in Maria Erling and Mark Granquist’s history of Augustana. A good many people in all these groups came to the United States looking not so much to find a new way of life as to preserve an old one.<sup>5</sup>

### The north-European revival and its legacies

When we look into the Swedish circumstances of origin of the Augustana Synod, we come across a phenomenon that gives this group much in common with other northern-European immigrants who would cross the ocean in the same waves. (To recapitulate the time-line briefly: the pioneers of all these groups arrived in the years just before the Civil War; a larger tide followed immediately after; the largest wave of all landed between the depressions of the mid-1870s and mid-1890s; and still sizeable but smaller numbers came between 1900 and World War I.) Similar socio-economic forces drove all these migrations: rising population pressure, increasing commercialization and industrialization, etc. But especially in the early phases, emigration from these countries was also religiously selective, or at least religiously charged, and the religion in question was the movement of evangelical-Protestant renewal that had built across northern Europe in the wake of Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo in 1815. That event had spelled, for many, the final eclipse of the promise of the French Revolution; young people instead often turned to the prospects of “heart religion”—conservative in theology but dynamic in means and

innovative in its social implications.<sup>6</sup>

Like all versions of evangelicalism, this one offered yearning and psychologically displaced people a combination of personal meaning and intense small-group bonding along with a new ethic of earnestness that promised to work as a leaven for the renewal of public life. Sooner or later, however, the movement had to settle in for the long run and so faced some tough decisions. Would intense experience continue to define the membership, or was firm doctrinal ballast—and therefore stricter theological definition—needed as well? Organizationally, would informal networks controlled by charismatic leaders continue to satisfy; or would strict standards of a pure church be needed to winnow out the mass; or (a third option) would more traditional church ways be restored along formal lines of mutual responsibility supervised by an educated clergy? One’s answer to the theological question did not necessarily predict one’s answer to the ecclesiological issue. Rather, a complex menu of combinations emerged, and in that matrix (cross-hatched, of course, by ethnicity) can be placed the full variety of denominations and affiliations that populated the German, Dutch, and Scandinavian church scene in the United States from the 1860s to the 1960s. The forge of this pattern, let us remember, was as much European as American.

In this context the road to fastest assimilation was the free-church model of the Baptist or Methodist sort. This populist-oriented, minimally creedal, highly mobile, and liturgically free type of Protestantism had arisen from very modest pre-revolutionary origins to dominate the American religious scene by the 1820s.<sup>7</sup> The historian can get some idea of how ubiquitous the free-church zealots were by the regularity with which pastors in all these new immigrant groups—Dutch Reformed, Missouri-Synod Lutheran, and yes, also the gentler folk of Augustana—denounced the proselytizing efforts of Methodist “wolves.”<sup>8</sup> Indeed, a fair number of Swedish souls were seized (or saved) by these revivalists. Thus, the most important development in Augustana history arguably came in the religious response of its founder Lars Paul Esbjörn to immigration itself: “Esbjörn became more Lutheran from the first day he arrived in the [United States].”<sup>9</sup> That is, this veteran of the awakening back in Sweden pushed back some against the pervasively evangelical atmosphere of antebellum America. He discovered himself to be more Lutheran in the new world than had been apparent in the old. So did pioneering pastor Erland Carlsson. The next step was for these pioneers to discover themselves to be more adamantly Lutheran than were their collaborators in the Synod of Northern Illinois. They withdrew from that affiliation in insisting that the Augsburg standards were not just “mainly” but fully in conformity to the word of God.<sup>10</sup>

This squabbling and separation may be mourned in one light, but in a larger view, this series of decisions set the groundwork for Augustana’s real contribution to American life in general and Lutheranism in particular. Augustana would retain a rich and complex body of confessional heritage amid evangelical reductions of the same. It would

maintain earnest and living piety without imposing experiential tests of true conversion as dictated by the logic of revivalism—and as embodied in the Mission Friends' secession of the 1880s. It would establish clerical authority without submitting to the charismatic cult of leadership that typified Erik Jansson at Bishop Hill or Martin Stephan in Missouri. It would intensely nurture its youth without aiming, as those prophets promised, at creating perfectionistic communes. It would insist on an educated ministry, over against all those Baptist and Methodist "wolves." It would honor and teach the Lutheran confessions without elevating them to the propositional dogma that C. F. W. Walther did in response to "Bishop" Stephan's fall into disgrace.<sup>11</sup>

The leavening strategy that the northern-European evangelical awakening had promised thus found one avenue of fulfillment within the traditional forms of theology and ecclesiology of the Augustana Synod. In terms of comparative immigration history, over against their Dutch Reformed counterparts, Augustana's pattern resembles that of the Midwestern section of the Reformed Church in America, just as the east-coast RCA resembled General Synod Lutheranism and the Christian Reformed Church did

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the Missouri Synod. Parallel to the peace-church spectrum, Augustana fits in the middle like the General Conference Mennonites as opposed to old-order Amish on the right and Quakers on the left. Likewise, vis-à-vis American Judaism, to the Conservatives that forged a moderate position between Orthodoxy and Reform.<sup>12</sup>

### Religion and ethnicity

Granted this placement, what role did Swedish ethnicity play within Augustana's Lutheran religion? This question is important to ask and quite difficult to answer. We can start by identifying clear outcomes at either end of the spectrum. On the one hand, several historians and theologians have pointed to Augustana's tradition of hymnody and liturgy as powerful carriers of a distinctive Swedish heritage.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, attempts at Augustana-affiliated colleges around the turn of the last century to create a Swedish-studies curriculum that would cement their students' identity as an ethnically-defined bloc in American society failed. Indeed, those very colleges at that very time saw the students cultivating American markers—such as athletics and Greek-like fraternal associations—in defiance of administrators'

power.<sup>14</sup> Colleges were incubators of "American" initiatives, not Swedish identity.

But that answer does not capture the full and ironic complexity of the record. First of all, as happened with immigrants from the Italian peninsula, from the various German territories, from regions of Poland and the Ukraine, etc., so also with Swedish immigrants, the rank and file of an immigrant group might only discover their ethnic identity upon arrival in America.<sup>15</sup> Back in the "old country," one's label at hand tended to be local or regional. Even among immigrants from so small a country as the Netherlands, for instance, residents of the Dutch Jerusalem of Grand Rapids, Michigan, settled in different neighborhoods according to provincial origins. Yet the real wars in Dutch America turned out to involve religion, not ancestral regions.<sup>16</sup> So also in Swedish America, ideology proved more important than ethnicity: the socialists had little to do with the church people, and the Lutheran church people hammered the tables at each other over how to understand the doctrine of the atonement.<sup>17</sup> Organizations promoting Swedish loyalty per se had occasional moments of glory ("Swedish-American" day at the Chicago World's Fair, for instance) but did not survive the language change in very vital form. While the Augustana Synod may not have ever housed more than twenty percent of all Swedish Americans, it was far and away the largest organization Swedish America ever formed. Thus, if Swedish ethnicity was invented in America, it found its most persistent home in, under, and around a religious commitment. For Swedish America the maxim is true: ethnicity lies at the heart of religion, but religion is the carrier of ethnicity.<sup>18</sup>

Exploring one instance of how that formula worked in practice reveals also how complicated and ironic the process of "Americanization" could be. I'm referring to the pioneering work of Immanuel Church in Chicago in developing within and around the congregation a full slate of organizations calibrated to different age-, gender-, and service-specific interests.<sup>19</sup> This occurred amid the Progressive Era in American history and constituted a fair replica of the so-called "institutional church" that mainline Protestants were building at the same time. Traditionally, historians took this to be a key marker of "Americanization," a clear departure from traditional rural parish life in Europe. But notice how well the change served to quicken and perpetuate young people's affiliation with a Swedish Lutheran church. The new model church made religion more than theological assertions or mere familial inheritance. It gave the newcomers flocking to Chicago—whether from the Midwestern countryside or directly from Sweden—a harbor and a launch-pad. It prompted new ways of thinking in the Synod, becoming an incubator for change and the church's positive interactions with modern life and people of other Christian traditions. The "church" and "American society" did not become exclusive options for the rising generation but formed a creative interface that perpetuated loyalty to, and critique of, both.

To review: a key element of standard Americanization theory with respect to religion is that, upon arrival in

the USA, the newcomers adopt the voluntaristic mode of church organization and activity. The insight gained from diversity theory is that immigration (and from the Immanuel Church example, we can extend that to internal migration from country to city as well) is a “religifying” experience. That is, an immigrant population is likely to become more involved with religious organization in the new world than it had been in the old. The Augustana story proves that both propositions can be true.

### Crisis moments

Religion and ethnicity can thus dwell in a creative tension but can also erupt into pointed conflict. These conflicts have particularly troubled American Catholic history from time to time because of the many ethnic groups that made up that church’s membership and the disproportionate place that Irish-Americans held among its clergy and hierarchy. For instance, critics of German background claimed that many of their compatriots had been lost to the church owing to Irish neglect, while (in subsequent generations) Polish immigrants could be frustrated by German-American bishops who refused to allow them to name a new church after a Polish saint. Rome’s solution was to permit the creation of “ethnic parishes” whereby people of a certain nationality could cross geographical boundaries to worship with members of their own background and language.<sup>20</sup> Augustana and other nineteenth-century American Lutherans avoided this problem by establishing a pattern by which each ethnic group had its own distinct synod. Augustana also avoided most of the wars within these synods over how loose or strict theology should be (à la Iowa vs. Missouri) or over what type of piety was right (à la happy Danes vs. gloomy Danes). Augustana’s historians point with pride to the fact that (absent the Mission Friends) no separate *Lutheran* synod has ever broken off within Swedish America. That does not mean, however, that the dynamics of immigration and ethnicity did not shake Augustana’s foundations from time to time. The early 1930s revolution at the Rock Island seminary can be further illuminated in this light.

The dramatic changing of the guard and the decisive new direction undertaken at Augustana Theological Seminary in 1930-31 must be seen against the turbulence of the American scene in the 1920s, and that turbulence can only be understood against the backdrop of World War I. The war spelled harrowing days on the home front since American sentiment about the conflict had been divided right down to the declaration of war in April 1917.<sup>21</sup> The United States at the time numbered millions of first- and second-generation immigrants, many of them thickly clustered in cities, many of them with their own native-language newspapers, and many of them descendants of nations with which the United States was now at war. German-Americans were particularly suspect, but Irish-Americans too, since they felt little love for Great Britain, the USA’s new best friend. To this situation state and federal governments responded with acts of official repression and propaganda crusades that generated suspicion of all things

“foreign,” including the use of non-English languages in public. The pressure fell not only upon overt “enemies” but also upon neutral nationalities like the Swedes and Dutch. Accordingly, the language change to English went forward rapidly in most Protestant ethnic churches during the 1920s. The erosion of that traditional marker of denominational boundaries was one reason that the ‘20s was so fractious a period in these churches’ histories.<sup>22</sup> Besides that, extreme war-time demands for loyalty and conformity could not be turned off with the flick of a switch, and the closure of much further immigration from abroad, entailed by the mid-‘20s immigration laws, meant that further growth would have to come from internal sources alone. For many reasons, then, it was important for these churches to (re-)define exactly who they were and how they were going to move forward. Yes, “Americans” they would be, but which type of American?

All the while these ethnic Protestant denominations, like Augustana and the Dutch-American Christian Reformed Church, could read daily headlines about doctrinal wrangling in long-established churches of British descent. In the North, the Presbyterian and Baptist churches were occupied with loud, protracted wars between “Modernists” and “Fundamentalists” over how traditional creeds were to be understood, while down South, in Dayton, Tennessee, the Scopes Trial seemed to provide a showdown between biblical literalism and modern science over questions of human origins and the standards of cultural authority.<sup>23</sup> The result of these conflicts was not necessarily a triumph for the Modernists but did entail a clear defeat—worse, a humiliation—for the Fundamentalists. They went underground into autonomous subcultures that would only resurface after the 1960s as the “evangelical” movement. For the moment, then, ethnic Protestants, called into full conformity with American life, had clear examples from the outside of what might be at stake—and how these stakes could be settled.

The Dutch Christian Reformed Church responded with its own version of the Presbyterian and Baptist battles. The particular issues at hand need not detain us here, but the outcome was clear: through a series of heresy trials and ethical pronouncements, the CRC scotched both its most progressive and reactionary elements and put into power a regime of strict confessional orthodoxy and strict behavioral boundaries over against American popular culture.<sup>24</sup> “The Fundamentalists are brethren in Christ,” Arminian though many of them might be, declared the editor of the CRC’s English-language magazine. “The Modernists are enemies of the Cross.” This regime would only begin to change after the *next* world war, when in the early 1950s the entire faculty at the CRC’s Calvin Theological Seminary would be purged and replaced with a group of young moderates interested in a more supple understanding of Reformed theology and a more positive interaction with American society.<sup>25</sup> That same change occurred at Augustana College and Seminary twenty years earlier.

Interestingly, the archival record of this turnover seems to be less available in the Swedish than in the Dutch case, but the contending profiles and the final outcome are clear

enough. In the promotion of Conrad Bergendoff to dean, the appointment of A. D. Mattson in ethics, and of Eric Wahlstrom in biblical studies, Augustana finished its passage through the turbulent waters of the 1920s by elevating a moderate regime that no longer understood the Augsburg standards as dogmatic propositions but as a dynamic framework for engaging a world in flux.<sup>26</sup> It would undertake conversations with partners both within and beyond the larger American Lutheran community from a stance of confidence and openness. This was precisely the progressive “Americanization” that the classic understanding of that term expected. But as the Christian Reformed case teaches, and as other contenders within the Augustana episode indicated, another path of acculturation was possible. Adopting the English language and reaffirming American loyalties did not necessarily spell a “progressive” posture; historians Erling and Granquist remind us that in Augustana circles “modernizers” (in the sociological and *not* the theological sense of the term) “came from left and right.”<sup>27</sup> The conservative option was voiced by faculty at Augustana’s Bible institutes—an all-American institution if ever there was one—who advocated a platform of strict confessionalism, personal piety, and familiar biblicism as the Synod’s stand-

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Over time this momentum [*toward larger organizations*] eventually brought about the merger—or submergence—of Augustana into two successively broader Lutheran bodies....It is difficult to know precisely what other option Augustana might have pursued.

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point going forward. Furthermore, the icon of the progressive cause and the bane of the conservatives was a *Swedish* personage of a most hierarchical “old-world” office, Bishop Nathan Söderblom, whose visit to Augustana communities in 1923 intensified the decade’s stakes of controversy. In sum, viewing the Synod’s pivot around 1930 through the lens of immigration and acculturation reveals the socio-cultural issues behind the theological and institutional wrangling, and reminds us that Americanization is not a uniform or set path.

### **Merger as American incorporation**

Over the long term, the 1920s brought American Protestants to a fork in the road: one could thereafter go underground as Fundamentalist/evangelical or one could travel the “mainline” of acceptability and public responsibility. Augustana took the latter path, although carrying along a traditional piety, liturgy, and theology that made it a distinct traveler on that road. Still, it could not avoid the momentum that the mainline itself seemed to spell, and that important parties

on it certainly pushed forward. Internally, this momentum entailed the push toward corporate management techniques in running the church’s affairs; externally, it prompted a search for partners with which to merge. These were mirrors of another signal phenomenon of the 1920s, the corporation complex exemplified by the creation of General Motors as the nation’s largest private enterprise and run by new management techniques innovated by GM’s celebrated head, Alfred Sloan.<sup>28</sup> Over time this momentum eventually brought about the merger—or submergence—of Augustana into two successively broader Lutheran bodies. When the first of these mergers occurred, in 1962, General Motors commanded over a 50% market share in American auto sales; a half century later, GM is finally emerging from government-mandated bankruptcy, a radically smaller company but with clear signs of revived health. To invoke an infamous line from American history: though “what was good for General Motors was good for America” during the Eisenhower administration, was GM ever a good model of how a church should run?

It is difficult to know precisely what other option Augustana might have pursued. The consolidation of the once 66 different synods of American Lutherans into two predominant bodies makes the prospect of Augustana standing on its own over the long term a rather fanciful prospect. At the same time, the merger compulsion that entranced so much of the Protestant mainline’s leadership in the middle third of the 20th century seems a bit bemusing these days, and turns out to have been particularly ill-timed. The cultural revolution that swept the United States in the 1960s was profoundly hostile to “bigness,” and bland corporate identities have long since given way to boutique special branding. Mainline churches’ steady decline in membership ever since seems tied to an inability to retain their youth more than to anything else. A sad irony on two counts. First, a strong impression that comes from reading Augustana history is that the Synod was especially successful over the years at cultivating loyalty and leadership in the next generation.<sup>29</sup> Second, the distinctive liturgy that Augustana preserved from its Swedish past is exactly the sort of marker that would set a religious body apart with real integrity.

But eras come and go, and who knows which new age is now dawning, has already risen? The ancient-future fascination amid the emerging church shows that young people disaffected with the established styles of both evangelical and mainline churches are in want of just the sorts of resources that particular bodies like Augustana once offered.<sup>30</sup> And while there is no such thing as a virtual church, the internet does allow the recovery and exchange of resources from long ago and far away. The future of American religion lies with intentional local communities clearly committed to values and prospects different from those mass-mediated for maximum market share. The United States has always been a land of new migrations, also internally, mentally, and spiritually, and who is to say that a new cohort of the faithful will not fall upon Augustana’s, amid other Lutheran voices, as an anchorage for vital and winsome Christianity?



## Endnotes

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9. M. Erling and M. Granquist, *Augustana Story*, p. 11.
10. On Carlson, *ibid.*, 27. The break with the Synod of Northern Illinois is covered on pp. 32-35.
11. For detail, see a standard history of American Lutheranism such as E. Cliffford Nelson, *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). The complexity is aptly summarized in Sydney Ahlstrom, *Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972) 523-29, 756-62.
12. On the Dutch Reformed and Anabaptist cases, see James D. Bratt, "Protestant Immigrants and the Protestant Mainstream," *Minority Faiths and the American Protestant Mainstream*, ed. Jonathan D. Sarna (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998) 110-35. The American Jewish spectrum is mapped in any number of good studies, among which is J. Sarna, *American Judaism*.
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24. J. Bratt, *Dutch Calvinism*, 93-121.
25. Quotation, *ibid.*, 127. For the post World War II episode, see pp. 187-97.
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# Edgar M. Carlson

by Joanna Carlson Swanson



Born into a community of Swedish immigrant farmers whose roots were in Småland, Dad's earliest years revolved around the life and work of a dairy farm just north of Amery, Wisconsin. A one room school house, with its unique opportunities for learning, provided the basics for his primary education. The rural congregation of Balsam Lake Lutheran Church gave the family and community their spiritual home. The environment fostered resilience, a strong work ethic, and self-reliance.

After completing eighth grade, Dad attended high school in Amery, living in town with a relative during the winter, sharing rides in better weather. During these years, his talent in public speaking and debate began to develop sufficiently to be noticed and affirmed by his community. Both his community and family anticipated that he would study for the ministry.<sup>1</sup>

Dad arrived at Gustavus in 1926. Yearbooks showed he excelled in debate. Paired with Wilton Bergstrand, they formed a persuasive team that competed effectively in the national championship tournaments. They reached the quarterfinals as juniors and won the Pi Kappa Delta championship as seniors, with future Bethany College president Emory Lindquist in second place. Summers were spent with the Missionary Society traveling to congregations<sup>2</sup> and later working wheat fields in North Dakota while serving two small congregations as student pastor. He graduated magna cum laude.

What was most important to his children was meeting Ebba Edquist. Her Gustavus roots were deep. Her father taught biology at Gustavus for forty years, while her mother had been a part of the School of Music. My mother excelled in both biology and music. Edgar and Ebba became each other's perfect life partner.

Winning the national debate championship forced him to make a choice regarding his future. The University of Iowa offered him a scholarship to do graduate work in speech. He determined that his future would be with the church, and he chose to continue at Augustana Seminary with the intent of becoming a pastor.<sup>3</sup>

In the midpoint of his senior year, he was contacted by the Minnesota Conference to preach over the Christmas season at Mount Olivet, a small Twin Cities congregation experiencing a vacancy. Following this trial period, he received a call to serve there. Mount Olivet was about 10 years old with a membership of less than 300.<sup>4</sup> During Dad's tenure at Mount Olivet, the congregation grew suf-

ficiently to become financially secure and no longer dependent on the Conference for support.<sup>5</sup> Records from Mount Olivet suggest that it was a good period for both pastor and parish.

Mount Olivet gave Dad the opportunity to immerse himself in pastoral ministry. That gift would continue to serve him well for the rest of his ministry: as he taught college students and seminarians, served as pastor to the Gustavus community, preached in chapel and churches, and wrote about congregations and ministry.

During his years at Mount Olivet, he studied at the University of Minnesota concentrating on graduate level philosophy and English.<sup>6</sup> But in 1937, when Dad was 29, Gustavus asked him to teach in the Christianity Department. He wrestled with discerning the nature of his call and leaving that congregation without leadership. Only when he was convinced that it was the Holy Spirit's direction did he transfer his gifts from congregation to classroom.<sup>7</sup>

Teaching responsibilities included required courses in the Bible, church history, and doctrine. The course in doctrine was an honors course open to both pre-seminary students and others interested in theology. During the summers he pursued doctoral studies at the University of Chicago. He remained on the Gustavus faculty until 1942.

His role as a faculty member gave him insights into the mission of the church college and the importance to the college of the search for truth. Principles regarding academic freedom for faculty and students must have originated while he was a faculty member. In later years, he frequently articulated these academic principles to a wide variety of audiences.

The Augustana Synod encouraged young pastors and provided them with opportunities to write, speak, and lead church organizations. Dad wrote for *The Augustana Quarterly*, *The Lutheran Companion*, *The Journal of Religion*, *Church History*, and *The Christian Century*.

Dad embraced the synod's position affirming pacifism. He spoke out against America's war effort and wrote passionately in defense of pacifism. He advised conscientious objectors, corresponded with elected officials, and was a leader in the Augustana Lutheran Fellowship of Reconciliation.<sup>8</sup> Following the United States' entry into the war, the synod took the lead in calling for a just and lasting peace and eventual reconstruction of a war torn world. His writings reflect that also.

He joined the faculty at Augustana Seminary in 1942 as associate professor of English Bible and History of Doctrine. Old class syllabi and reading lists reveal a broad approach to his teaching responsibilities, a thorough grasp of contemporary religious thought, a keen understanding of church history, and awareness of the important role pastors play in interpreting theology for their congregations.

The move to Rock Island, Illinois, facilitated his stud-

ies and completion of his thesis. The doctoral thesis was an in-depth study on Swedish theologians' understanding of Luther's doctrine. Titled "The Interpretation of Luther in Modern Swedish Theology," it explained the new approach to Luther developed by these theologians.<sup>9</sup> Dad received his Ph.D. in June, 1944.<sup>10</sup>

## Return to Gustavus

During his second year at the seminary, Dad was approached by Minnesota Conference President Emil Swenson to consider returning to Gustavus, but now as president. Although not pursuing the position, Dad was open to being considered. Apart from the Gustavus community, the possibility of leaving the seminary was met with mixed reviews. Dr. P.O. Bersell, the synod president, was disappointed, as were seminary students and some pastors.

But in late April the Gustavus Board placed his name before the conference and he was approved by a vote of 229 in favor of his election and 67 against who preferred that he remain at the seminary.<sup>11</sup> Almost two weeks later he wrote his acceptance of that call.

His agreement with the Gustavus Board permitted him to continue his theological work as a teacher and pastor so that he would still be able to preach, study, write, and lecture. He mentioned many times that he considered it essential that a college president should seek to incarnate in his own person the kind of education for which the institution stands, both as to spiritual and academic attitudes and interests.<sup>12</sup>

## The Gustavus years

In 1944, Gustavus was a small church college, impacted greatly by World War II. The student body numbered less than 100 civilian students, augmented by almost 400 Navy V-12 students.<sup>13</sup>

While the initial challenge was to maintain the college, the subsequent challenge was to prepare the campus and faculty for a massive influx of students. In 1945 the Minnesota Conference of the Augustana Synod approved new administrative positions and a new dormitory.<sup>14</sup> With enrollment catapulting to over 1100 in 1946, finding adequate facilities and faculties was paramount.

The first major construction was the building of the long awaited library. Completed in 1948 and dedicated in 1950, it provided an adequate and modern library for the students. It cemented a relationship between Gustavus and her Swedish heritage. The library became the American memorial to the UN peacekeeper, Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte.

The relationship with the Bernadotte Foundation, begun with the library, continued with the endorsement and establishment of the Count Folke Bernadotte Foundation. Its program focused on international relations and student study abroad. These consequences transformed Gustavus: the international dimension was strengthened in a way that related to the college's immigrant roots; it paved the way for the relationship with the Nobel Foundation

leading to the Nobel Conferences; and it added to the long-standing tradition of a concern for peace.<sup>15</sup>

The Fifties began with an unexpected challenge. The onset of the Korean conflict created a substantial drop in enrollment, with a resulting financial crisis, retrenchment, and faculty and staff layoffs. Not until the mid fifties did stability and growth return.

The latter part of that decade became a period of analyzing, planning, and preparing for new growth in the student body. Facilities expanded steadily, curriculum was revised, the Swedish connection was strengthened, the administration and faculty grew in both number and expertise, and the relationship to the church evolved.

New and modern academic buildings began to supplement what was already present. A remodeled gymnasium produced a Student Union and additional space allowed for a new Food Service. Vikner Hall opened as a center for languages. Two dormitories, Christ Chapel and the Nobel Hall of Science were completed in the early Sixties.<sup>16</sup> Towards the end of the Carlson era, three more dormitories were added and the Student Union underwent further expansion.

## Chapel talks

Any description of college life and growth needs to include the daily chapel program. Dad preached at least once a week, for special services, opening of the school year, and baccalaureate services. Frequent topics focused on God's love, the death and resurrection of Jesus, worship, commitment, vocation and the search for Truth.

The question above all others is "*what think ye of the Christ, whose son is he?*" He is himself the Queter, the seeker. We do not find him so much as He finds us. He is not so much a resource for our lives as we are resources for him to accomplish His purposes in the world.<sup>17</sup>

The centrality of the death and resurrection of Jesus and its profound implications occurred repeatedly. In a chapel talk titled "Some Footnotes to Easter" he preached, "The worst that men can do to God encountered the best that God can do for men. The worst in life encountered Jesus Christ and lost. They took everything that evil can take from a man—freedom, comfort, health, life—and they left him with a kingdom."<sup>18</sup>

For the opening worship in Christ Chapel, he spoke about God's grace in this manner:

...for grace is the freely bestowed goodness of God, His full pardon for our sin, His gracious providence, His uncalculating kindness towards us and towards all men. God's intention and will is to do us good in every way and through every circumstance of life. This is what God's grace means and this was what was for evermore made clear and irrevocable through Jesus Christ.

The original chapel talks are housed at the Gustavus Archives.

## Christ Chapel

The building of Christ Chapel was a long held dream of the Gustavus community. It was a parting gift from

the Minnesota Conference of the Augustana Synod. The architect's final plan envisioned a bold, distinctive look for the chapel described as a cross within a crown. When the bids were let, the sole bid was considerably more than the money available. A contractor from Mankato, George Carlstrom, offered to build the chapel for the money available provided that some modifications could be made. So the chapel was erected, but without a cloistered walk, lacking office space, and with a limited basement.<sup>19</sup> With ground breaking on March 2, 1959, Christ Chapel opened in September 11, 1961 and was dedicated January 1962. Dad preached about forty percent of the time.<sup>20</sup>

Christ Chapel's centrality of location spoke to the centrality of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The dedication of prime morning time for daily chapel underscored the importance of freedom to proclaim the Gospel in the world of higher education.<sup>21</sup> Its size and dominance of site confirmed the connection between faith and higher learning. It became the stage for proclaiming "that the truth about the world and everyone in it is that they are the objects of an unbelievable kindness and goodwill. We are children of the eternal God whose will is grace and whose power is love."<sup>22</sup>

## Nobel connections

In 1958, the Nobel Foundation gave Gustavus permission to use the Nobel name to establish an American memorial to Alfred Nobel. The dedication of the Nobel Hall of Science brought Gustavus national acclaim, especially as 26 Nobel laureates attended the dedication. With the encouragement of several laureates, Dad received permission to launch the Nobel Conferences, meetings that continue to bring international recognition to Gustavus.

In 1968, Dad brought the Carlson years at Gustavus to a close. The Gustavian Yearbook from 1968 gave this insight: "The relationship between the students and the President is close. 'Doc Ed'...constantly surrounds himself with the campus he has loved and served so well for 24 years."<sup>23</sup>

This writer is sure that a portion of his heart always remained there. He not only served with distinction, but he loved the college, his interactions with the students, the challenges that needed to be addressed, and the new opportunities that enriched the Gustavus family.

Accounts of stories involving my father abound among older members of the Gustavus community. Some of them reveal his deep affection for students as expressed in words or deeds of affirmation and encouragement. Others show a caring and compassionate side, with a gift for saying or writing the right words or phrases that encompassed another's unfortunate circumstance. There exist stories of interactions with unhappy students that were resolved with a combination of wisdom and wit. Others recall being in the Carlson home, enjoying my parents' gracious hospitality. Dad had a lively, droll sense of humor that included understating, self-deprecating, and quick thinking combined with perfect timing and excellent delivery. Although by nature reserved, he was sought out not only in his public roles but also in more personal ways as friend, advisor, or confidante.

## Theologian and church leader

Throughout his years as college president, Dad continued to be a leading theologian. Three highly regarded books were written: *The Reinterpretation of Luther* described the Swedish theologians' approach and earned him high regard as a Luther scholar; *The Church and The Public Conscience* introduced a rationale for the church in the public arena and defined his views on personal and public responsibility; and *The Classic Christian Faith* explained the Small Catechism through the format of Chapel talks. That book is known for its clarity of exposition, beauty of language, and helpfulness to readers seeking to understand the essential teachings of the Christian tradition.<sup>24</sup>

He was highly sought as a teacher and speaker, contributed to religious journals, and served on Lutheran World Federation and Faith and Order (WCC) Commissions as well as LCA Commissions and Executive Council.

For him, it was a rich balance and he was fortunate to contribute and excel in both theology and higher education. A more extensive description of the theology he taught and interpreted; his participation in church affairs; and a listing of his writings, activities, and awards is included on the AHA website.

## Higher education

When Dad left Gustavus to lead the Minnesota Private College Council, he transferred his passion for college students from one particular college to the public arena. He developed the Council so that it could be a persuasive voice for all sixteen private colleges in Minnesota. He constructed a tightly-woven rationale for permitting state financial aid to go directly to students who would then take it with them to the college of their choice. In an indirect way, church related colleges could benefit from state sponsored scholarships while not infringing on the separation of church and state. His approach was rooted in Lutheran theology, based on the orders of creation and their right to exist in order to provide for a stable society. His ability to articulate his vision of the public good contributed to a favorable outcome. The practical side of his argument stressed the advantages the state experiences from a well educated citizenry and the cost to the state if the state had to absorb the additional cost of educating students attending the private colleges. He persuaded both the state legislature and the business community of the wisdom of his arguments. His vision for a strong, unified voice supportive of students (particularly financially) and the private, church related colleges provided resources that endure.

He remained with the MPCC until 1975. He then undertook a national project for private colleges and universities, and wrote his final work, *The Future of Church Related Higher Education*.<sup>25</sup>

## Retirement Years

In some ways Dad's retirement years were the expected activities: travel to new places, time to enjoy friends and family, and summers at the family's lake cottage. But he also had unique opportunities that were almost a mirror image

of earlier years. He returned to a seminary (then Luther Northwestern Seminaries) as Dean of Students and subsequently Visiting Professor of Systematic Theology. Hamline University asked him to be Interim President for one year. He served congregations in the Minneapolis Area Synod as interim pastor. His interests in Swedish American activities continued. Gustavus invited him to serve on the Board of Trustees and welcomed his involvement.

Dad's story would not be complete without mentioning his family. Our mother, Ebba Edquist Carlson, was supportive of him and of us. She was gracious, caring, kind, interested in others, capable, an excellent musician, and a wonderful wife and mother. She was a remarkable hostess and loved having people in their home. She entertained students and attended their activities. Her life revolved around family, college, and church. She excelled in all things related to family: children and grandchildren were my parents' delight. She died in 1986.

Family includes my brothers, Dave and Sam, and over the years expanded with the three spouses of the children (Karen, Jack, and Barbara) and 10 grandchildren. Dad was a wise, patient, supportive, positive, loving father. We experienced in our home the concepts that he preached and taught: love, forgiveness, service, and hope. He brought the larger world that he knew into our home, teaching us while broadening our horizons. We were most fortunate.

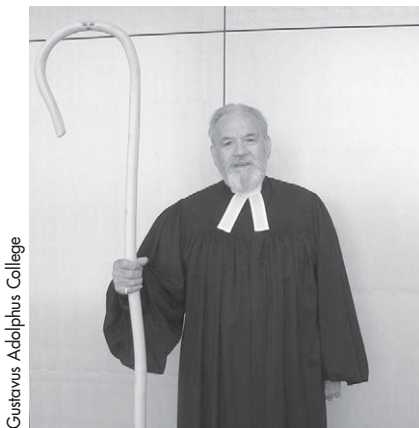
### Here is Dad's conclusion to his family history—a fitting way to end.

*There is no way of summarizing so rich a life as Ebba and I had together. I can only say thanks to all who have made it rich in opportunities and at least acceptable in achievement.<sup>26</sup>*

*Joanna Carlson Swanson graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College, earned a Master's Degree in Physiology from Iowa State University and later a Master of Arts in Systematic Theology from Luther Seminary. She served as an Associate in Ministry at Normandale Lutheran Church in Edina, Minnesota. Married to Jack Swanson, she is mother of three and grandmother to seven.*

## Endnotes

1. Edgar Carlson, interviewed by Robert Esbjornson, Edina, MN. January 14, 1989, transcript Michael Hauser Collection, Gustavus Adolphus College Archives, St. Peter, Minnesota.
2. Dave Kenney, *Gustavus: 150 Years of History*, (Stillwater, MN: Peg Projects, Inc. 2011), 73.
3. Edgar Carlson, interviewed by Robert Esbjornson.
4. Mount Olivet Archival material, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
5. Mount Olivet Archival material.
6. Edgar Carlson, "Reminiscences for the Family," (Minneapolis: published privately, 1989), 49.
7. Mount Olivet Archival material.
8. Roger Pettinger, "The Peace Movement of the Augustana Lutheran Church as a Catalyst in the Americanization Process" (Ph.D. diss., Washington State University, 1987), 181.
9. Carlson, "Reminiscences for the Family," 176.
10. Doniver Lund, *Gustavus Adolphus College: Celebrating 150 Years*, (Minneapolis: Primaris Limited Public Relations, 1987), 65.
11. Ibid., 167. Original letters at Gustavus Adolphus College Archives, St. Peter, Minnesota.
12. Edgar Carlson, "Reminiscences for the Family," 152.
13. Lund, 67.
14. Kenney, 98.
15. Edgar Carlson, interviewed by Robert Esbjornson, January 14, 1987.
16. Kenney, 102.
17. Carlson, Baccalaureate Address, 1960. Gustavus Adolphus College Archives.
18. Carlson, Chapel Talk, "Some Footnotes to Easter," April 4, 1961. Gustavus Adolphus College Archives.
19. Personal recollection by Joanna Carlson Swanson.
20. Rachel Larson, interview with Joanna Swanson, March 2012.
21. Edgar Carlson, interviewed by Robert Esbjornson, 3.
22. Chapel Talk, September 10, 1961.
23. *Gustavian Yearbook 1968*, Gustavus Adolphus College Archives, 20.
24. Steuer, Axel. Tribute at memorial service on April 13, 1992. Reprinted in the *Gustavus Quarterly*, Summer, 1992, 14.
25. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977.
26. Edgar M. Carlson, "Reminiscences for the Family," 178.



Gustavus Adolphus College

In one of the special interest groups at Gathering VIII, Pastor Rod Anderson, Chaplain at Gustavus Adolphus College, impersonated pioneer Augustana pastor Eric Norelius. The shepherd's crook symbolized the shepherding role of a pastor; the tabs at the neck were characteristic garb for a pastor in the early years.



Gustavus Adolphus College

Participants waiting to process for the Gathering service in Christ Chapel on Sunday morning, June 24th. Pictured, left to right, identifiable: Pastor Rod Anderson, Amy Pehrson, Bishop Donald Sjöberg, Pastor William Strom, Pastor Barbara Lundblad, Bishop Herbert Chilstrom. Pastor Lundblad and Bishop Chilstrom teamed together in the presentation of the sermon.

## Renewing AHA Membership

The Augustana Heritage Association is making plans for the future, including such things as the 2013 tour in Sweden and the 2014 get-together at Midland University in Fremont, Nebraska. However, to bring these and other plans to fruition, the AHA needs your support. Indeed, we cannot continue without that support. Memberships are an important...indeed, an essential...part of our funding. Our *Newsletter*, our office expenses, our planning meetings, our publications, and all our other projects rest upon your ongoing support and your continued membership.

The current memberships run until the 2014 event at Midland University. If you have already renewed, thanks! If not, please use the form below to send in your membership. And again, thanks!

### AUGUSTANA HERITAGE ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Individual membership(s) \_\_\_ @\$35 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Household membership(s) \_\_\_ @\$50 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Congregations, Institutions,  
and Agencies \_\_\_ @\$100 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

In addition, I/we wish to give a tax deductible gift to AHA:

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(Memberships are not tax deductible)

## Special Lutheran-Covenant Issue

In November 2010 a symposium was held at North Park University in Chicago on Lutheran-Covenant relations over the years. A special issue of the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* has appeared recently containing presentations given at this symposium. Copies of this special issue are available for \$7.00, including postage and handling, from the Augustana Heritage Association, 1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, IL 60615.

Note: the above special issue is not to be confused with the June 2012 issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission*, nor with the Spring 2010 issue of *Lutheran Quarterly*. Both of those special issues were devoted to the Augustana story, but neither of them dealt specifically with the historical relationship between Augustana and the Covenant Church.

Readers may be interested to know the essays included in this special issue of the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*. The essays are:

“Two Anniversaries and Five Historians”  
*Thomas Tredway, Augustana College*

“Histories from the Inside Out: Shared Origins and Denominational Historiography in the Writings of G. Everett Arden and Karl A. Olsson”  
*Philip J. Anderson, North Park Theological Seminary*

“Paul Peter Waldenström: A Good Lutheran?”  
*Mark Safstrom, University of Illinois*

“A Mission Identity on the Line: Mission Friends and Augustana’s Mission to the Comanches, 1879-1880”  
*Maria Erling, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg*

“Two Churches and the Swedish-American Community”  
*Dag Blanck, Uppsala University and Augustana College*

“After the Transition to English: Relations between Augustana and the Covenant Church, 1920-1945”  
*Mark A. Granquist, Luther Seminary*

“Seeking an Interpretive Discrimen in the Evangelical Covenant Church”  
*C. John Weborg, North Park Theological Seminary*

“Reading Like a Pietist: Spirit, Community, and Scripture”  
*John E. Phelan, Jr., North Park Theological Seminary*

“Leaven in the Loaf or Axe at the Root of the Tree: Inclusivity in the Church as a Priority for Mission in the Augustana and Covenant Traditions”  
*David Lindberg, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago*

## NEWS AND EVENTS

### Gathering enthusiasm

The following glowing words are from one of the evaluation sheets received following the Gathering at Gustavus Adolphus College. They are reprinted here as a way of acknowledging the work of the many people whose efforts contributed to the success of Gathering VIII.

"I've attended every Gathering and each and every one has been unique—wonderful—and so educational.

I've learned more about Augustana than I ever knew—it was 'just church' growing up—that's the good thing, but knowing what 'we' did is just the best—I can't thank you (whoever you are) enough! And I thank God for our wonderful heritage—unmatched by any other!!!!"

**Pastor Bill Berg, at age 101 the oldest pastor from Augustana, gives the benediction at the closing worship service for Gathering VIII, June 24, 2012.**

**Behind: Pastor Barbara Lundblad, Pastor William Strom, Amy Pehrson, Pastor Rod Anderson. Holding the microphone: Steve Hogberg.**



Gustavus Adolphus College

### Mystery yet unsolved

Readers may recall the story from the Spring 2012 issue of this *Newsletter* (page 22) seeking information about the identity of the Bertha Louise Peterson named in a death certificate found in a thrift store picture frame bought in Wichita, Kansas. As of this writing no solution has been found, but the story has now been picked up by the *Swedish American Genealogist* in its latest issue, and has also been told in the *Lindsborg News-Record* weekly. Perhaps someone from this larger audience will come forth with an answer.

### Inez Rundstrom tells her story

At the 2012 Gathering, one special interest event consisted of a dramatic presentation of the life of long-time Gustavus Adolphus College mathematics teacher Inez Rundstrom. Rundstrom was once called "the most educated woman of Swedish heritage in America." In 1885, at age 15, she was the first female graduate and the youngest graduate ever from Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. As a teenager she pursued graduate study in Europe. In 1894 she was called to teach at Gustavus, where she served as a beloved professor of

mathematics for 48 years.

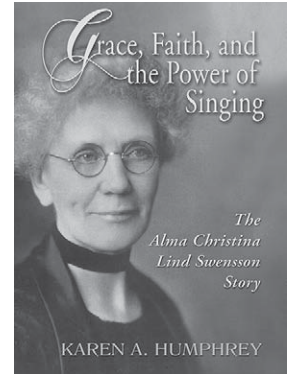
The research and written dialogue for this DVD was done by playwright Sharon Robinson. The role was played by Elsa Cornell.

The cost of the DVD, including mailing, is \$15. Send check to Elsa Cornell, 1312 Pine Pointe Curve, St. Peter, MN 56082.

### *Grace, Faith, and the Power of Singing: The Alma Christina Lind Swensson Story*, by Karen A. Humphrey

Alma Swenson, a gifted musician, lived in the shadow of her well-known husband Carl Aaron Swensson. She was nevertheless a powerful person in her own right, and here her moving story is told in a thoroughly-researched study.

Minnesota University Press, PO Box 390759, Minneapolis, MN 55439; \$16.00 plus \$5.80 shipping and handling.



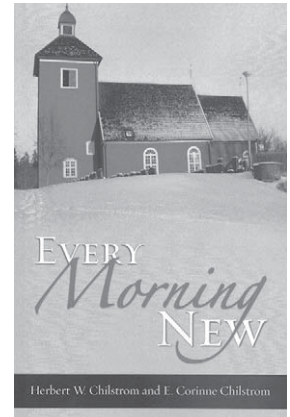
### Herb and Corinne Chilstrom produce devotional book

Dr. Herbert Chilstrom and the Rev. Corinne Chilstrom have written a devotional book entitled *Every Morning New*. It was commissioned by the Augustana Heritage Association Board of Directors as a lasting tribute and memento to the Gatherings of the AHA through the years, and it is available for the first time at the AHA Gathering at Gustavus Adolphus College in June for those who attended.

The title of the book is taken from the words of a hymn by Johan Olaf Wallin, "Again Thy Glorious Sun Doth Rise," which contains the words "thy bounteous grace is every morning new." The book contains meditations for every day of the year.

The AHA expressed its heartfelt thanks to Herb and Corinne Chilstrom at the business meeting of the AHA on June 23 with a standing ovation. The book represents a lot of work (entries for every day of the year!), imagination, and leadership on a journey of deep spiritual reflection. It is also beautifully written and contains a striking cover photo of the church in Sweden from which the Chilstrom family emigrated.

This fine devotional resource can be ordered through the AHA office. The cost is \$15.00, which includes the book's price, plus postage and handling.



# Augustana Heritage Association

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## Books, Journals, CDs and DVDs on sale

The books, CDs and DVDs listed below may be ordered from the Augustana Heritage Association. (See details below)

### Books

#### *Äkta Augustana: Heirloom Recipes*

Edited by Curtis and MariAn Olson and Luther and Adele Lindberg. A collection of recipes and Swedish traditions gathered by AHA members. \$20 including postage and handling.

#### *The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America*

By Maria Erling and Mark Granquist (Augsburg Fortress, 2008). \$20 including postage and handling.

#### *The Augustana Heritage: Recollections, Perspectives, and Prospects*

Edited by Arland J. Hultgren and Vance L. Eckstrom. Essays from presentations at the 1998 AHA Gathering at Chautauqua, NY. (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 1998) \$10 including postage and handling.

#### *The Heritage of Augustana: Essays on the Life and Legacy of the Augustana Lutheran Church*

Edited by Hartland H. Gifford and Arland J. Hultgren. Essays from the 2000 AHA Gathering in Rock Island and the 2002 AHA Gathering in Lindsborg. (Kirk House Publishers, Minneapolis, 2004). \$10 including postage and handling.

#### *Songs of Two Homelands—Hymns and Liturgy of the Augustana Lutheran Tradition, 2nd edition*

Edited by Ronald T. Englund, Glenn C. Stone and John O. Swanson. (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 2002). \$10 including postage and handling.

Available from the publisher, Scarecrow Press—

#### *The Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church in Print*

By Virginia P. Follstad. An annotated list of serial publications issued by the Augustana Lutheran Church 1855-1962 with selected serial publications after 1962. (Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Maryland, 2007) \$45. [www.scarecrowpress.com](http://www.scarecrowpress.com)

#### *Every Morning New*

By Herbert W. Chilstrom and E. Corinne Chilstrom (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 2012). Devotional entries for every day of the year. \$15.00 including postage and handling.

### Journals

#### *Lutheran Quarterly—Augustana issue—Spring 2010*

Edited by Maria Erling and Mark Granquist. \$6 including postage and handling.

#### *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly—Augustana/Covenant issue—April-July 2012*

From the Covenant Conference Proceedings, November 2010. \$7 including postage and handling.

### CDs and DVDs

#### *Nearer, Still Nearer (CD)*

Hymns, Songs, and Liturgy from the 2004 AHA Gathering, St. Peter, Minnesota. (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 2004) \$10 including postage and handling.

#### *Augustana: Five Pastors Share Their Memories (DVD)*

Recollections of Augustana by five pastors: Arvid E. Anderson, Herbert W. Chilstrom, Paul M. Cornell, Donald W. Sjöberg and Reuben T. Swanson. Recorded at an AHA board meeting in 2005. (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 2007) \$5 including postage and handling.

#### *Join in the Dancing: Swedish Folk Dance Mass (DVD)*

Par Harling's Swedish Folk Dance Mass. Filmed at the 2006 AHA Gathering at Chautauqua, NY. (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 2007) \$10 including postage and handling.

**Send orders to: Augustana Heritage Association,  
1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, IL 60615. Make checks  
payable to "Augustana Heritage Association."  
If you have questions, phone Ruth Ann Deppe at  
(800) 635-1116 ext. 757.**