



March 1998
Volume 3, Number 3

Special Emphasis

WOMEN'S Missionary Society

Led By the Spirit

Women in Mission

WMS-
A Journey to be
Remembered



Special Events

Augustana Heritage
Festival of Faith
Escanaba, Michigan
June 20, 1998

Sesquicentennial
Heritage Gathering
Jamestown, New York
September 18 - 21, 1998

Augustana Heritage NEWSLETTER

A publication of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

This issue of the Augustana Heritage Newsletter is dedicated to the memories and mission of the Women's Missionary Society. When one wonders what had happened to the spirit of Augustana, these stories remind us that it is very much alive in the church today. The tireless efforts of Emmy Evald, the organizer of the Women's Missionary Society, have resulted in a full partnership of ministry in the church. We give thanks for the WMS and its successors - full partners in the Gospel!

Led by the Spirit

Doris Hedeem Spong

This message was given by Doris Hedeem Spong at Messiah and Bethany Lutheran Churches in Lindsborg, Kansas on Pentecost, 1992, celebrating the centennial organization of the Augustana Women's Missionary Society at Lindsborg on June 6, 1892. Doris Hedeem Spong was the final president of WMS (ALCW) and the second president of Lutheran Church Women of the Lutheran Church in America. She had been elected Young Women's Missionary Society Secretary in 1926, and also was historian, chairman of the Missionary Education Committee, and chairman of the Joint Planning Committee for Women's Societies for Merger, 1959 - 1962.

The dramatic story of the women in the Church is like a sequel to the Bible story of women at the time of Christ. As Jesus walked on earth, women followed performing many tasks of hospitality. They were at the cross when Christ died. They were the first ones at the tomb. They ran first to tell the story to the disciples who were still in the city. All of this we call Bible history, but today I would like to tell you not HISTory but rather HERstory, of the women who have been **led by the Spirit** to be witnesses of the Good News of Christ.

Beginning 150 years ago, many poor Swedish immigrants settled in communities like the Smoky River Valley. They brought their love of God and faith in Christ with them to the new homeland. When churches were built, women were asked to help provide support, usually for furnishings, and to help pay the debt. This led to sewing and the sale of products such as wool socks and clergy attire. Women would gather in sewing societies, quilting bees and ladies' aids.

With the passing of the early pioneer period, even with its grinding poverty and the back-breaking toil, the women were ready to express their concern and Christian faith in distant areas of the world. Records show that there were a few societies for mission like Immanuel Church, Chicago, McPherson and Lindsborg, Kansas, and Axtell and Bertrand, Nebraska. They needed a leader

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The Augustana Heritage Newsletter

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with enthusiasm, vision and faith. Such a woman was Emmy Evald, the dynamic daughter of Pastor Erland Carlsson, a pioneer leader in the Andover, IL, and Immanuel, Chicago, parishes. In 1883, she married C. A. Evald, who was then pastor of Immanuel, Chicago.

Emmy Evald had many interests that extended far beyond her personal life. She was educated in the Chicago public schools, Rockford College for Women, and in Kalmar, Sweden, where she was confirmed in the cathedral. Contact with missionary societies in Sweden and Germany made such an impression that she wrote,

"I, with God's help, promise to organize a Women's Missionary Society in the Augustana Synod."

Mrs. Evald founded a Missionary Society in her husband's parish in 1888. She led a Bible class of between 300 and 500 persons, and this became a nucleus for the missionary society. Another experience with women of churches around the world was her connection with the 1892 World's Fair in Chicago. She was president of the First Lutheran Congress of Women in the World, held in Chicago in connection with the World's Fair. At Rockford College, she was a classmate of the famous Jane Addams, who founded Hull House in Chicago.

The organization of the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) did not just happen. It was planned by four women, including Emmy Evald, who met in 1891 at Center City, Minnesota, while attending the Augustana Synod convention. It was the custom of pastors' wives and lay delegates to accompany their husbands to these annual meetings. These four women agreed to meet the following year at Lindsborg and seek to organize a synodical society for missions. These were not idle words. They passed on the word so the result was a gathering "of 50 women representing virtually every section of the Synod" at Lindsborg in June, 1892.

Mrs. Evald gave this historic statement, "My parents, Dr. and Mrs. Erland Carlsson, invited all the women attending the Synod convention to their home on Friday afternoon, June 3, 1892. A second session was held on Saturday afternoon in Mrs. Malmberg's home, and on Monday afternoon, June 6, Mrs. Carl Swensson invited us to come to her home, the Bethany parsonage. This third session was held on the beautiful lawn of the parsonage." Now the organization was effected and Mrs. Evald was elected president and Mrs. Alma Swensson, secretary. Mrs. Evald held the office of president for 43 years.

Today, you and I can see this historical location on Main Street. In 1941, a bronze plaque was erected in the Lindsborg City Park, where the Bethany parsonage once stood. The same year, a gift of \$5,000 was given toward the women's dormitory which is known as Alma Swensson Hall at Bethany College.

After the organization of the Society, the 50 women marched to the synodical convention and presented their petition for synodical approval.

The men had doubts and fears about this proposal. It took time and much debate before they came to a decision. It was passed by a majority but not unanimously Mrs. Evald wrote,

*"The women had won a victory, not for themselves,
but for the cause of Christ for social, home and foreign missions."*

The WMS at Work

It would require a volume by itself to relate what this organization has accomplished in and for the Church. In the area of foreign missions, the WMS paid salaries for most of the women missionaries, which at one time reached a total of 54. By 1933, 63 buildings had been erected with funds given through the channels of the WMS. I recall a huge diorama, depicting these 63 buildings, that was first shown at the synodical convention at Ebenezer Church in Chicago that year and later put on display at the World's Fair. This pictured the hospitals, schools and homes in China, India, Tanganyika, United States and Puerto Rico.

Many devices were used to accomplish this. For example, boxes were distributed to women, children and youth to be used individually in their homes as they read and prayed for the missionaries and their work. Some of you remember Thank Offering boxes, which are used even today. There were Boxes of Blessing, Mite Boxes, Treasure Chests and Dime Books. There were also special funds, such as India Lace, Christmas Cheer and My Missionary for a Day, which personalized the relationship between the giver and the missionary.

The Missionary Society gave support to the programs of the church. Two of the presidents of the Board of World Missions, Pastor O.J. Johnson and S.G. Hagglund wrote that the long delayed decision of the Augustana Synod in 1905 to find its own field in China and the field in Africa again in 1917 was no doubt due partially to the hope and expectation that the WMS would undergird the work. In these expectations the church was not disappointed, though the women insisted at all times on running their own business in their own way and expected the synodical authorities to keep hands off.

The women recognized the importance of promoting missionary work, and at one time one of the WMS staff, Dolores Caston-Runbeck, was given this task as her responsibility. Throughout the life of the Society, there were patterns of setting goals, to increase membership, adding subscribers to the magazine, *Mission Tidings*, and increasing financial giving. A most successful example is the promotion of the Silver Jubilee in 1917. Women were enlisted to be Honorary Members of the Silver Jubilee by fulfilling the goal of securing 10 new members, 10 new subscribers to the magazine and one life member, or a gift of \$10.00. It worked. There were 20,000 new members and subscribers and \$30,000 in a gift to missions. Similar plans were used for the 30th, 40th, 50th and 60th anniversaries.

With remarkable ingenuity and imaginative resourcefulness, WMS formulated a multi-pronged program of service. Dr. Everett Arden in *Augustana Heritage* states

*"(WMS) wrote one of the greatest success stories in the history
(or should we say HERstory?)
of the Augustana Synod."*

No agency of the Synod, not even the Synod itself, was more ably organized or competently managed than the WMS. But beyond the organizational efficiency, it knew why it existed,

its reason or purpose and drive. It fostered a keen self-consciousness, a powerful sense of mission and put meaning and direction into every phase of its activity.

The official magazine of the WMS was published as early as 1901, and was distributed at the convention in Denver, Colorado that year. The editor was our special first lady of Bethany College, Mrs. Alma Swensson. She continued as the editor until her death in 1931. The first year, the magazine was published in the Swedish language. In 1912 it appeared in English every other issue. Then in 1918 there were two editions, and Mrs. Swensson continued as the Swedish editor. Of course, Emmy Evald had a special page, titled "Among Ourselves," in both languages. Perhaps the greatest emphasis in WMS was placed on missionary education, through the magazine, *Mission Tidings*, and program materials.

Dr. P. O. Bersell, long-time president of Augustana Synod (1935-51), whose mother was active in the WMS stated, "I have observed the world-wide program of WMS and its vital contribution. The financial program alone has been tremendous. Even now it is so great that it appears if this support were suddenly withdrawn, it would have a paralyzing effect. But I am thinking also of the educational and inspirational phase of the WMS activities. This has given a tone and strength to the missionary spirit of the Synod and has fostered a spirit of devotion and sacrificial service beyond that of any other human agency. In heroic leadership and loyal membership, the Women's Missionary Society has written a unique chapter in American church history."

As early as 1910, the children were encouraged to join the Junior Mission Bands. In 1924 youth were also given an opportunity to learn of and share in the missionary program. Funds were given to the Boards of Parish Education and Youth Activities to continue providing materials about missionary work through their offices. Through the church schools, Augustana children learned extensively about the total missionary program.

To include young women in the WMS, all districts and conferences elected a secretary for Young Women's Missionary Societies, to encourage local societies and hold rallies. They used Treasure Chests to collect financial support. This developed in the 1940's into Business and Professional Societies. This met a need for women who were being employed outside the home in increasingly large numbers and who needed to meet in the evening.

The WMS - Partners in Mission

Another step of the WMS organization was to become partners in the total church program when the women adopted their new name as Augustana Lutheran Church Women in 1958. This embraced all the local organizations within the congregations. This new approach was well received. As mergers with other Lutheran church bodies occurred in 1963 and 1988, this plan was the approved form of organization.

What was the relationship between the Synod and this women's auxiliary? We recall that the women asked for approval of the organization in 1892. It was not approved heartily by everyone. Pastor Alfred Hergin, long-time pastor at Bethany Church in Lindsborg was quoted as saying, when he was in Cambridge, Minnesota:

"We have lifted an offering of nearly \$40.00 for the Synod's Missionary Society, but we are not at all in favor of more government by women than is necessary. . . The congregation's women have enough organizations."

There was competition between local and synod work, even then.

When the Synod came to the WMS in 1921 and asked for support to build a Women's Dormitory at Augustana College in Rock Island, there was a kind of legitimization of WMS. Over \$111,000 was received for the building, but the Minnesota Conference refused to cooperate in this appeal as it did not approve of this as a WMS project. I can recall the debate and the hard feelings that resulted because of this decision.

Another area of struggle in cooperation had to do with representation in decision making. The Church was willing to accept the monetary gifts of the women, but the voice of women was not included at Board meetings or church conventions. Finally in 1924, the Board of Foreign Missions invited the WMS to send two advisory members, but they were not given voting privileges until 1941. The Board of American Missions, under a new plan of organization, elected two women as voting members in 1933. As we look at it today, we say this is merely a token, and it seemed suitable that the secretary of the Board be a woman.

Let us today, on the birthday celebration of the centennial of the Women's Missionary Society, dedicate ourselves, emulating the pioneer women, to be courageous and open to guidance as we receive the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Each day presents an opportunity to receive the Spirit to face the needs of the world and our communities with a healing message.

THE AUGUSTANA HERITAGE MEMOIRS AND ESSAYS COLLECTION

The number of contributors to the Augustana Heritage Memoirs and Essays Collection has now grown to fifty-one with the addition of articles and publications from the following: the descendants of Lars Gustaf and Elizabeth Christina Almen, a family history covering 120 years, 1876-1996; Eleanor Anderson, Marbury Anderson, William Berg, Gerald Christianson, Donald Conrad, William Conrad, Donald Flatt, Rudolph Fredstorm, an interview by Lavern Grosc and a life story; Eleanor and Donald Hallquist, a life story of A. Leonard and Pearl Smith; Donald Hornstra, Dan Roberts, a life story; Lorraine Leaf Stavig, Reuben Swanson, Theodore N. Swanson and Harry Victorson. We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of these people.

We especially invite reflections and memories about:

Leaders of the Augustana Lutheran Church
Anecdotes and Stories about life in the Augustana Lutheran Church
Contributions of the Augustana Lutheran Church
to the life of the church today

Abraham Lincoln once said, "The deeds of the founders grow more and more dim with the passage of time." The Augustana Heritage Memoirs and Essays Collection will help present and future generations remember and appreciate the gifts of Augustana. Many of us have memories, collections of family histories and material which tell of the journey of Augustana. Thank you for taking some time to make your contribution to the collection.

Please send your material to Donovan J. Palmquist,
10940 57th Avenue North,
Plymouth, MN 55442.

Women in Mission

Margaret E. Hawkinson Coleman

Margaret E. Hawkinson Coleman was called as a missionary to India by the Augustana Synod and was commissioned at the meeting of the Synod in Lindsborg, Kansas, on June 16, 1939. (Margaret Peterson, called to service in Africa, and Margaret Friberg, called to service in China, were commissioned at the same time. The salaries of all three were paid by the Women's Missionary Society.) She was assigned various areas of Bible Women's Work until 1967, and then taught classes for the wives of seminary students in Rajahmundry and Hyderabad. Before her retirement in 1983, Mrs. Coleman also served as president of the Mission Council, the first woman to hold this office, from 1975 to 1979.

The Augustana Lutheran Church, and its successors, had missionaries in India from 1879 to 1992. They worked in cooperation with the Board of Foreign Missions of the General Council and the ULCA in the area north and south of the Godavary River on the east coast, with Rajahmundry as the center. Later, several of the Augustana missionaries worked in the Guntur area. Most were career missionaries, who served until retirement and laid the foundation for future growth.

Miss Charlotte Swensson, sent out just three years after the Augustana Women's Missionary Society was organized, was the third woman to come to the Rajahmundry field. She immediately saw the importance of working among women and children and began a school to teach women to go to the village women with the Good News of Christ the Savior. Her efforts led to the later development of the large Bible Training Center, since named in her honor, where Ruth Hildegard Swanson taught for many years. Many young and older Christian women received training there. Some became Bible women who gained access to Hindu homes where men could not enter, and they became a great force of evangelism.

Other women saw the importance of educating women and established schools. At that time, there had been no schools for girls in India. With the beginning of Christian schools, girls from village congregations could come and live for the school term. Hindu girls from the town came as day pupils.

Today the Christian population in India is better educated than the average Indian, and Christians are beginning to take their place among the middle class which is growing rapidly in India.

One could not be long in India without realizing the need for medical help. Miss Hedwig Wahlberg, a nurse, arrived in Rajahmundry in 1903 and served in a small hospital that had been established for women and children. With the arrival of Dr. Betty Nilsson, and her service there for more than 40 years, the hospital grew into a large institution with a daily Dispensary and a Training School for Nurses. Other Augustana nurses who served long and faithfully as nurses and trainers of nurses were Hilma Levine Werner, Verna Lofgren and Ada Kron Pearson.

One group of women who were often not given credit for their services was the missionary wives. They toured with their husbands, helped in village evangelism, taught in schools, established Sunday schools and served in many other ways. Even though they were given assignments, they were never salaried. After five years as a single missionary, Margaret Hawkinson married William D. Coleman on September 5, 1944, and that day her salary stopped although she continued in the same work. This situation has changed and a qualified wife may now be given an assignment with salary, under certain stipulations.

When Margaret Hawkinson was called to India in 1938, it was thought that she should have a year of studies before going. Efforts were made for her and Margaret Zundel to study at a Lutheran seminary, but no seminary would take them. They then went to Biblical Seminary in New York which had been the training school for women missionaries before them. It turned out to be a more satisfactory place for preparation than the Lutheran seminaries would have been at that time. Besides excellent Bible studies, there were classes to help in learning new languages, and contact with students of many denominations was helpful in the ecumenical situations that would occur in the mission field.

Missionary women wrote articles and letters that they felt would be of interest to the women in the U.S.A. and Canada as a means of communication with the women who were supporting their work. These articles were published by the Women's Missionary Societies in magazines such as: *Mission Tidings* and *Women's Work*. Some feel that today this avenue of expression and interaction is lacking.

Margaret Hawkinson came to India when the mission work was well established and was about to enter a new era. Much of what had been managed by the Mission Council now came under the jurisdiction of the church. Schools were turned over to the government and missionaries became advisors and teammates. It has been said that missionaries are the only group of people who are glad to work themselves out of a job. This happened for the Lutheran Mission in Andhra State, India. Where there had been more than 100 missionaries in the 1930's, there are now none. This did not mean that the area had all become Christian but rather it was the result of strict government regulations on obtaining visas.

The India church that was planted has now taken over all the work of evangelizing, educating and of doing medical and social work. Reports are most encouraging. New churches are being built, new parishes formed, and even a new synod has been organized. Many Hindus are coming to the services. Women continue as an integral part of the Church. Many wives have studied in the seminary with their husbands and have earned theological degrees, as have many single women. Although the Church has not agreed to ordain these women, they serve in various capacities. Wives help their husbands in parish work, and women have established a number of Ashrams (Retreat Centers) where Hindu women inquirers can come for counseling, fellowship and Bible study.

Mrs. Coleman rejoices that

*"The seed has been planted and God is giving the increase.
The Holy Spirit is working. We praise and thank the Lord."*

THE AUGUSTANA HERITAGE ENDOWMENT AN UPDATE

As of January 31, 1998, approximately \$1,380,000 has been committed toward the endowment for the **Augustana Heritage Professorship for Global Missions at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.**

Thanks to the hundreds of people who have made commitments toward the Endowment.

WMS-
A Journey to be Remembered
Marion Lindquist

Marion Lindquist is the daughter of Pastor Oscar and Hildur Gustafson. A graduate of Augustana College, involved in JMS and YWMS and as the wife of Pastor Ralph Lindquist, she experienced WMS and Business WMS in Portland, OR and St. Paul, MN. She served on the executive board of the Columbia Conference WMS, was a member of the Women's Joint Planning Committee for the LCA, chaired the merger convention in 1962 and elected to the LCW board of the LCA.

Augustana Heritage and tradition cannot be complete without a tribute honoring the Women's Missionary Society. *From Acorns Small* is a booklet written by Ruth Benson about this organization of the Augustana Lutheran Church from its beginning until the 1958 reorganization. To read it is to respect and love these devoted ladies. Ms Benson writes:

Four women attending the Synod with their husbands in 1891, talked of organizing a synodical women's missionary society. During the ensuing year, these women must have spoken with others about this matter, because at the next Synod of the Church, fifty women with plans for some definite action were present.

The next year, 1892, on June 6, at Bethany Lutheran Church in Lindsborg, Kansas, they organized "to awaken a greater interest in missions and a more general support of the same."

The talented and dynamic Dr. Emmy Evald became its first president, and held that office until 1935. This organization grew and its influence spread steadily. In 1958 when it was reorganized to be Augustana Lutheran Church Women, reports showed that there were:

- * 1,552 missionary societies including adult, teenage and unified societies.
- * 52,311 members in these organizations.
- * 121,000 children receiving missionary education through the Sunday church schools and children's weekday missionary societies.
- * The financial contributions to all causes from 1892 through 1957, the Women's Missionary Society had given to the church between eight and nine million dollars."

WMS-Leaders in Mission

The first church-wide program sponsored by the WMS was a call to prayer on the first Sunday of the church year. Equally important and interesting is the fact that the women's role expanded as the mission of the church grew. For example: The Augustana Church began work in India in 1878. When the need was apparent, WMS educated and supported Dr. Betty Nilsson for the Rajamundry Hospital. In 1905, when the Church began work in the Honan province in China, Sister Ingeborg Nystul was among the first of many missionaries supported by the WMS. After World War I the German Lutherans in the Leipzig field had to give up most of their work in Africa. The Augustana Synod stepped in and the women lent their support. Miss Selma Swanson was the first missionary to that continent to be supported by the women. In 1910, Augustana was to celebrate its 50th anniversary, its Golden Jubilee, with emphasis on home missions. The ladies voted to give the church a gift of \$10,000. Ms. Benson wrote:

At the 1909 convention, the delegation was somewhat fearful that the \$10,000 would not be in on time for the Church jubilee, so subscription cards were distributed

among the delegates, asking that groups pledge ten dollars each to make someone a Life Member of the Society. More than one thousand dollars were pledged by this method.

At the Jubilee Festival in June, 1910, Mrs. Evald presented to Dr. Eric Norelius, President of the Augustana Synod, \$12,000 instead of the promised \$10,000. This was a success story that became a habit of the Women's Missionary Society, for in most instances goals were exceeded throughout its history.

As the years passed and Augustana became part of the National Lutheran Council and the Lutheran World Federation, women supported and found their niche in the Post-War Emergency fund, in representation at the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation Assemblies, and in numerous inter-Lutheran and inter-faith programs.

WMS-The Personal Touch

The unique strength of this organization was the "personal" connection. In financial drives or membership goals, the method, technique or "gimmick" was heart-rending and personal. My mother, Mrs. Oscar Gustafson, died in 1952. At that time, on her dresser, were three pictures of missionaries. They were her "My Missionary for a Day" friends. She had paid \$2.50 for each salary and also pledged prayer support. The day she selected was June 16, her birthday. She wasn't alone. "My Missionary for a Day" grew to support six missionaries, even though the price was raised to \$3.50 per day!

Similarly, it was easy for ladies to empathize when moneys were needed for homes for girls. Women pictured their own kin arriving in this country or needing shelter in a strange city.

On furlough, missionaries fanned throughout all the Synods and shared personal stories. On return, women would correspond with their missionary friends to assure them of their continued support.

Did You Know that the WMS Financed the Following Buildings?

* The Women's Building at Augustana College; * WMS Headquarters and Missionary Home in Chicago; * Chapels at Immanuel Deaconess Institute in Omaha, Nebraska; and Bethphage Mission in Axtell, Nebraska; * Hospitals in Kiomboi, Tanganyika, East Africa; Iambi, Tanganyike, E.Africa; and in China; * Dispensary & Hospital at Bhimavaram, India; * Home for Girls in Vancouver, British Columbia; * The Emmy Evald School (girls' school) in China; * The Ruruma Girls' School in Africa * Home for Lutheran Women in New York City.

Did You Know that the Women's Missionary Society had only five Presidents?

* Mrs. C. A. (Emmy) Evald (1829-1935) * Mrs. Peter Peterson (1935-1939)
* Mrs. Daniel T. Martin (1939-1949) * Mrs. John S. (Ruth) Benson (1949-1956)
* Mrs. Bernard (Doris) Spong (1956-) She continued as President of the Augustana Lutheran Church Women until the merger in 1962.

A Tribute to Marie Wise Hult and the Bethlehem Lutheran Church Women of Gary, Indiana

Phyllis Marie Hult and Joan Selma Hult

We are grateful to Phyllis Marie Hult and Joan Selma Hult for writing this tribute to their mother and her involvement in the life of the church. The story of Marie Wise Hult is the story of many women in the Augustana Lutheran Church. It reminds us of the deeper meaning of heritage - the faith shared from one generation to the next. Phyllis Hult is a graduate of Augustana College and has served the church as youth director and director of Christian education in congregations in Rockford and La Grange, Illinois. Joan, a graduate of Indiana University and the University of Southern California (Ph.D.) with degrees in physical education and sports history, has taught at St. Olaf College, Concordia College and the University of Maryland. Both Phyllis and Joan have served the church as volunteers in many ways.

As we walked into the Lutheran Center of the ELCA during Christmas 1997, our eyes were drawn to the people depicted on the banners hanging in the entrance, declaring us "Alive in Our Heritage and Hope." It certainly reminded us of our deep connection with Emmy Carlsson Evald. She was the founder of the Augustana Lutheran Women's Missionary Society in 1892.

Our Grandparents

Our lineage and legacy comes from our paternal grandmother, Selma, who by working for Mrs. Evald's household, experienced not only Mrs. Evald's missionary zeal, but also the joy of meeting her future husband, Swan Hult. As a result of Mrs. Evald's arranging for Swedish immigrant youth in the Chicago area to meet one another, Swan and Selma soon married and reared seven children in the La Porte, Indiana sandy soil countryside, including our father, Swan Albert Hult.

During the same era, our maternal grandmother, Christina Gronlund, came from Sweden where she started her life in America working in La Porte, Indiana (a town of about 25,000 with lots of Swedes) and attending Bethany Lutheran Church. Not long after she arrived, she married our grandfather, Gustave L. Wise, whose father had been a charter member and deacon at Bethany. Our grandparents were considered, according to the 75th Anniversary booklet, an important pioneer couple at Bethany for their entire married life. Our father's family also worshiped at Bethany. It is not surprising, therefore, that we as fourth generation Augustana Lutheran church women reflect in our lives a heritage from two sets of grandparents and their early relationship with the Augustana Lutheran Evalds and the Bethany Swedish Lutheran Church.

Our Parents

Our mother, Marie Wise Hult, was the fourth child born to Gustave and Christina Wise, while our father, Swan Albert Hult, was the second-born of Swan and Selma Karlson Hult. At Bethany, our father took his confirmation vows in Swedish, while our mother took hers in English. Both Bethany and our folks' first home church after marriage, Bethlehem Lutheran in Gary, Indiana, were bilingual congregations. Our parents' lives clearly reflected the values, goals, mission, and faithful service exhibited by their parents. While our own heritage and legacy come from both our parents and grandparents, our special tribute is primarily focused on the contributions of our mother, Marie P. Wise Hult, an extraordinary woman living out her witness to Christ in two Augustana Lutheran settings.

From Grandmother to Mother

Our mother, Marie, watched her mother faithfully fulfill her Christian role at Bethany. Christina Wise was active in her church's first women's organization, the Ladies Sewing

Society. She attended and paid dues of one penny. The sewing society sold their crafts at fund-raising auctions for the church and for its mission. They also followed the tradition of serving dinners for a multitude of events. By the end of the 1890's, the Society took the name of the Women's Missionary Society, meeting in members' homes. As time passed, a short devotional service was added, and dues increased to 10 cents. By the 1920's, the name changed again to Bethany Ladies Aid. Over the years, my grandmother lived and worked within the WMS, helped to make money through its projects and clearly demonstrated her commitment and concern for missions at home and abroad. She also was active in the Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society, where she helped gather money for the African mission, Bethphage and salaries of Augustana missionaries and nurses.

Another activity of our grandmother was being the hostess for clergy who came to La Porte. She always opened her home for visitors, including significant theologians and pastors within the Illinois Conference of the Augustana Synod. This included such renowned figures as Dr. T.N. Hasselquist, Dr. Eric Norelius and O.J. Siljestrom.

Marie's Early Life

While still at home in her early life, Marie, quiet, bright and obedient went through Cradle Roll, Junior Mission Band and sang in the choir. Later she took on her adult Christian responsibility by teaching Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, singing in the choir and helping with church dinners. Her most active role was that of a faithful member of the Loyal Lutherans, which had been organized to "promote Christian development of the young people of Bethany and to foster a spirit of true Christian fellowship among them."

Life at Bethlehem in Gary

Given their heritage, it is not surprising that when Mom and Dad got married in 1926 and moved to Gary, they immediately became active members of Bethlehem. (They had moved because Dad had accepted a job at the National Biscuit Company.) Bethlehem stood in the shadows of the steel mills with their bellowing smoke spreading across the city. The church offered a much less imposing structure than Bethany, but the awesome nave with its stained glass windows and large picture of Christ ascending was inspiring to us. The people were friendly and it was a vital growing church with many young families.

The spirit of Christian fellowship and Marie's spiritual development continued to be her vision and dream in Gary. Her theme of faithful service, love and concern for her Savior and for his people carried over into her life at Bethlehem. In fact, both parents served the church with such commitment and devotion that the 75th Anniversary Celebration was in memory of Marie Hult. The memorial statement read: "Bethlehem Lutheran Church expresses deep appreciation for the many years of service of Marie and Albert Hult We praise God for their ministry and example." We, along with our brother, Robert J. Hult, an Augie graduate and lawyer, who is a faithful member of St. John's Lutheran in Bloomington, Illinois, echo their praise and offer thanksgiving for our folks' Christian witness, gift of unconditional love, and a childhood within an Augustana environment.

Marie and the Bethlehem Women, 1926-1962

What was the role of women leaders such as Marie Hult and her Bethlehem friends in the women's organizations of the Augustana Lutheran Church in the 1926-1962 epoch? Our mother's early role did not seem to differ significantly from her church life in Bethany, except that she became not just a participant but a quiet reserved leader, but always with a twinkle in her eyes and a pleasant friendly manner. While raising three children, Mother volunteered within the Women's Missionary Society (Ruth Circle, later called the Ladies Aid Society and finally Bethlehem Guild), Cradle Roll, Junior Mission Band, music and worship, taught Sunday School, worked at church dinners and occasionally entertained pastors and missionaries as had her mother before her. She practiced the art of leadership as she experienced the joy of the Word of God in devotions, Bible study and in reading about the missions and social ministry of the national church.

Marie Hult had the missionary zeal of her forebears as a member of the WMS. She and other women from the church met in each other's homes bringing their offspring along to learn about missionaries and their work in strange places. They tore sheets into strips and rolled them for the leprosy colonies in Africa. They invited missionaries to speak to their church group. A number of the early missionaries who came to speak were guests in our home. We were both influenced by what we heard. Phyllis went to Africa twice, to Tanzania and Kenya. Joan remembers the lively debates on the domination of indigenous cultures and whether to influence practices that appeared contrary to Lutheran doctrine.

Beyond Local Concerns -- One Unified Organization

While Marie worked in all the women's organizations, she later was a prime mover in her congregation by discouraging having several women's societies like the Dorcas, Ruth Circle and the YWMS. This she did because the national organization had begun to hold a vision of involving every female member of the church in one unified organization; thus the Augustana Lutheran Church Women's organization was born. The women at Bethlehem, the District and Conference did join together to expand their ministry to include the total mission of the church, not just foreign missions. This was an exciting idea for Marie because she already had been very active in the Church Women United in Gary, and served as its inspirational president.

After Bernard and Doris Spong accepted a call to Bethlehem in the 1940s, staying until the early 1950s, mother blossomed under the tutelage of Doris. Behind the scenes Doris encouraged Marie to take formal training in public speaking as she saw our mother's special attributes as a leader of women. Mom's leadership style had been one of leading by example more than speaking out on vital issues, but her training assisted her to be more forceful, yet always caring in her approach. She simply could not "hurt other people's feelings". In her new found confidence, she soon found herself expressing her faith through leading Bible Studies and receiving additional training in workshops and retreats through the National WMS/ALCW. She then conducted workshops, led training programs, and often was a delegate to the women's conventions. She built her life around commitment, devotion to the principles of missions, faith, good works, leadership, and sharing her faith in the **strong name of Jesus**. Thanks to Doris and my mother's encouragement, too, Bethlehem had a disproportionate number of women who served beyond the local boundaries of Bethlehem. Most memorable was the dynamic trio of Marie, Mildred Eskilson and Mynette Cope.

Mother as Camp Director

Perhaps the best example of our mother's extraordinary ability as a lay leader was her work as Director of Girls' Week for two weeks each year at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin for over a decade and half. Having worked in the Illinois Conference WMS for years, she became its vice president, thus automatically inheriting the role of Director of Girls' Week at Camp Augustana, one for which at first glance she seemed unsuited, being unskilled in sports. While Marie lacked knowledge of camping, she had the simple faith that God would support her in this endeavor and the job would not be beyond her capability. Mrs. Hildur Norling was thus "sent" to provide the tutelage for our mother, who could then capably run the camp. We worked as counselors there. I remember how amazed we were at "Mom Hult's" leadership ability. She could use the same "teacher look" she used to discipline us when we had misbehaved, yet she also had a sense of humor in her discipline. Being called "Mom Hult" by all the campers and counselors is a tribute to her endearing human spirit. For years after the merger of ALCW/LCW, counselors and leaders from camp days met for yearly jovial reunions.

The Merger into Lutheran Church in America

Marie was sad to leave her friends and the women's organization in the Illinois Conference as the merger of the Augustana Synod and LCA moved her to the Indiana/Kentucky Synod. As others have said, perhaps the greatest gift Augustana Lutheran Church Women gave to the merging church women's organization was the dedication and leadership of women like

Doris Spong, my mother, and their friends from the Illinois Conference. The Augustana women were dedicated to the pursuit of the ordination of women, increasing women's role in church politics and councils and placing emphasis on all the missions of the church.

Joan fondly remembers participating in the ordination of Beth Platz as a pastor, as it took place in the chapel at the University of Maryland, with the reception at Hope Church, Joan's home church. She found it to be a fulfillment of her own dreams and hopes for women in the church. She remembers saying a prayer that day in thanksgiving for women leaders of the "old" Augustana Synod and especially our role model and mentor, Doris Spong, who was such an instrumental leader in the movement for women's ordination.

In the meantime, Marie moved with enthusiasm to accept new positions within the Indiana/Kentucky Synod, understanding well the needs of the new women's organization. She continued her leadership, principally on the local and synod level, almost to the end of her life. At the synodical level she served as trainer for workshops, conducted Bible studies, went to conferences, served on the Board of Social Missions and was publisher of the LCW Newsletter for years.

Multiculturalism

While keeping busy with the aforementioned activities, Marie also served as secretary for Bethlehem's new multicultural congregation. She had an opportunity in her last years to know and work with people of different cultures. Perhaps her greatest thrill was to see Bethlehem become a multicultural congregation, adjusting its ministry to the inner-city changes in Gary. She would be proud to know that her home church never fled to the suburbs and that the members have maintained their witness to the neighborhood, depending for pastoral leadership on a pastor of color with more non-Swedes than Swedes in the pews and in leadership roles -- a true testimony to fulfilling the word of God to go into the world and proclaim the Gospel.

Marie also lived to see Phyllis serve for 20 years as a Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministry and Joan to serve as a professor at three different Lutheran colleges, both also becoming strong proponents of women in the ministry and the work of WELCA .

Although Marie died in 1983, before the last merger, she would have subscribed to the church's mission, "to seek to be faithful to its scriptural and confessional foundations." She would rejoice in the goal of full communion with other Christians within the various church bodies and be pleased with the emphasis on women and children in poverty and the diversity goals within WELCA.

In a letter to her family and friends at Bethlehem just before her death, Marie Hult said, " I never had a chance to talk with all of you about religion. What is religion? Nothing except the love of Christ for everyone in the world. Not only the love, but the salvation that comes through Him." This was her motto through life and one that provides us a rich Augustana Lutheran legacy, helping us all to be "Alive in our Heritage and in our Hope for the Global Village." Thanks be to God for the work of the Augustana Synod, Illinois Conference, the Bethlehem congregation, and Marie Wise Hult.

If you would like to contribute to the Augustana Heritage Newsletter
with an "I Remember" article,
please send it to:

The Augustana Heritage Newsletter, The Editor,
1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60615.

Emmy Evald
Pioneer, Founder and Leader
of the Women's Missionary Society

Jane Tulleen, Minnetonka, MN

Jane Tulleen is a graduate of Augustana College, Rock Island. While doing graduate work in English at the University of Minnesota, she completed a research project on the life of Emmy Evald. We are grateful to Jane Tulleen who prepared this summary.

The story of the Augustana Women's Missionary Society is the story of women exploring leadership roles for the first time on a national scale. As in every movement, much depends on having a leader who is "in the right place at the right time." Emmy Evald was such a leader.

Emmy Carlsson Evald grew up in a traditional Swedish-American immigrant community in Chicago, but with a remarkable role model: her father Erland Carlsson, a revered Lutheran minister. In later years, Emmy told a friend she remembered seeing how people literally lined up in the church on weekdays to talk to him, because he had a reputation as a very wise man.

Emmy inherited her father's leadership abilities and his commitment to making a difference in the world. Her organizational and leadership capabilities were encouraged at Rockford Seminary for Women, where she attended college along with many other gifted reformers, including Jane Addams. Emmy was intensely interested in mission work, and after she married the Reverend Carl Evald, started a missionary society in her own church. But she felt this small-scale approach was not effective, and thought that missions should be a higher Synod priority. So at the Synod convention in 1891, she broached the idea of a missionary society to four other minister's wives. They agreed to go home and talk it up. The next year, 50 wives at the Synod convention in Lindsborg wrote a resolution to organize the Women's Missionary Society as an official part of the Synod. They had to ask a man, Dr. Abrahamson, to present their petition for Synod approval, and there was much debate. But eventually the Women's Missionary Society was born. Emmy Carlsson Evald was elected president, a post she would hold for the next 43 years.

At first, she and her officers had some start-up problems. Membership didn't increase as expected until separate regional "conferences" were established, each with its own officers. This was a shrewd move: by giving women more leadership opportunities, more women wanted to join. They threw themselves into their work, determined to prove that *they could do God's work as well as men. And Emmy Evald was an effective organizer* and inspirational speaker. In the early years, their fund-raising was done for joint projects recommended by the men's Foreign Mission Board. But as they became more successful, they became more independent. By 1903 they sent out missionaries from among their own membership, and paid the salaries of women missionary doctors. If they couldn't find women doctors, they paid to send women to medical school. They supported a hospital in India and sent the first American woman missionary to China. They even made up a deficit in the men's mission society. The General Council of the Lutheran Church commended the women for their work.

Despite their success, every step they took had to be authorized by the men's Foreign Mission Board. In 1907, when the Society had raised \$12,000 for a new hospital in India, they petitioned the General Council to become independent, arguing, "Women have proved they can do the work well, but before the women expend the money, they desire that the future management of the hospital be wholly under the control of WMS.

The hospital was needed badly, so the Synod gave in. From then on, the WMS became a power in its own right. Emmy Evald was credited with having the foresight to get control of the fund disbursement. During the next 20 years, the society did hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of business. Through the WMS, women learned to buy and sell property and run foreign missions--becoming, in effect, officers of an international nonprofit corporation.

It's no accident that all this happened while women were seeking the right to vote: the time was ripe, and Emmy Evald had been a charter member of the International Women's Suffrage Association. The WMS took no official position on suffrage, but in the year of ratification, 1919, their *Mission Tidings* newsletter ran new slogans that spoke volumes: "Woman's status determines to a very large extent the character of her nation. The thermometer of a man's character is his attitude to women."

Then the WMS, in some people's opinion, went too far. The year after women got the vote, in 1920, Augustana College and Seminary asked the WMS to raise funds for a new women's dormitory, which they jubilantly took on as a sort of "home mission." Within a year, the women had raised \$121,000 in pledges toward the goal of \$150,000, and engaged an architect to draft plans. But the male seminary students and faculty objected to the prominent building site chosen by the WMS because it would cut off their imposing view. They recommended, instead, a site across the street in undeveloped, marshy land. It became a "battle of the sexes," and Evald wrote: "The women, who have entrusted us with their money, have expressed their desire that we do not put the building into a "back yard".... They...want a "prominent and imposing site for the Women's Building." *Mission Tidings* reported: "The daughters are waiting--waiting to see if mother wins out."

For some time, some ministers had resented the fact that the WMS solicited in their churches for money that would have gone to their local projects. And then the mothers themselves split ranks. A number of Rock Island women, upset because so many decisions were made from headquarters in Chicago by Emmy Evald, sided with the ministers, and presented a petition of 375 signatures to the Synod siding with the seminarians. The Synod deferred to the petitioners, and the WMS signed over the money to the college for a dormitory located in the marshy land. The Women's Building was dedicated in 1927 and, ironically, was later named Carlsson Hall after Emmy Evald's father. No official WMS representative was present.

This confrontation made many women reconsider whether independence was worth the cost of being called unchristian. Undoubtedly the episode discouraged Evald, who spent most of her last years developing a home for young women in New York City and resigned as president in 1935. Both women and men sought a renewed spirit of cooperation rather than competition, and the WMS became a member of the new Board of Home Missions. By 1942, they had representatives on all major boards for missions, but since they were the minority in each, they no longer had a forum for independent decision-making.

So how will history treat Emmy Evald and the Women's Missionary Society? The WMS was neither radical nor unique: it came into being when so many other women's groups began, and disbanded when others did. But it played a crucial role in the history of the Augustana Lutheran Church. The WMS gave its women a forum for making a difference on a grand scale. It saved the lives of hundreds of people overseas. It gave women the chance to serve society as doctors and administrators overseas and it gave mothers and homemakers the opportunities to succeed in areas of life outside the domestic. Emmy Evald, as founder and leader of the Women's Missionary Society, provided younger generations of church women with a role model and a tradition, hopefully not forgotten, of accomplished church mothers, as well as church fathers.

Augustana Heritage Festival of Faith

June 20, 1998

Bethany Lutheran Church

202 S. 11th Street,

Escanaba, Michigan 49829

June 20, 1998 -beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Worship Service - Dr. Wilton E. Bergstrand, preacher

Mass choir directed by John Beck

Festival Luncheon - Pastor Robert Langseth, MC

For luncheon reservations, please send a check for \$8.00 per person to:

Augustana Heritage Festival, c/o Ralph K. Peterson,

Bethany Lutheran Church, 202 South 11th St., Escanaba, Michigan 49829.

Members of the Festival Planning Committee are:

Ellwood Mattson, Marquette, Michigan, Chair; Edith Edberg, Iron Mountain, Michigan; Marian Gronquist, Montreal, Wisconsin; Lowell Holmgren, Ishpeming, Michigan; Pastor D.C. and Nancy Kalweit, Marquette, Michigan; Pastor Robert and Deloris Langseth, Calumet, Michigan; Pastor Ingmar and Betty Levin, Manistique, Michigan; Owen and Judy Peterson, Menominee, Michigan; Ralph K. Peterson, Escanaba, Michigan; Bishop Dale and Jo Skogman, Marquette, Michigan; Pastor Robert Sutherland, Negaunee, Michigan and Orice Walters, Iron Mountain, Michigan.

Augustana Heritage

Sesquicentennial Gathering

September 18 - 21, 1998

Chautauqua Institution,

Chautauqua, New York

If you wish to participate in the Augustana Heritage Sesquicentennial Gathering, you must request registration materials from:

"Augustana 98",

Scandinavian Studies Program,

P.O. Box 20,

Jamestown, New York 14702-0020

Registration deadline is July 1, 1998. Events will begin at 1:00 pm, Friday, September 18, 1998. Please tell others who have "Augustana Roots" about the Gathering. All former Augustana congregations of the ELCA have received information about the Gathering.