

# The Augustana Heritage Newsletter

Volume 5 Number 4 Spring 2008



## Welcome to Gathering VI

Augustana Heritage Association  
June 19–22, 2008 in Lindsborg, Kansas  
Theme: “Children of Augustana”

Welcome to the biennial national gathering of the Augustana Heritage Association in Lindsborg, Kansas, from Thursday, June 19, through Sunday, June 22, 2008. All sons and daughters of the former Augustana Lutheran Church, together with family and friends, are invited to inspirational music, worship, displays and events on the theme, “Children of Augustana.” Participants will look back to the contributions of “old Augustana” as well as looking to the future as the Augustana tradition continues in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Gathering falls during the annual Midsummer’s Weekend in Lindsborg, which celebrates the living heri-

tage of this historic community founded by Swedish immigrants. Those attending the Gathering will enjoy the music and dancing, exhibits, special foods and other events in this Midsummer’s celebration.

Bethany College, Bethany Lutheran Church and Messiah Lutheran Church, all in Lindsborg, are sponsors of the Gathering. Some 500 or more people are expected to take part. The local committee, chaired by Judy Burch, the Rev. Richard Monson and Janet Monson, are working with the entire Lindsborg community to welcome all who join this AHA Gathering VI.

This spring 2008 issue of *The Augustana Heritage Newsletter* focuses on the coming Gathering VI in Lindsborg. (Note the Registration Form and lodging information on pages 11-14. You may pull this out from the center of the newsletter or photocopy it in order to register.)



photo by Jim Turner

**Bethany College – Presser Hall with relocated statue of founder, the Rev. Dr. Carl Aaron Swanson.**

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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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# Bethany College President Edward F. Leonard III welcomes all to the Lindsborg Gathering

Dear members of the Augustana Heritage Association,

Since its founding by Swedish Lutheran immigrants in 1881, Bethany College has been an educational institution shaped, enlivened, and supported by the Church. Our mission as a college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—to nurture and challenge individuals in their search for truth and meaning as they lead lives of faith, learning and service—reflects this profound influence.

One way in which we celebrate and enact our mission is through a tradition of strong relationships with churches. Because of our heritage as a college of the former Augustana Synod, and because of our shared immigrant history, we are especially proud to again have the opportunity to host the Augustana Heritage Association Gathering. We look forward to welcoming you and to renewing our common bonds.

This is a time of growth at Bethany College. I hope you are able to visit us and experience the excitement and energy on campus for yourself as part of a gathering that is enjoyable, inspirational, and truly blessed with the presence of Christ.

Sincerely,  
Edward F. Leonard III, Ph.D.  
President  
Bethany College

*President Leonard formally began as president of the college on August 1, 2007, and he was inaugurated as the college's thirteenth president on April 12, 2008. He previously served as vice president for advancement at Wilmington College in Ohio. In addition to his past experience in higher education and the corporate world, President Leonard has taught business and marketing classes as an adjunct professor at a number of colleges. He and his wife, Sheila, have a son, Quade.*



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## Two Lindsborg churches are co-sponsors with Bethany College of Gathering VI



**Bethany Lutheran Church**



**Messiah Lutheran Church**

photo by Janet Monson

# Dala horses at large in Lindsborg over Midsummer's Day!

## An overview of Gathering VI from the local committee



Be forewarned, a herd of wild Dala horses is at large in Lindsborg, Kansas. Now is the time to come and see your favorite Dala horse during Midsummer's Day while attending the Augustana Heritage Association's Gathering VI, from June 19-22, 2008. Gathering hosts include Bethany College, Bethany Lutheran Church, Messiah Lutheran Church, and the Lindsborg Community.

Who were the original Swedish Lutherans in Kansas? John A. Johnson migrated in 1855 from Galesburg, Illinois, to the Blue Valley in Kansas a year after the Kansas Territory was established. In 1863, as part of the new Augustana Synod, the Mariadahl Lutheran Church of Pottawatomie County was organized. A few Swedes began arriving in the Smoky Valley in central Kansas after the Civil War. The First Swedish Agricultural Company of McPherson County, Kansas, was organized in April 17, 1868, by members of Salem and Immanuel Lutheran Churches of Chicago. The land company purchased 13,160 acres in Kansas from the Union Pacific Railroad. The company's Kansas settlement was named Lindsborg after members of the original company—Lindell, Lindh, Lindgren, and Linde. Company membership required Lutheran church membership. Nearly all the original Lindsborg settlers came with Pastor Olof Olsson from Sunnemo and his former Värmland parishes in Sweden.

The Lindsborg community today is known widely for its great music, internationally recognized visual arts, prime Swedish-American attractions, major festivals, historic sites which go back to pre-pioneer days, noted religious and educational institutions with lasting traditions, museums and galleries, an agricultural economic base, and a well-deserved civic pride. Lindsborg always has a welcome mat out for visitors, and now is looking forward to hosting Gathering VII!

Bethany Lutheran Church was founded August 19, 1869, and was the original church of the Lindsborg community and of the First Swedish Agricultural Company. Pastor Olsson and these pietistic settlers organized the church, seeking religious freedom to have an independent "pure" Lutheran Church. The first building was two miles northwest of the town site. In 1874, the nave

of the present building was constructed. Improvements have come with several renovations and additions, the 1904 one being the most notable in preparation for an Augustana Synod convention. The Bethany Lutheran Church has been designated a National Historic site.

In 1879, Dr. Carl A. Swensson succeeded Dr. Olsson as pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church. Through Swensson's efforts, Bethany Academy was founded on October 15, 1881, in the sacristy of the church. Because of its financial support and close physical and spiritual ties to the Bethany Lutheran Church, the academy became Bethany College. The renowned annual rendition of Handel's "Messiah" oratorio began at the church and continues to this day at the college. Bethany College, now a college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, has been an historic long-serving liberal arts college of the former Augustana Synod. Bethany College is committed to maintaining its Swedish roots and Lutheran heritage.

As the 1900s began, Bethany Lutheran Church, under the leadership of Dr. Alfred Bergin, remained firmly committed to its use of Swedish as the primary language of worship. However, an increasing number of Lindsborg residents, especially among Bethany College faculty and students, did not speak Swedish. To meet the need for an English-language congregation, Messiah Lutheran Church was organized in 1908, with the motto, "The faith of our fathers in the language of our children." Given the congregation's close links to the college, it was natural that first services were held in the college chapel, with the college president, Dr. Ernst Pihlblad, serving as pastor. Now, a century later, Messiah Church happily participates in the Augustana Heritage Association's 2008 Gathering as a part of its centennial celebration.

The theme of this Gathering is "Children of Augustana." Therefore, all the sons and daughters of Augustana are encouraged to assemble in Lindsborg at Midsummer's to celebrate and share their heritage. It promises to be a wonderful time where participants will have a unique opportunity to return to their roots. Gathering VI is open to everyone but it will be of special interest to those from the Augustana tradition, together with their families and friends.

The four days of the Gathering will be packed with dozens of extraordinary interest sessions, keynote presentations, reunions, exhibits, displays, special meals, shopping, hymn singing, special music, inspiring devo-

tions, and worship services. Some of these highlights are listed below:

**Augustana Roadshow:** Attendees will have a magnificent opportunity to commemorate and celebrate their Augustana heritage by sharing their Augustana photos, memorabilia, and personal stories at the Augustana Roadshow. Please come prepared with a 3-5 minute presentation. A video recording of your appearance will be made during registration on Thursday, June 19. A recording of these vignettes will be shown at three interest group sessions and also will be available for purchase at the Gathering bookstore.

**The Augustana Influence at Augustana, Bethany, and Gustavus Adolphus Colleges:** The presidents and representatives of these colleges will reflect on how the "Children of Augustana" have shaped these three historical Augustana colleges and how these institutions continue to be influenced today through their Augustana ancestry. This panel presentation will be Saturday morning's keynote address.

**Three Augustana Synod and College Women and Their Intellectual and Spiritual Legacy:** Three remarkable Augustana women of the 1880s and 1890s will be brought to life. Great intellectual and spiritual energy and a passion for education flame the personal stories of Inez Rundstrom, Anna Olsson, and Emmy Carlson Evald.

**Putting Youth on the Front Burner: The Role of Youth in the Augustana Synod:** The unique contributions of the Augustana Synod in its emphasis on youth and youth ministry will be the focus of the Friday keynote address given by Maria Erling and a number of interest groups.

**A Congresswoman's Commitment to Improving Daily Life:** Lois Capps has served as a member of the United States House of Representatives from California's 23rd District since 1998. The daughter of a Lutheran pastor, Capps will tell in her Saturday afternoon's keynote address how she is committed to helping people improve their daily lives through better schools, quality health care, and a cleaner environment.

**The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America:** The fascinating history of American Lutheranism, with its mergers of separate ethnic churches and its complex engagement with contemporary American culture, will be reviewed in a number of presentations.

Profiles of many Augustana personalities will be featured, including, but not limited to: Lars Paul Esbjörn, Oscar Benson, Emory Lindquist, and Conrad Bergendoff. John Norton will be giving the keynote presentation on Lars Paul Esbjörn on Sunday morning.

**Christ Above All, 1949 Augustana Luther League Convention:** The film "Christ Above All" which documents the 13th International Youth Conference of the Augustana Synod's Luther League which was held in Duluth, Minnesota, June 22-26, 1949, will be featured.

**Camp Sing-a-Long:** Gathering participants will have an opportunity to remember a summer night at church camp at a Sing-a-Long scheduled for Saturday evening. Main Street will be blocked off and the campfire will be glowing as we sing the songs that nurtured us as we grew up. This will be a time to revel in memories of our superb experience of being "Children of Augustana" at church camp. Send your favorite song requests, memories, and your willingness to participate to Jerry Leaf, [gbleaf@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gbleaf@sbcglobal.net), or by mail 903 North Main, Lindsborg, KS 67456

**Worship Services:** The Gathering will feature daily hymn sings and devotions, as well as, three exceptional worship services. Hymn sings will be led by Rebecca Copley with her husband, Don Johnson as organist. Worship services will feature Jack Swanson as organist and the Gathering Choir, directed by Karl Nelson, will sing at the Sunday service. Attendees are encouraged to sign up to sing in the Gathering Choir at registration. Daily practices will be listed in the program schedule. As you can see, the musical heritage of Augustana will once again be front and center.

The service on Thursday evening will center on hymns that reflect the rich spiritual and musical heritage of Bethany Lutheran Church and Bethany College. It will be held at historic Bethany Lutheran Church. Friday night worship will begin with a musical program by the Smokey Valley Men's Chorus. The preacher will be the Rev. Donald Sjöberg. The Friday evening service will be based on the Lenten liturgy from the Augustana Hymnal while the Sunday morning communion worship service will feature the Augustana liturgical setting for the Trinity season. The Rev. Charles Colberg will preach on Sunday morning. Friday and Sunday services will both be held in Presser Hall on the campus of Bethany College.

Gathering VI will coincide with the well-known Midsummer's Festival in Lindsborg. Participants will have a chance to see the Lindsborg *Folkdanslag*, the high school Swedish Folk Dancers and the annual raising of the Maypole. There will also be an auto rally as the Volvo Club of America will hold its annual get-together that weekend. Plan now to extend your visit through the afternoon of June 22 since the American Scandinavian Association of the Great Plains will hold a Swedish Vesper Service at Bethany Lutheran Church on Sunday afternoon, June 22. Bishop Esbjörn Hagberg from Karlstad, Sweden, will be the preacher and Alf Brorson will be the liturgist. You are also invited to a meal immediately following the service which will be held in the Bethany Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall.

For more details see the web site, [www.augustana-heritage.org](http://www.augustana-heritage.org). If you do not have internet access, ask a friend, relative, or pastor to help get the needed information. Complete details will be printed in the Gathering program that will be distributed at check-in/registration.

# Highly-ranked Bethany College traces its roots to 19th century Swedish Lutheran immigrants

Bethany College, established by Swedish Lutheran immigrants on October 15, 1881, in the sacristy of Bethany Lutheran Church, is a college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) owned and operated by the Central States and Arkansas / Oklahoma Synods. The college has traditionally enjoyed a close relationship with the broader Lutheran church.

The mission of Bethany College is to nurture and challenge individuals in their search for truth and meaning as they lead lives of faith, learning and service.

## Founding and early days

From the earliest days, people of Lindsborg have valued and promoted education at all levels. Dr. Olof Olsson, the first pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church, was the first McPherson County superintendent of public schools and promoted education as a state legislator. In 1881, when many community residents still lived in dugouts, they worked with Olsson's successor, the Rev. Dr. Carl A. Swensson, to establish Bethany Academy, which quickly became the well-respected higher education institution of Bethany College.

The Rev. Carl A. Swensson was only 22 years old

when he became pastor of the Lindsborg community's first church, Bethany Lutheran, with 675 members. Pastor Swensson, newly ordained by the Augustana Lutheran Synod, arrived in Lindsborg in June 1879 to succeed the Rev. Dr. Olof Olsson, the original spiritual leader and first pastor of the fledgling Swedish-American immigrant pioneer community. Olsson had moved on to become a faculty member and then later president of Augustana College and Theological Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois.

There were major contrasts between Swensson—energetic, forceful, high-achieving, a natural leader—and Olsson, who was quiet, scholarly, and mild-mannered. Both were committed Christians with *läsare* pietistic backgrounds. When the Rev. Dr. Carl A. Swensson met with the first Bethany students, he had a vision. Some called it his “air castle.” The founding of Bethany College by Swensson represented a great venture in faith. He recognized that early founding visions had come from Olsson and his beloved Värmland friends. But it was he who, after a summer 1881 meeting in Lindsborg by the national Augustana Synod, “could not rid myself of the thought that the right time was at hand” to build the school.

Swensson said: “I saw how God had blessed our settlements in this beautiful, flourishing, and liberty-loving state. But how our children and youth should obtain the necessary Christian education was a question....” The date set to open the Bethany Academy was October 15, 1881. J.A. Udden, a recent Augustana College graduate, was engaged as the teacher. The college grew rapidly, and within five years enrollment was at 161. Then a large five-story Old Main building was constructed. Swensson's educational institution, founded as an academy, became a college in 1886 with an amended charter with the right to confer baccalaureate degrees. In 1887, the four-year program was introduced, and the first class was graduated in 1891.

Bethany evolved from Bethany Academy through 1885, to Bethany Normal Institute in 1886, to Bethany College and Normal Institute in 1887, to Bethany College in 1889. Bethany went from eleven students at its beginning to an academy in a modest frame building, and finally to a full college offering bachelor of arts degrees and housed in an imposing brick “Main Building” of six stories, including basement—with classrooms, dining hall, a chapel seating 850 persons, 103 student residence rooms, and a basement museum. Within eight years Bethany College had become solidly rooted in central Kansas, and it looked forward to more academic achievements.



Mingenback Art Center, Bethany College

## Historical figures

Eclipsed perhaps only by founder and second president, the Rev. Dr. Carl Aaron Swensson, is the Rev. Dr. Ernst Frederick Wilhelm Pihlblad (1873-1943) who stands out as the greatest leader in Bethany College's first five decades. It was Pihlblad, the college's third president, who, following the death of Swensson, directed Bethany's growth and development from 1904 to 1941.

After attending public schools in Kansas City, Ernst came to Lindsborg with his parents. He matriculated in the first class of Bethany Academy at age eleven, then continued studies in Bethany College where he was the first baccalaureate graduate in the Class of 1891. Pihlblad attended Augustana Theological Seminary in Rock Island and was ordained in 1894. After serving parishes in New Jersey, he returned to Bethany as professor of Latin. He was a professor from 1895 to 1904 and president from 1905 to 1941. Pihlblad contributed 46 years of uninterrupted official service to Bethany College, although he was offered and declined many positions in church, state, and education.

Pihlblad believed in the worth of teaching and learning. From the start, he and his colleagues sought to strengthen the Bethany educational programs. Accreditation was achieved in 1932, and in 1936, Bethany became a prestigious member of the National Association of Schools of Music. On campus, the Andrew Carnegie library was built in 1907. In 1905, the Swedish Pavilion at the St. Louis Exposition was moved to the campus and over the years it served numerous purposes, most notably as a center for art studies and exhibitions. Presser Hall—which the well-known music magazine *Etude* described as “one of the finest music buildings in America”—was completed in 1929.

Emory K. Lindquist (1908-1992) was Bethany's fourth president. He was a Lindsborg native, a Bethany alumnus, Rhodes Scholar, author of scholarly works including ten books, historian, biographer, distinguished professor and administrator, churchman, a pillar in Swedish-America, and an exemplary church and civic leader. Lindquist returned to Bethany College as a history professor in 1933, became acting president in 1941, and in 1943 was named president. Under his watch, Bethany survived war troubles, grew in post-war America, and improved its reputation. The ground was set for stellar institutional developments.

Through the years, 13 presidents have led Bethany College (there was no president in the first year, when J.A. Udden was the first instructor and the Rev. Dr. Carl Aaron Swensson was teacher of religion): the Rev. Edward Nelander, 1882-1888; the Rev. Dr. Carl A. Swensson, 1888-1904; the Rev. Dr. Ernst F. Pihlblad, 1904-1941; Dr. Emory K. Lindquist, 1941-1954; Dr. Robert A. L. Mortvedt, 1954-1959; the Rev. Dr. L. Dale Lund, 1959-1965; the Rev. Dr. G. Kenneth Andeen, 1965-1967; Dr. Arvin W. Hahn, 1967-1983; Dr. Peter J.



**Basketball is one of Bethany's 15 intercollegiate sports**

Ristuben, 1983-1990; Dr. Joel M. McKean, 1990-1996; the Rev. Dr. Christopher M. Thomforde, 1996-2001; Dr. Paul K. Formo, 2001- 2007; and Dr. Edward F. Leonard III, 2007 to present.

## Vital artistic traditions

The most nationally visible cultural offering at Bethany College is the college-community shared endeavor of the annual eight-day Messiah Festival of Music and Art, featuring Handel's "Messiah" oratorio and other music and art events, which began March 28, 1882. Bethany College and Lindsborg work together as important partners in this event.

On April 12, 1881, Carl Swensson was present in Rock Island and Moline for the first rendition there of Handel's great oratorio, "Messiah." Inspiration for the oratorio society there had been brought by Dr. Olof Olsson after visiting London. It didn't take long until Carl and his wife Alma soon had a chorus rehearsing in Lindsborg, and the first Lindsborg "Messiah" renditions were presented in March 1882 with orchestral help from Illinois. Who could have known the extent to which the Lindsborg tradition would grow, to become the major internationally-known festival and religious presentation?

Today it is obvious that music and visual arts have been central to the community's cultural life. Lindsborg people have been, and continue to be, active in creating and promoting the arts. Many community people were and are woodcarvers, painters, watercolorists, pen and ink artists, printmakers, potters, weavers, glassblowers, jewelry craftsmen, basket makers, and photographers. Many resident visual artists have been Bethany College faculty members, and achieved great renown, most notably the Swedish-American artist Birger Sandzén.

The Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery on Bethany's campus continues this tradition, and Lindsborg abounds



**Music at Bethany—Dr. Daniel Masterson gives lesson to Andrew Loges.**

with art galleries, craft shops and import gift shops. Lindsborg is also known for its Svensk Hyllningfest, held with the college's homecoming in odd-numbered years. This provides a unique opportunity to celebrate the Scandinavian-American heritage of the region.

### **Bethany College today**

Today Bethany College has an enrollment of approximately 550 students from 27 states and 16 foreign countries. It is a four-year, undergraduate liberal arts-based college with a blend of professional programs. Many of Bethany's graduates are known around the nation and world.

Bethany awards Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Music Education degrees, and offers 50 majors and concentrations, nine teaching endorsement areas, and 17 minors. The college's primary focus is on undergraduate degree programs which prepare students for specific professions as well as in traditional liberal arts disciplines.

Along with traditionally strong programs in education, music and business, Bethany has developed innovative, interdisciplinary programs. From criminal justice to art therapy, sports management to Christian ministry, Bethany's curriculum is able to prepare students for a variety of cutting-edge careers.

Yet the college continues to emphasize interactive, personalized learning and foster a friendly, intimate campus atmosphere. Its student-faculty ratio is 13:1, and Bethany students value hands-on professors who serve as mentors. Bethany's small class sizes were noted this year by the magazine U.S. News and World Report, which ranked Bethany as a top tier school in the Midwest region of its "Best Baccalaureate Colleges." Bethany was one of only two Kansas schools to be listed in the top tier.

More than half of Bethany students are members of one of the school's 15 junior varsity and varsity intercollegiate sports teams, and Bethany students regularly participate in service and internship opportunities. Last fall Bethany students, faculty and staff—including President Leonard—opened the 2007-2008 academic year with a service trip to Greensburg, Kansas, to assist with tornado-recovery efforts.

The physical plant of Bethany College has undergone recent renewal due to Campus Green, a multi-phase project to better provide the college and its students with a campus landscape that befits Bethany's high-quality education and the Kansas environment. Bethany's campus has gained new walkways, lighting, plantings, parking facilities, a promenade of flags and Stolz Circle, which features a cross-shaped foundation and Carl Aaron Swensson statue.

### **Looking to the future**

Currently, members of the Bethany College community are engaged in a strategic planning process to reexamine and recommend priorities for the college. To complement this process, and as part of his national President's Tour 2008, President Leonard is leading a series of Future Forums in which participants can hear, share and dream about Bethany's bright future.

Several major financial commitments have been made to support this bright future. On Nov. 16, President Leonard announced a \$1 million challenge grant that will make a transformational difference at Bethany, in Lindsborg and in the lives of students for generations to come. If the college raises \$1 million towards the project by June 30, 2008, Gerald "Bud" Pearson, a long-time friend of the college, will complete the challenge by donating a matching gift of \$1 million for the construction of a new Swedish chapel and welcome center on campus.

In February 2008, the college announced the sale of \$6 million of bonds, financed through the Kansas Independent College Financing Authority. Money from these bonds will fund three major building projects on campus, as well as provide funds necessary to complete the college's current Campus Green project.

The Augustana Lutheran Church ceased in 1962 with a national merger, but since then Bethany College has continued to build upon its church roots and identities as it serves the church in educational mission. Continuing through today and looking to the future, it is evident that the college, church, community, and people come together in a unique way in Lindsborg, Kansas. Members of the Augustana Heritage Association will experience these values, celebrations, and offerings while gathering at Bethany College this June.

*For more information about Bethany College, please visit [www.bethanylb.edu](http://www.bethanylb.edu).*

# Birger Sandzén, featured on Antiques Road Show, taught art at Bethany for 52 years

## Gathering welcome to visit Sandzén Memorial Gallery on Bethany campus

Birger Sandzén was born in Blidsberg, Sweden on February 5, 1871. He read a book by the founder of Bethany College, Dr. Carl Aaron Swensson, and being intrigued by life in America, he sent Swensson a letter requesting a position at Bethany College. Swensson replied, "Come at once."

As a professional artist, Sandzén produced an astonishing number of oils, watercolors, and prints that found their ways into literally thousands of homes and schools not only regionally but also nationally. The PBS Antiques Road Show has featured Sandzén three times. The Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery was built in 1958 to display his works but it is to be shared with that of others since Sandzén was always eager to encourage fellow artists and to make the community a cultural center. The Gathering VI registrants will have the opportunity to tour the Gallery during interest sessions and a reception Saturday night, June 21.



**Kansas Creek – linoleum cut, 1936 –left**

**The Old Homestead – oil on canvas, 1921 –below**

On September 4, 1894, Birger Sandzén began teaching at Bethany. He taught French, Swedish, German and Spanish, while assisting in the art and vocal music departments. During his early years in Lindsborg, he was the tenor soloist for the Bethany Oratorio Society. By 1899, he had become the principal art teacher at Bethany. Even though Sandzén intended to stay in America only a few years, he liked his new home so much that, except for two trips to Mexico and three to Europe, he remained in the United States the rest of his life, most of those sixty years being spent in Lindsborg, fifty-two as a teacher at Bethany College. He was a member of Bethany Lutheran Church, one of the principal churches of the Augustana Synod. He died in 1954.



# New history of Augustana Lutheran Church, first in nearly 50 years, to make its debut at Gathering VI in Lindsborg

An exciting new history of the former Augustana Lutheran Church will make its debut at Gathering VI of the Augustana Heritage Association (AHA) at Lindsborg, Kansas, from June 19-22. *The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America* is by two professors who are also ordained pastors from the Augustana tradition, Dr. Maria E. Erling and Dr. Mark A. Granquist. This is the first book since 1960 to chronicle the history of the Augustana Church founded in 1860 by Swedish immigrants.

Augsburg Fortress is publishing the 376-page paperback, which will be sold at the Lindsborg gathering at a reduced price of \$25. Copies may also be ordered from the AHA office in Chicago at this special price but the books will be shipped after the conclusion of the Lindsborg gathering.

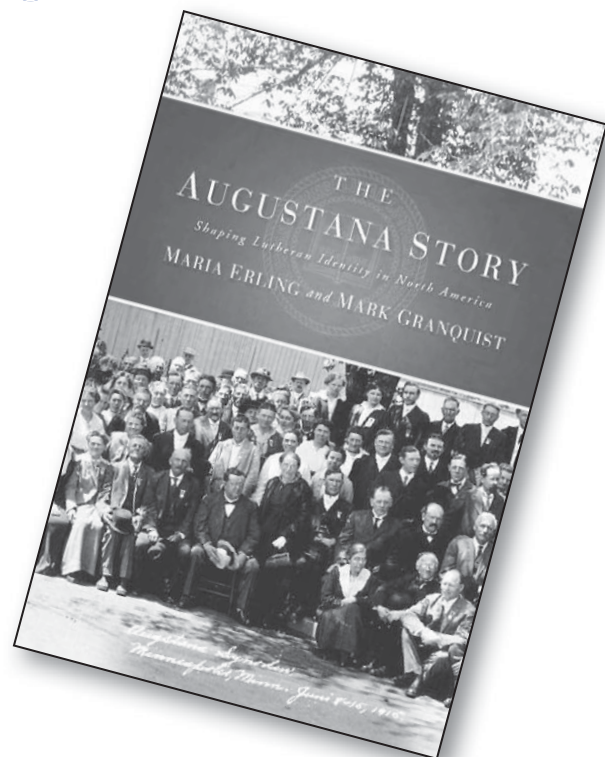
Dr. Maria Erling is Associate Professor of the History of Christianity in North America and Global Mission at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Dr. Mark Granquist is Visiting Associate Professor of Church History at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The Rev. Dr. Arland J. Hultgren, who chairs the AHA Projects and Publications Committee, has written the back cover of the new book. He is Asher O. and Carrie Nasby Professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Dr. Hultgren writes:

"The Augustana Story is a splendid and welcome achievement. Within this book, the story of a significant Lutheran tradition in North America is told with skill and insight by two fine historians. They tell the story to a wide readership for the first time. And they tell it once more to those who remember the Augustana Lutheran Church and continue its heritage in the wider church of today. Their memories will be supplemented, confirmed, revised, and even challenged.

"The story of Augustana is shown to be well worth telling, and it is told in interesting ways. The authors tell the story not simply from the inside, recounting names, dates, and events, but they set it within the larger social fabric, culture, and history of Sweden, the United States, and Canada and, furthermore, within the larger context of Lutheranism in North America. They make use of letters and archival materials that have never been drawn upon before and, by using them, fill us in on what was going on behind the scenes of official reports. Finally,



they give readers the "feel" for what it was like to grow up in the Augustana Lutheran Church.

"This is not only the culmination of several years of research and writing, but it sets forth an innovative and refreshing approach to denominational history telling.

"The admonition that we should "remember the days of old" and "consider the years long past" (Deuteronomy 32:7) sounds simple enough, but in order to fulfill it, most of us need help. Maria Erling and Mark Granquist are faithful guides, and we are deeply in their debt."

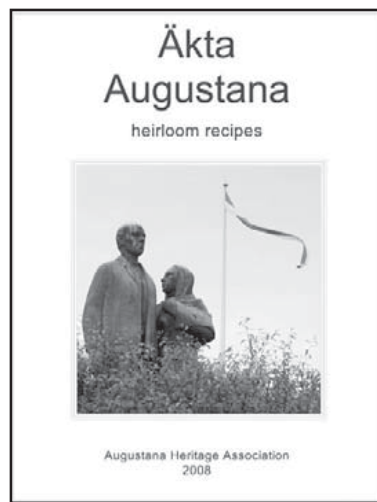
*The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America* by Maria E. Erling and Mark A. Granquist. Published in 2008 by Augsburg Fortress. Paper, 376 pages. \$29. On sale by the Augustana Heritage Association for \$25 plus \$5 for postage and handling. Order by mail from AHA, 1100 E. 55th St., Chicago, IL 60615-5299. Make checks payable to Augustana Heritage Association. If you have questions, phone Ruth Ann Deppe at (800) 635-1116, ext. 712. Mail orders will be sent following the AHA Gathering in June.

# New cookbook celebrating Augustana's heritage will go on sale for first time at Lindsborg

More than 200 recipes from the Swedish-American past of the Augustana Lutheran Church are included in *Äkta Augustana*, a new heritage cookbook that will be published just before the AHA Gathering VI in Lindsborg, Kansas, from June 19-22.

*Äkta Augustana* is Swedish for "authentic" or "genuine" Augustana. This attractive new book, with many pages of text and pictures as well as recipes, celebrates the food and family traditions of Augustana. The book will sell for \$20.

Two pastors and their wives, who are themselves "Äkta Augustana," have edited this welcome new cookbook with the help of people from the United States and Sweden, who have submitted recipes and stories. The Rev. Dr. Luther E. Lindberg and Adele Lindberg of Columbia, South Carolina, and the Rev. Curtis L. Olson and MariAn Olson of Easton, Pennsylvania have compiled this book which they say "gives a 21st century experience of a long and wonderful heritage." They add that "the heritage cookbook reminds us of some of



the things that the people who sat in the pews in our congregations experienced at home and in the church basement."

The recipes and stories come from many contributors who feel that it is important to carry on the tradition not just in our memories and words, but in our daily physical experiences. *Äkta Augustana* will make a fine gift for members of our families, especially children and grandchildren. Here is an opportunity to pass on part of a wonderful heritage that continues to live today in many of our homes.

*Äkta Augustana* by Luther and Adele Lindberg, Curtis and MariAn Olson. Published in 2008 by Augustana Heritage Association. Paper, \$20. Mail orders from AHA, 1100 E. 55th St., Chicago, IL 60615-5299. Make checks payable to Augustana Heritage Association. Add \$5 for postage and handling. Mail orders will be sent following the AHA Gathering in June. If you have questions, phone Ruth Ann Deppe at (800) 635-1116, ext. 712.



**Inlagd sill —left**

## Call for all former youth Caravaners to Gathering VI at Lindsborg

With a theme of "Children of Augustana," what could be more appropriate than a gathering of the "children" who were part of that special group of youth who were Caravaners. The last time Caravaners met officially was August of 1995. They met in connection with the national convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Minneapolis. Former Caravaners will be part of the Augustana Heritage Gathering in Lindsborg, Kansas, from June 19-22. The Midsummer Celebration in Lindsborg will take place during the Gathering, an event you need to experience.

As he was organizing the 1995 reunion, John Hult wrote that "the main purpose of the Caravaning program was to strengthen the youth program in our churches and to share our faith with both youth and

adults. At that time the tremendous impact it would have on the Caravaners themselves had not been fully understood". The coming event in Lindsborg will give us an opportunity to reflect on this aspect even more.

Pastor Carl Manfred, Dr. David Nelson and Birger Nelson have agreed to facilitate two different interest sessions. We are looking for former Caravaners who would be willing to share some of their experiences and the impact it made on their lives. Mostly, it will be an opportunity for a group of people who shared a special common experience to interact with each other some 45 plus years later.

*If you are interested and willing to participate, please contact Birger Nelson, 8107 Bayridge Ave, Gig Harbor, WA 98332. (253) 853-5905. [cbnelson@ft.newyorklife.com](mailto:cbnelson@ft.newyorklife.com)*

# Hartland Gifford, AHA Executive Director, writes

*The Rev. Hartland H. Gifford, Executive Director of the Augustana Heritage Association, writes to all members and friends:*

Serving as Executive Director of AHA is truly an honor. It is also very rewarding as it affords me the opportunity to work with some very talented and committed people. In addition, it allows me to do some thinking about the future.

As you know, I proposed at Gathering V at Chautauqua, the idea of forming an Augustana Lutheran Church Alliance (ALCA). A meeting was held in October 2007, at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, to determine the feasibility of such a venture. Representatives from a number of entities with ties to the former Augustana Church all agreed to continue our exploration of this idea. As you read these words, a small group is developing a proposal to come before the AHA

membership (as well as other entities involved). It is too early to forecast just what such an Alliance might look like, but I think it is safe to say that those working on the idea are fully committed to it.

This spring two new publications will see the light of day. The first is the eagerly-awaited history volume sponsored by AHA and published by Augsburg Fortress, *The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America* by Maria Erling and Mark Granquist. This will be a “must-have” book not only for individuals but also congregations with Augustana roots. The second book is *Äkta Augustana* edited by Curt and MariAn Olson, Luther and Adele Lindberg. (See pages 7 and 8 for more information.)

There are other exciting communication possibilities before us. As these are further defined and refined, readers of the *AHA Newsletter* will be the first to know.

## “If this is New York”—a hoary joke or more?

by Ronald T. Englund

The old story about Lindsborg that begins with a Swedish immigrant exclaiming “If this is New York,” may be a hoary joke to Lindsborg residents, but it brings laughter and makes an important point for many people around the world. I’ve heard it told and retold it on numerous occasions during our thirty years living overseas.

The Center for Kansas Studies of Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas, provides this version of the story in “Quotable Kansas”:

“Lindsborg, in McPherson County, was settled by Swedes and was so well publicized in Sweden that many Swedes knew it was a famous American city. Kenneth Davis, in his bicentennial history, *Kansas* (1976), tells the story of a Kansas-bound Swede who, landing in New York City, was overwhelmed by the hugeness and richness of the metropolis. ‘If this is New York,’ cried he in his native tongue, ‘what must Lindsborg be like!’”

I’ve also heard this told with the Swedish immigrant landing in Chicago and crying out, “If this is Chicago, what must Lindsborg be like.”

^ This old story makes a valid point about ethno-

centrism, the tendency to look at the world primarily from the perspective of your own culture. In London, England, while serving the Lutheran Church of St. Anne and St. Agnes, with members from more than 35 countries, I was involved in many discussions of ethnocentrism, which continues to be an issue in our lives. Humorous stories abound from various countries illustrating ethnocentrism and making people laugh over their blinkered views.

In my youth, growing up in a very “Swedish” Augustana congregation in Cambridge, Massachusetts, we held strong ethnocentric views. We often spoke about cities and towns by saying what seemed to be most significant about them—“We have a church there.” As a parochial Easterner, I grew up thinking that the most important communities in the United States were places with large numbers of Swedish immigrants—like Brockton and Worcester, Massachusetts; Hartford and New Britain, Connecticut; and Jamestown, New York. To many of us New Englanders these “important” places were all located in the northeastern United States, of course, where we had large congregations.



# Augustana Heritage Association

## *Gathering VI Lindsborg, Kansas*

Thursday - Sunday June 19 - 22, 2008

### REGISTRATION for *GATHERING VI*

*Please print.*

#### Participant #1

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary/medical/special needs: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Participant #2

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary/medical/special needs: \_\_\_\_\_

**Attach a separate sheet for additional participants**

#### CONFERENCE REGISTRATION (see description on next page)

- |   |                              |              |
|---|------------------------------|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Postmarked by May 15, 2008                 | \$175 x _____ participants = | Total: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Postmarked after May 15, 2008              | \$195 x _____ participants = | Total: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events only registration (snacks/no meals) | \$ 95 x _____ participants = | Total: _____ |

#### HOUSING

- ☐ I/We will be staying **off-campus** and will make my/our own reservations.
- Location and city \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Please arrange **on-campus** housing at Bethany College for me/us.
- I/We will need on-campus housing on [please check all the apply]
- Thursday      Friday      Saturday
- |  |                  |              |
|--|------------------|--------------|
| ○ Single (one participant in room, not shared)     | \$35/night/room  | Total: _____ |
| ○ Double (two participants in room)                | \$40/night/room  | Total: _____ |
| ○ Reserving entire suite (one or two participants) | \$70/night/suite | Total: _____ |

Roommate or suitemate preference(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Mail completed registrations to:

Augustana Heritage Association  
Bethany Lutheran Church  
320 N. Main  
Lindsborg, KS 67456

Payment to *Augustana Heritage Association* must accompany registration.

Total payment enclosed by check: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment charged to Visa, Mastercard, Discover

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Security code (last three digits on back of card) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration:**

The registration fee includes all full-group and small-group sessions, program costs, Thursday evening meal, noon and evening meals on Friday and Saturday, Sunday noon meal, and all coffee/snack breaks. Events only registration includes all of the aforementioned except meals. No refunds will be given for meals not attended. No partial registration is available. Cancellations will be honored up to June 10, 2008 and all but \$25 will be refunded.

**Off-campus Housing:** See attached list. All reservations will be made by individual participants. Remember to mention Augustana Heritage Association when making reservations. Breakfast meals will be “on your own” for off-campus housing.

**Lodging at Bethany College:**

Lodging at Bethany College will be provided in the campus residence halls. Housing for the Gathering will be provided in suite-style residence halls; two rooms share one bathroom. Each room has two single beds. A pillow, blanket, bed linens, bath towel and washcloth will be provided. An entire suite may be reserved by a single registration (one participant or two participants) who do not want to share a bathroom but the cost will be \$70 per night for the whole suite.

Adequate on-campus housing is anticipated. Campus housing will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Bethany College will **not** provide alarm clocks, hair dryers, televisions, fans, radios, irons or ironing boards.

For those who stay on campus, a continental breakfast will be provided. For on-campus housing questions, please contact the Bethany College Office of Summer Programs at (785) 227-3380, ext. 8158. Check-in for campus housing will be Thursday, June 19, 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Check-out will be 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and from 12:30 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. on the morning following your reservation date(s). If other arrangements need to be made for check-in or check-out, please call the number above. Location for checking-in and out will be at Messiah Lutheran Church.

**Your Reunion Groups:**

College: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

College: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Seminary: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Seminary Chorus: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Caravaners: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Choir:   soprano                     alto                     tenor                     bass

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to help organize or host your reunion group? \_\_\_\_\_

Specify which interest group \_\_\_\_\_

As reunion groups are identified and formed, you will be notified as time permits. Reunion group events will be posted at registration.

---

**Please provide additional names and addresses of those who may be interested in attending.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# AHA Gathering VI at Lindsborg

The local committee is excited about the variety of worship, fellowship, and entertainment experiences planned for Gathering VI, scheduled to coincide with the Midsummer's Day Festival in Lindsborg that offers a taste of Swedish heritage. "Save-the-Date" cards have been sent to remind everyone of the upcoming event. The materials for registration, on-campus and off campus housing, and local area attractions are included in this newsletter and can also be found on the Augustana Heritage web site ([augustanaheritage.org](http://augustanaheritage.org)). Blocks of rooms for off-campus housing are being held for AHA from July 1, 2007 through April 15, 2008. To secure the block room rate, identify oneself as an AHA (Augustana Heritage Association) participant. Negotiating other rates at any area hotel is an option. A more detailed program will be published in The Augustana Heritage Newsletter in the spring of 2008. To ask questions of the local planning committee, send an e-mail to [AHAgathering@aol.com](mailto:AHAgathering@aol.com) or write AHA at Bethany Lutheran Church, 320 North Main, Lindsborg, KS 67456. Additional information will be posted on the AHA web site as plans are developed. Register early to receive monthly e-mail updates on Gathering VI that will be sent after January 2008.

## A Sampling of Off-campus Lodging for AHA

### Lindsborg

Coronado Motel & RV Park	305 Harrison	(785) 227-3943	(800) 747-2793
Movies 'N More RV Park	236 Cole	(785) 227-2729	
Rosberg House B&B [5]	103 E. State	(785) 227-4189	(888) 215-5234
Seasons of the Fox B&B [4]	505 N. Second	(785) 227-2549	(800) 756-3596
Swedish Country Inn [18]	112 W. Lincoln	(785) 227-2985	(800) 231-0266
Viking Motel	446 Harrison	(785) 227-3336	(800) 326-8390

For more information, go to [www.lindsborg.org](http://www.lindsborg.org) or call the Lindsborg Chamber of Commerce at (785) 227-3706 or toll free (888) 227-2227.

### McPherson

Best Western	2211 E. Kansas	(620) 241-5343	(888) 841-0038
Days Inn	2300 E. Kansas	(620) 241-3690	(800) DAYSINN
Holiday Inn Express [40]	2302 E. Kansas	(620) 241-5566	
Red Coach Inn	2111 E. Kansas	(620) 241-6960	(800) 362-0072
Best Value Inn	2110 E. Kansas	(620) 241-8881	

For more information, go to [www.mcphersonks.org](http://www.mcphersonks.org) or call the McPherson Convention & Visitors Bureau at (620) 241-3340 or toll free (800) 324-8022. These McPherson hotels are directly off I-135 and old Hwy. 81 and within a 15–20 minute drive of Lindsborg.

### Salina

Baymont Inn and Suites	745 W. Schilling Rd.	(785) 493-9800
Candlewood Suites	2650 Planet Ave.	(785) 823-6939
Comfort Inn	1820 W. Crawford	(785) 826-1711
Courtyard by Marriott [50]	3020 Riffel Drive	(785) 309-1300
Country Inn & Suites [20]	2760 S. Ninth	(785) 827-1271
Fairfield Inn	1740 W. Crawford	(785) 823-6900
Hampton Inn [50]	401 W. Schilling Rd.	(785) 823-9800
Holiday Inn	1616 W. Crawford	(785) 823-1739

For more information, go to [www.salinakansas.org](http://www.salinakansas.org) or call the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce at (785) 827-9301 or toll free (877) SalinaKS [(877) 725-4625]. These Salina hotels are directly off I-135 and Hwy. 81 and within a 15–20 minute drive of Lindsborg.

The brackets with a number indicate those hotels where blocks of rooms are reserved for the Augustana Heritage Association. Reservations may be made after July 1, 2007 or until April 15, 2008. Identify your reservation as being an Augustana Heritage Association participant since group rates have been negotiated. However, negotiating your own rates at any area hotel is certainly an option.

# Join the Augustana Heritage Association

## The Value of Membership in AHA

By becoming a member of the Augustana Heritage Association you join with a large group of people from all over the United States and Canada who are vitally interested in continuing the spirit of Augustana.

AHA is concerned not only with the past as it defines and promotes the heritage of Augustana, but also the present and future as its members faithfully live out their witness in the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

An individual membership is only \$35 for two years. A two-year membership for a household is \$50. Also congregations, institutions and agencies of the church may join for \$100.

Your membership, as well as any additional tax deductible gifts, will enable AHA to be an energetic organization, helping people not only to recognize the contributions of the Augustana Lutheran Church in the past, but to bring Augustana's faithful and dedicated perspective to the church of today and tomorrow.

As a member you receive The Augustana Heritage Association NEWSLETTER which is published twice a year, Spring and Fall.

A Membership Application form is provided in this Newsletter. If you have not joined for the 2007-2008 period, JOIN AHA TODAY! Detach the membership application provided and mail it today.

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### AUGUSTANA HERITAGE ASSOCIATION 2007-2008 Membership Application

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Individual membership(s).... @ \$35/ person \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Family membership(s).....@ \$50/ family \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Congregations/Institutions.....@ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Also we wish to give a tax deductible gift to AHA

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25    \_\_\_\_\_ \$50    \_\_\_\_\_ \$100    other \$ \_\_\_\_\_    Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Augustana Heritage Association

Please enroll the following membership of AHA for 2007-2008:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name (spouse) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City & State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Detach application form and send to:  
Augustana Heritage Association  
1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, IL 60615-5199

# "Island of hope" became "island of tears" for Augustana immigrant family

by Ronald T. Englund

Ellis Island has often been called both an "island of hope and an island of tears" for the thousands of immigrants who entered the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. It was a lifelong "island of tears" for an Augustana family from Sweden that settled in Massachusetts just before World War I. Hildegard Hallgren is part of the previously unknown story of America's Immigrant Hospital chronicled in *Forgotten Ellis Island*, a new book and documentary film by award-winning filmmaker Lorie Conway. The moving story of this long-forgotten hospital, twenty-two buildings crammed on to two small islands near the Statue of Liberty, was published in 2007 by Smithsonian under the imprint of HarperCollins Publishers. Conway's hour-long documentary film also had its premiere at Ellis Island last October.

Sven Johan Hallgren, a cabinet maker, and his wife, Hilda, emigrated to the United States in 1914 and lived in Quincy, Massachusetts until 1921. They were members of Salem Lutheran Church, a former Augustana congregation that is now Faith Lutheran Church in Quincy. The Hallgrens, who by then had three children, Hildegard, Conrad and Linnea, returned to Sweden in 1921 to sell their family home in Blekinge. Conrad returned to Massachusetts in 1923. In 1924, the rest of the Hallgren family set sail for New York in order to settle permanently in America. When they arrived at Ellis Island, their ordeal began. It is recounted by Lorie Conway on pages 128 and 129 of this first book on the immigrant hospital, which was considered "America's first line of defense against immigrant-borne disease." Hundreds of thousands of immigrants were examined

and treated at the hospital. Those considered feeble of body or mind were deported.

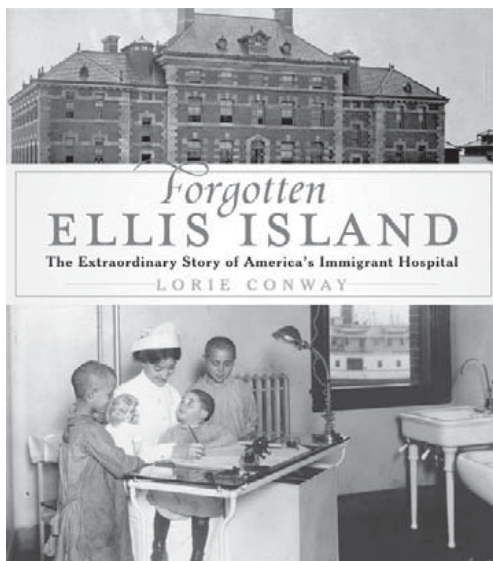
When the Hallgrens arrived at New York, Linnea, then eight years old, recalled that her sister, Hildegard, 15, was diagnosed as mentally deficient. Lorie Conway quotes Linnea in her book: "We got through our tests and we were all ready to land. But they found fault with my sister...they said she had eye trouble...and then also from her crying and being so nervous all the time they declared that she was intellectually subnormal." Hildegard was placed in the dreaded category of "feeble-minded."

The whole family was detained at Ellis Island for two weeks, without any contact with Hildegard who was kept in the immigrant hospital. Linnea, a citizen because she was born in the United States, was allowed to leave in the care of her twenty-year-old brother, Conrad, who was then living in Quincy. Seven weeks later, Hildegard and her parents were on a steamship back to Sweden. Lorie Conway quotes Hilda Hallgren who wrote in her diary: "When we landed in Goteborg we were homeless.

We had sold our home and all our possessions before we left for the U.S. We now live in hope that God will direct us so that our separation with our children in America will not be too long." Two years later, Mr. and Mrs. Hallgren decided to return to the United States, but Hildegard remained in Sweden. The Hallgrens had appealed the decision, which seemed unjust, and even wrote to President Coolidge asking for help. It was all to no avail, and the

family was never again united. Ellis Island was truly an "island of tears" for the Hallgrens.

Sven Johan and Hilda Hallgren made regular trips to Sweden through the years and retired there. Conrad,



Hildegard (seated left) with her parents in 1943

continued on Page 25

# A Prophet in his own Country

## Oscar A. Benson (1891–1972)—Augustana's tenth president

by David L. Lindberg



**Oscar Benson in 1927**  
Pastor, Bethlehem Lutheran,  
Ridgeway, Pa.

From the hills of Pennsylvania and the spartan halls of Upsala College, then in Kenilworth, New Jersey, came the man who became the tenth president of the Augustana Lutheran Church, the Rev. Dr. Oscar A. Benson. He loved Augustana, his “home country,” but he loved all of American Lutheranism even more. He was president of the Church from 1951 until 1959 while Augustana members debated the relative merits of remaining with the other church

bodies in the American Lutheran Conference, of which he had also been the president. Early on, following the decision of the June 1952 Augustana Synod meeting that any proposed Lutheran merger must include invitations to all other Lutheran groups in America, he led the walkout of Augustana's delegates in Minneapolis on Nov. 10, 1952. “We have only one door through which we can go, and we shall do that as graciously as we can,” he said.<sup>1</sup> E. E. Ryden described that event in these words, “It was a solemn moment, and everyone present sensed its significance as the Augustana representatives arose and walked quietly from the conference chamber while the other committee members sat in silence.”<sup>2</sup>

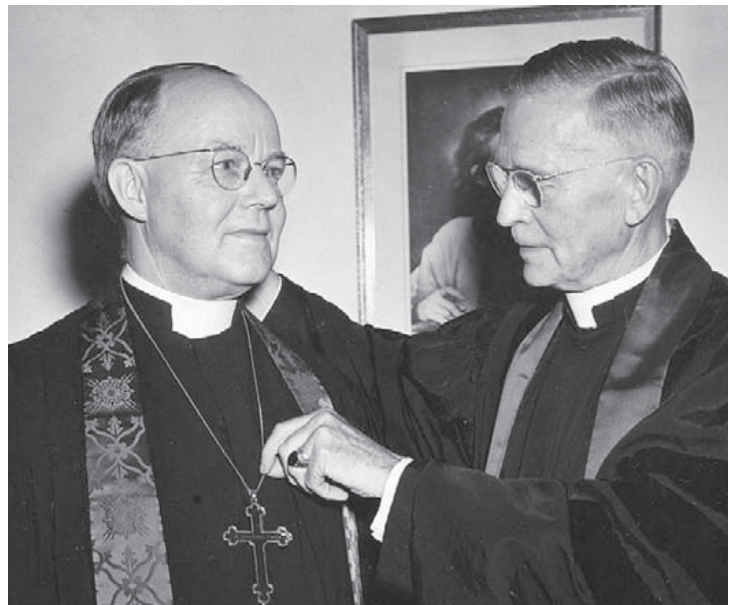
But still, as late as 1958, he was being quoted as saying that “the day may not be too far away” when 17 Lutheran bodies will merge. And he also warned, “Any delay in the negotiations may prove to be fatal.”<sup>3</sup> Johannes Knudsen summed up Oscar Benson's role in merger negotiations as the person who sparked the efforts toward unity while Conrad Bergendoff was “most respected for his wisdom” and P. O. Bersell “wore the mantle of an emeritus.”<sup>4</sup>

Upset with the apparent recalcitrance of some of the possible merger partners, Oscar Benson identified the obstacles to Lutheran merger as provincialism and vested interests. “Our difficulties are largely psychological,” he said.<sup>5</sup> Were it not for his belief that all the merger partners were as Lutheran as he was, these remarks could

be read as unfairly judgmental and even hypocritical. But for Oscar Benson it must have seemed that in the Augustana heritage of being a prophet, it was his responsibility to point out the shortcomings of his own countrymen, the Lutherans in America.

He preached many sermons and wrote many articles about social consciousness and the voice of prophecy in the Augustana Church. One essay, written in 1968 for the 100th anniversary of Salem Lutheran on the south side of Chicago, the congregation that he served the longest (1931-42), he credited his presidential predecessor, P. O. Bersell, with insisting that Christian citizens must provide the voice of prophecy on the day's issues. Toward that end, Augustana's first “Commission on Morals and Social Relations” was established in 1937, in order to bring proposals to the annual Synod meetings. Such social issues as alcoholism, divorce, and gambling were addressed. The Augustana church twice approved the proposed Ludlow amendment to the U. S. Constitution which, if it had been enacted, would have given the American people, except in case of invasion by armed forces, sole power by a national referendum to declare war or to engage in warfare overseas.<sup>6</sup>

Oscar Benson was himself a pacifist, speaking out against war as early as 1919 and continuing into the Vietnam Era. He stood up for the rights of the American



**President Emeritus P.O. Bersell, transfers  
pectoral cross to President Benson in 1952.**

Indians, declaring that it was not just the American Negroes - the term used then - who were being unfairly segregated in society. Missionaries, he maintained, could not be effective if their host countries were exploiting the people among whom they worked. "Talk to our missionaries," he urged, "they'll tell you that they themselves will soon be banished from Africa if western nations continue to keep Africans under economic slavery."<sup>7</sup> He noted with considerable satisfaction that "quite some time before the Supreme Court ruling in 1954, the policy of desegregation had been approved by our church and implemented in many cities by congregations, including Salem in Chicago."<sup>8</sup>

Oscar Benson believed that there was also a unique Augustana administrative structure, although this was not as easy to document as Augustana's social consciousness. Again he credits P. O. Bersell who demonstrated "that efficiency can be effected without any impairment to democracy, and in fact that efficiency based on autocracy is not long-lived."<sup>9</sup> In Oscar Benson's own book on polity, he warns against any kind of domineering or intolerance on the part of deacons and trustees in a congregation. "Before the report of a nominating committee is adopted by a congregation, the report may always be amended by nominations from the floor. This privilege of a congregation is inalienable."<sup>10</sup> His criteria for appropriate congregational leaders included character, ability, humility, willingness to learn, alertness, industry, and the courage to express well-founded convictions. He warned against those who seemed too shrewd as well as those who were chosen simply for their piety.<sup>11</sup> In 1962, he wrote that his goal as an administrator was to try to unify the Augustana Lutheran Church and to remove provincial attitudes of superiority or inferiority. At conventions he wanted all delegates to be heard politely "so that anyone might differ with me without feeling timid or apologetic about doing so."<sup>12</sup>

That Oscar Benson was extremely fair and democratic in his administration is evidenced by his regular election to leadership positions. Serving as vice-president in both the New York and Illinois Conferences on a part time basis and then full time in the Illinois Conference and the national church, it was only because of the mandatory retirement rule of age 67 that he ended his Augustana presidency. In addition, he also served terms as president of the American Lutheran Conference and the National Lutheran Council. Perhaps one of the best assessments of Oscar Benson's leadership style is in a congratulatory letter to him from John Stensvaag of the Lutheran Free Church. After mentioning Oscar Benson's fearlessness, forthright leadership and his sense of the oneness of the church, he adds, "You have remained a simple and sincere follower."<sup>13</sup>

It was during Oscar Benson's term as president of the National Lutheran Council that I had my only



**President Benson leaves for world tour of Augustana mission fields in 1954**

personal experience with his democratic, delegating style, albeit from afar. In 1953, the Eisenhower state department encouraged general public support of the United Nations by holding a United Nations Day. The National Lutheran Council had accepted membership on the Council of Member Organizations, and Oscar Benson asked Clarence Nelson, pastor of the Augustana Lutheran Church in Washington, D.C., to attend as the representative for the National Lutheran Council. "I don't know too much about the importance or purpose of the meeting, but naturally I am anxious that we shall not fail to do our part in promoting anything that is worthwhile," he explained. "There has been a great deal of criticism of UN policy and procedure, but the consensus of Christian leaders seems to be that the United Nations program deserves our support."<sup>14</sup> In what I experienced as Augustana's democratic administrative style, Clarence Nelson, my intern supervisor, asked me to go in his stead, saying 'I get to go to the White House every now and again, so why don't you go in my place?' In the rose garden I heard speeches by the president



**President Benson, with his wife, Elfie, at 1959 retirement dinner, Hartford, Ct.**

and John Foster Dulles, in addition to briefings in the nearby State Department building. Adding to my report to Oscar Benson, Clarence Nelson heartily concurred in the recommendation that a proclamation from either the Council or from its president be read from the pulpit and/or published in the periodicals of the organization.<sup>15</sup>

Oscar Benson was obviously not just a child of Augustana, but also a product of a much wider culture. He earned his Ph.D from the University of Pittsburgh in sociology with a dissertation entitled "Problems in the Accommodation of the Swedes to American Culture." His Master of Arts degree from Augustana College was in geology. He was a member of the American Sociological Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. When time permitted he directed choirs, played the violin, wrote poetry, did oil painting, enjoyed photography and handball. If there was anything he was not, it was that he was NOT provincial!

Finally, the question must be asked, as a prophet in his own country, was he without honor? At the time of his retirement from the presidency of the church in 1959, he was made "Honorary President" because P. O. Bersell was already "President Emeritus" and apparently Augustana could have only one of those! In his book, *Lutheranism in North America—1914-1970*, E. Clifford Nelson does not mention Oscar Benson, perhaps because the Lutheran merger talks began prior to his presidency of Augustana and concluded after he was no longer president. And no doubt many in the American Lutheran Conference sensed more of rejection than a courageous call for a wider unity. And again, as modest as he was and as candid as he was, Oscar Benson did not always get the praise that he deserved. His daughter, Hilvie

Benson Ostrow, now of Golden Valley, Minnesota, put it best. At his retirement dinner during the Augustana Synod meeting in Hartford, Connecticut, with 600 people present, she said about her father, "Beneath a somewhat cool exterior there beats a very tender and sentimental heart."

*Dr. David L. Lindberg of Newport Beach, California, is Professor Emeritus of World Mission and World Religion, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.*

*Ronald Englund comments: I'm grateful to David Lindberg for this fine article about Oscar Benson whom I knew rather well and always admired. He was my pastor at Trinity Lutheran, Worcester, Massachusetts, when I graduated from Upsala College in 1950 and during my first year at Augustana Seminary. He served Trinity from 1949 to 1951, when he was elected Augustana's president. I can still remember his powerful and fearless preaching when I was home during summer vacations and holidays. My father, Eskil G. Englund, was New England Conference president with offices in Worcester, and our family was often together socially with Oscar and Elfie Benson. Dr. Benson, as we called him, always had an old baseball glove, bat and ball in the trunk of his car. He loved to play and I remember enjoyable times when he hit baseballs to me and others in the field. In 1954, at the time I was ordained, Dr. Benson, then president of the Church, said to me, "Ronald, now that you're ordained, you can call me Oscar." I could never quite do it.*

## Endnotes

1. W. Kent Gilbert, *Commitment to Unity*, 1988, p. 99
2. *Lutheran Companion*, Nov. 26, 1952.
3. *Daytona Beach Evening Star*, April 24, 1958.
4. Johannes Knudsen. *The Formation of the Lutheran Church in America*, Fortress Press, 1978. p. 25.
5. W. Kent Gilbert, *ibid*.
6. Oscar A. Benson, "Social Consciousness in the Augustana Church," Roger Carlson, ed., *Century Plus*, 1968. pp. 19-20.
7. Religious News Service report of Oscar Benson's address to the New England Conference, 4-25-56, p. 8.
8. Oscar A. Benson, *Social Consciousness*, p. 21
9. *op cit*, p. 19.
10. Oscar A. Benson, *Deacons and Trustees: A guide for Church Board Members*, Augustana Book Concern, 1954.
11. *op cit*, p. 5
12. Letter to G. E. Arden, 3/5/62, Oscar A Benson collection, ELCA Archives.
13. Letter from Stensvaag to Benson, 5/22/1959, Oscar A. Benson Collection, ELCA Archives.
14. Letter from Benson to Nelson, 5/21/53, Oscar A. Benson collection, ELCA Archives.
15. Letter from Lindberg and Nelson to Benson, 9/25/1953, Oscar A. Benson collection, ELCA Archives.

# Augustana's oldest living pastor

## Martin Ringstrom will celebrate his 100th birthday this year

by Janet Monson

On a cold Tuesday morning in February 2008, Martin Theodore Ringstrom was prepared to be interviewed at his home in Lindsborg, Kansas. He had brought out memorabilia - a picture from 1931 of the entire Augustana Seminary student body including the faculty and staff; a picture of his seminary class of 1934, a copy of an Augustana Heritage Newsletter; a bulletin from a service celebrating his and Herbert Johnson Sr.'s 65th anniversary of their ordination; and a collection of reminiscences "at this stage of life and earlier." Being the gentleman, he also had coffee and cookies ready.

His ninety-nine years have not dulled his memories of the former Augustana Synod. Ringstrom recalled that being a pastor in the Augustana Synod was good because the synod was small enough that one could actually be a delegate to its national annual conventions. He regretted not being able to be a delegate after Augustana merged into larger Lutheran bodies. He served as a convention delegate every three or four years. In Augustana, closeness developed between pastors and congregations. Synod conventions were gatherings where everyone knew your name, "just like a family."

Martin felt that he made an impact at the convention on two separate occasions. The first was when the idea of confession was brought to the floor. The proponents wanted the Augustana Synod to adopt a stance on confession similar to the Roman Catholics; a confession was to be private between the pastor and the confessor and the confession could not be divulged for any reason. Martin reasoned that if an innocent man was to be punished and he, as pastor, had heard a confession exonerating the innocent man, the confession should not be held in confidence. He stood up at the convention and expounded on his conviction that a minister should not be bound by an act of confession. Dr. Conrad Bergendoff and Dr. Karl Mattson supported his rationale. Generally speaking, Martin agrees with private confessions not being divulged but he claims that extenuating circumstances can occur.

The second instance was when a change was proposed to make the convention a biennial occurrence rather than annual. The proposal was voted on and accepted when many of the delegates were not present. The vote was also taken at a time not properly identified by the established agenda. Martin noted both of these and spoke with Dr. E. E. Ryden, editor of the Lutheran Companion. Dr. Ryden told him to speak with the Augustana Synod President, Dr. P. O.

Bersell, about reconsidering the proposal. President Bersell asked Martin about the motivation for this reassessment—not following parliamentary procedure or malcontent—and he was assured it was the former. The proposal was reconsidered at the appointed time in the agenda and the proposal was defeated. Annual conventions continued.

When Martin Ringstrom reflects on fond memories of the Augustana Synod, he mentioned individuals, classmates, professors, fellow pastors, and personal friends from congregations. He related that his confirmation pastor, L. J. Fihn, truly stood out. His confirmation class met on Saturday mornings. Seven boys sat in the front row and six girls sat in the second row. Martin presumed this

placement removed the temptation of the boys playing with the girls' long braids. Pastor Fihn asked each student for his/her full name, including one's middle name. One of the boy's middle names was Emerald. Another classmate said, "mine's Topaz" which brought noisy laughter. One girl's middle name was unusual (Okurra) since its root was in her Japanese ancestry. The confirmands thought this whole ordeal was hilarious but later, being guilt-ridden Swedes, they became ashamed. During the next session, the class was well behaved. Pastor Fihn apologized for thinking poorly of the children who were now mannerly.

Martin sang the first lines of a familiar hymn, "Lord with Glowing Heart, I Praise Thee." When it was sung



*continued on Page 22*

# “How Great Thou Art” travels around the world

## A hymn story with the ingredients of a detective novel

by Per Harling



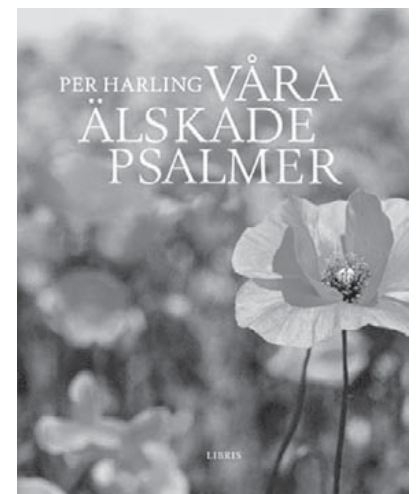
*The Rev. Per Harling of the Church of Sweden was a featured speaker at the 2006 AHA Gathering in Chautauqua, New York. His Swedish Folk Dance Mass, “Join in the Dancing,” was used in a celebration of Holy Communion. He also gave a major address on hymn writer Lina Sandell as well as a presentation on Swedish hymns, old and new. In 2007 his latest book, “Våra Älskade Psalmer” (Our*

*Beloved Hymns), was published by Libris Förlag of Örebro, Sweden. Now in its second printing, this popular book tells about hymns, old and new, that are popular in Sweden. We are pleased to publish his chapter on the amazing story of a world favorite hymn, “How Great Thou Art.” We are most grateful to Libris for permission to reprint this chapter. We are also grateful to Norman A. Hjelm, former director and senior editor of Fortress Press, for translating it into English.*

*Since September 2007, Per Harling and his wife, Ingrid, are serving as pastor and assistant at Church of Sweden congregations in Geneva, Lausanne and Bern, Switzerland. They serve the 5,000 Swedes who live this part of Switzerland.*

During 1999 and 2000, I journeyed with a small television team to eleven countries on four continents in an effort to uncover congregational singing throughout global and growing Christianity. The result was ten programs for Swedish TV2, “The Whole World Sings.” On these trips we encountered all sorts of churches and communities. Not least was this so in Russia where we filmed one of the series’ programs. In the spring of 2000, we arrived in Moscow, a metropolis where billboards for McDonald’s and Sony are every bit as prominent as the shining cupolas—old and now often brand new—of increasingly vital Orthodox churches. Naturally we participated in many Orthodox liturgies, but we also visited congregations that were new in this country where expressions of Christian faith were more or less forbidden for so long a time.

In one of Moscow’s drab and depressing suburbs, we searched with great difficulty for an



### Augustana’s oldest living pastor *continued from Page 21*

on a Saturday morning during Catechism class, tears streamed down Pastor Fihn’s furrowed cheeks and into his beard. Martin wondered whether “Will I ever love the Lord as much as Pastor Fihn does?”

Martin T. Ringstrom, ordained in 1934, now 74 years ago, is the oldest living pastor ordained by the former Augustana Synod. As Martin puts it “the rest have gone to heaven.” He and other clergy ordained by Augustana before or in 1943 will be recognized at the 10:30 am service on Sunday, June 22, at Presser Hall, Bethany College, during Gathering VI of the Augustana Heritage Association in Lindsborg. Members of the community are encouraged to attend this celebratory service.

Martin was born November 9, 1908, in Bertrand, Nebraska, the son of Elmer and Emma Marie (Anderson) Ringstrom. He graduated from Augustana College (1931) and Augustana Seminary (1934), Rock Island, Illinois. He married the former Louise Segerhammar in Lindsborg,

Kansas, on June 18, 1942, and together they had four children. Louise died in 2001.

Martin served as pastor of six Lutheran congregations during his ministry - St. John’s in Helena, Montana; Highlands in Denver, Colorado; First in Manhattan, Kansas; Bethel in Omaha, Nebraska; Messiah in Bay City, Michigan; and Holy Trinity in Niles, Michigan. In 1961, he served for a year as president of Luther Junior College, Wahoo, Nebraska. In addition, he served on several church-related boards. He retired from the ministry in July 1973.

Martin lives independently in Lindsborg and is an active member of Bethany Lutheran Church. He continues to write articles, once or twice a year, for the Lindsborg News Record. His memory is truly an Augustana treasure and one that all of the “Children of Augustana” can admire.

*Janet Monson of McPherson, Kansas, is one of the co-chairs of the committee planning the AHA Gathering VI in Lindsborg.*

apartment in a high rise where we had been told a small house church would be worshipping just that evening. When we heard the singing outside one of the doors we knew that we were in the right place.

Since we were expected, we entered and were welcomed by the fifteen-women strong house church that met every week in the small parlor of the woman who led the congregation. None of them knew any language other than Russian and, of course, no one on our TV-team knew a word of that language. But we were warmly invited in to share in their fellowship's worship which in large measure consisted in joyful, loud, and spontaneous singing. We attempted to hum along as well as we could. The songs were completely unknown to us, but the music was simple. They were accompanied by a guitar.

Then, after a short prayer, the women began a song which we recognized immediately. The guitarist couldn't quite get it, so I took her guitar, found the right key, and began to play along. The song they were singing was our well-known hymn from Mönsterås, *O store Gud (How Great Thou Art)*! They sang in Russian, we in Swedish, and suddenly we found the kind of community that transcends all linguistic barriers. We sang with a common understanding of God's greatness—in one melody but in two languages.

The women were astonished that we knew their *Russian* song. We tried to explain that the hymn actually was Swedish, but they really did not understand what we meant since for them this was one of the most well-known spiritual songs of Russia. I could understand this, for the spreading of this hymn from Mönsterås in Sweden to Russia and throughout the world is a story with the ingredients of a detective novel.

### Broberg becomes a pastor

The text to Psalm 11 in *Den svenska Psalmboken* (The Swedish Hymnal, 1986; No 856 in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*) was written by Pastor Carl Boberg (1859-1940), born and raised in Mönsterås near Kalmar on the east coast of Småland. After having tried his hand both at being a sailor and a wood-working teacher, Boberg took a two-year course at a mission school in Kristinehamn, Värmland, and in 1881, he became a pastor (*predikant*) in the free church mission congregation in Mönsterås. In his first year, his salary was, to say the least, meager: one crown per day! Gradually, however, he moved on to become editor of the paper *Sanningsvitnet* (*Truth's Witness*), an Evangelical-Lutheran weekly for the inner mission. And subsequently he found himself more and more involved in political activities. At first Boberg moved in radical, liberal circles, but with time, he adopted more clearly conservative ("höger") positions. These activities and positions ultimately brought him into the Swedish Parliament, the *Riksdag*, where from 1912-1931 he was a

conservative member, representing the southern county of Kalmar in what was then the upper chamber.

As a youth, Carl Boberg had written down his observations, often crushing, concerning events and persons in Mönsterås and its environs in satirical verse. The principal of the mission school in Kristinehamn noticed Carl's writing gifts and requested him to write texts for a planned songbook. Accordingly, in 1881, a number of texts by Carl Boberg were published. He was then 22 years old, having just passed the examinations for service as a pastor.

During his life, hundreds of songs came from his pen. Not seldom he wrote songs during times when he suffered, for varying reasons, personal adversity. The hymnologist Oscar Lövgren wrote of Boberg, "The question is if his best songs did not come from just such times." Boberg himself described this, "Songs are born in sorrow, but in songs joy is found."

The background of Swedish Psalm 11, however, is not one of such sorrow. We will let Oscar Lövgren give the account:

On a warm summer day, probably in 1885, Boberg together with a group of others from Mönsterås had participated in a sewing-circle meeting in Kronobäck, three kilometers from the town. Nature was at her fairest; it was a radiant afternoon. On the way home, a thunder cloud suddenly appeared on the horizon. Soon it burst open. Sharp lightening struck through the air. Strong winds swept over the fields and their billowing rye. There were hard claps of thunder. Rain came down in cold, fresh showers. But in a while, the thunderstorm was over. A rainbow shone across the sky.

When Boberg came home and opened the windows he saw before him the gulf of Mönsterås like a blank mirror. From the other side of the water he heard the song of thrushes in the Kråkerum forest. There had been a burial that afternoon and in a short while, he heard the iron tones of the church bells coming through the still evening.

Thus there had been a long series of impressions and pictures from the riches of nature. During the course of the evening, these took shape in Boberg's lyrical mind as the well-known poem, *O store Gud*. The roar of the thunder, the murmur of the wind, the beat of the rain, the glistening of the rainbow, and the clang of the church bells all shine through this poetic creation. And so was produced perhaps more a lyrical nature poem than a spiritual song for worship. In the March 13, 1886, edition of *Mönsterås Tidningen*, the local newspaper, this poem was published for the first time.

At first the song had nine verses, but when it was included in *Den svenska psalmboken* it was shortened to six verses. In *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* it has only four verses. We really do not know the origins of the melody, even if some hold that it was composed by a comrade to Boberg when he was a sailor. It is also sometimes said that the

melody was originally a Swedish folk song. It came, in any case, to be sung more and more—at first with the rhythm of a waltz, but in time it took on a “four-four” beat. In 1907, the song was translated into German by a German who was living in Estonia. And so began the travels of the hymn.

### The hymn travels to Russia

Five or six years later the words were translated from German into Russian by Ivan Prokhanoff—who was called by some “modern Russia’s Martin Luther”—and it spread throughout the Russian kingdom. In 1922, many of Prokhanoff’s songs were collected in a large book, *A Christian’s Songs*. This was published in New York by the American Bible Society where Prokhanoff had friends. The Russian translation of *How Great Thou Art* was included in this book.

In about 1927, the English missionary Stuart K. Hine learned this song and began to use it in his evangelistic work in the Ukraine. And soon Hine rendered an English version of the first three verses. When World War II broke out, Hine returned to Great Britain where he frequently used the song in various revival meetings. In 1948, he added a fourth verse to the song, written by himself.

In the United States the song in time received more and more attention, and its great breakthrough came with the help of the well-known Billy Graham. He used it for the first time in an evangelistic campaign in Toronto, but it was above all in the more than one hundred events of Graham’s 1957 “crusade” in New York City that *How Great Thou Art* became widely known.

Over the years, the hymn was more or less forgotten in Sweden. It was not even included in the 1951 hymnal of Boberg’s own Mission Covenant Church. However, the well-known Pentecostal singer Einar Ekberg, who during the 1950s lived in the U.S., came in contact with the song and was deeply moved by it. He decided to introduce the magnificent song into Swedish and asked his son-in-law Elon Svanell to make a Swedish translation of the English text.

And so it happened. In one of Einar Ekberg’s sheets of music—during the second half of the 1950s, he wrote a whole series of articles called “The American Reportoire” (*Amerika-repertoaren*)—he included the hymn, whose journeys had begun in the Swedish town of Mönsterås and which had traveled via Germany to Russia, to England, and to the United States, in a *new* Swedish translation! When Einar Ekberg sang the hymn on his tours around Sweden, the reactions came quickly: was this not Carl Boberg’s old and well-known song, and not a song from

America? Thus it was that the old song from Mönsterås was reborn in Sweden the land of its origin.

### A remarkable journey

This remarkable journey resulted in *How Great Thou Art*, which is found in countless hymnals and song books throughout the world, having many points of origin and even originators attributed to it. Sometimes Stuart K. Hine, the British translator, is seen as the originator of both text and melody; sometimes he is noted as the author of a text set to a Russian folk melody; sometimes Carl Boberg is seen as author of an original text set to a Russian melody; and in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* of 1978, Boberg is noted as author of the Swedish text and Hine the English text, the melody is a “Swedish folk tune” arranged by Hine, and the copyright is held by Hine (1953) and assigned to “Manna Music, Inc.” (1955). *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* changes this a bit and indicates that the text is by Boberg, translated and adapted by Hine, the melody is identified as a Swedish folk tune adapted by Hine, and the copyright is in Hine’s name (1953, renewed 1981) but assigned to Manna Music. [It should be noted that those responsible for both the *LBW* and now the *ELW* have



Carl Boberg

changed two words in the first verse: (Hine had “all the worlds” and “rolling thunder,” the Lutheran hymnals have “all the works” and “mighty thunder.”) The fact that Hine, in 1953, took out copyright to both text and music proved to pay great dividends since *How Great Thou Art* has come to be one of the most recorded hymns ever. Elvis Presley’s interpretation of the song was an enormous success—he recorded it no less than seven times! One can surely say that is the Swedish hymn most widely spread throughout the world. It is now translated into countless languages.

A few years ago the Swedish Mission Church, through the Stockholm religious publisher Verbum, went to court to secure Hine’s copyright, since the old Mission Covenant Church had papers proving that the rights of origin were held by the church. But because of the cost the case was not pursued. In any case, the text will be in the public domain in 2010 when seventy years will have passed since Boberg’s death.

### Back home after a journey around the world

So it was that Carl Boberg’s melodious meditation over God’s greatness as experienced during the changing weather of an 1885 summer day in Mönsterås journeyed throughout the world for seventy years before it found its way back home. That’s how things can go.

I certainly can understand the Russian women whom I met in that Moscow house church when they claimed that *How Great Thou Art* was “their” song. So it is with magnificent hymns. They are “ours” regardless of their origin, regardless of the language in which they are sung, regardless of the hymnals in which they are found. For when a hymn like *How Great Thou Art* tells of God’s greatness everyone in the worldwide church recognizes it, and everyone recognizes the liberating power of praise when they can sing: “Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee...”

Here is Stuart Hine’s English version of Boberg’s words, which in its turn builds on a Russian translation of a German translation!

O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder  
consider all the worlds thy hands have made,  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
thy power throughout the universe displayed.  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee;  
how great thou art, how great thou art!  
When through the woods and forest glades I wander,  
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;

when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur  
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze;

Then sings my soul...

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,  
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
he bled and died to take away my sin.

Then sings my soul...

When Christ shall come with shout of acclimation  
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.  
Then I shall bow in humble adoration,  
and there proclaim, my God, how great thou art.

Then sings my soul...

From Per Harling, *Våra Älskade Psalmer* (Örebro: Libris Förlag, 2007), pp. 35-45. Translated by Norman A. Hjelm.

If any readers would like to order this book, you may e-mail [order@libris.se](mailto:order@libris.se) and ask them for the cost plus shipping to the USA. Or you may write to them at Libris Postorder, Box 1213, S-701 12 Örebro, Sweden. Anna Braw of Libris points out that “many of the Swedish hymns in this book have English translations and that the music is there so that you can sing together with both Swedish-speaking and non-Swedish speaking friends.”

## Island of Tears

*continued from Page 17*

who also made frequent trips to Sweden, met his wife, Ruth Karolina Dahlin, in Örebro. Linnea Hallgren worked as a secretary in Sweden from 1951 to 1970, when she moved to South Yarmouth, Massachusetts. She died unexpectedly in 2000 at the age of 84. Ruth Hallgren died on Cape Cod in 2002. The only remaining member of the Hallgren family in the United States is John Hallgren, son of Conrad and Ruth, who divides his time between South Chatham, Massachusetts, and Clearwater, Florida.

*Ronald Englund comments: A quick look at the index of Forgiven Ellis Island, reveals two other Swedish immigrants linked with the hospital. On page 111, there’s a quote from Ann Elizabeth Nilsson Rierison, immigrant from Sweden, with a photo of her as a five-year-old on a cart being wheeled into the hospital. On pages 82 and 83, there is an invoice for the funeral of Richard W. Moburg on December 20, 1920, from Ericson & Ericson Funeral Directors, 157 East 22nd Street, New York City. Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church’s address is 155 East 22nd Street. Do any of our readers know these people? The story of Hildegard Hallgren, with photos, is*

*on pages 128 and 129.*

*From 1940 to 1948, when I was a teenager, the Hallgren family were leading members of Augustana Lutheran Church (now Faith Lutheran Church) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where my father, Eskil G. Englund, was pastor. He officiated at the marriage of Conrad and Ruth at Augustana Church in 1948. I have many happy memories of visiting with the Hallgrens but I had no inkling at the time about the sad story of their daughter in Sweden who never lived with the family following her deportation from Ellis Island in 1924. I only learned about Hildegard after we retired on Cape Cod and met, after more than 50 years, both Linnea Hallgren, two years before her death, and Ruth Hallgren, four years before her death. I’m grateful to Linnea and Ruth, and to John Hallgren, for their help with this sad story.*

*Forgotten Ellis Island, The Extraordinary Story of America’s Immigrant Hospital* by Lorie Conway. Published in 2007 by Smithsonian Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Books. Hardcover, with many illustrations. 193 pages. \$26.95.

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## NEWS AND EVENTS

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### **AHA to hold 2008 Meeting during Gathering VI**

Several important items will come before members at the 2008 business meeting of the Augustana Heritage Association on Saturday, June 21, at 3:15 pm, during the AHA Gathering VI in Lindsborg, Kansas.

In addition to approving financial reports and a budget for the coming biennium, members will receive information concerning the possible formation of an Augustana Lutheran Church Alliance (ALCA). The idea for such an Alliance was proposed by Hartland Gifford, AHA Executive Director, and exploration of it was approved at Gathering V at Lake Chautauqua in 2006.

Three Board members will be elected to the AHA Board of Directors. Reports from the various AHA committees will inform members about their emphases and activities. Two new publications will be available at the Gathering and it is hoped that some new communication ventures can be announced.

Members will receive a preview of Gathering VII at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, in 2010, and will be asked to approve initial planning for Gathering VIII at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota, in 2012, and to consider a proposed return to Bethany College in Lindsborg for Gathering IX in 2014.

### **Betty Cornell is making steady progress towards recovery**

Betty Cornell, wife of the Rev. Paul Cornell, president of the Augustana Heritage Association, is making steady progress towards recovery after suffering four aneurysms of the left frontal lobe of her brain last November 8. She continues to be hospitalized and is now a resident at Meadowood in Worcester, Pennsylvania. Betty and Paul will move to their new home in this lifecare community on May 15.

As this issue of the AHA Newsletter goes to press, Paul reports that Betty is "recovering slowly and surely with every expectation that she will recover," and that she is now "sitting in a wheel chair, eating and speaking." He adds that "we are enormously grateful for all the prayers offered for Betty and for the overwhelming number of cards and letters from friends that we have received." We continue to pray for the Cornells during these difficult days and that the Lord will grant Betty full recovery from this illness.

### **Marsh Luther Drege installed at Seafarers & International House**

The Rev. Marsh Luther Drege was installed as pastor and executive director of Seafarers & International House, New York City, on March 9. The service and reception was held at nearby Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church. This Lutheran mission for seafarers and sojourners is based at an 84-room guesthouse built in 1964 at the corner of East 15th Street and Irving Place in Manhattan.

An ELCA pastor, Drege was ordained in 1985 as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, Washington, DC. In 1989, he became director of Metigoshe Ministries, an ELCA retreat center and summer Bible camp in Bottineau, North Dakota. He has served as a campus pastor at Penn State University since 2004.

Seafarers & International House was founded in 1873 to serve Swedes and was a ministry of the Augustana Lutheran Church. During Augustana days, it was known as the Lutheran Seamen's Center until it merged in 1964 with the Lutheran Home for Women in New York City. Two former executive directors who were ordained by the Augustana Lutheran Church are still living and are neighbors on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. The

Rev. J. Robert Nordlander served as executive director from 1974-84. He and his wife, Marlowe, live in Yarmouthport. The Rev. J. Gordon Swanson served as executive director from 1984-94. He and his wife, Anne, live in Cotuit.

Christ Lutheran Church of New York City worships at Seafarers & International House in its Nordgren Chapel named in memory of the Rev. J. Vincent Nordgren who served as executive director from 1952-65. He was well-known in the Augustana Church for his educational books, mainly for young people, on the Bible, church history and Luther's Catechism.

### **Annual Augustana Service on September 21**

The annual celebration of Holy Communion using the Augustana liturgy is set for Sunday, September 21, at 2:30 pm at Normandale Lutheran Church, 6100 Normandale Road, Edina, Minnesota. The Rev. Dr. S. Bernhard Erling of St. Peter, Minnesota, will preach with the Rev. Michael L. Edwins and the Rev. Shawn R. Mai, both of Minneapolis, the liturgists. Dr. John O. (Jack) Swanson, organist at Normandale Lutheran, will again serve as organist for the liturgy and many much-loved hymns from the Augustana tradition which are found in *Songs of Two Homelands*. Coffee and fellowship will follow the service. Everyone is invited. If you have questions, contact Jack Swanson by e-mail at [joswan01@aol.com](mailto:joswan01@aol.com) or phone him at (952) 941-1738.

### **Bertil E. Anderson Lecture Series focuses on theology and the arts**

The Bertil E. Anderson Lecture Series at First English Lutheran Church in Mansfield, Ohio, has presented speakers on various aspects of excellence in theology and the arts since 1994. The annual event was founded in memory

of Bertil Anderson, both a pastor and a church musician, who was ordained in the Augustana Lutheran Church and served at First English Lutheran from 1980 to 1989. After his death in 1993, gifts in his memory were used to establish the lecture series.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Westermeyer gave the 14th Anderson Memorial Lecture on November 17 and 18, 2007. He is professor of church music at Luther Theological Seminary and directs the Master in Sacred Music program with St. Olaf College and Luther Seminary.

Bertil Anderson's widow, Helen Anderson, who is also a church musician, continues to live in Mansfield.

### **Hougen, another ELCA Bishop of Augustana heritage**

Bishop Philip Hougen of the Southeastern Iowa Synod was omitted from the list of ELCA bishops from the Augustana Heritage that was published on page 4 of the Fall 2007 issue of *Augustana Heritage Newsletter*. We are grateful to former bishop Harold Skillrud of Bloomington, Illinois, pointing out this omission.

Bishop Hougen explains that "although I wasn't ordained until 1969 in the Lutheran Church in America, I was baptized, confirmed and raised at St. Mark's, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. My 'father in faith' is Pastor Richard Engstrom, who encouraged me to consider a call to the ministry. My internship was at Grace, Aurora, Illinois, where I learned ministry from

Pastor J. Gordon Swanson, who is 'one of my favorite people in the whole world.' For better or for worse, I don't have a drop of Swedish blood in me, but Augustana is in my head and in my heart."

Are there other ELCA bishops who come from the Augustana Heritage that were not on our list?

### **Augustana Choir in Sweden during Esbjörn Bicentennial**

The Augustana College Choir from Rock Island, Illinois, will sing in Sweden during the 200th anniversary celebration of the birth of Lars Paul Esbjörn (1808-1870), who founded the Augustana Lutheran Church in 1860. College President Steven Bahls, together with alumni, will also be touring in Sweden during the Esbjörn anniversary, overlapping with the choir's sixteen-day tour from May 31 to June 16, 2008. During the tour, the choir will sing at churches linked with Esbjörn before he emigrated to the United States.

The Augustana Choir's schedule includes concerts on Sunday, June 8, at 2 pm at the Home of the Aged in Gävle and at 7 pm at the Hille Church, with its parish choir; on Monday, June 9 at 10 am at the Öslättfors Church and at 7 pm at the Östervåla Church; and on Sunday, June 15 the 11 am High Mass at Uppsala Cathedral followed by a concert at 6 pm.

The Hille Church will celebrate "Esbjörn Day" on Pentecost, May

11, with a Jubilee High Mass at 11 am. The service will feature Esbjörn's "final sermon," preached on Pentecost 1849, as he left for the United States with more than one hundred members of the congregation. Another "Esbjörn Day" will be celebrated in Östervåla at 11 am on Sunday, May 18.

We will report on additional Esbjörn celebrations in Sweden during 2008 in the next issue of the newsletter.

### **Swedish Elderhostel at Concordia Language Villages October 19-25**

Concordia Language Villages near Bemidji, Minnesota, will feature an Elderhostel, "Sweden and Swedish—the Sjölundén Experience," October 19-25, at Turtle River Lake near Bemidji, Minnesota. The leader will be Elise Peters, a graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College who is Executive Director of the Swedish Council of America, based in Minneapolis.

The Concordia Language Villages program, part of Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota, is "an internationally recognized and respected language and cultural immersion program preparing young people for global citizenship." It began in 1961 and offers a wide variety of programs in many languages for children, adults, families and teachers. For more information, phone Jeanie Kennedy at (800) 450-2214, e-mail her at [kennedy@cord.edu](mailto:kennedy@cord.edu) or go to [www.ConcordiaLanguageVillages.org](http://www.ConcordiaLanguageVillages.org)

### **Thanks from the new editor**

As the new editor of *The Augustana Heritage Newsletter*, I thank the many who have helped me in producing this spring 2008 issue, which focuses on Gathering VI in Lindsborg. I am grateful both to the local planning committee for the Gathering and to Bethany College for providing so many suggestions, articles and photos.

I am also grateful to Arvid and Nancy Anderson who have served as editors since 1999. They have set a high standard for our newsletter and we are all most appreciative of their distinguished service to the AHA. They have

generously shared ideas and information to help me in my new task.

Ruth Ann Deppe, in the AHA office in Chicago, and Ann Rezny, our new graphic designer, have also given me wonderful help. There are many others, too numerous to mention here, who have provided material and advice to me.

I welcome your comments and suggestions for articles for future issues. There will not be room for everything, but I will try to include as much as possible.

—Ronald T. Englund

## Books, CDs and DVDs on sale

The books, CDs and DVDs listed below will be on sale at the AHA Gathering VI in Lindsborg, Kansas, from June 19-22, 2008. They may also be ordered from the AHA office (see details below).

### Books

#### **New! *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 plus \$5 postage and handling. (Available after June 22)

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

By Maria Erling and Mark Granquist (Augsburg Fortress, 2008). \$25 plus \$5 postage and handling. (Available after June 22)

#### ***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). \$20 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.

Also 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)

### CDs and DVDs

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

Hymns, Songs, and Liturgy from the 2004 AHA Gathering, St. Peter, Minnesota. (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 2004) \$15 including postage and handling, two or more copies to the same address: \$12.50 each.

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

Recollections of Augustana by five pastors: Arvid E. Anderson, Herbert W. Chilstrom, Paul M. Cornell, Donald W. Sjoborg and Reuben T. Swanson. Recorded at an AHA board meeting in 2005. (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 2007) \$5 plus \$3 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) \$15 plus \$3 postage and handling. (Available after June 22)

Send orders to: Augustana Heritage Association, 1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, IL 60615-5299. Make checks payable to "Augustana Heritage Association." If you have questions, phone Ruth Ann Deppe at (800) 635-1116 ext. 712.