

ROSENIUS, ROSENIANISM, AND THE EARLY AUGUSTANA SYNOD

American Lutheranism

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CHAPTER I

THE QUESTION

The mid-nineteenth century saw the first great waves of Swedish immigrants assaulting America. That there were definite religious aspects influencing their emigration has already been documented.¹ The Swedish and American church scenes were running remarkably parallel during this period. Both were characterized by the same powerful phenomenon — revival. While itinerant circuit riders were pounding Bibles at river crossing camp meetings all across America, Swedish lay preachers were gathering flocks in homes and prayer houses throughout Sweden.

And yet, the Swedish pioneers were not quickly and automatically absorbed into the stream of the American denominations. Their Lutheran background lessened the attraction of Reformed denominations, and their mother tongue kept them from disappearing into the Lutheran bodies so dominated by the German language. The Swedes instead rallied around their language and church heritage, and in 1860 the Augustana Synod was born.

All the standard histories of the Augustana Synod give due reverence to the fact that a large number of its first generation members had roots deep in the Swedish revivals of that era. Most of the revivals that occurred in Sweden during the first half of the nineteenth century can be termed "pietistic" to a greater or lesser degree. This influence was also clearly stamped on the young church in America. For instance, its

Minnesota Conference resolved in 1864 that "the use of alcoholic beverages, except when used as medicine, is considered a sin."² In 1868, the Synod itself declared "card playing, dancing, theater-going ... are contrary to the Word of God and true Christianity."³ The Synod's first periodical, Det Rätta Hemlandet, tells of the examination of ministerial candidates at the first Synod meeting in 1860. All eight men "gave an account of their conversion, spiritual experiences, and call to the ministry."⁴ One early pastor, Olof Olsson, tried organizing a church "for believers only."⁵ Though its historians do not want to go so far as to call the infant Augustana a "läsare"⁶ or pietist church, they have to admit that "there is undoubtedly much truth in this statement."⁷

Since the pietistic movements in Sweden were quite numerous and extremely varied as to doctrine and practice, the question naturally arises as to which movements had a major effect on the American immigrants. The Synod historians, almost to a man, give the top honor to Carl Olof Rosenius (1816-1868). Clifford Nelson says that Rosenius "has perhaps exerted more influence on the preaching of the clergy as well as on the piety of the people of the Augustana Church than any other leader,"⁸ and that "more than any other single leader, we must take Rosenius seriously into account when we consider the spiritual movements and factors that have shaped our church."⁹ Oscar Olson agrees: "It is safe to say that no one influenced the pioneer pastors and the early immigrants more profoundly than did Rosenius."¹⁰ Thus, it is this Stockholm lay preacher who is acclaimed as the primary pietistic influence brought by the Swedes from their fatherland.

Did C.O. Rosenius really have such a great influence on the early Augustana Synod? If so, how was his influence felt? Was it seen in the structure of the new body? Was it reflected in the church's doctrine or practice? Was it to be heard in the preaching of its pioneer pastors,

or felt in the home devotions of its laity? Was it seen in the publications of the Synod, or was it brought over in battered copies of the Pietisten? Was it felt mainly through Rosenius' mission society, the Evangelical Fatherland Society?

These are questions that deserve serious consideration and yet, to my knowledge, have never adequately been explored or documented. This is what we shall attempt to do under the title Rosenius, Rosenianism, and the Early Augustana Synod. After briefly taking a look at the traits which distinguish the movement of C.O. Rosenius from the other pietistic revivals, we shall examine the background and leanings of the Synod's most important founding pastors, the 1860 trip to Sweden of O.C. T. Andrén, Augustana's connection with the Evangelical Fatherland Society, Rosenius' writings in America, and some key doctrinal tendencies of the young Synod. Having investigated these areas, we should have a better picture of the extent and mode of Rosenius' influence on the fledgling Augustana Synod.

¹See especially George M. Stephenson, Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration (Minneapolis: U. of Minn. Press, 1932), and Gunnar Westin, Emigranterna och kyrkan: Brev från och till Svénskar i Amerika (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1932).

²Oscar N. Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church in America 1860-1910 (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1910), p.50.

³Ibid., p.50.

⁴Det Rätta Hemlandet, 1860, pp.114f.

⁵E.W. Olson, Olof Olsson (Rock Island: Aug. Bk. Concern, 1941), p.41.

⁶läsare is the Swedish word for "readers." It was originally the name given to a particular pietistic group in Northern Sweden, but later became a designation for Pietists in general. The name came from their practice of gathering in homes and reading sermons of Luther rather than listening to a sermon prepared by one of their own members.

7Sam Rönnegård, "Religious Movements in Northern Sweden 100 Years Ago and the Augustana Synod," Augustana Quarterly, XXVII, No. 3 (July, 1948), p.232.

8Clifford A. Nelson, "Pulpit and Altar," in Centennial Essays: Augustana Lutheran Church 1860-1960 (Rock Island: Augustana Press, 1960), p. 175.

9Ibid., p.175.

10Oscar N. Olson, op. cit., p.31.

CHAPTER 2

ROSENIUS AND ROSENIANISM

C. J. Petri wrote that the Augustana founders came to this country "with a spirit of true pietism, represented by such men in the Church of Sweden as Dr. P. Fjellstedt, Rev. P. A. Ahlberg, Dr. P. Wieselgren, C. O. Rosenius, and others."¹¹ Among the many "others" who might have been mentioned by name are Lestadius, Schartau, Wiberg, Hammar, and, later, Waldenström. Hence, in order to study the special influence that Rosenius may have had upon the Augustana Synod, we must first delineate what was distinctive in the revival of Rosenius. Exactly what were the traits of Rosenius and Rosenianism that might help us trace his influence in America?

It is not to be denied that Rosenianism was an outgrowth of an earlier era of Swedish pietism. One may go so far as to call Rosenius' movement "the direct heir of the Norrland readers."¹² Yet, when compared to many of the other revivals stemming from this same background, Rosenius "approached much closer to normal Christianity and avoided the excesses of the sects."¹³ Since extreme deviations in doctrine or practice are much easier to trace, our subject becomes much more complicated because of this pietism lacking excesses.

Probably the most outstanding characteristic of Rosenius' teaching was his absolute devotion to the Swedish state church. While Baptists, Separatists, and others were calling the people to revival and exodus

from the state church system, Rosenius called for revival and renewal inside the old system. What makes this the more curious is Rosenius' own life long "call" as lay preacher in the Methodistic Bethlehem Church in Stockholm. Though often he preached against the deadness in the state church of his day, he saw separation as a hindrance to true renewal in Sweden.¹⁴ This allegiance has kept the great majority of his followers inside the pale of the state church right to the present time.¹⁵ His method of reform from within was centered around the use of lay preachers like himself, as is seen in his mission society, E.F.S.

This strong tie to the state church can be connected (even if it can't be justified) with Rosenius' high regard for the writings of Luther. From childhood on Rosenius avidly read Luther, especially his sermons. He always thought of himself as a true Lutheran, and hence a member of the Lutheran Church. Rosenius' problem, one that plagued the majority of Swedes then and now, was that he could only equate the Lutheran Church with the Swedish state church. Though he was strongly influenced by the Methodist George Scott, he never thought of giving up the Lutheran doctrine.¹⁶ He boldly defended infant baptism¹⁷ and regularly took communion in the state church.¹⁸ His preaching was full of Luther's phraseology and picture language.

His broad acquaintance with Luther's writings comes out most clearly, however, in Rosenius' Gospel-centered message. While the majority of Swedish pietists were, like their German brothers, very good at confusing Law and Gospel, Rosenius was a true "doctor of the Scriptures." Luther taught him well to distinguish between Law and Gospel. Though he went along often with the typical thunder and brimstone preaching of this revival era, Rosenius always followed up with the full comfort of the Gospel. He was noted for his strong "concentration on the cross and the suffering of

Christ."¹⁹ Some have gone so far as to say that his "sole dogma was the forgiveness of sins without merit of the sinner."²⁰ His motto is said to have been "the world is justified by Christ,"²¹ and this typifies his fine understanding of objective justification, always a weak point among Scandinavian Lutherans. These distinctive elements -- an emphasis on Gospel preaching, a theology centered on the cross, and a clear position in favor of objective justification -- are all evidences of Rosenius' true understanding of Luther, and serve to set him apart from the majority of nineteenth-century revivalists.

Rosenius also followed Luther in emphasizing the importance of the call. A look at Rosenius' own call, however, once again discloses his fence-straddling position on the church. Though always a devoted layman in the state church, Rosenius, as mentioned before, was a preacher in Scott's Methodist-oriented church. In 1841 Rosenius had begun assisting Scott but he was often bothered about not having been properly called to such a position. Scott alleviated the problem by getting Rosenius a yearly stipend and a call as "city-missionary" for The Foreign Evangelical Society, based in New York. Thus, from 1841 until his death, Rosenius was a called and salaried worker of this Reformed mission society and its successor, The American and Foreign Christian Union.²²

That Rosenius apparently felt no qualms about being called and supported by a non-Lutheran group seems strange to us. Yet, it is rather typical. Though Rosenius himself preached quite sound Lutheranism, he was always rather friendly to those less orthodox in doctrine or practice. Eric Janson went a little too far with his perfectionist teachings, and, what was probably even worse in Rosenius' eyes, in burning Luther's writings. Rosenius was forced to soundly condemn him. But Rosenius seemed quite friendly towards people with Baptist and Methodist (espec-

ially Wesleyan²⁴) leanings, and had no concept of pulpit, altar, or prayer fellowship principals. Though he preached law and Gospel like the best of Lutherans, he felt free in cooperating with any of the true believers or true members of Christ's body, "even if their part of the church calls itself Appollo's and I call mine Paul's."²⁵

We see, therefore, that even though Rosenius was not the proponent of any extremist doctrinal positions (such as Janson or Waldenstrom) nor were his followers recognizable from any weird physical practices (such as the "preaching=sickness" so prevalent at this time), a definite Rosenian teaching and practice can be discerned. In the following chapters, besides noting the direct contacts between Rosenius and the founders of Augustana, we shall also see whether any of these distinctive teachings and practices show themselves during the first quarter century of Augustana's existence.

¹¹C. J. Petri, "Swedish Lutheran Pioneer Missionaries," in The Augustana Synod 1860-1910: A Brief Review of its History (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1910), p.9.

¹²Ronnegard, op. cit., p.231.

¹³John Wordsworth, The National Church of Sweden (London: A.R. Mowbray, Ltd., 1911), p.372.

¹⁴G. Everett Arden, The School of the Prophets: The Background and History of Augustana Theological Seminary 1860-1960 (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1960), p.49.

¹⁵Among the exceptions were the Danish group usually called Bornholmers, Waldenström and his Mission Covenant Church (the majority of whose members never dropped membership in the state church, however), and the new Lutheran Confessional Church of Sweden founded in 1974 which can trace the majority of its families back to Rosenius via E.F.S. and Bibeltrogna Vänner.

¹⁶"Jag har aldrig i tiden tankt ofvergifva var lutherska lara," in a letter to his brother Peter, dated Jan. 26, 1841, quoted in C.O. Rosenius: Hans liv och verksamhet, 5te Uppl., (Stockholm: E.F.S.Forlag, 1909), p.84. In a letter dated the day before Easter, 1842, Rosenius adds, "Jag tycker vår kyrka har den renaste, fullkomligaste lära, och dessutom är min moder." Ibid., p.117.

¹⁷Rosenius and his followers were "tappra försvarare af barndopet" says P. Palmquist, one of Rosenius' associate pastors in a letter of Dec. 24, 1852. The letter was adressed to A. Wiberg who had recently been re-baptized by Baptists in Copenhagen. It is cited by Gunnar Westin, Emmigranterna, p.62.

¹⁸Wordsworth, op. cit., p.374.

¹⁹Nelson, "Pulpit and Altar," p.175.

²⁰F. Nielson, "Bornholmers," in The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949), vol. 2, p. 235.

²¹Ibid., vol. 2, p.235.

²²The letters of Rosenius to the societies along with the pertinent excerpts from the society's proceedings have been published by Gunnar Westin under the title "Brev från C.O. Rosenius till Amerika," an article in Kyrkohistorisk Årskrift, 1930, pp.239-348. Though the last report on Rosenius' work in Sweden appeared in the 1865 minutes, we would assume that the support continued until his death in 1868.

²³C.O. Rosenius, p.171. Cf. also pp.172ff.; and pp.190.

²⁴Ibid., pp.86-7.

²⁵Ibid., p.86.

CHAPTER 3

THE FOUNDERS OF AUGUSTANA

It is undoubtedly the clergy that have the most influence in shaping a church body. The historians have elected about a half dozen of Augustana's early pastors to its hall of immortals. We shall begin with these men, therefore, in our search for signs of the influence of Rosenius.

Lars Esbjörn

Lars Esbjörn was the first ordained Swedish Lutheran pastor to answer the cry for preachers in nineteenth-century America. He is usually characterized as a typical pietist preacher of that day.²⁶ The zeal he had for the pietistic cause can be seen from his work in translating Arndt's True Christianity and Little Garden of Paradise into Swedish early in his ministry. Though there is no record of his having had any personal contact with Rosenius before his departure for America in 1849, he seems to have in several ways tended in that direction.

For instance, Esbjörn was a good personal friend of George Scott.²⁷ After his "awakening" in 1839, Esbjörn was an active participant with Scott, Baird, and Wieselgren in various meetings, such as at the 1840 Hudiksvall temperance meeting where he was even elected secretary.²⁸ After Scott's expulsion from Sweden, Esbjörn wrote to him, "Come and preach as before the gospel of Jesus, repentance, and faith without respect to outward forms."²⁹ Anyone so attached to Scott must have had religious ideas pretty much in common also with Rosenius.

If anything, Esbjörn seems to have been more Methodist-minded through Scott's influence than Rosenius was. He doesn't seem to have developed a real appreciation for the Confessions until he had been in America for some time. He seems to have even swayed towards accepting Methodism outright at one time in order to gain support from Hedström and his Bethel Ship in New York. However, in most aspects, he seems to have arrived later at a position rather close to that of Rosenius, cooperating to some extent with other church bodies and yet preaching a quite orthodox Lutheranism in other points. While in Sweden, he attacked the anti-unionistic policies of the Lund Mission Society, and while in America, he accepted support from the American Home Mission Society.³⁰

His position on church fellowship is seen from a letter he wrote to Eric Norelius, April/26, 1858. Norelius had been contemplating a break from the Northern Illinois Synod and a merger with other Minnesota pastors to form a Minnesota Synod. Esbjörn's advice might well have come from Rosenius himself:

You are dissatisfied with our synod because some are "New Lutherans." Who can guarantee that you will not have them among yourselves also? Do you not already have the aged Heyer? Could you forbid him membership? That would indeed kill the whole project. You have I believe absorbed a wrong conviction from the brethren in Columbus concerning the relation of the orthodox Christian to the less orthodox, who are willing to cooperate with him and who give him liberty to act according to his faith and conviction. I may call this conviction which you have received too eremitic or donatistic. It assumes that the orthodox shall separate himself from his more ignorant and less precise brethren, and shall not remain in an "unholy alliance."³¹

Though Rosenius evidently had little or no direct influence upon Lars Esbjörn, it is clear that the two men had a common mind set, probably due to the common influence upon them of George Scott. Hence, we see a similarity in doctrine and practice. It seems as though the two finally met, but only in 1862 after Esbjörn had returned for good to Sweden.³²

T. N. Hasselquist

Tuve Nilsson Hasselquist, though a later arrival than Esbjörn, played an even greater role in shaping Augustana. As synod and seminary president, as editor and publisher, his influence was felt throughout the synod during its formative years.

Hasselquist was a product of the Skåne pietistic movements. Though having studied theology at Lund, then still under the magnetism of Schartau, he quickly became associated with Wieselgren's temperance movement and with the Vanneberge Tract Society. His mentor was Hans Birger Hammar, and along with him he helped found a Swedish society for the advancement of religious freedom in the hope of eventually starting a free church modelled after the one in Scotland. He openly spoke out against the existing evils of the state church and seems to be well on his way to leaving the Lutheran creed completely at the time he left for America. His final farewell address was given before a group of Moravians in Helsingborg.³³

Though, as in the case of Esbjörn, we have no record of any direct contact with Rosenius, there is a record of a run-in between Hasselquist and Rosenius' devotee Oscar Ahnfelt. Ahnfelt travelled throughout Sweden as a Rosenian ambassador spreading the Gospel through sermons and even more impressively through his songs. When Ahnfelt was scheduled to appear in his parish, Hasselquist took the floor instead and prevented Ahnfelt from taking any part in leading or performing for the service.³⁴ In a similar vein, we are told that he refused to recommend Rosenius' monthly paper, The Pietist, to his parishioners.

Exactly what his objection was is unclear. Perhaps it lay in Rosenius' strong commitment to "mother church." For those caught up in the reform and revival movements of the time it was very difficult to conceive of Lutheranism in any terms but that of the state church system. This resulted in the thought that Lutheranism must be sacrificed also to accom-

plish the purge of the Swedish church. Rosenius was at the opposite extreme. As a staunch Lutheran in doctrine he saw himself compelled to stay under the wing of the state church in order not to risk the loss of Lutheranism to the sects. Though this dicotomy between "Lutheran state church" and "non-Lutheran free church" seems strange to us, it was prevalent in Sweden at the time and, to a great extent, still is. However this does not explain fully the friction between Hasselquist and Rosenius. In a letter to Peter Wieselgren, dated Åkarp, March 28, 1852, Hasselquist says, "Even Fjellstedt believes as I do that at least a part of the Rosenians are leaning towards the Methodists."³⁶ Perhaps we can only conclude that Hasselquist was unsure of himself and wavering in his own attitudes at this time.

Hasselquist arrived in America in 1852 and his early position there was quite similar to Esbjörn's. He applied for and received support from the same mission society. In a letter to them of April 24, 1853 Hasselquist says, "I am with all my heart attached to the Lutheran Confessions, but not so that I should draw back from fellow laboring with brethren of other denominations..."³⁷ In the following year, he wrote to them that he had already realized while in Sweden that the state church system "was wrong, because a church discipline was impossible and the notorius for impiety and infidelity had accession to the privileges of the Church of God quite as well as the believing."³⁸ The religious freedom of America now allowed Hasselquist not only to air his feelings but to try out in practice the practicality of the free church system, something Rosenius would have probably shuddered at.

Yet, at the same time, the proselytizing Baptists, Methodists, and Episcopalians drove Hasselquist, as it had Esbjörn, back to a study of the Lutheran Confessions. Consequently, he became more Lutheran in doctrine and practice, and thus also more Rosenian. In 1858 Hasselquist had spoken out in favor of the General Synod "so much the more as "New Luth-

eranism " is on the wane."³⁹ A decade later, however, he pushed the entrance of Augustana into the General Council.⁴⁰ Though always willing to cooperate with other Lutheran churches, as the years passed he became less and less willing to cooperate with other denominations.

The increasingly Lutheran stand of Hasselquist is paralleled by an increasing appreciation for Rosenius and his writings. In 1856 Det Rätta Hemlandet was begun under the editorship of Hasselquist. Though in Sweden he had never recommended The Pietist to his people, now we find him reprinting large portions of it in his own paper. He did the same later as editor of Augustana. In its very first issue, October 1868, we find reference to the writings of "Rosenius, that man filled with love who has so recently been called home." It is also significant to note that one of the first books to roll off Hasselquist's printing press in Galesburg was Oscar Ahnfelt's Fifty Spiritual Songs.

Surely this is a drastic change from Hasselquist's former position towards Rosenius and his followers. However, it is difficult to determine whether this increased appreciation for Rosenius led Hasselquist to an increased confessionality, or whether the increased confessionality brought on by a renewed study of the Confessions resulted in a greater appreciation for Rosenius and his writings. The latter seems to be the more acceptable conclusion. It is clear that Rosenius and Hasselquist did end up in basically the same doctrinal stance. We have little evidence, however, that Rosenius was to any great degree the cause of this.

Eric Norelius

Eric Norelius is the final member of the triumvirate most responsible for shaping the Augustana Synod. As Synod president, professor of theology, travelling missionary, editor and publisher, and Synod historian, Norelius' influence was probably the most wide spread of the three.

Norelius' teaching, however, was, as mentioned before, very Rosenian in content (as one would expect realizing the close contact between Hedberg and Rosenius). He criticized the controversial Norwegian Elling Eielsen for confusing Law and Gospel "as so many of the older pietists have been accustomed to do."⁴⁶ In his history of Augustana, he criticizes Esbjörn for his association with the A.H.M.S. because of its "overemphasis on subjective experience at the expense of correct apprehension by faith of the objective truths of Christianity and of the Word and Sacraments."⁴⁷ He also adopted methods in his missionary work that were favored by Rosenius: the informal Bible study, conventicle prayer meetings, and the "husförhör," a home catechetical session stressing especially sin and grace.⁴⁸

Though Rosenian in doctrine and methodology, Norelius was at odds with Rosenius in some matters of practice, especially church fellowship. Norelius would never have thought of working side by side with Methodists (even Wesleyans) the way Rosenius did. When the Methodist minister Agrellius came to his frontier area of Minnesota, Norelius writes, "It would undoubtedly have been polite for me to invite him to preach in my stead, but I could not do so because of my own personal convictions."⁴⁹

All in all, Norelius must also be considered a member of the "churchly evangelical school" of which Rosenius was Sweden's leading representative. As editor of Minnesota Posten and Augustana he also used and appreciated the fine gospel devotions of Rosenius. Yet, little proof can be brought forward in support of any substantial influence by Rosenius himself.

During the 1850's three more pastors emigrated and joined the founding fathers of Augustana. It is noteworthy that two of them came from "darkest" Småland and the other from Skåne which have "more

than any other part of Sweden, preserved the old Lutheran heritage from earlier times."⁵⁰ So it is not surprising to find that these three also fit the general pattern of Esbjörn, Hasselquist, and Norelius, i.e. they were caught in a tension between an allegiance to pietistic Lutheranism and the vision of a free church system.

Erland Carlsson

Erland Carlsson came to the U.S. in 1853. One of the ablest men in the Växjö diocese, he was driven to emigrate by his dissatisfaction with the conditions in the Swedish church. Oscar Olson says that he was influenced strongly by the revivalist Peter Sellergren,⁵¹ and Evald Lawson says that he "appears to have read widely in Schartau, Hoof, and Rosenius,"⁵² but neither document their statements. It seems as if the influence he received from Rosenius was, at best, one of many revivalistic influences. Once he was in America, it is said that "his understanding and appreciation of the Lutheran Confessions ... grew stronger year by year, because of the frequent struggles he had with various sects."⁵³ This Rosenian trend towards an appreciation of the Confessions may have been in part due to contact with the writings of Rosenius. If so, this was probably Carlsson's biggest debt to him.

Jonas Swensson

Jonas Swensson came to America in 1856 and is said to have been "in many respects the most confessional and churchly of all the Swedish Lutheran pastors"⁵⁴ who arrived in the U.S.A. between 1849 and 1860. Who helped mold him in this "confessional" and "churchly" vein? He himself acknowledged the strong influence of Jacob Otto Hoof (1768-1839), the West Gottland preacher and writer.⁵⁵ Norelius in his history calls Swensson a "spiritual son of Nohrborg."⁵⁶ Though he too undoubtedly respected Rosenius and read his works with profit, direct influence seems:

to have been minimal.

O. C. T. Andrén

Olof Christian Telemark Andrén, the last of the pastors arriving before 1860, was a representative of the southern Swedish confessional movements also, but little is known of those who influenced his spiritual development. His influence on the Augustana Synod was minimal in any case, since he spent but four years in America. In 1860 he was sent to Sweden to gather books and money for the establishment of Augustana Theological Seminary. The direct contact he had with Rosenius during this visit is taken up in detail in the following chapter. However, it is interesting to note at this time that the one pastor who did have direct contact with Rosenius on the personal level never returned to America and hence had little chance to spread any influence in doctrine or practice that he might have received.

Olof Olsson

Olof Olsson is the last of the early pastors we shall consider. His theological development is said to be "typical of many of the fathers of the Augustana Synod."⁵⁷ His background can also be termed typical. The child of an evangelical pietistic movement, in his case in Värmland, he developed a warm pietism without rejecting the Lutheran Confessions. In America he wanted his congregation in Lindsborg, Kansas to be for believers only. The combination of confessional and pietistic elements that is so "typical" of all these pastors can be seen in this congregation's constitution. It "recognizes the evangelical Lutheran confessions as its rule of faith, yet desires to stand in friendly and brotherly relation to Christians of other protestant persuasions."⁵⁸ This sounds much like the thinking of Esbjörn, Hasselquist, and Rosenius. Yet Olsson

and the Augustana men developed a more confessional position as time went by. Söderström characterizes it as follows:

From having been willing to cooperate with all Christians who sincerely believed in Christ, they wanted only to cooperate with those who correctly believed in Christ. And they were firmly convinced that the Book of Concord gave the correct interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.⁵⁹

Though Augustana's pastors never came to absolute clarity as Söderström almost suggests, the trend certainly can be seen.

Sam Rönnegård says that Hasselquist and Olsson were "with respect to their religious types largely influenced by Rosenius."⁶⁰ This does not appear to be valid in the light of our research into the background of these Augustana fathers. It would have been much more accurate to say that they were of the same spiritual type characterized by Rosenius. This statement could then be extended to include the other Augustana patriarchs as well. Overall, there seems to have been little or no direct contact with Rosenius himself, whereas there was much contact with Scott, Wieselgren, Hammar, and other revivalists. At best the influence of Rosenius came second-hand via these men and via Rosenius' writings. However, the resulting emphasis on Law and Gospel, the Confessions, and the writings of Luther which typified these Augustana pastors can perhaps most accurately be summed up by the term Rosemianism.

Rosenius more than anyone else represented this brand of evangelical pietism in the minds of nineteenth-century Swedes, and so it is natural to attribute the dominance of this position in the early years of the Augustana Synod to Rosenius himself. But in reality, it seems that the Synod's fathers were shaped more by the mentors and the age which shaped Rosenius than by Rosenius himself. They were more his evangelical contemporaries than his spiritual sons.

The Laity

The clergy may be the most important in shaping a church body, but the laymen also play a role. In the days of immigration they often determined which type of pastor would be sent to serve them. We must ask, therefore, to what extent Rosenianism was imprinted upon the laymen of the early Augustana Synod.

During this early period, a congregation sometimes actively sought a pastor that would be to their liking. The congregation in Stockholm, Wisconsin, for example, sought its first pastor by advertizing in a secular newspaper in Sweden. One of his requirements was to be that he was not a "reader."⁶¹ This was an exception, however, since the better share of immigrants who became affiliated with a church in the new world were products of Sweden's revivals. Most would not have viewed the term "reader" with scorn. Yet, we must ask if there was any special allegiance to C.G. Rosenius.

In general, Augustana's laity were products of the more conservative and evangelical revivals in Sweden, while the more radical elements gravitated to the Episcopalian, Baptist, and Methodist denominations. In Augustana we find little evidence of extreme doctrinal deviations, such as were common among the Jansonists, or of exstactical practices, such as the "preaching sickness," so common in Sweden at this time. Yet an examination of early correspondence such as that collected by Westin reveals little mention of Rosenius by the laity.⁶²

But there is no denying the influence of Rosenius via his writings, especially The Pietist, and through the songs written by his adherents, especially Lina Sandell and Oscar Ahnfelt. G. Everett Arden says that Rosenius' prayer book and Ahnfelt's songs plus the family Bible were "an invariable part of immigrant luggage."⁶³ The historian of Augustana's

²⁶Gunnar Westin, Emmigranterna och kyrkan: Brev från och till Svenskar i Amerika (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1932), p.24.

²⁷Ibid., p.16.

²⁸Ibid., p.9.

²⁹Gunnar Westin, George Scott och hans verksamhet i Sverige (2 Vols.; Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag,), vol. 2, p.361.

³⁰Oscar N. Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church in America : Pioneer Period 1846-1860 (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern,), pp.110, 126-9.

³¹Emeroy Johnson, A Church is Planted: The Story of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference 1851-1876 (Minneapolis: Lund Press Inc., 1948), p.126.

³²Westin, Emmigranterna, p.107, cites a letter from Esbjörn to André, May 27, 1862, Filipstad: "I had with me a call to Waldenström, which I immediately sent to him with lector Rosenius, when I found out that he was going to Uppsala in order to call him to be a missionary in the service of a projected missionary society in Gothenburg."

³³Oscar F. Ander, T.N. Hasselquist (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1931), p.9.

³⁴Ibid., p.9.

³⁵Ibid., p.9.

³⁶Westin, Emmigranterna, pp.50-1. "Efter hvad jag tror, anser äfven Fjellstedt åtminstone en del Rosenianer luta åt Methodisten."

³⁷Olson, Pioneer Period, p.129.

³⁸Westin, Emmigranterna, p.71. Also cited in Conrad Bergendorf, "A Free Church in a Free Nation," Augustana Quarterly, XXV, No. 1 (Jan., 1946), pp.59-60.

³⁹Johnson, op. cit., p.126.

⁴⁰Westin, Emmigranterna, p.140.

⁴¹Ibid., pp.21-22.

⁴²Hugo Söderström, Confession and Cooperation (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wilsell,), p.17.

⁴³Eric Norelius, Journals of Eric Norelius, trans. and ed. G. Everett Arden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p.67.

⁴⁴Ibid., p.143.

⁴⁵Ibid., p.46.

⁴⁶Ibid., p.130.

- 47Olson, Pioneer Period, p.128f.
- 48Norelius, op. cit., p.24.
- 49Ibid., p.137.
- 50Hilding Pleijel, "The Church From Which Came the Founders of the Augustana Synod," Augustana Quarterly, XXVII, No. 3 (July, 1948), p.207f.
- 51Olson, 1860-1910, p.31.
- 52Evald Lawson, "The Ministry," in Centennial Essays: Augustana Lutheran Church 1860-1960 (Rock Island: Augustana Press, 1960), p.15. George Stephenson in Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration, p.171, says "He had read Schartau, Rosenius, and Nohrborg and had come under the influence of the Sällergren revival..."
- 53Söderström, op. cit., p.18.
- 54Ibid., p.19.
- 55Olson, 1860-1910, p.31.
- 56Ibid., p.31.
- 57Söderström, op. cit., p.204.
- 58Ibid., p.20.
- 59Ibid., pp.20-21.
- 60Rönnegård, op. cit., pp.231-2.
- 61Johnson, op. cit., pp.76f.
- 62An exception is a letter dated Chicago, May 21, 1869, from C.F. Rydholm to Rev. Jonas Auslund in which Rydholm quotes Rosenius as having written, "Preach the Gospel and you will soon find the hypocrites." (L.C.A. Archives, Auslund Papers)
- 63G. Everett Arden, The School of the Prophets: The Background and History of Augustana Theological Seminary 1860-1960 (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1960), p.52.
- 64Johnson, op. cit., p.356.
- 65Westin, Emmigranterna, p.460.
- 66Ibid., p.14 (note).

CHAPTER 4

THE VISIT OF ANDRÉN

One of the first decisions of the newly formed Augustana Synod was to open a seminary. To remedy the two major problems involved, the lack of money and books, it was decided to send to Sweden for help. O.C.T. Andrén was chosen to personally travel to Scandinavia for this purpose.

Andrén left for Sweden on August 21, 1860, and arrived in Stockholm on October 26 of the same year. Oscar Olson in his history of the Augustana Synod says that Andrén there met with Rosenius and received his full support.⁶⁷ In his biography of Andrén, Olson goes even further. "He also was invited to preach in Bethlehem Church, of which Rosenius was in charge, on many occasions and received a warm reception from the Evangelical Fatherland Foundation."⁶⁸ Olson further remarks, "He was also given an opportunity through Rosenius and others to meet with influential persons sympathetic to his cause."⁶⁹ Since Olson does not do so, we shall attempt to document these statements.

The only detailed account available to us concerning Andrén's visit is Andrén's own dagbok (diary) of the trip, now part of the O.C.T. Andrén Collection in the L.C.A. Archives. We reproduce below in translation the entries which deal with Rosenius and Bethlehem Church:

Oct. 28 -- In Adolf Fredriks Church and Bethlehem Church.

Oct. 29 -- At the home of Rosenius and Elmblad.

Nov. 3 -- At 6 p.m. held a Bible study at Bethlehem Church over

Matthew 11:28, and in connection with it presented our needs in America. Without being announced, a collection was taken up amounting to 110 Riks dollars.

- Nov. 4 --- All Saints Day in Bethlehem Church.
- Nov. 6 --- In the evening at Dr. Melander's ... After that, Rosenius began reading at the 24th verse of Romans 8, after which he spoke on vv.24-30, I on vv.31-34, and Elmblad on vv.35-37.
- Nov. 11 --- In the evening preached for a crowd at Bethlehem Church on Hebrews 4:9.
- Nov. 12 --- In the evening Bible study in Bethlehem Church on Titus 2:11-15. The collection was given for the Augustana seminary, amounting to 318 Riks dollars and a few cents.
- Nov. 21 --- In the evening preached at Bethlehem on Revelation of John 3:---.

From Andrén's account we must conclude that Rosenius did receive Andrén warmly, allowing him to preach at his church and taking him inside his circle of friends. If we don't overemphasize Olson's terms "full" and "influential persons" we can find basis here for his statements. Yet, if Rosenius played such an active and instrumental part in helping Andrén and his mission, it seems strange that Andrén finds time to mention his name but twice in his entire diary!

Perhaps if Andrén had returned to America he would have given a more detailed account of the part Rosenius played in the success of his mission. But Andrén sent the results of his trip back to America, and he himself remained in the mother country. This trip, which could have resulted in strong personal relationships developing between Rosenius and the Augustana Synod, leads us only to another dead-end.

⁶⁷Olson, 1860-1910, p.9.

⁶⁸Oscar N. Olson, Olof Christian Telemark Andrén: Ambassador of Good Will (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1954), p.30.

⁶⁹Ibid., p.32.

CHAPTER 5

E.F.S. AND AUGUSTANA

Rosenius and his followers were very mission minded, especially in the area of what we call home missions. It is only natural, therefore, that they founded their own mission society, the Evangelical Fatherland Society (E.F.S.). This society, formed in 1856, and its newspaper, Budbäraren, were set up with a very Rosenian structure, being "free" yet remaining "within the bosom of the church."⁷⁰ Exactly how much credit Rosenius ought to be given for the founding and work of the society has been debated. Dau says Rosenius "must not be regarded as the only instrument for building up the organization,"⁷¹ while Westin notes that, though many others were involved, "the spiritual leader was Rosenius."⁷²

By the time E.F.S. was in existence, most of Augustana's early pastors and laymen were already in America. Thus, the first real contact of the Augustana Synod with the society seems to have come at the time of Andrén 's visit. Olson says the E.F.S. gave Andrén a warm reception.⁷³ From this time on Augustana and its pastors were "in close correspondence" with E.F.S. and received some financial aid from it. Westin reprints a letter of Jan. 16, 1813 from the society to Hasselquist telling him that 1000 Riks dollars were being forwarded and that this was only half of a contribution that E.F.S. was making towards the work in America.⁷⁴

Almost more important than financial help from Sweden, was the help

the Americans sought in recruiting pastors for work in the new world. We would expect that E.F.S would also have made a contribution in this area. In 1863, the society opened a mission school, Johannelund, to train lay preachers and missionaries. Yet, for some reason we hear of no students being recruited or sent to America. Olson reports on the other hand that young men were sent from the mission schools of Fjellstedt and Ahlberg.⁷⁵ This fact, along with the opening of Norelius' own Minnesota Elementary School, excludes the possibility that Augustana didn't want such semi-trained candidates for the ministry. Even if we cannot explain why E.F.S. did not contribute in this respect, it most certainly is a fact worth noting.

Since Rosenius was one of the four board members who undertook the actual supervision of the society's activities,⁷⁶ it seems strange that none of the copious correspondence between Augustana and E.F.S. mentions his name. It is tempting to conclude on this basis that any influence of Rosenius upon the Augustana Synod via E.F.S. was minimal. Again, it is primarily through E.F.S.'s publication of Rosenius' writings that it contributed to the "Roseniasation" of Augustana.

⁷⁰Stephenson, Swedish Immigration, p.45.

⁷¹W.H.T. Dau, "A Bit of Recent Swedish Church History," Theological Monthly, II, No. 10 (Oct., 1922), p.290.

⁷²Westin, Emmigranterna, p.30.

⁷³Olson, O.C.T. Andrén, p.30.

⁷⁴Westin, Emmigranterna, p.111.

⁷⁵Olson, 1860-1910, pp.11-12.

⁷⁶Rosenius, Liv och Verksamhet, p.324.

CHAPTER 6

THE WRITINGS OF ROSENIUS

Since Rosenius has rightly been termed "the direct heir of the Norrland readers,"⁷⁷ it is only to be expected that he laid much stress upon writing devotional material for his people. It is also fitting, therefore, that his greatest influence was probably exerted through the printed word. His magazine, The Pietist, reached a circulation of about 10,000 copies per issue between 1853- 1865, an astounding figure for that period of history, especially when it is reported that many copies were passed from house to house.⁷⁸ His family prayer book is said to have sold 30,000 copies in Norway and Denmark alone.⁷⁹

Noting the pietistic background of Augustana's founders, it is only natural to expect that Rosenius' works were also widely spread among these Swedes in America. It has already been noted above that his prayer book, devotions, and volumes of The Pietist were common baggage among the immigrants. We mentioned also the reprints appearing in Augustana's magazines⁸⁰ and the large number of Rosenius' works available from Augustana's book house in Rock Island. Apparently, Rosenius' works continued to hold a place of honor in the synod throughout the years. Clifford Nelson says his books were read "as long as Swedish was used as a devotional language,"⁸¹ and Karl Mattson said that yet in 1960 "bound volumes are still found on the shelves of a great number of the older pastors of Augustana."⁸² Unfortunately, few were ever trans-

lated into English and so the effective influence of Rosenius' many writings in America ended in the first decades of this century. It would be interesting to see if there is a connection between the eclipse of Rosenius' writings and the eclipse of confessionalism noted by Söderström.⁸³

In these writings of Rosenius we find his greatest influence on Augustana. Thus, it ought to be remembered that his works were almost entirely of a devotional nature. They stressed sin and grace, justification through faith in Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross, and the importance of clinging to God's revealed Word. Detailed treatises on doctrinal points such as the church, the ministry, etc. are entirely lacking. Hence, though we can note in general a confessional trend in the Synod and note from its publications a deep sense of piety and reverence for the Gospel message, we would be on shaky ground trying to identify further the influence Rosenius' written works had upon the Augustana Synod.

⁷⁷Rönnegård, op. cit., p.231.

⁷⁸The population of Sweden was about 3 million at this time.

⁷⁹Wordsworth, Church of Sweden, p.374.

⁸⁰Though I was unable to examine a complete run of Det Rätta Hemlandet, I was able to leaf through volumes 8-11 (1863-66). Interestingly enough, I noted that in 1863 the borrowed material consisted in sermons by Louis Harms, and selections from Arndt. In 1864, Luther, Fjellstedt, Bogatsky, Chayenne, Brastberger, and Fritschel were all given space, and first in 1865 do we find selections by Rosenius. But then Hasselquist went wild and about 40% of that volume is from Rosenius, mainly his Commentary on Romans. This would be an interesting thing to pursue further.

⁸¹E. Clifford Nelson, "Pulpit and Altar," in Centennial Essays, p.175.

⁸² Karl E. Mattson, "The Theology of the Augustana Lutheran Church," in Centennial Essays, p.35. It may legitimately be questioned how much influence the Swedish books on the shelf had in 1960. The majority had probably about the same use that German copies of Stoeckhardt and Hoenecke have in our synod. The author has seen volumes of Pietisten in second-hand bookstores as far away as Portland, Oregon.

⁸³ Söderström, op. cit., p.22.

CHAPTER 7

DOCTRINAL CHARACTERISTICS

Because of the extremely complex religious situation in Sweden in the nineteenth-century, as well as the various factors which gave a distinctive American coloring to the churches on this side of the Atlantic, it is risky business trying to trace minute influences. However, in the case of C. O. Rosenius and the Augustana Synod, there are four broad areas which we wish to discuss briefly: the doctrine of the church, relations with the Swedish state church, church fellowship practices, and the ministry.

Rosenius was clearly a solid adherent to the "mother" church of Sweden, and he looked upon his own activities and associates as an ecclesiola in ecclesia.⁸⁴ Youngert finds Rosenians holding such views in the Augustana Synod, who "while noting the unbelief, sins, deviations, and apostasy in the Church, are not willing to leave, but desire to stand fast and build up the Church."⁸⁵ On Youngert's authority we might conclude that here we see the effect of Rosenius and his writings.

As far as relations with the Swedish state church go, it is rather difficult to hypothesize how Rosenius would have acted in or reacted to the American atmosphere of total religious freedom. Dealings between Augustana and the state church were friendly. After Andrén's visit, the state church took up collections for Augustana for two consecutive years.

Esbjorn came to America on leave of absence and was credited with service time for the years he spent on the American field. Andr n was received hospitably by all facets of the state church hierarchy and laity. Yet, his mission was the first step towards the independence of Augustana. By opening a seminary of their own, the Augustana fathers were consciously steering a course towards autonomy.

The question arises whether Augustana was really a "daughter" of the Swedish church. Martin Englund answers affirmatively. Despite its independence in polity, Augustana had "the much coveted relation of Daughter Church in America."⁸⁶ George Stephenson disagrees and says that "to assert that the Augustana Synod... is the daughter of the Church of Sweden is to ignore the facts relating to religious conditions on the old country during the nineteenth-century."⁸⁷ Both men are probably right. In the eyes of the Swedish church, Augustana could only exist as a true church, "in the line of apostolic succession,"⁸⁸ as their own daughter. Yet, historically speaking, Augustana was much more the daughter of the revivalists and separatists of that age. The influence by Rosenius and the other reformers was certainly much more important at the time than the influence of the Archbishops of that period.⁸⁹ Relations were friendly, but not all that important. It seems as though Augustana straddled the fence much as Rosenius did, staying officially under the wing of the church and yet preaching a pietistic confessionalism.

The doctrine of church fellowship was gradually refined in the young Swedish synod, yet never to the point to which the Missouri Synod came. When the General Council was formed, the periodical Augustana noted Missouri's position in abstaining from joining. Their position was due to the fact that they not only held fast to the Confessions, but also to

the "doctrinal development which came about in the century after Luther and which is called orthodoxism." Because of this they would not "recognize as Lutheran or have any church fellowship with those, who do not occupy exactly the same position as they do," and hence they are "rather loveless." But the editor hastens to add that, "we hope they shall grow out of this so as not only to possess Lutheran doctrine, but also Lutheran practice with Lutheran freedom."⁹⁰

Yet, Augustana's position did become rather strong through the study of the Confessions and especially through the influence of Norelius. Rosenius would have written against Missouri in a similar vein, but he probably would not have sanctioned the many apologetical writings of Augustana. Many polemical tracts and articles were published, especially against the Methodists, Baptists, and Episcopalians. Peter Sjöblom is especially noteworthy for his apologetics against the charges of Baptists, and adherents of Waldenström. But by the second and third decades of this century, Rosenius would have felt a little more at home again, as men such as Youngert steered the Synod back towards a more "loving" attitude in respect to other churches.

One of the greatest evidences of the influence of Rosenianism and similar movements on the Augustana Synod is the synod's historic approach to lay preachers and the ministry in general. Whereas the state church was drifting more and more into a high church concept of the ministry, and the separatists were going to the opposite extreme, Augustana found a balance quite early in its history. Because of the large number of pastoral deviates floating around the frontier, the synod leaders realized the importance of having qualified shepherds in their congregations. They did use lay preachers, but only when licensed by the synod.⁹¹ Norelius even made provisions for training lay preachers in his Minnesota Elementary School.

While licensing lay preachers kept the pastoral office from degenerating, the synod also spoke out against the high church tendencies they had seen in Sweden. T.N. Hasselquist saw the danger and false teaching involved quite clearly. In a letter from Paxton, April 6, 1867, to Peter Wieselgren, he explained that Augustana had nothing doctrinal in mind by not adopting the episcopal system into its synod machinery. "But," he hastens to add, "we must as Lutherans fight against the 'succession of bishops' because that doctrine is in opposition to the material principal of the reformation."⁸² Since Rosenius always insisted on receiving the Sacraments in the state church, we might well see this as an improvement on Rosenius' position. In this area, as the others mentioned above, the church in America, free from the bondage of a state church system, was able to see beyond the vision of Rosenius. They came to this clarity based on a study of the Confessions and their Lutheran heritage which Rosenius so highly regarded and which he had helped pass on to them.

⁸⁴S.G. Youngert, "Types of Piety in the Augustana Synod: The Churchly Evangelical Type," Augustana Quarterly, VIII (Jan., 1929), p.49.

⁸⁵Ibid., p.48.

⁸⁶Martin Englund, "Church Polity of the Augustana Synod," in The Augustana Synod: A Brief Review of Its History 1860-1910 (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1910), pp.47-8.

⁸⁷Stephenson, op. cit., p.49.

⁸⁸Englund, op. cit., p.47.

⁸⁹It is a good commentary on the impact of the revivals of this period to note that in this entire study the name of an archbishop has not needed to be mentioned.

⁹⁰From an article on the General Council appearing in Augustana
I, No. 1 (Oct., 1868).

⁹¹The 1860 constitution said that licensed lay preachers had "the
right to preach, catechise, hold devotional meetings and privately en-
courage a godly life."

⁹²cited in Westin, Emnigranterna, p.147.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

With each chapter we have given a brief summary, but it is in place to here again compile the results of our study.

Though the founders of Augustana seem to have had very little if any personal contact with C.O. Rosenius either in Sweden or in America via letter, the widespread promulgation of his literature convincingly proves his influence upon the Augustana Synod. Most of the Augustana fathers had more direct contact with other revivalists in Sweden, but the interplay and cross-pollination of the various movements of the last century probably have concealed even more influences that in some way or other owe themselves to Rosenius and his followers. The confessional trend in Augustana in the first half century was, as we have seen, given a true Rosenian flavor by the semi-^{conservative} ~~liberal~~ fellowship practices of Augustana as compared to the "heartless orthodoxism" of the Missouri Synod.⁹³ All this seems to show substantial elements of Rosenianism in the early Augustana Synod. We might do well to emphasize more the influence of Rosenianism than of Rosenius himself. Previous studies of Augustana have failed in this respect.

During the early years, Augustana often looked to Sweden in the hope of calling one of its notable leaders to service in America. Calls were extended to such famous leaders as Ahlberg, Fjellstedt, and even lector Waldenström.⁹⁴ However, C.O. Rosenius never received such a call. Was it because of his failing health? Was it that he was

too important in his capacity in Stockholm? Was it because Norelius had never been able to swallow Rosenius' cooperation with the Methodists and his support from that New York mission society? Or was it that Hasselquist was too embarrassed about his past conduct toward Ahnfelt? Was it merely coincidence? It has seemed to me at times as if some invisible barrier shielded the Augustana Synod from ever having direct contact with this monumental figure of Swedish church history. In any case, Augustana learned to love and respect Rosenius, even if it was from a distance.

In the first issue of Augustana some comments are made on a letter of Rosenius that had been published in Det Rätta Hemlandet. There Rosenius is described as "that man full of love who was recently called home."⁹⁵ The editor and his readers evidently had held this man in high regard and had no doubts of where he would be spending eternity. In an obituary printed in Det Rätta Hemlandet, the editor again implies that he and his readers are among "the large flock of Rosenius' hearers and friends, who now will miss this exceptional man."⁹⁶ And what the editor said in conclusion might well express the following forty years of Augustana's history and the place Rosenius' writings had in them: "He speaks to us yet, even though he is now dead."⁹⁷

⁹³C.A. Blomgren, "The Union of the Augustana Synod with the General Council," in Augustana: A Brief History, p.221.

⁹⁴Westin, Emmigranterna, pp.143-4. An interesting point for church historians to speculate upon is how the history of the Augustana Synod and even more so the history of the Church of Sweden would have changed if Waldenström had accepted the call to Augustana.

⁹⁵Augustana, I, No.1 (Oct., 1868).

⁹⁶Det Rätta Hemlandet, XIII, No. 4 (April, 1868), pp.56ff.

⁹⁷Ibid., p.58.