

## **One Man's Journey**

The story of Rev. August William Edwins.  
The first Augustana Synod Missionary to China.

Lutheranism in America  
CH331  
Professor James F. Korthals

Skip Goetzinger  
May 1, 2001

*To those who have modeled Christ in their lives for the rest of us to behold –  
whether living or with Him -*

*who planted the seed that being a Pastor was a “most noble work,”*

*who motivated us -*

*who encouraged when they needed it more themselves,  
smiled, reprimanded and loved us as dear children entrusted to their care,  
whether we were their children or not.*

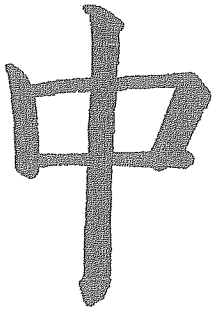
*To these people this work is dedicated.*

*Because whether your legacy is ever written down in history books or not,  
your memory will live with us forever.*

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ  
for so richly supplying Christian parents, teachers, adopted fathers  
and uncles in our lives!*

*"At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am  
a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony  
of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*

*Revelation 19:10*



*Soli Deo Gloria*

11 March 2001



**CHUNG HWAH**

*Pronounced Geeung Huwa, meaning China.*

*Literal meaning is "Middle Flowery Kingdom."*



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Both of the parents were born in Sävsnäs, Dalecarlia, Sweden. They were married in Sweden 1865 and migrated to America like so many others in 1868. This year is known in Swedish history as "the year of famine." They settled first on a farm at Moingona, Iowa, but moved to Swede Valley in 1871.

The father's original Swedish surname was Bjesse,<sup>1</sup> but this proved to be too difficult for his neighbors to pronounce and spell. As a result he adopted the name Edwins after becoming an American citizen. The young couple had left Sweden because of famine, but they found their new American home only slightly better. Poverty continued to lurk around their new home in this new land also. Their first years were spent in a one-room house, probably smaller than the average American garage, with food often in limited supply.

The father would occasionally work on the nearby railroad which was under construction. This would leave the mother and children alone in an area that was still inhabited by roaming Indians. Frequently large groups of Indians would come to the Edwins home with some cornmeal and request that Mother Edwins bake some bread for them. This would frighten the children tremendously. "Whenever the Indians came dressed in their feathers and regalia, we children would hide under the beds," Edwins said later in life.<sup>2</sup>

The same year that the Edwins family arrived in Swede Valley (1871) a Lutheran congregation was organized, and they became charter members the same for the rest of their lives. A.W. Edwins was the fourth of eleven children. Both parents died in 1919 and were buried in the Swede Valley Cemetery.

A.W. was baptized when only a few days old by Pastor C.J. Damström. He attended a one-room country school. Even before confirmation he involved himself in the work of his church; singing in choir and teaching Sunday School to the younger children. It is about this time of his confirmation years that he seems to have drifted a bit away from church. His confirmation teacher, Pastor Daniel Renstrom, helped him back to the foundation of his faith and to a solid Christian footing. A.W. often spoke of him with sincere



Swede Valley, Iowa

- 1 Professor Brug says that this is an uncommon combination of letters; an uncommon way to spell this Swedish name. He noted that most often one would find Bjösse, or Bjousse. In either case, the Swedish "j" is pronounced as a "y" in English: "Byesse."
- 2 Swanson, H. Three Missionary Pioneers. 52.

appreciation.

At the time of his confirmation the desire to serve as a pastor came back to A.W. with new force. Poverty made it impossible, however, to begin his studies immediately; he first had to earn some money. He left home at sixteen and obtained a job in a tinshop in Ogden, Iowa. Here he learned the tinner's trade, a skill that would serve him well later in life. Later he became a dry goods clerk. This work did not interest him, so he went on to Omaha, Nebraska and became a coachman for a wealthy family.

About this time he became deeply concerned for his parents whose farm mortgage was coming due. He and his brother Charlie agreed to raise the required amount to pay the mortgage and made it a surprise to their parents. Having not said "corban!", the money he had laid aside for his education was now gone. Another delay came when word reached him that a horse on the family farm had died. His help assured the purchase of another horse.

Like many men who have desired to prepare for the ministry, A.W. had to wait before he could begin his studies. It proved, however, that God has His timetable for the events in our lives. While he came to the Seminary as an "older student," he came with experience already built into the man.

### **"He was the best student of the class"**

When A.W. was finally able to set out for Rock Island he was twenty-two years old. He enrolled in the second class at Augustana Academy on January 9, 1894. Among his classmates was a little lad only half his age – his name was Peter Olof Bersell.<sup>3</sup> They were classmates through both academy and college; both graduating on May 29, 1899. Edwins was the valedictorian of his class both in college and in seminary.

Looking back at those days, Dr. Bersell wrote:<sup>3</sup>

I was a boy eleven years of age and he was just twice as old, a mature man. At least so he appeared to me, for I thought of him then as an old, experienced man, almost in a class with my father. Yet we became classmates and continued as such for six years until graduation from college.

David Edwins about his mother and the people:

*"Mother told about the loneliness of the early years as missionaries. As a young bride and living in this strange and hostile environment was most difficult. Their seclusion from the inhabitants had to be taken at times in a manner that appeared to be most inhospitable. Chinese by nature are a curious and friendly people. Their culture did not say that it was impolite to stare or gawk at these visitors through a window in their home. Most of them had never seen a white person with blond hair from the other side of the ocean. If visible the Chinese would spend hours just looking at you, talking among themselves, snickering and laughing. The Chinese found the foreigners to be a strange phenomena. These people spoke a language that they did not understand. The new arrival had white skin, light hair, blue eyes and tried to speak Chinese but with a very strange and foreign accent which had been unheard of before."*

<sup>3</sup> Peter Olof Bersell went on to become the President of the Augustana Synod. His sermon at A.W.'s memorial service at Augustana Church on August 30, 1942 was reprinted in the September 17, 1942 issue of The Lutheran Companion, entitled "A Fruitful Ministry."

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He was the best student in the class, for to him had been given wonderful intellectual endowments and he was a thorough workman, a splendid example of intellectual honesty. It was quite as it should be that he who stood head and shoulders above the rest in the class was the valedictorian on graduation day.

During his college and seminary years he served congregations in the following cities: Traverse City, MI, 1894-1895; First Church, St. Paul, MN, 1896-1899; Salem Church, Chicago, IL, 1900; Mayville, NY, 1901.

S. Hjalmar Swanson writes:<sup>4</sup>

The question of an Augustana mission in China was often discussed in the seminary while Edwins was a senior. It led to no little both prayer and searching of heart by the members of this class, not the least by Edwins. As yet the Synod had no such mission but often the question would be asked: 'Why should we not begin a mission in that great land and why should not one of us volunteer for such service?' If Edwins at that time felt moved to volunteer, we do not know, since he did not indicate it. Edwins did not act quickly nor did he permit his emotions to carry him away. It took a call which amounted to a 'draft' from God and His Church to make him decide on this important matter.

The Synod held its 1902 annual convention at Ishpeming, Michigan, and here Edwins and his twenty-one classmates were ordained June 15. Edwins was ordained on a call from the Trinity Lutheran Church of Stillwater, Minnesota. This was one of the leading congregations of the Minnesota Conference and had a membership of 890 and a Sunday School enrollment of 280. Here the young pastor found a warm welcome and congenial environment. He enjoyed especially his work with the young people among whom he conducted, with mutual blessings, a popular Bible class.

### *The China Mission Association and the founding China impetus.*

Augustana was not uninvolved in foreign mission work. Cooperation with the General Council's "Telugu Mission" in India dates back to its first years in 1867.<sup>5</sup> As late as 1945 Augustana was still involved in the mission work in India with the United Lutheran Church.

As early as 1894 special concern for China was expressed in the Synodical records. Augustana had



An example of the ordination of Augustana Seminary graduates as pastors. Here shown at the 1946 convention held in Duluth. This ordination practice differs from that of the WELS, where the newly assigned Seminary graduate - a pastor by virtue of his call - is ordained at his first church.



Stillwater, Minnesota

- 4 S. Hjalmar Swanson, "Three Missionary Pioneers," 55. This author has material regarding A.W. Edwins' life that I have been unable to obtain from any other sources. There are portions in the book that strongly suggest that he interviewed A.W.'s wife, Alfreda. Per David Edwins, A.W.'s son, no extant biographical information remains from his mother Alfreda.
- 5 The Augustana Synod was officially organized in 1860. However, in their centennial commemorative book "A Century of Life and Growth" they advertise "1848-1948." Referring to a little group of Swedish immigrants who settled in Jefferson County, Iowa, it is written: "Their evangelical doctrine is reflected in the Lutheran concept of the universal priesthood of all believers. With no pastor in their midst or within call they chose in the year 1848 one of their own men to serve as pastor that they might have the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. Thus a church was born in the new land." Apparently, this is the reason for the "founding date" of 1848.
  - The General Council, what we might want to think of today as a "synod," was really a type of alliance of independent synods. It was organized in 1867.

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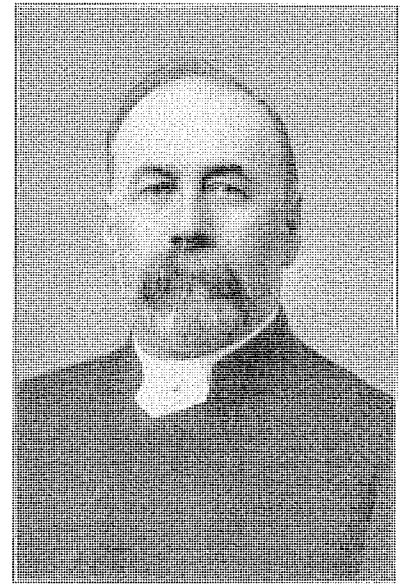
already ventured into India, but was receiving weak support. Voices of caution raised their concern against any greater responsibilities and so they won the day. Augustana would not venture into China on its own, but would continue in a supportive role to an established society or general church agency.

This common sense approach did not satisfy everyone. Pastor J.C. Hultkrans invited interested persons to the parsonage of Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota to pray about China and its troubled millions. A few weeks later, September 3 & 4, 1901, the first organizational meeting of the future foreign mission society met. Pastor C.J. Collen of New London, Minnesota, gave an instructive mission lecture on the theme "Our Debt to the Pagan World." The members met the following day, and after a general discussion following the theme presented the previous day, it was voted to "organize a Missionary Society whose purpose shall be to carry on foreign mission work."<sup>6</sup> Seventeen charter members signed the minutes of this first meeting, thus organizing the first Foreign Missionary Society of the Augustana Synod.<sup>7</sup>

The news spread through the church press, "Lutersk Tidskrift" and people dissatisfied with conservative mission policy responded with eagerness. They developed a constitution and published their own journal, *Kina Missionären*. These were not students who were asking permission from Synod to call and support missionaries, but mature pastors and laypersons.

The earnestness, and the frustration with its own Synod, with which this Association viewed its work is reflected in its constitution. "The purpose of the Mission Association shall be: . . . establishing and conducting missionary work in heathen lands; . . . to constitute a uniting link for volunteers within our Synod who feel a concern over the need of pagan folks *and desire that our church may conduct its own foreign missions.*"<sup>8</sup>

Also note: "Membership in this mission association may be held by any member of the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod *who desires to see our*



**Rev. C.A. Hultkrans**

The driving impetus for the founding of the Foreign Mission Association. He then served continuously as a member of the China Mission Board from its organization in 1908 to his death on October 21, 1915.

6 Foreign Mission Association minutes from Sep. 3, 4, 1901.

7 17 Charter members: 13 pastors, 4 laypeople.

8 The Evangelical Lutheran Foreign Mission Association. Constitution. Article II.

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church establish its own foreign mission work."<sup>9</sup> This Association was serious about *doing* something. It was not only their goal to conduct mission festivals; not only to distribute mission literature; not only to heighten awareness of the need for mission work, but to actually collect the necessary funds in order to "call and send out missionaries."<sup>10</sup>

The newly founded Foreign Mission Society took more than a year to study the matter. From the minutes of the Foreign Mission Association, Jan. 23, 1903 (1 year, 4 months after the first organizing meeting): "Voted: That the Board be authorized to contact mission fields in China and Africa to ascertain where it would be most desirable to begin missionary work." Again at the Board meeting five days later, Feb. 28, 1903: "The question of calling missionaries to be sent out to the mission field was given consideration. . . agreement not to extend any call at this time, but to continue to place this important matter before God in prayer."

Concern over the work of this para-church organization can be seen in the minutes of Apr. 22, 1903: "A letter from Dr. (*space is left blank*), President of the Augustana Synod was read in which he requested to know the purpose of the association." The Board was authorized by the membership to answer. (The President of the Synod at this time would have been Rev. E. Norelius, D.D.; 1874-81; 1899-1911)

Finally, one month short of the two year anniversary of the organizing meeting, it was voted to call theological student S.G. Hagglund to go out as a missionary to China.<sup>11</sup> The efforts of the Mission Association were starting to bear fruit. A man had been called, a general location in China focused on,<sup>12</sup> and an offer of assistance had been received.<sup>13</sup>

After the initial call to theological student Hagglund was declined, the Board of the Society turned its thoughts to a young man who had been an active participant in its meetings, A.W. Edwins, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church of Stillwater, MN. The minutes of the Board meeting for Dec. 1, 1904, read: "Following an earnest prayer by Pastor C.A. Hultkrans, it was unanimously voted to call Pastor A.W. Edwins

David Edwins about his parents:

*"Living within the walled city of Hsüchow gave some protection against marauders, thieves and bandits. The walled city gave the same protection to the newly arrived 'Foreign Devils' (as they were called by the Chinese). More importantly it gave the opportunity to spread the good news. . . The Gospel of Jesus Christ. After all, wasn't this what they came to do? Preach and convert the heathens from their wicked ways and idolatry. These foreigners offered salvation through faith in a living God that you could not see or feel. This was indeed a new and strange religion."*

<sup>9</sup> The Evangelical Lutheran Foreign Mission Association. Constitution. Article III, Section 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Article V, Section 3, ¶2.

<sup>11</sup> Foreign Mission Association minutes; Aug. 31, 1903.

<sup>12</sup> "Our eyes have been turning to the province of Honan hoping there to begin our missionary work." Foreign Mission Association minutes; Annual Report of the Board, Feb. 18, 1904.

<sup>13</sup> "Promise of support from the Church of Sweden Mission in Honan and Shansi has been offered to assist our missionaries until the work is launched." Foreign Mission Association minutes; Annual Report of the Board, Feb. 18, 1904



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of Stillwater, MN to go out to China as a missionary. His salary was set at \$800 for the first year."<sup>14</sup>

Upon receipt of the call, a deep inner struggle followed. He deeply loved his flock at Trinity Church, yet he did not want to be a Jonah if God was calling him. So he did the only thing a Christian pastor can do when holding two calls; he took it to the Lord in prayer. Hjalmar Swanson continues with the story:

"Into the late hours of the night, after he had gone to bed, he continued to pray that God would make His will clear to him. One night he decided to 'try God,' to ask him for a sign. He said: 'I will arise, take my Bible and open it in the dark and place it thus face down on my desk. If then in the morning my eyes will be directed at the opened place to some significant statement, I will accept it as God's special message to me at this time regarding this call.

In the morning he discovered that he had opened the Bible at Acts, chapter 16, and his eyes caught immediately its ninth verse: 'And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over to Macedonia, and help us.' He was deeply impressed. Some might say that it was a peculiar coincidence. To him it was an answer to his prayer."<sup>15</sup>

When the Society held its annual meeting at Center City, Minnesota, on February 13 & 14, 1905, the chairman of the Board was able to report that Pastor Edwins had accepted the call. After four years of labor and delay, this little group of devoted men now could see their dreams assuming definite shape.

Edwins' letter of acceptance, dated February 9, 1905, read as follows:

Pastor A.F. Almer, Forest Lake, Minnesota

Grace and peace:

Herewith I wish to inform you that after many prayers and a very careful consideration of the matter I have come to the conviction that I should accept the call which I have received and try to work with the grace and strength which God may afford for the cause of the Gospel on the mission field in China.

Last night I turned in my resignation as pastor of the local congregation to our Church Council and

A poignant mission zeal story from the Annual Report of the Board of the Foreign Mission Association; Feb. 18, 1904:

*"Livingston was preaching once to a Chieftan and his tribe in the jungles of Africa. Following, the Chieftan asked 'Did your father know about this message?' When Livingstone gave an affirmative answer, he asked, 'Why did he not then come here and tell this to my father? He is now dead and is therefore unable to hear this.' Missionaries have often been asked the same question. We wonder if this question will not meet us on judgement day."*

<sup>14</sup> Foreign Mission Association Minutes. Dec. 1, 1904

<sup>15</sup> Swanson, H. *Three Missionary Pioneers*. 58.

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begged for permission to leave the service here June 1st, providing the congregation does not consider that time unsuitable.

The Church Council wishes to pass a resolution not to accept the resignation. I succeeded in preventing them from taking such action, stating that it would not be right to do so if it should prove to be God's will that I should go as a missionary to China. The resignation, however, was not accepted because it was felt that to do so would be to ignore the congregation. They understand plainly however that it is my determination, by God's grace, to abide by my decision and consequently it is quite unlikely that anything will be done to retain me here.

As matters now stand it would be best not to consider this letter as a formal acceptance of the call. This can be done as soon as the congregation has had an opportunity to understand the situation and to accept matters accordingly, and for this a long time should not be required.

And now it is my prayer that God may so lead matters that the step which I have taken at least may not be determined to the cause of God's Kingdom and that, if anything good may be accomplished, God alone may have the glory.

Cordial greetings.  
Sincerely,  
A.W. Edwins<sup>16</sup>

This was a momentous decision for a pastor to make. Humanly speaking, he was well-established in a congregation with nearly 700 communicant members. He now chose to serve a society which had no official standing in the Church, but rather was looked upon with suspicion in many quarters. It had no mission field and, while concentrating its focus upon China, it had absolutely no assurance as to where an opening might be found. As to the Society's financial strength, it had in its treasury at the time \$1,032.47.

Had Edwins counseled with flesh and blood it would seem that he would have said: "This is a risky and hazardous enterprise to exchange for the security of a well-established parish." Both he and the members of the Society stepped out in faith, and God blessed their efforts.

David Edwins was telling about the death of his eldest brother, the first child, whom the Edwins' lost only a few hours after birth. Then he (the ninth child) re-tells the following story about their third child Margaret (Marne), this writers' grandmother:

*"Marne was born in Hsüchow. The situation had improved and things had gotten better. Sister Ingeborg, a nurse, was there with them and could help with the new arrival. All was well. Margaret grew and developed well. It wasn't much after her second birthday the she came down with dysentery. Her body was becoming more and more dehydrated from vomiting and diarrhea. Medical help was days away. The specter of Theodore's death was ever present. Margaret couldn't retain any liquid. She was rapidly weakening as the hours passed. The weather was exceedingly hot and humid. Dad sat beside her bed and tried to keep her little body cool against her burning fever and the summer heat. As Mother used to say in relating this event: 'Baby Margaret was sick unto death with dysentery.'"*

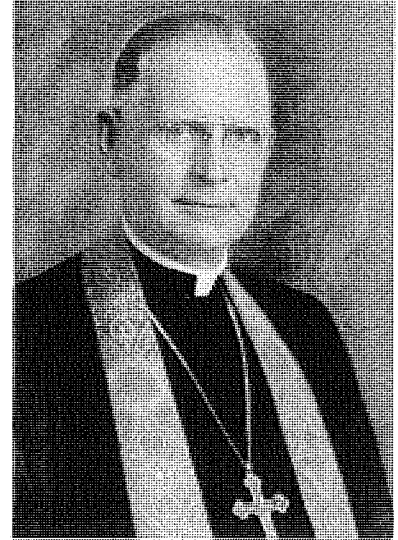
*"This story was passed down to us while we were children at home in China. I can't forget Mother telling us of this happening to impress upon us the power of prayer."*

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Rev. Bersell, President of the Augustana Synod, and former classmate of A.W said in his memorial service sermon:<sup>17</sup>

"God had chosen His man. We can well understand the struggle that Edwins had to go through when he was faced with this call. There was no guarantee of adequate support of the work, no financial security for himself and his family. There was no official board to back him up. The Synod itself was not concerned about it. There were evident difficulties and unseen dangers to be met. And with characteristic modesty he undoubtedly said, 'Why should I be the man, of all the pastors in the Synod, to undertake this work and be the pioneer?'

*The year 1906 we will set aside momentarily. If we were following these events chronologically, we would now continue with Edwins' departure for China. However, we will continue with the history of the Foreign Mission Association, and then pick up with A.W.'s departure for, and life in China.*



Rev. P. O. Bersell

<sup>17</sup> Bersell, P.O. The Lutheran Companion. "A Fruitful Ministry," Sept. 17, 1942, 1049.

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***Augustana Synod takes over the work  
of the Foreign Mission Association.***

By 1908 the China Mission Society had more than 600 members, five missionaries were on the field (including wives), property had been bought in Hsüchow and paid for – and there was still \$3,000 in the treasury. With this favorable record the society offered their work and resources to the Augustana Synod.

As early as Dec. 1907 there was official talk of Synodical involvement in the China mission work. "Through private letters as well as in printed articles Missionary Edwins has been recommending that the Association should ask the Synod to take over its missionary work. The immensity of the field seems to have given him this feeling as well as the hope that thereby more workers might more speedily be sent out."<sup>18</sup>

The Board of Directors did not feel prompted under present conditions to present any definite recommendation to the association until a special meeting on May 21, 1908, at Immanuel Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN. There it was voted: "that the Foreign Mission Association approach the Synod at its next meeting in Chicago with a petition that Synod if it so desires, be given an opportunity to take over and continue the work which the association has started in China, making it the Synod's own mission, with this one condition that the Synod will elect a special board of missions."<sup>19</sup>

A special committee was formed to draw up a petition to the Synod. It read as follows:

<sup>18</sup> Foreign Mission Association minutes; Annual meeting; Dec. 5, 6, 1907.

<sup>19</sup> Foreign Mission Association minutes from May 21, 1908.

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## PETITION TO SYNOD

The following communication was sent to Dr. A. Norelius, President of the Augustana Synod, to be presented by him to the Synodical Convention.

Dr. E. Norelius,  
President, Evangelical Lutheran Church,  
Augustana Synod.

Grace and Peace.

Whereas it has been the aim of the Evangelical Lutheran Foreign Missions Association of Minnesota to work for the establishment of the foreign mission which would be our own and to constitute a uniting link of voluntary forces within our Synod interested in such an undertaking until the time shall come when the Synod may consider itself prepared to undertake such a mission and

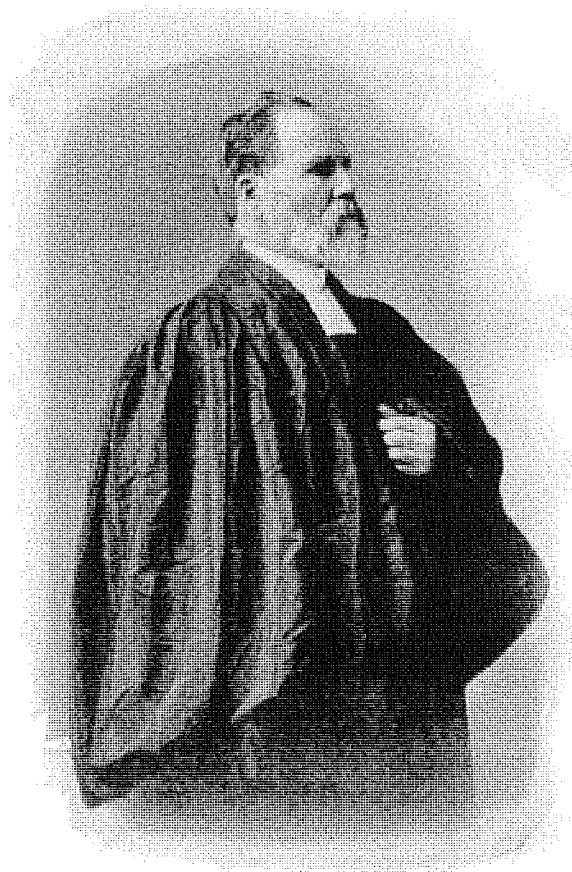
whereas, we now have been led to understand from various sources that the Synod already at its coming convention in Chicago may wish to take over the association's mission in China,

we therefore desire to submit this matter to Synod for its decision.

The association has been in existence about six years and it has between 600 and 700 members among the pastors and laymen of the Synod. It is incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota and it has an extensive mission field in Honan, China. Five missionaries are already serving on the field: Pastor and Mrs. A.W. Edwins, Dr. and Mrs. O.T. Friberg, and Sister Ingeborg Nystul. Property has been purchased in Hsüchow, Honon, China, at the cost of \$3,000 fully paid. The association has in its treasury a cash balance of \$3,000. The association is prepared to turn its field, property, and cash assets to the Augustana Synod as soon as the Synod may decide to take over the same as its own mission and elects a special board of foreign missions to administer their work.

Center City, Minnesota, May 26, 1908

F.M. Eckman, Chairman of the Association,  
C.A. Hultkrans, Chairman of the Board.



Dr. E. Norelius, D.D., R.N.O.,  
President,  
Evangelical Lutheran Church, Augustana Synod.



Augustana did not adopt English as its "official" language until 1920.

For future researchers, I document the paper trail as follows:

**Foreign Mission Association publications:**

- "Kristlig Tidskrift for Hadmamission och Diakoni" ("Christian Magazine for Foreign Missions and Deaconess Work"). Nov. 21, 1902. Swedish.
- "Luthersk Tidskrift" Aug. 31, 1903. Swedish.  
A reference appears in the minutes to this new, and shortened, name.
- "Kina Missionären"<sup>21</sup>  
Renamed Feb., 1908. Swedish.  
Discontinues publication in 1921.

**China Mission Publication:**

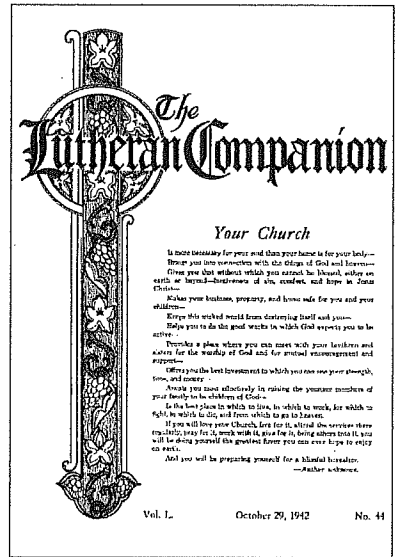
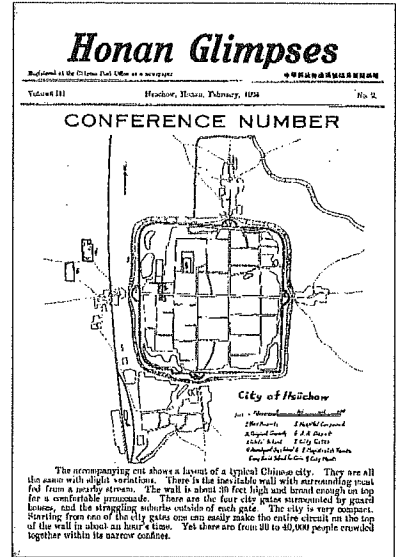
- "Glimpses from Central Honan"<sup>22</sup>  
Mar., 1922. English.
- "Honan Glimpses"  
Renamed Dec., 1923; last issue Mar., 1927. English.

**Augustana Synod, Board for World Missions:**

- "The Augustana Foreign Missionary"  
1926-1938. English. Intended to be a continuation of "Kina Missionären."
- "Augustana Overseas"  
Renamed in the 1940's. English.

**Augustana Synod Church Publications:**

- "Augustana"  
Discontinued in 1958. Swedish to the end. Was rolled over into "The Lutheran Companion."
- "The Lutheran Companion"  
Began 1892 in English. Began as the young people's magazine in English. Eventually became the main church publication when "Augustana" was discontinued.



<sup>21</sup> Regarding the "Kina Missionären" Edwins wrote: "By this time we would have been in a pretty tight sack if we did not have our little 'Kina Missionären' as a mouthpiece. I don't wonder that Dr. A. (?) wished for the 'natural death' of that little paper. Then he could have kept those who do not talk to his liking from getting a hearing." *Letterpress book*. Dec. 21, 1909.

<sup>22</sup> Began as a mimeographed publication. Each missionary was supplied two copies. By March, 1923 ("Honan Glimpses") it appeared as a printed newspaper. It was published ten times per year. No issues in July or August since the missionaries came together for conference and vacations at this time.

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### **A.W.'s professional life takes a turn.**

We have spoken at length about the events that led to the Augustana Synod achieving a mission station in China. The resulting facts that led to the call of A.W. Edwins as the first Augustana Synod Missionary to China have been laid forth. Now we turn away from the Synod and Society work in America, and return our attention to the missionary himself.

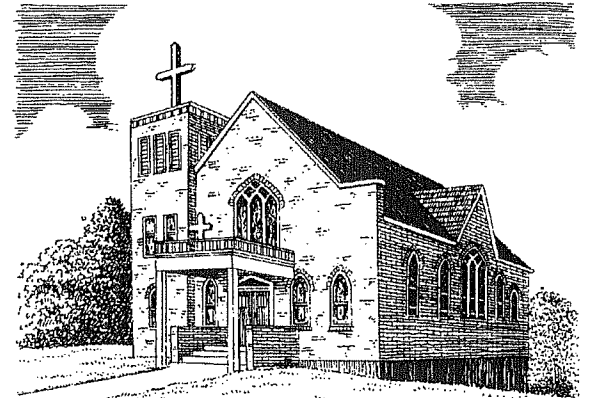
A.W.'s letter of acceptance was dated Feb. 9, 1905. By Sept. 6, 1905 he was married to Alfreda Anderholm. On Sept. 14, 1905 he and his bride attended a farewell service at Gustavus Adolphus Church in St. Paul, MN. The next day he attended another farewell at Augustana Church in Minneapolis, MN. The same day they departed for China. Within eight months of his acceptance letter, Oct. 21, A.W. Edwins arrived in Shanghai as a missionary, new husband in a new land, with an uncertain destination known only as "Honan Province."

Let's step back just a moment. When Edwins received the call to serve as a missionary to China he was not married. But under God's guidance he soon found a young lady, Miss Alfreda Anderholm of Clayton, Wisconsin, who was willing to be his bride and serve with him in China. This was a step of faith, and presumably also of love, for she faced an uncertain future and danger in agreeing to marry a man headed for China. Only a few years before, China had experienced the great Boxer Rebellion which witnessed the slaughter of countless Christians.

### **Getting to China.**

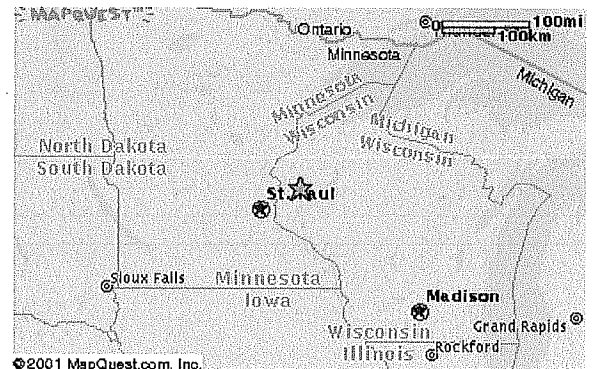
The Edwins sailed from Seattle on September 20, 1905 on the S.S. *Dakota*, a new ship making her maiden trip to the Orient. They found several missionaries among their fellow travellers. Alfreda Edwins relates as she looked back upon this, her first of many long sea crossings:

"The trip was very pleasant. On board we met several missionaries among whom were Pastor and Mrs. Trygstad of the Hauge Norwegian Mission and others who had been in China before and were now returning. From them we learned much about China and the needs of Honan. A Presbyterian couple on the way back to Honan assured us that there was



Immanuel Lutheran Church Rural Clayton,

Immanuel Church, Rural Clayton, Wisconsin



Rural Clayton, Wisconsin



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ample room for us to begin work also in that province. Our first stop was in Japan. Here we spent ten lovely days sight-seeing. It was here we saw for the first time idols such as the heathen worship, and our hearts were stirred within us at the sight. But Japan was so beautiful, while from fellow passengers we had heard so much about how dirty China and her people were, and we wondered very much as to what conditions we would face when we would arrive there."<sup>23</sup>

In a letter written while yet on the *S.S Dakota* and mailed from Japan A.W. wrote:

"We have been told by missionaries who are our fellow passengers that Honan province is open for the Gospel. This has been very encouraging since we are entertaining the hope of finding a field in that province. The population of Honan is about 22,000,000 (*this estimate was actually half the actual population of the province*). The number of missionaries is however very small. If every missionary in China were to locate in Honan, each missionary would still find 7,000 souls for whose spiritual and, in many instances, physical care he would be responsible.<sup>24</sup> 'The harvest is indeed plenteous, but the laborers are few!' Dear brethren in the faith in the Augustana Synod, we grant that you have many duties to discharge at home, but do not neglect to stretch out the hand of Christian love to the poor heathen, and when you do so then do not forget altogether China, by so many completely forgotten, with its hundreds of millions famished and walking in darkness."<sup>25</sup>

When the Edwins arrived in Shanghai on October 21, 1905, they were met by a Dr. Hotvedt of the Norwegian mission who welcomed them to China. It was he who took charge of them and became their guide and travel manager over the next thirty days, until they safely reached Fancheng in the Hupeh province.



Honan Province: Future area of work.

Shanghai: point of arrival.

Hankow: first destination w/ Dr. Hotvedt.

Fancheng: Studied & lived w/Hauge missionaries for next 10 months.

<sup>23</sup> Swanson, H. *Three Missionary Pioneers*. 60, 61.

<sup>24</sup> The responsibility that A.W. refers is the Pietistic influence upon the Augustana Synod. For Augustana, to do mission work meant also to send Doctors and Deaconesses, (medical missionaries), who would also establish hospitals and schools. Take note of the vast numbers that were hospitalized versus the numbers that actually converted to Christianity on page 40.

<sup>25</sup> Swanson, H. *Three Missionary Pioneers*. 61.

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### *Twenty days on a river boat.*

The trip from Shanghai to Hankow was four days by riverboat up the Yangtze river. Once in Hankow,<sup>26</sup> the Norwegian missionary, Dr. Hotvedt, remained only long enough to hire a riverboat which was to be their home for the next twenty days. At last they reached Fancheng on Thanksgiving day, Nov. 30, 1905.

Once in Fancheng, missionaries from the Hauge Synod, (later to become part of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America), graciously opened their homes to the Edwins'. This hospitality was enjoyed until they were ready to occupy the chosen field of Honan in September of 1906.

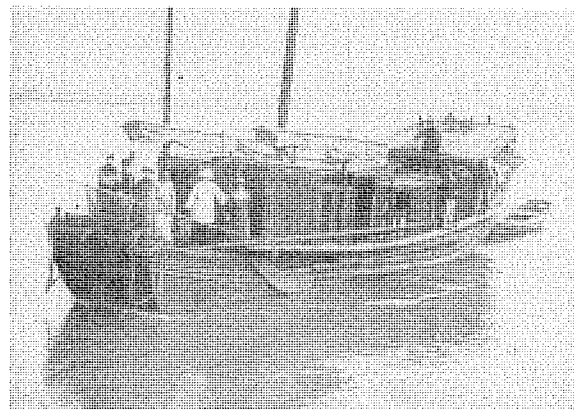
### *A year of preparation in Fancheng – 1906.*

The year spent in Fancheng with the Hauge missionaries was spent chiefly in language studies. A.W. did not have the luxury of attending a language school like those who would follow him. While in Shanghai he had purchased Ballard's Primer and a dictionary, and had already made plans for learning the language.

He hired himself a Chinese language teacher who knew no English (or Swedish). Naturally he could not ask his teacher any questions, nor could the instructor give any helpful guidance. But Edwins applied himself with the same perseverance that he had demonstrated back at Augustana Academy and Seminary. In time, he made remarkable progress in this difficult language. It is said that he possessed the valuable skill of self-criticism and aimed at perfection.

Mrs. Edwins relates: "When we left Fancheng the following year, he had sufficient command of the language to get along and take us, then alone, down the same river in the same manner in which we had come up the previous year in company with a man who had been in China several years."<sup>27</sup>

It was said of Edwins that he eventually spoke Chinese almost like a native. Some missionaries have said: "Edwins spoke equally well in English, Swedish and Chinese."<sup>27</sup>



The Edwins travelling up the Han River on their first trip into central China. 1905.



<sup>26</sup> Hankow is one of the three cities making up the old Wuhan center, now simply called Wuhan. Hankow is the "Chicago" of China.

<sup>27</sup> Swanson, H. *Three Missionary Pioneers*. 63. As a child I was told that he was proficient in fourteen languages.

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### *Developing a mission field – where to start?*

On April 24, 1906 Edwins left Fancheng to investigate the Honan province to the north. He was in the company of two Hauge Synod Missionaries, Landahl and Ronning, along with his Chinese language instructor, Mr. Lei. Their goal was to look for a field for the new Augustana mission. He later wrote: "One of the chief benefits of spending some time with older missionaries was the help we received when seeking to decide on a field for our future labors in China."<sup>28</sup>

Since the Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the century, conditions in many parts of China were far from peaceful and law-abiding. Anti-foreign sentiments continued to be part of the fabric of many parts of Chinese locales. Friends warned Edwins and his associates not to venture upon so long a journey at such a time, but they had "committed the entire matter to God in prayer and counted confidently upon His faithfulness for guidance and protection."<sup>29</sup>

I will let Edwins relate what happened while on his exploratory journey for a mission field. At the time, it was a well publicized story in the Augustana periodicals:

To our knowledge, no danger threatened us at any time except on the second day of our journey. Then it happened that we were attacked by a mob at a country village where two of the common Chinese open-air theaters had attracted a concourse of about two thousand idle spectators. The village street was crowded to the utmost, and through the crowded street our clumsy mule carts had to make their way. On seeing that we were foreigners many in the crowd began to yell out a kind of unearthly war whoop. Our drivers were somewhat uneasy and desired to move on as fast as the dense crowd would make way. Our two-wheeled carts swayed more or less from side to side on the uneven road. A basket of Chinese steamed bread must have been upset by a slight collision with one of our carts. The vender, a young boy, screamed loudly as his little loaves rolled on the ground and were snatched up by the thievish bystanders. This episode perhaps increased the commotion somewhat. Little by little, however, our carts plowed their way through the dense mass of surging humanity and we were soon on the point of leaving the crowd behind us, but then the mob followed us, hooting and yelling and hurling at us and our mules and vehicles whatever



<sup>28</sup> Edwins, A.W. *Our First Decade in China*. 10.

<sup>29</sup> Edwins, A.W. *Our First Decade in China*. 10.

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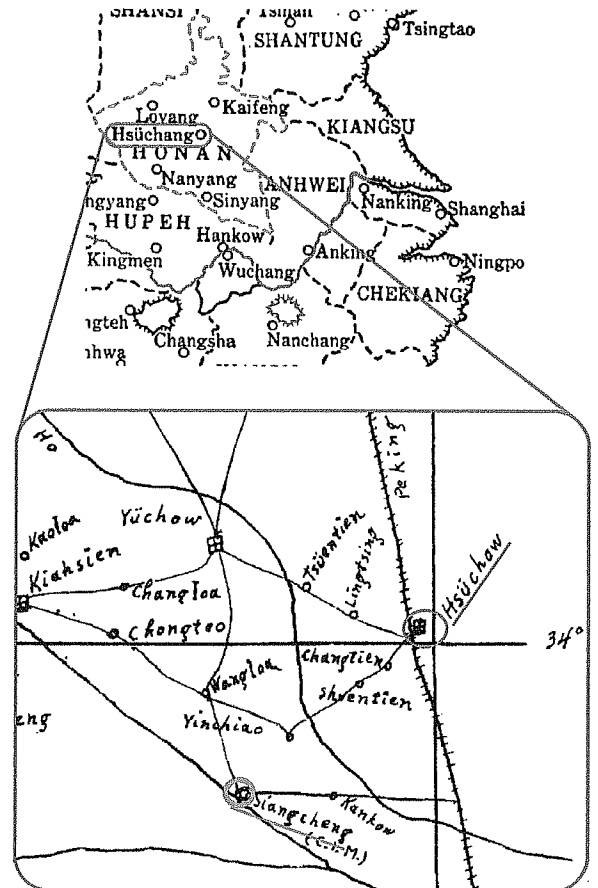
missiles were at hand. Our mules were beaten most unmercifully with large, heavy lumps of sun-dried clay. Some of our little company also received heavy blows from the flying missiles. The mules pulling the foremost cart stopped and for some moments it seemed as though we might be surrounded, but fortunately our drivers succeeded in getting their animals started again, and by rapid driving we managed to outdistance the howling mob."<sup>30</sup>

Edwins continues his story:

Our unpleasant encounter with a Chinese mob led us to consult with some officials. These (officials) kindly provided us with a military escort, but advised us to travel by another route than the one we had intended to follow. A few days' travel by the new route took us to Hsiangcheng, a city near the Peking-Hankow railway. At this city we met some of the leading China Inland Mission<sup>31</sup> workers in the province of Honan. Information given by these missionaries, together with the kind attitude they took towards our new mission, led to a decision in our choice of a field. These kind messengers of the Lord helped, in fact, to open for us the door of missionary opportunity in China. And it is meet (right, fitting) that we here also give due recognition to God's providential guidance by mentioning that the very men whom He used to direct and help us were in Hsiangcheng by reason of His special leading. To His blessed name be the honor and the glory! After our choice of field had been made, careful negotiations with neighboring missions soon led to an understanding between us and them as to the territory our mission would be permitted to occupy.<sup>32</sup>

Most of the mission field they had come to see had been preempted by the China Inland Mission (CIM), but they graciously set aside a generous portion of the province for the work of the future Augustana Mission. In fact, the CIM lacked personnel to properly carry out work in the area. This evening meeting between Edwins and the representatives of the CIM was of tremendous importance to the Augustana Synod, and to the millions of souls in the province.

But in a very personal way, this was a great victory in the life of A.W. Edwins as well. This was the moment for which he had lived and prayed and suffered for the last many months. At last there was an



Hsüchang was originally known as Hsüchow.

<sup>30</sup> Edwins, A.W. *Our First Decade in China*. 10, 11.

<sup>31</sup> China Inland Mission: "It was begun in 1895 by J. Hudson Taylor. Conservative theologically after the Evangelical pattern, it accepted 'willing, skillful workers' regardless of their denominational affiliation. As its name indicates, it sought to reach the regions untouched by other Protestant missions. . . In 1914 it had over 1,000 missionaries on its rolls." Latourette, K. *A History of Christianity*. 1325.

<sup>32</sup> Edwins, A.W. *Our First Decade in China*. 11, 12.

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Augustana field in China. This evening became one of the happiest of his life. He later wrote:

"I am confident that no polar explorer on reaching his goal has experienced a joy so pure and satisfying as that which thrilled my soul when at last I saw before me as a reality that which so many had prayed for during so many years – our dear Synod as last had a mission field all its own in ancient heathen China!"<sup>33</sup>



Chinese coin.

Given to this writer by his Grandmother, Margaret (nee Edwins) Eckstrom.

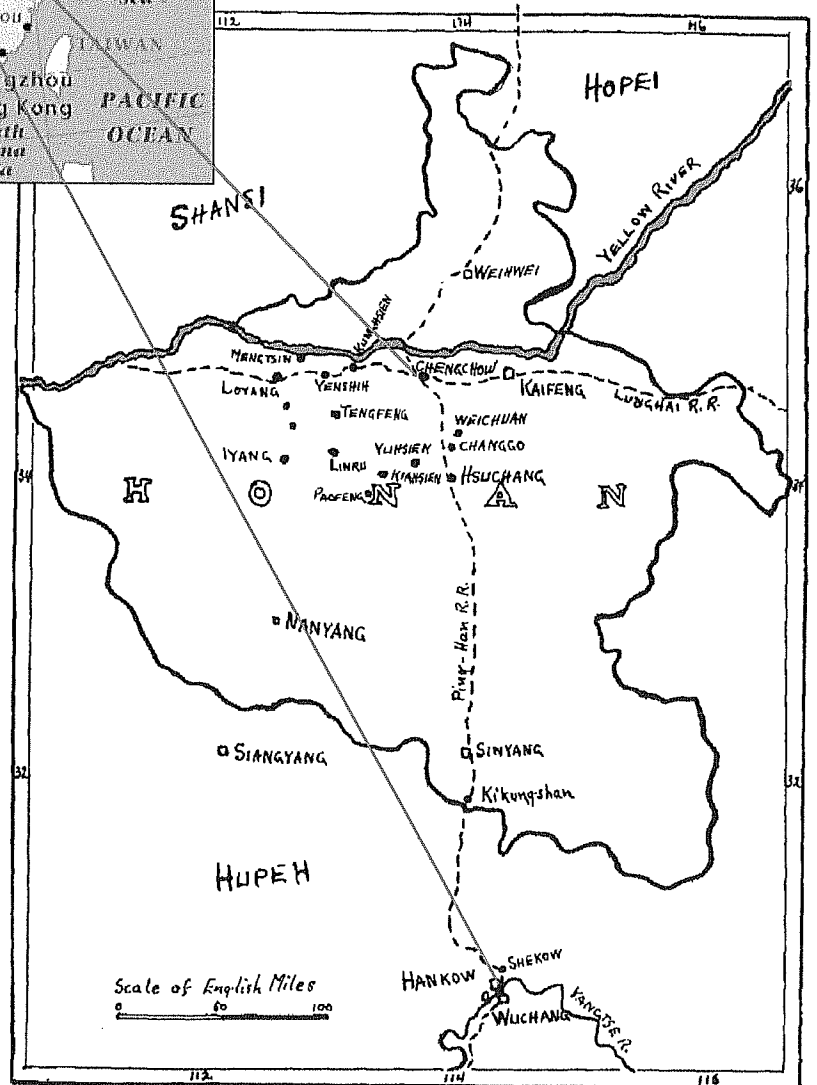
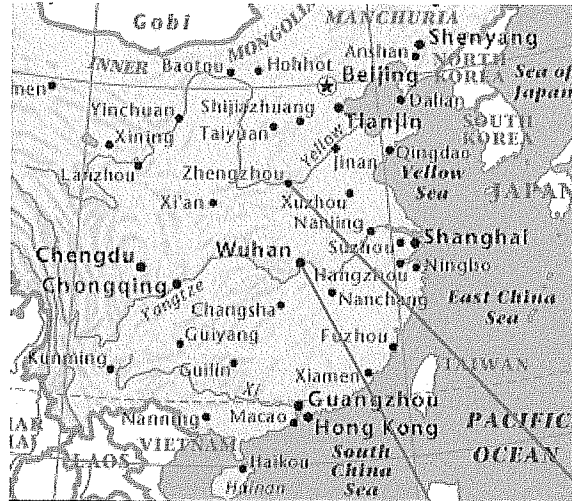
#### History of Lutheran Missions in China as of 1930:\*

Founded:	Synod:	Location:	Workers		Baptized Members
			Foreign	Native	
1890	Norwegian Lutheran Church	Honan-Hupeh	129	—	6,890
1905	Augustana	Honan	21	100	1,608
1913	Missouri	Hupeh-Szechwan	13	53	600
1925	United Lutheran Church	Shantung	19	160	2,423

This table taken from "Into all the World," W. Polack, Concordia Publishing House, 1930. Polack took this table from "Lutheran World Almanac," 1930.

Compare with Augustana's figures (cf. p.39 of this paper): 27      120      1,924

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**Augustana Mission field  
in heart of Honan province:**

- An area 10,000 square miles.
- An area slightly less than the state of Minnesota.
- 1900 density figures:  
 Honan: 520 people per square mile.  
 Minnesota: 22.1 people per square mile.  
 U.S. ave.: 31 people per square mile.
- Kaifeng to Loyang, east to west.
- Yellow river south to the borders of the China Inland Mission.
- 17 cities.
- 600 villages.
- 10,000 towns.
- +/- 5 million people.

**Other mission work adjoining  
Augustana's field:**

- North, across Yellow (Huang Ho) River:  
 Canadian Presbyterian Mission.
- Northwest:  
 Swedish Mission in China.
- Southwest:  
 Norwegian Lutheran Mission.  
 Lutheran Brethren Mission.
- South:  
 Ebenezer Mission (China Inland Mission).
- East:  
 China Inland Mission.  
 Southern Baptist Convention.
- Southeast:  
 Lutheran Synod Mission.  
 American Lutheran Mission.

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### *Departure for their new home – Hsüchow.*

Concerning the first year spent with the Hauge missionaries, Edwins wrote of he and his wife in the third person:

"The opportunity thus given the new arrivals to spend several months (*actually ten months*) at an old mission station proved to be of great value and importance. They were guided in their early language studies, advised regarding conditions and customs in China, cheered and helped in many ways. For all this they will cherish feelings of lifelong gratitude to the friends in the Hauge Mission."<sup>34</sup>

On September 2, 1906, a little over 1 year after arriving in China, the Edwins left Fancheng and departed for Hsüchow (Hsüchang) in the Honan province. They stayed here for the next seventeen months in borrowed quarters, guests of the China Inland Mission. While Edwins downplays the condition of these "borrowed quarters," the truth is that it was a mud-brick home with dirt floors.<sup>35</sup>

Shortly after getting settled, Sister Ingeborg Nystul, a deaconess, joined them in November of 1906 from St. Paul, Minnesota.

Immediately they set to purchasing land for their new mission in Hsüchow; this was accomplished in the spring of 1907. After a delay of a year in taking possession of the property, they were finally able to move into their first "real" home in China in March of 1908 – 2 years, five months after arriving in China!

### *The "nuts & bolts" of developing a mission field.*

March 1908 found the Edwins' occupying their new permanent home on the mission compound. Soon after, in April, Dr. C.P. Friberg arrived with his family. He would eventually be assigned to take over the mission station at Honanfu (Loyang). In November of the same year Rev. A.E. Trued arrived with his family and would take over the work at the mission station in Juchow. Now there were seven missionaries soon to serve at four locations in the Honan province. But first, language training must occur.

A glimpse is given to us that may shed light on the success, humanly speaking, of the Augustana mission in China. Why did it seem to geographically grow so fast?



**Rev. & Mrs. Edwins at first home in Hsüchow.**  
The woman to the left is Sister Ingeborg Nystul.  
After Nov. 1906.

David Edwins about his parents' first home:

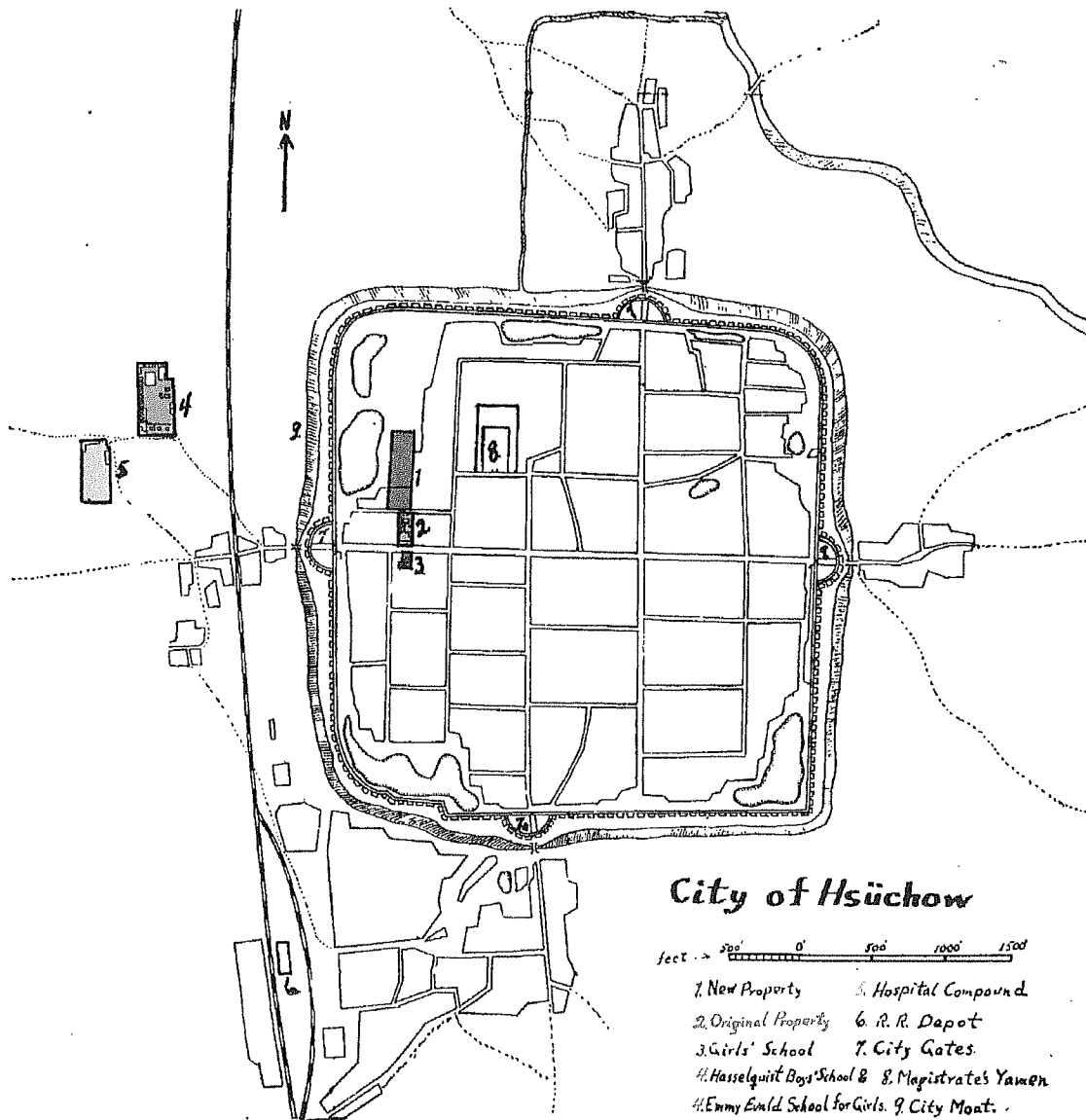
*"Mother and Dad suffered many difficult hardships particularly during those early years. They lived in a Chinese house with earthen floor. Peanut oil lamps (a dish of oil with lighted wick at night). They did not have the furniture, food and household effects that they were accustomed to as American from Minnesota. Their chairs were wooden and straight back. No cushions. The tables festooned with small stools placed around, for sitting on while having their meals. The beds were of Chinese design. Wooden frame with sisal rope drawn between the side braces to hold the straw mattress."*

<sup>34</sup> Edwins, A.W. *Our First Decade in China*. 9.

<sup>35</sup> Swanson, H. *Three Missionary Pioneers*. 68. Describes this first borrowed home in Hsüchow: "could at best be compared to a pioneer settler's home in our western prairie states before the turn of the century. It was a native house built of mud bricks with a thatched roof and a dirt floor."

**Hsüchow, 1924.**

This is 18 years after A.W. Edwins first came to Hsüchow, but it gives the reader some sense of the expansion of the mission in this city alone. The red rectangle is the original property that Edwins purchased for the mission compound in the spring of 1907 and finally moved into a year later; March, 1908.



- 1. New Property
- 2. Original Property
- 3. Girl's School
- 4. Hasselquist Boy's School  
& Emmy Ewald School for Girls

- Hospital Compound
- 6. R.R. Depot
- 7. City Gates
- 8. Magistrate's Yamen
- 9. City Moat



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"He (A.W. Edwins) felt that the first duty which confronted him and his new fellow workers would be to occupy the larger field and hold it until recruits could arrive from the homeland. He made it therefore a point to obtain a foothold as soon as possible in some of the cities in the area which he had received as a mission field – Hsüchang, Juchow, Yüchow, Kiahsien, Loyang."<sup>36</sup>

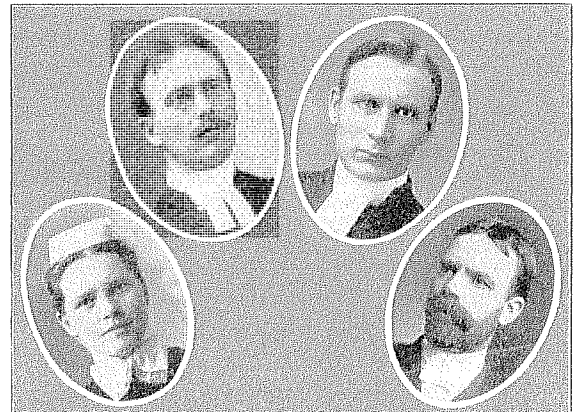
Why did the Mission seem to grow so slowly with respect to converts? Why did it seem to grow so quickly with respect to geography? Why did the Mission seem to suddenly spring to life around 1920, fifteen years *after* Edwins had arrived in China? In part, the answer lies in the suspicion the Chinese had for foreigners. The answer also lies in part to the emphasis that Augustana put on "social work;" its schools and hospitals didn't primarily preach the gospel.

But with regard to this mission in China, the biggest answer to these questions lies in Edwins' mission methodology - the nuts and bolts of how he went about "building" this mission field:

It required much faith in these early days to reach out in this way and claim for the Lord and the Church this large area. Would workers be sent out to hold these and other necessary stations? With trust in God, Edwins and his few fellow workers went about laying a good foundation, even at the risk of being misunderstood by their supporters at home. Could he not have reported, during these pioneer years, better numerical results if he had concentrated on one place and intensively worked there to gain converts? A man with smaller vision may have done so. Instead he set out to preempt the whole field and claim it for the Church of God in the belief that God would also supply the necessary men and women to carry out the evangelization. Harvesters would come, and when they came they were to find the groundwork done and the doors open. Later developments have proven that he, in this, was a wise master-builder. When a number of workers at last arrived, he stepped aside from the local evangelistic work and unselfishly rejoiced with these younger workers when the joy of bringing in the harvest was given to them.<sup>37</sup>

An insight from the Foreign Mission Association minutes; Feb. 4, 5, 1908:

*"Missionary Edwins has informed the treasurer of the association in a letter that it has become impossible for him to manage on \$800 a year. The Board therefore decided unanimously to raise Missionary Edwin's salary to \$1,000 commencing in June, 1907." (It this a typographic error, meaning June, 1908? Or, is this increase to be retro-active?)*  
*"Furthermore, it was decided that \$100 of the \$300 which Pastor Edwins has borrowed from the association be presented to him as a Christmas gift."*



**Augustana missionaries in China.**

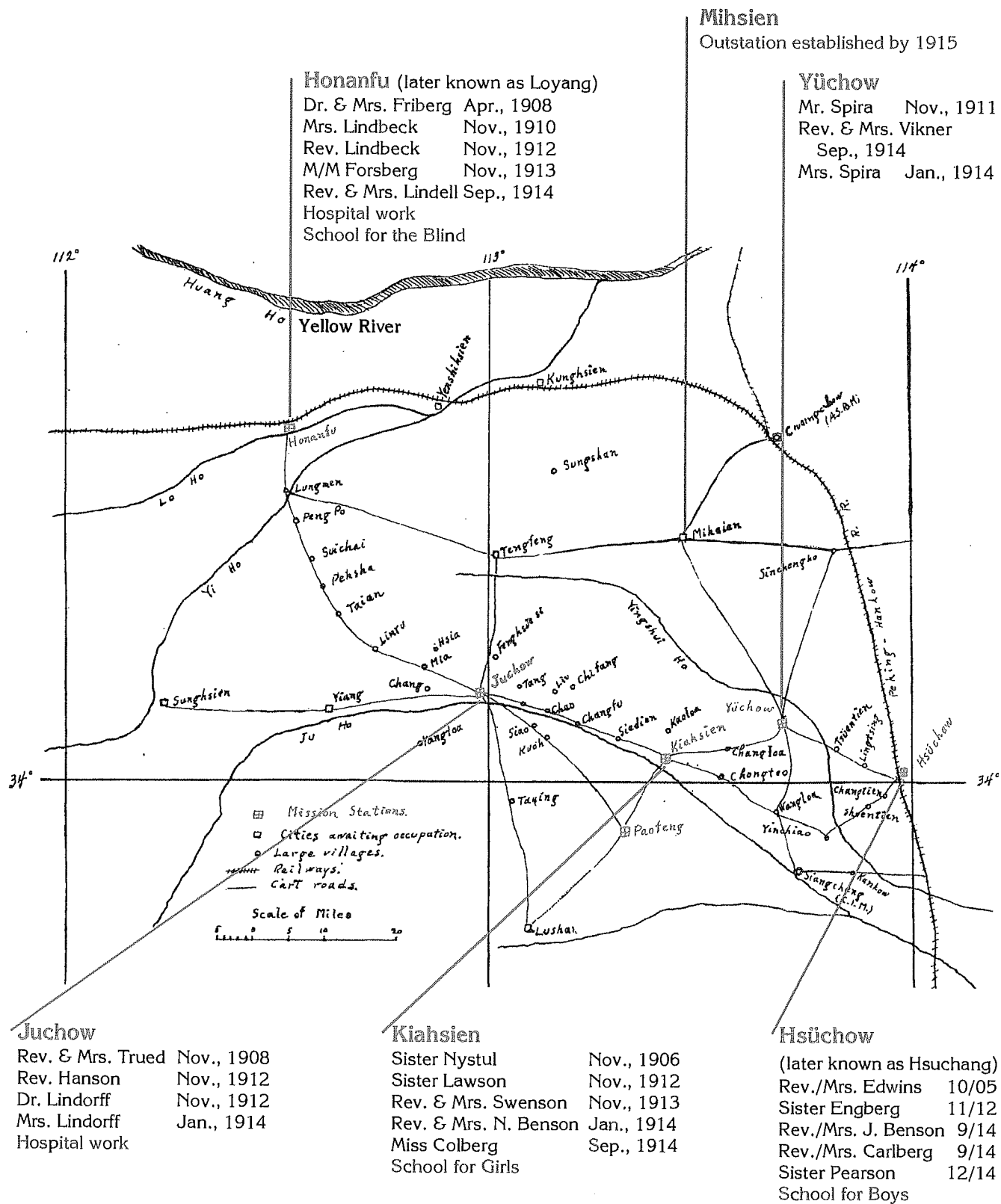
November, 1908.

Sister Ingeborg Nystul, Rev. A.W. Edwins, Rev. A.E. Trued, Dr. C.P. Friberg, M.D.

<sup>36</sup> Swanson, H. *Three Missionary Pioneers*. 69.

<sup>37</sup> Swanson, H. *Three Missionary Pioneers*. 71, 72

Augustana Synod – China Mission Field as of 1915



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### **Milestones in the Honan Mission area.**

With the foundation set and workers starting to arrive,<sup>38</sup> Edwins continued with his mission building by establishing schools. This activity kept him busy up to 1911, the year of his first furlough.

For a review of the milestones of these first six years consider:<sup>39</sup>

- 1909: Hsüchow (Hsuchang) school opens
- 1910, spring. Entered Jüchow where the China Inland Mission had done work as an outstation for many years. The city and the whole country governed by the city were handed over to the Augustana mission.
  - 1910, spring. Unsuccessful first attempt at entering the city of Kiahsien.
    - 1910, before summer came. Honanfu, where the Swedish Mission had an old and prosperous work was handed over to Augustana.
      - 1910, last Sunday in May: 9 people baptized.
      - 1910, by end of year there were five stations.
      - 1911. Successful in getting into Kiahsien.

### **The greatest event of 1910.**

The Edwins' had been in their "permanent" home in Hsüchow for 2 years, 2 months. They had been in Hsüchow a total of 3 years, 7 months. They had been in China for 4 years, 7 months – and then the Lord blessed their reason for coming! Nine adults were baptized. Edwins writes:

The first one to receive baptism in our little chapel that day was a gray-haired old man of the same age as my own father. Sixty-seven long years he had been outside the pale of Christ's Church, without God, hope and peace. Among those baptized at that time were two elderly women. This first little ingathering on our China field was made just as our Church in the homeland was about to celebrate its jubilee. No one at home knew then that the first half century of our history as a Church included the reaping of these first fruits of Christian Chinese.<sup>40</sup>

From A.W. Edwins' Letterpress book. Dec. 21, 1909; Hsüchow:

*"Lately there has been a great deal of disturbance south of Ruchow on account of the robbers harassing the country people. Shortly before we came to Ruchow this last time, a young man had been kidnapped in the south suburb while at the market. The robbers want a ransom of Tls 1000 (\$593 u.s.) before they will release him, and if the ransom is not paid they threaten to take his life. Owing to things of this sort the country people feel very restless and many are flocking to the city, with the result that it is now very difficult to rent or buy as cheaply as before.*

*But this ought to be a good time to get property outside of the city, because many want to sell and come into the city. I hardly think that a mission station would be in any danger from robbers, though common thieves might try their luck with the foreigners. But this they do here in Hsüchow. We came out on our north upstairs veranda the other day and found that thieves had dug two fairly large holes into our brick wall. Something must have frightened them away before they got through."*

38 See page 39 for a listing of Missionaries and their arrival dates.

39 See also the parallel timeline beginning on page 42.

40 Drach, G. Our Church Abroad. 172

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**From A.W. Edwins' Letterpress book. Jan. 26, 1910;**

**Hsüchow:** He has already had one article rejected from publication. The reason he was told was that it might cause too much agitation. Now he has had an article published, but in a slightly changed form. In a letter to Rev. Trued he writes:

*"It may be that some of my expressions are too pointed in some respects. I mentioned some of the reasons why our people had been kept from a more zealous effort in behalf of our China mission. . .*

*Thus you see Dr. L.G.A. is not the only one who undertakes to "doctor" my articles. They are being doctored at Bethesda Hospital also. But "mas-kee!" Let them take what they can stand! Out here it is difficult to know just how sensitive some of our home friends are.*

*If they develop very far along that line, it will save us some trouble. We can just write off the alphabet and send it along and ask them to put the letters together and make whatever words they would like to have us say. That would be simple and convenient."*

**From A.W. Edwins' Letterpress book. Feb. (2-7?), 1910;**

**Hsüchow:** In a letter to the Editor (Kina Missionären?) he takes up the issue of the China Mission versus the India Mission, the allocation of resources, and those who would like to see the China mission die. This is his closing paragraph:

*"But there is only one place where cold hearts may be warmed, where stubborn wills may be bent, where sin blinded eyes may be made to see God's ideal, and where power to realize that ideal is given: The Cross! Have we apprehended its wisdom? Known its love-power? Enjoyed its peace? Had a glimpse of its glory? Then let us arise in the power of God and declare that the wrongs which injure our lives, hinder God's cause, and dishonor His name, shall cease to be!"*



**Rev. & Mrs. A.W. Edwins**

Picture taken during their first furlough in 1911.

Infant: Annette – Son: Eugene

Daughter on lap: Emma

Daughter standing: Helen Margaret\*

\* (writer's grandmother)

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### 1912 - 1914. Transition to Headmaster.

Preparing new missionaries takes work and time, and there seemed to be no one better suited for the task of teaching them the language and the ways of China than A.W. Edwins. Upon arriving back from his 1911 furlough, it appears that he returned to Hsüchow to continue with his mission work.

But the continuing flow of workers was creating a problem because there was no union language school to which these new arrivals could be sent to learn the language. After due deliberation it was deemed best that Edwins should leave the mission work and withdraw to Kikungshan. There he would conduct an intensive language school so as to get the new workers prepared as soon as possible.

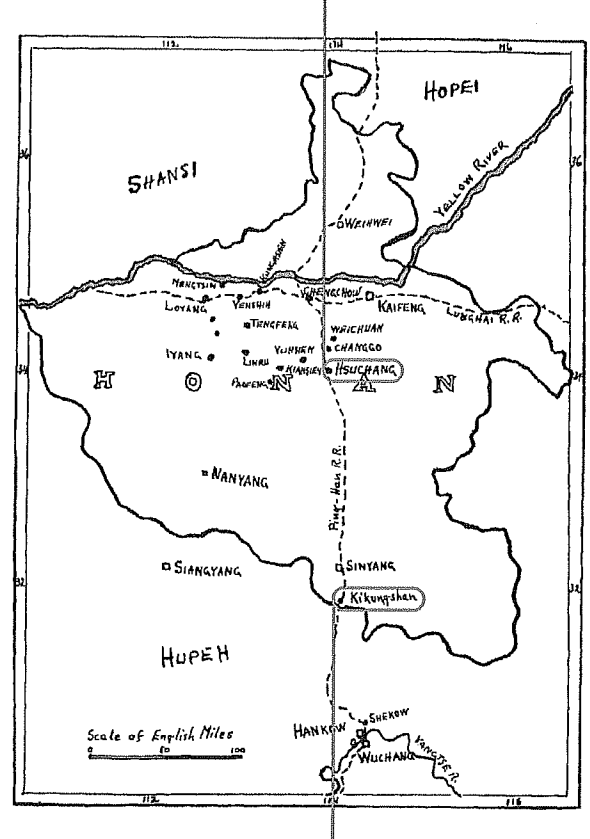
The mission station work was left to Rev. Trued, and a few others, who at this time had learned to use the Chinese language proficiently. Other Lutheran missions which had received reinforcements joined in the language school effort until Edwins found himself conducting a school with an enrollment of thirty-six. The school "officially" opened Oct. 21, 1914.

Concerning his new teaching duties, Edwins wrote at the time:

Our newly arrived brothers and sisters are busy with learning the language. They are making good progress, and I dare entertain the hope that they are going to acquire a better knowledge of the Chinese than most of us others did during the first year in China. A language school will save at least a year's time when it comes to learning the Chinese.<sup>41</sup>

The school was eventually moved to Peking at the recommendation of a language school commission. It remained there until the outbreak of war in 1941.

Hsüchang (Hsüchow): Edwins' first home in Honan.



**Kikungshan:** Home of Union Language School. Also became the home for the American School, a school for Missionaries' children. This writer's grandmother attended this school.

41 Swanson, H. *Three Missionary Pioneers*. 77, 78.  
A.W. Edwins in a letter to C.S. Hultkrans, dated Dec. 3, 1914.

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### **More transition to academic work.**

Edwins' linguistic accomplishments and his knowledge of Chinese ways and customs, coupled with his general theological scholarship, indicated that from now on he would prove most valuable to the mission in general literary work and in teaching. To these pursuits he was now permitted to devote himself. While this made his life more secluded and gave him less to do with the administration of the mission's activities, it did give him an opportunity to be one of the pioneers in (what he thought) a bigger work and to assist in laying the foundation for the Lutheran Church of China.<sup>42</sup>

Early in 1916 Edwins was elected editor of "Sin I Bao," a union Lutheran church paper. The paper enjoyed a wide circulation among the members of the various Lutheran missions. In 1920, when the Lutheran Church of China was organized. The paper became its official publication. Edwins was hesitant at first to enter upon union work lest it not be approved by his home mission board. He wrote in a letter to O.J. Johnson, April 10, 1917: "If it should be a matter of separating me from our own mission, then I would prefer to withdraw altogether from this new employment."<sup>43</sup>

The Synod did not feel ready to enter into union work at this time, so in convention resolution of June 1917, it tabled the matter until more information could be obtained. As a result, Edwins felt that he could not continue as editor-in-chief of "The Lutheran" ("Sin I Bao") and he tendered his resignation in September.



Dr. A.W. Edwins

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### **Sep. 1917 - 1921 furlough.**

We know that the language school in Kikungshan, which Edwins was headmaster, was moved to Peking sometime during the beginning of 1916. The mystery is what filled his time for the next five years?

It can be assumed that he may have moved back to Hsüchow where he assisted in the work there.

<sup>42</sup> The Lutheran Church of China was a pan-Lutheran organization. More on this later.

<sup>43</sup> Swanson, H. *Three Missionary Pioneers*. 79.

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### *The last twenty years of his life - 1922-1942.*

As a result of the Synodical resolution of 1921 to enter into joint work with the other Lutheran Missions of the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS), Edwins was called to serve as the Augustana Synod faculty member. He held the chair for Dogmatics and Christian Ethics. At different times he taught various other subjects and served for awhile as president of the Seminary.

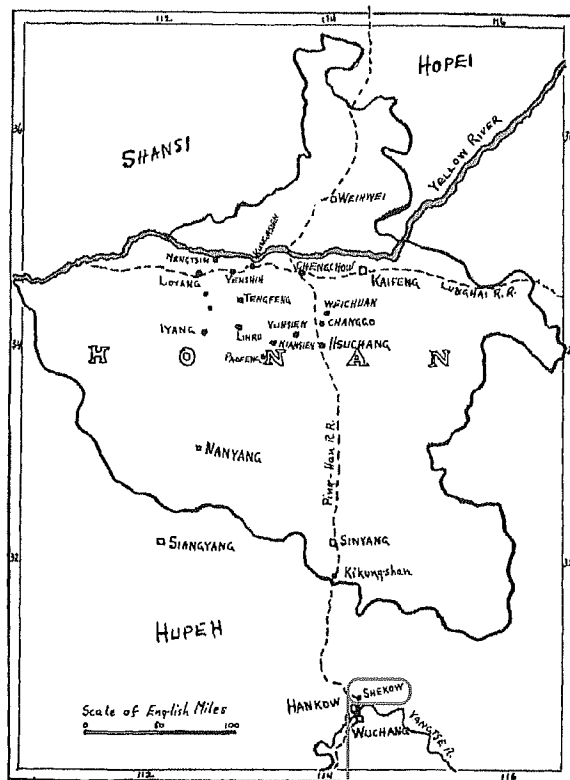
Edwins was nearing the end of his second decade in China. The Augustana mission had experienced a definite period of expansion during this time: educational, medical, evangelistic, along with union work with neighboring missions. This union work had brought about the completion of a Lutheran Hymn book, a Church book, a Lutheran Union College, a Lutheran Board of Publication, a Theological Seminary, and an American School for missionaries' children.

A.W. Edwins in 1922 at the age of 51:

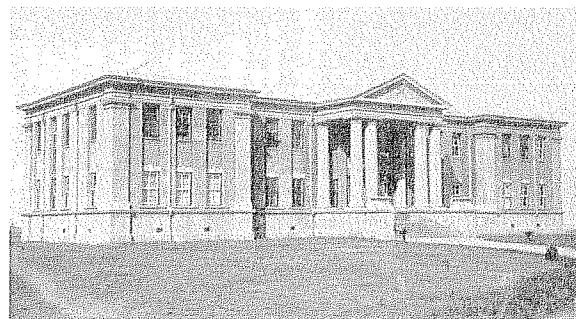
To tell the truth, I feel most deeply ashamed to think that my own Bible knowledge is as poor as it is at my age of half a century. Somehow our desperate enemy seems to succeed in making our holy Bible a carelessly read and poorly understood book even among most Christians.<sup>44</sup>

Besides teaching at the Seminary, A.W. kept himself busy by writing a nine-part series in "Honan Glimpses" entitled "Bible Truth Focalized in the Lord's Prayer." The series began in the Sept. 25, 1922 issue and was completed in February, 1924. Many parts of this series sounded very much like Luther's explanations in the Large Catechism.

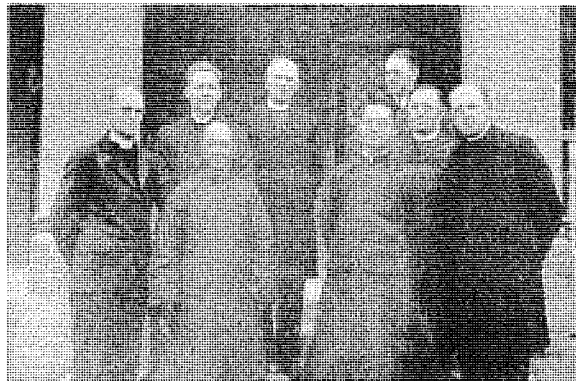
Not much can be found about this portion of Edwins' life. Gustav Carlberg, longtime President of the Seminary and a prolific writer on the China Lutheran Mission work mentions Edwins only rarely. One gets the feeling that Edwins had become a fixture at the Seminary. I suppose this is not surprising, given his humble nature. Yet Carlberg did have this to say about Edwins: "Dr. Edwins was effective as a preacher, and equally proficient as a teacher. He had a keen mind and was thoroughgoing in his method."<sup>45</sup>



Shekow: Home of Lutheran Theological Seminary.



Lutheran Theological Seminary, Shekow.



Edwins (and faculty) at Seminary with graduates.

<sup>44</sup> Edwins, A.W. *Honan Glimpses*. June 25, 1922

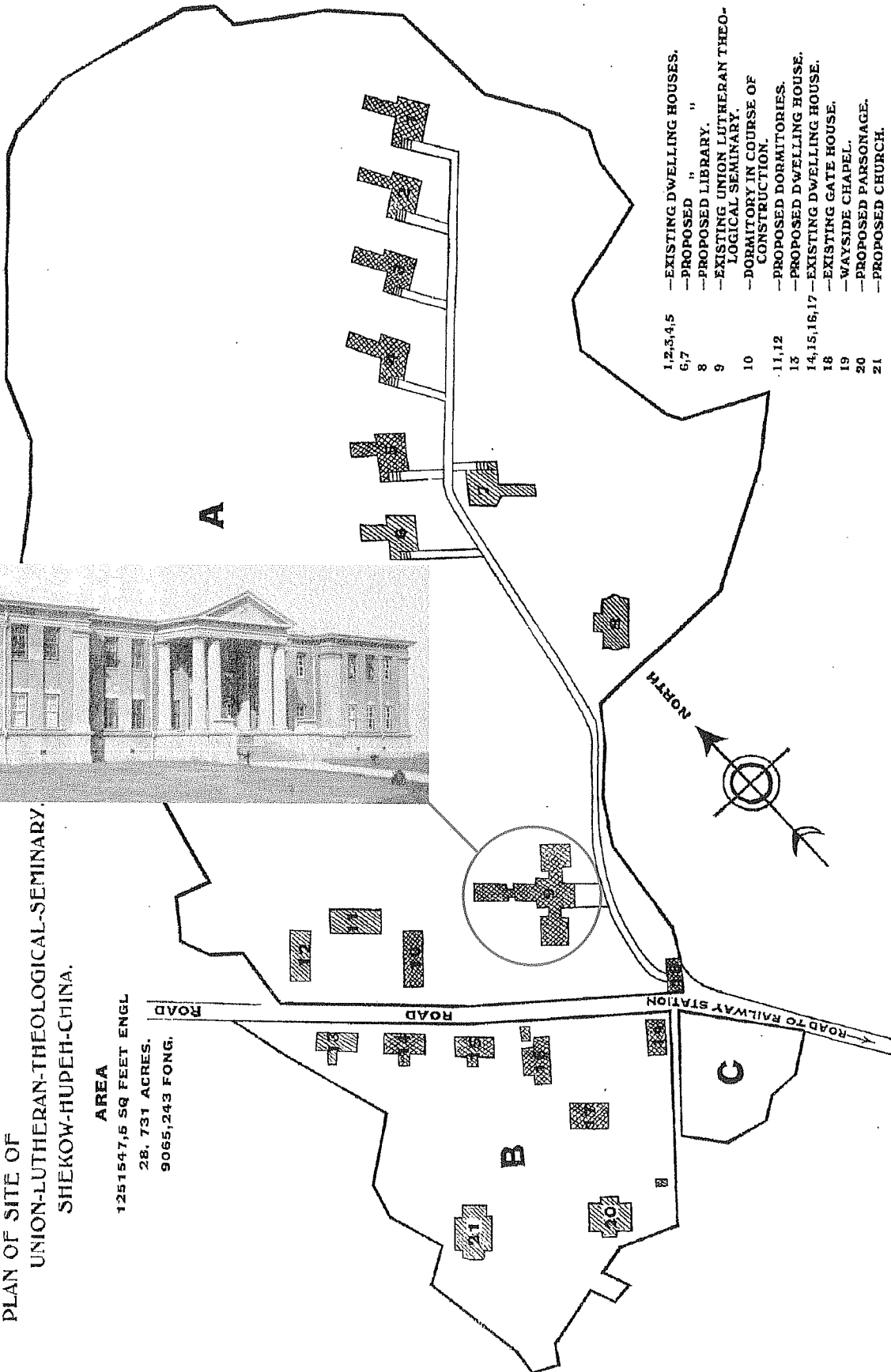
<sup>45</sup> Carlberg, G. *The Changing China Scene*. 241.

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PLAN OF SITE OF  
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- 10 — DORMITORY IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION.
- 11,12 — PROPOSED DORMITORIES.
- 13 — PROPOSED DWELLING HOUSE.
- 14,15,16,17 — EXISTING DWELLING HOUSE.
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### **1927: Revolution and evacuation.**

The Nationalist Revolution came about as a result of a desire to overthrow local war lords, unify the country, and become free from unfair treaties with foreign powers. After years of unrest (nothing new to China) the revolution finally came to a head in 1927. Due to the severe anti-foreign and anti-Christian sentiment, all but four of the Missionaries and their families evacuated the country.<sup>46</sup>

I have been unable to document with certainty where, and for how long, the missionaries were gone. I am deducing from the photo to the right that they returned to the U.S. in April of 1927. From the photo at lower right, Edwins is back in China by January of 1929



**Evacuation of missionaries in 1927.**

Augustana missionaries on board the "President Pierce" which brought them back to America in April of 1927. The woman circled in red is Alfreda Edwins. The man to the right holding the child on the railing most certainly looks like A.W. Edwins.

### **1936 furlough.**

No records have been found to describe the events of this year. He left as a Professor of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, and he returned to do the same.

### **1937: Japan invades China.**

In 1937 Japan invaded China and threatened the life of the country. It was a time of great sorrow and distress. The government had withdrawn westward to Chungking. Many thought that missionary work would come to an end, but it took some time for the Japanese to reach the inner provinces of China.



**Conference photo at Hsüchow, Jan. 1929.**

A.W. Edwins is circled in red. Sister Ingeborg Nystul is front left wearing the light colored Chinese winter overcoat.

<sup>46</sup> Dr. Friberg, Pastors Lindell, Lindbeck and Hanson remained.









would be best under the circumstances to bring him along, as there seemed to be a chance for him to survive the journey. The steamer S.S. Conte Verde, left Shanghai on June 29 at noon. At first A.W. seemed to be doing well. He was able to take some food and seemed to be gaining a bit of strength. But soon his condition became worse and on July 2, 1942 at 10:25 a.m. his spirit departed to be with the Lord.

"That evening his body was brought to the isolation ward and early the next morning the sailors prepared it for burial by wrapping it in heavy canvas with weights and thick ropes. At 4:30 p.m. on July 3, a group of fellow missionaries and friends, together with the captain and officers of the ship and the Swiss and Japanese representatives, gathered in the after part of the ship. The body was placed on a high bench, even with the top of the rail and covered with a black cloth. Dr. Ralph Mortensen conducted the services and read the obituary. Pastor I. Daehlin gave the address, and Dr. Gustav Carlberg performed the committal service, and thus we laid

Charge to the account of \_\_\_\_\_ \$

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
DOMESTIC	CABLE
TELEGRAM	ORDINARY
DAY LETTER	URGENT RATE
SERIAL	DEFERRED
OVERNIGHT TELEGRAM	NIGHT LETTER
SPECIAL SERVICE	SHIP RADIOGRAM

Patrons should check class of service desired; otherwise the message will be transmitted as a telegram or ordinary cablegram.

# WESTERN UNION

1206

CHECK

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ACCOUNTING INFORMATION

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TIME FILED

**A. N. WILLIAMS**      **NEWCOMB CARLTON**      **J. C. WILLEVER**  
PRESIDENT      CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD      FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

Send the following telegram, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

**WANT A REPLY?**  
 "Answer by WESTERN UNION" or similar phrases may be included without charge.

July 9, 1942

The following telegram received from the State Department: "Regret having to inform you that we received telegram dated July 6 from the American Legation, Berne, stating that according to official information August William Edwins, age 71, died on board the S. S. Conte Verde at 10:25 a.m. July 2 from cerebral hemorrhage and that his luggage will be transferred to the M. S. Gripsholm at Lourenco Marques. It will be appreciated if you will inform next of kin. Cordell Hull, Secretary of State."

Signed, Joe J. Mickle, Foreign Missions Conference  
New York City

our brother to rest in the depths of the sea, the waters of which lap the shores of the land which he loved so well and to which he had given a lifetime of service.<sup>52</sup>

The place where his body was committed to the sea was about 170 miles off the coast of Indo-China, near Phanrang.

Rev. Kunos relates: "About seven months after his bout with typhus, Dr. Edwins, this truly great missionary pioneer, was seeing all the planets from eternity's angle. We are grateful to God that we were privileged to work with this erst-while tinsmith, turned pastor to missionary to Doctor of Theology. What a glorious six months we had while we were privileged to work with this saintly servant of Christ."<sup>53</sup>

### "A true man of God"

Rev. Bersell, President of the Synod wrote:

My first impression of him was verified and deepened during the subsequent years. He was worthy of love and respect. His was a quiet dignity that commanded respect. He was always sedate and never "let himself go." He was formal in his attire and proper in his behavior. He was always the gentlemen, considerate and kind. This was not an artificial mannerism, but rather the mark of a Christian character and a consecrated personality. He had many talents, but he did not scatter them. He was not narrow-minded, but he hewed the line. In his presence one felt that here was a man who represented a cause, a true man of God.

We do not wonder that the Lord chose such a one as he to be a pastor, a leader, a pioneer and pathfinder for the kingdom.<sup>54</sup>

Bersell goes on to describe how A.W. was on the committee for selecting the class motto upon graduation from the academy in 1895. "It took learned men to do that back in those days." The committee submitted "*Res severa, verum gaudium.*" (The difficult achievement results in true joy.) "Doesn't that describe his life?" continues Bersell. "His horizon quite likely did not then extend to the other side of the globe. But there was another that ordered his life. The young man had entrusted the direction to the Captain of his soul and He directed him step by step. Edwins obeyed."<sup>55</sup>

52 Carlberg, G. "Dr. Edwins' Life and Death." *The Lutheran Companion*. Oct. 29, 1942. 1245, 1246.

53 Kunos, J. *That I May Tell of Your Marvelous Works*. 118.

54 Bersell, P.O. *The Lutheran Companion*. "A Fruitful Ministry," Sept. 17, 1942, 1048.

55 Bersell, P.O. *The Lutheran Companion*. "A Fruitful Ministry," Sept. 17, 1942, 1048.

***A man of quiet ways.***

Edwins preferred a quiet home life. But in a group he could be a witty conversationalist and enjoyed especially a friendly theological discussion. He inherited the gift of sarcasm but used it with care. He was not interested in athletics. His main exercise was taking walks. He enjoyed best of all a stroll in the evening. His hobby was astronomy (refer to Kunos' comment on page 35). It gave him pleasure to talk with friends about the stars and planets and to trace their courses in the heavens.

With his children he was tender but firm. The principles which guided his life he passed along to his children. He loved to tuck the little ones into bed and hear them pray, and to help them pray in their own words. To each child he gave a special Swedish pet name. One of the favorite amusements, when he and the children spent an evening hour together, was to cast shadows with his hands upon the wall. The children would never grow tired of seeing the many interesting animals and faces he could make.

He loved music. At dusk he loved to sit at the piano and sing in a quiet pensive way old and familiar Swedish hymns.

***In closing.***

God used this humble and gifted man to lay the foundation for a church in China. It took years before he could baptize his first convert. When his work was finished in 1942, the mission which he founded had been greatly blessed by the Lord: 63 congregations, several thousand members, 24 native pastors, more than 200 native evangelists, teachers and Bible workers. Few men are privileged to see such results on this side of eternity. ☺

One anecdotal story from A.W. Edwins' ninth child, David Edwins:

*I once asked my Great-Uncle, David Edwins, why he never studied for the ministry. He looked at me quietly for a moment, and said: "Once, when we were home on furlough your Great-grandfather had to go down to Iowa for a Pastor's Conference, but he came home early. Now, as I saw him walking up the road I raced down to him, overjoyed to see him home earlier than expected. I asked him why he was home several days early and he answered me: 'David, Pastors are like fertilizer. God gave pastors as a gift to His church so that they would be spread out over the land and feed and nourish His people with His Word; so that they will grow in faith and flourish in good works. But when you pile them all up together in one place, they stink to high heaven!'"*

*Uncle Dave looked at me and said, "I decided right then and there that I didn't want to be a Pastor." David Edwins went on to be a very active lay worker in the Lord's church.*





**Augustana Synod - China Mission in Honan (all stations)**

	1910	1915	1920	1924	1930	1935	1945
<i>Locations:</i>							
Organized congregations			5	7	8	35	
Outstations & preaching places	5	6	12	51	67	97	
<i>Workers:</i>							
Missionaries	8	32	38	53	27	32	
Native workers		37	38	130	120	155	
<i>Membership:</i>							
Communicants				1,594		2,451	
Total baptized membership	9	161	613	1,819	1,924	3,002	
Catechumens				1,925		3,916	
<i>Social work:</i>							
Schools	5	5				20	
Teachers		5	44	89	11	42	
Pupils		84	622	1,400	252	886	

The following figures are fiscal, not cumulative:

Total # medical treatments	9,173					37,722
Native contribution				\$911.70		\$9,529.82
Synodical contribution	\$32,000	\$60,000	\$80,000	\$23,000	\$40,000	

Missionaries: always included the wives of Pastors and Doctors.

Native workers: includes Evangelists, Bible Women, and Christian workers.

Catechumens: also referred to as "registered inquirers"

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**Lutheran Theological Seminary @ Shekow**

(a sketch of enrollment statistics from The Lutheran Theological Seminary Annual Reports)

BMS = Berlin Missionary Society

DMS = Danish " "

FMS = Finnish " "

NMS = Norwegian " "

LUM = Lutheran United Mission

ASM = Augustana Synod Mission (Sometimes also referred to as "Lutheran Augustana Mission" LAM)

SMC = Swedish Mission in China

**Graduates by year:**

	DMS	FMS	NMS	LUM	ASM	BMS	SMC
1916 (22)		5	3	14			
1918 (5)			4	1			
1919 (4)	1		3				
1920 (11)		2	5	4			
1921 (5)		1	3	1			
1922 (6)		1	4	1			
1923 (3)	2	1					
1924 (12)			4	5	3		
1925 (9)	2	1	3	2			1
1926 (6)			2	3	1		
1927 (2) {1 fr: "Xtian Mission to Buddhists}					1		
1928 (5) { 2 fr: Amer. Luth. Mission}			2	1			
1929 (4)	1	1		1	1		
1930 (4)							
1931 (7)							
1932 (3)							
1933 (6)							
	1934 (12)		1938 (5)		1949 (5)		1953 (13)
	1935 (15)				1950 (9)		1954 (3)
	1936 (9)		1947 (5)		1951 (11)		1956 (15)
	1937 (16)		1948 (15)		1952 (16)		1957 (12)
							1958 (12)

**1922 - 43 students**

	DMS	FMS	NMS	LUM	ASM	BMS	SMC
Senior	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
Junior	1	-	5	6	3	-	-
Sophomore	1	1	3	2	-	1	1
Freshman	-	5	3	4	1	3	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>

1942 - 1945 No Annual Reports due to the war.

**1948 - 40 students**

	DMS	FMS	NMS	LUM	ASM	BMS	SMC
Senior			?	?	?		
Junior			?	?	?		
Sophomore			?	?	?		
Freshman			?	?	?		
<b>Total (includes 4 students from "ALM")</b>			<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>		

**Synopsis of the Foreign Mission Association minutes: Other events:**

**Life of A.W. Edwins**

Timeline: August William Edwins

1871 Aug. 12

Born Swede Valley in Boone County, Iowa

- Father: Anders Johansson Bjesse (changed name Bjesse to Edwins)
- Mother: Lena Katarina Nilsson (Tysk)

1894 Augustana Academy

1899 Augustana College, B.A.

1902 Augustana Seminary graduate.

June 15 Ordained @ Ishpeming, Michigan.

1902 Pastor – Trinity Lutheran Church, Stillwater, MN.

1903 Pastor – Trinity Lutheran Church, Stillwater, MN.

1904 Pastor – Trinity Lutheran Church, Stillwater, MN.

1905 Pastor – Trinity Lutheran Church, Stillwater, MN.

Officially knowns as:  
The Evangelical Lutheran Foreign Mission Association  
aka:

- The Swedish Lutheran Foreign Mission Association
- The China Mission Society

1901 Sep. 3,4

- Bethlehem Luth. Church, Minneapolis, MN
- Organizing meeting. Seventeen charter members sign minutes.

1902 Apr. 8 (7 months)

- Bethlehem Luth. Church, Minneapolis, MN
- Proposed constitution adopted. Officers elected. Board elected.
- The minutes consider this Apr. 8 meeting its first.

1902 Nov. 21 (1 yr, 2 mth.)

- Gustavus Adolphus Church, St. Paul, MN
- Voted: that the Mission Association join w/the Board of Directors of Bethesda Hospital to publish a small magazine in the interests of foreign missions and deaconess work.
- Voted: that the magazine be called "Kristlig Tidskrift for Hadmmission och Diakoni" (Christian Magazine for Foreign Missions and Deaconess Work).
- Voted: that at the coming annual meeting a call be extended to Pastor P.M. Hanson to serve as the foield superintendent for our proposed China Mission.
- 55 new members accepted. A.W. Edwins listed.

1903 Jan. 23 (1 yr, 4 mth.)

- St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Minn., MN
- Voted: that the Board be authorized to contact mission fields in China and Africa to ascertain where it would be most desirable to begin missionary work.
- Voted: membership requirements changed to reflect acceptance into membership not just of Augustana Synod members, but "any member of an Evangelical Lutheran Congregation."

1903 Jan. 28 Board meeting.

- "The question of calling missionaries to be sent out to the mission field was given consideration. . . . agreement not to extend any call at this time, but to continue to place this important matter before God

1903

Discussions among Lutheran missions re: unity begin. This is two years before Augustana arrives in China. See 1920, Aug. 25 for the official organization.

Life of A. W. Edwins

Synopsis of the Foreign Mission Association minutes:

Other events:

in prayer."

- It's interesting to note that medical missionary Friberg was notified that he would be sent "as soon as a pastor is found who will accompany him to assume leadership of the work on the mission field where work will be started."

1903 Apr. 22 (1 yr, 7 mth.)

- Trinity Lutheran Church, Stillwater, MN
- A letter from Dr. (blank- This would be Rev. E. Norelius, D.D.), President of the Augustana Synod was read in which he requested to know the purpose of the association. Authorized to answer the letter.

- Voted: contact Rock Island to ascertain if any students are interested in becoming foreign missionaries.

1903 Aug. 31 Board meeting.

- Voted: to call theological student S.G. Hagglund to go out as a missionary to China.

1903 Sep. 8,9 (2 years)

- Swedish Ev. Luth. Church, Moores Prairie, MN
- No mention in the minutes of the Boards action to call Hagglund.

1903 Nov. 3, 4 (2 yr, 1 mth.)

- Bernadotte, MN
- Pastor A.W. Edwins spoke briefly on the theme "The Importance of Being on the Lord's Side."
- Nov. 4; Pastor Edwins preached on 1 Tim. 2:4-7, "What Guidance May be Obtained from the Scriptures and from Experience as How Best to Conduct Foreign Mission Work."

1904 Feb. 18 Annual Report of the Board.

- I never heard this story before and thought it worth repeating from the Board's report: "Livingston was preaching once to a Chieftan and his tribe in the jungles of Africa. Following, the Chieftan asked 'Did your father know about this message?' When Livingstone gave an affirmative answer, he asked, 'Why did he not then come here and tell this to my father? He is now dead and is therefore unable to hear this.' Missionaries have often been asked the same question. We wonder if this question will not meet us on judgement day."

**Life of A.W. Edwins**

**Synopsis of the Foreign Mission Association minutes:**

**Other events:**

- "Our eyes have been turned to the province of Honan hoping there to begin our missionary work."
- Promise of support from the Church of Sweden Mission in Honan and Shansi is mentioned, "to assist our missionaries until the work is launched."

1904 Feb. 18, 19 (2 yr, 5 mth.)  
Augustana Church, Minneapolis, MN

1904 Feb. 23 Board meeting.  
Mar. 14 Board meeting.  
Apr. 27, 28 Antwater, MN (no minutes)  
Oct. 24, 25 Almelund, MN

- 1904 Dec. 1 St. Paul, MN
- No mention in these minutes about theological student S.G. Hagglund returning the call to serve as missionary to China.
  - "Following an earnest prayer by Pastor C.A. Hultkrans it was unanimously voted to call Pastor A.W. Edwins, Stillwater, Minnesota, to go out to China as a missionary. His salary was set at \$800 for the first year and travel expenses to the field."

1905 Feb. 9 Date of his letter of acceptance to serve as a missionary to China for the Foreign Mission Assoc.

- 1905 Feb. 13, 14  
Center City, MN
- The Board of Directors reported that they had met three times, that they had received a negative answer from Pastor S.G. Hagglund and that at its last meeting, a call had been voted Pastor A.W. Edwins as missionary to China.
  - Reports that Pastor Edwins had given an affirmative answer to the Board's call to serve as Missionary in China.
  - Pastor A.W. Edwins gave the missionary sermon based upon the words of Jesus: "Put out into the deep" Luke 5:4. The sermon indicated that the speaker was in a special way filled with zeal for missions.

1905 May 1  
Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN

**Synopsis of the Foreign Mission Association minutes: Other events:**

**Life of A.W. Edwins**

1905 Sep. 6 Married Alfrida Anderholm. (Fr: Immanuel Lutheran Church, Rural Clayton, WI)

1905 Sep. 14 Farewell service at Gustavus Adolphus Church, St. Paul, MN

1905 Sep. 15 Farewell service at Augustana Church, Minneapolis, MN

1905 Sep. 20 Depart fr: Seattle for Shanghai

1905 Oct. 21 Arrive Shanghai

1905 Nov. 30 Arrive (river boat trip) Fancheng. (Thanksgiving Day).

1906 12 months in Fancheng learning language. (w/Hauge Synod missionaries)

1906 Apr. 24 Left on tour to look for a field in Honan.

1906 Sep. 2 Left Fancheng for Hsüchow (Hsuechang) - their new home.

1906 Oct. Arrived Hsüchang. Here they live as guests of the China Inland Mission.

1907 Spring Premises purchased for first mission station.

1905 Sept. 14 Gustavus Adolphus Church, St. Paul, MN  
• Farewell Service held for A.W. Edwins.

1905 Sept. 15 Augustana Church, Minneapolis, MN  
• Similiar farewell service as held Sept. 14.

1906 Jan. 26 Zion Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN

1906 June 7, 8 Elim Lutheran Church

1906 Dec. 4 Emanuel Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN

1907 Dec. 5, 6 Annual Meeting

1906 Nov. Sister Ingeborg Nystul arrives.

17 months



**Synopsis of the Foreign Mission Association minutes:**

**Other events:**

- "Through private letters as well as in printed articles Missionary Edwins has been recommending that the Association should ask the Synod to take over its missionary work. The immensity of the field seems to have given him this feeling as well as the hope that thereby more workers might more speedily be sent out." The Board of Directors did not feel prompted under present conditions to present any definite recommendation to the association.
- The Board recommends that authority be given the association to extend a call during the coming year to a man, preferably a doctor, to serve as missionary in China.

1907 May 21, 22  
Swedish Ev. Luth. Church, Cambridge, MN

1907 Sep 26, 27  
Swedish Lutheran Church, Dassel, MN  
• A lengthy letter from Missionary Edwins was read. (*Oh, to have this letter!*)

1907 Nov 5, 6  
Sabylund, WI

- 1908**
- Feb 4, 5 Annual meeting.
  - Can laymen be employed on the mission field?
  - Voted: That the name of the association's magazine be changed from "Luthersk Tidskrift" to "Kina Missionaren" ("The China Missionary").
  - Voted: That the association approach the Minnesota Conference with request to recommend to Synod action whereby the call issued to a theological student by the Foreign Mission Association be recognized as valid for ordination into the Holy Ministry.
  - Mention that property for a mission station in Honan had been purchased.
  - A call was voted Pastor S.G. Hagglund as a missionary to China. This call was answered in the negative.
  - A call was voted to Dr. Carl P. Friberg to serve as medical missionary. This call was answered in the affirmative.
  - "Missionary Edwins has informed the treasurer of the association in a letter that it has become impossible for him to manage on \$800 a year. The Board therefore decided unanimously to raise Missionary

- 1908**
- Cooperative effort initiated to form a Seminary. (See 1913). Participants:
    - Amer. Luth. Mission (United Norwegian Luth. Church of Amer.)
    - Hauge Synod
    - Finland Missionary Society
    - Norwegian Missionary Society

**Synopsis of the Foreign Mission Association minutes:** **Other events:**

Edwin's salary to \$1,000 commencing in June, 1907. *(Is this supposed to be retroactive, or is this a typo?)* Furthermore, it was decided that \$100 of the \$300 which Pastor Edwins has borrowed from the association be presented to him as a Christmas gift."

• "A call was voted to theological student Alfred Trued to go out as a missionary to our field in China following ordination. Mr. Trued is said to be a man of good gifts and to sense a call of God and a urging of the Spirit to work among the heathen in China."

1908 Apr. Dr. & Mrs. C.P. Friberg arrive.

1908 May 21 Special Meeting @ Immanuel Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN.

1908 Nov. Rev. & Mrs. A.E. Trued arrive.

• "Voted: that the Foreign Mission Association approach the Synod at its next meeting in Chicago with a petition that Synod if it so desires, be given an opportunity to take over and continue the work which the association has started in China, making it the Synod's own mission, with this one condition that the Synod will elect a special board of missions."

1909: Hsüchow (Hsuechang) school opens

1908, Sep. 30 Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Minn., MN.

• Voted: That the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Foreign Mission Association turn over to the Augustana Synod its work in China in accordance with the petition which was presented to Synod and the action taken by Synod at its meeting in Chicago June, 1908, and the officers of the association be authorized to carry through this transaction.

1909 May 4 Annual Meeting. Center City, MN.

1909 Oct. 11, 12

1908 Mar. Left their mud-brick home as guests of the China Inland Mission for their permanent home on the mission compound property they purchased. (Since Oct., 1906: 17 months in mud-brick home)

1908 Mar. This date should probably be considered the real starting point of any mission activity in the Honan province.

- They now have their own home.
- They now possess the mission property.
- Now they can focus on work.

This is not to say that mission work was not being conducted the past 17 months.



**Life of A.W. Edwins**

**Synopsis of the Foreign Mission Association minutes:**

**Other events:**

	<p>1910 Apr. 19, 20 Chisado City &amp; Forest Lake, MN.</p>	<p>1910, spring. Entered Yüchow where the China Inland Mission had done work as an outstation for many years. The city and the whole country governed by the city were handed over to the Augustana mission.</p>
	<p>1910 Sep. 28 Stillwater, MN.</p>	<p>1910, spring. unsuccessful first attempt at entering the city of Kiahsien.</p>
	<p>1910 Nov. 9, 10 Canon Falls &amp; Red Wing, MN.</p>	<p>1910 May 10 9 people baptized.</p>
<p>1911</p>	<p>Apr. 4, 5 Emanuel Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN.</p>	<p>1910, before summer came. Honanfu, where the Swedish Mission had an old and prosperous work was handed over to Augustana.</p>
<p>1912</p>	<p>Mar. 5 Ebenezer Lutheran Church, So. Minn., MN.</p>	<p>1910 Nov. Mrs. Magda Lindbeck arrives.</p>
		<p>1910, by end of year there were five stations.</p>
		<p>1911. Successful in getting into Kiahsien.</p>
		<p>1911 Nov. Mr. C.O.A. Spira (lay-worker) arrives.</p>
		<p>1912 Nov. 5 new missionaries arrive: Sister Hanna Engberg. Sister Thyra Lawson. Rev. M.B. Hanson. Rev. L.W. Lindbeck Dr. O.W. Lindorff</p>
<p>1913</p>	<p>Feb 4, 5 Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Klara Congregations Church, St. Paul, MN.</p>	<p>1913 Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) is founded.</p>
<p>1913</p>	<p>Mar. 17</p>	<p>1913 Nov. 4 new missionaries arrive: Mr. &amp; Mrs. Forsberg. Rev. &amp; Mrs. V.E. Swenson</p>

Life of A.W. Edwins

Synopsis of the Foreign Mission Association minutes:

Other events:

<p>1914 Oct. 21 Appointed Headmaster of language school @ Kikungshan. 36 enrolled.</p>	<p>1914 Mar 23, 24 Zion Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN</p>	<p>1914 Jan. Mrs. Hedvig Lindorff arrives</p>
<p>1915 Headmaster of language school.</p>	<p>1914 Apr. 5, 6 Swedish Lutheran Bethesda Church, So. St. Paul, MN.</p>	<p>1914 1914 Edwins calls for more missionaries. By 1914 there were 32 missionaries (including wives) serving an area 10,000 square miles with 5 million people.</p>
<p>1916 Elected editor of pan-Lutheran paper "Sin I Bao"</p>	<p>1915 May 28, 29 Bethel Lutheran Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastor J. Torell reported verbally that he had received several promises of sizeable gifts for the China Mission work and that two had promised to pay interest as long as they lived on gifts. The total</li> <li>• The "Association" is having less and less to do in the way of "real" work and business. The Chairman of the Board reports: The facts are that very little of real importance has been accomplished and consequently this will chiefly (his report) consist of a report in words."</li> </ul>	<p>1914 Sep. 11 new missionaries arrive: Rev. &amp; Mrs. J.L. Benson Rev. &amp; Mrs. N. Benson Rev. &amp; Mrs. G. Carlberg Rev. &amp; Mrs. J.J. Lindell Rev. &amp; Mrs. D. Vikner Miss Hanna Colberg</p>
<p>1914 Oct. 21 Language School established @ Kikungshan</p>	<p>1914 Oct. 21 Language School established @ Kikungshan</p>	<p>1914 Dec. 1914 ? Sister Elvira Pearson arrives. Mrs. C.O.A. Spira arrives.</p>

Life of A. W. Edwins	Synopsis of the Foreign Mission Association minutes:	Other events:
<p>1917 D.D. Augustana Seminary</p> <p>1917 Jun. Resigns editor-in-chief position of "Sin I Bao"</p>	<p>1917 Mar 18, 19 Augustana Church, Minneapolis, MN.</p> <p>1918 Jan 27 Zion Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN.</p> <p>1918 Feb 24, 25 Clara Swedish Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN.</p> <p>1919 Mar. 13, 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mission Festival @ Gloryaday Church on Sunday.</li> <li>• Business meeting @ home of Pastor &amp; Mrs. Thelander.</li> <li>• A few normal business items are mentioned; that the Board had met four times over the past year.</li> <li>• Then, at the bottom of the page: "(Here the minutes of the China Mission Society abruptly come to a close.)"</li> </ul> <p>After the handing over of the Association mission work to the Synod, the China Mission Society became largely a para-church organization. Its primary work was in the area of continuing to publish "The China Missionary," promote awareness of mission work among the laypeople of the Synod, and provide some moderate financial assistance to the China Mission and Missionaries.</p> <p>It becomes obvious by looking at the synopsis of the meeting minutes after 1908 that this organization had little real work to do. However, it should be noted that throughout its life as a society the minutes reflect much hymn signing, preaching about mission work, the recitation of memory passages, and the "uplifting, inspirational and edifying" messages that were shared at these meetings.</p>	<p>1917 See 1908 for previous details. Amer. Luth. Mission &amp; Hauge Synod Mission form the Lutheran United Mission.</p> <p>They joined when their parent Synods united to form the Norwegian Luth. Ch. of Amer.</p>

Synopsis of the  
Foreign Mission Association minutes:

Life of A.W. Edwins

Other events:

<p>1920</p>		<p>Every station had a primary school.</p>
<p>1920</p>	<p>Aug. 25</p>	<p>The Lutheran Church of China, a pan-Lutheran church body is organized at Kikungshan. Charter members:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norwegian Missionary Society</li> <li>• Finnish Missionary Society (Suomi)</li> <li>• Church of Sweden Mission</li> <li>• Augustana Mission</li> </ul>                     = Represents 14,000 Lutherans.</p>
<p>1920</p>		<p>Augustana officially joins in work of LTS.</p>
<p>1921</p>		<p>Augustana gives \$7,800 to LTS for its portion of the joint work there.</p>
<p>1921 Dec.</p>	<p>A.W. Edwins begins to serve call as the Augustana Synod faculty member. [1922-42 – Professor @ Lutheran Seminary in China]</p>	
<p>1922</p>		<p>Augustana gives \$15,000 to LTS for its portion of the joint work there.</p>
<p>1922 Mar.</p>		<p>LTS newsletter "Glimpses from Central Honan" begins publication</p>
<p>1922 Oct. 13</p>		<p>Pastors Lundeen &amp; Forsberg taken captive by robber band.</p>
<p>1922 ?</p>		<p>Result of kidnappings, American School in Kikungshan is moved to the Seminary in Shekow.</p>
<p>1923</p>		<p>@ town of Bah Seh, 30 miles so. of Honanfu, 650 citizens are held by a band of 1,000 robbers. <i>(This is a typical example, not a lone incident.)</i></p>
<p>1923 Dec.</p>		<p>LTS newsletter "Glimpses from Central Honan" changes name to "Honan Glimpses."</p>

Synopsis of the  
Foreign Mission Association minutes:

Life of A. W. Edwins

Other events:

1927 Apr.	Evacuation to America	1924 Jun. 13	12 graduate from LTS @ Shekow.
1929 Jan.	Hsichow; mission conference	1927-31	Revolution in China.
1936	Departs for furlough year.	1927 Mar.	LTS newsletter "Honan Glimpses" publishes its last edition.
1937	Returns from furlough year.	1928	Revolution in China.
1941 Mar.	Sent wife and youngest children home to U.S.	1929	Revolution in China.
1941 Dec. 23	Sent to hospital for Typhus. Intl. Hosp. @ Hankow.	1930	Revolution in China.
		1931	Revolution in China.
		1935:	53 congregations, 36 out-stations, 61 preaching places, 3,000 had been baptized (to date), 4,000 catechumens.
		1937	Japan invades China.

Synopsis of the Foreign Mission Association minutes: Other events:

Life of A. W. Edwins

1942 Jan. 23 Interred by Japanese.  
Sent to Luth. Home for Missionaries  
@ Hankow to convalesce.

1942 Jun. 5 Boarded Japanese steamer  
for Shanghai.

Jun. 9 Arrived Shanghai.  
Assigned to Amer. Country Club  
w/+/- 340 other repatriates.

Jun. 19 Suffered a cerebral hemorrhage.  
Immobilized his right side & impaired  
his speech.  
Moved to the China Inland Hospital.

Released to Red Cross & sent home via  
the S.S. *Conte Verde*.

Jun. 29 S.S. *Conte Verde* departs Shanghai.

1942 Jul. 2 10:25 a.m. Died.

Jul. 3 4:30 p.m. Buried @ sea.

Aug. 30 Memorial Service  
@ Augustana Luth. Church, Minn., MN

1948 The Lutheran Church of China, a pan-  
Lutheran church body (organized  
in 1920) – by this date 15 of the 20  
Lutheran missions in China are affili-  
ated.

1948 Nov. 18 LTS evacuates to Hong Kong.



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<sup>1</sup> *Multiple Authors*: Written by the Nurses & Doctors who cared for him. Nurses: Helen Anderson, M. Burkwall, Dorothy Clawson, Helen Dizney. Doctors: J.C. McCracken, E.E. Murray, N. Bercovitz, T.V. Oltman.

<sup>2</sup> ELCA Archives, Elk Grove, IL. April 12, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> ELCA Archives, Elk Grove, IL. April 12, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> *Marne Eckstrom Interview*: Recorded in previous report: "My Family Involved In China." Died Oct. 16, 1989.

<sup>5</sup> ELCA Archives, Elk Grove, IL. March 30, 2001. Photocopies of English pages are in my possession.

<sup>6</sup> ELCA Archives, Elk Grove, IL. Photocopies made and shipped to me.

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