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# The Baptist Pietist CLARION

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Edited by G. WILLIAM CARLSON, Professor of History and Political Science at Bethel University; RON SAARI, Senior Pastor at Central Baptist Church.

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## Pietism Rocks: An Identity Worth Sharing



DR. TRUETT LAWSON, former Executive Director, Minnesota Baptist Conference. Address delivered at Minnesota Baptist Conference Meeting, October 2007 |

### INTRODUCTION: THE ALMOND IN THE PUDDING

My father, before he passed away this past year, wrote a personal history which included some of his memories of growing up Swedish in the eastern part of the United States. He relates his memories of Swedish Christmas traditions and particularly when their family gathered to dip their spoons into a freshly baked rice pudding. You see, within the

pudding was a small treasure that he or one of his sisters might discover – the discovery was, of course, the almond that was hidden in the rice pudding, and the reward was that the person who received it would be the next to be married. He relates the excitement of waiting for the pudding but then his anxiety wondering if he might get the almond. The thought of an imminent marriage was a bit overwhelming for a 5-year-old boy.

During the past year, I have been researching and writing a script for an American Swedish Institute exhibit on Swedish Baptist roots. As I have studied the roots of our movement, I have discovered an almond in the pudding. This discovery has helped me clarify the true historic identity of our gathered people – the BGC, the Conference.

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## Lessons from Luke: Why Do the Children of Cebu's Shelter Have to Suffer So Much?



PAUL HEALY, Field Director and President of CSC. Sermon given at Central Baptist Church, February 13, 2007 | **WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE?**

The mysteries of God are a part of the Christian life that can often lead to confusion, doubt and even discouragement for believers. For some, it's a pride thing. We want to have answers—we want to understand, to be able to grasp the complexities of Biblical truth and God's plan for mankind. For some, God's mysteries—the unexplained things of life—are stumbling blocks to faith.

Why do bad things happen to good people. Why does He allow pain, suffering and evil to thrive in our world? Several months ago we were witnesses to the aftermath of the tragedy in Pennsylvania involving the Amish community, where good, decent, hard working, non-violent people were subjected to unspeakable cruelty towards their children. How can this happen?

One of our CSC children, who grew up in the worst poverty imaginable in Cebu City, was adopted into a family in the United States several years ago. Well meaning people would tell her how lucky she was and how God obviously had a wonderful plan for her life. She had a hard time with that and would sometimes ask her parents, "But what about

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# Inside this Issue of the Baptist Pietism Clarion

G. WILLIAM CARLSON, *Professor of History and Political Science, Bethel University* | This is the eighth issue of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion*. It was created to analyze the Baptist Pietist heritage of the Baptist General Conference, support efforts of the Baptist General Conference History Center and publish relevant presentations on our heritage and values.

**Previous issues of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion* can be found at the following website: [http://cas.bethel.edu/dept/history/Baptist\\_Pietist\\_Clarion](http://cas.bethel.edu/dept/history/Baptist_Pietist_Clarion)**

1. One of the primary missions of this issue of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion* is to publish Dr. Truett Lawson's last address to the Minnesota Baptist Conference in Duluth, Minnesota in October 2007. Dr. Lawson recently retired as the Executive Minister of the MBC, a position he held since July 1990. Dan Carlson was recently installed as his replacement.

This past year the Minnesota Baptist Conference was invited to host an exhibit of its history at the American Swedish Institute. Dr. Lawson gave a major presentation outlining the core events of MBC history and explored their meaning for understanding the current ministry of the denomination in Minnesota. He came to value our pietistic heritage not only as an expression of our history but also as an identifying trait of our future. It is a valuable essay.

2. A significant characteristic of the pietist tradition is that Christians are to live as prophetic people who seek economic and social justice in the societies in which they live. This was a pattern that Jesus carried out in his ministry and we are to walk in his steps. In 1903 Pastor John Eric Klingberg began the Klingberg Children's Home when he was asked to provide support for a number of orphans in New

Britain, Connecticut. This mission emerged from his pietistic commitments. Its object was, as God opens the way, to help children as they are in need of home, shelter, education and the experience of God's grace.

In the 1970's a home for homeless children of Cebu was opened in the Philippines. Paul and Marlys Healy, among others, decided to develop a home that reflected a commitment to Christian outreach. A second home was opened in 1985 and in the late 1990's a school was opened at the site. The two residences care for 70-80 children, some of whom have significant special needs. The priority is to eventually return the children to their parents or to place the children for adoption.

There are many similarities between the Children's Shelter of Cebu and Klingberg Children's Home as an expression of the social outreach expression of the pietist heritage. Paul Healy's sermon, "The Gospel According to Luke" is a wonderful expression

of pietistic Christianity and tells a valuable story that we all need to hear. Sid Teske, a well-received "Turnip the Clown," describes the short term missions project of Central Baptist Church as they directed a camp experience for the children.

3. The poetry of "Signe" is a frequent and important contribution to the issues of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion*. Her poetry was championed by John Eric Klingberg. She developed a close relationship to the work at the Children's Home. Her two poems about Klingberg are a genuine appreciation of his spiritual and social outreach to children.

4. Jim Smith, a professor of church history at Bethel Seminary West, recently called me and said that he had found a 1902 letter from missionary Johanna Anderson to his grandmother. He wondered whether the BGC archives would be interested. Along with the letter was a picture of Johanna Anderson and two younger members of his family. This is a wonderful illustration of why families need to be careful before they discard materials from old family trunks and attic boxes.

5. We are pleased to include in this issue the art works of Tom Foty and Dale Johnson. Dale is the Professor of Art at Bethel University and created the two murals included in this issue for the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in 1997. Tom Foty, a Minnesota artist, was commissioned to develop two murals for the MBC exhibit at the American Swedish Institute. We are pleased to include them in this issue. Foty states that "I love to capture in all its beauty on canvass in 2 dimensions what God has already created in 3 dimensions."



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# John Eric Klingberg: Experiencing the Blessing of God



G. WILLIAM CARLSON, *Professor of History and Political Science, Bethel University* | I remember growing up in the Montclair Baptist Church in New Jersey. One of

the significant stories I encountered was that of John Eric Klingberg's interaction with a police officer who told him that there were three boys who had been deserted and needed a home. They were hungry and without a family. Did the pastor know of anyone who would be willing to take them in? Klingberg was convinced that God was speaking to him and that after praying about it for an evening he felt that "he had no other choice than to take them to our own home. It was the best I had to offer."

After a series of interesting reflections with his family and a prayer meeting at church, Klingberg claimed the promise that "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." The Lord provided a house in which the children could stay, a young woman who was willing to be a full-time matron and resources to meet the needs of the children. Klingberg believed that this would be a "house that God built." He would not intentionally seek

funds, clothing and housing but would "trust in God only and make all wants known to Him in prayer, and wait patiently for His help." Thus commenced Klingberg Children's Home, a ministry that by 1904 had given a home to 22 children.

In my parent's library was a copy of *J.E. Klingberg: Adventurer in Faith* written by Irene and Robert Klingberg. It was inscribed: "To Mr. and Mrs. Bert Carlson with a sincere wish for the blessings of God." The ministry of the Klingberg Children's Home was a valued expression of our family commitments. Members of the Klingberg family were visitors in our home, especially when they came to speak in the Montclair church.

John Eric Klingberg was a significant contributor to the life and ministry of the Baptist General Conference. He was held in high esteem. This essay will develop several aspects of his contributions. He strongly supported the denomination's Baptist pietist heritage.

## EARLY IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

Klingberg understood the immigrant experience and supported efforts to respond to their spiritual and societal needs. He was born in Saxhyttan, Sweden in November 1867 to a poor rural family and experienced poverty and hunger. His mother encouraged John to become a good, honest workman and articulated the "way of righteousness."

When John Eric Klingberg was young, a disheveled stranger gave John three books: a copy of the New Testament, a catechism and the biography of Elihu Burritt. He gave them to John's teacher and John was only to receive them when he was able to read well. Klingberg believed that this old, drunken stranger, "unknowingly planted in my young life the seed out of which grew my love for good literature. And that is not all. For by giving me a New Testament he likewise put into my hand the key that admitted me to the great spiritual storehouse of my heavenly Father."

After a series of crises, family moves, economic suffering, and labor exploitation at homes he was assigned, John began to reflect on his sense of loneliness and alienation. He prayed to Jesus that He would come and help John because he was a "poor boy without home and friends." He did not know where his parents were. He was so unhappy that he felt he must die. He prayed for Jesus to help him.



John Eric Klingberg

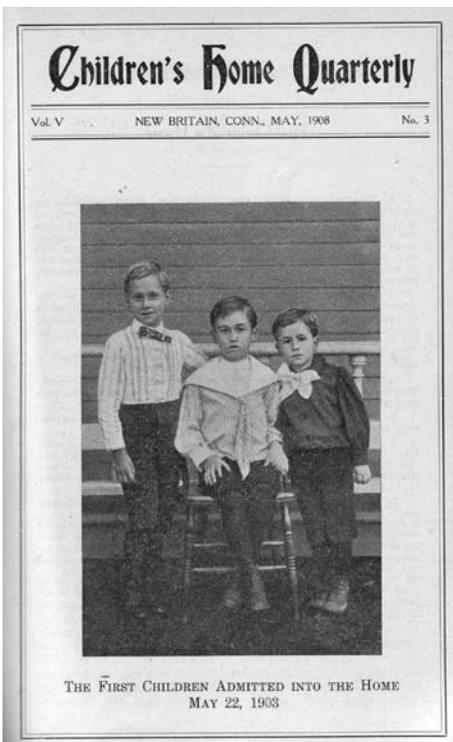
After working in an iron works company, where he changed his last name to Klingberg, John Eric Klingberg made a decision to leave Sweden. In July 1891 he sailed to the United States landing in Boston and eventually traveling to Chicago. After journeying away from his Christian

heritage and seeking pleasure in the tavern life, Klingberg found himself in great conflict. Two things brought Klingberg back to faith. First, he decided to follow the footsteps of Elihu Burritt who, as a blacksmith, studied fifty languages and eventually organized International Peace Conferences. During his off hours John worked hard learning Greek and Latin.

Second, in September 1893, in spiritual despair, he went to a worship service in the Oak Street Hall and encountered Christ in a new manner. He accepted Christ as his personal Saviour and "now enjoyed the peace of God in a most sweet and wonderful way." Klingberg "found rest after so many weary months" and concluded that he now had tasted the joy of heaven, saw the light of Christ, sang the songs of deliverance and heard the call to serve a great King.

## PASTOR AND SPIRITUAL COUNSELOR

In November 1893, Klingberg joined the Salem Baptist Church in Chicago and began to attend the Swedish Seminary at



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Morgan Park. His enthusiasm for learning was finally satiated and he proclaimed the gospel wherever he went. He found a “deep comfort in knowing and believing that His Lord watched over him, caring for him.” Pastoring a working class population at the Swedish Baptist Tabernacle in south Chicago, he became acutely aware of the struggles of the new immigrants. He wrote, “I was challenged by the sin and ignorance all around me. Besides carrying on my regular pastor duties, I started a little school in the church. During the summer months I brought in the poor waifs that played day in and day out on the hot, dusty streets.”

Klingberg was formally ordained in April 1898, married Magdalene Erickson in March 1899, and received a call in the summer of 1900 from the Elim Baptist Church in New Britain, Connecticut. He served as pastor of the church from 1900-1924 and 1933-1945. It was a small church made up of recently arrived Swedish immigrants. Sermons emphasized evangelism, spiritual disciplines, especially Bible reading and prayer, and a commitment to Christian service.

Klingberg gave a series of sermons to a Young People’s Summer Assembly in 1926. He emphasized faith in Jesus Christ as Savior as essential to becoming a Christian and that Christians need to spread that gospel wherever they are. He preached that “You have received so much instruction in the word of God, seen so much of Jesus Christ already that it will give you inspiration to tell others... How necessary it is to live in constant communion with the Lord Jesus Christ and may He be with you. I pray to God that men and women may be converted.” We need, added Klingberg, “to teach our young people the reality of heaven, the salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Klingberg was also a prayer warrior. He would long for a time of solitude where he could get alone with his Saviour. He would love to go to the ocean, steal away into the woods or seek out his favorite large stone in Barnesdale, New Britain. It was a seven ton boulder and was a spot where he would weep for the needs of the Children’s Home and seek wisdom for pastoral leadership issues. In an essay to young people he suggested that prayer is essential to the life of faith, a

way to receive the blessings of God and gain strength for the Christian journey. Prayer should have an intentionality to it and needs to be a two-way communication with God. He wrote: “We can pray at any time and in any place, but I believe that if we really desire an hour that is free from tumult, strife, and noise, for communion with God in prayer the night is the best time...If we love Him above all things, He will teach us how to pray that we may have the victory. If we pray we soon learn how to pray; if we keep at it the blessings will surely come.”

Bruce S. Fleming, a distinguished BGC pastor, grew up in Klingberg Children’s Home. He suggested that the Children’s Home that prayer built was a “constant reminder to all men, that God answers prayer. Its message humbles and warms the hearts of those who look upon the edifice as a sacred

demonstration of the power and wisdom of God in this modern twentieth century.” John Eric Klingberg was indeed a “man of prayer, humbly believing that God would supply all the needs, spiritual and material. He not only believed in miracles, his very life was a miracle.”

### CELEBRATOR OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Klingberg was extremely proud of his new nation. He often expressed this sense of patriotism in essays supporting American efforts in World War I and encouraging children at the Home to celebrate traditional American holidays. He often recognized the benefits that many immigrants, including himself, gained when they were allowed to be successful in the new land.

However, what made America a valued

*continued on p. 5*



## Klingberg’s Children’s Home (1904) A Plan for Involvement

1. The Home should be established with the view of giving orphans and destitute children home, education and Christian training, and that children, regardless of nationality or religious affiliation, should be admitted.
2. For support of the work we should trust in God and make all our wants known to Him in prayer, and wait patiently for His help.
3. That the work should stimulate other believers to greater activity for the kingdom of God, and be for the increase of their faith in Him.
4. To prove to the world that the word of God is true and that He answers prayers today just as much as He did in times past.

nation was its commitment to justice and peace. America was not perfect but it was willing to overcome the significant sins of its past. In a poem, *America*, which he penned in 1919, he expressed his belief that the United States was a unique place which provided a beacon of hope to those who had experienced religious and political persecution or needed the opportunity to escape the poverty of the homeland. Klingberg penned:

*And yet thy wealth is not alone in gold  
But in the character of finest mould  
That sons and daughters of thy race can  
show  
In words and actions true where're they go.  
Thy future hope built on the rock of Truth,  
And teach each maiden and each manly  
youth  
That Justice only can forever stand  
And give protection to their fatherland;  
Destroy all evil and all selfish greed,  
Protect the weak and be their friend in need.*

*It seems that Providence appointed you  
To break the fetters of the slave and to  
Proclaim to nations, whether great or small,  
That there is happiness and room for all  
Upon this globe, and with the weapons  
bright  
Defend that sacred truth, that right is might;  
And to the nations tranquil peace restore  
And do away with wars for evermore.*

## HISTORIAN AND BIBLIOPHILE

When I first started the research on John Eric Klingberg I encountered Gary Long, a Baptist historian friend who was honored to have obtained the Klingberg library collection of the works of Charles Spurgeon. Klingberg treasured the development of his library and was a life-long learner. One did not have to have a doctorate degree to fall in love with books.

Klingberg's collection included the novels of such literary greats as John Milton and William Cowper. When he was seventy he traveled to Wesleyan University several times a week to study English Literature. He said: "To collect the thoughts of others and to make them our own, is our duty. The bee does no wrong in draining the flowers of their sweet

## "A Well Worn Bible is a Good Evidence that its Possessor Loves It"

BY JOHN ERIC KLINGBERG, *Children's Home Almanac 1910*, pp. 3-4 | First of all, buy a good Bible. That means a Bible well printed, well bound and not too heavy. Use it daily and do not think it is too precious to be worn out while you are serving your Master. A well worn Bible is good evidence that its possessor loves it. For my part, I have never been able to understand why the Bible should be used only for an ornament in the home.

Some people think that the Word of God should be used for show. I remember a book-binder to whom I brought an old Bible that I had used for several years. The book was very precious to me, and although it was marked in many places and dirty I did not like to part with it, and decided to have it rebound, and for this reason I took it to the binder. When I came to get the Bible, he looked at me and said, "It is a great shame, Mr. Klingberg, that you who are a minister should use the Bible the way you have done. Why, it is dirty and marked in many places, and it is in an awful shape! I can show a Bible that I have upstairs, and it is just as clean today as it was twenty years ago." God has given us His Word, not for show, but for practical every day use.

There is another suggestion I like to make in connection with Bible reading, and that is much prayer. Without prayer it is altogether impossible to understand the Word of God. It is the Spirit that shall guide us into all truth. Through prayer the Word will really be a lamp unto our feet.

nectar. Neither do we commit sin by enriching our lives with the precious gifts of truth others have left behind for our use." Another section of his library was a distinguished collection of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in a variety of languages. There was also a portion of the library that was committed to Charles Spurgeon and George Mueller. He was especially appreciative of Spurgeon's commentaries which he often used in his sermons and historical essays. Many volumes of that library, particularly the 100 editions of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* are found in the library at Bethel Theological Seminary.

Klingberg could get along with little sleep. He would spend many hours after everyone else had gone to bed reading and writing. He was constantly writing the history and analysis of life at the Children's Home. He put together collections of materials for the children at the Home in a series entitled the *Children's Home Almanac*. In 1937 he became president of the Historical Society of the General Conference and was in frequent contact with Adolf Olson who was writing *A Centenary History*.

Also Klingberg chronicled the history of the Swedish Baptist New York Conference, 1883-1933, wrote a series of articles about such significant Baptist General Conference leaders as Captain Schroeder

and Arvid Gordh, penned an analysis of "Literary Studies" and authored his own poetry, some of which were included in a volume published in 1920. He was also active in Baptist General Conference religious politics and wrote a document on theology entitled *Fundamentals*.

Klingberg strongly believed that the major stories of the BGC heritage needed to be well told and passed on from one generation to another. In his article on Captain Schroeder, Klingberg wrote that "for the instruction of the young people particularly, and for the old in general, it is time to consider who this rugged, stalwart son of the ocean was, and what he did for the kingdom of God among the Swedes of the world."

## PIETIST AND COMMITED RESPONSE TO POVERTY AND CHILDREN

Bruce Fleming tells the story of a young girl who wandered into the backyard of the Klingberg's residence and sat there for the day. She was taken into the parsonage. Three days later her relatives came and took her away. He asked the question "But what becomes of those who have no relatives?" His commitment to the Children's Home was his answer. It was an "everlasting monument dedicated to one man's faith in humanity,

in children, and in God Almighty.”

The orphanage was an expression of Klingberg’s Baptist pietist commitments. Klingberg wrote the following about the activities of Francke, the leading German pietist. What professor August Herman Francke did for the “orphans of Halle, Germany, in the seventeenth century is well known to every student of church history. The thought that I should perhaps be allowed to trust in God as had these men who had become such mighty laborers in God’s vineyard, gave my heart new strength.”

In 1904 Klingberg sought counsel from leaders of the orphanages that George Muller had established in Bristol, England. As a theological student in Halle, Muller stayed in one of the homes that Francke had established for homeless children. In 1835 Muller read a biography of Francke and came to the conclusion that God had compelled him to do for the poor in Bristol what Francke had done in Germany. The establishment of the orphanage houses was to glorify God, enhance the faith of God’s children and provide for the

spiritual and temporal welfare of fatherless and motherless children.

Klingberg traveled to England and Sweden where he visited with the leaders of the Bristol orphanage homes, visited Spurgeon’s Tabernacle and visited the memorials for John Bunyan, John Wesley and Isaac Watts. While visiting the orphanage homes he commented that “I noted everything there was in the most perfect order, cleanliness everywhere and the children looked strong and healthy. O what a mighty work carried on in Bristol every year, and what a testimony of God’s faithfulness.”

There are a number of highlights in the history of Klingberg Children’s Home. In 1920 the cornerstone was laid on the construction of a significant new residence center which was finally completed in 1922. A second Children’s Home was established in Chicago under the leadership of his daughter Mabel in the fall of 1926. After John Eric Klingberg’s death in 1946, leadership of the New Britain home was passed to Hadden E. Klingberg, Sr.

Between 1903 and 1970 more than 2,000

children received services from the Home. Many of the young people went on to higher education or found work in the industrial enterprises. It was clear, however, in the 1970’s that Klingberg Children’s Home needed to significantly change the nature of its ministry in response to changing state laws and different approaches to issues of dealing with families in crises. Many of these changes were initiated under the leadership of Don Klingberg, Jr.

Now called Klingberg Family Centers, it provides new services such as a safe home for foster children, acute residential care, special education programs, home-based family services, respite care services and extended day treatment programs. The new mission is to “uphold, preserve and restore families in a therapeutic environment, valuing the absolute worth of every child, while adhering to the highest ethical principles in accordance with our Judeo-Christian heritage.”

## CONCLUSION

John Eric Klingberg was a major contributor to the early history of the Baptist General Conference. His commitment to children was unwavering. In one of his 1926 youth sermons he tells the story of a young Swedish immigrant who came to the Scandinavian Home in New York where P. E. Engberg was superintendent. After a great reluctance to commence her work experience she hid in her room for two days. She was all alone. The young woman finally encountered the superintendent with a smile on her face and a commitment in her steps.

Engberg asked her what had happened. She replied that she had seen a picture of Jesus on the wall and underneath that picture were the words “seek ye first the kingdom of God and all things will be added.” During the evening she gave her heart to Jesus and was ready to go to work.

Klingberg observed that this young Swedish woman gave many wonderful years to the Home in faithful service and asked the young people around him to also seek the kingdom of God first, trust in God and leave our future in His hands. That summarizes well the life and testimony of John Eric Klingberg and provides for us a mandate for our own era.

## Day at the Beach: Glimpses of Real Life at the Children’s Home

ELSIE OSBORNE DAVIS, *New Britain Herald* 1918; found in *The Children’s Home Almanac 1918*, pp. 30-33 | Just imagine two dozen boys of assorted sizes loaded into a big auto truck, trundled down the river to the seashore, where none of them had ever been before, and let loose in a good old-fashioned farmhouse to spend two solid weeks—doesn’t that spell happiness? Sending the boys from the Corbin Avenue house of the Children’s Home to Chalker Beach, Saybrook, was the finest investment that local friends of the Home could possibly make...

The days were hardly long enough to hold all the fun. From early morning till moonlight evenings there was something doing all the time—trust a lot of lively boys for that! Fishing! Well! They caught one hundred and fifty fish, all kinds and sizes, and then they stopped. That was their limit. And besides clam chowders and crabs, they ate boiled fish, fried fish, baked fish, every kind of fish, until they were ashamed to pass a fish market!

Two of the boys yearned to do more than sit on a rock and pull in an occasional “animated bologna” as they call the eels. These two struck up an acquaintance with the “Captain” when he was painting his lobster buoys, and every day after that they rendered him valuable assistance on his fishing trips. They were seasick at first, of course, but what of that!

There were apples and plums nearby and the boys had permission to pick up all the fruit on the ground. It was a temptation sometimes not to bump against the trees and jar the limbs accidentally, but the boys did not succumb. If they had, perhaps they would not have gained such a fine reputation all up and down the beach for being remarkably quiet, well-mannered lads. Everyone like them. The neighbors all spoke well of them, the famous Saybrook mosquitoes were their constant companions and some little fiddler crabs became painfully attached to them.

# The Pietist Poetry of Signe Olson Peterson: Celebrating the Life and Witness of John Eric Klingberg

G. WILLIAM CARLSON, *Professor of History and Political Science, Bethel University* | In recent issues of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion* we have published the poetry of Signe Olson Peterson. She wrote, under the name “Signe,” around 300 poems and essays which were published in at least eight Swedish newspa-

## AM APPEAL TO THE AMERICAN POETS

J. E. KLINGBERG, *Svenska Standaret*,  
Vol. XI, No. 50, 1917, p. 3.

Give us something worth reading,  
Ye poets with harps of gold,  
Sing to the hearts that are bleeding,  
Inspire the young and the old:  
Apply to the life new meaning,  
Interpret the signs of time,  
In history's field go gleaming  
Put noblest thoughts into rhyme.

Tell us of Puritan fathers,  
Of Washington's mighty deed,  
Of Henry, Franklin and others,  
Who planted the golden seed.  
Tell us the beautiful story  
That time will always adore,  
Of Abraham Lincoln's glory,  
In glowing stanzas once more.

Revive this great generation,  
Sing courage into its breast,  
Proclaim to this mighty nation  
That now is no time for rest.  
Our sons in heroic manner  
Are seen in a bloody dance,  
Beneath the Star Spangled Banner  
On the blood-soaked soil of France.

Ye singers on sunlit mountains,  
Fill wood and valleys with song,  
And show us the rippling fountains  
That thousands have sought so  
long.  
Give us a song, ye immortals,  
That sounds like a mighty wave,  
And hist'ry will on her portals  
Your names forever engrave.

pers and journals from Port Arthur, Canada, Chicago, to New Britain Connecticut. Signe immigrated from Varmland Sweden to Port Arthur Canada in May 1911. Signe worked as a domestic for a widow in one of Port Arthur's grand homes.

After moving to Minnesota she married Rev. E. B. Peterson, raised six children, and ministered to churches in Fish Lake, Eveleth and Kerkhoven, Minnesota. Signe's poetry often reflected upon her Christian faith. Her poems frequently define characteristics of the pietist tradition. Such include a need for born again experience, a delight in prayer and Bible study, a celebration of the community of faith, a desire for holy living and an anticipation of heaven.

There was also, for Signe, a sense that life was hard and that only God could provide strength and support in times of need. In a letter from Signe to Rev. John Klingberg in 1918, a pastor in New Britain, Connecticut and a major champion of her poetry, she wrote:

“I have been and am continually completely alone out here. I have worked in families the whole time. I worked in the same family for five years. There did I write the greatest number of my poems. Some are written under so tragic conditions. Monday mornings, when I was alone down in the basement and did laundry, my thoughts used to work the best... The poetry has helped me overcome so much and has been such a great blessing to me.”

Several letters to Klingberg written in November/December 1919 express Signe's thanks for his thoughtful letters and his support for her poetry. She was deeply supportive of Klingberg Children's Home which was founded in 1903 in New Britain, Connecticut.

Letters suggest that ultimately Signe's trip to St. Paul in 1919 was the first stage in her desire to work at the Klingberg Children's Home. There must have been a young woman at Klingberg's home who was also named Signe to whom she wrote letters and sent gifts. She was also trying to find children

## A CUP OF COLD WATER

SIGNE OLSON PETERSON

A cup of cold water  
Given in His name  
Holds a gracious promise  
We may rightly claim.

Then how dare we question,  
Or to estimate  
God's eternal measures  
Of what's small or great?

As we value service  
We perhaps would deem  
A cup of cold water  
Least in our esteem.

But the true appraisal  
Given by our Lord  
Has forever made it  
Worthy of reward.

adoptees for her two friends Marie Erickson and Phoebe Nelson.

Signe concluded one letter by admiring Klingberg's “unmovable trust in God, which makes you so strong and able to do good work. Your faith is your victory. God bless you richly.” Klingberg honored her poetry by including her in his book on American Swedish literature (*Litteraturhistoriska studier*).

Signe had a great commitment to Christians who gave their lives to assist children and rescue them from destitute conditions. Her own experience as a immigrant made her sensitive to those who are abused and alone. She wanted all children to experience the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Signe also expressed great concern for Christians to meet the physical and emotional needs of children. She was committed to a cup of cold water Christianity. We were to follow Christ's example and express His care for those in need.

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# Klingberg poems by Signe Olson Peterson

TÄNK PÅ KLINGBERGS MÅNGA SMÅ TILL JUL!  
(THINK OF KLINGBERG'S LITTLE ONES AT CHRISTMAS!)  
(*Svenska Standaret*, Vol. XII, No. 49, December 10, 1918,  
p. 1, translated by Tom Coleman)

Think of Pastor Klingberg's many small,  
When the holy bells of Christmas ring,  
Become an angel who will make a call,  
And to them a joyful greeting bring.

They are lacking a home and Mom and Dad,  
The loss they in their hearts can feel,  
In tender breasts there is a longing sad,  
To feel in life a joy that is real.

The pound you have is God's and not your own,  
He gave it for others good to do,  
And He one day will ask you to make known,  
What fruit's the harvest has given you.

You will harvest exactly what you sow,  
You will receive as much as you share,  
If empty handed you to life's field go,  
Your field in the autumn will be bare.

Everything you give God's small today,  
In the book of life He will record,  
At last from the throne you will hear Him say,  
That it was given to the Lord.

*Signe Olson Peterson*



*Klingberg children's home (1920)*

**A ROSE ON DR. KLINGBERG'S GRAVE**  
(November 27, 1946)

With a bereaved, but truly grateful nation  
Presenting a selected wreath of praise  
I add a rose of love and adoration  
On Brother Klingberg's final resting place.

We cannot mourn, as we are thus recalling  
The tender mercies God through him revealed  
The many showers of blessing that were falling  
On his assigned and dedicated field.

With sanctified and humbly yielded fitness  
To lead and guide, to rescue and restore  
He ventured out with God, as chosen witness,  
Such as New Britain never saw before.

Their little homeless ones he was receiving  
Into a house that was built on prayer  
Dismay and fear their wounded hearts were leaving  
As they found love and warmth and tender care.

The willing consecrated hands that fed them  
Were ministering unto their souls also  
To saving knowledge of their Saviour led them  
Before their faith in good had lost its glow.

Now all these rescued ones proclaim their story  
Throughout the land, how they were saved and spared,  
And give to God their undivided glory  
For all they gained, because His servant cared.

God special honor was on him bestowing  
When Heavens portals He threw open wide  
That final day he to his work was going  
And they stepped in to glory side by side.

The twilight glow was lending added splendor  
As thus his day of labor reach it's close  
His ardent task of love and self surrender  
Was crowned with hallowed, infinite repose.

Our gains are great having known about him  
And his unfinished work we pledge to share  
It cannot cease, but shall go on without him  
For it was found and is sustained by prayer.

# CSC in Retrospect – a Personal History



By TERRI L. HANSEN  
**LED BY GOD: A  
DREAM BECOMES  
A SUCCESSFUL  
MINISTRY**

The history of the Children's Shelter of Cebu is far from an objective assortment of facts and figures, growth patterns and statistics. It is a story, and not only that, it is a story that happens to be a resident part of my personal memories. I may have only been a spectator, as someone peeking through a knothole in the fence, but nonetheless, I have been an observer and vicarious participant in this history. I have been privy to watch as three young, idealistic, twenty-somethings with a dream were led by God to turn that dream into a mature, seasoned, and successful ministry, a humanitarian ministry to homeless children in Cebu City, on the island of Cebu, Philippines.

I would like to begin with my early memories of Paul Healy. I remember coming to the Bethel College campus in the fall of 1973 as a lowly freshman girl. Unbeknownst to me and other innocent victims, one of the unsanctioned events of Welcome Week was the opportunist activity engaged in by the upper classmen of hanging around in various unobtrusive locations to "check out" the new "crop" of women. There was a certain group of juniors of the male persuasion who made early connections with a certain group of freshmen of the female persuasion. My future husband, Dave, was one of the former, and I, the latter. Paul Healy ended up the odd man out as nearly his entire group of friends latched on to their respective gals, many for life. Maybe it was because he was only a sophomore and didn't sense the urgency, or maybe he was just bitter, but my first impressions of Paul were that he hated women and got a great deal of satisfaction from intimidating and humiliating them, and those who loved them.

Fast forward to 1977. Dave and I were now happily married. Dave and Paul had remained close friends throughout college, even sharing an apartment Dave's senior

year. Paul had actually folded his 6'8" frame into a Volkswagen Beetle and traveled the 950 miles from St. Paul to Denver to attend our wedding and spent several nights sleeping in a tent camper in my brother's driveway. My opinion of Paul had softened because of this. He was a true blue friend and loyal to the core. But now, the inconceivable was happening. He was sitting in our living room at Har Mar Apartments and describing to us a recent trip he had taken to the Philippines. He and two young women had gone over to investigate the possibility of opening up a foster home for homeless street children in Cebu City. One of the women, Marlys Danielson, had gone first with her father and had been so struck and impassioned by what she saw there that she came home and began to recruit others to her cause. We signed on that day to give \$20 a month to support these three. I am guessing that we were among some of their first regular supporters.

There was something else I observed in that meeting with Paul. I was not sure if he was more interested in this cause or in the one in whose heart it burned so deeply! But as the saying goes, God works in mysterious ways, and within a few months, Paul and Marlys were not only planning their return trip to Cebu, but they were planning their wedding as well. They were married in the

fall of 1978 at a beautiful service at Northwestern Chapel in Roseville, Minnesota. Paul would be the first to admit that he got the better end of that deal. A loving, lasting partnership was formed and in May of 1979, they along with two other young Minnesotans, left to fulfill their ministry dream.

## **"SUFFERING THAT LEADS TO GODLINESS": EARLY STRUGGLES FOR THE CSC**

Prior to their leaving, however, several months were spent experiencing the "suffering that leads to godliness." I chuckled when I came across this letter in Paul's blog on the CSC website. He writes,

"In 1978 a small group of us were trying to raise money to start a ministry in the Philippines. We were concerned about the needs of homeless and hungry Filipino children. But none of us had experience in fund raising! We tried everything, from donut and candy sales to supermarket collection cans and marathons. Finally, after having raised almost nothing for our efforts, we got the idea to have a benefit concert. We decided to have B.J. Thomas come to the Minneapolis Auditorium, and one of our group members put up the

*continued on p.10*

## **Children's Shelter of Cebu in the Philippines**

<http://www.cscshelter.org/>

### **OUR MISSION STATEMENT:**

CSC exists to glorify God by demonstrating His love to the Philippines as we provide a loving, Christ-centered home with comprehensive medical, educational and placement services for homeless Filipino children.

### **OUR CORE VALUES:**

We are Christ-centered and prayer focused.

We are committed to keeping families together.

We value the lives of all children, regardless of their limitations or challenges.

We value adoption and make it a primary placement option for most of our children.

We will continue to invest in children who can't be adopted and assist parents who have surrendered their children.

We view the introduction of new donors, prayer warriors and potential missionaries to Cebu as a ministry.

money to book him and his group and to pay for the initial promotion of the concert.

“The concert was a disaster. The auditorium held about 10,000 people; less than 3,000 showed up. I’ll never forget the feeling of standing in the lobby waiting for the crowds that never came. We couldn’t pay the orchestra, the ticket office, the printer, the radio stations or the newspapers. There we were, a group of youngsters with a desire for a ministry in Cebu, surrounded by angry, threatening creditors. It seemed like our organization and our dream for an orphanage were dead.”

He goes on to say that for some reason, they didn’t give up. They managed to placate their creditors, gradually paying off their debts. Within a few weeks they received a donation of \$40,000 from a Bethel College student. Paul continued, “All our plans and efforts to raise funds had netted us a pile of debts and a load of frustration. But God’s miraculous work in the heart of a young man resulted in enough money to purchase property in Cebu and begin the work.”

Dave and I attended that B.J. Thomas concert, I guess along with 2,998 others. We watched in wonder as God moved this group further out on that limb of faith. We were there when the first “Friends of CSC” banquet was held in the sanctuary of Central Baptist Church in St. Paul. We have attended nearly all subsequent banquets in the ever familiar Robertson Gym at Bethel. We have endured slideshows and home grown videos, Jerry Healy’s wry jokes and multiple chicken dinners. But we wouldn’t have missed seeing little Ann-Ann, one of the first children taken in by CSC, walk to the piano to sing and play for the tearful crowd. Ann-Ann had come to St. Paul to have surgery to correct her severe scoliosis. Now as Mary Ann Clark, adopted by a Minnesota family, she was a beacon for God.

We have watched as God has done one miracle after another. Early on, when Cliff Danielson, (Marlys’ dad) was the stateside director, he determined that the banquet offering would be counted and the amount announced before the attendees left for the

evening. How inspiring it was for us year after year to come together and be able to see how God would bless our collective efforts each year. And the offering total mounted over the years to record highs as individuals and families caught the vision and climbed on board. And every year, more families with adopted CSC children stood to be applauded by the awed crowd.

### GOD OPENS DOORS

We were amazed as God opened doors within the Filipino government and used CSC as a model for care. They were also able to assist in the development of sound practices for foreign adoption there. A strategic relationship was developed with the late Ron Duterte, then Mayor of Cebu City. His profession of Christianity and his true belief in and support of the ministry of CSC was an encouragement and inspiration. Many of us had the opportunity to hear him speak at the stateside banquet.

We have been blessed time and time again as new levels of ministry have been achieved and the capacity of CSC has grown. By 1985 a second home was added. In 1992, with a grant from the Schmidt Family Foundation in Canada, more land was purchased and the two current homes were built. In 1995, plans were begun on the Children of Hope School. Construction began in 1997 and it opened its doors in August of 1998. The Wally Johnson Teen home was added so that those children who would most likely never be adopted could learn to live independently and gain skills they needed to function in the world outside the walls of CSC. In October of 2007 CSC accepted its 750<sup>th</sup> child! 70 to 80 children are served at any given time and 70 Filipino workers are employed to assist the American staff in all areas of the ministry.

Currently, a campaign is under way entitled, “Building a Legacy of Hope”. By far CSC’s most ambitious capital drive to date, they are seeking funds to build a new infirmary, a residence specially fitted for the children with special needs, a new, more adequate teen home, and much needed office space for executives and social workers. They will also

include a small apartment for visiting adoptive families. The land has been purchased and \$635,000 of their \$2 million goal will go to expand the Luke Fund Endowment, ensuring stability for the future of CSC.

In 1976, I would have voted Paul Healy “least likely to become a missionary” in the Bethel Spire. Not in my wildest dreams could I have imagined this sarcastic, cynical fellow, would become my role model for discipleship! This unlikely person, who with his equally amazing wife, would leave family and friends, travel half way around the world, never to look back.

Paul and Marlys, along with Mitch and Ruth, Sandy, and a host of others have continued to bless and inspire us in their selfless dedication to these children who would otherwise have no future. From humble beginnings and youthful idealism God has grown this ministry. They have understood the secret to success from the very beginning – this is God’s ministry. As Paul so aptly summarized in his blog, “Our efforts are inadequate, even pathetic at times. But God takes our faith and commitment (although sometimes found lacking) and makes something great out of them, in the work of the ministry in Cebu and in the promotional efforts in Minnesota.”

As I began, I have only had the privilege of being an observer. We have, as a couple, remained close to this ministry. They are the best when it comes to building bridges to their supporters – the banquets, the newsletters, foster friend updates, the prayer ministry, the website. Everyone who has made a commitment to be involved in CSC has been enfolded into the circle and treated like a member of the family. Their history is only 30 years young, but their future is secure and limitless because they operate with relational integrity. We were there at its inception and continue our connection because God is in it and many lives have been affected for his kingdom. We hope to one day, God willing, visit in person. For now, we continue to enjoy the view from our knothole, incredibly blessed by the miracles, constantly marveling in all God has done. That is the story – that is CSC.

# This Clown Left Part of His Heart in Cebu



SIDNEY TESKE, *Member of Central Baptist Church Mission Project to CSC | In February 2008, eight members of Central Baptist Church, were*

*engaged in a short-term missions project at the Children's Shelter of Cebu. The following is a reflection on their experience written by Sid Teske, also known as "Turnip the Clown." His clown performances included several schools as well as a camp experience for the children at the Shelter. For pictures of the experiences see the following website: <http://www.cscshelter.org/Clown/>*

## HEALY INVITES CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH MEMBERS TO CSC

Two tall and potentially imposing yet humble men sat at the table with a group of us at breakfast one morning in the Spring of 2007. We of course knew why we had been invited, but there was a moment of thoughtful silence when they asked us to be part of a team who would go to Cebu City in the Philippines to work at a camp for the children at the Children's Shelter of Cebu (CSC). Paul Healy, the spokesman spoke quietly and earnestly about his vision for the lost children of Cebu and especially for those who by God's providence were then living at the Shelter.

An inauspicious beginning, but in February, 2008, a team of eight people traveled to Cebu to lead and direct a seaside Bible Camp for the school age children at the Shelter. Each team member was carefully selected to fill a particular role in this ministry. A nurse, a student counselor, a team leader, two youth leaders, a tender, approachable fellow to reach the shy kids, a man of many construction talents, and a clown. What follows are some of the poignant experiences of that clown.

## POVERTY STRICKEN AREAS OF CEBU CITY

After an initial meeting with the children and young people at the Shelter, we were given a tour of poverty stricken areas of Cebu City that tragically serves as the home

of thousands of children in distress. It was for the most part, a silent tour except for our driver and tour guide, Marlys Healy who pointed out things we otherwise might not have seen. "Here are two families who spend their days putting charcoal in small plastic bags for resale." A small girl of perhaps 3 years old blackened by charcoal dust from head to feet, stared at us from an opening in the tarp over the entrance. Tears welled in our eyes.

"See the cardboard leaning against the wall on the sidewalk," Marlys asked "it is one family's home." "In this vast sea of ramshackle buildings are thousands of families who each have living space seldom bigger than a 9 x 9 hovel." We too could see that there was no plumbing, no privacy, covered only by corrugated metal, so badly rusted they could only be cast offs from another place, separated by narrow foot paths and common bamboo or discarded plywood walls. Marlys continued: "The most difficult thing we face here is that we get calls every day of the week asking us to take another child, and we have to turn almost all of them away. We can take only a few extreme cases when we have space." Our hearts nearly stopped beating as we sat in stunned silence.

"On your right you see a small stream, the banks covered with precarious homes. The families there use the stream as their garbage dump, toilet and wash tub." Tear ducts now almost dry, we slouched down in our seats, too overwhelmed to respond. This then was the preparation we needed. Now we were ready to lead the camp with a sense of purpose and heartfelt care.

## WORKING WITH THE CHILDREN AT CSC

The next 3 days were spent at the shelter getting acquainted with the children, and letting them get to know us in the safe environment of the Shelter grounds. Some of the children had been there for only days or months and their eyes expressed reservation at first. All of them were very cautious about touch – suspicious eyes would stare even if

you touched an elbow. It was going to be a slow process. They have little or no understanding of the concept of "trust" or "love" though it permeates the entire Shelter and emanates from every staff and short term mission member. It takes the children time to heal and to accept and we were patient.



*Turnip the Clown with children in Cebu*

Gradually some of the children made friends with different team members.

The team along with Shelter staff then drove to the camp one day ahead of the campers to prepare for the children's arrival. We had to clean the kitchen and dining area, hang new lighting in several places, prepare the infirmary, (the nurses contended with a chicken pox outbreak) and improve several safety problems. Just 16 hours after we arrived, three bus-loads of cautiously excited children arrived. It was our prayer that the next four days would allow the children to see God in a new light, to see Him as Love, as Grace, as Hope, as Savior.

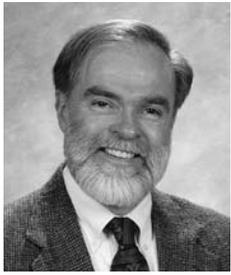
We played and swam with the children, led Bible lessons which were introduced by a clown routine, and helped cook, clean and serve in the kitchen and wherever needed. The youth directors executed a well drilled plan and through all the turmoil of a boisterous camp, kept us all in direct contact with the children. The children played, swam, sang, sat enraptured by the Bible lessons and ate heaping plates of rice.

## TWO CHILDREN AT CSC: SM AND MF

One of the wonders of the environment was that every child found a team member to gravitate to, and to befriend. I was no excep-

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# Johanna Anderson: Pioneer Missionary



JAMES D. SMITH III (Th.D.), *Associate Professor of Church History at Bethel Seminary, San Diego* | The story of Johanna Anderson, the first overseas

missionary from a Swedish Baptist congregation, deserves an occasional re-telling. It stands as an inspiration to heartfelt service for Christ, and also illustrates how revisiting our history can reveal ties within the Body of Christ which encourage our life together.

Johanna was born in Nyed, Varmland, Sweden on October 2, 1856. At age 12 she came with her father to America for an eighteen-month stay. After returning home, the family was drawn to Minnesota in 1870. They were members of a Swedish Baptist Church in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

The 1880 census (accessed through Stearns County History Museum) offers an engaging sketch of Johanna's family. Her parents, Andrew and Stina (Larson) Anderson, married in 1849, and had six children: Lars, August, John, Johanna, Mary and Olof. All lived at home, where father was a carriage manufacturer, in partnership with his sons. Johanna was teaching, and otherwise involved in the community. The town's *Journal-Press* notes "Hannah's" leadership in the local Young Women's Christian Temperance Union by 1883.

Records of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society indicate that, while their family home was in St. Cloud, Johanna actually made

a commitment to Christ and was baptized in Moorhead. St. Cloud State University confirms her 1876 graduation from the Normal School, with an emphasis in elementary education. She served in Becker, Clear Lake and Snake River. However, most of her teaching was in the St. Cloud Public Schools.

A greater cause beckoned—worldwide evangelization. As her memorial in the *St. Cloud Times* (Dec. 21, 1904) reflects, for two or three years she prayerfully investigated the possibilities of overseas service. Ultimately, she was appointed by the Women's American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, destined for Burma on September 29, 1888. She taught in the Toungoo district for nine years. While the American Baptist Historical Society has a small collection of official correspondence (1892-94), little else has survived. What is clear, however, is a picture of fruitful service and deteriorating health. She was obliged to return for her first furlough in 1897, eager to share news of God's work in Burma where possible.

In Minnesota she was often asked if the Burma mission was worth the personal price. Finally, she responded to her friends by telling them a series of stories about the work of God in the village of Loikaw. After the Karens people came to realize that we were not dangerous, they came to

listen to our songs and hear our stories about Jesus. Soon several came to Christ and were baptized and a church was organized.

Another story was related concerning the kidnapping of two young children from the village by raiders from another village. This was in essence a declaration of war and the Christians in Loikaw felt they could not go out to fight and believed that God would release the two children. Johanna Anderson tells how the members of the church spent the whole night in prayer for the children. And God heard our prayer for the "next morning the children were restored to us uninjured. That time of rejoicing together with these Christians was alone worth seven years of sojourn in Burma. And now



Johanna Anderson

when I visited Loikaw to say farewell, one hundred twenty seven Christians promised to remember me in prayer. Do I have to ask if it paid? It has given such a dividend that I must return."

To friends she said, "I must return to Burma." To her family, she added a sobering word: "You will never see me again—I go from Burma to Heaven." As the *Times* observes, "her wish was granted." Returning to the field in 1901, while laboring in the new Loikaw work among the Red Karens, she died on December 1904, shortly after an exhausting ten-day mountain trip.

## Johanna Anderson: A Family Friend

DR. JAMES D. SMITH III, Associate Professor of Church History at Bethel Seminary San Diego and grandson of Cornelia Vandersluis Rand | For our family, interest in Johanna Anderson's story over the years has been connected with our BGC roots, accompanied by a love of Christian history. But there is a more personal dimension. My maternal grandmother, Cornelia Gertrude (Vandersluis) Rand, was born in St. Cloud on Aug. 6, 1879. She lived long enough to pray faithfully as I began seminary studies at Bethel almost a

century later. But it remained for my mother to pass on a word that Grandma "Nell" had never told me. She and others in her family had known, loved and prayed for Hannah Anderson.

Informed of a tradition like this, the Christian, historian, and grandson in me all had questions: Is it so? Where's the evidence? Why didn't she tell me? Then came the twinge of regret: I wish I'd talked with my Grandma more about a world of things. My mom mentioned that there was supposedly

a letter from Johanna "somewhere" in our family's trunks and boxes.

In the process of great excavations, about two years ago I found "The Letter." It was a warm, moving, faith-filled note from Johanna Anderson, sent from Bassein, Burma on Jan. 2, 1902. She writes about concerns for children in the school, place of missionary activity and joy of receiving packages from home.

She also asks my 22 year-old grandma (herself a teacher and 1900 Normal School grad) to "run across the street when you get



this and take to my dear ones there a message of love from me.” Across the street? I finally discovered (thanks to the memorial service announcement) that the Anderson family lived at 304 Eighth Avenue South. Then it clicked. My great-grandparents, Jan and Cornelia (Meyst) Vandersluis came to Minnesota, were married there in May of 1868, and settled in St. Cloud. Their home, where Grandma Van birthed 14 children and raised the 11 who survived, was at 311 Eighth Avenue South. The Anderson and Vandersluis families for years had been neighbors just across the street – and Johanna had taught some of the Vans in school.

Also drawn from a different trunk was the ornate photo album of my Grandma’s broth-

er Charles, and near the front was the photo of a threesome labeled in my Grandma’s handwriting: “Johanna Anderson, Missionary to Burma.” With her, hand-in-hand, were two young girls—the elder was my Grandma Nell, the younger her sister Jet (mentioned in the letter)—ca. 1888. Together, the letter and picture present not only Johanna Anderson the Spirit-filled missionary hero but also the neighbor, friend and very human sister in Christ. Both dimensions are true, and both a blessing -- even as it’s our turn to “encourage one another to love and good works.”

Johanna Anderson (center)  
with Nell and Jet.



LETTER FROM JOHANNA ANDERSON TO CORNELIA VANDERSLUIS RAND (TRANSCRIBED BY JDS III)

Bassein, Burma

Jan. 2, 1902.

My dear Nellie –

This is the first time I have written 1902 in a letter and it makes me think how time flies and that we are much nearer to meeting each other again than we were. “Much nearer,” above, came out of my consciousness of a long time ago that I saw you last. They say time is measured by events, not by time. Perhaps that is why so long a time seems to have elapsed since I came to Burma. Certainly it does not seem to be the same year or within a year since I left America. It seems years ago. The things that are happening are victories for God and his Kingdom, but by that “victories” you will discern that we are in the strife.

Life seems long sometimes because of apprehensions. What if the Devil should have his way and win the day. We are so small that we cannot see far, and sometimes it is only by faith that we know the final victory will be Christ’s. A week ago last Sunday (how long ago it seems) ten of our boys in the highest standards rebelled and were expelled from school. Eight of them have humbly come back confessing their fault before the school and promised better conduct, been forgiven and restored. One more is in this morning with a ...

Jan.3. I have forgotten what interrupted me, but he came up to see me and I talked with him a long time, showing him where he had been wrong and how very wrong it was to be disobedient and disrespectful. He was in my daily Bible Class and I believe he has sought after a higher Christian life, that of walking in the Spirit. I believe it was more than the Devil could stand to have so many boys feel that way and so he is bestirring himself. My Lim (that is his name) learned one lesson from this, that if he wants to be led by the Spirit, he must not follow the devices of his own heart nor of the hearts of others. I am praying much for him and for Olney, who was the worst one of the lot. These two boys have not been received back into school and maybe they cannot be, but I pray they may be good men and soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Will you help me? Among the girls too, there has been trouble and my heart has often been sick and heavy over things here and

also over my whereabouts for next year. I think it is now decided that I am to stay here. I want only God’s will to be done. The pulling to [this sheet blew down to the ground] other places, because there are not workers enough, has been so strong that I have fairly felt torn to pieces. My heart flies back to God, and my refuge has been prayer. I remember He loves me and will never leave me nor forsake me nor fail me, and often I have wonderful peace in the midst of trouble.

But letters from home are welcome, I assure you, and so was also the thoughtful giving of the gift you sent me for Christmas. Thank you, so much. The Lord Himself sent me a message for Christmas, which I appreciated very much. A little booklet, so sweet, “Beside the Still Waters” on the 23rd Psalm and a lovely card with the verse, in German, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.” They did me lots of good. I know He did it because the givers did not know what I needed.

I am so glad Chas Nipper is being saved and that you cling to the Lord yourself. Am glad, and praise God for all who turn to Him. Am glad God has heard us for Jet’s health as to her body. Don’t you believe he will, too, for her soul? Oh, I want her soul with all its powers for Jesus and his service. Please give my love to her, and to your mother and Alice. To think I should see so little of your brothers while at home. I did not see Johnnie at all. Remember me to them all and also to your cousin John Vandersluis who did so much work for me.

Run across the street when you get this and take to my dear ones there a message of love from me. “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” In our Bible Class this morning, we noticed the word “Jehovah nissi,” the Lord is my banner, or flag. The enemies can never shoot that down or capture it, so I (praise His Name) shall be victorious because “The Lord is my banner.”

Remember me also to other friends. With much love,  
Johanna Anderson

all the kids who are still there, who weren't adopted, and who are still suffering and dying? What is God's wonderful plan for their lives? Why me and not them?

For many of us, we celebrate the goodness of God in our lives, we praise him for his healing, for material comforts, for blessing our efforts – even as we observe people who remain sick or disabled, who suffer in poverty – those whose efforts and initiatives end in disappointment and ruin.

There are two extremes in terms of people's reactions to the things about God and life that are not understood. There are those who try in vain to grasp the ungraspable – to be able to reduce the mysteries to understandable formulas or explanations.

I remember a young seminarian who came to Cebu and who filled the pulpit of our church on a Sunday evening. He preached for an hour on the "peace of God that passes all understanding." Perhaps he felt that if he preached long enough he could crack that nut and open our understanding! We all know those who have reduced the book of Revelation to precise charts and timetables, giving us easy to understand categories for all of human history and, most especially, the times to come.

A second category are those who shake their heads and say, "We'll only know these answers when we get to heaven." They suspend inquiry, not bothering to seek answers to the perplexing questions of life.

### **POVERTY AND ALL THAT GOES WITH IT, IS "IN YOUR FACE."**

Living and working in a third world country like the Philippines brings some of these mysteries to the front of our lives. People often ask me "How do you like living in the Philippines?" That's a tough one to answer. Life anywhere has its highs and lows. Some days are great, others are difficult. I often answer this way: when I'm sitting down to a nice breakfast I am aware that, within a few meters of my house are families that have no breakfast; when I'm driving to the office or the Shelter, I often pass people walking along the road who, for lack of a few cents cannot even afford public transportation and must walk; and when I stop to buy medicine for

my family or the CSC kids, there are people standing nearby whose children are dying for lack of that very same medicine.

### **WHY AM I BLESSED AND THEY ARE NOT?**

I recall a conversation with a missionary a few days after Cebu was hit by a strong typhoon. Many of our CSC workers lost their roofs or their entire homes. The houses of the poor were devastated by the high winds and torrential rains. The missionary said that it had been such a miracle how God spared the missionary homes from damage, holding his hands of protection around us during the storm. I remember wondering whether it wasn't more a matter of our having cement houses and strong metal roofs.

Why did our CSC kids have to suffer so much? And how much more, those who live on the street and cannot be admitted to CSC? These are tough questions. When it comes to trying to understand our own suffering, the Bible gives some answers. For example, Romans 5:3-4 tells us that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character, and character, hope. And the Bible gives us additional hope that we will someday come to see God's purpose and mysteries: "*But now we see through a glass dimly, but then face to face.*" And we hear the testimonies of Christian brothers and sisters who have lived through terrible times and have turned negatives into positives in their lives.

Several months ago I was attending a conference in Bismark, North Dakota. One of the featured speakers was Steve Saint. Steve's father, Nate Saint, was one of the five missionaries killed in 1956 by Aucas warriors in Ecuador. Steve told about what that tragic day meant to his family, and what it was like when his dad, his hero, didn't come home that day. We saw video of his current family life, and saw a man who was interacting with Steve's children, and who was being referred to as "Uncle."

It turns out that this was the very man who had killed Steve's father, who had come to know Jesus and had experienced the forgiveness of God and of the Saint family and now was a part of their family – an amazing story of how good things had come out of tragedy and suffering.

So the clear message is that God has a plan for our lives. We will discover that plan in the right time. He is writing our life's stories, but some of the chapters are difficult ones.

We can understand this. We can, when aided by the Holy Spirit, see how difficulties and suffering are part of a purification process for us, and that we, like Job, will eventually be better people for it. But what about people who, because of major disabilities, are unable to understand their situation, unable to discern the hand of God or his plan for their lives? Where is the purification and growth and ultimate value for these people? What could God's purpose possibly be?

### **LUKE BECAME A FIXTURE AT CSC.**

Back on 1982 a baby was born in a charity ward in a small hospital in Cebu City. The baby underwent cardiac arrest during birth and was without oxygen for an extended time. Unlike many cases of charity patients, the hospital staff decided to resuscitate the baby, even after he had suffered massive brain damage and cerebral palsy. The baby's mother abandoned him in the hospital, and after a couple months Luke was referred to CSC. When we took him in, he appeared to be a bouncing baby boy. We did not know that he would not develop physically beyond about a year and a half, or mentally beyond a few months. Luke would never speak, nor have voluntary movement of his arms or legs.

For over 23 years he was an integral part of our lives and a symbol of CSC and what we are all about. Many times Luke would be hospitalized – often due to upper respiratory infections. He fought for his life many times. There were at least a dozen times when we were sure that he would die. The doctors had told us that he wouldn't make it past five years old. Then they revised it to nine, then 11 – certainly he wouldn't reach his teenage years.

One time, when Luke was critically ill, our staff met to pray and I asked them to reflect on his life. Here is why: I believe that God had a purpose for Luke's life when he created him. I believe that He uses people like Luke to teach us important things. But here is the rub: If we don't spend time reflecting on these lessons, then Luke's life is useless. Its up to us to allow God to make sense of Luke's life.

## WHAT HAS GOD TAUGHT US THROUGH LUKE'S LIFE?

**1. Life is precious.** Even though he had nothing to live for, from the world's point of view, Luke clung to life almost ferociously. Some of us who have much more to live for

take life casually, we take life for granted. Not Luke. Every day was a struggle. Every breath had to be fought for. Life is a gift from God and we should treat it carefully.

**2. God has provided us with opportunities through Luke's life to minister to him in significant and life-saving**

**ways.** He has provided an avenue for us to live out the biblical mandate to minister unto the "least of these," because, truly, Luke was in that category. Hundreds of people have been given a blessing to participate in the support of CSC that reaches out to children like Luke and many others with other special needs.

**3. Luke has given us a chance to show others a Godly value system that doesn't reserve love and attention for those who have something to give back, or who have "potential" or a bright future.** For many people who live in a developing country, where resources are limited, this has been a difficult lesson to learn. How could we justify spending so much money for Luke's hospitalization when other, "normal," kids needed care? Luke's life gave us the opportunity to teach about the value of life and about how God looks at all of us.

**4. Luke has been a tremendous ambassador for CSC.** People around the world remember observing the loving care that he received by our staff and workers. They remember his famous smiles. They may quickly forget the names of the staff or other children, but they remember Luke. "How's Luke doing?" we get asked wherever we go to talk about the ministry of CSC. And our care of Luke helps us explain the true nature and core values of

our work in the Philippines.

**5. Luke has been a safety valve for those who know him.** My job as Field Director of CSC involves lots of administrative chores, like making budgets, government relations and various kinds of problem

solving. There are days when I get stressed out and start to feel the weight of the world on my shoulders. But all I needed to do is to drive a few short miles to where Luke lived, to hold him in my arms, and I got a clear picture of what real struggles are all about. My struggles paled in comparison to what Luke faced

every day. Self pity may be easy for some people, but those that knew Luke have no excuse for feeling sorry for themselves. What a great gift that was to all of us.

A little over a week before we left Cebu, Marlys called me on my cell phone and told me that I should get to the hospital quickly, as Luke wasn't doing well. He had been hospitalized for over a week and his breathing was bad. I had gotten messages similar to this one throughout Luke's life, so I went to the office and took care of a few things. But the Lord laid it on my heart to go see Luke and when I entered his room his breathing was extremely labored. He looked different than I had ever seen him, and it became clear that he was dying. I sat down next to him, kissed him and looked into his eyes. For 23 years we had loved this boy. It wasn't easy to say goodbye. I said to him, "Luke. You can go. Go to be with Jesus, Luke. I love you." Within a couple of minutes Luke took his last breath. 23 years of pain, suffering, limitations, hospitalizations, forced breathing, skin rashes and infections were over. We would never see Luke's smile again.

As Luke was dying in that hospital room, I made a promise. I'm not sure if I was making a promise to Luke, to God or to myself. But I decided then and there that I was going to talk about Luke on our coming furlough. I

believed then and do now, that the church of Jesus Christ needs to hear about Luke, that the lessons of his life are important ones. Many Americans are complainers—full of self pity. People who have so many material comforts are unsatisfied. American discourse is increasingly a chorus of victim and entitlement claims. Charles Sykes, in his book "A Nation of Victims: The Decay of the American Character" states that, "in a nation where everyone is a victim, no one is a victim." In our preoccupation with our own needs we have a hard time seeing the needs of others—people like Luke.

In his song "God Help the Outcasts," the Hunchback of Notre Dame poses several difficult issues:

*I don't know if there's a reason  
Why some are blessed, some not  
Why the few You seem to favor  
They fear us, flee us,  
Try not to see us.*

The first part we have already examined. The second is our call to arms. "Why the few You seem to favor, they fear us, flee us, try not to see us."

I don't know what factors might make it difficult for us to see the needs of society's outcasts. Perhaps we are too busy. Maybe our personal and church calendars are so full that there just isn't room for Luke, or the man who had fallen to thieves at the side of the road, to break into our day. Maybe we are numbed or fatigued by the needs of others, or simply overwhelmed by the circumstances of our own lives. Maybe we have become cynical. "Why did that guy travel this road at this time carrying that amount of money? He deserves what he got!"

Maybe, just maybe, Luke can help cut through the apathy, the self-centeredness and cynicism of our lives. He was a person with significant needs that he didn't cause. He was totally dependent on others to live. His life had none of the possibilities and opportunities that we take for granted every day. He needed us so very much. Maybe Luke can serve as a symbol of many others that we come into contact with. Maybe Luke can help us rescue our lives.

Thank you God for the memory of Luke. May we learn from his life. Amen.



Luke

tion. I want to introduce two of them.

SM (about age 9) and her siblings (one older, one younger) came to the Shelter in 2007, with a large abscess on the left side of her lower jaw. The abscess was removed, but in doing so, part of her left



SM

lower jaw bone was removed leaving a noticeable indentation and discoloring scar. SM has asked staff: "When I look in the mirror, I am very ugly, why did God make me like that?"

Marlys has already arranged for a plastic surgeon to repair the damage, but nevertheless, answering the question SM had is not trivial. I befriended her and made a point of assuring her that she was beautiful because

she really was – except for the scar, she was very attractive, both inside and out. We played together and held hands while we walked around the Shelter grounds and later at the camp. My mind and heart went out to her and loved her for

the dear child she was, is and will become. She needs a loving family to adopt her and her siblings.

MF (age 10) came with his siblings to the Shelter just two months before we arrived, and still did not know enough English to communicate. We got to know each other at the Shelter and often sat together during meals when at the camp. He watched the

clown and the other team members with an intensity that meant he was soaking up everything faster than a paper towel. The last evening together he came and sat on my lap, and then put his head against my chest and relaxed, content to experience what it is like to just be held by an adult in peace and safety. He and his siblings too need a wonderful home to bless with their energy and love.

This clown left part of his heart at Cebu, and if health and opportunity allow, he would want to return, though hopefully, through adoption of the current youth, to a new group of residents.

The world cries for workers to commit to mission service, long and short term, if the reader is able and willing, I urge you to go. Bring whatever skill you have and share yourself with others.

Searching for a way to describe the identity and character of a unique, evangelical movement such as ours is not easy. I hear descriptions from our pulpits that demonstrate more ambiguity on this topic than insight. Our blogs and chat rooms stir with the same confusing discussions. Usually these are attempts to define by comparison. We are to the left of John MacArthur but right of Brian McLaren. A little less sensitive than Bill Hybels. We have a statement of faith, an Affirmation, but it does not resolve our discussions regarding whether we are Calvinistic enough, Pentecostal enough or, for that matter, too much of both.

After a year of digging in this pudding, I have become convinced that the answer to the "Who are we?" question is not found in any of the above comparisons. It is rather found in a devotional study of our historical roots, seeking to understand how God formed and shaped the minds and hearts of our spiritual fathers and mothers and the way he is shaping us today.

When a person is on a journey to understand one's past and clarify one's identity, events, personalities even words alone become pregnant with meaning. This has been my journey. I cannot remember exactly when the transformation began, but the history that is reflected in the word "Pietism" began to

emerge as the formative mark of our Conference movement in my mind. As I have shared this journey with others, I am amazed with the response I have heard. "Transformational." "This liberates us from the oppressive bondage of denominationalism." "I was stunned... the past connected with the present for me." "This stuff is why I am in the Conference and I never really understood it."

**1. THE EMERGENCE OF THE PIETIST STORY: VALUING A PIETISTIC COMMITMENT TO EXPERIENTIAL CHRISTIANITY**

In 17th century Germany, a lay movement developed called Pietism. It advocated a religion of the heart to replace the dominant spiritless religion that was more a matter of the head than the heart. German theologian Phillip Jacob Spener became the clear advocate for this Pietistic movement. In 1675 he published six constructive proposals for renewing

the church in Germany. His appeal was called "Pia Desideria." Let me paraphrase them:

1. A greater use of the Bible to teach and instruct the church.
2. Encouragement of spiritual priesthood through direct access to God in prayer, in worship.



*Baptist History Montage—by Dale Johnson*

3. Christianity should be practiced, not just known, and lived out in right relationships and moral integrity.
4. We should use preaching for the specific purpose of building up the faith of the church and individuals.
5. Our seminaries and universities should seek a religion of the heart, not just a religion of the head.
6. We should exercise gentleness whenever we are discussing theological or religious controversies.

**Spener modeled these principles by urging that they be practiced in small groups called “Colleges of Piety” or Conventicles, little convents. We would say “small groups,” where a living, personal faith by the participants was lived out in an atmosphere that encouraged devotion and mutual love.**

Nothing else I might say in this article is more important in understanding “who we are” than these tenets and practices of Pietism. I believe it is the thread that connects the present with our past and it will be the marker of our identity as we enter continued change in our future.

This golden thread, which began in the middle of orthodox German Lutheranism, would weave itself through the fabric of European life and eventually reach Sweden. History says that one of the threads of pietism came to Sweden through its soldiers who, in the Great Northern War, were exposed to German Pietism. 25,000 Swedish soldiers under King Charles XII were defeated in Poltava, Ukraine, by Peter the Great of Russia. They were imprisoned in Siberia. There were great revivals there. Eventually, they returned (about 5,000 of them) to Sweden, very much filled with this new enthusiasm for God and his power to change the heart. People began to meet in devotional groups, reading the Bible, Johann Arndt’s “*True Christianity*,” Luther, and other reformer’s sermons. With derision they were called “Läsare” – the readers.

## **2. F. O. NILSSON—VALUING THE PIETIST COMMITMENT TO BE CONVERSIONISTS**

The läsare revivals were not well received. For 150 years after that, the laws and politics and the State church of Sweden would join

together in a diabolical act called the Conventicle Law, which had as its goal the total suppression of this new personal pietistic spiritual life that had entered the country. A Baptist church in Sweden was organized in 1850 by Pietist preacher F. O. Nilsson. The State church and local authorities ramped up the persecution of pietistic believers at an alarming level. Violence was not unusual; fines and legal fees were common; and community outrage and shunning became a daily experience. The Swedish State church believed that its unity and structure were more important than any fresh winds of God’s Spirit in the land—a warning for us.

You see, we Swedish Baptists were pretty much a bunch of renegade Lutherans. We had in our hearts a deep sense of faith in God and a desire to live in accordance with the precepts of the Bible. As simple as these things sound to us today, they were the ultimate threat for a corrupt State church and led to a generation of chaotic religious persecution in the mid-19th century in Sweden.

F. O. Nilsson became a preacher with power and an encourager to Pietistic groups throughout Sweden. He was our trailblazer. He was not highly educated but he was highly intelligent and read voraciously. He was born into a home with an alcoholic father but from the early years of life he still had a deep spiritual hunger and a right relationship with God. For lack of vocational direction, he became a sailor at the age of 19. But his life voyage to understand himself and understand God was the real matter in his life. Wherever he could, he read religious tracts, listened to preachers, and asked God whether there was hope for him. An answer came one night in the summer of 1834. The words of scripture, “All tears shall be wiped from their eyes,” came to him as a personal promise from God and that brought him a sense of forgiveness of sin and acceptance with God that led him to cry out, “My Lord and my God.”

**That call has never changed for us. We are conversionists. We believe that we are born and grow toward a manner of life that sees God and his laws as an intruder. We believe that Jesus came to provide a faith bridge to reconnect us all with God our maker. Genetic Christianity does not satisfy the heart or save the soul.**

He was a man of controversy and knew



*F. O. Nilsson conducts baptism celebrations  
by Tom Foty*

what imprisonment was like. He became one of two non-conforming religious leaders that were exiled from Sweden for their faith. This is where the Baptist piece comes in. He studied the Bible and became convinced that it taught that adult baptism by immersion is the Biblical expression of adult faith in Christ. It is also important to note how far he and our founders remained from the family tree of the English Baptists. The BGC, while sympathetic to a conservative theological tradition, have not played a role in the Baptist divisions in the United States. We were a missional movement that intentionally moved away from disastrous religious wars.

On May 5, 1853, 21 members of the Swedish Baptist Church were joined by F. O. Nilsson’s family and 10 fellow Baptists from

Copenhagen, where Nilsson was residing in exile. They sailed on the *Jenny Pitts*, headed for Boston. Later, they arrived in Rock Island, Illinois, where several families decided to stay. Some others headed for Swedish settlements in Village Creek, Iowa, but the remainder traveled up the Mississippi River to La Crosse and overland to the Root River Valley that would become known as Swede Bottom and then eventually Houston, Minnesota.

This group took up residence beside a tribe of 40 to 50 Dakota Sioux native people and assembled on August 18, 1853, to praise God for safely bringing them to this place. Their stories are similar to my great grandfather's. Native people often silently appeared at the door, hungry after a journey or a hunt. They would receive a meal, always, and if they saw something they liked they could take it – after all, they were here first.

Eventually, when F. O. Nilsson rejoined his friends in Houston, he found a discouraged group of Swedes. Fever had deteriorated their strength; a prairie fire had destroyed their hay. Most were ill-prepared for the winter ahead and near the point of destitution. That winter, the worst would occur—an epidemic of cholera swept through the settlement. Four adults and a child died within four days. The beginnings were tumultuous and painful for the Swedish Baptist movement in America.

When I think about the risk and suffering and the overall price that was paid by these early settlers in our movement, I am left with a question. What really drove them to making such extreme steps? The records of pioneer life are chilling. I think it's only when we examine their actions in the context of their personal world view, and their faith journeys, that we begin to understand why their decisions would foster a spiritual movement and ultimately the formation of an entirely new gathering of churches in America.

But at the end of his life, F. O. Nilsson found himself alone. New leaders were taking his place in the Baptist movement. His intellectual curiosity led him to read the writings of Unitarian American theologian Theodore Parker, the German rationalists, and Darwin. His free thinking was a great concern to leaders in the Swedish Baptist

movement and eventually led to a hurtful rebuff from his old friend and colleague, Anders Wiberg. He was removed from the Houston church at the end of his life, a painful thing for many people. He was dealt with harshly by many former colleagues and suffered from depression. But in the final days of his life, to many who prayerfully remained his friend, he reaffirmed his confidence in his God and in the mercy God had extended him through “his Rock and Savior, Jesus Christ” (from a letter to a friend).

**There are risks to a faith that is open to education and intellectualism. But I believe that one of the marks of our Swedish Baptist movement has been an openness for full inquiry, believing ultimately that our theology and the Bible will hold up to the rigors of theological debate and extended higher education.**

### 3. ANDREW PETERSON— VALUING THE PIETIST COMMITMENT TO A GATHERED AND MISSION DRIVEN CHURCH

Andrew Peterson is another fascinating story. He emigrated early – 1850 – from his parish in Vastra Ryd, Ostergötland, Sweden. On his way to Minnesota, he spent two years in Iowa working in a fruit nursery. During these years, he met F. O. Nilsson and was baptized. In 1948, when Wilhelm Moberg, the respected Swedish novelist who wrote *The Emigrants*, came to the Minnesota Historical Society to do research, he asked the librarian for any chronicles that dealt with Swedes in the States. The clerk brought a foot-high stack of books that looked like a village shopkeeper's records, explaining they were the journals of a Swedish American farmer and he had no idea what they contained because they were written in Swedish. What he had before him were the diaries of Andrew Peterson of Scandia, Minnesota—11 volumes, 3,000 pages, 16,000 entries—a daily record left over 48 years of his life, estimated by Moberg that if spaced on a 10-point type, it might produce perhaps 10,000 typed pages.

Moberg found that the diaries were brief,

factual records of daily activities and events, rarely disclosing emotions, rarely even adding a sentence regarding his feelings and convictions. Andrew Peterson talks about buying animals, planting potatoes, tapping maple trees, building shanties, sharing labor with the neighbors, his conversion and baptism and his marriage with a couple of sentences. The birth of a child receives as many words as the birth of a calf.

Why would someone write the details of daily activities and nothing more in a diary every day for 48 years? I struggled with that question until, in my historical search, I came across a theologically trained layman named Hans Nielson Hauge, whose works were extremely popular and read widely by Pietists



*Andrew Peterson's apple orchard—by Tom Foty*

in Sweden and in Norway. One of Hauge's foundational concepts was that a person's daily work was a divine call. Indeed, that all of the aspects of our life, including our work, are our worship to God and should be done with celebration and diligence as service to a living God.

**I like to believe that Andrew Peterson's dairies grew out of this essential conviction that a positive sense of sanctity of work and daily life is part of our core values as the offspring of Swedish Baptists. I like**

**to believe that these ideals have remained in our DNA to this day. We are positive, diligent, dependable, and committed—not judgmental, suspicious, distant, and dark.**

Andrew Peterson, together with F. O. Nilsson, would found the Scandia Baptist Church in Waconia, Minnesota, in his log home and build their first 20'x20' church building in the Scandia community. Together, they would host the first meeting of the Minnesota Swedish Baptist "konferens" in Scandia. The name these founders gave to this first meeting of Minnesota churches has always interested me. "Konferens," in Swedish, means little more than "gathering." The structures of what would become the Baptist General Conference were not envisioned by these founders.

They saw the power potential of their mission in relationships and associations, not structure. In many ways, the Conference movement today still holds up these ideals of ultimate importance. And in a post-denominational world, the perspective helps us re-vision what we have always known we were—a movement of churches driven by mission and gathered to fuel the vision.

#### **4. ANDREW AND ERICK NORELIOUS—VALUING THE PIETIST COMMITMENT TO THE IRENIC SPIRIT**

It is interesting to look at the relationship between the Swedish Baptists and the Swedish Lutherans through the eyes of the Norelius brothers. The Norelius family was strongly pietistic in Sweden and immigrated early to America. Of course, in sheer numbers, virtually every Swede that came over from Sweden was a Lutheran by virtue of the dominance of the state church.

But the Swedish Baptist church was growing at an extraordinary rate and clearly was a threat or at least, shall we say, a player in the religious life of early Minnesota. Andrew and Erick Norelius determined to immigrate to America and had decided that their pietistic convictions would best be fulfilled by starting a new church when they arrived in their new homeland. They knew a gifted Pietist Lutheran pastor, Gustav Palmquist, and decided that he had the leadership and spiritual gifts to be pastor for the new congregation.

Unfortunately, by the time they arrived

in the states, Gustav Palmquist had become a leading Swedish Baptist in Illinois, and Andrew Norelius would follow Gustav Palmquist in the same religious journey. Erick Norelius remained faithful to his Lutheran tradition and used his considerable gifts to found the Swedish or Augustana Lutheran Church in Minnesota. He started several Lutheran churches. He established a children's home that would evolve into the Lutheran Social Services. A school he started would become Gustavus Adolphus College. Norelius Hall memorializes him there. Andrew, on the other hand, became a significant leader in the Baptist movement, pastoring churches in both Minnesota and Iowa.

In Erick Norelius' personal diary, he records a visit to the Scandia Baptist settlement that was started by F. O. Nilsson and Andrew Peterson. He was visiting to see if there were enough Lutherans to start a church but the Baptist congregation invited him to preach. No Lutheran church would have a Baptist as the preacher for the morning service. But here's an incident where those sorts of rules were broken and a Lutheran leader was welcomed to a Baptist pulpit. Norelius records that he spoke from Zechariah 12:9-12. He notes that the church was strongly discussing the doctrine of election and mentions visiting one of the Baptist members, a farmer named George Madson, who would study the Bible in the original Greek.

#### **5. JOHANNA ANDERSON—VALUING THE PIETIST COMMITMENT TO MISSIONS AND GLOBAL MINISTRY**

The pietist heart that was emerging in Post-Reformation Germany would bring two other shaping forces into our history—world evangelization and social reform. Jacob Spener's successor was August Hermann Franke, a brilliant organizer. Franke established a foundation that employed over 3,000 people. A school was established in Glaucha, near Halle that educated hundreds of poor children displaced after the 30 Years War.

Similar schools were started in Moscow, Siberia and India where education, evangelism, even prison ministry, were carried on. Franke's Orphan House (Waisenhaus) provided meals and housing for thousands of children and would inspire George Mueller in the modern missionary movement. In the years that followed, Pietists led missionary and social justice agendas where Lutheran and Calvinist establishments seemed distracted by their political goals.

I am also powerfully moved by the origins of world missions among Swedish Baptist churches. Our first missionary from Swedish Baptist churches was a woman named Johanna Anderson, an unmarried school teacher who came from St. Cloud, Minnesota. After the death of her parents, at the age of 32, as a single woman, she traveled to Toungoo, Burma, in 1888, where she worked for 10 years among mountain people called the Karens. So



*Johanna Anderson  
by Tom Foty*

remote was this village, it required a rope ladder for entrance. She lived there and is buried there. This is an extraordinary fact in our history, if you think about it. Women were denied the right to vote in both Sweden and America until almost 1920, and in the 19th century most women were living almost purely domestic lives.

**And yet, as it relates to the call of God to bring the good news of the Gospel to the world, all those backgrounds, limitations, roles, and restrictions seemed to be lifted and a woman led with boldness. She would not be the last. Indeed, an entire core of women missionaries, evangelists, and preachers would enrich the Baptist work in Minnesota in the years ahead.**

During the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the BGC engaged in a number of new initiatives: the denomination transitioned from Swedish to English, developed their own missionary program, joined ranks with mainstream evangelical movements and initiated a greater global presence through participation in such organizations as the Baptist World Alliance. A

**JOHANNA ANDERSON VISITS A  
WOMEN'S MISSION SCHOOL IN  
CHICAGO**

(from "A Servant of the Lord" by Agnes Gordh (*Ungdoms-Stjarna*) February 1910, pp. 13-16. (translated by Doug Gordh, October 25, 1979)

...Her entrance was so quiet and modest and during the evening she was so unobtrusive that none was aware of her except the one she came to see. In the morning, Mrs. Morris, the director, asked her to say something about the mission in Burma. When she had finished, everyone felt a desire to be able to speak as she did, to pray as she did, to understand God's Word as she did, to leave such an impression as she did. "We felt as if the Lord Himself had been with us," said one of the young people.

new American Pietism would touch a nation that was re-forming after the disruptions of WWII. This evangelical movement encouraged leaders such as Billy Graham and organizations such as Campus Crusade for Christ and World Vision, and a significant church growth movement in a renamed Baptist General Conference. Missionaries would be sent out in great numbers. Church planting would be revitalized. Camps were bought to reach a new generation of youth and Bethel thrived to train pastors and educate young people to permeate the culture for Christ.

**CONCLUSION: VALUING A PIETIST  
COMMITMENT FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  
CHURCH**

This brings us to today and to my "invitation" in this address. In my position as a leader in the Minnesota Baptist Conference, I visit churches and often have had to bite my tongue as I visit with pastors and lay leaders in our dynamically growing fellowship. It does not seem to matter if it is a megachurch or a rural church—traditional or contemporary—Calvinist or seeker-sensitive. I inevitably will be informed that "we are not your traditional Conference Baptist church here, we have Lutherans and Catholics and unchurched people that make up our church." I want to cry out! I want to turn the phrase around and say, "You have those Lutherans and Catholics and unchurched people because you are a Confer-

ence church! You are part of a movement of churches whose history has uniquely prepared you with a DNA that will attract people of all backgrounds who are seeking a heart that is open to God and other people."

Look at the world in which we minister; some have called it the post-denominational era. The average unchurched person believes that the denominations are all fighting each other. They believe that Baptist churches are for Baptists and Lutheran churches for Lutherans and that neither has much to do with them. Then tune into news releases from the nation's largest Baptist group challenging women pastors and advocating a woman's unique role of submission in the home. While at the same time, another large Baptist conference is sawing itself in pieces over the ordination of gay clergy. Christians try to respond to the challenge of the social issues of our day but some remain convinced that beneath our morality is a loathing hatred for people with alternative lifestyles. Unchurched people will try to understand the Christian politics of Jimmy Carter and those of James Dobson.

There remains a need for an authentic encounter with God and a loving group of Christ-followers. Our history, values, and mission are a powerful alternative to the typical offering out there. For one thing, we really did not descend from the denominational wars and separations of the Reformation. Our origins are in a movement, a lay movement that ran parallel and counter to that denominational strife, right down to the day our founders stepped on the boat. Yes, we took on the name Baptist because we believed in adult baptism by immersion and because the Baptist freedom principles were a counter point to the coercive creeds and confession and oppressive politics of European protestant churches.

When I read Jacob Spener's call to his church, it is the same message God gives us

today. We want people to know that when you come to Christ in faith, you have direct access to God... that the Bible is there as a guidebook for life... that there's a right way to live and a godly way to live... that preaching and the purpose of the church is to build up believers to be stronger in all of these things. And that these things should affect our educational systems and the integrity of our clergy. And, finally, if there are matters of discussion and debate and relationship with other denominations, or within our denomination, they certainly should be carried on in the spirit of Christ, a spirit of gentleness.

We express a transformational gospel that can change life and bring grace and healing—a positive life change and a positive com-

munity change. It is a matter of the heart, not just the head. There is room to think, where non-essential issues are treated as exactly that, non-essential. Because it is positive and therefore irenic there is room to affirm other ministries—free of the darkness and suspiciousness that have often accompanied evangelical Christian groups.



*The Life of Prayer—by Dale Johnson*

This is us, Ladies and Gentlemen! No, we have not always lived up to it. Yes, we have had leaders and movements within us who did not understand it, or did not appreciate it. But it is the almond in the pudding. As the Conference moves into a multi-ethnic world, a broken world, we have a treasure, an identity worth sharing. A 400-year pietistic history, a courageous immigrant journey, and a remaining passion, that God has just begun to use us. The thread will be woven in the megachurch, the neighborhood church, the ethnic church, or the rural church. Contemporary or traditional, it will provide the faith guide for the future of the Baptist General Conference.