

JOHN WESLEY AND EARLY SWEDISH PIETISM:
CARL MAGNUS WRANGEL AND JOHAN HINRIC LIDEN

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Students of Wesley have long been aware of his encounter with Scandinavians. Perhaps the most important of these, George Wolff (1736–1828) has not been known to be a Scandinavian, until quite recently.¹ He was a Norwegian, a merchant, but, since Norway was under Danish rule, he also served as Norwegian-Danish Consul General in London. Wesley repeatedly visited the Wolff home, Balham, for dinner, tea and “conversation” (or, “religious talk”)² and appointed Wolff one of the executors of his will, and called him “my faithful friend.” Wolff’s obituary describes their relationship this way: “For many years he enjoyed the confidence and esteem of Mr. Wesley, of whose Will he was the last surviving executor. He was a man of great humility and ardent piety; and one of the most liberal contributors to the funds of the Methodist Charities in London.”³ Wolff was also a pioneer in the organization of The British Bible Society.

Another not so well known Scandinavian was Christopher Sundenius, a Swede who served England in the American War of Independence, and was converted through the Methodists. He married John Wesley’s granddaughter, Jane Smith, and was also one of the founders of The British Bible Society.⁴ Furthermore, two young Swedes in London, Aron Mathesius, an assistant pastor, and Malte Ramel, a secretary at the Swedish Legation, were said to be Methodists.⁵ We shall return to these two later. There were also occasional visitors from Sweden, such as the Bishop of Gothenburg, the Right Rev. Eric Lamberg, and Rev. N. S. Swederius.⁶

¹Peder Borgen, “Den Dansk-norske Konsul George Wolff (1736–1828),” in H. W. Andersen et al. (eds.), *Clios tro tjener. Festskrift til Per Fuglum* (Trondheim, Norway: Historisk Institutt Skriftserie, The University of Trondheim, 1994), 45–75. (The translations from Swedish or Norwegian in this paper are mine).

²*The Works of John Wesley*, Richard P. Heitzenrater et al. (eds.) (Bicentennial Edition; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975–), XXIII, 263; Diary: 441, 451, 471, etc.

³*The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* Nehemiah Curnock (ed.) (8 vols.; London: The Epworth Press, Reprint 1960), VIII, 342–343, *passim*. Cf. *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* (London, 1798–), 1828, 286.

⁴*The Works of John Wesley*, XXII, 416; XXIII, 134.

⁵Lars Lindholm, *Johan Hinric Lidén* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Uppsala, Sweden: Institutionen för ide och lärdomshistoria vid Uppsala Universitet, 1978), 160.

⁶*The Arminian Magazine* (London: 1778–1797), VII (1784), 331; *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 1837, 533, 534 (Letter from Wrangel to John Wesley): “I found him [Bishop Lamberg] to be a great friend of yours. He had heard you preach while on his travels in England. I sent him your books; and he was well pleased with what he read, and desired me to remember him to you.”

However, two other Swedes shall be the focus of this paper, namely, the Rev. Dr. Carl Magnus Wrangel, who visited England and Wesley in 1768, and professor John Hinric Lidén, who did the same the year after. Both of them are known to students of Wesley, not the least because there are several extant letters from the correspondence between these two Swedes and Wesley. In his Journal Wesley writes of Dr. Wrangel's dining with him and later preaching in the New Room.⁷ Two of Wrangel's letters are printed in several places,⁸ and some information about professor Lidén, with excerpts from his Journal, has been printed in *Proceedings of The Wesley Historical Society*.⁹

But who were these two men? Let us have a closer look:

I

The family of Wrangel von Sage und Waschel moved from Germany to Estonia with the German Order. Carl Magnus' father, the army major Otto Wilhelm Wrangel, was born in Reval (Tallinn, Estonia) in 1688, and moved to Sweden in 1709. Most of the men in the family were high-ranking military men. Under King Karl XII's various military campaigns at least 70 Wrangel men were killed, of which 22 are buried at the Ukranian town of Poltava after the Russian defeat of the Swedish army. Several of the Wrangel family became leading politicians and government administrators in Sweden. Carl Magnus was born into this famous family of nobility on August 23, 1727, in Möklinta Parish near the town of Sala in central Sweden. He was the only male member of the family who did *not* become a soldier. On his mother's side, on the other hand, were several famous scientists and theologians.¹⁰ As a result of the prolonged wars, great hunger and misery plagued the country, and after his father's death he and his family became quite destitute and dependent upon the support of others in the family. Carl Magnus came under the ward of his mother's brother who sent him on a study trip to Strasbourg. At an age of 22 (1749) he came to Uppsala and became a student under the famous professor Ihre, an historian, a linguistic genius and an outspoken political liberal. About two years later Wrangel switched from his political studies to the study of theology. Political life in Sweden at that time was divided into two groups, "hattarna" (the "hats," i.e., the nobility) who had the ruling power, and "mössorna" (the "caps") who

⁷*The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* John Telford (ed.) (8 vols.; London: The Epworth Press, Reprint 1960), V, 154ff., 163 (Lidén); 179ff. (Wrangel); Curnock, V, 290 (Wrangel).

⁸*The Arminian Magazine*, VII (1784), 330–332, 614–615; *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 1837, 533–536; Cf. L. Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.* (3 vols.; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890), III, 66–68.

⁹*Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* (England, 1898–), XIV (1929), 1–5.

¹⁰For further details of his family, see Nils Jacobsson, *Bland Svenskamerikaner och Gustavianer* (Stockholm, Sweden: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelsens Bokförlag, 1953), 1–7.

consisted largely of craftsmen, shopkeepers, and farmers. Most of the professors belonged to the latter group. This was also a time of almost unlimited flattery, with copious and servile use of extremely flowery language and superlatives in addressing persons of rank and influence. Having the favor of such persons seemed to be necessary to gain any kind of position. Wrangel held a speech in which he symbolically lifted the six-year-old prince almost into heaven, praising God for this greatest gift ever given to the Swedish people. Nevertheless, the prince was intelligent and a good student in his own right. The address created quite an interest, and probably did not hurt Wrangel's chances to his later being appointed to the attractive position of chaplain to the court and spiritual counselor to the King. A year later (1752) he served as respondent at a disputation. His arguments were brilliant, and further gained the favor of the royal couple.¹¹

The young, intelligent and industrious nobleman soon caught the interest of Archbishop Dr. Henrik Benzelius, who taught him personally, and strengthened his resolve to serve God and the church. The King, who was well acquainted with Wrangel's gifts, hard work and progress, recommended him to receive a scholarship at the Uppsala Academy, Wrangel himself having no funds for further studies. He began preaching in various churches. Even before ordained a priest, he was invited in 1755 to preach in Ulriksdal Castle before the whole royal family. In an open letter dated May 2, 1756, the King called him to serve as chaplain to the Royal Court. At the same time he was also encouraged by the King to go to Germany for further theological studies. This opened for a temptation to adjust to the wishes and thoughts of the court.¹²

At that time parts of Germany (Pommern) were ruled by Sweden. The University of Greifswald was located in that area, and was for all practical purposes, a Swedish-German institution. During the summer of 1756 the school celebrated its founding 300 years earlier. Upon recommendation from the Faculty of Philosophy at Uppsala University, Wrangel was then appointed "Jubelmagister" ("Jubilee Master") in philosophy. From Greifswald he proceeded to Gottingen where he was enrolled October 26, 1756. After a year's studies, and after a solemn disputation act, the degree of Doctor of Theology was solemnly conferred upon him September 30, 1757. At the disputation Wrangel defended a dissertation on the Temptations of Jesus in the Desert.¹³

Upon his return to Sweden, Wrangel was ordained by bishop Erik Alstrin in Strangnas Cathedral on March 17, 1758.¹⁴ Shortly after (April 3,

¹¹Jacobsson, 17ff., 24

¹²*The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 1837, 154 (Wrangel to John Wesley, Oct. 10, 1771).

¹³*Dissertatio Theologica de Tentatione Christi in Deserto*.

¹⁴Bishop Alstrin was quite positive toward the Moravians, whom he considered allies in the struggle against radical Pietism. He even let the Moravian Arvid Gradin (known from John Wesley's visit to Herrnhut) preach in a Lutheran Church.

1758) he was favored with The Royal Majesty's High Authorization to be their Ordinary Chaplain and Privy-Councillor, with seat and vote in the Consistory of the Royal Court, although without the enjoyment of any remuneration.¹⁵ This appointment did not occur without dissension and discussion. Some of those who should approve Wrangel for membership in the Consistory evidently did not favor German doctoral degrees. Some demanded new examinations to make sure that he was qualified. But after a period of discussion he was finally accepted. The Consistory handled matters concerning the behavior and performance of the clergy. At that time complaints were raised against several of the priests, alleging that they had broken their oath and the law in preaching against the present form of government.

The next month Wrangel's career took an unexpected turn. He had long been a sort of protege of Archbishop H. Benzelius. Benzelius was one of the most eager supporters of the Swedish mission on the Delaware in America, a mission which went back to the failed Swedish colony of New Sweden. Wrangel wrote bishop Benzelius and also enclosed some papers. The Archbishop answered in a friendly letter, congratulating him on his high appointments, at the same time offering him the position of Provost (superintendent) for the Swedish churches in the Lower Delaware/Philadelphia area. This was, of course, a great and difficult assignment. Wrangel thanked Benzelius for his confidence in him, but felt he needed to find God's plan for his life.¹⁶ Besides, he had an attack of a disease of the chest. But his final answer was affirmative. Unfortunately, the Archbishop died only twelve days later. As a result a Church Board took over the administration of the work in America. A Rev. Acrelius, a former provost for that work, argued quite strongly that a priest who had just been ordained should not be assigned responsibility for such a demanding and difficult work. Others were envious of Wrangel's rapid advancement and this new appointment, in addition to his having received the important position of Chaplain at the Royal Court. But he was eventually affirmed and received his authorizations from the King June 12, 1758.

The journey turned out to be rather difficult. The seven-year war was raging at that time and Wrangel had to wait in London a whole month before securing a passage. In addition, it was a dangerous and long journey, lasting 20 weeks. Finally, in the morning of April 3, 1759, they reached shore at the town of Chester on the Delaware. A new, exciting and difficult period in the young priest's life had begun. Wrangel met with several difficulties even before leaving Sweden. Rev. Erik Unander, who had earlier served in America, and who himself desired the prestigious position of Provost, attacked the new instructions for the administration of the work in America,

¹⁵Jacobsson, 44.

¹⁶Wrangel to Bishop Berzelius, May 9, 1758.

claiming that it gave too much power to the Provost. As it turned out, this was in reality a foretaste of what would later take place, partially because of these strict instructions. Wrangel was then appointed parish priest at the Wicaco church in Philadelphia and Provost over the other four small churches along the Delaware River.

The colony of *Nya Sverige* (New Sweden) was founded in 1638 and began as a sixty-eight mile strip of land along the Delaware River.¹⁷ The first priest arrived in 1640 and the first block-house church was raised in 1641, the first Lutheran church in America. After Fort Christina and the church there burned down in 1646, a new and better church was built. Church life became more regular, organized much like the church in Sweden. In spite of the long distances people had to travel, all, who were able, were *required* to attend worship on Sundays, just as in Sweden. Life was hard, and many of the settlers succumbed to various diseases. The Swedish colonial experiment actually ended when the Dutch conquered the area in 1655. Most of the settlers remained and became Dutch citizens. The British seized the Delaware area from the Dutch in 1664, and the Swedes became British subjects. A time of spiritual decline followed, until in 1696 three priests from Sweden were assigned to the area. However, negative developments again prevailed until around 1730 and many of the parishes had no priest. General morals declined. New conflicts developed, within, as well as between, the congregations. Many of the new Swedish immigrants turned out to be persons of a rather devious background and several of the priests were little suited for the taxing circumstances of their work. In addition, the influence of the great revival movements during the 1730s, especially the activities of Count Zinzendorf, and later George Whitefield, further enlarged the problem. Anglicization increased and many of the Swedes joined the Anglican Church, especially after the new priest who arrived in 1743 turned out to be a very orthodox and stern Lutheran.

Wrangel suffered from some health problems (chills). The Wicaco congregation was on the way to full disintegration when he arrived, and the appointments made by the Consistory in Sweden turned out to be impossible to employ. A meeting of the priests on June 1, 1759, decided to write to Sweden and explain the situation. Unfortunately, Rev. Unander, who had incurred great debts after not having received a proper salary, talked Wrangel and the other priests into including some accusations against the former Provost, Acrelius, for having through haughtiness, vengeance and personal gain hurt the spiritual well-being of the congregations. These incorrect and unwise accusations made Acrelius an influential enemy of

¹⁷See Jehu Curtis Clay, *Annals of the Swedes on the Delaware* (Chicago: John Ericsson Memorial Committee. Fourth Edition, 1938); and, Nils Ahnlund, *Nya Sverige. De Historiska Huvuddragen*. (Stockholm: Svenska Diakonistyrelsens Bokförlag, 1938), both *passim*.

Wrangel.¹⁸ After having looked further into the matter, Wrangel realized that these accusations were groundless. In a letter to bishop Troilius October 13, 1759, he openly admitted his mistake. At the same time he had uncovered mismanagement of finances and property by Unander, and demanded his return to Sweden. Unander was recalled, but delayed his departure. Wrangel then went to Unander's congregation in Christina and faced him at the altar. Unander responded by asking him to leave, and told him to go back to school and learn how to be a priest. Bringing Wrangel to tears, he asked the congregation to see that this Provost was a child who needed a good whipping. After delaying his departure, and creating more difficulties, Unander finally returned to Sweden, and embarked on a trail of accusations against Wrangel.

In all this struggle under difficult circumstances, limited resources, and a people without much eagerness for religion, Wrangel gained new strength by his growing relationship with the leader of the German Lutheran Church, Heinrich Melchior Mühlenberg. He visited him in New Providence on August 24, 1760. Mühlenberg later warmly described their meeting this way:

On August 24, 1760 did I have the honor of meeting in my home His Highness Mr. Doctor and Provost von Wrangel, who stayed for two days and two nights. I was very much encouraged by his mild and humble ways and edified by important conversations about the kingdom of God.¹⁹

Mühlenberg was invited to the meeting of the Swedish priests, and later wrote about the event: "On Sunday, September 14, 1760, did Wrangel first give a thorough and edifying statement about the importance of the Holy Communion, and at the High Mass he preached with spirit and power on Psalm 126:5. . . ." His words went to the listeners' hearts. Wrangel clearly emphasized in his work the importance of visits and catechizations in the homes. The cooperation between the German and the Swedish Lutherans continued and expanded.

Mühlenberg and Wrangel even developed a Constitution for the local church, a Constitution which became important even for later Lutheranism in America. Wrangel was the most outstanding preacher among the Swedes, and gathered large congregations. The church in Wicaco began growing again and two new churches were organized. A revival broke out in some places and Wrangel especially tried to reach the young people, with some success.

Interestingly, Wrangel met Methodists already in America. He was well acquainted with George Whitefield, and was greatly impressed with this

¹⁸Jacobsson, 88–89. Acrelius writes in a letter: "Some documents recently arrived from America contained a lot of gall which dr. Wrangel had mixed together against me, for which he received some support of pastor Unander, who has been dissatisfied ever since he was called to the mission. I fear that this man will be a beam in my eye as long as I live . . . ,"

¹⁹Jacobson, 99.

popular speaker and tried to some extent to copy him. Like Whitefield, the sensitive Wrangel easily moved his listeners to tears.²⁰ When Whitefield on his sixth journey to America visited Philadelphia in the fall of 1763, Wrangel took the initiative to invite him to the Swedish-German Synod which gathered there in October, 1763. The synod agreed, and Whitefield accepted, although he was not well at that time.²¹ Mühlenberg wrote:

The following day October 18 [1763] the children and a great congregation of German and Englishmen of different confessions gathered in Mikael's church, which was very crowded. Mr. Whitefield entered the pulpit, prayed a heartfelt and powerful prayer. He then turned to the children and held under tears and heartfelt engagement, a suitable speech about pious children in the Old and New Testaments, and some newer examples which happened in his time, and then emphasized the duties of the parents. . . . But as Mr. Whitefield was bodily very weak and the throng in the church became too great, we had to break and closed with church music.²²

Whitefield wrote about this event in a letter to his friend Robert Keene: "Last Tuesday, we had a remarkable season among the Lutherans. Children and grown people were much impressed."²³ The next day Whitefield visited the school house in which the ministers were gathered, and bid a moving farewell. But the relationship with Whitefield did not end with these events. On Wednesday, October 17, 1764, a great number of people of all classes, offices and rank, from the Governor to the lowest, including Dr. Wrangel, gathered in the church of the English Academy in Philadelphia, where Whitefield held a "charity sermon" for the benefit of the school for the poor at the Academy. He gave an edifying sermon on the Lord's Prayer, and closed with a forceful appeal for charity which was so effective that they received 105 pounds in the collection. The good relations between Wrangel, Mühlenberg, and Whitefield continued. When Whitefield came to Philadelphia again in 1770 he packed the newly built Lutheran Zion Church. He preached about "the inner glory of God's house," II Chron. 7:1, and also included some moving words about the Pietists Francke and Ziegenhagen.²⁴

But not all were equally impressed by Whitefield. The conservative Lutheran historian Gräbner wrote: "This great delusion that in the name of the Synod invite such a heretic as Whitefield to enter the pulpit, as it happened at this synod, would not have occurred before Wrangel's time."²⁵

Wrangel had other contacts with Methodists as well. The Rev. William Guirey (Gurry?), was a member on trial in the Conference and travelled in

²⁰Jacobsson, 143-144.

²¹Mühlenberg comments: "Dr. Wrangel gave as a reason, among other things, that Mr. Whitefield had through collections assisted 'our poor, suffering brethren.'" This referred to Salzburgians in Austria who were persecuted for their pietistic faith. Jacobsson, 144.

²²Jacobsson, 143-144.

²³Letter Whitefield to Robert Keene, October 21, 1763. Cf. Jacobsson, 145, and L. Tyerman, *The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield* (2 vols. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1877), II, 468.

²⁴Jacobsson, 147.

²⁵Jacobsson, 147.

Virginia. His name disappears from the records in 1797. He sympathized with O'Kelly, from whom he later broke on doctrinal disagreements. It was written of him: "He says that he embraced religion under Dr. Wrangle [sic], of the Reformed [Lutheran] Church of Sweden, who held a successful meeting in Philadelphia, but subsequently returned to Sweden, leaving his converts without a shepherd."²⁶ It has also been asserted that Wrangel may have been acquainted with Wesleyan Methodism and its pioneers Philip Embury and Thomas Webb. Likewise, Wrangel assisted Webb in Philadelphia, for which he was called the "Preparer of the Way" for the Methodists in that area.²⁷ Although these assertions cannot be fully verified, the probability of this having happened is rather high.

Another early connection between Methodism and Swedish Lutherans can clearly be verified, namely that of Joseph Pilmore. In his Journal entry for December 20, 1769 (after Wrangel left America in 1768), Pilmore wrote: "we found a few people gathered together [sic] at the house of an honest Sweed [Swede]. . . . My own soul was greatly refreshed among them, and I promised to visit them again."²⁸ He later preached at the Swedish Lutheran church in Kingsessing, a church built during Wrangel's time when he was one of their first pastors.²⁹ However, Pilmore soon had a different experience with the Swedes, which shows that it was not always the best preachers who were sent to America: ". . . I went to St. Peters, where I expected to hear the Revd. Mr. Duchè, but the Swedes' Minister preached, who is one of the poorest workmen I ever heard; however, he is a Gownsmen and that's qualification [sic] enough for a man of this World."³⁰ This latest statement of Pilmore serves to illustrate some of the problems Wrangel faced as Provost of the Swedish church.

Before long Wrangel faced more and serious difficulties. The priest Borell began using the Catechism of the Church of England. Wrangel did not like this, because he was afraid of the church becoming Anglicized.

²⁶Edward J. Drinkhouse, *History of Methodist Reform* (2 vols. Baltimore and Pittsburg: The Board of Publication of The Methodist Protestant Church, 1899), I, 111. *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, Elmer T. Clark et al. (eds.) (3 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), 412, n. 53. That Asbury was acquainted with the Swedish Lutherans is shown in these statements: "We lay no claim to the Latin, Greek, English, Lutheran, Swedish, or Protestant Episcopal Church order,"; and, "The Reformed English, Scotch, Danish, Swede, Episcopal Churches, have all corrupted their ways before the Lord." Asbury, III, 476, 492. See also A. G. Meacham, *A Compendius History of the Rise and Progress of the Methodist Church Both in Europe and in America*, . . . (New York: Knowlton & Rice, 1835), 477.

²⁷Jacobsson, 200.

²⁸*The Journal of Joseph Pilmore*, Frederick E. Maser and Howard T. Maag (eds.) (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1969), 32.

²⁹Pilmore, 38, 41.

³⁰Pilmore, 80.

Borell complained to the Consistory in Sweden, and gained their support in that the catechism of the English Church could be used for the time being. Consequently, Borell and another pastor, Wicksell, sent a letter of complaint in which they demanded that Wrangel be recalled. They did not really find any fault with him, but accused him of using too much time with pastor Mühlenberg and the Germans, and that he did not show them the letters from Sweden. Borell was soon found guilty of improper behavior with two of the women in the church, and lost the trust of the congregation. Sadly enough, the Consistory in Sweden, who now had Wrangel's enemy Unander as advisor, sided with Borell, and on March 14, 1764, issued a statement urging Wrangel to request a return to Sweden. At about the same time he became very ill due to complete exhaustion. He fainted and was partially lame. But after care and rest, he recovered and was able to continue his work.

The tension between Borell and Wrangel increased. Wrangel received a letter of repeal from Sweden, dated March 7, 1765, together with the information that Borell, in spite of his immoral behavior, had been appointed Provost in his place. Wrangel withheld the documents of this assignment, continued his work, and wrote the Consistory requesting that Borell be recalled and that Wrangel's actions be approved. The local churches supported Wrangel. But the Consistory chastised him and confirmed their appointment of Borell as Provost. Even Mühlenberg supported Wrangel in a fourteen page detailed explanation and defense of him, both as a person and as Provost and priest. He concluded with an appeal that Wrangel's appointment be prolonged. If not, he would work to have him appointed to work in the German Synod. The churches and the school also urged Wrangel to stay. But after receiving still another letter of accusation from Borell, the Consistory demanded his immediate return. Meanwhile, Borell became ill and died, and Rev. Göranson, who was to take over the local church, more or less lost his mind.

On September 3, 1768, Wrangel boarded the ship that was to take him across the ocean. The well-known historian of the Swedes at the Delaware, Dr. Amandus Johnsson, had this to say about Wrangel:

He was one of the most powerful and learned priests that Sweden ever sent to this area. He stayed here more than nine years, and left a deep impression upon the colony. He was one of the first revival preachers in America, and his sermons gathered innumerable congregations which filled the largest meeting rooms and churches available in the country. He leaned toward liberalism and cared less for the religious forms and dogmas which some of his colleagues in the Swedish-Lutheran Church. One may truly say, that he to some degree was the father of Methodism in America.³¹

The sources say very little about Wrangel's journey to England and his sojourn there. The main information of this visit is the well-known passage in John Wesley's Journal:

³¹Jacobsson, 199-200.

I dined with Dr. Wrangel, one of the King of Sweden's Chaplains, who has spent several years in Pennsylvania. His heart seemed to be greatly united to the American Christians, and he strongly pleaded for our sending some of our preachers to help them, multitudes of whom are as sheep without a shepherd. Tuesday 18. He preached at the New Room to a crowded audience and gave general satisfaction by the simplicity and life which accompanied his sound doctrine.³²

By providence, Wrangel's ship landed in Bristol at the same time Wesley visited the city. We have already seen that he was allowed to preach to the Methodists at the New Room. He stayed in Bristol about a week and got to know some of Wesley's friends. He even visited the school in Kingswood as shown in one of his letters: ". . . remember me to all your friends, not forgetting dear Kingswood."³³

While in England Wrangel corresponded with Mr. John Hood, who had ". . . received his first religious impressions" from Wrangel, and with other friends in Philadelphia, sending them some of Wesley's religious tracts, and, more important, advised them that, if the Methodist preachers formed a society in Philadelphia, to unite with them, which they later did. When Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore were going to America, it was first known to the people in Philadelphia through a letter from Wrangel.³⁴

The meeting with Wesley made an indelible impression upon Wrangel. Not only Wesley as person, but his whole movement, Methodism, fascinated him. He felt related to the Methodist form of piety, and was impressed by its energetic strategy and organization, and saw in it a corrective to the quietism so often found in the American revivals.³⁵

Although Wrangel himself did not publish very much,³⁶ he still showed great interest in tracts of revival sermons, short appealing pamphlets about rough sinners' conversions, and the blessed deaths of holy men and women. This interest created what later became of great importance in Swedish church life: the organization of the first Swedish society for voluntary church activities. Wrangel, while in America, observed the good results of two such organizations, namely, *The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (S.P.C.K. founded 1699), and *The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (S.P.G., founded 1701).

After returning to Sweden in 1769, he resumed his work as chaplain at the Royal Court, but seemed to have difficulties in receiving a pastorate. He

³²*The Works of John Wesley*, XXII, 161.

³³*Arminian Magazine*, 1784, 615.

³⁴John Lednum, *A History of the Rise of Methodism in America*. (Philadelphia: Published by the Author, 1862), 40-41. Cf. J. M. Buckley, *A History of Methodism in the United States* (The American Church History Series; New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1896), 121; John Nuelsen, et al., *Kurzgefasste Geschichte des Methodismus* (Zweite durchgesehene und erweiterte Auflage. Bremen: Verlagshaus der Methodistenkirche, 1929), 418.

³⁵Allan Parkman, "Carl Magnus Wrangel och Anglosachsisk Väckelsefromhet." *Kyrkohistorisk Årsskrift* (1957, 101-135), 120.

³⁶Parkman, 126-127.

was called to face an inquiry as to the accusations of his antagonists in America. He received some criticism, but was finally acquitted after four grueling days of questioning. Still, he continued his quest for a society like the English ones. As early as 1762 Wrangel wrote, with a touch of envy, in his diary: "If [only] our Lutheran Church here in this country [America] had the support like that of the English through *The Society for Promotion of the Faith*."³⁷ During his visit in London, he requested through the Bishop a grant from S.P.C.K. to buy religious books and tracts for the scattered Swedes in Egg-Harbour. They granted him five pounds.³⁸

Wrangel finally felt that the ground for organization of a new society was sufficiently laid. In a letter to John Wesley he wrote:

Last parliament-session several Clergymen, and amongst them four Bishops, agreed to my proposals, concerning a Society for propagating practical religion. We intend as soon as the plan is rightly fixed, to enter into correspondence with several parts of the world; and we expect the honour of your correspondence also. The affair is a secret to the public, and will be carried on so, till it is well settled.³⁹

At the beginning of 1771 two preparatory meetings were held (February 7, and March 14), and on March 27, 1771, a Society was organized under the name of *Societas Svecana pro Fide et Christianismo* (generally called *Pro Fide*). A statement of purpose was also added: "A Society, which with the greatest care shall further the growth and practice of Christianity in the Svea Realm."⁴⁰ In addition to Wrangel, twelve outstanding theologians and priests were present. The Membership Roster lists Wrangel as member no. 1, with a note added: "The Founder of the Society." John Wesley is listed as member no. 38, and was identified as "Pastor in London," with the same date as Wrangel,⁴¹ who later informed Wesley about this event: "I send you enclosed the Letter of Admission to our Society. The Rules not yet being printed in English, we send them in German, as I think you are master of that language."⁴² Wesley responded kindly in a letter to the Society: "I return you my sincerest thanks for doing me the honour of admitting me into your number, and shall greatly rejoice if it should be in my power to forward your excellent design."⁴³

³⁷Quoted by Parkman, 128.

³⁸Wrangel had personally received 30 Pounds from S.P.G. for his work among Englishmen in America. Parkman, 128, n. 3.

³⁹*Arminian Magazine*, 1784, 33; Cfr. *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 1837, 533.

⁴⁰C. H. Levin, *Samfundet Pro Fide et Christianismo* (Stockholm: Ivar Hægströms Boktryckeri, 1871), 1.

⁴¹Membership list, *Pro Fide* Archives, Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm.

⁴²*Arminian Magazine*, 1784, 614. This Constitution was printed in Swedish, German and English, showing the international character of the Society. The membership grew rapidly: After its first year there were 76 members: 25 living in Stockholm, 23 in the Swedish provinces of Finland and Pommern (Germany), and 28 foreign members. Levin, 3.

⁴³Telford, V, 302.

Wrangel also mentioned that Wesley had donated some books to the library of *Pro Fide*. A list of these (which may not be complete) is found in one of their publications:

[From] Mr. P[astor] JOH. WESLEY in London: *Notes upon the Old Testament*. Bristol 1765. 2 Vol. 4. [Quarto] Smit's *Sermons of the American Affaires*. Philad. 1775. Duche, *The American Vine*, a sermon &c. Philad. 1775. Wesley, *The doctrine of original Sin*. Bristol 1757. Janeway, *Token for Children*. Lond. 1769. Joh. Shower, *Serious Reflexions on Time and Eternity*. Lond. 1770. *Luther's Cathecism* (In English) Lond. 1770. *Prayers composed for the use of Children*. Lond. 1770. *The heinons [heinous] guilt nad destructive consiquences [sic] of impurity*. London 1763. *An humble attempt to assist Parents and Masters &c*. London 1765.⁴⁴

Unfortunately, most books in the library of the Society were auctioned on April 26, 1834. These gifts from Wesley can, therefore, no longer be traced.

There is, however, another interesting way Wesley material came to Sweden. The priest of the Lutheran church at the Swedish Legation in London, Rev. Aron Mathesius, who was also a member of *Pro Fide* (and a Methodist), donated some books to the Society library: "Four separate essays on moral issues. Translations from English. Manuscript. Sermons on 1st Sunday after Easter, presenting: Some of an upright Teacher's qualities. Manuscript." All were documents of ethical concerns.⁴⁵ But most interesting is his translation of Wesley's sermon "The Cure of Evil-speaking" into Swedish, published in London as early as 1780.⁴⁶ This translation was also published in Gothenburg, Sweden, in 1819, with Mathesius listed as translator. This version is practically identical with the London edition, only with minor corrections of spelling.⁴⁷ Still another translation from Wesley's writings is taken from his description of his encounter with the Moravian Christian David in Herrnhut in 1738. The translator is anonymous, and called himself ". . . one who—after the advice of St. Paul—would like to see that one tried all things, and kept what is good."⁴⁸ However, internal evidence suggests that it may have been translated and published by the Moravian Brethren. Thus, long before any Methodist work began in Sweden, Wesley, his writings, his movement and his work, were well known.

⁴⁴*Svenska Samfundet Pro Fide Samlingar* (vol. I, Stockholm: Tryckt i Kumblinska Tryckeriet, 1791–1798), 1798, Part 1, 89–90.

⁴⁵*Pro Fide Samlingar*, Part 4, 397.

⁴⁶[John Wesley] "Bot emot förtal." Translated from English [by Aron Mathesius]. In a seven-page Preface it is called: "A Sermon preached by a God-fearing English Teacher," referring to a footnote: "Mr. John Wesley."

⁴⁷"Bot emot förtal. En predikan öfver Matth. 18:15, 16, 17." (Götheborg [Gothenburg]: np 1819). Uppsala University lists *Pro Fide* as being behind this publication.

⁴⁸"Något om den genom Brödra-Historien bekandte Christian David: hämtad och öfwersatt utur Herr Wesley's Engelska-Journal . . ." (Göteborg: 1800). Cf. *The Works of John Wesley*, XVIII, 273–281.

II

The second main person of our inquiry, Johan Hinric Lidén, was also a supporter of the concerns of Wrangel and *Pro Fide*, and showed life-long interest in its work. He is listed as number 26, among the first group of members.⁴⁹

Johan Hinric Lidén's grandfather came to Sweden from Pommern in Germany. His father, Martin, served as lecturer at the University of Uppsala, and later in Linköpings Gymnasium. Into this intellectually and spiritually active family was Johan Hinric born on January 6, 1741. He was not a strong child, inheriting weak health from his mother. His first years of schooling were under various tutors. Then he went to public school and gymnasium. Among other subjects, he became proficient in several languages: Latin, French, German, English, Greek, and Hebrew, and later Italian. Having signed the student oath, he matriculated at Uppsala University on February 24, 1758, was examined, with good results, and granted membership in the Östgöta "nation" (fraternity), named after the area from which he came. As was usual at that time, he was required to study a variety of subjects.

As early as 1759 the faculty granted him, only 18 years old, permission to enter into a program of examinations and tests for the purpose of earning the degree of *filosofie magister* (master of philosophy). Interestingly, his chosen topic was on the refugees' reception by the house of Medici in the Middle Ages.⁵⁰ After further discussions, and after having received a certification from three professors, he could finally call himself *filosofie kandidat* (candidate of philosophy). But his lack of exercise and proper care further weakened his health, resulting in serious lung problems. The climate in Finland, where he later worked as a tutor, did nothing to better this situation. He remained a bibliophile his whole life. He had already collected more than 2000 academic dissertations while at Uppsala. Now, while staying in Åbo, Finland, he acquired in the fall of 1762 400 dissertations from Åbo University.

After returning to Uppsala, he began working on the dissertation for his *Magister's* degree. His topic was the history of Swedish poetry, entitled *Historiola litteraria poetarium Svecanorum*. The first three parts were published in 1764–65, and the fourth in 1772. One of his concerns seemed to be to refute the ideas that people from the Northern Countries lacked literary capacities. His work received some critical reactions, but his pioneer role and thoroughness made his thesis credible, and later researchers followed his arguments, and even his mistakes.⁵¹ The disputation took place May 26, 1764, and after a vote of the professors, he and some others were promoted.

⁴⁹A new record of domestic members was later developed, where Lidén had number 31. Aron Mathesius, Lidén's friend, was also a member of *Pro Fide*.

⁵⁰Lindholm, 13–14: *Tentamen historico-literarum, de favore sereniss. domus Mediceæ, in migrantes ab Oriente in Occidentem literatos et literas.*

⁵¹Lindholm, 38–54.

But what was to be his profession? On the basis of his abilities and interests, the work as librarian suited him best. As usual, flattery, intrigues, and manipulations dominated the university situation, and he was several times by-passed, but on September 30, 1765, he was finally appointed "extra-ordinary amanuensis," but without any financial support from the state. The library at Uppsala University was in a bad state. There were no set procedures or system for loans, and many never returned the books. They had no workable catalogue system, and manuscripts were not catalogued at all. Soon he gained the rights of *docent* (lecturer) which did not count much when the assistant professorships were to be distributed. Instead, he embarked on a trail of collecting books of various kinds, and soon had a large collection. Just during the year 1766 his collection grew from 8,000 to 11,000 volumes.

As soon as he received his *Magister* (Master's) degree, he began planning for travel abroad. He applied for a travel grant from a foundation, and to his surprise, he got it. His father's willingness to support him financially probably played some role in his receiving these funds. The Crown Prince gave him leave of absence, and he received his passport from the Dean of the University, the King, and the County Governor.⁵² Lidén's abilities, learned understanding, and observations led to a travel diary which can hardly be equalled. He was meticulous to the point of being almost finicky. It contained detailed descriptions of everything he saw. In addition, he pasted in pamphlets, programs, lists of books for sale, as well as quotes from other works, his own commentaries, etc. He carried with him dozens of recommendations from all sorts of important persons in Sweden. He looked up the leaders in the places he visited such as the mayor, the parish priest, and, not least, all the libraries and book stores he could find. As many as four worship services were frequented daily in order to listen to the sermons.

At first, he spent more than two months traveling through southern Sweden and Copenhagen, Denmark. The first important stop in Germany was the University of Greifswald where the town itself as well as the professors gained his attention. The University of Göttingen was next. It had been developed with full freedom in speech and writing, as long as one did not offend any religion, and no censorship was allowed in the hands of the theologians. Religious tolerance should reign, on evangelical grounds, and strife of philosophical and religious kinds were to be avoided. This suited Lidén well. He hated dogmatic bickering and flattery, and had chosen his place of study with care when he went to Göttingen. He signed up as a student of theology and desired to be a regular student like the others. But he socialized often with the professors and avoided the so-called student activities. The library was one of the main reasons why he chose Göttingen. With its 80,000 volumes, well organized and with good catalogues, it over-

⁵²Lindholm, 98-99.

shadowed even Uppsala, although he also saw the negative sides of the town and its people. Again, he bought more than 400 books.⁵³

At a consequent sojourn in the Netherlands, he was less than impressed. Learning was poor, the libraries just as bad. And he disliked their “disdain for religion, the wives’ ruling over their husbands, and the poor upbringing of the children.” He frequented all kinds of religious groups: Mennonites, Roman Catholics, Quakers, and even Jews. But his goal was to visit the Herrnhutian (Moravian) Colony of Zeist. Of the 400 inhabitants there, sixteen were Swedish. He was greatly impressed both with their mutual love and their practical arrangements.⁵⁴

Finally, he arrived in London by mid-summer. He soon began to present his recommendations. The next day was Sunday and he went to the Swedish Church in Wapping, a bit below the Tower. He visited several hospitals, listing 25 in all, and concluded: “Generosity toward the suffering is a national virtue.”⁵⁵ The British Museum was soon frequented. He borrowed ten to twenty books at a time, and kept on reading and writing day and night. London was a paradise for a book collector, with its innumerable book stalls, and even more books could be bought at auctions.⁵⁶ He was allowed to visit the Observatory at Greenwich, a privilege that was almost never granted. Later, he was introduced to several members of the Royal Society, and even permitted to attend their first fall meeting. Through these contacts he also met Benjamin Franklin, who told him, that “for a long time to come, the English colonies in America would not be able to free themselves.”⁵⁷

Lidén made a list of all Swedes in London in 1768, and ended up with about forty persons. One of these was, “Doctor Carl Magnus Wrangel, coming from America, where he several years had been Provost of the Swedish churches. A God-fearing and zealous Priest.” The young nobleman and secretary at the Swedish Legation, Malte Ramel, was also listed, with the following commentary: “Also one of my friends from Uppsala. I do not know of anything good that cannot be said of him. A model for young people in fearing God, steady behavior, hard work and diligence—How many a happy and enjoyable time have I not had in his company!”⁵⁸ He also met the well-known Swede, Emanuel Swedenborg, founder of the Swedenborgian Church. Lidén’s reaction was blunt: “I have talked to the old man, who is crazy in the head.” He wondered, “how can you discuss anything with a man who writes everything *ex visis & auditis*? Who *expressis verbis* says that God has revealed himself to him, and that he has written on God’s order?”⁵⁹

⁵³Lindholm, 116ff.

⁵⁴Johan Hinric Lidén, *Travel Diaries*. (Manuscripts), 353f.

⁵⁵Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 145–146.

⁵⁶Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 146–147.

⁵⁷Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 428.

⁵⁸Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 520–521.

⁵⁹Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 484f.; Lindholm, 148, 215–216.

Lidén made several trips to interesting places. After visiting Oxford and Cambridge, his judgment was rather mixed: Oxford was really an ugly town, with winding streets and poor houses," with exception of the college buildings: ". . . a lover of Gothic architecture should come here." He listed each college one by one, evaluating the libraries, the teaching methods and the professors. The famous Bodleian Library he held to be somewhat over-rated. The lack of literature from other countries and lack of newer books, especially in German, was quite evident. The handwritten manuscripts were the most valuable. But the old English academic customs did not find much sympathy with him, and, he mused, they seem to still exist because one does not take into account that most of the constitutions of the colleges are from "the dark time of the Pope, and how much have not the sciences changed since then."⁶⁰

While in Oxford he also went to church at the Merton College Chapel: "After we on Sunday listened to a philosophical discourse or lecture, that here is called sermon, which a young master read, we began visiting the colleges . . ."⁶¹ Lidén complained about the preaching in general: the sermons are well done and presented, but did not mention the basic truths of Christianity, the atonement of the death of Jesus, the name of the Savior was never spoken, and no text from the Bible was mentioned.⁶²

It is unpardonable that during the blessed Passion Week there is never preached a word about the suffering of Jesus, but about entirely other subjects. What is this but to be ashamed of the Cross of Jesus, which however forever is the foundation of our Salvation.

However, things were different with the Methodists:

This is the real reason why Mr. Wesley created so great attention by his sermons, because he spoke of a crucified Savior and faith in his merits—such the people never had heard. Educated people pronounced his doctrine as enthusiastic and heretic —just as if not the greatest heresy is to forget Christ.⁶³

At Wesley's request Lidén attended ". . . the so called Private Society, when only Methodists were present, furnished with tickets, to prevent strangers to attend." Wesley spoke to their edification about "practical Christianity," and encouraged them to diligent prayer and celebrating the Lord's Supper, as the best means to grow in grace.

Lidén was also impressed with the singing: "The congregational song of the Methodists is the most beautiful I ever heard. Their fine hymns have

⁶⁰Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 474f. Lindholm, 149–150.

⁶¹In a note Lidén makes these comments: "The academic worship service consists only of such a sermon, here nothing is sung. The worship service cannot begin until the Vice Chancellor has arrived, who always must make his procession here, led by 6 beadles with maces in the hand." Cf. Lindholm, 159–160.

⁶²*Proceedings, WHS*, XVII, 1929, 3; Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 512.

⁶³Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 493; Cf. *Proceedings, WHS*, XVII, 2.

also their own beautiful melodies composed by great masters, here they sing with a propriety, devotion, serenity and charm that give me unlimited pleasure."⁶⁴

Before Lidén left Sweden, Bishop Eric Lamberg in Gothenburg, who had earlier met Wesley in London, encouraged him to look up the "well-known and powerful Wesley and his sect." However, Lidén met George Whitefield first, and wrote:

Today [Aug. 23, 1769] I heard the well-known Mr. Whitfield, (*sic*) one of the principals of the Methodists, (and also Chaplain to the Countess of Huntingdon,) preach in the Tabernacle. He now bade farewell to his congregation, in order to go for the seventh time to America. Here was such a large influx of people that they did not find room in the church. He has very moving gifts of presentation, but he mixes in too many stories in his sermons. . . . Next Sunday he said goodbye in his Chapel in Tottenham Forest, and preached one more time in the Tabernacle. Wednesday morning at 7 (i.e. August 30) on the text John 10:11f., after which he immediately went onboard the ship.⁶⁵

Not until October 15, 1769, did Lidén meet John Wesley, when he went to the Methodist Chapel in Spitalfields which had an audience of more than 4,000 people. Lidén wrote: "The sermon was short but eminently evangelical. He has not great oratorical gifts, no outward appearance, but a pure and pleasant voice." He described his first meeting with Wesley this way:

I went forward to shake hands with Mr. Wesley, who already through Mr. [William] Ley knew my name, and was received by him in his usual amiable and friendly way. He is a small, thin old man, with his own long and straight hair, and looks as the worst country parson in Sweden, but has learning as a Bishop and zeal for the glory of God which is quite extraordinary. His talk is very agreeable, and his mild face and pious manner secure him the love of all right-minded men. He is the personification of piety, and he seems to me a living representation of the loving Apostle John.⁶⁶

Interesting and perhaps not so well known, is John Wesley's greeting to Lidén in his "*stamboke*," a sort of reverse guest book, where the people being visited wrote some words of greeting, instead of the guest doing so. Wesley's greeting was this:

Many are we now, and one,
We who Jesus have put on;
There is neither bond, nor free,
Male nor female, Lord, in Thee.
Love, like Death, hath all destroy'd,
Render'd our [all] Distinctions void:

⁶⁴Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 494; *Proceedings, WHS*, XVII, 3.

⁶⁵Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 479. Lidén found this epitaph over Mrs. George Whitefield at the Chapel in Tottenham: "To the memory of mrs. Whitefield, who, after upwards of thirty years strong and frequent manifestations of her Redeemer's love, mixed with strong and frequent strugglings against the buffetings of Satan, many sicknesses and indwellings of Sin, was joyfully released, August [9], 1768." Cf. L. Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. George Whitefield* (2 vols. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1877), II, 555.

⁶⁶Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 493-494.

Names, & sects, & Parties fall:
Thou, O Christ, art all in all!

London
Nov. 17, 1769.

John Wesley⁶⁷

In spite of the short-comings Lidén had found in England, he still left as a convinced anglophile:

The great love I have gained for England, the excellent politeness with which I was met, the friends I there have gotten, the remembrance of the happy moments I have spent in this Land of Freedom, made also my departure from here rather difficult. If I had not been Swedish, I would be an Englishman, and if not my own native country owned the right to all my love, then England should surely be the country where I would live and even finish my days. London is not the place I should choose. No, the Country-side, the Country-side!⁶⁸

From England Lidén went to spend some time in France, and, later, also in parts of Germany. After visiting, among other places, the Herrnhut village and the Moravians, which he greatly appreciated, he returned safely and with “indescribable joy” to Sweden on June 27, 1770, almost to the day two years after he left.

He had been granted the position of “*adjunkt*” (assistant professor) at the University of Lund, but never accepted the call, because the Crown Prince interceded, requesting that he remain in Uppsala. Two universities were now competing for his services, and everything seemed to go the right way. But then something tragic happened. Lidén writes: “The year 1771 in the month of July I was, during my stay in [the province of] ÖsterGötland, suddenly attacked by the onset of a serious rheumatism.”⁶⁹ Although he tried to continue his teaching from his home, it soon became clear that the illness progressed rather rapidly, in spite of attempted treatments both in Sweden and in other countries, but all in vain. He finally resigned himself to his fate, moved to the city of Norrköping to stay with family members. Ironically, about a month later he was promoted to the rank of professor. In spite of his illness, he continued to read and write, especially writing scores of letters. But after awhile even writing became too difficult for him and he had to hire an amanuensis. Nevertheless, he edited and published a five-volume book catalogue and a collection of letters, under great pain and effort. By October 1780 he could not move at all, and needed help for everything. Still, he maintained his good humor and peace, thanks to his strong faith. He finally contracted lung inflammation and died April 23, 1793, only 52 years old.

⁶⁷G. Osborn, *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley* (13 vols. London: Wesleyan-Methodist Conference Office, 1868–1872), I, 362, Section “The Communion of Sanits,” part 4, verse 5.

⁶⁸Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 637.

⁶⁹Lindholm, 234.

III

In light of what has been said above, a great degree of affinity and compatibility appears to have developed between the two Swedish Lutherans and the Methodist/Anglican, John Wesley. How did this emerge, and what was the basis for these interesting relationships?

First, personal contacts: John Wesley was already acquainted with Lutheran Pietists, such as Peter Böhler, Bishop Spangenberg, and others. Likewise, there had already been various personal contacts between Methodists and Wrangel and Lidén. Neither one of the two Swedes came unprepared for their encounter with Wesley. In America, Wrangel worked with Whitefield and learned from him, even to the point of adopting his style of preaching. His use of smaller groups and conventicles exhibited several traits similar to those of Wesley's societies and classes. It is interesting to note that when Thomas Webb arrived in Philadelphia in 1767, he found a small group of converts after George Whitefield's preaching, calling themselves "Methides." Webb was impressed with their sincerity and soon joined them, and assumed leadership. The group later organized itself as "The Religious Society of Protestants called Methodists." Wrangel participated actively in Whitefield's campaigns, and told the people about British Methodism and John Wesley.⁷⁰ Lidén did not have quite as much direct contact with Methodists before his arrival in London. However, Bishop Eric Lamberg, of Gothenburg, Sweden, had strongly urged him to visit Wesley. Also, several other visitors to England whetted his appetite for such a meeting. Likewise, his close friendship with Malthe Ramel, secretary of the Swedish Legation, and Aron Mathesius, pastor of the Swedish church in London, both known as Methodists, although remaining Lutherans, brought Lidén closer to Wesley. After learning of Wrangel's plans to organize *Pro Fide*, and his attempts to get John Wesley as a member, Ramel wrote a letter to Lidén, asking him to "show discretion toward his parents" concerning their "Methodist Son," adding, "Surely, it cannot now in Sweden be heterodox (or whatever it is called) to be a Methodist."⁷¹

Secondly, the middle of the 18th Century was a time of great movements pulling in different directions. In Sweden, a conservative orthodoxy dominated church life, a theology which supported the "unity" idea and the sole rights of the state church system: To be a citizen meant automatic membership in the church, with obligatory church attendance, required participation in Holy Communion, and regular training in the teachings of the

⁷⁰*The Encyclopedia of World Methodism* (2 vols. Nolan B. Harmon et al. (eds.) Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), II, 1894, 2067; Cf. Arthur Bruce Moss, *Thomas Webb, a Founder of American Methodism* ([New York]: Commission on Archives and History, New York Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church, 1975), 5.

⁷¹Parkman, 12.

Christian faith. No services or conventicles were allowed outside the church or with lay leadership. However, at the time of Wrangel and Lidén, opposing movements began making cracks in this solid, monolithic structure: On the one side, the influence of Pietism, including that of the Moravians, came more and more to the fore. From the other side the wave of the Enlightenment rolled on, with Voltairean "free thinkers," and atheists. Of these, the ideas of the German scientist and philosopher Christian Wolff found quite an impression on Swedish scientific life. He attempted to establish "true" Christianity by means of philosophy, identifying it with the religion of reason, or natural religion. But the character of revealed religion with reason was maintained. The Socinians carried this one step further: reason decides what shall be considered revealed truth. The Deists consequently concluded that historical religion should be set aside as superfluous, and only natural religion should be retained.⁷² Thus, both Wesley in England, and Wrangel and Lidén in Sweden, faced the same ideologies and attacks upon traditional Christianity.

Thirdly, both Wesley and the two Swedes were strongly influenced by Pietism in some form: they had all received strong impressions from the piety of the Moravians, and, while Wrangel and Lidén had more direct contacts with the Halle-type of Pietism, Wesley was no stranger to Puritanism and *their* understanding of the life of faith. An article in a publication by *Pro Fide* described the Swedish understanding of these relationships as follows: Methodists, followers of Wesley,

... are a sort of Puritans. [They] Have their name from their strict way of living and profession according to rules or a certain method. As opposed to the English Church they are almost Lutherans; but among these they should be called Pietists. The Wesleyans are considered a self-righteous people. . . . Nevertheless, regardless of all opposition, the Methodists have grown so much that one everywhere finds Wesley's or Whitefield's chapels, and among all classes a great number of their zealous followers.⁷³

At the same time, Wrangel attacked *extreme* Pietism, as well as Moravianism, not because he opposed their faith, but because they tried to form groups outside the church. Lidén, on the other hand, was more sympathetic to these groups. For him the way of a living, dynamic faith was the important thing, not dogmatic or institutional adherence. Wesley had some of the same attitudes: the Church of England was *his church*. But all three of the men strongly opposed extreme Moravianism and Pietism, such as antinomianism and the "blood and wound" theology of the Moravian "sifting period" (1745–1760).⁷⁴

⁷²Wilhelm Windelband, *A History of Philosophy* (2 vols. New York: Harper & Row, 1958. Harper Torchbooks), 444, 487–488; Jacobsson, 32–33; Lindholm, 126.

⁷³*Pro Fide Samlingar*, I, part 4, 1798, 313–315; Jacobsson, 32.

⁷⁴Jacobsson, 28.

Fourthly, The moral decay and the misery of common workers were quite similar in Sweden and in England. Lidén was quite descriptive and direct in describing his experience with English moral life:

Sunday is committed to much outward devotion in England. Then everything is quiet and silent. Then to play an instrument were a deadly sin, while on the other hand they have no conscience for drinking and whoring in secret Someone has said that the careful keeping of Sunday is the only [thing] by which one could see that the English had religion—although that would be too strong.⁷⁵

Likewise, the Swedish life exhibited immorality and decay, as well as the misery of people working in mines and other parts of the growing industrial community.⁷⁶

Fifthly, both Wesley and the two Swedes stressed the importance of education. This was, of course a central point in the activities of Pietism. Wrangel even began gathering his parishioners in order to teach them true religion. *Pro Fide* later did the same when they developed catechetical schools in Sweden. Lidén's great interest in institutions of learning has already been shown above. However, he leaned more and more toward a public school system. Wrangel also spoke of "the dear Kingswood," an enterprise which is a typical example of John Wesley's high regard for education. He encouraged his people to read, and gave each preacher a pack of books. His publishing scores of books, including *The Christian Library*, the "Reader's Digest Condensed Books" of that time, clearly indicates his attitudes in this area.⁷⁷

Lastly, There emerged a deep common sense in and among the three men of the importance of conversion and a living faith in Jesus Christ and his atonement. Wrangel was a Hallensian in heart and deed, and ". . . considered himself as born again and converted, he had the inner calling and he had the Spirit." But he was not simply a man of Pietism, he was also "a late-born son of *the great American revival*."⁷⁸ When Wrangel met John Wesley at his disembarking in Bristol, Wesley let him preach at the New Room, ". . . to a crowded audience and [he] gave general satisfaction by the simplicity and life which accompanied *his sound doctrine*."⁷⁹ Wesley made an indelible impression upon Wrangel. He felt himself akin to many aspects of the Methodist form of piety, and probably also its energetical strategy and firm organization. But, when he asked Wesley to send preachers to America, it probably was more a consequence of his care for the spiritual well-being of his former parishioners than his concern for the budding Methodist soci-

⁷⁵Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 511.

⁷⁶Jacobsson, 282ff.; Parkman, 102.

⁷⁷Lidén pasted into his *Travel Diary* two printed lists of items published by John and Charles Wesley, the one listing 177, the other 187 numbers. Cf. Jacobsson, 115ff.; Parkman, 111–112; Lindholm, 274f.

⁷⁸Parkman, 112, 116, 118.

⁷⁹*The Works of John Wesley*, XXII, 161. The emphasis is mine.

ety of Thomas Webb.⁸⁰ At the request of Wrangel, Lidén said himself willing to write the history of Methodism to be published by *Pro Fide*, but his illness made that impossible to realize.

Lidén, for his part, shared the same basic understanding of the Christian faith. He wrote:

The most beautiful speech which does not touch upon the basis for religion, that forgets Christ, the foundation of faith, cannot touch the heart for its good; it becomes a foam, a loose speech, strikes no roots, tickles and pleases the ear, but is forgotten, [and] leaves the heart as [it was] before.⁸¹

Wesley was different. He spoke of a crucified Savior and the faith in the merits of Christ, and made great impression upon Lidén: “[Wesley’s] mild face, and pious being, gain him the love of all right-minded [persons].” Later, at the Foundery, Lidén listened to Wesley preach: “His topic was now about the love of Christ, which he splendidly presented.”⁸² Thus, we find a large degree of agreement between the three men. They were all churchmen; they were all influenced in some degree by Pietism; they were also all colored by the thinking of the Enlightenment, although without rejecting the biblical revelation; and they all focused upon the essentials of the Christian faith: repentance and the forgiveness of sin, and a consequent life growing in holiness. As Wesley wrote: “We have but one point in view—to be *altogether Christians*, scriptural, rational Christians.”⁸³

⁸⁰Parkman, 120

⁸¹Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 512.

⁸²Lidén, *Travel Diaries*, 494.

⁸³Telford, V, 154.