

THE ORIGINS OF THE SWEDISH LUTHERAN MINISTRY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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Abstract

The Church of Sweden Mission established a significant presence on the Witwatersrand early in the twentieth century, but this was preceded by abortive Swedish Lutheran missionary endeavours there during the 1890s. Paul Nilsson Gullander, an erstwhile Swedish immigrant in the USA, undertook a semi-private initiative in 1898. He conducted a dual ministry to both Scandinavian immigrants and African mineworkers until forced by illness and the Second Anglo-Boer War to leave the South African Republic.

1 INTRODUCTION

During the two decades following the onset of the Witwatersrand gold rush in 1886, numerous missionary agencies undertook evangelistic and social ministries amongst the chiefly African labourers whose urbanisation fundamentally and permanently altered the demographic profile of Johannesburg and environs. Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and other churches were soon gathered, while such nondenominational bodies as the Cape General Mission and the Compounds Mission played their parts in a growing amalgam of Christianity. Beginning in 1902, the Church of Sweden Mission (CSM), a Lutheran body which had been active in Natal since the 1870s, extended its work to Johannesburg, initially to minister to members of its rural congregations who had joined the exodus to the mines where, their Nordic pastors feared, they would be subjected to moral degradation and lose their faith. This general

topic is the subject of the present writer's recent doctoral thesis at the University of Pretoria.¹

Before the Scandinavian mission history began, there was another Swedish Lutheran who was not affiliated with that organisation (Scandinavian Mission) undertook missionary work there. The two-fold ministry of Paul Nilsson Gullander (1863-1925) in the City of Gold lasted only approximately two years, but it was historically significant because he not only launched one of the earliest Scandinavian missionary endeavours amongst Africans in the South African Republic but also gathered the first formally constituted Scandinavian congregation in that country. Whether Gullander's short-lived efforts in Johannesburg were worth book-length treatment is debatable. Clearly he thought they were, for he wrote a highly tendentious and in many respects unreliable volume about them early in the twentieth century.² They are mentioned in Alan H Winquist Swanson's sketchy history of Scandinavians in South Africa but, as indicated below, that description is not fully reliable. In any event, Gullander's overlooked ministry to both Africans and Nordic immigrants on the Witwatersrand warrants the attention of historians of Christianity in Southern Africa because it sheds light on the particular challenges which confronted clergymen and others engaged in ministry to both European and indigenous peoples in the polyglot boomtown of Johannesburg.

2 GULLANDER'S RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND IN SWEDEN, NATAL, AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Gullander's upbringing in Sweden, education there and in the United States of America, and experience as a missionary all affected his ministry in Johannesburg. Born at Gullåckra south of Lund, he drank deeply at the well of pietism which had influenced regional spiritual life since the time of the most influential of Southern Swedish pietists, Henric Schartau (1757-1825). At the Cathedral School in Lund, Gullander recalled, he "became acquainted with sin as well as grace but found peace through the God of my life". In 1887 Gullander joined

the Swedish exodus to North America, where an older brother was studying in Rock Island, Illinois, at the seminary of the Swedish-American Lutheran Augustana Synod. Paul did not immediately follow in his footsteps educationally, choosing instead Chicago Theological Seminary, where Congregationalists had recently established Dano-Norwegian and Swedish departments for preparing Scandinavian immigrants for bilingual ministries.³ He graduated in 1891. While in seminary he gained experience in urban ministry at Chicago Bible Home, an early endeavour in Christian social work. The ethnic composition of Chicago differed markedly from what Gullander would encounter on the Witwatersrand a decade later, however, as this Midwestern metropolis did not yet have the vast African-American population which subsequently determined much of its social history.

A year after completing his studies, Gullander became one of the first missionaries to serve in the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America, a nondenominational body which the globetrotting Swedish evangelist Fredrik Franson had recently founded with other Nordic immigrants in Chicago. Gullander and seven other Scandinavians - representing both Lutheran and other denominational traditions, but having little apparent commitment to any of them - sailed to Natal in 1892 to establish a mission field there. Gullander's involvement in this endeavour was brief, but it made a profound impact on his life and influenced his career as a missionary. Late in 1892 he married one of his colleagues, Augusta Hultberg, who gave birth to a son the following May but died ten days thereafter.⁴ Gullander entrusted his son to the boy's maternal grandparents in Sweden. Before leaving Natal, he met Frans Fristedt of the CSM, with whom he corresponded quite frequently during the next few years.⁵

Returning to his spiritual roots, Gullander returned to the United States of America in 1893 and entered Augustana College and Theological Seminary, where his older brother was still enrolled. As he explained to officials in the CSM two years later, he had been attracted to what he too loosely termed the 'Reformed' tradition because of unspecified 'external influences' while he was still 'not rooted in the truth'. The remainder of his ministry would be in

Lutheran churches and organisations. At Augustana he completed an abridged theological course in 1896.⁶

Service in the CSM seemed to be Gullander's most obvious means of returning to Southern Africa, as the Swedish-American Augustana Synod did not have a field there. He consequently wrote to Fristedt in July 1894 and revealed his intention to apply to the CSM.⁷ Late in 1895, shortly before Fristedt investigated conditions for possible ministry to Zulu migrants in Johannesburg, he wrote to Gullander that the CSM was considering opening a field in Matabeleland. This struck a chord with the aspiring missionary, who replied to him almost immediately and stated that he and his erstwhile colleagues in the Scandinavian Alliance Mission had initially considered going there but that reports of malaria had prompted them to remain in Natal. Gullander nevertheless emphasised his willingness to proclaim the Gospel wherever the CSM sent him.⁸

Before the end of 1895, Gullander informed the CSM of his desire to become a missionary in Southern Africa.⁹ He was promptly rejected.¹⁰ Gullander was then ordained in the Augustana Synod in 1896 and briefly served pastorates in Pennsylvania and Connecticut while seeking ways to return to Africa.

An opportunity became visible within months of Gullander's ordination. Early in 1896 Adolf Wilhelm Claudelin (1842-1921) of the Swedish Society in Johannesburg heeded Fristedt's advice and wrote to Bishop Knut Henning Gezelius von Scheele (1838-1920), who oversaw the Church of Sweden parishes on the Baltic island of Gotland of which Claudelin was a native, and pleaded for a Swedish Lutheran pastor for the congregation which Claudelin and others hoped to organise.¹¹ Fristedt also corresponded with von Scheele in this regard. Unable to spare a man from Sweden, the bishop referred the request to Johannes Telleen, a Swedish-American who headed the foreign missionary work of the Lutheran General Council in the United States. Telleen had close ties to Augustana College and Theological Seminary and had supported Gullander's application to the CSM. Von Scheele and Fristedt also contacted Gullander directly about the matter. Gullander responded by writing to Claudelin in June 1896 and expressing his willingness to minister to the Swedes in

Johannesburg. He cautioned that his travel expenses would be great but assured him that he could cover them himself. Gullander further stated his conviction that voluntary contributions from people in Sweden and the United States of America could defray a significant part of his maintenance expenses in Johannesburg.¹²

With procedural and financial matters still unresolved, Gullander turned to Telleen for advice. He wondered *inter alia* whether the official call to Johannesburg should come from or be sanctioned by the Augustana Synod. Gullander also broached the question of raising money for his support and suggested that efforts to do so be made in both Scandinavia and amongst Scandinavian-Americans. In motivating this ethnically inclusive strategy, he conveyed Claudelin's observations that, in Johannesburg, Norwegians were more numerous and tended to be more interested in ecclesiastical activities than were Swedes in that city. This awareness foreshadowed a dispute over whether the congregation he sought to form would be primarily Swedish or explicitly pan-Scandinavian nearly killed it in infancy.¹³

Gullander sailed to Sweden in November 1896 to raise money for his projected ministry in Johannesburg. His results were mixed. He turned initially to the Evangelical Fatherland Association (*Evangeliska Fosterlands-stiftelsen*), a pietistically orientated Lutheran parachurch body which conducted both domestic and foreign missionary work, and then to the Lund Missionary Society, another predominantly Lutheran body, but again received nothing.¹⁴

Gullander spent much of 1897 traversing his native land and accosting pastors and various other people. "To raise money for ecclesiastical projects by subscription is less common and less respectable in Sweden than in America", he admitted later. "As a Swedish-American, however, it was comparatively easy for me to obtain aid in this way for our countrymen in Africa".¹⁵ Dr Henry Tottie of the CSM, for instance, supported his cause, even though the CSM had recently rejected Gullander's application to serve it. Gullander also found a warm reception at the summer residence of Archbishop Anton Niklas Sundberg (1818-1900), the primate of Sweden and *ex officio* head of the CSM. Sundberg informed him that the steering

committee of the CSM had repeatedly discussed the possibility of establishing a station in Johannesburg but that budgetary problems had thus far been prohibitive.¹⁶

Gullander succeeded in collecting and vouchsafing with the Lund Missionary Society 5 732 Swedish crowns, the approximate equivalent of £320, for his venture.¹⁷ It seems most plausible that he intended to use the money he had gathered primarily to cover his own initial expenses and possibly to defray the cost of a plot on which to build a chapel. By the same token, Gullander probably believed that the congregation would quickly become self-sufficient with its costs borne largely by prosperous Swedes in Johannesburg. The point is crucial because from virtually the outset Gullander was at odds with other Scandinavians there with regard to how funds would be raised for the establishment and maintenance of the parish.

3 EARLY SCANDINAVIAN LUTHERAN WORSHIP IN

JOHANNESBURG

Irregular services of worship in one or another Scandinavian language in Johannesburg antedated Gullander's arrival there by several years. By 1893 Emil Berg, a Norwegian Lutheran pastor, was preaching in the city. After his departure in 1894 or 1895, some *de facto* members of his proto-congregation began to worship in Baptist, Methodist, and other churches. According to Adolf Claudelin, one of the leaders of the Swedish community, this erosion was a principal factor prompting him to appeal to Bishop von Scheele in 1895 for assistance in establishing a specifically Lutheran congregation.¹⁸

A firmer foundation was built in 1896 and 1897 while Gullander was still overseas soliciting funds. Prominent Swedes in Johannesburg founded their Swedish Society in 1896. It encompassed only a minority of the immigrants who were eligible for membership, but it gave some cohesion to the ethnic group. It also provided a venue for

Scandinavian worship, which resumed in March 1897 when a Danish evangelist, Hans Juul, began to preach to Nordic immigrants. Emil Berg also returned from Pretoria, and these two men held services every Sunday morning and afternoon in a room which the Swedish Society sub-let for £3 per month. According to Claudelin the congregation numbered sixty people. Its pan-Scandinavian character was also evident weekly, as Berg and Juul would preach in Norwegian and Danish, respectively, and the liturgy included an amalgam of Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian hymns. Claudelin wrote to the Augustana Synod to procure copies of the Swedish hymnals which it employed, even though a majority of the people in the congregation was reportedly Norwegians.¹⁹

This as yet unconstituted church not only worshipped but also began to conduct sorely needed diaconal work. With Berg engaged in secular employment all week and Juul ministering primarily to African migrants, Claudelin and other lay people had to shoulder this task. Claudelin wrote in 1897 that he and other members who were active in social ministry visited the hospital regularly but did not have sufficient time to call on other Scandinavian immigrants in their homes or at the mines. Three nurses from Denmark, Sweden, and Norway on the staff of the Catholic hospital often attended to the care of compatriots who had fallen ill.²⁰

4 THE TROUBLED GENESIS OF GULLANDER'S MINISTRY TO SCANDINAVIAN IMMIGRANTS

Gullander reached Johannesburg on 28 March 1898 and began his ministry there almost immediately. The first service at which he officiated was on Easter in the hall which the unofficial congregation had hired from the Swedish Society. Gullander reported that the room was "packed with attentively listening Scandinavians" for what he believed was "the first formal Swedish service" in Johannesburg.²¹

The initially harmonious relations between Gullander and his flock did not long endure. Within weeks differences concerning the ethnic emphasis of the congregation, the financing of its activities, and other

matters surfaced and shattered whatever unity may at first have appeared to rest over Scandinavian religious life in Johannesburg. These matters, some of which in retrospect seem quite petty, were of sufficient importance to part of the congregation to bring about a *de facto* schism, though one which ultimately hastened its constitution and which foreshadowed headaches which the CSM suffered in its ministry to Scandinavian immigrants in Johannesburg. They therefore warrant our attention.

The first two disagreements concerned divergent opinions on how to collect additional money to launch a permanent congregation and the means by which members would support it. A women's group within the Swedish Society conceived the idea of raising funds by arranging a charity ball at the National Hotel. Approximately 100 Scandinavian and other European immigrants participated in this night of 'high revelry', as a social reporter described the occasion in one of the city's newspapers, the *Standard and Diggers News*. The cultivated atmosphere and the finery of those in attendance had little in common with the spirituality which the pietistically inclined Gullander hoped to engender in his flock. The guests danced the night away beneath the entwined flags of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark.²² Given his pietistic proclivities, it is not surprising that Gullander protested against the event by refusing to attend and subsequently describing it in highly critical terms.²³

Instead of gala evenings, Gullander proposed that the members of the church support it through collections taken during the service. One leading member of the congregation opposed this suggestion so vehemently, however, that it came to naught. Instead, Gullander attempted to create a financial foundation through pledges of support. This too floundered. The disillusioned Gullander later ascribed its failure to a "lack of interest in religion and Christianity". He accused the "members of the Swedish Society of preferring to spend their money on amusements rather than on the work of the church".²⁴

Gullander then felt compelled to turn to America in search of funds, because within weeks he had used nearly 4 000 of the ca 5 700 crowns he had raised in Sweden. Gullander wrote to *Augustana*, the

weekly newspaper of the Augustana Synod. Not mentioning the financial disputes amongst the Swedes in Johannesburg or their alleged disaffection from Christianity, he declared that, because of the economic recession in the South African Republic, his parishioners were unable to contribute significantly to the maintenance of their church. Gullander also stressed his desire to expand his ministry and reach Swedes who worked in the far-flung mines, a task for which he needed a horse. He also revealed that instead of attending exclusively to the spiritual needs of Scandinavian immigrants, he envisaged an ethnically dualistic urban ministry. A mission to the Africans on the Witwatersrand was also needed, he emphasised, not least because of their moral depravity. Illustrating the latter point, Gullander noted that a few months earlier the police had arrested 700 prostitutes and sent them by rail to Cape Town but that they were gradually returning to the less stringent moral environment of Johannesburg. Gullander tugged directly at the heartstrings of his compatriots: "How do you respond, you who live over there in America? You are fully aware of the importance of [missionary] work in Africa". In addition to money, he pleaded for free subscriptions to *Augustana* as a means of stimulating ethno-religious interest amongst Swedish immigrants in Johannesburg and volunteered to reciprocate by writing regularly to that newspaper. Gullander mentioned that a gift of 400 books from a publisher in Stockholm would soon arrive and form the nucleus of a library for the Swedish community but asked readers of *Augustana* to supplement this collection because "there is no literature in our mother tongue here".²⁵

Gullander also sought to place his ministry under the aegis of the CSM. In July 1898 he renewed the application which he had submitted nearly three years earlier. Since his arrival in Johannesburg, he wrote, he had discovered that "one had not exaggerated the spiritual and moral decadence which prevails here". Gullander concluded his appeal by noting that he had resumed his study of the Zulu language, presumably implying that he could also serve the CSM by doing missionary work amongst Nguni migrants in and near Johannesburg.²⁶ Fifty people, most of whom had Swedish surnames, sought to bolster this application by writing almost simultaneously to the CSM and expressing their support of Gullander

'in the warmest terms'.²⁷ The steering committee did not discuss Gullander's appeal until mid-November, when it again declined his office of service.²⁸ In a rather curt letter to him written nearly two months later, Gudmar Hogner (1859-1935), the director of the CSM, merely indicated that 'in principle' it engaged only pastors who were ordained in the Church of Sweden, which Gullander was not.²⁹

In the meantime the financial plight of the infant congregation in Johannesburg had worsened. By August 1898 Gullander's Swedish account had reportedly dwindled to 1 000 crowns.³⁰ Incompatible opinions about ways to solve the crisis militated against arriving at a solution in the short term and, ultimately, contributed to a schism in the congregation. In November a group of well-intentioned women within the Swedish Society arranged a traditional Christmas bazaar to raise funds for the church. This clique, which called their auxiliary *Ledstjärnan* (i.e. The Lode Star), envisaged a distinctly Swedish congregation, whereas Gullander and many other Nordic immigrants hoped to establish a genuinely pan-Scandinavian one. Other women in Johannesburg, including some from Sweden, shared the latter vision.³¹ Gullander refused to sanction the *Ledstjärnan* proposal and, in the words of four leaders of this faction who protested to the steering committee of the Swedish Society, allegedly "opposed us in the most energetic way".³² This created additional tension between that organisation and the pastor who, ironically enough, had been named an honorary member of it only three months earlier.³³ Furthermore, the chairperson of the women's group who lodged the protest against Gullander was Alfa von Zweigbergk, whose impetuous husband, the well-to-do plaster manufacturer Gustaf von Zweigbergk then presided over the Swedish Society. Gullander was thus caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, his financial resources continued to dwindle and his efforts to obtain additional support from Swedish and American sources were bearing very little fruit. On the other hand, Gullander was increasingly at odds with the leadership of the Swedish Society, whose hedonistic lifestyle ran counter to his pietistic moral values and religious principles.³⁴

5 THE SCANDINAVIAN IMMIGRANT ECCLESIASTICAL

SCHISM

An irreparable breach occurred in November 1898. The Swedish Society decided on 5 November 1898 to announce a public meeting for all interested Scandinavian immigrants at which a discussion of the future of the church would head the agenda. Gullander, probably fearing that this would link the congregation formally to the Swedish Society acted swiftly to avert such an action. On 10 November 1898 he announced in the Johannesburg daily press that “the Scandinavians in the Transvaal are forming an Evangelistic [*sic*] Lutheran congregation, and intend to erect a church in Johannesburg”. Gullander declared that “assistance is expected from Scandinavians in Europe and America”. He stated that a general meeting would take place on an unspecified date and expressed his hope “that all Scandinavians will help, as much as they can”.³⁵ In what may have been an attempt to buy time and avoid an immediate confrontation with the leaders of the Swedish Society, after his sermon on 13 November 1898, he informed those in attendance that he would be out of town the following Sunday and consequently no service would be held on that day.³⁶ In fact, Gullander had decided that he would never again preach in the quarters of the Swedish Society. Again using the daily press as his neutral medium, he announced anonymously that ‘the Scandinavians’ would henceforth worship at the Good Templars’ Hall in central Johannesburg.³⁷

Von Zweigbergk, incensed at his Swedish Society’s impending loss of partial control of the incipient congregation, wrote immediately to the editors of *The Star* and *The Standard* and demanded to know on whose authority the announcement had been made. Without mentioning Gullander, whom he must have suspected, he declared that the services would continue as usual. Von Zweigbergk also invited ‘all Scandinavians’ to attend a meeting on 18 November 1898 in the rooms of the Swedish Society to consider “a question of urgent importance in connection with the church”.³⁸

These variant visions of the future of the church soon devolved into an acrimonious public debate. In a rejoinder printed in at least two newspapers in Johannesburg, Gullander insisted that Von Zweigbergk was mistaken in claiming that services would continue under the auspices of the Swedish Society unless, he added sarcastically, its chairman intended to officiate at them himself. In a transparently *ad hominem* slur aimed at the Swedish Society's chairman and other compatriots who did not share his pietistic spirituality, Gullander hoped "that those who have lost the faith of their childhood and do not (as it seems) believe in this movement, would keep quiet". He asserted that he would continue his mission despite the "private fancies and interests" of those Swedish immigrants who sought to impede it. "I have absolute right on my side and this I will defend", Gullander proclaimed.³⁹

Undaunted, the leaders of the Swedish Society proceeded with their plans to continue services in their building. Contrary to Gullander's sarcastic prediction, Von Zweigbergk did not have to officiate, because Emil Berg was willing to preach to the faction that remained there. At its meeting on 23 November 1898, the Swedish Society sought to complement this part-time preaching ministry by appointing a committee which would visit sick Scandinavians. Von Zweigbergk and his allies, moreover, reported the breach to the CSM, although what they sought to accomplish by doing so is not clear. Their action was probably intended as a retraction of their support of Gullander's application for affiliation with the CSM. In any case, they declared categorically that he was unfit to minister to the Scandinavians in Johannesburg. These leaders of the Swedish Society also insisted that Gullander had neglected his visitation ministry and informed the CSM of the newly appointed committee which would assume responsibility for this task.⁴⁰

Behind the scenes, some of Gullander's compatriots sought to heal the rift. At a meeting of the Swedish Society, an articulate mine worker named Carl David Appelgren (1850-1899) succeeded in getting what he called a 'conciliatory resolution' approved and sent to Gullander, who reportedly refused to accept this olive branch.⁴¹ The two unofficial congregations thus continued on their separate paths.

Probably feeling slighted, Appelgren returned the dispute to the public arena. In a polemical letter to *The Standard*, he sought to destroy Gullander's credibility. In his eagerness to get pledges for the planned church, he alleged, Gullander had acted independently, "without being assisted by a properly constituted vestry". Appelgren wondered why the ambitious newcomer had not "associated with himself the leading Scandinavians of Johannesburg" or, more formally, "trustees for the funds as would have met with the approval of the whole congregation". Appelgren also accused Gullander of arriving in Johannesburg "without proper credentials", perhaps unaware that the latter was a properly ordained pastor in the Augustana Synod and had secured testimonials from several of its officers. Finally, in an obvious misunderstanding, Appelgren declared that the Swedish Society had consistently striven to establish a pan-Scandinavian church on the Witwatersrand but that Gullander had undermined this ideal by insisting on the creation of a specifically Swedish one.⁴² This assertion cannot be harmonised with Gullander's repeated written statements that his ministry would extend beyond his own ethnic group.

The beleaguered pastor's flock rallied to his defence and replied in kind words to Appelgren's assault two days after it appeared. Matching his distortion of the facts, they explained that when Emil Berg had proven unsatisfactory as a pastor they had concluded that "nothing but a Swede would do" and had consequently appealed to ecclesiastical authorities in Sweden in their search for one. They disagreed entirely with Appelgren's contention that Gullander was a narrow-gauged nationalist, however, and emphasised that the subscription lists which he had sent out had borne the Swedish and Norwegian consul's seal of approval. Finally, these allies accused the Swedish Society's leaders of behaving like "a spoilt child who tells its mother everything" by complaining to the CSM about the local dispute.⁴³

6 GULLANDER'S SECOND DISPUTATIOUS SCANDINAVIAN IMMIGRANT CONGREGATION

With this loyal corps of followers behind him, Gullander proceeded to found a formally constituted church. He announced a constituent meeting to be held in the Good Templars' Hall on 18 December 1898 and requested all Scandinavians in the region to attend.⁴⁴ After an abbreviated morning service, an unspecified number of people agreed to form the 'Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Johannesburg' and elected a committee to administer its affairs.⁴⁵ Within a week they drafted a constitution, which the people who attended the service on 26 December 1898, approved. By mid-January forty-nine people had signed this document. The signatories were indeed a pan-Scandinavian lot, including Danes with names like Sørensen, Jensen, and Prior, Norwegian-bearing names like Houge, Berg, and Høyer, and Swedes with such names as Edlund, Lindberg, and Hermanson.

The precise size of the congregation has proven historiographically problematical. In an unreliable sketch of the Scandinavians on the Witwatersrand before 1902, the American historian Alan H Winquist declared that it had "fifty-one original members".⁴⁶ At what point this was the case, however, is not entirely clear. Winquist indicates that these members "passed and accepted" the constitution on 18 December 1898,⁴⁷ but in fact the committee had not even drafted it by that date. No more than other congregations in Johannesburg did the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Johannesburg have a static membership. Winquist refers to a peculiar list of signatories of the constitution which Gullander published in January 1899. Compounding the confusion, Winquist reproduces forty-eight names from this list.⁴⁸ That register, however, is not a membership list. Indeed, in an accompanying statement, Gullander expressed the wish that the signatories would join the congregation and declared that 'several' had already done so. Further undercutting Winquist's assertion and bringing his mathematics into question is the fact that the list does not include fifty-one names, but rather fifty-three, and four of them are unquestionably duplicates. Besides these forty-nine people, moreover, there was Gullander himself.⁴⁹ As many of the early records of the congregation are not extant, it is probably impossible to establish with precision its size at birth. In any case, it was small and included only a small fraction of the Scandinavian immigrants on the Witwatersrand. In an account of his activities in the

South African Republic published shortly after the turn of the century, Gullander conceded that only about fifty people joined the church and that most of the Nordic newcomers in the Johannesburg area “do not have any interest in ecclesiastical affairs”.⁵⁰

Undaunted by the continuing disaffection of the Nordic masses with formal religious life, Gullander pressed ahead with his young flock, which Swedes by no means dominated. On 26 February 1899 a parish council comprising representatives from Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Suedophone Finland replaced the provisional committee. Eight weeks later this distinctly Scandinavian congregation left the Good Templars' Hall and began to worship in a room which *Nordkap* (ie North Cape), a very active Norwegian fraternal organisation, placed at its disposal without charge. During the first service at this venue Emil Berg, who only briefly had co-operated with the Swedish Society, confirmed two of his sons after Gullander's sermon. A Norwegian woman, Aagot Welge, played the congregation's new organ. Two members who were the proprietors of a small hotel gave Gullander free meals daily.⁵¹

Not all the non-Swedish Nordic immigrants were satisfied with this arrangement, and some questioned the sincerity of it at a time when tensions between Norway and Sweden were mounting and would lead to a dissolution of their union in 1905. One of the most outspoken detractors was H Anton Høyer, a Norwegian nationalist and newspaper distributor. He attacked Gullander in *Skandinaven* (i.e. Scandinavia), which was then Southern Africa's only Scandinavian periodical. Høyer incorrectly referred to him as a 'lay preacher' whose behaviour had precipitated the ecclesiastical schism in Johannesburg. He attributed this to Gullander's alleged disingenuousness in creating a Scandinavian congregation. To Høyer's mind, he was little more than a Swede who had come to the Witwatersrand to minister to Swedes and, only after his alienation from the Swedish Society, had he begun to pose as a pastor to the Scandinavians in general there.⁵² Anyone in a position to assay these accusations with the touchstone of the pertinent evidence could recognise them as essentially false. But Høyer revealed no such familiarity with the facts.

Gullander's allies again rallied to his public defence, though not until three months after Høyer's attack had appeared in print. Replying to it in *Skandinaven*, the seven-person parish council picked apart Høyer's accusations by pointing out that their pastor had consistently acted in good faith and in co-operation with responsible ecclesiastical authorities in the United States of America and Sweden. They insisted that from the outset Gullander had explicitly sought to gather a Scandinavian church, not an exclusively Swedish one.⁵³ Høyer issued a rejoinder in the same newspaper a few weeks later. He denied that he had sought to impede Gullander's ministry but repeated his unsubstantiated accusation that the young pastor was not a sincere pan-Scandinavian and asserted that on both sides of the Atlantic Gullander had announced his intention to minister to 'Swedes' and had never mentioned the other Nordic nationalities until several months after his arrival in Johannesburg. With a final thrust of his rhetorical rapier at the new church, Høyer depicted the meeting at which it was officially formed as "an ecclesiastical fiasco if not entirely a theatrical performance". He declined to explain why he regarded it as such or give any details of that convocation, but by then the establishment of a genuinely pan-Scandinavian church was a *fait accompli*. It would function without interruption for several more months until the Second Anglo-Boer War prompted many of the Nordic immigrants to flee to Natal and the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope.⁵⁴

Before that flight reached major proportions in October 1899, the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church became a fairly active if small congregation, and Gullander developed a multifaceted ministry to it. He admitted in 1902 that the number of communicants had never risen significantly above fifty but attributed this partly to the spiritually exclusive nature of the church. According to its constitution, prospective members had to be examined with regard to their faith. What this involved is not fully clear. It is unlikely that applicants had to profess a conversion experience, as that would have been quite foreign to the Lutheran tradition in general and gone beyond the strictures of the pietistic tradition which Gullander represented. In any case, he insisted retrospectively that the examination was "undeniably a real advantage" and that it had excluded "several wealthy and respected Scandinavians" from the

congregation. The fact that some people who otherwise may have joined had to spend their Sundays working in the mines also reportedly limited membership. Gullander baptised approximately a dozen children into the church in 1899, some of them two or three years old. He also officiated at the funerals of an undisclosed number of Scandinavians, not all of whom belonged to the congregation. The young pastor usually visited the hospital in Johannesburg twice a week. He lamented, though, that many of the sick Nordic immigrants to whom he ministered there broke their promises to attend his services after they were discharged.⁵⁵

Whatever disadvantages Gullander's church had during its short life, it soon faced practically no direct competition in its efforts to serve the Scandinavian population. The services at the Swedish Society appear to have ceased after Berg joined the new church. According to Gullander, a 'certain gentleman' whom he did not name briefly preached to and served as the 'spiritual leader' of the rival flock. That layman, however, reportedly 'found it difficult to stay sober' and in effect presided over the dissolution of what Gullander sarcastically called the 'counterservices' of the Swedish Society.⁵⁶

7 GULLANDER'S TENT-MAKER MINISTRY TO AFRICAN MINeworkERS

Despite its relatively small size, the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church planned in 1899 to construct a chapel. The necessity of acquiring a free site for the proposed building is underscored by the fact that the congregation was either unable or unwilling to pay Gullander a salary. He consequently had to support himself by taking employment as the librarian at Rose Deep Mine in Germiston near Johannesburg, a position which a Danish immigrant director of that company named L Pedersen secured for him. Gullander began to work there early in 1899 when the weak financial position of his flock, which appears to have included very few prosperous Scandinavians on the Witwatersrand, became obvious. This position brought the energetic pastor into closer proximity with

African labourers than had previously been the case. He used the opportunity to pursue some of the first Scandinavian missionary work amongst urbanised indigenous people in the South African Republic. In this brief endeavour, which entailed *inter alia* preaching at a chapel which the Rose Deep company erected for its ca 2 000 employees, Gullander co-operated with one of the sons of the renowned Scottish missionary Robert Moffatt.⁵⁷

After only a few months of dividing his professional time between ministry to Scandinavian immigrants, librarianship, and missionary work amongst black miners, Gullander left the library and began to gain his livelihood as the manager of the compound where most of the other Rose Deep employees stayed. This government-supported post brought him into even closer contact with the sons of Africa, whom he described in deprecating terms. Much of his work, he explained in his memoirs, consisted of preserving some semblance of order amongst these 'savages of human beings' and ensuring that each shift of workers succeeded the preceding one in the mines on time. Gullander related that often immoderate consumption of alcohol made the labourers under his supervision so unruly "that the so-called 'six-shooter' had to be relied on in order to maintain order and protect life and property". It is not known whether he ever bore arms himself, but he expressed gratitude for the ninety black policemen and watchmen who assisted him. Gullander also committed to writing his approval of the system of pass laws which then obtained in the South African Republic as a comprehensive means of controlling the mobility of black labourers. The 'Boers' who had devised this system, he wrote, had created "a true ideal of governance and order in the administration of their country". Gullander acknowledged that one could thereby feel incarcerated but tempered even this moderate criticism of the pass laws by insisting that they were "not necessarily uncomfortable" or a "great limitation of one's freedom". In harmony with his condoning of this structural means of control, he mentioned without critical comment that blacks who violated certain regulations incurred punishments of as many as sixty lashes with a whip.⁵⁸ Nothing in the extant evidence indicates that Gullander ever rose above the condescension and paternalism which characterised countless nineteenth-century Scandinavian and other European missionaries' attitudes towards the indigenous Africans whom they

were evangelising or that he felt any moral obligation to work for more just or even humane treatment of the men under his supervision.

Gullander repeatedly expressed admiration of the Afrikaans population of the Transvaal. Indeed, before, during, and after the Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902 he betrayed his support of the republican defence against the overwhelming might of the British Empire, as did many people in Scandinavia. In mid-1899, as the threat of war loomed on the horizon, Gullander belittled *Uitlander* grievances and declared that “anyone is blind who does not see that the principal cause [of war-mongering in the South African Republic] is the commercial and speculative interests in this rich land of gold. And since money is a power, capitalists naturally believe they have the right to lead England and the Transvaal into a war, however destructive it may be, in order to protect their personal interests”. He publicly urged fellow Scandinavians to join in prayer for divine protection of the South African Republic.⁵⁹ After more than 100 equally pro-Boer Nordic immigrants in that country rallied to its defence a few months later by forming the Scandinavian Corps, an irregular regiment of volunteers,⁶⁰ Gullander suggested that he accompany these men into battle as their chaplain. This appears to have been only after the Corps was devastated at the battle of Magersfontein in December 1899, however, because Gullander explained that he had changed his mind on the advice of Christer Uggla (1865-1945), a Swedish engineer who had helped to organise the Corps but who informed him that it was near the end of its days in a losing cause.⁶¹ Looking ahead momentarily, when Gullander spent part of 1900 in Sweden he vigorously defended the Afrikaners against what he asserted were false British accusations that they mistreated black Africans. If that were not the case, Gullander reasoned in response to a journalist’s query, urban indigenous labourers could easily rise up against the hard-pressed government of the South African Republic and ally with the British instead of, in many cases, serving on the republican side. Twisting his logic, he declared that British mining companies treated their African employees like beasts of burden, segregated them from European colleagues, and guarded them like criminals in the compounds. The ‘Boers’, by contrast, while ‘strict’, were nevertheless ‘extremely fair to

the natives, who accept this'. Gullander did not explain, however, why these exploited mineworkers did not revolt against their oppressive English employers. Nor did he reveal how he could generalise that "those who have served Boers are generally better trained than those of their compatriots who are in the employ of the English". Gullander conceded, though, that it was "advantageous for the Europeans that the mining companies have such good access to the blacks. They do the crudest and heaviest work, and even if the whites sometimes have to toil hard for their rather high wages, the natives have to toil even harder".⁶² This Swedish pastor's attitudes towards black Africans were thus inconsistent and are consequently difficult to summarise with precision. On the one hand, he clearly regarded them as culturally inferior to and less mature than Europeans. He was obviously grateful that Africans were present in abundance to perform arduous tasks which whites disdained. On the other hand, at times Gullander believed Europeans were obliged to treat their black employees more mildly than many did, although it is impossible to know whether he openly advocated this while he himself was employed in privileged positions in the exploitative mining industry.

8 GULLANDER'S DEPARTURE FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Illness forced Gullander to leave the South African Republic early in 1900, some four months after the outbreak of war. He wrote two years later that during his spell on the Witwatersrand an unspecified malady had caused him to be hospitalised three times. A medical doctor had then urged him to go elsewhere to recover his strength in a 'milder climate'. Gullander also wrote that the war had made it impossible to continue his ministry to Scandinavians in and near Johannesburg, the majority of whom had by then quit the area. When missionaries in the CSM invited him to recuperate at one of their stations in Natal until the cessation of hostilities, Gullander responded by sending most of his clothing and books to Dundee. Then, however, he had a change of mind, perhaps because Boer victories during the first few months of the war and the British response of dispatching large numbers of additional soldiers to

Southern Africa made it apparent that the fighting might continue much longer than initially expected. Gullander thus acquired a passport from E B Suhrke, the Swedish-Norwegian consul in Johannesburg, bade the remnant of his Nordic congregation farewell, and left Johannesburg for Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) in Portuguese East Africa (subsequently Moçambique) on 26 February 1900. From there he sailed via Durban and London back to Sweden, apparently defying the previously cited medical advice to convalesce in a gentler climate than that which the highveld had offered in the summer.⁶³

Thus ended Gullander's direct participation in ministry to Scandinavian immigrants and urbanised Africans on the Witwatersrand. This former missionary declared later in 1900 that he intended to return to the field and resume his urban work after the end of the war.⁶⁴ In fact, Gullander never set foot on South African soil again. His involvement on behalf of the endeavours he had undertaken continued for several more years, though, chiefly through his resumption of efforts to raise funds in both Sweden and the United States of America. Immediately before leaving Johannesburg he had secured a testimonial letter signed by three of that city's Swedes and one Norwegian who declared that the congregation had received a free plot from the government but needed approximately 90 000 Swedish crowns, or some £5 000, to erect a chapel on it. Without a permanent place of worship and with the war raging, they explained, very little could be done in terms of effective ministry to the Scandinavians on the Witwatersrand.⁶⁵ Amongst Swedish-Americans Gullander's efforts to collect part of this sum involved above all else the publication of his account of his *Tre år i Afrika* (i.e. Three years in Africa), a self-justifying autobiographical narrative in which he described the need for a Lutheran ministry to Scandinavians in Johannesburg but mentioned virtually nothing about the strife in which he had repeatedly been involved. Gullander also travelled widely in the United States of America, taking the matter directly to congregations of the Augustana Synod while simultaneously working for that denomination's publishing house in Rock Island, Illinois. He urged readers of the Augustana Synod's periodical, *Augustana*, to contribute to the cause. His efforts were not particularly fruitful. In August 1903 Gullander reported that he had

collected only about \$1 000.⁶⁶ In the meantime, the stagnation of his fund-raising campaign, despite an upswing in the American economy, had stimulated him to turn to Sweden for assistance. In October 1901 Gullander wrote to Bishop von Scheele, who a few years earlier had played a pivotal rôle in conveying to the Augustana Synod the request of Swedes in Johannesburg for a pastor. He explained to the bishop that the Augustana Synod and particularly its president, Eric Norelius, were sympathetic to his efforts on behalf of Swedes in Johannesburg but were too preoccupied with immigrant congregations in North America to be of noteworthy assistance to Swedes on the other side of the world. Gullander thus proposed that the CSM become involved with Scandinavian ministry on the Witwatersrand and volunteered to turn over to that body the money he had raised amongst Swedish-Americans. He requested von Scheele to submit this proposal to the steering committee of the CSM.⁶⁷ Gullander's part in the endeavour thus ended.

9 CONCLUSION

The saga of Gullander's brief ministry adds another chip to the kaleidoscopic history of Christianity on the Witwatersrand during a period of rapid social, economic, and religious change. His generally troubled interaction with the Scandinavian congregation sheds further light on how people could become disaffected with organised religious life when such factors as heightened ethnic loyalty, financial obligations, and disagreements about the fundamental nature of the Christian life divided people with a considerable measure of cultural commonality into hostile camps. That only a small proportion of the Nordic immigrants in and near Johannesburg ever became active members in the Scandinavian or Swedish Lutheran community there is thus hardly surprising. Coming from a rapidly secularising country and having immigrated to Southern Africa chiefly for pecuniary reasons, they did not readily find themselves in spiritual or moral agreement with the ordained ministers of the Lutheran heritage.

To be sure, Gullander's contacts with indigenous Africans were probably too insignificant to warrant further investigation of their relationship to the general history of missionary endeavours on the

Witwatersrand or even the Swedish Lutheran part of them, which began almost immediately after the conclusion of the war in 1902. That is essentially a different and much broader chapter in the religious history of the region. Nevertheless, his unhappy experiences with migratory labourers underscores the fact that immigrants from seemingly innocuous nations with little history of racial tension, including those called to proclaim God's love for humanity, could mimic local whites' disparaging remarks and willingness to use violent means of control. Condescending, paternalistic, and fearful attitudes towards Africans on the Witwatersrand, in other words, were not limited to Afrikaners or English speakers.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Frederick Hale, 2005. "Swedish Lutheran Missionaries on the Witwatersrand, 1902-1960". Doctor of Philosophy dissertation, University of Pretoria.
- 2 Paul Gullander, *Tre år i Afrika* (Rock Island: privately published, 1902).
- 3 For the history of these departments, see Frederick Hale, "The Dano-Norwegian Department of Chicago Theological Seminary", *The Bridge*, VII, no 1 (1984), pp 12-29, and Frederick Hale, "The Swedish Department of Chicago Theological Seminary", *Bulletin of the Congregational Library*, XXXII, no 2 (Winter 1981), pp 4-14.
- 4 Emilie Forbord (Bulunga) to *Evangelisten*, 20 July 1893, in *Evangelisten*, (5 October 1893), p 4; Carl Poulsen (Ekutandaneni) to Pastor Madsen, 1 June 1893, in *Morgensstjernen*, V, no 15 (15 July 1893), p 94.
- 5 Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II: 6, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelses Protokoll 1894-1897*, Paul Gullander (Rock Island, Illinois) to CSM Steering Committee, 16 September 1895.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Church of Sweden Mission Archives, uncatalogued manuscripts, *Paul Gullander minnesbok*, Paul Gullander (Rock Island, Illinois) to F L Fristedt, 13 September 1894.
- 8 *Paul Gullander minnesbok*, Paul Gullander (Rock Island, Illinois) to F L Fristedt, 30 December 1895.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I: 3, *Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelses Protokoll 1894-1902*, 14 February 1896.
- 11 For a brief biographical account of Claudelin, see *Gotlänningen* (Visby), 4 March 1921 (obituary).
- 12 *Paul Gullander minnesbok*, Paul Gullander (Washington, Connecticut) to Ad W Claudelin, 27 June 1896.
- 13 *Paul Gullander minnesbok*, Paul Gullander (Washington, Connecticut) to Johannes Telleen, 21 September 1896.
- 14 Gullander, *Tre år i Afrika*, p 19.
- 15 Ibid, p 20.
- 16 Ibid, pp 24, 26.
- 17 *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelses Protokoll 1898-1899*, Paul Gullander (Johannesburg) to CSM Steering Committee, 18 July 1898.
- 18 Adolf W Claudelin (Johannesburg) to unspecified recipient, 24 November 1897, in *Lunds Missions-Tidning*, LII, no 1 (January 1898), pp 8-9.
- 19 Ibid, pp 9-10.
- 20 Ibid, p 10.
- 21 "Något om den kyrkliga verksamhet, som utöfwats bland skandinaverna i Johannesburg af pastor Paul Gullander", *Lunds Missions-Tidning*, LIV, no 9 (September 1898), p 164.
- 22 *The Standard and Diggers' News* (Johannesburg), 24 September 1898.
- 23 "Något om den kyrkliga verksamhet", pp 164-165.
- 24 Ibid, p 165.
- 25 Paul Gullander (Johannesburg) to *Augustana*, 18 April 1898, in *Augustana*, XLIII, no 24 (16 June 1898), pp 371-372.
- 26 Paul Gullander to CSM Steering Committee, 18 July 1898.
- 27 *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelses Protokoll 1898-1899*, fifty signatories (Johannesburg) to CSM Steering Committee, 9 July 1898.
- 28 Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A I: 3, *Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelses Protokoll 1894-1902*, 14 November 1898.
- 29 Church of Sweden Mission Archives, B II: 1, *Missionsdirektorns Koncept Hogner 1897-1900*, Gudmar Hogner (Uppsala) to Paul Gullander, 4 January 1898 [sic].
- 30 J[ohannes] T[elleen], "Skandinaverna i Syd-Afrika", *Augustana*, XLIII, no 42 (20 October 1898), p 660.
- 31 Gullander, "Något om den kyrkliga verksamhet", p 164.
- 32 *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelses Protokoll 1898-1899*, Alfa von Zweigbergk et al. (Johannesburg) to Swedish Society Steering Committee, 30 November 1898.
- 33 *Paul Gullander minnesbok*, Nils Åkerblom (Johannesburg) to Pastor Gullander, 19 August 1898.

- 34 Gullander, "Något om den kyrkliga verksamhet", p 165.
- 35 *The Star* (Johannesburg), 10 November 1898.
- 36 *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelses Protokoll 1898-1899*, Gustaf von Zweigbergk et al. (Johannesburg) to CSM Steering Committee, 26 November 1899.
- 37 *The Star*, 16 November 1898; *The Standard* (Johannesburg), 17 November 1898. Newspaper cuttings of these two announcements in the uncatalogued Gullander archivalia in the Church of Sweden Mission Archives bear his signature, so there can be no question that he was the author of them.
- 38 *The Star*, 17 November 1898; *The Standard*, 18 November 1898.
- 39 Paul Gullander (Johannesburg) to *The Standard* and *The Star*, 19 November 1898, in *The Standard* and *The Star*, 21 November 1898.
- 40 *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelses Protokoll 1898-1899*, Gustaf von Zweigbergk et al. (Johannesburg) to CSM Steering Committee, 26 November 1898.
- 41 C D Appelgren (South Randfontein) to *The Standard*, 23 November 1898, in *The Standard*, 14 December 1898.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 "Several Subscribers" (unspecified provenance) to *The Standard*, 16 December 1898, in *The Standard*, 19 December 1898.
- 44 *The Star*, 14 December 1898 (advertisement).
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- 46 Alan H Winquist, *Scandinavians and South Africa. Their impact on the cultural, social and economic development of pre-1902 South Africa* (Cape Town and Rotterdam: A A Balkema, 1978), p 115.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Ibid, pp 211-212.
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- 50 Gullander, *Tre år i Afrika*, p 43.
- 51 Ibid, pp 42-43.
- 52 Anton Høyer (Johannesburg) to *Skandinaven*, undated, in *Skandinaven*, 9 February 1899.
- 53 E Boman et al. (Johannesburg) to *Skandinaven*, 20 May 1899, in *Skandinaven*, 22 June 1899.
- 54 Anton Høyer (Johannesburg) to *Skandinaven*, June 1899, in *Skandinaven*, 13 July 1899.
- 55 Gullander, *Tre år i Afrika*, pp 42-43.
- 56 Ibid, p 41.
- 57 Ibid, pp 50-51.
- 58 Ibid, pp 160-162.
- 59 Paul Gullander (Germiston) to *Skandinaven*, 23 June 1899, in *Skandinaven*, 29 June 1899.
- 60 The most recent scholarly treatment of this irregular unit is Frederick Hale, "The Scandinavian Corps in the Second Anglo-Boer War", *Historia*, XLV, no 1 (May 2000), pp 220-237.
- 61 Gullander, *Tre år i Afrika*, p 162.
- 62 *Trelleborgs Tidningen*, 27 June 1900 (interview).
- 63 Gullander, *Tre år i Afrika*, pp 159-160, 162-165.
- 64 Gullander, "Något om den kyrkliga verksamhet", p 168.
- 65 Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II: 8, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelses Protokoll 1900-1901*, testimonial letter by M. Hansen Stormoen et al. (Johannesburg), February 1900.
- 66 Church of Sweden Mission Archives, A II: 10, *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelses Protokoll 1903*, Paul Gullander (Rock Island, Illinois) to Archbishop J.A. Ekman, 22 August 1903.
- 67 *Bilagor till Svenska Kyrkans Missionsstyrelses Protokoll 1900-1901*, Paul Gullander (Minneapolis) to Bishop K H von Scheele, 31 October 1901.