EVANGELISKA FOSTERLANDS-STIFTELSEN (EFS): EVANGELICAL REVIVALISM AND SECULARISATION IN SWEDEN 1856 –1910

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the relation between revivalism and secularisation through the Swedish Evangelical-Lutheran organisation *Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen* (EFS – approximately the Swedish Evangelical Mission Society) between 1856 and 1910.

Secularisation is a problematic expression, but here it is used to describe a changing perception of religion in terms of personalisation and individualisation of beliefs.

Christianity provided by the State church was compulsory and self-evident in early 19th century Sweden. In mid 19th century the homogeneous society began to fall apart; a transformation related to modernisation. Within the religious sphere, different revivals undermined the Church's hegemony. EFS was founded in an attempt to safeguard the confessional content of the revival.

In the beginning of the examined period EFS' antagonists were mainly non-confessional branches of Christianity. During the latest quarter of the century the situation changed under the influence of a more pluralistic society. EFS and the Church became alternatives among other ideologies and lifestyles, which had to be marketed and sold. On a national level EFS' competitors now became different secularists, and EFS also started to form its own identity separated from the Church. Locally EFS adapted to the new market situation by downgrading the specific Lutheran content and instead emphasising the social aspect. This transformation can be described in terms of secularisation, denominationalisation, and individualisation of beliefs.

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Abbreviations

DUF	De ungas förbund, approx. The Association for the Young
EFS	Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen, approx. The Swedish Evangelical Mission Society
EFSA	EFS' Archive located in Stockholm
EFSAR	EFS' Annual Reports
SMF	Svenska Missionsförbundet, approx. The Swedish Mission Covenant Church
Ubl	Umebladet, newspaper in Umeå
Wbl	Westerbotten, newspaper in Umeå

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation will focus on the changes the confessional and Evangelical-Lutheran revivalist organisation EFS – *Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen* (abbreviation for approximately The Swedish Evangelical Mission Society) underwent during its first fifty years, i.e. 1856-1910. These changes can be described as for example a process of democratisation on an institutional level. However, the transformation can also be expressed in terms of, and in relation to a contemporary process of secularisation. During the second half of the 19th century, something happened with the perception of religiosity in Sweden. This transformation can be described in terms of secularisation, in the sense that religion became privatised. The changing perception occurred due to social/external reasons including industrialisation, urbanisation, and the increasing significance of science (i.e. modernization). Under these circumstances it became more problematic to claim the universal significance and truth of the Christian doctrines. For the State Church it became increasingly more difficult for the all-embracing Swedish State Church to maintain its authoritarian position.

This also gave echo within the whole religious sphere, which transformed in order to (consciously or unconsciously) preserve its meaning to the people. Therefore we have a situation where external, social factors, interact with internal, religious ones, in the process of secularisation. EFS constitutes one important element in this process in Sweden.

This dissertation will focus on the Swedish Evangelical and confessional revivalist organisation EFS, which through contemporary influences from the Evangelical revival, wanted to revitalise the State church. This was not an unproblematic project. At the same time as they started to stress the individual relation to God, in an Evangelical tradition, and founded an organisation set apart from the Church (but strictly confessional), it undermined the Church from within. Under pressure of external factors EFS transformed in order to adapt to an increasingly pluralistic market situation.

Sweden was, in mid 19th century, to a large extent not industrialised or urbanised, and still religiously homogenous – one nation and one Church. There was no competition between "the Church" and "the Chapel", as in for example Britain. There were also legal restrictions for religious activities outside the Church in the beginning of the examined period. Competition between "the Church" and "the Chapel" is a later phenomenon, but constitutes a part of this study. This study will examine the early stages in this process.

The theological content of the revivalist movement is not particularly interesting, rather its social implications. Therefore I focus on the revival as a social phenomenon even if it is easy to realise the problems with this distinction.

Some concluding remarks to the introduction; I have no intention to evaluate and judge the transformation EFS underwent. I make no attempt to explain what went wrong on the way when EFS, the Church, and Christianity over all, today struggle with their relevance. In too many cases, authors are writing from their own agenda with a specific aim. Writing about secularisation is a subject closely related to one's own opinions and might be a way of expressing either discontent with religiosity, or

supporting one's own religious affiliation. I can not claim to stand apart from my background and experiences, and that is probably the cause to why I will not make such judgements. I can only establish the fact that during the latter half of the 19th century, Swedish society changed, which, among other things, affected the perception of religion, and I want to describe, examine, and analyse this transformation.

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. The second chapter constitutes the theoretical and contextual background. In the third chapter, aim and work of the national, central EFS will be studied with focus on its activities within Sweden. The chapter is mainly based upon printed annual reports published by EFS. The fourth chapter is a local study with the aim of examining one local congregation and its development. Letters to the central EFS, now located in EFS' archive (stored in the archive of the city of Stockholm, *Stockholms stadsarkiv*), local newspapers, and printed compilations of visitation records from the diocese, constitute the main empirical foundation. The last chapter constitutes the conclusion and the discussion.

The Swedish academic context

Secularisation is not a major issue within Swedish history, and there is no equivalent of the English expression "religious history". However, in recent years, something is beginning to happen and religiosity as a foundation for popular beliefs is in a larger extent in focus.

Some scholars have chosen to place the process of secularisation to the 18th century. Oja studies the changing roll of magic during the 16th and 17th centuries Sweden. She examines the changing conception of magical and natural causes, and relates this development to the scientific progresses and enlightenment among the elite. According to her, secularisation occurs when natural causes replace and explain previous magic phenomenon.[1] In Bergfeldt's thesis the changing role of the (State) church is the object of examination. The declining legislative role of the Church, and Church and communion attendance are studied.[2] Both studies focus on secularisation on an institutional level.

Jarrick dates secularisation to the 18th century too. The study is interesting since it relates secularisation to the Herrnhutistic revival, and its emphasis on the personal relation to God, contrary to a collective conception of religiosity.[3] Sanders has a similar understanding of secularisation. She relates secularisation to the process of privatisation of faith in the early popular revivalist movement, during the first half of the 19th century.[4] Both Jarrick's and Sanders' view on secularisation have been useful, but the date for the religious shift is too early, and it has a too restricted diffusion.

In Martling's study secularisation is dated to the second half of the 19th century. He acknowledges the important role of both a more modern and pluralistic society, and the undermining role of contemporary revivalist movements. Modern

[1] Linda Oja, *Varken Gud eller natur: Synen på magi i 1600- och 1700-talets Sverige* (Eslöv, 1999).
[2] Börje Bergfeldt, *Den teokratiska statens död: Sekularisering och civilisering i 1700-talets Stockholm* (Stockholm, 1997).
[3] Arne Jarrick, *Den himmelske älskaren: Herrnhutisk väckelse, vantro och sekularisering i 1700-talets Sverige* (Stockholm, 1987).
[4] Hanne Sanders, *Bondevaekkelse og sekularisering: En protestantisk folkelig kultur i Danmark og Sverige 1820-1850* (Stockholm, 1995).

society and revivals entailed a fragmented Church which could not maintain its hegemony (exemplified through communion attendance).[5]

I place my work within the context of two Swedish academic projects dealing with the 19th century. One concerns voluntary associations, popular movements and adult education in the northern part of Sweden (*Norrlands bildningshistoria*), and the other with popular movements and class (*Klassamhällets funktioner: Folkrörelserna*). Significant is the small role the revivalist movement and religiosity play in these surveys, and secularisation is not an issue. Nevertheless, both projects are important since they constitute the context to this study. Qvarsell's survey belongs to the former project. He studies middle class based associations and the growth of a public sphere during the 19th century in a town in northern Sweden. In Ambjörnsson's study the mentality behind the respectable worker is examined. In both studies, and in Olsson's study of the educated and respectable citizen, the religious content is tuned down.[6]

The latter project studies the popular voluntary movements, the revivalist movement included, but without involving secularisation. One problem is also that EFS is unproblematically treated as a popular movement, despite its obvious middle class character.[7]

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[5] Carl Henrik Martling, *Nattvardskrisen i Karlstads stift under 1800-talets senare hälft* (Lund, 1958); idem, *Kyrkosed och sekularisering* (Stockholm, 1961).

[6] Roger Qvarsell, *Kulturmiljö och idéspridning: Idédebatt, bokspridning och sällskapsliv kring 1800-talets mitt* (Stockholm, 1988); Ronny Ambjörnsson, *Den skötsamme arbetaren: Idéer och ideal i ett norrländskt sågverkssamhälle 1880-1930* (Stockholm, 1988); Björn Olsson, *Den bildade borgaren: Bildningssträvan och folkbildning i en norrländsk småstad* (Stockholm, 1994).

[7] For a conclusion of the project see Sven Lundkvist, *Folkrörelserna i det svenska samhället* 1850-1920 (Stockholm, 1977).

Jansson's study is the starting-point when middle class based association is examined within a Swedish context, but, here as well, the religious content is put in the background.[8]

Within Church history, the focus has mainly been on some specific internal and theological issues. For example Lundqvist's two works on EFS are relevant in this case, but they do not in a wide extent focus on the social context of EFS.[9]

[8] Torkel Jansson, *Adertonhundratalets associationer: Forskning och problem kring ett sprängfullt tomrum eller sammanslutningsprinciper och föreningsformer mellan två samhällsformationer c:a 1800-1870* (Stockholm, 1985).

[9] Karl Axel Lundqvist, *Organisation och bekännelse: Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen och Svenska kyrkan 1890-1911* (Stockholm, 1977), idem, *EFS i demokratins tidevarv: Utvecklingen som inomkyrklig rörelse 1918-1927* (Stockholm, 1982).

CHAPTER 2

SECULARISATION AND REVIVALISM – INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

Secularisation

> "Secularisation occurs when supernatural religion – that is, religion based on 'belief in God or a future state' – becomes private, optional and problematic."[10]

What is actually secularisation? Is it as simple as the quotation by Edwards suggests? At this point I make no attempt to describe the "true" meaning of secularisation. I rather discuss in what way "secularisation" is useful and applicable for my purpose.

Most of us agree on the basic features of the process of secularisation. In short secularisation is "the diminishing social significance of religion", but in what way this happened (if it has happened at all), is widely debated.[11]

The process is basically described in the "secularisation thesis". According to the thesis, the fading role of religion is mainly a result of the rise of modern society.

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[10] David L. Edwards, *Religion and Change* (London, 1969), 16.
[11] Roy Wallis & Steve Bruce, "Secularization: The Orthodox Model", in *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis*, ed. Steve Bruce (Oxford, 1992), 11.

Under pressure from the process of modernisation, related to the emergence of industrialised society, religion inevitably lost its all-embracing significance both in an institutional sense, and for a majority of the people.

According to the thesis, the process of modernisation led to important changes within three key areas. Bruce and Wallis summon up these characteristics in: *social differentiation*, *societalization* and *rationalization*.[12]

Social differentiation is the process which led to that specialised roles and institutions developed to deal with specific areas of society, which previously were dealt with by one, hegemonic, institution – often the Church. Education, welfare, health care, social control and so on, were institutionalised and run separately from each other. Differentiation due to modernisation and industrialisation also entailed the emergence of social classes, and class society. Society became more pluralistic and fragmentised, especially in industrialised areas. This also implies that secularisation, according to the "thesis", mainly applies to the urbanised part of society. As a result of this development "the plausibility of a single moral universe in which all manner and conditions of persons have a place in some grand design is subverted."[13]

Societalization is the process in which society is re-organised to concern the notion of the society or the national state as a whole, instead of the local village or the family. The process of industrialisation made rural and close-knit society weaker, and replaced it with urban forms of organisations. Hierarchical, large-scale, production and organisation replaced the small-scale community. The modern state emerged with its impersonal bureaucracies. The individual was emancipated from enforced structures in exchange for an anonymous existence in urban surroundings. Wilson

[12] Ibid. See also Bryan R. Wilson, in for an example, *Contemporary Transformations of Religion* (London, 1976), who seems to be the foundation to Bruce and Willis.

argues that religion has it source and strength in the organically structured rural community, and it loses its significance in a society not based upon the close-knit community.[14] The consequence is, once again, that the plausibility for any single moral or religious overarching system becomes a matter of personal preferences and becomes a voluntary activity.[15]

Finally, *rationalization* implies that the mind and mentality of people, and the way they act change under influence of social alterations, as mentioned above. It is the process which for example includes the separation of the realm of God from the world. Paradoxically, this division has been enforced in order to "purify" Christianity by, for instance, Protestant Reformers, Puritans and Evangelicals. Therefore, says Berger, "Christianity has been its own gravedigger".[16] Berger and Bruce say that this separation, emphasised after the Reformation, opened up the world for exploring and hence laid the ground for the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, which in the long run undermined Christianity.

This "orthodox" view on secularisation has been criticised because it contains the preconceived idea that lower strata of society, the new urban working class, were the first to lose their religion, a statement balanced by more recent historical research.[17]

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[13] Wallis & Bruce, "Secularization: The Orthodox Model", 12.
[14] Bryan R. Wilson, *Contemporary Transformations of Religion*, 99-103. This is a statement closely connected to the "gemeinschaft – gesellschaft" discussion originated in the early 20th century. The expressions was used by Ferdinand Tönnies to describe the transformation of society between two ideal states where gemeinscahft represented the hierarchical by organised rural society, and gesellschaft represented the more pluralistic and urban society. See for example, Ferdinand Tönnies, *Fundamental Concepts of Sociology: Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* trans. (New York, 1940). This statement has since then been more balanced by historians since society apparently does not necessarily become less religious with a higher degree of urbanisation.
[15] Wallis & Bruce, "Secularization: The Orthodox Model", 13.
[16] Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York, 1967), 127.
[17] For recent examples see Sarah C. Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular culture in Southwark c.1880-1939* (Oxford, 1999); Hugh McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe 1848-1914*

The main point seems, nevertheless, difficult to argue; the monopolistic role the Church and Christianity had before (in some non-specified time), as a self evident paradigm, in which to interpret the self and the world, has undergone a declining tendency.

Martin is one of the fiercest opponents of the thesis. He claims that secularisation is a problematic expression, since it describes a too complex phenomenon, in widely different contexts so that it cannot be generalised at all. Further more, it is often used ideologically and with a certain purpose. "Secularisation" has either been used to show the steady progress toward a more rational society, or to point out how lower strata are irreligious and wicked. The thesis is also founded upon the false assumption of a previous Christian "golden age" when Christian faith was wide spread among the population, says Martin[18]. At the same time as he dismisses the whole concept of secularisation, he agrees that something has happened to the perception of religion related to the process of modernisation. Nevertheless, industrialisation broke down community-based society, caused plurality and fragmentation, and made religious attendance a private and voluntary activity.[19] Davie claims that religiosity probably never will disappear – religion rather mutates under pressure and influence of surrounding society. It is also possible to have a high level of beliefs alongside low

(Basingstoke & New York, 2000); Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (London, 2001). Williams and Brown claim that the "secularisation thesis" focus on institutional and doctrinal Christianity, and therefore hide the fact that popular beliefs often could be a mix of folklore and Christianity, both before and after the assumed breakthrough for a secularised society. McLeod claims that the extent of "secularisation" is dependent on both geographical area and social sphere. Hence no unambiguous definition is possible to use.

[18] David Martin, *The Religious and the Secular: Studies in Secularization* (London, 1969), 3-36.

[19] Ibid., 106-130, idem, A *General Theory of Secularization* (Oxford, 1978), 91-2.

levels of practice.[20] The U.S. is often pointed out as the exception which falsifies the thesis.[21]

In other words, secularisation is to a wide extent a question about definitions – mainly about whether it should be understood as de-christianisation (the Christian religion disappears) or personalization (religion turns into an individual and optional act).

Bruce makes an important distinction concerning the conception of religion with importance for how we evaluate secularisation. He separates a functional definition of religion from a substantive. According to a functional definition, religion refers to what it does – for an example religion providing a social order, or giving answers to fundamental questions. A substantive definition takes into consideration what religion actually is –faith and actions based upon beliefs in the existence of a supernatural power. These are no simple definitions, but, as Bruce claims, a functional definition tends to focus on religious organisations, and a substantive definition raises questions about what supernatural is and what nature is.[22] During the last decades religion, and consequently secularisation too, tend to be defined in substantive terms rather then functional. This shift corresponds to the choice of source material. Statistics of church attendance and numbers of members from religious organisations have been replaced with oral material, diaries, letters, tracts novels et cetera.

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[20] Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford, 1994), 194, 198.
[21] One of the problems with the secularisation thesis seems to be the fact that the U.S. despite the process of modernisation apparently has not been secularised. See for an example Roger Finke, "An Unsecular America", in *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis*, ed. Steve Bruce (Oxford, 1992), 145-65. But, Berger says, in the U.S. the Churches have succeeded in keeping their position only by becoming secularised. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 107-8.
[22] Steve Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World: From Cathedrals to Cults* (Oxford, 1996), 6-7.

The main features of the "secularisation thesis" are interesting for me, and constitute a framework for my understanding. But this study will focus on factors more directly related to experiences of Christian organisations and their actions to oppose the trend of secularisation. The paradoxical relationship between activities aiming toward a more "true" and pious religiosity (often emphasised by different revivalist movements), and their sometimes counter-productive results, are of particular interest.

Pluralism, fragmentation, and role differentiation seem to be the essential core of the whole process. In an increasingly more pluralistic society, Christianity had to be marketed and sold in an open and competitive market.[23] The new market situation gave roughly two options for religion – to adapt or to retreat.

Berger stresses the importance of the pluralistic situation to understand secularisation, and it supports well my aims. In a pluralistic situation no worldview can any longer be taken for granted. Allegiance becomes by necessity voluntary and less certain. Therefore, any view looking for supporters has to be marketed. Marketing inevitably requires adaptation, which furthermore implies that an element of dynamics and change is introduced; in this situation it "becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the religious traditions as unchanging verity". In the long run it opened up to subjectivism and relativism, which undermined Christianity as the absolute truth. In the pluralistic situation, the acts of faith, commitment and salvation are introduced, which lead to the introduction of doubts. This feature is apparent within Christianity at least since the Reformation, but was further emphasised in modern society of the

[23] Karel Dobbelaere, "Church Involvement and Secularization", in *Secularization, Rationalism, and Sectarianism: Essays in Honour of Bryan R. Wilson*, ed. Eileen Barker et al (Oxford, 1993); 24, Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 137-8.

18th and 19th centuries. Different kinds of Pietistic and Evangelical revivals stressed the individual relation to God as well, and hence opened up for religious relativism.[24]

One interesting aspect in Berger's hypothesis is that in order to struggle against secularisation religious organisations and movements tend to gather and collaborate with each other. Previous religious rivals are no longer enemies, but equals with similar problems. Ecumenicity under these circumstances is a sign of secularisation, with no hope to restore the former situation.[25]

Here I have written about secularisation mainly on an individual level and how personal practices are affected. But, it is not only personal practices that transform. It is also important to show how this tendency influence organised religiosity, especially in a survey carried out on a religious organisation. Theories about secularisation tend not to look upon how religious organisations are affected. They rather implicitly assume that their significance quietly declines and vanishes. Maybe this is correct, but it does not happen without an attempt from the organisations to oppose the process of secularisation. These efforts can result in different responses and outcomes.

Troeltsch categorised organised religion in the sect – church dichotomy. The church claims its all-embracing and monopolistic position, both concerning beliefs and people. Consequently, the sect is the counterpart, claiming its exclusivity.[26] This picture was balanced later by Niebuhr, who pointed out the middle way between church and sect – the denomination. The denomination is a well-established religious organisation, with mainly well situated individuals involved. The denomination does

[24] Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 137-158.
[25] Ibid., 140.
[26] Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* vol. 1-2 (London, 1931).

neither explicitly exclude people nor claim its superior and almost self-evident position.[27] It is the form we know from most established Free churches of today.

Gilbert claims that the denominations, under pressure of modernisation during the 19th century, had to respond to the new situation. Gilbert and Yeo talk both about responses to secularisation, either through accommodation or resistance (consciously or un-consciously) – to become more like the surrounding secular world in an attempt to attract new possible adherents, or to maintain exclusivity.[28] This is a process that can be seen in the 19th century. Perman, like Gilbert, writes about the same development, but in the 1960s and 70s, and he finds its origin in the late 19th century. He says, that religion in a secular society affects and secularises the inner life, practices and beliefs of the Church.[29] This view also implies that, by accommodation to a secular society, the religious organisations secularised themselves and under-mined their own position.

I am interested in the transformation Christianity underwent in the second half of the 19th century, viewed from inside, and through the eyes of, a Christian organisation. To understand this transformation it is appropriate to talk about it mainly in terms of pluralisation, fragmentation, privatisation, competition, and adaptation. These are the ingredients that secularisation consists of during the studied period.

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[27] H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York, 1957).
[28] Alan D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Changes 1714-1914* (London, 1976), 138-45; idem, *The Making of Post-Christian Britain: A History of the Secularization of Modern Society* (London, 1980), 102-27; Stephen Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis* (London, 1976), 302.
[29] David Perman, *Change and the Churches: An Anatomy of Religion in Britain* (London, 1977), 37-58.

Evangelical revivalism - Background and Context

In order to understand the origins, the background, and the context of EFS, it is important to begin with a survey of the phenomenon within Protestant Christianity called Evangelicalism. This is important since EFS placed itself within the European Evangelical tradition and legitimised themselves thereby.

EFS was inspired by Pietistic theology, and legitimised their work and practice by saying that they were working in a strictly Pietistic Lutheran tradition. But, when it comes to forms of organisation and out-reaching work and views about missionizing, EFS was inspired mainly by British Methodism and other forms of voluntary organisations such as for example different tract societies. I assume that when EFS was founded in 1856, the Methodist movement was too divided and, in some wings, too Free church-like to work as a good role model for a Swedish confessional organisation.[30] Hempton's expression "noisy Methodists and pious Protestants" illustrates the relation between what was noted as Lutheranism respectively Methodism.[31] The religiosity of EFS implied a calm, not noisy, and pious attitude. Within EFS Pietism and Methodism were intermingled and adapted to the Swedish context. Like the Pietists and the early Methodists EFS wanted to be the vitalizer within the Church (ecclesiolae in Ecclesia - little churches within the Church).

[30] According to William Gibson, Methodism was at this time divides into at least six different fractions. *Church, State and Society, 1760-1850* (London, 1994), 149-55.
[31] David Hempton, "Noisy Methodists and pious Protestants: Evangelical Revival and Religious Minorities in Eigthteenth-Century Ireland", in *Amazing Graze: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States*, eds. George A. Rawlyk & Mark A. Noll (Grand Rapids, 1993).

The international context and the origins of Evangelicalism

One feature of "Evangelicalism", as used here, is the stress on "personal conversion and salvation by faith in the atoning death of Christ".[32]

In search for the origins of Evangelicalism, we must look upon the situation in 17th century Europe. Walsh dates the "birth" of Evangelicalism to approximately the fifty years before the so-called English awakening in the 1740s and the rise of Methodism. Following a thriving period after the Reformation, the Protestant Churches experienced a backlash in many places over Europe. It was the acme of the Counter-Reformation.[33] Protestant elite and Churches all over Europe experienced a time of religious institutionalism and stagnation after the heyday of Reforms. There were feelings of present decay and hopes for a future renewal and revival.[34] Shared anxieties in the Protestant world gave shared experiences and expectations, which became the breeding-ground for Evangelicalism. Ecclesiastical forces were hoping for a second Reformation to come, and there was also a hope to narrow the gap between the Church and common people.[35]

A group of German Protestants known as Pietists, with P. J. Spener and A. H. Francke at the University of Halle as key persons, were of special importance for the further development. They both criticised the Protestant Church and the Catholic encroachment. The Pietists are well known for their strong emphasis on personal relationship with God, and the need for a "New Birth" (conversion). The Pietists also promoted a domestic approach to religion and refused to be institutionalised within

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[32] *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, entry "Evangelicalism" (Oxford, 1977).
[33] G. M. Ditchfield, *The Evangelical Revival* (London, 1998), 9-11; John Walsh, "'Methodism' and the Origins of English-Speaking Evangelicalism", in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990* eds. Mark A Noll et al (New York & Oxford, 1994), 20.
[34] Walsh, "'Methodism' and the Origins of English-Speaking Evangelicalism", 20-1.

the Church. They stressed the importance of lay participation (the priesthood of all believers), Bible reading in the vernacular and meetings in conventicles. It is important, in relation to EFS, that they never considered themselves as separatists, rather as vitalizers of the existing Church – as little churches within the Church.[36]

Important in the early history of Evangelicalism was also the Herrnhutic inspiration, with its travelling aristocrats' world-wide missionary activities.[37]

This was the background of the "Awakening" to come, first among German and English communities in America and then at the European continent and Britain, and later in Sweden too.

Characteristics of the Evangelical revival

In order to characterise the Evangelical "mentality", Bebbington says it has four main characteristics: "*conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and ... *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross."[38]

Through these four elements of Evangelicalism it is possible, I think, on one hand to see the inspiration from mainly early Protestantism and German Pietism with its focus on the scripture in the native language and the importance of a personal conversion. On the other hand, it is clear that Herrnhutism inspired through focus on emotions and fervent missionary activities. Throughout the whole tradition is also

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[35] W. R. Ward, "Power and Piety", in *Faith and Faction* (London, 1993), 76-7.
[36] Ditchfield, *The Evangelical Revival*, 11-2.
[37] Ward, "Power and Piety", 89; Ditchfield, *The Evangelical Revival*, 16
[38] This section is based on D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), 3-17; and Ditchfield, *The Evangelical Revival*, 26-30.

emphasis on lay participation, informality, enthusiasm, little churches within the Church, and implicitly a seed for separation from the Church.

There was a strong emphasis on *conversion* within Evangelicalism. Preachers urged the audience to turn away from their sins in repentance and turn to Christ in faith. The conversion had moral connotations as well. A converted Evangelical person should work hard, save money and help the neighbours. The conversion divided people too, into Christians and pagans – those who were saved, and those who were not.

It was a duty for the converted to engage in *activism* for the spread of the Gospel. The individual resurrection led directly to the obligation to bring its benefits to others. In other words, there is a direct link between conversion and participating in activities provided by the Evangelicals, and missionizing the Gospel to the non-converted. Missionary societies, itinerant preaching, distributing printed material, and a rich variety of activities within the organisations are all related to the ethos of activism.

The devotion to the Bible, and its absolute position as the main (only) source of salvation and eternal life, was also a central feature – here called *biblicism*. The Bible was the centre of preaching, praying, studying, and hymn singing, which was in line with the Lutheran tradition. The Bible and related literature were distributed with the intention of providing conversions. The Bible and bible literature should be accessible for everybody, and all had the right and duty to read and interpret the word of God.

Fourthly, *crucicentrism* contains the centrality of preaching of the doctrine of the Atonement. Christ's sacrifice on the cross was the only way for humanity to be forgiven and reconciled with God.

CHAPTER 3

EFS ON A NATIONAL LEVEL

Context

Short history of the Swedish 19th century

In the 19th century, Swedish society started to experience some changes with major impact on both social structures and mentalities. Sweden was about to take the step from being a rural society to becoming an industrialised-capitalist society.

In rural areas, since the end of the 18th century, laws were passed in order to re-distribute the estates, which led to division and re-location of the so-called core-villages. Simultaneously agriculture was rationalised, which led to a surplus of workforce. At the same time the population increased.

On the political level drastic changes occurred due to the Swedish debacle in the War of 1808-09 when Finland was lost. In the aftermath, the absolute king was dethroned and replaced. The power of the crown was seriously reduced and shared with the parliament.

Thereafter, it is possible to see signs of industrialisation. Industries were established, which gave work to the unemployed rural peasantry, and thereby urbanisation started. The population of especially lower classes increased and old social patterns broke down, and the working and middle class were created.

Religious context in Sweden[39]

It is possible to present Sweden until mid 19th century as a religiously homogeneous society. Being a good citizen entailed being a good Lutheran, which was carried out through compulsory Church attendance and statutory catechism. After the Reformation (accomplished during approximately 70 years in the 16th century) the Lutheran Church and State constituted a stable unit, not disturbed by religious wars or any other severe schismatic movements. 1858 saw the Conventicle Act annulled. It was passed in 1726 in order to prevent religious disturbances and forbade religious gathering without a clergyman. With the Dissenters Acts of the 1860s and 1870s, Swedish citizens were allowed to form approved non-confessional congregations. Until the Religious Freedom Act of 1951 Swedish persons were not allowed to abstain from membership of the approved Christian churches (of which the Catholic church was excluded). The Church was finally disestablished the 1st of January 2000.[40]

No significant Free churches were established on a national basis before the 19th century. Although, there were both Pietistic revival movements, during the 18th century, and later popular Bible-reading based revivals with Pietistic and Herrnhutistic influences, and antinomianistic revivals too (antinomianism – that Christians are by grace set free from the need to observe any moral law). These different kinds of movements can be seen as a joint phenomenon nation-wide, but they were in most

[39] This passage is mainly based upon Lundqvist, *Organisation och bekännele*, 13-24; Oloph Bexell, "Kykligheter i svenska kyrkan", in *Kyrkans liv: Introduktion till kyrkovetenskapen*, ed. Stephan Borgehammar, (Stockholm, 1993); *Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen genom 75 år* vol. I, ed. Eskil Levander (Stockholm, 1931). For a brief survey see also my own "Erik Janze: En obemärkt tjänare i Guds rike", *Oknytt*, 2000:1-2.

[40] See for example Geoffrey Parker, "Success and Failure during the Reformation", *Past and Present* 1992:136, who points out Sweden as the outstanding example of a successful Protestant (Lutheran, my mark) system after the 1620s. See also David Tribe, *100 Years of Freethought* (London, 1967), 134; or Edward L. Cleary's "The Catholic Church", in *Religious Freedom and Evangelization in Latin America: The Challenge of Religious Pluralism* ed. Paul E. Sigmund (Maryknoll, 1999), 16-7. Cleary

cases practised in a restricted local area around some single lay key person. One joint feature among the different revivals was the emphasis on small gatherings outside the legal structure of the Church – the conventicle. Quite often the different revivals constituted a popular and hostile response to rational influences on the theology and the Church. At the same time, the Conventicle Act prevented religious meetings, outside the Church. After 1858, as a result of the annulment of the Conventicle Act, an increasing number of both confessional/conformist and non-conformist congregations were officially founded all over the country (even if they illegally had existed before too).[41]

There is a direct connection between EFS and English Methodism through C. O. Rosenius (EFS main character and theologian). He had left his home for studies in Uppsala in 1839. There he came in contact with the Methodist preacher George Scott who made Rosenius his companion and introduced him as a lay preacher in Stockholm. Scott founded associations in Sweden for distributing tracts and Bibles, for missionizing, and for teetotalism, in accordance with Evangelical ideal. When Scott had to leave Sweden in 1842 due to common discontent with his preaching, Rosenius was his successor and continued his preaching. Together Scott and Rosenius also founded a journal for the confessional revival (*Pietisten*), which constituted a uniting centre for the Evangelical revival in Sweden.

In the preceding decades of the foundation of EFS, some organisational attempts had been made to found a co-ordinating organisation for missionizing within the nation.

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claims that Sweden is the "most" Protestant country in the world (a statement which probably must be balanced and defined).

[41] Allan Sandewall, *Konventikel- och sakramentsbestämmelsernas tillämpning i Sverige 1809-1900* (Stockholm, Göteborg & Uppsala, 1961), 17ff, 42.

For example there were different tract societies and various forms of organisations that wanted to work as coordinators. One task for these organisations was also to promote a calming effect in the revolutionary years around 1850, according to themselves. One problem was that a polarization within Swedish religious life started to emerge.

The first Baptist baptism took place in 1848. A few years later the Baptist movement was established and organised in Sweden, as the first significant organised Free church. At that time, there was consequently a risk that the Evangelical-Lutheran unity provided by the State church, could undergo a split due to the pressure of the non-confessional revival. This threat was experienced especially among higher strata of society, the Church and the clergy.

The middle class began to associate, to found associations with the aim of preserving a calm social order, by addressing what was referred to as the "social question". Especially lower strata were considered problematic.[42] Evangelical religiosity was an important element in these associations and constituted both the foundation for middle class identity, and its legitimacy.[43] Religiosity was therefore, in Sweden, as well as in for example England, intertwined with anxiety about social conditions. According to Cox, "...society would fall apart without morality, morality was impossible without religion and religion would disappear without the churches". Churchliness was a civic duty, and especially in Sweden the foundation for a united

[42] See for example George Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany* (Princeton, 1993), 2-4, 55. For the formulation of the social question in Sweden, see Per Wisselgren, *Samhällets kartläggare: Lorénska stiftelsen, den sociala frågan och samhällsvetenskapens formering 1830-1920* (Eslöv, 2000), chap. 2.

[43] R J Morris, *Class, Sect and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-1850* (Manchester, 1990), 173.

State.[44] This is important to bear in mind when considering the context in which EFS was founded.

The founding of EFS

It is within this context that the founding of the confessional and conformist EFS must be seen. The Church did not take the initiative. It was rather an implicit critique against it, since the Church was considered as too institutionalised and this-worldly to deal properly with the situation (at least according to EFS themselves). Through the years there were constant tensions between the Church and EFS because of this relationship, often coloured by geographical characteristics. High Church areas were more reluctant to accept EFS than Low Church dominated areas. In the northern part of Sweden, with a low density of population, the Church was more willing to accept EFS since they often needed a helping hand in the huge areas.

The actual initiative to found EFS was taken by a newly ordained clergyman, H. J. Lundborg, who as student in Uppsala had come in contact with the Evangelical revival. He had a firm belief in the necessity of conventicles, active mission, and personal conversion. After his ordination, he had made a trip to Scotland where he came in contact with the Scottish Free church. The Scottish Free church was seen as a role model because of its evangelical affiliation and the relatively independent relation to the State. This must be related to the religious situation in Sweden, with the Conventicle Act and, according to the founders of EFS, a too dormant Church.

In Scotland Lundborg got to know, according to himself, an independent evangelical and spiritual Church, with missionizing activities such as Sunday schools

[44] Jeffrey Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth, 1870-1930* (New York & Oxford, 1982), 271. For Sweden see for example Jansson, *Adertonhundratalets associationer*, 84.

and distribution of literature. Thereby he got the idea of founding a separate organisation, but within the framework of the Church, and not as a Free Church, in order to strengthen the Church and bar the way to further scattering tendencies.[45]

EFS was founded in 1856 as a confessional organisation within the Church (based on the Piestistic idea of ecclesiolae in Ecclesia). It consisted of a committee of twelve men, living in Stockholm, from higher strata (from the nobility, the clergy and the bourgeoisie), in sole control.[46] The main aim was to safeguard the interests of the voluntary and confessional revivalist movement, and to bring the revival back into the Evangelical-Lutheran direction. EFS wanted to provide the nation with a co-ordinating and controlling authority for the confessional revival. They wanted both to oppose the church-dividing tendencies from mainly Baptists and Mormons, and to revitalize too dormant Church. EFS also wanted to emphasise the importance of individual faith, based on conversion, and the need for Bible reading in various forms, and domestic religious practices, as a complement to the Church.[47] This was legitimated with reference mainly to Luther and German Pietism.

EFS can in the beginning not be considered as a democratic organisation. The board was in sole control and renewed itself until 1874. After 1874 local Evangelical-Lutheran communities could apply for membership. Thereby, they also got some influence in the nation-wide organisation through the annual conference. The

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[45] For the relation between EFS and Scotland see Nils Rodén, *Hans Jacob Lundborg: En pil på Herrens båge* (Stockholm, 1961), 74-86.

[46] *Evangeliska fosterlands-stiftelsen genom 75 år*, 47. This middle and upper class engagement in founding associations is typical for Swedish associations at least until the last decades of the 19th century. Then popular movements like the temperance, working class, and the rest of the revivalist movements started to found associations on a more popular basis. These associations were a responce to an perceived threat from the morally depraved lower strata. They also constituted an attempt to replace the State in a time when it retreated from a previous stronger position. These associations and philanthrophy went often hand in hand. See mainly Jansson, *Adertonhundratalets associationer*, and Qvarsell, *Kulturmiljö och idéspridning*.

[47] *EFSAR*, 1856, 62, 64-5; 1857, 65; 1858-59, 16.

composition of the board was during the whole period characterised by people from upper strata, but a shift towards a more democratic order can be seen. The aim to provide the Swedish society with a co-ordinating and controlling confessional Evangelical-Lutheran authority was strong in the beginning, but during the first fifty years this position changed too. This narrative can also be told through a secularisation perspective since it coincided with a changed perception of Christianity.

The aims and work of the Central EFS

Distributing literature

To sell and distribute what was considered as good literature was for a long time one of EFS' main missions, together with co-ordinating the work of confessional colporteurs. These activities are in line with the aforementioned Evangelical ideal concerning an active Christianity. Distributing literature was always important and considered as useful, even if the importance of confessional literature declined over the years. There was a strong belief in the power of the printed word among the Evangelicals over all. EFS' aim was to bar the way for literature of dubious content, not only to convert people. According to EFS, books and papers with damaging content had been spread for a while, which had, together with a low knowledge about the word of God, resulted in a common hostility toward Christianity. EFS saw a direct relation between literature and morality, and through replacing poor literature with

good; they hoped to improve consciousness of Christianity and implicitly the level of morality.[48]

At the time of the foundation, the aim was to work as a national co-ordinating point for Evangelical-Lutheran literature, provide translations of foreign literature, and also distribute literature for children and youth. The idea was that for example tract societies whould be able to turn to EFS and be assured of the confessional quality of the literature, contrary to Free church literature.[49] The necessity of controlling literature was over all considered as important in the confused religious situation in mid 19th century.[50]

Only gradually EFS planned to start their own work of publishing literature of easy understanding mainly for the poor, but after only one year they had their own publishing company. 360.000 items were published the first year, which was doubled in the next year and remained on that level for several years.[51] For Sweden this is quite a volume and EFS' publishing company was during the second half of the century regarded as one of the largest among the Scandinavian countries.[52]

At a rough characterisation of the published and distributed literature, two main directions can be seen. On one hand books and "larger", more substantial, literature were spread, and on the other hand were tracts and a diversity of "lighter" and easy understandable literature. Among more solid literature we find the Bible, commentaries on the Bible, catechisms, printed compilations of sermons, and we find

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[48] *Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen genom 75 år*, 61, *EFSAR* 1856, 19.
[49] *EFSAR*, 1857, 10. *Pietisten*, 1856:6.
[50] Eric Johannesson, *Den läsande familjen: Familjetidskriften i Sverige 1850-1880* (Stockholm, 1980), 48f, 60.
[51] *EFSAR*, 1856, 16-7. See the annual reports each year for circulation figures.
[52] Sven Rinman, *Studier i svensk bokhandel: Svenska bokläggare föreningen 1843-1887* (Stockholm, 1951), 240ff.

authors like Luther (who was the most important), Arndt, and Gezelius. This literature described the essence of Christianity pure and clear, according to EFS.[53]

EFS was aware of the demanding content of these more substantial books, and that reading of them required some previous knowledge. That was the reason to why people in lower strata did not read them. And that is why tracts and other "lighter" literature had a missionizing function[54] – to lead the way to more proper literature on a popular level (in practice, the reader was probably already converted and connected to some revival movement). When it comes to the authors of this kind of literature it seems not to be important. Quite often this kind of literature were translations from German or English, but the ambition was to find Swedish work too.[55]

If EFS in the beginning wanted to oppose and push aside poor literature, after some years, it began to emphasise the need to constitute an alternative and changed its strategy. It is a slightly different meaning but nevertheless important. It was in this spirit EFS started to publish stories and so-called "true fiction" which in its form was similar to the poor literature, but with a good Christian content.[56] It was a way to implicitly preach the word of God, in a way which was apt to attract lower strata and other un-godly persons, who otherwise preferred poor literature. This progress was not considered positive, but it was seen as a necessary adaptation to the new situation. As time went by, EFS unhappily recognised that the situation had changed. The shift

[53] See for example *EFSAR*, 1858-59, 29; 1860, 17ff.
[54] See for example *EFSAR*, 1858-59, 30; 1863, 21.
[55] Kerstin Rydbeck, *Nykter läsning: Den svenska godtemplarrörelsen och litteraturen 1896-1925* (Uppsala, 1995), 31.
[56] "True fiction" was genre of literature common within the Evangelical revival that told a story, likely to have happened, of a person who could act as a role model. It was quite tied to its genre rules and showed often how a person was tempted and depraved in the beginning, but with the help of God he or she could overcome the difficulties. Often these stories also had an implicit moral message and a sharp dichotomy between the unholy "world" and the converted Christians. Se for example Daniel Lindmark, "Väckelsebiografin, den fromma berättelsen och verklighetsfiktionen: Struktur och funktion i två av

within literature also meant that for example "true fiction" became a means for both missionizing and edifying believers, and it can be seen as an example of how secular influences turned into something useful.[57] At the end of the century, they acknowledged that a lot had been changed concerning the people and literature. In mid 19th century people only owned a few books including the Bible, a hymnbook and maybe a compilation of sermons, but in 1899 the average person owns many more books and consequently, the taste had been refined, which EFS had to be aware of.[58]

In an average year about 700.000 items of literature were distributed. Papers, tracts, almanacs, and bible cards constituted a majority, not the "larger" books.[59] One should not overestimate the figures from the publisher, since congregations and individual persons commonly bought literature for free distribution with the purpose of missionize. It is not clear in the annual reports, but in personal letters from for instance colporteurs, that all kinds of literature became increasingly more difficult to distribute over the years (which makes sense with circulation rates of 700,000 annually, within a population of 4 million!). The market for religious literature seems to be saturated after years of distributing from different associations.

The Colporteurs

According to the dictionary of the Swedish Academy, "colporteur" implies an itinerant person who distributes religious literature, often without higher education (sometimes a religious preacher). This explanation is applicable for EFS' colporteurs

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väckelsens litterära genrer", in *Uppfostran, undervisning, upplysning: Linjer i svensk folkundervisning före folkskolan* (Umeå, 1995), 132-6.

[57] Robert Currie, *Methodism Divided: A study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism* (London, 1968), 134-6.

[58] *EFSAR* 1864, 38-9; 1873, 30; 1876, 32; 1899, 170.

as well. Their function was not fixed, but transformed over time due to social changes, changes in the relation to the Church, and because of non-approved actions from the colporteurs themselves.

The aims for EFS were to co-ordinate and control the work of the colporteurs, and to oppose non-confessional colporteurs (especially from the Baptists in mid 19th century) and prevent further splitting up of the Church. People should be able to trust colporteurs (and literature) sent out from EFS.

The inspiration of the colporteurs was founded on the idea of the priesthood of all believers, mentioned for example in Paul's letter to the Romans. The use of colporteurs was of cause not unproblematic for an organisation that wanted to shelter within the Church. This issue caused arguments over the years, both within EFS, and in relation to the Church. Even if the activity was based upon the priesthood of all believers in the case of EFS, it had to be adapted to a Swedish confessional Lutheran context. A clergyman should preach and a worker should work, according to the Lutheran doctrine. One might think that it would be possible for a colporteur to preach if he wanted, but with respect to the Lutheran doctrine and the Church, there were well-defined restrictions.

If you wanted to become a colporteur an application directly to EFS had to be made, which apart from a personal letter as a confirmation of the personal vocation, must contain a letter of recommendation from a clergyman, trusted by EFS. There were also demands of economic stability, and profane and religious knowledge, also

[59] The volume of literature is shown each year in the annual reports. For example of free distributing see for example *EFSAR* 1860, 31ff; 1861, 28-9.

confirmed by a clergyman. A calling from a place was needed too, before the certificate could be issued.

The main tasks for the colporteurs were to distribute literature, talk to people they met, make home and illness visitations, all with the purpose of missionizing the word of God. But, and this is important, they were not allowed to preach, i.e. to mediate the word of God in their own words, according to their own mind – this was solely the duty of an ordained clergyman.[60] As a consequence of the confessional position, they should always subordinate themselves to the Church and the clergy. To object to these premises, and work without the permission of the Church, would endanger the confessional position.

The object for the activities of the colporteurs was mainly people from the broad strata, and that is also why they often originated from roughly the same social layer.[61] They were always men, and usually from lower artisan or higher peasantry strata. The thought was that the colporteurs, from their social mid position, would have a mediating role between high and low strata, and that they would be able to talk to people in their own language and with the same manners.[62]

The first year, 1856, EFS issued 11 certificates for colporteurs willing to work within this occupation during parts of the year. This body was constantly growing over the years, with some exceptions.[63] But, it did not take long before EFS' board considered that the body of colporteurs needed a shaking up. This development was due to the fact that distributed literature was not read to the extent the board had wished. Another problem was that the colporteurs did not live up to the expectations

[60] The regulations for the colporteurs are published each year in the annual reports from the 1860s.
[61] *EFSAR* 1861, 130-1; 1864, 59.
[62] This pattern is also seen within contemporary adult education. Björn Olsson, *Att torgföra vetenskap: Det vetenskapliga föredragets och populärföreläsningens teori, praktik och kultur* (Lund, 1998), 72.

of the board, and resigned or were dismissed. EFS' colporteurs were also breaking their rights and limitations in some areas. The colporteurs had in these cases expanded their duties to include preaching (explaining the word of God according to their own ability), which was not approved according to the regulations.[64]

In the end of the 1860s, a change was on its way, mainly because of the expanding and self-taken role of the colporteurs. The annual conference in 1868 changed the directives a little to meet the new situation, and the demands from the people.[65] EFS' board might have realised that it was not possible to stop the development, and that it would probably be better to have colporteurs within some regulations, even if it meant that they were loosened, than a major schism, which might lead to separation and division. The colporteurs were not told to give up their preaching – if the Church approved of it. However, the board was not satisfied with this progress.

1877 this schism had grown and a separation of significant parts of the body of colporteurs broke loose. The catalyst was officially the theological question about God's reconciliation with mankind (the Theory of Atonement).[66] But, colporteurs had also ventured to serve as administrators of the Eucharist among "true believers" – and this was of course to exceed their rights as confessional colporteurs. Therefore, the split was not only a matter of theological questions, but also a sign of the ability of the colporteurs, and the people to oppose the monopolistic Church. This fraction left EFS

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[63] See statistics in the annual reports.
[64] See for example *EFSAR* 1860, 65-83.
[65] *EFSAR* 1867, 4ff.
[66] The Theory of Atonement – According to Lutheran orthodoxy man had to be reconciled to God, not God to man, and God sent His Son, not in wrath but in love. A non-orthodox theory was put forward by P P Waldenström. He was previously one of EFS' more prominent representative but formed a Free church in 1878, *Svenska Missionsförbundet* (SMF) – approx. the Swedish Mission Covenant Church, due to diverting opinions in this question, and questions related to the Free Church standpoint, such as the view on the clergy and the sacraments.

and founded a Free church organisation – *Svenska Missionsförbundet* (SMF, approximately the Swedish Mission Covenant Church).[67]

After this episode EFS carried out a survey concerning the question of Atonement and Eucharist, and dismissed colporteurs that had non-confessional opinions. The demands on the colporteurs were raised, in order to gain stability again. The minimum age increased from 21 to 25 years, since EFS wanted to avoid that preaching activities became the main career. An applicant for the certificate had to prove that he had an original occupation. Demands on previous knowledge and suitability increased too. The time for education, in EFS own school for colporteurs (available from 1862), in the cases this option was used, and this is interesting, decreased from two years to one.[68] It is obvious that education was a problem since it probably gave the individual colporteur ability and confidence to preach. Education could apparently be dangerous if it was given to the wrong person, which often was a question connected to class, an opinion apparent in this case too.[69] The colporteurs became older, more mature and less educated – and hopefully less problematic – after the clash in the late 1870s.

This process made, in the same time, the relation to the Church stronger since the confessional fraction had been victorious, and the body of colporteurs more homogenous. This good relation between the Church and EFS lasted only for a few years. In the beginning of the 1890s the Church underwent a process of change in which it started to emphasis its own voluntary activities. In that way the Church itself

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[67] For a good and accessible survey of SMF see Bror Walan, *Året 1878* (Stockholm, 1978).
[68] Ivan Hellström, *Johannelund 125 år* (Uppsala, 1987), 34ff. *EFSAR* 1879, 124-5.
[69] In contemporary Sweden, this discussion is referred to as the discussion about the dangerous "semi-knowledge". Too little and badly adjusted education could give a person the false notion of his or her position in society. It is a discussion related to how conservative forces wanted to preserve a static society where everybody knew their place. Nils Runeby, "Varken fågel eller fisk: Om den farliga

started to compete with EFS and take over their undertakings within the confessional and voluntary sphere.[70] At the same time it seems like EFS implicitly approved of the fact that the colporteurs had in practice actually preached, and worked full time as stationary preachers.[71]

EFS' aim with the colporteurs was that they would have a role as a mediator of God's pure word, in an Evangelical and Lutheran sense, to the "simple people" in order to make the conformity stronger. The outcome was exactly the opposite. The colporteurs constituted an element of a more general tendency toward secularising, and an important one on a popular level, I would say. The reason is that they were a part of the ordinary people, and, according to EFS' aim too, able to talk to the people in their own language. Analogous to that, Chadwick stresses the importance of how a more specialised and educated society reduced the role of the pulpit of the Church, and the clergy, during the 19th century.[72] He is talking about a process among equals of the clergy, but among lower strata the work of colporteurs and lay preachers must have played a similar role.

Traces of this development can be seen in the compilations of visitation records from the diocese in northern Sweden. In the late 19th century, the Church was quite positive to help from EFS' colporteurs, since they were supposed to be confessional and support the clergy. EFS' colporteurs helped the clergy to maintain the activity in the large and lowly populated area of northern Sweden. Nevertheless,

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halvbildningen", in *Vetenskapens träd: Idéhistoriska studier tillägnade Sten Lindroth* (Stockholm, 1974).

[70] Lundqvist, *Organisation och bekännelse*, 74-5; Göran Gellerstam, *Utvecklingslinjer inom fattigvård och diakoni i Sverige 1871- omkring 1895* (Lund, 1971), 274ff; Anders Jarlert, *Tro och ämbete: En undersökning av den kyrkliga debatten i Göteborgs stift under slutet av 1800-talet* (Stockholm, 1984), 51ff.

[71] Lundqvist, *Organisation och bekännelse*, 87.

[72] Owen Chadwick, "The established Church under Attack" , in *The Victorian Crisis of Faith*, ed. Anthony Symundson (London, 1970), 101.

there was a problem even with these colporteurs, since they could be mixed up with separatist and Free church colporteurs, who explicitly sought to undermine the position of the State church. There was also a problem with the extended use of preaching, since "the colporteur is tempted to put himself in the place of the clergy. This also undermines the position of the service [authors translation]."[73] Another problem was that the itinerant preachers never stayed long enough to hear criticism. Therefore, according to the visitation record, they tended to see themselves successful and self-sufficient. Hence, they started to work outside the confessional framework, opposing the work of the clergy.[74] Consequently both the Church and EFS (as aforementioned) saw a problem with the preaching of the colporteurs. The mere presence of the colporteurs threatened the confessional position of EFS, and the preaching was one crucial point. Later, when EFS approved to this development, the Church became reluctant to accept colporteurs over all, since they undermined the hegemony of the Church and its clergy.

The colporteurs not only caused a slackening of religious power structures since they challenged Church authorities, supported by the word of God. They probably also reduced the status of the religious authority and stimulated religious neglect through their simple presence regarding both knowledge and manners.

One indication of the new relation is that the colporteurs after 1906 were called pastors, which both reflect the new relation, and implies their new assignments.

[73] *Prästmöteshandlingar*, 1890, 65.
[74] *Prästmöteshandlingar*, 1897, 42-3.

Representatives

EFS' organisation had the board in Stockholm on top of the hierarchy, in sole control, for at least approximately the first two decades. On a local level the local representatives (*provinsombud*) played an important role in the organisation. The representatives were meant to be well-situated men, known as serious and steady Christians. They should be in contact with the board and were supposed to help, support, and control the local colporteurs, observe the spiritual needs in the neighbourhood, and have a stock of literature to distribute.[75]

The first year the local representatives amounted to 73, an amount that grew steadily over the years. It is easy to see that the local representatives originated from another social class compared to the colporteurs. The colporteur came from upper lower class, the representatives came from mainly the middle classes, and you find among them shopkeepers, squires, and persons from the civil administration, some landowning farmers, and clergy. EFS preferred clergy in this role, as well as in the position of chairmen of the local congregations. This close connection to the clergy was desired because of the aspiration to be recognised as part of the Church. In the middle of the 1890s the body of local representatives amounted to more than 600 persons, and the proportion of clergy constituted a small majority. Except clergymen these representatives mainly consisted of teachers and land-owning farmers. Consequently it is possible to say that EFS on a national level reflected prevailing power structures during the studied period. After 1890 the amount of local representatives still increased in the same time as the proportion of clergy decreased. These are signs of a looser relation to the Church and a stronger separate identity.[76]

[75] *EFSAR*, 1856, 31; 1858-59, 49.
[76] See each annual report for lists of local representatives and their occupation.

Local congregations

The central board was of course positive to the foundation of new local Evangelical-Lutheran congregations, and argued that joint strength was far more powerful than single and scattered attempts.

From 1856 until 1874, EFS only consisted of the board in Stockholm. In the 1860s, there was a mutual wish to have a closer relation between the board and the local congregations. The board meant that a stronger tie between them and the local congregations would increase the feeling of belonging and loyalty, and benefit the Evangelical cause. This was made possible through the annual meeting in 1874 and it was from that year possible for local congregations to obtain membership, and also have the possibility to take part in the decision making at the annual conference.[77]

The number of congregations was in the beginning around one hundred, with some losses and some new recruitment. After the theological debacle over the Theory of the Atonement in the late 1870s, some voices are heard from EFS in the early 1880s to exclude some congregations, but very little happened. A few years later, in 1887 the first four congregations were excluded because of a diverging theological opinion. The year thereafter, 35 congregations were excluded because of the same reason, or because of different views upon the Eucharist, the Baptism, the relation to the Church, or simply because the congregation was not active any more.[78]

It was not common for the congregations to own chapels in the beginning. The congregations instead used premises provided by the Church or by the School, but the case could also be the reverse. As time passed by and the relation hardened between

[77] *EFSAR*, 1870, 109; 1871, 62-3; 1874, 10ff.
[78] *EFSAR*, 1887, 35ff.; 1888, 37ff.

the Church and/or the School as two different opponents on one hand, and EFS on the other hand, chapel-building was initiated to a higher extent during the last decades of the 19th century. This both increased the feeling of independence from earlier proponents, and emphasised EFS as an independent Christian association in itself.[79]

In the local congregations, the adherents met for hymn singing, praying, reading Christian texts (mainly Luther or the Bible), the overall purpose being give praise to God and fill themselves up with the Gospel. Quite often the congregation constituted an "umbrella-organisation" for several different subgroups such as worship, reading-, and temperance-assemblies, and assemblies with different specific aims such as collecting money for missionizing. Women also had sewing assemblies and men had so called working assemblies. To run Sunday schools for children and youth became early an important feature within EFS, the aim was mainly to safeguard the Christian faith to coming generations, and to change the poor moral state of the people.[80]

During the 1860s and 1870s it became more usual within EFS to initiate special congregations for young men and women. In 1902 the *De ungas förbund* (*DUF*, approximately the Association for the Young) was founded. This was an attempt to have a closer tie, and better controle, between the central EFS and the local youth associations. This development seems to have been a response to Free church youth associations, and more ecumenical attempts such as YMCA and YWCA, which EFS apparently did not like, due to their vague Christian standpoint.[81]

After the process of excluding during the 1880s, the number of congregations grew steadily and amounted to slightly less then 300 at the end of the examined

[79] See for example *EFSAR*, 1884, 93; 1886, 66; 1901, 42; 1903, 51.
[80] *EFSAR*, 1875, 91; 1906, 12.

period, even if the major growth occured during the first decades of the 20th century. There were also a little more then 300 DUF-congregations, and about 250 Sunday schools connected to DUF.[82]

We can in this case also see a development toward a more coherent and homogenous organisation, through putting up limitations toward both divergent religious affiliations and the rest of the society. This process can be described in terms of "denominationalisation"[83] and "institutionalisation". At the same time we can observe the emergence of a specific culture for the organisation and its congregations, which is further explored in the local study.

A changing habitat and the response

Organisational changes

This description of EFS' activities might not give an over all convincing picture of the process of secularisation. But each small contribution forms a pattern which fits in to a more general process of secularisation. EFS underwent a transformation from being taken for granted (at least in their own eyes), to being perceived as one alternative among others in an over all more pluralistic and specialised society. EFS adapted to

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[81] *EFSAR*, 1902, 30; 1904, 40; 1905, 29; 1906, 33.
[82] Statistics are shown annually in the annual reports.
[83] "The *denomniational* type of religious organisation represents, from the viewpoint of sectarian religion, a compromise with the 'world', for the denominational position involves no rejection of the wider society *per se*, but rather an orientation to a particular constituency within it. The *denomination* is less totalitarian then the *sect* in the kind of religious commitment which it demands, and thus more capable of performing socially integrative functions for particular social groups. And whereas both *church* type and *sect* type religious groups advance, at least in theory, monopolistic claims asserting their unique legitimacy, *denominations*, although they are inclusive in the sense of having relatively relaxed criteria of membership, claim only a pluralistic legitimacy. The *denominational* type regard

the new situation by transforming into a denomination – consciously or unconsciously, voluntarily or non-voluntarily.

Throughout the survey it is possible to see all effort EFS puts in, in order to constitute a conformist and confessional organisation. In the same time there are divergent opinions about how the message of Evangelical revivalism and Church faithfulness should be combined properly. Several signs are pointing in the direction that the initial aims (to be the true believers within the Church) will not be fulfilled for different reasons. Neither the Church nor the people (the target group) were particularly interested in a new hierarchical confessional organisation, and this transformed EFS over the years, seen in the survey of the annual reports. Hence, the original aims had to be omitted.

In the beginning EFS emphasised the importance of distributing more solid literature such as Luther, and other theologians, and the Bible. And as means to get the common people to read it, they prepared the people with "lighter" literature such as different tracts. In the beginning the aim was also to oppress poor literature. In due time EFS realised the difficulties with distributing solid literature and started to publish so-called "true fiction", with similar, but good, content compared to the contemporary "worldly" literature. With a modern word we can talk about this development in terms of market adaptation. Now they wanted to be an alternative to the poor literature, not to oppose it, since it was no use to do that any more.

The body of colporteurs was as important for EFS' work as problematic. They were important and necessary in the work as Evangelicals, but problematic because of the attempts to be confessional. Over the years the colporteurs themselves expanded

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itself, not as the one true church, but as one of a plurality of legitimate institutional alternatives." Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England*, 140-1.

their sphere of action. They started to preach to an extent that they were not supposed to do, and therefore they forced EFS to take action against them to restrict their preaching. Nevertheless, the cogent framework was loosened in order to have some restrictions at all.

Among the local representatives we can see traces of the on going development of EFS toward the denominational form too. The aim was to have clergymen as local representatives and also as chairmen in the local congregation. This was in the beginning quite successful and the proportion of clergies among the representatives amounted to roughly the half of the total amount in the 1890s, but thereafter the proportion of clergy steadily decreased. This is a sign of a worsened relation to the Church and how the aim of being a confessional organisation within the Church had to be re-evaluated.

In the beginning, it was not possible for local congregations to obtain membership in EFS, a condition which changed in 1874. This was another step toward the creation of an own and separate organisation even if the purpose never was to omit the confessional standpoint. A further step toward a more separate organisation was taken when the central board encouraged the different congregations to build their own chapels, instead of being dependent on the Church or the School.

The relation between the Church and EFS changed too. After a period of almost disdain from the Church during EFS first decades, the relation changed after the exclusion of non-obedient colporteurs in the late 1870s, according to EFS. This was only a temporary phase and the positive relationship changed again in the 1880s and 1890s, when the Church itself emphasised its own voluntary work. At the same

time, an increase of Chapel-building and full-time preaching colporteurs can be seen, which were a response to a more insecure relation to the Church.

This process both strengthened EFS' own identity and encouraged them to separate them from previous promoters. The development during this period went toward a more coherent and homogenous organisation. In the same time we see an adaptation due to changes in the surrounding society, which was turning more pluralistic and fragmented (if one subscribes to the opinion of what modernisation commonly entails). Under such circumstances the churches had the opportunity to adapt or resist (and become more sect like). What we see here is how EFS adapted to prevailing conditions, here mainly examined in relation to the Church, and formed an organisation with a more distinctive identity. This process can be described in terms of "denominationalisation".[84]

EFS (and the Church) became more competitive in order to meet new demands and attract potential adherents.[85] Even if it is possible to study the emergence of a more specific identity, the relation to other Christian affiliations loosened since they under these circumstances only could claim a "pluralistic legitimacy", according to Gilbert. Changes in the religious-political climate affected organised Christianity as a whole, and brought an end to the conflict between the Church and the Chapel, the Establishment and Dissent. Both the Church and the Chapel had to work under the new conditions – a statement valid for both England

[84] See previus note.
[85] The same development is seen in England in relation between the Church of England and the Nonconformists, according to Gilbert, which both turned into the denominational form. Ibid., 138-63; see also Frances Knight, *The Nineteenth-century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), 201-2.

and Sweden.[86] But if different Christian associations lost their role as opposing mirror images to construct an identity against, new enemies appeared.

Changing enemies

It was not only changes in the relation to the Church that constituted a pressure to EFS initial aims. Surrounding society also changed. In the annual report it is possible to see EFS' respond to a changing world, and for example see how the enemies, the competitors, changed over the years. This societal transformation forced EFS to take action against it in order to be on top of the situation. The annual reports only show the shift in mentality, not much about countermeasures in practice (this must be examined in a local study). EFS was, as aforementioned, founded with regard to the rise of the Baptist movement, Mormonism, and a too dormant and institutionalised State church. EFS' counterparts were in other words mainly different Christian affiliations, but without the "true" Evangelical-Lutheran faith. EFS defined itself as the retainer of true Christianity in an amoral and depraved world, with basically non-correct believers as opponents.

In the end of the 1870s a new opponent/alternative appears on the religious scene. It was the new intellectual approach to society EFS objected to, which in the name of rationality, science, and material progress, opposed Christianity. Chadwick would say that this "rational" movement was the main reason for secularisation which replaced religion with rationality.[87] This one-factor explanation is however difficult to

[86] Gerald Parsons, "Introduction: From Centre to Periphery, Victorian Religious Controversies in Perspective", in *Religion in Victorian Britain: Controversies* vol. II (Manchester, 1988), 8. See also Currie, *Methodism Divided*, in which he describes the situation for the different branches of Methodism in the late 19th century as a situation of new found ecumenism to meet the new demands.

[87] Owen Chadwick, *The secularization of the European mind in the nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 1975), 6-7.

grasp since metaphysical beliefs still today are prolific. Nevertheless, the hegemonic position of Christianity and its plausibility were questioned.

According to EFS it was obvious what results this secular movement will bring concerning Christendom and morality. They thought themselves to see a decline in obedience to social power structures including marriage, family ties, and respect. In the long run nobody would be able to trust each other. EFS' attacks were directed toward positivists, rationalists and freethinkers and other rationality based and secular movements and tendencies.[88] The part of the academic philosophy influenced by secularism was a threat too, since it put man above God. EFS claimed that God was above everything, and it could not see the possibility that the human intellect could challenge the will of God. It was not philosophy as a subject they opposed; rather the fractions which wanted to replace God with man, according to themselves.[89]

In fact, it was a turbulent time for Christianity which was both exposed to pressure from "outside", but also from the "inside", which created uncertainties and ambiguity. Christian proponents sometimes searched to accommodate the Christian faith with a scientific view and in some cases with a spiritualistic and/or humanistic view. Some sought for a new Reformation of Christianity that would be prepared for new tendencies of the age. In these cases the position of God as a personal transcendent being, and organised Christianity, were undermined.[90]

With aversion EFS commented how German rational theology started to get a grip on the faculties of Theology in Sweden, and undermined "true" beliefs in the

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[88] *EFSAR*, 1877, 118.
[89] *EFSAR*, 1882, 26-7.
[90] James Turner, *Without God, without creed: The origins of unbelief in America* (Baltimore & London, 1895), 141-67; James L. Moore, "Theodicy and Society: The Crisis of the Intelligentia", in *Victorian Faith in Crisis*, eds. Richard J. Helmstadter & Bernard Lightman (London, 1990).

Bible.[91] Over all EFS feared that clergy-to-be could be affected by the Bible critical and rational doctrines, advocated by both scientists and tutors at the seminar. The same doctrines were seen to spread among common people, which together with poor fiction, affected common life, school, and Church.[92]

In the 1880s the so-called culture-radical (and secular) movement was established in Sweden, with for example the author August Strindberg in a lead position. The movement challenged Church and Christianity with a mix of for example Darwinism, positivism, socialism, and scientific beliefs, in a spirit of rationality and progress. They wanted to replace religiosity and metaphysical speculations with arguments founded on science.[93] Whether the culture-radical movement itself, or other similar currencies in the Swedish idea-life, was successful at whole is not examined here. But it is a fact that EFS in the last decades of the 19th century experienced a threat from the rationalistic and scientific adherents, which can be seen in the annual reports. This threat was not present in mid 19th century.

So, even if Tribe claims that freethinkers always have been relatively weak in Sweden[94], they constituted a real threat to EFS. The mere presence of Positivistic (materialistic) thoughts, even if it was not strong in numbers, provoked and shaped religiosity, and exposed the fears that Christianity could be questioned and proved false.[95] However, the heyday of Swedish secularism occurred during some decades in the end of the 19th century, and the same can be said about Britain. According to Royle secularism and a thriving Christianity was intimately intermingled. Since they

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[91] It was called Ritschlianism after the German theologian Albrecht Ritschl. *EFSAR* 1894, 181-2.
[92] *EFSAR* 1902, 29, 50; 1904, 25.
[93] Kjell Jonsson, *Vid vetandets gräns: Om skiljelinjen mellan naturvetenskap och metafysik I svensk kulturdebatt 1870-1920* (Lund, 1987), 120; Christer Skoglund, *Vita mössor och röda fanor: Vänsterstudenter, kulturradikalism och bildningsideal i Sverige 1880-1940* (Stockholm, 1991), 54-61.
[94] David Tribe, *100 Years of Freethought.*

both lost their significance in the end of the 19th century as a result of the more pluralistic society, we can conclude that perception of religiosity must have changed.[96]

Budd claims that there is a relation between the attacks from both secularists and "rational" theologians, and sowing the seeds of doubts concerning the previous obvious authority of the Bible, also among also common people. According to her, the more widespread use of the Bible resulted in disbelief since errors and contradictions could be discovered and discussed among all readers.[97] Among Swedish historians, it is an established fact that there is a direct relation between revivalism, its emphasis on reading, and the emancipation of the individual.[98]

In Sweden, there is no well-established equivalent to the concept of "the Victorian crisis of faith" such as in Britain.[99] Nevertheless, in the late Swedish 19th century there was a struggle for hegemony between scientific and religious world-views, but not as examined and explained as in Britain. There are no simple explanations to the complex relation between the two spheres in any of the cases. However, after a time of turmoil the outcome was a quiet "agreement" that religion

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[95] Charles D Cashdollar, *The Transformation of Theology, 1830-1890: Positivism and Protestant Thought in Britain and America* (Princeton, 1989), 444-5.
[96] Edward Royle, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans: Popular Freethought in Britain 1866-1915* (Manchester, 1980), 328-31.
[97] Susan Budd, *Varieties of Unbelief: Atheists and Agnostics in English Society 1850-1960* (London, 1977), 105-11.
[98] See for example Ambjörnsson, *Den skötsamme arbetaren*, 247-8; Olle Josephson, "Att ta ordet för hundra år sedan", in *Arbetarna tar ordet: Språk och kommunikation i tidig arbetarrörelse*, ed. Olle Josephson (Stockholm, 1996), 21.
[99] For Britain see the for example the volumes *The Victorian crisis of faith: Six lectures*, ed. Anthony Symondsen (London, 1970), and *Victorian Faith in Crisis*, eds. Richard J. Helmstadter & Bernard Lightman (London, 1990).

and science belonged to different and specialized areas of life.[100] Science created in due time an alternative to religious beliefs even if it never fully replaced religion.[101]

However, in the beginning of the 20th century a different approach toward the social tendencies can be seen within EFS. This was a response to the changing religious climate. It seems like EFS can no longer avoid the reality of a transformed society. Christianity was on its way to lose its self-evident position, and EFS was consequently losing its foundation, which they became increasingly aware of. In a few cases we can read that it is no longer possible to stand outside the profane world. It is maybe even necessary with some interaction, especially for EFS' colporteurs and other co-workers in bigger cities, so they can understand the world of common people. But, if you examine the profane world you must be careful with what you read, hear, and see.[102] This opinion was not possible to mention a few decades before.

EFS did not vanish after this, it rather diffused even more, especially in the northern part of Sweden, but its role had changed. EFS could now only claim its relevance as a limited fraction of society among others. Therefore we cannot talk about secularisation in terms of de-christianisation at this moment, rather in terms of a changed perception of religion. Cox writes; "...to the rise and fall of religion should be added transformation. The eighteenth and nineteenth century European churches contributed to, and participated in, a momentous transition from a 'confessional' religious settlement to a 'voluntarist' religious settlement.[103] In Sweden, this

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[100] See especially Sydney Eisen, "Introduction", in *Victorian Faith in Crisis*, eds. Richard J. Helmstadtler & Bernard Lightman (London, 1990). For Sweden see for example Jonsson, *Vid vetandets gräns*, 102ff.

[101] George Levine, "Scientific Discourse as an Alternative to Faith", in *Victorian Faith in Crisis*, eds. Richard J. Helmstadter & Bernard Lightman (London, 1990).

[102] *EFSAR*, 1901, 129.

[103] Jeffrey Cox, "Master Narratives of Long-Term Religious Change", paper to the colloquium "The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe c.1700-2000, Paris 9-12 April 1997.

transformation took place in the late half of the 19th century, which is in practice clearer in a local study.

CHAPTER 4

UMEÅS EVANGELISK-LUTERSKA MISSIONSFÖRENING (UMEÅ'S EVANGELICAL-LUTHERAN CONGREGATION)

In addition to the national EFS, there are the local congregations. Different congregations had different characteristics, which varied both over time and due to location. In High church dominated areas EFS tended to take a more Free church like stand, without collaboration with the local Church, and vice versa. In an ideal world, according to EFS themselves, EFS and the Church constituted a unity where EFS took care of voluntary and missionizing activities, and the vicar held the chair of the congregation. As a sign of the complementary condition EFS should not have service in Sunday mornings, but join the Church. During at least the first decades EFS' congregations should not have any member register, which was an attempt to avoid accusations about founding a Free church. This was the ideal state and can therefore be called the "theory" of EFS, which did not always work in practice, for example because of divergent local opinions about the role of EFS in relation to the Church.

In this chapter I will study EFS' local congregation in Umeå, a town in northern Sweden, in the province of Västerbotten. I have chosen this particular congregation for different reasons. First, EFS has traditionally been very strong and significant in this area, and the relation between EFS and the Church has over the years been

good. In other words, the conditions in Umeå are quite close to the ideal state. Second, a research project connected to my home department (History of Ideas), about voluntary and popular organisation was carried out about Umeå a few years ago, but the role of the revivalist movement was omitted. Third, I have a personal interest in the area since I have been living and working in the area for almost ten years.

Context

The local context

The province of Västerbotten was during the 19th century a predominantly agricultural area with mainly land-owning farmers. Otherwise there were deep forest. Umeå, together with Skellefteå, were the towns in the province, of which Umeå was the administrative centre. Umeå had in the 1840s approximately 1500 inhabitants and by the end of the examined period approximately 3000. Both towns were characterised by trade and were at the end of the century still not particularly affected by industrialisation. There was consequently no dominant industrial/capitalistic structure in the towns. In these towns, as other towns in the northern Sweden, the upper bourgeoisie was absent and the lower bourgeoisie was composed of for example municipal and other administrative bureaucrats, the clergy, shopkeepers and to some extent also artisans. As Umeå grew the middle class also became bigger and more significant in the public life of the towns. The middle class, as in other contemporary Swedish towns, dominated existing voluntary organisations. Popular organisations for, and by, common people were still unusual in Sweden. Contemporary voluntary organisations

such as working men's societies, women societies, music and theatre associations, literature societies, were all characterised by ideas of enlightenment, civilisation, moral refinement, philanthropy, class harmony, and dominated by the middle class.[104]

Since the bourgeoisie/the middle class was intertwined with the governing of the town and media, it is difficult to talk about a critical "public sphere" analogous to Habermas's expression.[105] The body of the middle class seems to have been too small to constitute a critical public sphere. Research concerning the religiosity of the urban middle class in the late 19th century seems to deal with great towns where the middle class is predominantly either non-religious or opposed to established religiosity.[106] On the contrary, power, established religiosity through the State church, and middle class values were during the 19th century still intertwined in a small town like Umeå.

The local religious context

The German Pietistic revival came to the area around Umeå in the beginning of the 18th century through the clergyman Nils Nilsson Grubb. He had studied at the University of Halle, and when he returned home he wanted to inspire the local spiritual life in accordance with his Pietistic beliefs. He introduced and emphasised Pietistic beliefs and practices in services, through catechism, house meetings, and literature distributing. Despite his good intentions he was put on ecclesiastical trial,

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[104] Per Frånberg, *Umeåsystemet: En studie i alternativ nykterhetspolitik 1915-1945* (Umeå, 1983), 2-3; Dag Nordmark, *Det förenande samtalet: Om norrländsk lokalpress och den borgerliga offentlighetens etablering under 1800-talets första hälft* (Stockholm, 1989), 17ff; Olsson, *Den bildade borgaren*, 47-87; Qvarsell, *Kulturmiljö och idéspridning*, 17ff, 75-6.

[105] See mainly Jürgen Habermas's, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962) transl. (Cambridge, 1989).

[106] See for example Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789-1989*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1997), 98-117; or for example *European Religion in the Age of Great Cities 1830-1930* ed. Hugh McLeod (London, 1995).

but found not guilty soon after his death, 43 years old. Ever since then Pietism has affected and coloured the area and its mentality.[107]

Both south and north of Umeå, a more radical and separatist revivalism flourished in the early 19th century, but in Umeå revivalism was more moderate. It is possible to assume that the local tradition since Grubb's days was open to lay participation in a Pietistic spirit, and the Church was experienced in how to deal with popular revivalism. Revivalism around Umeå had therefore a mutual relation to the Church, and confessionalism seems to have been the prevailing condition within the movement.[108] It might also be interesting to note that EFS' main character and theologian, C. O. Rosenius, was born only a few miles outside Umeå, and that his father was a Pietist friendly clergyman.[109] In other words, there was a good breeding ground for EFS in the area.

Umeå's Evangelical-Lutheran congregation

The predecessor to Umeå's Evangelical-Lutheran congregation was established in 1854. That year, a Chapel was build by some Lutheran "friends of missionizing" (as the first in Sweden), but it was not until 1874 EFS made it possible for local congregations to gain membership over all. Even if the word Chapel is used here, it is not the equivalent for "Chapel" as in an English context. This was not a non-

[107] See for example John Holmgren, *Norrlandsläseriet: Studier till dess förhistoria och dess historia fram till år 1830* (Lund, 1948), 20ff; Jarrick, *Den himelske älskaren*, 148, Olsson, *Den bildade borgaren*, 37.
[108] Curt Carlsson, *Samhörighet och separation: Kyrkan och EFS i pitebygden och skellefteåbygden* (Uppsala, 1979), 20-28.

conformist Chapel since EFS was conformist and confessional, not a Free Church. That was also the case in Umeå too. The Swedish word is *missionshus* or *bönhus* - a direct translation is "mission home" or "prayer home". The Chapel was owned by a group of different shareholders (the "friends of missionizing") during the first two decades. The "friends" met every Sunday morning, one hour before service in Church, after which they went to Church. There was also a meeting in the afternoon and two times during the week too. They met for praying and reading the word of God, which basically meant reading the New Testament and Luther.[110]

The congregation did not have members, for a start. This changed in due course, but the original idea was that they were members of the State church. Since member registers are missing it is difficult to define the individuals within the congregation. EFS did not have member registers during the first decades since it could be seen as a step toward the foundation of a Free church. Known individuals are therefore those who had a position on the board, or persons mentioned in letters or annual reports, in other word the active people, the core of the congregation. Those who only went to different meetings, sent their children to the Sunday school et cetera, are mostly unknown to us today. But the fact that the Sunday school at some time held a few hundred children, and the Chapel of the congregation had to be expanded over the years, bear witness that there were more sympathising people outside the core.[111]

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[109] Stig Ingemar Olofsson, *Umeå stads historia 1888-1972* (Umeå, 1972), 179; Sven Lodin, *Carl Olof Rosenius i unga år 1816-1842* (Stockholm, 1933) 240-253.

[110] *EFSA, EI:13, 108*, Allan Hofgren, *Med Gud och hans vänskap: Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen genom 100 år* (Stockholm, 1956), 39; Letter from G T Sœdén, EFS' local representative in Umeå from 1856, *EFSA EI:1*, dated 18/10 1856; *EFSA DII:1, Ombudsböcker*, 1856-1894. See also Sædén's letter from 1905 about the history of the congregation.

[111] *Umeå evangelisk lutherska missionsförening 1876-1916* (Umeå, 1916), 40; *N:1 visitationsbok för Umeå stads församling 1890-*, the visitation 1895.

Among the stockholders we find a goldsmith and court judge, some shop-keepers and artisans. The owners belonged in other word to the middle class, which in this case meant that they belonged to upper strata of the town. We find the same structure when the congregation applied for membership in EFS in 1876, and the shares were transferred to the congregation itself. The board consisted of the same kind of people, and the vicar held the chair.[112]

We see the same persons on the board, as for example on the board of the Church and in the voluntary branch of the county administrative board (*Hushållnings-sällskapet* – which was concerned with mainly carrying out new findings in agriculture). We also find persons from EFS among the top crust in the manufacture register for the town.[113] There was in other words a close relation between the middle class in Umeå and the Evangelical and confessional religiosity carried out by EFS.

Therefore, it is hardly possible to say that the congregation in Umeå was especially subversive. Its character was rather the opposite. At least the board of the congregation wanted to preserve the social and consequently the religious, Lutheran, order. That is one reason to why it is interesting to study the congregation in Umeå, if one subscribes to the opinion that it is possible to see a tendency toward secularisation in the studied time. Even if EFS did not want to change either the society or themselves, and their religious preferences, the paradoxical happened and they had to transform due to social changes.

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[112] *Umeå evangelisk lutherska missionsförening 1876-1916*, 23.

[113] Bo Enander, *Västerbottens läns Hushållningssällskap 1814-1914* (Uppsala, 1933); B E Forsgren, *Umeås Fabriks- och Hantverksförening 1847-1932* (Umeå, 1932). See also the visitation records for the Church in the town of Umeå for the members of the board of the Church, *N:1*, *Visitationsbok för Umeå stad 1890-*.

Activities within the congregation

Within the congregation different kinds of devotions had a central place, such as Christian talks/lectures, Bible reading and expositions, and praying. These activities had the double aim of both edifying the congregation and missionizing potential adherents. During the time between 1854 and 1876 the meetings in the Chapel basically consisted of singing, reading and praying according to approved texts and formulas. Money was probably also raised for mission and sent to EFS for further distribution for missionizing both within the nation and abroad.[114]

In 1877 the congregation called for and got a colporteur. This slightly changed the order of the meetings. The colporteur seemed to preach to some extent too, a change which was not approved by all in the congregation. This new order caused sometimes, and in some cases, tensions between traditional fractions and more modern ones within the congregation.[115]

The means for missions were collected through: for example, by selling needlework made by the women in their needle work groups within the congregation; sales by public auction; lectures for the sake of missions with collections; musical performances with entrance fees and so on.[116]

It is possible to say that the mission and "missionizing" held together the different branches of the congregation. The mission was in many cases an excuse to meet and socialize. In that way, even if it was mainly for pleasure, it was always possible to say that God was served and praised. In due time it seems like this missionizing feature became more and more important in the same time as the

[114] *Umeå evangelisk lutherska missionsförening*, 20-1.
[115] See annual reports for when and where the colporteurs were located. For an example of tension see Erik Janze *EFSA EI:32, 671.*
[116] See letters from local representatives and colporteurs and advertisements in the local papers.

proportion of the specific and traditional Evangelical-Lutheran devotional practises lost in importance. As mentioned, the activities in the Chapel were basically restricted to reading and singing in the early history of the congregation. But at the turn of the century we can see how the traditional forms have to share space with new activities of different kind, especially when it comes to outgoing activities. Reading and singing were not enough any longer in the competition for new souls.

From the early years of the congregation Sunday school was held mainly for children and youth, in order to secure a good Christian and moral education for them. The development of Sunday school responded to changes within the compulsory school, which could not provide the children with adequate Christian education, at least according to EFS and other defenders of Christianity.[117] Unfortunately it is difficult to have exact statistics of Sunday school attendance. In 1878, 200 children joined Sunday school, and ten years later about 400 children.[118]

There were some other attempts to attract the youth too. In the 1860s specific associations emerged for both young men and young women within EFS congregations around the country. These associations never flourished and in the major schism after 1878 (the schism about the Theory of Atonement) many of these youth associations broke loose from EFS and joined the Free church fraction. Thereafter, EFS was careful and reluctant in the founding of similar associations., aiming to the young. In the 1880s YMCA and YWCA established in Sweden, which gave an impetus to new attempts from EFS to start counter activities. YMCA/YWCA was too ecumenical and

[117] See for example Göran Sidebäck, *Kampen om barnets själ: Barn- och ungdomsorganisationer för fostran och normbildning 1850-1980* (Stockholm, 1992), 28-9, 43-4.
[118] Alfred Westman, *EFSA EI:26, 354*, author unknown, *EI:47, 624.*

had a vague Christian profile, according to EFS.[119] In Umeå's EFS, there were youth associations established from at least 1887 and YMCA since mid 1890s.

The same pattern, in terms of a hierarchical order, seen on a national level can be seen in Umeå as well, but adapted to the local conditions. The social pattern of the stockholders from the foundation of the congregation is about the same when it obtained membership in 1876. It is still the upper crust of the town that dominated the board.

The separation between the sexes is obvious in the work of the local congregations. This division can be deduced from the traditional Lutheran, and bourgeois, view upon the gender relation. Only men could preach (in contrary to the situation in the Free churches) and men were basically concerned with the governing of the congregations. Missionizing activities could be a way for women to gather and socialise in a time when female participation in society was restricted. When it comes to the work of the board, we are talking about an activity dominated not only by men (until 1912), but also by "respected" men from the upper layers of the town. This was in a time when morality and teaching morality was closely related to femininity.[120] The tasks of the women were therefore mainly connected to traditionally female values such as child and youth work, raising money for charity and philanthropy in the neighbourhood and missionizing abroad, running social activities, and so forth. Important to notice is that it was mainly the activities of the women that gave the financial support for the congregations. Interesting to note is as well that the

[119] *De ungas förbund: Återblick på de första 10 år* (Stockholm, 1912) 11-23.
[120] Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (London, 1974), 220.

proportion of women in EFS was the lowest among the revivalist groupings in Sweden[121], probably due to its patriarchal structure.[122]

Some changes within the congregation

This survey shows the main activities throughout the studied period. It is possible to trace a subtle but nevertheless an important transformation over the years. We can detect a displacement of emphasised practises; some activities seem to have lost in importance and other rose in importance. It is for example possible to interpret the appearance of the colporteur as a sign of an important shift in mentality. Before the colporteur they had, in the assemblies, in the Chapel, only read texts, without any attempts to preach. The colporteur was allowed, to some extent, to talk in his own words as long as the Church, and of course the rest of the congregation, approved of it (something the national board reluctantly approved). But maybe the most important change is more subtle and understated. It is connected to the rise of a more modern and pluralistic society and also related to the contemporary question about leisure.

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[121] Lundkvist, *Folkrörelserna i det svenska samhället*, 92.

[122] The gender perspective within a Lutheran context is an interesting subject in itself, but this is not the place for a wider examination. When voluntary organisations are examined the role of the women is often hidden or downplayed since their work are not the "official" work of the organisation. Thus it is a fact these organisations widely were dependent on female participation, both as sympathisers and doing the every day duties in the organisations, as well as financiers of the work through for example knitting-work groups. See for example Bjørg Seland, ""Called by the Lord" – Women's Place in the Norwegian Missionary Movement", in *Gender and Vocation: Women, Religion and Social Change in the Nordic Countries, 1830-1940*, ed. Pirjo Markkola (Helsinki, 2000). Hammar also implies that the early movement of female emancipation must be seen in a Lutheran context with its gender dividing doctrine and practice. Inger Hammar, "From Fredrika Bremer to Ellen Key: Calling, Gender and the Emancipation Debate in Sweden, c. 1830-1900", in *Gender and Vocation: Women, Religion and Social Change in the Nordic Countries, 1830-1940*, ed. Pirjo Markkola (Helsinki, 2000); idem, *Emancipation och religion: Den svenska kvinnorörelsens pionjärer i debatt om kvinnans kallelse ca 1860-1900* (Lund, 1999). Brown even claims it is not possible to understand Evangelical religiosity without a gender perspective. He means Evangelical religiosity was female in character and upheld by women, and the change in gender roles in the 1960s entailed the final decline and death for organised Christianity. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*.

The newspapers from the 1850s do not show many signs of a dynamic life in the town, and no wonder; there were not many features characteristic for a modern town. The enjoyments of the town seem to have been rare, except some lectures in the school and a ball on account of the Crown Prince's name day. The first we hear from "our" congregation is an advertisement in 1876 due to the membership in EFS, and it was asking for gifts to be sold for the sake of mission.[123]

Over the years the congregation expanded its activities radically. This change in intensity is especially noticeable from the end of the 1880s and onward. For example, according to the annual report to EFS in Stockholm, the congregation in 1878, during one week, usually met for praying three times a week, they ran a Sunday school once a week and the women's needle-work group met once a week too.[124]

In a letter from the colporteur situated in the congregation in 1887 we get an impression of how the weekly schedule now looked. On Mondays, the young men's group met. It was also the day for expositions of the texts for the Sunday school. Tuesday was the day for needlework meetings for elderly people, and every second Tuesday the group for young women met for needlework and praying. On Wednesdays the temperance association within the congregation met. Thursday was the day for lectures and praying. The association for mission among seamen met on Fridays, and a prayer meeting was also held on that evening. Nothing is mentioned about Saturday. But this was the day for the more occasional and special events, according to the advertisements in the papers. On Sundays lectures were held and they met for praying twice. It was also the day for the Sunday school.[125] Since EFS was confessional the adherents were supposed to visit the Church in the morning too. This was

[123] *Ubl*, 16 & 30/6 1876; *Wbt*, 13/6 1876.
[124] Letter to EFS, Alfred Westman, *EFSA E1:26, 354*.

the weekly schedule of the congregation in 1887. The more unusual, but not rare, meetings of social character were not mentioned then. There was an obvious but subtle increase of both activities and the variety of activities.

Over the time activities such as auctions, occasions for drinking tea and lemonade to collect money for mission, musical soirées, picnics and different daytrips, et cetera, increased. The importance of these social activities increased, with the double purpose to attract new adherents and to keep sympathisers (for a more extensive discussion see below).[126]

We can see a tendency toward a creation of a specific and alternative culture within the congregation. For example, Young describes the culture and the busy activities in the Chapel in a very positive way, and how English Non-conformists wanted to provide its adherents with alternative activities. The importance lay not always in the godly character, rather in the fact they constituted an alternative, contrary to the profane society.[127] This alternative culture was not explicit when the congregation was founded in Umeå in mid 19th century, but at the end of the century. This shows the change toward the denominational form, and is a sign of a changed perception of religion. The question is how it happened and why.

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[125] P J Sjöstrand *EFSA EI:47, 624.*

[126] This subtle development is seen through reading of the newspapers over a long period, and hence difficult to make footnotes.

[127] Kenneth Young, *Chapel: The Joyous Days and Prayerful Nights of the Nonconformists in their Heyday 1850-1950* (London, 1972), 105-38.

1880s – a time for changes

During the 1880s, it became clear that society was about to change, also in the small town Umeå. It is possible to see how the congregation became aware of its role as an individual entity in the life of the town, both religiously and otherwise. They went from being mainly associated with the Church (and therefore in a way taken for granted) to being one association among others. Nationally EFS experienced an increasing threat from both secularists and the Church (who started to emphasise its own voluntary work), stressed in the previous chapter. The conditions seem to differ in Umeå where the relation to the Church was good throughout the 19th century, but the tendency toward denominationalism is apparent.

A separating element is so to speak latent in Protestantism, and hence in the revivalist movement as well, since they emphasised their role as "true" believers contrary to non-true believers. Therefore, it is possible to claim that there is at least a loose connection between Protestantism (and its different branches of revivalism) and secularisation in terms of individualisation and personalisation of faith.[128] If EFS nationally started to found its own individual identity, separated from the Church, due to pressure from the Church and secularists, EFS in Umeå felt pressure and competition from other emerging associations and activities.

Before the 1880s Umeå is described, from EFS' and the Church's point of view, as a strictly Evangelical-Lutheran town where it was difficult for the Baptist movement to establish.[129] By the end of the 1870s, EFS was shaken by the conflict over the Theory of Atonement and several congregations experienced a split. It never

[128] Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World*, 20-3; Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 110ff, 136.

reached Umeå.[130] The schism within EFS over the Theory of Atonement is however given quite extensive space in the local papers. It was apparently an issue for the whole nation, which can be understandable since it in fact was a matter of the survival of the united Church. At the same time, a debate can be seen in the local papers about this subject, and the related question about whether the clergy should solely distribute the Eucharist.[131] EFS was simultaneously sometimes pointed out as a force which undermined the Church through their attempts to make Christianity more accessible to common people.[132] There must, in other words, have been a public awareness of the turbulent time for the united Swedish State church.

Consequently, at the same time the congregation became aware of the possibility of conflicts and divisions. In several letters to EFS in Stockholm they report how Lutheranism was still predominant in the town, and at the same time they observed with increasing anxiety how the religious status quo seemed to be coming to an end.[133]

New competitors, a new market situation

It is during the 1880s we can see how an increase in activities in the town left traces in the papers (in the same time as we could see an increase of activities within the congregation). From mainly having the Church as a place to go to and a few predominantly middle class enjoyments, the range of activities increased dramatically in the town, and consequently the competition increased too. The easiest way to note this

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[129] *Umeå Evangelisk Lutherska Missionsförening*, 18f, Visitation record for the Church in the countryside of Umeå from 1876, Umeå lands församling, *N:3, Visitationsprotokoll 1876-1896.*
[130] O Norrman, *EFSA EI:36, 518.*
[131] The debate took place around 1877. See *Wbn* 17 & 24/10, 7/11 1876; 23/1, 20/3, 10/4, 18/12 1877; et al.

development is to compare the increasing amount of advertisements, for different activities in the town, on the front pages of the papers over the years.

The presence of different associations and leisure activities are pictured in the papers through advertising. Temperance organisations and Free churches were advertising about different kinds of meetings such as "ordinary" gatherings, lectures, day trips on the river and to nearby places, and a variety of different parties.

A plethora of new amusements rose in the town due to these organisations, reaching out to a new audience – the ordinary people. Even if the middle class had experienced some doubts about its own relation to leisure, the real problem appeared when leisure activities became common among the working class in the late 19th century.[134] In Sweden the youth of the working class was considered as a particular problem in the last decades of the century, but it was an issue related to the "social question" as well.[135] Different attempts were made by middle class based associations to teach working class people proper enjoyments.[136] Consequently also EFS experienced this problem and concerns were raised since the new situation threatened the traditional position of the Church.

If we on a national level generally can observe an augmented tension between EFS and the Church, in Umeå we see tendencies to some co-operation (and locally this was of course possible, it was up to each congregation and parish to decide their co-operation). In the 1880s, we can for instance see how it became possible for the local colporteur to participate in services, and the clergy in the Chapel.

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[132] *Ubl* 17/8 1877. In the same time EFS advises their colporteurs, in the local papers, not to attend eucarist congregations. *Wbt* 19/3 1878.
[133] O Norrman, *EFSA EI:36, 518*, Gunnar Ekström, *EI:43, 404*.
[134] Peter Bailey, *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City* (Cambridge, 1998), 25-6.
[135] Hans-Erik Olson, *Staten och ungdomens fritid: Kontroll eller autonomi?* (Lund, 1992), chap. 3.
[136] Olsson, *Den bildade borgaren*, 70-80.

Different kinds of popular movements started to establish in Umeå, at this time, distinguished from previous middle class based associations. During the 1880s, different branches of the temperance movement were established in the town. Previous attempts to promote sobriety were initiated from higher strata and advocated moderate drinking, which can be compared to the "new" popular and teetotal temperance movements.

When the Goodtemplars established in Umeå during the first years of the 1880s, a row broke loose among its adherents. Internal disturbances were one reason to why authorities, the Church and people from the middle class were suspicious of the teetotal temperance movement. The fact that the popular temperance movement attracted people from lower strata affected the debate as well.[137] They were consequently met with suspicion from EFS, and others, in the beginning, since they both had a Christian facade without a mainly Christian goal, and also had several secret rituals for the initiated. The secret characteristic of the movement intimidated the established society and fuelled rumours, which pointed out the Goodtemplars as subversive.[138] In due course EFS, and others, balanced their view when their prejudices were not fulfilled.

A small fraction of Baptists had been in the town for some years too. In 1875 a Baptist baptism was performed in a small village outside Umeå. It is mentioned one paper as a rare occasion.[139] In 1886 another Free church was established in the town, (*Missionsförbundet* – the fraction which had separated from EFS). YMCA and

[137] For Umeå see *Efter femtio år: Hur Godtemplarorden utvecklats i Västerbotten: En minnesskrift 1882-1932*, ed. Birger Bergling (Umeå, 1932).
[138] *EFSA*, Erik Janze, *EI:37, 929*; G T Sædén & Gunnar Ekström *EI:45, 404*; J A Stenmark *EI:89, 202*. See also the diocese's (Härnösand's diocese) printed compilation of visitation records from 1883 (*Prästmöteshandlingar*), part I, bill A.
[139] *Wbt* 23/6 1875.

YWCA came in the early 1890s. The Salvation Army and Socialists are also mentioned as established associations in the 1890s.[140]

Another contributing reason to the shift in mentality in the late 1880s was the fire in 1888 when large parts of the town burned down. After that disastrous incident the composition of the population changed since a large group of workers moved to the town in the phase of re-building.[141] This probably also changed the circumstances for the congregation, and tuned in with the increasing number of popular associations. We don not know if EFS experienced this as a problem since it is not mentioned in the source material. This change must however have contributed to a new structure in the town, and interacted with the general process toward modernisation, as seen all over Europe.[142]

To participate in the "new" popular organisations was a way of, consciously or unconsciously, opposing and set aside the hegemony, and to create an alternative sphere, separated from the power.[143] Obviously, the foundation of the Free churches was a protest against the hegemonic Church. The temperance movement sometimes constituted an attempt for ordinary people to oppose the political hegemony, and "learn" democracy, in order to make their voice heard in the public debate. And sometimes both Free churches and the temperance movement joined the early

[140] A survey of Umeå's associations is found in Olsson, *Den bildade borgaren*, 100-7.
[141] Per Frånberg, "Umeå var genomgångsstad för arbetare efter branden", *Västerbottens Kuriren*, March 1972, 350 year Anniversary issue.
[142] For an overview see for example Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe*, chapter on working class.
[143] Jürgen Habermas is using the expression plebeian sphere (featuring common people) to describe this alternative sphere alongside with, and parallel to the public sphere. In a Swedish context popular movements have been examined as separate spheres with its own agenda and culture. See Åke Kussak, *Författaren som predikant: Ett frikyrkosamfunds litterära verksamhet 1910-1939* (Stockholm, 1982); and Rydbeck, *Nykter läsning*.

working class movement locally in order to improve the conditions for the workers.[144] Both the Church and EFS objected to such behaviour since it undermined the social order. This situation raised new demands on the already established Lutheran religiosity to keep it on top of the situation.

The congregation was in other words facing a new time, with new influences and new competitors. At the beginning of the 1880s, the colporteur Erik Janze experienced that he and his work was opposed by parts of the congregation. Some persons within the congregation claimed that he not was able to mediate the word of God "forcefully" enough, even if he read from and used the same books as before. It was a matter of a rift between different generations because the elderly showed him Luther and the Bible, and the younger persons threatened to go to the Baptists if the tedious reading continued, Janze said. Young people wanted freer oral expositions instead.[145] Janze left the congregation and thereafter, they read only from the New Testament and Luther.

A few years later a new colporteur, P J Sjöstrand, was located in the town, and he was in the beginning completely trusted. But after only a few years he was considered too boring as well, A group from the congregation sent an appeal to Stockholm, and they wanted the colporteur transferred. They claimed that Sjöstrand was worn out as preacher. As a good example, contrary to Sjöstrand, they mentioned the Free churches which changed the preachers more often. The same thing happened to Sjöstrand's successor, again with references to the more varied preaching within

[144] Irving Palm, *Frikyrkorna, arbetarfrågan och klasskampen: Frikyrkorörelsens hållning till arbetarnas fackliga och politiska kamp åren kring sekelskiftet* (Uppsala, 1982), 169-173.
[145] Erik Janze, *EFSA EI:32, 374, 671; EI:33, 151.*

the Free churches. They acknowledged that the congregation had to compete over the souls with the Free churches, which was a new experience in the congregation.[146]

Nationally we could see, in the former chapter, a shift around the 1880s when EFS started to react against secular movements and tendencies in society. This cannot be seen in Umeå in the same time. Instead the establishing of different Free churches and other associations seem to have been the problem when EFS in Umeå wanted to safeguard the right faith. In the mid of the 1880s one letter writer indignantly observed how people rather went the meetings with the religiously dubious temperance movement then visited Christian activities.[147]

This was simultaneously a time when the new urban middle class experienced a prosperous time in Sweden. The middle class manifested their presence through solemn and cultivating enjoyments such as balls, dinners, excursions, musical soirees and different festivities to celebrate special days in Swedish towns.[148] In Umeå, we can see an increasing amount of bourgeois enjoyments, but mixed with more popular amusements toward the end of the century. This seems to have inspired the congregation to a variety of joyful occasions. One can see a transformation of the activities within the Chapel toward the 1900s "in the sense that they relied more on secular culture than old chapel life did".[149] These new trends were of course both feared and welcomed by the churches.[150]

I do not want to over emphasise these small signs of the new conditions the congregation had to work under. Nevertheless, they fit into a pattern in which the competitive situation without any doubt increased in the town. The question about

[146] G T Sædén, *EFSA EI:70, 1257; EI:71, 2181.*
[147] A G Hellström *EFSA EI:39, 583.*
[148] Nordmark, *Det förenande samtalet*, 20.
[149] Currie, *Methodism Divided*, 137.

making the congregation more appealing rose in order to be able to attract people. Pressure from both above and, as in this case, "from below" has been established to force voluntary organisations into directions they not always wanted, for example toward more entertainment in order to attract a wider clientele, a development also seen within Umeå's EFS-congregation.[151]

Consequently, it is in the same time EFS increased their occasions for socialising, and this is not a coincidence, rather a matter of adaptation and an attempt to find new ways to attract people. Unfortunately, there is no explicit evidence/records left today of any discussions concerning this change in direction. It was now the congregation started to launch activities without a "clear" Christian devotional content as before. The aim was mainly to collect money for missionary activities. The amount of different devotional activities and meetings increased. The congregation started to have for example so called "spiritual concerts".[152] In 1889 a sequence of evening-amusements started in order to enhance the interest for teetotalism, with serving of food and coffee, lectures, song and music. They were starting to throw coffee and tea parties for the sake of national and international missionizing activities.[153] Also parties for different special occasions emerged, such as Christmas parties and parties around the Shrove Tuesday and so on. In the end of 1899, both a party was held to celebrate the Swedish king and they thanked God for him,[154] and a party for collecting money for installing electrified illumination in the Chapel.[155] The amount of "pleasant" meetings, always with the excuse to collect money for some noble cause

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[150] Ian Sellers, *Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity* (London, 1977), 48.
[151] Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis*, 322.
[152] *Ubl* 20/11 1890.
[153] *Wbt* 18, 21/3, 8/4, 27/5 1889; 21/4 1890.
[154] *Wbt* 2/12 1899.
[155] *Wbt* 27/12 1899.

seem to have increased, in the same time as the total amount of occasions to meet increased over all during the last decades of the 19th century.

The tendency toward an increasing emphasise on fellowship within the congregation is even more obvious when it comes to the work among the youth. YMCA/YWCA were established in the town in mid 1890s. EFS had concerns about them since their religious affiliation was unclear, but could not deny the fact that young people were attracted by their activities. When EFS' youth work was institutionalised through *De ungas förbund* (the Young People's association) in 1902 it seems like the main aim is to gather under pleasant forms, and of course with the noble purpose to make Christianity attractive to young people. Special meetings with devotion, Bible studying, parties, day trips et al, for youth were arranged several times a week. After looking at the budget for the youth association, it is quickly seen that the costs for socialising were even higher then the cost for missionizing activities, which implies the focus on "pleasant" activities within the youth associations.[156] The aforementioned transformation of ways of socialising was regarded as a means to keep youth within the congregations (which was illustrated in the previous discussion about the colporteur and his preaching).[157]

The reaction against secular and neutral religious movements was delayed in Umeå, compared to what is seen nationally within EFS. But, by the end of the 19th century, the temperance movement and socialists have become the main antagonists. This must be compared with the fact that it was mainly the Free churches that constituted the main threat some decade before. At the same time, a tendency toward ecumenicalism where the different branches of Christianity associated in order to

[156] J A Stenmark *EFSA EI: 261*; Carl Sandström *EI:156, 744*; Gustaf Sundqvist & Robert Sandberg *EI:167, 2170.*

increase their power arose. The change is noticeable on the regular and compulsory place in the papers where the Church exclusively informed the public of their activities. Until the late 1880s the Church was the only one to announce its activities on this place but thereafter, EFS and other Free Churches had this possibility.

In 1907 the clergyman, and chairman in the congregation, T H Svartengren, wrote to EFS and recommended a stronger emphasis on ecumenism for example in the Sunday schools. This was a reaction both against the Sunday schools provided by the temperance movement, and against plans from the Social democrats to found one as well. The same clergyman wrote one year later too, and stressed the importance of EFS' large out door meetings in the summer. Since the temperance and the working class movement had their demonstration marches, he argued that EFS' meetings were a way to oppose and compete with these events.[158] There was in other words a slide in mentality at the beginning of the 20th century, in extension of the development in the 19th century. Then secular forces were opposed and ecumenism became an option. Ecumenism is often seen as a progress but both Gilbert and Wilson see ecumenism as an option when traditional strategies are outmoded and a sign of a declining significance of religion.[159]

Whether this change toward a more "pleasant" or "entertaining" form of Christianity corresponds to a contemporary shift in theology is not studied here. I am more concerned with "the practice". In Britain, this transformation has its equivalence in theological thinking. The doctrine of hell was toned down, God became less

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[157] Currie, *Methodism Divided*, 133-4.
[158] T H Svartengren *EFSA EI:160, 2720; 165, 1294.*
[159] Gilbert, *The Making of Post-Christian Britain*, 125-6; Wilson, *Contemporary Transformations of religion*, 85.

judging, and humanity and its possibilities were lifted up and were given a more positive view.[160]

A more subtle change can also be seen in the local newspapers over the years. This can be seen through for example the serials which were published on a regular basis in the newspapers. In mid 19th century these stories often had an explicit religious content with underlying moral message. In due time the stories changed in character and the religious message was tuned down, and emphasis was more on non-religious amusement. In 1875, in one paper, one of the aims with the serials was to be entertaining and cautionary, in 1899 only entertaining.[161]

In the beginning of the examined period, only reports and advertisements concerning different authorities (the Church included) were printed – and nothing related to any voluntary association. Toward the second quarter of the century a slight change can be noticed. Reports from national annual meetings, and statistics for major national associations appear to a larger extent. In other words, these organisations started to take place in the public debate. In the end of the period all different kinds of associations were given space in the newspapers, both with advertisements, reports and short summaries. Over all, the authoritarian religious content declined in the newspapers, in the same time as the papers mirror the social change, in which society turned more pluralistic. It is not possible to say that the society, seen through the papers, became "less" religious since they, in the end of the 19th century, to a larger extent gave space to religious manifestations. But it changed toward pluralisation and popularisation.

[160] McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City*, 224-8; Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 143-6.

Can we speak about secularisation?

How can we now interpret this development as an ongoing process toward secularisation in terms of a changing perception of religion?

The transformation of religion over the years due to a growth of "religious amusements" must be related to the development of the town. The social milieu became more pluralistic in terms of for example leisure activities and alternative ways of living and thinking. This made both religion and secularism suffer.[162] A pluralistic situation is, above all, a market situation, says Berger, in which religiosity, too (as well as other ideologies and activities), has to be adapted to the market in order to be sold. Therefore, pluralisation and secularisation are inevitably linked together.[163] Yeo claims that there is a relation between the growth of leisure activities in the late 19th century and the market adaptation among contemporary religious organisations. This was in the beginning, a successful development for the organisations. When leisure started to replace religion, previous "higher" religious goals were undermined, which prepared for the denominalisation of religion. [164] If the churches wanted to attract people in a less religiously homogenous and changing society, it implied that the churches were forced into continuous adaptation.[165] Because of this new pluralistic and competitive situation Christianity became more responsive, more inclusive, and more complex; i. e. Christianity tried to fit in to the new society by becoming more like it, and hence more vulnerable.[166]

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[161] *Wbt* 22/12 1875; 4/1 1899.
[162] Nash, David, *Secularism, Art and Freedom* (Leicester, 1992), 25.
[163] Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 126, 137-8, 145-7, 154.
[164] Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis*, 316-8, 324-5.
[165] Gilbert, *The Making of Post-Christian Britain*, 108-9; Perman, *Change and the Churches*, 37-58.
[166] S. J. D. Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline: Organisation and Experience in Industrial Yorkshire, 1870-1920* (Cambridge, 1996), 383-7.

Consequently, if you want to be pessimistic about this development it is possible to say that the late 19th century Christianity became "less" Christian, and merely a passive victim of social circumstances. But, as Cox probably rightly claims, the modern distinction between "religion" and "really social", "really political" or "really a question of social class", does not accurately describe the situation of the 19th century. When society changed, religion changed/transformed as well. In a time with increasing social tensions, organised Christianity turned more social. One (sometimes problematic) effect, seen in both England and through the eyes of EFS, was to provide the people with popular recreation and entertainment.[167] EFS started to compete by providing the people with more activities and more amusing activities. Toward the last decades of the century, says Bebbington, the "Evangelicals were to the fore in the general shift in favour of providing organised leisure facilities for the working people. Suspicion of amusements melted away as they came to be seen as valuable adjuncts of church life."[168]

According to Brown, the rise of activities within the religious voluntary organisations were also connected to the creation of a successful religious, predominantly middle class based, entity – distinct from the "religious other", the non-churchgoers. "It defined belonging, and it defined exclusion. A vast new territory was formed to which were entrusted the meanings of 'being religious' and 'being irreligious'". Participation in the activities became a marker of identity, more then previously.[169] This argument can of course be questioned since the transformation

[167] Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society*, 48-64.
[168] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 132.
[169] Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, 43-5.

often aimed toward the lower classes, and grew out of social concerns.[170] In EFS' case the increase of social activities contributed to the creation of their own identity, and actually less middle class based then before.

Simultaneously, the religious organisations, such as the congregation in Umeå, expanded the arena of religion in terms of both personal beliefs and social behaviour – and religious affiliation became more of a lifestyle, and a culture. It is possible to talk about a life-style because; can people without the life-style maintain the range of activities, seen within a local congregation, in a small town as Umeå? But by turning religion in such a direction, paradoxically, "these forces of intensified religiosity sowed the dragon's teeth that generated the soldiers of unbeliefs".[171] According to Cox, this development does not automatically entail the decline of the significance of religious practices and beliefs. It is all a matter of adaptation to the prevailing context. When adaptation is successful the churches can be prolific, but this has not been the case in Europe in the long run. "The churches have simply lacked the resources to respond, and have turned inward instead, preoccupied with denominational structure and church union."[172]

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[170] For this positive view, without talking about socialisation as means for discipline, see for example Sellars, *Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity*, 47-8; and Gerald Parsons, "From Dissenters to Free Churchmen: The transition of Victorian Nonconformity", in *Religion in Victorian Britain: Traditions* vol. I (Manchester, 1988), 111-3.

[171] Frank M. Turner, "The Victorian crisis of faith and the faith that was lost", in *Victorian faith in crisis: Essays on continuity and change in nineteenth-century religious belief* eds. Helmstader, Richard J. & Lightman, Bernard V. (Stanford, 1990).

[172] Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth 1870-1930* (Oxford, 1982), 266-77.

In a nutshell: the pluralistic, competitive situation both separated religion from society and laid the ground for religion as a specific, and optional, marker of identity. This was at first a prosperous development for Christianity and EFS (at least in the examined area), but in the long run it undermined the position of Christianity over all, within this context.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have examined the Swedish confessional and Evangelical revivalist movement *Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen* (*EFS* – approximately the Swedish Evangelical Mission Society) during the later half of the 19th century, and its response to a general process of secularisation. I do not claim to study the process of secularisation in Sweden over all – only how this Christian organisation changed due to a perceived secularisation during the period between 1856 and 1910. This change can be described in terms of adaptation to prevailing conditions. I see the adaptation in line with the process of secularisation. Thus, it does not automatically imply that EFS lost adherents and significance. The outcome was rather the contrary, and the heyday of EFS occurred in the period between the 1910s and 1950s.

Even if there are no clear and coherent signs of an ongoing process of secularisation, we can see a pattern pointing toward secularisation in terms of a new, and changed, perception of religiosity. There was definitely an interaction between a more general tendency toward a secular society and the response from EFS.

As McLeod shows, it is not possible to talk about secularisation as a universal process, with one single cause, in all areas of society and life durig the examined

period. Reasons and impacts differ with both geographical areas and the role of religion in different social areas.[173]

The specific area I have examined here is how a Swedish confessional revivalist organisation, within the privileged State church, responded. If these changes respond to an actual loss of significance for Christianity among a majority of the population, or if it is a response to an imagined secularisation among a specific, and religious, part of the Swedes, has not been examined.

Many attempts have been made to interpret the process of secularisation and its causes. Whether we can talk about secularisation over all in the examined time period, or not, is a matter of how the term "secularisation" is defined. On one hand, we can talk about secularisation in terms of "dechristianisation" – Christianity vanished and disappeared. On the other hand we can talk about secularisation as the process which made religion a voluntary, individual, private, not taken for granted, and problematic/questionable activity. I prefer the latter description since it is, at least in Sweden, difficult to claim that Christianity lost its role as a mental framework for great parts of the population, as early as in the 19th century. It is difficult to talk about secularisation in terms of dechristianisation since we can see an overwhelmingly increase of religious activities. In what way either personal beliefs are simultaneously transformed, or to what extent Christian practices and rites still played a significant role in peoples life, are not an issue here.

Lutheran Christianity and the State church had the privileged position as the only religious alternative, at least until mid 19th century. Lutheranism coloured Swedish mentality to a wide extent, even if popular beliefs were mixed with folklore,

[173] Hugh McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe 1848-1914*, (London, 2000), 285-9.

and was an unquestioned part of the Swedish mentality. Secularisation interacted with, and was a part of, legal changes in the same time which loosened the legal framework within the religious sphere. What happened during the examined period was that the position of the Church and Christianity were questioned from different directions. One implicit and sometimes unintended "attack" came from different revival movements, since they often emerged as a critique to the Church, and hence undermined it. It might be seen as difficult to talk about revivalism as a forerunner to secularisation, but in a way, paradoxically, they presuppose each other. As Turner puts it, "only a person with a firm faith can lose it in a problematic fashion".[174] Christianity was no longer a collective activity, but an individual, stressed further in the same tradition as the Reformation. Therefore, we can talk about secularisation in terms of making religion personal and problematic – it made religion optional. In Cox's words "the great transformation affecting religion in the modern world is not decline, but the possibility of decline",[175] which was introduced through the emphasis on conversion.

On a national level, seen through the reading of the annual reports, we can see how the movement underwent a homogenising process during the examined period. The movement became both more homogenous and at the same time a distinct separate unit, alongside with other contemporary organisations and styles of life.

EFS that started in 1856 consisted for the first two decades of a board of twelve men, in sole control, with the purpose to unite and strengthen the Evangelical-Lutheran revival around Sweden, against the early Baptists and Mormons. In due

[174] Turner, "The Victorian Crisis of Faith and the Faith that was Lost", 15.
[175] Jeffrey Cox, "Master Narratives of Long-Term Religious Change".

time, in order to strengthen Swedish Evangelicalism, it became possible for sympathising congregations over the country to obtain membership in EFS (from 1874). At the end of the 1870s, the movement was shaken by the conflict over the Theory of Atonement. In the following years the Free church fraction within EFS was distinguished and they established their own association (*Svenska Missionsförbundet, SMF*).

We can also see how the results of EFS' attempts to have a close connection to the Church varied over the years. In the beginning the Church was largely reluctant to accept EFS. This changed, according to EFS, when the Free church fraction was excluded, and a time of mutual respect took place. One effort to achieve respect from the Church was to have clergymen in the chair of the congregations. Another way was to recruit clergymen as local representatives. The quantity of local representatives increased steadily from the foundation and the proportion of clergies amounted to approximately half. From about the 1890s this proportion sank. Simultaneously, EFS encouraged congregations to build their own Chapels in order to strengthen their independence and identity. This was a countermeasure to the Church that had started to emphasise its own voluntary work.

We can also see how EFS' colporteurs widened their space of activities and forced EFS to expand their "legal" rights. The colporteurs were in the beginning not allowed to preach, only to distribute books and discuss with people. They always had to have the approval of the clergies. Toward the end of the century the conditions had gradually changed and their preaching were implicitly supported by EFS. In 1906, EFS changed the title colporteur to pastor, which implies an approval of the preaching activities.

There was also a shift in attitude when it came to the work of publishing. In the beginning, the aim was to distribute good Evangelical-Lutheran literature to bar the way for literature of dubious content. The focus was on books and not on small tracts and other to "light weight" literature. By the end of the 19th century, EFS recognised the difficulties in distributing "substantial" literature and now changed its purpose. Now EFS wanted to be a pious and godly alternative to profane literature.

At the same time as we see the denominational form take shape on a national level, we can see how EFS' enemies shifted. In mid 19th century, when EFS was founded, the main enemies consisted of Free churches, and different branches of Christianity, such as Baptists and Mormons. During the 1880s this changed and the main antagonists became non-religious groupings such as positivists, secularists, socialists and materialists over all, or theologians inspired by a more scientific view. The hostile attitude toward other Christian affiliations was ironed out. EFS had become aware of their position as an alternative, in a more pluralistic society.

Sweden started to undergo a transformation toward a more modern and industrialised society during the examined period. If we subscribe to the opinion that a modernized society is a more pluralistic and fragmented society, where each view must be marketed and sold, we here see how EFS responded by becoming, consciously or unconsciously, a more apt fragment of society. The organisation separated themselves to a higher degree then before from the Church and formed a single unit.

The local study shows a slightly different picture of the events, with some similarities, but to some extent delayed. Umeå was a religiously homogenous society until the

establishment of the popular movements in the 1880s. In Umeå, the congregation was the first significant religious alternative to the Church (even if it is not adequate to talk about a real alternative due to EFS' confessionalism). Since EFS and the Church in Umeå mutually worked together it is difficult to talk about EFS as opposing the Church; EFS was rather a supporter of the religious and social order. The secular forces that the central board considered as the new "enemies" during the 1880s are not apparent in Umeå – either within the congregation or in the public debate. In Umeå the religiously neutral organisations were the first to constitute a threat instead, and caused the congregation to respond.

The response was hence mainly a result of an increase of alternative ways of living your life and spending your spare time. There was no explicit secular movement in the town, at least not until the 1890s, and then through the working class movement. Free thinkers, positivists, and materialists are not mentioned as dangerous in Umeå. Nevertheless we can observe a shift in the religious mentality, seen through the correspondence between EFS in Umeå and in Stockholm. At the same time, we can see how the newspapers started to report the schism within EFS and how it divided the organisation by the end of the 1870s. This development made the congregation aware of themselves as separate and vulnerable. This contributed to an awareness that the religious conditions have changed in the nation around Umeå. In the local congregation, there was a divergence of opinions about the role of the colporteur, mainly concerning whether he could preach or not, and about how often they should change him. This was a question about competing with other religious associations, and was raised in order to make the meetings more appealing to people.

With the purpose of meeting the new competitive situation, the congregation started to emphasise the importance of coming together under pleasant forms. Occasions to meet of various reasons increased significantly around the 1880s. At the same time, the occasions for meeting became less traditionally "religious". By mid 19th century, the main purpose had been to meet and read Luther or the Bible, but by end of the century this had been transformed. The proportion of "pure" Christian devotional meetings decreased at expense of more social events – the role of Christianity had changed.

In addition, it is also possible to see how the predominantly middle class based congregation turned into a more popular organisation, and became comparable to other similar organisations. This process did not fully evolve during the examined period, but the tendency is clear.[176] The importance of the middle class, and the middle class based congregations decreased within EFS. Whether this reflected a more general trend of religious neglect within the middle class specifically is not examined here.[177]

Social changes affected both the Church and EFS, which in EFS' case can be seen in its attempts to adapt to the new competitive market for different reasons. EFS tried to maintain its significance and beneficial position as related to the Church, but found themselves as an alternative among others. Then they started to keep interest in preserving their own way of life. A certain lifestyle evolved with the possibility of spending all their spare time within the congregation. Nevertheless, it is important to see that this transformation had a positive influence on the number of adherents

[176] Lundqvist, *EFS i demokratins tidevarv*, 120-1.
[177] This fact is described as important by Yeo and Brown. When the middle class lost interest in religion and withdrew from the voluntary organisations, the organisations lost its freedom in terms of

nation-wide the preceding decades. The perception of religion had changed, and the transformation was successful.

money, time, and respectability. Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis*, 296, 321; Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* (Edinburgh, 1997), 124-32.

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