

First Missions – Sweden

First Missions – Pioneering Workers – Sweden

Sweden – Sverige

Revised Sept. 3, 2014

SWEDEN – SVERIGE

When did the workers first arrive? 1910-11

1912 Workers List shows Bob Skeritt, August Gustafson, Edgar Carlson/Karlsson, Edith Eklund and Esther Hanson.

By 1924, there were 14 workers on the Sweden Workers list.

Who were the first brother workers? Reportedly, **August Gustafson** (1873–1970) was the first. In 1899, when he was 25, August Gustafson began preaching according to Matthew 10, independently of the Go-Preacher movement. He and his companion (who?) came in contact with the Go-Preachers and began to preach with their movement. August is believed to be of Norwegian descent.

Robert Skeritt was from Ireland and labored in Scotland, America and Sweden. He was in the work from 1902 until at least 1913. He left the work, married and remained loyal to Wm Irvine's Omega teachings after Irvine was expelled from the fellowship and moved to Palestine. Robert wrote Hymn No. 80: Come Let Us Follow Jesus. **There are many letters to Robert & Nan Skeritt written by Wm Irvine.**

In August, 1949, when he was 70 years old, August Gustafson was put out of the work. Five years later, he met Edward Cooney and became his companion, at age 75. He died in 1970 at the age of 97. There was a memorial service held for him in Sweden. **(More details about August are in the book: Selected Letters of Fred Wood, 1890-1986 by Patricia Roberts, p.34)**

Who were the first sister workers? **Edith Eklund** (1872-1956), along with **Esther Hanson** (1884-1962) were the first sister workers to go to Sweden in 1910. Edith Eklund was born in Sweden in 1872, started in the work in Nebraska in 1908. After her home visit in 1920, she remained in Sweden until she died in the work there in 1956. She was the first worker buried in a cemetery in Bjärnum, Sweden where four other workers are also buried. **Esther Hanson** was born in Minnesota in 1884, professed 1905, went in the work 1906, was in the work in California, Oregon, Washington, Sweden and Finland. At some point she married a man named Herman Benson and died in 1962 in Washington USA.

Josef Henry Hanson (1888-1973) and **Edith Hanson** (1890-1965) were siblings (**see Photo**) who left America together on August 28, 1920 and arrived in Sweden on September 8, 1920 "for the purpose of evangelistic work, non-demonination." They are no relation to Esther Hanson, the first sister worker. They were born in Illinois, Henry in 1888 and Edith in 1890. Their parents, Hans and Anna Hanson, came to America in 1882 from Sweden. In 1903 or 1904, the Hanson family moved to Boring, Oregon from Rockford, Illinois. Both Henry and Edith professed in 1911 and went in the work in 1912. Both continued in the work until their deaths. Henry died in 1973 and Edith died in 1965. They basically remained in Scandinavia for most of the rest of their lives, Henry mostly in Sweden, Edith in Sweden and also in Finland and Norway.

Unfortunately, **Edith Hanson** was arrested in Norway on October 14, 1942 with her companion **Alma Lee** and they became **Prisoners of War** in Norway and Germany during WWII. Alma Lee wrote an account of their time spend in prison titled: **"My Prisoner of War Days."** They were released in 1945. Edith returned to Oregon in 1959 and labored there until her death in December, 1965 at the age of 75. Along with several other Hanson family members, Edith is buried at the Sandy Ridge Cemetery, just over the hill from the Boring convention grounds. Henry is buried in a cemetery in Bjärnum, Sweden where 4 other workers are buried.

Who was the first to profess? When? In 1912, two brother workers met the **Hemdals** who professed, along with others. There was a big stir in the Lutherans and in their anger a group broke into the Hemdal home and assaulted the brother workers, driving them from the area. (Source: **Sydney Holt August 3, 1985 Letter No. 7**)

Who were the first native workers? Some of the first Swedish workers were those of the Olsson family. Three Olsson's siblings were in the work. They were Tyra, Ragnar and Ragnhilde. Ragnar left the work and married Margarete, another worker.

When & Where was the first meeting? Possibly somewhere in Blekinge

When & Where was the first baptism?

When & Where was the first convention? Possibly, Saxemara, Blekinge

Prior convention locations: Orsa, Darlarna, Bjärnum, Skåne

Currently, Stockholm is the only convention in Sweden.

Who have the Overseers been?

August Gustafson (1873-1970) Overseer dates unknown.

William Weir (1882-1969) was Overseer in Sweden and possibly Finland also from the early 1920s until his death in 1969. He is listed on the 1929 Swedish Workers list, and from then on until his death. Originally from Scotland, he had been Overseer in

Minnesota for a few years in the 1920s before going to Sweden. He wrote Hymn No.152: A Living Offering. William went into the work in 1903 and labored in Scotland, USA and Sweden. (He is not related to the Weir family of Dublin, Ireland.)

Josef Henry Hanson (1888–1973) from Oregon went to Sweden in 1920 where he preached all his life, only returning home to America for a few home visits. Henry Hanson became the Overseer after Wm Weir died; however, he only outlived William Weir by 4 years, dying in 1973, and is buried in Bjarnum, Sweden . **See Photo #2 of Henry.**

Hugo Johnson from Minnesota, who had been preaching in Sweden for many years, became Overseer after Henry Hanson, until he was incapacitated in 1985. Hugo died in 1987.

Harry Johnson from Minnesota (no relation to Hugo) had been overseer in Minnesota and Wisconsin for many years before he went to Sweden. Hugo lived until 1987, but Harry pretty much assumed the responsibility from the time he went there. By 1990 Harry Johnson was beginning to turn oversight over to Eldon Knudson, as Harry's health failed. Harry died June 7, 1997 and is buried in Sweden.

Eldon Knudson is from Manitoba Canada. He left Manitoba for Iceland in 1968, then moved on to the Faroe Islands and Sweden. In 1973 he went to Hong Kong, where he stayed until 1977. He returned to Manitoba for three years, then went back to Sweden in 1980, and has been there or in Finland ever since. It was under Eldon's jurisdiction that the fellowship was registered as a corporation in Sweden named "Christians in Sweden." Eldon is the current overseer there (in 2010), though his health is beginning to fail.

Incorporated as: Kristna i Sverige (Christians in Sweden) on October 1, 1992 by Eldon Knudson in Stockholm

View documents at: <http://www.anotherstep.net/Constitution.htm>

Church Name: Known as "Jesu vägen" (the Jesus Way") and "sanningen" ("the truth") and "Kristna i Sverige" (Christians in Sweden)

Graves: There are five graves of workers in one cemetery located in Bjarnum, Sweden:

Edith Eklund (1872-1956)

William Weir (1882-1969)

Georg Hemdal (1890-1971)

J. Henry Hanson (1888-1973)

Torsten Hemdal (1894-1977)

TTT Editor's Note: In the absence of a written account, the above information has been compiled by the TTT Editor from various sources. Corrections or additions are most welcome; as well as other historical accounts for this country [Email TTT](#)