

## A Brief History of the Scandinavian Mission

Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of latter-Day Saints* p.779-780

SCANDINAVIAN MISSION (The) embraced the three Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, and at different times also Iceland and Finland. The headquarters of the mission were at Copenhagen, Denmark. The population of Denmark is about 3,000,000, Sweden about 6,140,000, and Norway about 2,890,000 [in about 1940].

The preaching of the restored gospel was confined to the English-speaking people (Indians excepted) until 1843, when the first missionaries were sent to the Pacific Islands, where they founded the Society Islands Mission in 1844; but after the headquarters of the Church had been established in Great Salt Lake Valley and the first missionaries were called from there to foreign lands, missionaries were chosen to open up the door for the restored gospel in France, Germany, Italy, and Scandinavia, on the continent of Europe. Thus Apostle Erastus Snow was called to open up a mission in the Scandinavian countries, and with him Peter O. Hansen was called specially to Denmark, and John E. Forsgren to Sweden. These brethren left Great Salt Lake Valley, together with other missionaries, in October, 1849, and arrived in Great Britain early the following year. Erastus Snow, while stopping in England, chose George Parker Dykes, who was laboring as a missionary in England, to accompany him and the other brethren mentioned to Scandinavia. Elders Snow, Forsgren and Dykes arrived in Copenhagen, Denmark, June 14, 1850, (having been preceded there by a month or so by Peter O. Hansen). Successful missionary work was at once commenced in the capital of Denmark, where the first baptisms took place Aug. 12, 1850, and the first branch of the Church was organized Sept. 15, 1850.

In the meantime John E. Forsgren was sent to Sweden, where he, on July 26, 1850, baptized his brother, Peter A. Forsgren, as the first convert to the restored gospel in Sweden. Owing to persecution the work in Sweden, however, did not prosper until 1853, but in Denmark George P. Dykes raised up the second branch of the Church in that country at Aalborg Nov. 25, 1850. Soon other branches were organized, which were grouped into three conferences, named respectively the Aalborg Conference, the Fredericia Conference, and the Copenhagen Conference. Many branches were raised up in different parts of Denmark, which were organized into other conferences, such as Aarhus, Bornholm, Fyen, Oderise, Øernes, Skive and Vendsyssel.

Norway was opened up as a missionary field by Hans F. Petersen, a Danish local Elder, in September, 1851. Other missionaries followed him to Norway, where two branches of the Church were organized, to-wit: Østerrisør (organized July 16, 1852), and Frederikstad (organized July 25, 1852). These two branches were organized as the Brevik (later Christiania) Conference Aug. 14, 1852. Soon after (Sept. 5, 1852), three other branches were organized, namely, Brevik

Branch. Dec. 8, 1853, the Christiania Branch Sept. 29, 1854, and the Drammen Branch.

In Sweden the first branches of the Church were organized in 1853 by Anders W. Winberg, namely, Skönabäck April 24, 1853, Malmö April 25, 1853, Lomma April 25, 1853, and Lund April 30, 1853. These branches, which were raised up in the midst of much persecution, were grouped into the Skåne Conference (organized June 26, 1853). Later many other branches were organized in Sweden, which were grouped into the Stockholm Conference (organized Dec. 31, 1854), Göteborg (organized Sept. 5, 1857), Norrköping (organized May 12, 1858), and Sundswall (organized June 12, 1859).

As the work increased in Norway, branches were organized in different parts of the country, and in 1899 (May 8) Norway, which hitherto had consisted of only one conference, was divided into three conferences, namely, the Christiania (continued), Bergen and Trondhjem.

After the lapse of a few years, the Scandinavian Mission, consisting of the three Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, became the most successful and fruitful missionary field of the Church established among non-English-speaking people. From the beginning until the close of 1930, 54,358 persons were baptized in Scandinavia, namely, 26,656 in Denmark, 19,147 in Sweden, and 8,555 in Norway. Of these 26,027 emigrated to Zion during the same period, namely, 13,984 from Denmark, 8,545 from Sweden, and 3,498 from Norway.

Following is a list of the Elders who have acted as presidents of the Scandinavian Mission: Erastus Snow, 1850–1852; John E. Forsgren, 1852; Willard Snow, 1852–1853; John Van Cott, 1853–1856; Hector C. Haight, 1856–1858; Carl Widerborg, 1858–1860; John Van Cott (second term), 1860–1862; Jesse N. Smith, 1862–1864; Samuel L. Sprague (pro tem.), 1864; Carl Widerborg, (second term), 1864–1868; Jesse N. Smith (second term), 1868–1870; William W. Cluff, 1870–1871; Canute Peterson, 1871–1873; Christian G. Larsen, 1873–1875; Nils C. Flygare, 1875–1876; Ola N. Liljenquist, 1876–1877; August W. Carlson (pro tem.), 1877–1878; Nils C. Flygare (second term), 1878–1879; Niels Wilhelmsen, 1879–1881; Andrew Jenson (pro tem.), 1881; Christian D. Fieldsted, 1881–1884; Anthon H. Lund, 1884–1885; Nils C. Flygare (third term), 1885–1888; Christian D. Fjeldsted (second term), 1888–1890; Edward H. Anderson, 1890–1892; Joseph Christiansen, 1892–1893; Carl A. Carlquist, 1893–1894; Peter Sundwall, 1894–1896; Christian N. Lund, 1896–1898; George Christensen, 1898; Andreas Peterson, 1898–1901; Anthon L. Skanchy, 1901–1904; Christian D. Fieldsted (third term), 1904–1905.

In 1905 it was decided to separate Sweden from Denmark and Norway and organize the Swedish part of the mission into a separate mission, called the Swedish Mission, and to retain Denmark and Norway under the old name of Scandinavian Mission.