Swedish Pietism (1700–1727) as Resistance and Popular Religion
by Todd Green

Despite the widespread disagreement among scholars concerning the definition, chronology, and geographical scope of the Pietist movement, Pietism continues to receive a considerable amount of scholarly attention. Whereas German church historians once dominated the study of Pietism, recent decades have witnessed an increasingly interdisciplinary approach to Pietist research through the contributions of sociologists, cultural anthropologists, and gender historians. While contributions to the study of Pietism continue to abound, there has not been any significant work done on the concept of Pietism as a form of popular religion. Yet if popular religion in its most general sense is understood as those religious beliefs and practices that at some level stand in tension with or even in opposition to the religious beliefs and practices which are promoted and sanctioned by formal ecclesiastical structures, then the study of Pietism as a form of popular religion is full of potential.

The study of Pietism as popular religion yields two problems. First, there would appear to be an obvious incongruity between Pietism and popular religion in that many scholars define the popular religion of the unlearned/commoner over against the religion of the learned/elite. In the case of Pietism, these traditional distinctions do not work, at least not in the early stages of Pietism as it developed in late seventeenth-century Germany through the efforts of Philip Jakob Spener and August Hermann Francke. Many well-educated members of the middle and upper classes, including some prominent members of the clergy, participated in this early form of Pietism, or Spener-Halle Pietism. Since many Pietists shared much in common with the official representatives and defenders of Lutheran Orthodoxy in Germany in terms of education and social class, any sort of popular religious distinction that is drawn between these two groups cannot rely on traditional popular
religious categories. In order to make the case for Pietism as a form of popular religion, the boundaries must be redrawn in a way that sees the tension primarily between the official Lutheran religion as it was promoted and sanctioned by the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities (electors, princes, higher clergy, etc.), and the popular religion of Pietism as it was observed by those who lacked the formal authority to determine the parameters of official religious beliefs and practices in society.

If this sort of distinction between the religion of the authorities and the religion of those outside of authoritative structures is established, then a second problem arises. Is it not the case that Spener-Halle Pietism gained crucial support in various German states among those who had the authority to determine and to sanction official religion in their respective territories? A common assumption among many historians is that the growth and influence of Spener-Halle Pietism resulted in part from the patronage and support offered by an extensive network of small imperial courts, counts, and princes throughout Germany. To a certain extent, this argument is difficult to refute. For example, Francke's success in the establishment of Pietism and Pietist enterprises in Halle cannot be understood apart from the support and patronage of the Brandenburg elector. Because of the elector's favor, Francke and his institutions received special economic privileges, licenses, and freedoms that thwarted the efforts of Orthodox clergy to undermine Pietism in the city. A similar case can be made for Spener's success in Berlin. It was the support of Elector Frederick III of Prussia that enabled Spener to establish Pietism in the city and to create a refuge of sorts for Pietists. Examples could be cited concerning the activities of other Pietist leaders who connected themselves with imperial courts throughout middle and northern Germany toward the end of the seventeenth century. It appears then that the boundaries were sometimes quite fluid in late seventeenth-century Germany between the religion sanctioned by the authorities and Spener-Halle Pietism.

The level of involvement among some of the political authorities in supporting Spener-Halle Pietism in Germany does complicate the case for viewing it as popular religion, but caution is in order here. It should also be remembered that Pietism in Germany
encountered plenty of opposition from the secular authorities as it spread in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. The Saxon elector, for example, issued two prohibitions in Leipzig against private gatherings in 1690, both of which were aimed at the Pietist movement. These attempts to suppress the movement did have success in forcing some of the leaders of the movement to leave the city. However, in response to the loss of pastoral leadership, the laity who had connected themselves with the movement in Leipzig assumed a greater leadership role. Pietists encountered similar attempts by the secular authorities to suppress conventicles in cities like Erfurt and Hamburg around the same time. Other prominent Pietist leaders in middle and northern Germany were forced to leave towns because of their involvement in Pietist activities. The point here is that Spener-Halle Pietism did not always enjoy the favor of the political authorities. In popular religious fashion, Spener-Halle Pietism at times had to sustain itself without the support of persons who had the authority to sanction and define official religion in a given territory.

The study of Spener-Halle Pietism popular religion, then, would be a promising enterprise, but it is the purpose of this essay to focus on Pietism in its Swedish context. The case for Swedish Pietism as popular religion is even more sustainable in part because in Sweden, there was a more unified stance against the early Pietist movement among the authorities, both temporal and ecclesiastical. Monarchs, the royal council, bishops, and the Swedish parliament, especially the clergy estate, typically demonstrated a united front as defenders of established Lutheranism over against the perceived threat of the Pietist movement. Pietism in Sweden was thus hard-pressed in the early eighteenth century to find sustenance “from above,” more so even than was the case in Germany at the end of the seventeenth century.

Because the distinction between the religion of the authorities and the religion of the Pietists was more discernable in Sweden than in Germany in the initial spread of the movement, and because there was consequently a greater need for Swedish Pietists to rely on popular support in order for their movement to survive, the focus of this article will be on Swedish Pietism. After providing
a brief chronological overview of the early Pietist movement in Sweden, this article will make the case of Swedish Pietism as a form of popular religion by analyzing four facets of the movement from a popular religious perspective: its leadership, its basic beliefs and practices, its standards for participation, and the attitudes adopted by the authorities in relation to it.

**Pietism in Sweden as Popular Religion**

While the Evangelical Lutheran religion was established as the official religion of Sweden in 1593 by the Uppsala Assembly, the decisions of the Assembly did not incorporate the *Book of Concord* into the church's collection of authoritative writings. In the course of the seventeenth century, however, the more uncompromising Concordian Orthodoxy came to exert a greater influence on the theology of the Lutheran Church. By 1686, Concordian Orthodoxy gained a major victory through the establishment of a new church law. This law stipulated that the *Book of Concord* was to serve as the standard for interpreting the true evangelical faith, particularly as that faith was expressed in the Augsburg Confession. Anyone who spread teachings which contradicted the true evangelical faith as it was expressed in the Augsburg Confession and interpreted by the *Book of Concord* could be exiled. An official book censor was also established in 1687 in order to help defend more “orthodox” Lutheran doctrines from any false teachings that could potentially enter Sweden from abroad through books and journals.\(^\text{10}\)

It was in the context of the consolidation of Lutheran Orthodoxy by the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities that Pietism in Sweden developed toward the end of the seventeenth century. Pietism in the spirit of Spener came to Sweden in the late 1680s. Spener himself was invited to serve as the priest of the German Church in Stockholm during this period, and though he declined the invitation, he did send a copy of *Die evangelische Glaubenslehre* to the queen, Ulrika Eleonora the Elder. In the 1690s, Halle Pietism began to make inroads into Sweden through German and Swedish students who had lived and studied at Halle. In 1700, two of these students began organizing some of the first conventicles in con-
connection with a German congregation in Karlskrona, a coastal town in southeast Sweden. As such, the year 1700 serves as the starting point of the present study. Pietism in Karlskrona made significant advances early on among merchants and craftsmen, but the opposition among the clergy in the town was strong enough to limit the spread of Pietism there.\textsuperscript{11}

In the first quarter of the eighteenth century, adherents to Pietism could be found scattered throughout a handful of towns besides Karlskrona, including Gothenburg and Umeå. But the center of the Pietist movement was Stockholm. Francke himself maintained regular contact with the Pietists in Stockholm, and through Francke's influence, along with the leadership of various laypeople of high social rank, Pietist gatherings in the city became more common, and the number of adherents grew. The situation in Stockholm was thus different than in Karlskrona in that the efforts of the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities to suppress the Pietist movement were much less successful in the former than they were in the latter, though the circumstances would become more favorable for Pietism in Karlskrona by the 1710s.\textsuperscript{12}

By 1715, the ranks of Pietists, particularly in Stockholm, were characterized by a greater representation among the clergy than was the case in the previous decade.\textsuperscript{13} The Pietist movement still maintained much of its lay character as scores of former prisoners of war, many of whom had been won over to Pietism while imprisoned in Russia, returned to Sweden in the early 1720s and gave Swedish Pietism its second wind. Leaders of the Pietist movement tried to take advantage of the increased numbers of adherents in the early 1720s by implementing a plan of church reform based on Pietist ideas. The plan never succeeded, and in 1726, a parliamentary decree known as the Conventicle Decree was issued which prohibited conventicles. With this decree, along with the death of Francke in 1727, Swedish Pietism lost its momentum and ceased to function as an internal, church-friendly reform movement. Pietist ideas would continue to filter into the broader populace throughout the century, but from 1727 onward, Pietism as an organized movement came to adopt a more radical, separatist character under the inspiration and leadership of Johan Conrad Dippel and Eric Tolstadius.
Because of the important differences between Radical Pietism and the earlier, more church-friendly form of Pietism in Sweden, the present study will focus only on the latter.

_Leaders and Transmitters “From Below”_

One of the most common issues that scholars seek to address in the study of popular religion is the issue of leadership and transmission, and so in the case of Swedish Pietism, the question must be asked: Who were its primary leaders and transmitters? In order to begin addressing this question, it is important to note first that Pietism in Sweden won most of its initial adherents among those who were well-educated and who came mostly from middle- and upper-class backgrounds. For this reason, its leaders came from these backgrounds as well.

While Halle students were the organizers of some of the first conventicles in Sweden, the principal leaders and transmitters of Pietism during the first quarter of the eighteenth century were civil servants and other government officials in Stockholm. The most prominent leader and organizer of the Stockholm circle of Pietists in this period was Elias Wolker. Wolker was an accountant, and it was he who worked both to organize many of the conventicles in Stockholm and to establish a connection with Spener-Halle Pietism through active correspondence with Francke. Other notable leaders of this Pietist circle in Stockholm were Lorens Carelberg, a mint-master, and Georg Lybecker, a deputy judge. The remaining laypeople who participated in the Stockholm circle of Pietists, at least in the first decade of the eighteenth century, were primarily lower government officials and merchants.

The number of clergymen in this Stockholm circle was quite small in the beginning. More clergy would become attracted to the Pietist movement during the 1710s, but even some of these clergymen were “converted” to Pietism only through the individual efforts of lay leaders. It would not be until the early 1720s that clergy would acquire a more prominent leadership role in the Pietist movement. Even then, this leadership role was one they shared with other lay leaders, an indication that early Swedish Pietism never lost its strong lay character.
In terms of collective influence, the Swedish prisoners of war returning to their homeland in the early 1720s were arguably the most important transmitters of Pietist ideas in the early eighteenth century. After a Russian victory at the Battle of Poltava in 1709, as many as 20,000 Swedish soldiers were imprisoned in Russia. Many of these soldiers ended up spending over a decade in prisoner camps in the Siberian capital of Tobolsk. Congregations were ultimately formed in these prisoner camps under the aegis of the Swedish Church and in conformity with the Church Law of 1686. While Lutheranism in these camps helped the soldiers to maintain something of their Swedish identities, it also served as the infrastructure through which Pietism spread. As the works of Arndt, Spener, and Francke circulated throughout the camps, many soldiers came to adopt Pietist ideas and practices. Between 1722 and 1724, approximately 5,000 soldiers returned to Sweden from imprisonment in Russia, many of whom had been won over by Pietism. These soldiers served as catalysts for the further spread of Pietism in Sweden in the 1720s, and through their influence, the conditions were created which gave some Pietist leaders more confidence in pushing for Pietist reforms in the Swedish Church. One of these former prisoners of war, Josias Cederhielm, would even become a member of the royal council in 1723. In this capacity, Cederhielm worked to implement Pietist reforms in the Swedish Church.

What is evident from the above discussion is that while the leaders and transmitters of Swedish Pietism in the early eighteenth century included many people of high social ranking, their ranks generally did not contain any prominent representatives from the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities. The Carolingian kings, the archbishops, the Stockholm consistory, and the cathedral chapters were all strongly opposed to Pietism in this early period and worked in varying degrees to suppress the potential threat that this movement posed to religious uniformity in Sweden. A few Pietists did eventually manage to infiltrate the ranks of parliament and the royal council, but the vast majority of the members of these temporal bodies remained firmly committed to established Lutheranism. Consequently, there were few people in positions of temporal or ecclesiastical authority who could use their influence to sustain
Pietism. For Swedish Pietism to survive in the early eighteenth century, it, like any other form of popular religion, would have to find its sustenance “from below.”

Beliefs and Practices

The basic beliefs and practices advocated by Swedish Pietists did not differ in many respects from those found in Spener-Halle Pietism. Like their German counterparts, Swedish Pietists were basically advocates of an internal church reform movement. They did not necessarily disagree with the central tenets of established Lutheranism but rather had come to believe that these teachings had developed into a rigid, lifeless system of doctrine. Pietists believed that many Lutheran theologians had grown so concerned with defending right beliefs that they neglected the importance of right living and of a more personal encounter with God. The emphasis on sanctification through a personal experience of spiritual rebirth characterized Pietist beliefs in Sweden in much the same way that it did in Germany. Swedish Pietism, like Spener-Halle Pietism, sought to complete the Reformation that had begun in the sixteenth century by stressing the importance of individual spiritual renewal through a devotional life rooted more in Scriptural injunctions and teachings than in confessional writings.

The focus on individual spiritual renewal through scripturally-based devotional practices led Swedish Pietists to criticize the formal worship practices and rituals of established Lutheranism. One notable example of such a criticism was expressed by Wolker himself concerning the manner in which prayers were spoken aloud by Orthodox clergy in worship. He argued that the formal prayers offered by clergy served simply as a confession of the lips and not as an expression of the inner work of God’s Spirit in the soul of the individual. Wolker maintained that the pious do not repeat prayers from fixed formulae as the clergy often do during Sunday worship. The pious use their own words when approaching the “throne of grace.” Wolker criticized other traditional practices and rituals observed in the Lutheran church which he believed had no basis in scriptural teachings, including churching, exorcisms at baptism,
the Mass before the altar, and the use of the lectionary for preaching.\textsuperscript{22} Through his criticisms of some of the rituals endorsed by established Lutheranism, Wolker was articulating an understanding of “proper worship” that mirrored how worship was (and was not) being observed in Pietist gatherings. It is thus reasonable to assume that Wolker’s criticisms were shared by many of the early Swedish Pietists.

In order to create a worshipful environment in which a living faith in God could be developed and nourished, Swedish Pietists adopted the Spener-Halle pattern of meeting in conventicles apart from regular Sunday worship. In Stockholm, these conventicles often met on Wednesday and Friday evenings. At these gatherings, psalms were sung, a chapter or passage from the Bible was read, a member of the circle explicated the passage, and prayers were offered.\textsuperscript{23} These conventicles would become the primary source of tension between the authorities and the Pietists as these meetings took place without the approval and mediation of the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities.

What is important about Pietist beliefs and practices is that Pietists developed them through making direct appeals to the authorities of Scripture and personal experience. Pietists did not always feel the need to make their beliefs and practices conform to the standards of religiosity that were promoted and sanctioned by the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities. However, while Pietists circumvented the authority of the representatives of formal ecclesiastical religion in order to develop some of their beliefs and practices, it is important to stress that they still viewed themselves as a part of the official Swedish Church. Pietists continued to participate in formal ecclesiastical religion even as they embraced beliefs and engaged in practices which at times put them at odds with authoritative representatives of this religion. This overlap between Pietism and established Lutheranism does not mean that Pietism falls outside the definitional boundaries of popular religion. Recent scholarship on popular religion has attempted to emphasize both the harmony and the tension between popular religion and formal ecclesiastical religion. The case can thus be made that the story of Swedish Pietism and its relationship to established Lutheranism is “a tale of
consensus and resistance," although since the decision has been made here to focus only on the resistance element of popular religion, such a "tale" cannot be conveyed fully in the context of this article.

The Conventicle and Standards for Participation

The best illustration of the resistance element in the relationship between Pietism and established Lutheranism is the Pietist commitment to gathering in conventicles. By appealing directly to Scripture and personal experience, Pietists both justified the existence of separate conventicles and set their own standards for participating in them. The theological principle behind the conventicle was the Reformation teaching of the priesthood of all believers, a principle that leaders such as Wolker believed was based not only in Luther's writings but, more importantly, in Scripture itself. Wolker argued that all believing Christians had the right to hold private gatherings and to participate in them for the purposes of spiritual edification. Wolker also insisted that believing Christians had the right to serve in leadership capacities at these gatherings through preaching, and given the amount of evidence for the prominent role of lay preaching in many of these conventicles, it can be assumed that his belief was shared by most other Pietists.

If believing Christians had the right to participate in and to preach at private conventicles, then what sort of barriers did Pietists establish that separated the believing Christians who met in conventicles from those whom Pietists believed were Christian in name only? For most Pietists, as long as one sought a more intimate relationship with God both through an experience of spiritual rebirth/conversion and through mutual edification by other converted Christians, then he/she could be counted as a believing Christian and thereby participate in conventicles. "Converted" and "unconverted" were the operative categories which separated those who could participate in conventicles from those who could not. These categories were also the basic standards determining who could preach at Pietist gatherings. When Wolker was questioned by an investigatory commission in 1713 concerning how he, an
unlearned man, could understand and explain God's Word, Wolker responded that he received these abilities through the Holy Spirit, and that because of his spiritual conversion, he was able to preach God's Word "as well as an unconverted theologian." On another occasion, Wolker cited the authority of Luther himself, insisting that he, like Luther, viewed the university degrees and philosophical teachings of priests as "excrement" when compared with "the illumination that God through his pure Word and Holy Spirit gives to every believing Christian." Formal education and theological training were thus not to be the determining factors in who could have leadership and/or preaching roles in these conventicles. Social class was also not to be a determining factor, though again, since there was a tendency for these Pietist gatherings to consist primarily of people of high social standing, the leadership tended to be dominated by such people.

The question of gender is also an important one to address when discussing barriers to participation and leadership in conventicles. Were converted women allowed to participate in these gatherings, and if so, were they able to exercise leadership roles in them through preaching? On the whole, women were allowed both to participate in conventicles and even occasionally to preach at them in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. One noteworthy example of the participation and occasional leadership of women in Pietist gatherings is the conventicle held in 1712 on Whitmonday at Carelberg's home in Stockholm. Among those who participated in this conventicle were Carelberg's wife and daughter, Lybecker's wife, and Wolker's daughter. Moreover, Wolker's daughter, Margareta, gave an exposition during this conventicle, presumably of a biblical text or a spiritual theme, after her father had preached a sermon. The 1713 investigatory commission objected to this practice and reminded Margareta that women are not allowed to teach and explain God's Word. Margareta responded to the commission by stating that through prayer, God's Spirit had taught her how to understand God's Word, and this was proof enough that God gave grace even to women. It is difficult to determine how often women had the same opportunity as Margareta Wolker to preach and teach in conventicles, but the above evidence suggests at the very least that it
could and did happen, even in the most prominent Pietist circle in Sweden.

Conventicles obviously did not provide equal opportunities for participation and leadership, yet they did illustrate the Pietist commitment to alternative standards of determining participation and leadership. Pietists differed from the authoritative representatives of established Lutheranism in that they did not believe that the right to participate in their gatherings should be based on formal assent to confessional writings. Likewise, Pietists did not believe that leadership roles in their gatherings should be determined by such factors as formal theological training or, to some extent, gender, as was the case in parish churches. Spiritual experiences of rebirth/ conversion and the authority of Scripture set the standards for participation and leadership from the Pietist perspective, and as such, the stage was set for a considerable amount of tension and conflict to develop between the Pietists and the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities whose responsibility it was to defend the official teachings of the established church.

**Authoritative Attitudes “From Above”**

From the perspective of many of the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities in early eighteenth-century Sweden, religious uniformity was one of the foundations of a peaceful, prosperous society. In order to prevent Pietists from undermining this foundation, the authorities undertook repeated measures to suppress the movement. Only a few of these measures can be discussed in the context of this article, but what these and other measures represent is the notion that authentic religious beliefs and practices must be mediated and transmitted to the people by representatives of formal ecclesiastical structures so that uniformity in religion can be preserved. Any attempt to arrive at authentic religious beliefs and practices in a way that circumvents these unifying structures must therefore be fought.

Some of the first official stirrings against Pietism in the early years of the eighteenth century came from the general superintendent of Swedish Pomerania, Johann Friedrich Mayer. Mayer, a clergyman
who previously had developed a reputation as a staunch opponent of Spener and Francke while serving the St. James Church in Hamburg, repeatedly warned Karl XII of the harm that Pietism could cause to Sweden's religious uniformity. Under Mayer's influence, the king issued various public notices encouraging Swedish students abroad to study at the University of Greifswald, a bastion of Lutheran Orthodoxy, instead of the University of Halle, a Pietist stronghold. In 1706, Karl XII took an additional step to ensure that false teachings would not enter Sweden by issuing a royal edict. The edict stipulated the need for temporal and ecclesiastical authorities both to inspect the foreign academies at which students study and to examine the knowledge of these students upon their return to Sweden before they could receive any state or church office. The edict also reiterated the importance of obeying the existing religious laws and of enforcing religious uniformity throughout the kingdom. Anyone who violated these laws or undermined religious uniformity was to be removed from office.

Despite this and other official warnings from the king and the royal council, conventicles continued to meet and to gain adherents. In response to the perceived religious and social unrest in Stockholm from the perspective of the authorities, the royal council issued a warning letter in 1713. The letter was drafted by Archbishop Haquin Spegel. It contained eleven points concerning the dangers of Pietist gatherings, including the tendency of such gatherings to despise the commands of the temporal authorities, to disregard the authority of the clergy, and to show no respect for the Church's teachings on the sacraments. The letter was signed both by the princess, Ulrika Elenora the Younger, and by twelve royal councilors. Like the royal edict of 1706, this letter also did not have the desired effect, and conventicles continued to take place.

The Conventicle Decree of 1726, however, did achieve some measure of success in combating Pietism. The event that served as a catalyst for this decree was the conventicle that was held outside of Stockholm in Sickla in August of 1723. This particular conventicle was reported by a local priest to the Stockholm consistory, which in its turn reported the matter to the Attorney General. The Attorney General facilitated the appointment of a special commission,
consisting of four priests and four laymen, to investigate the Sickla conventicle and to determine what was allowable in regard to such gatherings. All of the laymen and two of the priests were favorably disposed to Pietism, and as a result, the commission concluded that the gathering did not violate existing ordinances. The other two priests dissented, arguing that it was inappropriate for people of different classes and sexes who were unrelated to each other to gather together for devotionals. They maintained that the only religious gatherings that were permissible outside the supervision of the ecclesiastical authorities were family devotionals led by the head of the household.

Despite the fact that these two priests represented the minority viewpoint on the commission, their dissent and the nature of their objections ultimately paved the way for the Conventicle Decree of 1726. This decree prohibited conventicles and any other sort of private religious gathering outside the context of formal ecclesiastical worship, though an exception was made for family devotionals. Participants in conventicles were subject to fines, while those who organized conventicles could potentially be exiled. In an effort to affirm the necessity of religious uniformity, all four parliamentary estates approved this decree, in spite of the objections raised by some members of parliament who were sympathetic to Pietism.

While the Conventicle Decree did curb the momentum of Pietism as an organized, internal church-reform movement, some of the ideas that had been advocated by Pietism in the first quarter of the eighteenth century gradually continued to disseminate into the wider populace through devotional literature, hymns, theological works, and preaching. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the Conventicle Decree, like the 1706 edict and the 1713 warning letter, ultimately did not succeed in suppressing popular Pietist beliefs and practices. People continued to develop and embrace Pietist ways of being religious that stood in opposition to the ways that the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities thought people ought to be religious. The very persistence of Pietist concepts of religiosity in spite of the official measures taken against Pietism suggests that one of the main reasons why Pietism survived was that it was the epitome
of a popular religious movement, a movement that in the face of repeated opposition "from above" continued to find its sustenance and support "from below."

**Pietism as Popular Religion in Sweden and Beyond**

By the mid-eighteenth century, Pietist ideas and practices had become more acceptable to the "mainstream" of Swedish society, including the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities. When the authorities did enact measures against the Pietist movement after 1727, they did so primarily in response to the more radical version of Pietism advocated by Dippel and Tolstadius. Radical Pietism in Sweden differed from the Pietism of the first quarter of the eighteenth century both by diverging much more from the teachings of traditional Lutheranism and by adopting a much more negative view of the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities. The older generation of Swedish Pietists, including Wolker, opposed these radical tendencies, but by the beginning of the 1730s, Radical Pietism had replaced the older form of Pietism as the more visible, organized form of Pietism in Sweden.  

In order to study Swedish Pietism as a form of popular religion from the late 1720s onward, one must focus on its more radical manifestation. The study of Radical Pietism from a popular religious perspective would be a fruitful enterprise in its own right, but such a study falls outside the scope of this article.

This article has argued that since the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities in Sweden were largely unified in their opposition to Pietism, and since there was a great need for Swedish Pietists to find sustenance "from below," a strong case can be made for Swedish Pietism as a form of popular religion. It is important to stress, however, that many of the popular religious characteristics that existed in Swedish Pietism also existed in Spener-Halle Pietism and, for that matter, the Pietism found in other parts of Scandinavia. The opposition from temporal and ecclesiastical authorities, the emphasis on personal experiences of spiritual renewal, the reaction against doctrinal formality and rigidity, the formation of conventicles, the
partial transcending of social and gender boundaries—these characteristics could be found in varying degrees in the Pietist movement both on the continent and in Scandinavia. Given these parallels between Swedish Pietism and Pietism in other geographical and confessional contexts in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Europe, the possibility of moving beyond Sweden in order to study Pietism as a manifestation of popular religion is indeed quite promising. At the very least, additional studies of the broader Pietist movement as a form of popular religion would contribute greatly to the ongoing scholarly effort to understand better some of the important differences that have historically existed between institutionally prescribed religion and religion as it has been defined and practiced by the people.

NOTES


   Still, the oppositional element tends to be the distinctive feature of most definitions of popular religion, and for this reason, it is the oppositional element that is stressed in this essay. For a discussion of the problems inherent in defining the relationship between official and popular religion simply in oppositional terms, see Ellen Badone, introduction to *Religious Orthodoxy & Popular Faith in European Society*, ed. Ellen Badone (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 5–6.

3. Ernest Stoefller believes that it is impossible to separate the impact of Spener from that of Francke, and so he often refers to the early Pietist movement as the "Spener-Halle movement." Stoefller's construct is certainly debatable, yet this article will employ Stoefller's designation of the early Pietist movement in Germany simply as a way of distinguishing it from the so-called Radical Pietism that developed in Germany in the early eighteenth century. See Ernest Stoefller, *German Pietism during the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), 39.


7. The second chapter of Mori’s book, *Begisterung und Ernüchterung in christlicher Vollkommenheit*, discusses some of the relationships established between Pietist students, clergy, and theologians on the one hand and members of imperial courts on the other hand as the Pietist movement spread from Leipzig to various cities in middle and northern Germany in the early 1690s.


9. Carola Nordbäck argues that during the early Pietist movement, Pietists achieved more significant political victories in Germany and even in Denmark than they did in Sweden. Nordbäck maintains that this was the case in part because the Orthodox camp in Sweden had much more political power than was the case in either Germany or Denmark. See Carola Nordbäck, *Samvetets röst. Om mötet mellan luthersk ortodoxi och konservativ pietism i 1720-talets Sverige* (Sundsvall: Nyman & Jonson, 2004), 182.


12. Ibid., 202–3.

13. One of the few clergymen whom Stockholm Pietists could trust as one of their own in the first decade of the eighteenth century was Petrus Dahlborg, a court chaplain for the queen mother. Ibid., 176.


17. The figure of 20,000 includes only the Swedish soldiers who were taken as prisoners. When one takes into account the Swedish civilians, particularly women and children, who joined the soldiers in the prisoner camps, the number of Swedes imprisoned rises to about 30,000. Pleijel, *Karolinska kyrkofromhet, pietism, och herrnhutism*, 207.


20. Stoeffler makes this particular argument in relation to German Pietism alone. See Stoeffler, *introduction to German Pietism*, x.


27. Nathan Odenvik, *Elias Wölker. Sveriges förste frikyrkopredikant* (Örebro: Örebro Missionsföreningen, 1933), 67. The writings of the early Swedish Pietists have not been collected into a published volume, in large part because leading Swedish Pietists like Wölker did not publish treatises. In fact, the beliefs and thoughts of the early Swedish Pietists can largely be gleaned only from scattered sources, including letters and consistory protocol, and sometimes these sources derive from church authorities unsympathetic to Pietism. Odenvik, while himself not a historian, wrote a biography of Elias Wölker in part to pay homage to the person he believed was the foremost predecessor of the free church movement in Sweden. In writing his biography, Odenvik studied many of the primary sources mentioned above which contain references to Wölker's religious beliefs. Extensive excerpts from these documents can be found in Odenvik's biography. Quotes from and paraphrases of Wölker and his associates in this article, then, depend largely upon Odenvik's work.

28. Ibid., 112.

29. Ibid., 75.


33. The Sickla conventicle was certainly the main catalyst for the Conventicle Decree of 1726, but it was not the only one to contribute to the push for this legislation. Another conventicle that led authorities to enact the Conventicle Decree was one that took place in the house of Erland Hjärnes in Stockholm in 1725. This conventicle was the first one in which the participants were officially punished (through fines) for their participation in a Pietist gathering. See Nordbäck, *Samvetets röst*, 184–85.

34. Carl Tellbom, a theology student and private tutor from Stockholm, preached at the worship service in the nearby Nacka parish on the Sunday morning following the Sickla conventicle. His Pietist audience consisted of 28 people—17 men and 11 women. Tellbom was already on probation by the archbishop for preaching a controversial sermon espousing Pietist ideas in April of 1722 in the Mary Magdalene parish in Stockholm. For a detailed account of his sermon and how it contributed to the subsequent inquiry into the Sickla conventicle and ultimately to the Conventicle Decree, see Ove Nordstrandh, “Carl Tellboms predikan i Nacka kyrka den 25 augusti 1723—den yttersta upprinnelsen till sicksäkerheter och konventikelplakatet,” *Kyrkohistorisk Årskrift* 53 (1953): 148–200.

35. Although it was noted earlier in the article that the leaders and transmitters of Swedish Pietism were primarily from middle- to upper-class backgrounds, the conventicles themselves were at times characterized by a greater diversity of participants in terms of social class. The reason for this was that the leaders and organizers of these conventicles were sometimes accompanied by their servants. See Nordbäck, *Samvetets röst*, 185.


