



## Christian Social Reform Work as Christian Masculinization? A Swedish Example

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*“Our intention is not to discuss and theorize, but to march and take action.” These were the words of the Swedish Protestant pastor Eric E:son Hammar, characterizing the work of the Christian social reform project of which he was the leader and driving force, in the periodical Ny Mark (New Land) in 1909. In this article, I will present the results of a study of Ny Mark and its presentation of different masculinities. A hypothesis is that Eric E:son Hammar and his colonization project was a part of a Swedish project promoting “muscular” Christian manliness.*

“Our intention is not to discuss and theorize, but to march and take action.” These were the words of the Swedish protestant pastor Eric E:son Hammar, characterizing the work of the Christian social reform project of which he was the leader and driving force, in the periodical *Ny Mark (New Land)* in 1909. The quotation summarizes Hammar’s idea of Christian social reform work: personal, practical action and resourcefulness before cautiousness and indirect contributions.

In this article, I will present the results of a study of *Ny Mark*, which was published between 1908 and 1926, and which was the official publication of a Christian social reform project led by Hammar. The article will start from the idea that Hammar and his colonization project can be seen as part of a contemporary Christian reaction to a presumed change in the societal position of Christianity and the Church. By way of introduction, I will discuss a connection between the construction of masculinity, Christendom and social reform work: that Christian social reform work can be seen as part of a Christian mobilization against what was understood as demasculinization and devitalization of the Church and Christianity. The question is: can Hammar’s Christian social reform project be related to Anglo-Saxon ideas of so-called Christian manliness?

### *Christian Manliness, Muscular Christianity and Social Christianity*

What, then, is understood by Christian Manliness? The most well-known manifestation is the phenomenon of *Muscular Christianity*, which originated as a literary movement in England in the 1850s. The phrase Muscular Christianity first appeared in a review of the British parson and writer Charles Kingsley’s (1819-1875) novel *Two Years Ago* in 1857. Later,

it was also used to describe the novel *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1856) by Kingsley's friend Thomas Hughes (1822-1896). According to Clifford Putney (2001), Muscular Christianity soon became the general label of not only Kingsley's and Hughes' writings, but of a whole genre of adventure novels about "manly Christian heroes" who combined high moral principles with recognition – and promotion – of the physical body. Kingsley and Hughes' writings are to be seen in the light of their social criticism, and especially their criticism of the Anglican Church, which they found weakened and effeminate. In short, Muscular Christianity can be seen as a "campaign for more health and manliness in religion."

In America, the ideas of Muscular Christianity did not establish a grip on society until after the Civil War. Then it found a breeding ground in a general occupation with manliness and health that was part of the critique of modernization and urbanization. Among American men who felt their manhood, health and social status threatened by impairing city life, weakening office jobs and "feminized" Protestantism, Muscular Christianity was embraced as "a strenuous religion for the strenuous life." Muscular Christianity had its heyday in America from around 1880 to 1920. Movements such as the YMCA and the Men and Religion Forward Movement sought to make religion more manly and attractive to men. Muscular Christian ideals, however, lost their force after World War I (Putney, 2001).

The phenomena of Muscular Christianity has been studied by several scholars in the US and Great Britain (Vance, 1985; Hall, 1994; Robertson, 1994; Ladd and Mathisen, 1999; Bradstock, 2000; Putney, 2001). Their definitions are fairly uniform. Muscular Christianity was formulated in the 1850s and originated from changes in Victorian and, later, American society. The two central and intertwining motives were to counteract the separation of spiritual life from secular life on all levels, and to handle the synthesis of masculinity and Christianity. The feminization of religion, religiosity and church life had to be eliminated. Religiosity had to be changed into something more attractive to men by infusing it with notions of manliness. The churches had to be more relevant to society and worldlier in character and activity. To raise oneself above one's own masculinity was not requisite in order to serve God, and Muscular Christianity advocates wished to promote an image of masculinity that embraced piety and chivalry as well as recognition of the male body with its needs, desires and possibilities. The true Christian man should not only be his own master, but the master of society that he could change for the better.

Scholars also connect the ideas of Muscular Christianity to the issue of *Social Christianity*, expressed through the Progressive movement (USA), the Christian Socialist movement (England) and the Social Gospel movement (USA), and to the more general ideologies of imperialism and nationalism. Putney (2001) traces the origins of American Muscular Christianity to the so-called Progressive movement at the end of the 1800s. The movement rose as a reaction to what was perceived as over-civilization and devitalization of society. It focused on the cult of the strenuous life, bodily vigor, action before reflection, experience before book learning and pragmatism before sentimentality. In this context, the church, as well as many other aspects of society, had demands on it to be more "masculine" and vigorous (Putney, 2001).

The Christian Socialist movement was started in London in 1848. Among the attendants at the first meeting were, not surprisingly, Kingsley and Hughes. The lead issue

of the movement was how the church should handle the grievances of the working-class in order to prevent revolution. For the Christian Socialists, religion and politics were inseparable, which echoes Muscular Christian thought that the spiritual and the worldly should not be alienated from each other, in society or the individual. The church, the Christian Socialists claimed, should be engaged in social questions. The first active period of the movement lasted only a few years, until 1854 when disagreement among members ended its activities. In the 1880s, the movement saw a revival and new Christian Socialist groups were formed.<sup>1</sup>

The Social Gospel movement of the USA had its heyday at the end of twentieth century and was, according to Putney (2001), a true Muscular Christianity movement. The movement's main interests were to make the Protestant churches of America more contemporary and relevant to society, and to embrace a manly Christianity in contrast to religious "sentimentality" and "femininity." The Social Gospellers performed practical social actions in urban societies, but, as Putney (2001) writes, they also were moralists who wished to spread Protestant virtues among the urban working-class (and to Catholic immigrants). The church as effeminate and the unmanliness of religion were of central concern to the Social Gospel movement. The solution to this problem was to bring more men into church by "having the churches coming to grips with physical reality." This meant the solving of social problems, but it also meant active interest in the body. The church had to accept sports and physical exercise. This was not, however, only a strategy to attract young men to the church; there was also the connection between a good body and health in service of higher purposes and the good of society (Putney, 2001, p. 39-44).

Muscular Christianity cannot be called a "movement," as there was no organization or uniform program, but rather a current or collection of ideas. However, as we have seen, Muscular Christianity had connections with the more organized Social Christianity movements such as the Christian Socialist movement, and inspired and influenced later movements such as the Social Gospel. In this text, I will apply the phrase *Christian Manliness* to ideas held together by the problem of combining Christianity with what was seen as manliness – manifested in more diffuse complexes of ideas such as the Muscular Christianity tradition, or in more organized concepts of Social Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

### *Church and Christianity Devitalized and Demasculinized?*

To the Anglo-Saxon Christian Manliness advocates, the solution to problems such as the demasculinization of Christianity and the alienation of the Church from the secular world was to reconnect Christianity to manliness. In Sweden, criticism of Church and Christianity has not been analyzed from such a gender perspective, but concern about the same secularizing problems can be traced.

From the middle of the nineteenth century, the Lutheran Swedish State Church was criticized in a way that earlier had been unthinkable. The criticism was aimed at the Church as "official religious interpreter," but also more generally as "religious institution" (Bexell, 2003, pp. 166-77). During the radicalism of the 1880s, critical voices increased from the intellectual-cultural elite, which dissociated itself from dogmatic religion and from the Church as institution, but embraced science as the principle of social order (Bexell, 2003, pp. 168-170; Rosenberg, 1948, pp. 87-144). Partially intertwined with this

cultural-intellectual denigration was also a socialist criticism. The socialists saw the Church and State as allied, and criticism of the upper-classes and the State therefore also meant criticism of the State Church. The Church, on its side, interpreted socialism as concentrated only on the material, with no respect for the spiritual. Christianity, on the other hand, was said to be the true uniting force of society through its “ethics, outlook on mankind, faith and order of things.” This opposition of Church and socialism has been taken as the explanation of the Church and clergy’s general indifference to social questions in Sweden (Bexell, 2003, pp. 170-172; Rosenberg, 1948, pp. 87-142, Christiansson, 2006, pp. 110-112). Irrespective of origin, the turn-of-the-century criticism of Church and Christianity in Sweden united in the view of Church and Christianity as *alienated from secular society*. The Church, it was asserted, was unworldly and therefore unwilling and insignificant in the struggle for a better society (Bexell, 2003, pp. 172-74).

Accordingly, by the turn of the century, the Church and religion in general were undergoing increasing pressure and questioning; their hegemonic social position wavered. Church and Christianity were confronted with the threat of *devitalization*, that is, decreasing power and strength in a social and cultural context. In the light of separation of the spiritual world from the secular, the Church from society, and religion from politics, this devitalization had connections to a supposed separation of Christendom from masculinity – a *demasculinization*. The connection between a demasculinization of Christendom and secularization emanates from an understanding of “secularization” as religion’s decreasing importance in public society, in the light of the bourgeois gendered division of society to private “feminine” and public “masculine” spheres. Separation of Church from State meant that religion increasingly came to be seen as a private matter with feminine connotations. The formal religious practice of men decreased while women’s engagement and participation increased, and this supported the opinion of religion as women’s concern.<sup>3</sup>

How, then, did the clergy handle this situation? Church historians have emphasized how the Church, in Sweden as well as in other countries, did not remain passive facing the changes in religion’s position. From the nineteenth century, there has been a noteworthy mobilization of “religious defense,” aiming at strengthening the positions of Church and Christianity (Jalert, 2003; Blaschke, 2000 and 2002; McLeod 2000a). This defense movement can, from a gender perspective, be interpreted as Christian *men’s* attempt to counteract the demasculinization. This is also the main hypothesis of the ongoing Swedish research project *Christian Manliness – A Paradox of Modernity*, of which the study of pastor Eric E:son Hammar and his Christian social reform project is a part.<sup>4</sup> The hypothesis is, as we have seen, supported by Anglo-Saxon research on ideas and movements round the concepts of Christian manliness and Christian social activism in these countries at the turn of the century.

### *Eric E:son Hammar and The Floda Colonies*

In 1906, the Swedish protestant pastor Eric E:son Hammar published a booklet, in which he presented an idea: he wanted to start a colonization project and help the less fortunate members of society to a better life. Sweden should be relieved from costs of welfare, and at the same time gain from the increase in cultivated land areas. The project was a social

reform project with its starting point in the raising up of the individual. The alcoholic and ex-convict should be raised to be a farmer, a good man and citizen: self-sufficient, hard-working, head of a family with both physical and mental strength. The end product of the colonization project was to be the happy, self-sufficient agricultural family.<sup>5</sup>

Hammar was ordained in 1901 in a diocese in northern Sweden (Norrland). Originally from the southern part of Sweden, Hammar was inspired by a contemporary romantic idealization of Norrland.<sup>6</sup> In 1902-1916 he held a post as a parish pastor in the sparsely populated parish of Vemdalen, an isolated location surrounded by forests and mountains. The population was about 1000, the majority living in the church village of Vemdalen and the rest spread among smaller settlements. The main industries of the parish were agriculture and forestry. This brought about a lifestyle that was very unfamiliar to Hammar: in wintertime, the men lived separated from their families during weekdays, working in the forests. In summertime, many women left their homes to live with the cattle in the pasture fields (fäbodrar). In addition, during autumn and winter, the area was invaded by hundreds of vagrant woodsmen, and on weekends these men visited the village to drink and enjoy the company of local youth.

During his last years as a student, Hammar became interested in social problems. In Vemdalen, he became concerned by drinking, immorality, and the non-observance of the Sabbath. The so-often separated families resulted in there being no parental authority over the young, he wrote in his official reports, and this in combination with the influence from the woodsmen was devastating. Hammar's efforts to manage the problems were not very successful. The local customs were tenacious. But Hammar's social ambitions were firm, and he soon found another way to channel them: the colonization project at the Floda moor.

Hammar took the initiative to an organization, *Sällskapet för Kristen Social Nykterhetsverksamhet*, later *Föreningen Floda Kolonier* (*The Christian Social Temperance Society*, later *The Floda Colonies Society*, FCS). His colonization ideas were realized in 1908, when he personally set to work at the bog land that was bought for the purpose. FCS, at the most, had about 3000 supporting members, although there were only a handful of active members. The society's Christian character was clear, and not just because it was started by a pastor and most of the influential board members were also pastors. The society's purpose was to carry on "Christian humanitarian work" and to "foster a Christian basis." The meaning of the latter is unclear – in practice, the "fostering" of the alcoholic men was not aiming for conversion or religious revival, but soberness and usefulness. The colonists had to join daily prayers, but that was the only active religious element. More clearly, FCS wanted to highlight the project as a Christian social activity. In *Ny Mark* and other texts by Hammar, he is constantly emphasizing the Christian's duty to be merciful and compassionate in a practical and active way, to "march and take action."

FCS started three colonies in different parts of Sweden in 1908, 1914 and 1916. The Vemdalen colony (Floda I) was the only colony in a literal sense, while the functions of Floda II and Floda III were more like farm collectives from which suitable men with good future prospects of succeeding in becoming a sober, hard-working farmer, could be chosen for the Floda I colony. The man first had to prove himself capable and worthy, then he would be allowed to bring his family, if he had any, to Floda I, and eventually take

possession of a “colonate,” a cottage and a plot. As a settler, the man was supposed to earn his own living and provide for his family.

Hammar’s vision was a network of tens of thousands of supporting members, a self-sufficient organization and a self-renewing body of educated employees. This vision never became reality. Due to economic reasons, FCS was forced to seek the state’s help and involvement, and Hammar had to see his lifetime achievement slip from his hands and be integrated in the developing state system of alcoholism treatment. In 1925, the original colony in Vemdalen was the last part of the project to be terminated.

What happened to Hammar? In 1916, Hammar left his official position as a pastor in the Swedish State Church. His time had for several years been shared between his duties as a parish pastor and the colonization project. His wishes were to have the bishop’s approval and blessing to perform his social reform work as part of his official position. But as the parish work was neglected (Hammar always tended to give priority to the colonization work) the bishop gave him an ultimatum: fulfill the parish duties as regulated or leave the post. So Hammar left, and he left Vemdalen as well.

Between 1916 and 1921, Hammar worked with alcoholism treatment and colonization, employed first by FCS and later as preacher and superintendent at the state’s first alcoholism treatment institution. In 1921, Hammar returned as Swedish State Church official and held a post as curate for two years until he eventually became a vicar in Säter in 1923. The work within the FCS continued until 1925. Hammar died in June 1943, shortly after having hoisted the flag in his garden.

### *Masculinities in Ny Mark*

While the issue of this study is not the colonization project as such, but its “man-making” functions, a few things have to be said about it. The colonization project was the first of its kind in Sweden, but it can easily be connected to the critique of modernization in contemporary Sweden. Within the framework of this critical movement grew concern about secularization and gender issues, the idea of the natural and healthy countryside in contrast to the dangerous and devastating city, as well as the ideal of domesticity. There was also a growing interest in social problems and their solutions through scientific knowledge and rationalism, all reflected in Hammar’s Christian-social project (Sörlin, 1988; Edling, 1996; Hedin, 2002; Stolare, 2003). The project was also an expression for Hammar’s personal conviction that practical social work was a true task for the church and clergy. On a higher level it reflects his opinion of how, on one hand, activism and physical strength and, on the other, confidence in God and love of one’s neighbor could and should be combined in Man, with strong character the glue between them. Hammar’s direct inspiration was the working colonies for vagrant and alcoholic men in Germany, Netherlands and England, and especially the work of the German pastor von Bodelschwing, who opened his first working colony in the 1880s.<sup>7</sup>

This study has focused upon the question of how masculinity was constructed in the Christian context of the colonization project. The colonization project was not a “man-making” project, and the texts of *Ny Mark* are not characterized by explicit statements about manliness and un-manliness. The goal of the colonization activities were, though, explicitly to change people from non-desirable to desirable, *to foster them into men*.<sup>8</sup> My

supposition is that there is an Ideal Man rising from the text, while the men who were to be transformed represent other types of masculinities, subordinated to the Ideal. But what were the characteristics of this Ideal Man, and what qualities distinguished the men who were to be transformed? Another question is if, and how, the Ideal Man was constructed in relation not only to other men, but also to women? Had woman a role in the re-birth of man?

Before presenting the study and its results, there are some things to be said about the material, *Ny Mark*. The periodical was published for the first time in 1908. It was planned to be a quarterly report, but in reality it was irregularly published. Some years, such as 1919, there was only one issue; other years, such as 1910, there were six issues. Altogether there were about 40 issues between 1908 and 1927.

*Ny Mark* was published by FCS's constant secretary and "managing director," Eric E:son Hammar himself, who was also the main writer and editor. The periodical was intended mainly for supporting members of the organization, but also for the general public. Its purpose was to provide information about and reports from the colonization work and to request support for the organization. The most common themes are, beside reports from the colonization activities: the dangerous city, domesticity and the family, and the importance of combining Christian love of one's neighbor with practical work for social reform.

For this study, the periodical has been studied chronologically with focus on statements on men, women and family. The results of the study will be presented under the headings *The Masculinities of Ny Mark, A Woman's Task, Home, Household and Family*, and discussed under the article's last heading.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Masculinities of Ny Mark*

As said before, the men who were to be changed through colonization should be "fostered into men." Implicitly, those men were not real men, or maybe not men at all? They are most often referred to as "individuals," "persons," "human material" or "elements" – clearly differentiated from the category of *men*. What was it, then, that made these men unmanly or even non-manly?<sup>10</sup>

The activities of SFC were first and foremost intended for alcoholic, ex-convict and vagrant "individuals" – a category obviously regarded as problematic and, according to SFC, not noticed enough by the social welfare movement in Sweden.<sup>11</sup> This may have been true. When SFC started their practice in 1908, there were in Sweden only two private, non-repressive institutions designed to treat alcoholics. None of these two "homes" had fulfilled their original ambition to receive clients from the lower classes. The clientele at the Floda colonies, however, differed noticeably from the clientele at the earlier homes. More than 50% of the registered men belonged to the category of "skilled or unskilled workers," almost 70% of them had a history at different kinds of supporting or repressive institutions, and more than 40% were pre-convicts. Moreover, the majority of the pre-convicts were recidivists.<sup>12</sup>

Among the colonists was another problematic type of man, maybe not vagrant or criminal, but still alcoholic and living under irregular conditions. These were the "mummy's boys" – weaklings, spoiled and strangers to "real" work.<sup>13</sup> In likelihood, this

category ran predominately together with the middle- and upper-class part of the clientele. In *Ny Mark*, though, the class aspect is not conspicuous in the categorizing of the problematic “types.” If not a social problem of the same dignity, the weakling was as problematic *as a man* as the ruffian. The problem with both groups, and so what characterized the man who was no man, was that he did not work, had no “real” home or family and was not a real citizen (had no civil rights or did not fulfill his civil duties by working for his own living and for the profit of society). Another common characteristic was the loss of strength in one form or another – physical, mental or both. The lack of mental strength meant idleness, being without a will of one’s own and moral weakness. The physical weakness showed in illness or frailness – book-reading men with pale hands were among the men who were to be transformed.<sup>14</sup>

The hope was that the fostering activities at the colony should result in a healthy, strong man who was able to, and wanted to, work for his own living and support a family in a home of his own. *Competence* was the watchword, together with *worthy* and *respected member of society, a citizen*.<sup>15</sup> The picture of the Ideal Man stands out in two poems published in *Ny Mark* 1910:

My song for those,  
Who wear the weight and heat on harvest day,  
Who can handle the scythe with strength  
And swing it quickly with long, sweeping strokes

...

My song for those,  
Who dig the ditches and break ground,  
He is a man and first among men  
Who fights the wasteland, brave and strong. (*My Song for Those*,  
Karl-Erik Forsslund)<sup>16</sup>

If you break new ground, you break steel,  
You iron-marrowed boy!  
To clear new land is your goal, isn’t it?  
Won’t your hand stand firm in encounter?  
The arm is sinewy, if the ground is stony,  
You powerful son of the mountains. (*The Youth Song*, Viktor  
Myrén)<sup>17</sup>

The two poems point out the qualities of the Ideal Man: he is strong and sinewy, he sweats, he works hard and he enjoys it. The study of *Ny Mark* shows that the Ideal Man was physically strong, competent, strenuous, strong in character, a resident and a family provider. This stereotype of masculinity was superior in relation to two countertypes: the uncontrolled, irresponsible, vagrant man who was a burden to society, and the weak, frail, feeble and spoiled man. Bodily strength and competence is accentuated in a way that places the former man superior to the latter. A combination, as in the Ideal Man, was

preferable, of course, but to break ground and clear new land, muscles and endurance were more important than any inner quality.

### *A Woman's Task*

George L. Mosse (1996) and Claes Ekenstam (1998) claim that qualities ascribed to "woman" are qualities that "man" is supposed to have less of or to be without, or, if they existed in a man were effeminate. According to this, what is said about woman in *Ny Mark* certainly says something about man as well, which is why focusing on women in a study on men is both interesting and necessary.

So, how is the woman pictured in *Ny Mark*? Did she take part in the man-making of the colonization project? Woman is pictured in two ways. First, as the Ideal Woman, with specific qualities and tasks that differ from the Ideal Man. Second, woman is pictured out of her role in the transformation of the man.

Woman was important in the colonization project. She constituted a central part of the family, whose reunion was a goal for FCS, and had a central role in the home that was to be the family's fundament. The woman/wife should keep the home clean, neat, nice and happy. In fact, the woman is described as the leading character of the colonist home, and her competence was decisive for the final results of the project.<sup>18</sup>

That the woman had to be, or was to be, *competent*, is a constantly recurring theme. Around the years of 1913 and 1914, the writings about woman intensified. Hammar by this time formulated an idea of a woman's home, where the male colonists' wives or proposed wives should get their necessary education in the art of homecare and childcare. This education should, according to Hammar, be completed before man and woman could be allowed to join as a couple in a colonist home. He claimed that a man could be made sober and competent, but if he rejoined an incompetent woman, his transformation would be wasted:

As woman is the soul of the home, it is of great importance, to make sure, that she is made qualified for her calling. To send a restored man to an incompetent wife ... and to a home, that is neglected and in decay, is to make him a recidivist and to have wasted work and money. And to reunite the man with such a wife at the colony is to lay the burden of a proletarian family on the FCS and to make the colony a poor house.<sup>19</sup>

The competent woman was to be able to do all the daily chores in a small farm home: prepare cheap and nourishing meals, take care of children, look after pig and cow, keep the home neat and clean, sew and repair clothes and so on. Her tasks were not only practical, though. The competent woman should be the soul of the home, responsible for its comfort, financial strength and moral worth: this was her calling.<sup>20</sup>

What is said about the woman in *Ny Mark* reflects the view that the Ideal Man, on his own, was not expected to be able to keep up domesticity. On the contrary, the good home, created and managed by the competent woman, was *a requirement* for the Ideal Man's manliness. The tasks within the four walls of the home, the care and upbringing of

the children, were not duties of the Ideal Man. His duties were to work and support the family. Important, though, is that without a family, the Ideal Man's mission in life could not be fulfilled.

### *Home, Household and Family*

The true relation between parents and children, the good home, is a vital necessity for all people, that wish to remain free, happy, strong.<sup>21</sup>

The final goal for the colonization activities was not only the self-supporting, hard-working man, but man as part of the family and rooted in the home. The man as a family provider is constantly stressed in *Ny Mark*. Through training as a colonist, the man was to be made capable of assembling his scattered family around him, bringing them from the dangerous city to the safe countryside, and then to support them. The family was to be not only a unit, but one capable of surviving, that could serve Swedish society instead of relying upon it. The unmarried man could approach the ideal as well, even if the Ideal Man was married. In *Ny Mark* there is a story about a colonist that had been found sufficiently competent to get possession of a colonate: the man was keeping up good work and order *in spite of* his lack of a wife.<sup>22</sup>

The ideals of the family, the work in the household and the relations between man and woman, as expressed in *Ny Mark*, can be summarized as a wish to defend the family as the fundamental unit of society. Man and woman should unite, or re-unite, in a *family* that should constitute a *household* in a *home*. The idealization of the good home was neither new nor unique, but an integral part of a more general contemporary idealization of the agrarian "home of one's own" in the Swedish countryside. In turn, this "home-ideology" was part of the growing interest in social problems in combination with critique of modernization, civilization and the city (Sörlin, 1988; Edling, 1996; Stolare, 2003). In the context of Hammar's colonization project, however, the home and the family had a direct function in the rehabilitation of man, and also constituted a unit of advantage to society and a base for good citizens.

What about the distribution of work within the household, as expressed in *Ny Mark*? As said above, the woman had her special tasks, separated from the man's. She was not supposed to work outside the home. The woman's bonding to the domestic sphere was strong, and there her position was strong as well. The woman was to be responsible – for the children, for the economy, for the good order, for the morality, for the food and for the animals – in short, she was responsible in all areas where the man was not supposed to be responsible. The man's work was to be performed outside the household and apart from the home. According to *Ny Mark*, he had no domestic undertakings.

### *Conclusion*

Several scholars of gender and masculinity have agreed upon the notion that there are not one, but many different representations of masculinity (for example Connell, 1995; Mosse,

1996; Tjeder, 2003). This was not obvious in early gender studies, when for example the categories “woman” and “man” for a long time were discussed as if homogeneous. Other agreements among scholars are that masculinity is not constructed only in relation to the other sex, but also in relation to other men, and that the relationships between different representations of masculinity, or masculine “types” can be described in terms of dominance, subordination, power and control (see for example Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1996; Mosse 1996). So, the Ideal Man is defined against the womanly, the unmanly and the non-manly.

The study of *Ny Mark* has resulted in knowledge of the conception of an Ideal Man, expressed by the pastor Eric E:son Hammar as a spokesperson for the Christian *Floda Colonies Society* between 1908 and 1926. It has been found that this Ideal Man was constructed in relation to other men, or more precisely the male clients of the colonization project, who were to be transformed. These men, as well as the types of men they represent were, not surprisingly, subordinated to the Ideal Man – in fact, they were not even spoken about as “men,” but as “elements,” “human materiel,” “individuals” and “persons.”

The foundation of the colonization project was the combination of Christian virtues and practical action. This combination was central in the Ideal Man of *Ny Mark*. He was physically strong, competent, strenuous, strong of character, a resident and family provider. In *Ny Mark*, the importance of physical strength, action and usefulness is emphasized – but at the same time, there are connections with other, more gentle masculine ideals such the Ideal Man’s role as a family man and the promotion of contentment and high morals.

This stereotype of masculinity was formed in contrast to two countertypes, represented among the alcoholic clientele that the colonization project was intended for: the uncontrolled, irresponsible, vagrant man who was a burden to society, and the weak, frail, feeble and spoiled man. The Ideal Man was, of course, superior to the unmanly or non-manly countertypes, but interestingly there was an order of precedence even among the countertypes. Even if a combination of inner and outer strength was the ideal, the outer strength is admired and accentuated in *Ny Mark* in a way that makes clear that the physically strong man was always seen as superior to the weak. So, the strong and solid, though immoral and of weak character, was valued higher or of equal value to the weak man, just or not.

Hammar and SFC attached great importance to physical strength and gave it equal value to inner strength. A presupposition is that this kind of “muscularity” in a pronounced *Christian* reform project was unconventional to parts of contemporary society, or to the common sense of religious ideals. “Our intention is not to discuss and theorize, but to march and take action,” Hammar declares in an early issue of *Ny Mark*.<sup>23</sup> In this remark lies the implicit critique of the Christians who dissociate themselves from worldly matters. As with the Christian Manliness advocates in England and America, it seems the relationship between spiritual and worldly, on a societal as well as individual level, was of great concern to Hammar.

The idealization of the home and the family stands out as a main thread in *Ny Mark*. The home was the base for the good citizen as well as for masculinity, and the

woman's domain. *Ny Mark* advocates a classic division of labor, where the man was supposed to work outside the home as family provider. But in the unit of the home and family, the complementary nature of man and woman was central and requisite. Even if the man was expected to provide for his family, the family seems more important to the man than he to the family. Central aspects of the Ideal Man's masculinity were his relation to, and function in, the family and the household. The Ideal Man should be part of a family of which he should be the provider. The statements about the woman in *Ny Mark* are partly about womanly ideals, and partly about her functions in the metamorphosis of the man. As the things said about the Ideal Woman's qualities and functions are so distinct and explicit, these statements reversed also say things about the Ideal Man. *Ny Mark* makes clear what is demanded of the Ideal Woman: domestic skills. The children, the cooking, the clothes, the household economy and the animals were her responsibilities, in short, the home-making. The Ideal Man wasn't expected to run a home. As the Ideal Man, in contrast to woman, had no innate or natural domestic mission – he had instead to be *domesticated*. The Ideal Woman, as the requirement for the cohesion of the family and the good home, was by those means very important to the man's transformation from irresponsible, ruffian or weakling, into the Ideal Man, and later, as a guarantor for the maintenance of the man's new and better self. In short, woman had responsibility for the man's masculinity.

The idealization of the home and the family can be connected to the Christian Manliness ideas as a branch of a more general critique of modernization, civilization and urban lifestyle. Hammar's critique of the city and city life has not yet been examined, even if this study of the masculinities of *Ny Mark* shows that Hammar found city life devastating to a robust, vigorous, strenuous and true manliness. Scholars have also claimed that the family might have been the key in the formulation of a new Christian masculinity – this was the place where the separate ideals of the gentleman and the manly-man could both be justified (see for example Morgan, 2000; Jalert, 2003).

The SFC definitions of the Ideal man and the Ideal Woman are neither new nor unique, but it shows that in Sweden, as well as in the Anglo-Saxon countries, there was concern about Christianity and manliness. There were no formal connections between Eric E:son Hammar and the Anglo-Saxon manifestations striving for Christian Manliness. Yet, I would like to argue that the colonization project of Hammar and SFC did represent a Swedish counterpart: a Social Christianity project, led by pastors of the Swedish State Church, with an obvious commitment to masculinization and upholding the masculine ideal.

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/REkingsley.htm> accessed 20 April 2006.

<sup>2</sup> This, in a way, poses a risk for confusion. For example, Norman Vance uses the term Christian Manliness to describe Muscular Christianity, as he finds the latter a trivializing term that draws attention to muscles rather than to the issue of Christianity. Christian Manliness, he writes, also was the term more commonly accepted among contemporary

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clergy (Vance, 1985, p. 2). On the other hand, Donald E. Hall (1994) and his fellow writers chose to use the term Muscular Christianity, as they are of the opinion that “manliness” to the creators of the genre and its ideas was synonymous with strength and power, both physical and moral (Hall, 1994, p. 9). In any case, Muscular Christianity was a man-making project. Putney (2001) defines it as Christian commitment to health and manliness.

<sup>3</sup> This change, demasculinization, has in Swedish as in Anglo-Saxon research, mostly been spoken of in terms of *feminization*. See for example McLeod (2000a, 2000b), Blücker (2000), Gunneriusson Karlström (2004), Gill (2000), Lauer (2000) and Putney (2001).

<sup>4</sup> Unpublished project plan *Christian Manliness - A Paradox of Modernity? Men and Religion in A Northern European Context, 1840 to 1940*: [http://www.hist.lu.se/hist/forskning/kristen\\_manlighet.php](http://www.hist.lu.se/hist/forskning/kristen_manlighet.php).

<sup>5</sup> The information of the biographic part of this article derives from Montan (1950, pp. 25-36), Hammar’s unpublished memoirs (Stiftsbiblioteket, Västerås stadsbibliotek) and official reports for 1902, 1904, 1908, 1911 and 1915 (Landsarkivet Östersund, Vemdalens kyrkoarkiv). The information about the Floda colonies derives from the Floda archives (Stiftsbiblioteket, Västerås stadsbibliotek). My PhD thesis (Prestjan, 2004), examined the Floda colonies as a part of the early Swedish private system for alcoholism treatment.

<sup>6</sup> The idealization of Norrland was part of the contemporary Swedish critique of modern society and civilization. Several Swedish scholars have written about this, see for example Sörlin (1988).

<sup>7</sup> In the research project *Christian Manliness - A Paradox of Modernity? Men and Religion in a Northern-European Context, 1840 to 1940*, I carry out a wider study with Hammar in focus. The information about Hammar referred to here are the results from this ongoing study. The Swedish social reformer G. H. von Koch reported upon von Bodelschwing’s (and others’) activities in the booklet *Hem och anstalter för lösdrifvare*, 1907.

<sup>8</sup> *Ny Mark* 1910:2c, p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> The issues 1908:1, 1908:1b, 1909:2, 1909:2b are not included in the study.

<sup>10</sup> The “unmanly man” is not-so-manly or less manly, while the “non-manly” is not a man at all.

<sup>11</sup> For example *Ny Mark* 1910:1, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ny Mark* 1912:1, pp. 6-7, 1913:1, pp. 1-2, 9-11, 1914:1-2, pp. 4-7; The Floda Archives: *Statistics 1908-1918*. The supporting and repressive institutions referred to are alcoholism treatment institutions, workhouses, poorhouses, prisons, reformatories and hospitals.

<sup>13</sup> For example *Ny Mark* 1911:2-3, p. 7, 1918:1-2, p. 32.

<sup>14</sup> For example *Ny Mark* 1910:1, p. 3, 1910:1d, p. 7, 1910:2c, p.23, 1911:2-3, p. 6, 1921:3-4, p. 4. In *Ny Mark*, the not accepted types of masculinities, or the men who were not men but “elements” or “individuals,” are described in many ways. In the issue 1921:3-4, p. 4, are some real cases from the Floda colony I described as unmarried, vagrants, mentally inferior, morally indolent, without character, useless for society and spoiled. In another issue, 1910:3, pp. 18-20, is a critical comment on a group of harbor workers. The message is that this special group of workers was close to vagrancy, criminality and alcoholism and a good example of how a man should not be. The harbor workers lived apart from home

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and family, their work was irregular, they led a vagrant life, they drank and gambled and could not save their income.

<sup>15</sup> For example *Ny Mark* 1909:3, p. 12, 1910:1, p. 3, 1910:2c, pp. 18, 23, 1914:3-4, p.6, 1915:4, p.4, 1919:1-4, pp. 5, 52.

<sup>16</sup> *Ny Mark* 1910:2, p. 28. My translation.

<sup>17</sup> *Ny Mark* 1910:4, p. 2. My translation.

<sup>18</sup> *Ny Mark* 1909-1927.

<sup>19</sup> *Ny Mark* 1916:4, pp. 4-5. See also *Ny Mark* 1915:4, p. 7, 1919:1-4, pp. 9, 52.

<sup>20</sup> For example *Ny Mark* 1913:3-4, p. 20, 1914:1-2, p. 23, 1915:4, p. 12, 1916:4, p. 4, 1917:3-4, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup> *Ny Mark* 1909:3, p. 14.

<sup>22</sup> *Ny Mark* 1913:3-4, pp. 14-15.

<sup>23</sup> *Ny Mark* 1909:2, p. 7.

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