

INVITATION TO CONFERENCE

The Future of Scandinavian Creation Theology:

Martin Luther and N.F.S. Grundtvig Revisited

August 25-26, 2014, Vartov, Farvergade 27, Central Copenhagen

Scandinavian creation theology (SCT) has become an umbrella term used for a specific theological movement in Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Beginning in the mid-20th century, it is still highly influential in the Nordic countries, within as well as outside of the churches, and has influenced also parts of German and North American theology, especially among Lutherans.

SCT combines the creation theology of the Reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546) – with his positive view of creation but negative view of humanity – with central aspects of the so-called “Mosaic-Christian view of life” of the Danish theologian N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872). In contrast to Luther, Grundtvig argued that human beings never lost the positive traces of being created in the image and likeness of God. Accordingly, the Christian triad of faith, hope and love can be recognized, appreciated, and exercised also by non-believers. With his principle, “human first, then a Christian,” Grundtvig argued that a broader understanding and appreciation of naturally lived human experience is the underlying condition for a Christian way of life. Christian faith has to be lived in a humane way, in accordance with a shared sense of humanity.

The three central figures usually associated with SCT are Regin Prenter, K.E. Løgstrup and Gustaf Wingren, all of whom have continued to have a considerable readership and reception beyond the immediate generation of students that they taught. While Prenter and Wingren are mostly read among theologians (Wingren also by lay people), Løgstrup’s writings have reached a larger cultural audience. His books continue to be re-published and discussed in the public realm, also due to new American translations.

While SCT does not constitute a unified movement with clear boundaries, the commonly shared view is that God’s creation has an independent value and meaning, and is more than a mere foil for human redemption. The beauty of creation exemplifies divine benevolence, a benevolence also encompassing non-human nature (a view shared by Luther and Grundtvig). While Luther appreciated the human capacity for discerning ethical demands (*lex naturalis*) even in a fallen world, and also emphasized the positive role of a worldly government that follows principles of justice and reasonableness (the doctrine of the two regiments), Grundtvig expressed a positive view of the cognitive and experiential capacities of human beings. For Grundtvig, faith, hope and love are basically the same phenomena, within as well as outside Church and Christianity.

SCT offers a unique combination between Luther's and Grundtvig's theologies. But exactly *how* the relation between humanity and Christianity has to be understood, and *to what extent* philosophical arguments are viable in the domain of theology, has continued to be controversial. How Grundtvig's motto, "Human first..," fares with Luther's principle of *simul justus et peccator* remains to be seen.

The aim of the conference is twofold. The first purpose of the conference is to investigate the common contours and various commitments of the SCT, and to delineate its different ramifications and emphases among its representatives. The second purpose is to identify the challenges to the program of SCT within contemporary philosophy and theology, while also discussing plausible ways of responding to its critics from a more constructive perspective. What are the limitations, and what are the contributions of SCT today? For example, how does SCT fare in relation to postmodern developments within contemporary philosophy? To what extent must common sense give way to communal sense? And what about contemporary theological proposals within Trinitarian theology, gender theology, and interreligious theology? On the one hand, SCT seems to be challenged by a new emphasis on the profiling of church life and ritual practices, on the other hand by more legal approaches to human rights and welfare societies. How are the concerns of SCT to be rearticulated in a contemporary context?

The conference is open to researchers and students from Universities and other educational institutions and anyone else with interest in Scandinavian Creation Theology.

Apply at <https://auws.au.dk/Scandinav-Creation-Theol> (See below for practical information)

Program

The Future of Scandinavian Creation Theology: Martin Luther and N.F.S. Grundtvig Revisited

Monday, August 25, 2014

09.15–9.45 Coffee, tea etc.

9.45-10.00: Introduction

Director Dr. Michael Schelde and Professor Niels Henrik Gregersen

10.00– 11.00 Ten Misconceptions of Scandinavian Creation Theology

Brief inputs for general discussion by Bengt Kristensson Uggla, Trygve Wyller and Niels Henrik Gregersen

Introduction: Michael Schelde

11.15-12.15 Scandinavian Creation Theology: Both Secular and Religious
Professor Trygve Wyller, Oslo University

12.15 – 13.00: Lunch

Introduction: Trygve Wyller

13.00 – 14.00: Martin Luther in Scandinavian Creation Theology
Allen Joergensen, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Canada

14.00 – 15.00: Regin Prenter and Scandinavian Creation Theology
Professor mso Christine Swinth-Væрге Poder; Copenhagen University

15.30 – 18.00: Four **examples of CHALLENGES**

Introduction: Niels Henrik Gregersen

1. As Yourself or As the Other: Løgstrup between Kierkegaard and C.S. Lewis
Pia Søltoft, Copenhagen University
2. Human Rights: Revisiting the political program of SCT
Elisabeth Gerle, Uppsala University
3. The Religious Other and SCT
Jakob Wiren, Lund University

18.00 – 19.30: Dinner

19.30 – 21.00: Gustaf Wingren and Scandinavian Creation Theology
Bengt Kristensson Uggla, Åbo University

Thursday, August 26, 2014

09.00 – 10.00: Two more examples of CHALLENGES

4. Body theologies and SCT
Kjetil Hafstad, Oslo University

5. Gender theologies and SCT
Benedicte Hammer Præstholt, University of Aarhus

10.00 – 10.15: Coffee

Introduction: Bengt Kristensson Ugglå

10.15 – 11.15: N.F.S. Grundtvig in Scandinavian Creation Theology
Svein-Aage Christoffersen, Oslo University

11.15 – 12.15: K.E. Løgstrup and Scandinavian Creation Theology
Professor Niels Henrik Gregersen, Copenhagen University

12.15: General discussions, future plans and closing of the conference

13.00: Sandwich

Practical information

Tuition DKR 400, - plus VAT totally **DKR 500,-**

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The Conference fee includes participation in the conference in accordance with the above program and meals as described.

If you live further than 50 km. from the conference venue in Vartov, then The Grundtvig Study Centre offers a hotel room from August the 25th to the 26th free of charge.

Please indicate at registration whether you want a hotel.

If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact

Michael Schelde

teoms@cas.au.dk

Phone +45 2899 2591