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*Scandinavian Creation Theology*  
— *a Constellation Open to a Variety of Interpretations*

We can be precise about it already from the beginning: there's never been an established school of thought named "Scandinavian Creation Theology" associated with scholars identifying themselves with this particular notion, specific journals dedicated to the field or series of conferences titled in this way. Nevertheless, we may talk about a group of Lutheran theologians in Scandinavia with a family resemblance, who during the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century claimed that the doctrine of creation is to be considered an indispensable part of the Christian creed itself and that it furthermore constitutes the universal horizon of understanding for any articulation of the unique message of the gospel. I am referring to a group of influential theological thinkers (in particular K.E. Løgstrup, Gustaf Wingren, and to some extent Regin Prenter), who combined their roles as university professors and public intellectuals with their experiences as pastors. Their promotion of a specific approach to theology had a profound impact on academic theology as well as on national churches and cultural life in general in Denmark and Sweden (and to some extent Norway).<sup>1</sup>

This loosely network of theologians emerged in the aftermath of the breakdown of the grand liberal paradigm, which had dominated the theological scene during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Already as young scholars, they were influenced by the critique that dialectical theology directed against the idealistic Jesus of classical liberalism, and they also asserted

firmly God's identification with Jesus Christ and the divine presence and action in Jesus' death and resurrection. At the same time, they were deeply dissatisfied with the anti-liberal approach that more and more came to dominate Protestant theology after WWI, represented by major figures like Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, and Anders Nygren. In a dawning post liberal theological context, these Lutheran scholars criticized a postliberal theology that increasingly developed into anti-liberal positions, driven by the challenge to develop an alternative theological interpretation of the neglected and discredited notion of *creation*. Carried by a new hermeneutical creativity, they started to revisit their own Lutheran heritage looking for theological reconfigurations that could contribute to the development of a theology of creation beyond both liberalism and anti-liberalism.

### ***A Theological Constellation***

Asked by the Grundtvig Study Centre at Aarhus University to reclaim this particular theological tradition—which for a long time had been influential in Scandinavia, but that seemed to have lost influence and visibility at the beginning of the new millennium—Niels Henrik Gregersen, Trygve Wyller and I decided to name this particular approach to the Christian faith *Scandinavian creation theology*, a term indeed already used in theological parlance. In our 2017 publication, which we edited together, we made a systematic attempt to reconstruct and conceptualize this stream of theology, in collaboration with an extensive group of colleagues who contributed with constructive and critical elaborations on various aspects and challenges.<sup>2</sup>

Right from the very beginning of our work, we were determined by the conviction that it is necessary to resist the temptation presenting the case as a homogenous movement with a unified common program. Instead, we decided to conceive Scandinavian creation theology as *a constellation consisting of three major “founding figures”*: K. E.

Løgstrup (1905-1981), Regin Prenter (1907-1990), and Gustaf Wingren (1910-2000). The first two of these founding figures were Danes appointed as professors at Aarhus University, while the third one was professor at Lund University, Sweden. They shared a common academic platform, yet it is obvious how much these theologians differs, both in style and opinion. Conceived as a *constellation* of protagonists, Scandinavian creation theology thus comprises a *variety of positions and profiles*. In the Danish context this variety stretched from the mainly philosophical profile of Løgstrup, who was a significant figure in public life, a member of the Danish Academy, and who advocated a more secular style with a minimum of ecclesiological interest—to the more conservative Prenter, whose main field was dogmatics, which he developed in close relation to both the Christian tradition and in intense interaction with the life of the church. Wingren, in turn, started his intellectual journey in the field of biblical theology, and his profound interest in the Scriptures remained a distinguished feature of his publications throughout his intellectual career, also when he turned his disciplinary interest into historical investigations and systematic theology. Wingren differs greatly from Løgstrup, by having no real philosophical interest, and from Prenter, by his public polemic intellect and by his personal metamorphosis that transformed him into a political theologian during the latter part of his life.

If Løgstrup can be said to be the one who offered the original inspiration for Scandinavian creation theology in general, that served as an impulse for both Prenter and Wingren; and if Prenters journey, from an originally Barthian position via a “Lutheran turn” to a well-grounded Grundtvigian position, discloses some of the most important sources for Scandinavian creation theology; Wingren was the one who provided the most extensive and consistent version of Scandinavian creation theology, incorporating not only biblical and historical theology as well as systematic and practical theological perspectives, but also an embryonic political theology.<sup>3</sup>

Considering these founding figures as a *constellation* strengthens the view that Scandinavian creation theology should not be treated as a closed system with a unified program, the diversity of views among these proponents should rather make us regard their many publications as an “open source”—an invitation to a variety of interpretations and a *work in progress*.

### ***Grundtvig as Mediator of the Lutheran Heritage***

The three founding figures of Scandinavian Creation Theology were all related to Nicolaj F.S. Grundtvig (1783–1872), a thinker who seems to stand out as being just as important in Denmark as he has been neglected abroad (especially when compared with Søren Kierkegaard).<sup>4</sup> In addition to his unusual intellectual productivity as a poet, preacher, historian, reformer of the educational system, politician, and so on, Grundtvig was a central figure in nation-building when Denmark reinvented itself during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and during WWII he appeared as a kind of “national reformer” who brought the Danish Church into an open conversation with modernity as a realm shared by Christians and secular-religious mindsets alike.

Løgstrup, Prenter, and Wingren were deeply rooted in Lutheran theology—and simultaneously strongly convinced about the necessity of critical mediations when rendering Martin Luther’s theology today. No matter how much the Reformation has meant to modernity from a long-term perspective, the Reformer himself was never modern. Løgstrup asserted: “Darwin lies between Luther and us.”<sup>5</sup> As Lutheran scholars studying the primary sources of Luther’s work, they knew that in order to learn from this former Augustinian friar, *mediation* is required. Hence, in our conceptualization of Scandinavian creation theology we decided to add what may be considered as *a reconfiguration of Reformation theology by mediating Luther’s theology through Grundtvig’s*.

The fact that he was born in 1783, exactly 300 years after Luther, made Grundtvig identify strongly with the Reformer in Wittenberg. Yet, Grundtvig was fully aware that he was living in new historical epoch: Europe was marked by Enlightenment, Romanticism, and Revolution, and in Denmark the new era was manifested by the transition from royal monarchy and autocracy to national democracy and people's sovereignty. Rooted in Lutheranism, Grundtvig became convinced that the French Revolution must be considered an even more important event than the Reformation.<sup>6</sup>

Distinct from Luther's ambivalent assessment of the human condition and future prospects, Grundtvig expressed an appreciation of human capacity, societal development and nation-building. At the same time he was formed by a universal intellect and an "ecumenical" life-affirming view which included a variety of Christian dominations as well as pagans. Inspired by a regained trinitarian theology with an incarnational focus, that included an affirmation of creation and a recognition of humanity, he claimed that the divine work of redemption can only be properly understood in the light of God's work in creation: "the real participation of the divine in what is human and of the human in what is divine."<sup>7</sup>

### ***Theological Anthropology: Human Comes First!***

"Human comes first, Christian comes next" is one of Grundtvig's most famous and quoted dictums.<sup>8</sup> This particular focus on human dignity, as something that needs to come first in order to understand what it means to be Christian, was an integral part of a theological conception formed by an original affirmation of the creation-given life. This appreciation of the ordinary lived human experience, perceived as a necessary condition for the elaboration of a Christian view on faith and life, is a fundamental characteristic of Scandinavian creation theology in general—in contrast to anti-liberal versions of postliberal theology.<sup>9</sup>

Wingren especially is inscribed in 20th century theology as a consistent critic of the dominant anti-liberal movement, represented by theologians from Barth to Nygren, that systematically isolated *the distinctively Christian*—opposed to God’s omnipresence and the universal life conditions we all share as human beings—making this a particularity identical with a comprehensive description of the Christian faith. The theological clarity that may be achieved by isolating something distinctively unique when approaching Christianity may sound ideal; it has, however, devastating consequences for our understand of Christian faith. Indeed, a prerequisite for embracing the unique elements of the Christian faith is the articulation of universally recognizable features of human life.

It is important to recognize the general implications of the fact that Wingren started his career by researching Marcion and his attempt to isolate something distinctly Christian, eliminating everything connected to creation, thus removing the question what it means to be human, from the theological agenda. Having investigated this arch-heretic of the early church, Wingren later, in his anti-liberal polemic, pointed out the many striking similarities between Marcion and the dominant theological tendencies of his own day (read: Barth and Nygren).

Already as a young scholar in 1938, Wingren wrote in his personal journal: “Anthropology is terribly neglected in all of modern theology.”<sup>10</sup> He later claimed that the “curious anti-liberal mania,”<sup>11</sup> characterizing the constant attack on the liberal legacy in European theology in the era after 1920, had created a dangerous gulf between Christian faith and human life in general and thus generated an anthropological deficit in Christian theology: “Since 1920, every thesis that has interpreted constructively what ‘[humanity]’ is in the light of the belief in creation has been destroyed.”<sup>12</sup>

The theological anthropology advocated by Scandinavian creation theology takes our understanding of what it means to be human beyond the anthropocentrism and self-

glorification of liberal theology, as well as the anti-liberal anthropoclasm and rejection of human achievement. This “humanism of the other”<sup>13</sup> starts from the profound experience of being *decentered*—by gifts and demands, and by a gospel that does not originate from oneself. Thus, both creation and salvation may, according to this Lutheran way of doing theology, be considered as something *extra nos*. Wingren articulated the basic features of his theological anthropology in this way: “To live means to receive life from outside oneself. As soon as we are cut off from these external sources, life is extinguished. The resurrection life is the receiving of life from an external source, from which even now in faith man draws his sustenance. But the same thing holds good even now of the bodily life, and not just that of believers, but of all bodily life.”<sup>14</sup> The gift of creation thus primarily means a decentering of the subject. Yet, within the cohesion of an economy of gift, also a recentering of the subject is taking place, conceived of as an affirmation of human capacity. This is a distinct dialectical way of thinking, where an original decentering move is balanced by a new centering move.<sup>15</sup>

All three “founding figures” of Scandinavian Creation Theology shared the critique of dialectical theology against the anthropocentrism of liberal theology and transcendental idealism of Neo-Kantianism. A common inspiration for Scandinavian creation theology is the early critique a “culturally-biased view of life” delivered by Løgstrup, who warned that such a transcendental perspective risks detaching the self and culture from the world and nature, resulting in an ideology associated with an idealistic understanding of life, not compatible with an understanding of life as a gift.<sup>16</sup>

Consequently, the focus on the doctrine of creation does not result in a theology of strong subjectivities, where the subject is seen as someone who creates both itself and its own world. Instead, creation faith is associated with an affirmation of the pre-cultural conditions of human existence, the embeddedness of human existence in an always already given creation. Løgstrup contributed with a philosophical articulation of this



anthropology in terms of, what Niels Henrik Gregersen has defined as a “decentered view of the human self without deleting the self.”<sup>17</sup> According to Løgstrup’s phenomenological investigations, everything—also the ethical demand—flows from inter-human situations as a shared field of living, and not from an isolated human consciousness. Human beings thus do not *construct* meaning, but rather *discovers* and *receives* meaning in the midst of personal relationships of interdependency: “Trust is not of our own making; it is given.”<sup>18</sup>

### ***Creation as doctrine and horizon of understanding***

The key word in the conceptualization of Scandinavian creation theology is *creation*. Historically, the first Christian confessions were likely primarily “purely” Christological, while Marcion and gnostic movements made the early church acknowledge that the gospel is not spoken into an “empty” God-forsaken world. The church fathers were confronted with challenges that urged them to articulate the *implicit* creation faith that was a prerequisite for any Christology and for the gospel to be heard. Furthermore, the reference to creation was not considered as an external prerequisite, but an integral part of the Christian creed itself, as a *doctrine of creation*.

Talking about “creation” invites two major misunderstandings. First, the creationist’s focus on an originally implanted information, which makes creation theology appear as an historical account competing with historiographical operations and scientific accounts. Yet, according to Scandinavian creation theology, creation has nothing to do with a privileged kind of information about a remote historical origin. Instead of being used as a source for historical knowledge, creation means *life*, and first and foremost that God creates *now*! The world is not an alien place, but God’s creation where all life flow from him. There is nothing esoteric about this, but rather an expression framed by an almost secular perspective: “When the Bible speaks about God, it does not speak about a reality which

[hu]man encounters in a specifically religious act and of which he has some knowledge [. . . ] God is creator, and his relation to [hu]man is given in the simple fact that [hu]man lives.”<sup>19</sup>

The proclamation of God’s universal presence is not as an asset associated with information, but an interpretation of life as something that *God gives* and *we receive*. Recognizing creation in this way acts as a barrier against turning universal claims into totalizing generalizations that eliminate singularity.

This also implies that there can be no competition between God’s activity and human capabilities—these are perceived the exact same reality seen from two different angles. Consequently, slandering the human (also when it is done in the vain purpose to honor God) is not an attitude compatible with Christian theology. Incarnation means: God becoming human in Jesus Christ—the process of becoming fulfilled when Christ gives his own life *for others*. Christian faith is an invitation to follow in his footsteps. In the 1949 article on “The meaning of work,” Wingren promptly states: “If we flee from our neighbour to God, we do not come to God. But to ourselves, to our own selves. When the other is pushed from the center of our lives, Christ is also pushed from the center. For Christ is given to the world, he is human, in the form of a servant. The journey outward toward the people for the earth is a journey in the direction in which the cross stands and in which death occurs; that is a journey in the direction toward where He is, and where there is hope, the hope of resurrection.”<sup>20</sup>

Wingren’s notion of a “grain-of-wheat-eschatology” is perhaps the most elaborated conceptualization of this theological anthropology. The combination of the two tension-filled conceptual pairs *death/life* (i.e. a paradoxical interpretation of life based on death) and *actual/ideal* (i.e. a temporal tension between “already now” and “not yet”) makes visible a sharp contrast to a romantic idealization of a creational harmony of static orders.<sup>21</sup>

The second misunderstanding, which became the major challenge for the first generation of Scandinavian creation theologians, originates from the mixing together with a

“theology of orders” (*Ordnungstheologie*), an interpretation of creation recognized as an argument for *status quo*, a kind of theology that provided a dangerous support for *Deutsche Christen* (German Christians) during Nazism. In a period of time when this reactionary perversion of the doctrine of creation was supported by an emerging superpower in the neighborhood, Scandinavian creation theology developed a Lutheran theology that, with a quite different focus on creation, did not have the same political implications. Creation does not promote fixed orders of status quo and hierarchical relations of superiority and subordination. The doctrine of creation means *change*, transformation and becoming. All key concepts in the grammar of Scandinavian creation theologians are dynamic: creation means continual transformation; in a similar way, the law is recognized as a flexible dynamic, regulated by the changing ethical demand of the other connected to ever new contexts; the gospel is not a fixed and permanent message, but a concrete address to specific people, an event accomplished as a result of an interpretative act in the ever changing world “in front of the text”; the church is a movement towards the restoration of creation far from an already fixed and determined order, and so on. This dynamic understanding of creation focuses on *life*, not information; *change*, not status quo.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Recapitulatio: Becoming Human Again!***

If we take creation as horizon of understanding seriously, it means that we cannot understand the gospel or the church, if we place them in an empty God-forsaken world. Yet, this original affirmation of the creation that we share with all living creatures is also a doctrine, and as such a part of the Christian creed itself. The church is not sent to the world to *cut off* God's work in all human life, but to *restore* creation and to make us human again!

If Marcion had an important *negative* function for Wingren, as a contrast representing an interpretation of the Christian faith in which everything that unites

Christianity with a general human position is expurgated, Irenaeus served as a *positive* configuration of an interpretation of the Christian faith that instead had an *integrating* function for human life as a whole. Wingren recognized Irenaeus as the most important theologian in the Christian church before the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and Irenaeus had an impact on his fundamental theological conceptions during all his life. From Irenaeus he learned that everything in the Christian faith—no matter we talk about Christology, ecclesiology or sacraments—can be summarized in the concept *recapitulatio*, which means restored creation. But if becoming a Christian means nothing else than becoming human again, then theology presumes an original affirmation of that which is supposed to be restored: creation.

Here, we find many links and similarities between Wingren and Prenter, who also criticized strongly the danger of a sacred isolation of a church without contact with daily life. Christian theology presupposes a *positive* connection between humanity and Christianity. In her presentation of Prenter as Scandinavian creation theologian, Christine Svinth-Vaerger Pöder concludes: “The point is *not deliverance* from the affliction of created life, but on the contrary, the *integration* of that real created life in an incarnational and sacramental realism.”<sup>23</sup>

In their attempts to transcend the false dichotomies associated with the human/divine divide in Christian theology, both Prenter and Wingren were dependent on Grundtvig and his introduction of Irenaeus in the Scandinavian context. Wingren made frequent use of this kind of theology in his confrontation with his contemporary anti-liberal theology. We may hear a reverberation of the patristic battles in the early church in statements like this: “If, however, [hu]man is set in opposition to God from the beginning [. . .] it becomes quite impossible afterwards to withdraw from this position. Positive statements which are made about [hu]man then become limitations on the sovereignty of God, and

positive statements about the omnipotence of God are seen to be limitations on [hu]man's freedom."<sup>24</sup>

Wingren criticized this zero-sum game and rejected every theological attempt to put human and divine in opposition as competitors. According to his view, the continual process of becoming human and God's act of creativity are identical—exactly the same reality, only seen from different perspectives: “[Hu]man's growth is thus not simply a work, a consequence of God's act of creation, but actually *is* God's act of creation, exactly the same reality as God's creation, though seen from a different angle.”<sup>25</sup>

Wingren claimed that a theology of *recapitulatio*, affirming the continuity of the divine operation in accordance with an understanding of salvation in Christ as the renewal of creation, requires also a greater emphasis on the place of the human nature in the work of Christ. Becoming a Christian means nothing less—and nothing more—than becoming human again. The flight from creation means the flight from the humanity of Christ, stated Wingren, who frequently criticized what he considered as strong monophysitic tendencies in contemporary theology, claiming Christ's divinity at the cost of his humanity.<sup>26</sup>

If salvation does not intend to separate Christians from the world, but connect them even stronger with the world, this means that it will only be possible to articulate the *positive* relation between the church and Christ if we simultaneously consider the *positive* relation between the church and the world. Christ's divinity does not mean the least limitation of his humanity.

### ***Theology for a Post-Constantinian Age***

We are living in post-Constantinian age when the historical connections between state and church is about to dissolve in most parts of the world. This causes change and means tremendous challenges not only for the church, but also for the state. A common critical

remark about Scandinavian Creation Theology has been that this interpretation of the Christian faith is too closely linked with a formerly monolithic Lutheran majority-culture in the Scandinavian countries in order to survive this transformation. The question has thus been raised: Is it too late for the universal perspectives of creation theology? Is the only alternative an anti-liberal approach abandoning all universal claims? Is it time to stop all endeavors of integration between human and Christian—and reduce Christianity to an esoteric community of believers?

Wingren's interpretation of the post-Constantinian conditions for Christian theology differs dramatically from the dominant ways of coping with these challenges by theologians both in his own time—and in our current context today. While contemporary postliberal theology mainly takes the post-Constantine situation as an excuse to paint the Constantinian era in pitch black colors of decay, Wingren is far more balanced and pragmatic when considering different ways relating to the state as well as society. While contemporary postliberal theology tends to demonize the state in particular and society in general and warns of unbridled secularization, Wingren (with strong support from Irenaeus) argues for the theological necessity of viewing *the world as such* as a world that is *always already* God's beloved creation. And while large parts of the churches in our time one tends to paint the end of the Constantinian era in dystopian colors and immediately draws hasty conclusions that neither creation faith nor the folk church would have any future possibilities in this situation, we need to seriously consider the theological resources to navigate in this situation by using Wingren's specific conceptualization of Scandinavian creation theology conceived as a *post-Constantinian Lutheran theology educated by the pre-Constantinian theology of Irenaeus*.<sup>27</sup>

Wingren's investigations on Irenaeus, in particular in his later works (which are not translated into English), are of extraordinary importance because they remind us about the historical fact that Irenaeus' theology of creation emerged from a theologian who was leading

a tiny little congregation during the second century. It was in this extreme minority situation, in which Christians were being hounded and killed, that Irenaeus developed his effervescent creation theology about how God is active in all living things and with his love sustains the world, without any necessary religious sanctions. If the doctrine of creation was conceived in a pre-Constantinian context as an affirmation of God's universal presence in all creatures, the significance of this universal vision should not be linked or limited to a presupposed majority situation. Creation faith is not about "churchification" or "Christianizing" the world, but a profound affirmation of the world as creation. Consequently, creation theology is to be considered as an appropriate theology also for a post-Constantinian era, where Christians have to co-exist with people of other faiths (or without faith) in a post-Christian society. From the perspective of this contextualization of Irenaeus' texts, it is quite clear that Wingren considered the emerging post-Constantinian era as an opportunity, a situation which seems to have filled him with joy, relief and anticipation. Thus, we may conclude that the ongoing transformation of the world is something that makes also Scandinavian creation theology increasingly relevant and important—far beyond Scandinavia.

#### KEY TERMS

Scandinavian creation theology, NFS Grundtvig, Martin Luther, Gustaf Wingren, K.E: Løgstrup, Regin Prenter, theological anthropology

#### THE AUTHOR

***Bengt Kristensson Ugglå***, theologian and philosopher, holder of the Amos Anderson Chair in Philosophy, Culture, and Management at Åbo Akademi University, the Swedish-speaking university in Turku, Finland. In 1994 he defended his doctoral dissertation on Paul Ricoeur (Systematic Theology) at Lund University, Sweden. Author of fifteen books and numerous of other publications, he has developed a cross-disciplinary hermeneutics, which has also influenced his theological thinking. He is a distinguished expert, and has published extensively, on Gustaf Wingren's theological project, and one of his most acclaimed

theological books from 2010, *Becoming Human Again: The Theological Life of Gustaf Wingren* (Cascade Books) was released in English in 2016.

## ABSTRACT

This text is a general introduction to Scandinavian creation theology, both from a historical and systematic point of view. The concept is connected to a loosely network of theologians that emerged during the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the aftermath of the breakdown of the grand liberal paradigm, and as a critique against dominant anti-liberal approaches in protestant theology. In this article, Scandinavian creation theology is conceived as a “constellation” of three major “founding figures”—K. E. Løgstrup (1905-1981), Regin Prenter (1907-1990), and Gustaf Wingren (1910-2000)—who elaborated on a reconfiguration of Reformation theology by a “mediation” of Luther’s theology inspired by the important Danish theologian N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1882). Using the doctrine of creation as horizon of understanding for the Christian faith, an original affirmation of the ordinary life shared by all human being is taken as a theological starting point, instead of the attempts to isolate something distinctively Christian. Inspired by Irenaeus’ concept “recapitulatio” it is claimed that becoming a Christian means nothing less—and nothing more—than becoming human again. Finally, despite the fact that this theological approach was developed in a declining monolithic Lutheran majority-culture, it is being argued, that the ongoing transformation associated with an emerging post-Constantinian era, is something that makes Scandinavian creation theology increasingly relevant and important today.

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding Scandinavian creation theology, Finland stands out as unusual exception among the Nordic countries. Considering Finland’s and Sweden’s common historical roots as nations, and the Lutheran confession of their national churches, this is something like an enigma, still waiting to be investigated.

<sup>2</sup> *Reformation Theology for a Post-Secular Age: Løgstrup, Prenter, Wingren, and the Future of Scandinavian Creation Theology*, edited by Niels Henrik Gregersen, Bengt Kristensson Ugglå, Trygve Wyller (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017). Extraordinary constructive responses from Catherine Keller and Marit Trelstad, in association with a session at the American Academy of Religion in Boston in November 2017, inspired to further dialogue in *American Perspectives meet Scandinavian Creation Theology* (Church of Sweden Research Department & The Grundtvig Study Center, Aarhus University, 2019), ed. by Elisabeth Gerle and Michael Schelde.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bengt Kristensson Ugglå. *Becoming Human Again: The Theological Life of Gustaf Wingren* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016), Chapter 5 “Metamorphosis and Recontextualization” (167-213) and Chapter 7 “Systematic Theology Turned Critique of Civilization” (255-296). PhD Candidate, Ewa Lindquist Hotz, elaborates on creation theology as political theology in her upcoming thesis, which she will defend at Åbo Akademi University in the fall of 2021.

<sup>4</sup> As a prerequisite for an emerging international reception of his work, Aarhus University Press has released a series of five volumes with collections of Grundtvig’s work in beautiful English translation by Edward Broadbridge, covering his hymns, his theology, his views of



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school and pedagogy, his political views, and his philosophical works. Of special interest for theology is *Human Comes First: The Christian Theology of N.F.S. Grundtvig*, trans. and ed. Edward Broadbridge (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> K.E. Løgstrup. *Metaphysics*, vol. I, tr. Russel L. Dess (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1995), 336. For an elaboration on Luther's anthropology, see Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen, "Anthropology between Homo Sacer and Homo Oeconomicus. Luther's Theological Anthropology of Human Capital," in *"What is Human?" Theological Encounters with Anthropology*, ed. Eve-Marie Becker, Jan Dietrich og Bo Holm (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 213-34.

<sup>6</sup> Ove Korsgaard. *Grundtvig rundt: En guide* (København: Gyldendal, 2018), 12–14.

<sup>7</sup> A.M. Allchin. "Grundtvig: The Earth made in God's Image" in: *Reformation Theology for a Post-Secular Age*, 128.

<sup>8</sup> N.F.S Grundtvig. "Human comes first, and Christian next!" (1837) in: *Living Well-Springs: The Hymns, Songs, and Poems of N.F.S. Grundtvig* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2015), 249.

<sup>9</sup> Bengt Kristensson Uggla. "Gustaf Wingren as Anti-Anti-Liberal Theologian: The Contribution of Scandinavian Creation Theology to a Liberal Theology for Today," in: *Liberale Teologie heute / Liberal Theology Today*, ed. Jörg Lauster, Ulrich Schmiedel, Peter Schüz (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 37-48.

<sup>10</sup> Gustaf Wingren. *The Johanneum Journal* [Johanneumboken]. Unpublished notebook from Wingren's research period in Berlin in 1938 and thereafter after his return to Sweden. Lund University library, 179.

<sup>11</sup> Gustaf Wingren. *Creation and Law*. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1958/1961/2003), 12.

<sup>12</sup> Gustaf Wingren. *The Flight from Creation* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1971/2020), 62.

<sup>13</sup> This concept is inspired by Emmanuel Lévinas. *Humanism of the Other*, tr. Nidra Poller (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Wingren, *Creation and Law*, 18.

<sup>15</sup> Without any real connections or mutual references, there are yet many similarities between Wingren's theological anthropology and the philosophical anthropology developed by the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur. Cf. Bengt Kristensson Uggla "What Makes Us Human? The Lutheran Anthropological Link Between Wingren and Ricoeur", *Open Theology*, no. 4 (2018): 308-315.

<sup>16</sup> K.E. Løgstrup. *Den erkendelsesteoretiske konflikt mellem den transcendent-filosofiske idealisme af teologien* (Copenhagen: Samlaren, 1942); *The Ethical Demand* (Notre Dame University Press, 1956/1997).

<sup>17</sup> Niels Henrik Gregersen. "K.E. Løgstrup and Scandinavian Creation Theology" in: *Reformation Theology for a Post-Secular Age*, 53.

<sup>18</sup> K.E. Løgstrup. *The Ethical Demand*. (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1997), 18.

<sup>19</sup> Wingren, *Creation and Law*, 179.

<sup>20</sup> Gustaf Wingren. "Arbetets mening" [The Meaning of Work]. In: *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift* 25 (1949), 286.

<sup>21</sup> Gustaf Wingren. *Credo: The Christian View of Faith and Life* (Eugene, OR; Wipf and Stock 1974/1981/2020), 21. Cf. Kristensson Uggla, *Becoming Human Again*, 153-166.

<sup>22</sup> A short critical remark: perhaps we need to stress that the doctrine of creation in Scandinavian creation theology has mainly been developed in terms of theological anthropology—or, to be more precise: as an anthropology with ontological implications. The major exception is Løgstrup, who has contributed in an extraordinary way by elaborating on the cosmological dimension of creation theology. Yet, in this context Ole Jensen should also be mentioned, who has elaborated on the ecological dimension of creation theology, cf. his

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early book *Tillväxtens gränser: Ekologi och religion* [The Limits of Growth: Ecology and Religion] (Stockholm: Verbum 1976/1979).

<sup>23</sup> Christine Svinth-Vaerger Pöder. “Regin Prenter and Scandinavian Creation Theology” in: *Reformation Theology for a Post-Secular Age*, 75.

<sup>24</sup> Gustaf Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation: A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1947/1959/2004), xii.

<sup>25</sup> Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation*, 33. Cf. Catherine Keller “The divine lure draws but does not force” in: *American Perspectives meet Scandinavian Creation Theology*, 14-20.

<sup>26</sup> Gustaf Wingren’s critique of monophysitism is perhaps most explicit in *The Living Word: A Theological Study of Preaching and the Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1949/1960/2002).

<sup>27</sup> Even if this recognition of an emerging post-Constantinian era is present already in Wingren’s early publications, he elaborated more extensively on this theme in his later works from the 1970s and 80s. The fact that these later publications have only seldom been translated makes the international reception of his work limited and incomplete. For a presentation of the contents of Wingren’s later work, cf. Kristensson Uggla. *Becoming Human Again*, Chapter 5-8. For an outline of these perspectives, see my postscript, “En teologi som bara blir mer och mer aktuell: Kyrkofadern Irenaeus i Gustaf Wingrens postkonstantinska optic” [A theology that is just getting more and more relevant: The Church Father Irenaeus in Gustaf Wingren's post-Constantinian optic], to Wingren’s second monography on Irenaeus, *Människa och kristen: En bok om Irenaeus* [Human and Christian: A Book about Irenaeus] (Skellefteå: Artos, 1983/2019), 145-188.