



Key note speakers

Serene Jones,
Union Theological Seminary, NY

Jone Salomonsen,
University of Oslo

Brian Brock,
University of Aberdeen

Agata Bielik-Robson,
University of Nottingham

Reclaiming Radical Theology: Sin and Grace in a Postsecular Age

Nov 7-9, 2018

University College Stockholm/Stockholm School of Theology, Sweden

Wednesday, November 7

12.30-1	Registration and coffee/tea	Main entrance
1-1.30	<p><i>Welcome!</i> Sofia Camnerin, Vice President and Academic Dean at Stockholm University College</p> <p><i>Why Feminist Theology?</i> Michael Nausner, Prof., Vice Head of Research Department, Church of Sweden, Uppsala</p> <p><i>Reclaiming in "Reclaiming Radical Theology"</i> Susanne Wigorts Yngvesson, Professor in Ethics, University College Stockholm</p>	Room 219-220
1.30-2.45	<p>Keynote 1 Serene Jones: <i>Grace in a Secular Age</i> Respondent: Anna Mercedes Moderator: Joseph Sverker</p>	Room 219-220
2.45-3.30	Coffee and Tea	
3.30-4.45	<p>Papers, session 1. Moderator: Susanne Wigorts Yngvesson Thomas Ekstrand & Cecilia Wejryd: <i>The Gospel alone? Law and Gospel in 20th century Swedish Lutheranism</i> Jenny Karlsson: <i>Sinful thoughts, myths and dreams about justice.</i></p>	Room 219-220

	Dinner in town (no arrangements are planned)	
7-9 pm	<i>Terror, Environmental Issues, Political Uncertainty. Can Theology offer Language and Frameworks in Times of Difficulties?</i> Serene Jones, Professor Birte Nordahl, PhD-student, priest Moderator: Michael Nausner	Storkyrkan (Cathedral in the Old town)

Thursday, November 8

9.30-10.45	Keynote 2 Jone Salomonsen: <i>Sin in a Secular Age. Brevik and Radical White Nationalism</i> Respondent: Joseph Sverker Moderator: Sofia Camnerin	Room 219-220
10.45-11.15	Coffee and Tea	
11.15-12.15	Papers. Session 2. Moderator: Jenny Karlsson Tue Ravn: <i>Pride in appearances: sin and grace in the post-secular</i> Sebastian Ekberg: <i>A blessed fall forward? Rehearsing original sin</i>	Room 219-220
12.15-1.15	Lunch	College restaurant
1.15-2.30	Keynote 3 Brian Brock: <i>Temptation in the time of #metoo</i> Respondent: Susanne Wigorts Yngvesson Moderator: Petra Carlsson	Room 219-220
2.30-3.15	Coffee and Tea	
3.15-5	Papers, session 3. Moderator: Michael Nausner Anna Mercedes: <i>Christ, Gender Theory, and a Becoming Sin</i> Susanne Forsström Fäldt: <i>Grace, Law and Universality – a theological perspective on grace as a resource for an ethics of casuistry</i> Thomas Kazen: <i>Original survival and moral repair: an exegete reads ancient experience with evolutionary theory</i>	Room 219-220
6	Conference dinner (pre-registration is required)	College restaurant

Friday, November 9

9.30-10.45	Keynote 4: Agatha Bielik Robson: <i>Grace as Forgiveness. Derrida's Paul</i> Respondent: Petra Carlsson Moderator: Susanne Wigorts Yngvesson	Room 219-220
10.45-11.15	Coffee and Tea	
10.45-11.45	Papers, Session 4. Moderator: Joseph Sverker Ted Harris: <i>Kierkegaard's concept of sin</i> Eugene Drumm: <i>The Repression of Consciousness</i>	Room 219-220
11.45-12	Closing and talk about the future	

Papers

Eugene Drumm, BSc, Med, MS, M.Litt, Chaplain, Portlaoise Prison, Portlaoise, Ireland

[The Repression of Consciousness](#)

I take Gen 1:26 as essential to a Christian understanding of sin. I take sin as the falling from their dignity by human beings, their living destructively instead of ruling as the image and likeness of the loving creator. Such rule was possible. I assume some hermeneutic points justifying a contemporary reading.

I contend that there is urgent need to clarify what may be meant by creation in the image of God. There are powerful political and economic forces aimed at maintaining radically reduced understandings of the human person and of society. Mainstream psychology collaborates with these forces with its empirical and statistical methods. As a result sin can only be a legal infringement.

My aim is to uncover something of what “in the image of God” may mean with the help of EHusserl. He insisted on staying with description of immediate experiences rather than taking refuge prematurely in explanations. It is an astonishing fact that we achieve a stable and endlessly complex world from ‘flimsy’ endlessly fluctuating sense data, that we can communicate meaningfully about it, and that sciences have developed in symbolic languages on the basis of human perception and thought. Consciousness is active and bestows sense on the mere sensory data. The conscious subject..or person...cannot, with any rational coherence, be taken as an object among objects. The ethical implications are enormous. It is in these achievements I seek to portray some of what may be essential to our being created in the image of God. It is in the failure to promote such awareness that I seek to locate some of the blindness which causes us to settle for so much less but correspondingly, for so much destructive competitiveness.

Sebastian Ekberg, MTS, University of Notre Dame, MTh, Lund University

[A blessed fall forward? Rehearsing original sin](#)

According to a popular interpretation in contemporary theology, the event or reality of original sin was a tragic necessity that nevertheless led to the further maturation of the human race. Claiming its roots in Irenaean anthropology, this account understands the Fall as an epistemological step forward in the history of humankind: to become like unto God, humanity needs to develop an awareness of good and evil. In my paper, I trace this idea not to Irenaeus but to Hegel, and differentiate between the two. Following the work of Cyril O'Regan, I compare Hegel's “gnostic” grammar of sin and salvation with Irenaeus' original hamartiology. The former's attempt to sublimate the tension between sin and grace is juxtaposed to the latter, who I argue adumbrates the paradoxical *felix culpa* trope found later in the western church fathers. Further, I identify these two conflicting strands of thought as they have been reproduced in contemporary theology. On the side of Hegel we find Alfred North Whitehead and Teilhard de Chardin, who see the fall of humans as paradigmatic of an evolutionary logic of evil in creation. On this logic, sin is part and parcel of the ‘worlding’ of the world. On the side of Irenaeus we find Joseph Ratzinger, who emphasizes Christ as the recapitulation/turning on its head of Adam's first sin, thereby undoing the fundamentally illogical history of a world disturbed in its originally good, relational structure. This latter view upholds the thought that sin is irrational and an aberration from the natural course of creation, even when it declares that sin is part of

God's single drama of creation and salvation. Finally, I outline some questions about the two hamartiologies and their concomitant soteriologies: what comfort and what challenge is to be found in each respective theory?

Thomas Ekstrand, Assoc. prof., Uppsala University
& Cecilia Wejryd, prof., Uppsala University

The Gospel alone? Law and Gospel in 20th century Swedish Lutheranism

A central tenet in Lutheran Orthodoxy is the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. The Formula of Concord states "that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be maintained in the Church with great diligence as an especially brilliant light, by which, according to the admonition of St. Paul, the Word of God is rightly divided".¹ The underlying assumption in the doctrine of the three uses of the Law is that the Law is the principal road to salvation: if the law could be fulfilled, human beings would be granted eternal life with God. But since it cannot, the Gospel of salvation through Christ is preached.

This pattern was integrated in the teaching and pastoral praxis of the Church of Sweden from the beginning of the 17th century. At the end of the 19th century the Orthodox understanding of the three uses of the law started to lose its influence, not least due to the influence of revivalist movements.

The hypothesis of this paper is that theology and pastoral praxis in the Church of Sweden has shifted from a law-gospel dialectic to a gospel-oriented theology where the law – if it plays a role – is seen as something that should be preached after the Gospel of God's universal love has first been proclaimed.

By studying three theologians that have deeply influenced the Church of Sweden in the 20th century – P P Waldenström, Einar Billing and Arne Palmqvist understanding of law, gospel, sin and grace the paper aims at clarifying a major identity shift in 20th century Swedish Lutheranism. Grace is now seen as theologically prior to the Law. However, it can be argued that the priority given to grace by Waldenström, Billing and Palmqvist was contextually related to the revivalist critique of Orthodox Lutheranism and that contemporary Lutheran theology in a Swedish context could benefit from a renewed reflection on the Law-Gospel dialectic.

Susanne Forsström Fäldt, Ma Theology Lund University, Minister in Church of Sweden

Grace, Law and Universality – a Theological Perspective on Grace as a Resource for an Ethics of Casuistry

In a pluralist and increasingly diversified society, an ever-increasing need for an ethic arises, that encompasses both the kind of universal claims that allows us to navigate past the lockdown in closed-minded communities that make joint conversation impossible, and *at the same time* provides space for the particular and situational. An illustrative example of the need for such ethical reflection is the political discussion recently brought in Swedish daily media about the possibility of gender-separated bathing times at public baths. The discussion resulted in breach of a group of (mostly Muslim) women's needs for bodily integrity with reference to universal principles. During the Reformation Jubilee, which took place at about the same time as this debate, the popular Lutheran rhetoric to set law against grace was repeatedly expressed in different contexts. In my view, these two discussions intersect in the issue of how universal principles are to be weighed against the needs of specific persons in certain situations. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the discussion of how an ethical discourse may contain universal claims and yet be rooted in the particular. More specifically, the question that

has been guiding this survey is whether – and if so, how – it is possible from a Protestant doctrine of grace to articulate a theological foundation for an ethics capable of balancing the universal and particular, so that concepts such as truth and justice are not emptied on content while at the same time protecting particularity and difference.

I have previously been investigating how the doctrine of grace unfolds in the writings of the theologians Serene Jones and Anna Mercedes. By very briefly presenting the main features of this reading, I wish to show how such a conversation about law and grace, as well as of the relationship between universality and particularity, may contribute to a deepened discussion of grace as a resource for an ethics of casuistry.

Ted Harris, Reverend, Church of Sweden

[Kierkegaard's concept of sin](#)

The Danish theologian and philosopher Søren Kierkegaard outlines in the *Concept of Dread and Sickness unto Death* a systematic view of an individual's state of sin. His view presupposes a hylomorphic framework.

Three fundamental views of human nature characterize the history of Western thinking. (1) A materialistic view which claims that the building blocks of human nature are material entities and that humans lack the ability to freely ascribe meaning and value to life. (2) A dualistic view which claims that the true stuff of human nature is *res cogitans*, an immaterial substance which is a source of direction and goal. (3) A hylomorphic view which claims that all living beings are composed of matter and form and that the human capacity for self-consciousness is a source of purpose and significance.

Kierkegaard rejects materialism and substance dualism and sees human nature from a hylomorphic perspective. He acknowledges the human capacity for both receptivity and creativity and argues in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* that the modern age has forgotten about human creativity, that is, inwardness which is the unique capacity to attribute meaning to life, "something to live and die for". He writes in *Either/Or*: "... melancholy is sin, really it is a sin *instar omnium*, for not to will deeply and sincerely is sin, and this is the mother of all sins."

Kierkegaard's concept of sin clashes with the materialistic mindset which plays a dominant role in modern Western thinking. Since materialism rejects the human capacity to create meaning and value, Kierkegaard argues throughout his authorship that unless modern Western thinking posits the human capacity to enchant life, human existence will remain disenchanting, that is, characterized by despair, sickness unto death. This sickness expresses itself as intrapersonal disharmony and interpersonal dissonance.

Jenny Karlsson, PhD-student at Åbo Academy and Stockholm University College/Stockholm School of Theology

[Sinful thoughts, myths and dreams about justice](#)

Thomas Kazen, Professor of Biblical Studies, Stockholm School of Theology

[Original survival and moral repair:](#)

[an exegete reads ancient experience with evolutionary theory](#)

Sin and Grace are usually treated as decidedly theological concepts, but moral infringements and moral repair are universal experiences, with or without theological superstructures. In this paper I take an evolutionary approach and explore Sin as primeval survival strategy in the fields of reproduction (sex), individual integrity (revenge), and social organisation (hierarchy, dominance-subordinance), but a survival strategy out of context. Strategies of moral repair, Grace in particular, can then be viewed as a kind of contextual or cultural adaptation. With the help of game theory, commitment signalling theory, and the valuable relationships hypothesis, a number of conciliatory behaviours, mitigating practices, and tendencies to forbearance and forgiveness can be explained. Might an evolutionary perspective be relevant for divine Grace, too?

Examples from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, together with cognate texts, are analysed from the proposed perspective and provide underpinnings for the paper's argument.

Anna Mercedes, Associate Professor of Theology, College of Saint Benedict/ Saint John's University, Minnesota USA; Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

[Christ, Gender Theory, and a Becoming Sin](#)

This paper suggests an affirmative theology of sin! This less common theological approach

grows out of a kenotic or self-giving model of Christ, that is, an idea of Christ as other-oriented and eccentric, devoted to the world, even to the point of becoming sin on its behalf. In resonance with the theological tones of Luther's bold sins, Bonhoeffer's "non-religious" interpretation of Christ, and Althaus-Reid's "un-just messiah," the paper asks whether sin, for all its dangers, may be a risk of Christian passion, even a characteristic of Christian practice, in the pattern of the one whom the apostle Paul tells us was made to be sin that we might become the righteousness of God (in 2 Corinthians 5:21). The paper turns to Judith Butler's gender theory to borrow concepts that help describe a productive notion of sin. Using Butler's writing on drag, fantasy, and social norms, the paper imagines that sin might sometimes reconfigure the boundaries of righteousness. Might an Unjust Christ, a Christ in drag, christen human bodies beyond the boundaries of decency? And might it become the Christian body to give up its own claims to righteousness and devote itself instead to the world God so loves, becoming sin while abiding in a Christ given away?

Tue Ravn, Ma Theology, Minister in the Danish Church

[Pride in appearances: sin and grace in the post-secular](#)

In the current age of politicized Christianity, it has become increasingly clear that the concepts of sin and grace are central to Christian self-understanding. It shows itself in arguments made about 'neighbor love' in relation to migrants, human suffering and when political parties to construct identity on Christianity, by writhing it into e.g. the Danish Government platform. My paper calls for an analysis of the traditional Augustinian conception of sin as *Privatio Boni* (lack of good), and Paul Tillich's (1886-1965) concept of 'Theology of culture'. The aim of this analysis is to show how *Privatio Boni*, argued by Augustin (354-430) as being a corruption of the will, which causes us to love, not God, but ourselves, can highlight the radical nature of Tillich 'Theology of culture'. This Augustinian conception of sin passes on through Martin Luther, and John Calvin and is still with us, but reaches its tactile breaking point, with our current political age. We need an analysis,

that can show us, the inherent problem in understanding sin simply as a 'lack', because it leaves us blind to inherent danger of our pride, in a time, where Christianity has regained political significance. Therefore I propose that Tillich's concept of theology which he defines as: "...the permanent guardian of the unconditioned against the aspirations of its own religious and secular appearances.", is analyzed by applying the critique of Privatio Boni, developed by Proclus (412-485), who defined evil not as a lack of good, but as a perversion. Such an analysis will allow us to see how a concept of sin as a lack, is insufficient for our current age. We need to reconsider Tillich definition, which will enable us to highlight how we guard the unconditioned against our very own concepts of its appearances in our age.