

LUMEN

SYMPOSIUM ON CONFESSION AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

11-12 February 2019, Aarhus University

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Reformation brought about a major societal shift in the areas of poor relief, and caring for the sick. The responsibility for these groups shifted from the church to the state.

At the same time, people who now lived in these post-reformation societies could no longer buy indulgences through alms. How far can these considerable changes in the political, confessional and cultural character of large parts of Europe be said to have influenced the development of European welfare systems? Academic research on the subject has been inconclusive: on the one hand, some point out the consistency in European development across confessions; while on the other hand, welfare systems in Europe are often grouped into three different models, superimposed onto different confessional boundaries.

Each of the three large confessions in Europe (Lutheranism, Reformed, Catholicism) have their specific perception of “deserving” and “underserving” poor, of work, of social responsibility and authority.

The consequences of these particular viewpoints on the provision of poor relief and social responsibility more generally, however, remain open to debate.

The Reformation may have changed the legal responsibility for the poor in Protestant societies, but these places nevertheless retain clear cultural continuities from the medieval period.



Pauper Statues are a common sight outside churches in Ostrobothnia (Finland) and in some parts of Sweden. The wooden statue incorporates a box for money to be given to the local poor. This statue is from Kälviä in Central Ostrobothnia, and dates from 1820. In common with many pauper statues, a text from the Book of Proverbs (19:17) reminds parishioners: “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord.”

Photo By Andrew G. Newby from an exhibition of Pauper Statues, Kerimäki Church, Finland, 2013.

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LUMEN seeks to analyse this central question for the investigation of the influence from religion on societal development with two symposiums. The first one took place in spring 2018 and addressed the possibility or usefulness of discussing a Lutheran social ethic or teaching, and the possible relevance to the development of a Nordic welfare system.

Even though it is possible to highlight differences in welfare systems according to confessional boundaries, this cannot in itself be said to prove an influence from religion and confessional specifics on the understanding of welfare and social responsibility. With this second symposium on religion and welfare, we will address the possible connection between confession and social welfare on a both concrete and methodological level. Departing from empirical cases, highlighting what we actually know about development of poor relief and the role of religion in this development from the reformation until the 20th century, we aim to discuss both the concrete examples and the analytical tools for examining the relationship between religion, politics and poor relief.

In addition to a focus on the Lutheran countries, we consider that it will be important to have papers investigating the Catholic as well as Reformed tradition to allow for comparative approaches and discussions. Proposals are welcome from researchers at all career stages, and from all relevant disciplines. Papers could address the following subjects (but not limited to):

- The role of religion and confessional traces in the means and goals of poor relief
- Actors and institutions within the poor relief system
- Social responsibility and obligations of authorities
- Poor relief systems under political jurisdiction or outside political jurisdiction
- Church ordinances and legislation
- Methodical approaches

CONFIRMED KEYNOTES

Dr. Esther Chung-Kim,
Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Claremont McKenna College:

“Caring for the Deserving: Wittenberg Reformers on Poor relief”

Dr. Christian Neddens,
Professor at Luth. Theol. Hochschule Oberursel:

“Personal relationships as core metaphors of faith in the pictorial worlds of Lutheranism – their implication for social responsibility”

Dr. Andrew G. Newby,
Kone Senior Research Fellow, Tampere Institute for Advanced Social Research:

“Worship Industry or Starve – racial, ethnic and religious rhetoric in nineteenth-century poor relief”

Abstracts of no more than 250 words, and a short bio, should be emailed to Nina Koefoed, (hisnk@cas.au.dk) by **1 December 2018**. Questions or queries can also be addressed to the above.

Convenors: Nina Koefoed & Andrew G. Newby

Contact: hisnk@cas.au.dk

For more info, please visit:
www.lumen.au.dk