

# Kristendommens Morgenstjerne

**Konvergerende teologiske træk  
med baggrund i østlig tradition hos  
John Wesley og NFS Grundtvig**

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## Abstract

Thaarup, Jørgen *Kristendommens Morgenstjerne, Konvergerende teologiske træk med baggrund i østlig tradition hos John Wesley og NFS Grundtvig.* (Summary: *The Morning Star of Christianity, Converging theologies with reference to the Eastern tradition in the writing of John Wesley and NFS Grundtvig.*)

This thesis deals with the convergent trait we find in the central parts of the theologies of John Wesley and NFS Grundtvig, when we look at them in the perspective of some of the Eastern Greek church fathers and their theologies. The first step of investigation is to identify where in the theologies of Wesley and Grundtvig we find equivalences and convergences. The next step is to analyse these convergences to find influences from the Eastern Greek tradition.

Wesley and Grundtvig are theologians in different ecclesiastical and cultural contexts. They are protestant reformers of the church and the society life. We find some direct connections between Wesley and Grundtvig, but not influences to explain the common trait in their theologies. It is the hypothesis of this dissertation that Wesley's inspiration from Macarius, Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, Ephraem Syrus and other theologians of the early Greek church, and Grundtvig's inspiration from Irenaeus and the Greek Leiturgikón and other Greek theologians have influenced their thinking in the same direction.

Wesley and Grundtvig understood themselves as contemporary reformers of church and society, Wesley in Anglican England and Grundtvig in Lutheran Denmark. Both of them found that the corruption of Christianity, including the role of the church in the national state, began with the Constantine alliance between Christianity and the ruling culture. The power status of the church and its representatives has been a repeated source to derailment of what Christianity is all about. Wesley and Grundtvig, each of them in different manners and ways, lift up the period before the Constantine, Latin era, and in addition also Christian cultures outside the influence of the same, e.g. the Anglo-Saxon Christian culture, as the golden area of Christianity, where any reformation must be rooted and find inspiration and legality.

It is in the central core issues of Christian theology we find the similar convergent traits in Wesley's and Grundtvig's theologies: anthropology, hamatology, understanding of God, understanding of Christ's reconciling ministry, salvation understood as growth and in the synergistic relation with the Divine One, and finally the role of the trinity within their theologies. We find in all examined themes that Wesley and Grundtvig are influenced by Eastern theology, either identified theologians or ideas identified as typical characteristics of the Eastern thinking, and these influences of Eastern theology draw Wesley and Grundtvig closer to one another and in the same direction.

The study shows how a common root or an inspiration from a third source can bring different theological traditions closer together. This is important e.g. for the theological dialogue among churches.

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