



POWER AND POWERLESSNESS: RELATIONS – PRACTICES – STRUCTURES

5TH NORDIC CONFERENCE ON THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE

AARHUS UNIVERSITY, 20.-22.8.2025

Wednesday 20.8.

From 11.00	Registration (1485 - Groundfloor)
12.30	Lunch sandwiches (1485 - Groundfloor)
13.30	Welcome and introduction to the conference Ulla Schmidt, Aarhus University, (1485 - 123)
13.45	Keynote lecture 1, Prof. Mikkel Thorup, Aarhus University. Power and powerlessness as topics of history of ideas (exact title TBA), (1485 – 123)
15.15	Coffee break
15.45	Papers (30 min. pr. paper, incl. discussion)
	CHANNEL 1 (1485 – 238): CHURCH MINISTRIES
15.45	The power of ministry in church of Norway <i>Halvard Johannessen, Oslo University</i>
16.15	"The students are so old nowadays?"

	<i>Karin Rubenson, University of Gothenburg</i>
16.45	SHORT BREAK
17.00	Logics of volunteer practice in the Church of Norway <i>Dorte Kappelgaard, MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society</i>
17.30	"So I built a room where the confirmands can pray": A qualitative in-depth study of how catechists in the Church of Norway create professional space. <i>Camilla Jørgensen, MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society</i>
	CHANNEL 2 (1485 – 218): MATERIALITY, SPACE, AESTHETICS
15.45	"Like Protected from All Evil": Discourses of Space and Spaces of Discourse on the Sense of Safety at Urban Church Building in Finland <i>Rosa I. R. Huotari, University of Helsinki</i>
16.15	The Power of Aesthetics and Art in Studies of Lived Religion <i>Katarina Westerlund, Uppsala University</i>
16.45	SHORT BREAK
17.00	Incombustible crosses and the making of modern-day relics <i>Jakob Dahlbacka, Åbo Akademi University</i>
17.30	Transformation of church spaces <i>Kerstin Menzel, University of Leipzig</i>
	CHANNEL 3 (1485 – 226): RELIGION: SOCIETAL POWER?
15.45	Empowering Hope: Responses to Climate Change and Global Injustices in Practical Theology and Religious Education <i>Viktor Aldrin, Borås University</i>
16.15	Picturing narratives not easy to tell – on diaconal work in areas of mills, forests and people <i>Cecilia Nahnfeldt, Åbo Akademi University</i>
16.45	SHORT BREAK
17.00	Religious Practices in Dealing with Experiences of Power and Powerlessness due to Climatic Threats <i>Miriam Loehr, Bern University</i>
17.30	Militarization and a Weakened Democratic Culture: A Theopolitical Response <i>Jonas Idestrom, University College Stockholm</i>
18.15	Buffet dinner 1485 – 123

Thursday 21.8.

09.00	Keynote lecture 2, Prof. Ulrike Auga, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Religion – gender – power. A theological epistemology (exact title TBA) (1485 – 123)
10.30	Coffee break (1485 – groundfloor)
10.50	Papers (30 min. pr paper incl. discussion)
	CHANNEL 1 (1485 – 238): MUSIC
10.50	Minority-language hymns in a majority hymnal: Sami and kven hymns in Norsk Salmebok 2013 <i>Per Kristian Aschim, SPIR / MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society</i>
11.20	The male? and musical companions as brides wed in the Church of Sweden in 2024 <i>Sofija Lazic Pedersen, Åbo Akademi University</i>
11.50	SHORT BREAK
12.00	"I Surrender to You!" Power and Praise in Contemporary Worship Practices <i>Asbjørn Lauridsen, Aarhus University</i>
	CHANNEL 2 (1485 – 218): CHURCH STRUCTURES
10.50	Power Negotiation, Ecclesial-Municipal Collaboration, Theological Rationalities <i>Mette Møberg Madsen, Aarhus University</i>
11.20	Power and powerlessness in a Lutheran minority church in Germany <i>Christoph Barnbrock, Lutherische Hochschule Oberursel</i>
11.50	SHORT BREAK
12.00	The Church of Sweden and the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe <i>Martin Berntson, University of Gothenburg</i>
	CHANNEL 3 (1485 – 226): Practices of power, empowerment, and critique
10.50	Doing eucharist - reflections on power structures and empowerment practices <i>Marcel Brenner, University of Tübingen</i>
11.20	Ideology Critique as Critique of Power <i>Kristin Merle, University of Hamburg</i>
11.50	SHORT BREAK

12.00	Power in practical-theological research <i>Fredrik Saxegaard, MF School of Theology, Religion and Society</i>
12.30	Lunch (building 1485, groundfloor)
13.20	Keynote lecture 3, Prof. Stephanie Dietrich , VID Specialized University, Norway Power and powerlessness: learning in / from international diaconia (exact title TBA) (1485 – 123)
14.50	Coffee break
15.15	Papers (30 min. pr paper, incl. discussion)
	CHANNEL 1 (1485 – 238): RELIGIOUS ENCOUNTERS – DYNAMICS OF CHANGE
15.15	Decline in baptismal numbers - how can that be empowering? <i>Steinunn Arnþrúður Björnsdóttir, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland / University of Iceland</i>
15.45	The Role of Pentecostal Exorcisms in the Struggle for the Local Religious Symbolic Field: Religious Ethnography in Oromia, Ethiopia <i>Daniel Jara, Bern University</i>
16.15	SHORT BREAK
16.30	Is Christianity a new counterculture? Why young Finnish men are increasingly drawn to Christianity <i>Kati Tervo-Niemelä, University of Eastern Finland</i>
17.00	Growing up with two selves connected by God: A collaborative autoethnography on youth diaries from the perspective of religious deidentification <i>Jonna Ojalampi; Kaisa Viinikka, University of Eastern Finland</i>
	CHANNEL 2 (1485 – 218): Preaching
15.15	The Pulpit in the Reformed Church Service between Power and Powerlessness <i>David Plüss, Bern University</i>
15.45	Preaching in Crisis, Power and Powerlessness, Trauma Theology <i>Michael Mørch Thunbo, Aarhus University / Lutheran School of Theology in Aarhus</i>
16.15	SHORT BREAK
16.30	The Gordian Knot of the Preacher: Resisting «the Weaponized Grotesque» by Telling Humanizing Stories <i>Tone Stangeland Kaufman, MF School of Theology, Religion and Society</i>

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	CHANNEL 3 (1485 – 226): Practices of power, empowerment, and critique
15.15	Biography and Power: Exploring Power and Powerlessness in Narrative. Interviews with Protestant Women from the GDR <i>Dorothee Branz, University of Tübingen</i>
15.45	Realms of power in Bible performances on social media and Church education <i>Florence Häneke; Madlen Geidel, University of Erlangen – Nuremberg</i>
16.15	SHORT BREAK
16.30	Religion as a source of power in navigating menstrual life <i>Sara Högberg, Åbo Akademi University</i>
17.00	The power of praise and prayer in the face of war and migration <i>Martina Björkander, Åbo Akademi University</i>
17.45	Refreshments and culture 1485 – 123
18.45	Walk / transportation to Aarhus Ø
19.15	Conference dinner at Nicolinehus, Aarhus Ø

Friday 22.8.

09.00	Papers (30 min. pr paper, incl. discussion)
	CHANNEL 1 (1485 – 238): RELIGIOUS ENCOUNTERS – DYNAMICS OF CHANGE
09.00	Help in need or congregation of peers? Power, empowerment, and agency in encounters between individuals of migrant and Danish backgrounds in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark <i>Laura Bjørg Serup Petersen, Aarhus University</i>
09.30	Reimagining Power and Authority in Churches: A Bosadi Approach to Biblical Interpretation <i>Linda Wendy Naicker, University of South Africa</i>
10.00	SHORT BREAK
10.15	Healing practices as empowerment among the Maya: A comparison of Catholic, Evangelical and Traditionalist healing practices in Guatemala (minus <i>Jakob Egeris Thorsen, Aarhus University</i>
10.45	Beyond Tradition: Ethical Challenges in Relation to New Spiritual Practices in the Church <i>Sofia Lindahl, Åbo Akademi University</i>
	CHANNEL 2 (1485 – 218): Pastors and Power: Leading Religious Institutions in Times of Change (NB! 5 papers)
09.00	Leading and Losing? How Church Leaders Deal with the Shrinking Social Importance of the Lutheran Majority Churches? <i>Annette Rose Leis-Peters, VID Specialized University</i>
09.25	The Vigor and Burden of the Clergy Calling – Measuring Work Wellbeing and Work Orientation Among Lutheran Clergy in the Nordic Countries <i>Kati Tervo-Niemelä, University of Eastern Finland</i>
09.50	What Keeps Them Going? Exploring the Inner Drive of Church Leaders <i>Alexandra Äng, Åbo Akademi</i>
10.15	SHORT BREAK
10.25	The Agency of the Pastors in Times of Change: What Empowers and Weakens the Pastoral Agency? <i>Steinunn Arnþrúður Björnsdóttir, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland / University of Iceland</i>

10.50	The Evolving Role of the Church Warden as a Local Church Leader <i>Harald Askeland, VID Specialized University</i>
11.15	Coffee break
11.30	Closing session: wrapping up and looking forward
12.30	Good bye!!