

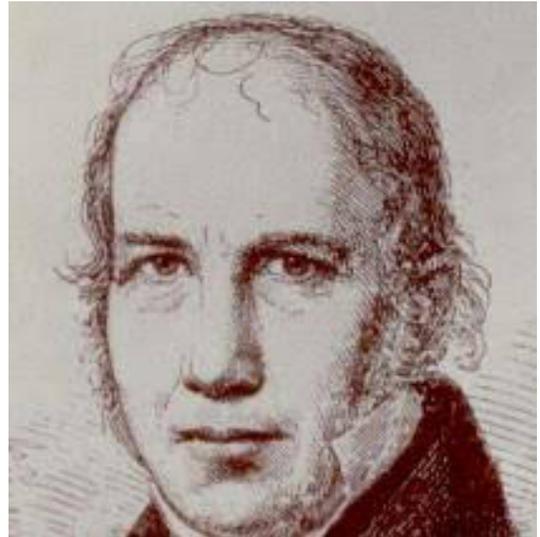
CHURCH AND LIFE

formerly *Kirke og Folk*

VOLUME LXVII UPSPS 296-040

September 2017

Number 9



“All our (Christian) endeavors are wasted unless the response in people to human mirth and joy is reawakened; for of what worth is an eternal life, if we do not have a temporal life which we can joyfully anticipate as being eternal . . .”

N.F.S. Grundtvig

September 2017 Highlights

Happy Birthday,

Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig!

In this issue we celebrate Grundtvig's 234th birthday. The exciting aspect of this year's birthday, is that Grundtvig is finally becoming better known throughout the world, due in a large part to the efforts of The Grundtvig Studies Centre at the University of Aarhus and at Vartov in Copenhagen. But perhaps even more important, the need for Grundtvigian values is critical, and with technology, Grundtvig's contributions are now more accessible throughout the world.

To celebrate the birthday we have an article from **Michael Schelde**, the Director of the Grundtvig Studies Centre on Scandinavian Creation Theology (SCT) describing contributions of important recent scholars to this movement. Grundtvig's emphasis on the first article of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in God the Father, maker of

heaven and earth," is basic to our tradition of valuing nature and creation.

We continue with **Louise Spencer's** thesis, "The Danish Folk School," exploring what a folk school is NOT. It lends clarity to realize what a folk school ISN'T in order to understand what it is! In addition we have two remarkable poems by **Karma Larsen**, the niece of Louise Spencer, including one which highlights the remarkable Nysted Folk School loved by her parents and so many others. **Karma** is a botanist who lives in Lincoln, Nebraska.

We continue to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Danebod Folk School in Tyler, MN with an article about this summer's July Family Camp by **Carla Mortensen**, a retired Licensed Clinical Social Worker from Minneapolis, MN.

Having recently returned from the August folk meeting I am reawakened to what a fantastic place Danebod Folk School really is! What a gift, thanks to all the beautiful people who through the years have kept the building structure strong and attractive, and programs flourishing! Danebod is home for many, perhaps for all who attend!

For those of you on Facebook, (or wannabees) Carla also has an article about the robotic profile Facebook has gleaned from her participation, not quite the same as the "real" live Carla Mortensen. One wonders—What description would Facebook come up with to describe Grundtvig?

Inspired by the DAHS topic of fusion, **Hanna Broadbridge** writes about the movement of people—how people integrate, assimilate and eventually fuse into a new culture. Now, due to extreme problems, hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers and displaced people overwhelm the process. Can we learn to share? Can we learn to co-operate? Can we practice common responsibility?

ji

Church and Life

formerly *Kirke og Folk*

September 15, 2017

Number 9

www.churchandlife.org

Published ten times a year by the Danish Interest Conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at Askov, Minnesota.

Periodic postage paid at Askov, Minnesota 55704. Postmaster: Send address changes to Wanda Clark, Bus. Mgr, 123 NW 7th Street, Grand Rapids, MN 55744-2639.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Rate \$20 per year (U.S.A.) \$35 for Canada and \$60 for Denmark (hard copies). Electronic subscriptions available to Canada and Europe for \$20. Subscription payments or gifts and memorials should be sent to the Business Manager.

DANISH INTEREST CONFERENCE Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

PRESIDENT	Dan Mikel
SECRETARY	Sonja Knudsen
TREASURER	Lee Molgaard
EDITOR	Joy Ibsen, 34650 107th Engineers Memorial Hwy Silver City, MI 49953 906-885-5412 churchandlife@danamerica.com
POETRY EDITOR	Lise Kildegaard, 409 Upper Broadway Decorah, IA 52010 kildegli@luther.edu
BUSINESS MANAGER	Wanda Clark, 123 NW 7th Street Grand Rapids, MN 55744-2639 WE_Clark@msn.com • 218-326-6776

Dates to Remember

October 5-7, the 40th Anniversary Conference, **Danish American Heritage Society "Danish American Fusion — A Blending of Cultures,"** Schaumburg, IL. For information and to register: danishheritage.org/2017-conference.

EDITORIAL DEADLINES

CHRISTMAS IS COMING! Please send your articles, memories, stories, photographs by November 1 for the special Christmas 2017 issue! The 2017 October issue of *Church and Life* has a deadline of September 20. Send articles and stories, sermons, essays, obituaries, photos, "Dates to Remember," "In their Own Words," and special features to the editor. Poetry should be sent to the poetry editor.

The Quotation on the Cover

The quotation is from a personal letter written by Grundtvig. (*Schools for Life, A Danish-American Experiment in Adult Education*, Enok Mortensen, Danish American Heritage Society, printed by American Publishing Company, Askov, MN, p. 18.)

Human Comes First

By MICHAEL SCHELDE

Director of the Grundtvig Center
University of Aarhus and Vartov

The title of this paper is taken from a poem by N.F.S. Grundtvig. Let me quote the two last verses from his poem: "Human comes first and Christian next:"

*Human comes first and Christian next,
this is a major precept;
Our Christianity comes free,
a gladness pure and perfect,
but gladness only in the end
for those who truly are God's friend
and Truth's right noble kindred!*

*They who would truly human be
while on this earth still living
lending an ear to Truth's own word,
to God the glory giving;
If Christian faith is the true way,
though 'Christian' they be not today
they will be so tomorrow!*

This poem sets the theme for this paper. It is a central poem of N.F.S. Grundtvig and it is at the same time a central take-off for 20 Centuries Scandinavian Christian Theology.

In this poem Grundtvig has a positive view of human life. According to him all people are created in the image of God. Generally Grundtvig had a positive view on human life. For Grundtvig, faith, hope, and love are basically the same phenomena within as well as outside Church and Christianity. Moreover, for Grundtvig, the major enemy of human life is death rather than sin.

My own history



I have a Grundtvigian background where there was a close relation between Grundtvig's thinking and our activities in civil society. That means taking active part in Grundtvigian youth movements, attending a Peoples' High School [Folk High School] — which I did when I was 17, and taking responsibility within local society. So Grundtvig and his thinking is a central part of my understanding social life, engagement in the society and politics. Grundtvig had many tools in his toolbox. I experienced singing (Grundtvig wrote 1500 hymns and songs), his focus on body culture (body and spirit is close connected) and his dialogical-based pedagogic.

The view from my window

The view from my office [at Vartov in Copenhagen] is in the building, where Grundtvig was pastor from 1839 to 1872. The text at the sculpture is the following: "Life words of Deity-root: The source is for your life's route/river — don't hang to the riverbank."

Central perspectives for this paper

The central perspective of this presentation is the relation between Scandinavian Creation Theology and man's experience of life in relation to love, hope and nature. My central question is: *What is the relation between human experiences and Christian faith? Between our understanding of creation and our relation to world around us and to Nature?*

What is Scandinavian Creation Theology (SCT)?

Let me begin with the word Scandinavian. SCT is certainly not only for Scandinavia and not linked to the idea of particular divine revelations given to particular people. SCT develop in Scandinavia as a fruitful dialogue between systematic theologians mainly in Denmark and Sweden. Their focus and main question was whether the language and practice of theology is concerned with the Christian church only—or is the theological understanding of the gospel intertwined with the life and experiences of all human beings? SCT answers with a clear "yes" to the latter, for SCT theology is to reflect over our lives as we share them in God's creation.

One could say that SCT is a theological strategy. The *vision* of SCT is a dialogue between Christians and non-Christians founded in the fact that all humans have common conditions. The context is a growing secularity and wish of restarting a broad dialogue between church, theology and society.

The theological concern of SCT then, is the shared conditions of human life. We are all born, and we will all die. We all need food for nourishment and the company of others. Parents care for their children, and all children continue to play. Likewise, teenagers and grown-ups alike continue to long for recognition and prefer to be welcomed rather than to be expelled. Human beings of whatever religious or non-religious orientation—know about the pain of being ashamed and being found guilty, even if cultural codes differ. Likewise all grown-ups know the social infighting for power, influence, and status, regardless of what counts as status. We are all embodied persons, even if our bodies look different. We always live together with other persons, who appeal to us for help, and from whom we ourselves seek help. And we all live under the same biosphere and enjoy the sun, clouds, rain and wind.

The founding fathers and their perspectives

We often talk about three systematic theologians as the founding fathers of SCT: K.E. Løgstrup (1905-1981); Regin Prenter (1907-1990) and Gutaf Wingren (1910 – 2000). Lets have a look into the toolboxes of the founding fathers. What did they think? What were their perspectives?

K.E. Løgstrup

Let me begin with K.E. Løgstrup whose tone is more secular than Prenter and Wingren. The following quotation sets the tone, when he concludes that eternity is incarnated in our lives:

"Eternity is incarnated in the demand it imposes upon us through the interpersonal situation and in the sovereign expressions of life that correspond to it. Eternity incarnates itself not, in the first instance, in Jesus of Nazareth, but is already so in creation and the universality of the demand" (Løgstrup [1967] 2007, 71).

"In its basic sense, trust is essential to every conversation. In conversation as such we deliver ourselves over into the hands of another. This is evident in the fact that in the very act of addressing a person we make a certain demand of him."

"Trust is not of our own making; it is given. Our life is so constituted that it cannot be lived except as one person lays him or herself open to another person and puts her or himself into that person's hands either by showing or claiming trust."



Løgstrup talks about the sovereign expression—trust, openness of speech despite selfishness.

Let me resume his perspective in four bullets from the book, *The Ethical Demand*.

- The ethical demand is "radical," insofar as it is based in the elementary root (*radix*) of human interdependence, and insofar as it demands that we help the other person wholeheartedly and unconditionally, without any ulterior selfish motives.

- The ethical demand is "silent," since it needs no verbal explication, and does not tell the agent exactly what to do in the given situation. It is the very phenomenon of trust that calls forth the demand of taking care of the other person in his or her vulnerability.

- The ethical demand is "one-sided," or unilateral, since the ethical demand is lost from sight if we help the other person while expecting later counterfeit benefits: "a protest in the name of reciprocity" (1997, 116) is unethical.

- Finally, the ethical demand is "unfulfillable," since human beings continue to be selfish and self-concerned creatures, always negotiating the concern for others with the concern for themselves, hereby compromising the radical nature of the ethical demand.

The founders of SCT speak of the vulnerability of the other person in terms of an experience of holding "something of the other's life in my hand" (Løgstrup). Accordingly, salvation is interpreted as "regeneration" (Prenter),

"particular aspects" of Christianity (related to Christology and eschatology).

Jesus is presented as the arch-example of what it means to live thoroughly in immediacy, apparently without feeling a need to protect himself. As such, Jesus was not only teaching the ethical demand, but he lived what he taught. Moreover, as Løgstrup argued in *The Ethical Demand*, Jesus was preaching the unconditional forgiveness of sin to his contemporaries, implicitly claiming to speak out of God's generosity.

Gustaf Wingren (1910 – 2000) First article theologians

From 1951, professor in systematisk theology at Lunds Universitet, Sweden Minister in Swedish church.

Wingren stresses continuity. Just as no human being in reality can live without the daily "taste" of God, it cannot be Church's mission to do the work of God in creation, "The proper view of the positive relationship between Christ and the Church cannot arise, without the positive relationship between the Church and the world, the Church and humanity."



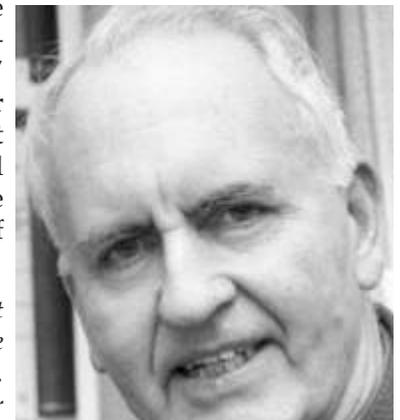
"Without a creative perspective that marks the continuity of God's actions the gospel loses its character of the Gospel: "The whole church is the recapitulation of creation, Return spirit health."

"To live means to receive life from outside oneself. As soon as we are cut off from these external sources, life is

Regin Prenter, Professor at Aarhus University in dogmatics from 1945 to 1972.

"Our whole humanity including our bodily nature and our whole universe of 'things' and 'substances' is 'justified,' united with God our creator in the moment when we are reconciled with him through the universal sacrifice of Jesus Christ."

Note: In the next issue Michel Schelde continues, with "N.F.S. Grundtvig, The mediator of Reformation Theology" with more on the work of the three SCT theologians and their relationships to Grundtvig.



What a Folk High School is NOT

By LOUISE SPENCER

(From: Louise Spencer's 1982 theses

"The Folk School: Education for Social Change"

Chapter 1, Part 2)

In addition to the generally agreed upon criteria characterizing the folk school there are also generally agreed upon "nots." They include:

1. The folk school is not essentially a religious institution. It is religious in the sense that there is a genuine concern for the forces which create and give meaning to life. Grundtvig himself was a Lutheran pastor, descending from a long line of pastors. When a religious movement of the masses — a revival of old Lutheran Christianity — came into opposition with the clergy, he sided with the laymen. His support of these dissidents forced him to resign as an ordained clergyman. His opponents attacked him labeling him a humanist and a pagan. He was a bold advocate of freedom for all points of view and believed that it was this present immediate life that was of concern. In a personal letter Grundtvig once wrote: "All our (Christian) endeavors are wasted unless the response in people to human ~mirth and joy is reawakened; for of what worth is an eternal life, if we do not have a temporal life which we can joyfully anticipate as being eternal ..."¹⁵

Grundtvig's followers came to be known as the "Happy Danes" because of their proclivity for finding joy and happiness in this life — for dancing and singing and playing in a manner considered unseemly by the traditional pietists. My ancestors were among these "Happy Danes." In reading about the Danish and the Danish-American folk schools one is certainly aware of a strong Christian emphasis but as Enok Mortensen says in his book *Schools for Life*, "It (a true folk school) is rooted in a culture and in folkways that antedate Christianity; mythology, music, songs, tales, poetry, dances and all the other ingredients that are indigenous to, and which shape and mold the life of the people."¹⁶

2. Although deeply concerned with the history, lore, language and traditions of a people, a folk school is not nationalistic. Dame Olive Campbell in her book *The Danish Folk School* quotes a folk school principal as distinguishing between "National" and "Nationalistic."¹⁷ The first implies inward development and the latter outward expansion. An international attitude is reached through the national and not nationalistic. The significance of each culture is recognized and their inter-dependence stressed. The first folk school in Denmark was established near the German border and a deliberate effort was made to prevent further cultural incursion by the Germans. However no attempt was made to impose Danish culture outside Denmark. In Poland folk schools have been strong in the Russian sector where concern about cultural domination is strongest. Folk schools stress the importance of cultural identity and the need for dialogue between people from

these diverse cultures. The Danish-American folk schools were a means whereby immigrants and their children could achieve an American identity without losing their Danish roots. The chauvinistic patriotism of World War I was deeply lamented in the Danish-American folk schools — in Iowa a law forbade the use of foreign language in a public gathering — and yet one of the folk school leaders was to write, in Danish, in a church publication: "We must speak strongly of love for America. America is a conglomeration of peoples of all the earth, and that is the marvelous thing about our country, that it does not end in chaos but that it quietly and without strife reaches unity ..."¹⁸

3. The final phrase in the previous quote — the wish that the United States would achieve a unity without strife or chaos — leads to the third "not." Folk schools do not teach philosophies that advocate violence nor do they aim to inspire people to revolution. Folk schools are concerned with basic ideals and values and with the development of awakened, independent, responsible and free individuals. Johannes Knudsen states in his first characteristic of a folk school: "In 'the folk school' every person has a value and a potential. The individual must be made aware of the potential in order that the values may be realized or fulfilled. Paulo Friere calls this "conscientization."¹⁹

This *conscientization*, this awakening and enlivening of individuals may threaten established agencies. Traditional educational institutions are designed to train students to function more effectively within that particular societal framework. Folk schools seek to motivate individuals to function cooperatively for their common welfare with a deep respect for their culture and society. In the first case there is an effort to maintain the status quo; in the other there is an impetus to pursue growth and change. Again I quote Johannes Knudsen:

"In its essence the folk school is not the vehicle of a specific political or social program. If it does not awaken individuals to a strong and continued concern for man and his earth, it has failed in its very being, but it does not promote any one particular stance."²⁰

The early Danish folk schools did not advocate the development of co-operatives. However in the 1870's and 1880's when the Danish farmers were faced with economic ruin due to foreign competition in the grain market they did develop co-operatives and switched from grain to export of dairy products. Holger Begtrup, Hans Lund and Peter Mennicke in their book, *The Folk High Schools of Denmark and the Development of a Farming Community* say:

".... It is universally admitted that the agricultural population could not, but for the work of the People's High Schools, have shown adaptability so great, open-mindedness so intelligent... Corporate life in an atmosphere of liberal education had given practical culture. The new leaders of the peasantry, the organizers of the new and effective co-operation were for the most part High School men."²¹

In addition to these characteristics which have been mostly deliberate and reflective of Grundtvig's philosophy there are at least two others which have evolved —

which are so to speak, inherent in the folk schools' nature. They are an individuality of each school imposed largely by the personality of the Head or Principal, and secondly, a student body composed mainly of a rural, farming, peasant class.

As mentioned previously, Christian VIII had planned to establish folk schools but his death and changes in political climate resulted in folk schools becoming independently established by impassioned individuals committed to Grundtvig's philosophy. Christian Kold used his life's savings and money he solicited to buy land and construct a building, then went out to attract students who paid a meager amount for their spartan room and board. Kold's sister was cook and housekeeper and Kold and a fellow-teacher slept in the loft with the pupils. Reportedly there were no complaints from students: "The daily feast of good words made the pupils forget all thought about food."²²

And so the pattern was established and what Myles Horton called "men on fire" have continued to demonstrate their commitment by investing financially, emotionally and intellectually in institutions which will bear their stamp. In a speech given at a centennial celebration of the Norwegian Folk school and printed in the Norwegian paper "*Syn og Segn*" Sigmund Skard said:

"The school came into being in its own special way. The theory of the school was born in the brain of a Danish poet-dreamer who in his own time wasn't thought to have absolutely sound judgment. The school was revolutionary — in methods, in philosophy in its view of society. It provoked opposition of those who were in positions of serious responsibility. Besides how impractical it was! It deliberately avoided organization — it was individualistic to the point of suicide. In *that* characteristic it hasn't changed with the years. Now as formerly a *folkehogskule* is set up by a single man who intends to run the school his way or not at all."²³

These charismatic leaders leave their mark on the students and the school. My parents did not refer to the numerical year they were at folk school but rather, "the year Holger Strandskov was there," or "when Aage Moller was there."

Grundtvig's followers tended to regard the church as an official arm of the state and consequently there was a reluctance to have the schools owned by a church. Ashland, a folk school in Michigan, was largely supported by the members of a local congregation, but they opted not to own the school and so it was transferred from one Head to another for 99 cents although the buildings were valued at \$3,000.²⁴ The premium placed on freedom and the faith in individuals as against that of institutions reflected in this insistence that folk schools be outside the influence of any organization reveals much about the Grundtvigian distrust of authority based outside the individual.

This distrust of institutions was balanced by a firm belief in the common man. Grundtvig saw his schools to be schools for all the people. He firmly believed that the folk school experience would be as essential to those entering any field of public service as for the general citizen-

ry. There would be no duplication of the curriculum of the Latin school and in the folk school setting these future public servants could learn their language and their culture together with their peers from the larger population of manual laborers and both would be enriched.

"Therefore, even if there were no need in the land for a royal Danish folk high school for the general population, the need would still exist, especially for those whose education right from the elementary level has been planned to meet the course requirements of the Latin school. For if the performance of those students in their future work as public servants or professional men is to be truly beneficial, they must be able to think and speak in Danish and to love and know their country and its fundamental laws as well as the best among their peers. However, this will not happen unless they, through the folk high school, are given the opportunity to enter into living contact and personal interaction with a number of students of approximately the same age. True, these students know no language other than Danish, but through experience they have acquired a far different kind of knowledge than that which can be found in any textbook, certainly not in those prescribed for use in the Latin school. I am speaking of their personal familiarity with greater or smaller parts of the country, the people and the daily life of its citizens."²⁵....

Despite Grundtvig's intention the student body at folk schools has remained largely rural. Efforts to establish urban folk schools have not been encouraging. As a matter of fact, as Dame Olive Campbell reported in 1928, the sophisticated, educated Copenhagener is off-hand and a bit disdainful of the folk schools. She quotes these responses to queries about the folk schools from people in Copenhagen:

"Folk schools? Oh. yes. They are for the peasants."
"Very well for the peasants, but of course superficial. They are apt to make the peasant think he knows everything."²⁶

My own experience was with the peasant's disdain of those from Copenhagen. In a book of Danish children's poetry a poem dealing with confirmation is illustrated with a boy wearing a top hat, smoking a cigar and swaggering with a cane. In response to my questioning, my father scornfully explained that in some places in Denmark, especially Copenhagen, people only went to church at Christmas and Easter and that confirmation was mainly an occasion for a drinking party. Also when a Danish author was scheduled to speak locally my enthusiasm was dampened when I was told that he wasn't really one of us — he was from Copenhagen.

In spite of Grundtvig's firm commitment to have his schools serve all young people, in practice they found their pupils among the laborers and have continued to serve mainly a rural people. The most successful folk schools in the United States have been in the rural Midwest and Appalachian regions.

Having made this attempt to describe and define a folk school I must conclude, that as with most definitions, something is lacking. The definition does not convey what attendance at folk school has meant to those who attended.

Again I quote from the letter written by my maternal grandmother: "You will never know how dear Vallekilde has become to me in the time I have been here. I'm sure America hasn't become that dear to you We are living a rich cultural and religious life here at Vallekilde. E. Trier who is the president is wonderful in explaining so many things for us..... (After lunch) Trier has a lecture and that's the best hour of the day! In his lectures he started with creation and emphasized how much we have to thank God for and that we are created in His image. How important a Christian home is. Nothing in the world influences children more than a good Christian mother. And he says so many things which mean so much to me that I hadn't thought of before. May God help me to never forget all the good things I have heard here at Vallekilde."

And surely, from somewhere, she who had left home at the age of 7 to work as a goose girl, acquired and transmitted beliefs, commitments and joys which are trickling into the fourth generation. Wright Morris, in his book *Plains Songs for Female Voices*, speaks of the high price that was paid in settling the American west. His character Cora who is situated in the same part of Nebraska where my grandparents homesteaded and at about the same time protects herself from the awareness of the desperate difficulties by sublimating or denying passions and emotions. My grandmother, after having borne and raised six children in a dugout and sod house in western Nebraska, insisted on a move to eastern Nebraska where the family could join a community of fellow Danes and find the community and fellowship which she so sorely missed. The emotional poverty which Wright Morris calls the heritage of the plains was not to be our heritage. Instead we were to inherit the joy of living, a belief in the inherent goodness of man, and a sense of our worth and value.

Throughout years filled with drought, depression and grasshoppers, on Sunday afternoon after the picnic, the ball game, the water fight, or whatever other foolish diversion the joy of being alive and together might have fostered, Grundtvig's songs of joy and hope rose, if not melodically at least passionately.

Having given the guidelines for a folk school and having spoken highly of its benefits, there are three men who have worked to establish such schools. Each of them found a need and in trying to find answers to the need came upon the "folk school approach" independently. Grundtvig founded the folk school. Myles Horton discovered the folk schools during his search for a means to aid his Appalachian neighbors. Paulo Freire, a century after Grundtvig, a half a world away, came to use almost the same terminology as that used by Grundtvig although there is no evidence, nor is it likely, that he was familiar with this obscure Danish poet.

(The author's chapter on Paulo Freire's work will be published next month.)

FOOTNOTES:

- 15 Mortensen, Enok. *Schools for Life: A Danish American Experiment in Adult Education* Askov, MN: American Pub. Society, 1977, p. 18.

- 16 Ibid, p. 20.
 17 Campbell, Olive. *The Danish Folk School*. New York: Macmillan Co. 1928, p. 164.
 18 Mortensen. *Schools for Life*. p. 70.
 19 Knudsen, "The Folk School." p. 10.
 20 Ibid, p. 10.
 21 Begtrup, Lund, Manniche. *Folk High Schools*, p.7.
 22 Begtrup. *Danish People's High School*, p. 101.
 23 Skarol, Sigmund, "The Norwegian People's Colleges for One Hundred Years." *Syn og Segn*, No. 7 (1964).
 24 Mortensen. *Schools for Life*, p. 41.
 25 Knudsen, Johannes, editor. *N.F.S. Grundtvig: Selected Writings*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976, p. 155.
 26 Campbell, *Danish Folk School*, p. 2.

Remembering

By KARMA LARSEN



The poem "Remembering" refers to folk schools. Karma Larsen's parents were very involved with the folk school in Nysted, Nebraska.

the phone calls come to me suddenly
 faltering voices, hesitant
 is this Milly's daughter?
 my father answered, best as he could
 now suddenly me
 awkward and abrupt on the phone
 a writer, not speaker, of words

i want to invite them to her big, wooden table
 to pull from the counter the freshly baked pie
 or bread, or rolls
 to seat them, laugh with them.
 someday I'll know the words to speak
 the meal to prepare
 the inflection they want to hear
 the right answer
 the farm, the church, the folk school, they ask
 what will happen?

i take the filament they've thrown out in hope
 this tenuous connection by phone, by email
 hold firm to it, tighten it
 let them know someone is there
 like them, I want to call my mom
 sit at her table, laugh
 i would tell her of their sweet voices
 and over the sink filled with green beans
 or strawberries
 we would remember.

klarsen1@unl.edu

Milly Sorensen, 1922-2004

By KARMA LARSEN

*The night after she died
the old house moaned.
It groaned and wailed in the wind
far into the night.
Inside, sheltered by a thousand tiny kindnesses
we tried to sleep
but she was everywhere.
Small bundles in every room
letters, notes, gifts, bundled in groups with rubber bands.
The rubberbands, like her, not as strong as they once were.
Her patience and care evident in the way
they were gathered, marked in her beautiful handwriting:
Church, Emails, Articles to Keep, Garden.
Old, beatup cookie tins with labels and notes
who they were to go to, what was inside.
The chasm opened before us,
wider at every step.
Until we asked ourselves what she would want us to do
and then everything became clear and simple again:
Trust in your Father. Bibles, verses, books and notes everywhere.
Love and care for all you've been given...
Husband. Not until his last radiation, and not even that day of
celebration, but the day after, did she seek help.
Children. Photos, old letters, packets with names,
gifts, plans, reservations, into the years ahead.
Grandchildren. Quilts, scrapbooks, scribbles all bundled,
stored, carefully marked.
Family. Addresses, cards, gifts wrapped and unwrapped.
Church and community. On the table were notes for another's
funeral. The salad she, of the broken elbow and the surgery,
would bring.
All of us together are like one of her carefully marked packages,
fully known and understood, bound together.
The path she walked opens before us.
Able to see that only, we follow.*

klarsen@unl.edu

Danebod Family Camp

July 2017

By CARLA MORTENSEN

There is much to celebrate in Tyler this year and the July campers made the most of these opportunities. First, we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the family camps, first called "Rec Camps." Enok Mortensen had worked hard to revitalize the Folk School and invited recreation leaders to a training institute in the late '40s. Their feedback on the pro-

Page 8

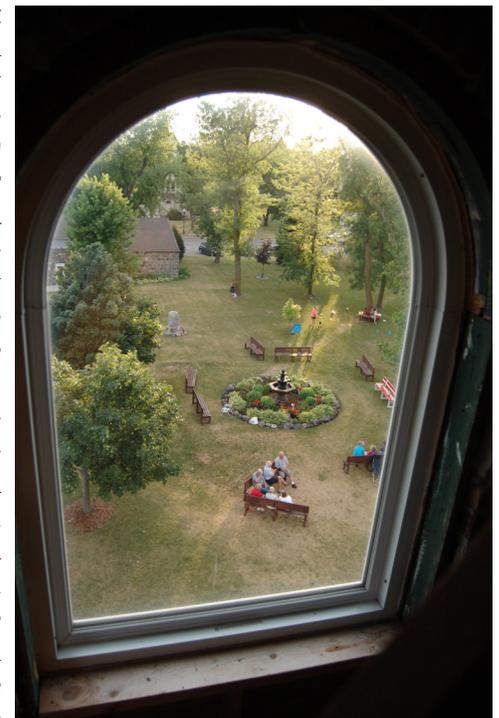


gramming was that they only wished they could bring their families. And so the camps began and flourished, adding a second in 1970 and a third in 1980. Our July song sheet included songs written over the 70 years by creative lyricists among the campers during those 70 years.

We saw pictures and read history of the devastating fire that destroyed the original wooden folk school built

in 1888. We sang the translated cantata written by Kristian Ostergaard and Thorvald Knudsen that was sung at the dedication of the new brick building a mere 9 months after the fire. Erik Hansen, a Tyler native now living in Vermont, did the translation. After the celebratory cantata, we had an old fashioned ice cream social and games on the lawn as well as tours to the tower where we can see southwestern Minnesota at its greenest and finest.

All the other usual things that make camp "camp": singing, dancing, discussion, crafts, and, of course, great eating took up the remainder of our wonderful week at Danebod.



morte007@umn.edu

Photographs by Carla Mortensen

Facebook (FB) Profile

By CARLA MORTENSEN



OK, we can all admit it. We feel a small sense of pride when Facebook compliments us on our Mensa qualities when we see number patterns and know which equation will follow $6 \times 3 = 18$. I feel pride when I can correctly identify the great paintings by the masters.

Facebook identifies me as “tough, sexy and red” based on my activities on FB. It must be my scintillating responses to clever posts; usually “Like”, “Wow” or “LOL.” I have even made a few political statements this fall that would apparently suggest that I am “brilliant, feisty, and destined to be a social worker due to my tendency to seek consensus.” [Carla is a retired independent clinical social worker.]

When I play *Bejeweled Blitz*, my addictive pastime, I am routinely praised for my speed and dexterity with the audio compliments “excellent,” “outstanding,” and “unbelievable.” Pretty soon I have a big head, in spite of my parents’ frequent admonishments to refrain from getting “too big for your britches. I get haughty when I win 500,000 coins, rather than my normal 1000 for merely checking in.

I was told that my word for this year is “friendship” and FB defined me as a “...warrior with a childlike soul. You laugh and cry with the same intensity. You are always there for friends and family. You stand up for them, support them, and care about them. You are guided by emotions and so can feel everyone’s pain. You believe in togetherness and always try to bring everyone closer. You are a person people can lean on in times of despair and you never let anyone down.”

The other day while playing *Bejeweled*, a pop up message appeared, “Would you like to invite Dorothy Mortensen to play *Bejeweled*?” I was able to pause and consider the question. This fall I have learned restraint in my quest to refrain from making snarky comments in response to messages that Obama will go down as the worst president in history. After all, I would not want to get identified as a flake or firebrand. So I reconsidered the question. Would I want to invite Dorothy to play? Possibly. It would indeed thrill me if she accepted my invitation, as she died in August of 2014.

So, what happens to our Facebook personality when we die? I have been told by people who are younger than me, that FB is for older people. We eventually die. I imagine my future on FB to note, based on my activity, “you are a hesitant careful angel with a heavenly soul. You tend to keep your opinions to yourself lest you get saddled with the label, ‘hyperactive.’ Your friends consider you wise and always ready to ponder infinity.”

My Grundtvigian forbears taught that life is what we make it here on earth. So, OK. Next time when the popup asks, I am going to take the plunge and press the “yes” button and risk another life of fun and games with Dorothy.

morte007@umn.edu

Announcing a New Book: *Human Comes First*

September 8, 2017 was the 234th birthday of N.F.S. Grundtvig — and we have much to celebrate, because without doubt more people in the world know about Grundtvig’s contributions to theology, education, literature, politics, and hymn-writing than ever before in history! And many more will know about him in the future because his work is becoming more accessible to people than ever before in history!

The Grundtvig Study Centre at Aarhus University was established in 2009 to continue the work of the Centre for Grundtvig Studies. The Study Centre is focused on the following:

1. An annotated digital edition of Grundtvig’s writings
2. Research in areas of specific interest to Grundtvig:
 - Theology and the church
 - Democracy and the concept of *folkelighed* (the people’s character)
 - Educational ideas and concept of *folkoplysning* (Popular education/enlightenment)
3. Knowledge exchange, teaching and communication.*

Familiarizing modern readers with Grundtvig is quite a challenge, even if they speak and write Danish. Grundtvig’s work includes 1475 known texts of approximately 35,000 pages. Sentences are between 100-150 words, and his syntax, use of language and references can be very challenging! Nevertheless the Grundtvig Study Centre and Aarhus University Press have made incredible achievements toward completing a ground-breaking 5-volume series of Grundtvig’s works translated into English. In 2011 Grundtvig’s educational ideas were published in *The School for Life*. In 2015 (*Living Wellsprings*), his hymns, songs, and poems were published.

Both have received excellent reviews, such as: “The world and scholarship have been done a great service

with this edition of Grundtvig's works." *Linda Woodhead, Professor in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion, Lancaster University*

"Scholars and general readers alike will find these translations to be not only invaluable sources for the study of the work of an influential modern genius, but also a very pleasurable reading experience, one that is inspiring and full of surprising insights." *Mark Bradshaw Busbee, Department of English Chair, Samford University, Alabama*

Contributions to the cost of these volumes have come from Danish and American foundations and private persons, a list of whom appears in each book. Volume 3 is on the way – *Human Comes First. The Christian Theology of N.F.S. Grundtvig* — is due for publication in early 2018. If you wish to make a contribution to this exciting new book of Grundtvig's translations, contact Joy Ibsen by October 5th.

Its content is as follows:

1. "The Christian Church and the People's Culture" (1825-56) 12 essays and articles, including Grundtvig's reflections on his trial for libel.

2. "Basic Christian Teachings" (1855-61) 15 commentaries on the Christian faith, including one on "The Lord's Prayer" and another on "Faith, Hope, and Love."

3. "Sermons for the Church Year" (1837-55) 14 sermons, including the 3 Christian Festivals, the last 3 sermons before his death, and a sermon praising Mary and Joseph for dragging the 12-year-old Jesus home from the Temple, where they would have fed him with learning, but not with life!

4. "Letters and Speeches" (1822-63) including seven letters, two of which are from England, where Grundtvig fumes over being locked out of morning worship at St. Paul's Cathedral by a policeman for coming late to the service! Also his two eulogies beside the coffins of his late wives.

As with the previous volumes, the manuscripts have been translated and edited by Edward Broadbridge, with introductions by leading Grundtvig scholars, including Professor Niels Henrik Gregersen.

Two more volumes are scheduled for the coming years:

- *The Common Good. N.F.S. Grundtvig as Politician and Contemporary Historian*

- *The Advance of Learning. N.F.S. Grundtvig's Philosophical Writings*

Once all 5 volumes have been published it is expected that there will be an upsurge in Grundtvig studies as university libraries and departments offer the works to professors and students alike.

They will receive international promotion from the Grundtvig Centre in Denmark and its cultural affiliates around the world. Indeed, a Chinese version of Grundtvig's theology is in the pipeline!

* "Foreword," *The School for Life, N.F.S. Grundtvig on Education for the People*
p. 7-8

Page 10

Fusion of People on the Move

By HANNA BROADBRIDGE

At the moment the *BBC World* is showing a TV series on the History of Africa as seen through the eyes of and



explained by local Africans. Here it becomes clear to us that we are all and have always been, in some sense, migrants. The human race has moved up though Africa and spread out over what is today Asia and Australia. Some also walked to Europe and settled there. How people reached the North and South America is still up for discussion. When we

talk about 'discovery' of the Americas by Christopher Columbus, we are probably not using the right word or even talking about the right person.

What we can see from this ancient pattern is that people have always wanted to seek better opportunities and challenges, to improve their own and their children's future. Land has always been at the center of people's dreams. When empty land was discovered in the Americas and to some extent also in southern Africa and Australia, it was enticing and had an enormous pull on people to go there. The social and religious control in the old motherland often left few possibilities for improving one's status and quality of life. Danes left home to seek their fortune abroad throughout the 19th century, while at the same time Germans and Poles entered the country and took upon themselves the work that the Danes did not want to do, especially working with potatoes and sugar beets. Earlier, Dutch people had come to Denmark, more precisely to Amager near Copenhagen, where they became market gardeners.

In Denmark we have even provided a refuge of acceptance and peace for two groups of people who had religious problems in their homelands: In the 17th century French Huguenot — Protestants — came to Denmark and were given the freedom of the city of Fredericia to live there. They were mainly artisans. The other group were the German Herrnhuts or Moravians — also Protestants — who came to Denmark in the 18th century and settled in Christiansfeld, where their reputation for making the world's best honey cakes still brings many tourists to the town which even has been given the Unesco World Heritage accolade.

Over the years all these peoples have integrated, assimilated and fused into what is now Denmark. So we have three words: *migrants*, — people who are on the move to somewhere; *immigrants* who move into a new country, and *emigrants* — people who move out of a country. All three words create their own problems and tensions, de-

pending on where you are, and what your attitude is. If we, the natives of Denmark, can see the benefits of opening our doors to the newcomers, then they are welcomed and cared for. If, on the other hand, we see these people as a threat to our society and unsettling for our values, we seem to treat them with ambivalence, if not disdain.

We are involved in a serious discussion here in Europe about whether we all have a right to live in a country and to work and earn an income here so that we can look after and care for ourselves and our families on the outcome of our efforts. Can we expect the newcomers to merge and 'fuse' so fully that they accept our culture, our religion, our values or can they continue to live within their own established set of values, culture and religion? This has led to some kind of identity crisis for Europeans, followed by the conflicting ideas of the understanding and interpretation of human rights, and of the Christian concept of "helping thy neighbour."

Today the world is on the move, not least by being tempted and encouraged by the media, digital and social, to look for a better life, sometimes even to gamble and risk everything, including money and life, sometimes to do it to help the family, thus fulfilling the duty of a good son or daughter, at their own expense.

At the moment of writing it is estimated that Italy alone will receive, this year, about 200,000 asylum seekers, risking their lives in the Mediterranean sea in most unseaworthy boats after fleeing either war, persecution or hopelessness, and driven by strong survival instincts, energy and dreams.

These moves seem unstoppable and uncontrollable unless we all are prepared to readjust our understanding of common responsibility for one another and to reach a sharing and shared level of what the world has to offer the peoples in it in access to education and training, opportunities, equality, and respect. Are we ready to become part of a world fused into a new coherence, or do we stand firm on our established culture, values and identities?

Peace and security will not gain the much needed foothold until a balance of the good things in the world has been reached for all to share in and experiencing mutual respect, acceptance, equity and equality.

As Grundtvig put it as early as in 1820: " In this lies our wealth, on this tenet we draw

That few are too rich and still fewer too poor."

hanna@broadbridge.dk

Also from Hanna: Katja Bie, a Danish textile artist, has produced silk ties and long silk scarves with patterns made from the handwriting of Grundtvig's manuscripts for "Lovely is the Midnight Sky" [*Dejlig Er Den Himmel Blå*] and extracts from his last sermon and his last poem. The articles are beautiful and come in two colors for the scarves, blue and red-brown. The tie is dark blue. We shall bring some to the Chicago conference of Danish American Heritage Society in October 2017.

Gifts to Church and Life

In Memory of —

Richard (Dick) Kramme, \$10 from Carol Christiansen

Miriam Rodholm Showalter, \$25 from Janet Jensen

Harald and Margaret Madsen, \$25 from Jerry and

Ricke Bly

Ardis Petersen, \$30 from Hans Clausen

Supporting Subscribers (\$21-\$50)

Poul and Susanna Bertelsen

Jane Scaro

Svend and Maren Petersen

Jim Mason

Bill and Connie Smith

Don Borling

Al and Sue Nielsen

Ingrid Holm

Jerry and Ricke Bly

Sandra Laursen

Margaret Sorensen

Gyritha Blinkilde

Carol Christiansen

Edmund Clausen

Andres Albertsen

John Rasmussen

Sustaining Subscribers

Dagmar Muthamia

Leif Nielsen

Susan Jacobsen

Thank you for your support!

A Way to Help People Affected by Hurricanes:

Lutheran Disaster Response, P O Box 1809

Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

Write "Hurricane Response -- U.S."

on your check memo line.

Tel: 800-638-3522 or online.



Thunderstorm at Danebod, July 2017

Post Script

On August 21, a grand event, a solar eclipse crossed United States, from the Pacific to the Atlantic, the first total solar eclipse to sweep the country in about a century! During a solar eclipse (as seen from the planet earth) the moon passes between the sun and earth, and partially blocks the sun. This can happen only at the time of a new moon when the sun and the moon are in conjunction, as seen from earth, an alignment called syzygy. During a total eclipse, the sun is fully obscured by the moon. The moon's orbit is elliptical and the distance between the moon and the earth varies by about 6% which causes the moon's apparent size to vary with its distance from the earth. The effect of this leads to the difference between total and partial eclipses.

Total solar eclipses are rare although they occur somewhere on earth every 18 months on average. A total eclipse lasts for a maximum of a few minutes at any location, because the Moon's *umbra* (the term for the darkest part of the moon's shadow) moves eastward fast — over 1700 km/h!

People who are really committed to watching solar eclipses and will travel almost anywhere to see one are called "umbraphiles" — According to "The New Yorker" magazine there are three people who claim to have seen the most solar eclipses (33), all men from New York state. One of them, Glenn Schneider, uses the word "mesmerized" as an understatement to describe how he felt when he first saw an eclipse at the age of 14. It is the right word!

This was the first opportunity I had to really look at the eclipse with the proper glasses (furnished by my grandsons from the local library) and it was AMAZING! The eclipse we saw from Lisle, IL was about 2/3 total eclipse and there was considerable cloud coverage, but through the glasses we could watch it. I was excited from the moment I first saw it begin! WOW! While it was cloudy the atmosphere became less bright, but it was not dark. My excitement was not the kind you experience when your basketball team makes a winning basket against your main rival in the last 2 two seconds of the game — rather it is the excitement of simply being alive and part of a fantastic universe. Mesmerizing! To use an overused but an accurate word, it was totally AWESOME. For me it restored a sense of awesomeness and wonder about our world.

My daughter Thea reported a more intense atmospheric response around her home in North Carolina — "It was weird — a darker, eerie sky, the sound of thousands of crickets chirping." In Nashville, TN animal keeper Jenna Wolczyk described the crowds' response to the eclipse as "an excited roar ... a joyous sigh," but it was unclear how much the crowds (6000 people) excited the animals and how much was due to the eclipse. Not having watches, the giraffes at the zoo in Nashville, TN galloped around crazily when the sun reappeared, as they often do at twilight, their playtime. The rhinoceros became

agitated; the flamingoes gathered together, but was it for safety or because they thought it was time to go inside for the evening? The cows in a pasture in a small farm in South Carolina (no crowd) became agitated and seemed to head for the barn during the eclipse.

I think animals know, as we do, when something bigger than earth itself occurs. It is a Job experience — "*But now my eye sees Thee.*" (Job 42, V5) Seeing the eclipse can be a moment of truth, similar to what the astronauts experienced when they first saw the earth from the moon.

When we experience a solar eclipse the weird and silly antics of humanity quickly vaporize and disappear. In spite of our accomplishments, frailties, silliness's, and inadequate efforts to overcome spiritual immaturity, the intense beauty and wonder of the workings of the cosmos intervenes and becomes part of us. Somehow, looking at the sun hiding is like looking at the earth, becoming more aware of the great mystery of life on earth. It gives a fresh understanding of our place in the universe. Each of us is infinitesimally small, but incredibly important. Why else would we be here?

In nature, we are given God's gift of a renewed dedication to loving life, honoring mother earth, cherishing the sun and our good reliable friend, the moon. The next total solar eclipse is April 8, 2024. I plan to have a front row seat. My grandsons will be almost grown, but hopefully I will be able to secure the needed dark glasses — and hopefully, our beautiful earth will still be intact so we can play 'hide and seek' with our beloved sun.

ji

If you missed or wish to review the solar eclipse, watch the "Eclipse Megamovie" on the internet. It was prepared by Google which assembled 35,000 images of the event and assembled them into a nearly 3-minute movie of the hour and a half eclipse. See: www.cnet.com/news/googles-solar-eclipse-megamovie.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_eclipse#cite_note-31

<http://www.care2.com/causes/how-did-the-total-solar-eclipse-affect-animals.html>

"Dept. of Superlatives TOTALLY," Jason Kersten. *The New Yorker*, August 28, 2017.