

Abstract

The topic of this article-based thesis in the history of Christianity is the development of the Haugian movement in the period 1814–1842, with a main focus on the movement in Norway and a case study of an attempted expansion into Sweden. The thesis highlights how the trial against Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824) served as a catalyst for the movement's further development, through constraints and opportunities for resumption of revival activities. The study is delimited to the examination of assembly practices within the movement, and the theoretical perspective is institutionalization. The development of assembly practices after the trial is studied as an informal process of institutionalization.

The thesis demonstrates how the trial against Hauge halted the conflict-generating activities within the movement and became a driving force in the institutionalization of assembly practices both in Norway and Sweden. In Norway, Haugians sought to establish assembly practices that largely met legal requirements; in Sweden, Haugian preachers approached sympathetic priests who allowed their gatherings. Meanwhile, accusations of sectarianism and enthusiasm, from which Hauge had been acquitted, continued to influence the movement's development. For example, the Haugians' desire to appear orthodox influenced the publication of assembly literature and resulted in self-imposed restrictions on lay preaching.

Hauge played an active role in the movement's activities after the trial, both as a driving force and as a restrainer. His clear guidelines had an institutionalizing effect, as beliefs and practices associated with Haugian gatherings became more streamlined and adapted to legal regulations. He also played a central role in the movement's development after his death through his final will, institutionalizing an informal organization of elders as a control structure within the movement. Hauge's active role was also pivotal in the movement's attempted expansion into Sweden; on the one hand propagating and coordinating it, on the other curbing potential collaboration.

Adaptations of assembly practices were legitimated in various ways. Internally, it was sometimes argued that the adjustments were in fact improvements; externally, the Haugians emphasized the orthodox and legal nature of their practices. The institutionalization of the movement after the trial partly represented a break with the early movement's assembly practices. However, the continuation of key elements under Hauge's leadership also instilled a strong conviction among Haugians that the revival carried on.