

Church in Change

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
from 2000 to 2003

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PREFACE

This book reports the activities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland during the period 2000–2003. The beginning of the new millennium witnessed numerous changes both in the operating environment of the Church and within the Church itself. There was more internal migration in our country than ever before, and the number of foreigners in Finland increased. New legislation on freedom of religion came into force. Numerous reforms were implemented in the Church, such as those in the form of service and in the *Church Handbook I–III*.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is part of a worldwide Church, which, ever since the days of the Apostles, has borne witness to the Holy Trinity and served its neighbours. The message of the Church is unchanging, yet the Church needs reforms. As a visible organisation the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and all it accomplishes, its administration and finances, can be reviewed like those of any human organisation whatsoever. The four-year report scrutinises the nature of the operating environment and how the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has fulfilled its mission.

This book was written by Dr. *Kimmo Kääriäinen*, Director of the Church Research Institute, and by Dr. *Maarit Hytönen*, Dr. *Kati Niemelä* and *Kari Salonen*, M.Th. The book is based on the four-year report of the Church for the period 2000–2003, published in Finnish and in Swedish. Comparable reports have been published since 1967.

The book is largely based on statistical data compiled from the parishes. The Church Council has collected basic information from each parish on a yearly basis regarding changes in the population, activities and finance. In addition to these data the Church Research Institute has elicited information on various aspects of the work from parishes and unions of parishes. A survey entitled *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003* was carried out to elicit information on the religiosity of the entire adult population of Finland, their

relationship to the Church and participation in parish activities (N = 1,009). Likewise the survey *Monitor 2004* was carried out on attitudes and the accompanying *Church Monitor* (N = 2,569). The conceptions of the parish workers and elected officials have been ascertained through questionnaires made by the Church Research Institute for these groups. In addition to this the various units of the Church Council have provided information on matters pertaining to their respective fields. In some chapters use has been made of data contained in the Church for the People Internet publication (http://www.evl.fi/english/church_for_the_people).

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1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Finland is a country with both eastern and western influences. Christian influences from both East and West reached Finland a thousand years ago. Missionary efforts on the part of the Western church were, however, stronger, and by the beginning of the 14th century most of Finland was under the Roman Catholic Church and Swedish rule. The Catholic Church brought European civilisation to Finland. It united dispersed tribes into a single nation and provided an advanced system of administration. The Church ministered to the destitute and infirm by maintaining houses for the poor and hospitals. It fostered learning and the arts. Eighty stone churches, their frescoes, wood carvings, sacred relics, altar cloths and vestments remind us of the high standard of both Finnish and imported art. The Church was responsible for higher learning and for teaching the common people as well. By the end of the Middle Ages the Finns had learned to live with the Church and its sacraments. The Bishop of Turku was the most powerful man in medieval Finland. He also represented the Finns at the Royal Council of Sweden. Most of the 164 Finns registered at medieval universities embarked on their studies with the support of the cathedral chapter.

The Reformation

The Protestant reformation reached Sweden and Finland in the 1520s. Its strength derived not from the people or the clergy but from the fact that it was instituted by royal decree. One aspect of Luther's doctrine especially interested King *Gustavus Vasa*: it entitled him to break the secular power of the Church and transfer its income and property to the state.

Sweden accepted the *Confession of Augsburg* at Uppsala in 1593. Lutheranism became the state religion. It guaranteed the unity of the realm and tolerated no deviation. The Reformation severed all ties with Rome. The supremacy of the Pope was

replaced by that of the King of Sweden, who stripped the Church of its income and property. *Mikael Agricola*, the first Lutheran Bishop of Finland, translated the New Testament into Finnish. Divine services gradually became more Lutheran and were conducted in the vernacular. The monasteries were closed, and priests allowed to marry.

In the period of Lutheran orthodoxy in the 17th and early 18th centuries the Church again had a similar cultural monopoly to that of the Middle Ages. It preached loyalty to the state, instilled a strong sense of Christian morality in the people and taught the Finns to read.

Russia ended Swedish rule over Finland by conquering Finland in the beginning of the 19th century. Finland became a Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire in 1809. Although the ruler was now the Orthodox Tsar rather than a Lutheran king, the Lutheran Church remained the state church of Finland. The *Ecclesiastical Act* of 1869 loosened the bonds between church and state and increased the independence of the Church. The supreme decision-making body of the Church, the Synod, was founded.

Pietism

Pietism, with its emphasis on individual conversion and personal spirituality, and its appeal to the emotions, gained a foothold at the beginning of the 18th century. From this background at the beginning of the 19th century emerged the traditional revivalist movements. These were Pietism, Evangelism and Laestadianism. They remained typical features of Finnish religious life.

Arising as they did during the first half of the 19th century, these movements were opposed by both the state and the clergy. It was feared that they would cause political unrest and arouse Russian suspicions. The leading clergy also suspected them of opposing the established Church and spreading heresy. They were denied the right of assembly and their leaders' movements were restricted.

Freedom of religion

Until the end of the 19th century every Finn had to belong to either the Lutheran or the Orthodox Church. It was not until the *Nonconformity Act* of 1889 was passed that the position of other Protestant churches was made official and membership of them permitted. The Baptists and the Methodists were the first religious denominations to gain official recognition.

Freedom of religion was guaranteed in 1923. The *Freedom of Religion Act* granted citizens the right to found religious denominations freely and belong to them, or to remain entirely without religious affiliation. The state no longer affirmed the Lutheran faith, thereby assuming a neutral attitude to religion. The rights and duties of citizens do not depend on the religious denomination to which they belong or whether they belong to any religious community at all.

The Church in independent Finland

In 1917 Russia plunged into the chaos of the Revolution: Finland seized the opportunity on December 6, 1917, and Parliament approved the declaration of independence. Shortly after the declaration, civil war broke out in Finland. It was a war between the Government forces, known as the Whites, and extremist left-wing forces known as the Red Guard, inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution. The Reds wanted to create a socialist Finland, possibly in union with emerging Soviet Russia. Virtually the entire clergy supported bourgeois Finland, the Whites.

Relations between the Church leadership and the organised working class remained distant, while the victors began to see the Church as the bastion of the legal order, the national tradition and Western culture. It was expected to foster moral citizens, loyal to the state.

The Winter War against the Soviet Union (1939–1940) was characterised as a struggle in defence of "home, faith and fatherland". The Church was a source of support and unity during this struggle. The will to defend one's country had religious

overtones. The administrative and financial independence of the Church increased during the war with the establishment of the Church Central Fund (1941) and the Ecclesiastical Board (1944). Links with the labour movement also improved during the Second World War.

The Church took on new tasks after the war, for example family counselling. Church social work (diaconia) expanded rapidly, as did youth work.

In independent Finland the state has taken over some of the functions that formerly belonged to the Church. Nevertheless, the Evangelical Lutheran and Orthodox Churches still retain duties that could in principle be performed by either the state or local government.

In the mid-sixties Finnish culture was shaken by migration from rural to urban areas, emigration, growing influence from abroad, the pluralistic image of the world conveyed by television and the universal crisis of authority. The Church, too, was branded undemocratic and conservative. From the 1970s onwards discussion of ethical issues and interest in religion have been on the increase.

In the post-war period secularisation has gained ground in all the Nordic countries. The position of religion at the centre of society's set of values has weakened and many areas of life have adopted their own morality and set of values with only tenuous links with religion and the Church.

The economic situation in Finland has shown mainly clear improvement in the post-war period except at the beginning of the 1990s, when the country was hit by an unusually severe recession. This created a divide between the poor and the wealthy. It fell to the Church to plug many of the gaps left open by the social welfare system. More people sought help through the Church's network of diaconal provision; an increasing proportion of those in need of assistance were of working age. The parishes continued to provide meals for the unemployed, and more food banks were introduced.

The economic uncertainty and the Church's contribution in these circumstances led to increasingly positive attitudes towards the Church. There was a decline in the number of those leaving the Church, and an increase in the number of new members joining.

Since 1995 Finland has been a member of the European Union.

2. DIRECTIONS OF CHANGE IN FINNISH SOCIETY

In February 2000 *Tarja Halonen* was elected President of Finland. A Social Democrat, she had served as foreign minister. She is the first female President of Finland. *Esko Aho*, who went through to the second round in the election process took 48.4% of the votes while Tarja Halonen took 51.6%. President Halonen's popularity grew rapidly and at the end of the period reported the majority of Finns judged her to have acquitted herself well of her tasks.

At the beginning of March 2000 the new *Constitution of Finland* came into force. Information dissemination was taken care of by sending the Constitution to every home. It was accompanied by a brochure describing its content in easily understandable terms.

At the beginning of 2002 Finland adopted the common currency, the Euro. Until the end of February the Finnish *markka* retained its validity, but even in mid-January most of the currency in circulation was Euros.

Population changes

During the period covered by the report the population of Finland increased by more than 48,000, and at the end of 2003 amounted to 5,219,732. The share of children under the age of 15 was 18% and of those over 65 it was almost 16%. According to the prediction of Statistics Finland the share of those under 15 is likely to remain unchanged right until the year 2030, but the share of those over 65 will rise in the same period to become one quarter of the population.

The largest five-year age group was those aged 50 to 54, the second largest being those aged 55 to 59. During the period covered by the report there was much discussion as to how these

so-called large age groups were to be kept in good health in working life. The official retirement age is 65 years, but many people retire before this. The aim of the national age programme and the government programme was aimed at postponing retirement for 2–3 years from the present average of 59 years, which would ensure the future sufficiency of pensions and welfare society. The pensions reform due to come into force in 2005 provides financial incentives to continue the working career after the age of 63.

Migration

Migration from one locality to another among Finns was lively. In 2000 those moving from one municipality to another numbered 260,000. Migration between municipalities peaked in 2001 with 282,000 people moving. In 2002 the corresponding figure was 273,000 and in 2003 it was 275,000. Several different factors contributed to these moves, but the predominant one was moving in pursuit of work. This marked trend in migration caused a housing shortage, a rise in the prices of homes and an overloading of public services in the receiving localities. The localities from which population departed were left with different problems, namely diminished taxation revenues and reduction in services.

The dwindling resources of the municipalities also had an effect on the merging of municipalities, with a reduction of six municipalities during the period covered by the report. In 1999 there were altogether 452 local authorities, of which 107 were designated as towns and 345 other municipalities. In 2003 there were altogether 446 local authorities, 111 being designated as towns and the remaining 335 municipalities. A considerable reduction in the number of municipalities has been predicted.

Compared to migration between municipalities, moving within the same municipality doubled. During the period of the report 550,000 people moved within the municipality every year. In 2001 this figure actually reached 577,000.

The number of foreigners in Finland increased fourfold in the 1990s. This increase continued during the period of the report. At

the beginning of this period there were almost 88,000 foreigners in Finland, while at the end of the period there were actually 107,000. At the end of 2003 the number of EU citizens in Finland was less than 19,000.

Table 1. Foreign nationals in Finland 1990-2003. Statistics Finland.

| Main national groups | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2003 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Russians | . | 9,720 | 20,552 | 24,998 |
| Estonians | . | 8,446 | 10,839 | 13,397 |
| Swedes | 6,051 | 7,014 | 7,887 | 8,124 |
| Somalis | 44 | 4,044 | 4,190 | 4,642 |
| Former Yugoslavia and Republic of Yugoslavia | 75 | 2,407 | 3,575 | 4,243 |
| Iraqis | 107 | 1,341 | 3,102 | 3,485 |
| Total | 26,255 | 68,566 | 91,074 | 107,003 |

At the end of the period those having a language other than Finnish or Swedish as their mother tongue numbered 125,000 according to Statistics Finland. The number of those with Russian as their mother tongue increased particularly, amounting at the end of 2003 to 35,000. Despite the increase in immigration the population of Finland was still one of the most homogenous in Europe.

With the arrival of immigrants the religious map of Finland changed more than the membership figures of officially registered religious communities indicate. With the increase in the number of Russians the number of Orthodox believers grew more than the official statistics. In Russia it is not customary to be registered as a member of a church as is the case in Finland, thus many baptised Russians have continued this custom and have not officially joined as members of any religious organisation. The number of Muslims also increased, although many Muslim immigrants have not become members of registered Islamic organisations. The age structure of the foreigners differed clearly from that of the population as a whole. There were many children and people of working age. The unemployment figures for many groups of foreigners were high.

In 2003 those moving away from Finland amounted to 12,000. However, they were greatly outnumbered by those moving into

Finland. Those moving away were predominantly young, linguistically proficient and well educated. Their residence abroad is generally temporary.

Development of the economic situation

During the period of the report the gross national product (GNP) showed an annual increase of 1.1–5.1%. Inflation fell throughout the entire period of the report. In 2000 the inflation rate was 3.4%, in 2003 it was a mere 0.9%. The interest rate fell to a record low. While in 2000 the three-month Euribor index was still 4.5%, by 2003 it had fallen to 2.5%.

Growth in the difference between incomes halted in the period covered by the report. For the six years 1995–2000 there was a continuous growth in differences in incomes, largely attributable to an increase in revenues from unearned income. Taken internationally the differences in income in Finland were smaller compared to many other industrialised countries. In Finland the incomes of the top fifth were 3.6 times those of the bottom fifth of the population in 2002. This ratio is among the smallest in Europe.

Changes in working life

Unemployment decreased only slightly during the period covered by the report. According to Statistics Finland the unemployment rate at the beginning of the period was approximately 10%, and at the end of it 9%. At the end of 2003 the unemployment rate was highest in the far north of Finland, at 16% in Lapland and lowest in southern Finland at approximately 7%. Youth unemployment and long-term unemployment give particular cause for concern. Youth unemployment (15 to 24 year-olds) fell during the period of the report, but in 2003 was still 22%. According to a labour survey by Statistics Finland the long-term (over one year) unemployment rate was over 23% in 2003. The employment rate of those aged 15 to 64 remained the same. In 2003 it was calculated at 67.3%.

Development of the information society

The development in electronic communication devices had a marked affect on the lives of Finnish people during the period covered by the report. Electronic mail and the Internet became more widespread and diminished the significance of geographical distance. More and more Finns were accessible at any time in any place due to mobile phones. It became more common to send text messages using mobile phones. This was particularly popular among young people: almost all those aged 15 to 29 had sent text messages.

In 2003 some 2.4 million, i.e. 61% of Finns aged 15 to 74 had an e-mail address of their own. There were 2.6 million Internet users. Use of the Internet was most common among those aged 15 to 19: 93% of women and all men used the Internet. In the age group 20 to 29 nine tenths used the Internet. Among those over 50 using the Internet was much less common: only half of those aged 50 to 59 and only 18% of those over 60 used the Internet.

The technology barometer shows that Finland was among the world leaders as an information society. In an information society the production, processing, transfer and utilisation of information is of decisive significance in all sectors of society. Finland did well in the comparison of information societies. Knowledge society is considered the next developmental stage after information society: this is a society in which information and knowhow are the basis of liberal education and fundamental production factors. In a knowledge society the emphasis is on significant knowledge as opposed to quantitative information.

The new Freedom of Religion Act

The new *Freedom of Religion Act* came into effect in August 2003. It replaced the previous Freedom of Religion Act of 1923. Freedom of religion is a constitutional right. It entails the right to profess and practise a religion, the right to express a conviction and the right to belong or not to belong to a religious community.

The rationale behind the new Act is the notion of positive freedom of religion. Religion is considered not only as an individual's own choice but also as part of community tradition. The function of the State is to ensure freedom of religion and create the preconditions for its implementation.

Under the former Act, the denomination of the child was automatically determined by the denomination of his/her parents/guardians. On this point the new Act remains neutral, only determining who decides on the denomination of the child. Under the Act, the parents/guardians determine the denomination of the child together, that is, whether or not they wish to keep the child in the Church. There is one exception, however: the decision on the denomination of a child aged 12 to 17 requires unanimity between the child and the guardian. A child aged 15 or older may, with the parents'/guardians' written permission, join or leave a religious community. The religious affiliation of a child who has turned 12 may be changed only with his/her consent.

A child aged 12 to 17 may join or remain a member of the Church or a religious community even though the parents are not members. A child under the age of 12 may be received as a member of the Church if at least one of the parents/guardians is a member. A child under the age of 12 may remain a member of the Church even if his parents/guardians relinquish it. Those over 18 may decide independently about their religious affiliations.

Under the 1923 Act, an individual could belong to only one religious community at a time. This provision will be in effect for a three-year transitional period, i.e. until 31 July 2006. After that, the Freedom of Religion Act in no way prevents a person from simultaneously belonging to several religious communities. It will be for the religious communities to decide whether or not their members can also belong to other religious communities.

In keeping with the spirit of the Constitution, the new Act emphasises the positive right to receive religious instruction. The earlier law departed from the notion of negative right to be exempted from religious instruction. In the new *Basic Education and Upper Secondary School Acts*, the term "religious instruction according to the pupil's denomination" was replaced by the term "the instruction of their own religion". On the one hand, a pupil is

entitled to instruction in his/her own faith; on the other, he/she is obliged to participate in it. A pupil who does not belong to the religion of the majority of pupils can participate in the instruction of this religion only if he/she enrolls separately for it.

A teacher offering Evangelical Lutheran or Orthodox instruction is no longer required to be a member of the church in question, only to be qualified to teach.

The Freedom of Religion Act does not impinge on school traditions. According to the Parliament of Finland, the singing of traditional hymns at end-of-term celebrations in spring and before Christmas does not constitute the practice of a religion in the meaning of the Act. The meaning of these celebrations is seen to be to pass on and preserve culture; accordingly, all pupils, regardless of their religious affiliation, can participate. As in the earlier legislation, a minimum of 20 individuals is required to found a religious community.

The Burials Act

Interments are governed by a separate statute, prepared at the same time as the Freedom of Religion Act. The purpose of the *Burials Act* is to promote the realisation of freedom of religion and conscience in interment, and to ensure that due respect is paid to the memory of the deceased. The main consideration in the Act is to ensure dignity and respect in the handling of the body and ashes and in the maintenance of the cemetery.

Under the Burials Act, the Evangelical Lutheran graveyards will continue to serve as general cemeteries where non-members are also entitled to have a resting place. After a transitional period of three years, from 2007 onwards, a grave site must be made available on request to non-members in a separate non-denominational area. The non-denominational area is an area clearly marked off from the rest of the cemetery or a separate cemetery. It may not be unreasonably far from the parish or union of parishes. Some 85% of the over 1,100 cemeteries in Finland belong to the Lutheran Church.

Under the new Burials Act, the fees charged for burials must be calculated according to the same principles. Under the old legislation, it was possible to charge more (cost price at the most) for those who did not belong to the Lutheran Church. The parishes may continue their practice of charging no or only small burial fees to war veterans and may also apply the principle to their spouses.

The Civil Union Law

During the period covered by the report the legislation governing same-sex partnerships was the most prominent in the debate on sexual ethics. The law regarding same-sex partners was passed by the Parliament of Finland at the end of September 2001, and came into force in March 2002. Under this legislation the same rights and obligations as spouses, with certain exceptions, are conferred on those registering their same-sex union. However, the pair relationship is a legal institution of a different nature from matrimony.

The Church expressed its negative opinion to the bill in a statement issued by the Church Council in February 2001. In October 2001 the opinion of the bishops of the new law was made public. Here it was stated that the Church in its statements on the law was opposed to the union of same-sex couples being equated with matrimony. The Church would not perform religious rites relating to same-sex couples. Nevertheless, the attitude to those of homosexual orientation should be such as to have respect for their human rights in the Church as elsewhere in society. The Church in its statement required that its workers should conduct themselves in keeping with the traditional teaching.

The ramifications of the law manifested themselves in the General Synod of May 2002, when two motions put forward by delegates were addressed. In one of these it was proposed that a person living in a registered same-sex union should not be allowed to hold office or work as an employee of the Church, while the other motion proposed the preparation of alternative forms of service to bless the same-sex union and the home. In November

2003 the General Synod decided that the matter of the ramifications of the law in the Church be transferred to the Bishops' Conference in order to explore the theological and juridical dimensions.

In April 2002, according to a survey commissioned of Gallup Finland, one third of Finns were of opinion that registered same-sex couples should be entitled to a blessing from the Church. However, more than half of Finns were opposed to the blessing of the Church being given to same-sex couples.

3. FINNISH RELIGIOSITY AND ATTITUDES TO THE CHURCH

Membership numbers in religious movements

The membership of present population of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland at the end of 2003 was 4,390,261. This amounts to 84.2 percent of the population. There has been a recent decrease in the share of the population belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Fifty years earlier the share was ten percent higher.

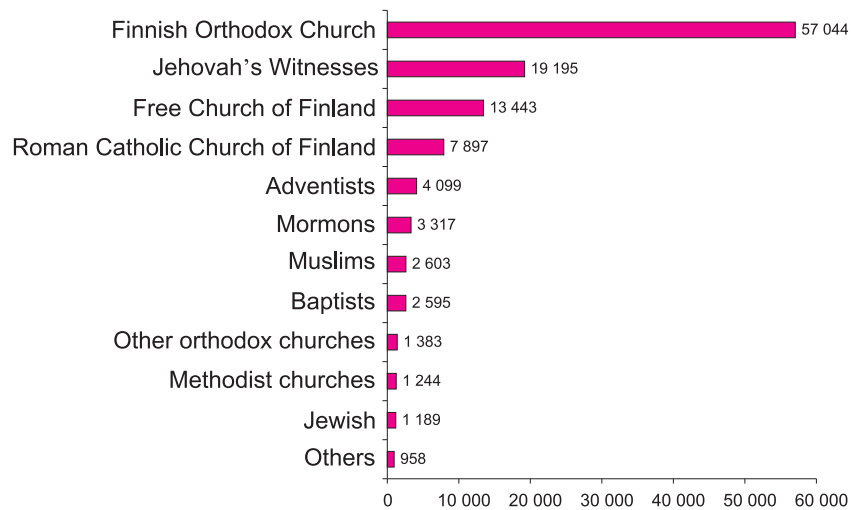
Table 2. Population of Finland by religious affiliation 1920–2003 (%).
Statistics Finland.

| Year | Lutherans | Eastern Orthodox | Others | Those not belonging to registered movements | Not known |
|------|-----------|------------------|--------|---|-----------|
| 1920 | 98.1 | 1.6 | 0.3 | 0.03 | - |
| 1940 | 95.9 | 1.8 | 0.3 | 2.0 | - |
| 1960 | 92.4 | 1.4 | 0.6 | 5.5 | 0.1 |
| 1980 | 90.3 | 1.1 | 0.7 | 7.8 | 0.1 |
| 2000 | 85.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 12.7 | 0 |
| 2003 | 84.2 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 13.5 | 0 |

The second national church in Finland, the Orthodox Church had 1.1% (57,044) of the population as its members. For the period covered by the report 2000–2003 the membership of the Orthodox Church grew by 3.2% (1,788 persons).

Only slightly over one percent of Finns belonged to other registered religious organisations. Those not belonging to any religious organisation amount to 13.5% of Finns. Their number has constantly increased. Women not belonging to any registered religious organisation amount to 11.1% and men 16.1%.

Figure 1. Membership numbers for other registered religious movements than the Evangelical Lutheran Church at the end of 2003.

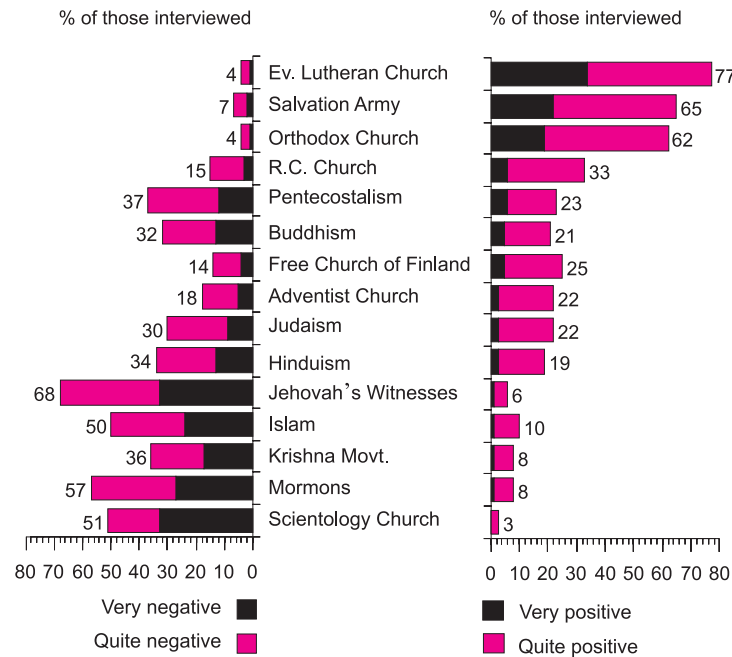


The figure for those not belonging to religious organisations includes those belonging to organisations which are not registered, among them Pentecostals and Muslims. Approximately 1% of Finns are Pentecostals and the estimate for Muslims is 0.5%.

Finnish attitudes to different religions and denominations

Finns are most positively disposed towards Christian denominations, most of all to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Positive attitudes to Christian churches increased during the period of the report. In addition to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Finns are particularly positive towards the Salvation Army and the Eastern Orthodox Church. They are most negatively disposed towards Islam, Scientology, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses.

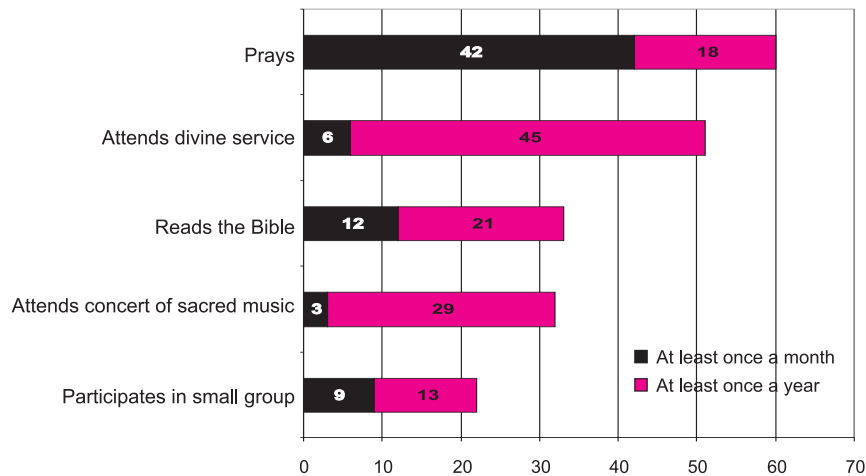
Figure 2. Attitudes of Finns to different religious denominations. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003 (N = 1009).



Practising religion

All in all religion among Finns is characterised by a high degree of privacy and low public religious participation. Although almost two thirds of Finns consider themselves religious, their public practising of their faith is slight. It also clearly declined in the twentieth century ever since information enabling comparison has been available. According to the survey *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003* six percent of Finns attend divine service at least once a month, while 45% of Finns go to church less frequently than this, but at least once a year. Every fifth Finn (19%) attends divine service less than once a year, while every fourth (28%) reports not having gone to church at all in recent years. One third of Finns attend a church concert or other performance of sacred music at least once a year.

Figure 3. Religious participation of Finns (%). Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003 (N = 1009), Gallup Ecclesiastica 2004 (N = 1032).



Compared with Europeans, Finns are not passive in their private religious practices. Every fourth Finn (25%) prays every day, 11% pray at least once a week, every third (33%) less frequently. Every fourth (28%) reports not praying at all in recent years. Every third reads the Bible at least once a year, while 12% of Finns read the Bible at least once a month.

Religious identity

According to the *Church Monitor 2004* survey three out of four Finns (73%) consider themselves to be Christians. When this information was last elicited in 1996 the corresponding share was 89%. Those considering themselves Lutherans amount to 63%. This is a distinct drop since 1996, when the corresponding figure was 78%. The number of those considering themselves Lutherans was particularly low among young people. There are far fewer young people considering themselves Lutherans than there are

considering themselves to be Christians. Of those under 25 years of age only 44% consider themselves Lutherans, although there are almost as many considering themselves Christians as there are in other age groups, 67%. Of those under 25 who consider themselves Christians only 55% also consider themselves Lutherans. Finns considering themselves religious amount to 38%.

There has been a clear increase in the share of those considering themselves to be atheists. In 1996 there were only 3% and in 2003 as many as 12%. This rise has been especially marked among young people, with 16% of under 25-year-olds considering themselves atheists (6% in 1996).

Table 3. Religious identities of Finns in 1996 and 2003 (%). Gallup Ecclesiastica 1996 (N = 975) and Church Monitor 2003 (N = 2569).

| | Yes in 2003 | No in 2003 | Can't say in 2003 | Yes in 1996 |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Consider themselves Christians | 73 | 12 | 15 | 80 |
| Consider themselves Lutheran | 63 | 22 | 15 | 78 |
| Consider themselves religious | 38 | 37 | 25 | 45 |
| Consider themselves atheists | 12 | 71 | 17 | 3 |

Christian beliefs

According to the *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003* survey one third of Finns (36%) reported that they believed in God according to Christian doctrine. The share had diminished since 1999. A further 28% reported that they believed in God, although in a different way from the teachings of the Church. Every tenth reported not believing in God and every fifth reported having doubts.

The *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003* survey elicited Finns' attitudes to certain tenets of Christianity, such as the notion of God as the Creator of the world or the virgin birth of Jesus. The responses to these questions are presented in Table 4. Approximately every third Finn believes firmly in the matters raised. Likewise every fifth Finn does not subscribe at all to the beliefs in question.

Table 4. Finns' beliefs in tenets of Christianity. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003 (N = 1009).

| | Believes firmly | Deems it likely | Deems it unlikely | Does not believe at all | Can't say |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| Jesus is the Son of God | 37 | 31 | 12 | 14 | 5 |
| Jesus rose from the dead | 36 | 25 | 18 | 16 | 5 |
| God created the world | 32 | 27 | 20 | 17 | 4 |
| Jesus was born of a virgin | 32 | 22 | 19 | 21 | 7 |
| Satan exists | 30 | 22 | 20 | 22 | 6 |
| Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead | 29 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 5 |
| The miracles in the Bible really happened | 28 | 33 | 22 | 13 | 5 |

Regardless of whether they believe in the main tenets of Christianity, most Finns (78%) consider the teachings of Christ and instructions for life to be appropriate tenets for living in our time. Only 7% of Finns considered them to be not at all applicable to the present time. Those not belonging to any religious movement generally also consider the teachings of Christ to be relevant for people in the present time.

When the faith of Finns in the main tenets of Christianity is compared to the situation of four years earlier (1999) a steady decline can be seen throughout in the share of those believing firmly or considering them likely. The changes occurring in Finns commitment to the doctrines of the Church and the decline in "correct" beliefs are consistently reflected in the decline in institutional religiousness.

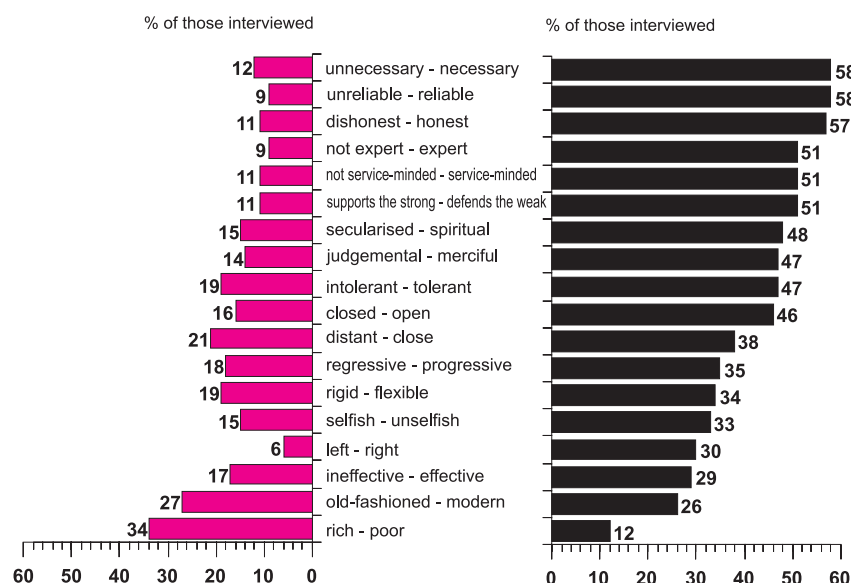
Finns' conceptions of life after death are variable. Approximately half of Finns believe that the person will be called to judgement after death for what s/he has done, while one third see this differently. According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003* every fifth respondent (19%) thinks that all will be raised from the dead and that some will have eternal life while others will be damned, on the other hand 15% believe that all will be saved. There are 14% who believe in being born again. One third expect that all life will cease after death. The notion of all life ceasing after death has become more widespread: in 1999 every fourth Finn subscribed to this view.

The public image of the Church

Most Finns have an essentially positive image of the Church. According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003* 58% of Finns consider the Church honest and reliable. This share is the same as in the period of the previous report. Conversely, every tenth Finn considers the Church to be dishonest and unreliable. Fifty-eight percent of Finns consider that the Church is necessary. However, this share is smaller than in 1999 (64%). The share of those considering that the Church is spiritual has likewise decreased (from 58% to 48%).

At the same time Finns' image of the Church changed in the period covered by the report becoming more open, merciful and tolerant. In the Finns' opinion the Church had a strong image as the defender of the weak (51% in 2003, 40% in 1999). The share of those believing the Church to be more open increased in the period covered by the report from 37% to 46%. The share of those believing the Church to be service-minded also increased. Conversely the shares of those believing the Church to be selfish, judgemental, rigid and intolerant decreased.

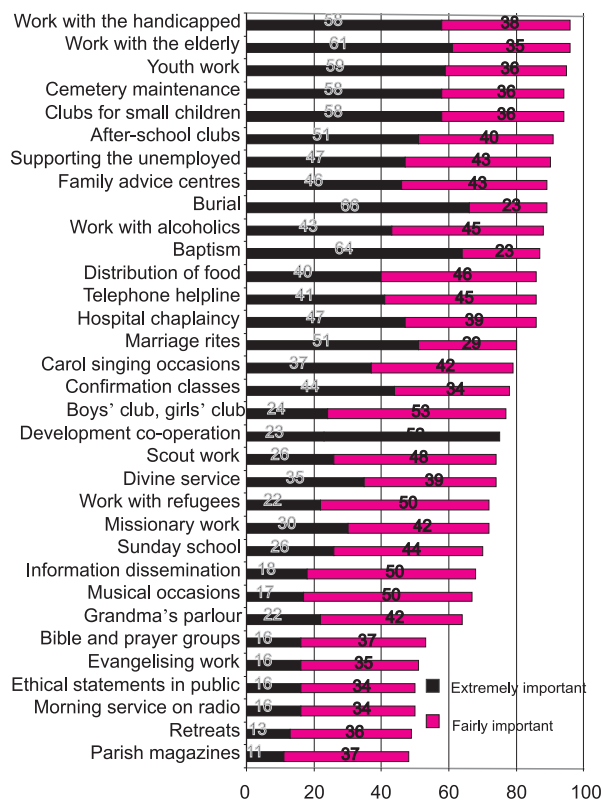
Figure 4. Finns images of the Church. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003 (N = 1009).



Attitudes to various forms of Church activity

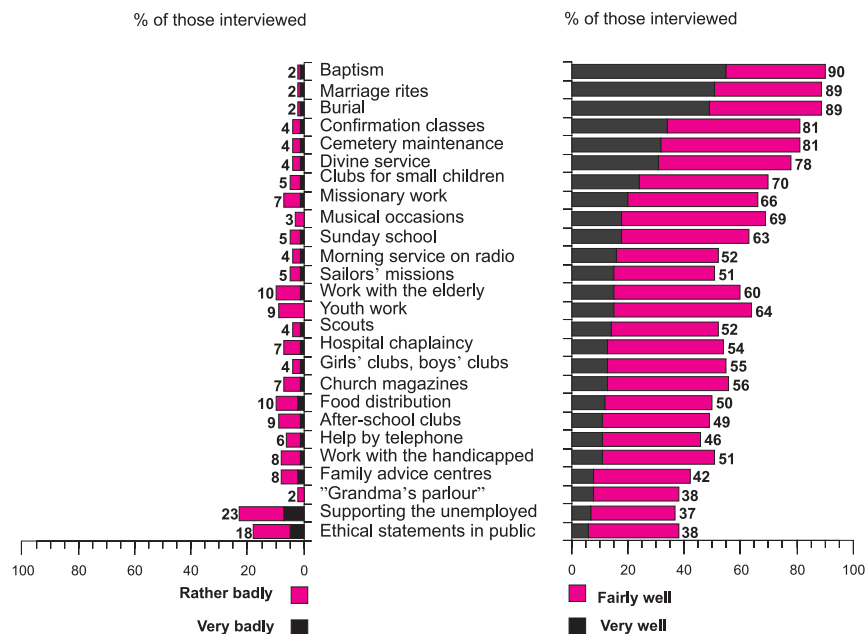
Finns generally consider the forms of action of the Church to be important. In the case of all the modes of action mentioned at least every second Finn considered them to be either fairly important or extremely important. The Finnish respondents considered the most important work of the Church to be that done with the elderly, the handicapped, young people, small children (clubs) and in cemetery maintenance. More than nine Finns out of ten considered these modes of action to be fairly important or very important. However, most frequently of all burial and baptism are considered to be *extremely* important. Two thirds of Finns consider these extremely important.

Figure 5. Finns' assessment of the importance of the various forms of activity by the Church (%). Church Monitor 2004 (N = 2569).



And how satisfied are the parishioners with the functioning of the Church? According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003* the parishes are well thought of, especially for the way in which functions are executed. Nine out of ten Finns are of the opinion that baptism, marriages and burials are well done. Only two percent of Finns reported negative experiences of the way in which these were taken care of. The great majority also gave a positive assessment of confirmation classes, cemetery maintenance and the way in which services were held. The poorest assessments were for supporting the unemployed and ethical statements in public. Only a good third of Finns believed that the Church had acquitted itself well in these functions. The most significant change in the period covered by the report, however, was in satisfaction with the burial arrangements in the parishes. In 1999 those reporting that they were very satisfied was 60%, while in 2003 this was only 32%. It may well be that the reason behind this is the changes in the prices of graves as a result of the law on funerals.

Figure 6. Finns' assessments of how the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the parishes have managed their functions. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003 (N = 1009).



4. ADMINISTRATION

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is an episcopal Church with a very strong tradition of parish autonomy. In addition to this, during the recent decades the significance of the church's national bodies has grown considerably. The most significant levels of administration are the parish, the diocese, and the Church as a whole. The central principle of administration is that each administrative body includes both clergy and lay people, in accordance with the principle of the universal priesthood of believers. With the exception of the diocesan chapters and the Bishops' Conference, all administrative bodies within the church have a clear majority of laypersons.

Parish administration

According to a territorial principle, Church members belong to the parish in whose area they live. This principle is also applied in cities which are divided into several parishes. On the other hand, the same area may include both Finnish and Swedish-speaking parishes, and there is a German-speaking parish whose territory covers the entire country.

Large parishes are a typical feature of Finland's ecclesiastical situation. Of the ca. 580 parishes in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, only 30 have less than one thousand members. The average population of a parish was 7,500 in 2003. However, there is great variation in the size of parishes. The smallest had 120 members and in the largest there were 63,000 members. Almost two thirds of the parishes had fewer than 6,000 members. On the other hand almost one half of the parishioners belong to parishes of over 15,000 members although these accounted for only 13% of all parishes.

Table 5. Distribution of parishes by membership in 2003.

| Membership | No. of parishes | % of parishes | % of Church membership |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------------|
| under 3,000 | 216 | 37.1 | 8.6 |
| 3,000–5,999 | 143 | 24.6 | 14.0 |
| 6,000–8,999 | 67 | 11.5 | 11.3 |
| 9,000–11,999 | 42 | 7.2 | 9.8 |
| 12,000–14,999 | 36 | 6.2 | 11.1 |
| 15,000–19,999 | 25 | 4.3 | 10.0 |
| 20,000–29,999 | 34 | 5.8 | 18.6 |
| 30,000– | 19 | 3.3 | 16.6 |
| Total | 582 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Membership records have been meticulously kept in the parishes for many generations, since the Church has traditionally taken care of the official census registry for its members. Now this task is performed by the State Civil Registry Office, but the Church acts as an administrative body, recording and having access to national census registration information.

The basic features in parish administration are a democratic principle combined with a respect for the special position of the clergy. The highest decision-making body within each parish is the parochial council, the members of which (11–39, depending on the size of the parish) are elected every four years in elections which are held at the same time throughout the country. These elections are organised according to the same principles as any other elections in Finland: the candidates are banded together in voting blocks (usually organised along party political lines), and the results are determined according to the principle of proportional representation. Any Church member whose eighteenth birthday precedes the date of the election is eligible to vote. In the 2002 church elections there was a 14.3% voter turnout (in the previous elections in 1998 it had been 13.7%). Of those elected to parochial councils 53% were women. The majority of elected were over 50, with only 6% below the age of 30. To be eligible to serve on the parochial council, a person must be confirmed and "known for his/her Christian convictions".

The parochial council determines the Church tax rate which will be charged in the parish, approves parish budgets, operational plans, and annual reports, decides on building projects, etc. It generally gathers 2–4 times per year. The parochial council in turn appoints members to the parish board, the executive body which prepares initiatives and implements decisions. Its task is generally to supervise parish operations and to deal with the parish's financial affairs and property management. In practice, parish board meetings are often dominated by financial and administrative issues. It is also possible for the parish board to set up a separate finance committee.

If there are a number of parishes within the same city or municipality, common elections are held to select members for each parish's own parochial council as well as representatives to a joint parochial council, which in turn appoints members to a joint board. In these cases a parish union is always established to handle financial matters. The parish union frequently also deals with aspects of pastoral care, including portions of diaconal work, youth work, child care and family counselling, and public relations work.

The vicar is the chairperson of the parish board, but is not a member of the parochial council. Other parish employees are not permitted to be members of the parish administration, which creates a particular challenge for larger parishes to maintain sufficient contact between workers and elected representatives.

Since 1999 parishes and parish unions have been required to prepare action and financial plans for periods at least three years. For the year 2003 such plans had been drawn up by 94% of parishes.

Generally around ten parishes come together to form a deanery, in which one vicar assists the bishop by acting as an area dean. Very little administrative work is done on the deanery level, but often it functions as a level for inter-parish cooperation in various fields of Church work.

Diocesan Administration

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is composed of nine dioceses, eight of which are regional, with the remaining one covering all of the country's Swedish-speaking parishes. These latter parishes are for the most part scattered around the Finnish coastline and in the Åland Islands. Of all Church members, in fact, fewer than six per cent speak Swedish as their native tongue. The archbishop's seat is in the city of Turku. Since 1998 there has also been a second bishop in the diocese of Turku. The archbishop has many administrative tasks relating to the whole Church, but he does not act as a supervisor for the other bishops, having instead the status of *primus inter pares*.

During the period covered by the report the bishops of the respective dioceses served as follows: In the archbishopric of Turku Archbishop *Jukka Parma* and Bishop *Ilkka Kantola*, in Tampere, Bishop *Juha Pihkala*, in Oulu Bishop *Olavi Rimpiläinen* until the end of 2000, and from the beginning of 2001 Bishop *Samuel Salmi*, in Mikkeli Bishop *Voitto Huotari*, in Porvoo Bishop *Erik Vikström*, in Kuopio Bishop *Wille Riekkinen*, in Lapua Bishop *Jorma Laulaja* and in Helsinki Bishop *Eero Huovinen*.

A new diocese came into being at the beginning of 2004. The General Synod decided to establish a new diocese by dividing the Diocese of Helsinki into two while the population and personnel of the Diocese of Helsinki were nearly twice those of the other dioceses. It was decided to locate the Bishop's see and the deanery in the city of Espoo and that the new diocese should be named the Diocese of Espoo. In the Diocese of Espoo, there are 24 parishes and approx. 425,000 members of the Church. The Cathedral Dean of Helsinki, Dr. *Mikko Heikka* was elected Bishop of Espoo in October 2003.

A bishop is the leader of his (or potentially her) diocese's administration. He is the highest shepherd over its parishes and pastors. All of the pastors in a diocese as well as its lay representatives take part in the election of the new bishop. The President of the Republic formerly appointed one of the top three candidates (normally the winner of the election) as the new bishop;

nowadays, however, the election is entirely the Church's own affair.

The bishop is assisted by the diocesan chapter, which also acts as an independent administrative body. The bishop is the chairperson of the chapter, with the dean acting as vice-chair. The rest of the membership is composed of two clergy assessors, one lay member, the legal assessor and the diocesan dean. The latter are elected for three years at a time from among the permanent pastors of the diocese, with all the pastors being eligible to vote.

A reform of diocesan administration came into force in 2004. The annual diocesan meeting was replaced with a diocesan council, consisting of 14 lay representatives and 7 clergy representatives. A lay representative acts as the chairperson. The bishop and the members of the diocesan chapter are among those entitled to be present and to take part in discussion. The diocesan council approves the operational and financial plan of the diocese, prepares a budget proposal for the Central Church Fund, and draws up proposals for consideration by the Church Council.

Pastors are subordinate to the bishop and the diocesan chapter, but their employers and paymasters are still the parishes. Each diocese, in addition to the bishop, also employs a full-time lawyer and at least four experts in personnel training and operational development. Altogether a diocese has approximately ten employees of its own. Their tasks include, among other things, personnel training and consultation on matters relating to the working environment in the parishes.

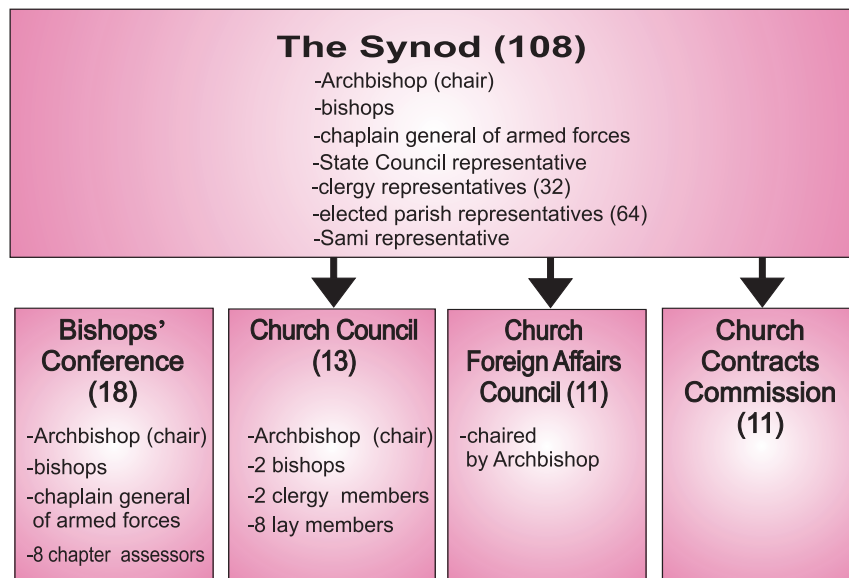
The Church's General Administration

Our Church has had its own autonomous administration ever since 1869. At present its general administrative bodies are the General Synod, the Church Council and the Bishops' Conference.

Prior to 1974 the General Synod gathered only once in every five years, but then there came a major administrative reform. Currently the Synod gathers twice a year, generally for a five-day meeting each time. These meetings are held in Turku, even though the Church Council offices are in Helsinki. The Synod includes 64

lay representatives, 32 representatives of the clergy, all the bishops (including the field bishop of the Finnish Army), a Sami representative, and a representative of the Council of State. Members of the parish boards elect lay representatives and the pastors of the dioceses elect representatives of the clergy to the Synod for a four-year term. The Archbishop serves as the chairperson, and the Synod selects two vice-chairs (in practice always laypersons).

Figure 7. The Central Church Administration



The General Synod has the task of approving the Church's confessional and liturgical books. Another task of the Synod is to decide on changes in the Church Act, the Church Order, and Church election systems. During the period covered by the report the Synod accomplished numerous notable matters, such as the division of the Diocese of Helsinki, the reforms of the diocesan and parish union administration, the development of the equal division of the taxation revenue of the parishes, the approval of the

law concerning funerals and the revision of the *Church Handbook I–III*.

Changes to the *Church Act* require the approval of the national parliament and the signature of the President of the Republic. The parliament may not, however, make any changes in the Church Act proposals. Approval of the confessional and liturgical books, and changes to the Church Act and church order, require a 3/4 majority vote in the Synod.

The General Synod also decides on matters of official relationships with other church organisations and confessional groups and inter-church organisations, evaluates doctrinal statements, and gives expert advice to the Council of State, as well as approving the Church budget and evaluating the operational strategies and annual reports prepared by the Church Council offices.

The Church's common organ for general administrative functions is the Church Council. Its task is to take care of the Church's common administrative, economic and strategic needs. The Church Council generally meets on a monthly basis. The Archbishop serves as chairperson, and other members include two bishops, two pastors and eight laypersons. Apart from the bishops, these members are selected by the Synod. The Church Council's leading officers form the Cabinet.

In the offices of the Church Council (including the Institute for Advanced Training in Järvenpää and the Research Institute in Tampere) there is a total of approximately 200 full-time employees. In addition to this, FinnChurchAid, the Church's charity organization, operates as a separate foundation, employing approximately 30 workers. Within Church House there are special experts for consultancy on many different areas of parish work, financial management, and personnel issues, as well as for questions of inter-church relationships. The office of the Church Council is headed by a Chief Secretary. Since the beginning of 1998 this post has been held by the Rev. *Risto Junttila*.

The Bishops' Conference handles issues relating to the faith, proclamations, and work of the Church, as well as those relating to diocesan administration and care. It generally meets twice a year for a two-day meeting. One special Finnish feature is that in

addition to the bishops and the military field bishop, one assessor from each diocese is also present at these meetings. In addition to these meetings, the bishops gather occasionally for brief meetings and once a year for a long residential meeting, which are not of an administrative nature.

Administrative decisions of the reported period

During the term covered by the report efforts were made to actively monitor EU legislation and also other EU issues of importance from the perspective of the Church. The most important legislative issues were the *Directive on discrimination in the workplace*, and the draft of the *EU Constitution*. According to §51 article 1 of the *Constitutional Agreement* the EU will engage in open and regular dialogue with the churches among others, acknowledging their identity and their special mission, which will pose major challenges to the Church in the future.

The Chief Secretary of the Church Council is responsible for EU matters. It is part of normal work of the experts of the office of the Church Council to follow the development and legislation of the EU. Monitoring EU legislation and the co-ordination of EU matters is the province of the legal advisor of the administrative department. In addition to this an EU contact person, on a fee-paying basis, follows, disseminates information and publicises topical EU matters. The internal EU monitoring group of the Church co-ordinates EU monitoring and information dissemination, expresses opinions on individual matters and creates a more general view on the relation the Church to the EU and matters addressed in its organs. In 2001 the Church Council set up an EU advisory board to advise on topical EU issues and those important to the Church. The members of this advisory board are both EU experts from various fields and officials of the Church, the chairperson being the Archbishop.

The Finnish legislation on gender equality was changed, therefore the Church' legislation on gender quotas also had to be implemented. According to the new legislation at least 40% men and 40% women should be elected the governing bodies of the

Church and parishes, boards, advisory boards and workgroups. The principle, however, does not extend to administrative bodies elected in parish elections, such as parish councils. Others not covered by the quota principle are the General Synod, the Bishops' Conference and deanery and diocesan councils.

During the period covered by the report there was a shift in the direction of more strategic planning of operations. The parishes are required to make use of longer-term action and financial plans, and several strategies for action were approved for the Church as a whole. In November 2002 the Church Council approved the vision and strategy of the Church. This document contains the overall mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, its vision and its strategy until the year 2010. According to the document the mission or basic function of the Church is permanent and independent of time, place, society and the form in which the Church is organised. A church which is fulfilling its mission is an open church welcoming all comers. The vision of the Church is exemplified in the title of the document – a church which is present. It is the vision of the Church to be present in Finnish reality and to meet the people in the environments in which they live. A new information management strategy and a communications strategy were also formulated. In addition new strategies were formulated for diaconial and social work and for work with children and young people. The aim of the strategies is to create a shared direction for those working in and for the Church at the national, local and diocesan levels. The strategies moreover seek to support the planning of work in the local parishes.

5. MEMBERSHIP

At the end of 2003 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland had 4.4 million members, amounting to 82.2% of the population. During the period covered by the report the percentage of the population belonging to the Church fell by 1.0%. However, the absolute number of people fell by only 9,854 (–0.2%). Among women membership included 86.5% and of men 81.8%. The age group of whom the lowest share belonged to the Church was 40 to 49, with a membership of 79.7%.

The most important reasons for being members of the Church were Church rites, baptism, marriage in church and burial and the fact that the Church maintains the cemeteries. Nine out of ten parishioners considered these to be important reasons for belonging to the Church.

Of the children born in Finland in 2003, 87.0% were given an Evangelical Lutheran baptism. More new members, however, were received into the Church than members who died during the same period. Every year less than 1.0% of the members died.

There was more migration than ever before, with 1.35 million people moving to new parishes. The migration gain was in the dioceses of Helsinki and Tampere, while in other dioceses there was a net loss of population in the period covered by the report.

Leaving the Church in 2003, with the facilitation of so doing due to the new legislation approached the peaks experienced during the years of the economic recession. In 2003 a total of 26,857 people resigned from the Church, amounting to 0.61% of its members. Of these resignations 80% occurred in the urban parishes. Another factor contributing to resignations was the new legislation on burials, requiring the parishes to charge the same prices for graves of members and non-members. This was widely felt to be unjust. The number of people resigning from the Church in the course of the four-year period covered by the report was 70,583, which is 1.6% of the mean population. The growth compared to the period covered by the previous report was 38%.

Figure 8. Numbers of those resigning and those joining the Church in the period 1923–2003.

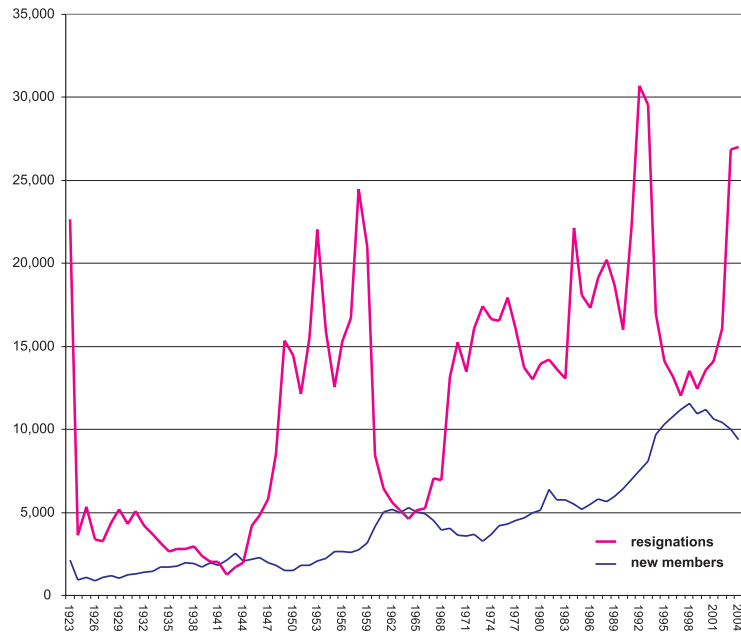
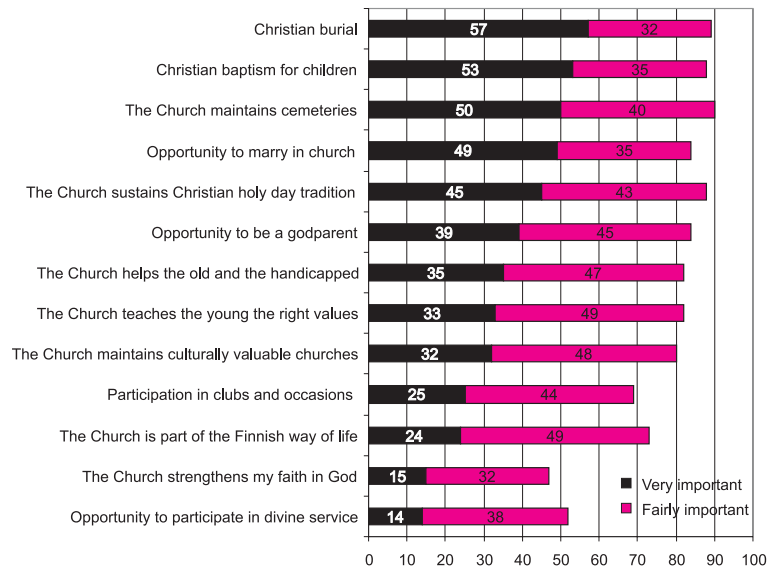


Figure 9. Reasons for belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003 (N = 827).



Church in Change

There was a drop of 5.1% from the previous reporting period in the number of those joining the Church, with a total for the entire current period of 42,228 new members. In 2003 the Church received 10,023 new members. Young adults were more active in becoming members, and also in resigning. Both joining and resignation was most active in the Diocese of Helsinki.

6. WORSHIP

Developing worship and Church rites

The revising of the order of service begun in 1988 continued in the period covered by the report. The General Synod approved the new *General Gospel Book (Church Handbook I)* in 1999, and the new book of services (*Church Handbook II*) in both Finnish and Swedish in January 2000. These books were introduced at Advent 2000.

The book of 2000 is the eighth Lutheran book of services in Finland. Their predecessors could be considered to be the Roman Catholic, the *Missale Aboense* of 1488. In 1549 *Mikael Agricola* compiled a manual entitled *Messu eli Herran Ehtolinen*, and *Paavali Juusten* revised this in 1575, after which manuals were produced in 1614, 1694, 1886, 1913 and 1968.

The book presents the orders of service for the Communion service, the weekly service and the service without Communion. Four alternative liturgical settings are available for the Eucharist service, and the parishes can select their own. The *General Gospel Book* contains three cycles of texts for the Church year and the accompanying prayers.

The main theological premises in the revision stress the Trinity as the cornerstone of the services, services as a celebration of God's redeeming presence, connecting the sermon to the service as a whole, the diaconial nature of the service and the missionary aspect, i.e. the nature of the service as a prayer. The committee compiling the book wished to stress the principle of worship as the flexibility of the structure of the service and to take account of local resources, careful planning and the holding of the service in language comprehensible to modern people.

Among those working in the parishes in 2004, 38% considered a revision of the order of service to be necessary, while 26% deemed revision unnecessary. The revision was regarded as an

improvement by 37% and as a step in the wrong direction by 9%. According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003*, 53% of Finns were aware that there had been a revision of the forms of service in the Lutheran Church. The revision was considered necessary by 40%, with 41% unable to say whether the change was for the better or the worse. The development was seen to be positive by 25% of Finns.

The revision of the order of service continued with the work of revising the *Book of Occasional Services (Church Handbook III)* begun in 1997. Draft versions in Finnish and Swedish of a third book were submitted to the Archbishop in 2001. The reactions of the parishes were requested to be taken into account when the appropriate committee modified the book. The General Synod approved both language versions in November 2003.

Matters with bearing on the need for a revision of the book on occasional services and sacraments included the introduction of the new translation of the Bible in 1992, the general linguistic development and the change in liturgical culture accompanying the revision of the order of service. The new book is much more comprehensive than its predecessor. It extends not only to occasional services but also to marriage, induction and blessings for a new task and forms of prayer interludes with appropriate hymns and psalms and refrains.

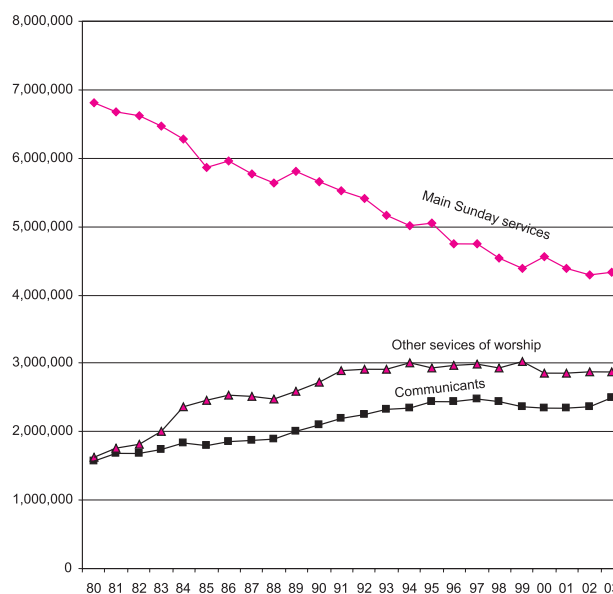
The basis for the form of occasional services is the structure of worship without Eucharist. The revised conception is that every occasional service is a form of worship/divine service. In accordance with the tenets of the revision of the orders of service an effort has been made to increase the participation of parishioners in the planning of the worship, while continuing to remember those who wish merely to follow the service. Hymn singing and joining in prayer are also ways of participating. The necessity for discussing the form of service before the celebration of rites is emphasised.

Attendance at worship and other public events

In 2003 the parishes arranged 70,000 services of worship, of which two thirds were main services of worship held on Sundays and one third other services. Attendances at divine service totalled 7.2 million. Main Sunday services accounted for 4.3 million and other services for 2.9 million worshippers.

In 2003, 3.2% of the average membership attended services regularly. Attendance was highest in the rural areas (3.9%) of the average membership, and lowest in the urban areas 2.8% of membership. Average attendance per person was 1.6% times. Attendance at main Sunday service per person in 2003 was once a year.

Figure 10. Participation in Sunday services, other services of worship and Holy Communion 1980–2003.



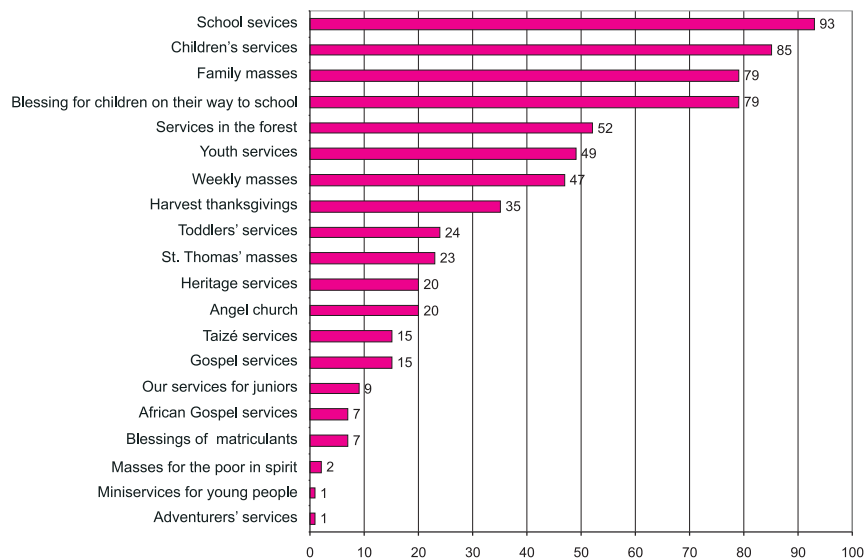
There was an increase during the period covered by the report in the number of Communion services held and in those participating. In 2003 Holy Communion was celebrated 43,000 times (40,000 in 1999), the total attendance being 2.5 million (2.4 million in 1999). This increase is attributable to the overall change

in the culture of services. The main form of service has now become the mass, Holy Communion, and efforts are being made to celebrate Holy Communion every Sunday at the main service. While in 1975 those participating in Holy Communion amounted to 28% of average membership, in 2003 the corresponding figure was 57%.

In addition to main services, 24,000 other services were held in 2003, attended weekly by 1.3% of average membership. Weekly masses became more common especially with the publication of the book *Worship Services*. In 2003, 47% of all parishes and 58% of urban parishes arranged weekly masses. In the large towns international services are also held in English and in German.

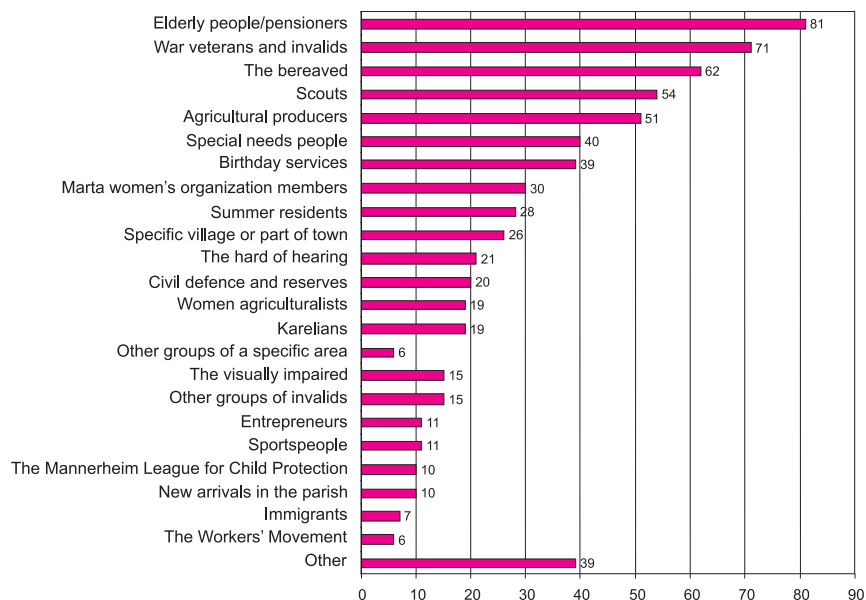
In 2003 most parishes held services for schools and children. Family masses were held in 79% and St. Thomas' Masses in 23% of parishes. Silent churches or *Taizé* masses were held in 15% of parishes. Other services held included services in the forest, services on the way to school, bikers' services and services for summer residents.

Figure 11. Special services in 2003 (% of parishes).



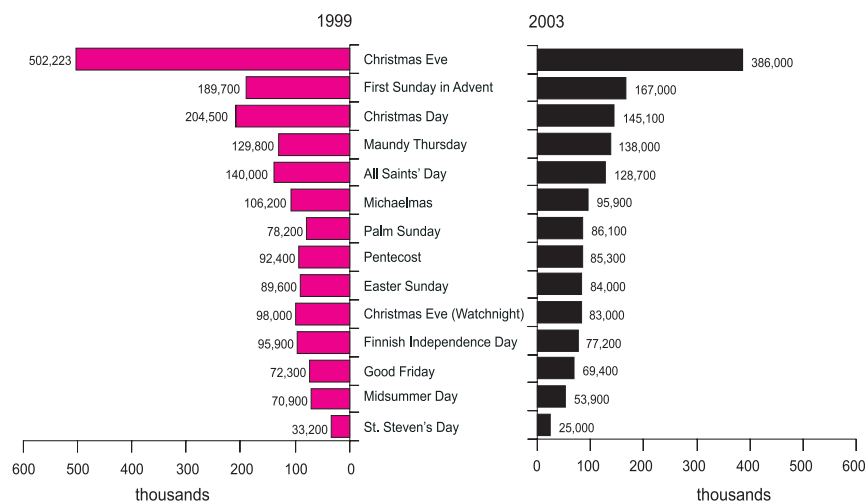
Special groups may be invited to mainstream services by arranging special *invitation services*, for example religious services for summer residents or the unemployed, or various handicapped people's groups. Religious services for special needs people have been celebrated since 1969. Most parishes celebrated special services for the elderly (81%) and war veterans (71%).

Figure 12. Services in 2003 to which special groups were invited (% of parishes).



Christmas Eve continues to be the most popular time for going to church, although there was a fall in attendance in church during the Christmas period. There was a drop of more than 18,000 in the number of those going to church on Christmas Eve, and of 60,000 for Christmas Day. The decrease in those attending services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in recent years has been affected by the wide variety of services held on Christmas Eve. In 2003, 83,000 people attended the Christmas Eve watchnight service.

Figure 13. Church attendance on public holidays during the Church year 1999 and 2003.



In addition to holding services the parishes arranged a further 104,300 other public events (96,500 in 1999), among them devotions, parish catechism meetings, musical occasions, clubs and national and regional events. Total participation was 6.4 million (6.2 million in 1999).

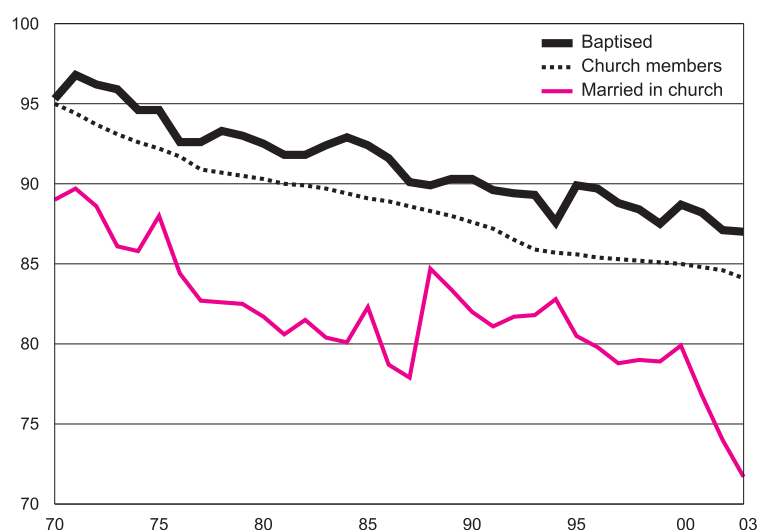
In 2003 the parishes held 13,600 musical occasions attended by audiences totalling 1.9 million. The increase during the period covered by the report was 13%, and in audience numbers 12%. Choirs and musical ensembles are an important part of voluntary work with 45,000 choir singers and instrumentalists in 2003. The number of music groups increased by 4.8% in the period covered by the report. In almost 60% of parishes there were choirs at services at least once a month.

The single most popular musical event is the evening for "Favourite Christmas Carols", which attracts over half a million Finns to go along and sing. In 2002 this tradition, inaugurated by the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission celebrated its 30th anniversary. The first time it involved 140 parishes, and now involves all parishes. In 2003 there was also an option to participate via Internet and digital TV.

Church rites

In 2003 baptisms, marriages and funerals totalled almost 113,000, with 4.1 million participants. There has been a slight decrease in the number of such occasions and the participation over the last four years, the drop in participation being 5.9% and in the number of occasions 1.9%.

Figure 14. Percentages of those belonging and baptised into the Church 1970–2003.



Compared to the Nordic countries the Finnish Church rites performed did well. In Finland Lutheran baptism, marriage and funeral rites are more common than in Sweden or Norway.

Table 6. Share of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of baptisms, marriages and funeral rites in Finland, Sweden and Norway in 2003 (%).

| | Finland | Sweden | Norway |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------|--------|
| % of birth cohort baptised | 87 | 68 | 78 |
| % of marriages solemnised | 68 | 55 | - |
| % of Ev. Luth. funerals | 98 (approx.) | 86 | 94 |

The percentage of those baptised of all births was 87 (88% in 1999). Baptisms in the home were most popular, with two thirds being held there. Average attendance at such home baptisms was 18 persons, at baptisms in church 22, the total average being 19.

Of all marriages contracted in 2003, 68% were solemnised in church. In 28% of civil ceremonies one of the partners was a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Ten percent of civil marriages were blessed in church.

Almost 48,000 funerals were held according to the rites of the Church, the total attendance at these being approximately 2 million. Of those deceased some 98% were given a Lutheran funeral, which is higher than the percentage share of those belonging to the Church. Funerals are held increasingly in the presence of only close relatives and friends. According to data gathered in November 2003, the clergy participated in 96% of memorial occasions held after the funeral and made speeches at 95%.

There has been an increase in Finland since the 1980s in private counselling in connection with Church rites. In such rites held in November 2003 such counselling was almost always included. Only 2.6% of baptisms did not include such advance counselling, which was most frequently arranged in the home of the child (53%), on parish premises (20%) or elsewhere (1%).

There is also a gradual increase in counselling after a church ceremony, most commonly after funerals and weddings, as was the case in 11% in November 2003. The corresponding figure after baptisms was 4% (6% in 1999).

7. EDUCATIONAL WORK AND WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Work with children

The work of the Church with children takes its departure from baptismal teaching. The main idea is to inspire children to find what they themselves are interested in and to allow them sufficient time to ask questions, think about things and arrive at their own conclusions. Support for parenthood is another important aspect of the work done by the parishes.

Generally a club for young children convenes twice a week, morning and afternoon, with a programme of handicrafts, games and other social and recreational activities. The children are also introduced to basics of Christianity and the celebrations throughout the Church Year. These children's clubs have long been the mainstay of the work of the Church with little children. The numbers of those participating have been reduced by the extension of the municipalities' day care and pre-school education provision to all 6 year-olds. Preschool education free of charge became a matter of law in 2003. Since these changes the share of 4 to 6 year-olds attending Church clubs has diminished from 61% of the age group in the early 1990s to 41% at the end of the period covered by the report. The clubs are attended by 50% of those aged 4 to 5. There has also been an absolute decrease in the number of children in the clubs due to a decrease in the birth rate. The total number of children in these clubs in 2003 was 71,000.

Sunday school is the traditional form of Christian education of the parishes, and this has been linked more closely to worship. This is church for children, emphasising the need for children to have services especially for them. The period covered by the report witnessed a rise of 2.4% in the number of Sunday school children. In 2003 there were 66,000 such children, corresponding

to 14.9% of the age group 5 to 11. Girls accounted for 56%. Sunday school concentrates largely on the same age group as the clubs. In 2003 every other (47%) Sunday school child was aged 4 to 6. Most of the Sunday school teachers were volunteers.

The nature of the work of the Church with children has become more family-centred, meaning among other things that there has been an annual quantitative increase in family club work. The number of meetings of family clubs in the period covered by the report increased by 28% and the number of participants by 10%. In 2003 a total of 42,000 meetings were held, with 1.2 million attendances recorded. The parishes also had active connections with pre-school education in society both in day care centres and in pre-school teaching.

Work with juniors

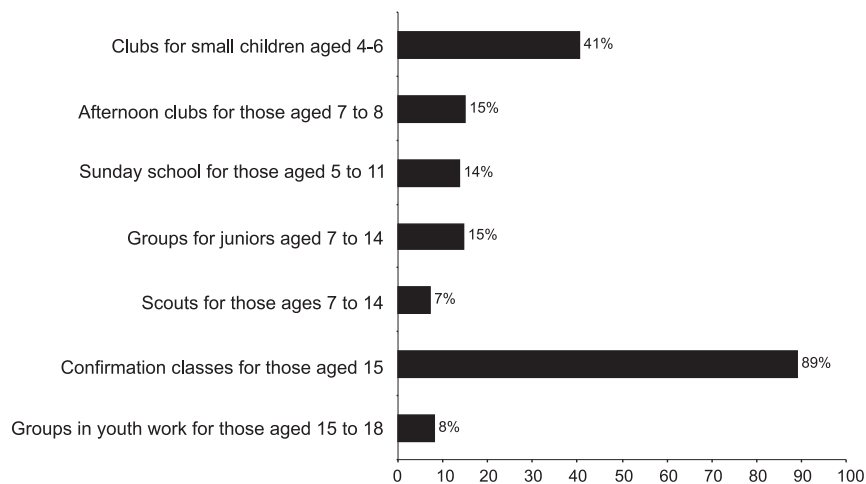
The parishes have long been active in arranging activities for younger schoolchildren before and after the school day. The need for this has grown as more homes have two breadwinners. Activities are intended especially for children of 8 to 9, and mostly take place in the afternoons after school, but also partly in the mornings before the school day begins so that children need not be alone at home. Groups generally meet every weekday, some less frequently. The work is both educational and caring. It was carried out as the parish's own activity and in network collaboration with the municipalities and organisations. Children aged 7 to 8 participating in the morning and afternoon clubs of the parishes amounted to 17,000 (13.8% of the age group). There was an increase of 31% in the period covered by the report. There was a decrease in the numbers of those participating in the separate clubs for those approaching early youth of 8.4%, with a total of 14.5% of 7 to 14 year-olds involved.

There was a drop of 16% in the number of children participating in the scout activities of the parishes. Membership of the parishes' scout troops in 2003 was 38,000, which is 7.3% of the 7 to 14 age group. Of all those in the scout movement more than half were in parish troops. There has been a drop in the

overall membership of the scout movement since the mid 1990s to the level of 1980. There has also been a clear decline in the relative share of scouts among young people.

Despite the steady decline in the activities for those approaching early youth in the period covered by the report, this does not tell the whole story about the work as a considerable part of activities go on in network co-operation with the schools and various actors. Excursions and camps continue to attract large numbers of this age group. There was an increase of 38% in the attendance at special events arranged.

Figure 15. Access to education and work for young people in 2003



Confirmation classes

In the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland the position of classes preparing young people for confirmation have an exceptionally strong position as an event connected to the baptismal teaching. This position has been maintained in the

period of the report as a whole with no fluctuations or changing trends. Preparation for confirmation continued to gather together the 15-year-old age cohort as a whole. This instruction moreover provides a renewed interface with the parents of these young people and their homes.

In 2003, 89.2% of 15 year-olds attended confirmation classes. For the entire period covered by the report the share was 90.2%. The share of confirmation classes implemented in the form of confirmation camps continued to increase in the period in question. In 2003 only 6% of attendees participated in daytime classes and 2% in evening classes, with 2% completing instruction privately. A reform was undertaken during the period covered by the report. A new curriculum entitled *Elämä – usko – rukous* (life – faith – prayer) for confirmation preparation was approved in 2001. The previous curriculum had been created in the 1970. The aim of the reform was to make preparation for confirmation into a preparation for life, departing from the young people's own experiences and life situations. Preparation for confirmation is perceived as part of the Church's continuous lifelong strengthening for parishioners. The challenge of preparation for confirmation is to present young people with a functioning contact to the parish; to impart to a young person the feeling that s/he is already a member of the parish, not just becoming one. The new curriculum for confirmation does not seek to provide detailed instructions on how preparation should be implemented, but rather to encourage planning at the local level.

The new curriculum has also has a concrete influence on practices in the parish; three parishes out of four report that they have either changed the way in which preparation for confirmation is implemented in keeping with the new curriculum or then changes were imminent.

Work with young people

Much of the work with young people is built up around the activities of peer tutors known as *Isoset*. In this system young people act as assistants to those in charge of preparation for

confirmation camps and partly also at the camps for children. They have become a major component among the volunteer workers in our Church. In 2003, 23,000 young people underwent training for this activity, 68% being girls. In the period covered by the report the number of those undergoing training increased by 7.9%. In 2003 a total of 13,400 young people acted as *Isoet* or peer tutors. 67% of them were girls.

Eight percent of those aged 15 to 18 participated in the regular group activities for young people organised by the parishes.

Since 1968 there has been special work with young people. This represents an effort to help those young people who are at risk of becoming marginalised. Activities include night-time coffee bars, work in substance abuse, and street patrols in the cities and at young people's music festivals. This special youth work is carried out in collaboration with several actors, among them the municipal sections for youth work and the police. There are some 140 workers for this purpose in 95 parishes or confederations of parishes. This work also depends on an extensive body of volunteer workers.

The parishes also engaged in active co-operation with various educational institutions. Almost all parishes (98%) reported active co-operation with schools in some fields.

8. DIACONIAL WORK AND SPIRITUAL COUNSELLING

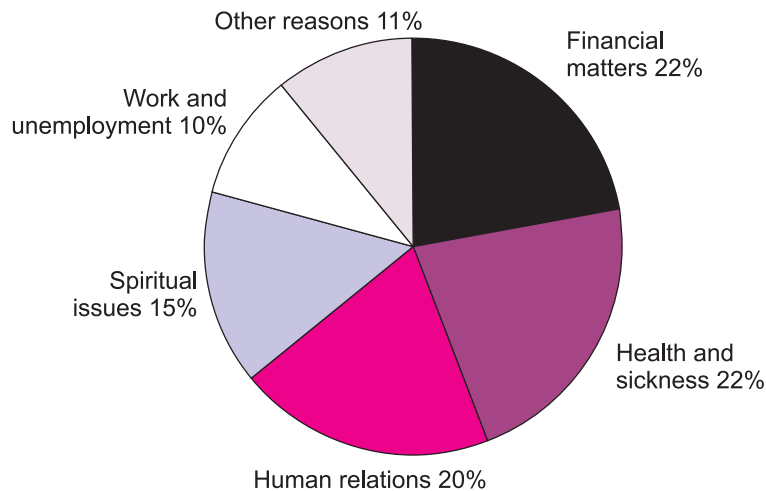
The mission of diaconial work is to identify, alleviate and relieve people's need and suffering. The aim is to cure and heal the individual as an individual and in the community and to cope amidst difficulties. It is characteristic of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland that organised diaconial work is accomplished as part of the work of the local parishes. There should be one diaconial post in each parish, held by a deacon or deaconess. In 2003 there were almost 1,500 trained holders of such posts and a further 28,000 volunteers in diaconial work.

In 2003, 288,000 different clients were served, amounting to 6.6% of the membership of the Church. Total client contacts in 2003 numbered 780,000, of which 42% occurred at the reception locations of the workers, 28% in people's own homes and 28% elsewhere. In addition to home visits and receiving clients on their own premises, the workers made visits to various locations, including hospitals, sheltered accommodation facilities, prisons and schools. Visits in 2003 totalled 199,000.

The age group with which most diaconial work was done are people aged 40 to 64, and accounting for 39% of client contacts. The next largest group is those aged 74 and over (23%). Client contacts with those aged 18 to 39 accounted for 18% of client contacts, and those aged 65 to 74 for 17%. Client contacts with those under 18 accounted for 4% in 2003.

The parishes take the view that in the period covered by the report there has been an increase in the number of problems with mental health, subsistence, loneliness and in the family and in pair relationships. Clients in diaconial work are mostly concerned about financial problems. Matters of almost equal concern are health and sickness and human relationships.

Figure 16. Client contacts in diaconial work by content in 2003.

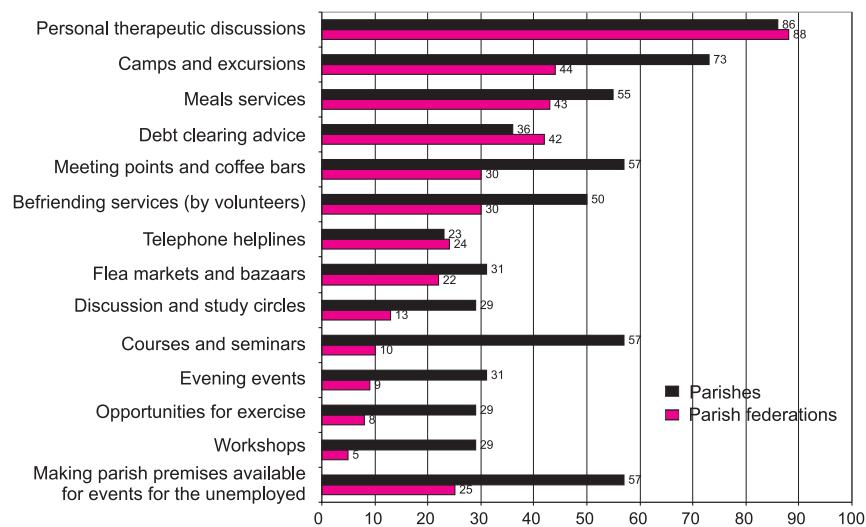


The passing of the economic recession can also be seen in the changes in the content of the diaconial client contacts. Matters pertaining to work and unemployment show the greatest decrease in the period covered by the report, during which there was also a decrease in the number of food parcels distributed, although the amount of support in Euros increased. In 2003 food was distributed to the value of 2.5 million Euros and approximately 200,000 units. Other financial assistance amounted to 3.2 million Euros, to over 35,000 cases.

The parishes also arranged group activities connected to diaconial work, such as diaconial and missionary circles, groups for pensioners, human relations groups and open days. In 2003 almost 600 diaconal circles met, the number of participants totalling 7,000.

To support unemployed people the parishes, either individually or in co-operation with other actors, have arranged most commonly personal therapeutic discussions and camps and excursions. Many parishes and federations of parishes also provide meals services and advice on clearing debts. The premises of the parishes have also been made available for events for the unemployed.

Figure 17. Work by the parishes and federations of parishes to support the unemployed in 2003 (%).



In 2003 the diaconial services of the parishes arranged 560 different groups for the handicapped, attracting almost 7,000 participants. The programme *Church for Everyone* approved in August 2003 provided important strategic guidelines for the Church's work with handicapped people. The handicapped policy programme of the Church is intended to guide parish workers, elected officials and parishioners. Its purpose is to help both the Church and handicapped people to a state of awareness and to develop the opportunities for handicapped people to participate in the Church. The programme is moreover the manifesto of the Church on the implementation of equality for handicapped people in society.

In 2001 the Church celebrated the 50th anniversary of its work for the visually impaired. The first full-time employee of the Church in this function was a curator for the blind, whose area of operations was Finland in its entirety. Later the focus of the work shifted to holy days and courses for the blind in the dioceses. Thereafter the international dimension was introduced, as a result

of which a school for visually impaired children was founded in Namibia. The hymnbook was translated into Braille in 1988 and the Bible in 1992.

Regarding services for the deaf a major achievement was the translation of the texts of the Church into sign language. In 2002 draft translations of the Lord's Prayer, the Blessing and the Creed were introduced experimentally. The Church Council recruited a full-time translator for sign language in 2002. In 2003 a draft translation of the *Christmas Gospel* came out on video, on dvd and on the Internet.

Of the major disasters occurring during the period covered by the report the terrorist strikes of 11 September in the USA and the explosion at the Myyrmanni Shopping Centre in Finland in October 2002 showed how important it is that the Church should be able to react rapidly in the aftermath of a disaster. Parishes throughout Finland arrange devotional services at very short notice likewise opportunities to talk with parish workers. Churches were kept open longer so that people could enter for silent devotion. The events moreover showed that in time of need Finns turn to the Church in their search for help and consolation.

In 1990 the Church Centre for Diaconia and Society produced guidelines for the preparation of contingency plans for work during catastrophes. As a result of this, rapid reaction groups were formed in numerous places and a system for giving alerts was developed. The aim was to create a nationwide Church alert system based on the regional alarm centres. In the event of major accidents the Office of the Archbishop is to liaise with the bishops, the Church Centre for Communication and the Church Council: For the units of the Church Council those for diaconial and social work, family affairs, hospital chaplaincy will provide and relay expert assistance in an emergency situation. If the area of the catastrophe is limited the diocese and parishes will take care of emergency help. Each diocesan dean has a person designated to assume responsibility in an emergency situation. In the parishes the parish priest will assume responsibility in the event of an emergency for measures to be undertaken in the parish based on the rapid reaction plan of the Church.

Spiritual counselling

The Church provides opportunities for discussions for spiritual counselling in the local parishes, in the family advisory centres and in various institutions such as hospitals and prisons. In November 2003 the clergy held 3,900 spiritual discussions arranged in advance, making an annual average of some 47,000 discussions. Every tenth discussion culminated in confession. These figures do not include spiritual discussions held in connection with Church rites, which form a crucial part of the spiritual counselling provided in the parishes.

Grieving groups are arranged for the bereaved and the relatives of suicides, while for those seeking silence there are what are known as retreats. Retreats are much used in the larger urban parishes particularly. The dioceses and parishes have also begun to pay more attention to spiritual guidance. Spiritual guidance and the related training is offered not only to parishioners but also to Church workers.

The telephone helpline "Serving Telephone" is one of the oldest forms of volunteer activity within the Church. It is easy to call the helpline as the number is the same throughout Finland. Anonymous calls are accepted and callers have the opportunity to discuss a wide variety of problems with the volunteer or parish worker on duty. The telephone helpline lets parishioners serve their neighbour in a way which on the one hand is clearly part of the Church's diaconal function and on the other constitutes a response to the challenges of posed by changes in modern society.

The helpline is open every evening, including Christmas and other holidays. In 2003 over 44,000 calls were taken. Fifty-three percent of callers were women and 47% were men. Those using the helpline are frequently lonely, in a state of mental anxiety or an acute crisis situation. In one third of calls the most fundamental questions were raised.

The focus in family counselling services is on the pair relationship. In addition to providing help in crises in the pair relationship, such as divorce, help is provided where possible in other family human relationships including matters pertaining to bringing up children. Families consisting of one person may also

contact the family counselling services when human relationships are a cause of concern.

In 2003 clients of the family advisory services numbered over 16,000, and of these 60% were women. The most common reasons for seeking help were difficulties in the pair relationship; there was, for example an increase in infidelity as a reason for seeking help. There was an overall increase in the amount of counselling during the period covered by the report. In 2003 the Church employed 162 family counsellors.

Courses and camps focussing on the pair relationship are arranged on different themes all over Finland. On these the partners seek out the strengths of their relationship, set new objectives and endeavour to open up knots in their relationship. Sharing experiences with other couples provides new perspectives on a couple's own relationship. The courses are intended for spouses, *de facto* spouses and courting couples. Other Christian organisations in addition to the Church arrange these events. Such opportunities were offered to their parishioners by 25% of parishes. Almost 15,000 people participated. The parishes arranged about one hundred camps for married couples, attracting 2,300 people. Such camps were held in 11% of parishes.

Spiritual counselling in hospitals follows changes in health care. In Finland periods of treatment have been cut and psychiatric treatment emphasises care in the community. This has duly made itself felt in the work of spiritual counselling in hospitals. Spiritual counselling in hospitals has expanded beyond conventional spiritual care to training and counselling and to expert tasks in religious and ethical questions. On the other hand the use of the traditional tools of spiritual care – private confession and Holy Communion and anointing with oil has increased.

In the experience of those offering spiritual counselling in hospitals there is not enough time in the working day to make home visits. The spiritual counselling for those in care in the community requires a greater contribution than before from the local parishes, both professional and volunteer workers. There is a particular need for people to provide support for mental patients, those recently discharged from hospital and lonely people.

In 2003 there were 121 full-time employees providing spiritual counselling in hospitals, and 15 part-time workers. Most of them were members of the clergy. Some hospital theologians serve as counsellors for the hospital and parish personnel.

9. CO-OPERATION BETWEEN CHURCHES

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland as a member of the Lutheran World Federation

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is among the largest member churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and takes an active part in numerous activities of the LWF. The annual LWF Council meeting was held in June 2000 in Turku, Finland. One of the most momentous of the decisions taken there concerned the continuation of the work envisaged in the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, which had been signed in Augsburg in 1999.

The 10th General Assembly of the LWF was held in July 2003 in Winnipeg, Canada on the theme *For Healing the World*. Ms. *Riikka Myllys*, undergraduate in theology, was elected a member of the council. Bishop *Eero Huovinen* was re-elected a member and, in addition, a vice-president of the LWF.

In the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland it has been considered important for the Lutheran World Federation to promote theological research and ecumenical doctrinal debate. The Church has encouraged negotiations with the Roman Catholic Church. For this purpose our representative in the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity has been the Rev. Dr. *Pirjo Työrinoja*. In the period covered by the report Bishop *Eero Huovinen* has served as chairman of the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, while Professor *Risto Saarinen* has served as visiting professor.

In May 2000 the General Synod set up a fund for international and ecumenical contacts. The fund supports the Lutheran World Federation and other ecumenical organisations by granting funding in order to smooth out sudden, unexpected changes. It was

decided to transfer 1.7 million Euro as core capital. The fund will be augmented through collections and contributions from other funds and through accruing interest.

Implementation of the Porvoo agreement

The implementation of the Porvoo Declaration linking the Lutheran churches of the Nordic and Baltic countries and the Anglican churches in Britain and Ireland was brought to an administrative conclusion in 2001 when the changes required by the *Declaration in the Church Act and Church Order* were made. A priest of a signatory church can be exempted from the obligation to belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in order to minister in our Church. Finnish citizenship is no longer a compulsory requirement for a vicar of a parish, member of the Church Council or incumbent of a bishop's position.

The Anglican Church in Finland has long been active in several localities, but the Porvoo Declaration has made it possible for activities once entirely Lutheran to be undertaken in collaboration with the Anglican Church. Many Lutheran pastors have been granted Permission to Officiate, a right to perform Church rites according to the Anglican order.

A meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, in March 2002 to address the theme of *Leading the Church in a Changing World* served to forge links between church leaders. The meeting considered leadership from the perspective of mission and also developed ideas to activate joint information of member churches and to bring the younger members of the churches into more visible interaction.

The 10th anniversary of the completion of the text of the Porvoo Declaration was celebrated in Porvoo and in Helsinki in October 2002 (*Porvoo Day*). Those present included representatives from almost all the churches belonging to the Porvoo communion. The theme of Porvoo Day was *Common Mission and Service*.

Relations to organs of inter-church co-operation

Our representative on the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) was the Rev. *Mari Kinnunen*, and in the Faith and Order commission the Rev. *Antti Saarelma*. Our representative in the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC was Bishop *Voitto Huotari*. The last meeting of the commission was held in Järvenpää, Finland in June 2002.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland decided to participate in the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence 2001–2010 under the theme *From Violence to Reconciliation* and selected focal campaign issues where intervention was desired in Finland: domestic violence, the culture of violence in the world of children and young people and racism and xenophobia.

The *Charta Oecumenica – Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe*, drafted by the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the (Catholic) Council of European Bishops' Conference (CCEE) was signed in April 2001 in Strasbourg. The document was published in Finland by the Ecumenical Council of Finland, which approved for purposes of ecumenical movement in Finland the recommendations *Good Manners in Ecumenism*.

In September 2001 the CEC arranged a major diaconia conference in Järvenpää. More than 130 delegates convened to consider the position and mission of diaconia in Europe, the role of diaconia in migration and refugee issues and racism, trafficking in human beings and the sex industry. In the same month in Helsinki the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland hosted a joint consultation between the Orthodox CEC member churches and the Protestant Churches in the Leuenberg Fellowship.

FinnChurchAid co-ordinator *Sylvia Raulo* was a member of the Central Committee of the CEC right until the 12th general meeting arranged June-July 2003 in Trondheim, Norway on the theme *Jesus Christ Heals and Reconciles: Our Witness in Europe*. At that meeting the Rev. *Matti Peiponen* was elected to the Central Committee of the CEC.

The European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society (EECCS) merged with the CEC at the beginning of 1999, thereafter becoming an important and extensive mode of operation of the CEC Church and Society Commission (CSC). Our Church co-operated closely with the CSC. Diocesan Dean *Gunnar Grönblom* and Information Officer *Eeva Kemppi-Repo* were CSC members and Gunnar Grönblom was also a member of its Executive Committee. Several other members of our Church also participated in the workgroups set up by the CSC.

The Nordic Ecumenical Council (NER) lost its preconditions for action when the Danish and Norwegian churches decided to resign their membership in 2001. Certain smaller churches also left the NER. It was decided at the Annual General Meeting in 2003 in Iceland to wind up the organisation. In the same year the Sigtuna Foundation set up the *Ekumeniskt institut för Norden*, the Ecumenical Institute for the Nordic Countries. The churches of Sweden and Finland made a major contribution to the start-up by promising funding for the next three years.

Theological discussions and other ecumenical contacts

A theological doctrinal discussion was arranged with the Russian Orthodox Church for the 12th time in Moscow in October 2002. Those involved in the negotiations evaluated the course and outcome of over 30 years of dialogue between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church. Both parties reported that the negotiations have done much to increase the churches' common understanding and brought them closer together. It was decided unanimously that the discussions should continue.

In autumn 2002 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Church of Sweden began doctrinal discussions with representatives of the Catholic dioceses in Helsinki and Stockholm. Negotiations opened with a series of discussions intended to take five years. The theme selected is *Justification in the Life of the Church*. Underlying the negotiations is a *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* according to which

there is an agreement between Lutherans and Catholics on the fundamental truths of justification. The talks now initiated underline the ecumenical importance of the declaration in the Nordic countries. What really set the discussions in motion can be traced back to the 1989 visit of Pope *John Paul II* to Sweden and Finland. The first talks were held in Karjalohja, Finland in 2002, and the second round in 2003 at Djursholm near Stockholm in May 2003, and the third in October 2003 in Turku, Finland.

The shared St. Henrik's Mass in Rome for Lutherans and Catholics has become an important event in the week of prayer for Christian unity. A common service was held annually on a regular basis, and various bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland took turns in celebrating the Mass together with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in Finland.

Archbishop *Jukka Paarma*, accompanied by a delegation, visited China in November 2002, where an inter-church co-operation agreement was signed between the China Christian Council and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. The agreement has served to activate direct contacts between parishes of the Finnish and Chinese churches.

The Evangelical Lutheran churches of Finland and Namibia achieved rapprochement in the period covered by the report. In March 2000 a co-operation agreement was concluded between the Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Namibia and the Diocese of Helsinki. A similar agreement had already been made in 2001 between the Eastern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Namibia and the Diocese of Tampere. A co-operation agreement was concluded between the churches of Finland and Namibia in 2001. In 2002 Archbishop *Jukka Paarma* visited Namibia. This visit included novel co-operation talks bringing together Finns and Namibians co-operating with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Namibia.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland in the period covered by the report engaged in scholarship exchange with the Lutheran churches of Ingria, Estonia and Hungary, and also with the Russian Orthodox Church. The Church moreover funded short-term annual study visits to Finland of scholarship holders of

the North American Suomi-Synod and arranged for study stipends to Germany and North America.

Work with partnership parishes

Work with sister parishes is an important part of the foreign relations of the local parishes. Such activities at their best promote connections between churches, parishes and their members as well as growth in Christian faith and service. In 2003 there were some 250 partnership parish connections. Most such connections were with Lutheran parishes in Estonia (97), Ingria (88) and Hungary (54). A co-operation agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Finland and Ingria was signed in April 2000.

In addition to this the Finnish parishes, deaneries and dioceses have sister parish links to many other foreign churches, including those in Latvia, Romania, Germany and Namibia. In the period covered by the report several ecumenical partnership parish links were forged with the Russian Orthodox Church in the Dioceses of St. Petersburg and Ladoga.

Ecumenical activities in the local parishes

The Lutheran parishes have numerous activities with the other Christian organisations operating within their areas. Such activity was most common with the Orthodox Church, engaged in by 235 parishes in 2003, with the Pentecostal movement (in 217 parishes) and the Free Church of Finland (in 112 parishes).

Local ecumenical links assume many forms, the most common in 2003 being shared activities (39% of parishes), visiting speakers between parishes (34%), sharing premises (32%) and joint meetings of parish workers (28%). Of the Lutheran parishes 35% reported arranging a Week of prayer for Christian unity together with other churches. The positive attitude of the Lutheran parish workers to the churches with which they co-operate lays a sound foundation for ecumenical co-operation.

Links between churches within Finland

In the period covered by the report the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland engaged in bilateral theological negotiations with the Orthodox Church of Finland, the Evangelical Free Church, the Pentecostal movement, the Baptists and the Methodist churches.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland moreover maintains regular contact with almost all the other churches and Christian organisations in Finland via the Finnish Ecumenical Council (FEC), which is the most important ecumenical organisation in Finland. At the end of 2003 there were 12 members, churches and Christian organisations. There were 20 observers. The Rev. *Jan Edström* of the Finnish Swedish-speaking Baptist mission continues to serve as the Secretary General of the FEC. The Christian churches and organisations in Finland celebrated the two thousandth anniversary of the Birth of Jesus Christ ecumenically at the turn of the millennium. This memorial year began at Advent 1999 with the theme *Year of Joy – Year of Hope*. The most notable event in the Year of Joy was the ecumenical event arranged in June. At the same time the 700th anniversary of Turku Cathedral was celebrated. The joint Year of Joy ended at Easter 2001, when Easter fell at the same time according to both the Western and Eastern (Julian) calendars.

The need for inter-denominational activities became only too obvious after the terrorist attacks of September 11. Terrorism and the "war against terrorism" constituted a threat to world peace. The churches and ecumenical organisations did their utmost to promote peaceful conflict resolution. President *Tarja Halonen* convened representatives of the various religions to contemplate the relations between them and the prevention of conflicts. For the first time in Finland shared prayer meetings of the different religions were arranged for peace.

In 2002, after much time had been devoted to its preparation the Finnish Ecumenical Council completed its idea bank for local ecumenism entitled *Opportunities for Local Ecumenism*. The idea bank, available on the homepages of the Ecumenical Council provides actors in the local parishes with ideas for arranging

ecumenical activity at the local level and how, for example, ecumenical worship can be planned and implemented.

Ministry to Finns abroad

The ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland to Finns abroad has traditionally depended on co-operation between churches and the integration of the Finnish parish work into the work of the local churches. This principle and action model do not fit well in the changed situation in which emigrants are only temporarily living away from Finland. Many Finns abroad think they are Finnish members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, and intend to return to Finland. This being so they feel no need to integrate permanently into the society and church of the place they are stationed. This frequently concerns people in business life, students or researchers. The same attitude is also to be found in what are known as tourist parishes, most of whose members spend the winter in the warmth of the south then return to Finland for summer.

Quantitatively Sweden is by far the greatest arena for Finns abroad. The Church of Sweden is firmly committed to this work and has created almost 100 official posts for work using the Finnish language – many of them for clergy. The Church of Sweden has also had its own church books translated into Finnish. The Finnish-language version of the hymnal of the Church of Sweden was introduced at Advent 2003. Nevertheless the *Church Order of 2000* has on the other hand given rise to uncertainty regarding the work done in the Finnish language and its future. The new document assigned the responsibility for work done using minority languages in the Church of Sweden to the local parishes, thereby causing the role of the dioceses and the Church as a whole (Uppsala Central Office) to decrease greatly.

At the time of the tragic terrorist attacks in New York a process of merging the two Finnish parishes in the city was ongoing. This development culminated in the completion of the merger in 2003, and in October that year the 100th anniversary of the older parish was celebrated.

Regarding work with tourists a survey and needs analysis were carried out. One of the concrete outcomes was the transfer of the work in Rhodes and Cyprus from the Seamen's Mission to the care of the Church Council as of and including summer 2002 and a cooperation agreement regarding the participation of the workers at the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, Bangkok in the work with Finns abroad in Thailand as of 2002. The custom of dispatching a priest to Florida for the winter was abandoned as of 2002, which is due in part to the effects of the terrorist attacks of September 11 on the tourist industry. The permanent post of the tourist priest in Tenerife was transferred in 2003 to the Costa del Sol in Spain as that of a second pastor with special focus on diaconial work. The post of co-ordinator of work with tourists at the Department for Foreign Affairs of the Church Council, which had existed on a project basis was made officially permanent as of 2003.

An agreement on co-operation was made with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) in October 2002. The aim of this agreement was to develop co-operation between the churches and ensure that the ministry of the Church was available to Finns living in Germany and to Germans living in Finland. Such agreements have been concluded at times ever since the 1970s, but the new agreement subsumes an extensive common theological rationale in the form of a common doctrinal basis. At the same time the 25th anniversary of the German work with Finns and its central organisation The Finnish Centre for Church Work (SKTK).

In the period covered by the report the dwindling Finnish parishes in Australia also managed in part with project priests on short visits. This trend is also beginning to emerge elsewhere, for example in Canada. The tours for Christmastime services from Finland to Brazil, Argentina and Chile continued on a yearly basis.

In 2003 the Finnish State approved the principles of dual citizenship according to which a Finnish citizen may also be a citizen of some other country. This was welcomed among Finns resident abroad. However, the cost of applying for citizenship, especially in the poorer countries, constitutes an impediment.

10. MISSIONARY WORK AND INTERNATIONAL DIACONIAL WORK

Missionary work in the parishes

Missionary work is part of the basic tasks of every parish. There were full-time workers employed for this purpose, mission secretaries, in approximately 100 parishes in 2003. In many parishes there was a mission secretary on a fee-paying basis or as a volunteer, or then the tasks of the mission secretary were included in the workload of some other employee.

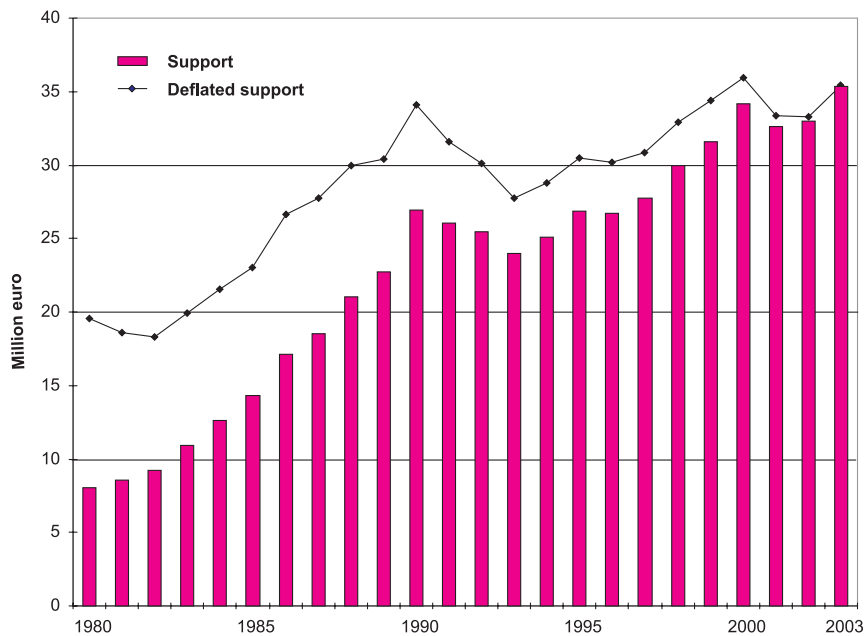
A considerable part of the parishes' missionary work is done on a voluntary basis. The most common forms of voluntary missionary work in the parishes were bazaars (in 91% of parishes in 2003), missionary occasions (90%), missionary circles (78%) and missionary lunches (70%). The number of permanent missionary work circles decreased in the period covered by the report by some 10%, and the number of participants in them by about 14%. As the traditional missionary activity of the parishes declines the operating culture of the mission work which was so dependent on it is changing.

There has been an increase in the interaction between the local parishes and the mission churches in the field. Representatives of the co-operation churches in 2003 visited 141 parishes (24%) and 84 parishes (14%) reported visits to foreign areas of missionary work in 2003.

The financial support of the parishes for missionary work continued to increase. The entire amount of the support rose from 31.6 million Euro (1999) to 35.4 million Euro (2003), making an increase of some 12%. The growth in the budgetary allocations made by the parishes for missionary work was particularly notable. This was duly influenced by the recommendation of the Bishops' Conference to the parishes to give one percent more of their

taxation revenues as a gift in the *Year of Joy* to the Church missionary organisations and to FinnChurchAid. These special allocations made it possible to embark on several projects in various fields. They included Bible work and theological training in China, education and health care in Ethiopia and church construction in Namibia.

Figure 18. Support for the missionary work of the parishes 1980–2003



In the activities begun at the beginning of the 1990s (in Ingria and Estonia) one contributory factor has been way in which a new kind of outwardly oriented activity was begun in the parishes in an effort to help those in need. As the foreign population of Finland increased, another contributory factor was an awakening of missionary zeal in the parishes. Many parishes came to realise that the need to bear Christian witness and render service was greater before in the home country. Development processes were set in motion in many parishes in an attempt to see international and missionary responsibility more clearly and widely as a part of what the parish is there to accomplish.

Missionary work of the Church

The period covered by the report witnessed an acceleration of the international, ecumenical and also the Finnish theological missionary work. This was largely attributable to changes in the overall situation of missionary work. For some time now the number of Christians in the southern hemisphere has been growing, while in the northern hemisphere it has been decreasing. This development is causing the focus of Christendom to move south.

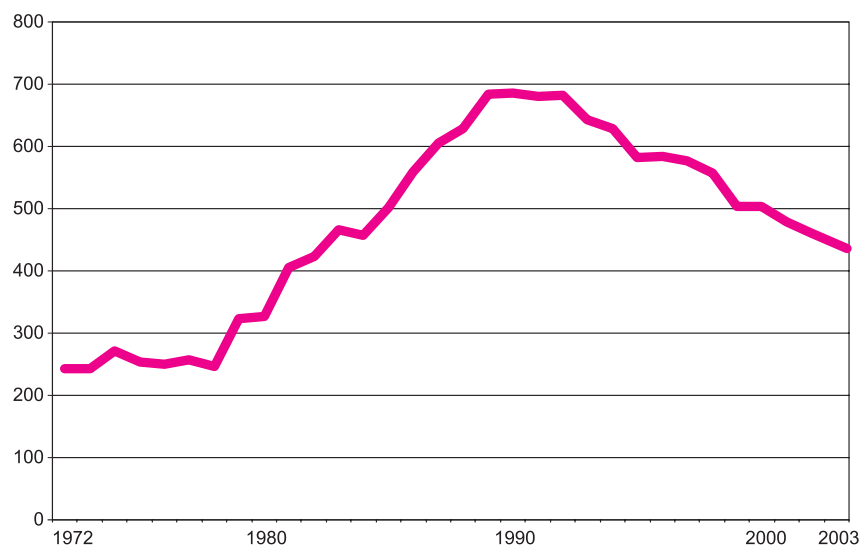
Changes are also occurring in the forms of missionary work. The change concerns primarily the position and task of the missionary worker. What was once traditionally a matter of sending out missionary workers is now becoming more complex activity increasingly dependent on reciprocity.

Table 7. Numbers of missionary workers of official organisations by continent at the end of 2003

| Countries by continent | No. of Workers | Countries by continent | No. of workers |
|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Bangladesh | 11 | UK | 2 |
| Hongkong | 11 | Austria | 1 |
| Israel | 19 | Croatia | 4 |
| Japan | 35 | France | 7 |
| Jordan | 3 | Germany | 8 |
| Near East | 29 | Slovakia | 1 |
| Mongolia | 14 | Russia | 44 |
| Nepal | 9 | Estonia | 5 |
| Pakistan | 6 | EUROPE TOTAL | 72 |
| Taiwan | 12 | | |
| Thailand | 14 | | |
| Others | 18 | Venezuela | 13 |
| TOTAL FOR ASIA | 181 | TOTAL FOR LATIN AMERICA | 13 |
| | | | |
| Angola | 14 | | |
| Botswana | 14 | Papua New Guinea | 14 |
| Ethiopia | 43 | TOTAL FOR OCEANIA | 14 |
| Cameroon | 9 | | |
| Kenya | 25 | TOTAL FOR ALL CONTINENTS | 445 |
| Namibia | 8 | | |
| Zambia | 3 | | |
| Senegal | 26 | | |
| Tanzania | 23 | | |
| TOTAL FOR AFRICA | 165 | | |

Missionary work is increasingly understood to be a task devolving upon the Church, to be carried out in the form of inter-church co-operation. This development has caused the responsibility and role of our own Church to be scrutinised in the field of operations which has traditionally been deemed the province of the missionary organisations. Many co-operation churches in the south would like to be able to make inter-church agreements on missionary cooperation rather than making them with the missionary societies as is the case at present. On the other hand the Finnish parishes are increasingly keen to assume a more active role in the planning and implementation of missionary work. Closer interaction and co-operation between the missionary societies and the international diaconia have also been deemed desirable.

Figure 19. Number of missionary workers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland 1972–2003.



The number of missionary workers continued its decline by 11.5% in the period covered by the report. The decrease since 1990 is 35%. It has been difficult for the missionary societies to find sufficient people willing to be sent out. As the worker resources of

the southern churches increase it may be that the need for traditional missionary workers at grassroots level will not be so great, nor in so many professions.

Missionary organisations

There are eight official missionary societies in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission being the largest of these. In 2003 this organisation had workers in 20 different countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and Oceania.

At the end of 2000 the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission completed its document *Faith and mission – Shared Commitment*. The document presents the theological basis of the Finnish Lutheran Mission and the principles of co-operation with churches and organisations in different countries. On the basis of its charter the society compiled a new strategy for the period 2004–2009. This stresses that the core of missionary work is in the parishes, in pluralism and in reciprocity. Alongside the despatch of missionary workers it is foreseen that there will be an increase in other forms of co-operation. Among the modes of working emphasis was placed on networking.

The head of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, Dean *Seikku Paunonen*, retired at the end of 2001. As his successor the committee appointed the Rev. *Seppo Rissanen*, Dr. of Theology as of the beginning of 2002.

The co-operation of the Mission with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs department for development co-operation continued to be intense. The Society was among the greatest recipients of development aid channelled to organisations. There were tens of projects every year in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

The Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland (LEAF) celebrated its 130th anniversary. The importance of the mission to Japan as the primary field of its operations was emphasised. The most important modes of operating for LEAF continued to be outward bound missionary work, which was continued in Japan,

Cameroon, Kenya, Zambia and Russia. There was moreover support for the Lutheran churches and their organisations in South Korea, Malawi, Papua New Guinea and Estonia.

Table 8. Numbers of missionary workers of the official missionary organisations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland in 2003.

| Missionary organisation | No. of workers |
|---|----------------|
| Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (SLS) | 239 |
| Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland (LEAF) | 47 |
| Swedish Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland (SLEAF) | 6 |
| Finnish Lutheran Mission (FLM) | 88 |
| Finnish Bible Society (FiBS) | - |
| Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission (FLOM) | 56 |
| The Messengers | 9 |

The missionary work of the Swedish-speaking Swedish Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland (SLEAF) continued in Kenya within the Lutheran Church of that country. The situation in Kenya is difficult due to the deterioration in the living conditions of the population, to AIDS and to corruption. At the end of 2003 a training programme was started up for young people entitled the *Rural Education Programme*. Its purpose was to provide some 60 young people with a chance to study. The four-year project is supported by the State of Finland.

The work of the Finnish Lutheran Mission (FLM) in the period covered by the report focussed particularly on the Islamic countries of Asia. The national mission was connected to the Sat-7 organisation broadcasting Christian TV programmes to Arab countries and is involved with similar extensive media projects in Turk-7. At the end of the period in question the focal areas adopted were Japan and Ethiopia.

The Finnish Bible Society (FBS) celebrated its 190th anniversary in 2002. In the period described it continued its activities in Bible translation and dissemination to various parts of the world. It carried out its Biblical work in collaboration with the worldwide United Bible Societies network with various churches and other missionary societies of our Church. The Secretary General of the FiBS, *Markku Kotila* was elected Chairperson of

the FiBS Europe – Middle-East Area Board in March 2001 in March 2001. In the period covered by the report on new focal area of the FiBS was the Bible and literacy work with the indigenous peoples of South America.

In recent years the focus of the work of the Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission (FLOM) has shifted to Asia. Among the more noteworthy events were the official registration and expansion of the Mongolian parish work. FLOM workers in Central Asia continued work in various aid and health care projects, at times in conditions of war. There was a reduction in the number of those sent to Tanzania and Ethiopia after the turn of the millennium, but this turned into an increase in Ethiopia during 2003.

The organisation called The Messengers in its foreign operations concentrated on financing Christian radio programmes for Asia, The Near East and the Far East, Africa and Europe, and on supporting the minority Lutheran churches in Europe. There was a remarkable generational change when the founding director, *Per-Olof Malk* retired, to be succeeded by *Juha Auvinen* as of autumn 2002. A novel work mode in the new era is the *Hanna Operation*, in which a network of women covering virtually the whole of Finland support a programme intended for Asian women. In 2003 radio programmes supported by the organisation were broadcast in 38 languages in Asia, Africa and Europe.

International diaconial work

FinnChurchAid is one of the major NGOs in carrying out the Church's international aid work. FinnChurchAid's strategy is to work mostly through local networks and people. The primary objective of the work is to provide aid locally in a cost-effective manner. The principle of FinnChurchAid has been to emphasise sustainable development, but in practice there has been a great deal of pressure to respond more to humanitarian needs resulting from catastrophes. Alongside the work of providing aid, and advocacy work addressing the structural root causes of poverty has become an increasingly important part of the work.

FinnChurchAid is among the major organisations who support the aid work of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). FinnChurchAid was actively involved when the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) was formed between the southern and northern churches and organisations in 2000. Various Church actors have been able to engage in cooperation in the structural, political and attitudinal problems of poverty through EAA's activity.

Among the international operations supported by FinnChurchAid, mention should be made of the *Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa* programme coordinated by the LWF. The first continent wide consultation was held in Johannesburg in October 2002. A step forward in increasing direct involvement in the field was achieved when FinnChurchAid was registered as an operational organization in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where it is implementing a post-war reconstruction programme.

A highly significant event closer to home was in May 2002, when St. Mary's Church in St. Petersburg, the main place of worship for the Church of Ingria, was consecrated after extensive structural repairs. The repair work on the church was begun in year 2000, and the costs amounted to 3.4 million Euros. FinnChurchAid was responsible for the repair project, which was funded by the parishes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Church Central Fund. St. Mary's Church is the only Lutheran church in St. Petersburg in which services are also held in the Finnish language.

FinnChurchAid employed various approaches to raise the level of the Finnish government development aid contributions to 0.7% of the gross national product. Together with the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, FinnChurchAid mounted a postcard campaign targeted specifically at the parishes, in which people were asked to appeal to their Members of Parliament to have the level of development aid raised.

Changes have occurred in the leadership of FinnChurchAid. *Tapio Saraneva* (ThD.), director of FinnChurchAid for 10 years, passed away in August 2003. *Antti Pentikäinen* was appointed as his successor, taking office in February 2004.

There was a shift at the end of 2003 from the framework agreement system between FinnChurchAid and Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to a partnership agreement. Under the new agreement, the organizations are permitted greater flexibility in their project planning but are required to bear more responsibility for project quality. Thus, the Ministry exercises its control more post facto.

11. COMMUNICATIONS

Communications strategy

The Church produced a new communications strategy entitled *The Communicative Church*. In 2002 this was dispatched for an extensive round of comments, after which it was approved in April 2004. The strategy states that the nature, mission and operations of the Church are of a communicative nature and that the propagation of the Gospel is perpetual task. The characteristics of the communications strategy of a dialogue-oriented church should be respect for all, listening and enquiring, appreciation for diversity, construction of unity and recipient-friendly communication. Three main strategic objectives are presented:

- 1) strengthening dialogue with the focus on personal communication
- 2) strengthening the importance of membership with the focus on children, young people and young adults
- 3) strengthening the presence of the Church in the media with the focus on net communications.

The strategy also advocates the presence of the Church in the mass media in general rather than setting up its own radio and TV stations. It also places greater emphasis on being recipient-oriented, i.e. parish-centred rather than broadcaster-centred.

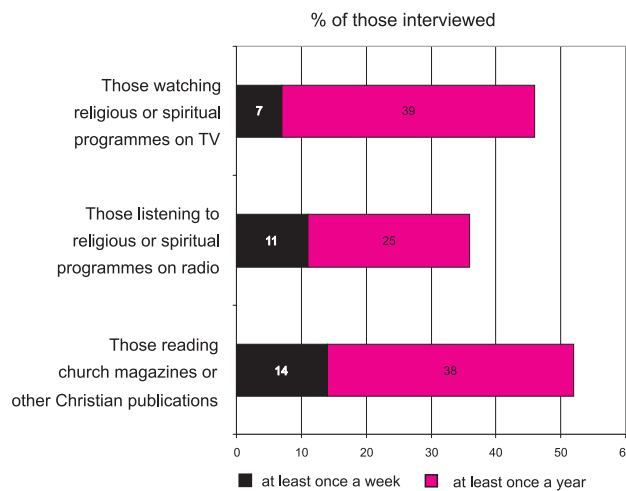
Information dissemination of the Church

The Church Information Centre is responsible for communications overall. In addition to this the larger parishes also have a professional information officer in their employ: in 2003 there were 41 such professionals and 13 unions of parishes reported that their communications were in the charge of a professional information officer.

The larger parishes produced their own parish magazines. In 2003 there were 95 parishes and 12 unions of parishes producing a publication which came out at least twice a year.

Given the population of Finland there are a large number of other church magazines in Finland, the most notable of these being the general church magazine *Kotimaa*. In 2003 its circulation was 51,000, which is 10% smaller than ten years ago. The magazine *Kyrkpressen* has the largest circulation among the church magazines published in Swedish and is sent to almost all the members of the Diocese of Porvoo. Some of the church magazines can also be read on the Internet.

Figure 20. Audiences of some church communications. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2004 (N = 1032).



Church communications on television

Almost half of Finns watched religious or spiritual programmes on television at least once a year. According to the *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2004* survey 7% of Finns reported watching spiritual or religious programmes once a week and 39% less frequently but at least once a year.

The Church's programmes are mostly to be seen on the TV2 channel, where in the period covered by the report there was a distinct increase in the number of church services broadcast. Some 30 to 37 per year were produced compared to 14–17 in the previous four-year period. This increase was made possible by abandoning certain other programmes and planning instead a brief weekly devotional programme. For the period covered by the report audiences of Lutheran church services averaged 139,000–191,000 per year.

The Diocesan Council of the Diocese of Porvoo produced television services in Swedish approximately once a month in co-operation with the Swedish language television network in Finland called Finlands svenska television (FST). Audiences amounted to some 40,000.

The new private Christian television channel TV7 began trial broadcasts on cable in the metropolitan region of Helsinki in December 2003. Digital TV provided an opportunity for short-term TV broadcasting permits but so far no experiments with them have been made in the parishes.

Church communications on radio

Of all modes of communication the Finns spend most time listening to radio. In 2003 the average listening time was 3 hours 36 minutes. Half of this was devoted to the National Broadcasting Company (YLE) channels and half to listening to commercial radio.

More than one third of Finns reported listening to spiritual or religious programmes at least once a year. According to the *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2004* survey 11% of Finns reported listening to spiritual or religious programmes at least once a week and 25% to listening less frequently but still at least once a year.

The production of Lutheran church services in the Finnish language averaged 56 per year. Church services on radio continue to be the most listened to programmes on YLE Radio 1 for classical music and culture, but there has been a clear decline in

the number of listeners. The average for 2003 was 214,000 while in the 1990s it might even exceed 300,000.

YLE Radio 1 broadcasts two Finnish-language morning devotions every day. In 2003 the average number of listeners to the 6.15 broadcast was 79,000 and for the 7.50 broadcast 190,000. In 2003 the average numbers of listeners to the evening devotion were 101,000 on weekdays and 113,000 on Saturdays.

The devotional broadcast *Andrum* in Swedish on Radio Vega at 6.55 reached some 32,000 listeners, the programme *Morgonandakt* broadcast at 8.53 some 49,000 and the programme *Aftonandakt* broadcast at 19.20 some 19,000 listeners. Between 60 and 64 church services in Swedish were broadcast annually, reaching an average of 35,000 listeners.

It has become more difficult to make programmes especially on the channels to which young people, young adults listen. The Church Information Centre began buying campaigns from regional commercial radio chains in order to reach these sections of the population.

In addition to this 96 parishes and 8 unions of parishes reported making programmes for commercial radio channels in 2003. About half of the parishes had obtained broadcasting time free of charge. Numerous parishes produced announcements for commercial radio about forthcoming activities in the parish, current affairs programmes, devotional programmes or the like. A total of 29 parishes reported that their church services were on local radio at least once a month and a further 39 parishes less than once in three months.

Radio Dei, the privately owned general Christian radio channel expanded in the period covered by the report to become a regional channel and many Lutheran parishes, too, sought to engage in co-operation with it. At the end of 2003 the number of people living within the area of Radio Dei amounted to more than 3 million, of whom 74,000 reported listening daily and 174,000 weekly.

12. FINANCE

The finances of the parishes

Most of the income of the parishes comes from the Church taxes paid by members. Each member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland pays a certain percentage of his/her income in the form of church tax. Each parish determines its church tax percentage on the basis of its financial situation. The percentage varies from parish to parish, the average in 2003 being 1.3%. The parishes also receive part of the corporate tax levied by the state. This is considered in Finland to be a compensation for the societal duties discharged by the Church, for example cemetery maintenance. The parishes' share of the revenue accruing from community tax in the country as a whole was 1.63% in the period 2001–2002, and 1.7% in the period 2002–2003. In 2004 it was 1.8%. The rise in the proportion of corporate income tax compensated for the tax reductions introduced in 2003, which reduced church tax revenue. The compensation covers a quarter of the drop in tax revenue.

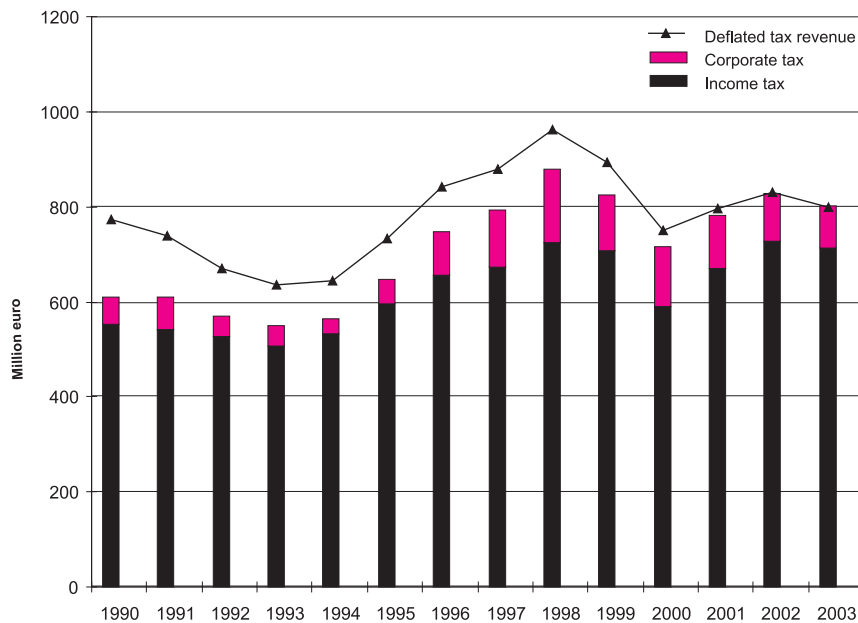
Table 9. Church tax and community tax in millions of Euro for the period 2000–2003 and the annual changes.

| | Church tax | change % | Corporate tax | change % | Total taxes | change % |
|--------------------------|------------|----------|---------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| 2000 | 591 | 2.0 | 125 | 6.3 | 716 | 2.7 |
| 2001 | 671 | 13.4 | 111 | -11.2 | 781 | 11.8 |
| 2002 | 727 | 8.4 | 99 | -10.8 | 826 | 3.0 |
| 2003 | 714 | -1.8 | 86 | -12.5 | 800 | -3.1 |
| Period covered by report | | 23.1 | | -26.4 | | 15.0 |

There was an overall increase of 15% in the taxes received by the parishes in the period covered by the report. The church taxes paid

by members increased by 23% and in 2003 amounted to 714 million Euro. The amount of corporate tax diminished by 26%, being 86 million Euro in 2003.

Figure 21. Tax income of the parishes 1990–2003.



Each parish is fiscally independent. However, as some of the parishes are poor and some are rich the differences in income are evened out through the aid mechanism of the Church Central Fund. Each parish pays some of its tax revenues to this fund, which then assists the financially weaker parishes. In 2001 the system for such aid was change such that the richer parishes paid as much as 20% of the corporate tax they received to the central fund.

The operating costs of the parishes increased by 22% in the period covered by the report. Personnel costs accounted for 61–62% of all costs. In the last ten years the parishes have greatly increased their investments. This is partly due to the fact that in the early 1990s, as a consequence of the economic recession, the

parishes reduced their investments, which has made itself felt in the years thereafter.

The operating margin, i.e. the difference between operating costs and operating incomes increased by 23% in the period covered by the report and investments by 30%. At the same time the increase in the parishes' incomes was 15%. The annual margin was insufficient in the four-year period to cover the costs of all investments and repayments of loans.

At the end of the period covered by the report the finances of the Church continued to be healthy. The cash assets of the parishes at the end of 2003 would have sufficed to pay the costs of almost 9 months, in the balance the ratio of cash in hand to foreign capital was good, relative indebtedness was small and self-sufficiency remained at 93% as in previous years.

The Church Central Fund

The Church Central Fund is intended to serve as a pension fund for the Church, to even out differences in income between the parishes and to finance the activities of the central administration and the dioceses. The pension fund constitutes 75%, aid 10% and other operations 15% of the finances of the central fund.

In the period covered by the report the Church's pension fund has been purposefully developed with the objective of operating on the same principles as other pension funds. The pension fund of the Church also joined the reform adopted as of the beginning of 2004. Under the new system all pensions will be paid and all the functions of the pension institution will be taken care of by the pension institution within which applicants for pensions most recently belonged.

The aim of the pension fund is to ensure that pensions will be paid and to even out the development in pensions payments of the parishes, including the time when the large age groups retire. At the end of 2003 the market value of the pension fund was 489 million Euro. The Church's calculatory liability for pensions at the end of 2003 was 2,786 million Euro, of which the pension fund covers 16.8%.

The financing and development of the aid mechanism of the Church Central Fund has been an important focal area since 2000. According to a study conducted in 2001 at the University of Tampere the financial situation of the parishes has declined considerably in the two previous years. Thus the allocation for annual aid was raised. Approximately 15 million Euro is earmarked annually for aid. More attention was also paid to how aid was allocated. This change clearly benefited the situation of the poorer parishes. This aid has also been used to support and encourage co-operation between parishes and various mergers of parishes.

The net costs of the joint operations of the Church (formerly the central administration) increased by some 11% in the period covered by the report. The net operating costs of the dioceses increased in this period by 20%. These increases were due to arranging training related to the reform in confirmation classes and to the addition of one diocesan secretary in each deanery.

13. PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

Number of personnel

In 2003 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland employed a total of 21,319 people. There was an increase of 10.6% in the number of personnel in the period covered by the report. In terms of person-years this is an increase of 6.9%. So measured, the personnel amounted to 15,247. The term refers to the contribution of one worker for one year.

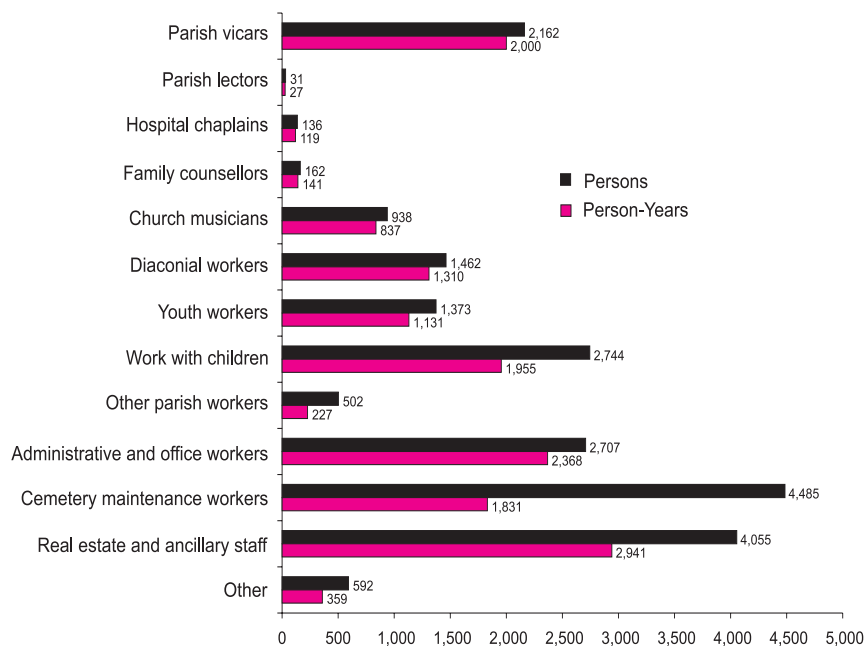
Parish work absorbed 45% (9,510 persons). Parish work is taken to include those working in theological capacities, Church musicians, those in diaconial work, those working with children and young people and certain individuals working in special functions. Measured in terms of person-years the share of parish work amounted to 51% (49% in 1999).

The share of theological workers (clergy in the parishes, lectors, those in hospital chaplaincy, family counsellors) was 15% measured in terms of person-years. The share of those working with children was 13%. The share of Church musicians in terms of person-years was 5%, of diaconial workers 9% and of youth workers 7%.

Compared to other churches a relatively large portion of the workforce of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is employed in other than spiritual functions. This is partly due to the fact that in Finland the Church has social obligations defined by law, such as cemetery maintenance. The Church also owns numerous premises necessitating a large number of maintenance personnel. Measured in terms of person-years 49% of the workforce are engaged in other tasks. Administration and clerical functions account for 16% of person-years, cemetery work for 12%, real estate and service functions for 19% and other functions for 2%.

Those in permanent employment account for 66% of the workforce, those on temporary contracts for 34%. The share of those on temporary contracts rose slightly in the period covered by the report (33% in 1999).

Figure 22. Church personnel by function in 2003

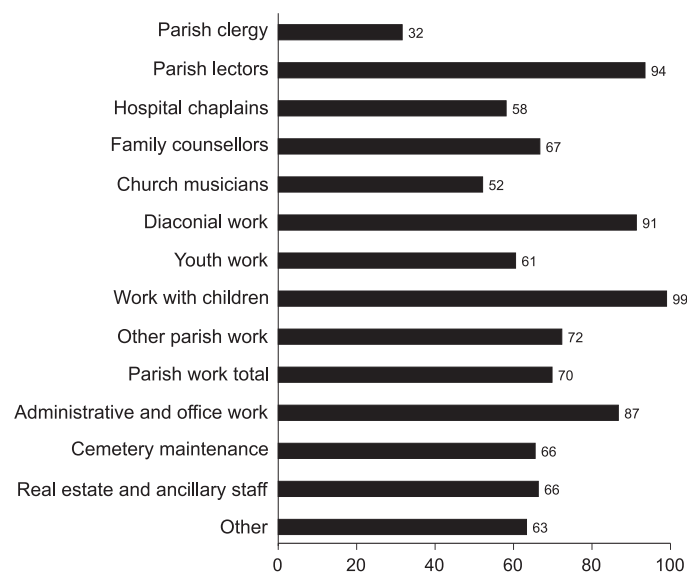


There was an increase in the number of employees in almost all functions in the period covered by the report, during which the increase centred on parish work while the increase in other functions was smaller. The quantitatively greatest increase within parish work was in the group of parish clergy with an increase of 298 (+16%). In diaconal work the increase was almost as great (254 persons, +21%) the only decrease was in the number of lectors (-11%, 4 persons).

Personnel by sex, age and pay structure

The personnel of the Church is predominantly female. In 2002 women accounted for 70% and men for 30% of employees, the share of women being greatest among those working with children, at 99%. Of those in diaconial work 91% were women, as were 32% of parish clergy. There was a 7% increase of women among the parish clergy in the period covered by the report (25% in 1999).

Figure 23. Share of women of the Church personnel by type of function 2003



Age structure and retirement

The average age of those permanently employed by the Church is particularly high. In 2003 the average age was 47.8 years (46.1 in 1999). The share of employees approaching pension age is high and the share of young employees is correspondingly low. The retirement of the large age-groups anticipated in the next few years will cause a drop in the average age and the work organisations will become polarised regarding their age structures. The Church

will simultaneously find itself competing for employees. The age groups approaching the market are on the whole rather smaller than those leaving the market. The share of those over 50 years of age was particularly large and correspondingly the share of those under 35 years of age was small in theological functions and work with children.

The average salary of full-time, permanently employed Church employees in 2003 was 2,020 Euro (in 1999 it was 1,849 Euro). The average wage rose in the period covered by the report by 9.2%. The average wage of men was 2,321 Euro and of women 1,819 Euro. The discrepancy between the men's and women's salaries is due to the different relative shares of men and women in the various functions.

The average overall earnings in 2003 for a full-time, permanently employed worker in diaconial work were around 1,680 Euro, for a youth worker 1,660 Euro and for a Church musician 2,000 Euro, for a clerical worker 1,590 Euro, for a financial manager 2,230 Euro, for a gardener 1,950 Euro, for a manageress 1,620 Euro and for a Church custodian 1,670 Euro. The average wage for a parish priest was 3,252 Euro, for a second pastor 2,540 Euro and for parish clergy 2,250 Euro.

The salaries of Church employees are lagging behind the development of salaries elsewhere in society. Compared to similar functions in other sectors the salaries in the Church are 9% lower. The average discrepancy in salary between the Church and the general labour markets is increasing as the level of education and profession rises.

Training for Church posts and the labour situation

Basic training

The basic training of Church workers takes place within the Finnish education system. In this way those training for Church work also acquire qualifications which enable them to work in society at large. Thus, for instance, deaconesses can also work as

nurses and Church youth leaders can be employed by local authorities as youth workers.

The faculties offering theological education are state-owned and ecumenical in nature. Theological training for work in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is provided by the universities of Helsinki and Joensuu (in Finnish) and by Åbo Akademi University (in Swedish). The Faculty of Theology at the University of Joensuu was founded in 2001. The Faculty is ecumenical and comprises departments for Western theology and Orthodox theology, each with their own degree programmes.

In the period 2002–2003 the total student intake of the theological faculties of the universities of Helsinki and Åbo Akademi and the degree programme in Western theology of the theological faculty of the University of Joensuu was 1,056. Of these 66% were women. During the same period 569 theologians graduated from the master's programmes. Of these 61% were women.

The number of ordinations as priests during the period covered by the report was 339 (436 in the period 1996–1999). Compared to the number of those graduating with master's degrees in theology this corresponds to 60% for the same periods. Of those ordained 58% were women. According to the records of the diocesan dean clergy totalled 3,736 at the end of 2003, with 587 of these retired. Of the clergy registered in all dioceses 28% were women. The share of female clergy was greatest in the Diocese of Helsinki, at 36%.

During the four-year period the employment situation for theologians remained stable. The unemployment rate among the clergy was 2%. Among all those graduating in theology the unemployment rate was somewhat higher. There has been a slight improvement in the employment rate of clergy since the last four-year period.

Table 10. Numbers of those ordained 1980–2003

| Diocese | Ordinations | | | | | | Share of women |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| | 1980–1983 | 1984–1987 | 1988–1991 | 1992–1995 | 1996–1999 | 2000–2003 | |
| Turku | 44 | 34 | 102 | 29 | 60 | 45 | 69% |
| Tampere | 35 | 36 | 124 | 30 | 42 | 41 | 76% |
| Oulu | 33 | 32 | 33 | 63 | 49 | 40 | 40% |
| Mikkeli | 30 | 17 | 64 | 27 | 58 | 52 | 59% |
| Porvoo | 27 | 21 | 49 | 18 | 20 | 25 | 52% |
| Kuopio | 25 | 27 | 65 | 24 | 63 | 46 | 57% |
| Lapua | 32 | 21 | 55 | 26 | 37 | 43 | 42% |
| Helsinki | 69 | 96 | 236 | 90 | 107 | 97 | 61% |
| Entire Church | 295 | 284 | 728 | 307 | 436 | 389 | 58% |
| Lectors ordained | - | - | 375 | 56 | 24 | 16 | |
| Women ordained | - | - | 517 | 132 | 223 | 224 | |

During the period covered by the report there were changes in the eligibility requirements for Church musicians. The change came into force in August 2003, when the minimum requirement was a qualification not less than a polytechnic degree.

The requirement for a cantor is a higher academic degree, which can be taken at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki or in Kuopio. It has been possible to take the polytechnic (AMK) degree programme in music with the option for Church musicians at the polytechnics of Oulu, Turku, Pietarsaari and Tampere. In autumn 2000 a new programme in the field of Church musician was introduced at Pirkanmaa Polytechnic. During the period covered by the report there was a decrease in the number of applicants for such education. During the same period the unemployment rate for Church musicians was approximately 3%.

The Diaconia Polytechnic, which provides education for deacons, deaconesses and youth leaders achieved permanent status in 2000. This polytechnic institution, known as Diak, had 2,900 students at the end of the period covered by the report and eight units. During that same period the number of those graduating from the degree programme conferring eligibility for diaconial work was 400. The nursing qualification subsuming eligibility for diaconial work was taken by 130 people, while those completing the degree as youth workers conferring eligibility to become Church youth leaders numbered 300. In 2003 the unemployment rate among diaconial workers was approximately 5%.

The basic qualification in child care was expanded in the period covered by the report to become a basic degree in child and family work. At the same time the credits requirement rose from 100 Finnish credits to 120 Finnish credits. The new qualification has enabled the spectrum of work for which the graduate is eligible to be extended to family counselling, work in juniors' clubs before and after school and support for religious teaching in daycare and networking. During the period covered by the report a total of 1,100 child care workers graduated, 98% of them women.

In-service training

The Church itself is responsible for the in-service training of Church employees: further training, supplementary training and specialist training. Personnel training refers to training arranged by the parish as the employer or obtained by outsourcing in order to upgrade the functions of the parish and improve the working skills of the personnel.

In-service training is offered by the Church's Institute for Advanced Training, other central departments of the Church Council, dioceses and colleges and also by various Christian organisations. Large parishes and unions of parishes have also put together their own training. Effort was invested in bringing order to the field, which in many ways lacked clarity, by endeavouring to make the co-ordination of Church personnel training clearer.

The most significant reform in training in the period covered by the report was the pastoral training introduced in 2002. Under the reform pastoral training is perceived as a training path beginning with the practical experience gained by theology undergraduates through parish traineeship and continuing throughout the work career. The pastoral qualification forms part of this larger whole, where greater emphasis than before is placed on study through courses, including diocesan elements.

The year 2002 likewise saw the introduction of an aptitude examination connected to pastoral training. Pastoral training entails an introduction to working as a priest. A total of 368 people completed the pastoral qualification in the years 2000–2003, 45%

of them women. Those completing the higher pastoral qualification numbered 26, one quarter of them women. The pastoral qualification is required for those becoming parish priests, while the higher pastoral qualification is required for certain special tasks within the Church.

Since the beginning of 2002 appointment as a vicar has required completion of the qualification in managing parish work. During the period covered by the report a total of 516 people completed this, only 21% of them women, although 32% of clergy working in the parishes were women.

Job satisfaction and personnel well-being

According to various surveys parish employees are mostly content and motivated in their work. Almost the entire personnel report that their work is useful and important. However, certain conflicts are experienced more than in workplaces on average. Conflicts between superiors and subordinates are frequently reported and are clearly more common than in Finnish workplaces in general. More bullying at work was also reported than in other workplaces. Fragmentary leisure time is an obvious problem, particularly in spiritual work. Women especially reported problems in the relation between work and leisure. The threat of serious burnout has also increased since 2001. All in all 21% of parish workers felt that burnout was a serious threat. Nevertheless the motivation to work of those engaged in spiritual work is mostly good.

Problems in the work organisation due to the issue of women clergy emerged in numerous ways in the Church. Overall there was an increase in the number of parish workers who were prepared to accept women clergy. In 2004, 88% of workers accepted women in the clergy without reservation. The share of those opposed to women clergy declined proportionately from 11% to 5%. Those opponents of women clergy refusing to co-operate with them amounted to only 1% (3% in 1999). There was also a decline in the understanding for those opposed to women clergy. More than half of the parish workers reported not being able to understand those opposed to women clergy.

14. REVIVALIST MOVEMENTS

Revivalist movements in the Church are those groups operating within the Evangelical Lutheran Church each with their own doctrinal bias. The revivalist movements have a many-sided significance in Finnish church life. The revivalist movements trace their origins back to protest movements opposed to the secularisation and rigidity of the Church, but over the course of time they came closer to the Church and integrated to become part of the national Church. Their activities serve to enrich the parishes in many ways.

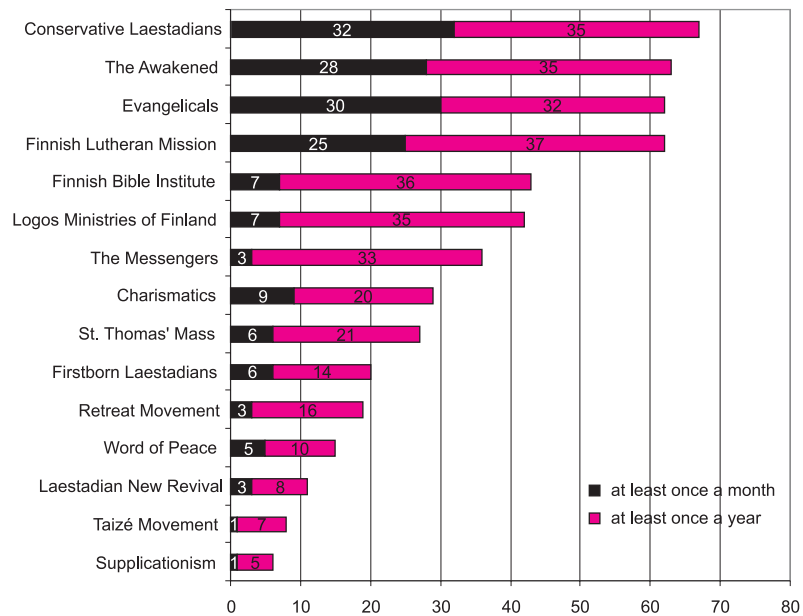
The movements having a widespread influence in our Church are the Laestadians, the "Awakened", the Evangelicals and the Neo-Pietists and the Charismatics, while more recent movements such as the Community of St. Thomas' Mass and the Taizé movement have brought fresh winds and ways of doing things. Although in many parishes these movements have a strong foothold, other movements have shown a small decline in the period in question. No movement seems to have expanded proportionately. It is also noteworthy that many movements of rural origin are now influential in the urban parishes.

According to the survey *Church Monitor 2004* every tenth Finn belongs firmly or loosely to some revivalist movement. Moreover, every tenth has been influenced by some revivalist movement. Among parish workers 53% report that they belong firmly or to some extent to at least one movement. Every third (32%) reports belonging to one movement, 9% to two movements and 6% to more than three movements.

Of the revivalist movements that considered closest to the Church is "The Awakened", and has spread particularly in central Finland. This movement has had the greatest influence on the Finnish clergy and other parish workers. Almost half of parish workers feel an affinity with this movement, whose activities were to be found in almost two parishes out of three. Pietism is characterised by a sense of God's greatness and the smallness of a

human being. In the Pietist view people themselves are not capable of faith and joy: they can only long and await God's mercy.

Figure 24. Activities of revivalist movements in the parish areas in 2003.



The evangelical revivalist movement, which stresses Lutheranism and mercy through baptism, was likewise active in almost two out of three parishes. However, there has been a slight decline in the activity of evangelism in the four-year period. Its most ardent adherents are to be found in Western Finland. It is characteristic of this movement, in contrast to the former, to rejoice in the certainty of faith. Among the elected officials of the Church evangelism is the most influential movement. Altogether 40% of elected officials feel an affinity with the movement, likewise one third of parish workers.

The most fervent support for the Laestadian movement is in the north of Finland. This movement began from the sermons on repentance by Lars Levi Laestadius and later split into several factions. The characteristic feature of the Laestadian conception of faith is the confession of sins and absolution "through Jesus' name and blood." Absolution can only be proclaimed by one who

believes rightly. The Laestadians are total abstainers from alcohol and do not approve of contraception. Of the various branches of the movement the greatest support is enjoyed by the conservative Laestadians, who were active in approximately two parishes out of three. The annual summer mass meeting of adherents of this movement, known as the *Suvisaura*, constitutes the largest religious gathering in Finland, attracting an annual 70,000 devotees. Of the other branches of Laestadianism the largest are the Firstborn Laestadians, the "Word of Peace" and the Laestadian New Revival.

Among the traditional revivalist movements the Supplicationists enjoyed least support, with activities in only 6% of Finnish parishes. Centred in south-east Finland, these believers are characterised by lengthy prayers while on their knees and adherence to the old 18th century form of hymnals and prayer books. In the 1980s there was a split in the movement, due in part to the issue of women clergy.

The geographically most widespread movement coming into being after the Second World War was the Neo-Pietists. This movement is characterised by emphasis on a personal religious solution and repentance. The most widespread of the Neo-Pietist movements is the Finnish Lutheran Mission. During the period covered by the report, however, its support has waned somewhat in the parishes. In 2003 it pursued activities in two out of three parishes. Like the other Neo-Pietist movements it is at its strongest in the east of Finland. Other Neo-Pietist movements with a strong following are the Logos Ministries of Finland and the Finnish Bible Institute.

The Charismatic movement spread to the parishes as of the 1970s. It is characterised by an emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Ghost, such as the healing of the sick, prophesying and speaking in tongues. Over some twenty years the movement has become entrenched among the spiritual movements of the Lutheran Church. In 2003 it was active in more than every fourth parish. The influence of the movement in the local parishes declined somewhat in the period covered by the report.

15. SERVICES MAINTAINED BY THE STATE

The Finnish State continues to maintain and fund certain activities which are of considerable significance to the Church. Religious instruction by religious affiliation according to the various faiths is arranged in comprehensive school and in upper secondary school. The State maintains two Finnish-language and one Swedish-language theological faculty, which are ecumenical in nature. The State takes care of the spiritual care of the military and the prisons. Another tradition is prayer days, confirmed annually by the President of Finland.

Religious education

In comprehensive schools and in upper secondary schools religious education is given according to the religion of the majority. In practice this means that in all municipally organised education in comprehensive and upper secondary schools religious education is arranged according to the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Those belonging to other religions or having no religious affiliation may be granted exemption from religious education. If there are at least three pupils belonging to some other religion they are entitled to religious education according to their faith. Those belonging to no religion and those exempted from religious education are taught philosophy of ethics.

Religious and ethical education are statutory parts of preschool education. Religious education in daycare is Christian in a general sense so that as many children as possible can participate.

The parishes support the religious and ethical education of the municipalities, and maintaining contact with the municipal daycare organisation is an established part of the parishes' work for children. This contact was at its most active with the daycare centres (kindergartens). Co-operation took the form of children's

services and visits to churches, visits to kindergartens by parish workers and visits by children to the premises of the parishes. The most common way of maintaining contact with kindergartens was services, which was done in 83% of parishes in 2003.

Pastoral work in the defence forces

Ecumenical work is done in the Finnish defence forces serving all, regardless of faith or conviction. There is also co-operation with other churches and Christian organisations and with the civil defence organisations. In 2003 there were 26 members of the Lutheran or Orthodox clergy in the service of the military, and a further 20 serving on a part-time or fee-paying basis. In addition to these the work of the Church was carried on by clergy doing their own military service, undergraduates in theology, youth leaders, reservist clergy and deacons and clergy and deacons serving in the UN peace-keeping forces. The military clergy is under the military bishop.

The purpose of this pastoral work is to provide those serving in the defence forces with the spiritual and personal support of the national churches by organising worship, Church teaching and pastoral counselling for the military. This has included services and devotional prayers in units, canteens and hospitals, likewise prayers in connection with field exercises and garrison ceremonies.

The Church has also been working among the UN peace-keeping forces. During the period covered by the report Finnish peacekeepers served in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Lebanon and Macedonia.

Work among criminals

In the largest prisons in Finland in 2003 there were some twenty full-time prison chaplains and deacons. In addition in the open prison there were part-time chaplains who maintained contact with the prison over and above the duties of their own parishes. Those

responsible for the spiritual counselling of prison inmates and the parish workers helped prisoners' relatives in their basic work. Work for those with criminal convictions was also done elsewhere than in prisons. Those released from prison and those serving their sentences in the community or who had conditional sentences need support. Aftercare is among the most important parts of the Church's work for criminals. This Church is expected to provide support especially regarding prisoners' families, the pair relationship, substance abuse problems and housing. The parishes moreover offered places in which community service could be accomplished.

16. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Since the years of the economic depression migration has been considerable. Moving to a new locality is a critical stage in which one's commitment to the Church may easily decline, resulting in resignation from the Church. Going out to meet new arrivals is a special challenge for the parishes.

There was also a good deal of immigration, with a rapid increase in the foreign population in Finland. Despite this Finland continues to be very homogenous regarding ethnicity and religion. However, the increasing number of those who do not belong to the Christian churches poses a growing challenge both to the missionary task of the Church and to the encounter of different religions and religious dialogue.

Another challenge in the work of the Church is the changes occurring in Finns' religiosity. There has been a decline in institutionalised religiosity; religion has become more private. There is a particular challenge in how the Church is to respond to people's spiritual needs and how to reconcile individualistic religiosity with the communal nature of the Church.

Resignations from the Church and the increase in migration have caused a drop in the share of Finns belonging to the Church. The issue of membership is crucial to the preservation of the Church as a church for the people. The frequently tenuous links of the great silent majority of members need to be strengthened. The missionary nature of the Church can be strengthened by utilising the experiences and action models acquired in missions in the Church at home, where effort is made to take the Gospel to those who do not belong to the Church and those who have drifted away from it.

The national Church continues to reach the majority of Finns through its rites. The position of Church rites is very strong and they are highly appreciated, even if in the larger cities they are no longer taken for granted. The opportunity for Church rites is the

main reason for belonging to the Church. Among the reasons for belonging to the Church, the tasks strengthening communality are in general are stressed. The preconditions for developing activities are good given the extensive interface. Church rites are not merely rites of passage; they bring us to the very essence of the message of the Church. They are a means to reach those who attend church only seldom. The discussions in connection with baptisms especially provide a natural channel to meet young adults whose participation in parish life is otherwise passive.

In the appropriate books the reform of the order of service has already been implemented. This has put new tools into our hands. With the reformed order of service, education for worship has become more important than before. The new mass provides ample opportunities for different modes of implementation. However, it is also important for the parishioners to feel that this is their own, regardless of the place in which they worship. It is important in the implementation of services to have consideration for those who only seldom attend worship. Participation in services can be activated by inviting different groups of parishioners. The reformed order of service offers laypersons many options to participate in the planning of services and in their implementation.

A Christian upbringing is crucial to the future of the Church for the people. It is of societal importance as it affects the value base of society. Many of the forms of work connected to upbringing can be used to reach not only children but also young people and their parents. These are the situations in which the Church can support the homes in their children's Christian upbringing. The challenge to the Church in society as a whole is to protect childhood and to ensure peace for children to grow up.

The changes in the age structure of the Finns should be reflected in the focal areas of educational work and in personnel structures. The number of children has declined, which has affected the number of children participating in the work for children. The share of 4 to 6 year-olds in the preschool groups has also diminished as a result of the expansion of preschool education. At the same time new groups have come within the

sphere of activities, and there has been a marked increase in the activities of afterschool clubs for juniors.

Confirmation classes are the cornerstone of the parishes' youth work, remaining consistently popular. The new curriculum for confirmation classes seeks to extend the duration of these and so to offer young people more opportunities to get to know their home parish. Confirmation classes provide a natural channel to get to know the families of these young people at parents' evenings.

The safeguarding of family and marriage is a task in which a stronger voice from the Church is called for. Project-style events intended to develop the pair relationship have reached very young adults. The family counselling provided by the Church is much needed: demand by far exceeds supply.

Appreciation for the work accomplished by the Church and for its public status has increased. The parishes and the Church as a whole engage in co-operation with various authorities. Networking and co-operation can be seen as the typical approach for a Church for the people. The Church is right there where the people are anyway, right in the structures. Yet the Church should take a critical attitude to the functions of various authorities being transferred to the Church, for example in the case of welfare services. And at the same time the Church should not forget that it may never, ever, turn its back on anyone in need.

Volunteer workers are indispensable to the success of many forms of action in the Church. In diaconal work their significance is particularly great. It is for all Church employees to accord volunteer workers the appropriate appreciation, training and support. The Church should be prepared in the future for an increase in the importance of the work of volunteers. The ageing of the population will cause an increase in the number of lonely old people. The importance of volunteers in helping them will increase. This trend will be especially marked in those areas with population loss, and where the relative share of old people will grow as those of working age move away to the growth centres.

There have been momentous changes in the field of communications. The influence of the media is pervasive and also affects images of the Church. Nevertheless personal interaction is what counts most in the image-building of the Church. The

participation of the Church in public debate should be proactive, not reactive.

The Church must be abreast of the development in network communications. One of the greatest problems from the user's perspective is the organisation-centred manner in which the Church and parish Internet services are arranged. The point of departure for the portal currently in the planning stage is user-friendliness, and the implementation is otherwise to be interactive. The same applies to the parishes' homepages to serve parishioners in the best possible way. The national Church should be there for the people in their everyday lives – the net is increasingly a part of Finns' everyday lives.

The number and structure of the Church personnel is such that it will have to be critically assessed in the future, merely due to considerations of finance, migration and membership and to changes in the age structure. In 5 to 10 years a considerable part of the Church employees will retire. As an employer it will be for the Church to ensure that ageing workers can cope as well as possible at work. There must be an active search for solutions to problems with coping at work and with the work organisation. As the large age groups retire there will be competition for labour. The Church will need to be competitive as an employer.

The overall picture of the international responsibility of the Church is fragmented. Missionary work, international diaconial work, ecumenical work, work with Finns abroad, work with immigrants and joint activities with sister parishes are perceived ever more clearly to be the entirety of the Church's international responsibility. The perception of international responsibility as a part of the work of the local parish presents challenges to increase co-operation among various actors, also at the level of planning, decision-making and implementation of the Church as a whole.

In Finland the ecumenical perspective is thriving. Legislation, documents, the official relationships of the churches and organisations and the annually held thematic weeks and days ensure the place of the ecumenical dimension in the life of the Church. At the local level, however, there are great differences due to ecclesiastical geography and the leaders of the parishes, and also to the ecumenical attitudes of other workers. It is a challenge

for all parishes to sustain the ecumenical dimension, for example through training. The local parishes should also be actively informed of the results achieved in negotiations with various churches.

The work with Finns abroad is facing new challenges. The marked structural change in the emigration of Finns and their far-flung departures to completely new areas is a tough challenge for the work of the Church for Finns abroad, compelling the more energetic development of co-operation with other actors. A major challenge in the traditional destinations of Finnish emigrants, such as Sweden and Germany, is posed by the ageing of Finns abroad, who expect support measures from Finland and the Church of Finland. Work with tourists is a strong and expanding area of the work with Finns abroad. In this field people are becoming active who, while living in Finland, had little to do with the Church.

As a result of migration flows the remote localities and the growth centres are becoming unequal. The uneven distribution of the population also puts the parishes and dioceses in unequal positions, with regard to both finance and membership. While the jobs are centralised around the great conurbations, the population elsewhere is dwindling and incomes are diminishing. This trend is clearly visible in the tax revenue statistics of the parishes. The Church as a whole is still able to support parishes in financial distress so as to find the best solutions to bring expenditure and revenue into balance. This poses challenges for the assistance mechanisms of the Church. Merging of parishes is also something which should be openly considered.

The parishes should be prepared for a decline in their finances in the future. The matter of the Church pension institution is a major individual issue in the overall Church finances. Its future will need to be resolved in the next four-year period.

A common strategy for the Church has been drawn up, and many areas of its work have their own strategies. The parishes are required to prepare their own long-term plans. Strategy work must not be confined to the paper it is printed on; the strategies must be implemented when work is planned and evaluated. The profound nature of spiritual life does not reveal itself in human evaluation, nor can many of the Church's main objectives be quantified. But

there are indeed areas where objectives can and must be clearly set, so that it is possible to evaluate their achievement. Thus it is also possible to evaluate when we are focussing on the essential and if we are using our resources to best advantage. The Church statistics compiled annually are largely based on information gathered in the local parishes, likewise the four-year report of the Church. These statistical data can serve not only the entire Church, but also the individual parishes in the evaluation of their own activities, showing the changes occurring in the various forms of action.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has many strengths and good preconditions for action. The changes noted in the period covered by the report suggest that they are not to be taken for granted. The Church must develop – inasmuch as it is humanly possible – in its spiritual task, its identity as an enlightened Church for the people which is present in the people's daily lives and in the changes in the life of society.