

# **Community, Participation, and Faith**

**Contemporary Challenges of the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church of Finland**

---

ISBN 978-951-693-327-9

Printed by: Unigrafia 2013

Cover design: Linnea Ekstrand

# Content

---

<b>Preface</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1 Religion and the changing culture</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2 Finnish society and religion – basic facts</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3 Changing patterns of religiosity</b>	<b>33</b>
3.1 Religious identity	33
3.2 Christian beliefs	35
3.3 Religious participation and activity	39
3.4 Religion in public life	42
3.5 Finns' relation to the Church	46
<b>4 Members</b>	<b>50</b>
4.1 Belonging to the Church	50
4.2 Baptisms, deaths and migration	54
4.3 Resigning from the Church	55
4.4 Joining the Church	58
<b>5 Worship services and other parish activities</b>	<b>61</b>
5.1 Developing worship services and church ceremonies	61
5.2 Worship services and other public events	63
5.3 Church ceremonies	70
5.4 Other parish activities	72
<b>6 Education</b>	<b>76</b>
6.1 Trends in education	76
6.2 Early childhood education by the Church	78
6.3 Work with preadolescents	81
6.4 Confirmation school	83
6.5 Youth work	84

6.6 Special youth work	85
6.7 Work in schools and educational institutions	86
6.8 Work with young adults	87
6.9 Work with adults	89
<b>7 Pastoral care and family counselling</b>	<b>91</b>
7.1 Pastoral care in the parishes	91
7.2 Family counselling and family work	92
7.3 Hospital pastoral care	94
7.4 Telephone Helpline and Online Help	96
7.5 Readiness for catastrophes and crises	98
<b>8 Diaconal and social work</b>	<b>100</b>
8.1 Diaconal work in the parishes	100
8.2 Work with the disabled	104
8.3 Work with substance abusers and convicts	105
8.4 Church and society	106
8.5 Multicultural work	107
8.6 Common Responsibility Campaign and other aid work	108
<b>9 Mission work and international diaconia</b>	<b>112</b>
9.1 Mission work as duty of the Church	112
9.2 Mission work activities and international diaconia in parishes	113
9.3 Church employees' and elected representatives' views on mission work	114
9.4 Missionaries	116
9.5 Organisations of mission work and international diaconia	117
9.6 Financial aid to mission work and international diaconia	120
<b>10 Inter-Church operation</b>	<b>122</b>
10.1 Ecumenical activities in Finland	122
10.2 Church's external affairs	126
10.3 Expatriate work of the Church	131
<b>11 Church, media and communication</b>	<b>133</b>
11.1 Church in the internet	134
11.2 Church communications on television	135
11.3 Church communications on radio	137
11.4 Church information dissemination	138
<b>12 Administration</b>	<b>140</b>
12.1 Parishes	140
12.2 Dioceses	145
12.3 General administration of the Church	146

<b>13 Economy</b>	<b>150</b>
13.1 General trend in the economy of parishes	150
13.2 Parish economy	151
13.3 Central Church Fund's economy	154
<b>14 Personnel, education and elected representatives</b>	<b>159</b>
14.1 Quantity and structure of personnel	159
14.2 Employees' views of directions of Church's development	163
14.3 Recruiting, education for office in the Church and labour situation	164
14.4 Developing and training personnel	168
14.5 Elected representatives	169
<b>15 Revival movements and organisations</b>	<b>172</b>
15.1 Revival movements as part of Church	172
15.2 Support and distribution of revival movements	174
15.3 Religiosity of revival movement supporters	177
15.4 Prayer Movement	179
15.5 Awakening Movement	180
15.6 Evangelical Movement	180
15.7 Laestadian Movement	181
15.8 Fifth revival Movement	182
15.9 Charismatic Movement	183
<b>16 Services maintained by the state</b>	<b>185</b>
16.1 Religious education	185
16.2 Church work in the Finnish Defence Forces	188
16.3 Work with convicts	190
<b>Challenged Church – conclusions</b>	<b>191</b>



# Preface

---

This book describes and analyses the situation and the activities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland in the turn of 2010s. In the past few years, the Church has been challenged from many different directions. Due to the mergers of municipalities, also the parish structures are undergoing changes. The trend in the economy of parishes presents its challenges to the Church. Individualism has challenged the traditional ways of belonging to a community and participating also in religious activities. The changes in the Finns' values are reflected in the Church and they introduce demands for change. The internal polarisation of the Church into liberals and conservatives has deepened. In public debate, the position of the Church and religion has been challenged through the discussion inspired by New Atheist books, for example.

The basis of the book consists mainly of the material collected for the Church's four-year report 2008–2011. The Church's four-year reports have been made on the assignment of the General Synod every four years ever since 1967. Their purpose is to describe and analyse the changes and trends in the Church and its operating environment. The basis of the four-year report consists of the statistics collected from the parishes and surveys that have been carried out.

The 2000s has been an active time of writing strategies and plans in the church. The strategy titled *Our Church - a Participatory Community* outlining the Church's operation was approved in 2008 and it gives the guidelines for the Church's operations till 2015. In addition to this, several other strategies and policies were completed in

the four-year term, and this book describes their effectiveness and significance.

The authors of this book are Dr. Hanna Salomäki and Dr. Harri Palmu, the directors of the Church Research Institute, and the researchers Dr. Kimmo Ketola, Adjunct Professor Kati Niemelä, Adjunct Professor Maarit Hytönen and Dr. Veli-Matti Salminen.

The numerous units of the Church administration have prepared assessments and reviews of their respective operational fields for the authors to use. Also other personnel at the Church Research Institute have made their contributions at various stages of the preparation of the book. The ADP work on the questionnaire data, the graphic design and layout were done by Risto Nissilä, research assistant. Temporary research assistants Kyllikki Hovila, Satu Ikonen and Maija-Kaisa Innanen and Pekka Innanen took care of the preliminary processing of the questionnaires and ADP entries, including the reception of responses to the various questionnaires from all parishes. Anita Ågren, administrative assistant and research secretaries Hanna Lilius and Satu Ikonen contributed at various phases. The Finnish text was translated to English by Jaana Shelby.

Several survey materials have been used as basis for the research. Every year, the Church Council gathers basic data on demographic changes, operation and economy from each parish. In addition to this, the Church Research Institute gathered from the parishes and federations of parishes more detailed information of the year 2011 using questionnaires designed for different areas of work. These are about general parish work, early childhood education, preteen and youth work, confirmation school, work in schools and educational institutions, diaconia and social work, mission work and international diaconia, communication, personnel, development and administration, operation of religious movements and organisations and immigration and twin parish operation.

Also, data was obtained by sending questionnaires to Church magazines, educational institutions providing Church education, public notaries of the diocesan chapters and Church organisations. Also, minutes of meetings of Church bodies, reports and annual reports, press releases and other researches were used as material. Furthermore, surveys were carried out among par-



ish employees and the elected representatives of parishes in the spring of 2012.

The Finns' religiosity was studied using a survey called *Gallup Ecclesiastica* 2011. The survey was carried out by TNS-Gallup Oy and commissioned by the Church Research Institute. TNS Gallup Forum, a web-based collection of data was used for the first time as collecting method. TNS Gallup Forum consists of about 40,000 Finnish members who represent the active population of Finland between ages 15 and 75. The research questionnaires were filled out online using one's personal computer. The different method may therefore influence somewhat the comparability of the findings with those of previous inquiries, which most often used personal interviews or questionnaires sent by post. The collection of research data was done 18 November – 2 December 2011. The invitation was sent to 7,663 persons and the final data contains the responses of 4,930 persons (64% response rate).

# 1 Religion and the changing culture

---

There are many signs indicating that the Western world is undergoing a transition in values, in which the significance of religions is reassessed. The disputes over public religious symbols and debate on religion sparked among the Western intelligentsia are the most visible demonstrations of this. In the past few years, the accelerating resignations from the Church have fuelled the debate in Finland, as well as the Church's internal disputes on the ordination of women and especially the position of homosexuals.

Finland is increasingly linked to the global social and cultural changes that are influencing in the background of the ongoing transition. The rise of religion into a global political power in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century challenged the modern interpretations of the receding role of religion in society. At the same time, the debate has traces of the post-modern distrust that is directed to all authorities. Many observers of modern life have underlined the distrust of authority associated with its current stage. New awareness of the permanent and even increasing impact of religions and their presence in society combined with a deeper distrust of authorities has resulted in a situation, in which religious phenomena, authorities and institutions are ever more easily objects of public debate and critical exchange of opinions.

This chapter examines the latest phenomena and debate topics that illustrate the changed position of religion in culture. The chapter concludes with an examination of how the Evangelical Lutheran Church has positioned itself lately in relation to the ongoing cultural and social changes.

## Homosexuality and the churches

In the 2000s, there has been much discussion especially about the significance of same-sex partnerships. In Finland, the new law on the registered partnerships of same-sex couples entered into force in 2002. The General Synod was thereafter presented with two initiatives; one of them stated that those living in a registered partnership should not be allowed to work in the Church. The other one proposed that same-sex partners could have their registered partnership blessed by the Church. In 2005, the Bishops' Conference established a working group to examine the theological and legal consequences of the new law on relationships in the Church. The working group published its report in 2009 and the Bishops' Conference's report on the effects of the law on the Church was completed and approved in the General Synod in the autumn of 2010. According to it living in a registered partnership was not a hindrance to having a Church office. The pastoral instructions associated with the report were approved in the Bishops' Conference in the spring of 2011. It said that the pastors can pray for and with those who have registered their partnership. However, the event should not be compared with a wedding, and it should not have elements belonging to a wedding such as exchange of vows and rings.

The position of homosexuals in the Church stirred up broad discussion in society. One of the past years' most dramatic discussions on religion began in October 2010, when Yle TV2 broadcast a live two-hour debate on the position and rights of homosexuals in society. The debate featured both those who advocated broadening the rights of homosexuals and those who were against it. Also, representatives of the Church took part in the debate on both sides of it, among them a pastor and the bishop of Tampere, as well as layman members of revival movements and Christian communities. The debate in the studio was intense and particular attention was paid to

the opinions of those who rejected homosexual lifestyle on the basis of the Bible's teaching on marriage and the relationship between man and woman. According to Yle's viewer statistics, at best 415,000 Finns were watching the programme. In addition, within a week, the programme was viewed online on more than 100,000 browsers.

The TV debate was followed by a lively public discussion in which many public figures took part. Inspired by the public debate, the wave of resignations from the Church accelerated. Already two days after the programme, more than 4,500 members had resigned from the Church. The rapid increase in Church resignations made headlines in the media so that in the next few weeks, the wave of resignations from the church continued to make the news. The increase in the number of daily resignations folded in a week. Still, by the end of the year a total of approximately 40,000 more members had resigned the Church than did for example the year before.

Many Church representatives had to quickly comment in the media the programme and the reaction it caused. Archbishop Kari Mäkinen lamented the fact that people resigned the Church due to issues related to homosexuality and the media stir. He stressed that the Church is considerably more many-faceted than would appear in the heated debate and he hoped that people would not resign but rather participate and influence in the Church with their own voices. In a televised interview, Mäkinen said that the question he hears in the message of those leaving the Church is whether God's love and complete acceptance is really meant for everyone. He also said that he hopes that people could experience that Christ's Church and its faith would be a safe foundation in life for everyone and that nobody would need to remain disconnected.

The quantity of online debate on the programme reached record numbers. The online debate participants of the Church were involved in the discussion from the very beginning underlining that people should influence the Church through voting, not through resigning. Also social media was used to present this theme. The attitude rejecting the homosexual lifestyle represented by several revival movements was also amply covered both in the traditional and in social media, and the Church's internal polarisation in the issue made the headlines.

## Moral change

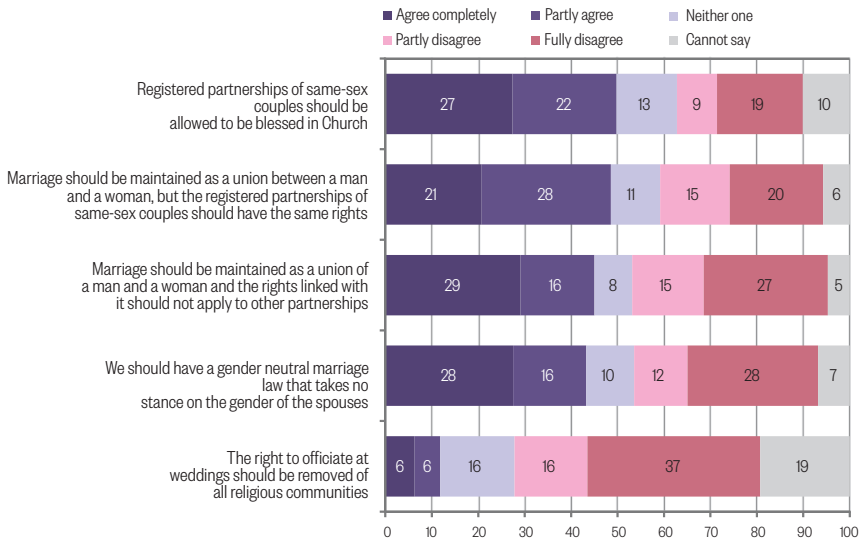
Long-lasting change in moral views can be seen in the background of many disputes concerning religion. This is seen particularly clearly in the changes concerning homosexuality. According to the *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey (N=4,930), 45 percent of Finns somewhat agreed or completely agreed with the statement that marriage should be maintained as a union between a man and a woman and its rights should not be applied to other relationships (Figure 1.1). Finns are clearly divided into two camps on this issue, because nearly equal share, 42 percent, somewhat disagreed or completely disagreed with the statement.

According to the same survey, approximately half of Finns (49%) somewhat agreed or completely agreed with the statement that marriage should be maintained as a union between a man and a woman but registered same-sex relationships should have equal rights. A total of 35 percent of the respondents somewhat disagreed or completely disagreed with this statement. And 43 percent somewhat agreed or completely agreed with the statement that a gender-neutral marriage law should be instituted taking no stance on the gender of the spouses. A total of 40 percent of the respondents somewhat disagreed or completely disagreed with this statement. Half of Finns (50%) somewhat agreed or completely agreed that registered relationships should be entitled to be blessed by the Church. 27 percent of the respondents disagreed with this statement.

On the background of the dispute there is a rapid and profound change in our moral concepts. In 1982, more than half, 56 percent of Finns, had the strictest rejecting stance toward homosexuality when the approval of the issue was measured on a ten-step scale. While in 2009, only 14 percent (Figure 1.2) had an equally strict stance. A drop of more than forty percentage points in less than three decades means a rapid and significant change in attitudes toward homosexuality.

Figure 1.1

Finns' concepts of marriage and of same-sex partnerships. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011, N=4,930 (%).



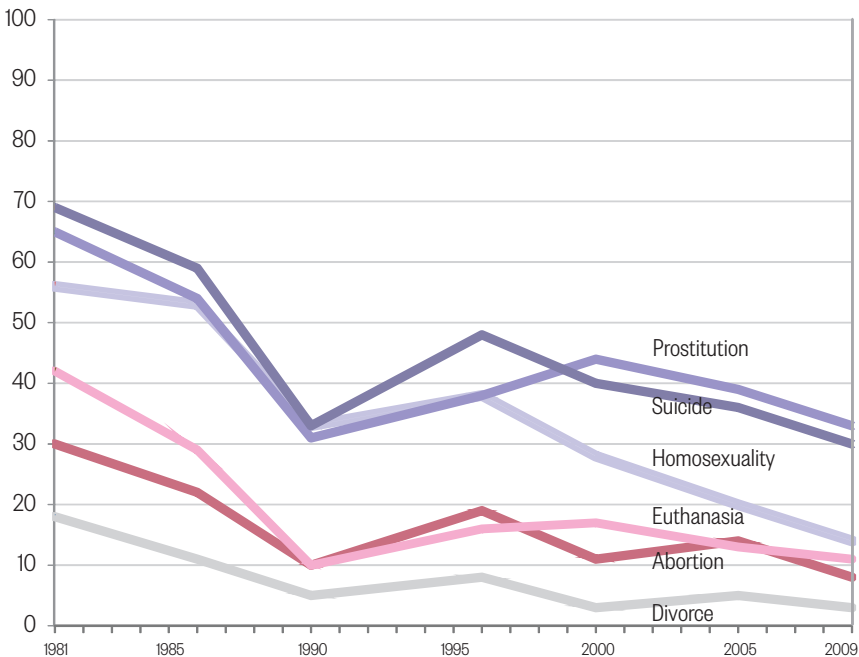
In many moral issues central to the Church's teaching, the change has been similar, but not as steep. The share of those strictly rejecting divorce has dropped from 18 percent to three. Regarding abortion, the equivalent change has been from 30 percent to eight, and for euthanasia from 42 percent to 11 percent. Correspondingly, those absolutely rejecting prostitution have dropped from 65 percent to 33 percent. The share of those rejecting suicide has dropped from 69 percent to 30 percent.

Therefore, in moral concepts, a clear and consistent transition has occurred toward more permissive views. In approval of homosexuality, the change has been particularly rapid. The change is also seen when examining the issue by age group. According to the *European Values Study* of 2009 (N=1,133), only six percent of persons under the age of 25 thought that homosexuality is never acceptable, whereas 44 percent thought that it is always acceptable. In the age group 25-34 years, those absolutely rejecting it made up 10 percent and 51 percent approved. Meanwhile, among persons over the age of 60 years, 23 percent thought that homosexuality is never acceptable and only 22 percent thought that it is always acceptable.

Also the level of education has a clear impact on attitudes toward homosexuality. Those with the lowest level of education have the most strictly rejecting attitudes.

Figure 1.2

Change in moral concepts in Finland 1981-2009. The share of those who would never accept the matter mentioned in a scale of 1 to 10. World Values and European Values Study surveys, N=469-1,134 and Gallup Fennica 1986, N=1,003 (%).



However, the change in moral concepts has not occurred in the same way among all Finns. The observations made by Hanna Salomäki based on the *ISSP 2008* survey clearly indicate that apart from age and the level of education, also religiosity strongly influences moral concepts.<sup>1</sup> The moral concepts of the religiously active population have not become more permissive the same way as those of other

1 Hanna Salomäki: "Uskonto ja suomalaisten moraalikäsitteet." In: Kimmo Ketola, Kati Niemelä, Harri Palmu ja Hanna Salomäki: *Uskonto suomalaisten elämässä*. Yhteiskuntatieteellisen tietokannan julkaisuja 9, 2011, pp. 25-39.

Finns. The least permissive in sexual matters were those, who prayed several times a day and actively participated in religious events. Also the views on the nature of truth of religions and of the Bible strongly influenced moral concepts. Those, who thought that the truth is found in one religion only and in whose view the Bible is literally the word of God, were clearly less permissive in sexual-ethical issues than the rest of the population.

Thus, a situation has emerged, in which a significant gap in values and moral concepts has formed between the religiously active and passive populations. It was exactly the public debate on the position of homosexuals that made visible this long-standing difference. However, similar differences can be seen also in other moral concepts.

### New Atheism

The changes that have occurred in values and moral concepts have created also a basis for the rise of Atheistic criticism of religion. Repeatedly, the New Atheistic debate is about the tension between science and religion that particularly characterises the debate in the United States. In Europe and especially the Lutheran countries, this kind of confrontation has traditionally failed to resonate because the churches in Europe traditionally have emphasised the division of labour between science and religion. However, the challenge that science presents to religion is not the only message of the New Atheism; another equally important goal of the writers is to increase the awareness of religion's negative impact on people's lives. According to the New Atheists, because the truths of faith cannot be subjected to criticism by reasoning, they inevitably feed violence and conflict. The goal is to undermine the general reverence surrounding religion and the broadly shared assumption that faith in God is gentle and beneficial.

Four international New Atheistic bestseller books were translated into Finnish by the year 2008: those of biologist Richard Dawkins (2007), philosopher Daniel Dennett (2007), author Sam Harris (2007) and author-reporter Christopher Hitchens (2008). According to publisher's information, Dawkins' *God Delusion* had sold 4,900 copies by the spring of 2012 and Dennett's and Harris' books 1,000-1,200 copies each.



In various parts of the world the books have sparked lively public discussion on religion, and many intellectuals have taken part in it. The debate has been lively also in Finland. According to the content analysis of *Helsingin Sanomat* done by Teemu Taira, the quantity of articles on Atheism peaked in the years 2007-2010.<sup>2</sup> The quantity of articles on Atheism and Atheists has increased fairly steadily since 1991, but most intensely after 2004. New Atheism was referred to for the first time in 2008 and the greatest number of media items handling it was published in 2010.

Along with the debate, also the organizations representing the nonreligious have made an effort to raise their profile. Inspired by their British role model, the Finnish freethinkers organised an advertising campaign with Atheist messages glued on busses: "God hardly exists. So stop worrying and enjoy life." (Finn. *Jumalaa tuskin on olemassa. Lopeta siis murehtiminen ja nauti elämästä.*) In Turku and Tampere, the advertising sparked resistance in the transportation agency and it was replaced by "Be happy for your life as if it was your only one, because it is." (Finn. *Iloitse elämästä kuin se olisi ainoasi, koska se on.*) The advertising campaign on the busses ran in Helsinki, Turku and Tampere for two weeks in June 2009.

In June 2010, Helsinki freethinkers organised a public campaign, in which religious literature was exchanged for porn magazines in the centre of Helsinki. The purpose of the event was to criticise the religions' negative attitude toward sexuality, especially that of Christianity and Islam. The event stirred up lively discussion and criticism, but this time also some Atheists distanced themselves from it. As a result of the campaign, many religiously indifferent and nonreligious persons may rather have become alienated from the freethinkers, and the significance given to the provocation seems to have caused dispersion also among the Atheists.

## Sexual abuse in religious communities

Sexual abuse of children in religious communities has caused extensive discussion in the past few years also in Finland. The child abuse

---

2 Teemu Taira: "More visible but limited in its popularity: Atheism (and atheists) in Finland." *Approaching Religion* vol. 2, no 1. 2012.

cases within the Catholic Church were exposed worldwide since the early 2000s and the debate on them were often reported also in the Finnish media. In Finland, the problem came up at the end of 2009 when the aggravated sexual abuse of at least 11 boys was exposed in a family belonging to the Swedish-language Laestadian community Rauhan Sana. Because the crime had expired and the perpetrator had died, the police did not investigate the case.

Along with the discussion sparked by the issue, the Church's family affairs centre began receiving messages from people who said they had been sexually abused as children. Most of the abuse cases revealed to the Church's family affairs centre had occurred in small religious communities. Social work researcher Johanna Hurtig, who studied the abuse cases that had occurred within the Conservative Laestadian movement, learnt about 150 perpetrators of whom 135 were from Finland. Most of the abuse cases Hurtig learnt about occurred during and after the 1980s. In April 2011 the leadership of the movement (Suomen Rauhanyhdistysten Keskusyhdistys) held a press conference in which it apologized for the fact that the movement had not known how to handle correctly the child abuse cases revealed. No population-level data is available on the incidence of child abuse cases so it is impossible to say whether the incidence of abuse is higher within the movements in the Church than within the population on the average.

The exposure of child abuse cases sparked a lively discussion on the confidentiality of confession. Minister of Justice Tuija Brax (Green) demanded interpreting the Church Law so that the confidentiality of confession is broken when the interest of the child so requires. Minister of Health and Social Services Paula Risikko (Coalition Party) proposed to change the Child Protection Law in case the churches do not spontaneously give up the confidentiality of confession. In negotiations between the state and the Church, it was agreed that the Church will examine how to combine the Child Protection Law and Church Law. The report approved in the Bishops' Conference in February 2011 emphasised that the duty to report and confidentiality do not conflict, but that the confidentiality of confession and furthering the protection of children can be both realised simultaneously. In the Church, the issue led to increasing training and information.

## Tragic events

In September 2008, a student shot nine students, a teacher and himself in Kauhajoki School of Service Sector Trades. A wave of bomb and death threats spread in schools after the killings: by December, the police had investigated more than 200 nameless threats. The same way as after the mass killing in Jokela a year earlier, a lively discussion began in Finland about the reasons for the mass killings. The government appointed two investigation committees to examine the reasons for the Kauhajoki and Jokela cases, and to assess the behaviour of media in connection to the killings. In the case of Jokela, the investigation committee noted that the perpetrator's particular marginalisation was on the background of the school shootings. The report on the Kauhajoki case notes that the shooter had had mental problems already for a decade and that the shooter's life situation contributed to bringing the problems to a head.

The Church took prompt action to contribute to handling the aftermath of the Kauhajoki school shootings. Already the first evening after the incident, Kauhajoki church doors were opened and people were invited to a memorial devotion that was attended by about 700 people. The following Sunday, a memorial service televised and broadcast through radio was held, and President Tarja Halonen attended it. In the autumn of 2008 the Church's Kauhajoki Project began with the aim of assisting people through the methods of parish work.

On New Year's Eve 2009, four people were shot with a handgun in shopping centre Sello in Espoo. The same day Espoo parish opened an on-call crisis phone service for those who felt anxious and scared because of the incident. Churches were open for silent prayer on the weekend after the incident and Leppävaara parish set up a memorial table in Sello for people to present their condolences.

In the past few years, there have been several family killings in Finland. In a time period from March 2008 to spring 2012 a total of 14 family killings were committed. In year 2008 alone, there were eight such cases. In the most recent killings, primarily the father has killed the children and in some cases has killed even the mother. Earlier, most often the mother has been the perpetrator. The report on family killings shows that the persons killing their own children

clearly differ from other perpetrators of homicide, because at the moment of committing the crime they are not drunk or under the influence of controlled substances. According to the report, there had been contacts with the authorities before the deed. Often also the closest relatives had expressed their concern in advance.

The increasing incidence of school shootings and family killings expresses the mental anxiety among Finns. They also speak about increased experience of meaninglessness and lack of purpose. In this way, these phenomena are linked to very fundamental issues of world view. Furthermore, they are often linked with an experience of being deprived of personally important people and of communities.

### The Lutheran Church in a changing world

The Lutheran Church must carry out its basic task in an ever more rapidly changing world. The Church's basic task in itself is timeless: the Christian Church exists to inspire faith in the holy triune God and love for our neighbours. Accordingly, the Church Law stipulates about Church activities: "In accordance to its confession, the Church declares the word of God and administers the Sacraments and in other ways acts to spread the Christian message and to implement charity" (Church Law 1:2).

In the past few decades, however, the accelerating changes have challenged the church to review its situation and to check its focuses. In February 2008, the Church Council approved the common strategy of the entire Church titled *Our Church – a Participatory Community*. In accordance with its name, the vision for 2015 is a community of sharing, in which the members find their spiritual home and in which they participate in carrying out its basic task. Ever since its beginning, the Christian Church has been characterised by an effort to build mutual unity and sharing. In light of the changes in the operating environment, this goal is especially topical today.

To achieve the vision, the strategy gives the central policies of the operation till 2015. The policy is presented on a general level because the parishes decide independently on their operation and act in very different circumstances. So the operation policy must turn into concrete goals at the different levels of the Church: in parishes, dioceses, Church central administration units and Church organisations.

In strategic thinking, the mission i.e. the basic task tells you why the community exists. According to the strategy *Our Church*, “the task of the Church is to invite people to unity with merciful God, to bring a lasting foundation to life and encourage caring for people and the creation.”

The vision refers to a view of the desired future. In the strategy *Our Church*, the common vision of the Church is that “in 2015, its members see the value of the Church and hear the voice of God in it. People come to church to find answers to life’s big questions and they leave church to serve God’s world.”

Values guide the operation. With values, the community expresses what it considers good and desirable. *Our Church* strategy defines the common values guiding the entire Church; they are based on the Ten Commandments and their interpretation. The values are itemised under four main categories: reverence of the holy, accountability, justice and truthfulness.

The policy is a group of conscious, prioritised choices and they tell us how to achieve the vision. With the help of the policy, the Church can react in the appropriate way to the changes in the environment. *Our Church* strategy gives six strategic policies till 2015:

- Strengthening spiritual life
- Caring for the weak and emphasizing global responsibility
- Strengthening the importance of Church’s members
- Carrying the message
- Structures that serve functions
- Continuing renewal of the Church

Archbishop Jukka Paarma characterised the central goals of the strategy in its publication ceremony by underlining that it focuses on the Church’s spiritual mission to speak of God, love and mercy. According to the archbishop “the goal is that Church membership is felt to be important, the Church is credible and has a policy of its own. Then a member can be proud for belonging to the Church.”

*Our Church* strategy points out the central position of parishes, but also strategic planning at other levels of the Church. Therefore, implementing the strategy requires commitment to common goals in

central administration units, dioceses, parishes and Church organisations as well as spiritual movements. During recent years, several strategies and operation policies on the work forms of the Church have been written specifying the ways *Our Church* strategy policies concern specific areas of work. The challenging task of the parishes is to ponder what these policies mean in practice in each parish.

## 2 Finnish society and religion – basic facts

---

The position and significance of religious communities in society depend on many historic, societal and legal factors. This chapter gives the background for understanding the operation of the Church by describing the central recent changes in the Finnish society. It examines especially the changes in work life and demographic structure and the recent changes in it resulting from immigration in particular. It also gives a brief overview of Finland's religion legislation and the relationship between the Church and state. In light of these, the changes in the membership figures of religious communities are examined.

### Economic development

A characteristic feature of Finland is that many social changes occurring throughout Europe have usually taken place in Finland comparatively late but then very rapidly and thoroughly. For instance, Finland industrialized very rapidly after the Second World War. The speed of this structural change was also visible in the tremendous revolution in the way of life as hundreds of thousands of people migrated from an agricultural environment to the towns in search of paid employment. By the end of the 1980s, more than 80 percent of

Finns lived in built-up areas. At the year 2008, primary production consisted of only 2.7 percent of the GDP, while secondary production consisted of 32 percent, and services 65 percent.<sup>3</sup>

Many aspects of modernisation follow the same pattern. Women's participation in the labour force in Finland is very high by international standards and has been so for quite some time. Already in 1988, women's employment rate was 64 percent, while men's was 73 percent (persons aged 15-64). Today, the gap between men and women has narrowed down further. In the year 2008, women's employment rate was 69 percent, which is almost as high as men's, 72 percent.<sup>4</sup>

The economic development gained speed after the Second World War. By the beginning of the 1970s, Finland's GDP per capita rose to the level of Japan. The development was initially based mainly on two groups of export industries, the metal industry and the forest industry. Since the 1980s, however, Finnish economy has no longer been dominated by these sectors. Such fields as electronics (e.g. Nokia), transport fuels (e.g. Neste Oil), chemicals (e.g. Kemira), engineering consulting, and information technology (e.g. Rovio) have expanded to replace them.

Like other Nordic countries, Finland has deregulated its economy since the late 1980s. In 1991, the Finnish economy fell into recession partly due to economic overheating but also due to a drop in exports to key export countries and the disappearance of bilateral trade with the Soviet Union. Nearly one fifth of the workforce was unemployed. After devaluation of the Finnish mark, the depression eased in 1993. Finland joined the European Union in 1995 and the euro zone in 1999. Since then, Finnish economy has fared better and Finland managed to avoid the worst of the global financial crisis in 2008-2009.

Nevertheless, the drop in productivity and increase in unemployment caused by the recession of the period 2008-2009 had an impact on the economic outlook everywhere in Finland. In some places, the changes were rapid. Areas with a one-sided business structure

---

3 Statistics Finland, 2012.

4 Statistics Finland, 2012.



and dependent on the operation of few large companies are the most problematic. Production cut-backs have impacted primarily the forest industry. About ten factories were closed in different parts of the country in the period 2005-2010. Also in shipyards, large numbers of people lost their jobs.

In the next few years even a greater economic challenge than production cut-backs will be the aging of population and the worsening dependency ratio resulting from it. The population dependency ratio has increased in Finland since the mid-1980s, and a particularly strong increase can be predicted to occur in the next couple of decades. According to some estimates, twice the quantity will leave the labour force annually in the 2010s than did so in the early part of the 2000s. In 2010, the population dependency ratio was 51.6, i.e. there were 0.5 dependent persons per each working-age person. According to the prognosis of Statistics Finland, by 2015, the population dependency ratio will be 59.1 and by 2020 it will be 65.4. However, the differences in dependency ratio by region and by municipality are considerable. In the year 2020, the dependency ratio is predicted to exceed one hundred in several Finnish municipalities. In Finland, there are already several regions that are losing their labour force. In Eastern and Northern Finland, the decrease in working-age population is particularly rapid.

Unemployment increased during 2008-2009 due to recession. According to the information of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the number of unemployed jobseekers began increasing in the autumn of 2008 reaching its peak at the end of 2009, after which the trend has been decreasing. However, there were great regional differences in unemployment. In the reporting period, unemployment of youth between ages 15-24 increased from 17 percent to about 20 percent. Youth unemployment peaked in 2009, when it was about 22 percent. Unemployment was clearly at a lower level in other age groups. According to Statistics Finland, in 2011 unemployment in all of Finland was 7.8 percent.

### Population changes

At the end of 2011, Finland's population was 5.4 million. Since 2008, population increased by more than 100,000 persons. However,

already since 1969, nativity has been below population replacement level. In 2011, the number of births was just under 60,000 which was more than 1,000 fewer than the previous year. According to Statistics Finland, already five consecutive years migration from abroad has been a more significant reason for increase in population than natural population growth. According to the data of 2011, migration from abroad was the greatest ever encountered during our country's independence.

Finns also have their children later than before. The number of under 34-year-old mothers giving birth decreased compared with the previous year. The average age of all those giving birth was 30.3 years.

Statistics indicate the ever greater diversity of Finnish families and the differences in people's life situations. According to Statistics Finland, in 2011 there were 2,012,464 married persons, 527,418 divorced and 292,678 widowed persons. A total of 4,102 persons lived in a registered partnership, 633 had divorced from one and 51 were widowed. Of those living in a registered partnership 1,787 were men and 2,315 were women.

In 2010, in Finland there were more than 515,000 childless married couples (including registered partnerships) and 196,000 equivalent cohabiting couples. Since 2007, the number of childless couples had increased by more than 17,000. The number of married couples with children was 447,000 and of cohabiting couples 117,000. There were about 118,000 single-parent families. Of these, 102,000 were families formed of a mother and children and 16,000 were families of a father and children. There were 659,000 women and 567,000 men living alone.

Population aging is also a factor that has a strong impact in the future of the Finnish society. The largest five-year age group of Finns in 2011 consisted of those between ages 60-64 (395,000), the next largest consisted of those between ages 55-59 (383,000). 18 percent of the population was over the age of 65.

All prognoses indicate that immigration is a permanent and continuously increasing phenomenon in Finland. Still, we must remember that in Finland, the share of immigrant population is small compared with other European countries. For example according to OECD statistics, in 2009 in Sweden, the share of those born abroad

was 14.4 percent, in Norway 10.9 percent and in Denmark 7.5 percent. In the same year in Finland the share of those born abroad was only 4.4 percent.

Immigrants are a group that is continuously more diverse. The most important reasons for immigration are family reasons, work or study. Particularly moving after employment has increased. Comparatively few have come to Finland in seek of international protection. The number of applicants has varied annually between 1,500 and 6,000 applicants. In addition to asylum seekers coming to Finland spontaneously, Finland receives as quota refugees persons defined as refugees by United Nations' refugee organisation UNHCR. Ever since 2001, Finland's refuge quota has been 750 persons. From 1992 till the end of 2010, about 33,000 persons with a refugee background had arrived in Finland.<sup>5</sup>

No unambiguous data is available of the immigrant population, but the situation can be examined based on the statistics on nationality, language and country of birth. According to Statistics Finland, in 2011 there were more than 183,000 foreign citizens living in Finland (3.4% of the population), 245,000 speakers of foreign language (4.5% of the population) and 266,000 persons born abroad (4.9% of the population). The statistics on nationality do not have the immigrants who have obtained Finnish citizenship. Statistics based on language do not include the approximately 30,000 Ingria Finns who have returned to Finland. The persons born abroad include those who are adopted into Finland, and Finns born abroad.

The largest groups of foreigners in Finland consist of citizens of Estonia (34,000), Russia (29,600), Sweden (8,500) and Somalia (7,400). Of all foreign citizens about 68,300 i.e. more than a third (37.3%) were citizens of other EU countries and 44,700 came from the rest of Europe (24.4%). This means that more than three fifths of the foreign citizens living in Finland originate from Europe. Approximately 41,600, i.e. less than a quarter (22.7%) comes from Asia and 19,600, i.e. just over a tenth (10.7%) from Africa. Only 6,200 (3.4%) of foreigners come from North and South America. Even fewer than this come from Oceania or elsewhere.

---

5 *Maahanmuuton vuosikatsaus, 2010.*

The religious views of immigrants are not recorded so no unambiguous statistics exist on them. By using the religious distribution of religions in the country of birth as a default, one can reach an indicative estimate of the religious distribution of the immigrant population. Based on a statistical analysis done by researcher Tuomas Martikainen, in 2009 about 61 percent of all immigrants were Christian.<sup>6</sup> However, the share of Christians has steadily decreased since 1990 at which point an estimated 76 percent of the immigrant population was Christian. The next largest group consisted of Muslims, of whom there were 19 percent of the immigrant population in 2009. The share of Muslims has correspondingly increased significantly since 1990, at which point only 6 percent of immigrants were Muslim. The share of non-religious people was estimated to be 11 percent and an estimated 9 percent belonged to other religions. The largest group among the other religions are Buddhists, who constitute an estimated 4 percent of immigrants.

### Legal framework for religions

Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Finland had a strict state church system; although due to commercial reasons foreign citizens were allowed to practice their own religions since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Church Act of 1869 was, however, already a decisive move towards a more independent Church. The law gave the Church its own legislation and its own legislative organ, the Synod. After that, the Church Act has been enacted through a special order of legislation unlike any other. Although the Parliament still finally enacts the Church Act, it has no right to change the content of the law proposal of the Synod.

Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, Finnish citizens had to belong to either the Lutheran or the Orthodox Church. Foreign citizens had the right to belong to other Christian Churches and the Jews had the right to practice their own religion. The Nonconformity Act of 1889 allowed the Protestant minority churches to gain legal recognition, but the situation was widely perceived as problematic as people with no religious convictions were forced to belong to the Church and partake in communion.

---

6 Tuomas Martikainen: "Maahanmuuttajien uskonnollisen taustan tilastollinen arvioiminen Suomessa." Teologinen Aikakauskirja 2011. Vol. 116 no 3: 232-246.

The 1919 Constitution of the newly independent Finland no longer claimed allegiance to Lutheranism as state ideology. The freedom of religion implied in the constitution was implemented through the Freedom of Religion Act of 1922, which came into force a year later. According to this law, every citizen had the right to leave the Evangelical Lutheran Church or other religious community, or remain outside them all. The rights and duties of citizens were no longer dependent on the religious community they belonged to, if any. The law stipulated that a recognized religious body can be formed by any 20 persons aged 18 years and over. Civil Register (since 1971 the Population Register) was established for those who did not want to belong to any religious organization.

In 2003, a new Freedom of Religion Act came into force in Finland, replacing the law of 1922. The new law confirms the right to profess and practice religion, to express one's religious convictions, and the right to belong or not to belong to a religious community. As in the earlier legislation, a minimum of 20 individuals is required to found a recognized religious body, and the Lutheran and Orthodox Churches retained their special status.

There is special legislation concerning the Lutheran and Orthodox Churches and they are considered folk churches by virtue of their numerical and historical significance. This entails certain privileges that the other religious organizations do not have. Because of their position under public law based on state legislation, the Lutheran and Orthodox Churches both retained their right to levy taxes. The Church tax is paid by Church members based on their income. However, part of the revenues of the corporate tax is given to the Lutheran and Orthodox Churches in compensation of their services to the state, such as maintenance of the cemeteries and culturally valuable buildings.

The Finnish State also maintains and funds certain activities that are quite significant especially for the folk churches, but to some degree for other religious organizations also. Religious education is offered extensively at various levels in the school and education system. It is included in the early education provided by so-

ciety and in preschool education. Religion is also offered as a school subject during basic school education and upper secondary school education. The state maintains two Finnish-language theological faculties and one Swedish-language faculty, which are ecumenical in nature.

The new act emphasizes positive right to receive religious instruction. In the Basic Education and Upper Secondary School Acts, the pupil is entitled to religious instruction in his or her own religion or conviction. The schools are required to organize such teaching if at least three pupils of the same faith request it. On the other hand, the child is also obliged to participate. A pupil who does not belong to the religion of the majority of pupils can participate in the instruction if he or she expressly enrolls in it.

Worship services and pastoral counselling are also implemented in other institutions maintained by the state, such as the Finnish Defence Forces and prison institutions.

### Membership in religious organisations

According to Church statistics, the number of Church members regularly residing in Finland was 4,170,748, i.e. 77.2 percent of the entire population (5,401,267) in 2011 (According to Statistics Finland, 77.3%, see Table 2.1). The share of absentee members was 182,604. Approximately 58,600 members, i.e. 1.1 percent of Finns, belonged to the second Finnish folk church, the Orthodox Church. A total of 1.5 percent of Finns belonged to other registered religious communities. The largest communities by number of members were Jehovah's Witnesses (ca. 19,000), Evangelical Free Church of Finland (ca. 14,800), Catholic Church in Finland (ca. 11,100) and Finnish Pentecostal Church (ca. 6,900) (see Table 2.2). The other religious communities are smaller than these.

Table 2.1

Finnish population by religious community 1920-2011. Statistics Finland.

Year	Lutheran %	Orthodox %	Other %	Unaffiliated with registered religious communities %	Unknown %
1920	98.1	1.6	0.3	0.03	-
1930	96.3	1.9	0.3	1.5	-
1940	95.9	1.8	0.3	2.0	-
1950	95.1	1.7	0.4	2.7	0.1
1960	92.4	1.4	0.6	5.5	0.1
1970	92.4	1.3	0.6	5.2	0.5
1980	90.3	1.1	0.7	7.8	0.1
1990	87.9	1.1	0.8	10.2	0
2000	85.1	1.1	1.1	12.7	0
2007	81.8	1.1	1.3	15.9	0
2008	80.7	1.1	1.3	16.9	0
2009	79.9	1.1	1.4	17.7	0
2010	78.3	1.1	1.4	19.2	0
2011	77.3	1.1	1.5	20.1	0

Table 2.2

Number of members of the largest religious communities by end of 2011 and share of total population. Source: Statistics Finland.

Religious organisation	Members	Percent of population
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland	4,175,443	77.30
Finnish Orthodox Church	58,584	1.08
Jehovah's Witnesses	19,001	0.35
Evangelical Free Church of Finland	14,789	0.27
Roman Catholic Church of Finland	11,091	0.21
Muslim communities	10,088	0.19
Pentecostal Church in Finland	6,876	0.13
Seventh Day Adventist Church	3,553	0.07
LDS-Church	3,208	0.06
Other Orthodox churches	2,599	0.05
Baptist churches	2,320	0.04
Methodist churches	1,342	0.02
Jewish communities	1,198	0.02
Other	2,877	0.06
Total members in religious communities	4,313,295	79.86
Total population	5,401,267	100.00

A total of 20.1 percent of Finns do not belong to any religious community. In addition to resigning from the Church, also immigration increased the share of those not belonging to religious communities. Of the entire population, 3.8 percent were persons of foreign language belonging to the population register. It is good to remember that not belonging to a religious community does not mean not having a religion. Most of the immigrants coming from Muslim countries and of Pentecostal Church members do not belong to registered religious communities.

By end of 2011, there were 78 registered independent religious communities operating in Finland. If we exclude the national churches, 29 of them i.e. more than a third of all, were Christian. A total of ca. 44,200 members belonged to them, i.e. more than half of all those belonging to registered religious communities (ca. 79,300).

However, the non-Christian religions increased their share rapidly. By end of 2011, 29 Islamic communities had been registered. All Muslim immigrants do not belong to Islamic communities, however. According to the estimate based on the immigrants' country of birth, in 2011, there were approximately 50,000-60,000 Muslims in Finland (Martikainen 2011). This means that only about one fifth of the Muslims living in Finland have joined an Islamic community.



## 3 Changing patterns of religiosity

---

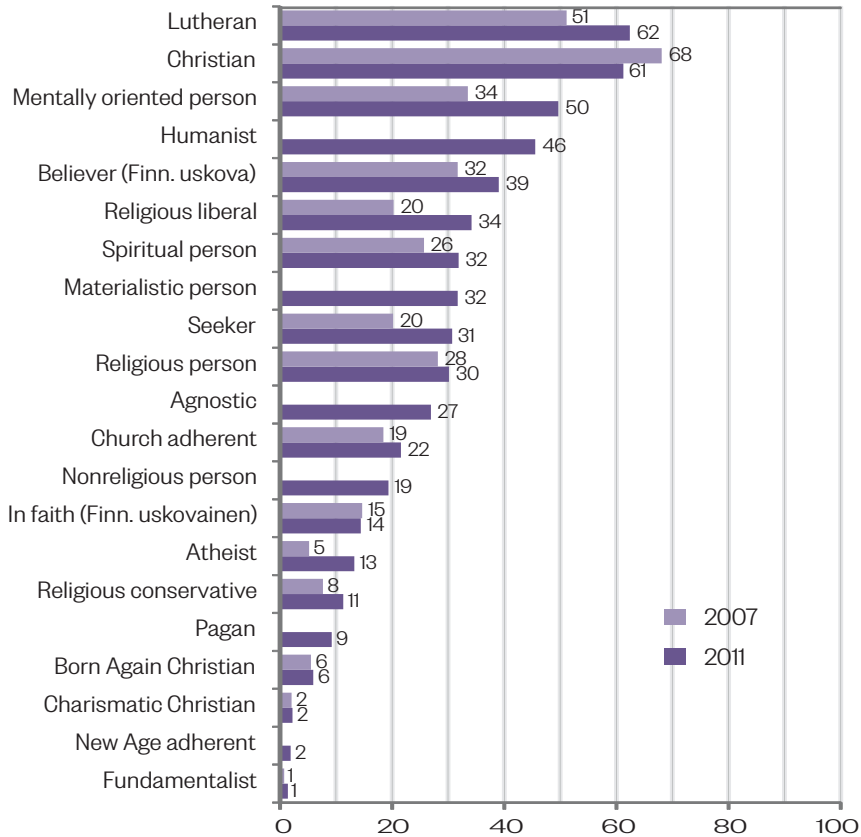
In the past few years, religion has been a subject of public discussion and interest more than usually. Many of the most important discussion topics have been international, such as the position of same-sex couples in the Church, child abuse and, related to that, the confidentiality of confession in religious communities as well as the debate sparked by New Atheism on belief in God. The changes reflect the long-term trends in culture and the moral climate. All these factors have an impact in people's religiosity and their relationship with the Church. This chapter examines the Finns' religiosity from the point of view of religious identities, beliefs and religious participation. After that, it examines the issue of Finns' attitudes toward religion in public life and especially the kind of expectations that Finns have concerning the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

### 3.1 Religious identity

In the *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey, the respondents were asked to choose from a list of religious and world view identities the ones that they thought described them (Figure 3.1). Most often, Finns chose the terms "Lutheran" and "Christian". More than three out of five Finns considered themselves Lutheran and Christian.

Figure 3.1

Finns' religious and world-view identities. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011, N=4,930; Church Monitor 2007, N=4,004.



Age, gender and living area influenced strongly the frequency with which people defined themselves as Christians and Lutherans. Only 57 percent of men considered themselves Lutheran, whereas among women, the equivalent share was 68 percent. Correspondingly, 56 percent of men and 66 percent of women considered themselves Christians. The differences between different age groups were considerable. Among young adults (ages 15-29), only 41 percent considered themselves Christians (Lutherans 43%). Instead, in the oldest age group, that of persons over the age of 65, a total of 79 percent considered themselves Christians (82% Lutherans). Regionally, Southern Finland differed from the rest of Finland with a lower than average

share of Christians and Lutherans. Instead, in smaller municipalities and especially in the provinces of Oulu and Lapland, there were more of those defining themselves as Christians and Lutherans.

The least chosen were such identities that can be considered to belong to the extremes in the field of religion. Only one percent of Finns think they are fundamentalists. Nearly equally few, only two percent, recognize themselves as adherents to New Age or as Charismatic Christians. Six percent of the population say they are born again Christians. In these identities, no change was detected when compared with the 2007 survey nor were there significant differences between different age groups or genders.

For a long time there has been few Finns who recognize themselves as Atheistic. But this is rapidly changing. During 2008-2011, the share of Finns considering themselves Atheists grew from five percent to thirteen percent. However, the difference between genders continues to be clear. 16 percent of men and 10 percent of women think they are Atheists. The differences between age groups indicate the speed of change. Among the young adults (15-29 years), one fifth (22%) of the population is Atheist. In the older age groups, the share of Atheists decreased steadily: among those of ages 30-39, their share was 17 percent, among 40-49-year olds it was 11 percent, among those of ages 50-64 it was 9 percent and among those over the age of 65 only 7 percent.

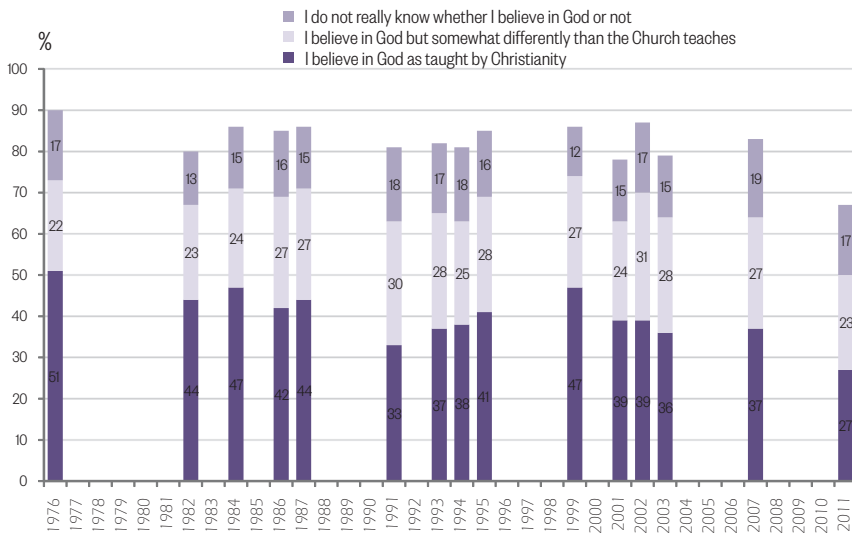
### **3.2 Christian beliefs**

In the *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey, only about a fourth of Finns said they believe in the Christian God. Compared with the 2007 survey, their share had dropped by ten percentage points. Also the share of those, who said they believe in God differently than the way the Church teaches, has dropped as well as the share of those, who are uncertain about their faith (Figure 3.2). If the share of those who are uncertain is included, in 2011 a total of 67 percent of Finns said they believe in some kind of God at least to some extent, whereas in 2007 the equivalent figure was 83 percent. Meanwhile, the share of those, who said that they do not believe in the existence of God, has

reached a record high, more than one fifth of Finns (21%). In 2007 there were 11 percent of them and in all earlier surveys they averaged under one tenth. This means that the share of those, who do not at all believe in the existence of God has doubled in only four years. There were seven percent of those who doubted God's existence. Compared with the previous survey, their share had increased by only approximately one percentage point.

Figure 3.2

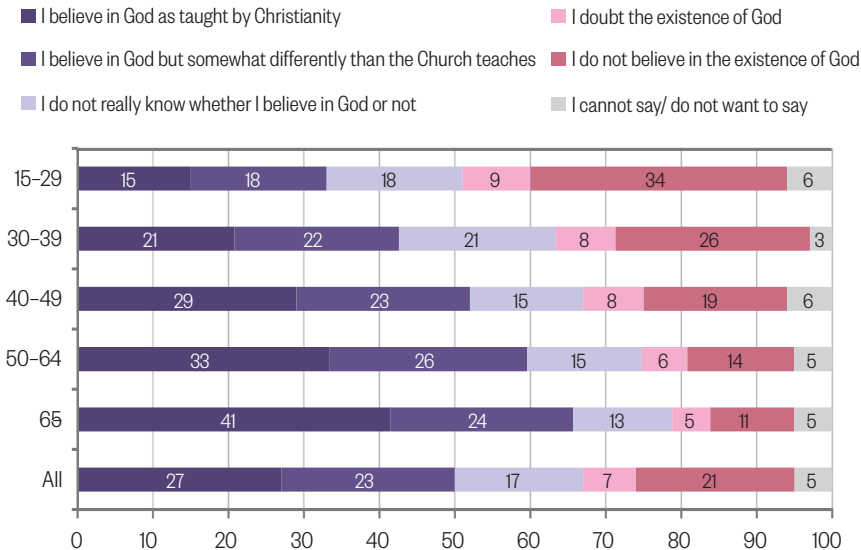
Finns' faith in God 1976-2011 according to Gallup Ecclesiastica and Church Monitor surveys, N = 992-4,930 (%).



Faith in God correlates strongly with age (Figure 3.3). In the age group of young adults, only 15 percent of Finns believe in the God taught by Christianity. The share of Christian faith in God is larger in each older age group. Among those over the age of 65, more than two fifths (41%) of the population believe in the Christian God.

Figure 3.3

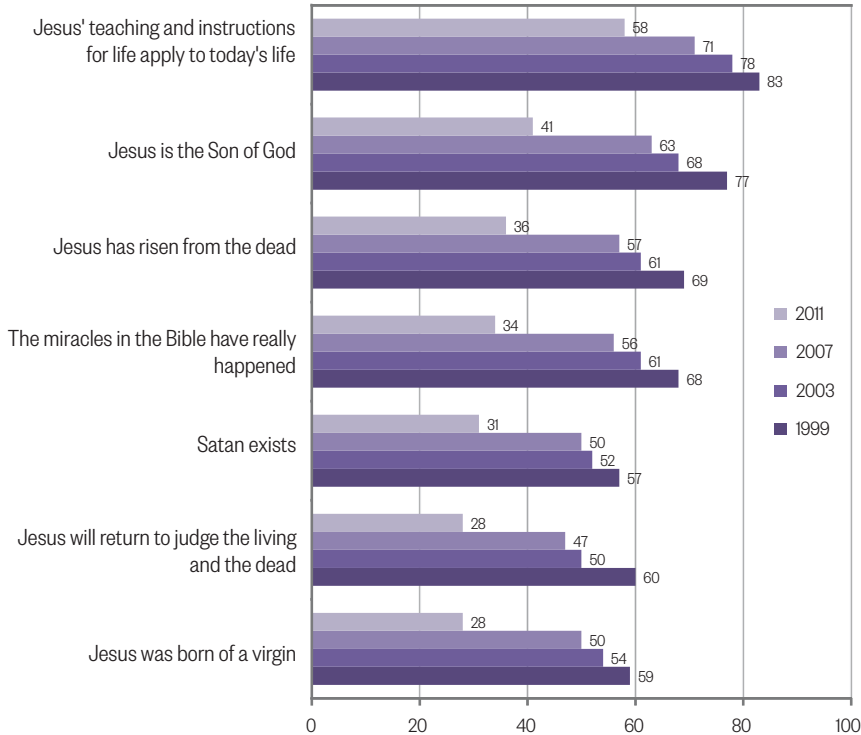
Faith in God in different age groups. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011. N=4,930 (%).



*Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey also asked about Finns' attitudes toward central Christian teachings, such as Jesus' virgin birth, divinity, resurrection from the dead and second coming (Figure 3.4). Especially in these issues, the change from the previous survey in 2007 was particularly marked. The share of those, who either believe firmly in these teachings or consider them at least likely, had dropped by an average of nearly twenty percentage points. When in the previous survey 63 percent considered the teaching of Jesus as Son of God at least likely, in 2011, the equivalent figure was only 41 percent. Also, compared with the previous survey, a nearly twenty percentage point drop each had occurred in Jesus' resurrection, virgin birth and second coming. It is likely that the differences in the polling methods accentuate this difference most in these issues. The development trend is nevertheless evident. Compared with 1999, in many issues the shares had practically halved.

Figure 3.4

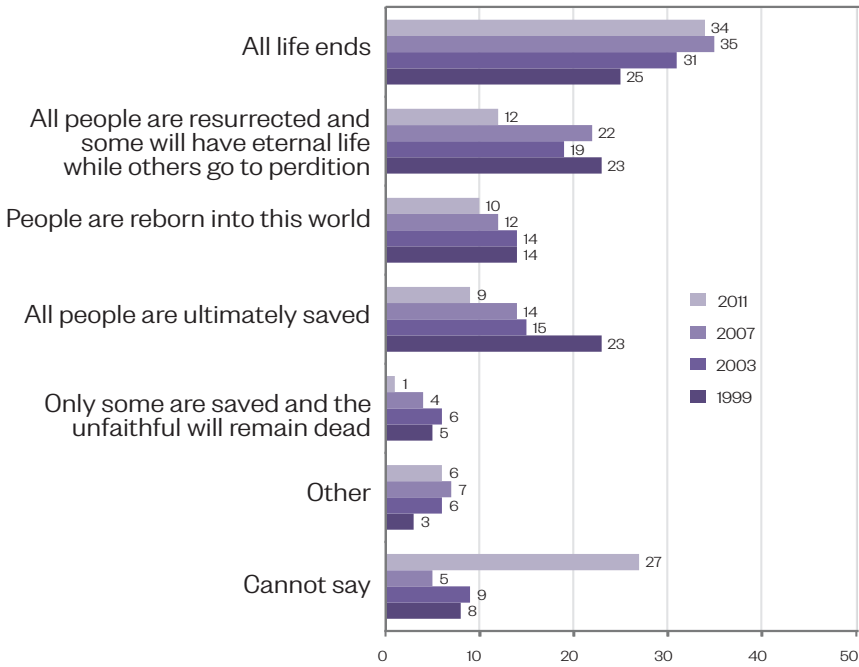
Share of Finns who consider some Christian teachings at least likely. Gallup Ecclesiastica 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011; N=992; 1,009; 1,030; 4,930 (%).



The same trend can be seen in concepts of life after death (Figure 3.5). In earlier surveys, approximately one fifth of Finns have chosen the traditional Christian teaching alternative, according to which “all people are resurrected and some will have everlasting life and some will have perdition”. In the 2011 survey, the share of those believing this was nearly halved to 12 percent. There was a decrease also among those, who believe that all people are saved or are reborn into this world. Instead, the share of those, who believe that in death all life ends, has remained the same. The most increase has occurred among those who are uncertain about what to think about life after death. All in all, more than one fourth or the respondents (27%) said they cannot say what they think of life after death, whereas in 2007 there were only five percent of them.

Figure 3.5

Finns' thoughts on what happens after death. Gallup Ecclesiastica 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011, N=992; 1,009; 1,030; 4,930 (%).



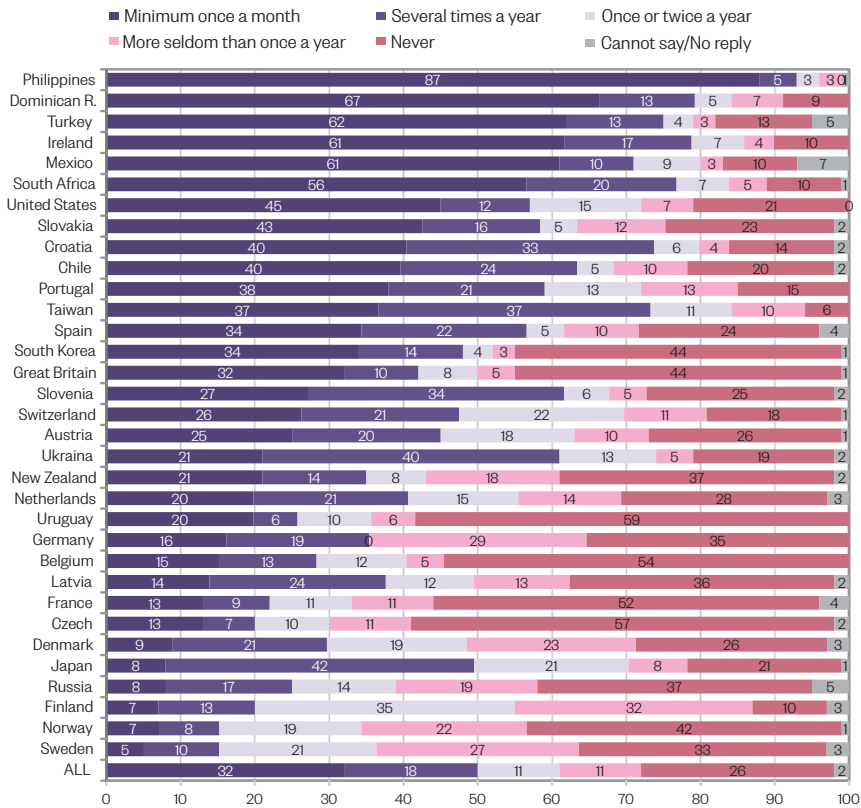
### 3.3 Religious participation and activity

In public religious participation, internationally, Finland belongs to the least active countries (see Figure 3.6). In the *ISSP 2008* survey, the respondents were asked “how often do you participate in worship services, Church ceremonies or spiritual events?” Seven percent of all Finns said they participated in such events at least monthly. Only in Sweden and Norway are the shares of actively participating people equally small or smaller. The largest share, i.e. more than one third, consists of those who say they participate once or twice per year. If we include those, who say they participate more seldom than once a year, the share increases to more than two thirds of the population.

Overall, the *ISSP 2008* survey showed that most Finns' attitude toward religion can be characterised as moderate or lukewarm.<sup>7</sup> In Finland, there are fairly few extremely religious or extremely anti-religious people. A relatively small share of both extremes is typical of Finns. Only less than one tenth considered themselves extremely religious, but correspondingly only less than one fifth considered themselves extremely non-religious. Nearly a third of Finns said they are somewhat religious and the same amount said that they are neither religious nor non-religious.

Figure 3.6

Attendance in religious events (worship services, church ceremonies or spiritual events) in different countries. ISSP 2008. N=52,647 (%).



7 Kimmo Ketola, Kati Niemelä, Harri Palmu ja Hanna Salomäki: *Uskonto suomalaisten elämässä*. Yhteiskuntatieteellisen tietoarkiston julkaisuja 9, 2011.

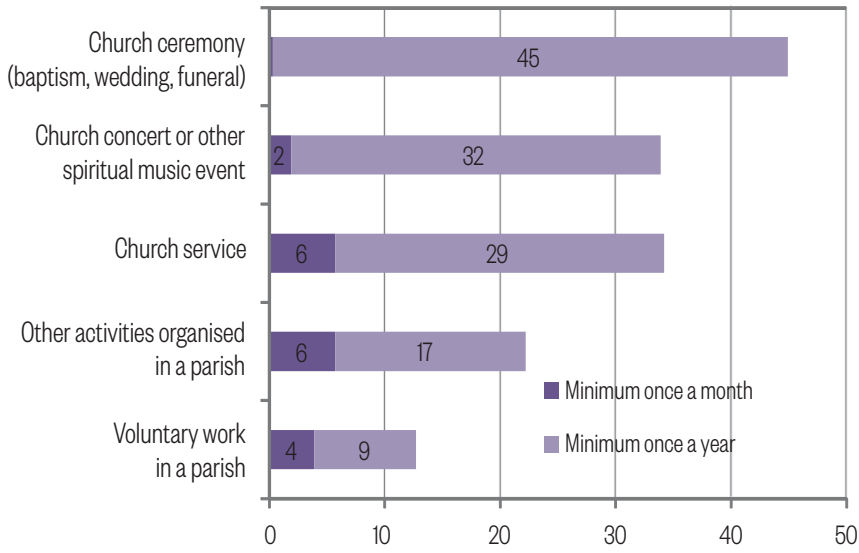


However, the analyses of European survey research material have indicated that it is precisely the share of sporadically participating people with moderately positive attitudes toward religion that is rapidly diminishing in different parts of Europe, although the shares of religiously committed and actively participating people have remained fairly stable.<sup>8</sup>

According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey, for most Finns the interface with Church is generated through Church ceremonies (Figure 3.7). Approximately 45 percent of Finns attend a Church ceremony at least once a year. Compared with 2007 *Gallup Ecclesiastica* survey, there is only a drop of three percentage points. Instead, in attending worship services, there is a decrease of ten percentage points. In the 2007 survey, 45 percent of the respondents said they attend worship services at least yearly. In 2011, the equivalent figure was only 35 percent. The decreasing trend in worship service attendance is evident. An equivalent drop has not occurred in church concert attendance or volunteer work participation.

Figure 3.7

Finns' public religious participation. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011, N=4,930 (%).



8 David Voas: "The Rise and Fall of Fuzzy Fidelity in Europe." *European Sociological Review*, vol. 25 no 2 (2009): 155-168.

Private practice of religion is more active in Finland than could be concluded from public participation. According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey, more than half (53%) of Finns pray at least once a year. More than one fifth (21%) say they pray daily. Compared with the 2007 survey, the figures had reduce because at the time, two thirds (66%) said they pray at least once a year and more than one fourth (27%) said they pray daily. In the 2011 survey more than a third (37%) said that they had not prayed at all in the past few years, whereas in the previous survey the share was only just over one fifth (21%).

According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011*, more than one fifth (22%) of Finns said they read the Bible at least once a year. Approximately four percent of Finns read the Bible at least weekly. The figures are considerably lower than in the 2007 *Gallup Ecclesiastica* survey, according to which more than two fifths (43%) read the Bible at least once a year. However, nearly the same quantity as before, five percent of Finns, read the Bible weekly.

However, the forms of private practice of religion and spiritual exercise have become more diverse in the past few years. According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey, two percent of Finns meditate daily and in addition, three percent do so weekly. Nine percent meditate several times a month. A total of 14 percent of Finns said they meditate at least once a year.

Nearly equivalent shares of Finns said they use some other method of spiritual growth, of which yoga and taiji were mentioned as examples in the survey. Five percent practiced these kinds of methods at least weekly. A total of about 14 percent said they practiced spiritual growth methods at least once a year.

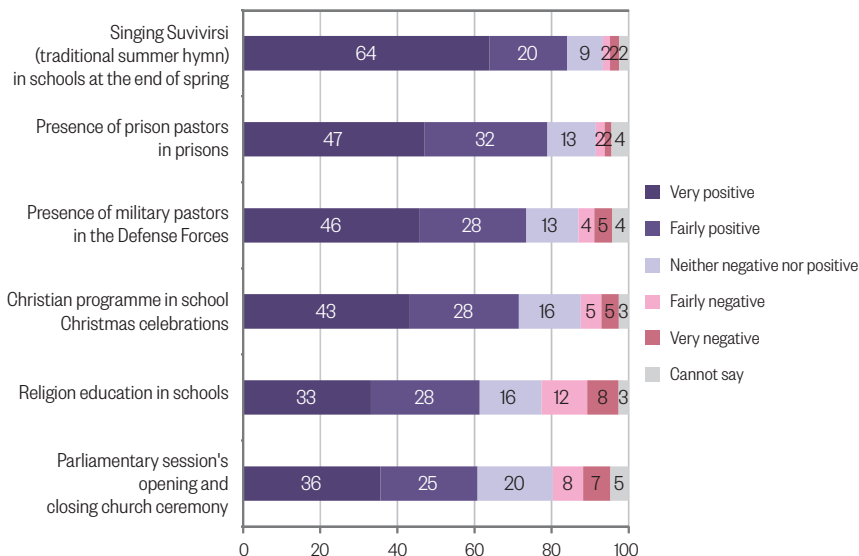
### **3.4 Religion in public life**

Disputes about religious symbols and emblems in public space have been common in Europe for years. These have been discussed more and more also in Finland. The large majority of Finns have a positive attitude toward the cooperation of Church and state and accept seeing things pertinent to the Christian culture in state-funded institu-

tions. The 2011 survey inquired about several issues pertinent to the relationship between Church and state. The most positive attitudes were toward Christian cultural features being seen in the schools. More than four fifths had positive attitudes toward singing *Suivirsi* (traditional summer hymn) in the spring term ending celebration in schools and nearly two thirds had an extremely positive attitude toward it (Figure 3.8). Only four percent had negative attitudes toward it. Nearly three fourths of Finns also had positive attitudes toward Christian programme in school Christmas celebrations whereas only ten percent had a negative attitude toward it. More than three in five had positive attitudes toward teaching religion in schools and approximately one fifth had negative attitudes.

Figure 3.8

Finns' attitudes toward Christian elements in state-funded institutions. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011, N=4,930. (%)



In all issues related to schools, women had more positive attitudes than men toward displays of religion. Correspondingly, positive attitudes are more prevalent in older age groups and in sparsely populated regions. Whereas the level of education did not much impact attitudes.

Also, the attitudes were extremely positive toward the presence of prison pastors in prisons and military chaplains in the Defence Forces. Nearly four fifths of Finns had positive attitudes toward prison pastors and only four percent had negative attitudes. Approximately three in five had positive attitudes toward the worship service at the inauguration of the parliamentary session. Also in these issues, positive attitudes were most prevalent among women, in older age groups and in sparsely populated regions.

More than half of Finns also think that the Church instead of the municipality can tend to burials, that YLE public broadcasting company can broadcast devotional programmes and that the Church must get its share of corporate tax revenue as compensation for tending to societal duties. Approximately one fifth of Finns had the opposite view. Slightly fewer than half of Finns also thought that there should not be restrictions to posting religious or Atheistic campaign posters in public facilities or on public transport vehicles. Again, less than one fifth was ready to restrict public display of worldview campaign posters. Instead, the right of Muslims to have devotional programmes on YLE was supported by only just over one fourth of Finns and more than two in five opposed it. In these issues, the differences in attitudes among men and women were fairly small. Also, the influence of the place of residence and level of education was not seen strongly. Instead, age clearly influenced in a way that increased the incidence of positive attitudes toward religion.

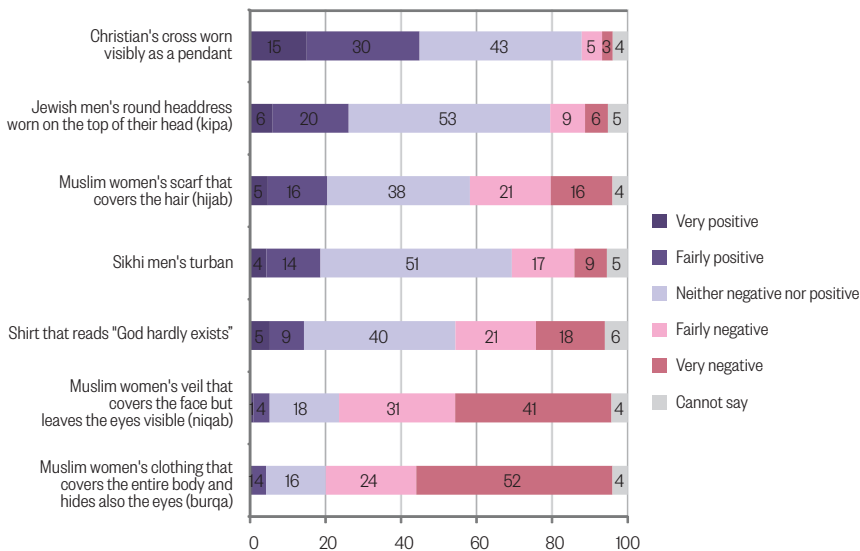
The Church's right to collect taxes divided opinions more evenly. Only two in five favoured maintaining the current right to collect taxes, whereas more than a third preferred removing the right. Among men, the figures were nearly in line, because there was 39-percent support for both views. The more zeal for removing the right to collect taxes was found in the capital area where more than two in five were of this opinion and only approximately one fourth opposed it. The younger the age group, the more removing the taxation right was favoured. Instead, views favouring the Church's taxation right increased as the level of education increased.

*Gallup Ecclesiastica* survey of 2011 also asked about the Finns' attitudes toward expressing religious identity with attire and other religious emblems worn visibly in public duties such as schools or work

places (Figure 3.9). Opinions were divided rather sharply between different habits. A cross pendant worn visibly by Christians was met with a positive attitude by nearly half and only eight percent had a negative attitude toward it. Opinions were divided fairly evenly also about kipa, the headdress worn by Jewish men, and turbans worn by Sikh men. Instead, the dress of Muslim women was met with more critical attitudes. Also in this case, the attitudes varied depending on how much of the body the dress covered. Two out of five Finns had a negative attitude toward a scarf that only covered the hair. One fifth had a positive attitude toward wearing such scarf. A fairly similar reaction was caused by a shirt expressing an Atheistic identity with the text “God hardly exists”, although the share of those with a positive attitude was even smaller, only approximately one seventh of the respondents. The Finns’ attitudes were the most negative toward such dress of Muslim women that in addition to hair and body also covered the face (niqab) and eyes (burqa). About three in four Finns had a negative attitude toward dress that covered so much in public tasks, and only a couple of percent had a positive attitude.

Figure 3.9

Finns’ attitudes toward presenting emblems of religious identity in public context. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011, N=4,930 (%).



Excluding the Atheistic shirt, women had more positive attitudes than men toward all religious emblems. This distinction was particularly clear in the case of the Muslim women's scarf. More than a quarter of women had a positive attitude toward a scarf that covers the hair, whereas the equivalent figure among men was only 15 percent. Correspondingly, only less than a third of women had a negative attitude toward the scarf, whereas among men the equivalent figure was 45 percent. Negativity toward the Muslim women's scarf was greater in the older age groups. Instead education and the urban character of the dwelling place did not directly correlate with the attitudes.

The older the age group the more negative the attitudes toward wearing the Atheistic shirt. In the age group of over 65-year-olds, only a few percent had a positive attitude toward it. Negativity was greater also in sparsely populated regions. The level of education, on the other hand, did not much influence attitudes.

Gender, age, area of living or level of education did not significantly impact the attitudes toward wearing a cross necklace. Also in attitudes toward the Jewish and Sikh headdress, the differences between different age groups, education levels and dwelling environments were marginal.

### **3.5 Finns' relation to the Church**

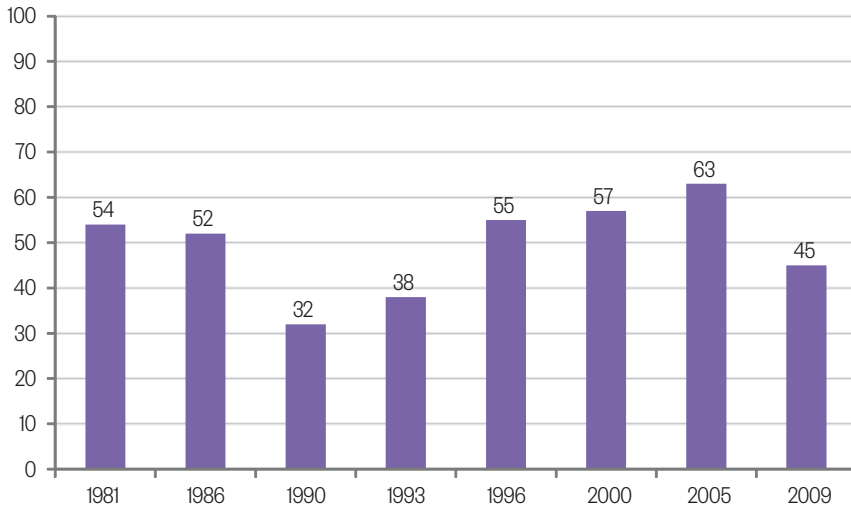
The Finns' trust in the Church has weakened in the past few years. According to the *European Values Study* survey done in 2009 (N=1,134), 45 percent of Finns said they trusted the Church at least to a fair degree. The share of those trusting the Church had dropped by 18 percentage points since the previous survey in 2005. This means that the share of those who trust the Church has returned to the low figures of the early 1990s (Figure 3.10).

There were also increasing doubts about the Church's ability to give answers to people's problems, compared with the 2009 survey. Slightly more than half (54%) of Finns believed that the Church was able to meet people's spiritual needs with competence. In 2005, the equivalent figure was 72 percent. The share of those who think that the Church gives competent answers to people's moral problems

has dropped from 45 percent to 33 percent. Concerning problems in family life, the shares dropped from 47 percent to 29 percent. Only 19 percent believed that the Church is able to give answers to today's social problems. In 2005, the equivalent figure was 35 percent.

Figure 3.10

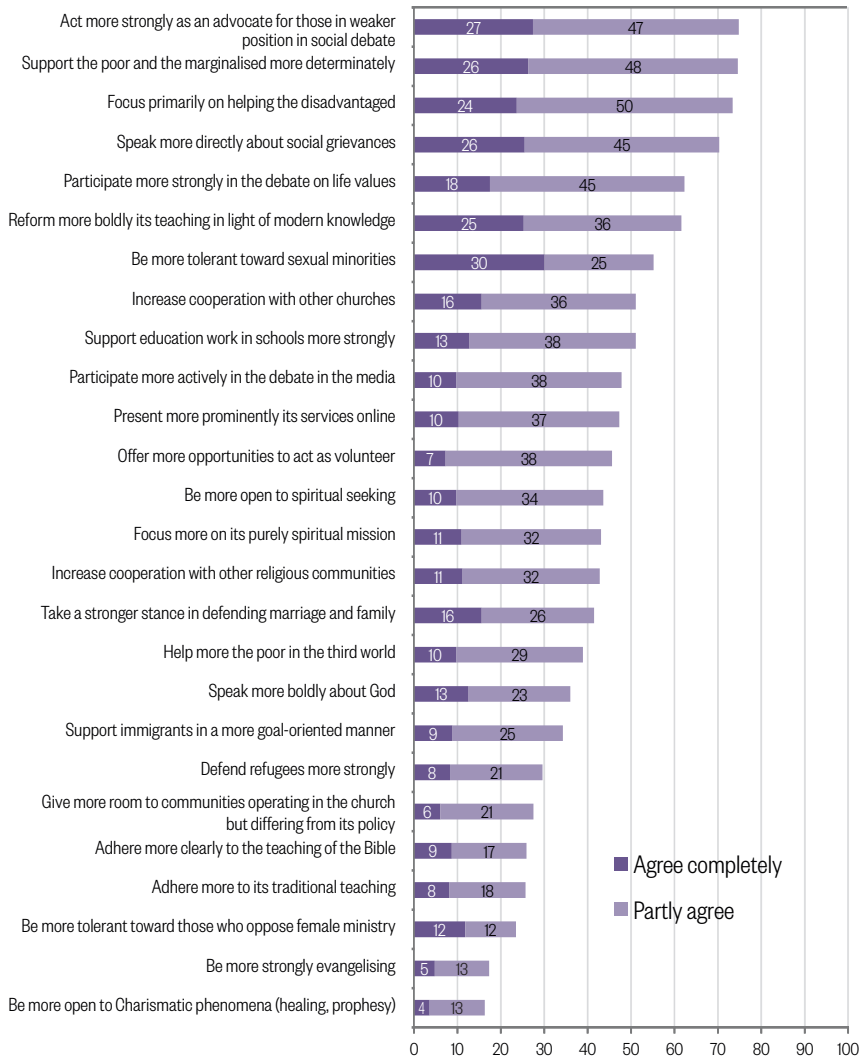
The share of Finns trusting the Church much or to a fair degree according to the World Values and European Values Study surveys 1981-2009 (%).



*Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey also asked the Finns what they think the Church should do or what it should be like (Figure 3.11). Approximately three fourths of Finns agreed that the Church should do more as an advocate of the disadvantaged in the social debate (75%), support the poor and marginalized more determinedly (75%) and most of all focus on helping the disadvantaged (73%). Nearly as many agreed that the Church should speak more directly about social grievances (73%). Only a few percent of Finns disagreed on these. In this, therefore, the Finns understanding of the Church's task and role in society is very clear and unanimous. There were no great differences between those who considered themselves to be religiously liberal or conservative, although the liberals emphasized these issues slightly more.

Figure 3.11

Finns' views on the direction in which the Church should develop. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011, N=4,930 (%).



More than three of five Finns also agreed that the Church should participate more strongly in the debate on life values (62%) and reform its teaching in light of modern knowledge (62%). More than half thought that it would be good for the Church to be more tolerant of sexual minorities (55%), enhance cooperation with other churches



(51%) and support the schools' education work more (51%). In these issues, the religiously liberal and conservative differed from each other considerably. For example, 74 percent of the liberals supported greater tolerance toward sexual minorities whereas only 22 percent of the religiously conservative agreed with this. Instead, conservatives supported more the schools' education work (80%) than did the liberals (54%). However, in the debate about life values the difference was not as great: 84 percent of the conservatives and 72 percent of the liberals supported the idea. The liberals (71%) supported cooperation with other churches more than did the conservatives (49%).

## Conclusions

The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been challenging for the Church. Opinion polls indicate that central Christian beliefs have ever decreasing personal significance to Finns. In the recent years it can be noted that the Atheistic identity has become ever more prevalent and the share of those is increasing who do not believe in God in any way at all. At the same time Finns still have great appreciation for the Church and gladly allow elements of Christian culture to be visible in public life. In spite of this it is evident that custom and tradition are not enough to maintain the preservation of a Christian world view in the Finnish society.

The opinion polls indicate that a large majority of Finns expect the Church to have a more active role in generating societal debate. Approximately two thirds of Finns think that the Church should speak more directly about social grievances and participate more strongly in the debate about life values. Equally many also call for reforming the teaching in light of modern knowledge. Nearly half support the idea that the Church would participate more actively in the debate in the media.

# 4 Members

---

## 4.1 Belonging to the Church

Church members belong to their local parish according to their place of domicile. Church members are entitled to attend Church ceremonies and worship services and other activities provided by the parish. They are entitled to vote in parish elections. Those who have been confirmed are entitled to become godparents.

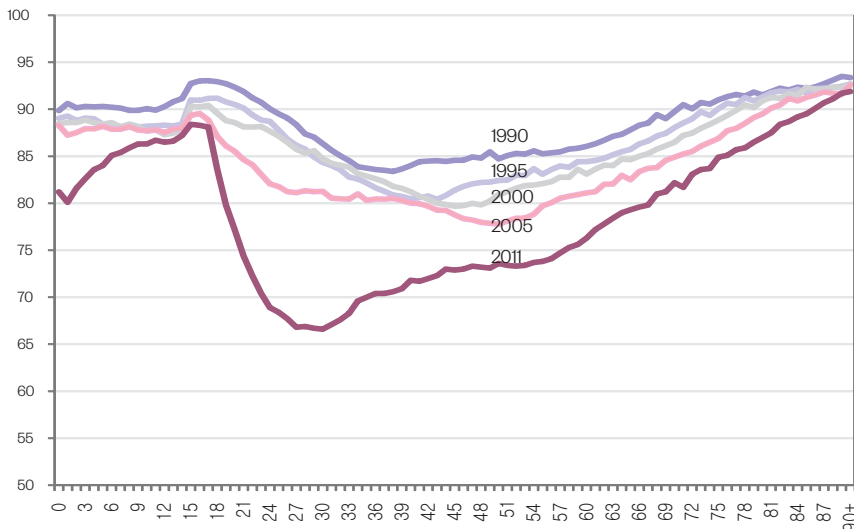
Church membership is currently a priority issue which is also stressed in the strategy *Our Church* in that membership should be meaningful in a spiritual sense. A strategic aim of the Church is to enhance the meaning of membership and to contact each member at least five times a year. In the strategy, special attention is paid to the membership of youth and young adults, as well as to welcoming new members when they move into the parish.

According to Church statistics, there were approximately 4,170,000 members in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland in 2011, which corresponds to 77 percent of the population (see Chapter 2). Total membership was above 4,353,000 which includes also members not living in Finland, for example Finns working abroad. The membership figures have been decreasing for some time, but the decrease of recent years has been more drastic than ever before. In the capital city region and other big cities in southern Finland, slightly more than 60 percent are members, whereas in some parts of northern Finland and Ostrobothnia, more than 90 percent of the population are members.

Of all women, 80 percent belonged to the Church in 2011, and 74 percent of men. As concerns age, the largest shares of those belonging to the Church were among the oldest age groups and those of confirmation age. Almost 90 percent of the 15-year-olds belonged to the Church. The share of members was remarkably lower among the 18-year-olds having the legal right to independently resign from the Church. The share of Church members was lowest among those aged 26 to 32, with only 67 percent of them belonging to the Church. Not until the age of 82 did the share of Church members reach the same percentage as among the 15-year-olds.

Figure 4.1

Share of those belonging to the Church by age group in 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2011. Statistics Finland (%).



In spite of the fact that the share of Church members was particularly low among youths and young adults, there has been a decrease of members also in the older cohorts. There were relatively more women than men belonging to the Church in all age groups except those under 18. The share of Church members is at its lowest among men aged around 30 years (62 %). The age group with the lowest share of members among women are the 27-year-olds (70 %).

## Reasons for belonging to the Church

The Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011 Survey elicited the significance of various factors for being members of the Church. All in all, the most important reasons for belonging are the tasks related to the role of Church in supporting the community. These are taking care of the disadvantaged in society and maintaining traditions at different turning points in life through Church ceremonies.

More than four out of five respondents consider it important for their membership that the Church helps the disadvantaged. The Finns consider help for the elderly and the disabled especially important, as well as help for people in difficult situations; both factors were considered important for membership by 84 percent of the respondents. The majority also named defending the poor and the marginalized in public discussion, as well as the Church's aid to Third World countries as important reasons for Church membership.

Another equally important group of reasons for belonging to the Church comprised of Church ceremonies: baptism, weddings and funerals, of which funerals were considered most often 'very important' (41 %). The opportunity to be a godparent was important to the youth and young adults but not as much to the older age groups.

The role of the Church in maintaining traditions and culture and being part of the Finnish way of life was important to the majority. Especially important was the fact that the Church maintains cemeteries, followed by the reason that the Church maintains the Christian tradition of holidays such as Christmas and Easter. Maintaining buildings and churchyards of cultural and historical value was considered similarly important. Two out of three members saw the Church as a part of the Finnish way of life, but in this factor the difference between age groups was greatest, so that the youth and young adults considered the role of Church as part of Finnish way of life much less important than the older age cohorts did.

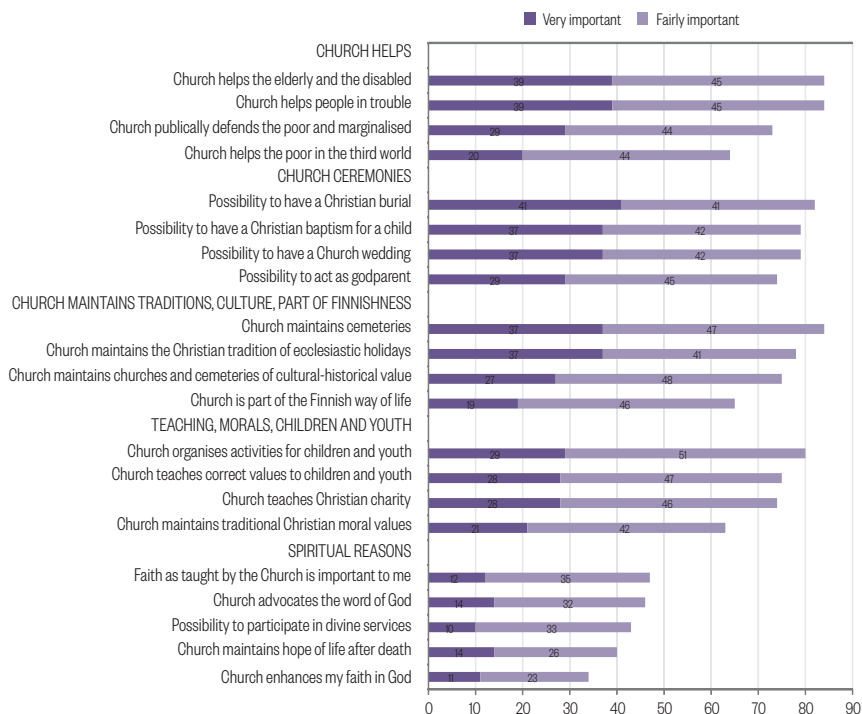
It is also fairly important to the members that the Church works for children and youth and teaches moral and human values. Four out of five members stressed that it is important that the Church arranges activities for children and young people, and a slightly smaller proportion considered it important that the Church also teaches right values in life. The role of the Church in teaching moral values has lost

importance among the younger age groups, whereas it has remained important to the older ones.

Issues related to belief and world view were important to less than half of the Church members. They were very important reasons for membership to one tenth of the members, which corresponds to the share of actively religious members. Among reasons related to belief and world view, the most important ones were the faith taught by the Church and the Church's representing the word of God. These reasons for belonging have clearly lost importance when compared with previous studies, especially considering the role of the Church in strengthening one's personal faith in God. Also the gap between younger and older age groups has grown in this factor.

Figure 4.2

Reasons for belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011, N=3,455 (%).



## 4.2 Baptisms, deaths and migration

Almost 60,000 children were born in Finland in 2011, of which 78 percent were baptized as members of the Church. The relative share of those baptized has followed a falling trend for some time, in parallel with the share of Church members in the population. Also the absolute number of baptisms decreased so that in 2011, approximately 2,600 fewer children (-5 %) were baptized, compared to the number of those baptized in 2008.

In the capital city Helsinki, only just more than half of the newborn children were baptized, which makes the share of baptized children remarkably lower compared to the rest of Finland. According to a survey conducted in the parishes of Helsinki and addressed to families not baptizing their child, it was not due to negative experiences in the parish, nor any practical difficulties, but rather a choice to let the child later on independently decide about belonging to the Church.

The number of baptisms, however, still exceeded the death rate among the Finnish population, as the number of births per year keeps growing. In 2011, the number of deaths among Church members was 42,800, which was 4,000 fewer than the number of children baptized in the same year. The annual death rate totalled approximately one percent of Church members.

### Migration

Mainly due to the decrease in both Church members and the number of parishes, migration between parishes decreased when compared to the beginning of the 2000s. However, people were moving inside parishes and municipal areas to the same extent as previously. The migration tended particularly toward the Diocese of Helsinki, but also the Dioceses of Espoo and Tampere had a large share of new parishioners. However, it should be noted that migration tends to be cumulative, as one individual may have moved several times. Students in particular tend to move frequently within a short period of time.

Almost all parishes bid newcomers welcome in one way or another. Every new parishioner was sent a welcoming letter in 85 per-

cent of the parishes, and a part of the newcomers in four percent of the parishes. More than every tenth parish arranged events to which newcomers, either all or some of them, were invited. Other ways of making contacts with some of the new parishioners were through visits to their homes, phone calls or e-mails, each of the above practiced in ten percent of the parishes.

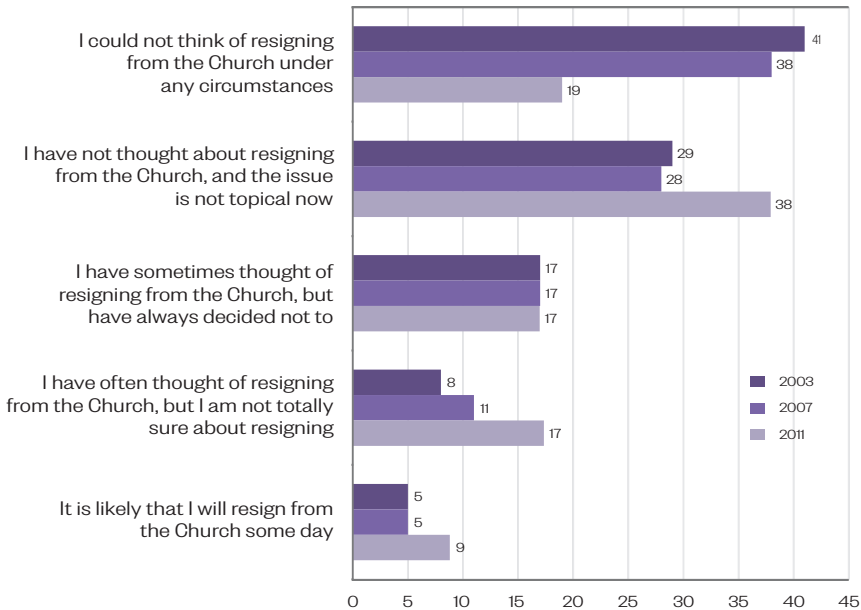
### **4.3 Resigning from the Church**

The number of resignations from the Church kept growing throughout the decade and the trend in resignations is expected to continue. Men accounted for 55 percent of the resignations in 2011. Only a few percent of those who resigned were under 18 years of age. It was more common to resign from the Church in urban than in rural parishes. The share of resignations in 2011 was slightly over one percent of the population in urban parishes whereas it did not exceed one percent in rural parishes.

There has been a remarkable decrease in the share of strongly committed members of the Church: according to the Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011 Survey, 19 percent of the members could not imagine themselves resigning from the Church under any circumstances. Instead, the share of those who had not thought about resigning and did not consider it an issue right now was rather high. Also the share of the weakly committed has grown. One fourth of the members had “potential for resigning”, either having thought about resigning but not sure about it, or considering it probable that they would resign. Compared to the previous surveys conducted in the 2000s, the share of strongly committed members has decreased remarkably not only among the younger age groups but also among the ones aged 65 or more. However, they were still most probably strongly committed members of the Church, whereas the share of the weakly committed totalled almost a half among the ones aged 15 to 24 and almost a third of the ones aged 25 to 34.

Figure 4.3

Commitment to Church membership, Gallup Ecclesiastica 2003 (N=827), 2007 (N=793) and 2011 (N=3,613).



There were more than 1,000 people participating in the Gallup Ecclesiastica Survey of 2011 who had resigned from the Church. These people were asked about reasons for resigning from the Church. To a clear majority, resignation was not a sudden decision. The most common reasons mentioned were that the Church as an institution did not seem to have any significance to them and that the respondents either did not believe in its teachings or did not consider themselves religious. Three out of four respondents reported these factors having influenced their decision to at least some extent. A reason of almost similar significance was the unwillingness to pay Church tax. As concerns the values that the Church is thought to represent, the opinions were polarized. Half of the respondents found it at least to some extent decisive for their resignation that the Church is too conservative. A much smaller share of the respondents (18%) had found it decisive that the Church is too secularized. More than one third had resigned because they considered the Church intolerant towards sexual minorities; respectively, one tenth of the ones resigned report-

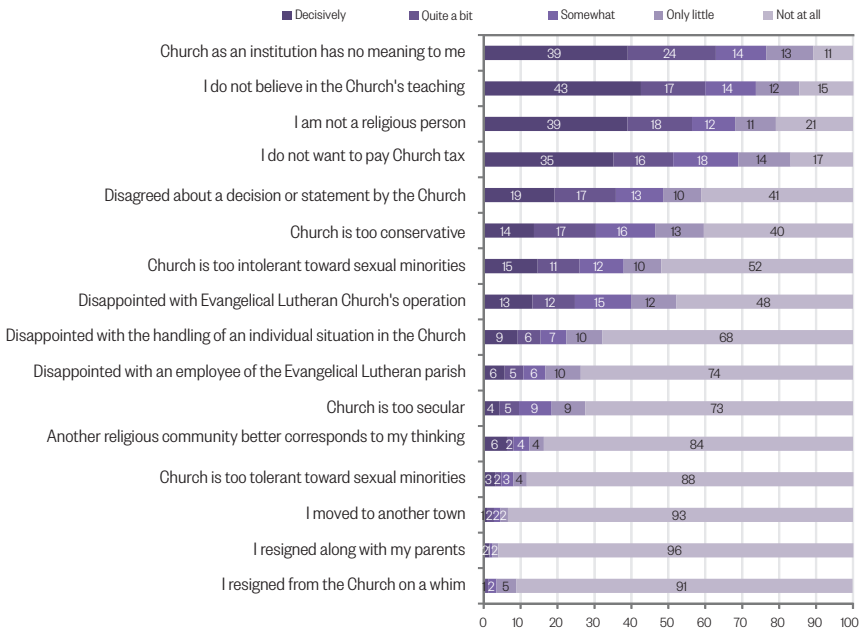


ed as their reason that the Church is too tolerant towards the same minorities.

Difference of opinion with a Church decision or a stance taken was at least somewhat decisive factor to one in two persons resigning from the Church. According to the annual registries of resignations from the Church, in 2010 and 2011, the difference of opinion was far more decisive for resigning than it had been in the previous years. In the same years also, the experience that the Church is intolerant towards sexual minorities turned out to be decisive to almost a half, whereas it did not have similar significance for resignation previously. This reason for resigning was boosted through the conversation which arose in the media simultaneously (see Chapter 1). The highest peak of resignations was reached in 2010 as over 83,000 people resigned from the Church, which amounted to two percent of the Church population. This marked an extraordinary “shock wave” in resignations which settled somewhat in the following year.

Figure 4.4

Reasons for resigning from the Church. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011, N=1,015 (%).



Disappointments with parish activities, employees or the handling of an individual occasion were clearly less common reasons for resigning from the Church, although disappointment with the activity of the Church as a whole was of higher significance during 2010 and 2011 as the number of resignations was the highest. Most often the ones who resigned did not join any other religious denomination, as only one tenth of the respondents considered it at least somewhat decisive that some other religious denomination corresponded better to their way of thinking.

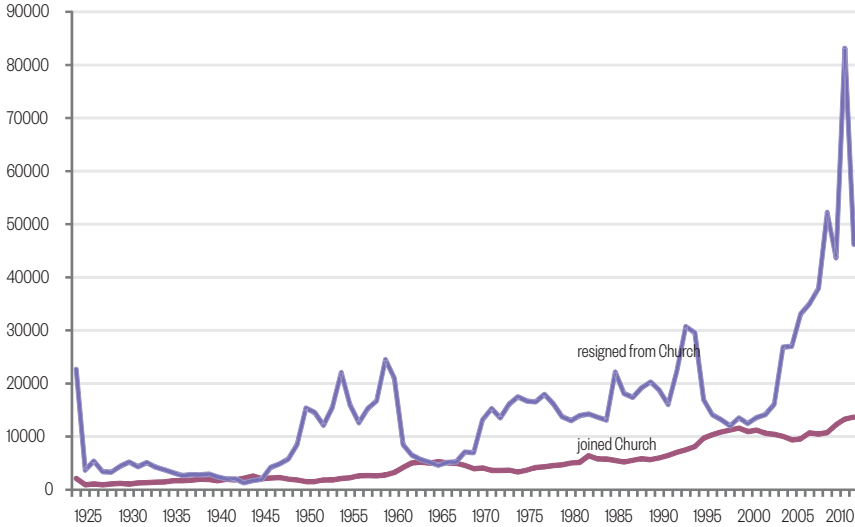
## 4.4 Joining the Church

The most common way of becoming a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is through baptism usually taking place in infancy. The Church can be joined also, for example, by those who have been baptized into other Christian churches or denominations and have been received into the Evangelical Lutheran Church by confessing the Creed of the Church. These have not been baptized again. Also those who have once resigned from the Church may have rejoined it. This section discusses joining the Church in a way other than baptism.

The number of people joining the Church has slowly increased since the 1970s, although the number of resignations has grown simultaneously with a much higher frequency. In 2011, a total of 13,600 persons joined the Church, which was the highest annual number ever. The greatest absolute and relative numbers of people joining the Church were found in the same places where also the highest numbers of resignations from the Church were registered, that is, in the capital city region.

Figure 4.5

Numbers of those resigning from the Church and those joining it in 1923-2011.



One fourth of those joining the Church in 2011 were under 18 years of age, almost a half of these aged under one year. Mostly those joining the Church during their first year of life were children who were baptized in infancy but were first entered into the population register for one reason or another. Almost one tenth of those joining were aged 12 to 17, thus near the age when they usually attend confirmation school. A total of 6 percent of those who joined were baptized as adults. A majority of them (58 %) were women.

In the Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011 survey, those not belonging to the Church were asked about their attitudes towards joining the Church. Less than a half of the respondents (45 %) could not imagine that they would join it in any circumstances. For one third it was neither an issue right now, nor had they considered it earlier. Small minorities had at least considered membership but had decided either not to join or were not sure. Almost one tenth could not answer the question, which makes the group of the uncertain ones larger than it has been in the previous surveys. All in all, it seems that not joining the Church is not as absolute a decision as it has been earlier, and people are more often uncertain whether or not to join the Church.

## Conclusions

Strengthening Church membership is a primary aim of the strategy 'Our Church'. However, there has been development in the opposite direction, as resigning from the Church has been more active than ever before and the number of strongly committed members has decreased remarkably. A decreasing proportion of all children born in Finland are baptized into the Church. Belief and world view have lost importance as reasons for belonging to the Church as the social care provided by the Church has become most important.

Those who have resigned from the Church usually report as reasons for their decision that the Church as an institution does not have any significance and that they do not believe in its teachings. The mere tradition is not sufficient to motivate Church membership. Young adults were among the most active in both joining the Church and resigning from it. It is a great challenge for the Church to reach this age group of 18 to 29-year-olds and include them in activities they prefer.

Maintaining a sustainable relationship to the Church is possible through frequent contacts. It requires an active contribution from the parishes to reach every member at least five times a year as the strategy of the Church outlines. Only one tenth of the members reported that their parish has reached them this frequently during the previous year. There is a lot of unused potential on this area for the Church to employ, as concerns for example the opportunities provided by the ICT development.

# 5 Worship services and other parish activities

---

## 5.1 Developing worship services and church ceremonies

Worship service is the celebration of God's saving presence. It is stressed in the Church that worship service not only reminds us of the good that God has done, but also brings past acts of salvation to the present when the congregation convenes. Worship service is an event in which God serves the people and the people serve God. According to the Christian and especially the Lutheran view, however, God always acts first; people for their part respond to the goodness they receive by serving God, first and foremost by loving their neighbour. Worship service has traditionally been considered to be the centre of the life of the parish.

The form of service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland was revised in the 1990s. In the reform, Church ceremonies became more than before a part of the life of worship of the congregation. The sacred rites of the Church were understood to express the nature of the congregation as a community for worship service. As with worship services, so also the ultimate purpose of the performance of sacred rites is to convey to people their fellowship with God and their share in His salvation. Thus every time rites are performed it is taken to be worship of God.

Many other events also have worship service elements: word of God, prayer, confession of faith and thanksgiving. A total of 42 percent of Church members consider the possibility of attending worship services an important reason to belong to the Church. Approximately equally many (46%) Church members attend worship services at least once a year.

In 2010, Church Council decided to start a development project to chart and develop worship service practices. The goal is to enhance the parishioners' participation in worship service life and in planning and carrying out the main mass on Sunday. Information on the parishioners' experience and expectations regarding worship service was gathered so that the development work would be based on people's real experiences and expectations and not just on impressions of them. Based on the research material collected in 2010, in a worship service, the church attendees primarily seek calming emotional experiences that are difficult to find in the midst of busy and noisy daily life. People also seek strength, God's presence and enhancement of faith in worship services.

*Our Church – a Participatory Community* strategy says that the goal is to enhance the versatility, naturalness, human warmth and spiritual depth of worship services. The strategy's goal is that the Church would reach each member at least five times a year in a high-quality manner. Those participating in the *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey were asked how often they think their parish reached them personally in some way in the past year. As examples of reaching the members, the survey mentioned personal encounters, a letter and participation. Half of Church members said that their parish had reached them at least once. One in ten said their parish had reached them five times or more, one in five said 1-4 times, 17 percent said once.

The respondents were also asked when last did the parish contact the respondent and when had the respondent contacted the parish. 17 percent of the respondents said that the parish had contacted them within the past month. Also, less than one in five said that the parish had contacted them within the past year but not within the past month. More than a fourth said they had contacted the parish in the past year.

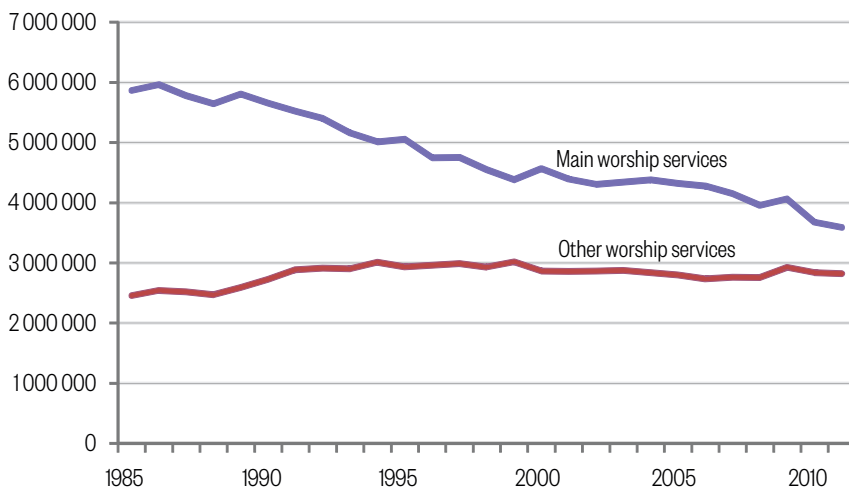
## 5.2 Worship services and other public events

A total of 74,000 worship services were organised in the parishes in 2011. Of them, 44,000 were main worship services on Sunday and 30,000 were other worship services. The number of main worship services dropped by four percent, but the number of other worship services increased by 24 percent from four years before. A total of 70 percent of the main worship services were masses i.e. Communion services, 30 percent were worship services.

In 2011, worship services were attended approximately 6.4 million times, which means that during the year, a Church member attended worship services an average of 1.5 times. A total of 2.9 percent of the average population of the Church attended worship services weekly. Worship service attendance dropped by seven percent. The main worship services were attended 3.6 million times and other worship services 2.8 million times. Attendance of other worship services increased by two percent, attendance of the main worship service dropped by 14 percent. A total of 1.6 percent of the average population of the Church attended the main worship services weekly, while 1.3 percent attended other worship services.

Figure 5.1

Attendance at main and other worship services 1980–2011.



## Worship service attendance

According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey, six percent of all Finns attend worship services at least once a month, 14 percent attend a couple of times per year and 15 percent at least once a year. A total of 27 percent said they participate more seldom, 39 percent did not attend last year. Proportionately, the largest numbers of those, who actively attend, are found among the members of churches other than the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Of the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, seven percent attend at least once a month and 39 percent at least once a year. One fourth of the Church members have not attended worship services last year, 29 percent even less often than once a year. Approximately one fourth of the Orthodox Church members attend actively, at least once a month, and approximately two fifths participate at least once a year. Approximately half of the members of other religious communities attend actively.

Compared with earlier years, especially the share of those who never attended in the past years has increased. Whereas the share of those who attend actively has remained nearly unchanged. Sporadic attendance has ever more often turned into total non-attendance.

Women are more active than men in attending worship services. Also age influences attendance activeness. Especially young adults seldom attend worship service. Only one in five men aged 25-34 say they participate at least once a year. 58 percent never attended in the past years and one in four more seldom than once a year. The oldest age groups have the largest numbers of those who attend worship services. Half (48%) of men over the age of 65 and two thirds (60%) of women attend at least once a year. Also youth are clearly more active than young adults. One in four men and one in three women under the age of 25 years attended worship services at least once a year. The closer to confirmation school age the youth were, the more active they were.

In most parishes (88%), Sunday worship service began at 10 am. Also other starting times have become more common. This is in line with the Church's strategy goals that the changed rhythm of life needs to be taken into consideration in worship service scheduling and especially in larger cities different types of worship services must be organized at different times.



In the parishes, liturgist (94%), worship service preacher (88%) and organist (88%) participated in planning the worship service most often every week. Instead, the other employees were involved fairly seldom. In only nine percent of parishes other employees were weekly involved in planning, in 39 percent at least once a month. In seven percent of parishes parishioners were weekly involved in planning, in one in five at least once a month. Elected representatives were involved at least once a month in 14 percent of parishes.

### Church attendance on holy days

Christmas Eve is still the most popular Church holiday. However, Church attendance on Christmas Eve, just like on all other most popular Church holidays, has decreased in the past few years. Attendance on the most popular holidays has dropped by 28 percent in the 2000s, the attendance of all worship services by 13 percent. The attendance of all worship services has remained steadier because it includes for example school worship services and Confirmation services; their attendance shows no equivalent decrease.

During the 2000s, there has been a drop by approximately one fourth (Christmas -28%, Easter -22%) in the Church attendance of Easter's most popular holidays (Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday) as well as Christmas's holidays (Christmas Eve, Christmas Night, Christmas Day and Boxing Day). In the 2000s, Christmas time Church attendance has decreased by 200,000 and attendance during Easter time by nearly 100,000. The decrease in holiday Church attendance has been particularly clear in the past few years. In four years, Christmas time attendance has decreased by 133,000 (-20%) and Easter time attendance by 62,000 (-16%).

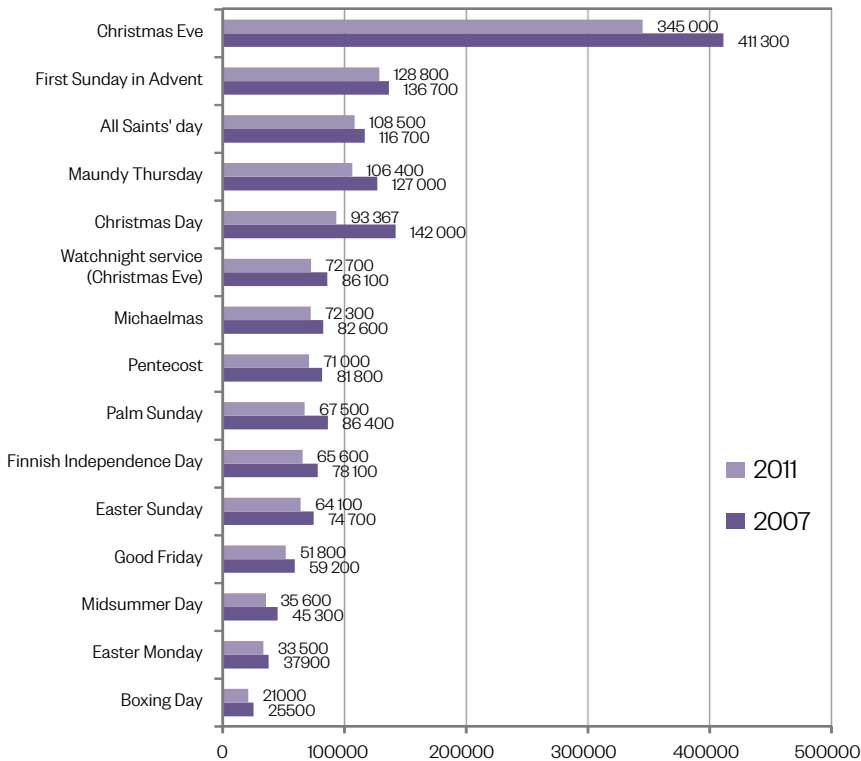
The strongest drop in attendance out of individual holidays was on Christmas Day (-34%). In just over ten years, Church attendance on Christmas Day has more than halved. Also attendance on Boxing Day has dropped powerfully (-18%). The 1<sup>st</sup> Advent Sunday (-6%) and All Saints Day (-7%) have maintained their popularity best, although even their attendance has dropped.

The parishes were asked about their attendance figures also on three so-called ordinary Sundays that traditionally were not among the most popular Church attendance days. On such Sundays, approx-

imately 55,000 attended Church, i.e. roughly the same number as on Good Friday and clearly more than on Boxing Day, Easter Monday and Midsummer Day. This shows that many of the ordinary Sundays were more popular days to attend Church than the traditional holidays. However, the development is not the same in all parishes. Experience in parishes which have paid special attention to organizing the worship services shows that attendance can also go up.

Figure 5.2

Church attendance on the most popular Church holidays in 2007 and 2011.



### Other worship services

In addition to the main worship services, other worship services are celebrated in the parishes. In statistics, the worship services other than the main one are entered as special worship services. Their attendance was a total of 2.8 million, which is 44 percent of all attend-

ance in worship services. There were 24 percent more of the other worship services than there were four years earlier. Attendance has remained fairly stable throughout the 2000s.

A considerable part of the special worship services are in different ways directed to families, children and youth. Worship services for schools and educational institutions were the most common special worship services; in 2011, nearly a million people (961,400) attended them. They constitute 15 percent of all worship service attendance.

The next most common are the confirmation services, although they are usually celebrated in connection with the main worship service. In 2011, approximately 2,100 confirmation services were celebrated in connection with the main worship service, and their attendance was more than 530,000. Overall, in 94 percent of the parishes, confirmation was celebrated in connection with the main worship service.

Nearly all parishes (92%) also organised family worship services. They were attended by 240,000 persons. Various worship services and Church visits directed to children were organised in 79 percent of the parishes and 360,000 persons attended them. Worship services for babies and their parents (*vauvakirkko*) have become slightly more popular and they were organised in half of the parishes. Toddler masses were organised in 18 percent of the parishes, angel mass (*enkelikirkko*) in nearly one fourth and worship services for juniors (*Meidän Messu*) in seven percent of the parishes. Blessing the first graders when starting school has become more common in the 2000s, and in 2011, it was done in 89 percent of the parishes. They were attended by approximately 80,000 persons which is roughly as many as attend the Christmas Night or Christmas Day worship services.

Youth worship services were organized in half of the parishes and approximately 75,000 attended them. Confirmation school Sunday was celebrated in half of the parishes and 54,000 attended them. Instead, worship services directed to students and young adults were organised only in 13 percent of the parishes. Blessing the matriculation examination candidates has decreased: it was done in only three percent of the parishes. Taizé masses and African gospel masses were celebrated in one tenth of the parishes. Other masses that appeal to the youth are for example the pop music and metal music masses organised in 1-2 percent of the parishes.

Various worship services directed to families, children and youth including the Confirmation masses gather an attendance of approximately 2.5 million, i.e. nearly 40 percent of all worship services. Thus, a significant part of the worship service work is done with families.

St Thomas masses are among the more popular among other worship services. Also different outdoor worship services and forest churches have increased their popularity. Parishes organising masses for sexual minorities constitute one percent of the parishes.

Worship services for groups that require special support have increased in number. One third of parishes organised a worship service directed for mentally disabled people, worship services with subtitles were organised in three percent of the parishes and worship services in simple Finnish in two percent of the parishes.

In the 2000s, weekday masses have become more common with the introduction of *The Book of Worship Services*. Weekday mass is intended for a weekday worship service that can be celebrated more simply and plainly than the main mass on Sunday. In 2011, a total of 84 percent of the parishes organised them nearly 7,000 times with approximately 360,000 attending.

Special groups are also invited to the main worship services. Especially inviting families with baptized children, their friends and godparents has become more common. In 2001, nearly half of the parishes invited them to worship services. Also inviting the families of Sunday school children, playgroup children or family playgroup children to the worship services became more common (88% of parishes invited them). A majority of the parishes invited to worship services also the confirmation school children and their parents, the elderly/retired people, elected representatives or others in charge, war veterans and war invalids and those who had lost their loved ones.

### Holy Communion

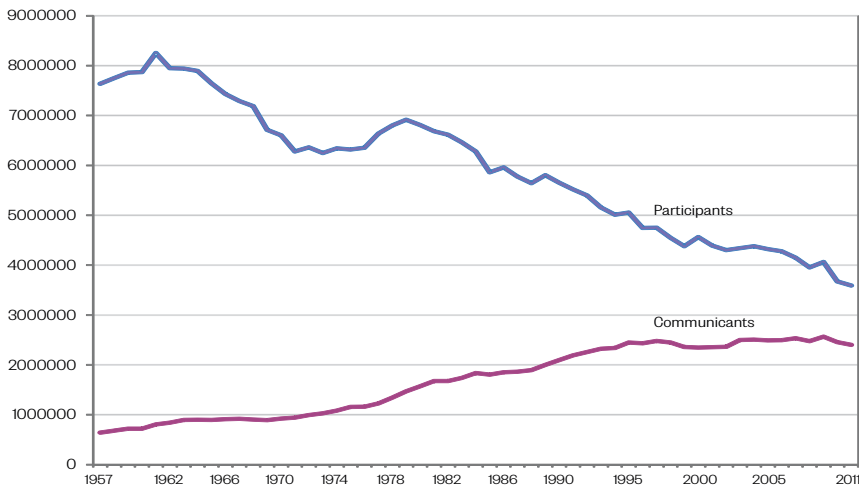
In 2011, a total of 70 percent of the main worship services were masses, i.e. communion services. In them, 1.8 million guests received Holy Communion. Overall, an average of 69 percent of those attending the mass partook of Holy Communion. In addition to the main worship services, approximately 30,000 other occasions with Holy Communion were organised in the parishes. These are Holy Communions of-

ferred in connection with other worship services, private Holy Communion and Holy Communion in connection with devotions and church ceremonies, with a total of 0.6 million persons partaking.

In the long run, the number of communicants has increased, but starting in the mid-1990s, the development has been even. The long-term increase in communicants is linked with the change in worship service culture in which there has been a desire to emphasise the significance of Holy Communion in the body of worship service.

Figure 5.3

Attendance at main Sunday service and Holy Communion 1957–2011.



### Road churches and tourist chapels

Road churches are Lutheran and Orthodox churches that open their doors for the summer months to welcome tourists and local people. The road churches are all located near the main roads and belong to the most important attractions of their area. Their opening hours vary but mainly they are open in June and July. Some of the churches are tourist attractions that may be located further from the main roads.

The chain of road churches intended for travellers included 279 churches in 2011. This idea comes from Germany, from which it has spread to Scandinavia and Estonia.

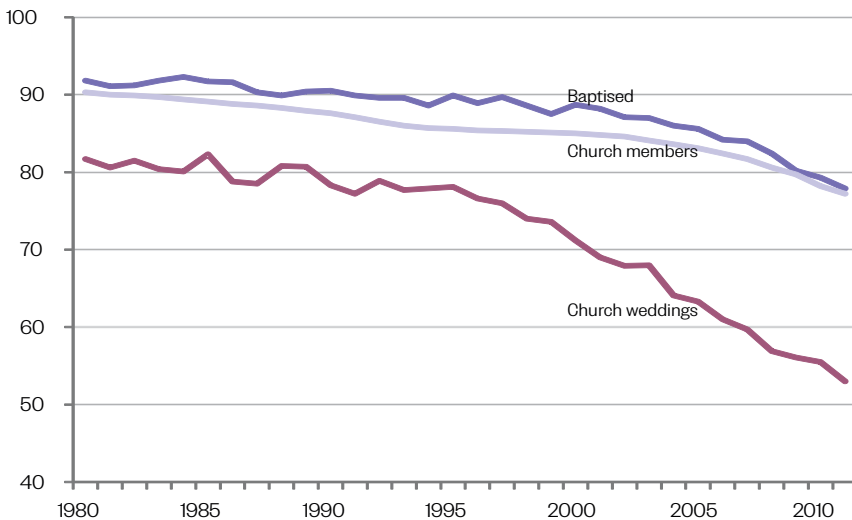
There are also tourist chapels in Lapland. Building tourist chapels began in the 1990s and they are used for worship services, devotions, concerts and Church ceremonies. There are also tourist pastors to serve travellers.

### 5.3 Church ceremonies

In 2011, a total of nearly 124,000 baptisms, weddings and blessings, funerals, confirmations and burials were organised, and a total of 3.86 million persons attended them. The number of events has increased but the number of those attending has dropped slightly. In 2011, nearly a million persons attended baptisms and weddings each, and 1.8 million attended funerals.

Figure 5.4

Percentage shares of those baptised and church weddings 1980–2011.



The changes in the popularity of church ceremonies are linked to changes in church membership, although the changes are not similar in the case of all church ceremonies. The change in the number of those baptised is in line with the changes in those belonging to the

church. The share of those who are wed in church has dropped drastically in the 2000s, clearly more rapidly than the share of church members.

In 2011, the share of baptised children out of all children born was 78 percent. All in all, there were 45,630 baptisms. Compared with 2007, the number of baptisms decreased by 6.5 percent and the number of persons attending them decreased by 4 percent.

In 2011, there were 860 persons who were baptised as adults; 58 percent of them were women. An average of 21 persons was present at baptisms. Unlike the attendance of other church ceremonies, the average number of persons attending baptisms has increased slightly in the 2000s.

The share of church weddings of all matrimonies was 53 percent. There were approximately 15,100 church weddings and the total number of matrimonies in the entire country was 28,600. 62 percent of the couples, in which at least one of the spouses belongs to the church, were married in Church. Church weddings have lost popularity significantly in the 2000s. Those to be wed in Church must be confirmed church members. Church wedding is possible also for couples of whom one belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the other one to some other Christian church or denomination. Church wedding can also be performed when one of the engaged partners belongs to a Christian church operating abroad.

In 2011, a total of 47 percent (13,400) of all matrimonies were civil marriages. Church blessings of civil marriages (for anyone who wants) were organised in 1,500 cases (11% of civil marriages). The share of civil marriages increased in the first, second, third and the consecutive marriages. In 2010, a total of 60 percent of first marriages were church weddings, 44 percent of second marriages and a good third of the third and consecutive marriages.

In 2011, there were 48,200 Church funerals. During the same year 50,600 persons died so approximately 95 percent of the deceased were given a Church funeral. Although the share of those who got a Church funeral decreased slightly, the majority of the deceased who did not belong to the Church were given Church funerals (69%).

Church ceremonies offer a broad interface with Finns and the members of the parishes. They reach also those who seldom go to Church, and they bring people to the core message of the church and

its basic mission. Preceding the church ceremonies, there is nearly always a discussion held either in the Church facilities or at home. However, discussions held after the Church ceremonies have not become common. Discussions with the family after the funerals were held in one tenth of the ceremonies, after baptisms in four percent and after weddings in five percent of the ceremonies.

## 5.4 Other parish activities

In addition to worship services, approximately 66,000 other parish events and 14,000 music events were organised in the parishes. Approximately 2.7 million attended the other parish events and 1.8 million attended the music events. Other parish events include for example Bible teaching events, parish catechetical meetings (kinkerit), revival meetings (seurat), devotions, regional and national events. The number of these events decreased by 18 percent, and the number of persons attending them dropped by 23 percent. A total of 1.2 percent of the average church population attended the events weekly. The number of music events decreased by 6 percent, and the number of persons attending them dropped by 14 percent since 2007.

Table 5.1

Attendance at other parish events in 2011.

	2011		Change 2007–2011 (%)	
	Events	Attendance	Events	Attendance
Music events	14 159	1 736 076	-6	-14
Bible teaching events	3 702	100 238	0	-2
Catechetical meetings	2 537	51 078	-18	-20
Revival meetings	8 518	497 027	-28	-28
Devotions	35 172	718 434	-9	-15
Regional and national events	712	545 943	-20	-9
Other events	15 774	833 871	-32	-33
All	80 574	4 482 667	-16	-19



There were 3,900 various groups that met regularly. A total of nearly 46,000 persons participated in the groups. 51 percent of the parishes had charismatic prayer evenings and 73,000 persons attended them. Evangelising events were organised in 27 percent of the parishes. The evangelising events were attended by 49,000 persons.

Alfa courses teaching about the content of Christianity were organised in 16 percent of the parishes. Evening and day events for women were organised in half of the parishes and one third of parishes had evening and day events for men. Women's day and evening events were attended by 28,000 persons and men's events by 19,000 persons.

One in five parishes organised silent retreats. More than 160 of them were organised and they had just fewer than 2,600 attendants.

### Prayer events

In 2011, a total of more than 6,100 prayer events of various kinds were organised and more than 115,000 persons attended them. Half of the parishes organised blessing of the sowing and thanksgiving for the harvest. Prayer events associated with the beginning of school or school term were organised in 63 percent of the parishes. Blessing care facilities, industrial plants, offices and other work places as well as blessing schools and other educational institutions were the most common among blessing of facilities. A total of 1,700 blessings of homes were organised and they were attended by 31,000 persons.

### Church plays

Church plays, tours of Biblical scenes and religious tableaux illustrate the Gospel stories through the means of drama. Advent or Christmas tours were organised in one fifth of the parishes and Easter tours or Easter tableaux in up to 39 percent of the parishes. Other Church plays were performed in 22 percent of the parishes. A total of 183,000 persons attended the various plays. Easter tours and Easter tableaux gathered the largest audience totalling 92,000 persons. Advent or Christmas tours were attended by 39,000 persons, other Church plays by 52,000.

## Musical activities

In 2011, more than 2,000 choirs and nearly 1,300 instrumental bands convened in the parishes; i.e. a total of approximately 3,300 musical groups. They had approximately 19,200 performances. The parishes gathered nearly 50,000 music amateurs. The number of choir members dropped slightly, but correspondingly the number of participants in instrumental bands increased by 79%.

The single most popular music event in the parishes was the Most Beautiful Christmas Carols event that was organised in nearly all (98%) of the parishes. In 2011, about 2,700 such events were organised and they gathered an audience of approximately 480,000 Finns to sing Christmas songs together.

Also many other music events were organised actively in the parishes. Hymn singing and other sing-along events were offered in 85 percent of the parishes. Choir concerts were organised in four out of five parishes, organ concerts in three out of five, gospel, jazz or equivalent concerts in more than half of the parishes, orchestra concerts in under half, youth concerts in two out of five and children's concerts in one third of parishes.

## Conclusions

Among Finns, going to Church – also on the most popular holidays – has decreased clearly. Especially the sporadic Church goers have decreased, and for many, sporadic Church attendance has ever more often turned into passiveness. The attendance of special worship services has remained steady. The number of weekly Masses has increased.

Attendance has gone up in parishes which have paid special attention to organizing the worship services. Willingness to attend is affected by the parishioners' role in the worship service, by jointly planning the worship services, the music used in the worship services and by the time of day they begin.

Among Church ceremonies, both the share of weddings and that of baptisms have dropped. The scanty contact of young adults to the parish and the ever higher age of starting a family mean that many new parents have not had contacts with the Church for a long time.

In such a case, baptising the child is not self-evident. Because Church resignations have increased, ever fewer couples have the possibility to have a Church wedding. The share of civil marriages has increased. Only one in ten civil marriage couples is blessed in Church.

# 6 Education

---

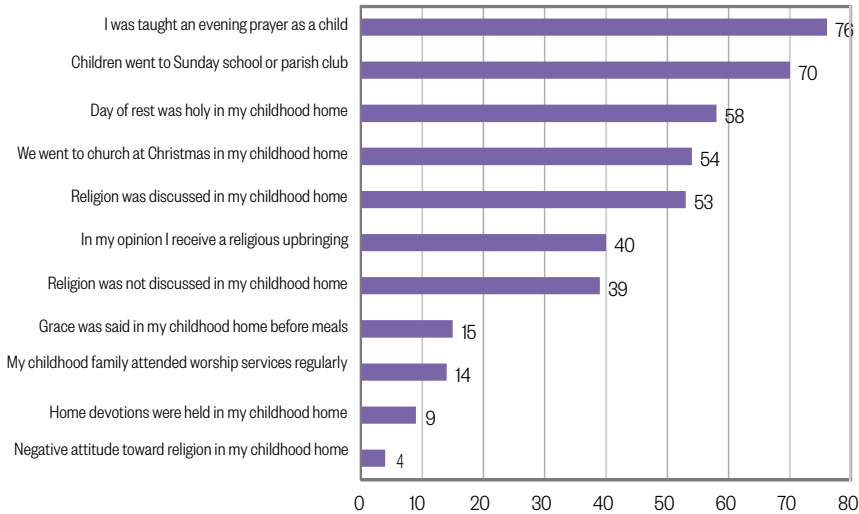
## 6.1 Trends in education

Teaching on baptism is the main point of departure in the work of the Church with children and youths. Baptism creates an obligation to provide teaching on the tenets of Christianity. The contents of Christian faith are taught, for example, in daytime clubs, Sunday schools and in confirmation school. Networks and co-operation with educational institutions, among others, play an important role in the educational work. The Church is also expected to support families and their spiritual life at home, according to its strategy 'Our Church'. One of the ways of implementing the strategy is encouraging parents to promote Christian traditions with their children, and inviting families to Sunday services.

At the end of 2011, the outline for the educational work of the Church was reformed. The new outline approaches education not only from the viewpoint of the educator or the organization but that of the phenomenon of growth. Human beings are perceived holistically, and spiritual growth is seen as an essential part of every person. The outline stresses education as one of the basic tasks of the Church present in all areas of its operation.

Figure 6.1

Finns' views on religious upbringing in their childhood home. The share of 'Yes' answers. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011, N=4,919 (%).

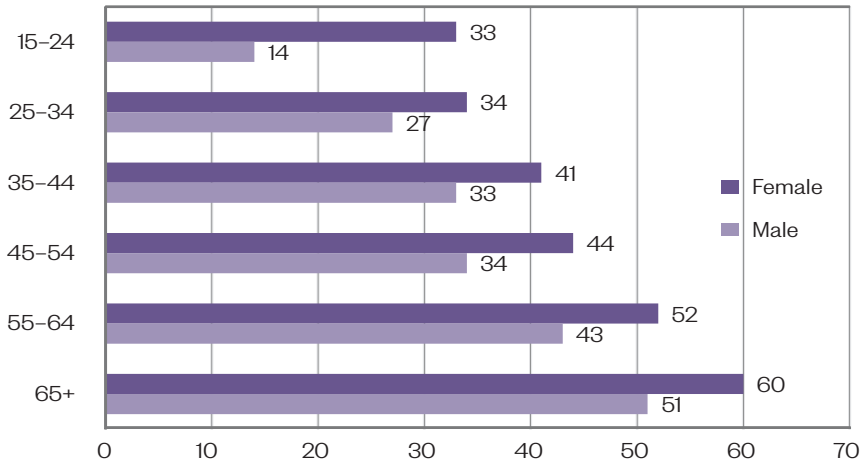


The role of religious upbringing at home has continued to decrease. Following the international trend shown in numerous studies, also in Finland the younger generations are always less influenced by religion than the older ones were. According to the Gallup Ecclesiastica Survey 2011, more than half of those aged 65 or more had received a religious upbringing at home whereas only one fifth of the youngest group (aged 15 to 24) reported the same. More than three out of four Finns were taught an evening prayer at home. Also clearly more than a half felt that the day of rest was kept in their childhood home (see Figure 6.1). The differences between age groups, however, were remarkable: an evening prayer was taught to 90 percent of the ones aged over 65 but to only half of those aged under 25. Similarly, 80 percent of the older group but only a fourth of the younger ones had a childhood home where the day of rest was kept.

When asked about giving religious upbringing to one's own children, the difference between age groups was similar. Also men and women differed remarkably. Especially young men were mostly unlikely to give or intended to give religious upbringing to their children. Women who were under 35 years of age were not particularly willing to give religious upbringing either, as only one third of them had done so or would consider it.

Figure 6.2

If you have/had children, did/would you give them a religious upbringing? The share of 'Yes' answers. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011, N=4,859 (%).



## 6.2 Early childhood education by the Church

Early childhood education by the Church is a sector of educational work carried out in the parishes among children under school age and their families. The work is guided through principles in the Early Childhood Curriculum of the Church published in 2008 which outlines also the development objectives for different activities of the work with children.

### Daytime clubs

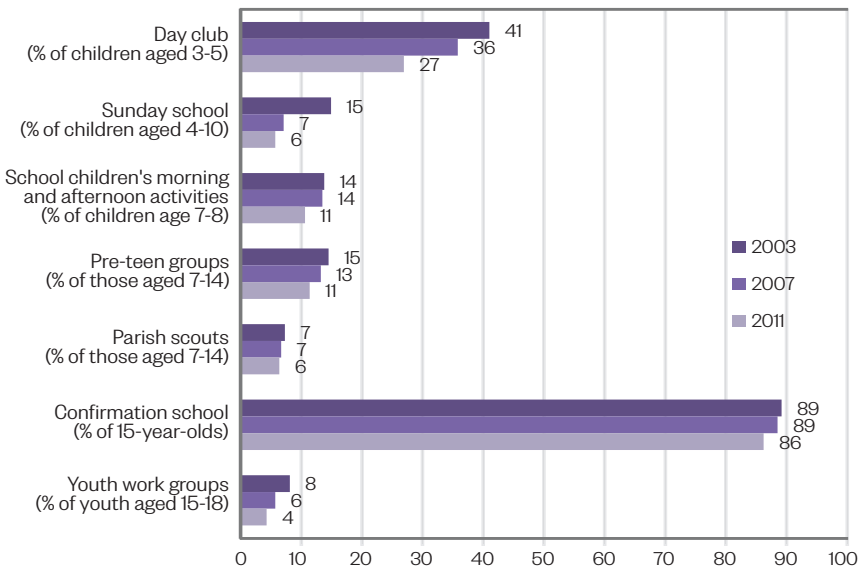
Daytime clubs have been a strong area of the Church's early childhood education work for decades. However, there has been a steady decrease in the number of children participating since the mid-1990s. In 2011, a total of 27 percent of Finnish children aged three to five participated in the daytime clubs in parishes. A majority of these children were not in municipal day care. Participation in the clubs has diminished as the right to municipal day care has been extended. In addition, the number of six-year-olds participating in daytime

clubs has rapidly decreased after 2003 when preschool education became free of charge.

A number of various events attached to daytime club activities were arranged in the parishes. Such events include parents' evenings and celebrations. In the course of 2011, some 3,000 events were arranged, with 150,000 people attending them. Daytime club activity includes also excursions and camps. The excursions had 28,000 children participating and the camps respectively 4,000 in 2011. Discussions with the parents of daytime club children became an important part of educational work. Three out of four parishes arranged discussions at least with some parents and one fourth of the parishes with the parents of every club attendant.

Figure 6.3

Coverage of the Church's education and youth work in 2003, 2007 and 2011.



### Sunday school

For schoolchildren and smaller children the parish offers Sunday school. It takes the form of a club and also of a worship service, thus often referred to as children's church. Sunday schools convene weekly, either on Sundays or weekdays.

In 2011, there were altogether 1,300 Sunday school groups with 23,000 children participating, corresponding to almost 6 percent of the children aged 5 to 11. The groups convened mostly on Sundays (63 %), but also other weekdays had gained importance. Most of the Sunday school teachers were volunteers. In 2011, there were 3,300 Sunday school teachers, of whom 80 percent were women. The number of volunteers has diminished with the decrease in Sunday schools.

### Other activities of early childhood education

The parishes approached families with small children also by sending birthday cards to children aged 1 to 5. In 63 percent of the parishes all children received a birthday greeting, in 14 percent some of the children of the age cohort. More than every third parish sent the whole age cohort invitations to daytime clubs. Every second parish arranged events to which they invited all children of the age cohort.

A considerable part of the early childhood education by the parishes is done in collaboration with municipal early childhood education authorities. The parishes maintain active contacts with early childhood education and preschool education authorities. Most of the parishes are engaged in some type of cooperation, including visits, arranging morning assemblies and services, and material help and shared training sessions.

The collaboration with municipalities in religious education was most active with day care centres. Altogether 86 percent of the parishes made visits to day care centres in 2011. A majority of the parishes also arranged worship services and Church excursions for the day care units. In addition, one third of the parishes arranged mentoring for the staff in day care units. The idea in mentoring is that day care employees may give religious education supported by the parish.

### Work with families

Transmission of Christian tradition and strengthening the membership in the Church are important in all Church's educational work. This includes supporting the families.

Family clubs serve to bring together children and the adults who take care of them, including mothers, fathers, grandparents and family day care workers. In the "adult-child" clubs, adults spend part of



the time discussing and exchanging experiences while children have their own activities. In open events adults and children are together all the time. A small service is held in the family clubs. There were 49,600 meetings of family clubs in 2011, with 1.19 million recorded attendants.

### **6.3 Work with preadolescents**

Church work with preadolescents consists of clubs, excursions, camps, many-faceted network and school cooperation, Scouts and individual events or theme events. The target group of preadolescent work are children aged 7-14.

The gathering activity of Church's preadolescent work, i.e. clubs, camps and excursions, has had a downward trend already for three decades. Compared with them, cooperation with schools has increased in significance and has found ever more diverse forms. Its basic elements are school day opening sessions, visits in the classroom, school sponsor activities, camp schools, school worship services and various other activities. In 2010, parishes were the third largest third sector service provider in school club operations.

In preadolescent work there is also abundant offer of individual events. A family-centred approach is ever more common. Adults and children together have been offered excursions, camps, clubs and special theme events. In clubs, the resource of volunteer club instructors is significant. In 2011, the parishes had nearly 14,000 volunteers instructing preadolescent clubs and Scouts.

The internet has become an ever more important operating environment for boys and girls. Church Council's *Spiritual Life Online* (Hengellinen elämä verkossa, see Chapter 11) project has trained parish employees to encounter boys and girls in the Church facilities and schools as well as online.

#### Morning and afternoon activities

The Law on Comprehensive Education guarantees morning and afternoon care for schoolchildren in the first and second grades. These

activities mostly take place in the afternoons after school or in the mornings before school begins. The municipalities are responsible for organizing the care, but they may also purchase the services from volunteer associations or other organizations, including parishes.

In 2011, one in two parishes were arranging morning and afternoon care, either independently (21 %) or in cooperation with the municipality (29 %). The groups mostly met five days a week (73 % of the parishes). Among smaller parishes this care was less frequent. There were altogether 12,400 children participating in 2011, which amounts to almost 11 percent of the age cohort of 7- to 8-year-olds.

### Groups and other activities for preadolescents

The preadolescent clubs had 53,400 participants in 2011, the amount of boys almost equal to that of girls. The club participants amounted to 11 percent of all children aged 7 to 14. There has been a decrease in the absolute number of clubs for preadolescents, but the number of clubs per parish has remained the same, due to the decrease of parishes.

Many parishes also arrange different kinds of open clubs for preadolescents which are open-door by nature and thus do not have formal members.

Excursions and camps bring many preadolescents together. In 2011, a total of 57,000 children participated in 5,000 camps. The decrease in participation from previous years can in part be explained by the smaller age cohorts. Excursions for preadolescents totalled 1,000 with 18,000 children.

### Scouting

Some 60,000 children and youth participated in Scout clubs in Finland in 2011. Approximately half of them participated in Scout clubs organized in the parishes. Scout clubs involve both preadolescents and youth. Also young adults take part in the activity.

There were 3,100 Scout clubs in the parishes in 2011, involving 6,600 leaders and 29,700 Scouts. The number of both groups and participants is decreasing, mainly due to the decrease in the numbers of young age cohorts and lack of leaders for the activity. Large numbers of excursions, trips and camps were arranged in Scout clubs.

Trips and excursions totalled 3,500 with 38,000 participants. Camps totalled 1,400 with 29,000 participants.

The Guides and Scouts of Finland signed a cooperation contract with the Evangelic-Lutheran Church of Finland in 2009. The aim of the cooperation is to promote religious education as part of the education provided by the Guides and Scouts of Finland.

## 6.4 Confirmation school

The popularity of confirmation school has remained strong. In 2011, there were 53,400 young people attending confirmation school. Almost all of them were aged 14 to 15, only a few percent attending confirmation school at a more advanced age. Thus, confirmation school reached 83 percent of the age group of 15-year-olds. The confirmation school of the Lutheran Church does not have a similar position in any other country as it does in Finland. In 2011, the participation rate in confirmation schools in Sweden was 32 percent of the age group, in Norway 65 percent and in Denmark 73 percent.

In Finland, the confirmation school has been developed with exceptional customer-centeredness based on the good practices found in the parishes. The reputation of confirmation school among the youth is good and confirmation school is seen as part of youth culture. The popularity of confirmation school in Finland is also explained by the rights that it brings. Unlike in other Nordic countries, the confirmation school is a prerequisite for Church wedding.

Nearly all those who attend confirmation school (99.7%) are confirmed. A considerable number of youth join the Church in connection with the confirmation school.

Some 12 percent of confirmation school students attended it in a place other than their home parish. Some of them attended confirmation schools of other local parishes and some attended those of revival movements or mission organisations. Confirmation school camp is the most popular form of confirmation school. A total of 92 percent of youth attended confirmation schools in which most of the teaching takes place during a camp session. In most cases, the length of the camp was seven or eight days. Six percent of youth attend-

ed day confirmation schools and one percent attended evening confirmation schools. Approximately a thousand adults attended adult confirmation schools in 2011, most of them studied privately.

According to a confirmation school research<sup>9</sup> done internationally in seven countries 2007-2008, confirmation school camp is a strength of the Finnish confirmation school practice. The Finnish youth are satisfied with their confirmation schools and it has a positive effect on their attitude toward the Church.

A follow-up study of the youth who had attended confirmation school shows that the confirmation school has a central impact in adulthood attitudes toward the Church. At the age of 25, most young adults estimated that the confirmation school was the single most significant factor influencing their religious thinking. The next most important factors were considered to be religion teaching in school and the influence of the home.

The confirmation school is a significant inspiration for participating in parish activities. The international confirmation school study shows that in no other Nordic or Central European country does the confirmation school inspire as many young people to be involved in the Church's youth work as in Finland. Ultimately, approximately one fourth of the Finnish youth who attend confirmation school also get involved in Church activities.

## 6.5 Youth work

In many parishes, training for young confirmed volunteers (YCV, *isoinen*) is the cornerstone of youth work; it gathers a considerable share of those confirmed in the previous years. As the YCV operations have expanded, the traditional activities in parish youth groups have decreased. In 2011, there were more than 700 youth work groups in the parishes and 11,100 youth attended them (15,200 youth in 2007). The number of those participating in the groups corresponds to 4 percent of the age group of those aged 15-18.

---

9 Innanen, Tapani & Niemelä, Kati (eds.) Rippikoulun todellisuus. Kirkon tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisuja 107, 2009.

In several parishes, youth evenings gather a considerably larger group of youth than the traditional group activity. In 2011, the parishes organised 19,100 youth evenings with 448,000 youth attending them. Furthermore, the parishes organised 2,300 other events directed to the youth with an attendance of 122,000.

In 2011, a total of 25,100 youth participated in the training of young confirmed volunteers. 68 percent of them were girls. The parishes often have more YCV candidates than can be placed. Only eight percent of parishes have a shortage of young confirmed volunteers. Two thirds of the parishes (67%) have offered YCV training in some form.

In 2011, a total of 15,900 youth had worked as YCV, which corresponds to 30 percent of the confirmation school age group. The YCVs are active in preadolescent work and confirmation school work. Also a number of other volunteer assistants are active in confirmation schools. One in four parishes (28%) used these volunteers regularly in all or nearly all groups.

Online youth work has become ever more important, and the Church has put a lot of resources in it in the past few years. An ever larger number of employees participated in online youth work and used social media in their work. In a special project, the parish youth workers were trained for online work.

## 6.6 Special youth work

The Church's special youth work refers to seeking and neighbourly work with youth and adolescents directed to children and youth who are risking to be marginalised or already are marginalised. Ever since 1968, special youth work has been part of parish youth work. The Youth Act that entered into force in the beginning of 2011 made special youth work statutory.

All in all half (52%) of the parishes did special youth work. Especially large parishes were active, in most of them there were one or several employees dedicated full-time to special youth work. The various operation forms were open door activities, *Saapastoiminta* (service consisting of nightly on call services, festival activities and

online service), seeking work, small group work and cooperation with schools.

In special youth work, the parishes work in cooperation with schools and municipal youth workers. The most common cooperation partners were schools; 65 percent of parishes doing special youth work had regular cooperation with them. In addition, parishes had regular cooperation with municipal youth workers (49% of parishes) and with the police and social workers (approximately 20% of parishes).

## **6.7 Work in schools and educational institutions**

The Church works in elementary schools, upper secondary schools, vocational schools, schools of applied sciences, universities and vocational adult education centres. The basis of cooperation is education in which the Church's and educational institution's tasks coincide (see Chapter 16). The particular mission of the work in educational institutions is to support and further the value education and broad-spectrum sophistication that takes place in them. The second mission is to further the spiritual, mental and social welfare of the pupils, students, teachers and other personnel, and of the entire educational community.

In 2011, approximately 65 fulltime employees worked in educational institution work, most of them were pastors. In addition, special youth workers, diaconal workers and Church musicians were involved. The educational institution workers mainly worked in vocational schools, schools of applied sciences and universities. The offices in educational institution work cover all the locations with at least 3,000 students. Many Church employees work with educational institutions as part of their other duties. The work done with basic education schools is distributed between parish workers, whereas the work in other educational institutions is mainly the fulltime responsibility of those doing the work.

Nearly all parishes declared that they have some kind of cooperation with schools and educational institutions. A total of 93 percent of the parishes declared that they have regular cooperation with elementary school and upper secondary school. The lower levels of

elementary school were the most frequent cooperation partner (92% regularly, 7% somewhat). 86 percent of parishes had regular cooperation and 12 percent had sporadic cooperation with the upper levels of elementary school. The share of regular cooperation is considerably less frequent in other educational institutions. 15 percent had regular cooperation with vocational schools. 14 percent of the parishes had regular cooperation with schools of applied sciences, 13 percent with universities.

The most common forms of cooperation were worship services, excursions and camps and school pastor or godparenting activities. Nearly all parishes organised worship services with elementary school classes. Worship services were organised less often with other educational institutions. Nearly half of parishes had cooperation in organising excursions and camps with elementary school classes. Furthermore, approximately a third of parishes had school pastor or school godparenting activities with elementary schools. Visiting the teacher-parent evenings was most common in the upper levels of elementary schools.

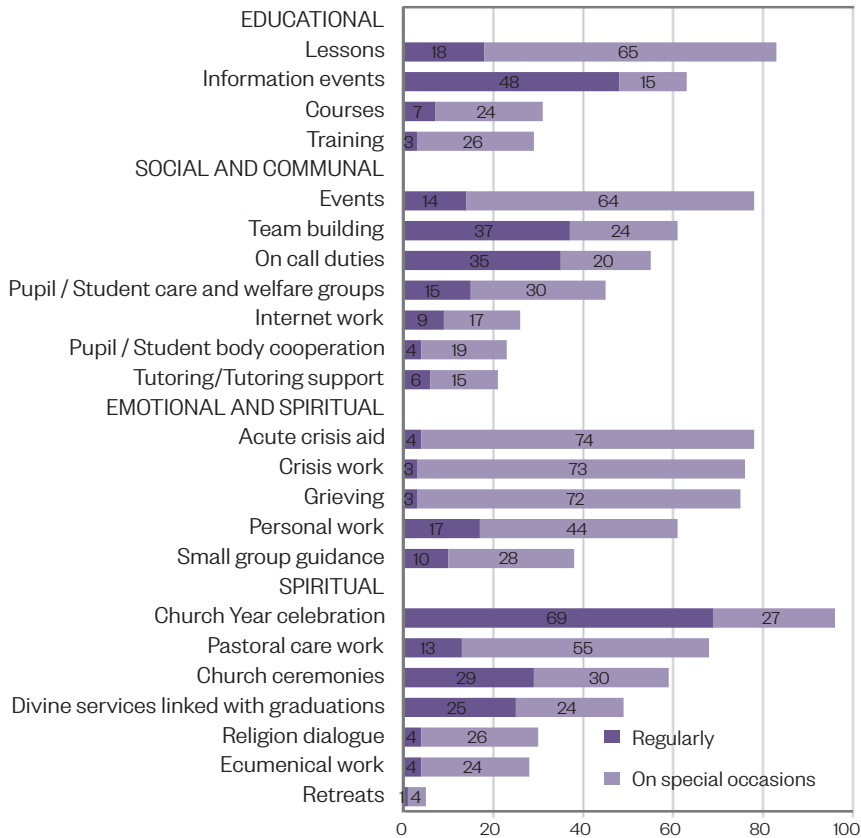
The cooperation with schools was educational, social and communal, emotional and mental as well as spiritual in nature. Especially visits in the classroom and various information bulletins were educational cooperation. The special competence of parishes was particularly evident in the area of crisis assistance. Four parishes out of five carried it out with schools if necessary. Among others, acute crisis assistance and crisis work as well as grief support were these.

## **6.8 Work with young adults**

In the Church, young adults usually refer to people aged 18-29. The goal of the work with young adults is to strengthen the young adults' experience of the parish and of the Church as a meaningful community that is close to them, and to develop their possibilities to influence the Church's operations and administration.

Figure 6.4

The forms of cooperative work in schools and educational institutions (% of parishes).



The goal of the *Young Adult as Member of the Church* (Nuori aikuinen kirkon jäsenenä) project carried out in 2006-2009 was to enhance the young adults' Christian identity and their growth into an adult's religiosity. The selection of project measures was divided into four areas, which were Christian identity, parish work, advocacy and communication. Encountering young adults through online community services was solidified during the project as one of the focal points of encountering young adults. Young adults have also been one of the target groups in worship service life and volunteer activity development projects common to the Church.



Work directed to young adults has increased in the parishes. In 2011, a total of 37 percent of parishes organised specific activities directed to gathering together young adults. Three out of four (76 %) large parishes organised such activities. In 2011, there were more than 200 groups for young adults with a total of 3,800 members. Also, coordination of the work done with young adults increased somewhat in the parishes, and ever larger number of parishes had specific employees focusing on this line of work. In 2011, mostly the largest parishes with more than 16 000 members had either one or several pastors dedicated to working with young adults either part-time or fulltime. Coordination was less frequent in small or medium-sized parishes.

## 6.9 Work with adults

*Our Church* strategy and the *Report on the Future of Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland* emphasise the importance of adult population when the significance of the Church to its members and as part of the civil society is being studied.

According to a report from 2011 examining adult work in the parishes, some of the parishes carried out this activity as a line of work with adults, some made it part of other forms of operation or lines of work. The focus was in activities that gather together, with the content focusing on the Bible. Another focus was larger events directed to adults and featuring visiting speakers from Christian organisations or communities.

In 2011, in the parishes, there were 3,900 regularly convening groups for adults. They had a total of 46,000 members. Most of the groups were Bible groups. Other groups were discussion groups, small groups focusing on couples' relationships and other adult groups.

In the past few years, layman-driven small groups (Adult Catechumenate) have been developed in which the central thing is the content originating from the questions of the group members, and joining the rhythm of the Church year and worship services of the parish. The groups continue meeting for about a year and they exist in each diocese.

## Conclusions

Religious education in the homes has decreased. Ever fewer people have Christian upbringing in the home. One third of women and only one in seven men under the age of 25 plan to give their possible children religious upbringing. Also, the number of participants in the Church's educational work has dropped. The share of those attending parish day clubs has decreased drastically; similarly, attendance in Sunday school, parish morning and afternoon activities and adolescent groups has also dropped. For this reason, the Church's operation will focus more on cooperation with other educational institutions. An example of this is the parishes' active cooperation with municipal day care services. Most parishes also regularly cooperate with elementary schools.

In international comparison, attending confirmation school has an exceptionally strong position in Finland. Opinion polls show that the youth are satisfied with confirmation school and it has a positive impact on their attitudes toward religion and the Church. Although confirmation school attendance has remained strong, it cannot be taken for granted. The drop in the share of baptised persons and in the popularity of Church weddings anticipates a drop also in confirmation school attendance. The activities of young confirmed volunteers are an example of a work area that resonates strongly among the Finnish youth. It offers the youth a chance to take responsibility and they are committed to it. Equivalent work forms, which give responsibilities to volunteers for example in guiding a group, could also be used in the work with adults.

# 7 Pastoral care and family counselling

---

## 7.1 Pastoral care in the parishes

The Lutheran concept of pastoral care refers to a service of love based on personal calling, in which we help our neighbours according to their real needs. All those belonging to the Church in the broadest sense should be concerned for their neighbours and all parishioners should engage in each other's pastoral care. This care is constructive interaction seeking to provide mental and spiritual support through discussion, confession, prayer, Bible study and hymns. The forms of pastoral care in the Church include the pastoral work of the local parish, family counselling, pastoral care in hospitals and a telephone helpline. In addition to this, pastoral care is offered in prisons and in the Finnish Defence Forces. Here, pastoral care only refers to care provided by professionals of the Church.

In 2008-2011, the number of pastoral care discussions by the pastors continued decreasing. In 2011, the pastors declared to have had monthly an average of 2,600 pastoral care discussions booked in advance, which means approximately 31,000 discussions per year. In addition to discussions booked in advance, the pastors had an average of 2,300 other pastoral care discussions per month. Approximately 7% of the pastoral care discussions involving pastors led to confession. The share of pastoral care discussions leading to confession de-

creased slightly. The figures do not include the pastoral care discussions conducted in connection with Church ceremonies.

The spiritual discussions and pastoral care conducted by diaconal employees formed one fifth of the customer contact measures. This means nearly 135,000 discussions in 2011.

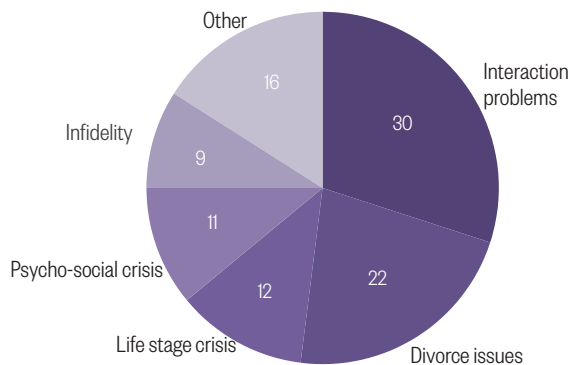
In 2011, parish pastors served Holy Communion in the premises of sick people an average of 900 times per month; in these, Holy Communion was celebrated with more than 2,500 persons. In 2011, the pastors held Communion services for groups in hospitals and care facilities more than one thousand times monthly and nearly 18,000 persons celebrated Holy Communion in them. Compared with 2007, there was a slight decrease in Holy Communion offered by pastors.

## 7.2 Family counselling and family work

The Church's family counselling supports and helps in family problems and in crises using spiritual counselling and therapeutic methods. In family counselling, the emphasis is on the couple's relationship issues. In addition to helping during crises in the relationship, such as divorce, help is provided also in other relationship issues within the family and in upbringing issues. Also those living alone are offered counselling in relationship issues.

Figure 7.1

The most common reasons for coming to Church family counselling in 2011 (%).



In 2011, there were more than 16,500 family counselling customers. The total quantity of the care work in the Church' Family Counselling Centres was nearly 84,000 discussion sessions. The work focused especially on couples counselling (43%).

The customers' most common reasons for seeking counselling were interaction problems (30%) and divorce issues (22%). Life crisis was the reason for 12 percent of the customers. The share of male customers was 42 percent. Ever more often, young adults and families with infants sought family counselling. Nearly 50 percent of the customers were in the age group 18-39.

The number of groups and those attending them have continued to decrease. In 2011, more than 60 therapeutic groups were organised in family counselling with a total of more than 400 members. The number of family mediations increased and numbered more than 5,900. The family counsellors had approximately 390 individuals under work supervision and 63 work supervision groups. The number of both has decreased.

### Family work in parishes

Courses and camps for couples were arranged throughout Finland on various themes. In these, the couples seek the strengths in their relationship, set new objectives and endeavour to sort out problems. Sharing experiences with other couples provides new perspectives on the relationship. The courses are intended for those who are married, cohabiting or otherwise in a relationship as a couple. In addition to the parishes, many Christian organizations offer these courses. In 2011, the parishes arranged almost 400 events especially intended for married couples.

More than 9,300 persons participated in these events. In addition to these, the parishes organised approximately 70 marriage camps or marriage courses that had more than 1,100 participants. There were more than 2,000 family events with approximately 144,000 participants. More than 300 family camps were organised and they had nearly 10,000 campers of whom approximately 4,300 were adults. More than a third of parishes (38 %) organised camps.

In 2011, more than one in five parishes (23%) carried out a long-term project pertaining to couples' relationship, parenting or family.

More than half of the parishes (52%) had regular cooperation with the municipality related to family work. Less than ten percent of parishes had regular cooperation with other Christian parishes or organisations and the revival movements.

### **7.3 Hospital pastoral care**

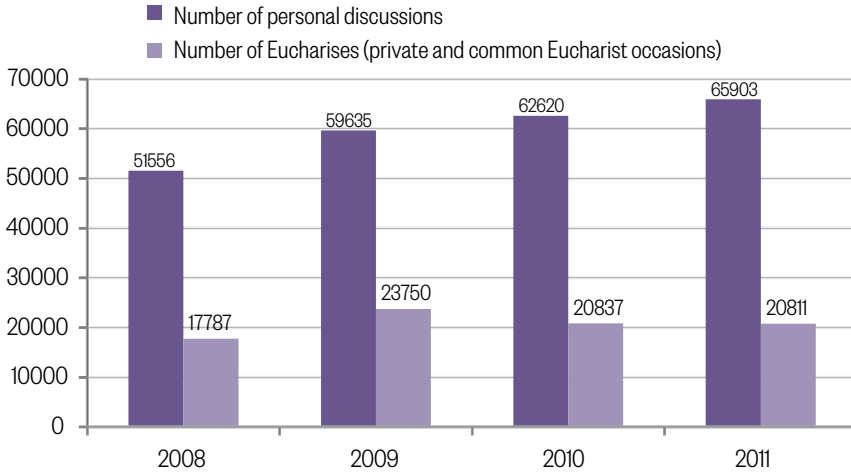
Pastoral counselling in hospitals entails helping people mentally and spiritually in their time of need and providing a service in which the Church works for people's good by receiving them, sharing their distress and offering the Gospel. Practical pastoral care in hospitals is carried out by specially trained hospital chaplains, who are there for the patients, their relatives and the personnel. The work of the hospital chaplain consists of personal discussions, presence, listening and walking alongside those in need. Groups for pastoral care, arranging religious events, Church ceremonies, as well as training and counselling are also part of hospital chaplain's work. In the care community, the hospital chaplain serves as an expert in religious and ethical issues. Those offering pastoral counselling in hospitals are employees of the Church. The pastors of the parishes also offer pastoral care in hospitals.

It is a characteristic feature of pastoral care in hospitals that the work is part of two systems, the Church and public health care. Pastoral care in hospital occurs when a person receives support and help. Municipal decisions and the service also influence the parishes and the pastoral care they provide. It is a challenge to ensure that help, both medical and spiritual, is available.

There were 120 fulltime and 17 part-time hospital chaplains. The hospital pastoral care offices are pastor's offices, but there were four lectors. The number of women among those holding an office increased and in 2011, a total of 93% of hospital chaplains were women. More than half of the hospital pastoral care employees had undergone the Church's work supervision training; several also had psychotherapist's training.

Figure 7.2

Number of personal discussions and communicants in hospital pastoral care 2008–2011.



The most important tool of a hospital chaplain is the pastoral care discussion. The number of pastoral care discussions has increased annually. In 2011, the number of discussions was nearly 66,000.

The Holy Communion celebrations in the hospitals concentrate in the period of Advent, Holy Week and the week preceding All Saints' Day. The number of private Holy Communion has increased annually. Often also the patient's family members partake in Holy Communion.

Grieving groups were organised also in hospitals for those who had lost their spouse, loved one or child, and for the family members of suicide victims. All in all, the number of grieving groups decreased. In 2011, a total of approximately 420 groups were organised and approximately 2,600 family members attended them. There were approximately 50 grieving group leaders.

Hospital chaplains used about ten percent of their work time for outpatient pastoral care. The fact that in 2011, hospital pastoral care made more than 1,300 house calls tells about the increase in outpatient pastoral care. Guiding volunteer activities has been part of the work of 46 hospital pastoral care persons. Developing volunteer activities to support the lonely, the sick and the elderly is one of the focal points in the Church's strategy. Hospital chaplains also act as

mentors, work supervisors and instructors in pastoral care training in the diocese. Hospital chaplains are often also the person informing of a loved one's death along with the police. The significance of this work is underlined in connection with accidents and crisis.

In the past few years, there has been a debate in Finland about allowing and producing death and about the care of a dying person. During their convention in 2009, hospital chaplains drafted a resolution in which they defend the dying person's right to spiritual care. The patient's conviction should be respected even when it differs from the caregiver's own conviction. Respecting the person's conviction influences the treatment measures, meals, holy ceremonies, palliative care and funeral practices. Hospital chaplains emphasise the dying person's right to leave life in peace. In the autumn of 2010, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health published palliative care recommendations in which meeting the dying person's mental and spiritual needs are part of good care.

The working group for developing volunteer activities completed its material on the Church's volunteers in healthcare. It includes a voluntary training programme and a description of their duties and rights.

## 7.4 Telephone Helpline and Online Help

### Telephone Helpline

The telephone helpline is maintained by the Evangelical Lutheran Parishes and anyone needing someone to listen or someone to talk to can contact them. The Church helpline provides help in case of accidents and in other crises when people feel a need to unburden themselves of their experiences and feelings and discuss what has happened. The trained volunteers and Church workers also trained in crises and major catastrophes respond to these calls. The calls are confidential and callers need not give a name.

In 2011 the number of helpline organisations was 31 with groups on standby in over 70 localities. There has been a shift to volunteers



manning the helplines and in 2011 out of 2,000 such workers 30 percent were volunteers.

The national smartnet-based emergency duty system of the telephone helpline, taken into use in 2007, has been a success. The system guarantees uniform service time in the entire country. The telephone helplines in Finnish (Palveleva Puhelin) and Swedish (Samtalstjänst) are accessible every evening and they can also be reached from abroad.

Because the calls are always directed to the available line, the service is more easily accessible. For this reason, the quantity of calls went up immediately by 30 percent and has stayed at an annual average of 54,000 discussions. The topics most often discussed are loneliness, various religious and worldview issues, mental difficulties as well as issues related to marriage and intimate relationships. Among the callers, there was a nearly equal number of women and men. Often the caller lived alone and most of them were retired.

### Online help

The online help has operated since 2005 as a parallel service with the telephone helpline and its operation is based on the same principles. You can send an anonymous and confidential message to the service and the persons on call will answer you within five days anonymously. The persons replying are the on-call persons of the telephone helpline who have been given additional training in working online. There were more than one hundred on-call persons and in 2011, most of them (80%) were volunteers.

The customers of the online help differ from the telephone helpline customers. A larger part of the persons contacting the online help were either living in a family or intimate relationship and were either in the working world or studying. This was also visible in the contents of the messages. Online help handled more crises in families and in relationships whereas on the phone the issues were more often loneliness and sickness. Approximately one third of the online help customers were women.

More than a thousand messages were sent annually to the online help. The number of contacts has not continued increasing after the first operating year. One reason for this may be that many prefer

to contact online discussion fora, which require no registration and which provide quicker replies.

## **7.5 Readiness for catastrophes and crises**

The work of the Church has always included offering support to those falling victim to sudden crises. Parish workers have gone to people afflicted by a sudden accident or other crisis situation. The Church workers have the basic skills for helping in crises. Unexpected catastrophes and serious accidents, however, have caused a need to prepare for assisting in crises and to provide training for it. Catastrophes and serious accidents have also created a need to create systems which can be deployed rapidly in case of emergency. The major catastrophes of the new millennium have shown how important it is for the Church to be able to react fast when accidents occur. Unexpected adverse events have posed great challenges to the Church's readiness for crisis, such as arranging religious occasions, providing spiritual care, caring for the deceased and other tasks, including evacuation and communications.

Arranging Church events to commemorate the victims, concrete crisis work such as financial and material aid and health care are thought to be among the most important things for Finns. The main forms of crisis work also included discussions and therapeutic crisis aid.

Principally, the anticipation arrangements are implemented as firmly as possible based on the operations in normal circumstances. At the local level, the operation centres in the parishes and parish unions, regionally in the dioceses. They draft their own regional anticipation plans. Each diocese coordinates the operations in its area; nationally it is done in the Church Council.

The Church's mental care organisations were operating or founding them was being planned in many locations. The goal of mental care is a functional Church's crisis group answering people's needs in an acute emergency and providing mental support to accident victims and their families. In catastrophes, the task of the Church is to participate in the work of authority organisations and of crisis groups. In order to find the procedure that best fits the location, in the founding

phase it is good to negotiate with the emergency centre, police, rescue authorities, healthcare district and other bodies providing psychosocial support. Together the groups commit to the principles of mental care ensuring a common practice in the entire country.

The mental care organisation is activated at the request of the rescue authorities in various accidents, catastrophes or crises, and it will integrate into the authorities' chain of assistance. The Church Council approved the principles of mental care and assigned its coordination to the operational department. The Church has also increased its offer of training for crisis and trauma work.

## Conclusions

People's mental illfare seems to have increased in Finland. Negative changes and crisis situations cause sadness, anxiety and insecurity. Being disadvantaged and in distress influences people's mental welfare in many ways. At the same time an ever larger share of people live alone and people are aging.

It is important that when needed, pastoral care is easily accessible. However, it seems that pastoral care is becoming ever more its own special area. The number of parish pastors' pastoral care discussions has continued to decrease, whereas the number of discussions with employees in special duties such as the hospital pastoral care has increased.

There is great demand for the Church's family counselling services and the family counselling work done by the Church is appreciated. More than half of the customers sought family counselling due to interaction problems or divorce issues. The increase in the quantity of family mediations indicates that difficulties and conflicts in families are common.

In hospital pastoral care, the number of personal discussions has increased. The challenges of outpatient pastoral care continue to grow and developing volunteer operations to support the lonely, the sick and the elderly will be a challenge in the future.

In threatening and crisis situations, the Church participates in the mental services of people as part of the psychosocial support of the Finnish society.

## 8 Diaconal and social work

### 8.1. Diaconal work in the parishes

Diaconal work belongs to the basic tasks of the Church. Its purpose is to aid especially those, whose need is greatest and who are not helped in other ways. The Church's diaconal work is carried out as part of the local parish's operations by both professionals and volunteers. Often, the Church acts in cooperation with the other helpers in society, such as the municipality and organisations.

According to the survey by Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011 (N=3,735), most of Church members (83%) felt that the Church's aid work is an important reason for them to belong to the Church. Compared with the previous surveys, the Church's aid work emerged as one of the most important reasons to belong to the Church. *Our Church* strategy says that the Church and its members care for the weakest and carry global responsibility. The situation in the society is especially challenging for diaconia: income differences continue to increase and the number of marginalised people is growing. Also the aging of the population generates new and increasing challenges to diaconal work.

## Changes in operating environment

The division of the society is seen ever more clearly in the diaconal work of the parishes. People's problems have become more diverse and deeper. The weakening standard of living - both absolutely and proportionately - of those living on basic security benefits is especially problematic. The social distance between population groups undermines coherence and solidarity.

The Citizens' barometer 2011 measured the Finns' opinions and experiences of welfare and welfare services. According to it, being disadvantaged accumulates and involves approximately 300 000 Finnish adults. The worst accumulation of problems is faced by the unemployed. According to the barometer, approximately 70,000 Finns felt disadvantaged, discriminated against and felt like an outsider often or continuously.

In the last few years, of all OECD countries the differences in health have been the greatest in Finland. The customers of diaconal work are often the group in which sickness and poverty are combined. The new Healthcare Act that entered into force in 2011 requires that healthcare officials cooperate with other actors for furthering health. This introduces challenges also to the diaconal work in the parishes.

## Diaconal work

The changes in society concern especially the diaconal work. The versatility of work forms forced the parish employees to prioritise their work. Meanwhile, structural changes in many parishes or their weakening financial situation had an impact in diaconal work resources.

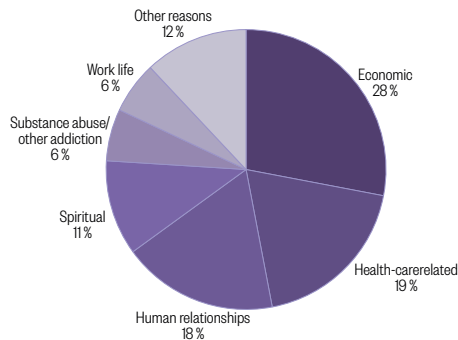
The number of customer contacts in diaconal work has decreased in spite of the increase in the number of persons in need of help with the adequacy of basic security benefits or indebtedness. In 2011, diaconal work had 184,000 different customers (in 2007, there were 193,000 customers). In 2011, there were approximately 591,000 customer contacts in diaconal work (in 2007, approximately 780,000). Of these, 33 percent were customer contacts at the receptions, 22 percent of the customer contacts occurred in homes. The share of email and telephone contacts was 36 percent. More than half of the customer contacts were with persons who were of working age and living alone.

The nearly 672,000 measures in 2011, registered by diaconal employees during customer contacts, were classified in six groups. The largest group consisted of measures related to financial aid (27%). The next largest number of entries consisted of measures related to clarifying life situation (22%) and pastoral care or spiritual discussions (20%). Six percent were healthcare measures and five percent were crisis discussions.

Financial issues have increased further among the reasons for diaconal work customer contacts and they constituted more than one fourth of the reasons for customer contacts in 2011. Also the share of healthcare issues as reasons for customer contacts has increased. Whereas the customer contacts related to human relations and spiritual matters have decreased. Also work life issues, narcotics or other addiction as well as other non-classified reasons could be a reason for contacts.

Figure 8.1

Reasons for diaconal customer contacts in 2011.



In 2011, the parishes distributed 150,000 food aid packages worth 3.77 million euros. Other financial aid worth 3.77 million euros was given to more than 31,000 households. Also the annual quantity of food aid and other financial assistance has increased. In 2011, the diaconal workers made a total of 171,000 visits to homes, institutions, schools and other locations. The number of visits has dropped.

In 2011, there were approximately 4,900 regularly convening diaconal work groups. They had nearly 63,000 members. The groups

organised by parish diaconal work were for example diaconal circles, combined diaconal and missions circles, human relations groups and pensioners' groups. The number of regularly convening groups has decreased throughout the decade. Also excursions and camps were organised in diaconal work.

The number of volunteers involved in diaconal work has been increasing in the 2000s. In 2011, there were more than 30,100 volunteer diaconal workers. In most of the local parishes, volunteers made housecalls (80%), visits to institutions (75%) and acted as group leaders (67%). The volunteers were mostly working age and retired. More than half of the parishes estimated that none of the volunteer diaconal workers were under the age of 30.

Especially the issues related to the adequacy of basic security benefits and indebtedness have increased among the customers encountered in the parish diaconal work in the past four years. In half of the parishes, there has also been an increase in the customers and topics involving loneliness and social relations, human relations and mental health problems. In nearly half of the parishes, there has been an increase in issue involving old age, the relationships of couples and family.

A total of 14 percent of the parishes have increased their resources in the work with the elderly due to the increase in their number. Some form of online help was adopted or online pastoral care was offered in one fifth of the parishes.

According to the estimate of the parishes, there have been changes in the focus of diaconal work. More than one third of the parishes saw an increase in their food aid and other material aid, mental support, networking for the benefit of the customers, different forms of volunteer work, work with the elderly, family work and preventive work.

## 8.2 Work with the disabled

The Church's work with the disabled aims at implementing accessibility, participation and equality in the Church and in society. The basis is that nobody should be excluded from attending in worship services or from the rest of parish life because of disability. In the parishes, the work is done by diaconal workers. Pastors for the deaf act as pastors of the sign-language parish and of those with impaired hearing. There are fulltime pastors, lectors and diaconal workers for Church's work with the disabled in the special disabled care districts and their central institutions or service centres.

The Church has its disability policy programme *Church for All* (Kirkko kaikille) that is used as a manual for parish employees, elected representatives and the parishioners. The aim of the programme is to help both the Church and the disabled people to be aware of and develop the disabled people's possibilities to participate in parish operations. Church for All work focuses on different areas of work at different times. In the past few years, the focus was on the work with sign language, the special issues of the deafblind and the matters of the deaf and of those with impaired hearing. Translating Church texts to sign language continued.

Disability work groups convened in the parishes and Church employees organised special activities, such as groups and camps. For years, the Church has organised special needs confirmation schools for those with intellectual developmental disorder. In 2011, parish diaconal work organised more than 500 different groups for the disabled with more than 7,000 participants.

In 2011, half of the parishes had regular cooperation with the municipal work with the disabled. Sporadic cooperation took place in more than one third of the parishes. Correspondingly, one third of the parishes had regular cooperation and approximately half of the parishes had sporadic cooperation with organisations for the disabled.



## 8.3 Work with substance abusers and convicts

### Substance abuse work

The purpose of substance abuse work is to help people in finding meaning and purpose of life and in seeking for solutions to get free from substance abuse. The Church and the parishes are present in the entire Finnish society and they encounter people in the life situations in which they live. The Church has worked for a long time to decrease the damages of alcohol abuse. In the parishes, substance abuse work is also a separate work form of the parishes and parish unions, as well as an area of work of several Christian organisations. In most parishes, the focus of substance abuse work had remained unchanged in 2011, but one fourth of the parishes reported an increase in substance abuse work.

The Church's narcotics strategy from 2005 underlined the importance of preventive substance abuse work and emphasised especially community spirit, which, apart from general parish work, also includes group activities and peer support for substance abusers. One of the goals of the narcotics strategy was that the Church will influence narcotics policy to minimise the damages cause by substance abuse.

A significant part of the Church's substance abuse work takes place in the parishes or by the parish unions. In 2011, the parishes' diaconal work had nearly 200 groups in substance abuse work. They had 1,600 participants.

### Work with criminals

A large part of the Church's prison work is done by the local parishes. Parish pastors, organists and deaconesses hold worship services and devotions in prisons. Parish unions and larger parishes have special deaconesses focusing on the work with criminals. In addition, youth workers and in larger cities, special youth workers work among the young inmates.

Personal pastoral care discussions with the inmates and their families and with the inmates that have been released are the most

significant forms of work with criminals. Diaconal workers and pastors arrange these discussions in cooperation with prisons and parishes. Support is also organised in prisons and parishes through small group activities.

Work among those convicted of crimes was also done in places other than the prison. Especially the diaconal and youth workers encountered in their work both those released from prison and those convicted and performing their community service or suspended prison sentence. The parishes also offered places to do community service. The Church was expected to provide support especially for the inmates' families, in couple's relationship, in substance abuse and housing.

## 8.4 Church and society

The Church's work in society supports carrying social responsibility and pays special attention to the issues of work life and the environment. In the parishes and parish unions, societal work is usually part of diaconal work or it is a work area of its own. For example work life and economic life, work with the unemployed, work in the work places, environmental issues, work for peace and human rights and multicultural work belong to societal work.

In 2011, a total of 66 percent of the parishes had regular societal work together with the social and healthcare sector of the municipalities. Municipal debt counselling services are a regular cooperation partner in one fourth of the parishes. Half of the parishes had cooperation with NGOs such as the committees for the unemployed and equivalent. In 2011, parishes also had sporadic or regular cooperation with patient associations, party organisations, nature protectionist and environmental organisations and trade organisations, for example.

One in four parishes estimated that the quantity of issues and customers related to work life had increased. More than 40 percent of the parishes estimated that work in the work places or supporting work communities had increased. Approximately half of the parishes had not worked in the work places.

According to their own estimate, nearly three in four parishes used budget money to support the unemployed and nearly half used money from the offerings. Either alone or together with other bodies the parishes and parish unions organised personal discussions, food services, camps and debt counselling to support the unemployed. Meeting opportunities and cafeterias were also part of the operation.

Open door meeting opportunities or bases for volunteer activities were organised in 46 percent of the parishes. Usually, these were part of the parish's own operation, but in 12 percent of the parishes it was done in cooperation with the municipality or some organisation. Discussion groups, devotions, arts and crafts and volunteer work opportunities as well as lectures were organized in most meeting points for volunteers. Some meeting points brokered volunteer help for homes and institutions or they provided a peer support group.

In 2011, nearly half of the parishes furthered the employment of the long-term unemployed and one in four furthered the employment of youth without professional training and of mental health rehabilitation patients. The parishes also furthered the employment of other persons who were in a weak position in the labour market.

## **8.5 Multicultural work**

Multicultural work invites into the parishes those coming from abroad. Its goal is to further the integration of immigrants and their inclusion in the Church and the Finnish society. Through encountering, training, advocacy and communication the work supports the kind of attitudes which are free from racism and ethnic prejudices and which further equality.

Finland's asylum policy has been debated. In the past few years, the parishes have offered protection and many kinds of support to tens of persons. Also family unifications and the concept of family were discussed in advocacy especially in 2010 due to the return decisions of two infirm elderly persons. Also the defects of employment-based immigration were discussed.

In 2010, racist hate speech increased strongly especially in the social media, also within the Church. Together with refugee organ-

isations, the Church produced *10 Allegations and Facts* material and *10 Facts About Refugees* card especially to support the discussions preceding the Church council and parliamentary elections.

Parishes organise regular activities for immigrants, mostly as common events for people of different nationalities and for those from Ingria and Russia. Temporary activities were organised in the parishes mostly as common events and as events for Russians and the Roma. Most parishes had no activities directed to immigrant groups in 2011.

In 2011, more than 80 parishes organised camps for immigrants. Half of these were targeted at married couples. Less than twenty parishes had international multicultural camps or family camps, and there were some camps that were directed only to women.

In 2011, more than 4,800 immigrants visited diaconal work receptions. Primarily, the help provided to immigrants consisted of mental support (41%), economic aid (39%), counselling (35%) or spiritual support (15%). In 2011, two percent of the parishes had regular activities related to religion dialogue and 15 percent had sporadic.

Developing the multicultural parish work clearly focused on furthering inclusion. The Church's challenge is directing attention to concrete parish work which would generate inclusion of immigrants and the Finnish emigrants returning to Finland.

## **8.6 Common Responsibility Campaign and other aid work**

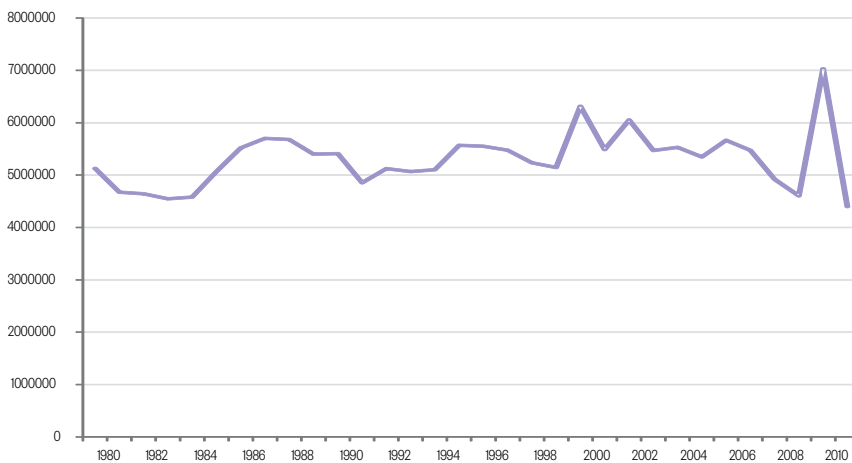
The Common Responsibility Campaign is a fundraising campaign of the Church diaconia and at the same time the biggest public fundraising organised annually. It is used to help the most needy in Finland and abroad. The fundraising is done by volunteers all over Finland and all Finnish parishes take part in it. The first fundraising was organised in 1950. The traditional door-to-door fundraising brings in just over 30 percent of the proceeds, but its share is decreasing.

In the past few years, the aid has been used for emergency aid

and restructuring of the crisis areas of the world, poor Haitian families with children and preventing marginalisation and enhancing community safety nets in Mozambique. In Finland, the fundraising proceeds have been used for example for a project enhancing the employment of mentally disabled people and immigrants that are hard to employ, as well as for a project preventing loneliness of children and youth. The total proceeds of the 2011 Common Responsibility Campaign were 4.4 million euros. The position of door-to-door fundraising continued to weaken and no fundraising methods to replace it were discovered. The share of fundraising costs of the total proceeds was 25 percent.

Figure 8.2

Development of Common Responsibility Campaign fundraising proceeds 1980-2011 (in euros).



*The Church's diaconal fund* is the aid fund common to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Since 1967, people fallen victim to the unpredictability of life have received help through this fund in Finland. The funds for the aid come from offerings, the Common Responsibility Campaign and individual donations. Annually, the total sum of aid granted has varied between 590,000 and 880,000 euros. The share of single parent families was 35 percent of the granted aid, the share of persons living alone and of families with two parents was

28 percent each. Especially the share of physically ill persons among those in need of aid was significant. As part of the operation of the Church's diaconal fund, aid was granted to prevent the marginalisation of children.

The task of the *Church's social forum* is to follow the value debate in society, to participate in it and to influence especially the decision making concerning the welfare services. The Church's social forum operates both nationally and regionally. Representatives of businesses, government ministries and labour market organisations, experts of social employment, NGOs, researchers and representatives of culture, media and the Church have been invited to participate in the forum.

## Conclusions

Inequality in society is increasing and people's problems are deeper and more diverse. The financial problems, indebtedness and powerful increase in differences in health of those in the weakest position are clearly visible in the Church's diaconal work. Increasingly, people turn to the Church's diaconia to get help in financial problems. Illness and poverty are strongly linked among the diaconia customers. The number of immigrants continues to increase, and there has been public debate on the various issues related to immigration. The need of material aid, the aging of population and the marginalisation of children and youth are central challenges of the Church and its diaconia when they help people and act as advocates of the disadvantaged.

In the Finns' opinion, the Church's helping the disadvantaged, supporting the poor and the marginalised and acting as their advocate in public discussion and in decision making in society is very important. The expectations of helping the disadvantaged are emphasised as the focal points of the Church in the future, both in the eyes of the Finns in general and of the Church's elected representatives and employees.

The number of volunteers is increasing. In ever larger number of parishes working-aged and retired people are involved as volunteers and studies show that clearly ever larger numbers of people – also youth – are ready to be involved as volunteers. It is noteworthy that in

diaconal work, there are remarkably few customer contacts with persons under the age of 18, and most of the parishes estimate that there are no volunteers under the age of 30 in diaconal work. Volunteer work offers parish members an opportunity to carry responsibility and to be active.

# 9 Mission work and international diaconia

---

## 9.1 Mission work as duty of the Church

According to the Church Order, it is the responsibility of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, its congregations and members to spread the Gospel among those who are not Christian. Mission is a basic duty of the parish. According to the mission strategy, both opening the road to eternal salvation and serving our neighbours belong to the Church's mission. Mission is comprehensive. God calls the members of His Church to serve in word and deed.

The parishes carry out their mission duty through the Church's mission organisations. According to *Our Church* strategy, the Church's mission work and international diaconia are reminders of the global reality and promote the dignity of life everywhere in the world. The strategy says that the Church enhances the parishioners' and Church employees' knowledge of the life of Third World people and Churches, and acts as their active partner. In the strategy, the goal is that the parishes use 4% of their budget funds for mission work and international diaconia, and that the Church has active interaction with the Churches in the developing countries.

The strategy also underlines encountering representatives of other religions on the basis of the Christian faith. According to the strategy, the Church ensures peace in society by engaging in inter-faith



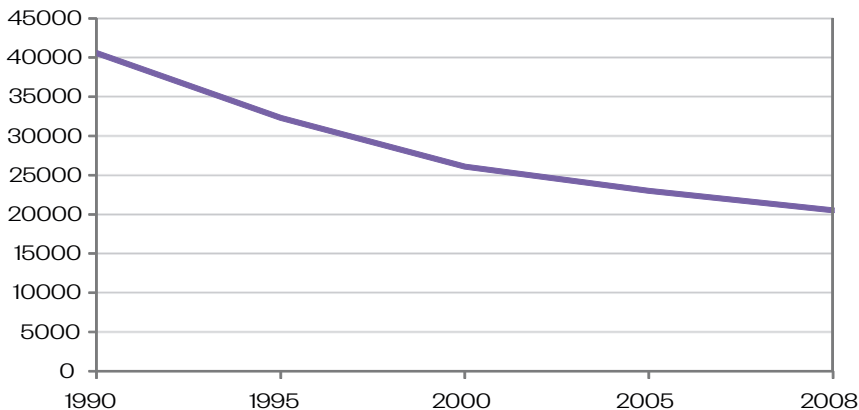
dialogue and by working for improving the mutual understanding between immigrants and Finns.

## 9.2 Mission work activities and international diaconia in parishes

The first part of the Lutheran Church's mission strategy until 2015 was approved in 2010. The document emphasises that the missional dimension should be visible in all the activities of the parish both among adults and youth's and children's age groups. According to the strategy, a missional parish encourages living as a Christian, educates in the mission responsibility and also serves both those distancing themselves from the Church and those who do not belong to it.

Figure 9.1

Participation in mission work groups 1990-2008.



The most common forms of operation of mission and international diaconia in the parishes were rummage sales and organising mission events, which were organised in nine out of ten parishes. Also mission circles and mission lunches were common. International diaconia events were organised in half of the parishes. Mission events directed to adults were organised in nine out of ten parishes. Or-

ganising mission events for children, preadolescents and youth was clearly rarer: they were organised in half of the parishes.

In the parishes, mission work activities reached ever fewer people. Participation in mission work groups has continued to decrease in the parishes for a long time. In 1990, more than 40,000 Finns were involved in mission circles and groups. By 2008, the number of participants had nearly halved.

In 2009, the mission work statistics were changed so that group operations and networks were entered as one data entry. After 2009, the membership figures of groups and networks decreased rapidly. In 2011, there were approximately 25,100 members. In 2011, more than 1,600 volunteer leaders were active in the groups.

The number of mission work events and of those attending them has decreased considerably in the parishes in the past few years. In 2011, there were nearly 467,000 attending the mission work events. The number of participants dropped by nearly 100,000 in a couple of years. There were approximately 15,900 persons acting as mission work volunteers in the parishes. Mission cafeterias and missions flea markets became more popular in the parishes.

A parish can employ a mission secretary to manage the tasks of mission work. The mission work strategy states that each parish and chapel parish should have at least a volunteer mission secretary. The goal is that a parish with 15,000 members has a full-time mission secretary. In smaller parishes, mission secretary's tasks are managed in combination with other tasks or for a fee or on voluntary basis. A total of 15 percent of parishes had a full-time mission secretary. The larger the parish, the more common this was.

### **9.3 Church employees' and elected representatives' views on mission work**

The mission strategy considers it important that the employees and elected representatives together tend to the operating possibilities of mission. According to an employee survey (2012), one fifth of par-

ish employees fully agreed with the statement that the Church must more strongly support mission work. 56 percent of men and 48 percent of women somewhat agreed or fully agreed with this.

The elected representatives emphasised mission work slightly more strongly than the employees. Also among the elected representatives, men emphasised supporting mission work slightly more than women. The replies differ from the surveys of ordinary Finns, according to which women consider mission work more important than men.

Table 9.1

Church employees' and elected representatives' views on mission work and supporting development cooperation. (%) Employee survey (2012) and elected representative survey (2012).

		Agree completely	Agree somewhat	Do not agree or disagree	Partly disagree	Fully disagree	Cannot say
The Church should more strongly support mission work	Employees	18	32	31	4	12	3
	Elected representatives	19	37	27	12	4	2
The Church should more strongly support development cooperation	Employees	8	40	34	5	10	3
	Elected representatives	9	36	34	16	4	2

One in ten parish employees fully agreed that the Church should more strongly support development cooperation. Women (51%) backed supporting development cooperation more strongly than men (41%). Also among the elected representatives, women (48%) backed stronger emphasis on development cooperation slightly more than men (41%).

Kati Niemelä's survey of parish employees (2010) shows that the pastors' mission orientation is clearly weakening. The younger the group of pastors, the smaller the share of those, who consider mission work a very important area of work. Among the pastors over the age of 55, three out of five (57%) thought that mission work is a very important area of work, but among those under the age of 35, only a third (34%) thought so. Pastors belonging to revivalist movements

and men considered mission work more important than others.

Also the survey of elected representatives indicated weakening zeal for mission work. A tenth (9%) of elected representatives under the age of 35, one in five (22%) elected representatives over the age of 55 fully agreed that the Church should more strongly support mission work.

## 9.4 Missionaries

The goal of the mission strategy is that by 2015, the Church has readjusted to the changed situation in world mission and found new ways to cooperate as a partner to the Churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Work and resources are focused on areas which have little or no Christians and Churches.

According to Finnish Mission Council's statistics, in 2011, a total of 745 missionaries were sent out from Finland. Fida International of the Pentecostal movement sends the largest number of missionaries (247). At the end of 2011, there were all together 354 missionaries sent by the Lutheran church.

Table 9.2

Changes in number of missionaries in the 2000s.

	2003	2007	2011
The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM)	239	218	185
Finnish Lutheran Mission	88	65	73
Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission (FLOM)	56	42	38
Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland (LEAF)	47	33	28
Swedish Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland (SLEAF)	6	9	7
Media Mission the Messengers	9	7	6
TOTAL	445	374	337

The number of missionaries has continued to decrease. Since 2003, the number of missionaries has decreased by a hundred persons (-24%). The trend is similar in other Nordic countries. Of all the mission organisations of the Lutheran Church in Finland, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission sends out the largest number of missionaries.

## 9.5 Organisations of mission work and international diaconia

There are seven mission organisations approved by the General Synod. The mission organisations' work abroad includes evangelising and diaconia. Most often, the work is done in cooperation with local Churches. International diaconia is carried out through the mission organisations and through Finn Church Aid (FCA). The work of the Finn Church Aid is focused on humanitarian aid, development cooperation and advocacy.

The **Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission** (Suomen Lähetysseura) strives to enhance Christian witness especially in areas that have no contact with evangelising. In Africa, the most significant partners are the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Tanzania, Namibia and Ethiopia. In Asia, the Evangelical Lutheran Mission employees work in the midst of large world religions. In Hong Kong, Bangkok and Taiwan, the Evangelical Lutheran Mission does evangelising and diaconial work. In Pakistan, the work focuses on parish work, and work with schools and healthcare, and in Nepal, the main focus are the development projects in poor rural villages and mental health work.

In the Middle East, in Israel, the work is done amongst Jews and Arabs for example in parish work and in the work with children, youth and the elderly. In Venezuela, Latin America, the work in social services and parish work focuses in the cities. In Papua New Guinea, in Oceania, Bible translation and literacy are the focuses of the operation. In Europe, the Evangelical Lutheran Mission operates in France, Russia and Estonia and the main focuses are evangelising and the work among the youth and Muslims.

The **Finnish Lutheran Mission's** (Suomen Evankelisluterilainen Kansanlähetyksen) focuses are especially the peoples that hear little Christian witness. These so-called unreached peoples in Asia and North Africa have in common the fact that their predominant religion is Islam. In the Middle East and in Africa, diaconal work is included in the work of the Finnish Lutheran Mission. Bible translation is done for example in Ethiopia and Russia. The Finnish Lu-

theran Mission does media work in the Middle East region and also works with the Jews. Mission flights are made in Kenya. The Finnish Lutheran Mission has worked in Japan already for 40 years.

**Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission** (Evankelis-luterilainen-Lähetisyhdistys Kylväjä) works in Bangladesh, Japan and Ethiopia and among the Mongol tribes, Muslims and Jews. In Bangladesh, the development cooperation is engaged in developing village communities, and in projects in community schools and health services. School children are being supported through godparenting activities. Cooperation in Japan and Ethiopia is carried out with the Norwegian Lutheran Mission. In Japan, the missionaries have various tasks in the parishes and in developing the Church's work areas and they teach in the Lutheran Theological Seminary and the Bible School. Also various small groups are much used in reaching people and in evangelising.

The **Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland** (LEAF) (Suomen Luterilainen Evankeliumiyhdistys) has missionaries in Japan, Kenya, Zambia, Russia and Estonia. Modern mission work in Japan is carried out with the help of the internet, for example. In Kenya, LEAF supports the work of its cooperation Church in educating theologians, in parish work and in pioneering, and supports education of pupils and teachers. The work methods in diaconial work include godparenting projects, schools for mentally disabled children and youth, an orphanage and emergency accommodations for girls. In Zambia, LEAF supports work in a Bible school, diaconial work, child and youth work, work with women and orphans and godparenting activities. The missionaries support the diocese of Congo by offering education. Parish work, and youth work as well as work in small groups are done in Estonia, and LEAF also assists the Estonian Church's missions centre. In Russia, the work includes diaconia, work with children and youth, as well as radio work and training.

The **Swedish Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland** (Svenska Lutherska Evangeliföreningen) does mission work in Kenya, Estonia and Southwest Asia. In Kenya, the work includes Bible translation, education and social work. In Estonia, work is done in the parish and with literature.

**Media Mission the Messengers** (Medialähetysjärjestö Sanansaattajat) supports Christian radio work and other media mission work especially in places where traditional mission work is difficult or impossible. The Messengers produced radio programmes in 42 languages. In the future, it directs more resources to television work in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. The focus of the work abroad shifts to Asia and large cities. Most of the radio and television programmes produced by the Messengers support Christians living in difficult circumstances.

The **Finnish Bible Society** (Suomen Pipliaseura) distributes Bibles in Finland and other countries in cooperation with Christian Churches and communities, mission organisations and through the international central organisation, the United Bible Societies. The Finnish Bible Society does international Bible work and publishing and furthers the use of the Bible. The international work includes Bible translation, literacy work, Bible distribution and HIV attitude education.

The **Finn Church Aid** (Kirkon Ulkomaanapu) founded several country and regional offices and organisations to support field operations. At the end of 2011, Finn Church Aid had offices in seven countries. The most significant change in the international network of Finn Church Aid was the establishment of the ACT alliance in 2010. It is an umbrella organisation of 125 Church development and humanitarian aid organisations that is one of the largest aid organisations in the world. The goal of the ACT alliance is to increase the mutual coordination of Church actors at local level and to strengthen their common voice and impact in international networks such as the United Nations.

Finn Church Aid's most significant partner in implementing development and catastrophe programs was the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). In addition to Church partners, Finn Church Aid carried out its project with local organisations. The Finn Church Aid founded its first country office in Liberia in 2008.

## 9.6 Financial aid to mission work and international diaconia

The parishes carry their missional responsibility for example by granting funds for mission work and international diaconia. In 2008, the Church's mission committee completed its recommendation on granting the parishes' budget funds to the Church's mission organisations and Finn Church Aid. The recommendation is that the parishes take into consideration the financial aid that the mission organisations receive from the parish and the voluntary support received from the parishioners, and the parish's dedicated cooperation agreements. Also, they are urged to consider the mission organisations' operation abroad and its share of the operation of the organisation, the scope and quality of the cooperation between the parish and the mission organisations as well as the parish's possibilities to participate in the planning and development of the organisation's mission operation.

In the past few years, in some parishes there has been lively debate on the funding of mission organisations. Some parish unions have decided to discontinue giving financial aid to such mission organisations that reject the ordination of women and homosexuality.

In the past few years, the parishes' support to mission organisations and international diaconia has increased in quantity. In 2010, the parishes funded mission work and international diaconia with 53.6 million euros (48.9 million euros in 2007). In the past few years, the share of international diaconia has increased.

### Conclusions

Our Church strategy emphasises that Church members see themselves as part of the global Church and carry out mission and feel responsible for their neighbours and for that justice is done internationally.

Travelling, increasing number of immigrants and ever increasing international contacts open up new horizons in strengthening the mission thinking. An ever larger group of Finns have an opportunity to have personal contacts with mission work. The increasing number of volunteers in the mission events of parishes tells about interest in mission work.



The challenge in mission work is transmitting the mission thinking to new generations and among the parishioners and Church employees. Nowadays, the justification of mission work is not considered self-evident. Communicating mission work already in the Church's education work furthers mission thinking's becoming a natural part of the parishioners' life.

# 10 Inter-Church operation

---

## 10.1 Ecumenical activities in Finland

Ecumenia means inter-Church cooperation and furthering the visible unity of the Church. The cooperation and aspiration for unity of the Christian Churches are coming true at several different levels: in the operation of the entire Church, of dioceses, parishes, mission organisations and the Finnish Ecumenical Council. Also, celebrating the Independence Day and Diet Inauguration worship services ecumenically are significant for the visibility of ecumenical cooperation and ecumenism.

### Church's ecumenical strategy

In January 2009, the Council for International Relations approved the ecumenical strategy till 2015 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland; *Our Church – a Community That Seeks Unity*. The ecumenical strategy set six areas of objectives: (1) we aspire to the visible unity of the Church, (2) we care for the weak and carry global responsibility, (3) we further the ecumenical dimension in the life of the Church and its members, (4) we enhance the significance of Church membership in the world and in Finland, (5) we communicate and discuss openly and (6) we renew the structures of our ecumenical operation. In relations to other Churches, the goal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is to be the same Church in all directions, although in these relations, different issues may be emphasised differently at different times.

## Ecumenical activities in parishes

In 2011, two out of three (69%) parishes organised ecumenical activities. The activities were regular in one fourth (27%) of the parishes and in two out of five (42%) parishes, it was one-off. Nearly half of the parishes organised events with other Churches. A third of parishes had joint use of facilities, speakers visiting between parishes or joint meetings of parish employees.

Table 10.1

Incidence of local ecumenical activities in parishes in 2011. (% of parishes)

Jointly organised ecumenical week of prayer	30
Collaboration in implementing the week of responsibility	12
Other joint events	46
Joint meetings of the employees of parishes	33
Speakers visiting between parishes	35
Joint use of facilities	35

Finns are open to increasing the cooperation with other religious communities. Half of Finns think that the Church should increase its cooperation with other Churches. Two in five think that the Church should increase cooperation with other religious communities. The thoughts of the Church's elected representatives and employees have a similar trend.

Table 10.2

The views of Finns, Church's elected representatives and employees on cooperation with other Churches and religious communities. Gallup Ecclesiastica (2011), Employee survey (2012) and elected representative survey (2012). (%)

		Agree completely	Agree somewhat
The Church should increase cooperation with other churches	Finns	16	36
	Elected representatives	19	42
	Employees	17	42
The Church should increase cooperation with other religious communities	Finns	11	32
	Employees	10	33
	Elected representatives	8	31

## International contacts in Finland

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has regular contacts with nearly all other Finnish Churches and Christian communities, especially through the operation of the Finnish Ecumenical Council. There are annual meetings between the representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Council, and the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Free Church Councils. Contacts with the Evangelical Free Church of Finland and Pentecostalism have been established as regular work of their joint advisory committees. The advisory committees met twice a year to share information on topical development and to plan joint activities.

In November 2010, the tenth theological negotiations were held in Helsinki with the Finnish Orthodox Church; they discussed the interpretation of the Bible in the Church's teaching as well as ecology and temperate lifestyle. In the negotiations, it was jointly noted about the interpretation of the Bible that "the Bible is the Church's book, announcement given of the Triune God's works of salvation, word of God. Its significance opens up profoundly from the Trinitarian perspective offered by the confession of faith. A Christ-centred approach to the entirety of the Bible can offer answers to the questions of today's humans and today's society that arise from the tradition of the Churches."

The negotiations noted that an ecological and temperate lifestyle is a deeply spiritual issue. The task of the Church and the parishes is to act ever more responsibly and prophetically in its teaching and in the concrete actions generating from it, especially in environmental issues. The negotiations noted that the Churches must take seriously also the kind of comprehensive understanding of welfare that comes from silence, prayer and fasting. "Our task as Churches is to encourage the society to seek the kind of operating models that further balance between the good of the individual, the community and creation in a global scale."

Discussion on doctrine with the Finnish-language and Swedish-language Baptist communities continued and in 2009, the topic of the fifth dialogue was joint (common) ministry and office. Both parties emphasised that both common ministry and a special office are needed in building a parish. The office was seen to be for both

preaching the word of God and for serving. “Especially the interaction between the office and the common ministry is needed for forming a parish. They should serve each other. Faith and baptism belong together. They join both to Christ and give spiritual qualification to manage the tasks in the parish.”

The negotiations also discussed ecumenical cooperation in crisis work and they noted that there is already much cooperation in the field of diaconial service, for example. The immigrants’ ecumenical encounters together and separately is a topical and increasing challenge.

Based on the doctrinal understanding reached in the discussion on doctrine carried out with the Finnish-language and Swedish-language Methodist Churches in 2002-2007, the General Synod approved a cooperation agreement with the Finnish Methodist Church and Finland’s Swedish Methodist Church in May 2010. An agreement on altar and pulpit fellowship and on recognising the ordained offices of the other Church was signed in December 2010. The Church’s Council for International Relations has appointed a cooperation working group for communication and practical implementation of the agreement.

### Finnish Ecumenical Council

The Finnish Ecumenical Council is the ecumenical cooperation body of Churches, Christian communities and parishes operating in Finland. The purpose of the council is to further aspirations toward the visible unity of Christ’s Church and to enhance the unity, serving and witness of Christians. The significance of the Finnish Ecumenical Council has become enhanced in the past years also as a societal actor and in the encounters between religions. The Finnish Ecumenical Council has 11 member churches, five observer churches and 18 partnership organisations.

The activities scheduled annually by the Ecumenical Council include the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the international week of responsibility of the Churches and preparing the ecumenical prayer day declaration with the President’s chancellery. Among the annual events there are also the local ecumenical forum, mission theme day, joint Mission Sunday of Christians, the Media Action

of the Year Award and partnership forum. The Ecumenical Council is a founding member of the USKOT Forum of representatives of Christianity, Judaism and Islam founded in January 2011 to further peace in society.

## 10.2 Church's external affairs

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is a founding member of the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches. A considerable part of the Church's international ecumenical operations is realised through these organisations. Furthermore, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland participates in inter-Church networks, such as the Porvoo Churches and Ecumenism in the Nordics, and has bilateral negotiations on doctrine with other Churches.

### Lutheran World Federation

In 2011, there were less than 75 million Lutheran Christians in the world and more than 70 million of them belong to the 145 member Churches of the Lutheran World Federation. The Lutheran World Federation promotes the unity and cooperation of Lutheran Churches. The World Service that is part of its operations channels humanitarian aid to different parts of the world. LWF's 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly was organised in Stuttgart 2010 under the theme *Give Us Today Our Daily Bread*.

The new seven-year strategy of the Lutheran World Federation guiding its operations was approved in June 2011. The new strategy defines LWF's strategic priorities as follows: 1) A community that is strengthened in the service of God and in continuous theological work, ecumenical dialogue and interfaith collaboration; 2) The capacity of the member Churches increases in holistic mission and in managing mutual affairs; 3) Efficient and empowering diaconia that encounters human suffering, injustice and catastrophes.

The four permeable strategic principles in all fields of actions are theological work and education, advocacy and public witness, justice between genders and participation of the youth. Organisational priorities are efficient communication and financial sustainability.

### Relations with inter-Church collaboration bodies

The World Council of Churches with 350 member Churches in 2011 has the most extensive coverage of all international ecumenical organisations. It represents more than 560 million Christians in more than 110 countries all over the world. The World Council of Churches aspires to have the Christian Churches recognise each other as genuine Christian Churches. It also works for alleviating material and spiritual need in the world for example by providing aid to areas suffering from wars or natural catastrophes. In 2010, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ecumenical movement was commemorated by celebrating the international mission congress held in Edinburgh in 1910; it gave the impetus also for the World Council of Churches and its *Faith and Order* Commission that handles doctrine and theological issues.

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) is an ecumenical collaboration body of Europe's Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran and Protestant Churches which in 2011 had 126 member Churches from most of the countries in Europe. The conference strives to further unity of Churches, peace and human rights in Europe. The 13th Assembly of the CEC was held in June 2009 in Lyon, France, and the organisation's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated in connection with the Assembly. The Assembly appointed a committee to plan the reform of the CEC and a draft for CEC's new strategy, organisation and decision making mechanism was completed at the end of 2011.

The Nordic ecumenical collaboration was coordinated through the Ecumenism in the Nordics network. Its goal is to further the mutual interaction of both majority and minority Churches in the Nordic countries. The network organised several theme meetings and annual ecumenical brainstorming forums. Its operation is not directly linked to twin parish activities, for example. Rather it furthers interaction of Church sector colleagues in the Nordic countries amongst the Lutherans and ecumenically. For example the pasto-

ral conference of Porvoo Churches (Anglo-Scandinavian) organised every two years has direct parish level links; a parish pastor from the Lutheran Church is sent to attend as representative.

### Theological negotiations and other connections

Since 1970, theological discussions on doctrine have been organised with the Russian Orthodox Church. In September 2008 in St Petersburg, the topic of the dialogue was “Freedom as Gift and Responsibility. Human Rights and Religious Education from the Christian Perspective”. The central content of the negotiations was collected in joint theses: nine theses on human rights and nine theses on religious education and on religion teaching from the Christian perspective. The theses on human rights have been placed in English and Finnish in the digital human rights library (<http://csc.ceceurope.org/issues/human-rights-library/>) of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches.

According to the theses, both rights and duties are involved in being a human. Based on creation, all humans must be treated with respect and according to their human value. Human rights are inalienable rights that belong to all humans, and societies must secure the implementation of these rights. Freedom of religion was noted to be a fundamental human right. Each child has the right to be taught the religion that corresponds to the child’s own religious traditions. “Information about religion cannot be taught in schools completely impartially because the teaching always reflects some world view and value system.” According to the theses, accepting teaching of religion in the curriculum does not lessen the non-religious character of school. A distinction must be made between the ecclesiastic teaching of baptism and the school’s teaching of religion. School children are to have the possibility to obtain profound information about their own religious tradition and basic information about other traditions.

In September 2011, the theme of the negotiations was “Church as Community. Christian identity and Church membership”. These were some of the statements made on the theme: “Holy Trinity is the initial image of the Church’s existence and life. In the Church, people are made partakers of eternal life through the act of mercy of the Holy Spirit with the world of God and the Holy Sacraments,



and they come into unity with love that is the image of the love between the personas of the Holy Trinity.” The Church’s message and actions were seen to be essentially linked to each other. “Wherever Church members live according to their faith demonstrating Christian love in their deeds and their attitudes toward the surrounding world, Church membership is strengthened and the Church attracts new members.”

The discussion on doctrine between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Swedish Church, the Catholic dioceses of Helsinki and Stockholm were completed in 2009 and the final report on the discussions, *Justification in the Life of the Church*, was published in Finnish, Swedish and English. The report continues discussing the issues left open in the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999) in the context of Finland’s and Sweden’s moderate Lutheran reform.

In the summer of 2011, the Lutheran-Catholic unity commission convened in Helsinki to discuss the document *From Conflict to Communion*, which approaches the heritage of the reform ecumenically, and commemorating it jointly on the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reform in 2017. International Lutheran-Catholic relations were tended to also by continuing the already established tradition of celebrating common Mass of Lutherans and Catholics on St Henry’s day in St Henry’s Art Chapel.

Lutheran-Anglican theological contacts with the Porvoo Churches continue and in 2009, the second consultation with the Porvoo Churches on diaconate was organised in Oslo; it is based on the Porvoo Communion commitment on “aspiring toward common understanding about the office of diaconia”. The Danish Church became full member of Porvoo Churches in October 2010. Collaboration in Finland with the Anglican Church was enhanced in the largest cities in which the Lutheran Church pastors celebrated worship services in English.

Collaboration of the Finnish and Namibian Evangelical Lutheran Churches has developed further. Matti Repo, Bishop of Tampere, attended the ordination of two new bishops of the Namibian Church in the spring of 2011. Relations with the South African Lutheran Church were also developed. In the spring of 2010, on behalf of our

Church, Archbishop Jukka Paarma signed a *Memorandum of understanding* and in the autumn of 2011 an agreement between the Churches was being prepared based on the agreement made with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Namibia.

### Exchange scholarship

The goal of the exchange scholarship programme of theology students and Church employees is to increase ecumenical knowledge, further theological research and familiarity with the life of the Church and improve language skills. There have been mutual exchange scholarships for example with the Lutheran Theological University of Budapest and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Researchers' trips are subsidised to Erlangen, to the summer seminar of the Strasbourg Ecumenical Institute and ecumenical courses in Josefstal, the VELKD Pastoralkollegium and the Augsburg Confession theological convention seminars.

### Twin parish work

The twin parish work is local level collaboration based on an agreement between two or more parishes. Its purpose is to further mutual contacts between Churches, parishes and their members and their growth in common Christian faith and service responsibility. Twin parish activities are an important part of the Church's foreign affairs and the parishes' internationalisation education, and a significant form of international diaconia.

Parishes, parish unions and deaneries and dioceses have twin parishes among the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Ingria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Poland, Sweden, Germany, Namibia and the United States. In addition to these, there are twin parishes among the parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Church of England. In 2011, three out of five (59%) parishes reported that they have a Lutheran twin parish abroad. Three percent of the parishes had activities with another foreign parish.

### 10.3 Expatriate work of the Church

The Church's expatriate work is done in forty countries. Expatriate work involves 140 fulltime employees most of whom are in Sweden. Most of the employees sent abroad are pastors or organists. The Finnish-language parish work of expatriates is most often part of the work of the Lutheran sister Churches.

The Church's expatriate work unit answers for the Church work done among the expatriate Finns and among the foreigners living in Finland. The unit coordinates expatriate parish activities in collaboration with the local sister Church and supports the expatriate work in the sister Churches by providing human resources and financial aid. It also makes known the Church's activities and services abroad.

According to the census register, in 2011, the number of Finnish citizens eligible to vote living abroad was approximately 228,000. Of them, 82 percent were Church members. Residing abroad is for a shorter term than before and meant to be temporary. For this reason, close collaboration with the sister Churches is ever more important. In the "sparsely inhabited areas" of Finns abroad, the significance of holidays is emphasised.

Especially young adults of ages 20-34 move abroad. In the past few years most of them have been women. Moving abroad permanently is usually due to marrying a foreigner. Studying, enhancing language skills, career development, getting new experiences and human relations have surpassed the motives related to income as reasons for moving. Approximately half of those who move abroad from Finland return within a period of five years and 60 percent within ten years.

In accordance with a joint project of Switzerland's Finnish Church work (SSKT), Zürich Lutheran parish (ELZK) and the Church's expatriate work unit, a Finnish immigrant pastor operated in the area 2008-2009. The purpose was to continue Switzerland's expatriate work in collaboration with all Lutheran parishes in Switzerland and the Finnish communities.

The Church has two expatriate actors in northern Germany: the Church's expatriate work in collaboration with the German Evangelical Church (EKD) and Finnish Seamen's Mission in Greater Hamburg area and Lübeck. The entire spiritual work in the greater

Hamburg area will be the responsibility of a Finnish immigrant pastor, who began working for the EKD's local country Church in the beginning of 2012.

There are approximately 35,000 persons with Finnish background living in California. In a three-year trial project, a leading immigrant pastor began working in April 2012 serving the Finnish communities in the United States' West Coast and the Finnish parish in Dallas.

The Church's tourist work has been done in Thailand since the beginning of 2001 in collaboration with the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission. The pastor for expatriate work in Thailand began working in September 2011 among the expatriates and among the Thai-Finnish families.

After the tsunami catastrophe on Boxing Day 2004, the Church's expatriate work has developed its crisis readiness in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finnish Seamen's Mission and other foreign actors of the Church. All Church employees working with expatriates have been instructed to draft a local readiness plan in case of emergency.

## Conclusions

Ecumenical collaboration between Churches is active. International church federations are in a transition and renewing their goals and structures. Our Church strategy emphasises that Christian unity should find visible forms. The goal of the recent ecumenical strategy is to further the ecumenical dimension in the life of the Church and its members.

Two out of three parishes organise ecumenical activities but it is regular in only one in four parishes. Finns are open to increasing the cooperation with other religious communities. Half of Finns believe that the Church should increase cooperation with other churches. Three out of five elected representatives and employees of the parishes think this way.

# 11 Church, media and communication

---

The global development of information and communication technology has been quick in the past few years. The number of internet users increased especially in the older age cohorts. According to Statistics Finland data, in 2010, a total of 86 percent of Finns has used the internet in the past three months. In the youngest age cohorts (15-29-year-olds), the figure was 100 percent. Correspondingly, in 2009, a total of 82 percent of households had a computer. 72 percent of households had a broadband connection and more than half had an internet mobile phone.<sup>10</sup>

The changes in the communication environment have had a profound impact in people's daily lives and habits. Researchers of media and culture have described this situation as postmodern media culture in which images, sounds and public spectacles broadcast by media have become an integral part of people's daily life. This phenomenon has been furthered especially by the rapid development of mobile devices into versatile and user-friendly communication instruments which allow the transmission of sound, text, images or videos.

On one hand, the media culture is about a global commercial industry in which supranational media corporations can efficiently produce both instruments and content for global consumption. On

---

10 Statistical Yearbook of Finland 2010.

the other hand technology offers a chance for anybody to create media content that challenges the contents transmitted by large media corporations and mainstream culture. The increased use of social media platforms such as Facebook has been especially characteristic in the past few years. The explosive spread of the use of Facebook began in Finland in 2007, and by autumn 2011, Facebook had 1.7 million Finnish users. The role of social media platforms became ever more prominent in connection with various crises.

All these changes have also had consequences for the Church, because along with the new media culture, the reaction threshold toward issues related to the Church and religion has lowered. In the past few years, religion has been under lively public debate and of interest in Finland. Many of the most important discussion topics have been international, such as the position of same-sex couples in the Church, child abuse and, related to that, the confidentiality of confession in religious communities as well as the debate sparked by New Atheism on belief in God. Furthermore, various crises, violence and accidents occurred in Finland and abroad which required prompt action of the Church and resources in communication. The following describes the Church's recent efforts in communication through different media.

## 11.1 Church in the internet

The parishes' online communication has developed markedly in recent years. In 2011, nearly all parishes (97%) had their own internet site either independently or as part of a parish union site. In 2007, a total of 90 percent of parishes reported this. A third (35%) of parishes reported that they actively and systematically monitor online communication concerning them. One in ten (10%) parishes was able to stream worship services online. Two in five parishes (41%) were using interactive online services. In 2007, the equivalent figure was only one fifth (20%). More than two thirds (70%) of parishes or their work forms had their own Facebook page in 2011.

Increased interaction and the strong growth of social media had a powerful impact on the Church's online work. One of the Church's

five strategic spearhead projects in recent years was the *Spiritual Life Online* project carried out 2009-2012. The project focused on developing spiritual online work, planning and trial of its management, developing the Church's online services and trying new online work forms and collaboration models, and developing Church employees' online competencies. During the project, special attention was paid to the recently ever more topical social media and its phenomena.

In October 2010, the Spiritual Life Online project opened a chat forum called *Church Listens* (Kirkko kuulolla) in Suomi24 online community. According to TNS Metrix, Suomi24 is one of the most used web sites in Finland. Also the Church's Facebook page Church in Finland (Kirkko Suomessa) created at the end of 2011 has been an actively used discussion forum. The page also has a real time secure private chat function with Church employees on call.

According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey, four percent of Finns visit websites associated with religion or Church at least once a week or more often. In practice this means more than two hundred thousand Finns. In addition, five percent visit them at least a couple of times a month. In other words, nearly one in ten, i.e. more than half a million Finns, visit internet sites associated with religion at least a couple of times per month.

## 11.2 Church communications on television

The television editing office of the Church Communication Centre supports and furthers Christian worship service and devotional life through the means of television and produces and develops material on Christianity and ethical issues for television and other graphic media.

The focus of devotional programmes continued to be in broadcasting worship services. Lutheran worship services had annually an average of 158,000 viewers in 2008-2011. *Pisara – Ajatus uskosta* (Drop – a thought on faith) is a devotional programme of a couple of minutes observing daily events and phenomena from the perspective of Christian faith. The writing team includes pastors and laymen and has been formed on ecumenical basis. It includes representatives of

the Lutheran, Orthodox, Catholic and Free Church. The programme was aired on Saturday afternoons and it reached 133,000 viewers on the average.

Table 11.1

Televised devotions in Finnish in Yleisradio Public Broadcasting Company in 2011.

Television worship services	Lutheran	26
	Orthodox	3
	Free denominations	5
	Catholic	1
	Total	35
Other devotional programmes	Pisara - ajatus uskosta	57
	Other production	1

Table 11.2

Average numbers of viewers of worship services in Finnish and Pisara programme 2008-2011.

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Worship services	169,000	153,000	171,000	139,000
Pisara	196,000	138,000	102,000	95,000

The Church's Swedish-language centre produced televised worship services together with FST5 10-12 times a year and they had an average of 8,000-20,000 viewers. Television programme *Himlaliiv* (Celestial Life) told about people who had their own unique way of practicing their faith. The half-hour programme was broadcast 13 times a year and it had an average of 25,000-40,000 viewers.

According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey, three percent of Finns watched spiritual or religious programmes on television weekly or more often. In addition, approximately 12 percent reported they watched them a couple of times per month. Approximately a fourth of Finns said they watched spiritual programmes at least once a year. In the youngest age cohort, people aged 15-24, more than four in five said they never watch them. Instead, only a third of those over the age of 65 say they never watch them.



### 11.3 Church communications on radio

Radio is still a significant media for the Finns. Each week it reaches 95 percent of Finns and daily nearly 80 percent of Finns. The share of Yle channels (53%) of listening is slightly larger than that of the commercial radios.

The Church produces its spiritual radio programmes mainly in collaboration with the national Yle Radio 1. There has been little collaboration with commercial radios. The Church produces the content of devotional programmes and Yle manages the recording and broadcasting. Devotional programmes continue to be the most listened-to programmes of Yle Radio 1. Their listener figures have not changed significantly in recent years. The listener figures of Lutheran worship services on radio have remained at approximately 193,000-212,000 listeners despite small annual variations.

The morning devotion broadcast at 7.10 am is the one most listened-to devotional programme. It has lost listeners but the decrease seems to have levelled at approximately 150,000 listeners. The listener figures of the morning devotion at 6.15 am have remained the same for a long time. In 2011, there were 62,000 listeners. The moment of prayer on Saturday evenings is the most listened-to evening devotion, reaching approximately 112,000 listeners in 2011. Evening devotions Monday through Friday reached 77 000 listeners in 2011 (89,000 in 2008).

The Church's Swedish-language centre plans and produces the devotions and worship services in Swedish for the radio and they are broadcast on Yle Radio Vega. Each weekday, there were three radio devotions and a radio worship service on holidays at 1 pm. The worship services broadcast through radio had an average of 22,000-28,000 listeners. Of the programmes sent during the week, *Andrum* reached 22,000-28,000 listeners (at 6.45 am) and 32,000-38,000 listeners during the second sending (at 8.54 am). *Aftonandakt* evening devotion (at 7.15 pm) reached, in turn, 12,000-16,000 listeners. *Familjeandakt* sent on Saturday mornings reached 20,000-32,000 listeners.

According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey, less than one fourth of Finns listen to spiritual or religious programmes on the radio at

least once a year. Two percent reported they listen to them daily and six percent do so weekly. Approximately six percent of those over the age of 65 listen to radio devotions daily and approximately one in ten do so at least once a week.

## 11.4 Church information dissemination

The Church's joint communications are handled by the communications unit of the Church Communication Centre in cooperation with the Church's joint bodies, dioceses, parishes and Church organisations. The communications unit communicates on issues associated with the Church and life to media and on its website. The Church's Swedish-language centre handles Church communications in Swedish.

In the recent years, parishes have increased their communications resources. In more than a third (36%) of parishes, communications was a special focus in 2008-2011. Focus on communications campaigns was visible in the operation of parishes. A total of 16 percent of parishes (30% of parish unions) reported that they had organised a communications campaign associated with Church membership in 2008-2011. Fewer than one tenth (8%) of parishes had carried out a communications survey within the past four years.

The parishes' estimates of the development trends in communications in the next four years reveal that online communications will be increasingly the focus in the near future. Three fourths of parishes estimate that investments in their own websites will increase in the next four years. More than two thirds estimate that investment in social media pages will increase.

In 2011, one in six parishes (15%) published an independent parish magazine that was distributed to every home at least twice a year. Roughly the same number of parishes (16%) published the parish's own pages as part of the local newspaper. Parishes belonging to parish unions (40% of parishes) distributed to their members the magazine published by the parish union.

According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011* survey, two fifths of Finns (41%) read a parish magazine or other Christian magazine at least

once a year. One in ten (11%) read these magazines weekly and more than a fourth (27%) at least a couple of times per month.

All in all, more than a hundred Church magazines are published in Finland annually. In addition to general Church magazines, the dioceses, Church organisations and work areas often have their own magazines. The total circulation of Church magazines was approximately 650,000 in 2011.

The Church magazine with the largest circulation is the Swedish-language *Kyrkpressen* with a circulation of more than 100,000. The online magazine *Kyrkpressen.fi* has been published since 2007. The general Church magazine in Finnish with the widest circulation is *Kotimaa*, a Christian weekly newspaper. In 2011, its circulation was approximately 39,000.

## Conclusions

Lately, religion has been in the media exceptionally often. Furthermore, the debate has included several issues challenging to the Church, such as the position of sexual minorities in the Church and international Atheist criticism of religion. As contacts with the parishes are lacking, people's understanding and impressions of the Church are formed ever more through media, and the consequences of this development may be dramatic.

Especially the intensity of the debate in the social media shows that there is ample pressure to have substantive debate on religion, Church and the Christian teaching. The Church is no longer seen as an unquestionable authority, but ever more there is demand for justifications and for changing the perceived shortcomings. The former object of communication has become ever more the subject in communication and a debating partner to be taken seriously.

The parishes' investment in online communications has increased and it was estimated to increase also in the future. Along with the transition in social media, online communication has become ever more strongly a tool for all parish employees. The transition in communications culture challenges the parishes to contemplate reaching their members in a new way.

# 12 Administration

---

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is an Episcopal Church with a very strong tradition of parish autonomy. 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 priesthood of all believers. With the exception of the diocesan chapters and the Bishops' Conference, all administrative bodies within the Church have a clear majority of lay people.

## 12.1 Parishes

According to a territorial (parochial) 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.

The parochial council determines the Church tax rate which will be charged in the parish, approves parish budgets, action plans, and annual reports, decides on building projects, etc. It generally gathers 2-4 times per year. The parochial council appoints members to the parish board, the executive body which prepares initiatives and im-

plements decisions. Its task is generally to supervise parish operations and to deal with the parish's financial affairs and property management. The vicar is the chairperson of the parish board.

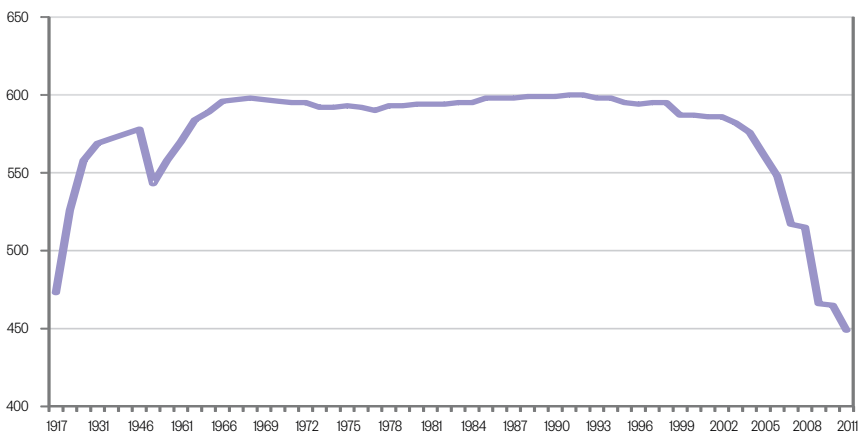
If there are a number of parishes within the same city or municipality, common elections are held to select members for each parish's own parochial council as well as representatives to a joint parochial council, which in turn appoints members to a joint board. In these cases a parish union is always 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.

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.

The members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland belonged to 449 parishes at the end of 2011. In 2008-2011, the number of parishes decreased by a total of 68 parishes mainly due to changes in the municipal structure. In 2011, there were 311 parish economies of which 273 parishes had a separate economy.

Figure 12.1

Number of parishes 1917-2011.



Six percent of the Church population belonged to small parishes of less than 3,000 members. Less than a third of parishes had fewer than 3,000 members and the majority (51%) of parishes had fewer than 6,000 members. The number of parishes decreased proportionately most in these size categories whereas it grew in all other size categories. 12 percent of parishes were large parishes of more than 20,000 members, and more than 37 percent of Church population lived in them. The parishes had an average of 9,300 members. The average size of parishes grew thus by just over 900 members.

Table 12.1

Division of parishes by size category in 2011.

Population	Number of parishes	% of parishes	% of population
Under 3,000	132	29.4	6.0
3,000–5,999	97	21.6	10.1
6,000–8,999	63	14.0	11.1
9,000–11,999	33	7.4	8.2
12,000–14,999	35	7.8	11.2
15,000–19,999	39	8.7	16.3
20,000–29,999	33	7.1	18.7
30,000–	19	4.0	18.4
Total	449	99.9	100.0

The decrease in the number of parishes was due to parish mergers. This was to make the parishes' own activities and finances more efficient on the one hand while on the other it was due to the municipal and service structure reforms begun in 2005. This is the biggest reform of municipal government and services in the history of Finland. The municipalities are to implement the reform by the end of 2012 in collaboration with central government. Its objective is to strengthen the municipal and service structure, to promote new ways of producing and organising services and to reform the municipalities' financing and state subsidies system and to review the division of labour between central and local government. There will be a strong structural and financial base on which to arrange and produce the services for which the municipalities are responsible. The process was the

occasion for numerous municipalities to merge and this was directly reflected in the parishes. According to the legislation there may only be one parish or parish union in the area of one municipality.

The biggest wave of change in the division into municipalities and parishes occurred in 2009, during which the number of parishes dropped by 49 parishes.

According to *Gallup Ecclesiastica* survey, two out of three (66%) parishioners felt that parish borders are meaningless in their participation in parish activities. The result is linked to the fact that most people scarcely participate in parish activities. The structural change mostly had an effect on those who participate actively. They estimated more often than others that the structural change has had a positive impact on their opportunities to participate.

### Parochial elections

The parishes' highest decision making power belongs to the elected representatives. In the parochial elections organised in November 2010, the parochial council members were elected in independent parishes and joint parochial council members and joint board members were elected in parish unions.

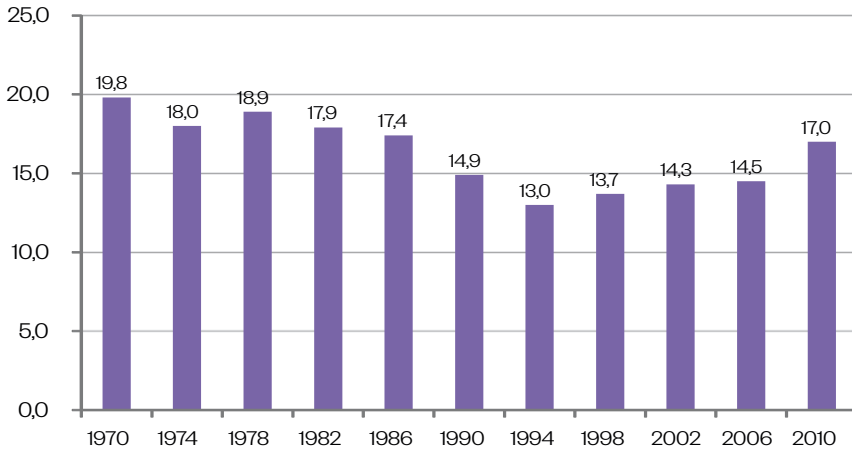
The parochial elections of 2010 introduced a reform that was significant for the entire society. For the first time, the Church entitled 16-year-olds to vote. There were just over 115,000 youth under the age of 18 that were eligible to vote.

The goal of the communications plan for the parochial elections was that the parishioners know about the elections, the focus is in online communication, the number of young candidates increases and the candidates become known. Furthermore, for the first time a national results service and election engine were available as well as a possibility to utilize national campaign material locally. Another goal was to increase voter turnout by at least one percent.

The voter turnout in parochial elections increased to 17 percent and among the youth aged 16-17, it was 15 percent. Voter turnout among girls was 17 percent and among boys 13 percent. In many parish unions the voter turnout of 16-17-year old youth was higher than the general voter turnout of the parish union.

Figure 12.2

Voter turnout in parochial elections 1970-2010.



Absentee voting clearly gained in popularity. Absentee voting reached record levels in several cities. The share of absentee votes was 54.5 percent. Absentee voting was done also by people other than those who cannot vote on the actual Election Day.

For the first time the voters also had access to an election engine. More than half of the parishes made use of the election engine. The election engine was visited by 280,000 different users, and a total of over three million downloads were made. The younger the voter group, the more important reason for voting was the possibility to use an election engine. When one in four of all voters considered this an important reason, among those of ages 16-24 it was important to the majority of voters.

In the parochial elections, more than 9,200 elected representatives were elected in 449 parishes: 7,052 for parochial councils and 2,174 for parish boards. Approximately 52 percent of all those elected were new elected representatives. The average age of those elected was 52 years.

The majority of the elected representatives were women (54%) just like after the previous elections. A total of 56 percent of the candidates were women. Women were a majority in all other age cohorts except among those over the age of 60.



The most important reasons for voting were positive attitude toward parish activities, a desire to influence in parish activities, suitable voting locality and the feeling that voting is a civic duty as well as knowing a candidate personally. The young people emphasised more than others the campaign advertising in parochial elections and their parents' example in going to vote.

Those who did not vote were asked what issues would get them to vote in parochial elections. Of all those who did not vote a third said they would certainly vote if they could vote through the post or electronically through the internet. Among those aged 18-29, a total of 44 percent said they would certainly vote if they could do it electronically.

Since 1994, using political emblems has been allowed in parochial elections. In the 2010 elections, their use was still variable, however, and some slates of candidates did not use political emblems even though a political reference group was in the background. In the parochial councils, there were more of those elected from political slates (61%) and in parish boards there were more of those elected from non-political slates of candidates (62%).

## 12.2 Dioceses

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is composed of nine dioceses, eight of which are regional. The remaining one covers all of the country's Swedish-speaking parishes or parishes in which the majority of members are Swedish-speaking. In addition the German-speaking parish and Olaus Petri parish belong to that diocese. The Swedish-speaking parishes are for the most part scattered around the Finnish coastline and in the Åland Islands. Of all church members six percent speak Swedish as their native language.

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 pertinent to the whole Church, but he does not act as a supervisor of the other bishops, having instead the status of *primus inter pares*.

Jukka Paarma was the archbishop of the Archdiocese of Turku, and starting in 2010, Kari Mäkinen; he was the former Bishop of Turku. The same year Kaarlo Kalliala was elected to be the bishop of Turku. Juha Pihkala was the bishop of the Diocese of Tampere, and Matti Repo starting in 2008. The bishop of the Diocese of Oulu was Samuel Salmi, the bishop of the Diocese of Mikkeli was Voitto Huotari and starting in 2009, Seppo Häkkinen. Gustav Björkstrand was the bishop of the Diocese of Porvoo till the year 2009, and after him Björn Vikström. Wille Riekkinen was the bishop of the Diocese of Kuopio, and starting in 2012, Jari Jolkkonen. The bishop of the Diocese of Lapua was Simo Peura, the bishop of the Diocese of Helsinki was Eero Huovinen and starting in 2010, Irja Askola. The bishop of the Diocese of Espoo was Mikko Heikka and starting in 2012, Tapio Luoma.

A bishop is the leader of his (or 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 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 cathedral dean acting as vice-chair. The rest of the membership is composed of two canons responsible for theology, one lay member, the canon responsible for legal matters and the diocesan dean. The canons responsible for theology are elected for three years at a time from among the permanent pastors of the diocese, with all the pastors of the diocese being eligible to vote.

### **12.3 General administration of the Church**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland 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.

## General synod

Prior to 1974 the General Synod gathered only once in every five years, but that was changed by 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 Defence Forces), a Sami representative, and a representative of the Finnish Government. 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).

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. Changes to the Church Act require the approval of the national parliament and the signature of the President of the Republic. 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 official relationships with other church organisations and confessional groups and inter-church organisations, evaluates doctrinal statements, approves the Church budget and evaluates the operational plans 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 lay persons. Apart from the bishops, these members are selected by the Synod. The Church Council's leading officers form the Cabinet.

## Church Council

In the offices of the Church Council (including the Institute for Advanced Training in Järvenpää and the Church Research Institute in Tampere) there are approximately 200 full-time employees. Within the offices of the Church Council, there are special experts for consultancy on many different areas of parish work, financial management, and personnel issues, as well as for issues of inter-church relationships. The office of the Church Council is headed by a Chief Secretary.

Until 2010, Dean Risto Junttila was the Chief Secretary. In the autumn of 2010, Dr.Th. Jukka Keskitalo was appointed Chief Secretary.

## Bishops' Conference

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. Decisions of the Bishops' Conference are binding when the Church Act and Church Order specifically stipulates the Bishops' Conference to resolve such cases. Otherwise they are recommendations. The Bishops' Conference 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 canon responsible for theology 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.

In the past few years, bishops have been discussing various issues associated with families. In 2008, the bishops' family book *Rakkauden lahja* (Gift of Love) was completed; it handles marriage, family and sexuality. In 2010, the Bishops' Conference approved the report on the consequences of the act on registered partnerships in the Church (*Parisuhdelain seuraukset kirkossa*). The General Synod approved the conclusions presented in the Bishops' Conference's report on Christian marriage, human value and the possibility of prayer concerning registered partnerships, and assigned the Bishops' Conference to draft pastoral operating instructions. The possibility

for having a moment of prayer for and with those having registered their partnership was approved in the Bishops' Conference in 2011. In practice, these prayer moments are fairly rare, however. They were held reportedly only in four percent of the parishes in 2011 (a total of 30 times). In 2011, approximately 300 couples registered their partnerships and there were approximately 4,000 couple living in registered partnerships.

## Conclusions

The goal of future parishes is to continue to be local and close, but also to ensure an entirety that is financially feasible. The Church's challenge in the near future is to find a model or models for reforming the structure of parishes that takes into consideration the differences between parishes.

As the unification of parishes continues, ever fewer decision makers are elected into the bodies of the parishes. The influence of the elected representatives increases. At the same time there is the risk of weakening the local democracy.

Increasing the voter turnout and ensuring the local features challenge the Church and the parishes to develop the elections so that they are as transparent as possible with clear emblems, and to present the candidates and the goals of the slates of candidates in a versatile way. According to studies, the possibility to use an elections engine, the possibility for absentee voting and extending the voting venues inspire people to vote. Communication about the elections is especially significant.

The rapid change in the operating environment influences the operations of the parishes, dioceses and Church's central administration. The significance of strategic work and proactive approach to the future are emphasised in arranging the administrative structures and in supporting the performance of the fundamental tasks.

# 13 Economy

---

## 13.1 General trend in the economy of 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 rate on the basis of its financial standing. The rate varies from parish to parish, the average in 2011 being 1.33%. The parishes also receive part of the corporate tax levied by the state. The parishes' share of the revenue accruing from municipal tax in the country as a whole was 1.75% in 2008, and 2.55% in the period 2009-2011.

The basis of the corporate tax revenue has been the idea of compensating the parishes for their services to the society. Burial services, census records and maintaining cultural property have been considered services to society. The net cost to the parishes for performing these services was 514 million euros and at the same time their share of the corporate tax revenue was 462 million euros.

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.

The general economic trend in the parishes was characterised by decreasing tax revenues and continuing increase of the operating

expenses. A considerable sum of money continued to be put into investments – more than the annual contribution margin would permit. To obtain additional funding, the parishes sold properties and took out loans.

In 2009, there was a historic drop in Finland's GNP. The financial market recession in 2008-2009 had the strongest impact on businesses, and the profits of businesses crashed temporarily. The economy continues to be unstable. The indebtedness of states in Europe has become an additional economic liability also in Finland.

## 13.2 Parish economy

Parishes are not safe from changes in general economy. The Church Tax revenue is linked to membership and employment. Demand for goods and services increases employment and allows the businesses to increase their results. The corporate tax revenue comes from the profits of organisations and companies.

The income of parishes increased, but not as much as their expenses. The income financing of parishes, i.e. tax revenue and operating and financing profits, were not enough to cover the operating expenses in all parishes. The accrued annual contribution margin (=income financing) was also not enough to cover more than just over half of the investments. In 2008-2011, the annual contribution margin accrued was 314 million euros. In the same period, 592 million euros were spent on investments and loan repayments.

A total of 63 parishes raised their Church Tax rate in 2008-2011. The average increase of Church Tax revenue was 2 percent, corporate tax 4 percent and the overall increase of tax revenue was 2 percent.

Tax revenues cover approximately 80 percent of the parishes' expenses. Most of the parishes' income, approximately 70 percent, comes from the Church Tax paid by the parishioners. The parishes also receive a share of the corporate tax collected by the state. Its share of the parishes' income is approximately 10 percent. In the reporting period, the parishes paid the tax administration an average of 19 million euros annually for collecting the taxes and paying them to the parishes.

In 2011, the Church Tax payments were 857 million euros. The share of corporate tax revenues was 133 million euros. In 2011, the total tax revenue was 954 million euros.

Figure 13.1

Tax revenue of parishes 2000–2011 (million euros).

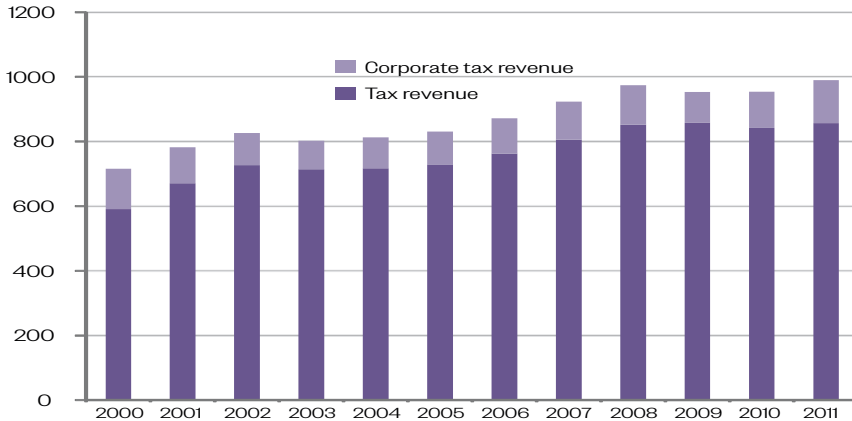


Table 13.1

Tax revenues in euros per member 2008–2011.

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Church Tax	198	201	200	205
Corporate tax revenue	28	22	27	32
Tax revenue total	227	224	227	237

### Operating proceeds and operating expenses

In 2011, the share of operating proceeds of the operating expenses was 16 percent. The operating proceeds increased by 10 percent and operating expenses by 6.5 percent. The operating balance, i.e. the difference between proceeds and expenses, increased by 6 percent.

The share of personnel expenses of the operating expenses was 61 percent. In purchase of services, the largest individual group was construction and maintenance services.

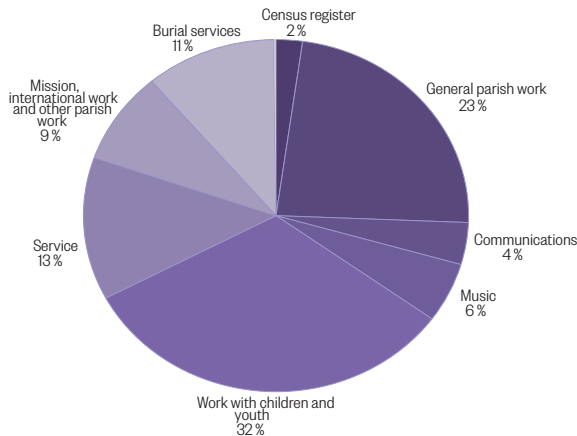


In 2011, of the subsidies given by the parishes, the share of mission work was 19 million euros, of Finn Church Aid 4 million euros, of diaconial aid 8 million euros and the share of other subsidies was 10 million euros. Other subsidies included for example subsidies to the Finnish Seamen's Mission and organisations and societies, whose operation supports that of the parish.

The largest operating expense was the property tax of 10 million euros paid to the municipalities.

Figure 13.2

The distribution of the parishes' actual expenses between different tasks 2008–2011.



A total of 55 percent of the parishes' operating expenses were spent on general parish work and managing parish tasks, eight percent on burial services, 20 percent on property management and 16 percent on general administration. The overall operating balance increased by six percent in the reporting period. Administration operating expenses increased the most. Also the operating expenses of burial services and property management increased.

Most expenses came from work with children and youth (335 million euros). 243 million euros were spent on general parish work (worship services, Church ceremonies, work with adults and other parish events) and 114 million euros on burial services. The group named Service includes diaconia (112 million euros), family counselling (11 million euros), hospital pastoral care (10

million euros) and telephone helpline and other service (3 million euros).

### Investments and result of the financial period

The parishes increased their investments 2008-2011. 13 million euros of the investments completed during 2011 were used on new constructions and 60 million euros on repairs. Of these expenses the share of churches, chapels and parish halls was 48 million euros, that of camp centres and course centres was 11 million euros. Other investments consisted of machinery and equipment, land and water structures and organ purchases. Investments related to burial service were a total of 17 million euros.

The result of the parishes' financial period weakened dramatically. There was an increase in the number of negative annual contribution margins and financial period results. The financial subsidies for investment expenses were primarily subsidies from the Central Church Fund. The parishes also received investment subsidies from the European Union.

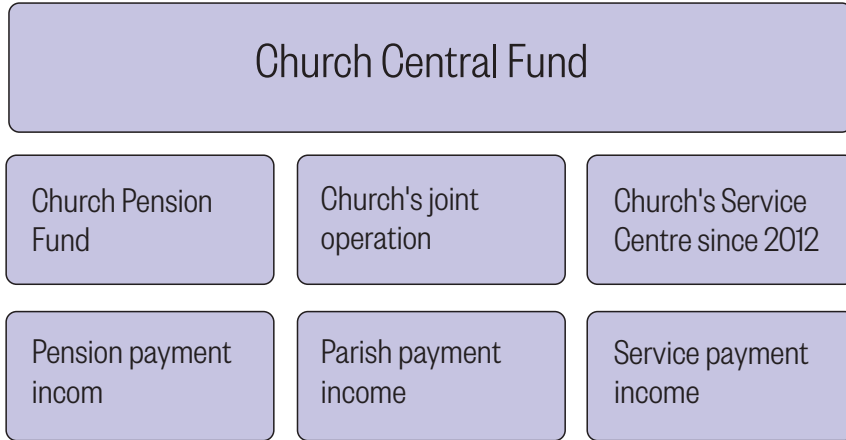
## 13.3 Central Church Fund's economy

The Central Church Fund is intended to serve as a pensions 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% of the finances of the Central Church Fund, aid constitutes 8% and other operations 17%.

The Central Church Fund has three separate parts: Church's joint activities, Church pension fund and the worship service Centre that began its operation in 2012. The different parts of the Central Church Fund are financed differently and they are kept apart from each other.

Figure 13.3

Central Church Fund's operation



### Church's joint operation

Church Council, diocese operations and subsidies belong to the Church's joint operations. The Church's joint operation is financed by the basic fees paid by the parishes and collected only based on the computational Church Tax. At the end of 2011, the basic fee was approximately 8 percent.

The operation of the Church Council is divided into basic operation and strategic projects. The surplus accrued from previous years is to be used to finance new projects that benefit the parishes equally so that no pressure to increase the parish fees emerges. In practice, the final accounts of the coming years will show a deficit in the income statement. The deficit is covered by the surplus of previous years, which at the end of 2011 was approximately 45 million euros.

Financing and developing the Central Church Fund's subsidy system has been an important focus ever since the year 2000. The subsidies are divided into traditional (tax revenue supplement, discretionary and construction subsidies) and development subsidies.

## Church pension fund

The Church's pension fund has been deliberately developed with the objective of operating on the same principles as other pension funds. The pension fund of the Church adopted the reformed procedures in the beginning of 2004. Under the new system, all pensions will be paid and all the functions of the pension institution will be managed by the pension applicant's most recent pension institution. All changes to the pension system in Finnish law have been incorporated into the Church Legislation.

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 cohorts retire. The pension fund investment is long-term. At the end of 2011, the market value of the pension fund was 932 million euros, i.e. the fund grew by 18% (140 million euros) in 2008–2011. This covered 22% of the Church's calculatory pensions' liability.

On December 31st, 2011, the Church pensions' liability was approximately 4,296 million euros. Pensions' liability increased considerably compared with the previous prognosis. The increase is due to the increase in the sum of salaries paid.

All Church employees have pension insurance contracts with the Central Church Fund which functions as the Church pension fund. The primary indicator annually monitored in pension operations is to see whether the annual pension revenue i.e. the pension payments made by the employers and employees are sufficient to cover the expenses, i.e. to pay the pensions and the administration costs. The difference between the pension payments and the pension costs are transferred into the pension fund. According to the pension prognosis, the annual pension expenses will increase faster than the pension revenues, so in a couple of years the money transfers are negative, i.e. pensions are financed partly also with the proceeds of the pension fund investment operations.

Starting in 2012, the Central Church Fund is responsible for collecting pension payments, financing the pension system and making the pension fund investments. The payments of 2012 were approximately 178 million euros, of which approximately 174.5 million

euros consisted of pensions and approximately 3 million euros consisted of management expenses.

Church Council decided to increase the Church's resources to develop responsible investment operations and started the Church's responsible investment project for the years 2008-2010. The primary tasks of the project were to increase the parishes' level of awareness of responsible investment operations, to develop the Church's role as an active owner, to network with other investors, to support various initiatives and to clarify the concepts of responsible investment and general communication on the subject. After the ownership policy was completed in 2009, the Central Church Fund has attended the shareholders' general meetings of Finnish companies. Central Church Fund signed the United Nations' principles for responsible investment (UN PRI) in the spring of 2008, and ever since has applied the international approach to responsible investment. On the Central Church Fund's initiative, Finland's Sustainable Investment Forum FINSIF was founded in Finland in 2010.

### Church's Service Centre (Kipa)

In its 2010 spring session, the General Synod approved the Church Act amendment proposal, according to which a bookkeeping and payroll computation service unit will be established in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Church's Service Centre (Kipa) serves all economic units of the Church. The Church's Service Centre got its first customers in the autumn of 2012.

In 2008, the plenary of the Church Council approved the service centre model (HeTa). The goal was to enhance the Church's human resource and economic management by centralising bookkeeping and payroll computation tasks under one common organisation of the Church. According to the model, the Church Council offers the parishes centralised services for a fee through several places of business. This means using one economic and human resource management programme, which reduces software expenses. At the same time, digital data transfer is adopted. The savings are an estimated 5 million euros a year when all parishes have transferred the above tasks to be handled by the Service Centre.

## Conclusions

The parishes' economic situation weakened strongly and the regional inequality development continued. The parishes continued to use more money than their income would warrant on operating expenses and investments. Financing was done by using savings, borrowing and by selling property. In the long run, this development is unsustainable.

The increase in Church Tax revenue is marginal and there is the risk that tax revenue may begin to decrease. Property maintenance and personnel expenses as part of the operating expenses form the majority of the parishes' expenses. In the future, this means not only focusing resources into the basic operations but also developing new kind of cooperation and property sales, for example.

# 14 Personnel, education and elected representatives

---

## 14.1 Quantity and structure of personnel

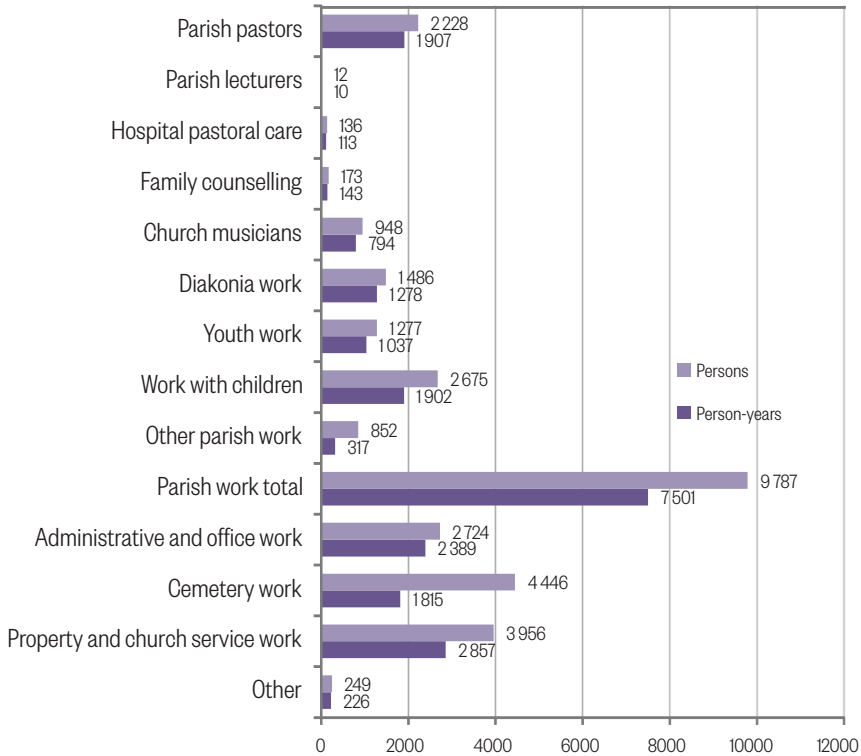
According to Our Church strategy, the strength of the Church is its professional and versatile personnel that is motivated and sees its work as meaningful. However, the parish operating culture has become employee-centred and layman duties and voluntary operations are not given adequate possibilities in parish life.

Competition over trained labour force is a challenge for the Church in the future. Ever fewer persons qualifying for employment in the Church have any practical links with parish work prior to qualifying. The educating units must support professional competence and the formation of a spiritual identity. As an employer, the Church must also manage well recruiting, induction and generating commitment as well as strengthening a spiritual identity.

In 2011, the Church had approximately 21,160 employees. Measured in man-years, the quantity was just under 14,800. In 2011, less than half (46%) of Church employees were doing parish work. Those working with children numbered just under 2,700 and formed the largest group among those doing parish work. Parish pastors (approximately 2,230 in number) formed the second largest group. Two thirds (66%) of parish workers were permanent employees in 2011.

Figure 14.1

Church personnel by duty groups in 2011. Commission for Church Employers.



There was increase in the share of parishes that were planning to cut their personnel. Half of the parishes reported that they either will cut (21%) or are likely to cut (31%) their personnel in 2012-2013. The share was even greater among parish unions: three out of four parish unions either intended to cut (42%) or was likely to cut (30%) their personnel.

### Age and gender structure

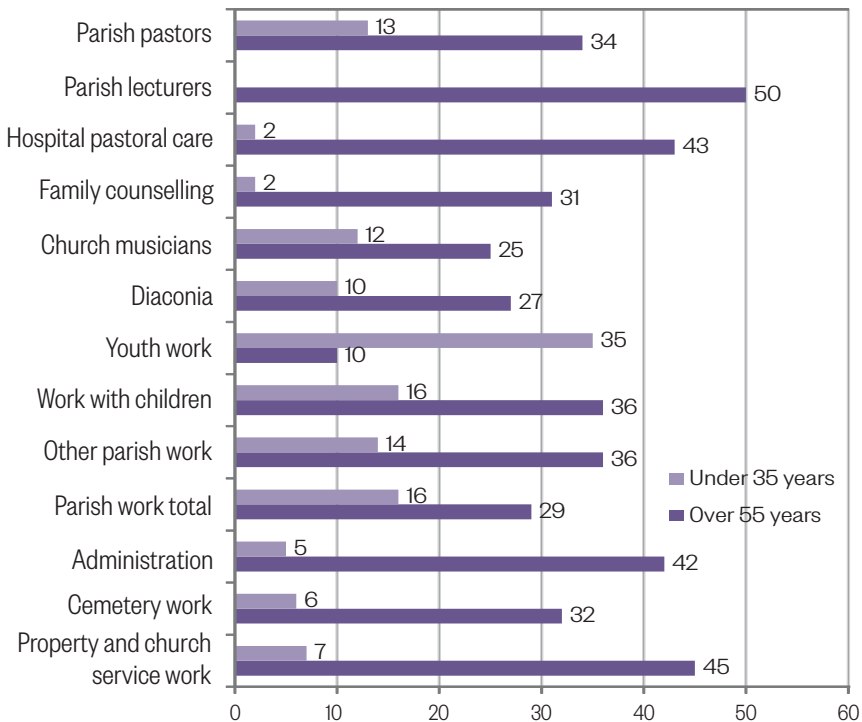
Slightly over one tenth (12%) of the parishes' permanent personnel was under the age of 35 and one third (35 %) was over the age of 55. Especially among the youth workers, there were many employees (35%) under the age of 35. The largest number of employees over the age of 55 was in property and worship services and hospital pastoral



care as well as among the parish lectors. Along with them, among the employees doing spiritual work, retiring in large numbers concerns especially the clergy, those working with children and in special tasks such as family counselling. In these employee groups, more than 15 percent have been estimated to retire during the period 2009-2014.

Figure 14.2

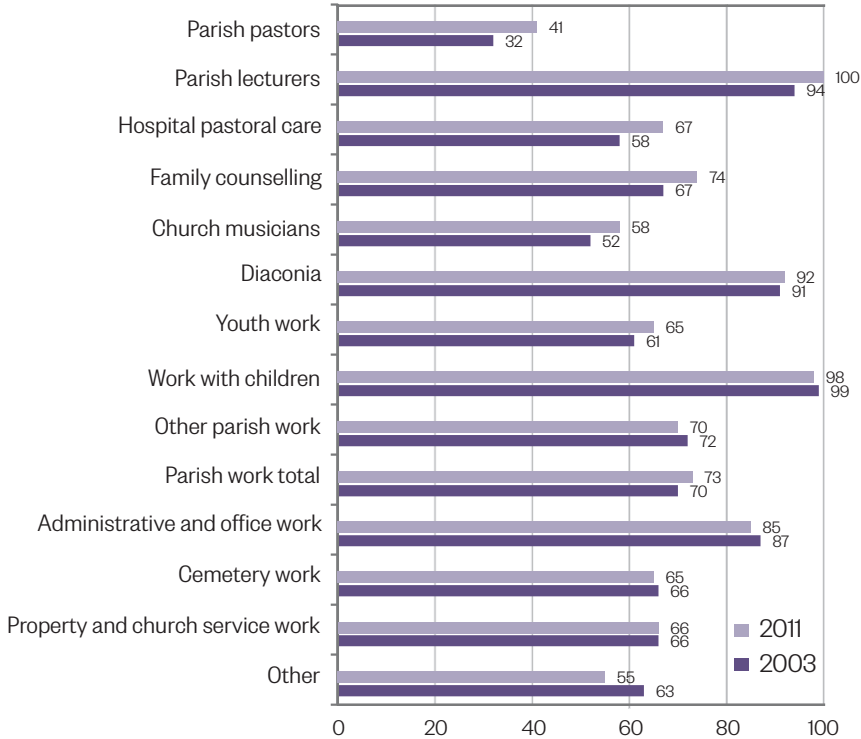
Division by age of the permanent personnel of the Church in different employee groups. Employee survey 2012. (%)



It is a characteristic trend of the Church's personnel that the proportion of women is increasing. In 2011, a total of 71 percent of the Church employees were women and 29 percent were men. The share of women is great especially in education and diaconal work. Excluding the parish pastors, all employee groups have a female majority. In the clergy, the proportion of women has increased continuously in the 2000s.

Figure 14.3

Proportion of women in Church personnel by duty group in 2003, 2007 and 2011. (%)



In the Church, the feeling that the work is meaningful and gives a possibility to utilise one's competence is typical. According to the Church sector's work condition barometer (2011), the majority of Church employees either completely agree (68%) or somewhat agree (28%) with the statement that they can use their abilities and competencies in their work. However, the work is felt to be mentally taxing. Three out of five (59%) employees were of this opinion. 13 percent of employees considered serious burnout a clear risk.

## **14.2 Employees' views of directions of Church's development**

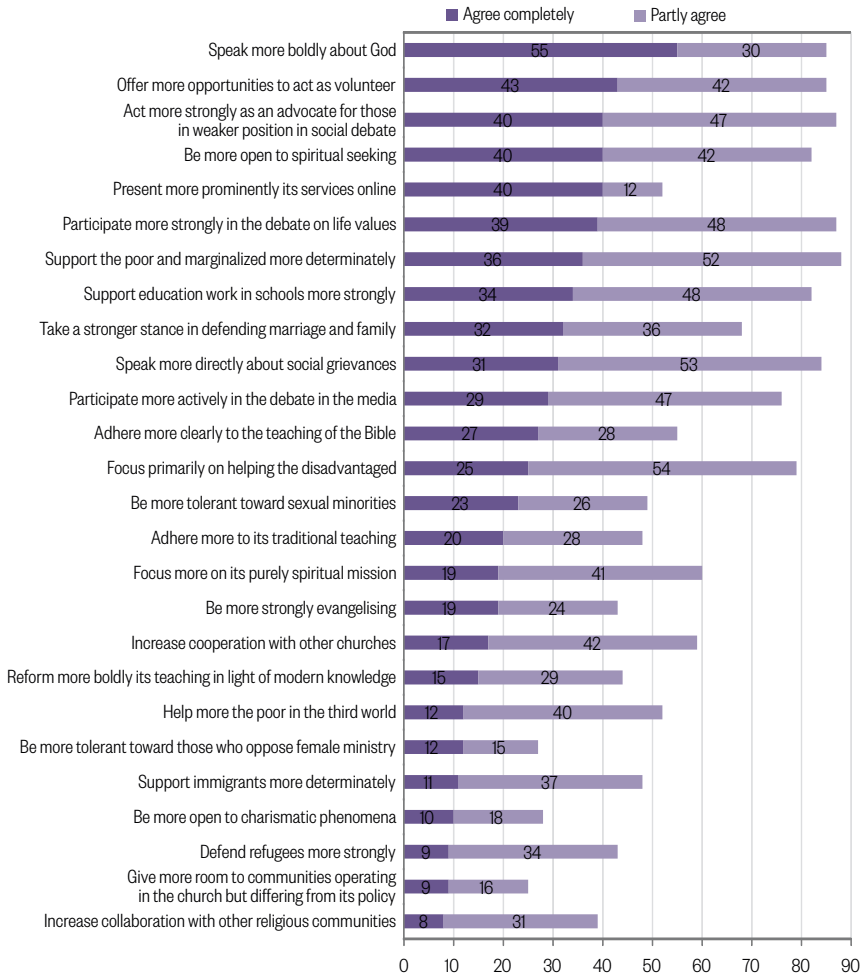
In the past few years, there has been a lively debate on how the Church's work should be directed in the future. In an employee survey, the employees were asked how they wished the Church to be developed. More than half of the employees agreed that the Church should speak more boldly about God. The employees considered it important that the Church offer more opportunities for volunteers. Two out of five employees underlined that the Church should be a defender of the disadvantaged and that the Church is open to spiritual quest.

An examination of those who completely agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement shows that the employees' views coincided with those of Finns in general. Both groups emphasise the elements associated with helping: helping the poor and marginalised and speaking for them.

The least popular with the employees were increasing collaboration with other denominations and giving the use of facilities to communities operating within the Church but differing from its policy. A tenth (9%) completely agreed, 16 percent partly agree that these kinds of communities should be given more room. A total of 42 percent of the respondents somewhat disagreed or completely disagreed with this statement. Attitudes toward those opposing the ordination of women were rejecting. A tenth (12%) completely agreed and 15 percent somewhat agreed with the statement. Half of the employees (54%) somewhat or completely disagreed.

Figure 14.4

Views of church employees about the direction in which the church should be developed. (%)



### 14.3 Recruiting, education for office in the Church and labour situation

In the future, the Church will have to compete ever more strongly for employees. The challenge will be significant also as the economic resources thin out, because during the period 2009–2014 more than 3,600 persons employed by the Church will retire.

The Church Council has made various efforts to further recruiting into Church jobs. Annually, more than 1,200 job training sessions are carried out in the parishes for students in the Church sector. Recruiting can be furthered with good induction. Induction is centrally associated with the stage in which the student is seeking a job in the Church for the first time. Traditionally, pastors have been invited to so-called ordination training before ordination to priesthood, but similar needs have been detected also in other fields of work.

The young people's and young adults' relationship with the Church has become less tight. The proportion of men has clearly decreased among Church sector students and those certified in the field. At the moment, one sixth is men, whereas nearly 30 percent of the Church's personnel are men. The operation of the parishes is the most central thing in recruiting people to Church sector education and jobs. How are the Church jobs introduced to children and youth in the parish for example during school visits or during their period of work experience? Also, appropriate implementation of on-the-job learning and apprenticeships is essential. As a rule, there have been an adequate number of students in Church sectors. However, it seems that the Church sectors' appeal is waning and in the next few years, ever stronger efforts must be put into student recruitment.

### Education leading to Church professions

The education qualifying for offices and jobs in the Church are carried out as part of the education system of society. In order for the parishes to have competent employees in different parts of the country, at the national level, the Church must make sure that the education and competence needs of the Church sector are known and taken into consideration then the education system of society is being developed.

### Theology education

Theology education is organised in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Helsinki, University of Eastern Finland (Joensuu) and Åbo Akademi. Many youth prefer to study near their home locality and also find their jobs either in the locality of their studies or of their home. Ever larger numbers of students graduate as Masters of

Theology without the qualification for Church jobs. The majority of those ordained as pastors are young adults, but among them, there is an increasing number of those who are over the age of 41 and are switching careers; often they already have a previous university degree. In the period 2008-2011, nearly 480 persons were ordained as pastors. 62 percent of those ordained were women.

### Organists' education

The Master's Degree required for the office of Church organist can be completed in the Church music degree programme of Sibelius Academy at the University of Helsinki and the University of Eastern Finland (Kuopio).

In the past few years, the overall number of applicants has risen but there is still only scarce interest in the Swedish-language education. As a rule, the graduated organists are recruited by the parishes. Approximately 140 persons qualified as organists in the period 2008-2011.

### Diaconia and youth work education

Diaconia and youth work education is centred in the Diakonia School of Applied Sciences DIAK. The number of students at DIAK has remained high and a significant part of the students seek jobs in the Church. However a slight decrease is detected in the number of students seeking Church sector education, and this is true of other groups as well, not only those applying to deaconess education. In the period 2008-2011, approximately 420 students graduated with qualifications to diaconia offices.

Youth worker education is also offered by Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences (Centria) which offers qualification as community pedagogues. Primarily, they are employed in the northern dioceses of the country. In the period 2008-2011, approximately 370 students graduated with qualifications to youth worker's offices.

A novelty in the education of the field is a professional master's degree focusing on diaconia and Christian education; the first such degree students graduated in 2008. The second group of students began their studies in January 2009. The profile of the education remained the same but youth work replaced Christian education in the

title. The students also have the possibility to get an international joint degree called *Master in Diaconia and Christian Social Practice*.

### Education for early childhood education

Ten folk high schools and two vocational schools offer vocational upper secondary qualification in work with children and families. There have been enough applicants for the education in the past few years: nearly twice the number of students beginning the studies each year. However, there is a continued shortage of male students. The students of these schools primarily come from the diocese, in which the school is located, or from neighbouring dioceses. Presumably, this enhances the graduated persons' employment in different parts of Finland. A nationwide network of educational institutions ensures that students from different dioceses apply for education. In the period 2008-2011 a total of approximately 1,900 persons graduated with a vocational upper secondary qualification in work with children and families.

### Ushers' education

Church custodian's vocational qualification studies are available at seven schools (six in Finnish and one in Swedish language) that geographically cover the country. Most of those applying for the studies are switching careers and are without a permanent employment with a parish.

The parishes are employing an ever greater number of employees with Church custodian's qualification and usually those selected for the Church custodian's job are required to have this qualification. In the next few years, an increasing number of Church custodians are retiring and presumably there will be a growing need of those with the qualification. In 2011, a total of 70 persons graduated with this qualification.

### Mission secretaries

The number of offices of parish mission secretaries has continued to increase since 1995. In 2011, the total number of mission secretaries employed or in office were 167. A person appointed as parish mission secretary is required to have an applicable professional degree qual-

ifying for work in the Church and having completed a minimum of eight credits of special studies in mission and international diaconia. The special studies can also be performed after graduation. The parishes also have mission secretaries for a fee and on voluntary basis and the Church's mission work centre and the dioceses tend to their training.

## 14.4 Developing and training personnel

Personnel training refers to training organised or purchased for the personnel by the employer. Some of it is intended for those in the early stages of their careers (induction and orientation training, basic skills of Church employee, supplementary training, and pastoral degree). Some is intended for more experienced employees (specialisation training, special training, leadership training). Training for competence updating and on topical issues are short-term training sessions on topical issues pertinent to the work. The Institute for Advanced Training coordinates the Church's personnel training.

### Personnel training of central sectors

An essential part of uniform Church personnel training is the pastoral training. It refers to the training path for clergy organised by the Church and beginning during theology studies and concluding with a higher pastoral examination and leadership training. The training is based on reflection on the theology education offered by the university and the experiences had in the work as pastor. The goal is to help a pastor in the early stages of his or her career to develop into a Church work professional. In the period 2008-2011, approximately 280 persons passed the pastoral examination, and 55% of them were women. Approximately 40 persons passed the higher pastoral examination (28% were women).

The Church has continued to develop leadership training. The basis of the Church's leadership training is the leadership training programme approved by the Bishops' Conference (Kirjo 2005). In the period 2008-2011, more than 250 persons qualified in leadership.



In the past few years, the proportion of women has grown among those with leadership qualification. Two out of five (40%) persons with leadership qualification were women.

## 14.5 Elected representatives

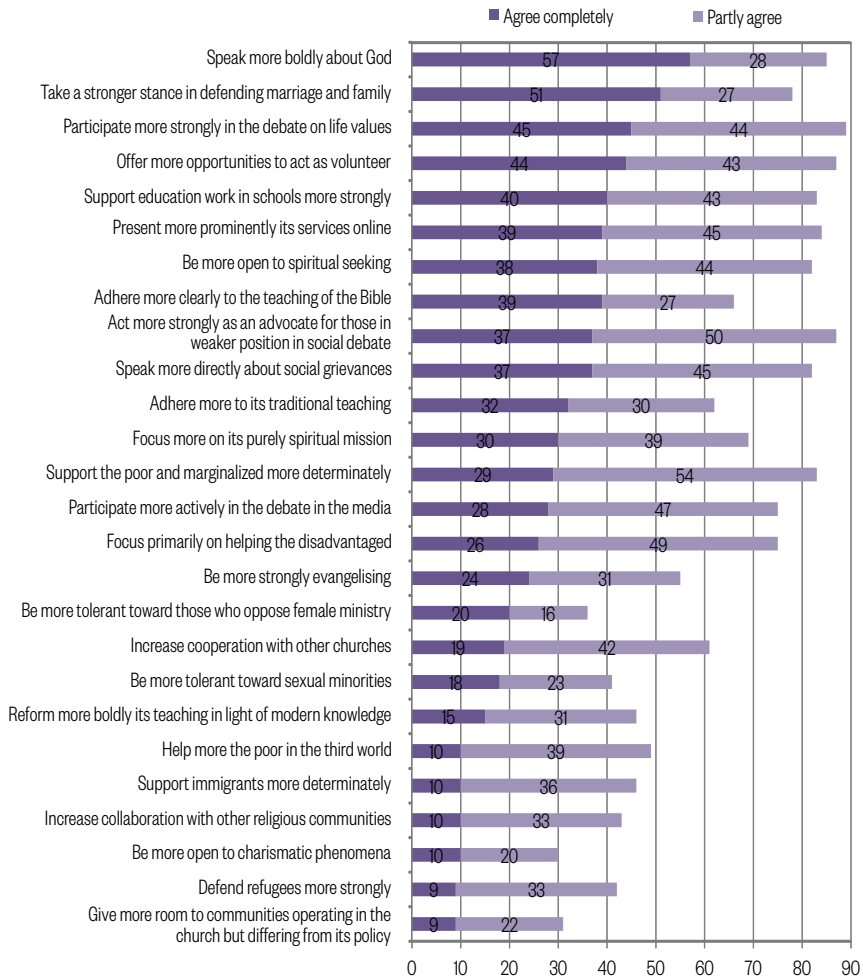
The parishes' highest decision making power belongs to Church's elected representatives. The Church has more than 9,200 elected representatives. Church's elected representatives are more active than Finns on the average in their private and public practice of religion. One in seven (14%) elected representatives of the Church attended a worship service at least once a week. Two out of five (40%) reported that they attend at least once a month. Also two out of five (41%) attended a couple of times a year and five percent said they attend at least once a year or more seldom than once a year. A fifth (19%) of the elected representatives says they pray several times a day. Two out of five (44%) prayed daily and 16% at least once a week. A tenth (8%) of elected representatives prayed monthly and five percent prayed at least once a year or never.

In the past few years, there has been debate in the Church about polarisation and the fact that the Church is being divided into camps with different emphases. The elected representative survey examined to what extent the elected representatives consider themselves theologically conservative or liberal. One in seven (13%) elected representatives of the Church considered themselves conservative and a third (33%) somewhat conservative. One in ten (11%) considered themselves liberal and one in five (22%) somewhat liberal. A total of 14 percent of elected representatives did not think they are either one.

When asked in which direction the Church should be developed, the elected representatives underlined bolder speech about God the most. Three in five (57%) elected representatives completely agreed and more than a fourth somewhat agreed with this. Mostly this was thought by those above the age of 55 (62% completely agreed). The lowest figure was among elected representatives under the age of 35 (46%) and among those of ages 35-44 (44%). At least two out of five in all age groups considered the Church's stronger speech about God very important.

Figure 14.5

Views of Church's elected representatives about the direction in which the church should be developed. (%)



The elected representatives also thought that the Church should speak more strongly for family and marriage. The older the elected representative, the stronger the support for this idea. Three out of five (58%) elected representatives over the age of 55 were of this opinion, a fifth (19%) of those under 35 years of age. Furthermore, the Church's more active participation in the debate on values and the Church's offering more opportunities for the volunteers emerged as the most

important directions of development for the elected representatives. Defending refugees, stronger support for development cooperation and giving the use of facilities to communities operating within the Church but differing from its policy were considered less important by the elected representatives.

## Conclusions

The changing environment requires new competencies of the employees. Enhancing volunteer activities changes the employee-centred operating methods of the parish. The employees are required to adopt a new communication culture when the internet has become a more significant operating environment than before.

The Finns' weakening commitment to doctrine challenges the parish employees to speak about faith understandably. Knowledge of Christian faith can no longer be considered a given. Our Church strategy underlines enhancing spiritual identity and bold speech of the foundation of faith. The core competence of the Church's spiritual work is thought to be knowledge of faith and doctrine, and knowing the Bible and the Confessions of the Church. The core competence of the employees becomes ever more important when an ever increasing group of people do not share the beliefs of the Church.

Half of the parishes estimate that they will cut their personnel in the period 2012-2013. This requires proactiveness and also makes recruiting volunteers and organising the work ever more crucial. Due to retiring personnel, the Church needs a lot of highly trained professionals to replace the competence of experienced employees. The parish experience of young employees is scarcer than before, which introduces an additional challenge to the development of the professional identity of Church employees. The Church is expected to communicate actively with Church sector students and to support the building of professional identity and spiritual growth.

# 15 Revival movements and organisations

---

## 15.1 Revival movements as part of Church

Revival movements refer to spiritual movements which originate from a larger folk revival. Emphasising a personal relationship with God is typical of the movements. In Finland, it is typical that the revival movements stay within the Lutheran Church unlike in other Nordic countries for example.

The oldest revival movements were born as a result of the 18<sup>th</sup> century revivals. The revival movements include the Prayer Movement, the Awakening Movement, the Finnish Evangelical Movement and Laestadian Movement. The revival movement born after these and consisting of several organisations is called the Fifth Revival Movement. Starting in the 1970s, a Charismatic trend has become ever stronger within the Church; it also has characteristics typical of a revival movement.

The revival movements and parishes cooperate in many ways. They organise common activities together, parish employees participate in the movements' events as speakers and the movements get to use parish facilities. Some revival movements are the Church's official mission organisations and their work is partly financed by the parishes.

According to Our Church strategy, a considerable part of the Church's activities are channelled through the revival movements and Christian organisations. The strategy underlines that different ways to experience Christian unity and to deepen spiritual growth are needed in the Church. The Church wants to support the generation of small operative groups and communities and to enhance the members' opportunities to develop the operation and to create something new.

In the past few years, the revival movements have been in public debate more than usual. At the same time as there is close collaboration between the revival movements and the Church in the local parishes, the tone of the debate is getting tenser. Some revival movements are strongly criticising the Church, its decisions and its decision makers. Primarily, this kind of antagonism was caused by the debate on homosexuality, which also became a topic in the debate in the Church after the parliament approved the law on the registration of partnerships of same-sex couples. Within the Church, a debate began on whether the same-sex couples should be blessed or married in church.

Paedophilia in religious communities became a discussion topic after members of the Conservative Laestadian Movement were convicted of sexual abuse of children. The perpetrators included preachers and other responsible persons in the movement. Conservative Laestadianism was also in the media after two women belonging to the movement were ordained as pastors. After doing so, they no longer could have responsible positions in the movement and also, in the movement, there were restrictions of the activities of persons with a positive attitude toward the ordination of women.

The ordination of women and homosexuality sparked debate also in some other revival movements. Some pastors rejecting the ordination of women refused to collaborate with female pastors, which led to litigation. Some of them left the parishes to work for the revival movements. The movements with a rejecting attitude toward the ordination of women, such as Finnish Lutheran Mission and Lutheran Evangelical Movement (SLEY), made an effort to enhance their own worship service communities. The issue became ever more topical as more women were ordained. Some parishes banned the revival movements' own worship services in the parish facilities.

In the past few years, the Luther Foundation has enhanced its operation; its central operating method is organising worship services. The foundation belongs to a Swedish mission diocese (Mission-sprovinssen) which has ordained pastors for Finnish worship service communities. They are not entitled to priesthood in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. In March 2010, a retired pastor was ordained bishop in the Luther Foundation, which resulted in his being dismissed from priesthood in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Luther Foundation organises worship service in nearly 30 localities in Finland. In the spring of 2013, the foundation founded its own mission diocese and new bishop was ordained.

The Finns' attitude toward homosexuality is one of the fastest changing moral views. In the folk Church, the change in its members' views is expressed as pressure to change the Church's sexual ethics teaching. Instead, in the majority of the revival movements, attitudes toward homosexuality have not changed much, just like they have not among those actively participating in religious activities. Thus, the Church is under conflicting pressures: the religiously passive majority expects the moral views to change while the active minority expects them to remain unchanged. The different views also cause conflict in the field of revival movements: some parish unions stopped giving financial support to such mission organisations of the revival movement, which had a rejecting attitude toward homosexuality.

In the past few years, there has been renewed discussion on the independence of the revival movements and their commitment to the Church. On one hand, accepting many interpretations in issues of dogma and practices has been characteristic of the folk Church, but on the other hand, the Church's role in holding to the common decisions and in intervening with abuse has been called for lately.

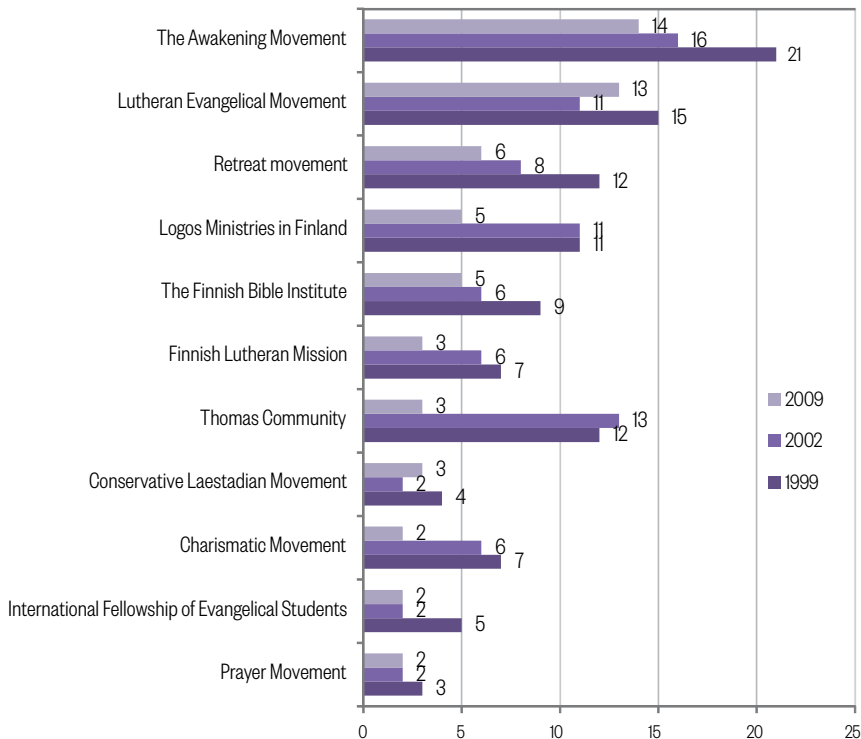
## **15.2 Support and distribution of revival movements**

The revival movements have great influence in the Finnish religious life. According to *Church Monitor 2004* survey, one in ten Finns be-

long to some revival movement and in addition, one in ten has been influenced by them in their thinking although they do not actually belong to a movement. The impact of revival movements is also evident among the Church's elected representatives. The supporters of revival movements are active in taking responsibilities both in parishes and at the national level. The activities organised by the revival movements supplement and diversify the religious offer of local parishes.

Figure 15.1

Church's employees' commitment to revival movements and Christian organisations in 1999, 2002 and 2009. Those belonging to the movements firmly and loosely (%).

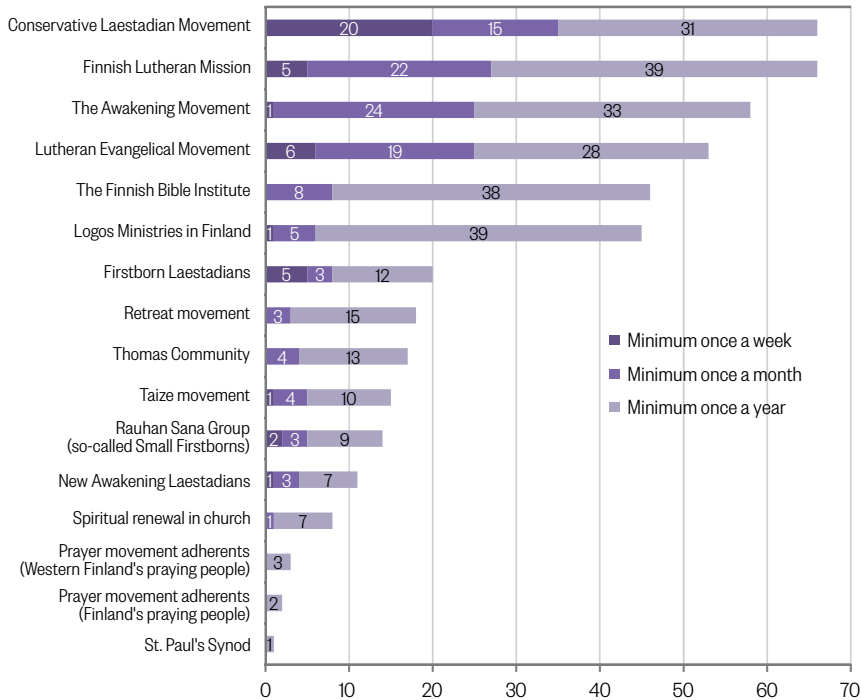


The revival movements are a reference group to a large part of Church employees. Two out of five (42%) Church employees consider themselves belonging to some revival movement or movements. In the 2000s, the Church employees' belonging to revival movements and

organisations has decreased in all movements. The drop has been especially clear in St Thomas Community, but also the proportion belonging to the Awakening Movement and the Retreat Movement has decreased clearly. Belonging to revival movement is clearly less common among the younger Church employees than among the older employees.

Figure 15.2

Regional distribution of revival movements and organisations in 2011. Operation in % of the parishes.



According to Church's employee survey, in 2009, the revival movements closest to the Church employees were the Awakening Movement and the Finnish Evangelical Movement. A total of 14 percent belonged to the Awakening Movement, and 13% belonged to the Finnish Evangelical Movement. According to studies by Niemelä<sup>11</sup>

11 Kati Niemelä: Uskonko niinkuin opetan, 2004; Papisto ja kanttorit 2010. (Clergy and Organists).



(2004, 2010), the Church employees belonging to revival movements were more strongly than others committed to the Church doctrine and practiced religion more actively. Commitment to revival movements was also expressed in their work orientation. In their work, those belonging to revival movements emphasised Bible teaching and mission work more than others.

Conservative Laestadians operate in the largest area geographically. In 2011, they had monthly activities in one out of five parishes. The movement had activities at least once a year in two out of three (69%) parishes (68% in 2007). Fairly equally widely spread is the Finnish Lutheran Mission, which has had activities in two out of three (66%) parishes.

In addition to revival movement, many Church organisations and foundations act in cooperation with the Church. They operate in mission work, diaconal work, evangelising, work with children and youth, and they do publishing, for example. The organisations also play an important role in educating the employees. Most of the organisations' employees work in the Church's mission organisations and diaconia and social sector organisations. The operation of mission organisations is examined in more detail in Chapter 9. The operation of diaconia and social sector organisations focuses mainly on care and service facilities and educational institutions, and they cooperate closely with state and local authorities. The Church's youth, education and cultural organisations carry out various tasks associated with developing child and youth work, producing material and advanced training.

### 15.3 Religiosity of revival movement supporters

A study of the participants of revival movements' summer events<sup>12</sup> showed that revival movement supporters are active in both private practice of religion and religious participation. In addition to this, movement supporters are actively involved in secular organisations.

---

12 Hanna Salomäki: *Herätysliikkeisiin sitoutuminen ja osallistuminen*, 2010 (Commitment and participation in revival movements)

Three out of five attendants of revival movements' summer events attended local parish activities at least once a month. Those belonging to the Fifth revival movement are the most active attendants of the Lutheran Church's activities. More than four in five participants of the summer events of the Finnish Lutheran Mission, the Logos Ministries in Finland and the Finnish Bible Institute attended parish activities at least once a month.

Also the *Gallup Ecclesiastica* survey (2011) indicated that among the active Church people, there is a large proportion of those belonging to revival movements: half of those attending Church activities monthly belonged to revival movements. In addition to this, revival movement supporters were rather closely involved in the activities of the revival movements. According to the summer event survey, half of those participating in the summer events were involved in their revival movement's activities at least once a month. Conservative Laestadians attending the summer events were clearly the most active. 84 percent of them participated in their movement's events every week and in addition, a tenth at least once a month. Conservative Laestadianism was characterised by close community commitment and a strong feeling of belonging to the movement. Half of the participants in the summer events of the Finnish Lutheran Mission and the Finnish Evangelical Movement were involved in their movement's activities at least once a month.

Active use of the Bible was common to most revival movement supporters. Half of the summer event participants read the Bible at least once a week. One in four (28%) read the Bible daily. Bible reading is clearly more common than with Finns on the average - five percent of them read the Bible daily (Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007). In most movements, daily Bible reading was also more common than Bible reading among pastors for their own personal devotion. (Niemi 2010).

Bible reading varied much between the supporters of different revival movements. Especially those participating in the events of the Fifth revival movement (Finnish Bible Institute, Finnish Lutheran Mission, Logos Ministries in Finland) read the Bible regularly.

The participants of the Conservative Laestadian summer events read the Bible least; two percent of them read the Bible daily. The

movement emphasises attending common meetings and obedience to the community's common Bible interpretation.

*Gallup Ecclesiastica* survey (2011) indicated that revival movement supporters were quite committed to the doctrine expressed in the creed. For example nine out of ten revival movement members or those influenced by them believed that Jesus was the Son of God.

Belonging to religious movements seems to give community support to the individual's religiosity when it comes to being involved in activities, private practice of religion and commitment to doctrine.

## 15.4 Prayer Movement

Revivals of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in Western Finland and Satakunta are on the background of the Prayer Movement (*rukoilevaisuus*). In accordance with the focuses of Pietism, the movement emphasises personal faith and rigorous Christian life. Devotion literature and song collections function as support to personal faith in life. Prayer is in a central position in the movement. Using old literature is characteristic of the movement. The Bible translation of 1776 is in use, similarly the Church handbook of 1694 and hymnal of 1701. Alongside these, also newer literature is used.

Differences of opinion concerning the ordination of women divided the Prayer Movement into two groups in the 1980s. The background society of those approving the ordination of women was the Praying People of Finland (*Suomen rukoilevaisen kansan yhdistys*) with a membership of 65 at the end of 2011. In 2011, the association had activities at least once a year in two percent of the parishes. The association for those rejecting the ordination of women is the Western Finland Prayer Association (*Länsi-Suomen Rukoilveaisten Yhdistys*), which had 60 members at the end of 2011. Western Finland Prayer Movement had activities in three percent of the parishes.

Among the Church employees, the Prayer Movement does not have much influence. Two percent of the employees reported they belong to the Prayer Movement.

## 15.5 Awakening Movement

The Awakening Movement (*berännäisyys*) was born in Savo and Ostrobothnia based on the folk revivals in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Awakening Movement emphasises timid and searching faith, greatness of God and smallness of humans. The basic feeling is that of one's own inadequacy. The teaching stresses also justice and carrying responsibilities in the society.

The Awakening Movement became organised already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when it founded a magazine, published a book collection and established a publishing company. The parent organization (Herätätäjä-Yhdistys) had just fewer than 6,000 members by the end of 2011. The Awakening Movement had activities at least once a year in three out of five (58%) parishes in 2011.

## 15.6 Evangelical Movement

The Evangelical Movement (*evankelisuus*) detached from the Awakening Movement after Fredrik Gabriel Hedberg, who became the movement's leader, abandoned the emphases of the Awakening Movement. Instead of the "longing faith" of the Awakening Movement, Hedberg underlined that humans can possess salvation and rejoice for it. Hedberg and friends left the Awakening Movement in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Evangelism became a movement of its own in the 1870s and 1880s.

The movement became organised at an early stage. In the 1870s, it founded a magazine in Finnish and Swedish. The movement began to organise meetings and use its own song collection. The umbrella association of the Finnish-language activities was the Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland and of the Swedish-language activities the *Swedish Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland*. Both are official mission organisations of the Church.

The local chapters of the Lutheran Evangelical Association (*Suomen Luterilainen Evankeliumiyhdistys*) in Finland had approximately 10,000 members and at the end of 2011, the main organ-

isation had 1,900 persons as members. LEAF organised activities at least once a year in half (53%) of the parishes.

The movement's internal disputes over the ordination of women resulted in the foundation of a new organisation, the Evangelical Mission Association (*Evankelinen Lähetisyhdistys*), in 2008 by those approving the ordination of women. At the end of 2011, the movement had 620 members. The movement organised activities at least once a year in less than a fifth (17%) of parishes, monthly activities in three percent of parishes.

In 2011, the membership of the *Swedish Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland* was approximately 990 persons.

## 15.7 Laestadian Movement

Laestadianian Movement (*lestadiolaisuus*) began from the activities of Lars Leevi Laestadius (1800-1861), a vicar in the Swedish Lapland. The movement spread quickly into the northern parts of Norway and Finland. The central position of confession of sins and absolution is characteristic of the Laestadian understanding of faith.

Laestadianism has dispersed several times. The largest one of the factions is Conservative Laestadians which has been estimated to have more than 100,000 supporters in Finland. Its umbrella organisation is the Central Committee of Conservative Laestadian Congregations (*Suomen Rauhanyhdistysten Keskusyhdistys*). The Conservative Laestadians is the largest of revival movements, and more than 70,000 supporters convene in its summer event.

The Conservative Laestadian movement organised activities at least once a year in two out of three (66%) parishes. In spite of its extensive range, Conservative Laestadianism is seldom a reference group of Church employees: three percent of them reported they belong to the movement.

Strong commitment to the activities of the movement and close community spirit are typical of Conservative Laestadianism. Commitment to the movement's policies and to its common position is in an emphasised position. (Salomäki 2010). The internet has introduced into public debate the disunity of thinking of the movement's

supporters. This concerned lifestyle issues (birth control) and the Church office (ordination of women), for example.

In 2011, the Firstborn Laestadianism (*esikoislestadiolaisuus*) had 4,500 persons as members. The movement has activities at least once a year in one fifth (20%) of the parishes.

Mission Association Rauhan Sana (*Rauhan Sana -lestadiolaisuus*) organised activities at least once a year in 14 percent of parishes in 2011.

The New Awakening Laestadians (*Lestadiolainen Uusheräys*) organised activities at least once a year in one tenth (11%) of parishes.

## 15.8 Fifth revival Movement

The movements born after the four “old” revival movements are called the Fifth revival movement. The movement emphasises faith and healing and the significance of evangelising, and the position of the Bible. In the background it has the Anglo-American Evangelical movement and Pietistic revival Christianity.

The movement consists of several different organisations. In 2011, the Finnish Lutheran Mission (*Suomen Evankelisluterilainen Kansanlähetyks*) was one of the most active revival movements and it has activities at least once a year in two out of three (67%) parishes. In 2009, three percent of parish employees said they belong to the movement. The Finnish Lutheran Mission has approximately 3,300 members.

In 2011, the Finnish Bible Institute (*Suomen Raamattuopisto*) had activities at least once a year in half (46%) of the parishes. In 2009, five percent of the employees of parishes belonged to the Finnish Bible Institute.

The Bible Institute Foundation has no individual members, but the mission rings have a total of approximately 11,100 members and the youth work support and contact ring has approximately 1,780 persons as members. A total of 2,460 persons belong to the Finnish Bible Institute’s Friends association.

The Logos Ministries in Finland (*Kansan Raamattuseura*) organised activities in half (46%) of the parishes in 2011. Five percent of

the employees of parishes said they belong to The Logos Ministries in Finland.

## 15.9 Charismatic Movement

The charismatic movement has spread in the Lutheran parishes since the 1970s. The movement emphasises the gifts of the spirit, such as healing the sick, prophecy and speaking in tongues. In the parishes, the movement's activities are channelled into the so-called word and prayer evenings.

One of the charismatic movements the Spiritual Renewal Movement, whose goal is to encourage the Church and spiritual movements in continuous spiritual renewal and to underline the significance of the Holy Spirit, gifts of the Spirit, prayer and connection in the life of the Christian Churches, communities and individual Christians. The Spiritual Renewal Movement has activities in three percent of Finnish parishes.

Since the 1990s, one of the most visible charismatic movements in the Church has been the Nokia Mission. The operation of the movement extended gradually and the group began turning into its own community. Conflicts emerged between the Lutheran Church and the movement and, sorting them out continued for several years. Attention was paid to the theology of its leader Markku Koivisto, his role as the leader of the movement and the dark side of charismatic phenomena. In the spring of 2008, Nokia Mission announced that it will establish a Church of its own.

The Nokia Mission Church began was founded in the autumn of 2008. This movement that gathered supporters from the Lutheran Church and from the free denominations adopted the use of both adult and infant baptism. In 2011, it had more than 300 members. Markku Koivisto was the leader of the Church. In August 2011, the movement announced that there has been "overstepping of sexual boundaries" in his life and he was dismissed from his position. Nokia Mission association has operated alongside the church. The operation in Finland has been centralised in Nokia Mission Church and mission work and media work in Mission World.

## Conclusions

According to Our Church strategy, different ways to experience Christian unity and to deepen spiritual growth are needed in the Church. The Church wants to support the generation of small groups and to enhance the members' opportunities to develop the activity and to create something new. For many Church members, the revival movements have become such small communities that support commitment to the Church's doctrine and operation. The same can be seen in Church employees: the employees belonging to revival movements are more strongly than others committed to the Church's doctrine.

So far, the supporters of most revival movements are strongly committed to the activities of the local parish: half of those actively attending worship services belong to revival movements. However, there is a great chasm in issues concerning the ordination of women and sexual ethics. Already now in some movements there is a detectable moving of those who attend actively to attend the worship services of the movement itself or of the Luther Foundation. Also themes associated with the Church doctrine (for example understanding of parish, baptism or Holy Communion) require constant dialogue with the movements.



# 16 Services maintained by the state

---

The Finnish state maintains and funds certain activities based on legislated basic human rights. Freedom of religion entails that society has the obligation to ensure the opportunity to practice one's own religion. Religious education, the life of worship and pastoral counselling are implemented in institutions maintained by society such as children's daycare centres, schools and other educational institutions. The services are also provided in the Finnish Defence Forces and prisons.

## 16.1 Religious education

There is a division of labour between the school and the Church. The school is responsible for offering the pupils a versatile general education that gives material for discussing worldviews. The Church for its part gives baptism education and guides its members to grow as Christians.

Religious education is offered widely in Finland at different levels of the education and school system. In elementary school and upper secondary school, religion is one of the school subjects. Actual religious education is not offered in vocational schools, universities and schools of applied sciences. The teaching in vocational schools

can include ethics, education in multiculturalism and teaching about different cultures.

### Religious education in daycare

Early childhood education is carried out in collaboration with a wide network serving the child and the family, including social, health-care and education sector and various organisations and communities working with children and families and their early childhood education services. In this collaboration, the Church is involved as an organiser of early childhood education services available to all, and by supporting the religious education of public early childhood education. Religious education has been part of daycare curriculum ever since the early 1980s.

Most parishes have contacts with the daycare services in their area. Religious education is also carried out by daycare personnel because they know best the children's questions and way of thinking and also the views of their families. Parish employees support the daycare personnel in different ways (see Chapter 5.2).

Together with the parishes' children's work centre, the Church's education and youth work organises mentoring in early childhood religious education. The Church also organises training in early childhood religious education for daycare personnel.

Attending preschool became a subjective right of each child starting in the autumn of 2001. Preschool curriculum section "ethics and worldview" includes cultural worldview education with the goal of developing worldview thinking for example by getting to know the customs in different religions and convictions.

### Religious education

The central content of the Freedom of Religion Act that entered into force in 2003 was the idea of the positive and negative aspect of the freedom of religion. The first one refers to the right to belong to a religious community, to have teaching in one's own religion and to practice one's religion privately and publicly. The negative freedom of religion refers to the right not to belong to any religious community and not to practice any religion. The current national core curriculum for elementary school and upper secondary school were completed af-

ter this in 2004. In it, religion teaching is defined as teaching in one's own religion. One can no longer speak about confessional teaching, and teaching one's own religion is not the same as practicing religion.

The changes in terminology were considered to reflect the prevailing practice, because in spite of its name, for decades, the confessional religion teaching had no longer meant teaching based on the doctrine of a religious community. The prevailing unclarity and incoherence concerning the concept of confessional contributed to giving up the use of the term. The requirement that religion teachers must belong to the Church was also removed from the law. The teacher teaches religion subject to public liability the same way as other school subjects.

If the pupil does not belong to any religious community, he may attend the teaching of ethics and worldview. If the pupil so desires, he or she can attend the religion teaching provided for the majority. Also those students, for whom it is not possible to provide their own religion teaching, may attend the teaching of ethics.

The school's religious events are part of religious education. The school may organise religious events such as school worship services, religious school day opening sessions and spiritual concerts. These events are considered practice of religion. For this reason, these events are attended by students whose parent so desire. Those studying in upper secondary school decide for themselves whether to attend or not.

There has been some confusion in interpreting the law especially in association with the school's common celebration traditions. Also, referring to the Freedom of Religion Act, some schools have refused to collaborate with the parish or have demanded for the school day opening sessions to be universally humane without Christian content. However, Finns have positive attitudes toward having religion and Christian cultural tradition visible in school. According to Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011 survey, nearly three fourths had a positive attitude toward Christian programme in schools' Christmas celebrations. More than 60 percent of respondents also had a positive attitude toward religion teaching in schools. Correspondingly, approximately 20 percent of the respondents had a negative attitude toward it.

## 16.2 Church work in the Finnish Defence Forces

Church work in the Defence Forces is basically army pastoral care, which entails pastoral care of individual conscripts and members of the military community, and tending to their spiritual needs. The purpose of the work is to support mentally and spiritually those serving in the Defence Forces and Border Guard and to maintain their ethical ability to function in all circumstances.

Church work is led by the Chaplain General and it is done by 28 full-time Lutheran military chaplains. In addition to them, there are 15 part-time military chaplains and some working for a fee; four of these are Orthodox. Furthermore, there are Church sector conscripts and reserve military chaplains and military deaconesses used in military refresher courses and crisis management troops. The number of military chaplains remained unchanged in the structural reform of the Defence Forces carried out in 2008, in which the leadership and administration systems were renewed.

Approximately 87 percent of the approximately 27,000 conscripts that began their military service in 2011 belonged to the folk Churches and approximately 11 percent in the population register. Approximately one percent were members of other Churches and half percent were Muslim. The practice of religion has been ensured and prerequisites for equal treatment of different religions and convictions have been created in the Defence Forces.

The Church work of the Defence Forces has lately oriented ever more toward maintaining international relations. Annually, the military chaplains participate in numerous international meetings and seminars as well as training of military chaplains. In the reporting period, Finnish military chaplains have operated in crisis management missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Chad, in the ATALANTA operation on the coast of Somalia and in the battle units of the European Union. Especially the personnel in the battle units has been coached to handle the long-term stress of crisis management operations and to manage in stressful special situations. Nearly all military chaplains have participated in peacekeepers' integration training.

Table 16.1

Church operation in the Defence Forces in 2008-2011

Function	2008	2009	2010	2011
Worship services without Holy Communion	169	144	163	123
Mass	459	437	549	529
Devotions	1,510	1,326	1,405	1,121
Communicants	36,373	34,426	36,146	36,719
Church ceremonies	456	354	444	477
Lessons to conscripts	1,475	1,460	1,850	1,508
Lessons to personnel	215	224	290	370
Personal discussions	4,647	4,102	4,674	5,185

The change that began in the worship services of the Defence Forces in the 1990s still continues: the soldiers' worship service is ever more often a Holy Communion out in the terrain. Out of all worship services of the garrisons, approximately four out of five are Field Masses in the terrain. In 2010, the monitoring of field Holy Communion was transferred from the local parishes to the Chaplain General of the Defence Forces.

The conscripts' education about the Church was increased in 2009. At the same time the military chaplains became responsible also for organising the substitute teaching of those freed from Church work. National courses for conscript chaplains and conscript deaconesses have been organised in the Reserve Officer School and Land Army School. The lectures and lessons offered by the military chaplains to the personnel have increased. Military confirmation schools, family education events, concerts and Most Beautiful Christmas Songs events, Bible and discussion circles have been organised in the garrisons as well as excursions to Church events.

In the Defence Forces, the military chaplains have an important duty to tend to social relations. They keep in touch with local parishes, voluntary defence work, war veterans, crisis workers and various educational institutions. In the garrisons, important collaborating partners are the canteen associations.

For two decades, the military chaplains have collaborated with the association for preserving the memory of those killed in wars concerning the search and burial of those killed in action in the Winter War and Continuation War. In 2011, several deceased found in

the war zone and identified as military were buried with military tributes in different parts of the country.

Because more than a half of the parishes need updating of their malfunction and emergency plans, the Defence Forces and the military chaplains began in 2011 a several-year project, in which the readiness plans of folk Churches, diocesan chapters and local parishes are coordinated, guided and supported.

### **16.3 Work with convicts**

The right to practice one's religion referred to in the Freedom of Religion Act applies also to the life in prison. The entire prison system and prison pastoral care workers tend to this. In prisons, the pastors are employees of the Correctional Services Institution and part of the prison's rehabilitation activities. Prison deaconesses hold offices in the dioceses. In 2012, there were 13 prison chaplains and three deaconesses operating in the prisons. In addition to this, the Evangelical Free Church of Finland has a deacon coordinating the work in prison.

According to a 2011 survey of prison chaplains, 65 percent of the convicts belonged to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. In the past year, one in four convicts participated in religious activities. The spiritual operations included Mass, devotionals, Bible study, music events and group activities. The chaplains had pastoral care discussions with one in five convicts.

One of the central issues in Church work in prisons was how to develop the collaboration of the correctional services sector and the parishes, and how to organise pastoral care and Church work as a whole with the inmates and their families. In the background, there are the savings goals set for the correctional services sector by the state administration, which presents considerable challenges to prison work and also to the Church's work in the prison. In 2012, the Correctional Services Department proposed transferring the hiring of prison chaplains from the state to the Church. However, the Ministry of Justice decided to continue hiring prison chaplains as employees of the Correctional Services Department.

# Challenged Church – conclusions

---

The strategy of the Lutheran Church emphasises that the Christian Church exists so that faith in the Holy Triune God and love for our neighbours would be generated in people. Mutual unity, inclusion, has always been characteristic of a community of Christians. Faith also generates good deeds, and caring for our neighbours and the creation.

Commitment to the Church has been examined in theology through three dimensions. The theoretical dimension expresses doctrinal and confessional commitment. This means, for example, commitment to certain fundamental convictions or dogmas of the Church. The practical dimension describes how the theoretical truth of faith is expressed as worship service and spiritual life both in the understanding of individuals and in ethics. This includes both public and private practice of religion. Both of the dimensions mentioned above are supplemented by the communal dimension. This kind of institutional commitment is carried out as formal membership in the community, for example.

The findings of the surveys show that Finns' attachment to the Church has become weaker than before as regards the commitment to the Church's doctrine to its operation and its membership. In each of these areas, a long-term weakening of commitment has been detected. However, in the past few years, the change has been expe-

cially powerful and visible in the Church in several areas. The trend occurs also in many other European countries.

### Commitment to Church's doctrine weakens

According to *Our Church* strategy, the task of the Church is to call people to salvation. In order to generate and increase faith, the Church tells the message of Jesus' death and resurrection, baptises in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, invites to the Holy Communion and declares the forgiveness of sins. The survey indicated that ever fewer Finns share these teachings of the Church. For example, the proportion of those, who believe in Jesus as the Son of God, in the resurrection, the last judgement and life after death and the veracity of the miracles occurring in the Bible, is about twenty percentage points lower than four years earlier (Gallup Ecclesiastica 2011, N=4930).

The share of those, who do not believe in God at all, has doubled in four years. That share (21%) is now higher than in any previous year. Only one in four (27%) said they believe in God in the way taught by Christianity. Among those under the age of 30, only 15 percent said they believe in this way.

According to *Our Church* strategy, ever more attention should be paid to the meaning of Church membership, and enhancing the Christian identity should be supported. Church membership has a spiritual significance. According to the survey, however, reasons having to do with conviction were the most important reason for Church membership to a smaller group of Church members than before. One third (34%) thinks it important that the Church enhances faith in God (51% in 2007) and two out of five (40%) that the Church maintains hope of life after death (54% in 2007).

### Public and private practice of religion have lessened

According to *Our Church* strategy, the local parish and its worship service are the central and supporting content core of the Church's operation. However, two out of three (66%) Finns say they attend worship services more seldom than once a year or not at all in the past few years. Sporadic attendance has ever more often turned into total non-attendance. This is also seen in attendance on holidays. For



example, Church attendance during Christmas has dropped by more than 133,000 in four years. It is also typical that Church is no longer attended as a family.

According to Our Church strategy, the Church must develop its work as a community of inclusion so that as many as possible find the meaning of faith and their own places in the Church's activities. It gathers people together to grow as Christians. Increasing the number of those participating in the activities in all age groups is also a goal. This has not come true. On the contrary, participation dropped drastically also in other parish activities (such as music events, revival meetings and devotional meetings) and there were approximately 20 percent fewer participants that four years earlier.

Also private practice of religion has weakened. Half of Finns said they pray at least once a year (66% in 2007). One fifth prayed daily. Also Bible reading lessened. Now, only one fifth of Finns read the Bible at least once a year, when four years earlier the share was 43 percent.

According to Our Church strategy, in Church ceremonies, the parish serves its members in various stages of their lives, preaches the Gospel and prays with them. Ever fewer Finns encounter the Church in such celebrations of life events. A total of 78% of infants born in 2011 were baptised (84% in 2007). In Helsinki, only half of the children were baptised. Only 53 percent of Finns were married in Church (60% in 2007). Approximately 95 percent of the deceased had Church funerals.

Share of those uncertain about membership is growing

According to Our Church strategy, the goal is to enhance the positive meaning of Church membership. Ever larger numbers, however, question their membership in the Church. In 2011, only one fifth said they would not resign from the Church under any circumstances (38% in 2007). Instead, the share of those has increased rapidly, who have thought of resigning from the Church or consider it likely. Now, already one fourth of Finns have such potential for resigning.

Ever weaker commitment to membership leads also to resigning from the Church. Resigning from the Church has continued to increase throughout the 2000s. In the period 2000-2003, less than

70,600 persons resigned from the Church, in 2004-2007 approximately 132,900 persons and in 2008-2011 more than 225,000 persons (5.4% of members) resigned from the Church. Also joining the Church increased. More than 49,800 persons joined the Church in the past four years.

The folk Church concept emphasises that the Church is the Church of all its members. According to Häkkinen<sup>13</sup>, belonging to the Church has been underlined in this thinking, whereas the elements of commitment to the doctrine and to operation have been less prominent. The ideal of commitment is Church membership, cognitive mastery of certain fundamental issues in the Christian doctrine and daily practice of faith linked to these, as well as daily Christian life. It is good to note that the different elements of religiosity are interlinked and enhance one another. The strategy *Our Church – a Participatory Community* emphasises the meaning of community spirit in the essence of the Church. The experience of unity is in a crucial role also in leaving the Church. Two out of three such Church members, who think it likely that they resign the Church, have not been contacted in any way (for example letter or personal encounter) by the parish in the past year. Correspondingly, it is typical of those who are strongly committed to Church membership that during the year, they have had several contacts with the parish.

### Questions of worldview in central role

Until the past few years, maintaining some kind of ties to the Church regardless of one's own religiosity has been typical of Finns. Belonging to Church and sporadically attending services has been a usual feature, just like in the rest of Scandinavia. However, new development trends indicate that this kind of operating model linked with tradition and culture is breaking. A great change is occurring in this very mainstream group that attends religious activities only seldom. In this group, an ever larger proportion has stopped attending altogether in the past few years. The phenomenon has been detected also elsewhere in Europe. According to religion sociologist David Voas<sup>14</sup>,

13 Seppo Häkkinen: *Ihanne ja todellisuus*, 2010 (Ideal and Reality)

14 "The Rise and Fall of Fuzzy Fidelity in Europe", *European Sociological Review*, 2009.

a significant change has occurred in the behaviour of the group that is not characterised by regular Church attendance and that is not consciously non-religious.

Primarily, people seek personal significance in religion. In the changing world, the worldview element is in an essential role in generating meaning. If this is lacking, mere tradition or cultural significance is not adequate to persuade a person to consider Church membership necessary in the long run. Based on the recent development one can observe that great changes can occur in commitment to the Church even in a short period of time. It is good for the Church to be prepared for a rapid drop in its membership in a short period of time because for a large group of Finns, the ties to Church membership are weaker than before.

The community dimension is a central element in commitment. Gathering around shared beliefs is an expression of faith and also enhances it. According to United States' religion sociologist Rodney Stark<sup>15</sup>, the central challenge of religions is generating trust in religious beliefs and assertions that cannot be verified through human means. The social group has a strong significance in this process. The more other people express their trust in religious concepts, the stronger the people's trust in them. According to Stark, participation in public and private practice of religion is the most central factor in generating trust in religious doctrines. According to him, trust in the doctrine increases in direct proportion to participation.

According to Stark, the increase in religious diversity leads to conflicts especially between the strongly religious and the weakly religious people. This kind of polarisation has been seen clearly in the Finnish debate. For example in value questions, the ways of thinking of religiously active and religiously passive people are ever further apart. Building unity in the folk Church among people with very different ways of thinking is a special challenge.

The downward curves in believing, participation and Church membership mean also a change in the social environment. Especially the younger generation has in its vicinity an ever larger group of people who do not belong to the Church, do not baptise their

---

15 *One true God*, 2001.

children or attend confirmation school. Thus, each decision linked with religion becomes a choice instead of a given: you need to expressly decide whether to baptise the child or get married in Church. This situation also challenges the traditionally popular Church work forms. In the changed situation for example the confirmation school may not necessarily automatically remain a part of youth culture. For many, the motive for completing confirmation school is to have a Church wedding or to be eligible for godparenting. When the significance of Church ceremonies decreases, they no longer provide a motive for completing confirmation school. According to a study on Europeans, the new generations are less religious than the earlier ones, and religiosity does not change significantly with age (Voas 2009).

In the future, passing on Christian faith to the new generations seems even more challenging than today, because Christian upbringing reaches ever smaller portion of Finns and only a small part of youth intend to give their children a Christian upbringing. Half of Finns have had a Christian upbringing in their home. Although the confirmation school reaches a large share of youth, leaving the Church occurs only a few years after completing the confirmation school. Up to a third (34%) of those under the age of 30 say that they do not believe God exists. It is good to pay attention to how the Church encounters this age group and their offspring.

European studies show that the central factor in furthering secularisation is the weakening of Christian upbringing. David Voas and Alasdair Crockett<sup>16</sup> say that it is precisely the failure in religious socialisation that leads to the new generations' being less active and with weaker commitments to beliefs. The weakening of religious socialisation means that an ever larger group of Finnish children and youth do not adopt their own religion's teachings, customs, the Christian content of holidays or various forms of religion occurring in daily life, and they have no contact with a community practicing the faith. The lack of Christian upbringing in childhood often predicts that the persons will remain far from religion even as an adult. One's own parents' religiosity is particularly significant.

---

16 "Religion in Britain, Neither Believing nor Belonging", *Sociology* 2005

## Reforming traditions enhances accessibility

Although the changes in society challenge the traditional forms of community life, the development is not inevitable. Institutions also have the possibility to slow down with their own actions the separation from them. Regardless of the fact that national statistics indicate alienation from dogma, operation and membership, at the same time at the local level there are examples of a different development. According to new research, for example worship service attendance has increased in places where special effort has been put into this operation. New, functional ways that attract modern people have been found in the Church. Examples of these are wedding night events organised in some urban parishes, for example. Therefore, institutions can also renew their tradition and make them meaningful without giving up their basis.

There are many groups and communities operating within the Church, in which the members are strongly committed. For example many revival movements are such. Strong commitment to Church doctrine, active practice of religion publicly and privately and committing to Church membership are characteristic of the persons belonging to them. This tells about the significance of community support also in religion. Usually, the revival movements have few salaried employees, which is why the participants are in a central role in organising the activities. This offers an experience of inclusion that enhances the commitment to the group. Along with active participation, also social networks get stronger so that a social element is linked with religious participation. This kind of elements can be found in many different small groups. These elements of community spirit and inclusion have also been enhanced in different way in the Church. In accordance with the Church strategy, much effort has been put into enhancing volunteer operations. Tens of thousands of volunteers are involved in the different work forms of the Church and the number of volunteers has increased in many areas of work such as diaconia and mission work.

Regardless of the fact that ever larger numbers of Finns say they do not believe in God at all, mental and spiritual seeking is characteristic of the Finnish society. Many kinds of worldview issues interest people. For example the rise of alternative spirituality reflects this.

The phenomenon challenges the Church to have a dialogue about worldview and values. According to the Church's strategy, in 2015 the Church has readiness to encounter people's seeking and to discuss the foundation of the Church's faith in clear and understandable language. This is what the Finns expect of the Church. Three out of five (63%) Finns think that the Church should participate more strongly in the discussion about values. Discussing values has become especially topical along with many crises. Accidents, school shootings and family killings have touched a large group of Finns and introduced a need for communities of care and security.

Discussing the foundation of faith requires that the Church employees have broad and deep knowledge of their own tradition. According to the Church's core competence description, competence in spiritual work requires knowledge of the Church's faith, the Bible and other fundamental documents of the Church and an ability to apply their content in the work of the parish. Enhancing the Church employees' spiritual identity has been thought important because ever fewer persons obtaining competence for working in the Church have a connection with a parish before they graduate. Studies also show that the private practice of religion of Church employees has lessened.<sup>17</sup>

Due to lessened Church contacts, ever larger numbers of Finns form their impression of the Church and religion thought the image given in the media. For this reason, it is significant that those using the Church's voice are actively involved in public discussion. In the past few years, there has been lively discussion about the role of religion in the Finnish society. Although Finns are ever less committed to religious activities and beliefs, most of them see that religion has its place in the life of schools and other public institutions. In spite of religion criticism and religious passiveness, the Church has been discussed quite a bit in the society. This indicates that the Church, its decisions and statements are meaningful to Finns, and they are not considered indifferently.

According to Our Church strategy, diaconia and social responsibility are part of the basic task of the Church. This includes both

---

17 For example Kati Niemelä: *Papisto ja kanttorit 2010* (Clergy and Organists).

helping the disadvantaged and speaking for them in public discussion. Ever since the beginning of the Church, Christians have cared for the disadvantaged. This dimension resonates well with Finns. Finns consider the factors linked with helping primary when they are asked in which direction the Church should be developed. Factors linked with helping were also the primary reasons to belong to the Church.

### Toward a community of participation

This survey indicates that the folk Church has come to a new situation. The earlier role and position cannot be considered self-evident among the members or in the society. Decreasing and less committed membership, pressures for change in society and the weakening of the Christian tradition in culture in the broad sense require rethinking of the folk Church's position. For example in Helsinki, only 60 percent of people are members of the Church.

Reconciling the tensions between the unchanging message and the changing operating environment has always been a challenge for the Church. Preaching the Gospel must be done in a fresh way with theologically sound arguments and in a way that even a person alienated from the Church's use of language can understand. The tension between community spirit and individualism is another cause of friction. The crucial thing is, whether the Church is able to generate a new kind of community spirit. The relevant thing is how the Church takes into consideration the members' individuality without losing its communal nature.

In the Church's strategy, these goals have been crystallised as follows: In 2015, the members see the value of their Church and hear the voice of God in it. People come to church to find answers to life's big questions and they leave church to serve God's world.

## Publications of the Church Research Institute

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 61 | Edited by Kati Niemelä  | Church Work and Management in Change  |
| 60 | Kimmo Kääriäinen, Kimmo Ketola, Kati Niemelä, Harri Palmu, Hanna Salomäki | Facing Diversity. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland from 2004 to 2007  |
| 59 | Kati Niemelä  | Does confirmation training really matter? A longitudinal study of the quality and effectiveness of confirmation training in Finland, 2008 |
| 58 | Teija Mikkola & Kati Niemelä & Juha Petterson                             | The Questioning Mind. Faith and Values of the New Generation, 2007  |
| 57 | Edited by Kimmo Kääriäinen & Eila Helander                                | The Ministry to Finns Abroad, 2007  |
| 56 | Hugh McLeod & Risto Saarinen & Aila Lauha                                 | North European Churches from the Cold War to Globalisation, 2006  |
| 55 |   | Church in Change. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland from 2000 to 2003, 2005  |
| 54 | Kimmo Kääriäinen & Kati Niemelä & Kimmo Ketola                            | Religion in Finland. Decline, Change and Transformation of Finnish Religiosity, 2005  |
| 53 | Maarit Hytönen  | Contemporary Ethical Questions and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, 2003   |
| 52 | Jaakko Rusama   | Ecumenical Growth in Finland. The History of the Finnish Ecumenical Council 1917-1999, 2002   |
| 51 | Kari Salonen & Kimmo Kääriäinen & Kati Niemelä                            | The Church at the Turn of the Millenium. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland from 1996 to 1999, 2001                               |
| 50 | Yngvill Martola   | Worship Renewal in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, 2001   |
| 49 | Johanna Räsänen   | Worship Reform. Feedback on the Service Reform Carried out in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland in the 1990s, 1999               |

**Church Research Institute**  
**Box 239, FI-33101 Tampere, Finland**  
**Tel. +358-3-3123 3400, Fax +358-3-3123 3450**  
**E-mail: [ktk@evl.fi](mailto:ktk@evl.fi), [www.evl.fi/research](http://www.evl.fi/research)**