

# Facing Diversity

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland  
from 2004 to 2007

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## FOREWORD

This book describes the operations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland during the period 2004-2007. There were numerous changes both in the operating environment and in the Church. The 2000s have witnessed major changes in the general attitudes, values and ways of life prevailing in society. Changes in municipal structures caused changes in parish structures. Migration was more lively than ever before. Considerable numbers of immigrants came to Finland and the range of religions here increased. Due to an increase in resignations from the Church there was a decrease in Church membership.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is part of a world-wide Church which, since the time of the apostles, has borne witness to the Holy Trinity and served its neighbours. The spiritual nature of the Church and its core message are immutable, yet the modes of action of the Church are renewing. As a visible institution its operations, administration and finances can be reviewed as can any other human organisation. This book sets out to describe in what kind of operating environment and how the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has accomplished its task. It also serves to introduce the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland to an international audience. It is based on a more extensive work in Finnish and Swedish.

The first main chapter recaps the history of the Christian faith in Finland. The second chapter considers Finnish religiosity. The following chapters address Church membership, activities, finance and administration. At the beginning of each chapter the most salient facts pertaining to each subject are presented. The final chapter brings together the main observations of how the most important developmental trends are to be interpreted and proposals as to how the Church should proceed in light of them.

The authors of this book are Adjunct Professor Kimmo Kääriäinen, Director of the Church Research Institute, and researchers at the Church Research Institute Dr. Kimmo Ketola, Adjunct Professor Kati Niemelä, Dr. Harri Palmu and Dr. Hanna Salomäki.

The numerous units of the Church administration have prepared accounts and assessments of their respective operational fields and put at the authors' disposal review of their own fields of operations. At the various stages of the preparation of the four-year report of the Church other personnel at the Church Research Institute have made their contributions. The ADP work on the questionnaire data, the graphic design and layout are the work of Risto Nissilä, research assistant. Anita Lamminen, administrative assistant and research secretaries Annika Aroharju and Hanna Lilius contributed at various junctures. Temporary research assistants Kyllikki Hovila, Satu Ikonen and Silja Pitkänen took care of the preliminary processing of the questionnaires and ADP entries, likewise of the reception of responses to the various questionnaires from all parishes. The Finnish text was translated by Virginia Mattila.

## Sources

The statistical data used here is based chiefly on data gathered from the parishes. The Church Council has annually collected the basic information from each parish on population changes, activities and finance. In addition to this information the Church Research Institute has addressed more precise enquiries for 2007 to the parishes and parish unions on the various aspects of the work. Further material used includes the minutes of meetings of Church bodies, memoranda and annual reports, likewise press releases and studies concerning the period covered by the report.

The religiosity of all adult Finns, their relation to the Church and participation in parish activities were analysed using data obtained from questionnaires. The report draws on the Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 Survey commissioned by the Church Research Institute of TNS-Gallup Oy. Data collection was by visiting interview during the period January-February 2007 and included a sample of 1,030 informants. Another significant dataset came from Church Monitor 2007 carried out by MDC RISC international Oy as part of the international RISC Monitor values survey. This survey was carried out in January-February in the form of a telephone-informed questionnaire survey of a sample of 4,004 people. The report also draws on other surveys by the Church Research Institute conducted during the period covered by the report.

# 1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Finland is a country with both eastern and western influences. Christian influences from both East and West reached Finland a thousand years ago. Missionary efforts on the part of the Western church were, however, stronger, and by the beginning of the 14th century most of Finland was under the Roman Catholic Church and Swedish rule.

The Catholic Church brought European civilisation to Finland. It united dispersed tribes into a single nation and provided an advanced system of administration. The Church ministered to the destitute and infirm by maintaining houses for the poor and hospitals. It fostered learning and the arts. Eighty stone churches, their frescoes, wood carvings, sacred relics, altar cloths and vestments remind us of the high standard of both Finnish and imported art.

The Church was responsible for higher learning and for teaching the common people as well. By the end of the Middle Ages the Finns had learned to live with the Church and its sacraments. The Bishop of Turku was the most powerful man in medieval Finland. He also represented the Finns at the Royal Council of Sweden. Most of the 164 Finns registered at medieval universities embarked on their studies with the support of the cathedral chapter.

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

Sweden accepted the Confession of Augsburg at Uppsala in 1593. Lutheranism became the state religion. It guaranteed the



unity of the realm and tolerated no deviation. The Reformation severed all ties with Rome. The Pope's power was replaced by that of the King of Sweden, who stripped the Church of its income and property. Mikael Agricola, the first Lutheran Bishop of Finland, translated the New Testament into the Finnish language. Divine services gradually became more Lutheran and were conducted in the vernacular. The monasteries were closed, and priests allowed to marry.

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

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

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

Arising as they did during the first half of the 19th century, these movements were opposed by both the state and the clergy. It was feared that they would cause political unrest and arouse Russian suspicions. The leading clergy also suspected them of

opposing the established church and spreading heresy. They were denied the right of assembly and their leaders' operations were restricted.

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

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

In 2003 a new law on freedom of religion came into force in Finland, replacing the law of 1923. The new law confirms the rights to profess and practice religion, to express one's religious convictions, and the right to belong or not belong to a religious denomination. The new law stressed more than the earlier law the positive freedom to practise one's religion. The new law also provides more precise regulations concerning registered religious communities. In addition, the law includes some changes in the regulations concerning religious education in schools. According to the law, schools are required to arrange religious instruction of pupils' own religion if they are at least three in number, and if their guardians want this.

**The Church in independent Finland.** In 1917 Russia plunged into the chaos of the Revolution: Finland seized her opportunity on

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

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

The Winter War against the Soviet Union (1939–1940) was characterised as a struggle in defence of “home, faith and fatherland”. The Church was a source of support and unity during this struggle. The will to defend one’s country had religious overtones. The administrative and financial independence of the Church increased during the war with the establishment of the Church Central Fund (1941) and the Ecclesiastical Board (1944). Links with the labour movement also improved during the Second World War.

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

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

In the mid-sixties Finnish culture was shaken by migration from rural to urban areas, emigration, growing influence from abroad, the pluralistic image of the world conveyed by television and the

universal crisis of authority. The Church, too, was branded undemocratic and conservative. From the 1970s onwards discussion of ethical issues and interest in religion have been on the increase.

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

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

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

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

**Church and state in present day Finland.** The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has traditionally been labelled in two different ways: some speak of it as a state church, while others call it a folk church. Both labels are somewhat misleading and susceptible to propagandistic use. Used in a critically evaluated way, though, they remain useful in that they still give a rough picture not only of the position of the church in Finnish society, but also of the relationship between Church and State.

In order to understand the current religious situation and church politics in Finland, it is important to bear in mind the country's strong state-church oriented tradition. This tradition is so long-standing and influential that the current situation is difficult to understand outside this context. The continuous state church situation has not only been a feature of the legal relationship between Church and State, but in its time it set the tone for the nature of the state. As in many other countries with state church systems, the religious homogeneity of the people was seen in Finland as a condition for the success of the state's policies of internal integration.

These days Finland no longer has a state church structure as in the previous centuries. The system has been dismantled step by step so as to give greater internal independence to the Lutheran Church. State authorities cannot become involved in decisions concerning the Church's internal affairs. Local parishes thus have broad economic independence and autonomy, as does the Synod.

The Lutheran Church's autonomy in internal affairs is further protected by the fact that the Parliament of Finland, which must ultimately ratify church law, has no right to alter the content of the proposals it receives from the Synod: all proposals must be either accepted in their original form or rejected altogether.

Another significant change has been the introduction of a new procedure for episcopal appointments. As a result, bishops are no longer appointed by the President of the Republic: the new procedure involves an election consisting, if necessary, of two rounds of voting, after which the winning candidate receives an official letter of appointment from the diocesan chapter.

Another significant area of contact is the system of guarantees for the Church's financial position. On the basis of its public rights in state legislation, the Church is entitled to collect taxes. In addition, the Church receives a share of the corporation tax.

Apart from administrative and economic ties, the contacts between Church and State are also seen in the maintenance of a number of cultural traditions of no economic significance. Examples of this include a worship service that takes place as part of the opening of Parliament.

The Church itself, in providing certain social services, nurtures an ongoing relationship with the state. This is seen most clearly in that parishes continue to take responsibility for maintaining census registration data concerning their members, and for their funeral services. Although the Church is no longer officially responsible for maintaining a population register, the situation may well remain unchanged in practice for the foreseeable future. With rare exceptions, parish cemeteries are to remain the usual burial place even for non-members of the Lutheran Church.

In spite of the abundant and diversified contacts between Church and State, and however, it has become common to speak of a “folk church” instead of a state church because of the Church’s greater autonomy.

## 2. FINNISH RELIGIOSITY

### 2.1. Membership of religious organisations

Compared to many European countries Finland is an exceptionally homogenous country regarding religion, in addition to which the share of those belonging to religious organisations is above the average. According to Church statistics, the present population of the Lutheran Church at the end of 2007 corresponded to 81.7 per cent of the population of the country (according to Statistics Finland 81.8%). Fifty years earlier this figure was ten per cent higher.

**Table 2.1. Population of Finland by religious denomination 1920-2007.**  
Statistics Finland.

	Lutherans %	Ortodox %	Other %	Those not belonging to registered deno- minations %	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	-
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
2003	84.1	1.1	1.1	13.5	0
2004	83.7	1.1	1.2	14	0
2005	83.1	1.1	1.2	14.6	0
2006	82.5	1.1	1.3	15.1	0
2007	81.8	1.1	1.3	15.9	0

The second folk church of Finland, the Orthodox Church, had 58,000 members, amounting to 1.1 per cent of Finns. Just over one percent of Finns moreover belonged to other registered religious organisations. The larger of these are the Jehovah's Witnesses with some 18,000 members, the Evangelical Free Church with some 14,000 members and the Catholic Church with some 9,000 members.

**Table 2.2. Major religious organisations. Members registered at the end of 2007. Statistics Finland.**

Religious organisation	Members
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland	4,514,359*
Finnish Orthodox Church	58,379
Jehovah's Witnesses	18,177
Evangelical Free Church of Finland	14,022
Roman Catholic Church of Finland	9,184
Muslims	5,689
Adventists	3,821
Pentecostal Church of Finland	3,455
LDS-Church	3,264
Baptists	2,398
Other Orthodox churches	1,954
Methodist churches	1,267
Jewish	1,181

\* Total Church membership including absent members.

Finns not belonging to any denomination amount to 15.9 per cent. There has recently been an increase in this number. The figure for those not belonging to any religious denomination also includes those possibly belonging to communities not registered, such as Pentecostals and Muslims. Members of the Pentecostals who have been baptised total some 50,000, and if family members are included this figure rises to 100,000. Only 3,500 of these are registered members of the Pentecostal Church of Finland.

The increase in the religions represented in Finland continued. At the end of 2007 there were 66 registered religious denomina-



tions in Finland. This is more than twice as many as there were at the turn of the 1990s. Many of the new organisations are Islamic. However, the number of registered religious denominations tells only little about the changes in the religious field as most of the communities operating in Finland do so as registered associations. The database of the Church Research Institute ([www.uskonnot.fi](http://www.uskonnot.fi)) listed some 800 communities, associations and other organisations with some religious movement or group in their background. Although most of the listed organisations are free churches operating under the auspices of an association, such as the Pentecostals, the number is still considerable. In addition to the new Christian parishes the number of communities drawing on eastern religions and western esoteric tradition has increased significantly in recent decades. Although several religions of foreign origin continue to be marginal in terms of membership numbers, the number of organisations shows the increasing diversity of religiosity in Finland.

**Religious background of immigrants.** The share of non-indigenous population in Finland is greater and more diverse now than ever before in recorded history. In spite of the rapid change, compared to the rest of Europe and in terms of numbers there are still relatively few immigrants in Finland. However, it is anticipated that immigration will continue to increase as it is assumed that the imminent retirement of the large age groups will give rise to a shortage of workforce.

There are no entirely unambiguous statistics available on the immigrant population, which must therefore be scrutinized in terms of statistics on nationality, language and country of origin. For example, the statistics on nationality do not include those individuals of foreign origin who have already obtained Finnish nationality. In compiling statistics by language some of the Ingrian returnee immigrants are not included. Statistics on country

of birth can be considered more valid as a measure of immigration. However, they include both adoptees and Finns born abroad. According to Statistics Finland, at the end of 2007 there were 133,000 foreign nationals living in Finland, 173,000 people whose mother tongue was not Finnish or Swedish and 203,000 who were born outside Finland. Estimated on the basis of those born outside Finland and including the second generation (some 80,000) one can say that some five per cent of the population are of foreign origin.

**Table 2.3. Foreign nationals in Finland 1990-2007. Statistics Finland.**

Nationality	1990	1995	2000	2003	2007
Russia	.	9,700	20,600	25,000	26,000
Estonia	.	8,400	10,800	13,400	20,000
Sweden	6,100	7,000	7,900	8,100	8,300
Somalia	44	4,000	4,200	4,600	5,000
China	300	1,400	1,700	3,400	4,000
Thailand	240	800	1,300	2,100	3,500
Germany	1,600	1,700	2,200	2,600	3,300
Turkey	300	1,300	1,800	2,300	3,200
UK	1,400	1,900	2,200	2,700	3,100
Iraq	100	1,300	3,100	3,500	3,000
Total	26,300	68,600	91,100	107,000	133,000

Regarding their social, educational and ethnic backgrounds immigrants are an extremely mixed group. The most common reason for moving to Finland is related to family. According to the information of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy family reasons underlie two thirds of moves occurring in the 1990s.

According to the researcher Tuomas Martikainen, the immigrant population can be divided into three main groups. The first and largest of these comprises those arriving from the territory of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, among whom are many Ingrian Finnish returnee immigrants. This group accounts

for some 40 per cent of immigrants. The second group comprises those moving from the Western countries, amounting to about a quarter of all immigrants. It includes Finnish returnee immigrants and immigrants moving for reasons of work. The third and smallest group comprises refugees, asylum seekers and those arriving in Finland under family reunification schemes. The people in this group mostly come from the Middle East, North Africa, Somalia and some Asian countries accounting for about a quarter of all immigrants.

There are no precise statistics on the religious background of immigrants. The assumption that they belong to the mainstream religion of their country of origin, however, provides some indication. According to the estimate made by Martikainen, about three quarters of immigrants were Christians and about one sixth Muslims. Of the others the largest groups are Buddhists and Hindus. Martikainen further estimated that among those with a Christian background some two thirds are Protestants, about one fifth Orthodox and the remainder Catholics or other. Of the religious organisations it was the Lutheran Church which acquired most new members from the immigrant population. In 2007 it had 47,200 members who were born outside Finland and some 12,000 with nationality other than Finnish. The Orthodox Church had the next largest group of those born outside Finland (6,000) and thereafter the Catholic Church (4,100) (Statistics Finland).

However, due to immigration the religious map of Finland changed more than the membership figure for officially registered religious bodies would suggest. According to information obtained from Statistics Finland, 31 per cent of those born outside Finland and 16 per cent of foreign nationals were members of religious bodies operating in Finland in 2007. For example, with the increasing number of Russians the number of Orthodox people increased more than the membership statistics indicate. In Russia it is not habitual to belong to the Church as a registered member in

the same way as in Finland, thus many Russians who have moved to Finland and who were baptized into the Orthodox faith have continued this practice and do not belong to any religious denomination.

The number of Muslims in Finland grew to an estimated 40,000, namely one per cent of Finns. However, only 5,700 belonged to registered Islamic organisations at the end of 2007. It must also be born in mind that the database on the population only includes those people whose domicile is Finland and who have a Finnish personal identity number. A total of about 40 mosques or other meeting halls for Muslims exist in Finland.

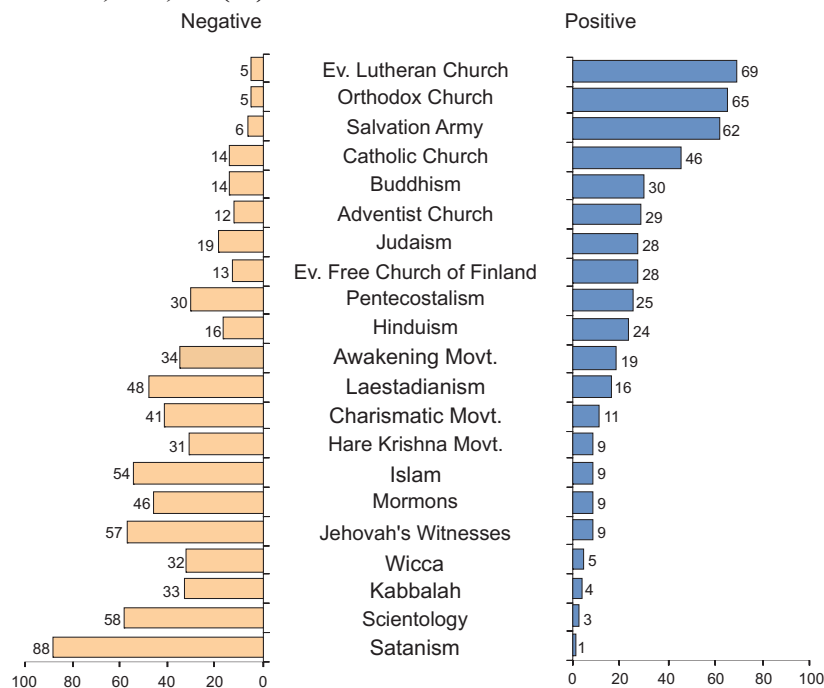
## 2.2. Finns' attitudes to different religions

Finns are mostly positively disposed towards the freedom to practise other religions. Most Finns are of the opinion that all religious groups in Finland should enjoy equal rights. The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) pre-test data 2006 shows that only every fifth Finn is opposed to equal rights for religious groups. The Finns consider it even more important to respect all religions. Only every tenth Finn was of the opinion that not all religions should be respected.

Attitudes to different religious groups differ, however. Finns are most positively disposed to Christian denominations, most of all to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, of which only five per cent has a negative attitude. In 2007 positive attitudes were reported in 69 per cent of Finns, albeit a decline of 8 percentage points (77% in 2003). The attitudes of Finns to the Orthodox Church and the Salvation Army were almost equally positive, with almost two out of three reporting a positive attitude and only five to six per cent a negative attitude. Next most positive attitudes to the religious denominations included were reported for the Catholic Church, to which almost half of respon-

dents were positively disposed (46%) and 14 per cent negatively disposed.

**Figure 2.1. Finns' attitudes to various religious groups. ISSP Pre-test data 2006, N=1,346 (%).**



In the case of other religious organisations there is a significant increase in the number of those reporting neutral attitudes. This is due in part to lack of knowledge about movements and organizations; for example, regarding Hinduism and Buddhism almost half of respondents were neutral. The share of those negatively disposed towards some denominations is also decidedly large. Attitudes to satanism were unambiguously negative. However, over half of Finns were also negatively disposed towards Scientology, Jehovah's Witnesses and Islam. There has moreover been a slight increase in negative attitudes to Islam since 2003. The Laestadians, Mormons and Charismatics also aroused negative attitudes in 40 per cent of Finns. The reason for negative

attitudes to different religions is most likely the conception that they demand of their adherents a more austere way of life as regards morality.

### 2.3. Religious participation and activity

With regard to public religious observance Finns ranked among the least active in international comparison. In the World Values Survey participation in religious observances was elicited as follows: “Excluding weddings and funerals, about how often do you go to church/religious gatherings?” When the question was formulated in this way 14 per cent of Finns answered that they participated in religious observances at least once a month. Of these less than half (6%) were very active and attended religious observances on a weekly basis or more frequently. Women of all age groups were more likely to be very active and fairly evenly from all age groups except for those aged 18-25, of whom only three per cent were very active in their religious observances. Two thirds (62%) of extremely active participants belonged to the Lutheran Church, and the rest mostly to the Pentecostals, the Free Church or Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Almost half of Finns (46%) participated in religious observances less than once a year. Most of them (73%) did, however, belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. There was an increase in the share of passive respondents since 1981, when only one third reported attending religious observances less than once a year or not at all. However, there has been virtually no change in the proportion of the very active (attending at least once a week) and the active (attending at least once a month).

**Table 1.6. Finns' attendance at religious observances 1981-2005 according to the World Values Survey (%).**

	1981	1990	1995-97	2000	2005
Once a month	13	11	11	14	14
Only on specific holy days	29	23	20	28	23
Once a year	25	16	23	13	17
Less often	33	50	47	45	46
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The World Values Survey did not include weddings and funerals in their measurements of participation. However, these occasions gather a considerable number of Finns every year, as almost two thirds of marriages are solemnized in church and almost all funerals are conducted according to Church rites.

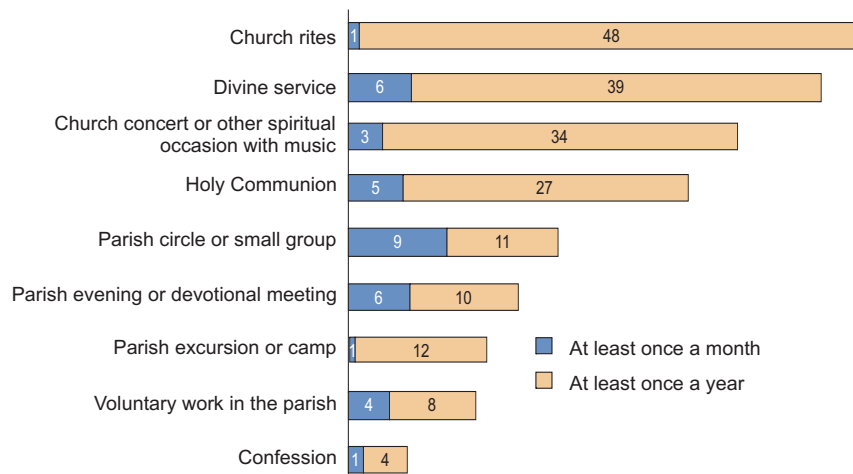
The World Values Survey asked Finns whether religious observances arranged to mark births, marriages and deaths were important to them. Celebrating births with Church rites was deemed important by 82 per cent of respondents, to mark marriages 79 per cent and deaths 86 per cent. No difference was found between the sexes or age groups regarding the importance attached to these observances. As expected, least importance was attached to them by those not belonging to any religious denomination. Nevertheless, about half of these people, too, considered these religious observances to be important.

Finns' private practice of religion is clearly more active than their public participation and on a European scale close to the average. Moreover there is no decline to be observed in private practice of religion as there is in the forms of its public practice. According to the Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 Survey, two thirds of all Finns (66%) prayed at least once a year. A quarter (27%) reported praying daily. The share has remained the same for decades. Only a fifth (21%) reported not praying at all in recent years.

Less than half (43%) of Finns reported reading the Bible at least once a year and five per cent of Finns every day. A further tenth

(12%) read it every week or at least once a month. About one third (36%) reported not having read the Bible at all in recent years and another fifth (21%) that they did so less than once a year. Those actively reading the Bible were more often women than men.

**Figure 2.2. Finns' public religious participation. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007, N=1,30 (%); Church Monitor 2007, N=4,004 (activity in participating in Church rites and worship Church Monitor 2007, others Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007).**



Finns' public religious participation is less active than their private practice would suggest. The Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 Survey elicited Finns' interest in participating in religious observances in a situation where the individual's own schedules did not impose restrictions and events were also at more convenient times. In all age groups there were many interested in actively participating. Those interested in participating at least once a month amounted to almost a fifth in all age groups. Approximately every tenth was interested in participating as much as once a week. Pensioners were the most interested in religious observance, with more than a third interested in participating at least once a month. In all age



groups there were many who were not at all interested in attending religious observances. In all age groups from 15 to 64 less than one third were totally without interest, among those of pensions age one fifth. In all age groups women were more interested in participating than men. Of all Finnish men 16 per cent would be interested in participating at least once a month, among women 26 per cent.

Church events including music were the most attractive for Finns; such events were reportedly very interesting or somewhat interesting for every other Finn – of all ages. Those reportedly very interested amounted to 12 per cent of Finns. Church services interested almost as many people, albeit with age accounting for interest especially in Church services among the various options; young people and young adults were clearly less interested in Church services than were older Finns. Conversely, young people were most interested in Gospel concerts.

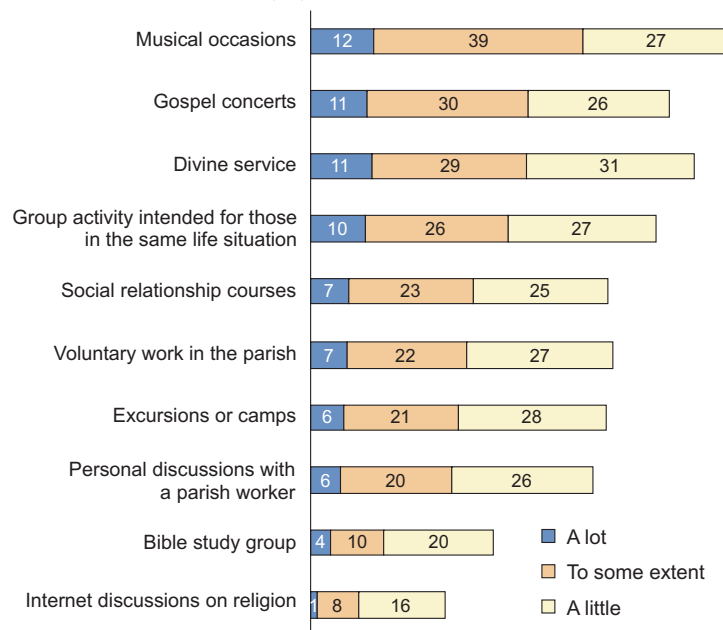
Group activities and courses on human relations for people in the same situation interested almost equal numbers of Finns in all age groups. All in all group activity and human relations courses interested about a third of Finns, with every tenth expressing a keen interest.

There were likewise equal numbers of people interested in voluntary work in all age groups. In total some seven per cent of Finns of all ages were very interested in the voluntary work of the parish. A further fifth was somewhat interested. Approximately the same number were interested in the excursions and camps arranged by the parish – again in all age groups. There was also the same amount of reported need for personal discussion with a parish worker in all age groups, however, most of all among older Finns (those over 75). A total of six per cent of Finns were very interested in discussion with a parish worker and in addition every fifth was somewhat interested.

Bible study groups interested people less than the other modes of activity proposed. Four per cent of Finns were very interested in these with a further ten per cent somewhat interested. Young people are clearly less interested in Bible study groups than older people.

Approximately one in ten Finns is interested to some extent in discussion about religion on the Internet. About one per cent are very interested. Somewhat surprisingly people in all age groups were equally interested, which goes to show that the use of the Internet pervades the whole society.

**Figure 2.3. Finns' interest in various forms of parish activity. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007, N=1,030 (%).**



Various musical occasions and Gospel concerts are of the greatest interest to young adults and middle-aged people, older people are interested particularly in Church services in addition to musical occasions. Group activity intended for people in the same situation emerges among the most interesting modes of activity in all

age groups. The interest of young people and young adults in voluntary work in the parish appears to be relatively high, higher, for example than in Church services. On the other hand voluntary work does not rank among the most interesting modes of activity with older Finns. However, it is noteworthy that quantitatively there are roughly the same number of people interested in all age groups.

The Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 Survey also elicited factors affecting non-participation in activities. The most important reason evinced by Finns was that they preferred to take care of their relationship to God privately without a church. Of all respondents 68 per cent reported that this had some influence or was decisive and there was no difference between men and women in this respect. Such thinking was most prevalent among those aged 25 to 34.

The next most important factors people reported as factors arising from their own different personal interests and considerations of the use of time. Almost one third (29%) of Finns gave as the decisive reason that the activities of the parish simply do not interest them. Moreover, more than one third considered that lack of interest had some effect. The same respondents typically felt no interest in spiritual life and considered that they knew nobody who would participate. Many of them felt that there was no activity in the parish which had any appeal for them.

Every fifth Finn felt that the decisive reason for non-involvement was that they had simply not got around to it. A further third also felt that this has some effect. For such respondents it is also typical that they have no time for further involvement and feel that activities are offered at inconvenient times.

Every tenth respondent had experienced some disappointment with the actions of the parish or some experience of the Church as narrow-minded and one with no room for individual thinking. In

addition every fourth respondent considered that such things played some part.

Every tenth respondent felt that there were various social reasons for non-involvement: friends were not involved and nobody had come to ask. The same people typically felt that it was significant that they knew nobody in the parish or had not received sufficient information about the work of the parish.

The reason least reported to underlie non-involvement was excessive open-mindedness on the part of the Church; 16 per cent reported that this had at least some small influence. More than double this number (39%) mentioned excessive narrow-mindedness on the part of the Church as a reason having at least some effect.

## 2.4. Religious identity

Finns' religious identity was elicited in the Church Monitor 2007 and World Values 2005 surveys. Of these the latter also enables comparing Finns with people in other countries. The World Values 2005 Survey asked respondents to reply to the question "Regardless of whether you attend religious events or not, do you consider yourself..." the response alternatives were a religious person, a non-religious person and a convinced atheist. According to this survey 61 per cent of Finns considered themselves to be religious, 36 per cent non-religious and three per cent convinced atheists. There was a slight increase in the share of those considering themselves to be religious since 1981. In all surveys from 1981 to 2005 there were some three per cent considering themselves to be convinced atheists. The share of those considering themselves to be religious was at its highest in the 2000 survey and at its lowest in the 1981 survey.

**Table 2.4. Shares of Finns reporting themselves to be religious, non-religious and atheists according to World Values Surveys 1981-2005 (%).**

	1981	1990	1995–97	2000	2005
Religious person	55	59	59	67	61
Not a religious person	42	38	38	30	36
A convinced atheist	3	3	3	3	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Not belonging to religious denominations does not necessarily mean being non-religious or anti-religious. As many as 40 per cent of those not belonging to any religious denomination considered themselves to be religious. About half (48%) considered themselves to be non-religious and only 11 per cent convinced atheists.

In international comparison according to the 2005 World Values Survey the largest shares in the countries compared of people considering themselves to be religious were in Poland and Romania. The share of atheists is highest of all in East Germany (32%) and South Korea (29%).

The Church Monitor 2007 data enables a more detailed examination of Finns' religious identities. In this survey respondents were asked to respond for different terms if they considered the terms to be appropriate to them. Thus respondents had the option of identifying themselves in several ways. The different scale naturally has some effect on the responses. According to the Church Monitor 2007 Survey two Finns out of three (68%) considered themselves to be Christians. Only a fifth did not consider themselves to be Christians with 12 per cent unable to say. Of those who were members of the Church 74 per cent considered themselves to be Christians, 14 per cent did not and 12 per cent were unable to say.

Over half of Finns considered themselves Lutherans (51%). For the term "Lutheran" the differences between age groups were

at their greatest. Among those under the age of 35 only 40 per cent considered themselves to be Lutheran, while among those over the age of 65 almost four out of five did so (78%).

One fifth of Finns considered themselves to be religious liberals. Eight per cent of Finns considered themselves to be religiously conservative. The number of those reportedly religiously conservative goes linearly with increasing age, with the greatest number of those identifying themselves as religiously conservative in the oldest age groups. On the other hand there were almost equally many religious liberals in all age groups (19-23%) with the exception of the youngest age group, in which there were fewest of all (14%).

Five per cent of respondents called themselves born-again Christians and two per cent called themselves charismatic Christians. Among men of all age groups there were more considering themselves to be religiously conservative than among women. Men also called themselves fundamentalists more than did women. All in all only one per cent of Finns considered themselves to be fundamentalists.

## 2.5. Christian beliefs

In the Gallup Ecclesiastica Survey of 2007 over a third of Finns reported that they believed in God as taught by Christian doctrine. This share was the same as in 2003, but over a longer space of time a falling trend can be discerned. In 1976 more than half of Finns reported believing in God as taught by Christian doctrine.

The share of those reporting believing in God but in a different way from that taught by the Church remained constant throughout the report period at a good fourth. The number of those believing in God in a different way, however, has been on the increase over a longer period of time. In 1976 such people amounted to one fifth of Finns.

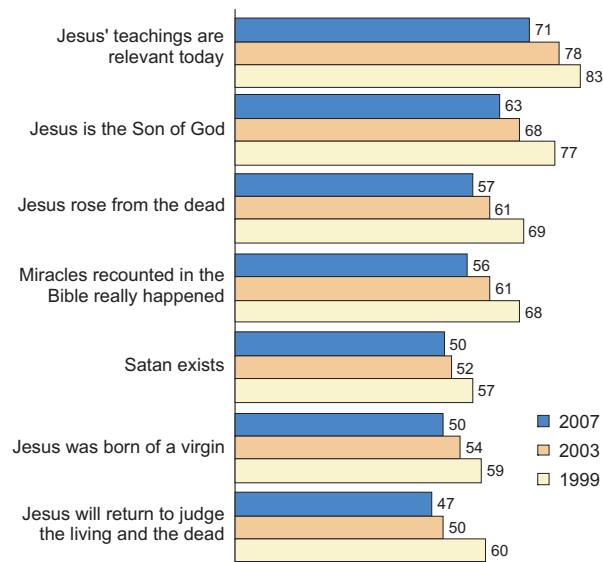
**Table 2.5. Finns' belief in God 1976-2007 according to surveys Gallup Ecclesiastica (G) and Monitor (M) (%).**

	G 1976	G 1982	M 1991	M 1995	G 1999	G 2003	G 2007
I believe in God as taught by Christianity	51	44	33	41	47	36	37
I believe in God, but in a rather different way what than is taught by the Church	22	23	30	28	27	28	27
I don't really know whether I believe in God or not	17	13	18	16	12	15	19
I doubt the existence of God	4	4	5	5	5	5	6
I don't believe in the existence God	5	6	8	10	6	10	11
Unable or unwilling to say	1	10	6	0	3	6	*
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	1,301	1,026	2,007	2,440	992	1,009	1,030

About one tenth of Finns reported that they did not believe in God and in addition to these six per cent reported having doubts. The share of those who were uncertain increased by almost one fifth. The greatest change since 2003 had occurred in the share of those uncertain about the existence of God, which had increased by four percentage points.

Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 also elicited Finns attitudes to the basic tenets of Christianity such as the divinity of Jesus, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection and the miracles of the Bible (Figure 2.4.). It was most widely believed by respondents that the teachings of Jesus for life are still appropriate in our time. Almost three quarters believed this to be at least probable and one third (35%) believed it firmly. On the other hand least credence was given to the belief that Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead. Less than half of Finns reported believing this to be at least probable. A good fourth believed it firmly. A fourth reported that they did not believe it at all. There was also great doubt about the existence of Satan. Over a quarter of respondents (27%) did not believe it at all and a fifth deemed it improbable.

**Figure 2.4. Share of Finns considering certain Christian teachings to be at least probable in 1999, 2003 and 2007. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007, N=1,030, 2003 N=1,009, and 1999 N=992 (%).**



Comparison of these figures to earlier findings shows a decrease in all beliefs. For almost all beliefs elicited the share of respondents considering them at least probable fell by some ten percentage points since 1999. The greatest decrease, 14 percentage points, was seen in the conception of Jesus as the Son of God. There was also a decrease of 13 percentage points in the belief that Jesus will come again.

There was also a great change in conceptions of life after death since 1999. Whereas in 1999 only a quarter of Finns thought that death meant the end of all life, the figure now rose to one third. Among men almost half (46%) thought that death meant the end of all life, among women a quarter (24%).

The share of those believing in the Resurrection and in the life eternal and in perdition remained the same. About a fifth of respondents opted for this alternative in all surveys. However, the share of those believing that all will be saved had fallen sharply. While in 1999 a quarter of Finns so believed, in 2007 only one



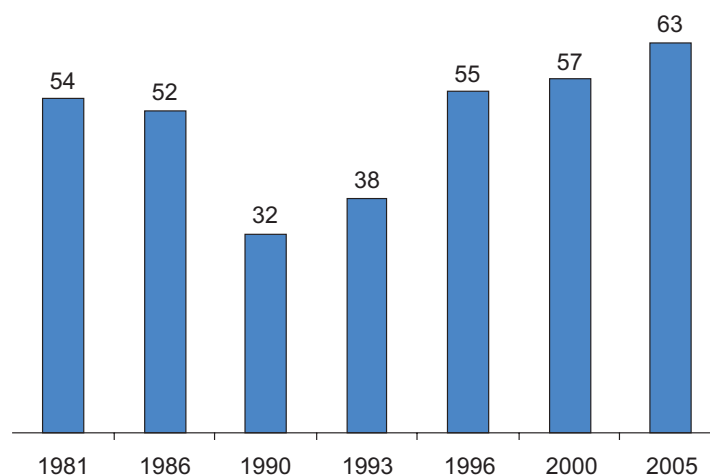
seventh chose this alternative as their own view. There was also a slight decrease in the belief in reincarnation.

## 2.6. Finns' relation to the Church

Finns' trust in the Church rose since the mid 1990s to a record high. According to the World Values Survey of 2005 the share of Finns having trust in the Church was 63 per cent. Since the last survey round in 2000 the share of those having trust in the Church had increased by six percentage points. The increase was considerable as the point of departure taken was 1990, when only a third of the nation reported having trust in the Church.

According to the World Values Survey 2005, more Finns also felt that the Church was providing valid answers to people's problems. Almost half of Finns were of the opinion that the Church provides valid answers to people's moral problems and needs and to today's social problems. Compared to 2000 the rise was of the order of ten per cent points. These figures were last so high in the mid-1980s.

**Figure 2.5. Shares of Finns having trust in the Church according to World Values Surveys 1981-2005 (%).**



The Gallup Ecclesiastica Survey of 2007 also explored the image of the Church. Relatively little change had occurred in images of the Church since 2003. Most Finns had positive images of the Church. Changes in these were relatively slight. Most Finns have positive images of the Church. Over 60 per cent deemed it reliable, necessary and honest. Moreover, over half of Finns consider the Church to be service-minded, expert, the defender of the weak and a spiritual organisation. However, Finns do not consider the Church to be efficient, modern or flexible. Less than one third of Finns could agree with these descriptions. There were more who considered the Church to be rigid, and old-fashioned than there were who considered it effective and flexible. Most of all there was an increase in the share of those considering the Church to be rich.

A certain increase in polarization can be discerned in these findings. In the percentages the change was greatest in both parts of opposite pairs. In other words both positive and negative images of the Church had become stronger.

Those responding to Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 were also required to evaluate the Church from the perspective of how it took care of its various tasks. The greatest satisfaction was expressed among Finns with the way in which the Church acquits itself of its ritual duties. Almost nine out of ten respondents felt that this was done well or fairly well. Only a few per cent of Finns considered this to be poorly accomplished. Finns were especially satisfied with the way in which baptisms and weddings were conducted. Only one per cent of Finns considered these to be poorly taken care of.

The care of cemeteries was likewise much appreciated by Finns. All in all 85 percent reported that they were satisfied with them. Four per cent of Finns reported that cemeteries were poorly taken care of. The remainder were unable to say.

The Finns were likewise highly satisfied with the way in which confirmation training was taken care of. All in all 81 per cent

reported satisfaction with these and only three per cent were not. The greatest dissatisfaction was expressed by Finns regarding how the Church has supported unemployed people and defended the weak in public. Every third respondent reported dissatisfaction with the way these tasks were accomplished.

In the Gallup Ecclesiastica Survey of 2007 Finns were also asked what they thought the Church should be like and in what direction it ought to change. Most Finns wanted the Church to occupy itself above all with helping the weaker people and listening more to its members. All in all two Finns out of three hoped for this from the Church. That the Church should concentrate on helping the weak was the most important characteristic for the Church among all age groups.

More than every second Finn wanted Church events to be more joyful and lively and to be more open to renewal. Approximately every sixth Finn disagreed. Those wishing for a more joyful and bolder Church generally also wanted the Church to be more tolerant, youthful and more open with regard to doctrine. Some of them also wanted the Church to be more charismatic. All age groups were represented among those wishing for a Church with more reform, more tolerant, youthful and charismatic, but there were more such respondents among those just over or under the age of 40.

At the same time about a third of Finns would like the Church to adhere more to its traditions. These Finns are also characterized by their wish for more energetic evangelizing and greater attention to God's word, likewise to sin and to God's law. People with such thoughts were more common among the older Finns.

What Finns' opinions differ most about among the opinions elicited was whether the Church should pay more attention to sin and God's law and whether Church events should be more ceremonial and dignified.

### 3. MEMBERS

- At the end of 2007 Church membership included 81.7 per cent of Finns. Church rites was the most important reason for membership.
- Eighty-four per cent of children born in 2007 were baptised by the Lutheran Church.
- Resignation from the Church was high throughout the report period, with a total of 133,000 resignations since 2003, amounting to 2.9 per cent of Church members.
- During the same period 39,500 people joined the Church. Young adults were among the most active in joining the Church as also in resigning from it.
- Migration continued brisk with 1.35 million people moving into new parishes between 2003 and 2007.

#### 3.1. Belonging to the Church

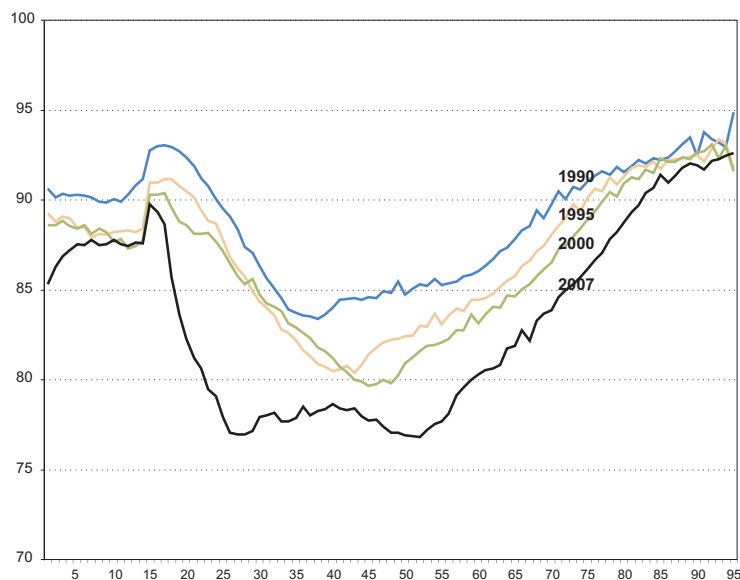
A member of the Church belongs to the local parish according to the place of domicile. Members belonged to 517 parishes, with an overall decrease in the number of parishes of 65 between 2003 and 2007. Members of the Church are entitled to Church religious ceremonies and the services and activities provided by the parish. They are entitled to vote in parish elections. Those who have been confirmed are entitled to become godparents.

According to Church statistics membership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland in 2007 amounted to 4,328,522, which corresponds to 81.7 per cent of the population. Total membership was 4,514,359, which includes 185,837 members not living in Finland, for example, Finns working abroad.

There was a decrease of 2.4 percentage points in the relative share of those belonging to the Church 2003-2007. The absolute membership diminished by 62,840 people. Of women 84.3 per cent belonged to the Church, of men 79.2 per cent.

The share of those belonging to the Church was lowest among those aged 40-49. According to information from Statistics Finland 77.9 per cent of them belonged to the Church. The largest shares of those belonging to the Church were among the oldest age groups and those of confirmation age or a little older. Over 90 per cent of those over 80 belonged to the Church. Almost 90 per cent of those aged 15-19 belonged to the Church. Thus the shares of the various age groups belonging to the Church almost form a U curve with the middle-aged at the bottom of it. The share of those belonging to the Church recently diminished among all except those over 90. The decrease was most marked among those aged 20-39.

**Figure 3.1. Share of those belonging to the Church by age group in 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2007. Statistics Finland (%).**



The decrease in the share of those belonging to the Church was particularly marked among young people and young adults. However, there is also a decrease in older cohorts. Although of today's pensioners a clearly larger share belong to the Church than

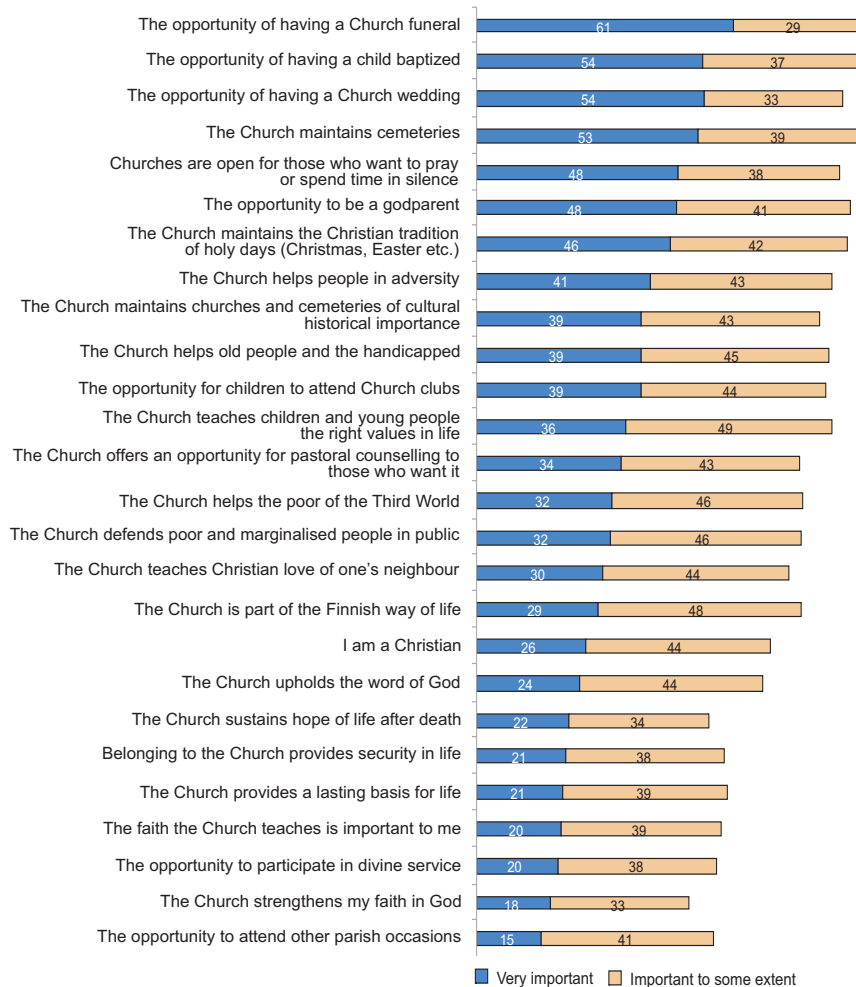
among young adults, there is no guarantee that young adults will become more religious or come closer to the Church with increasing age.

There were relatively more women than men belonging to the Church in all age groups except those under 15. Difference between men and women were at their greatest in the age group 60-69, in which the number of women belonging to the Church exceeded that of men of the same age by seven percentage points. Among both men and women the number of those belonging to the Church declined most among those aged 20-29 since 2003.

**Reasons for belonging to the Church.** The Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 Survey elicited the significance of various factors for Finns to be members of the Church. Overall the reasons for belonging stressed above all the tasks of the Church in supporting the community. These are maintaining tradition at turning points in life, such as through baptism and funeral rites and taking care of one's neighbours and especially of the disadvantaged. These were important to people of all ages.

The most important reasons for belonging to the Church continued to be Church rites, baptism, marriage and funerals and also the fact that the Church maintains cemeteries (see Figure 3.2.). Approximately nine out of ten members of the Church considered these either very important or fairly important reasons for belonging. Half of the members of the Church found Church rites to be very important. Other important reasons for belonging to the Church were the opportunity to be a godparent and that the Church maintains the Christian tradition of feast days and teaches the right values to children and young people. In 2003 only 39 per cent of respondents to the survey were of the opinion that the opportunity to be a godparent was a very important reason for them to belong to the Church, in 2007 the share was 48 per cent.

**Figure 3. 2. Reasons for belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007, N=793 (%).**



The Church is expected to help the disadvantaged. More than four out of five respondents (84%) reported that it was a reason for their own membership that the Church helps people in trouble, old people and handicapped people. Another reportedly important reason for Church membership was the assistance rendered by the Church abroad. Likewise defending in public the poor and the marginalized was an important reason for belonging to the Church. There was also appreciation for the cultural task of the Church and

this was another important reason for belonging. Four out of five (80%) of respondents considered it an important reason for membership that the Church maintains buildings and churchyards of cultural and historical value.

For three quarters (77%) of members the fact that the Church is part of the Finnish way of life was an important reason for belonging to the Church. For one quarter it was a very important reason. However, it should be noted that among young people it was uncommon to stress this reason and it was specifically on this factor that there was the greatest difference between young people and the older age groups. Among young people under 25 and among young adults, only just over a tenth (13%) considered the fact that the Church is a part of the Finnish way of life is very important for belonging to the Church, the share among those over 65 being one half. Young people typically do not consider belonging to the Church to be an important part of the Finnish way of life, in contrast to older generations, among whom “home, faith and fatherland” thinking is still firmly entrenched. This connection is the weaker the younger the respondent.

Spiritual reasons were important to more than every second Church member. Almost a quarter of them considered these to be very important. Among spiritual reasons the most important one was reportedly that the Church provides an enduring basis for life (considered important by 60%) and provides security in life (59%). More than a half of members (59%) considered the faith taught by the Church to be important for being a member. Likewise half of members considered the option of attending services to be significant for their membership.

Finns consider it important that the Church should also offer opportunities for private devotions. Most members (86%) deemed it important that churches should be open for those wishing to spend a quiet moment or pray. This opportunity for members’ private devotions was a decidedly more important reason for



belonging to the Church than the opportunity to attend services. The spiritual care provided by the Church was also considered important.

### 3.2. Baptisms, deaths and migration

In Finland in 2007 a total of 58,729 children were born, of whom 84 per cent were baptized as members of the Church. The relative share of those baptized fell in the period covered by the report by three percentage points (in 2003 it was 87%). However, the absolute number of those baptised remained almost the same apace with an increase in the number of births. Baptisms in 2007 totalled 49,325 children, which is 58 more than in 2003. In 2007 adults baptised totalled 1,014, of whom 444 were men and 570 were women. Young people baptized in connection with confirmation training numbered 1,114.

The number of baptisms continues to exceed the death rate among the population present. In 2007 the number of deaths among Church members was 42,170, which was 7,155 fewer than the number of children baptised in the same year.

**Migration continued to be brisk.** Altogether 1.35 million people moved to new parishes between 2003 and 2007. The migration drift was particularly to the Diocese of Helsinki. More than every second parishioner in the Diocese of Helsinki was at some point “a new parishioner”. However, it should be noted that moving tends to be cumulative, when one individual may have moved several times. Students in particular tend to move frequently within a short period of time.

Almost all the parishes bid newcomers welcome in one way or another. Eighty per cent of parishes sent new arrivals a welcoming letter, five percent part of the new arrivals. Almost every fifth parish arranged occasions to which newcomers were invited, in 13

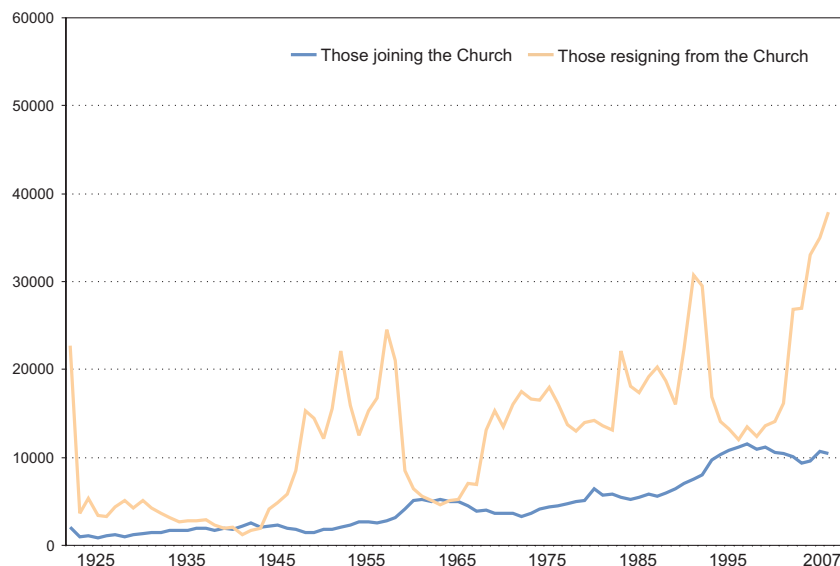
per cent all newcomers were invited and in five per cent some of the newcomers. It was rare to make visits to new parishioners. In two per cent of parishes visits were made to all newcomers and in every tenth parish (9%) some of the newcomers were welcomed by a visit to their homes. Only a few parishes did not bid newcomers welcome in any way at all.

### 3.3. Resigning from the Church

In 2007 altogether 37,879 people resigned from the Church, which amounts to 0.9 per cent of the Church population. Men accounted for 56 per cent of resignations.

It was decidedly more common to resign from the Church in urban than in rural parishes. In 2007, 79 per cent of resignations were in urban parishes. In the rural parishes a total of 0.6 per cent of the members resigned, in the urban parishes one per cent.

**Figure 3. 3. Numbers of those resigning from the Church and those joining it 1923-2007.**

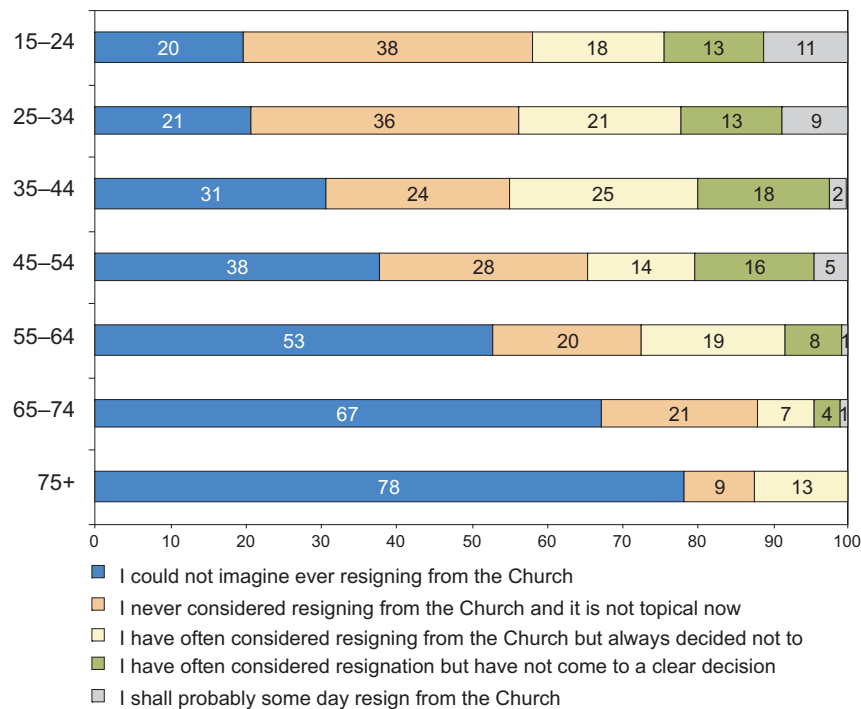


There was a slight decrease in the share of strongly committed members. According to the Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 Survey, 38 per cent of members could not imagine themselves resigning from the Church under any circumstances. In 2003 those reportedly firmly committed to the Church were 41 per cent. A corresponding change is discernible among those contemplating resignation from the Church. In 2003 resignation was being considered by eight per cent, now by 11 per cent. In both years a further five per cent of members considered that they would probably resign. Nevertheless the majority of Church members are still committed to their membership and resignation is no option for them. Two out of three members had never even thought about resignation, nor could most of them imagine resigning from the Church under any circumstances. Less than one fifth (17%) of Finns have sometimes thought about resigning from the Church, but had always decided that it was not an option.

Women are more strongly committed to the Church than men. According to the Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 Survey 42 per cent of women could not imagine resigning from the Church under any circumstances, among men it was 33 per cent. As noted above, those actually resigning from the Church are also slightly more frequently men than women.

The differences between age groups regarding commitment to Church membership are extremely great. The younger the age group the fewer people there are who are strongly committed to membership. Of those under 35 only one fifth reported that they could not imagine resigning from the Church under any circumstances. Similarly almost every fourth either considered resigning from the Church or thought it likely. More than two thirds of those aged over 65 were firmly committed to Church membership and only some individuals thought it likely that they would resign.

**Figure 3. 4. Attitudes of members of different ages to the notion of resigning from the Church in 2007. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007, N=793 (%).**



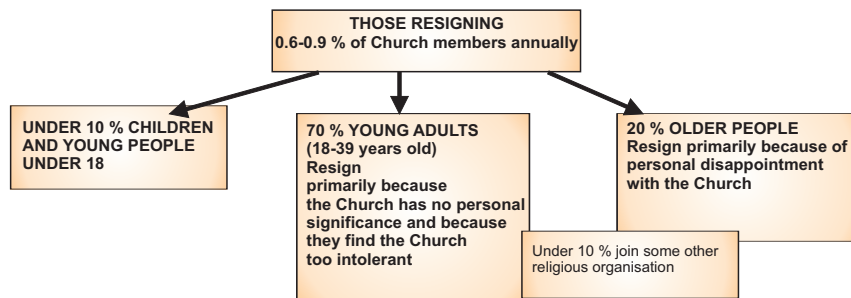
According to a study by Kati Niemelä entitled *Estranged or disappointed?* (Publications of the Church Research Institute 95, 2006) people resign from the Church mainly because the Church is not felt to have sufficient personal significance for them. This leads to a situation in which the individual is disinclined to pay Church tax. In the opinion of young people resigning from the Church it is not a matter of having a negative image of the Church or of disappointment in the Church. Rather many respondents explain their resignation from the Church by inability to commit to its message. However, resignation frequently requires some external stimulus such as being irritated by some stand taken by the Church. Generally those remote from the Church will take exception to some Church opinion they deem conservative.

Other groups resigning from the Church consist of those who are deeply religious and consider religion important. They feel that they do not find their place in the Church and look for some other religious community. They accounted for one tenth of resignations. On the other hand for two out of three of those resigning faith had little or no significance.

Resigning from the Church may also be a protest and demonstration against Church decision-making. Young adults were characterized by disappointment at the intolerance of the Church and what they felt to be lack of equality. It is difficult for young adults to accept experiences that the Church is not positively disposed to homosexuality or that there is discrimination against female pastors. They feel that discrimination is at odds with their system of values. In the origin of such feelings the media play a decisive role. Although among those resigning for such reasons there are those who consider religion significant, the study shows that faith does not have a great deal of personal significance. Those disappointed at the Church's opinions and statements, however, are also to be found among those for whom the Church is important. For many of them, however, conflicts are insufficient to cause their resignation and they want to continue as members of the Church in spite of them.

In the case of older people the reason for their resignation is frequently various disappointments with regard to the Church. Disappointments have been experiences in situations of personal importance such as the funeral of a close relative. However, there are not many such cases. Various studies show that those disappointed with some Church function account for only about one percent of Finns.

**Figure 3.5. Overall view of those resigning from the Church.**

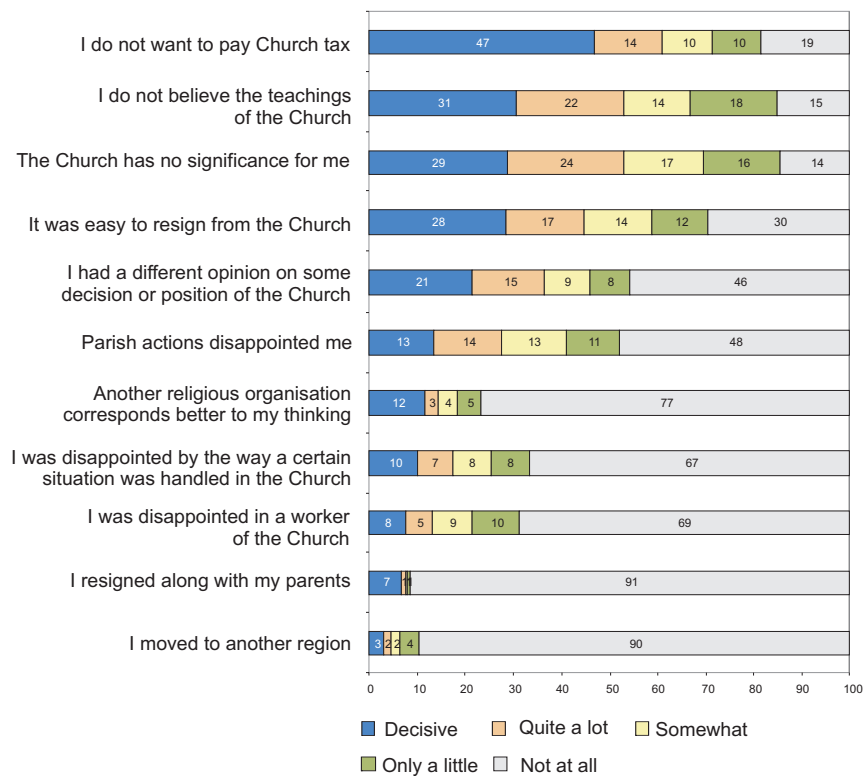


Those participating in the Church Monitor Survey of 2007 were also asked about reasons for resigning from the Church. The data included interviews with over 4,000 Finns among whom there were 560 people who had resigned from the Church. The findings support the findings based on qualitative data to the effect that the Church was not felt to have any significance and that the individual concerned did not believe in its teachings. Some 70 per cent of respondents reported that these factors had influenced their resignation from the Church at least to some extent. Only some 15 per cent estimated that they had no significance. For young adults in particular the reasons for resignation from the Church emphasised the feeling of the insignificance of the Church and the fact that they did not believe in its teachings. The ease with which one can now resign from the Church had been either a decisive or a largely decisive factor affecting resignation for almost every other person resigning. Only a good quarter considered such ease to be without significance. An equally large number thought that their ease was indeed decisive.

Difference of opinion with a Church decision or stand taken was a decisive or fairly decisive factor in the resignation of every

third person resigning from the Church. For every fifth this was decisive, for every second of no significance. Disappointments with the activities of the parish, an individual occasion or worker were clearly less common reasons for resigning from the Church. Approximately every tenth person resigning deemed these a decisive reason for their resignation. For the majority disappointments were of no consequence in their resignation. It was above all the older people who emphasised disappointments as a reason for resigning from the Church.

**Figure 3.6. Reasons for resigning from the Church. Church Monitor 2007, N=560 (resigned from the Church, total data N=4,004) (%).**



Only a small fraction of those resigning from the Church join some other religious denomination. Most of those resigning remain outside these. A total of 15 per cent of those participating in the

Church Monitor Survey of 2007 reported the reason for resignation to be that some other religious denomination corresponded better to their way of thinking. The survey based on letter material shows an affinity with the Pentecostals or other free churches. However, there is no more precise information available on the number of those resigning from the Church possibly joining other religious denominations. It has been estimated that less than one in ten resigning from the Church actually embraces some other faith.

It was noted above that Church tax was one reason for resigning from the Church. However, it should also be noted that among Church members there are quite many (20%) who would be willing to pay more tax in order to maintain activities as they are at present. These are people of all ages, both men and women in both upper and lower income brackets.

### 3.4. Joining the Church

The most common way of becoming a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is through baptism. For adults there is teaching before baptism. Others who have been properly baptised into other Christian churches or denominations are received into the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland by confessing the Creed of the Church. They are not baptised again. A person who has once resigned from the Church may rejoin it. This requires contacting the Church offices. If a person has not taken confirmation training, Christian teaching will be given. Next we consider those who became members of the Church in ways other than baptism in infancy.

Almost equal numbers of men and women joined the Church; in 2007, 51% of them were women. In 2007 altogether 10,474 people joined the Church. Of these, 2,981 were aged 0-14 years, and 895 were aged 15-17. It is noteworthy that some of those



joining the Church during their first year of life are children baptised in infancy who were first entered into the civil register.

The greatest numbers of people joining the Church are to be found in the same places as there are most resigning from the Church. In 2007 the numbers of those joining the Church in both relative and absolute terms were greatest in the metropolitan area.

According to a study conducted by Juha Kauppinen of those joining the Church, events in the lifespan such as marriage, baptism, becoming a godparent and one's own approaching death or the death of someone very close account for 59 per cent of those joining the Church. For 32 per cent there are spiritual reasons. This study was conducted in the city of Tampere relying on member registers for 1996, 2001 and 2006, postal questionnaires and personal interviews.

Regarding events related to the life span confirmation training was the most common reason for joining the Church. In addition to attracting young people to join, it also affected their parents. According to register data, young people account for some 18 per cent of those joining the Church, while their parents account for some three per cent of new members. The next most common reason has to do with the birth of a child or that an individual not belonging to the Church has been asked to become a godparent. Being asked to become a godparent activated approximately every seventh (about 14%) to join. The birth of one's own child and the desire for the child to have a Christian baptism was the reason for some seven percent of new members. The prospect of being married in church occasioned 13 per cent of new members to join. According to the findings of the study the closeness of either one's own or some close person's death was a significant factor for joining the Church for every tenth new member.

Spiritual reasons included breaking away from some other religion, frequently the Pentecostals (about 9% of new members). In such cases the other organisation had in some way been felt to be

judgmental and excessively controlling. Those coming from other religions amounted to approximately every tenth new member. Other spiritual reasons included religious conversion, regret at having once resigned from the Church, resolution of the strife surrounding the ordination of women, a desire to support the work of the Church and desire for communality.

People also joined the Church for practical reasons connected to everyday life. These include immigration and returning from living abroad (some 5%), and help received from the Church (some 4%).

According to the Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 Survey every tenth person not belonging to the Church considered it possible that s/he would join it. Six per cent considered it likely. Half (49%) of those not belonging to the Church could not imagine that they would join it. There were no noteworthy differences between men's and women's attitudes to joining the Church. Nor were there significant differences between different age groups.

## 4. WORSHIP AND OTHER PARISH ACTIVITY

- Attendance at all divine services in 2007 totalled 6.9 million. This means that on a weekly basis 3.1 per cent of the Church's average membership participated. Attendance at main services was some 4.2 million and at others some 2.8 million.
- Most Finns were satisfied with how the Church takes care of its services. Of all Finns 73 per cent considered that the Church took care of this fairly or very well.
- Church rites are considered a very important form of Church activity. Approximately nine out of ten Finns were of the opinion that the Church took care of baptisms, marriages and funerals fairly or very well.
- In 2007 the parishes arranged 15,000 musical events attended by over two million people. The number of musical events increased by ten per cent and audiences by six per cent.

### 4.1. Developing divine service and Church rites

Divine service is the celebration of God's saving presence. It is stressed in the Church that divine 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. Divine service is an event at 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. Divine 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. Both the Finnish and Swedish-language handbooks were introduced at Advent 2000. In the reform Church rites 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 divine service. As with Church 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.

## **4.2. Divine services and other public occasions**

In 2007 the parishes held 69,700 services. Over two thirds of these (45,500) were main Sunday services and the remainder (24,200) other types of services. Total attendance at services was some 6.9 million, which means that 3.1 per cent of members on average were present. Main Church services accounted for 4.2 million of these and the rest 2.8 million.

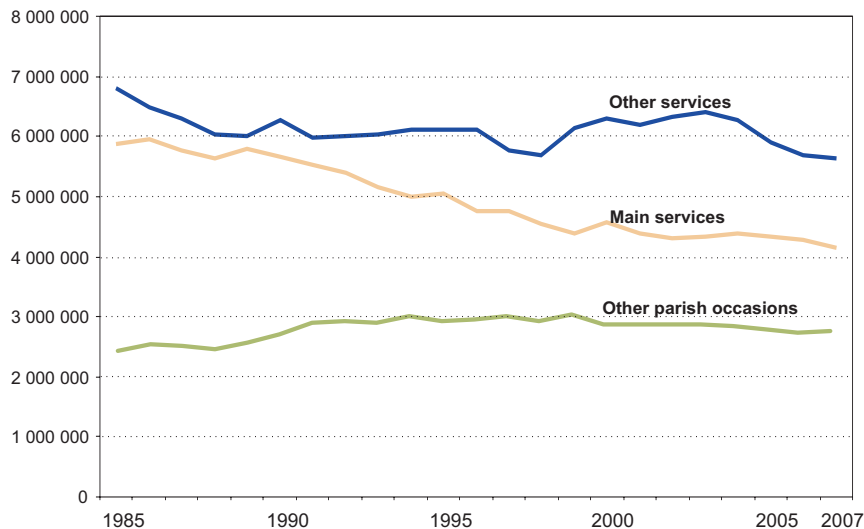
On a weekly basis 1.9 per cent of members attended main services in 2007, i.e. some 82,000 Finns. On average a parishioner attended a service once a year.

Weekly attendance at other Church services in 2007 amounted to 1.2 per cent of the average Church membership, i.e. some 52,000 Finns. Regarding weekly attendance there was no great difference between urban parishes (1.2% of the average number of people) and rural parishes (1.3% of the average number of people).

The numbers of those participating in main Church services has shown a steady decrease in recent decades (Figure 4.1.). However, attendance at other services increased from the 1980s to the mid 1990s, after which it has remained very steady.

Generally the main Church service on Sunday starts at ten o'clock, as reported by 88 per cent of parishes. A further seven per cent reported starting at eleven and four per cent at midday. In one per cent of parishes the main Sunday service starts at some other time.

**Figure 4.1. Attendance at main and other Church services and in other parish activities 1980-2007.**



According to the Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 Survey, Finns are mostly satisfied with the way the Church takes care of the services. Of all Finns 73 per cent thought that the Church took care of this either very well or fairly well. Of the forms of work on which responses were elicited it was ranked fifth best after Church rites, care of cemeteries and confirmation training.

The same survey found that four per cent of Finns go to church weekly and a further nine per cent reported attending at least once a month. Most of these are women. Fifteen per cent of women attended at least once a month, the corresponding figure for men being nine per cent. Over a quarter of Finns (26%) reported going to church a few times a year. There is a growing number of respondents who do not go at all.

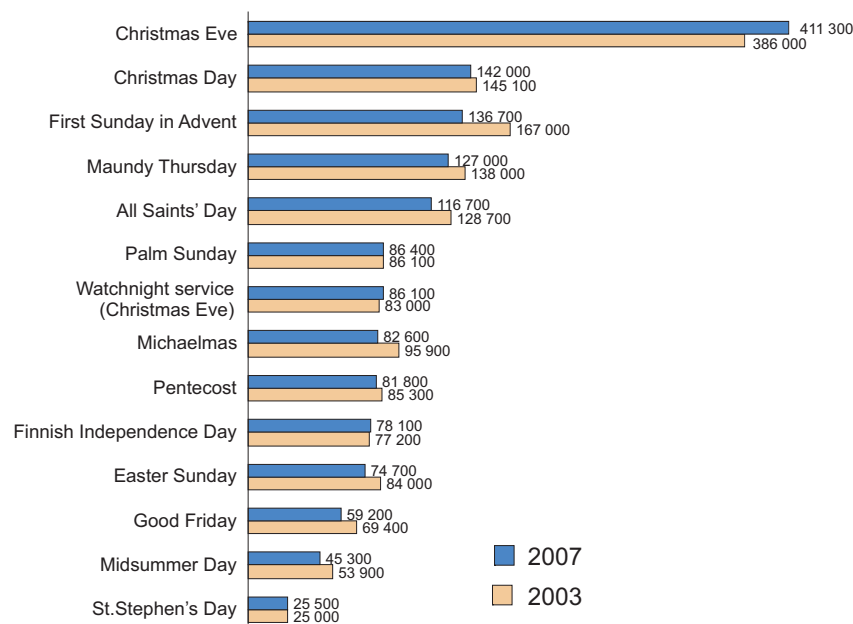
Age also affects activity in going to church. Younger age groups attend services less, and activity begins to rise only among those over 50. Thus it is young men who attend Church services least. It is significant that only four per cent of men under the age of 34 attend church once a month or more often while 35 per cent

reported not going at all in recent years. Moreover, when men's interest in all forms of activity was elicited, 66 per cent reported that Church services were of little or no interest.

The popularity of Christmas Eve as the most popular day to attend church has increased. In 2007 the increase on 2003 was 25,300, making a total of 411,000 attending. There was also an increase from 2003 of some 3,000 attending at night on Christmas Eve. The second most popular day for going to Church was 25 December, Christmas Day.

For many other feast days there had been a drop in attendance from 2003. The most dramatic decrease of 30,300 was for the first Sunday in Advent.

**Figure 4.2. Church attendance on the most popular feast days in the Church Year 2003 and 2007.**



There was also a decrease in the numbers of those going to church on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Attendance on Palm Sunday, however, remained unchanged. Neverthe-

less Maundy Thursday retained its position as the fourth most popular day for Finns to go to church.

In addition to the main Church service other services are held in the parishes. Several novel types of service have come into existence in recent years and services have come to currently include a wide variety of different services such as school services, baby church and St. Thomas Masses.

The nature of the special services has become ever more varied and they have spread to new parishes. For some ten years attendance has remained much the same. In 2007 attendance at special services amounted to 2.8 million.

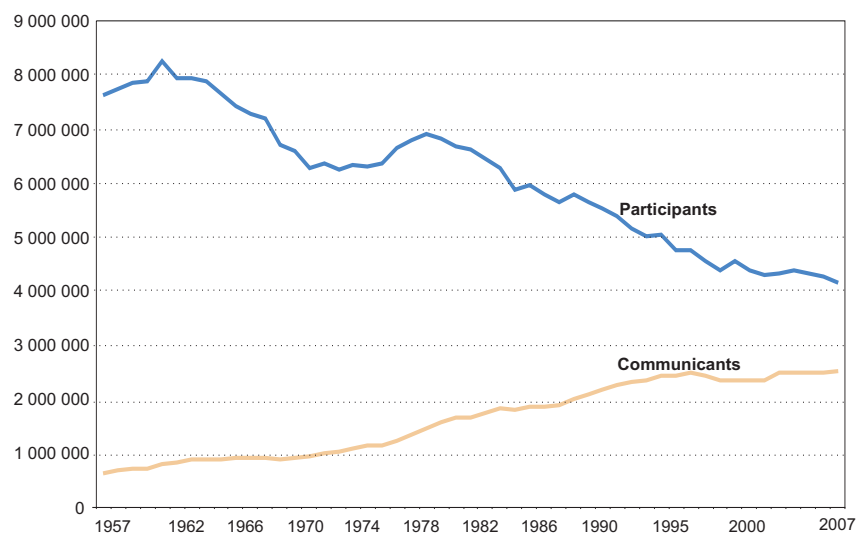
The most commonly held special services are those for schools and other educational institutions. These were held in 98 per cent of parishes. Other extremely common services are family services, held in 97 per cent of parishes. These also became much more frequent in recent years. Children's services and moments in church and blessings for children starting school were held in 88 per cent of parishes. In addition to these there were also youth services (in 45% of parishes), infant church (in 41% of parishes) and church for little children (in 21% of parishes). All in all there were a great many Church services held for families and children.

Fewer such options were offered to attract young people and young adults. The new types of mass introduced in recent years and intended for this age group included the Metal Mass and the Pop Mass. Such services make extensive use of rock and pop music as modes of expression and musical material. The first Metal Mass was celebrated in 2006 at the Temppeliaukio Church in Helsinki, also known as the Church in the Rock. Since then such masses have been celebrated in various parts of Finland.

There has been a slight increase in the number of communion services held in recent years. In 2007 they numbered over 45,000, which is an increase of five per cent (43,000 in 2003). There was also an increase from 2003 in the number of communicants to 2.5

million (an increase of 1.3%). The change is symptomatic of a long-term evolution in the culture of Church services seeking to stress the significance of worship as a whole. Effort is made to celebrate Holy Communion at every main Sunday service.

**Figure 4.3. Attendance at main Sunday service and Holy Communion 1957-2007.**



The chain of wayside churches intended for travellers included 267 churches in 2007. This idea comes from Germany, from which it has spread to Scandinavia and Estonia. Some of the churches are tourist sights and may be situated some distance from the main thoroughfares.

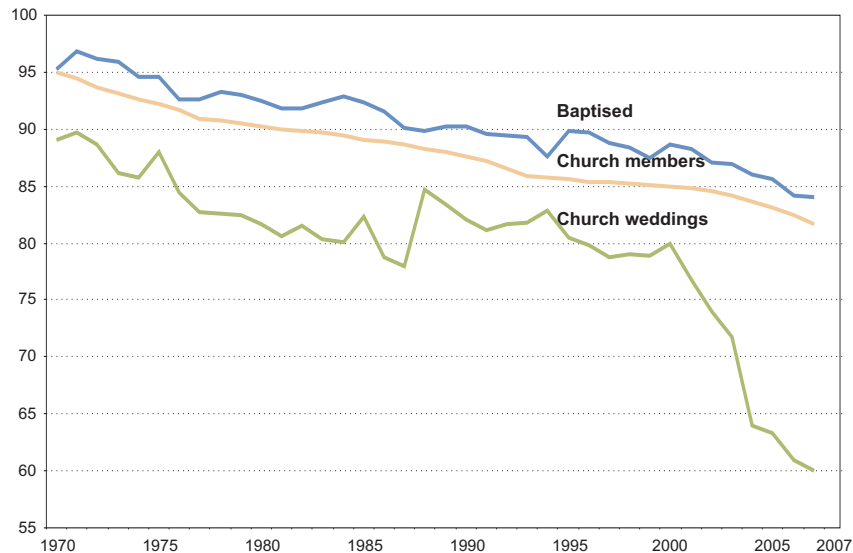
There are also tourist Chapels at Saariselkä, Levi, Ylläs and Pyhä-tunturi in Lapland to serve travellers. In November 2005 a hillside chapel was opened at Tahko, a ski resort. Such chapels have been built since the 1990s and they are used to hold services, devotions, concerts and Church rites. There are also tourist pastors to serve travellers.



### 4.3. Church Rites

In 2007 the number of baptisms, marriages and funerals totalled 113,800 and they had about 4 million attendees. In practice the number of Church rites has remained unchanged in recent years, likewise the number of attendees.

**Figure 4.4. Percentage shares of those baptised and church weddings 1970-2007.**



Proportionally the Church rites have, however, continued to decrease in frequency. It could be expected that the frequency of Church rites performed would diminish with the fall in Church membership. However, the change has not been the same for all Church rites. The decrease in the number of baptisms largely reflects the change in the number of those belonging to the Church. When the parents of a child are not Church members, it follows that there is a decrease in the number of baptisms. However, a major decrease in the number of those married in church is apparent from the turn of the millennium. The decrease in the number of funerals was only slight.

Eighty four per cent of those born in 2007 were baptised. Baptisms totalled 48,800 with almost a million attendees. All in all 49,300 people were baptised, approximately one thousand of them being adults and young people receiving baptism in the course of confirmation training. About two thirds of baptisms were arranged in people's homes, where the average number of attendees was 18, the corresponding figure for attendees on parish premises being 24. The overall average attendance was 20.

Marriages of Church members in 2007 totalled 26,900, of which 17,600 were solemnized in church. Of those marriages in which at least one of the spouses was a member of the Lutheran Church 66 per cent had a church wedding. Of all marriages contracted the share of church weddings was 60 per cent.

Of those marriages in which at least one of the spouses was a member of the Lutheran Church civil ceremonies numbered 9,200 or 34 per cent. Church blessings for civil marriages were arranged in 800 cases. Divorces of Church members totalled 11,200. Church weddings arranged totalled 17,700 with 1.2 million attendees.

The share of church weddings declined, especially for first and second marriages (see Table 4.1.). They accounted for a smaller proportion of all marriages contracted both for men and for women a drop of some seven percentage points.

The decline in the number of church weddings may be attributable to the improvement in the services provided by the register offices regarding marriages. Weddings are no longer only arranged in these offices during office hours but can be arranged at other places and at other times at the request of the bridal couple and against extra payment. It can be assumed that the extensive publicity accorded to large wedding parties has given rise to the impression that a modest ceremony can only be arranged at a register office even though the same option is available for church weddings.

**Table 4.1. Shares of Church weddings of all marriages in 2003 and 2007. Statistics Finland**

	2003		2007	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1. marriage	70 %	71 %	62 %	64 %
2. marriage	53 %	55 %	46 %	48 %
3. marriage	42 %	39 %	39 %	38 %

Church funerals totalled 47,300 and attendees 1.9 million in 2007. The total number of deaths that year was 49,100. Comparison of these figures permits the conclusion that some 96 per cent of all the deceased received a Christian funeral. (The figure, however, is not absolutely accurate as some of those whose funerals were held in 2007 had died the previous year, while the funerals of some of those who died at the end of 2007 were only held the following year.) The corresponding figure for 2003 was 98 per cent, thus there was a slight decrease in the number of those receiving a church funeral.

Discussions held in connection with the celebration of Church rites have become more frequent ever since the 1980s. The separate discussion in connection with baptism was omitted in only less than one per cent of all baptisms celebrated. In about two thirds of baptisms this discussion was arranged in the home of the child before the ceremony. Discussions were likewise held almost without exception in connection with marriages and blessings of marriages (omitted in less than 1%). In November 2007 there was a separate discussion relating to every funeral with only one exception.

#### 4.4. Other parish activity

The parishes have traditionally engaged in various kinds of activities to bring people together, among them musical events, parish

catechetical meetings, clubs, devotions and events at regional and national level. In recent decades the popularity of church plays has increased. A new form of work in the parish has been activities specifically aimed at young adults.

In addition to divine service the parishes arranged some 96,000 other public events attended by 5.6 million people. A decrease occurred in both the number of events and the number of participants; similar events in 2003 totalled 104,300 (-8%) and participants 6.4 million (-13%). With the exception of musical events the decrease occurred in all events and their participants (see Table 3.3). In 2007 the weekly number of participants in parish events was 2.5 per cent of the population (2.8% in 2003).

In addition to the traditional forms of activity mentioned above there were some 3,900 groups meeting regularly in the parishes. Of these 2,000 were Bible study and prayer groups with a total membership of some 17,500. There were some 770 discussion groups with some 7,400 members. Other groups in the work with adults amounted to 1,100 with 15,200 members. Participants in all these groups together amounted to 40,200 with 3,400 volunteer group leaders.

In 2007 charismatic events called by the name Word and Prayer Evenings were arranged in 54 per cent of parishes, evangelizing events in 20 per cent and retreats in 19 per cent. Participation in Word and Prayer Evenings and retreats increased slightly. Alpha courses for exploring the content of Christian faith increased to 17 per cent in the parishes. Women's days or evenings were held in 49 per cent and men's days or evenings in 37 per cent of parishes.

There was a distinct increase in the number of retreats in the period covered by the report. The parishes arranged some 260 retreats in 2007 and participants numbered almost 3,400. Spiritual guidance and support for spiritual growth form part of the field of spiritual care and this was provided to varying extents not only to parishioners but also to Church workers.

**Table 4.2. Attendance at other parish events in 2007.**

	Events	Participants	Change 2003–2007 (%)	
			Events	Participants
Musical events	15,012	2,010,833	10,6	5,9
Bible groups	3,698	102,027	-12,9	-27,5
Parish catechetical meeting	3,110	64,189	-15,5	-21,1
Clubs	11,766	688,242	-26,6	-33,5
Devotions	38,534	848,036	-7,6	-13,9
Regional/national events	886	600,681	-19,1	-27,8
Others	23,048	1,251,128	-4,2	-12,6
Total	96,054	5,565,136	-7,9	-13,1

Church musical activities include several areas. Hobbies include choirs and instrumental ensembles. Various concerts are connected to the Church Year. There has recently been an increase in musical events and participants. The increase in events was 11 per cent and in participants six per cent compared to 2003. In 2007 the parishes arranged a total of 15,000 musical events audiences exceeding two million.

In 2007 over 2,900 musical groups convened in the parishes, which was 100 more (4%) than in 2003. Membership of music groups, on the other hand, fell by less than one per cent. In 2007 the music groups of the parishes attracted 43,700 musiclovers.

In 2007 there were 2,100 choirs with 35,000 singers. The number of choirs diminished by nine per cent, with 13 per cent fewer members. However, the number of instrumental ensembles increased from 500 to some 860. The number of players likewise increased from 4,500 to 8,700.

The single most popular musical event is the Christmas carols in church before Christmas, with 2,500 such occasions arranged in 2007 attracting over half a million Finns to sing Christmas carols ancient and modern.

Blessing the home is a moment of prayer offered on behalf of the home and family. Such blessings of the home have been

offered since 1984. This may also be done by a layperson. In November 2007 pastors conducted 250 blessings of the home attended by 4,700 people, an average of 18 per home.

Other occasions when blessing is sought include blessing the crops as in rogation, giving thanks for the harvest, blessing the commencement of the academic year, the inauguration of a care facility or industrial installation, an office or other place of work.

The parishes report that the most frequent of these were for the beginning of the school term, which took place in 57 per cent of parishes. Blessing the crops was also very common (51% of parishes) and giving thanks for the harvest (46% of parishes). Such blessings were considerably less frequent in educational, care and industrial facilities, likewise blessings of other places of work. Blessings of schools and educational institutions were arranged in 13 per cent of parishes.

In recent years church plays, pilgrimages related to the Church Year and tableaux of the Gospel stories have become somewhat more common. In 2007 Advent and Christmas pilgrimages were arranged in 17 per cent of parishes with Easter pilgrimages and tableaux in 33 per cent. Other church plays were presented in 17 per cent of parishes. Pilgrims on Easter pilgrimages numbered 88,000 with 44,000 joining Advent and Christmas pilgrimages and 55,000 people involved in church plays.

## 5. EDUCATION

- Almost 61,600 children participated in daytime clubs, 28,100 in Sunday school.
- Every other parish arranged morning and evening activities for schoolchildren.
- There was a sharp decrease in the number of those having a Christian upbringing at home, especially in the metropolitan area.
- Confirmation training maintained its strong position: 88.5 per cent of 15-year-olds attended. Most young people are positively disposed to confirmation training and want their own children to participate in it.
- 27,000 young people participated in young confirmed volunteer training, and 18,000 served as young confirmed volunteer (*isonen*). This training has become more popular in recent years, with an increase of 20% since 2003 in such training and in increase of 35% in actually serving as peer tutors.
- Work with families expanded. Statistics record 1.19 million visits to family clubs.

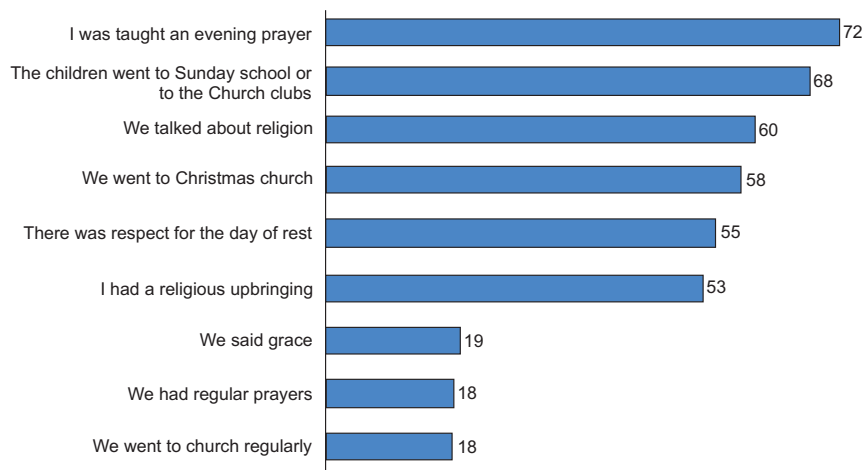
### 5.1. Trends in education

Baptismal teaching is the point of departure in the work of the Church with children and young people. Baptism creates an obligation to provide teaching on the tenets of Christianity. Teaching is provided, for example, in daytime clubs, Sunday schools and in confirmation training. There is a permanent challenge in this work due to the extent of the age cohort, the different life stage of those of different ages and the changes constantly occurring therein. Networks and co-operation, including that with educational institutions, play an important role.

Changes in the size of the age group are reflected in the Church's work in education. The target group for confirmation training is large (the total number of 15-year-olds being 67,700 in 2007). Conversely the size of the age group for daytime clubs was

exceptionally small (the total number of five-year-olds was just over 56,000 in 2007). The cohort of those of confirmation age will continue to be large in 2008-2009 (over 65,000) after which there will be a decrease due to a falling birthrate. Earlier, in the years between 1992-2002, there was a 17 per cent decrease in the birth-rate (over 11,000 children). Thereafter there was a slight increase.

**Figure 5.1. Finns' views on religious upbringing in their childhood home. Share of Finns responding affirmatively to each item. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 (%).**



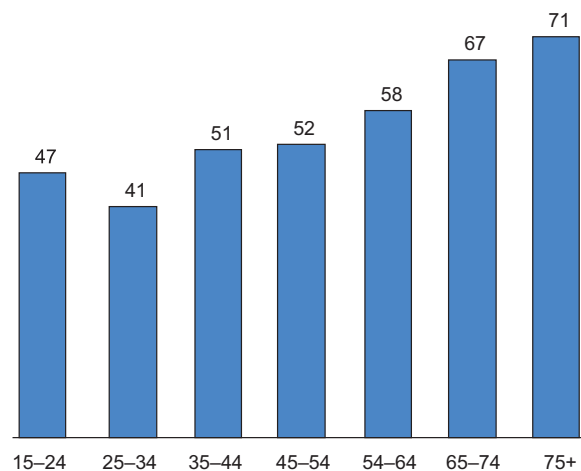
Religious upbringing in the home has traditionally been important in Finland. According to the Gallup Ecclesiastica Survey 2007 almost three out of four Finns have been taught an evening prayer at home (see Figure 5.1.). In two thirds of childhood homes children attended parish daytime clubs or Sunday schools. In most homes they also went to church at Christmas and talked about religion.

Numerous studies show that there has been a decrease in religious upbringing at home. Figure 5.2. shows the share by age group of those reporting that they had a religious upbringing in their homes. Among retirees more than two out of three reported



having had a religious upbringing while among those under 35 it was clearly less than half. The decrease in those reporting a religious upbringing at home was sharpest in the metropolitan area and in other large towns. In spite of the decrease in religious upbringing at home the habit of teaching an evening prayer had retained a strong position in Finnish homes. Even among young people aged 15-24 almost two thirds (61%) reported that their parents had taught them an evening prayer. Almost as many young people (58%) intended to teach their future children an evening prayer. Young adults wanted to give their own children a religious upbringing more often than they themselves felt that they had had one.

**Figure 5.2. Share of Finns reporting having had a religious upbringing at home by age group. Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007, N=1,030 (%).**



Religious upbringing was mostly provided by the mothers (57% of Finns) or the grandmother (44%). The importance of grandparents as a source of religious upbringing was especially marked in those younger than 45. Every third Finn had received a religious upbringing from the father, i.e. clearly less often than from the mother. Every fifth Finn has received religious upbringing from a grandmother and every sixth from a godparent.

## 5.2. Early childhood education by the Church

Early childhood education by the Church is Church education carried out in the parishes' work with children and families.

The daytime clubs of the parishes are the Church's activities for those aged 3-6. Such clubs are held twice a week for a few hours at a time. The Christian education offered in the clubs is holistic, including play and prayer. The task of these clubs is to support the Christian upbringing offered at home.

**Daytime clubs** have been a strong aspect of the Church's work with children. However, there has been a steady decrease in the number of children involved since the beginning of the 1990s. In 1990 a total of 61 per cent of children participated in the parishes' daytime clubs. Participation in these Church clubs has diminished as the right to municipal day care has been extended. The advent in 2003 of preschool education free of charge has for its part greatly reduced the number of six-year-olds participating in Church clubs. This has duly released more resources for clubs for three-year-olds resulting in a rather smaller overall decrease in participation.

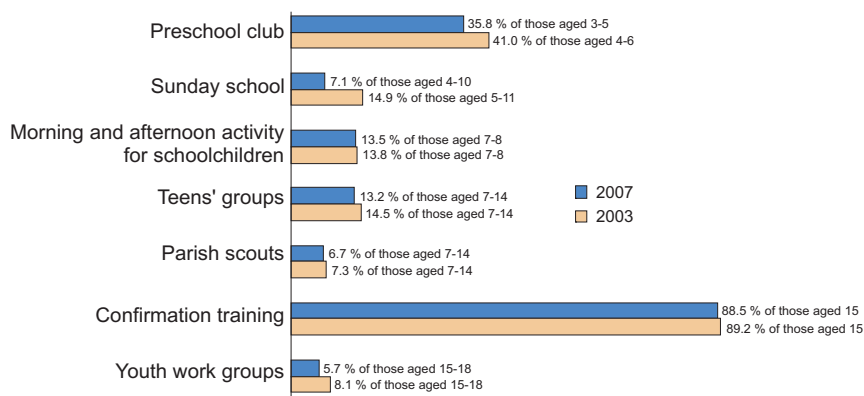
Participation in 2007 totalled 62,000 children, which corresponds to 36 per cent of children aged three to five. Fifty-two per cent were girls. The total number was 13 per cent smaller than in 2003. There was also a decrease in the number of groups, with 4,300 of them in the parishes. On average one parish had eight groups with 14 children per group.

Various daytime clubs for three-year-olds were arranged in every other parish with more than 5,000 three-year-olds participating. There were some 500 separate groups for three-year-olds. In more than every tenth parish there were also separate daytime club activities for preschoolers. Over 600 children participated in these. In those parishes with no separate groups for preschoolers six-year-olds had the option of joining groups intended for

younger children. However, efforts were made to arrange their own activities in the form of preschool activity.

In the course of 2007 a further 6,500 occasions were arranged in connection with the daytime club activity and over 305,000 people participated. Such occasions included parents' evenings and celebrations. Almost every other parish (40%) arranged parents' evenings for the parents of daytime club members.

**Figure 5.3. Coverage of the Church's education and youth work in 2003 and 2007.**



Sunday school is activity arranged for schoolchildren and smaller children. It takes the form of a club and also of a church service. It is referred to as the children's church. Such schools convene weekly, either on Sundays or weekdays. Parents of small children are also welcome. In 2007 almost 29,000 children participated, corresponding to 7.1% of the age cohort 5-11. There were over 1,600 such groups. On average there were three per parish and according to the statistics participants per group numbered 18 children, of whom 59 per cent were girls.

For some time now the number of children participating in Sunday school has been decreasing. However, it is not feasible to present statistics as the mode of compiling statistics were changed

as of the beginning of 2005, after which only the parish's own Sunday schools have been included.

Most of the Sunday school teachers are volunteers. In 2007 there were 4,200 Sunday school teachers, of whom 85 per cent were women. The number of volunteers has diminished apace with the reduction in Sunday schools by 39 per cent.

A considerable part of the early childhood education by the parishes is accomplished in collaboration with municipal early childhood education authorities. The parishes maintain active contacts with their early childhood education and preschool education authorities. Religious education in day care centres is of a general Christian nature so that as many children as possible can participate. Most of the parishes engaged in some type of co-operation with the early childhood education provided by society. Ways of maintaining such contact included visits, holding morning assemblies and services, likewise material help and shared training sessions.

**Work with families.** The general focus of the Church's educational work regarding early childhood education included teaching for baptism and supporting the spiritual life of the family. Supporting parenthood was also deemed important.

Family clubs serve to bring together children and the adults who care for them. They include mothers, fathers, grandparents and registered child minders. The adults spend part of the time exchanging experiences. For example, there may be discussion on a particular theme. The discussion may be preceded by a talk by an organiser or visitor. At the same time the children have their own activities. In open clubs adults and children are together all the time and there is a small service.

In 2007 visits recorded to the family clubs of the parishes numbered 1.19 million; 460,000 by adults and 734,000 by children. There was an increase of three per cent from 2003, and in

the number of meeting a greater increase. In 2007 there were 47,400 meetings of family clubs.

In addition to these clubs the parishes arrange various family camps and excursions and occasions for work with families. Three parishes out of four arranged family events in 2007. Family camps were held in every fourth parish. Participants included 4,400 adults and 5,800 children. Every fifth parish arranged events for married couples.

In their work with families the parishes frequently co-operated with the municipality (62% of parishes), with other Christian parishes (24%) or with Christian organisations or revivalists (24%). Other co-operation partners mentioned included the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare and the Save the Children organisation.

### 5.3. Work with preadolescents

**Morning and afternoon activities.** The parishes have long been active in arranging morning and afternoon activities for younger schoolchildren. These activities are intended in particular for children of seven to eight years and mostly take place in the afternoons after school or in the mornings before school begins. In 2007 every other parish (52%) arranged such activities, most frequently in the afternoons. Only in every tenth parish were there activities in the mornings. Participants in 2007 numbered over 15,600, which amounts to 13.5 per cent of the age cohort 7-8. Girls and boys participated in equal numbers. There were altogether 700 groups. There was a decrease in participation of nine per cent since 2003. This is largely due to a decrease in the size of the age group.

The parishes moreover arranged 800 special occasions in connection with these activities in which over 20,500 people participated. In almost half of the parishes offering morning and

afternoon activities opportunities were offered for parents to spend a little time on a brief discussion with the group leader.

The groups mostly met on five days a week (in 74% of parishes). Every fifth group only met on one day a week. These activities were set up in collaboration with the municipal authorities (in 67 % of parishes). There was an increase in the co-operation with the municipalities. In every fourth parish (28%) activities were arranged independently and in five per cent in collaboration with some organisation.

**Groups for preadolescents.** In 2007, 13.2 per cent of children aged 7-14 participated in preadolescent clubs. This share diminished since 2003 by 1.3 percentage points. In 2007 the preadolescent clubs had 64,800 participants, both girls and boys. This is a drop of 14.3 per cent from 2003 and is largely explained by a decrease in the size of the age group.

There was also a decrease in the number of groups for preadolescents. In 2007 there were almost 5,200 in the parishes, which corresponds to ten groups per parish and was nine per cent fewer than in 2003.

**Scouting.** Participation in scouting in Finland in 2007 involved some 70,000 children and young people. Almost half of these, 33,000, participated in Church troops. Since 2003 the number of scouts and guides in the parishes diminished by 12.6 per cent. There was a steady increase in the number of scouts and guides in Finland until the mid 1990s, when there was a slight decrease in popularity which has continued both in parish troops and elsewhere.

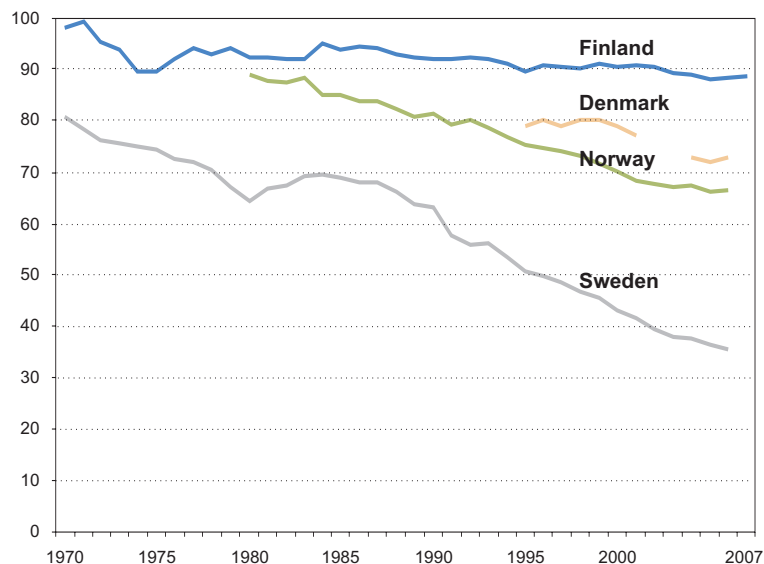
There were 3,600 troops in the parishes, corresponding to approximately seven troops per parish, a decrease of 9.4 per cent in four years. Large numbers of excursions, trips and camps were arranged in scouting. Trips and excursions totalled almost 4,500 with almost 50,000 participants. Camps totalled 1,500 (5,200 camp/days) with almost 30,000 participants.

**Other activities for preadolescents.** Excursions and camps serve to bring many preadolescents together. In 2007 camp participation amounted to 64,000 children with a decrease in the last four years of 15 per cent. The decrease can in part be explained by the smaller age cohorts. Total camps amounted to 2,400 and total camp/days 5,800. Excursions for preadolescents totalled 1,000 attracting 32,000 children (-25%).

## 5.4. Confirmation training

The popularity of confirmation training continued strong. In 2007, 59,900 young people attended, which is 88.5 of the age group of 15-year-olds (89.2% in 2003). Nowhere else in the Lutheran world is confirmation training so popular. In 2006 in Sweden 36 per cent of the age group participated, in Norway 67 per cent and in Denmark 73 per cent.

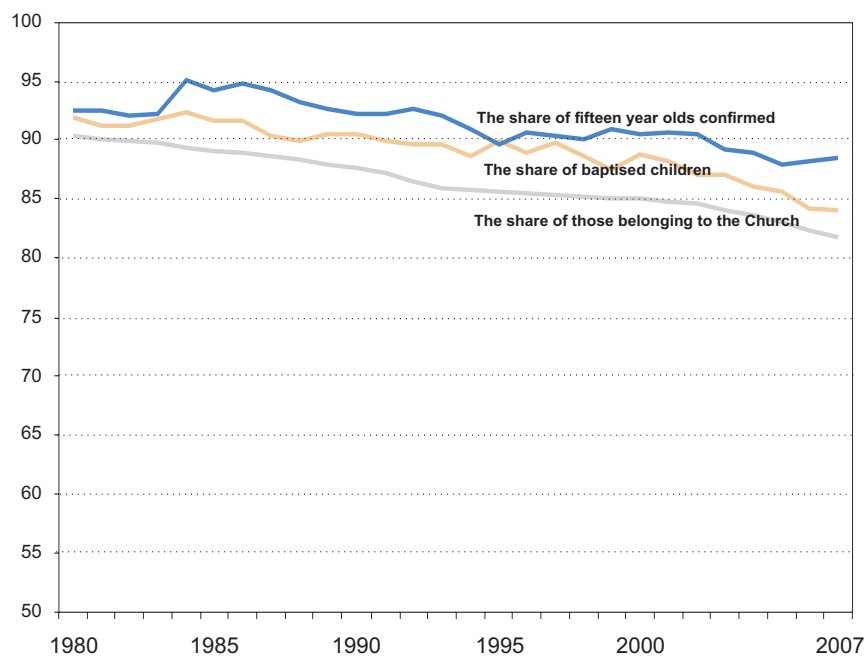
**Figure 5.4. Share of young people attending confirmation training in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark (%).**



As larger age groups than before reached confirmation age, there was a five per cent increase in participants from 2003. The number of groups likewise increased by five per cent. The parishes arranged a total of almost 2,500 confirmation training groups, which works out at five groups per parish.

The unique position of confirmation training in Finland rests on the one hand on its established position as a part of youth culture and on the rights it confers and on the other on the good implementation of the work at parish level and the constant renewal of the training provided. This work is based on good practices identified at the local level.

**Figure 5.5. Shares of those completing confirmation training, those belonging to the Church and of children baptised 1980-2007 (%).**



Most of those preparing for confirmation in adult age do so privately. Over 50 separate confirmation groups for adults were arranged by the parishes and parish unions. Participants numbered



260. More than a thousand people over 18 received private instruction and 145 who were under 18.

A total of 19 separate confirmation training groups were arranged for immigrants in 2007 in which 113 immigrants participated. Most of these groups were intended for those with Russian as their first language.

Confirmation training camp was the most popular mode of completion. Among young confirmants 91 per cent took training in camp. Seven per cent of young people participated in daytime instruction and two per cent in evening instruction.

Most young people took confirmation training in their own parishes, but a significant proportion took their confirmation training elsewhere. In 2007 over 6,600 of them participated in the confirmation training of some other parish or organization, which is 11 per cent of all participants. Every year a considerable number of young people become members of the Church in connection with confirmation training. In 2007 there were almost 1,860 such young people, of whom over 1,100 were baptised.

In some parishes confirmation reunions and other meetings have become a regular part of confirmation training. Such reunions of each training class are arranged in every fifth parish and with most training classes in every tenth parish. Other meetings of confirmation training participants after training and confirmation were arranged in almost every fourth parish.

## 5.5. Youth work

A young confirmed volunteer (YCV) (*isonen*) is a young person who has completed confirmation training and who assists the instructors and acts as a group leader. This entails special training which is generally arranged once a year.

In most parishes the YCV training constitutes the cornerstone of youth work. It has the effect of bringing together a considerable

proportion of the previous year's confirmants. As this type of activity has increased in the parishes there has conversely been a decrease in traditional youth work. Participation in the parish youth work groups in 2007 attracted 15,200 young people, which corresponds to 5.7 per cent of the age group 15-18 (8.1% in 2003). Both the number of groups (-22%) and the number of those participating in them (-26%) was less than in 2003. One group included on average 14 young people.

In many parishes young people's evenings attract considerably more participants than traditional group activity. In 2007 the parishes arranged 20,600 young people's evenings or the like. In a year participants numbered almost 484,000. Average attendance per evening was 23.

Almost 1,300 (almost 2,000 excursion/days) trips and excursion were organised within youth work in 2007, participants totalling over 27,000 young people. Over 1,400 (over 3,200 camp/days) youth work camps were held attracting over 40,000 participants.

The popularity of the YCV system increased after 2003. Those participating in training in 2007 numbered 27,000, with 18,000 young people actually serving as YCVs. There was a 20 per cent increase from 2003 in those undergoing YCV training and among those actually serving as YCVs the increase was no less than 35 per cent. The increase can be partly explained by the extension of the field of duties: In the parish the YCVs do more and more different things in the work with children and young people. This diversification of the field of operations has made being a YCV more popular. Efforts have been made in the parishes to find things for prospective YCVs to do. In more than a third of parishes there were more applicants than could be taken. In every other parish there are generally suitable numbers of would-be YCVs.

According to information supplied by the parishes themselves, there were in autumn 2007 some 7,500 young people aged 15-18 and over 2,000 over 18 in regularly meeting youth activities who

are not involved in the tasks of YCVs . Of those involved in youth activities some 35,000 are involved in YCV activities in one way or another.

## 5.6. Special youth work

The special youth work of the Church refers to work in the spirit of Christian charity with young people and preadolescents for children and young people at risk of marginalisation or who are already marginalized. The polarization of society exacerbates the plight of such young people who have drifted away from the normal development of their peers and are on the path to marginalization.

In 2007 such work was undertaken in every other parish. It took the form of an open door policy, counsellors' patrols at rock festivals, seeking-out work, and small group work. Other forms of activity included street patrols, substance abuse work, work with young offenders and camp school co-operation, night-time coffee bars and co-operation with families.

A new form of activity developed is car workshop activity. The most important aspect of the work is to support young boys at risk of marginalisation alongside their attendance at school. The aim is that the young people have experiences of succeeding, that they acquire group work skills and are accepted by society.

In special youth work the parishes collaborate actively with municipal youth work. Of the parishes engaging in special youth work half engaged in regular co-operation with municipal youth work and 34 per cent in temporary co-operation. There was regular co-operation with the police in every fifth parish and temporary co-operation in 44 per cent. Two out of three parishes engaging in special youth work had co-operation with social work. This co-operation was regular in every fourth of these parishes. Eighteen per cent of the parishes engaging in special youth work co-operated in the care of criminals and in the centres for family

support. Other co-operation partners in special youth work included the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (29%), Church organisations and revival movements (28%) and other organisations.

## **5.7. Work in schools and educational institutions**

This work concerns comprehensive schools, upper secondary schools, vocational schools, polytechnics, universities and adult education institutions. Such work in educational institutions is an essential part of early childhood education, youth work and work with adults. The premise for co-operation is education in which the tasks of the Church and the institutions dovetail with each other.

At the end of 2007 there were over 50 full-time positions for workers in this sector. Most of these were for clerics. There were four diaconial posts and two posts for church musicians.

There were some 40 posts for professional education workers some of which included responsibility for the local university in their job descriptions. There were 14 university chaplains. With the exception of one locality with 5,000 students, there were posts for all localities with more than 3,000 students.

Almost all parishes (99%) reported engaging in some kind of work with schools. Almost all parishes held services for schools and also arranged for visits to be made to schools to hold morning assemblies and brief devotions. In the lower classes of comprehensive schools a representative of the parish generally visited once or twice a month (59% of parishes/visits once a month per institution with lower classes of comprehensive school). In every third parish (32%) weekly visits were made to the lower classes of comprehensive school. Generally visits were made to the upper classes of comprehensive school on a weekly basis (54% of parishes) or at least once a month (34% of parishes).

## 5.8. Work with young adults

The objective of the work of the Church with young adults is to strengthen their experience of the parish and the Church as a significant and close organisation in their lives, to develop a community and develop their opportunities to exert influence in the activities of the Church and its governance. For the Church “young adults” generally refers to those aged 18-29.

In recent years the Church has put more effort than ever before into working with young adults. The background to this is concern about the relationship young adults have with the Church. Most of those people resigning from the Church are young adults, and research has also shown that they are farther away from the Church than any other age group. Young people’s image of the Church was essentially positive or neutral, but at the same time, on the level of their personal lives, the Church was felt to be distant and not needed.

Work with young adults has been increased in the parishes. In 2007 every third (32%) parish arranged activities for young adults (22% in 2003). However, increasing activities did not serve to activate participants: compared to 2003 there was a decrease in participants of 11 per cent. In 2007 there were 225 groups of young adults meeting, which included 2,900 participants.

More posts have been allocated to work with young adults or more responsibility has been assigned to this work. Co-operation with educational institutions was also set up. In 2007 approximately 40 parishes reported having in their union a pastor (or equivalent) dedicated solely to work with young adults. It was reported by 245 parishes that the coordination of work with young adults had been combined with the tasks of some other worker. Some 200 parishes reported that the coordination of work with young adults had not been assigned to anyone.

## 6. PASTORAL COUNSELLING

- Pastors and diaconal workers held 190,000 pastoral care discussions in a year. In addition to this, discussions in connection with rites performed were held almost without exception.
- There was an increase in the caring work in family counselling with over 17,400 clients in 2007. Almost half of those clients gave interaction problems or divorce issues as the reason for attending. The share of multicultural marriages and families is increasing in the clientele. There was also an increase among children and young people attending due to faring badly and being badly treated.
- The telephone helpline went national and Help on the Net was introduced. Volunteers accounted for 70 per cent of those manning the telephone hotline and 41,000 conversations took place.
- In all areas of pastoral counselling the importance of helping in the aftermath of crises and catastrophes increased.

### 6.1. Pastoral counselling in the parishes

In the Lutheran conception of religion, pastoral care must be a service of love as an individual's vocation, in which one's fellow men are helped according to their real needs. All those belonging to the Church in the broadest sense should be concerned for each other and all parishioners should engage in pastoral care of one another. This 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 the telephone helpline. In addition to this pastoral care is offered in prisons and in the Finnish Defence Forces (see Chapter 15). Here we consider pastoral care only as provided on a professional basis by employees of the Church.

In recent years there has been a decrease in the number of discussions held by pastors. In November 2007 the pastors

reported having engaged in 3,300 pastoral discussions arranged in advance, giving an annual figure of 40,000. In addition to discussions arranged in advance, the pastors also held 3,500 other pastoral discussions. Of these pastoral discussions approximately one tenth led to confession. These figures do not include pastoral discussions held in connection with Church rites.

In November 2007 the pastors of the parishes brought Holy Communion to the sick more than a thousand times (1,056) with 2,760 people receiving the sacrament. In November 2007 the pastors held 900 Communion services intended for groups in hospitals and other institutions which were attended by over 18,000 people.

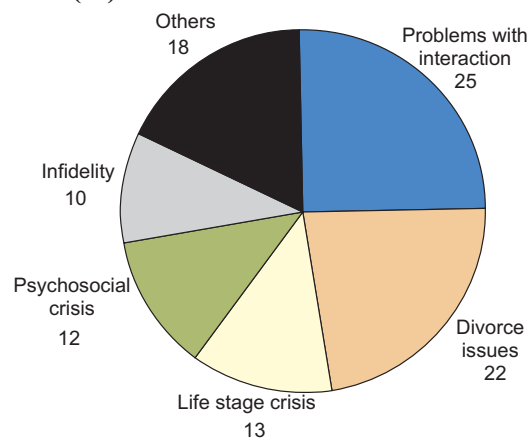
The spiritual discussions and pastoral counselling by diaconial workers accounted for one fifth of measures in client contacts. This amounts to some 112,000 discussions in 2007, and was the third most common form of diaconial client contact after other counselling and economic assistance. Diaconia workers moreover addressed spiritual issues by telephone and e-mails altogether over 33,000 times. Other parish workers also engaged in pastoral discussions. The number of grieving groups was over 450 in 2007 in which 2,700 bereaved relatives participated.

## 6.2. Family counselling

Family counselling by the Church supports and helps in family problems and in crises using spiritual counselling and therapeutic methods. In family counselling the emphasis is on questions pertaining to the pair relationship. In addition to helping during crises in the pair relationship, such as divorce, help is provided, where possible, in other issues pertaining to relationships within the family, and upbringing. Those living alone can also seek counselling in case of problems in human relations.

In 2007 more than 17,400 people received family counselling. The total amount of work accomplished by the family guidance centres was almost 82,000 counselling modules each lasting 45 minutes. By field of working the greatest modules were almost half (46%) in individual counselling and a third in pair negotiations.

**Figure 6.1. Most common reasons among clients for seeking family counselling in 2007 (%).**



In 2007 the most common reasons for seeking family counselling were problems in interaction and issues pertaining to divorce. Approximately every tenth client gave life stage crisis, psychosocial crisis or infidelity as the reason for seeking counselling. Other reasons for attending were recorded as problems with relatives and other close relationships, mental/physical abuse, traumatizing unexpected crises, sexual problems and religious questions. Men accounted for 40 per cent of all clients.

Caregiving groups arranged in 2007 amounted to over 70, with a total of 500 members. Family reconciliation sessions amounted to over 4,500. The family counsellors had some 470 supervisees and 84 counselling groups.

In 2007 the Church had 163 family counsellors and they worked in 42 family guidance centres; the municipalities buy



services from 30 of these. In 2007 there were also 29 part-time counsellors and 99 consultants on a fee-paying basis. The total number of people employed in the family guidance centres was almost 300.

An increase was seen in the share of multicultural marriages and families among the clientele of the family guidance centres. According to the centres, an increase can be seen in the number of people seeking help due to mistreatment and poor faring among children and young people and also domestic violence.

**Family education.** Courses and camps for the pair relationship were arranged throughout Finland on various themes. On these 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 one's own pair relationship. The courses are intended for those who are married, cohabiting or otherwise in a pair relationship. In addition to the parishes, those arranging these courses include many Christian organizations. In 2007 the parishes arranged almost 400 events especially intended for married couples.

### 6.3. Pastoral counselling in hospitals

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 hospital chaplains with special training, who are there for the patients, the relatives and the personnel. The work of the hospital chaplain entails personal discussions, being present, listening and walking alongside. Groups for pastoral care, arranging religious events, Church rites and training and counselling likewise form part of the work of the

hospital pastor. In the caring 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 likewise offer pastoral care in the 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. Decisions taken in the structure of the municipality 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.

The number of full-time personnel providing pastoral counselling in hospitals numbered 120 and part-time personnel 17. Most of these are pastors. The share of women among them was 58 per cent. There were 67 hospital theologians serving as counsellors. The change in the generations occasioned by the ageing of the hospital chaplains and the counsellors meant a great need for training in pastoral care and counselling.

The most important tool of the hospital chaplain is pastoral discussion. According to statistics compiled in November 2007, a hospital chaplain engaged in an average of 55 such discussions per month. The number of personal discussions was 5,700 in November 2007. In the 2000s a decrease was seen in the number of discussions.

The services with Holy Communion in hospitals clustered in the Church Year around Advent, Holy Week and the week before All Saints' Day. When Communion was brought to a patient the relatives frequently also participated. Between 500 and 600 people participated privately in Holy Communion annually. There was an annual fall in attendance at shared Holy Communion and in November 2007 the statistics showed 4,600 attendees. This may in part be explained by the shortened duration of hospitalization and the ever feebler condition of long-term patients.

Prayer moments on the death of a loved one were arranged at the request of the bereaved either in the hospital chapel or in the room in which the loved one died. On average such occasions numbered 164 a month.

Grieving groups are held not only in the parishes but also in hospitals for those who have lost a spouse, child or other close relative and for the relatives of those who died by their own hand. In November 2007, 46 such groups were arranged by those in charge of pastoral care in hospitals. Grieving groups were also arranged in the parishes and, for example, on the eve of All Saints' Day the mass held for those having lost a child or for those grieving about their childlessness has spread to various parts of Finland.

## **6.4. Telephone helpline and Help on the Net**

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.

By 2004 the telephone helpline had been in operation for forty years and in 2007 the number of helpline organisations was 31 with groups on standby in 70 localities. There has been a shift to volunteers manning the helplines and in 2007 out of 2,000 such workers 70 per cent were volunteers. The telephone helpline is among those activities of the Church with the greatest volunteer component in which those selected are trained then receive continuous counselling. In 2007 a total of 41,000 discussions took place on telephone helplines. Of these 1,650 took place through the

services offered in Swedish the second official language of Finland.

There was a slight decline in the number of calls. This can in part be explained by the existence of many parallel helplines. The share of men calling the helpline was 49 per cent.

The most common subjects in these discussions were loneliness, existential issues, mental problems, marital problems and problems in the pair relationship. The shares of these remained virtually unchanged, but in 2007 loneliness as a reason for calling rose to 34 percent of calls made.

The plan for extending activities to the Internet was put into practice when the new service Help on the Net was introduced in summer 2005. The choice of name (in Finnish literally *Serving Net*) was intended to show the connection between the telephone helpline and help on the net and the common operating principles. The responses are mostly sent by volunteers on standby.

In 2007, the second full year of the operation of the service, a total of 1,100 messages were sent. The largest age group was those from 25 to 44. The clientele of Help on the Net differed from that of the telephone helpline not only by their younger age but also in that over 60 per cent of clients were living either in a family or in a pair relationship and over half were engaged in working life or studying. The most common themes among the net messages were the pair relationship or family and fundamental issues. Loneliness was not so prominent as on the telephone helpline.

## 7. DIACONIAL AND SOCIAL WORK

- The diaconia organisation was approached chiefly for help with financial problems. The emphasis in client contacts shifted from elderly people to people of working age and although a decrease was seen in the number of client contacts after the economic recession of the 1990s, the resources used for providing financial aid remained the same.
- A total of almost 900,000 people participated in open days and food dispensing events arranged by the parishes.
- There was an increase in the Church's activity in environmental questions. The Church reviewed the requirements for the environmental diploma and in 2007 initiated the preparation of the Church climate programme.
- There was an increase in the number of immigrants, but wide variation in numbers of immigrants in different parishes
- The Church's crisis reaction capability has proven itself good and also enjoys public approbation.
- The Joint Responsibility Fundraising Campaign was the largest annual public fundraising campaign in Finland.

### 7.1. Diaconial work in the parishes

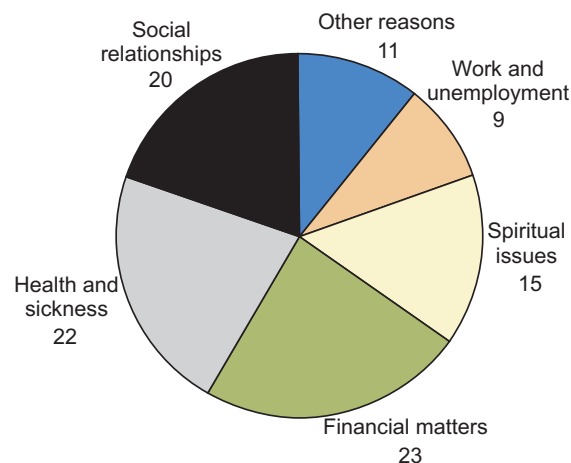
Diaconia is among the fundamental tasks of the Church. Its purpose is to offer help out of Christian charity to those whose need is greatest and who receive no other help. The diaconial work of the Church is accomplished in part through the local parishes and in the form of work done by professionally trained diaconia workers and by volunteers. However, diaconia is nowadays only one part of the extensive aid provided by officialdom and organisations. The Church frequently operates in conjunction with other aid providers in society.

In 2007 there were almost 709,000 client contacts. This includes contacts by e-mail and telephone, which together amounted to 259,000. Of the client contacts over half were with people of working age (58%) and people living alone (52%).

Gender was not recorded in all statistics, but in those where gender *was* recorded women accounted for 64 per cent.

The main cause of concern among diaconia clients was finance. Almost equally important reasons were matters pertaining to health and sickness and human relations. Other issues measured included religious issues and questions pertaining to work or unemployment.

**Figure 7.1. Client contacts in diaconial work by content in 2007 (%).**



In 2007 the measures recorded by professional diaconia workers in various client contacts were classified into five different groups. The largest of these was other help by talking with 31 per cent. The next most measures were recorded as financial assistance with 24 per cent, spiritual care and religious discussion with 20 per cent and sorting out life situations with 18 per cent. The share of healthcare measures was seven per cent. In 2007 food aid was distributed in the parishes to the value of 2.7 million Euros in some 114,000 units. The monetary value of food aid distributed through diaconial work remained unchanged since 2003. However, the number of individual food aid units clearly diminished in that time. Other financial aid was distributed to the value of 2.8 million Euros in 28,000 separate cases.

Diaconia workers visited people's homes, institutions, schools and elsewhere a total of 171,000 times in 2007. In 2007 the parishes arranged a total of 540 diaconia circles in which 6,500 people participated.

Participants in diaconia excursions totalled 83,000 and in camps 47,000. In recent years the number of volunteers participating in diaconia work has increased and in 2007 there were over 28,300 volunteers in diaconia work.

The Joint Responsibility Fundraising Campaign (Finn. *Yhteisvastuukeräys*) is the Church's major diaconia fundraising event and also the largest annual fundraising event in Finland. The first such campaign was carried through in 1950. The proceeds are used to help the needy in Finland and abroad. The aim is to provide the most concrete support possible and to help people to help themselves. This aid is given regardless of the recipients' ethnic background, religion or political conviction. Common responsibility tells of need, exerts influence in society and provides concrete aid for those in need. The collection is accomplished by 40,000 collectors all over Finland and all Finnish parishes participate.

## 7.2. Work with handicapped people

The pastoral care of handicapped people and practical service come under diaconial work. This work departs from the premise that having a handicap should never prevent anyone from participating in worship or in the life of the parish. People with handicaps are our equals, active parishioners, and only require the support specifically necessitated by the nature of their handicap. In the parishes this work is accomplished by diaconia workers while in larger cities there are specialist workers, full-time and part-time. Pastors for the deaf serve as ministers to sign language parishioners and as the pastors of the hard of hearing.

Among special needs members and their own institutions or service centres there are full-time pastors, diaconial workers and teachers for purposes of work with the handicapped. In the parishes there are meetings of groups for work with handicapped people and Church employees arrange special activities, such as groups and camps. The Church has constantly developed special confirmation classes for those with mild and severe handicaps, likewise confirmation classes using sign language.

The diaconial work of the parishes in 2007 arranged 560 groups intended for people with various handicaps. This figure has recently remained constant. Participants amounted to almost 6,600.

### **7.3. Work with substance abusers and offenders**

The point of departure for Christian work with substance abusers is recognition of the individual's unique value. The purpose of work with substance abusers is to help people seeking a meaningful and purposeful existence and to liberate them from the burden of guilt. The role of the Church in the prevention of the deleterious effects of substance abuse and in its treatment is in sustaining the message of mercy and the perspective of hope under all circumstances. The Church and the parishes are present in Finnish society as a whole and encounter people in the conditions in which they live. The Church also has extensive experience of reducing the deleterious effects of alcohol abuse. In the parishes work with substance abusers is also a separate form of work undertaken by parishes, parish unions and numerous Christian organisations.

The primary challenge in the work with substance abusers has been an increase in the deleterious effects of alcohol abuse



following an increase in alcohol consumption. Abuse of amphetamines and opiates likewise increased in the early 2000s, misuse of medications reached increasingly worrying proportions and smoking among young girls increased.

According to the research, a quarter of health care costs and less than a fifth of social care costs were incurred by the immediate deleterious effects of alcohol.

In 2007 the diaconial work of the parishes arranged 180 groups in substance abuse work and 1,400 people participated.

Work with prison inmates and other offenders is the traditional field of operations in the Church's work with offenders. Most of the work in prisons is taken care of by the local parishes. Parish pastors, church musicians and diaconial workers hold services and other devotions in prisons. In parish unions and in larger parishes there are specialized diaconial workers who focus on work with offenders.

The most significant forms of work with offenders are personal pastoral discussions with prisoners or their relatives and with recently released ex-convicts. In addition to this pastoral care is arranged in prisons and in the parishes in the form of small groups and especially diaconial and youth workers in the course of their work engaged with both people released from prison and those serving sentences entailing community service. Aftercare is among the most important areas of the Church's work with offenders.

## 7.4. The Church and society

As part of its work in society the Church participates in the social discussion and keeps the Christian perspective to the fore in that discussion, supports the bearing of social responsibility and in its work pays particular attention to issues in working life and the environment. In the parishes and parish unions work for the good

of society is usually part of diaconial work. Alternatively it constitutes its own field of operations supporting work organisations and unemployed people in transition in working life. For example, work for the good of society includes among its responsibilities work with unemployed people, work at the workplaces, environmental issues, work for society, international responsibility and work for peace and human rights and work with immigrants.

In 2007 co-operation with the associations for unemployed people was done in 36 per cent of parishes. Co-operation with the job centres was 40 per cent. The most common form of work of this nature by far was in co-operation with the municipal social and health care authorities, with 83 per cent of parishes engaged in such co-operation and 21 per cent with municipal youth work authorities. According to their own estimates 69 per cent of the parishes used budgetary funds and 37 percent collection funds to support unemployed people. Most commonly the parishes offered, either alone or in cooperation with other bodies, individual discussion help to unemployed people. Meals services, camps and excursions and indebtedness negotiations were offered in many parishes and parish unions. Meeting points and coffee rooms, good neighbour services or telephone helplines formed part of the work. Nineteen percent of parishes reported offering their premises for the use of unemployed people.

Significant changes occurred in the work of the parishes to support the unemployed. Every fifth parish reported at the end of 2007 a reduction in the work done with unemployed people. This was primarily due to a fall in the number of those unemployed and to an improvement in the employment situation. Above all there was a decrease in the number of parishes offering courses, seminars, excursions or camps for unemployed people. There was likewise a distinct decrease in the use of parish premises for the activities for unemployed people. On the other hand more parishes were

involved in personal discussion, indebtedness negotiations and telephone help for unemployed people.

There was an increase in ‘open doors’ activities; in 2007 the parishes arranged 19,000 open days and 11,000 occasions for food services. These events were attended by almost 900,000 people. Almost one third of the parishes reported that their workers had made visits to workplaces in 2007. These visits amounted to more than 2,700.

Work on the environmental programme of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland began in 2007 by going through the requirements of the diploma from the perspective of climate change. The environmental programme was completed in June 2008. It provides theological points of departure and practical recommendations to combat climate change. The main points of departure in the programme are gratitude, respect and moderation.

## 7.5. Work among immigrants

Work among immigrants welcomes into the parish people coming from outside Finland and promotes positive attitudes to multiculturalism regionally and in Finnish society as a whole. The work actively monitors the implementation of legislation and action plans regarding immigration and ethnic equality and if necessary takes a stand on immigrants’ affairs.

In 2007 the parishes had 47,200 members who were born outside Finland. In a quarter of parishes an individual or team has been appointed to be responsible for immigrants. Obviously most such parishes are situated in the metropolitan area. Appointing an individual or team to be responsible for immigrants was most common in large parishes and increased as the population of a parish increased.

## **7.6. Readiness for major 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 rendering assistance in crises and to undertake the related training. Catastrophes and serious accidents have likewise necessitated the formation of systems which can be deployed rapidly in case of need. The major catastrophes occurring in the new millennium have shown how important it is for the Church to be able to react fast in case of accident. 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.

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

During and after the great natural disaster in Asia in 2004 the most important thing for Finns was discussion through the telephone helpline. Christian pastoral care was deemed the most important subarea of crisis work in connection with possible future catastrophes. Finns reported that crisis work is part of the mission of the Church and that the proclamation of Christianity also has a place in crisis work.

## 8. MISSIONARY WORK AND INTERNATIONAL DIACONIA

- The parishes engage in foreign missionary work and international diaconal work together with the Church missionary organisations and with FinnChurch Aid (FCA).
- 374 people were involved in missionary work through the various missionary organisations. Most of these missionary workers are women. There has been a decrease in the number of missionary workers since the beginning of the 1990s.
- In the parishes there has been an increase in the various forms of voluntary activities for missionary work likewise education about missionary work and in internationalism have increased.
- In 2007 the funding raised to support the Church's missionary work and international diaconal workers was 48.9 million Euros.

### 8.1. The task of the Church in missionary work

It is the primary task of the Church mission work to participate in God's ongoing work of salvation in the world. This includes evangelizing, diaconal service, co-operation between churches and action in the cause of economic, societal and social justice. The work is accomplished in the Church's and parishes' own operating environments and throughout the world with other churches.

Foreign missionary work and international diaconal work is accomplished by the parishes together with the Church missionary organisations and FinnChurchAid. The official missionary organisations of the Church are:

- The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM, *Suomen Lähetysseura*)
- Finnish Lutheran Mission (FLM, *Suomen Evankelisluterilainen Kansanlähetyks*)

- The Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission (FLOM, *Evangelis-luterilainen Lähetyshdistys Kylväjä*)
- The Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland (LEAF, *Suomen Luterilainen Evankeliumiyhdistys*)
- Swedish Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland (SLEAF)
- The Messengers (*Sanansaattajat*)
- Finnish Bible Society (*Suomen Pibliaseura*)

Together with the missionary organisations the parishes fulfil their obligation in practical terms. The missionary organisations for their part accomplish the objectives of development co-operation. At the diocesan level the work is supported by missionary secretaries employed by the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission.

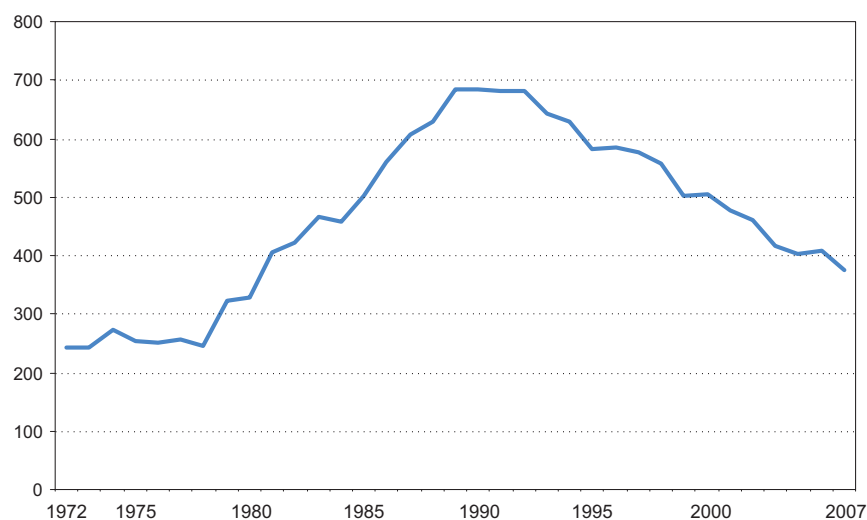
**Evangelizing work.** Evangelizing is likewise an important part of the missionary task of the Church. The task of the Church Council committee for evangelizing work is to promote the realisation of the missionary view of the parish and the Church. The committee supports parishes and Church organisations in their tasks by coordinating the discussion on evangelizing and by seeking new modes of evangelizing. The committee seeks concrete forms of implementation for bearing witness and service by the Church. The committee has recently drawn attention to ways in which immigrants and other newcomers to the parish could be welcomed into the parish. In evangelizing it is deemed important to maintain dialogue with those who for one reason and another have drifted away from the parish.

## 8.2. Missionary work

**Missionary workers.** At the end of 2007 missionary workers totalled 374. The number was at its greatest in the early 1990s, but has diminished since then. In 2007 the number was equal to what

it was at the beginning of the 1980s. In some Nordic countries the decrease in the number of missionary workers has been even greater. The church in Denmark has only 28, in Sweden 45 and in Norway 350.

**Figure 8.1. Numbers of missionary workers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland 1972-2007.**



Most missionary workers were posted to Asia, almost 120. There was a sharp decline in the number of missionary workers in Asia: in 2003 there were more than 180. There was also a clear decrease in the number of missionary workers in Africa: in 2003 there were 165, in 2007 only 104.

**Missionary organisations.** The work of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission was most extensive in Africa, where it was pursued together with the local Lutheran churches and other foreign missionary organisations. The Finnish Lutheran Mission worked on four continents – Asia, Europe, Africa and Oceania. The Finnish Lutheran Mission did missionary and development work especially in those areas to which Christianity has not yet

spread. Most of these peoples are to be found in the eastern hemisphere. The areas in which the Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission works are Bangladesh, Japan, Central Asia, South-West Asia and East Africa. The organisation moreover works with Mongols and Jews.

The Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland (LEAF) did missionary work in Japan, Kenya, Zambia, Estonia and Russia. In addition to these the organisation supports the activities of the local churches in Papua New Guinea, Malawi and South Korea. The Swedish Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland did missionary work in Kenya, Estonia and South-West Asia.

The radio missionary organisation *Sanansaattajat* supported radio programmes in 40 Asian, African and European languages. Its objective is to support Christian radio work and other media missionary broadcasting, especially in those places where traditional missionary work is difficult or impossible.

The Finnish Bible Society continued its distribution of Bibles in Finland and elsewhere in collaboration with Christian churches and communities, missionary organisations and its international central organisation the United Bible Societies. The Society publishes Bibles and related literature, develops and publicises work on the Bible and forms of using the Bible.

The work of missionary organisations consists of evangelizing and parish work, diaconial work, education, health care and administration. Many of the organisations are also involved in various development projects.

**Missionary work in the parishes.** One tenth of parishes had a full-time secretary for missionary affairs. Likewise every tenth parish had a part-time secretary for missionary affairs. The most common solution was for this work to be included in the job description of some employee. This was the way in one third of parishes. In one fourth of parishes the secretary for missionary



affairs was employed on a casual basis or on a voluntary basis. Eight per cent of parishes reported that this work had not been assigned to anyone.

There has been an increase of virtually all voluntary missionary work in the parishes since 2003. The most common of these was arranging occasions and bazaars. Four out of five parishes had missionary support groups and three out of four parishes had missionary lunches.

Practically all forms of missionary work and internationalization training increased in the parishes. The most common were missionary events and occasions, held in nine out of ten parishes. Participation in national missionary celebrations was also very common and visits by Named Delegates or other representatives of missionary work reported in four parishes out of five.

The most common forms of training in internationalization for children and young people were visits to schools, reported in 69 per cent of parishes. Visits to children's day care centres were made in one fourth of parishes.

Over 10,000 celebrations and events related to missionary work were arranged, the number of Finns participating being over half a million (550,000). There were over 1,800 missionary work groups operating in the parishes with over 21,000 members. There were 1,800 volunteer group leaders. On over 17,000 days flea markets and coffee places were open in the parishes. Volunteer missionary workers totalled almost 14,000. Almost 11,800 people were members of the missionary circles.

The value of the agreements between local parishes and missionary organisations exceeded 13.5 million Euros. The total support from the parishes for those engaging in missionary work and international diaconial work in 2007 was 48.9 million Euros. Three quarters were earmarked for the missionary organisations. Average support per parishioner was 11.3 Euros.

### 8.3. International diaconia

The organisation FinnChurchAid (FCA) serves as the umbrella organisation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and its parishes for diaconial and inter-church aid. The primary objective of FinnChurchAid is to reduce poverty and safeguard the basic rights of all people. According to the principles of the Church's diaconia the mission of FinnChurchAid is to help those people who are not helped by anyone else and to go to those places where others do not go. Administratively FCA is a foundation operating in conjunction with the Church Council for International Relations. It works in an international network in which its main co-operation partners are the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches and the churches' international catastrophe fund Action by Churches Together (ACT).

In development co-operation FinnChurchAid together with the local organisations and churches helps the poorest of the poor to improve their living conditions themselves. Of paramount importance on their programme is ensuring the commitment of the local population to the completion of the work. The objective is that this way the programmes can safeguard the basic needs of all members of the community, such as sufficient food, clean water, primary health care and education. FCA aid for catastrophes and refugees ensures that the basic needs of victims of war and natural disasters are met and also that they can cope with future calamities. In its work for refugees FCA develops not only emergency aid but also works to make repatriation possible. In interchurch co-operation FCA helps young churches to achieve financial and functional independence. In work for human rights and peace it promotes peace and justice in such a way that people can enjoy freedom to express their own religions, cultures and political convictions.

In the recent years FCA invested in intensifying co-operation with ecumenical aid organisations and Action by Churches Together (ACT) progressed. The share of influence and significance was also increased. In this way the operations of FCA have developed from charitable interventions towards exerting influence and changing the world in a direction which its own values and choices have a greater influence, for example on climate, trade, immigration and security policy.

Since 2003 the familiarity of FinnChurchAid increased more than that of any other aid organisation. This was facilitated by improving communications, marketing and fundraising.

The last four years have witnessed a marked development in FinnChurchAid. The financial resources of the organisation increased from some 18 million Euros to around 24 million Euros, making it Finland's largest development co-operation organisation and the second biggest implementer of humanitarian aid.

This signifies an increase in revenues from both the state and the parishes, but above all a marked increase in the support coming from the private sector. In recent years the support for FCA from private individuals increased by well over one hundred per cent.

## 9. ECUMENICAL RELATIONS AND MINISTRY TO FINNS ABROAD

- The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is an ecumenically active church. Theological negotiations with ecumenical partner churches were continued, likewise other extensive ecumenical contacts between churches.
- The Church had regular contacts with almost all other Christian churches and Christian organisations in Finland. Of the parishes more than half (53%) arranged ecumenical activity.
- Most (70%) of the parishes had twin parish activities with a foreign Lutheran parish. Most often such a twinning agreement was made with Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia.
- The temporary nature of moving abroad, the life situations of families, the ageing emigrant population and increasing tourism presented new challenges for ministry to Finns abroad.

### 9.1. Ecumenism in Finland

The efforts by Christian churches and organisations to achieve co-operation and contact are implemented on several different levels. The ecumenical activity and religious dialogue appears in the work of the Church as a whole: the dioceses, the parishes, the missionary organisations and the Finnish Ecumenical Council. Significant from the perspective of the manifestation of co-operation and ecumenical work are also the joint devotions offered in time of crisis and the ecumenical conduct of state worship. Since 1964 The Ecumenical Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has been celebrated in Finland. The 850<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Church in Finland was recently celebrated in collaboration with all the churches and Christian organisations in Finland.

**Ecumenical activities in local parishes.** More than half of the parishes (53%) were engaged in ecumenical activities in 2007; of the rural parishes 43 per cent and of the urban parishes 66 per cent. The larger the parish the more ecumenical activity there was. Thus in parishes with over 16,000 members ecumenical activity was arranged in 83 per cent, and in parishes with fewer than 4,000 members ecumenical activity was arranged in 37 per cent.

The parishes co-operate with various Christian organisations in their areas in many different ways. The most common co-operation in 2007 was with those Christian churches having regular activities in the area of the parish. The Roman Catholic Church engaged in co-operation with only few parish areas, but over a fifth of parishes reported co-operating with it. There was most co-operation with the Orthodox Church (61% of parishes), the Pentecostal Church (55% of parishes) and the Free Church of Finland (36% of parishes).

Most regular activity in the area of the parish was with the Pentecostal Church (69%), the Orthodox Church (31%) and the Free Church (28%).

The most common forms of ecumenical activity were arranging joint events (42% of parishes), visiting speakers (38%), sharing premises (36%) and meetings between employees of the parishes (26%). Of the Lutheran parishes 28 per cent reported arranging events in Christian Unity Week with other churches. However, only eight per cent of parishes reported having engaged in co-operation in the implementation of Responsibility Week. Co-operation of the Christian churches and movements functions well as 97 per cent of parishes reported that there had been no friction in 2007.

**Bilateral contacts in Finland.** The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland had regular contacts with almost all other churches and Christian organisations in Finland, especially through the Finnish

Ecumenical Council. The eighth round of theological negotiations was held with the Finnish Orthodox Church in Joensuu in February 2007. The themes of these negotiations were “Holiness and Striving” and “Violence in the Family and Close Relationships”.

Contacts to the Evangelical Free Church of Finland and to the Pentecostal movement have become established through the work of joint advisory boards. Convene these twice a year to share information on topical issues, to discuss themes of interest to either party and to plan joint operations. Doctrinal discussions with the Finnish and Swedish-speaking Baptist Unions in Finland continued. In 2006 the theme of the fourth dialogue was “The Communion of Saints, Church, Parish and Chances for Contact”. The negotiations resulted in a shared understanding on forms of joint activity.

The negotiations with the Finnish and Swedish speaking (United) Methodist Churches in Finland started in 2002 and were concluded in 2007. The outcome of the negotiations was the signing of a joint document *Participating in Christ*. The document recommended an agreement between Lutherans and Methodists on Communion and on reciprocal recognition of each other’s ministries.

The leaders of the Church Council meet annually with the representatives of the Finnish and Swedish-speaking Free Church Council.

**The Finnish Ecumenical Council.** The Finnish Ecumenical Council (FEC), chaired by Archbishop Jukka Paarma, is the ecumenical organ of co-operation for the churches, Christian organisations and parishes. Its purpose is to promote efforts towards visible Christian unity and to strengthen Christian unity, service and bearing witness. The significance of the Finnish Ecumenical Council has been emphasised in recent years also as

an actor in society. The divisions carry a great deal of the responsibility. The Ecumenical Council has 11 member churches and organisations and 20 observer members. In 2007 it celebrated 90 years of operation. The Secretary General until 2006 was the Rev. Jan Edström of the Finnish Baptist Mission and since 2006 Heikki Huttunen of the Finnish Orthodox Church.

The annual plans and operations of FEC include a week of prayer for Christian unity, which has achieved an established position in many parishes, as well as the churches' Joint Responsibility Week, which is celebrated in many parishes (see also Chapter 7.4. Church and Society). Since the beginning of 2006 responsibility for arranging this was transferred as a result of negotiations between FinnChurchAid and the FEC to the FEC. As agreed the FCA continues to organise the campaign and participates in its implementation. The tasks allotted to the FEC include preparations for the proclamation of ecumenical prayer day in collaboration with the Office of the President of the Republic of Finland. It was decided to reform the tradition in such a way that the prayer days of the Lutheran Church are days of Prayer for Christian Unity in January and of peace, human rights and international responsibility in October.

The ecumenical discussion on mission work advanced in November 2005 when the Mission Day was arranged for the first time ecumenically. At the time of the World Athletics Championships in Helsinki almost thirty local organisations that same year arranged an evangelism campaign More than Gold. The campaign organisers requested permission to use the FEC-approved Ecumenical Good Practices document to guide their operations. Thus rules of play laid down ecumenically had a wider area of application in the evangelism.

In summer 2007 the plight of asylum seekers and their treatment in Finland became a subject of public discussion. On the basis of the Finnish Ecumenical Council's publication *The Church*

as a Refuge two parishes decided to offer sanctuary and support to asylum seekers living under threat of deportation. There was discussion in the media regarding the relation of the Church to the law and legal authority. Connections between the churches and the national immigration authorities strengthened. Later the Church as a refuge action received two national peace prizes.

The Finnish Ecumenical Council autumn meeting of 2007 addressed the ecumenical significance of the Finnish Reformer Mikael Agricola to churches operating in Finland.

## 9.2. International ecumenical relations

**A member of the Lutheran World Federation.** In 2007 there were 71.8 million Lutheran Christians, of whom 68.3 million belonged to the 140 member churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). At the Ninth General Assembly (2003) at Winnipeg, Canada, Bishop Eero Huovinen and Ms. Riikka Myllys were elected to the LWF Council. In 2007 the organisation celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Lund, Sweden. The main address was delivered by President Martti Ahtisaari. The Church Council for International Relations serves as the Finnish national committee.

The talks in Geneva about the restructuring of the ecumenical movement in 2005 were attended by representatives of the Church Council for International Relations, mission organisations of the Church and FinnChurchAid.

**Relations to international ecumenical organisations.** The World Council of Churches (WCC) comprises 340 member churches and held its ninth general assembly in February 2006 in Porto Alegre, Brazil. The theme of the assembly was “God in Your Mercy, Change the World”. For the first time consensus was used as the method of making decisions, and this was recorded in the rules of the WCC. The traditional message of the World Council of



Churches was aimed primarily at ecumenical churches and for the first time it was made into a prayer on behalf of Church unity.

Bishop Simo Peura and the Rev Secretary for Theology Aaro Rytönen were elected from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland to the Central Committee of WCC which between assemblies wields the supreme decision-making power. From the Finnish Orthodox Church, Father Heikki Huttunen and MTh Outi Vasko were also elected, the latter also being elected to the Executive Committee and chair of the newly founded youth commission.

In the initiative of the WCC, the Churches are celebrating between 2001–2010 The Decade for Overcoming Violence (DOV). The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland participated in the DOV by holding a campaign “From Violence to Reconciliation”, selecting as its focal point those issues in Finland in which intervention is desired. These were domestic violence, the culture of violence in the world of children and young people, racism and dislike of foreigners. During the period of the report the Conference of European Churches (CEC) functioned as an ecumenical organisation with 126 Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, other Protestant and Old Catholic churches. The organisation has offices in Geneva, Brussels and Strasbourg. The joint EU contact person of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and Church of Sweden, Ms. Elina Eloranta works in the Church and Society Commission (CSC) office in Brussels.

The Central Committee of the CEC had three Finnish members. Besides Rector Tapani Rantala, the Rev. Veikko Purmonen from the Finnish Orthodox Church and Archbishop Long from the Russian Orthodox Church were members of the Committee. In 2007 the CEC Commission on Churches in Dialogue set up a two-year research project on dialogues between the Orthodox and other CEC member churches. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland seconded the project which was coordinated by a Finnish researcher, Dr. Kaisamari Hintikka.

Among the most significant ecumenical events of 2007 was the Third European Ecumenical Assembly (EEA3). The Assembly was arranged in conjunction with the Council of the Catholic Bishops of Europe and CEC. The theme of the EEA3 was “The Light of Christ Shines upon Us All. Hope for Renewal and Unity in Europe”. At the Assembly held in Sibiu, Romania there was strong representation from the delegation with young people, laypersons and women, and preparations were made in collaboration with the Finnish Orthodox Church and the Catholic Diocese of Helsinki.

With the cessation of the Nordic Ecumenical Council in 2003, the Ecumenical Institute for the North founded by the Sigtuna Foundation, has organized idea forums on an annual basis since 2004. The Churches of Sweden and Finland made a considerable contribution to the startup of the Institute by pledging funding for the first three years. The co-operation currently takes place in the framework of the Sveriges Kristna Råd, *Ekumenik i Norden*.

**Theological negotiations and other connections.** The theological doctrinal discussions arranged since 1970 with the Russian Orthodox Church were continued in autumn 2005 in Turku. The subject for the dialogue was “The Christian Conception of the Human Being in Today’s Europe. Salvation, Faith and Modern Society”. The negotiators arrived at 24 shared theses on the Christian conception of the human being and the challenges faced by the churches in the modern society.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Church of Sweden began doctrinal discussions with representatives of the Catholic Dioceses of Helsinki and Stockholm in 2002. The negotiations were scheduled to last for five years and the theme selected concerned unresolved issues in The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of the Justification (JDDJ), Justification in the Life of the Church (1999). Regardless of original plans, the negotiations

have lasted until 2009 and the final report will be published in 2010. The shared St. Henrik's Mass of Lutherans and Catholics in Rome has become a significant event in the week of prayer for Christian unity. A joint service was celebrated regularly every year in such a way that in alternate years the service was celebrated by a bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and a Catholic bishop. The same practice was used with the sermon preached at that service.

In recent years theological contacts between Lutherans and Anglicans have been active in the Porvoo church fellowship. In 2005, the first international gathering was arranged in cooperation with the CEC in which the theological identity of the churches of the Porvoo Agreement was discussed with representatives of the Orthodox Churches. In January 2006, a consultation was held in London on the nature of diaconate on the basis of the commitment formulated in the Porvoo Common Statement "to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry". The leaders of the Porvoo Churches convened at Cardiff in Wales in March 2006. In December 2007 the Church of Sweden invited representatives of the Porvoo Churches to inform each other about their attitudes to same-sex relationships. Domestic co-operation with the Anglican Church intensified in the larger cities.

The development in co-operation between the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Finland and Namibia was favourable and knowledge about each other increased considerably due to intensified contacts. A delegation of the Finnish Church led by the Archbishop visited Namibia and South Africa in April 2006. The co-operation agreement between the Lutheran Churches of Finland and Namibia dates from 2001. Besides this, the Dioceses of Helsinki and Espoo had a co-operation agreement with the Western Diocese of the Church of Namibia. The Diocese of Tampere has a co-operation agreement with the Eastern Diocese of Namibia.

**Work with twin parishes.** Work with twin parishes is an important part of the international relations of the local parishes of the Church. The purpose of twin parish activity is to promote contacts between churches, parishes and their members as well as growth in Christian faith and service. Relations with twin parishes are independently maintained bilateral relations between parishes, parish unions, deaneries and dioceses. The Church Department for International Relations supports parishes in making agreements, in funnelling financial aid and by organising seminars for those responsible for the work. It also maintains a list of twinning relations contracted between parishes in the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Ingria, Hungary, Estonia and Latvia and the Diocese of St. Petersburg of the Russian Orthodox Church. In addition to these, the local parishes and dioceses have international twin relations with other churches e.g. in Sweden, Germany and Namibia.

In 2007, most of the parishes (70%) engaged in twin parish activities with a foreign Lutheran church. The more populous the parish the more international twin activities it had. In addition to this, four per cent of parishes reported having twin parish activity with another, non-Lutheran, parish abroad.

The parishes had most twin parish activities with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (59%) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia (55%). There were also agreements with the Lutheran Church of Hungary (18%), the Church of Sweden (9%), the Lutheran Churches in Germany (7%) and the Russian Orthodox Church. The parishes moreover reported a large number of individual twin parish agreements.

Most of the parishes (60%) reported that their twin activities entailed financial support. Of the urban parishes, this was the case in 71 per cent, and in the rural parishes, 51 per cent of twin parish relations. In both, a further ten per cent of parishes reported that the support was of other than financial nature. The amounts of support reported varied from a few dozen Euros to several thousand Euros. About 20 parishes reported that the amount of aid

exceeded ten thousand Euros. At a meeting arranged with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in 2005 it was found that there were almost 40 construction projects ongoing in the Ingrian parishes for which support was applied for mostly from Finland. Financially the biggest projects were the renovation of the church in Petrozavodsk and the building of the organ of St. Mary's Church in St. Petersburg.

### 9.3. Ministry to Finns abroad

At present there are about 1.3 million ethnic Finns living outside Finland. Ministry to Finns abroad is supported and coordinated by the Church Council for International Relations.

Ministry to Finns abroad is concerned on the one hand with old Finnish parishes outside Finland. They are organised as a part of the local Lutheran Church. On the other hand nowadays the emphasis is on new emigrants living abroad for a shorter time and with the challenges of young families and increasing work with tourists. The work has been accomplished to a large extent by interchurch co-operation and with help of the local Lutheran churches and parishes. The work with Finns abroad is accomplished in collaboration with the Finnish Seamen's Mission and the missionary organisations.

Sweden was quantitatively clearly the largest field of Finns abroad. There were almost 100 employers (pastors and other positions) for the Finnish ministry through the Church of Sweden. Pastors have recently been recruited for sister churches, and for ministry to Finns especially in Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Canada and the USA. In 2007 two new pastors were appointed as migrant and tourist pastors in Spain and Estonia.

Tourist pastors and church musicians were serving at holiday resorts abroad. During the winter season 2006 – 2007 fourteen employees (pastors and church musicians) served the seasonal ministry at holiday resorts abroad.

## 10. REVIVALIST MOVEMENTS AND ORGANISATIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH

- The distribution of the revivalist movements remains mostly unchanged. Most activities were arranged by the Conservative Laestadians, the Finnish Lutheran Mission, the Awakening Movement and the Lutheran Evangelical Movement.
- One tenth of Finns belong to some revivalist movement, a further tenth reports being influenced by their thinking.
- Over half of Church employees (53%) belong to some revivalist movement.
- Nine out of ten parishes considered that their co-operation with the revivalist movements was going well.

### 10.1. Revivalist movements as part of the Church's activities

Several revivalist movements operate in the sphere of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The term “revivalist movement” has generally been used to mean a Church reform movement. The movements traditionally included among the revivalists have been the Laestadians, the Prayer Movement, the Awakened, the Lutheran Evangelical Movement and what is known as a “Fifth Revival Movement”. In recent years there has also been a Charismatic Movement operating through several organisations.

The revivalist movements in Finnish society in one way or another touch the lives of a large number of Finns. They have spread throughout the country. According to the Church Monitor Survey 2004 a tenth (11%) of Finns reported belonging to some revivalist movement and in addition to one tenth of respondents reported that their thinking had been influenced by them. Of parish employees over half (53%) reported belonging to some movement.

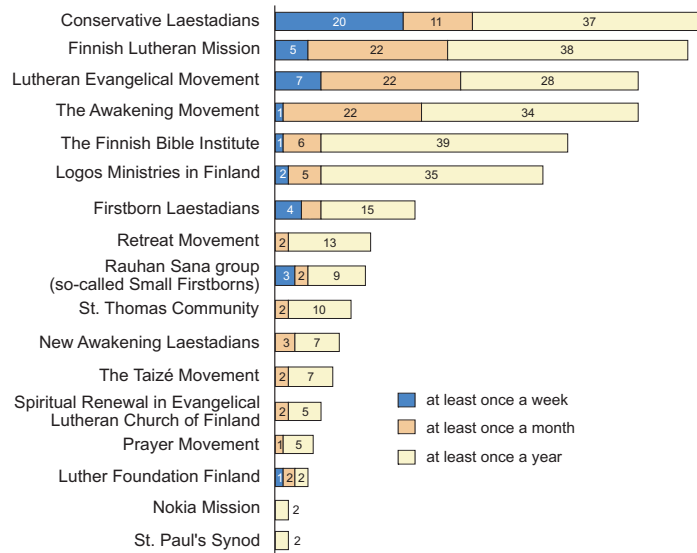
The revivalist movements are active in exerting influence in the Church. Most of their members participate actively in Church activities. There are many of them in commissions of trust in the Church, both on the local level and in the national level of the Church and in the voluntary work of the Church. From the revivalist movements a great number of young people apply for training which would qualify them to work for the Church. The contribution of the revivalist movements is also significant in youth work and publishing. The revivalist movements articulate views on decisions taken by the Church, and in recent years increasingly also together.

In addition to the revivalist movements, many church organisations and foundations operate in collaboration with the Church. Among other things they engage in missionary work, diaconial work, evangelizing work, work with children and young people and publishing. The organisations also have an important role in the training of Church employees.

## **10.2. Extent of revivalist movements and organisations**

The majority of the revivalist movements remain unchanged in their extent. The biggest of them are the Conservative Laestadians and the Finnish Lutheran Mission with activities at least once a year in two out of three parishes. The Conservative Laestadians are the most active in their activities with weekly meetings in every fifth parish. The next most extensive movements are the Awakened (58% of parishes) and the Lutheran Evangelical Movement (57%). The Lutheran Evangelical Movement has monthly activity in less than one third of parishes (29%), and the Lutheran Pietistic Folk Movement in a quarter of parishes (24%).

**Figure 10.1. Activities of revivalist movements and organizations in the areas of the parishes in 2007 (% of parishes).**



### 10.3. The Prayer Movement

The Prayer Movement (*rukoilevaisuus*) is the oldest of the revivalist movements originating in the revivals of the 1700s and 1800s in the West of Finland and the province of Satakunta. In keeping with the tenets of Pietism personal faith occupied an important position. Devotional literature and collections of songs were important in the popular revival.

It was characteristic of the movement to stress prayer, which is also reflected in the current activities of the movement. Praying upon one's knees was also used. The movement sustains tradition by retaining old prayer books and hymnals, such as the 17<sup>th</sup> century order of service and the 18<sup>th</sup> century hymnal. Alongside these, new texts and hymnbooks have also been adopted.

Throughout its history the movement has exerted influence in the province of Satakunta and the south-west of Finland. In 2007 the movement had activity once a year in at least six per cent of parishes. Monthly activity was reported in only one per cent of



parishes. Two per cent of parish workers belonged to the Prayer Movement. Eight per cent reported their thinking having been influenced by it. In the 1980s the movement split into two over the discussion on the ordination of women. Membership of the two groups amounts to some two hundred.

## 10.4. The Laestadians

The Laestadian revivalist movement came into being in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. It spread largely due to the spiritual reforming and preaching of the Swedish-born cleric Lars Levi Laestadius (1800-1861). The movement spread to the northern parts of Finland, Sweden and Norway. It has continued with several divisions, of which it is estimated that at least 15 are active in Finland. What they all have in common is proclaiming repentance and mercy and the view that all believers within the movement can proclaim the forgiveness of sins. Some of the movements include guidance on way of life in their teaching regarding clothing, music or alcohol consumption.

The dominant direction is Conservative Laestadianism, to which it is believed that at least 100,000 people subscribe. The parent organization of the Laestadians is the Central Committee of Conservative Laestadian Congregations. (*Suomen Rauhaniyhdistysten Keskusyhdistys*) The main forms of action were proclaiming the Word and spiritual care, work with children and young people and publishing. In 2007 the Conservative Laestadians had activities in two thirds (68%) of parishes. With migration the traditional northern revivalist movement has also gained a foothold in southern Finland.

The Church Monitor Survey 2004 showed that the Conservative Laestadians were the best known revivalist movement. Three out of four Finns knew of the movement even if they did not belong to it. More than two per cent of Finns reported belonging either

closely or loosely to the Conservative Laestadian movement. Among those under the age of 25 the movement had more influence than any other movement. Among Church employees two per cent reported belonging to the Conservative Laestadian movement while five per cent reported that it has influenced their thinking. The Conservative Laestadians had 195 local associations. In 2007 these local associations had a total of some 34,100 members.

The other main Laestadian groups are the Firstborn Laestadians with a membership of some 5,000 in 2007, the Laestadian New Awakening with 1,250 adherents and the Small Firstborns with about 900.

## 10.5. The Awakening Movement

The Awakening Movement came into being in the provinces of Savolax and Ostrobothnia on the basis of the folk revivals in the 1700s and 1800s. The peasant Paavo Ruotsalainen (1777-1852) emerged as the leading light of the movement. The Awakening Movement addresses sensitive and yearning faith. The movement stresses the greatness of God and the smallness of Man. Mercy is to be offered to all and personal experiences of faith are not elicited.

In 2007 the Awakening Movement had activity at least once a year in 58 per cent of parishes (63% in 2003). There was monthly activity in approximately a quarter of parishes (24%). The Awakening Movement is the most common reference group for the spiritual workers of the parishes. Of parish employees 16 per cent belonged to the movement. The membership of the parent organization (Herättäjä-Yhdistys) was under 6,000 at the end of 2007.

## 10.6. The Lutheran Evangelical Movement

There is a connection between the Lutheran Evangelical Movement and The Awakening Movement. Fredrik Gabriel Hedberg (1811-1893), who rose to be influential in the Lutheran Evangelical Movement broke away from the Awakening Movement having arrived at different religious views. In place of the yearning of the Awakening Movement, Hedberg stressed the certainty of salvation and of possessing faith. Evangelism became a movement in its own right in the 1870s and 1880s.

In the thinking of the Lutheran Evangelical Movement all has been made ready in the work of Christ, Heaven is open and sins forgiven. In place of the personal faith and rebirth stressed in Pietism, The Lutheran Evangelical Movement stressed the salvation already prepared by Christ. This gift of ready salvation was to be given indiscriminately to all. Baptism was perceived to ensure partaking of reconciliation.

In 2007 The Lutheran Evangelical Movement arranged activity in over half (57%) of parishes. There was monthly activity in 29 per cent of parishes. One tenth (11%) of spiritual parish employees felt that they belonged to the The Lutheran Evangelical Movement.

The parent organisation of the The Lutheran Evangelical Movement is the Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland (LEAF) (*Suomen Luterilainen Evankeliumiyhdistys*) with over 2,400 members in 2007. There were almost 11,700 members in local associations.

In recent years there has been lively discussion in the Lutheran Evangelical Movement on women in the priesthood. No consensus has been found regarding official appointments between parties representing differing views. As a result of this the evangelicals who accept women as priests established their own association in 2008 (*Evankelinen lähetisyhdistys*, ELY).

Swedish-language evangelical activities are arranged by the *Svenska Lutherska Evangeliföreningen* with some 1,100 members.

## 10.7. The Fifth Revival Movement

This movement, which came into being after the Second World War stresses personal faith and repentance in the Pietist tradition. Evangelizing and reaching out to people with the Christian message are important to the movement. The movement operates through several organisations of which the most significant are the Finnish Lutheran Mission (*Suomen Evankelisluterilainen Kansanlähetyks*), the Finnish Bible Institute (*Suomen Raamattuopisto*) and the Logos Ministries in Finland (*Kansan Raamattuseura*). Although a relatively new organization, its activities have spread over a wide area.

The Finnish Lutheran Mission in 2007 arranged activities at least once a year in two out of three parishes (66%). There was monthly activity in 28 per cent of parishes. The movement's association had 3,140 members. The individual members were in local associations whose friendship letter has a circulation of over 18,000 (in 2006).

In 2007 the Finnish Bible Institute in 2007 has activities at least once a year in 45 per cent of parishes and at least once a month in seven per cent of parishes. The Friends of the Finnish Bible Institute included 2,690 paying members.

The Logos Ministries in Finland have activities in 42 per cent of parishes at least once a year, with monthly activity in seven per cent of parishes. The Logos Ministries in Finland do not have members as such but rather informal support networks for workers. They included some 19,000 people.

## 10.8. The Charismatic Movement

The Charismatic Movement has spread to the parishes since the 1970s. The movement stresses the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as the healing of sickness, prophesying and speaking in tongues. In the parishes the activities of the Charismatic Movement have in part taken the form of so-called Word and Prayer evenings. The parent organisation of the charismatic tendency has been the Spiritual Renewal in Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. In 2007 this organisation had activities at least once a year in seven per cent of parishes and monthly activities in two per cent of parishes. Registered members of the organisation numbered some 700.

In recent years the charismatic movement within the Church has been brought to public notice especially by the Nokia Mission. The movement had activities at least once a year in two per cent of parishes.

For some years there has been tension between the Nokia Mission and the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The situation led among other things to additional bishop's inspections and to the suspension of the leader of the movement from his clerical post.

In spring 2008 it was announced that the Nokia Mission was to found its own church and that the clerics leading the movement would relinquish their employment with the Church. The reason evinced for breaking away from the Church was that in the Lutheran Church the authority was no longer derived from the Bible but from human preferences. Another reason given concerned matters of communality. For example, it has been possible to celebrate Holy Communion only seldom and the movement wished to offer its own baptism.

## 10.9. Other movements and organisations

For twenty years now **The St. Thomas Mass** has been celebrated in Finland. The masses of the St. Thomas Community combine modern spirituality and the old church tradition. The music is likewise from both old hymns and new music. A wide variety of volunteers participate in the mass. The St. Thomas Mass calls especially those who are searching and those who, like the Apostle Thomas, have doubts. In 2007 The St. Thomas Mass was celebrated at least once a year in only some tenth (12%) of parishes, with monthly masses in two per cent. At the end of 2007 the St. Thomas community has some 1,000 members.

**The Taizé Community** founded by Fr. Roger is an ecumenical order with members from several countries and denominations. It endeavours to present the image of unity and a concrete sign of reconciliation between the nations of a divided Christianity. A large number of young people from different countries have visited Taizé.

The Taizé Movement, which spread to Finland from France, arranged activities on an annual basis in every tenth parish (9%). It has monthly activity in two per cent of parishes.

**The Finnish Retreat Association** has operated in Finland since the end of the 1980s. It endeavours to promote the practice of silence and retreat and maintains contact with various denominations and Christian bodies engaging in silence and retreat. The Finnish Retreat Association arranged activities at least once a year in 15 per cent of parishes in Finland. There was activity on a monthly basis in two per cent of parishes.

**The Luther Foundation Finland** emphasizes the Lutheran confession. Its main modes of activity include worship and publishing. The Luther Foundation Finland arranged activities at

least once a year in five per cent of parishes, and at least once a month in three per cent of parishes.

There is a close connection between the founding of the Luther Foundation Finland and the ordaining of women as pastors, which the Foundation does not accept. The movement has given rise to discussion in Finland, among other reasons because some of its pastors, who do not have the rights of clerics in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, have baptised children.

### **10.10. Collaboration between the revivalist movements and the parish**

The parishes and revivalist movements engage in many kinds of collaboration. Parish employees participate in the events arranged by the movements, the parishes put their premises at the disposal of the revivalist movements and make allocations from their budgets to the revivalist movements and organisations. The most common way for the clergy to participate was in activities arranged by the Awakening Movement, The Lutheran Evangelical Movement and the Finnish Lutheran Mission. Members of the clergy participated in such events in two out of three parishes.

In parish youth work collaboration was reported most with the Lutheran Evangelical Movement, in almost half of parishes. Every third parish engaged in youth work collaboration with the Logos Ministries in Finland and the Finnish Lutheran Mission. The parishes generally put their meeting facilities at the disposal of the revivalist movements free of charge. The Conservative Laestadians had most meeting facilities of their own, in approximately a quarter of parishes (24%). The Evangelical Movement had its own facilities in 16 per cent of parishes and the Firstborn Laestadians in six per cent of parishes. Other movements has their own premises in only a few per cent of parishes or then not at all.

In most cases collaboration between the parishes and the revivalist movement or church organisations works well. Nine out of ten parishes (89%) reported no conflicts with the revivalist movements. Friction between the parishes and revivalist movements was experienced in different ways in different-sized parishes. Of rural parishes only seven per cent reported friction with revivalist movements, in urban parishes 15 per cent.

The organisations themselves mostly described collaboration with the parishes as functioning satisfactorily. Out of 15 revivalist movements or organisations, 14 described collaboration as mostly functioning satisfactorily.

The parishes also engaged in co-operation with other than Christian organisations, bodies and communities. Almost all the parishes engaged in co-operation with organisations of war veterans and pensioners. There has been an increase in common activities with both types of organisation since 2003.



## 11. PERSONNEL, TRAINING AND PEOPLE HOLDING COMMISSIONS OF TRUST

- In 2007 there were almost 21,400 people employed by the Church. Measure in terms of person-years 51 per cent were working in the parishes. Of all employees 66 per cent were employed on a permanent basis.
- Women accounted for 71 per cent of employees, men for 29 per cent. Among parish lectors, those working with children, diaconal workers, administrative and clerical workers the share of women is considerable.
- Pastors in parishes in 2007 numbered almost 2,300.
- Every year over 5,000 students are trained in higher education institutions and vocational schools for Church professions.
- Most of the people holding commissions of trust in the Church are over the age of 50. Those under the age of 30 accounted for seven per cent.

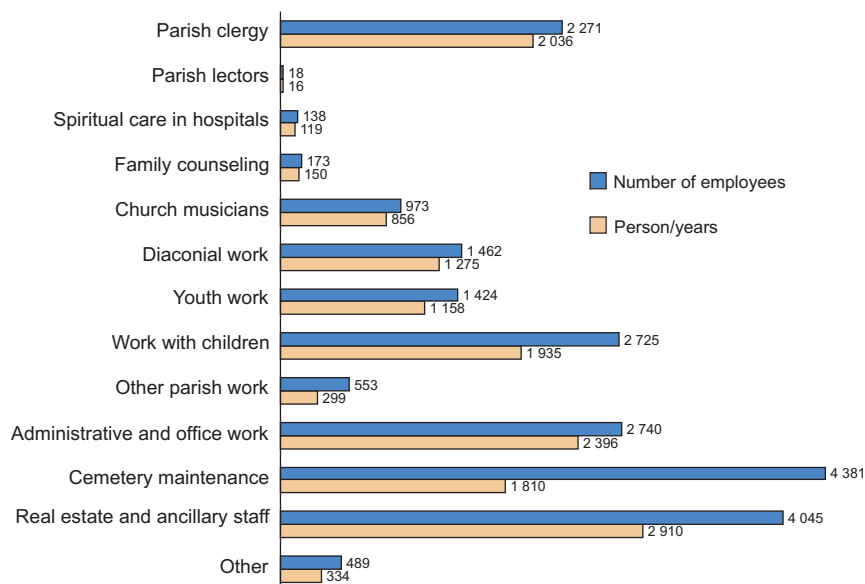
### 11.1. Personnel structure

In 2007 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland employed a total of 21,392 people. In terms of person-years this makes 15,295. Of those employed by the Church 48 per cent were in permanent posts and 52 per cent on normal contracts. Of workers, 46 per cent (9,737) work in the parishes.

**Gender structure.** The share of women among Church employees increased in almost all personnel groups. In 2007 women accounted for 71 per cent of employees, men for 29 per cent. The share of women in the employee group as a whole has gradually increased. Ten years earlier the share of women was 68 per cent. There was also an increase in the number of women among parish pastors, amounting in 2007 to 37 per cent. In ten years the share of women among the clergy has clearly increased; ten years ago it

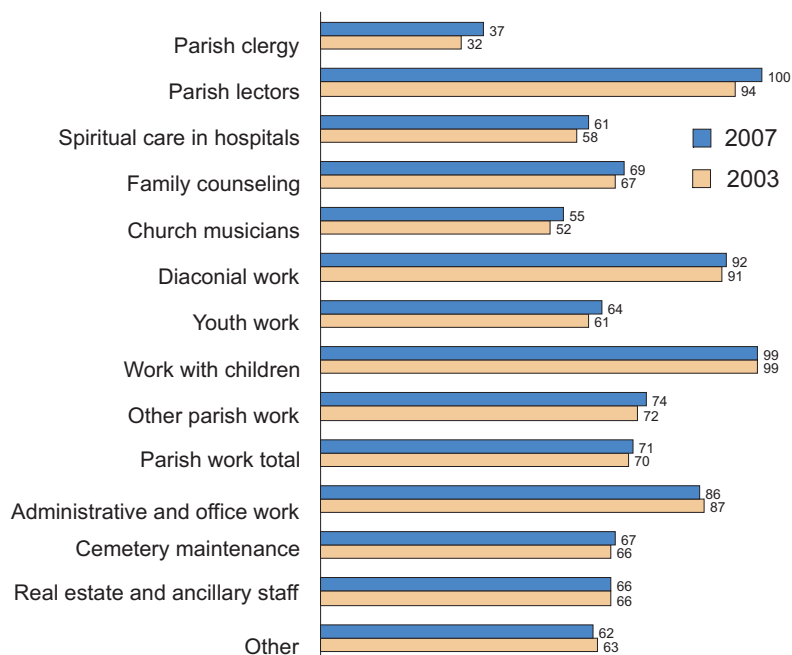
was 23 per cent. Of the clergy in the parishes among those aged 34 or less women were in the majority. The share of women among theology students has been growing for several years, which would suggest a further increase in their representation among the parish clergy in the future.

**Figure 11.1. Church personnel by tasks in 2007. Commission for Church Employers.**



The share of women in educational work is considerable: in the group of those working with children women accounted for 99 per cent and among youth workers a growth trend in the number of women was discernible: they accounted for 64 per cent.

**Figure 11.2. Share of women of the Church personnel by task group in 2003 and 2007. (%) Commission for Church Employers.**

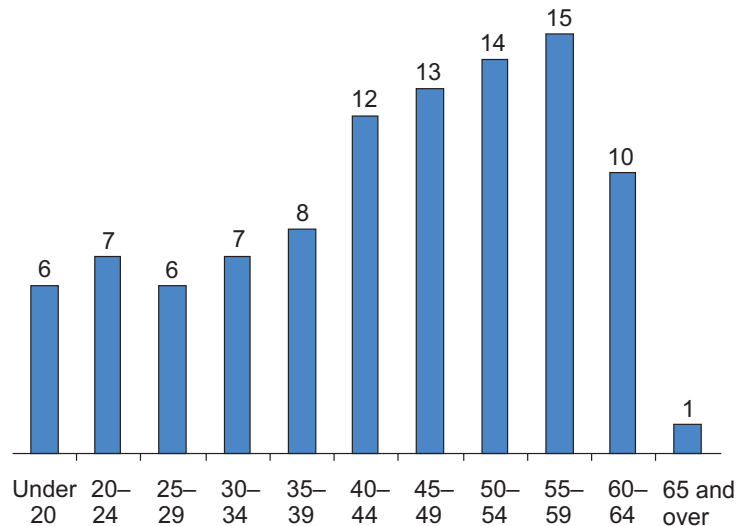


**Age structure.** At the end of 2007 the average age of Church employees was 48.3 years. In the years to come the Church will face a growing recruitment problem as the big age groups reach retirement age. The younger age groups are clearly less numerous than those about to retire, moreover many of those studying for Church careers end up in tasks other than the Church.

At the end of 2007 the total number of permanent parish employees was 11,292.

A quarter of Church employees (26%) were under 35 years old. This was a slight decrease from 2003, when 28% were under 35. Of workers in the parishes the share of those under 35 was 25 per cent. Employees at least 50 years old amounted to 40 per cent (37% in 2003). Parish workers over 50 amounted to 38 per cent.

**Figure 11.3. Age distribution of Church personnel in 2007. (%).**  
**Commission for Church Employers.**



## 11.2. Training for positions in the Church and the situation of the workforce

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

**Training of theologians.** Studies conferring eligibility for a pastor or lector of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland can be taken in the theological faculties of the Universities of Helsinki, Joensuu and Åbo Akademi.

According to research on theological studies theologians generally find work placements easily. Of those who graduate

about half find employment with the parishes and some ten per cent in organisation close to the Church and other organisations.

In the period 2004-2007 those ordained as priests numbered 456. This was an increase (389 in the period 2000-2003). Three out of five (60%) of those ordained were women (58% in the period 2000-2003). The clergy as a whole in 2007 numbered 4,305.

**Training as a Church musician.** The higher university degree conferring eligibility to serve as a Church musician can be taken at the Sibelius Academy on the degree programme for Church musicians in Helsinki and at the Kuopio facility. The polytechnic degree in the field of culture (option in Church music, musician) can be taken in Tampere, Oulu and Pietarsaari (Swedish-language).

There has been a decrease in the numbers of those applying for training as Church musicians. There was in particular a shortage of Swedish-speaking applicants and at times it was difficult to fill posts in small rural parishes.

**Training for diaconial and youth work.** Training as diaconial workers (deacons and deaconesses) and a youth workers is offered in the polytechnics (universities of applied sciences). The Diaconia Polytechnic (Diak) is the largest of the institutions offering such training. The number of applicants for training as deacons and youth workers has remained at an adequate level, but there has been a clear drop in the number of those applying for education as deaconesses.

**Teaching in early childhood education.** The qualification conferring eligibility for work with children (basic qualification in working with families and children) is a second level qualification in humanities and education. During the period 2004-2007 over 1,100 people qualified, 98 per cent of them women.

**Training as vergers of the Church.** During the period 2004-2007 a total of almost 300 people completed the qualification to be vergers. The professional qualification as verger has gradually established its position. When a verger seeks employment it is generally stipulated that the applicant has already completed this training or that he or she undertakes to do so. Like vocational qualifications, the studies are taken in close collaboration with working life.

**Mission secretary.** The training conferring eligibility for a post as a mission secretary can be linked to a polytechnic degree conferring eligibility for a post in diaconial work or as a Church youth worker. In such cases the studies must include courses in mission and international diaconial work.

**Financial-administrative personnel.** The financial-administrative personnel of the parishes have mostly acquired their professional expertise through working experience in the parish. People apply for such work not only from work in financial management in the public and private sectors but also from other tasks in the parishes. In many cases a temporary appointment such as practical training or summer work turns out to become a longer period of employment in the parish. An obvious lack of workforce is envisaged in financial management as there are many people in such jobs who will soon be due for retirement.

**Co-operation between the Church and the institutions offering education.** In recent years more emphasis has been placed on co-operation between professional education and working life. In the co-operation between the Church and the education institutions offering teaching a crucial role is played by the work of the Church in supporting the spiritual life and professional growth of those engaged in studies. Students need the support of the Church not only in recruitment for Church posts but

also in the building of a professional identity as a worker of the Church.

**On-the-job learning, practical training and introductions to work.** Every year over 1,300 students take practical training (higher level) or a period of on-the-job learning (second level education) in the parishes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. So far those studying with a view to a post in the Church have not consistently had opportunities during their studies to become familiar with their future tasks in the service of the parish or the Church. According to the recent plan, the parish should serve as a learning environment for all students. During practical training or on-the-job learning students form a conception of the professions in the Church and parishes as a potential place of work.

### 11.3 Personnel training

Personnel training refers to training arranged or acquired by the employer for the personnel in order to improve the functions of the parish and to improve the personnel's capabilities to accomplish their work and their job satisfaction. In the Church the coordination of personnel training is in the charge of the Institute for Advanced Training.

Personnel training is also arranged by the dioceses, Christian organisations and educational institutions.

**Pastoral training.** The pastoral qualification underwent reform in the early 2000s. This is training which supports pastors at the beginning of their careers. Since 2003 there has been a significant increase in the number of courses offered. The development work was initiated in such a way that effort was to be invested in Church diaconia, international responsibility or communications.

The higher pastoral qualification has traditionally been the Church's own qualification required of assessors of the chapter, diocesan deans and cathedral deans. The Bishops' Conference approved the reform of the higher pastoral qualification in February 2007. The new qualification confers better capabilities for those tasks for which the qualification is required. During the period 2004-2007 the lower pastoral qualification was taken by 254 people (50% women) and the higher pastoral qualification by 41 people (17% women).

**Leadership training.** More attention than before has been paid in the Church to leadership, and the related training has been further developed. The Bishops' Conference in February 2004 approved the new programme in leadership training.

There are obvious challenges in leadership training. One of the main challenges is in change management issues during change in the parish structure. Another is that of integrating the leadership training in financial management with other leadership training, as in parish work these are very closely connected. A third challenge is to increase training for middle management.



## 12. COMMUNICATIONS

- Communication using the Internet increased. Nowadays two thirds of Finnish households have an Internet connection. The Internet is used most by young people and young adults.
- The new evl.fi Internet service was initiated at Advent 2005. Its purpose was to make the Church more visible, receptive and active in the world of the Internet. There are also pages in English (<http://evl.fi/EVLen.sf>).
- The media are active in monitoring the Church and its news. In recent years there has been ample coverage of ethical issues related to the Church
- Lutheran televised church services attracted an average of 153,000 viewers in 2007 while on average 224,000 people listened to the Sunday church service on the radio.

### 12.1. Changes in the communications field

The significance of Internet communication in Finland has increased. According to information from Statistics Finland in 2006 there was a computer in 71 per cent of Finnish households and 64 per cent of households had an Internet connection. The use of the Internet has also increased significantly among all age groups, being particularly common among young people and young adults. In 2007, 99 per cent of those aged 15-29 reported using the Internet in the last three months.

A private Christian TV channel, TV7, began broadcasting at the end of 2003. The Christian radio channel Radio Dei continued broadcasting and to a wider area. According to a national survey on radio over 200,000 people reported listening to Radio Dei every week. Half of these listened daily.

## 12.2. Church information dissemination

In 2007 every tenth parish had a full-time information officer. In 2007 almost half of parishes and parish unions reported publishing their own church magazine at least twice a year or then the parish's own pages delivered to almost every home.

Dissemination of information common to the entire Church is taken care of by the information unit of the Church Information Centre in collaboration with the joint organs of the Church, the dioceses, parishes and Church organisations. The unit promotes the processing of subjects pertaining to Church and life in the media, in society and among the people. It offers topical information on Christianity, the Church, the parishes and what the Church is doing.

The construction and opening of the new evl.fi service in 2005 improved the options for using the Internet and consolidated Internet communication co-operation within the Church. The evl.fi service offered a direct news channel to the dioceses, Church organisations and parishes, which can update their bulletins themselves on the evl.fi service.

Over a hundred church magazines come out every year in Finland, which is quite a lot for a population of five million. In addition to the general magazines Church organisations and fields of work frequently have their own publications. The total circulation of church magazines in 2007 was approximately 700,000.

The church magazine with the biggest circulation is the Swedish-language *Kyrkpressen*, which is delivered to almost 90 per cent of Swedish-speaking homes in Finland. Its circulation exceeds 100,000 and it is also the most read Finnish church magazine in the Nordic countries. The most important Finnish-language church magazine is *Kotimaa* (= homeland) which is a Christian weekly. In 2007 its circulation was approximately 42,000.

### 12.3. Church communications on television

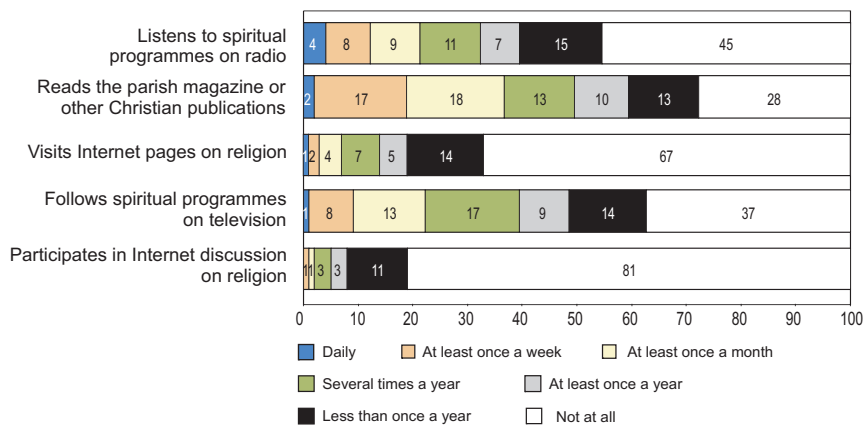
According to the Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 Survey, nine per cent of Finns followed religious programmes on television weekly or more often (see Figure 12.1.). Watching religious programmes was very common among those over 65 years old. One third of these reported following religious programmes at least once a week or more often. On the other hand among those aged 25 to 34 only one per cent reported following these programmes to intensely. In total, about half of Finns reported following religious programmes on television at least once a year or more. Over a third reported not watching any religious programmes at all.

The Lutheran televised church services had an annual viewer count of 153,000 to 190,000. After 2005 there was a decline in the number of people watching church services on television. The variation in viewer numbers was due to both the channel and the timing of the broadcast. The Church Center for Work in Swedish produces televised services in collaboration with the Swedish broadcasting authority *Finlands Svenska Television*. The average number of viewers was 40,000.

**Table 12.1. Numbers of televised church services in Finnish and their viewers 2004-2007 YLE.**

	2004	2005	2006	2007
TV services	35	35	35	35
Average number of viewers, Lutheran services	169,000	190,000	185,000	153,000

**Figure 12.1. Monitoring Church communications. *Gallup Ecclesiastica* 2007. N=1,030.**



## 12.4. Church communications on radio

Radio continues to be a significant means of communication for Finns and reaches 96 per cent of the population. At the beginning of 2007 YLE Radio 1 broadcasting times for church services were changed so that on alternate Sunday evenings from six to seven services of the free churches, the Catholic Church, special meetings at summer festivals and special services are broadcast. The innovation meant that the Lutheran service is now broadcast every Sunday at 10 in the morning.

Devotional programmes continue to be the most listened to programmes on YLE Radio 1, but numbers of listeners have decreased. The morning service at 7.50 had an average of 159,000 listeners in 2007. When the Saturday evening devotions became a prayer moment in 2005, the number of listeners was clearly greater than on other evenings, the average in 2007 being 110,000.

Numbers of listeners to radio services have increased slightly. In 2007 an average of 224,000 people listened to the Sunday service. The Church Center for Work in Swedish produced three

devotions per day in Swedish and these were broadcast on Radio Vega.

According to the Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 Survey a good third of Finns listen to radio devotions at least one a year (see Figure 12.1.). Four per cent reported listening every day and eight per cent at least once a week. More than one third of those over 65 reported listening to such radio programmes frequently, while of those under 35 such regularity was rare; only three per cent of them reported listening in on a weekly basis.

Approximately one fifth of parishes and two fifths of parish unions were themselves involved in the production of programmes on YLE regional radio or commercial radio in 2007. Programmes were produced by parishes mostly a few times a year. However, almost every tenth parish had weekly or monthly programmes. Parish unions generally had a weekly programme.

## **12.5. The Church's communications using the Internet**

The use and importance of the Internet have increased markedly in recent years, and it would appear that this development will continue. The Internet is used by virtually all those below the age of 40. It is also used a great deal at home, thus the Internet is strongly connected to private life, not only working life.

According to the Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007 Survey, three percent of Finns visit Internet pages on the Church or religion at least once a week or more (see Figure 12.1.). Moreover, four per cent visit these pages at least once a month. Visiting the religion pages in the Internet was more common among those under 35 than among older people.

The improvement in the Church's Internet communications is seen in the opening by the Church council of the evl.fi service and

in the introduction of interactive services. The level of usage of the Church Council Internet services doubled in four years. The average number of visits by the various users in 2007 was 122,000 (64,000 in 2003).

The new evl.fi Internet service was opened at Advent 2005. Its aim is to make the Church more visible, receptive and active in the world of the Internet. Initially users of the new service had a new option to articulate their experiences and wishes with regard to the Church and to send feedback to the Archbishop. The feedback was mostly positive. The service is constantly being improved on the basis of feedback. In 2007 two new language versions of the service were completed: extra simple Finnish and English.

There has also been a positive development in the Internet communications of the parishes. In 2007, 90 per cent of parishes or parish unions had their own homepages. In total 343 parishes reported having their own Internet pages and 118 reported that their Internet pages were part of the Internet pages of a parish union. Those parishes not having their own pages were almost invariably small rural parishes with fewer than 4,000 members.

The parishes moreover make active use of the Internet. Two thirds of them reported using the common Internet pages and intranet services of the Church on a daily basis. Only one per cent of parishes never use these options.

## 13. ADMINISTRATION

- At the end of 2007 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland had 517 parishes.
- The parish structures are in a state of major change, their number having diminished by 65 since 2003.
- Since 2004 there have been 9 dioceses.
- The strategy of the Church *Our Church – A Participatory Community* was completed, outlining the Church's activities and the future challenges to finance and administration and development areas until 2015.
- The administrative reform of the dioceses came into force. The first diocesan councils were chosen in February 2004.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is an episcopal Church with a very strong tradition of parish autonomy. In addition to this, the significance of the Church's national bodies has grown considerably in recent years. 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.

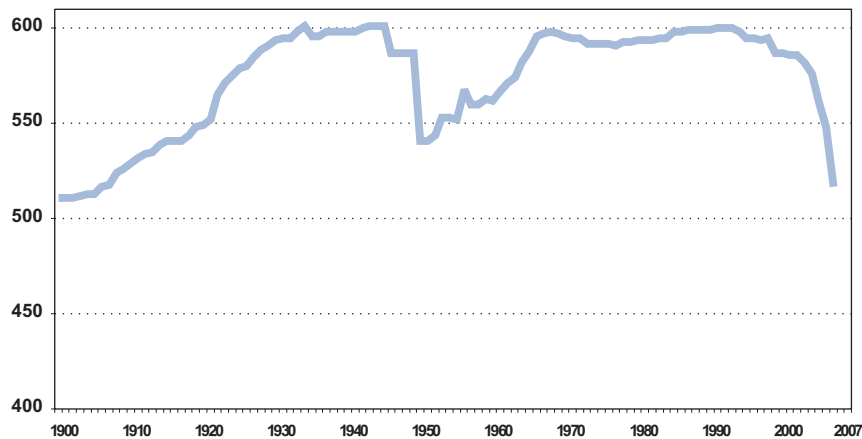
### 13.1. Parish administration

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.

At the end of 2007 the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland belonged to 517 parishes. The number of parishes diminished by a total of 65 parishes (in 2003 there were 582 parishes). In 2007 there were 390 parish financial units, of which 351 parishes had a separate financial unit. There were 39 parish unions including 166 parishes.

**Figure 13.1 Number of parishes 1900-2007.**



Just over seven per cent of Church members are in small parishes with fewer than 3,000 members. Every third parish fell into this size group. Large parishes with over 20,000 members accounted for ten per cent, but they included over a third of the Church population. The largest parish was the Jyväskylä city parish with over 65,000 members and the second largest was Malmi parish with 60,500 members, which belongs to the large Helsinki parish union. The average size of a parish was 8,372 members, a recent increase of 11 per cent.



**Table 13.1. Distribution of parishes of different sizes in 2007.**

Membership	No. of parishes	% of parishes	% of Church membership
under 3,000	168	32.5	7.3
3,000-5,999	123	23.8	12.2
6,000-8,999	72	13.9	12.3
9,000-11,999	33	6.4	7.8
12,000-14,999	35	6.8	10.9
15,000-19,999	34	6.6	13.9
20,000-29,999	33	6.4	18.5
30,000-	19	3.7	17.1
Total	517	100	100

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. In the years to come 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 structural changes of the parishes will continue to be significant. According to the parishes' own reports negotiations on mergers were conducted in every third parish. These concerned either establishing parish unions or mergers. In a further eight per

cent of parishes there were plans to begin talks on mergers in the coming years.

The basic features in parish administration are a democratic principle combined with a respect for the special position of the clergy. The highest decision-making body within each parish is the parochial council, the members of which are elected every four years in elections which are held at the same time throughout the country. These elections are organised according to the same principles as any other elections in Finland: the candidates are banded together in voting blocks (usually organised along party political lines), and the results are determined according to the principle of proportional representation. In the 2006 church elections there was a 14.5% voter turnout (in the previous elections in 2002 it had been 14.3%). Of those elected to parochial councils 54% were women. Almost two thirds of elected officials were over 50 years old. One third were over 60. Those under 30 were only seven per cent. To be eligible to serve on the parochial council, a person must be confirmed and “known for his/her Christian convictions”. Any Church member whose eighteenth birthday preceded the date of the election was eligible to vote.

The age structure among elected officials and especially the small number of young people among decision-makers was behind the representative’s initiative at the General Synod of May 2006. It was proposed that the voting age in Church elections be lowered to 16. The Synod decided in November 2006 to propose to the Council of State that the Church Act be amended and the voting age in Church elections lowered to 16. To be able to vote a person must be a confirmed member of the parish who is sixteen years old by the first election day. This new age limit will apply in the parish elections of 2010.

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 implements 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.

## **13.2. Diocesan administration**

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, in fact, fewer than six per cent speak Swedish as their native tongue.

The archbishop's seat is in the city of Turku. Since 1998 there has also been a second bishop in the diocese of Turku. The arch-

bishop has many administrative tasks relating to the whole Church, but he does not act as a supervisor for the other bishops, having instead the status of *primus inter pares*.

The bishops of the dioceses were: in the Diocese of Turku Archbishop Jukka Paarma and Bishop Ilkka Kantola, who resigned in May 2005, to be succeeded from the beginning of 2006 by Bishop Kari Mäkinen. The bishop of the Diocese of Tampere was Bishop Juha Pihkala (from June 2008 Bishop Matti Repo), in the Diocese of Oulu Bishop Samuel Salmi, in the Diocese of Mikkeli Bishop Voitto Huotari (from February 2009 Bishop Seppo Häkkinen), in the Diocese of Porvoo Bishop Erik Vikström until the end of November 2006 and from the beginning of December Bishop Gustav Björkstrand. In the Diocese of Kuopio there is Bishop Wille Riekkinen, in the Diocese of Lapua Bishop Jorma Laulaja until the end of August 2004 and from the beginning of September Bishop Simo Peura, in the Diocese of Helsinki Bishop Eero Huovinen and in the Diocese of Espoo Bishop Mikko Heikka. The Diocese of Espoo began from 2004, when the Diocese of Helsinki was divided into two.

A bishop is the leader of his (or potentially her) diocese's administration. He is the highest shepherd over its parishes and pastors. All of the pastors in a diocese as well as its lay representatives take part in the election of the new bishop.

The 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 being eligible to vote.

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

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

### 13.3. The Church's general administration

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

Prior to 1974 the General Synod gathered only once in every five years, but then there came a major administrative reform. Currently the Synod gathers twice a year, generally for a five-day meeting each time. These meetings are held in Turku, even though the Church Council offices are in Helsinki. The Synod includes 64 lay representatives, 32 representatives of the clergy, all the bishops (including the field bishop of the Finnish Defence Forces), a Sami representative, and a representative of the Council of State. Members of the parish boards elect lay representatives and the pastors of the dioceses elect representatives of the clergy to the

Synod for a four-year term. The Archbishop serves as the chairperson, and the Synod selects two vice-chairs (in practice always laypersons).

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 matters of 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.

In the offices of the Church Council (including the Institute for Advanced Training in Järvenpää and the Church Research Institute in Tampere) there is a total of approximately 200 full-time employees. In addition to this, FinnChurchAid, the Church's aid organisation, operates as a separate foundation, employing approximately 50 workers. Within Church House there are special experts for consultancy on many different areas of parish work, financial management, and personnel issues, as well as for questions of

inter-church relationships. The office of the Church Council is headed by a Chief Secretary. Since the beginning of 1998 this post has been held by the Rev. Risto Junttila.

The Bishops' Conference handles issues relating to the faith, proclamations, and work of the Church, as well as those relating to diocesan administration and care. 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.

Since 2002 the activities of the Church were guided by a common strategy. Its purpose was to give the general direction and common objectives for the development of the Church 2002-2010. According to the strategy the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland should be a renewing church for the people, of worship, upbringing and service, likewise of interaction and co-operation. The effect of the Church's common strategy was apparent at least to some extent in the plans and activities of many parishes.

As a consequence of the major changes in its operating environment, work was begun in autumn 2005 to create a new strategy for the Church until 2015. The strategy and the report underlying it were completed at the end of 2007. The workgroup preparing the strategy held extensive public discussion on drafts of the strategy, gathering feedback in the Internet and at various events and meetings.

The Church's strategy until 2015 was entitled *Our Church – A Participatory Community*. The strategy defines six main direc-

tions. These are strengthening spiritual life, caring for the weak and shouldering worldwide responsibility, strengthening the significance of Church membership and developing communications. Further goals were to develop structures to serve Church activities better than before and to continue the renewal of the Church.

The strategy *Our Church* raises to a prominent position strategic planning on the various levels of the Church: the parishes, the dioceses, the units of the Church administration and Church organisations and spiritual movements. The guidelines of the common strategy become concrete objectives in the plans on the local level and in the various units.



## 14. FINANCE

- There was a 15 per cent rise in the tax revenues of the parishes between 2003-2007. Simultaneously there was a 13.5 per cent increase in operating costs.
- Regional inequality was also evident in Church finances. In the conurbations the financial situation of the parishes was good while in the smaller parishes and in those with dwindling population the essential expenses exceeded the revenues.
- The Church pension institution was developed in such a way that it operates in the same way as other pension institutions.
- The Church's guidelines on responsible investments were finished. They describe how the ethical perspective can be accommodated in practice in investments.

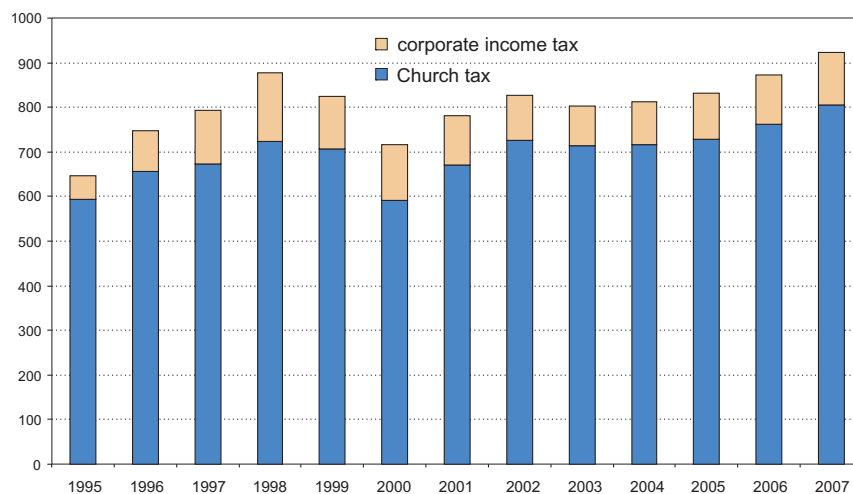
### 14.1. The finances of the parishes

Most of the income of the parishes comes from the Church taxes paid by members. Each member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland pays a certain percentage of his/her income in the form of Church tax. Each parish determines its Church tax percentage on the basis of its financial situation. The percentage varies from parish to parish, the average in 2007 being 1.3%. The parishes also receive part of the corporate tax levied by the state. This is considered in Finland to be a compensation for the societal duties discharged by the Church, for example cemetery maintenance. The parishes' share of the revenue accruing from municipal tax in the country as a whole was 1.75% in 2007.

In 2007 the share of Church taxes of the entire revenue of the Church was some 70 per cent and the share of corporate income taxes some ten per cent. Church tax recorded in 2007 amounted to 805 million Euros, whereas in 2004 it was 717 million Euros. The share of corporate income tax was 118 million Euros whereas in 2004 it was 96 million Euros. Total tax revenue for 2007 was 923

million Euros, with an increase of 15 per cent since 2003. The parishes paid the Tax Administration 17 million Euros for gathering and entering tax revenues for the parishes.

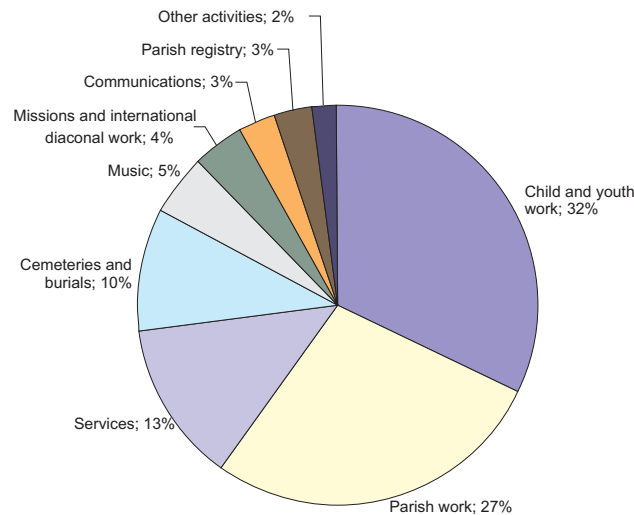
**Figure 14.1. Tax revenues of the parishes 1995-2007 (million Euros).**



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 operating costs of the parishes increased by 13.5%. Personnel costs accounted for 62% of all costs. In the last ten years the parishes have greatly increased their investments. This is partly due to the fact that in the early 1990s, as a consequence of the economic recession, the parishes reduced their investments, which has made itself felt in the years thereafter.

**Figure 14.2. Distribution of the parishes' expenses among various functions in 2007 (%).**



Most financial resources were spent on work with children and young people. This accounts for a third of all financial resources of the parishes. Parish activity includes worship, Church rites, work with adults, spiritual care, work for society and other parish events. These together accounted for a quarter of all resources. The service group includes diaconal work, family counselling, hospital pastoral care, the telephone helpline and other services. The share of these amounted to 13 per cent of the parishes' financial resources. The share of the burial function was ten per cent.

Since 2004 the parishes have allocated direct and indirect costs among task areas according to the principle from which they originate. For example, the share of work done by vicars of parishes for administration has been entered as an administrative item. In this way the Church and the parishes can be aware of how great a share each area constitutes of the total resources of the parishes. The costs include not only operating costs but also depreciations or the share of the investment costs of the fiscal year, capital interest and the share of basic functions of indirect administrative costs. The indirect costs of basic tasks are administrative costs, real estate

costs and Central Fund payments, likewise taxation costs. The parishes for the first time in 2007 also allocated Central Fund payments and taxation costs among basic tasks as indirect costs.

At the end of 2007 the finances of the Church continued to be healthy. The cash assets of the parishes would have sufficed to pay the costs of almost 9 months, in the balance the ratio of cash in hand to foreign capital was good, relative indebtedness was small and self-sufficiency remained at 92% as in previous years.

## 14.2. The Central Church Fund

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 77%, aid 8% and other operations 15% of the finances of the Central Church Fund.

The Church's pension fund has been purposefully developed with the objective of operating on the same principles as other pension funds. The pension fund of the Church also joined the reform adopted as of the beginning of 2004. Under the new system all pensions will be paid and all the functions of the pension institution will be taken care of by the pension institution within which applicants for pensions most recently belonged. 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 groups retire. The pension fund investment is long-term. The net yield of investments at the going rate in the period 1991-2007 (the entire history of the fund) has been some 9.7 per cent, which can be considered an extremely good result. At the end of 2007 the market value of the

pension fund was 792 million Euros. This covered 25% of the Church's calculatory liability for pensions.

The Central Church Fund throughout the 2000s has consciously endeavoured to promote responsible investment. In 2007 the Church Council approved the Church's guidelines on responsible investment. The new guidelines were based on the ethical principles for Church investments published in 1999. The aim more precisely was to describe how it is possible in practice to take account of the ethical perspective in making investments. The new guidelines were compiled partly in collaboration with the Church of Sweden. Another important factor in responsible investment was the two-year co-operation agreement with the consultants Ethix SRI Advisors Net, specialized in the evaluation of social responsibility. In 2007 Ethix conducted two evaluations of the responsibility of investments added to the pension fund. On the basis of these findings the management of the pension fund decided to involve themselves in activities pertaining to six companies. The accounts received permitted the conclusion that of these six companies five changed their actions sufficiently and updated their codes of conduct. In only one company was the desired change not achieved. Co-operation with the consultants continues. Further developing responsible investments will continue to be a focal issue in the activities of the Central Church Fund. It is hoped to increase the interest of the parishes in this subject.

The financing and development of the aid mechanism of the Central Church Fund has been an important focal area since 2000. The changes in the shares of modes of aid within the aid system were noteworthy. The share of development aid increased and became greater than traditional aid. In 2007 traditional aid (topping up tax revenues, discretionary aid and construction aid) was granted to the value of 5.9 million Euros and development aid to the value of 7.8 million Euros.

## 15. SERVICES MAINTAINED BY THE STATE

The Finnish state maintains and funds certain activities which are of considerable significance to the Church. 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, likewise the Finnish Defence Forces and prisons. The state maintains two Finnish-language faculties and one Swedish-language theological faculty which are ecumenical in nature.

The work of the Church in the Finnish Defence Forces and prisons institutions is based on the obligation of society to ensure basic human rights. Since society has the power to limit an individual's rights by incarcerating convicts or isolating military personnel from their civilian lives, society also has the obligation to ensure the opportunity to exercise some of the individual's basic human rights. In Western thinking on human rights soldiers and prisoners should be given the opportunity to practise their own religion.

### 15.1. Religious education

In Finland religious education is offered extensively at various levels in the school and education system. Religious education is included in the early childhood education provided by society and in preschool education. During basic school education and upper secondary school religion is offered as a school subject. Vocational institutions do not offer the subject by this name, however, it may be included in the teaching of ethics, multicultural education

and the teaching of various cultures. Many of these subjects touch upon religion.

Traditionally the teaching of religion has been firmly entrenched in kindergartens. In 1983 this was confirmed by law when a clause was added to the legislation governing children's day care according to which children's religious upbringing should be supported with consideration for the general cultural heritage. The legislation moreover requires that the religious convictions of the child's parents be respected.

The position of early childhood education was further strengthened in Finnish society in the 1990s and 2000s by guidelines on early childhood education. A new curriculum for preschool education was issued in 2000. In autumn 2001 it became the right of every child to participate in preschool education. The new content area "ethics and world view" was included in preschool education and is included in all pre-school teaching. This content area also includes teaching the cultural view, the mission being to develop the children's perceptions by exposing them to the workings of religions and convictions.

There has recently been a slight change in the focal area in the teaching of religion; the objective in teaching is no longer to educate pupils into personal faith. Since the reform in the system of school education an effort has been made to foster the pupils' religious, ethical and social development. The teaching of the subject has been unequivocally assigned to society. As one subject taught in school the teaching of religion clearly pursues different objectives from the teaching activities of the Church. Teachers of religion have also been keen to stress their own independent professional identity.

The legislation since 2003 governing comprehensive and upper secondary education no longer mentions "confessional teaching in religion", but rather "teaching on the pupil's own religion". This refers to teaching which is not synonymous with the practising of

religion. The change in the term was seen to reflect the dominant practice as, in spite of its name, teaching by confession had for many years ceased to mean teaching based on the doctrinal conceptions of a religious society. Another factor underlying the change of the term was the ongoing uncertainty and contradictory understanding regarding the concept of confessionalism. The curricula for comprehensive school and upper secondary school stress that the main purpose of teaching religion is to provide knowledge and experience of the significance of one's own religion and its societal and cultural influence. Another change in the legislation was that the teacher of religion was no longer supposed to be a member of the particular religion being taught. The teacher teaches religion with the same professional obligation as the teacher of other subjects. The change of term did not affect the model for arranging the teaching of religion.

## **15.2. Church work in the Finnish Defence Forces**

Church work in the Finnish Defence Forces involves the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church with recruits on national service, personnel and reservists. Field chaplains also do such work in the Border Guards, which comes under the Ministry of the Interior. The point of departure is that the chaplain is present among the parishioners. The purpose of the work is to provide the spiritual support of the national churches for those serving with the Defence Forces and Border Guards through worship, teaching and pastoral care. A further task is to maintain and develop the ethical actions of the military community in all conditions. The field chaplain is there for all recruits and personnel irrespective of confession and conviction. Pastoral care makes up a



considerable part of the work of the field chaplain in the Defence Forces. Personal discussions amount annually to 5,000-6,000.

In 2007 there were 28 full-time field chaplains. In addition there were part-time field chaplains, some of them of the Orthodox Church. Recruits to military service with a clerical background likewise participated in the work, as did field chaplains and diaconial workers in the reserve and pastors and diaconial workers on international assignments. There are field chaplains serving in Kosovo, Eritrea, Bosnia, Lebanon and Afghanistan. There is also a chaplain with the European Union Battle Groups (EUBG).

### 15.3. Work with offenders

Freedom of religion means not only freedom of confession but also freedom to practise religion. Safeguarding the basic rights of individuals is not only the task of those providing pastoral care, but of the entire organisation for the care of offenders. When the care of prisoners ensures the incarcerated the right to his/her religion during imprisonment it is also fulfilling basic human rights. Thus the work of those sent by their churches in the pastoral care of prisoners is connected to the care of prisoners as a whole. The prison chaplains are officials of the prisons institution and the prisons diaconial workers the officials of the dioceses.

The daily average number of prisoners in 2007 was 3,551. Full-time chaplains and diaconial workers totalled 18. In addition the Evangelical Free Church of Finland has delegated a prison diaconial worker. The full-time chaplains (15) and diaconial workers (3) serve in all closed prisons and in two open prisons. A further four open prisons had a prison chaplain who maintained contact with the prison in addition to the normal duties of the parish.

In the work with offenders chaplains and diaconial workers can meet individual prisoners at their own request. Those offering

pastoral care to prisoners take care of services, devotions and Church rites, likewise individual pastoral counselling and diaconial work. They maintain contact with the parishes and through them there is the most natural contact to the parish professional and voluntary workers. Providers of pastoral care in prison and parish workers also helped the relatives of prisoners as part of their regular duties. They moreover provided support for convicts on their release from prison.

## 16. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

The first decade of the 2000s has witnessed many changes in the Finnish society. There has been a marked change in the general attitudes prevailing in society. Commitment to traditional institutions has weakened. Migration has been more lively than ever before. Changes in municipal structures have changed the structures of the parishes and the process is gaining momentum. There has been an increase in the number of immigrants and the spectrum of religions has grown. Religiosity among Finns has also changed. The population is ageing and the large age groups are approaching retirement.

The changes which have occurred compel the Church to consider its own capacity to respond to the change in the culture. These changes require a readiness for change and flexibility in the development of novel modes of operation. Next we present the main observations and future challenges on the basis of the changes occurring in the 2000s.

### Church membership is more diverse

Recent decades have been characterised by a decline in the role of institutions. The Western way of thinking is dominated by the idea of living one's life on one's own terms, freedom to choose one's life style and making individual solutions in many spheres of life. There has been a marked decrease in memberships of traditional bodies such as political parties and associations. The same developmental trend concerns the Church, although to a lesser extent.

The issue of Church membership has become particularly topical since 2003. Resignations from the Church have increased

and there has been a fall in membership. Nevertheless most Finns are still members of the Lutheran Church and in many ways also committed to membership. However, the reasons for being a member of the Church are increasingly diverse. There are various reasons underlying membership and Church members are profiled in different ways. The Church thus faces increasing diversity among its members.

For many members the main reason for membership is the Church rites at turning points in the life course. Many people also want to be members of the Church because the Church helps the weak and the disadvantaged both at home and abroad and supports people in various kinds of crises. Some people for their part find it very important that the Church should maintain the Christian cultural heritage and teach important values for life. Many again appreciate the work of the Church with children and young people. Some people stress the spiritual tasks of the church and participate actively in the activities of the parish.

Some members take extensive advantage of the opportunities available. In addition to worship there is a wide range of regularly occurring activities. Many encounter the Church during Church rites at important turning points in their lives and the discussions related to these. Some people are in the habit of going to church on feast days, especially at Christmas and Easter. Many want to take part in doing good and sharing in the parish as volunteers. Almost everyone finds their way to the cemetery seeing their loved ones to their resting place and commemorating them by the grave. Different members expect different things from the Church and choose for themselves the extent to which they avail themselves of what the Church has to offer. The same individual may have several reasons for being a member and the primary motivation for membership may vary at different times in their lives. For many it is sufficient that the Church is there, that it functions, and is there when it is needed.

## Finns are moving, ageing and dying

Moving from one place to another has been more common than ever before. Such migration means that many traditional bonds are broken and that people form attachments to new living environments. These events also affect the relation Finns have with the Church. Many leave the Church just as they are moving from one place to another. In youth, too, the ties a young person has to the Church are broken due to moving to a new place to study. The Church has a significant task in welcoming people moving to new locations.

The population is also ageing. The imminent retirement of the large age groups will have a major impact on the work of the Church, which is in a position to offer ageing people meaningful ways of participating.

In addition to needing caring and health services, the ageing population will ultimately need a resting place. The Church not only takes care of its own members but also of almost all Finns. This gives the folk church a lot of interface with the population.

## Religiosity is becoming more individualised

In recent decades the Finns' values have changed, becoming increasingly individualistic. At the same time national and global values have lost ground. Values also vary increasingly between groups of people.

Part of this change reflects a change that is occurring throughout the entire Western world: a transition from traditional to post-traditional values. In research the latter have been deemed to include responsibility, independence, imagination, tolerance, the feeling of leadership and unselfishness. Constant evaluation and re-evaluation of one's life values is an intrinsic part of being modern. This is not a matter of a system of ideology, but a way of

arriving at solutions. Consequently traditional values such as stressing family life, appreciation of work or belonging to the Church may form part of a modern person's life. However, these are arrived at more consciously than before and on the basis of more independent reflection. They are not taken for granted by modern people but are considered as free choices. Religiosity, too, is modern when it stems from the self and follows a desire for authenticity.

According to research in the last 25 years there have been no dramatic changes in Finns' religiosity. However, there has for a long time been a decline in the belief in the teachings of Christianity. Although the share of those believing in God has remained relatively stable, there has been a distinct decline in belief in many of the basic tenets of Christianity. This challenges the Church to meet increasing spiritual searching and also to take seriously the intellectual challenges to religious belief.

Our modern attitude to life changes the relation to religious institutions. In the long term the greatest individual change is in the public practice of religion: an ever increasing number of people no longer participate in worship or other religious occasions. The Finns appreciate the worship celebrated by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and consider that the Church takes care of this either well or extremely well. Yet there has for long been a decline in participation in main Church services. The reason is likely to be found in individualisation as the most important reason given for non-attendance at Church was the preference to nurture the relation to God in private, without the Church.

Many would wish for a stronger relevance of divine service to the individual's own life. For different groups of people such relevance, however, means utterly different things. The diversity of ways of life and live situations poses a distinct challenge to develop more people-centred divine services. Regarding divine

service the change in the rhythm of life should be given some consideration. Experiential events, however, gather people in all walks of life. From this it follows that, for example, investing in the feasts of the Church Year would make it possible to reach a wide range of people.

Many traditional forms of church activity have lost their popularity, especially in the towns. Alongside traditional ways of operating it is possible to support the emergence of small operational groups and to strengthen the opportunities of Church members to have more influence on activities and develop something new. The extensive networks of the parishes offer opportunities to develop co-operation with other actors and organisations in society to a much greater extent than before. The parish workers need to consider how participation might be felt to be in conflict with independence, imagination and bearing personal responsibility. On the other hand people also want opportunities to realise unselfish ideals.

Individualisation brings with it a special challenge for Christian upbringing. The Finns increasingly want to respect the child's own way of experiencing religion and to leave the child space and independence in relation to religion. At the same time many young adults would like to give their children a Christian upbringing even if they themselves did not have one. There is clearly a need for a new kind of religious upbringing which respects the child's perspective. In supporting the Christian upbringing given in the home the parishes are in a key position.

## **In Church rites the Church meets its members at important turning points in their lives**

Finns consider Church rites to be important and appreciate them. Rites have for long been among the most important reasons for belonging to the Church. Through these the Church reaches the majority of Finns. Rites are an opportunity for the Church to encounter people at time of important events in the life course. However, there has been a downturn in the popularity of Church rites. The share of Christian baptisms and weddings has diminished. There has been a marked decrease in the share of those married by the Church. This development implies challenges also for the Church's traditionally strong modes of action. The share of those participating in rites in the metropolitan area continues to be clearly the lowest. In several things the development in the metropolitan area very likely predicts the future development elsewhere.

## **The interface of the Church with young adults is thin**

The popularity of confirmation training has continued strong, likewise the activities of the young confirmed volunteers (YCV). However, the challenge is how to sustain the connection with the Church afterwards. Young adults continue to easily drop out of the sphere of activities. More activities than before are being arranged for young adults and more official posts and areas of responsibility have been allotted to work with young adults than in the previous four-year period, but the number of those participating in activities has decreased. Above all it is a matter of whether the Church can find its natural place in the sphere of life and culture of the young adults.



## The Church is expected to help in crises and adversity

The diaconial work of the Church is in an important position as regards being the advocate of the disadvantaged in the public. This is a means by which the Church can draw attention to the plight of people and the underlying structural problems. The Church is moreover expected to provide concrete assistance. The mission of the Church to help the poor, the disadvantaged and those in trouble demands vigilance. The diaconial work of the Church has a quality all of its own in encountering peoples spiritual as well as social, mental and economic needs.

The Church bears a very considerable societal responsibility. Not all that is accomplished on Church tax revenue is apparent as a direct benefit to the individual but is a means of bearing a more extensive societal responsibility. This is a task which many Church members consider to be important. Finns themselves are interested in voluntary work.

The crisis work of the Church has proven its importance on many occasions during recent years. The basic skills of Church workers to deal with crises are an important part of the national rescue services.

International diaconial work and missionary work fulfil the Christian mission to bear witness, are a reminder of the worldwide reality and promote a life worth living throughout the world. The work is increasingly perceived to be one of the overall international responsibilities of the parish. Some of the most positive observations included the effectiveness of the Church's work in rendering assistance and the ensuing positive publicity. People respect the Church's work in helping people, wish for a greater effort and are themselves willing to participate.

## **The media images of the Church are increasingly influential**

Images of the Church are increasingly the result of the media as there has been a decline in Christian upbringing in the home and in participation in parish activities. There is ample media coverage of subjects pertaining to the Church and religion. The Church is perceived as an influential actor in society whose actions and opinions carry weight.

The implementation of spiritual life on the Internet is a significant recent innovation. For the parishes and the Church the Internet is a new operating environment, not just a piece of equipment. The innovation offers an opportunity to reach and help those parishioners who spend a lot of time on the Internet. Through interactive services the Church can carry out its fundamental spiritual mission in the Internet environment. Those using the Internet most are also the most challenging group for the Church: young people and young adults.

The conventional media continue to be important also. The average listener/viewer numbers for Church services on radio and television are fairly large in proportion to attendance at Church services on feast days. As the population ages the importance of these broadcast services will increase further as more and more people have difficulties in getting to church.

## **Structural change is only beginning**

Many structural changes are ongoing in the Church. Change in parish structures affect over half of the parishes in one way or other. Some of the parishes are involved in the process at their own initiative, some reluctantly due to municipal mergers. A structural reform should not be confined to administrative changes; it should entail safeguarding the preconditions for the spiritual life of the

individual parishioner. The parishes need new, dynamic action structures and modes of co-operation which support spiritual life and reach parishioners in natural life situations. The most important question in structural change is what kind of administrative and operative structures best serve to support parishioners' faith and life as Christians. When most of the parishes are involved in this process it becomes increasingly important to share experiences.

The finances of the Church are in balance, but there are great differences between regions and parishes. For many small parishes in fast emptying rural areas the situation is difficult. The challenge is to create structures with help to preserve parish life throughout Finland. In future plans note should be taken that the effects of a rising number of resignations from the Church have a lagged effect on its finances.

## **The competition for workforce is intensifying**

The retirement of the large age groups constitutes a major recruitment challenge for the Church, too. Those age groups which are about to enter the job market are numerically considerably smaller than those who are leaving it. Moreover, of those qualifying for Church professions, only part actually enter jobs in the Church. Countervailing effect can, however, be achieved by earlier recruitment, with the groundwork done during the parishes' work with young people. The majority of Church employees are women and this majority has increased in almost all sectors. It would be important to attract more men than before to come to work in the Church, especially in work having to do with education.

The competition over workers is not limited to new recruitments. Care needs also to be taken of the expertise,

well-being and preconditions for work among the present personnel.

## The renewal of the Church continues

The years 2004 to 2007 were characterised by considerable strategy work in the Church. Numerous strategies evolved and parishes differ greatly. Thus the effect of these strategies likewise varies.

A common strategy for the Church until 2015 has been drawn up. The broad outlines assume a concrete form in the plans at local level. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has many strengths and good preconditions for operations. However, many of the observed developments show that these cannot be taken for granted. The Church should develop as a community which calls people to a merciful God and which cares for their neighbours and all creation.

The national Church, mindful of its own identity, is present in an ever more complex society and in the lives of its members. Different members should be able to truly find their own place in their own Church. The vision of the Church Strategy states that “in 2015 members will see the value of their Church and will hear there the voice of God. In coming to Church people may find the answers to the major questions of life, and go from there to serve God’s world.”