

Historical encounters of the Sámi and the Church in Finland

Abstract

In 2012, Bishop Samuel Salmi of the Oulu diocese publicly apologised for the Church's misconduct towards the Sámi in Finland, referring especially to historical encounters. The apology reflected the Oulu cathedral chapter's new Sámi policy. My article analyses the development of Sámi–Church relations from the beginning of the 19th century to the post-war period in the second half of the 20th century. When compared to Sweden and especially to Norway, there was no apparent assimilation policy in the Finnish state administration or the Church. Bishops Johansson and Koskimies even managed to create a wave of Sámi language enthusiasm, criticizing Norwegian and Swedish Sámi policies and seizing some Lapland clergymen. Moreover, catechists or ambulatory teachers, going to Sámi children and providing education in a homelike atmosphere, represented a “culturally sensitive” form of education. The main problem, however, was the inconsistency in the Sámi policy of the Church. Positive actions depended on the activity and enthusiasm of individual people. Some Church officials could understand the significance of the native language, but another and more powerful tradition was what Vicar Tuomo Itkonen called “Finnish master thinking”. It was based on the controversial logic of “equality” in which the equality was only considered in the light of Finnish culture and supremacy.



Introduction

A historical event took place in a seminar “Encounter of the Sámi with the Church” in Inari on February 4th and 5th, 2012, just before the Sámi national day. Bishop Samuel Salmi of the Oulu diocese publicly apologised for the Church's misconduct towards the Sámi. He especially referred to the role of the Church in the racial studies in the 1930s, when “under the influence of the national socialist ideology we were prepared -- to subjugate the Sámi people and pursue ethnical studies that have been humiliating to the Sámi”.

The bishop stated: “Today I feel ashamed for those times. I wish to dissociate myself from them and apologise for those times.” He

admitted that the Sámi language has been disregarded in ecclesiastical activities. Apart from language, the Church has “often tended to deny the values and characteristics of the Sámi culture”. However, the bishop saw signs of a transition towards a new hope: “Where the yoik is heard, there exists a reality that the Church also has to appreciate. The Sámi youth are already seeking the way to it.”¹

The bishop’s apology attracted great publicity. The media speculated in advance whether the bishop was going to apologise as he had intended earlier or had he recanted his decision. The Sámi who were interviewed after the event considered the apology an important gesture and a courageous contribution to the Sámi. Ristenrauna Magga, a former representative of Sámi Parliament, described her sentiments: “First, there was crying and a great thankfulness. The apology proves that the Church has understood the issue and wants to proceed with the harmonising process.”²

In her own speech, also Magga emphasised that, apart from the neglected language, the Sámi “values, norms, rules, customs, beliefs, moral conceptions and traditions, which we as members of our community have embraced in our experiences and upbringing” had been disregarded. She presented a small detail as an example: how the Church disregarded the Sámi naming convention by christening every Sámi child with a Finnish name. Magga also stated that the apology “does not solve issues, only actions count. Concrete actions are required from the Church to promote the equality of the Sámi.”³

Sámi Parliament chairman Klemetti Näkkäljärvi was more critical than the others. He saw that the apology was a personal one, not the official Church standpoint, which would have to be discussed in a church assembly. In Näkkäljärvi’s view, it should be thoroughly investigated

1 “Piispa pyysi saamelaisilta anteeksi”, *Kaleva* 4.12.2012, in <http://yle.fi/uutiset/piispa_pyysi_saamelaisilta_anteeksi/5054393>, checked 11 January 2014. See also Erva Niittyvuopio, “Synlighet som förutsättning för försoning: Ett perspektiv från Evangelisk-lutherska kyrkan i Finland”, in Tore Johnsen & Line M. Skum (eds.), *Erkenne fortid – forme framtid: Innspill til kirkelig forsoningsarbeid i Sápmi* (Stamsund 2013) pp. 155–162.

2 “Piispa pyysi anteeksi saamelaisilta”, *Rauhan Tervehdys* 6.2.2012, <<http://www.rauhantervehdys.fi/cgi-bin/linnea.pl?document=00010111>>, checked 11 January 2014.

3 Ristenrauna Magga, “Kokemuksia kirkon ja seurakunnan toiminnasta Enontekiöllä”, in Erva Niittyvuopio (ed.), *Saamelaiset kirkossa – seminaari 4.–5.2.2012* (handout) (Oulu 2012).

what to apologise for. As an example, he presented the Church's role in the disappearance of the old religion as well as the endangerment of the Sámi languages and the yoik tradition. Näkkäläjärvi also pointed to the Finnish state, which in his opinion had a lot to apologise for, even more than the Church.⁴

In Nordic countries, bishop Salmi's apology was not the only one of its kind: the bishop of the diocese of Härnösand, Sweden, had made his apology to the Sámi already 12 years earlier.⁵ However, the apology reflected the Oulu cathedral chapter's new Sámi policy, which had already given results. In 2008, a Sámi work secretary post had been established in the chapter to produce and coordinate services in Sámi languages in all Finland. In the same year, an advisory council was appointed to support the secretary and everybody working with the Sámi, as well as to cooperate with corresponding bodies in other Nordic countries. The apology also paved way to the participation of the Finnish Sámi in the ecclesiastical activities of indigenous peoples.⁶

In the same seminar, I gave a presentation on the encounter between the Sámi and the Church especially in Finland. Roughly speaking, two competing traditions stand out in the relationship of the Church to the Sámi as early as from the 17th century. One was, in modern terms, the "culturally sensitive" line, which strove to defend and emphasise the language and culture of the minority. The other and more pronounced line was a trend that belittled and suppressed the minority or made excuses for the superiority of the dominant culture. The historiography on the Sámi past has emphasised the latter tradition, which resulted in

4 Klemetti Näkkäläjärvi, "Brysselistä Inariin", *A blog text* 5.2.2012, <<http://klemetti.blogspot.fi/2012/02/brysselista-inariin.html>>, checked 11 January 2014. See also "Saamelaiskarajien puheenjohtaja: "Salmen anteeksipyyntö ei riitä", <<http://www.kotimaa24.fi/artikkeli/saamelaiskarajien-puheenjohtaja-salmen-anteeksipyynto-ei-riita/>>, checked 11 January 2014.

5 "Kyrkan och samerna i dag: Nya vindar blåser", *Sápmi* – electronic material, see <<http://www.samer.se/1137>>, checked 11 January 2014. The need for reconciliation between the church and the Sámi was also recognized in Norway, where the church meeting in 1997 considered it as a main theme, see Tore Johnsen, "Menneskers arbeid eller Guds gave? En teologisk drøfting av forsoning med henblikk på forsoningsprosesser i Sápmi", in Tore Johnsen & Line M. Skum (eds.), *Erkenne fortid – forme framtid. Innspill til kirkelig forsoningsarbeid i Sápmi* (Stamsund 2013) p. 13.

6 <http://www.oulunhiippakunta.evl.fi/toiminta/tyoalat/s_mebargu_saamelaistyö>, checked 11 January 2014.

assimilating and even violent processes in the proselytism of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The more culturally sympathetic line was apparent especially in the relationship of the Church to the Sámi language. Apart from the compulsory teaching of a foreign language, there was also discussion already in the 17th century Church about the importance of the native language in internalising spirituality. This resulted in the training of Sámi-speaking clergymen and the creation of Sámi literature. Also the catechist system, that is circulating Sámi-speaking teachers, was suitable and flexible to the conditions in Lapland and worked well in Finnish Sámi territories for 200 years. The same two traditions manifest themselves in the relationship of the Finnish Church to the Sámi in the 19th century.⁷

In his speech, the bishop gave keys for defining the historical period also in my article. He said he apologised “on behalf of the bearers of this cross”, which was a reference to the office holders of his own diocese, founded in 1851. Thus, he restricted his apology not to concern “the Swedish period” in the 17th and 18th centuries, refuting already in advance Näkkäljärvi’s criticism about the destruction of the old religion. The bishop’s definition is practical from the perspective of my article, because I will focus on the development in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Changing northern policies

Finland changed from Swedish rule into a Russian Grand Duchy in 1809. Sweden also had to cede Kemi Lapland and parts of Torne Lapland, which were annexed to the Oulu province.⁸ During the Swedish rule, Kemi Lapland had been tended by the Härnösand cathedral chapter under special arrangements, but after 1809, the administration resided in Turku, at the opposite end of Finland. From its perspective, the Sámi parishes were extreme periphery. It mainly aroused annoyance

⁷ Veli-Pekka Lehtola, “Kirkon ja saamelaisten suhteet historiassa”, in Erva Niittyvuopio (ed.), *Saamelaiset kirkossa – seminaari 4*, -5.2.2012 (handout) (Oulu 2012a).

⁸ Kaisa Korpijaakko-Labba, *Saamelaisten oikeusasemasta Suomessa – kehityksen pääpiirteet Ruotsin vallan lopulta itsenäisyyden alkuun* (Guovdageaidnu 1999) pp. 21, 100, 103, 106; Maria Lähteenmäki, *Kalotin kansaa. Rajankäynnit ja vuorovaikutus Pohjoiskalotilla 1808–1889* (Helsinki 2004) pp. 10; Ritva Kylli, “Samaan aikaan Pohjan perillä: 1800-luvun alku Utsjoen ja Enontekiön lapinmaalla”, *Historiallinen aikakauskirja* 4 (2008) p. 373.

in authorities in the midst of their other pressures. According to the archbishop of Turku, the Russian peace negotiators should have turned the whole population of Lapland over to Norway or Sweden.⁹ In the historiography on Finnish Lapland, the first decades of the autonomy in Lapland have been called a state of stagnation (Kaisa Korpijaakko-Labba), a period of downright abasement and irresolute politics (Ritva Kylli), or it has been said that Lapland changed into the backwater of the country (Maria Lähteenmäki).¹⁰

Apart from secular administration, Lapland was also largely neglected in ecclesiastical affairs after the Hamina peace treaty, because the county dean living in Kemi had his hands full with border arrangements. The northernmost Utsjoki parish was almost completely abandoned at the beginning of the 19th century. It was often impossible to recruit clergymen or they could not be persuaded to stay in the severe conditions, and the activities of temporary clergymen caused complaints and even indignation.¹¹

The situation improved with the decision of the senate to grant Lapland clergy a right to promotion to more favourable posts after years of honourable service in Lapland: they could add their years in Lapland to their personal record twofold. Similarly, the decrees given in 1817 and 1824 obliged clergymen to report the situation in Lapland regularly to the cathedral chapter and to strengthen the status of the Sámi language. Vicar Jacob Fellman, who started in Utsjoki in 1820, worked diligently in both respects. However, his efforts for the benefit of the Sámi language suffered from the unfavourable attitude of county dean Mathias Castrén, who emphasised the role of Finnish as the language of the Church.¹²

The northern parts of the wide Oulu province faced administrative rearrangements in the 1840s.¹³ In 1849, a new church administrative area

9 Kylli (2008) p. 387.

10 Korpijaakko-Labba (1999) p. 100; Kylli (2008) p. 387; Lähteenmäki (2004) pp. 84; see also Matti Enbuske, *Vanhan Lapin valtamailla: Asutus ja maankäyttö Kemin Lapin ja Enontekiön alueella 1500-luvulta 1900-luvun alkuun* (Helsinki 2008) p. 219.

11 Kylli (2008) p. 385.

12 Kylli (2008) pp. 378–379, 387.

13 Samuli Onnela, “Lappi Pohjoiskalotin osana 1600-luvulta 1900-luvulle”, in *Lappi 4: Saamelaiden ja suomalaisten maa*, Martti Linkola (ed.) (Helsinki 1985); Tarja Nahkiaisola, *Asutus ja maankäyttö Inarissa ja Utsjoella 1700-luvun puolivälistä vuoteen 1925* (Helsinki

emerged in the northernmost parts of Finland, when the vast Kemi deanery was divided in two and the deanery of Lapland was established. In an effort to improve and regionalise church administration, a separate Kuopio diocese was established in 1851 and received the task to manage the ecclesiastical affairs of Northern Finland. Kuopio became the third diocesan capital after Turku and Porvoo. In 1900, episcopacy took another step to the north, when the Oulu cathedral chapter was established.¹⁴

The Kuopio cathedral chapter was given responsibility for a vast area from Northern Karelia to Lapland, but it focused its attention on the conditions of the northernmost Lapland and emphasised the importance of the Sámi language. Lapland had become the focus of special attention from the leadership of the whole grand duchy. Ritva Kylli sees that one reason for the emphasis on the Sámi language was influence from the important fennophile Elias Lönnrot. He had travelled to Lapland in 1842 and criticised the attitude of Finns towards the Sámi. Instead of obliging a few clergymen to learn Sámi, whole parishes were forced to learn Finnish. Lönnrot considered this issue a portentous example of “how things would proceed here, if Finns had the power: subjugated peoples would be deprived of their native language”. Lönnrot thought this was inappropriate for a nation that was itself in a minority position in the Russian empire.¹⁵

The establishment of the Kuopio diocese had a momentary effect on the Sámi policy of the Church especially in Utsjoki, which was a completely Sámi municipality. The Sámi language was emphasised in church services, and there was an effort to provide the parishioners with literature in their native language. One of the most fervent promoters of the Sámi language was vicar Anders Andelin, who learnt the Sámi language as recommended by the chapter. He translated some temperance books and basic religious literature, such as the ABC book *Aapis Kirji* (1859), to the Utsjoki dialect of North Sámi.¹⁶

2006) pp. 15.

14 Hannu Mustakallio, *Pohjoisen hiippakunta: Kuopion-Oulun hiippakunnan historia 1850–1939* (Kuopio-Oulu 2009) p. 101; Kylli (2008) p. 388.

15 Kylli (2008) p. 388.

16 Ritva Kylli, “Anders Andelin Utsjoen saamelaisten kirkkoherrana”, *Kaleva* 20:11 (1999); Ritva Kylli, *Kirkon ja saamelaisten kohtaaminen Utsjoella ja Inarissa 1742–1886* (Oulu 2005) pp. 206–221; Mustakallio (2009) pp. 105–106.

The vicar started to train a talented Sámi boy, Aslak Laiti, for a more extensive education. The cathedral chapter qualified him for elementary school teacher, and he worked as catechist in Utsjoki for several periods in the 1850s and 1860s. Laiti translated an elementary arithmetics book to Sámi and worked as Andelin's linguistic master in translating religious texts. Perhaps the hard life of a catechist or mental problems made Laiti leave later on for Southern Finland, where he worked in temporary post before his early death.¹⁷

After Andelin, the enthusiasm of clergymen for the Sámi language faded again for decades. Although clergy were paid extra for their Sámi language skills, few took the pains to learn it. Many clergymen felt they were only visiting Lapland.¹⁸ It is often apparent that the Sámi culture gave Finnish authorities a certain kind of cultural shock, and they only wanted to approach it from a Finnish perspective. This manifested itself also in the Sámi descriptions made by the clergy, even in the one Andelin published in 1859. The hunting and herding culture seemed primitive to the clergymen and they emphasised its negative characteristics.¹⁹

Although the clergymen often familiarized with the Sámi even in an every day level, their descriptions reflected rather the long tradition of stereotypical Lapp representations than the actual experiences in the field. Finnish educated classes felt they were the guides and mentors of the ignorant people and saw that Finnish culture was the basis of all development. In spite of his Sámi language hobby, vicar Andelin in his description considered the Sámi an undeveloped nature people, whose progress to a cultural level should be fostered in every way. The children should be gathered from the wilderness to school centres and education. They should abandon natural life and learn agriculture. This would help them cast off the sloth, slowness, dirtiness, drink addiction and short stature that Andelin described as distinctive Lapp characteristics.²⁰

Clergymen came and went, but resident Sámi officials and trus-

¹⁷ About Laiti, see Kylli (2005) pp. 387–392.

¹⁸ Kylli (2005) pp. 97–105, 228–231.

¹⁹ Kylli (2005) pp. 451–452.

²⁰ Kylli (1999).

tees brought continuity. The Sámi who were sympathetic towards the Church acted as cultural intermediaries between the clergymen and the parishioners. Sámi parish clerks, catechists and churchwardens took care of the teaching and spiritual affairs of the parish when there was no clergyman. They were the clergy's watching eyes outside the church grounds and helped a new clergyman into contact with the locals.²¹

Circulating teachers or catechists, both male and female, who were responsible for educating almost all Sámi children in the 19th century, had a special importance in maintaining Christianity in sparsely populated areas. This system was started in the "Swedish period" and adapted to the Sámi conditions. Teachers came to the children and often spoke their language. The school environment was familiar to the children and the catechist became a comfortable father or mother figure, while the fearsome Finnish clergyman did not have to be faced until the examination, which usually took place in a completely foreign language.²²

When the teacher went to the children, the Sámi living in scattered settlements did not have to send their children to a foreign environment for long periods. Children from neighbouring areas were gathered to a suitable house for 3–7 weeks at most. Catechists contributed to the house chores and often formed warm relationships with the children as well as the parents. The catechist system worked so well that bishop Gustaf Johansson considered it the teaching method best suited for the Sámi in the 1890s. Apart from Finnish, catechists had traditionally taught also in Sámi, which brought them a salary bonus.²³

The imperial proclamation in 1858 and the elementary school decree 1866 were steps towards fixed elementary schools, where children were to be gathered for longer-term teaching. In Utsjoki, the elementary school got under way already in 1878. It started in the church, but it was difficult to get pupils to school, because the parents thought the children would become lazy there. Finally, the authorities considered it more practical to locate the school in the proper population centre of the municipality, Outakoski, where it started operation in 1885.²⁴

21 Kylli (2005) pp. 337–418.

22 Kylli (2005) pp. 481–482.

23 Esko Kähkönen, *Katekeetat Suomen Lapissa 200 vuotta* (Rovaniemi 1988) p. 278.

24 Kylli (2005) pp. 392–395.

A Finnish couple, Elias and Olga Eriksson, were chosen teachers of the Outakoski school. The classes consisted of completely Sámi-speaking pupils and were mainly taught in Finnish, except in religion lessons, which were taught also in Sámi. The school did not give very good results. The cathedral chapter, which supervised the teaching, and especially bishop Gustaf Johansson started to emphasise the Sámi skills of authorities at the end of the 1880s: “Cultural work must move and work in the language of Lapland and start providing necessary books to Lapps.”²⁵

“Native language is a gift from God”

As Johansson’s quotation illustrates, there was a new turn in the relationship between the Sámi and the Church in the 1880s. Kuopio diocese bishop Gustaf Johansson took a liking to the Sámi and made a stand on improving the status of the Sámi language. On his visitation trip to the Sámi in 1886, he was the first bishop to actually visit Inari and Utsjoki. Johansson’s stand on the status of the Sámi language is quite interesting. He was a fennoman, proponent of Finnish culture, but that was precisely why he strove to strengthen the connection of the Sámi to Finland. He considered that cultural work and native language literature were the best means to prevent the Sámi from becoming Swedish or Norwegian.²⁶

In a wider perspective, Johansson’s attitude matched the policy of the whole Kuopio diocese on Finnish culture. The diocese carried out J. V. Snellman’s fennoman programme more explicitly than any other diocese from the start. Finnish replaced Swedish as the language of the cathedral chapter and the ministerial convention already at the beginning of the 1880s. The northern diocese was also foremost in finnicising the surnames of the clergymen.²⁷

So the diocese carried out a similar fennisation policy towards Swedish as Norway did in relation to Danish in the first part of the 19th

²⁵ Utsjoen piispantark pk 1896, Oulu cathedral chapter archive (OTA), Eb:138 in Oulu Provincial Archive (OMA).

²⁶ Mustakallio (2009) pp. 280–281.

²⁷ Mustakallio (2009) pp. 153–158.

century. The norwegianisation policy directed against Denmark changed, however, into an assimilation policy against the minority languages in Northern Norway from late 1840s. On the contrary, Finnish Church bishops Johansson and later J. R. Koskimies felt it important to emphasise the status of the Sámi language. This was partly on biblical grounds, but also as part of Finland's national issue. In their opinion, the status of the Finnish language in Russia was comparable to the status of minority languages in Finland.²⁸ The statements of bishops also reflected the opinion of some Finnish intellectuals that – because of common linguistic Finno-Ugric roots – the Sámi were relatives to the Finnish people and maybe even represented a kind of Finno-Ugric *Urkultur*.²⁹ In the spirit of Lönnrot, Johansson argued for improving the status of the Sámi language as a national obligation of Finns:

Nevertheless when the Finnish people have been liberated with God's help to become an independent nation and at the same time have cast off the repression to their language, justice towards the Lapps demands, although they may not be numerous, that they be taught more in their native language.³⁰

During the 1896 visitation, Johansson met the bishops of Tromsø and Härnösand to discuss the administration of the border parishes. Johansson summarised the opinions of the Nordic colleagues in the Sámi issue:

The people of Sweden and Norway want to abolish the Lapp language. All people must be taught to one language. This is presumably required from the state perspective. [...] For them, Lapp folk are not people, because they are not self-assertive. They say only by learning Norwegian and Swedish can they survive.

²⁸ See Mustakallio (2009) pp. 78–79.

²⁹ Pekka Isaksson, *Kumma kuvajainen: Rasismi rotututkimuksessa, rotuteorioiden saamelaiset ja suomalainen fyysinen antropologia* (Inari 2000) pp. 134–135.

³⁰ Inarin piispantark. ptk 8, 11.8.1896, OTA Eb:18a, OMA.

Johansson emphasised that oppressing the Sámi language and nationality was not for the glory of Nordic peoples. “The nationality of Lapland still has vitality, and it must be preserved”, he wrote.³¹ Johansson himself learnt North Sámi so that he could deliver a sermon during his visitations in 1896 in Utsjoki and Inari. In Utsjoki he said: “As people here are mostly of Lapp origin, it is necessary that the Lapp language can develop further and that the future elementary and ambulatory school teachers can speak this language.” He emphasised the role of the local language also to the Inari people:

People living in Inari are mostly Lapp folk, who speak a dialect not found anywhere else. It is desirable that you take care of the development of your language. All over the world, each nation tries to care for its language, and it would be necessary for the Inari language to develop into a literary language, so that you could get books here in your own language. It is good to learn Finnish, but keep your own language holy, for it is a gift from God.³²

The bishop wished that talented and well-mannered young Sámi could be trained to be teachers and to cultivate the Sámi language: “It is not good that the native language disappears. It is a gift from God and all people should value and develop their own language. [...] But if the people of Lapland do not make sacrifices to let their own children have more education, it is to be feared that the whole language will wither.”³³

Johansson’s confidence in the youth did not remain just a wish; he took an initiative himself. He negotiated a grant of 800 Finnish marks for travel and maintenance allowance to an Utsjoki Sámi, Josef Guttorm, who went to a four-year teacher seminar in Sortavala. The journey was so long that he could only visit his home during the summer vacations. The grant involved the obligation to return to his native place and work as a teacher. Guttorm received a post in the Outakoski school, where the pupils mainly spoke Sámi. Contrary to the bishop’s

31 G. Johanssonin päiväkirja 24.8.1896, s. 188, Coll. 743, Gustav Johansson’s collection, Helsinki University Library (HYK); Mustakallio (2009) p. 285.

32 Utsjoen piispantark ptk 1896, OTA Eb:138, OMA; Inarin piispantark. ptk 8. – 11.8.1896, OTA Eb:18a, OMA.

33 Utsjoen piispantark ptk 1896, OTA Eb:138, OMA.

original wish, the school board advised Guttorm to teach in Finnish, but he used Sámi as an auxiliary language.³⁴ In the first decades of the 20th century, about five other young Sámi received a similar allowance and studied to become teachers. However, they could not find work in their native area, but had to work outside the Sámi territory.³⁵

Johansson's work to promote the Sámi language was interrupted in 1897, when he became the archbishop of Turku. After a short-term bishop O. I. Colliander, the next bishop, J. R. Forsman became a fine continuator for Johansson's work with the Sámi. Forsman, who finnified his name to Koskimies in 1906, was also a proponent of fennicism, who in Johansson's spirit considered it a matter of national importance to cultivate also minority languages, such as Sámi. He learnt the Sámi language and used it during the visitations in the Sámi territory.³⁶

During the 1902 visitation in Utsjoki, where Aukusti Hakkarainen was instituted to vicarage two years after starting the work, the status of the Sámi language became an important issue. The vicar had already learnt Sámi to such an extent that he could give the sermon in Sámi. Also the bishop gave his speech in Sámi as well as in Finnish, and it was also added to the official visitation documents in both languages. In Finnish, the bishop even used the expression "Sámi people" (*saamilaisten*) instead of "Lapp" (*lappalainen*).³⁷

He evaluated the examination results in the light of the language issue. According to him, teaching the skills of reading to the Sámi was not enough, if understanding the text was difficult for them in a foreign language. In teaching "it would be ideal to use two languages, so that the native language would be primarily used, but considering the benefit that Finnish brings, also this language should be included". Although the bishop gave responsibility also to the Sámi themselves in preserving language, the greatest problem was that authorities and teachers in a bilingual parish usually mastered only one language. "This, my good

34 "Lappalaisten äidinkielen koulunkäynti", *Uusi Suomi* 9.4.1929; "Oappateäggi Josef Guttorm", *Sabmelaš* 3-4 (1944) pp. 4-5.

35 See Veli-Pekka Lehtola, *Saamelaiset suomalaiset: Kohtaamisia 1896-1953* (Helsinki 2012b) pp. 127-130.

36 About Koskimies, see Mustakallio (2009) pp. 324-367.

37 Utsjoen piispantark ptk 1902, OTA Eb:138, OMA; J. R. Koskimiehen päiväkirja kesä-heinäkuu 1902, JRKK, J. R. Koskimies' collection (JRKK), HYK.

friends, is a quite regrettable and pitiable matter, which seems to be an inherited grievance due to the attitudes of past times”, Koskimies stated during his Utsjoki examination.³⁸ In a way, this was an early version of an apology for the Church’s misconduct towards the Sámi.

The favourable attitude of the bishops Johansson and Koskimies towards the Sámi language was probably an important underlying factor for the increasing esteem the Sámi language received among vicars at the turn of the 20th century. This was evident when Lauri Arvid Itkonen was appointed vicar of Inari in 1899 and Aukusti Hakkarainen became vicar of the Utsjoki parish next year. Itkonen quickly learnt Aanaar Sámi and started to give sermons in Sámi on church festival days already in 1900. Hakkarainen, on the other hand, learnt North Sámi and in 1903 proudly signed a postcard to the bishop: “Ucjogast” [‘in Utsjoki’].³⁹

Itkonen and Hakkarainen were interested in translating as well as speaking in Sámi languages. Lack of textbooks in the native languages hindered the teaching of Sámi children in catechist schools and in confirmation school. In North Sámi, schools mostly used a biblical history from the middle of the 19th century translated by Anders Andelin and a Bible translation (1895) printed in Norway. Hakkarainen appealed to the bishop for the development of Sámi literature, because “already in confirmation school it is impossible to make do with only Finnish, when there are always some children who do not know it”.⁴⁰

Old Lapland clergy did not always set a good example to their successors. The former vicar of Utsjoki, A. Koivisto, stated in his report to the economic committee of Lapland: “These books procured by Finnish clergymen have such a demerit that the people have difficulty comprehending them as Lapp language or Finnish and do not want to use them.” When the Sámi knew Finnish, they felt it difficult to use “a book that was supposed to be in the Lapp language, but was not”. Because the people did not care for “continual experiments in their language”, they ended up demanding Finnish books – also because they

38 Utsjoen piispantark ptk 1902, OTA Eb:138, OMA; Inarin piispantark ptk 1902, OTA Eb:18a, OMA; Kähkönen (1988) p. 280.

39 A. Hakkarainen to J. R. Koskimies 2.3.1903, Coll 108.4, JRRK, HYK.

40 A. Hakkarainen to J. R. Koskimies 2.3.1903, Coll 108.4, JRRK, HYK.

felt it was important to learn Finnish. Koivisto, who evidently was not a linguist himself, emphasised that it was impossible for Finnish clergy to properly learn the Sámi language: “A Lapp suffers to hear his language ill-treated. A Lapp would gladly have a clergyman who knows his language, but it is difficult to learn to pronounce it in his manner, and all the more difficult to fully learn the quirks and nature of the language.” According to Koivisto, the Sámi in Utsjoki could generally read and the people were willing to learn, because “a Lapp will readily buy religious books and read them diligently”.⁴¹

Contrary to North Sámi, there were no books in Aanaar Sámi. Itkonen had to point out to decision makers that Aanaar Sámi was a distinct language, and therefore books produced in Mountain Sámi/North Sámi, for example, were not suitable for people in Inari. They preferred Finnish books. According to him, the primer and Catechism edited by Borg were unfamiliar to the Aanaar Sámi: “Many who have understood the situation complain wistfully how their language is falling into oblivion, hoping for a time when people in Inari can also give elementary teaching to their children in the native language.”⁴²

Itkonen worked hard at translation and published the Catechism in Aanaar Sámi in 1902 and the biblical history in 1906. Hakkarainen, on the other hand, made translations together with teachers and the board. He published the Catechism and Sundvall’s *Bibalhistoria* [‘Biblical history’] (1902) and the Gospel and Prayer Book (1905) in North Sámi. In 1905, Hakkarainen took vicarage of Kuolajärvi, however. His successor, Pekka Rudolf Heickel (later Heikinheimo), who moved from Enontekiö to Utsjoki, had no devotion for translation work, and the responsibility for translating fell upon Itkonen.

Heikinheimo was certainly encouraged to use the Sámi language directly in his inauguration in 1907, when the bishop advised the new vicar to learn Sámi, the native language of the people. There was no external obligation from a paragraph of law, but “there is one law and it is the law of love, which obligates and requires it”. The bishop saw that you could not approach the people without knowledge of their

⁴¹ Aukusti Koivisto: Kertomus Utsjoen seurakunnasta, Kert, Lapin kunnista 1902–1903, The archive of Lapland Committee (LKA) Ee:1, OMA.

⁴² “Kielisortoa Lapissa”, *Kaleva* 17.4.1901.

language, because then “there undoubtedly arises some reduction in the understanding and experiencing that should exist between the parish pastor and the congregation”.⁴³ In his diary, Koskimies comments on his advice to Heikinheimo to learn Sámi: “Did not quite seem to like it: I suppose he would rather like to fennicise.”⁴⁴ Heikinheimo still applied for a salary bonus for his Sámi language skills already at the end of the same year: “I have practised the Lapp language for a while now and I have now started to use this language in my sermons”. Teacher O. J. Guttorm and catechist N. W. Holmberg wrote him a language certificate.⁴⁵

Later Heikinheimo used the Sámi language to such an extent that he gave the church festival morning sermons required by the church law in Sámi, as well as all confirmation sermons. Catechist N. W. Holmberg also interpreted other speeches and explanations to Sámi especially in Outakoski, which can be considered the spiritual or at least Laestadian centre of the neighbourhood.⁴⁶ Also teacher Josef Guttorm acted as interpreter in Outakoski.

Even though the catechists were paid for their skills in the Sámi language, the situation had become worse at the turn of the 20th century. Holmberg was the only catechist in Finland who mastered the Sámi language; his parish was almost completely Sámi speaking. He was overworked, because he was responsible for the whole municipality as the only ambulatory schoolteacher. The visitation stated: “The teaching language is Lappish and many children read books in Lappish.” Early in the century, the Old Schoolmaster, that is N. W. Holmberg, had an average of 50 pupils a year. The ambulatory school was taught in seven different places for 32 weeks in all.⁴⁷

Bishop Koskimies emphasised the training of Sámi-speaking and even native Sámi catechists. In 1911, he managed to persuade the im-

43 Utsjoen piispantark ptk 1907, OTA Eb:138, OMA.

44 J. R. Koskimiehen pv-k 19.-21.7.1907, JRKK, HYK.

45 Utsjoen kirkkohra to Kuopion hiippak tuomiokapituli 4.11. ja 29.12.1907, Konseptikirjat 1906-15, Utsjoki parish archive L II:2, OMA.

46 Kertomus Utsjoen srk tilasta piispantarkastukseen 1913 (P.R. Heikinheimo), Utsjoen piispantark ptk 1913, OTA Eb:138, OMA.

47 Sodankylän piispantark 1913, OTA Eb:138, OMA.

perial senate to support an undertaking to establish a total of five new catechist offices in the Sámi territory, many of which emphasised the benefits of the Sámi and Sámi language skills.⁴⁸ Consequently, there were four Sámi-speaking catechists in the 1910s, when three out of the four catechists in Inari spoke Sámi in addition to the Utsjoki catechist. The language situation in the Utsjoki parish took a turn for the worse in 1915, when Holmberg retired from the catechist office after a full term of service. After a many years' application process, Finnish Albert Keskitalo from Enontekiö was chosen for the office. He learnt also Sámi, but it seems that the teaching was almost exclusively in Finnish.⁴⁹

“Language oppression in Lapland? Human rights for the minority!”

The enthusiasm of bishop Koskimies about the status of the Sámi language by no means represented the opinion of the whole Finnish clergy; in fact, he had to defend it in ministerial conventions. For example, the 1902 synodal convention discussed the publication of Sámi literature based on the initiative of vicar A. Hakkarainen. The proposal met with severe opposition, which manifested itself in two kinds of attitude. Vicar Niilo Karlsberg from Piippola stated that there was no need to publish anything in the Utsjoki dialect, because books were available from Norway. Former Utsjoki vicar V. A. Wirkkula, on the other hand, suggested that there was no need to publish books in Aanaar Sámi, because the people in Inari knew Finnish.⁵⁰

These statements represented the negative atmosphere that made vicar Lauri Itkonen from Inari to have sharply critical statements in the 1907 ministerial convention. He had already presented a major part of the criticism earlier in the *Kaiku* newspaper under heading “Language oppression in Lapland”, where he emphasized their “human rights”. Itkonen ridiculed that the church had taken special care to convert the Sámi, and even a state committee had been appointed to contemplate

⁴⁸ Tuomiokptln kok ptk 11.5.1911 § 12, OTA Ca:61, OMA.

⁴⁹ Kähkönen (1988) pp. 104, 470–471; Kertomus Utsjoen srk tilasta piispantarkastukseen 1932 (E. Vuornos), Utsjoen piispantark ptk 1932, OTA Eb:138, OMA.

⁵⁰ Mustakallio (2009) p. 440.

the economic exploitation of Lapland, but nothing had been done for the Sámi language: “We Finns certainly tremble to our bones when *our* language is threatened. But of course the Lapps have none of these lofty feelings, no love for their native language! You can despise and offend it, just make sure you are otherwise polite! But unfortunately a Lapp does not perceive it that way.”⁵¹

According to the writer, proposals for special privileges for the Sámi were deflected, because Finns emphasised uniform treatment and equality between different regions. Itkonen argued that Lapps surely should have “the same law and religion as we have”, but uniformity brought inequality. Finns did not need to study a foreign language to be allowed to marry, for example. In Lapland, on the other hand, there was both compulsory school attendance and compulsory communion. The writer suggested reverting to the spirit of the old Swedish period decree in legislation. “Is it impossible to get a clear law that no one without skills of Lappish is competent to apply for pastor or teacher office in Lappish-speaking parishes. If no such decree is passed, it is to be feared that the language conditions in Lapland remain unchanged.”⁵²

In the 1907 ministerial convention, Itkonen’s similar speech and proposal to add Sámi language skills to the qualifications of clergymen irritated some former Lapland clergy. The former vicar of Utsjoki, A. Koivisto, repeated his opinion that because “a Lapp suffers to hear his language ill-treated”, the clergymen should use only Finnish. Another former vicar of Utsjoki, Wirkkula, stated: “It is difficult to support Lapland’s nationality in practice, because finnishness is spreading and the Lapp nationality is crumbling.” In other words, he invoked a developmental theory idea that the Sámi were a vanishing people not worth wasting Church funds on.

Instead, bishop Koskimies considered that the Church should try to make up for “old sins” and emphasise the importance of the Sámi language also as an ecclesiastical language. Assistant judge J. A. Mannermaa proposed a practical solution: a substantial increase in the language bonus of Lapland clergy and considering the Sámi language

⁵¹ “Kielisortoa Lapissa”, *Kaleva* 17.4.1901.

⁵² “Kielisortoa Lapissa”, *Kaleva* 17.4.1901.

in nominations to offices. In his opinion, to arrange teaching of Christianity to the Sámi in their native language was a matter of honour to the national Church.⁵³

The interest in the Sámi language among the clergy subsided in the course of the 1910s for various reasons. Lauri Itkonen's literary work suffered a heavy blow in 1913, when the Inari vicarage burned with all notes and manuscripts. Also family reasons were involved when Itkonen and his family moved to the south in 1914. It was a severe setback to the Aanaar Sámi language, and its status among authorities collapsed after Itkonen. Books in Aanaar Sámi were not published for many decades.⁵⁴

Vicar Heikinheimo of Utsjoki had become careful in speaking Sámi, although he had the skill, and preferred using interpreters.⁵⁵ It may be that using the Sámi language was a similar status problem to Heikinheimo as it was to some county sheriffs, who did not want to speak Sámi to the Sámi people in fear of losing their credibility. For example, county chief, later bailiff L. I. Itkonen (vicar Lauri Itkonen's son), confessed after leaving Lapland that he dared not speak Sámi in Enontekiö, because the possible ridicule could have impeded his credibility in maintaining order in reindeer husbandry, for example.⁵⁶

Some sort of trauma could also be involved in the Sámi language usage of Arvi Järventaus. After being elected vicar of Enontekiö, he learnt the Sámi language on his own initiative. Evidently in Christmas 1915, he ventured to give a sermon in the Sámi language, and it was the first one in the parish in living memory. A newspaper described how the event had deeply affected the Sámi, but another newspaper suggested that local Finns did not appreciate the vicar's wish to preach in Sámi. There were negative opinions towards the Sámi. The sermon may have been one reason why Järventaus quite soon got into trouble with the local Finns in Enontekiö, perhaps also in relation to the Laestadians.⁵⁷ He

53 Mustakallio (2009) p. 441.

54 See e.g. Tuomo Itkonen, *Pippinä ja pappina* (Helsinki 1970) pp. 81–82.

55 Utsjoen piispantark ptk 1913, OTA Eb:138, OMA.

56 L. I. Itkonen to T. I. Itkonen 25.3.1924, Kansio 3, Lauri Itkonen's archive (LIA), KA.

57 "Kertomus Enontekiön kappeliseurakunnasta ajalta 1907–1913, Kesäkuun 12. p:nä pidettävää piispantarkastusta varten kirjoitti H. A. Järventaus, Piispantarkastusker-

moved to Sodankylä, where he spent time intermittently (1918–1923). His attitude towards the using of Sámi language was different now. In the report he made in 1918, he considered that separate teaching in the Sámi language was not necessary, because the Sámi knew Finnish. This was a typical excuse to evade the issue of teaching in the Sámi language. He showed no initiative in fostering the Sámi language in the parish and consequently, at the beginning of the 1920s, he moved to Southern Finland “to the shade of apple trees”, as he stated himself.⁵⁸

Laestadians and missionary workers of Lapland

While reflecting on its role in Northern Finland, the Church also had to define its position on the Christian doctrines that were influential in the Sámi territory. Laestadianism spread from Sweden and Norway to Enontekiö from the 1870s and to the Sámi in Deatnu/Tana in the 1890s. The traditionally ecclesiastical Aanaar Sámi did not seem to get excited about it, but many Teno Sámi became stout Laestadians. Vicar Wirkkula of Utsjoki experienced a personal Laestadian revival and spread the doctrine. The activity of Sámi preachers, such as Aapa-Hans (Helander), helped spreading the movement, although Finnish was a kind of an official language in Laestadianism.⁵⁹

The attitudes of bishops towards the movement varied. Johansson deemed Laestadianism “pernicious”, because it tied people up to preachers by emphasising that sins could be forgiven by ordinary people. On the other hand, bishop Koskimies did not consider Laestadianism a sect outside the national Church. During the visitation in Utsjoki in 1902, he emphasised that it was already a traditional movement that had been active in Northern Finland for decades, and it no longer seemed to cause “any great sentiments”, which convinced the bishop to leave the matter in the hands of the Lord.⁶⁰ Bishop Koskimies publicly

tomukset Eb:4, OMA.

58 Juhani Liukkonen, *Katekeettakoulu Suur-Sodankylässä 1837–1950* (Oulu 1993) pp. 131–132. About Järventaus, see Outi Oinas, *Kauniit asiat ja ihmisten asiat eivät voi olla Jumalalle vieraita: Kirjailija, pappi Arvi Järventaus ja Lappi* (Rovaniemi 2008).

59 Kylli (2005) pp. 469; see also D. N. Buharov, *Matka Lapissa syksyllä 1885* (Helsinki [1885] 2010) p. 181.

60 Seurakuntien kertomukset ks, OTA Eb, OMA; about Koskimies and Laestadianism,

acknowledged the religious and national significance of the movement, which also increased the trust of the Laestadians towards the bishop.⁶¹

Also vicars in the Sámi area reacted to Laestadianism in different ways. In the Utsjoki parish, the Outakoski village was considered “morally problematic”, because Laestadians had their own meetings without the clergy, led by preachers, such as Olli Koskamo. A. Hakkarainen deemed it a heresy, because of its own confession practice and congregation conception, which meant that salvation could not be found outside the sect. According to vicar Lauri Itkonen of Inari, Laestadianism resulted in “arrogant zeal, condemning of others and contempt towards the ecclesiastical church service”, for example. It also decreased the number of people going to church.⁶² On the other hand, vicar Heikinheimo saw that Laestadianism had removed “outward brutality” in Outakoski and had not created controversy or disorder. Assistant vicar A. E. S. Frosterus of Enontekiö also saw the Laestadian movement in a positive light: it was “the only expression of religious life here”. He did not want to deem it heresy, but an ecclesiastical movement “without which pure heathenism, reindeer theft, drunkenness and adultery would reign here”.⁶³

At the beginning of the 20th century, also “home missionary workers” came to the Finnish Sámi territory, when the ecumenical Young Women’s Christian Association founded the Riutula orphanage in Inari in 1905. The founding members Naemi von Bonsdorff and Ida Lilius did not want to go to distant lands but started missionary and relief work “in our country for the direly neglected people of Lapland”. The aim was to give a home to orphans and children of destitute families and raise them into proper Finnish citizens. However, the orphanage was criticised, for example, by the elementary school inspector Vihtori Lähde for neglecting the children’s native language, alienating them from their own culture and killing their “Lapland learning”.⁶⁴

see Mustakallio (2009) pp. 468–477.

61 Mustakallio (2009) p. 476.

62 Seurakuntien kertomukset 1908–1914, ks, OTA Eb, OMA.

63 Seurakuntien kertomukset ks, OTA Eb, OMA.

64 Vihtori Lähde, “Kansanopetuslaitoksen ominainen kehittäminen Lapissa”, *Opettajain lehti* 38 (1920) p. 38.

Tiina Saukko has studied the Riutula orphanage and stated that the Christian women's descriptions of the dirtiness and ignorance of the Sámi resembled the views of foreign missions on heathen peoples. However, it was not considered the fault of the Sámi themselves, but the writers saw that they just did not have their share of the civilisation, good manners and religiousness already mastered by the Finns. Finns had to teach the children especially hygiene and cleanliness. New arrivals were taken directly to sauna and given a haircut. Saukko believes that the Riutula staff no longer saw the children as Sámi, but as Finns who were only hindered by the Sámi language. Therefore, it had to be disposed of.⁶⁵

Aanaar Sámi Ilmari Mattus has said that while the orphanage gave the wards a home, it required them to speak Finnish as a sort of return service and thus eradicated their Sámi language skills.⁶⁶ The change from home life to the daily life in the orphanage caused difficulties with language as well as practices to many children. Thus, the Christian orphanages became institutions that sustained the children's individual wellbeing, but also institutions for educating them into Finns. From the perspective of Sámi culture, they have similar characteristics as later dormitories, where Sámi language skills weakened or disappeared in a fully Finnish environment.⁶⁷

Dismantling the catechist system

The 1921 compulsory education law was aimed at intensifying the construction of the school network. Each municipality was obligated to found a sufficient number of schools to guarantee every citizen's right to learn reading and writing. Fixed schools, established by the state, were meant to gradually replace ambulatory schools, that is catechist schools, maintained by the Church. The law was aimed at emphasising

65 Tiina Saukko, "Lapsia Jumalan valtakuntaa varten": NNKY:n ulkolähetystyö Inarissa vuosina 1920–1938 ja Riutulan lastenkoti", unpublished master thesis, University of Oulu (Oulu 2010) p. 45.

66 A verbal account of Ilmari Mattus.

67 About the influences of dormitories, see Minna Rasmus, *Bággu vuolgát, bággu birget: Sámemánáid ceavzinstrategiijat Suoma álbmotskuvlla ásodagain 1950–1960-logus* (Oulu 2008).

the responsibility of the state and the municipalities for education, while the role of the Church would decrease.⁶⁸

“Children living more than five kilometres from the elementary school in municipalities where the average population per square kilometre is less than three” were still temporarily exempt from compulsory education.⁶⁹ These children were still taught by catechists. Transition from the popular education of the Church to the elementary school system took a long time in Lapland, contrary to elsewhere in Finland. The 1921 law specified the transition period at 16 years, but in reality it took still ten years longer.⁷⁰

When the law was passed, there were 28 catechists in a total of 150 teaching districts in the whole Lapland. Twelve of them worked in the jurisdictional district of Lapland. The number of pupils in ambulatory schools peaked in 1922, at the same time as the compulsory education law was passed. Founding elementary schools was slow, because municipalities feared that the construction and maintenance costs would overwhelm them. Nevertheless, the number of elementary schools increased gradually. Year 1927 was a turning point, because the number of pupils in the elementary schools of Lapland exceeded that of the catechist schools.⁷¹

When the elementary school gained ground, the number of pupils in catechist schools decreased. While the four catechists in Inari had a total of 174 pupils in 1926, the number of catechists had dropped to three and there were only 89 pupils in 1934. There were about twenty teaching districts and teaching time in each place was five weeks on average. On the other hand, there were six elementary schools with a total of 255 children.⁷² Utsjoki got a new elementary school in 1929. When the municipality now had two school districts, the municipal authorities rejoiced that “compulsory education has come into full effect”.

68 *Lapin Kansa* 11.4.1929.

69 Laki oppivelvollisuuslaiksi 26.11.1920, *Valtiopäiväasiakirjat* 1920; Muutoksia lakiin oppivelvollisuuslaiksi 15.4.1921, *Valtiopäiväasiakirjat* 1921.

70 Kähkönen (1988) p. 67.

71 Kähkönen (1988) p. 256.

72 Kertomus srk tilasta 1934 (Tuomo Itkonen), Inarin piispantark p:t, OTA Eb:18a, OMA.

In reality, the numbers of pupils had only evened out temporarily: in 1932, about half of the children (65) in school age went to elementary school, while the other half went to catechist school, which was still run by one catechist.⁷³

Outside the central villages, teaching Sámi children was still the responsibility of catechists or ambulatory teachers. The bishop of the Oulu diocese stated in 1921: “Catechist schools [...] are in this parish undoubtedly the method of teaching that most practically suits local conditions and can therefore successfully provide teaching to all children in the parish.” The status of the Sámi language even improved in the 1920s in many parishes. For example, in Enontekiö the catechist learnt North Sámi. The catechist of Utsjoki, Keskitalo, spoke Sámi, although he evidently used it only a little in teaching. Three of the four catechists in Inari could speak Sámi in 1930 and the fourth had Sámi teachers as substitutes. All catechists in Inari were women, two of them Sámi, Valle and Anni Saijets. However, catechist teaching in the Sámi language never started in Sodankylä.⁷⁴

Despite the fact that catechists could use Sámi in teaching and explaining Finnish texts, sometimes they had difficulties making pupils understand the contents of what they read, not to mention the concepts and notions related to Christian values. When inspections were usually made in Finnish and with Finnish books, problems could be seen clearly. Vicar Tuomo Itkonen stated in his inspection trip to a remote corner of lake Inari that Sámi children often knew their homework “prattling by rote, but making grammatical errors so that the case endings of words went topsy turvy, and clauses made no sense. It was clear that the contents of the homework had not been understood.”⁷⁵

The transition from catechist teaching to the elementary school system finally took the whole first half of the 20th century. The last catechist stopped working as late as in 1956. The transition process

73 Kertomus Utsjoen srk tilasta piispantarkastukseen 1932 (E. Vuornos), Utsjoen piispantark ptk 1932, OTA Eb:138, OMA.

74 Piispantark ptk Inarissa 1921 ja 1929, OTA, OMA; Katekeettamatrikkeli; Kähkönen (1988) pp. 290, 421–471; Laura Lehtola, *Viimeinen katekeetta: Opettajana Inarin erämaissa*, Matti Lehtola (ed.) (Helsinki 1984).

75 Piispantark ptk Inarissa 1929. OTA, OMA.

involved a difficult issue: the status of the Sámi language in school teaching. The change from ambulatory schools to fixed schools by no means improved the situation, rather the contrary. While catechists in the Sámi territory usually knew the Sámi language, either as native speakers or as Sámi students, elementary school teachers were usually Finns. The situation in elementary schools was that the children had to learn the teacher's language to get along.⁷⁶

This was certainly not the original purpose, because both the elementary school decree from 1893 and the compulsory education law from 1921 guaranteed the right to have teaching in the native language in elementary schools. For instance in 1929, school counsellor Alfred Salmela considered the situation excellent in Finland compared to Norway, for example, where minority languages had no protection of laws. To the claims about the fennisation of the Sámi, Salmela responded that in Finnish law there were no "ordinances that would require using elementary school to fennicise national minorities". Salmela emphasised: "The school or teacher are in no way obligated to supervise that the pupils become Finnish or Swedish."⁷⁷

Vicar Tuomo Itkonen of Inari, on the other hand, represented the opinion that, in spite of the sanctimonious wishes, the situation in the field was bad. Although the law granted possibilities for teaching in the Sámi language, authorities usually dismissed them on artificial grounds, such as by invoking the Finnish language skills of the Sámi, the small size of the language or lack of teaching materials. Itkonen called this Finnish master thinking, which was quite another strategy compared to the Norwegian assimilation policy: "Even laziness can change into oppression towards others. In his laziness, the Finn deprives Lapps of their nationality and language, suppresses their need for education, makes them (if he can) an inferior mixed breed that will deteriorate in spirit and flesh."⁷⁸

Tuomo Itkonen followed the earlier thinking of his father Lauri Itkonen: the fact that Finns emphasised uniform treatment and equa-

⁷⁶ Oulun hiippak tuomioktli:n kok ptk 23.2.1935, liite 9, OTA Ca:85, OMA.

⁷⁷ *Lapin Kansa* 3.1.1929; "Kielellisten vähemmistöjen kansakoulu", *Uusi Suomi* 28.12.1928.

⁷⁸ Tuomo Itkonen, "Suomalaisuus ja lapinkielinen vähemmistö", *Uusi Suomi* 4.4.1929.

lity between different regions resulted in inequality for the Sámi, when the purpose was to implement this uniformity according to the Finnish language and Finnish ideals. This was the guiding principle of the whole Finnish Sámi policy in the first part of the 20th century. There were no ordinances in Finnish law to oppress the Sámi, but on the other hand, special privileges were denied in the spirit of uniformity.⁷⁹

Itkonen himself became victim of this type of “rationalist assimilation policy”. After becoming vicar of Inari in 1924, he learnt North Sámi and started a campaign to improve the status of the Sámi language both in the Church and in the elementary school system. However, numerous proposals and initiatives to do this were frustrated or rejected with the explanations that the Sámi language was too small to be a relevant objective for economical support, or that due to different Sámi languages, it would not be equal to support only one language, or that the Finnish inhabitants would suffer if Sámi languages were to be preferred.⁸⁰

To have his ideas implemented, Itkonen made a proposal to found the “Society for the Promotion of Lapp Culture” in 1932. It was an association of Finnish “Sámi friends”, which published a lot of Sámi literature, also religious, as well as Finland’s only magazine in Sámi, *Sabmelaš*. However, the association’s attempts to raise the status of the Sámi language also in the Church were deflected, because authorities considered the Finnish language skills of the Sámi to be sufficient to cope with the Finnish education, for example.⁸¹

The incident of the ethnical studies that bishop Salmi referred to in his apology was related to vicar Itkonen in two ways. In 1934, the Society for the Promotion of Lapp Culture that he had initiated supported an anthropological expedition to the Sámi area led by professor Väinö Lassila. The researcher group excavated a Sámi cemetery island in Inari and about 70 Sámi skulls were exported to the Anatomical Institute of

79 Jukka Nyssönen, “De finska samernas etnopolitiska mobilisering inom statliga ramar”, in Lars Elenius, Patrik Lantto & Matti Enbuske (red.), *Fredens konsekvenser: Samhällsförändringar i norr efter 1809* (Luleå 2009) pp. 168–169.

80 See Lehtola (2012b) pp. 290–297.

81 About the establishing of the organizations, see Lehtola (2012b) pp. 299–301.

the University of Helsinki.⁸² Vicar Itkonen gave the anthropologists an unofficial permit to do this. In the 1990s, the skulls became the primary objective for the claims for repatriation in Finland. They were reburied in the cemetery island in 1995 in a ceremony led by bishop Olavi Rimpiläinen, Salmi's predecessor.⁸³

Later in his memoirs, Itkonen explained that he had been aware that his permit was not formally needed, because the anthropological group already had the license from the National Board of Antiquity to undertake the excavations. However, since Itkonen was making a primer in the Sámi language and had difficulties in financing it, he made a deal with professor Lassila, who promised to produce the lacking funds for the book, if he could have the "moral support" of the parish for the excavations. Itkonen considered that this way, through the sacrifice of Sámi ancestors, he had provided "a better future for the living Sámi" by promoting their literacy.⁸⁴

Apart from Itkonen, vicar Erkki Vuornos of Utsjoki, who preached also in Laestadian meetings, actively used Sámi language in the 1930s. The Sámi language remained strong in the Utsjoki parish until the 1950s, because the population and petty officials were still 95 percent Sámi. The situation was contrary among the Reindeer Sámi in Enontekiö and Vuotso, where the parishes provided no services in the Sámi language.

In Inari, the situation changed for the worse especially in the 1930s. The number of Finns had exceeded the number of Sámi already in 1910, and this began to show also in the choices of people to confidential posts and petty offices. Finns strengthened their grip on the congregational activities. The development intensified with the gradual relocation of the village centre from the Inari Sámi village to the Finnish Ivalo, which quickly grew as a junction for the traffic towards Pechenga. Administrative offices moved to Ivalo mainly during the 1930s, only the church registry office and central church remained in Inari due to Itkonen's

82 Isaksson (2000) pp. 250–251.

83 See Veli-Pekka Lehtola, "The right to one's own past", in Maria Lähteenmäki & Päivi Maria Pihlaja (eds.), *The North Calotte: Perspectives on the histories and cultures of northernmost Europe* (Inari 2005) pp. 84–86.

84 Itkonen (1970) pp. 330–331.

resistance. When Itkonen moved away from Inari in 1940, and the church burned down in the Russian bombardments, the centre of the parish moved to Ivalo after the war. After that, the Sámi became a small minority in the parish administration. As something of a compensation for moving authority to Ivalo, the cathedral chapter created a special Sámi clergyman office in 1945 and located it in Inari.⁸⁵

The catechist system began to unwind when an amendment in the compulsory education law was passed in 1947: now compulsory education applied to all children in all sparsely populated municipalities, also the ones living more than five kilometres from the school. The amendment quickly resulted in the construction of new schools and founding dormitories for children from further away. Also in Sámi areas, the children were gathered to dormitories for weeks and even months without an opportunity to visit home.⁸⁶

Compulsory education entailed two kinds of consequences for the Sámi. All Sámi children could now enjoy full education, and also poorer children had a better chance to get education. In later decades, this would have the manifest effect that education gave the Sámi new means in promoting their interests in the Finnish society. On the other hand, the change to compulsory education had the cultural drawback that the school system operated solely on Finnish educational and cultural ideals. The Sámi language and the cultural tradition of the Sámi were completely neglected. The amendment of the compulsory education law effectively abolished the old catechist system, where Sámi-speaking teachers had circulated among the pupils living in the wilds. The teachers in the elementary school system mainly came from the south, and usually it did not even occur to them to learn Sámi. The school system with its dormitories efficiently alienated Sámi children from their background.⁸⁷

Many expressed their concern for the situation, where Sámi children were sent to a linguistically and culturally foreign environment. The Sámi delegation that went to Helsinki in 1947 summarised the problem:

85 See Lehtola (2012b) pp. 196–204.

86 Lehtola (2012b) pp. 196–204.

87 For details, see Veli-Pekka Lehtola, *Saamelainen ääni: Saamen Radio 1947–1997* (Helsinki 1997) p. 62.

We should see to it that when starting school, Sámi children do not get the feeling that they are at the same time turning their back to their home, as if the cultural heritage of that home was not something they could build their future on. It is the task of school to encourage, not discourage the children's belief in the Sámi future.⁸⁸

The national board of education, however, did not do anything to improve the situation until the educated Sámi generation in the 1970s mounted increasing demands.

Discussion

Were there grounds for bishop Salmi's apology to the Sámi? When you compare the Finnish situation to Sweden and especially to Norway, there was no apparent assimilation policy in the Church or the state administration. The situation was superficially good, at least during certain periods. Bishops Johansson and Koskimies even managed to create a wave of Sámi language enthusiasm, which also seized some Lapland clergymen. Moreover, catechists or ambulatory teachers went to Sámi children and provided education in a homelike atmosphere, although a few weeks of teaching did not bring very profound results.

However, the main problem in the Sámi policy of the Church was inconsistency. Positive actions depended on the activity of individual people. When their enthusiasm faded, the Sámi policy of the Church could also become dormant for a long period. Lapland clergymen came and went so often that permanent spiritual ties rarely emerged. The Sámi themselves were mostly in charge of continuity as church employees or elected officials.

Johansson and Koskimies, together with the Lapland clergymen who learnt the Sámi language, represented the Lönnrotian tradition in the Finnish Church: Finns should treat the Sámi equally because of their own subjugated history. However, it was typical for this conception also to sharply limit itself to issues about the Sámi language when

⁸⁸ Luonnos LSS:n lausunnoksi OPM:lle, Sámi Affairs Committee archive 1949–1951 (SAKA) 1:1, OMA; "Lappalaisten tulevaisuuden turvaaminen vaatii valtiovallan toimenpiteitä", Niilo Magga y.m. sisäasiainministeriölle 7. 4.1947, SAKA1:1, OMA; Saamelaislähetystö, *Saamelaislähetystön käynti Helsingissä toukokuussa 1947* (Helsinki 1947) pp. 8–15.

attempting to establish Christianity among the Sámi. Other Sámi traditions were not welcome to the local Christian culture: yoik music, storytelling, Sámi food or using Sámi preachers also in church were completely out of the question. As Ristenrauna Magga's example in the Inari seminar illustrated, disregarding Sámi naming conventions was a small and natural thing for the clergyman, but it depreciated the Sámi cultural heritage and revealed clear power structures.

Understanding the significance of the native language was a tradition in the Finnish Church, but another and more powerful tradition was what Tuomo Itkonen called Finnish master thinking. It was based on an idea that was characteristic to missionary work: "our" task is to bring "you" in to the civilization, good manners and religiousness already mastered by the Finns. This pattern of thought was clearly apparent in the controversial logic of "equality" that both father and son Itkonen criticised in their time. Finns emphasised that when all Finnish citizens had the same rights, everything was fine. They did not necessarily even come to think about their ethnocentric starting point – that everything happened according to the Finnish language and Finnish values. The criticism presented by Lauri and Tuomo Itkonen suggests, however, that there were alternatives.

The relationships of the Church and the Sámi after the Second World War has not been properly studied in Finland.⁸⁹ The development seems to have been similar to earlier phases, depending on the activity of individuals. Samuli Aikio stated in 1985 that the Church has had a fatherly policy based on "good will" for centuries, antithetical to the legitimate will or the official documented policy of the Church. This is why it swings unsteadily with the cultural climate.⁹⁰ The bishop's apology gave many Sámi hope for an official Church policy that consistently supports the language and culture.

⁸⁹ See Lauri Mustakallio, *Kirkko saamelaisten parissa v. 1970*, raportti (handout) (Oulu 1970); Antti Kähkönen, "Kirkko ja saamelaisvähemmistö", *Faravid: Pohjois-Suomen historiallisen yhdistyksen vuosikirja* 13 (Rovaniemi 1989) pp. 277–288.

⁹⁰ Samuli Aikio, "Saamen kielen julkinen ja kirjallinen käytö Suomessa" *Arsis* 4 (1985) pp. 28–30.

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Veli-Pekka Lehtola, born 1957, is Professor of Sámi Culture in the Giellagas Institute at the University of Oulu, Finland. Lehtola is a (North) Sámi from Aanaar or Inari in Northern Finland. He is specialized in the history of the Sámi and Lapland, in modern Sámi art, as well as in the development of the Sámi representations. In the field of history, his main subject has been the relationships between the Sámi and the Finns in the first part of the 20th century. He has published twelve monographs, e.g. *The Sámi People – Traditions in Transition* (University Press of Alaska 2004), as well as almost one hundred scientific articles in Finnish, Sámi, English, Swedish, French, German and Hungarian. During 2015–2018, Lehtola is the leader of the project “Domestication of Indigenous Discourses? Processes of Constructing Political Subjects in Sápmi” funded by the Academy of Finland.
veli-pekka.lehtola@oulu.fi

Sammanfattningar på nordsamiska, lulesamiska och sydsamiska

Historjjálaš gávnnadeamit sámiid ja girku gaskkas Suomas 2012, bismá Samuel Salmi Oulu bismáguovllus šállošii girku veardoguid sámiid vuostá Suomas, ja refererii erenoamážit historjjálaš dáhpáhusaide. Soabadeapmi čájehii Oulu bismágotti odđa sámi politihkka. Mu artihkkal vuoseha ovdáneami sámi-girku gaskavuodain 1800-logu álggus gitta 1900-logu beallemuttui. Go buohtastahtá Ruotain ja erenoamážit Norggain, de orru leamen ahte Suoma stáhta hálddahusas dahje girkus ii lean čielga assimilašuvdnapolitihkka. Bismá Johansson ja Koskimies nagodeigga movttiidit girku geavahit sámegeiela, moaittiiga Norgga ja Ruota sámeapolitihkka ja vihaheigga muhtin sámi báhpaid. Dasa lassin, katekehtat dehe johti oahpaheddjit, geat johte sámi mánáid mielde ja adde oahpu ruovttuin, ovdastedje ”kultursensitiivva”-hámi oahpahusas. Váldováttisvuhtan lei go girkus ii lean bisttevas sámeapolitihkka. Buorit doaimmat ledje gitta dain ovttaskas olbmui ja jus sis lei mokta. Muhtin girku ovddasteaddjit ipmirdedje eamiálbmogiid gielaid dehálašvuoda, muhto vel gievrrasit árbevierru lei dat man girkohearrá Tuomo Itonen gohčodii ”suopmelaš hearrájurddašeapmin”. Dat lei vuodđuduvvon kontroversiealla ”dásseárvvu” logihka vuodul mas dásseárvu dušše oaivvildii láddelaččaid jurddašan- ja láhtenmálle.

Översättning Miliana Baer

Histárjålasj gávnadime sámij ja Girikko gaskan Suoman

Oulu stifta biskåhppå Samuel Salmi, 2012, ándagis ánoj almulattjat Girikko nievres dåmadimes sámij vuosstáj Suoman, ja vuosedij sieralåhkáj histárjålasj gávnadimijda. Ándagisádnom reflekterij Oulu duobbmogirko duobbmokapihttala ádá Sáme vuoynov. Muv artihkkal guoradallá Sáme-Girikko gaskavuodaj ávdedimev 1900-lågo álgo rájes gitta mañnedoarroájggáj 2000-lågo mañnegietjen. Gå Svierigijn buohtastahtá ja sierralåhkáj Vuonajn, de ij lim vuoynos assimilerim vuoynno Suoma stáhta Girikko tjuottjudusán. Biskåhppå Johansson ja Koskimes vájku vuorbástijga Sáme geiela miellogisvuoda bárrosjimugav dahkat, gå lájtijga Vuona ja Svieriga sámepolitijkav sámijda ja ládajga soames

Sámeednama hárrájt. Duodden dasi, katjijsa ja jáhtteáhpaddidje, mannin sáme mánáj lusi ja ásadin áhpadásáv hájmmasjimuk birrasin, ávdástin ”kultuvralasj njuoras” áhpadás vuogev. Oajvveássje, gájt, lij Girikko sáme politijka vuosteldibme. Buorre dago mierreduvvin aktugattjaj dájmalasjvuohatj ja ávvuj. Muhtem girikko ávdástiddje máhttin dádjadit álgoálmuga giela ájnasvuodav, valla ietjá ja fábmogap dáhpe lij majt girkkohárrá Tuomo Itkonen gáhtjoj ”Suobmelasj ráddijiddje vuojnonn”. Vuododum lij ”buohtaárvo” logijkkaj man birra juorruli ja manna buohtaárvo val lij gehtjadum Suobmelasj kultuvra ja doarjodiddje tjuovgan.

Översättning Barbro Lundholm

*Tjåanghkoie saemieh jih sáevmien gærhkoie
ektine historijisnie*

Jaepien 2012 Uleåborgen stiften bíspe, Samuel Salmi aanteges mietie dovletje dáásverimmijste saemiej vuestie Sáevmesne gihtji, jih dan sjiere tjåanghkose vuesiehti gosse gærhkoie jih saemieh historijisnie gaavnesjamme. Aanteges Uleåborgen dáapmoekapihtelen orre saemie-policym vuesehte. Daate artihkele evtiedimmiem joekehte guktie saemieh jih gærhkoie 1800-jaepiej aalkoste jih tñjese dáaroen mænngan aktanamme. Gosse Sveerjem jih sjirere Nöörjem vuartesje ij Leah sáevmien staate naan joekoen laadtajdehtemepolitihkem saemiej vuestie dáárehti. Dah göökte bísph Johansson jih Koskiemies dovne buektiehtigan muvhtede lappmarhken hearride eadtjaldovvedh saemien gielem provhkedh. Katekeeth gieh saemien maanaj gáajkoe mñnedin jih dejtie hiejmine lohkehtin lin ”golteliks kultuvrese” gosse maanide ööhpehtin. Læjhkan dihte stööremes dáeriesmoere lij gærhkoen báastoeh saemiepolitihke. Aajnehke almetjen dáåpedimmie jih iedtje lij daerpies jis buektiehtidh maam joem fremmedh. Muvhtijste gærhkoen áajvaladtijste guarkajin man vihkeles saemien-giehe lij, mearan jeatjah jih jñtje reereme dáåpedimmie lij dihte maam hearra Tuomo Itkonen gohtjeme ”sáevmien stoeresiebriedahkevå-ájnoe”. Daate kontroversielle ”mñrrestallemelogihke”, gusnie mñrrestallemem barre sáevmien kultuvreste jih dej áejvijste vuesiehti.

Översättning Sig-Britt Persson och Karin Rensberg-Ripa