THE HOLY IMAGES OF CHRISTIANITY:

Metaphors in L2 sermons as expressions of holiness

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Uskonnollinen kieli on osa historiaamme ja kulttuuriamme. Metaforat tuovat uskonnolliseen kieleen dramatiikkaa ja mystiikkaa mutta myös arvoituksellisuutta. Metaforat ovat siten yksi niitä keinoja, joilla pyritään välittämään pyhyyden kokemus kuulijalle. Pyhyys on olennainen osa uskonnollisuutta. Usein uskonnollinen kokemus on epämääräinen tunne, joka on sekoitus kokemusta Jumalan rakkaudesta ja suuruudesta, irrottautumista arkielämästä ja mystistä kokemusta yhteydestä Jumalaan. Tämän kaiken taustalla vaikuttaa usko ja luottamus Jumalaan. Metaforat ovat hyvä tapa vihjata ymmärryksemme ylittäviin kokemuksiin, joita olisi vaikea sanoa suoraan. Samalla ne kuitenkin vaikuttavat kokemukseemme.

Olen tutkinut, millaisia metaforia uskonnollisessa kielessä käytetään ja kuinka ne luovat pyhyyden ilmapiiriä. Aineistona oli kymmenen lyhyehköä saarnaa. Ne piti suomalainen vanhoillislestadiolainen Suomen luterilaisen kirkon pappi, joka piti englanninkielisiä jumalanpalveluksia Suomessa asuville ulkomaalaisille. Nämä saarnat analysoitiin hyödyntäen metafora-analyysia. Aineistosta nostettiin esille viisi merkittävintä kategoriaa metaforien määrän ja merkittävyyden perusteella: tie Jumalan luo, Jeesuksessa (in Jesus Christ), ruoka, kasvu ja lahja. Tämän lisäksi aineistosta löytyi myös muita kategorioita, jotka käydään tutkimuksessa läpi lyhyesti. Kategoriat tuovat esille ykseyden Jumalan kanssa ja korostavat siten mystistä pyhyyden kokemusta. Ne korostavat myös Jumalan rakkautta ja moraalista puhtautta antaen siten Jumalasta luotettavan ja lähestyttävän kuvan, joka mahdollistaa uskonnollisen kokemuksen. Myös henkisen kasvun teema on läsnä metaforissa tuoden esiin pyhäksi kasvamisen. Sotaisat ja Jumalan majesteettisuutta korostavat metaforat sen sijaan puuttuvat. Saarnojen tunnelma onkin positiivinen ja maanläheinen. Ihmisten sisäistä kokemusta uskonnollisista metaforista voisi kuitenkin tutkia vielä lisää.

Säilytyspaikka – Depository

Muita tietoja – Additional information

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1 INTRODUCTION

In Christianity, God is thought to be a mystery. It is thought that we cannot really understand God. This causes a typical problem for religions: how to express something so inexpressible? Languages have limits and it is difficult to express all our experiences. Language we use creates limits for our thinking and understanding. Metaphors are one way to reach over the borders of language, as they hint rather than say directly. Because of this, metaphors are common in religious language. Another reason is that religious language is often quite poetic. It is supposed to be beautiful and to give us an emotional experience. Metaphors are appropriate for this, as many of the images that they create in our minds are often close to things that are important for us in our normal lives. However, even metaphors hide some aspects and emphasise others (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Because of this, we need to choose, which aspects of God or religious life we want to emphasise in our lives.

According to Harrison (2007: 2nd paragraph), religious language does not have distinguishable features. She suggests that it means "language that is used either to serve a religious purpose or in a religious context, or both". However, she mentions some features in footnotes. General religious language, when distinguished from theological language, contains lots of images and metaphors (ibid.: 2nd footnote). She also admits that, even though religious language and normal language use similar vocabulary, religious language uses antiquated terms and old-fashioned expressions (ibid.: 4th footnote). Avis (1999: vi-vii) emphasises that religion is a human creation in general. This is relevant if we remember that, in Christianity, the Bible is supposed to be the word of God. According to Avis (1999: vi-vii), divine revelation is, however, expressed and interpreted by human beings. He also emphasises that we experience the divine especially through imagination, which means in this context metaphors, symbols and myths. He claims that they can express something real about reality. (Avis 1999: vi-vii.) Even though their points of view are different, both of the writers think that religious language uses metaphors often, but language itself is not particularly holy. I wanted to study, how metaphors and images created by them affect religious experience. I am interested, how the mystery of God can be expressed through metaphors.

In this BA thesis, I will analyse metaphors in ten short sermons using metaphor analysis, which is based on the "discourse dynamics" theoretical framework (Cameron and Maslen 2010). The sermons were written by a male Finnish Conservative Laestadian chaplain, who is not a native speaker of English. They were delivered in Lutheran Sunday Services for foreigners living in Finland. My method is a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. I will analyse five main groupings of metaphors and five less important ones. I have chosen Finnish data, as it is in

Finland more relevant than for example American data. Non-native religious English has not been studied in Finland before. I decided to focus on sermons, as they not only use quotes from the Bible but also interpret and explain them reflecting today's culture.

I have chosen to use holiness as the focus. The word holy is often used to refer to God. Holiness means that God is unique and different from everything else and that God is pure and morally perfect (Webster 2004: 256-257). However, holiness can also mean a relationship with God. If we let Christ live and act through us, we can also be holy (Geiger 2014: n.p.). I could have also chosen to use the term sacred. Mircea Eliade (1987: 10) defines it to mean "the opposite of the profane". It would have emphasised the difference between normal and religious language. As stated above, however, there is no significant difference. That difference would have been too difficult to define. Because of the nature of metaphors, many metaphors in a religious context are both sacred and profane. On the other hand, the term holiness gives me an opportunity to study, how people experience God and religious life. I feel that metaphors give me good tools for this.

2 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The topic of my thesis is related to several subjects. Religious language can be studied in theology, linguistics or comparative religion/study of religions. Metaphors are a topic of theories and research in linguistics. Religious metaphors could also be studied from the point of view of literary analysis. My thesis is in the borders of different subjects, which is understandable, because I am interested to study the limits of language. In this section, I will define a metaphor and holiness and go through some previous research on religious metaphors.

2.1 Definition of a metaphor

Montgomery et al. (2007: 117-118) use a metaphor both as a synonym to figurative language generally and as one of the six types of figurative language they mention. They define an actual metaphor as follows:

> "Metaphor occurs when a word or phrase in one semantic field is transferred into another semantic field in order to talk about one thing as if it were another quite different thing" (Montgomery et al. 2007: 118).

They state that, in a metaphor, two ideas need to be connected by some similarity, 'a common ground' (Montgomery et al. 2007: 118, 123).

In this thesis, I have analysed similes and metonyms as metaphors. Similes are connected by a word such as *like* or *as* (Cameron and Maslen 2010: 110). Similes can be either metaphorical or non-metaphorical, as there is not necessarily incongruity or contrast (ibid.). I have treated similes in the same way as normal metaphors. They seem to be metaphorical. In some cases, it is relevant that metaphors are not similes (e.g. in Section 4.2). On the other hand, metonymy means "the relationship between an entity and an aspect or part of it" (Deignan 2010: 50). There is only one metonym, which appears several times, in the data. It will be mentioned in Section 4.3.

Metaphors we live by, written by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), is a classic and influential book about metaphors. The book made the conceptual metaphor theory known. They claim that our conceptual system is based on metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 3). As concepts affect our perception of the world and our relationships with people, metaphors affect the way we think and act. Thus, we can learn to understand people's thinking by studying metaphors and language in general. For example, the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR means that can win or lose an argument, attack our opponent or defend ourselves. On the other hand, if we thought an argument as

a dance, our experience of it would be different. (ibid.: 3-5.) This shows that conceptual metaphors hide some aspects of the concept (ibid.: 10). Harrison (2007: n. p.) points out that, if conceptual metaphors shape our experience, as Lakoff and Johnson claim, conceptual metaphors have had a huge impact to the way we experience religion. After its publication, Lakoff and Johnson's theory has been commented, criticized and developed by other researchers and writers themselves (Deignan 2010: 44, 49, 54).

Cameron and Maslen (2010: 101-102) consider an operational definition necessary for identifying metaphors in a text. According to them, metaphors are somehow anomalous in the context but still make sense:

> "Another way of describing the incongruity condition is to say that these words or phrases have one meaning in the context and another, different, meaning which is more basic in some way, usually more physical or more concrete than the contextual meaning" (Pragglejaz group 2007, cited by Cameron and Maslen 2010: 102).

Cameron and Maslen (2010: 102) also emphasise that all identified metaphors may not have been intended or interpreted as metaphors, but they are still potential metaphors. In my thesis, I have felt that obvious metaphors are more meaningful and that way more important to the analysis. However, it is a good idea to consider the relevance of conventional metaphors.

A great deal of studies have also been made about metaphors. Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2013) discusses in her article the relationship between conceptual metaphors and culture. She (ibid.: 332-333) points out that, even though the connection between conceptual metaphors and culture is generally accepted in cognitive linguistics, there is no agreement about how it works. She uses two case studies to show that conceptual metaphors are based on bodily experiences, but they are interpreted through our cultural background. Her examples show that conventional metaphors are not the same in different languages. Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2013: 324) suggests the term "culture sieve" to explain, how culture affects our experience and metaphors. Her idea is that the culture sieve "filters" experiences and "impregnates" them with cultural interpretation.

Nippold and Duthie (2003: abstract) studied mental imagery raised by transparent and opaque idioms. They asked groups of school-age children and adults to write down images that came to their minds. The study showed that children's images were less sophisticated and more concrete, while images written by adults were more often figurative. According to the writers, adults reported more figurative images because of deeper understanding of asked idioms. This is also important in the context of religious metaphors, as it may depend on our understanding, how literal or figurative our interpretation about religious metaphors is. However, in the religious context, we can never understand God and religion entirely, which means that concrete meanings of metaphors inevitably affect the way we understand theology.

2.2 Definition of holiness

Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d., n.p.) states that the word 'holy' means "exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness". This quote expresses the two sides of holiness. On the one hand, holiness is God's virtue. According to Webster (2004: 256-257), holiness means that God is unique and different from everything else and that God is pure and morally perfect. Dyck (2014: 1-4) claims that modern Christians have forgotten God's holiness and glory and concentrated on God's love and mercy. He describes how people in the Bible are scared in the presence of God. He seems to think that it is God's might and glory, not God's love, that inspires awe and reverence in Christians. Webster (2004: 258) recognizes the phenomenon but disagrees. He claims that holiness and love "can only be expounded in relation to each other" (ibid.). According to him, "holiness is manifest and operative in God's loving works of relating to the creature, taking up its cause and sanctifying it for life with himself" (ibid.: 259). In my view, holiness means all of these characteristics. Thus, God's holiness means that He is considered unique, morally perfect, powerful and loving.

On the other hand, Scandrett (2007) talks about, how we can be holy. He thinks that holiness means a relationship and union with God (ibid.: 1):

> "Passages like these convey the mysterious, yet utterly real fact that, by virtue of our union with Jesus, we participate in the life of God: He dwells in us, and we dwell in him. As such, we can say that in Christ, God's holiness is our holiness. In Christ, we are already holy. Any and all subsequent notions of what it means to be holy must be predicated on this truth" (ibid.: 1)

He admits that holiness is connected to goodness and moral purity but insists that connection with God needs to be first (ibid.: 1). Thus, holiness means more than being a good person: "At bottom, God's call to be holy is a radical, all-encompassing claim on our lives, our loves, and our very identities." (ibid.: 3). As quoted from Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d., n.p.) above, God is "worthy of complete devotion". However, being holy seems to be more than just obedience. Geiger (2014: n.p.) states that holiness is a characteristic of mysticism, which is different from extraordinary charisms, such as ecstasies or visions. According to him, both mean that God "lives and acts through us". It seems to me that trusting God and letting Him work through us makes us loving and holy, as He is loving and holy. Thus, obedience is a consequence of trusting God, as Scandrett (2007: 1) states.

2.3 Previous research on religious language and religious metaphors

In Finland, some research on religious language has been made in Finnish. Nissi and Mielikäinen's book (eds., 2014) describes many forms of religious language. It contains many points of view from different writers. Kela (2007) studies in her doctorate the process of translating the Old Testament in Finnish and creating new expressions by comparing different translations. She

uses a theoretical framework of metaphoric awareness, which is her combination of the interaction view of metaphor and the cognitive metaphor theory to study the process of metaphorisation. In Finland, there are also some master's theses about religious language from different subjects. For example, there have been such topics as metaphors in religious songs (e.g. Puurula 2008), the language of prayers from the point of view of cognitive linguistics (Nurminen 2010) and the modernization of religious vocabulary (Nieminen 2003).

Soskice (1985) wrote an influential book about religious metaphors. Harrison (2007: n. p.) explains Soskice's (1985) thoughts: "In her view, by generating new perspectives, successful metaphors expand our descriptive powers in a way that other types of linguistic expressions do not." "The great advantage of metaphor, then, is that it allows people to refer to God without their having to define 'God'." According to Soskice (1985: description), we have to understand metaphors better to understand theology better. In another book (2007: 4), she discusses the connection between metaphors, gender and kinship. She found out that the reason behind the popularity of gendered imagery in the Bible was an interest in kinship rather than hierarchy.

She is not the only theologian who has written a book about religious metaphors. Avis (1999: vi, 3) claims that we cannot understand Christianity without creative imagination, which works through metaphors, symbols and myths. He claims that Christian faith and the divine revelation is real and informative. His goal is to show this (ibid.: 3). According to him, St. Augustine already thought that God is a poet who uses metaphors, symbols and parables (ibid.: 3). He talks about the role of imagination in the four areas of Christianity: the Bible, theology, faith and liturgy. He has got inspiration from non-theological subjects, such as literature and philosophy of science (ibid.: description). His point of view is that liturgy is a form of literature (ibid.: 73). He even says that "the language of liturgy is poetry rather than prose" (Avis 1999: 75).

DesCamp and Sweetser (2005: abstract) analyse the biblical metaphors for God in light of cognitive linguistics. The article is written together by a priest and a professor of Linguistics and Cognitive Science (ibid.: 207). They present the theological discussion about religious metaphors, connect them to cognitive metaphors research, and finally, present also their own research about the metaphors of the Bible (ibid.: 208). They found out (ibid.: 233-234) that an asymmetric, but mutually loving relationship is considered ideal between God and humans. 'Asymmetric' means that God has power over us. The metaphors 'father' and 'king' are like this. Human-to-human metaphors are also preferred, but metaphors related to protection or transformation are exceptions from this. They state that masculine imagery is used in the Bible, because men had more authority than women. (ibid.: 233-234.)

After defining religious language, Harrison's article (2007: n. p.) presents different theories about religious language in the history Christianity. Martin Luther emphasised the literal meaning of the Bible to support ordinary people's ability to understand the Bible. However, the point of view is

problematic. A Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides, who lived in the Middle Ages, popularized the theory that God can be seen only via negativa, which means that we can only say what God is not like rather than to describe Him. His point of view was that religious language is supposed to support experiencing the divine. Thomas Aquinas came to a conclusion that religious language is neither univocal nor equivocal but analogical. He considered God as the cause of everything and thought that metaphors were valuable but analogy was more important. Harrison also comments that "the belief that only literal language is capable of being true, which is commonly attributed to Plato, has been held responsible for the view that metaphors only play a minor linguistic role". Harrison also describes Richard and Black's, Soskice's and Lakoff and Johnson's theories about metaphors. (Harrison 2007: n. p.)

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research questions

My research questions were the following:

1. What kind of metaphors are there in the data?
2. How do the metaphors create an impression of holiness?

The first question means that I have looked for metaphor groupings, systematic metaphors and more general themes. I have grouped the metaphors and looked for patterns or anything interesting. I particularly have looked for metaphors with similar topics (i.e. systematic metaphors), but I have not been very strict with that.

The second question will help me to interpret metaphors and how they are used in the data. I will focus on analysing, how metaphors are used in this particular context and what is typical for religious language. I also want to see what kind of effect is expected. Language is a social phenomenon and this case the social interaction is between a pastor and his audience. Language in church services is supposed to raise some kind of reaction. The audiences are supposed to get a feeling that God is great and mysterious and feel awe. My goal is to analyse how this is supposed to happen in this context. Metaphors are important tools for this.

3.2 Data

I will analyse ten sermons that were written by a male Finnish Conservative Laestadian chaplain. They were delivered in Lutheran Sunday Services in Finland. In the audience, there were foreigners living in Finland, some of whom might not have been even Lutheran. I do not give more information about the place or times, as he asked me not to reveal his identity. I met the pastor once and got some information face to face. I did not know the pastor beforehand. I got the data through e-mail in a written form. The pastor chose the sermons and the number of them. I got more sermons than I asked and analysed all I got. I also got some information through e-mails. I particularly asked about the expression *in Jesus' name and blood* (see Section 4.2) and got some information. Sermons are quite short (328 - 607 words). According to the pastor, there were about fifteen sermons a year. The sermons contain many quotes from the Bible. Because of that, many metaphors in the data are originally from the Bible. The sermons were clearly written by a non-native speaker of English, as

there are both grammar mistakes and typos and the language lacks the fluency of native English. I will quote my data as it has been written.

Laestadianism is a revival movement, which was born in Swedish Lapland in the 1840s and got its name from Pastor Lars Levi Laestadius (Salomäki 2010: 51-52). Conservative Laestadians are the biggest Laestadian group (ibid.: 55). They are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. However, this is controversial. Kuula (2012: n.p.) argues that a group with an exclusive understanding of salvation should not be part of the church, as they believe that the rest of the church will not be saved. Confession and forgiveness of sins are important for Conservative Laestadians (see Section 4.2). They are against premarital sex, homosexuality, abortion, contraception, suicides, euthanasia and watching television (Salomäki 2010: 55, 331, 338, 343). In addition, Conservative Laestadians do not use alcohol (Honkanen 2010). Allegorical interpretation of the Bible is common in Laestadianism (Salomäki 2010: 218). According to the research made by Salomäki (2010: 223), about half of Conservative Laestadians believe that the Bible is entirely infallible.

3.3 The method of analysis

As the method of analysis I use metaphor analysis that is based on Cameron and Maslen's (eds., 2010) book *Metaphor Analysis – Research Practice in Applied Linguistics, Social Sciences and the Humanities*. According to Cameron (2010b: 77), their book "introduces an alternative, discourse-based, theoretical framework for thinking about how metaphor works", which is called "the 'discourse dynamics' framework". Cameron (ibid.: 80) emphasises that metaphors need to be studied in the discourse context, and as a result, metaphors can help us to understand people's ideas, attitudes and values. Metaphors are considered to have linguistic, embodied, cognitive, affective, socio-cultural and dynamic dimensions (Cameron 2010c: 3). The discourse dynamics framework emphasises interconnectedness of these dimensions and patterns of metaphors (Cameron 2010b: 80).

Metaphors "are not necessarily considered to be manifestations of underlying conceptual metaphors" (ibid.: 79). Instead, language is thought to be a much more complicated system. According to the discourse dynamics framework, language is a dynamic and processual phenomenon. During interaction, language we use is affected by language used by other people and vice versa. For example, we may use expressions that are conventional in certain situations. (ibid.: 86.) We may also repeat, expand, relexicalize or contrast metaphors used by others (ibid.: 89-90). In the data, the dynamics of language can be seen in intertextuality and reactions expected from an audience.

As a method of analysis, metaphor analysis is a practical method, which starts "upwards" from the metaphors used in the data and tries to find patterns. It avoids generalization that is typical

for cognitive linguistics. (Cameron, Maslen and Low 2010: 124-125.) When analysing the data, I started with identifying metaphors and grouping them. Then I looked for systematic metaphors. This is a term used in the book:

> "A systematic metaphor is an emergent discourse phenomenon that is produced when discourse participants, over a discourse event or longer period of time, use a particular set of linguistic metaphor vehicles in talking about a particular topic, or closely connected topics." (Cameron 2010a: 91)

Topic here means the same as 'target domain' in the conceptual metaphor theory, in the other words the contextual meaning (Cameron, Maslen and Low 2010: 127). I have not been very strict with the similarity of topics. For example, faith, belief, forgiveness and the kingdom of God seem to be quite similar, as they all are related to our connection with God (see Section 4.5). Being flexible seems to be necessary, as the scope of the data is so limited. I have also tried to consider the effect of the discourse context, when I have felt it was necessary. I have especially analysed metaphors in the sentence they appear. In one occasion, I have also considered the structure of the sermons (see the expression *in Jesus' name and blood* Section 4.2). However, I did not find clear boundaries of segments of discourse activity, as Cameron (2010a: 149) suggests. This is, because the sermons are so short and they do not have a clear structure.

4 ANALYSIS

In this section, I will go through the metaphors groupings and systematic metaphors I found. At first, I will present five main metaphor groupings. They were chosen because of the number of metaphors in the groupings and because of meaningfulness. These groupings have helped me to find out, what is relevant in the data. In the end, I will also present shortly five smaller groupings, which I considered less important. This was necessary to safe space. I have ignored entirely metaphors that were alone in their groupings. I have also ignored metaphor groupings that were small and conventional, and thus, did not add anything to the analysis. I have followed the example of Cameron and Maslen (2010: 112) and included prepositions in my analysis.

I will use *italics* for examples from the data. I will give numbers for longer phrases and examples with one or more sentences. To make the result clearer, I will not give numbers for examples with two or three words only. When I refer to the whole metaphor grouping or its name, I will use SMALL CAPITAL ITALICS, as it was done in the book edited by Cameron and Maslen (2010).

4.1 The way to God

The grouping THE WAY TO GOD is the biggest grouping of metaphors in my data. I have considered it a systematic metaphor, as the metaphors in all are related to faith. Jesus was the one who (1) *showed the right way to God*, which in the end means believing and trusting in him. Jesus was also (2) *the gate to the Kingdom of God*. This means that, according to Christianity, we are saved because of our faith. It is also stated that (3) *the key to the righteous living is in living faith*. These metaphors express holiness as connection with God and righteousness. Thus, the way to God seems to be also the way to holiness.

The way to God goes *through Christ* (in two sermons), *through (living) faith* (in three sermons), *through Holy Spirit* (in two sermons) or *trough God's word* (in one sermon). As above, faith is also a common theme in these examples. The way to God seems to work both directions. (4) *Jesus calls us* and (5) *comes to us through Holy Spirit*. It is also stated that (6) *through his suffering, death and resurrection he opened way to heaven*. Thus, Jesus made salvation possible and now asks: (7) *"Do you love me and do you follow me?"* Faith means believing that Jesus was the Son of God, but he also asks us to (8) *trust him and his guidance*. That is another way to express that Jesus

(1) *showed the right way to God*. By emphasizing faith, love and trust in Jesus, these metaphors express that (1) *the right way to God* is something emotional rather than something we can do.

(3) *The key to the righteous living* emphasises that the way to God is a way of living. In general, a key can symbolise power to give or deny freedom (Biedermann 1993: 31). In this context, (3) *the key to the righteous living* seems to express an ability to choose to follow the way to God. Thus, faith makes it possible to live connected to God and to follow His guidance.

(2) *The gate to the Kingdom of God* could be a literal expression, if the pastor did not talk about Jesus. It could emphasise afterlife. However, the kingdom of God can also be a metaphorical expression. According to Conservative Laestadians (SKR, n.d., n.p.), the kingdom of God can be experienced on the Earth as righteousness, peace and joy. The word 'gate' in general can symbolise initiation or moving to a new state of life (Biedermann 1993: 280). This way, Jesus as the gate to the kingdom of God can also be a gate to a religious lifestyle. Furthermore, a gate emphasises an unknown place behind that gate and its otherness from this world (Biedermann 1993: 280). This can mean afterlife in this context. However, it can also refer to an altered state of consciousness and experiencing otherness and holiness of God. The presence of God in our lives can make a difference. Using the word 'gate' makes it seem that the kingdom of God is near us, just on the other side of the gate. We only need faith, the key.

I could also have chosen to label this grouping of metaphors THE GATE, but I chose the expression THE WAY TO GOD instead. As the previous paragraph shows, THE GATE could have been a powerful expression. However, I felt that THE WAY TO GOD fits better together with the ideas of guidance and righteous living. I wanted to emphasise life as a journey and growth as human being. The theme growth was also present in the data elsewhere. In addition, a journey can also include challenges. The sermons also refer to this. For example, the pastor talks about his worries and asks, if he is a pagan, as he do not trust God's care. The solution is of course faith.

4.2 In Jesus Christ

The expression *in (Lord) Jesus Christ*, with a metaphorical preposition *in*, appears four times in the data. The preposition is metaphorical, as it is not used in its normal physical meaning. For example, both of these sentences also mention salvation: (9) *"Only through faith we can be partakers of salvation in Jesus Christ."* (10) *"The foundation of our salvation is in Lord Jesus Christ."* The metaphor emphasises the divine nature and holiness of Jesus by suggesting that Jesus is unphysical and bigger than us. Even though the idea that God is omnipotent and sees and hears everything is familiar to us, we often think Jesus as a human with a body. According to Scandrett (2007: 1), we

are holy, when Jesus lives in us and we in him. That way this metaphor seems to suggest that salvation is a mystical experience.

While the metaphor *in (Lord) Jesus Christ* suggests that Jesus is not physical, the data also contains metaphors that suggest that Jesus is something material but not human. I already mentioned the metaphor Jesus is (2) *the gate to the Kingdom of God*, which has its origin in the Bible (John 10:9). It suggests that we go through Jesus and is similar to the metaphor *in (Lord) Jesus Christ*. The pastor also used a quote said by Jesus in the Bible, where he says he is (11) "*the way and the truth and the life*". This also suggests that Jesus was more than just a human. In the Bible (John 6:35), Jesus also says that he is "the Bread of life". There are several references to this idea in the data. It is also stated that Jesus (12) *is God´s grain of wheat, which has given to the world*. The same sermon also mentions that (13) *the word of God is a good seed, which has sowed to fields of our hearts*. These metaphors seem to suggest that Jesus is something that is put inside of us and that nurtures us. The mystical impression is strengthened by the fact that these metaphors are not similes. That makes the result more dramatic. Thus, these metaphors suggest that Jesus is a spirit rather than a human. I will discuss these metaphors more carefully later.

One category that is related to the expression *in (Lord) Jesus Christ* is the expression (14) *in Jesus' name and blood*. The expression appears in different forms in nine of ten sermons, also as a quote. It is usually near the end of the sermon. Usually there is also the word 'amen' in the end. Using the expression as a conclusion so often shows, how important the idea is for the pastor. The expression is typical for Conservative Laestadians. They state each other's sins forgiven using that expression. The pastor explained to me in an e-mail that Christians have power to forgive sins because of Holy Spirit. This idea is said to be in the Bible (John 20:21-23). I think that this expression emphasises that our sins can be forgiven particularly because of Jesus, not because of a vague divine force. The expression (14) *in Jesus' name and blood* then seems to mean "using Jesus' authority". It does not seem to be exactly the same thing as *in (Lord) Jesus Christ*. However, it can also mean that Jesus works through us and that Laestadians, who use the expression, are "in him" when they forgive someone's sins. I include it to this section, as Examples 9 and 10 also mention salvation. There seem to be strong enough similarity.

4.3 Food

The third group of metaphors includes the metaphors of bread and water. There were two types of metaphors related to bread. *Heavenly bread* is another expression for the Bread of Life, which was mentioned earlier. It appears five times in three sermons. Jesus talks about both bread and water in the Bible: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35, New International Version). The word *water*

appears several times in one of the sermons and works in the same way as the bread of life. It is called (15) *living water, water of eternal life*. It is said that (16) *our souls need heavenly bread*. That means that our souls need the connection with God, and we are *starving* without it. On the other hand, *daily bread* (or *earthly bread*) is said to mean things that we need in our daily lives. This expression is a metonym rather than an actual metaphor. According to the pastor, Martin Luther included in *daily bread* all our needs, such as food, clothing, home, property and relationships. The sermons state that both of the bread metaphors are given for us by God. This emphasises God's love and generosity.

Another word related to the food theme was *salt*. As bread normally contains salt, salt is part of what our souls need. The pastor offers an interpretation for it:

> (17) God´s word is like heavenly food. This word includes ”salt” which is the God´s law and truth. But if the sermon of God`s word is too salty nobody wants to listen it.

In the Old Testament, salt symbolises the covenant between God and His people and is added to the offerings to God because of that (Biedermann 1993: 356, Leviticus 2:13). That means that we cannot be truly connected to God, unless we accept and follow God's law and truth. On the other hand, when we follow God's law and truth, God works through us. This makes us holy. People often read the Bible to find guidance, which then nurtures their souls. God's law and truth can give them a sense of security. That is why the metaphor *salt* can be included together with the *heavenly bread*.

I have considered *heavenly bread*, *water* and *salt* a systematic metaphor. I did not include daily bread to it, as it represent our material needs. The other metaphors represent the connection with God, which nurtures us and which is considered necessary for us. In Christianity, isolation from God is a punishment for the evil. According to that, we cannot really be happy without God. Hunger and thirst represent a state where we miss a clearer connection with God, though we may not always realise this. The Bible does not consider them a problem: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." (Matthew 5:6). This supports the idea that salt (God's law and truth) is something we need. It is also important to remember that the metaphors used are simple food, which represents humility in front of God. Thus, connection with God seems to require recognising God's authority. We do not get more than we need.

4.4 Growth

There are also references to agriculture or growth in three of the sermons. There is one sermon, in which metaphors related to growth are used many times. As I mentioned before, Jesus is called (12) *God´s grain of wheat, which has given to the world*. That means that he is (18) *a seed, which first dies and after it grows up* giving us hope. The same sermon also states that (13) *the word of God is*

a good seed, *which has sowed to fields of our hearts*. It also calls his followers *sowers,* who sow the seeds of the gospel. The sermon seems to suggest that Jesus is a seed that is sown to our hearts, though it does not actually say that.

In another sermon, the pastor refers to the biblical idea of good fruits and claims that God wants us to grow:

(19) *If we have this wonderful gift, that our sins, failures, hatred and unbelief are forgiven, in our hearts grows a new, healty tree. It will make a good fruits like a love, joy, peace, longsuffering and kindness. God wants to remove a poor growth from our hearts.*

In another example, water is used as a synonym for 'living faith' , which creates growth:

(20) *In practical terms, their hearts had been dry desert without living faith. They had been unbelievers. Jesus had given fresh water for their dry hearts. Through the faith dry deserts of their hearts were changed. Now, there grew a new life. New life in Jesus Christ. This miracle was possible for everyone who believed.*

In both of these examples, growth happens because of God. Growth seems to be called "a miracle". All these three sermons show a positive attitude towards growth, while the lack of it is unwanted.

Spiritual growth is a common topic in spiritual literature, which makes it significant. In Christianity, growth means becoming more like God. The Bible mentions becoming more loving, stronger and learning to know God better (2 Peter 1:5-8, Colossians 3:10). When doing this, we are supposed to be "rooted and built up in" Jesus (Colossians 2:7). That means that faith makes us stronger. Generally, growth refers to the way children grow up and develop and, thus, means becoming more mature. Learning to know oneself better is important part of personal development, but growth can also mean learning to understand better, how the world works. When we refer to life as growth, it is seen as a process. That makes the metaphor GROWTH similar with the metaphor THE WAY TO GOD.

As shown above, growth is thought to be the result of faith or the gift of forgiveness in the data. In Example 20, 'desert' seems to be similar to hunger or thirst. Faith, like water, feeds the process of growth. The seed of the gospel creates understanding when it grows. Growth can be seen as learning to know God. We can also think that it is God, who grows in our hearts. Thus, growth can also be seen as learning to let God live in us and act through us. This kind of holiness is thought to produce good fruits, such as love, joy and peace. As food is usually the result of growth, spiritual growth may nurture us and feel good. Thus, food can be seen as both the cause and the result of growth.

4.5 The gift

The metaphor *GIFT* is important in the Christianity, as it expresses God's love. It is used four times in three sermons. Besides them, there are also a great deal of expressions of giving something. In the data, the word *gift* refers to faith, belief, forgiveness and God's kingdom. Example 19 above shows that the gift of forgiveness means not only forgiving sins and failures but also forgiving hatred and unbelief. Peace is also said to be given by Jesus. I have considered them a systematic metaphor, as they are all from God and they refer more or less to religious experience. Faith, belief and peace are emotional things. God's kingdom can mean an emotional experience or it can be a consequence of faith. Forgiveness of sins also means both a consequence of faith and healing the state of sinfulness.

This metaphor is related to holiness in many ways. The metaphor gift shows that God is unconditional, loving and generous. It is also remarkable, because it shows that our feelings can be given be God. As an ideal gift is unconditional, and it is given simply, because we are human beings (Bauman and May 2001: 80), God's gift cannot be achieved. To receive God's gift we need to trust Him. The idea that faith is a gift from God means that God lives in us and acts through us. It can be thought that God gives Himself and His holiness as a gift. This is consistent with the idea of Jesus being (12) *God´s grain of wheat*. We can be holy only, because God is holy (see Leviticus 19:2).

4.6 Others

Having analysed the five major groupings above, I will now give a brief outline of some other groupings to safe space. In Examples 3 and 20, there is the expression *living faith*. In addition to these examples, there are also two other examples of that expression. In the sermons, it is also said that unbelief or sin 'lives' in one's heart. In Example 15, there is also an expression *living water*. These expressions seem to be connected to the metaphor *GROWTH*. In Example 20, *living faith* creates growth. The expression seem to be connected to vitality and emphasises that our feelings are real. Living faith is more than just a habit. It could mean that God lives in us. It means trusting God in a way that is truly part of our daily lives. This seems to produce love, joy and peace (see Example 19). Living faith also grows and changes during times, when we learn new things and face new challenges. Even though this metaphor is relevant, I felt that it does not create as clear image as the main sections above. That is why it does not seem as important to my analysis.

The word *heart* is also a common expression in the data. It was used in many of the examples above. It does not seem to deserve its own section, as it is a very conventional expression,

which simply refers to our emotions. In this context, it seems to emphasise difference between brain and heart and, thus, the depth of our experience. Our mind and our understanding of life are important in theology. The pastor seems to want, however, to emphasise that faith need to be living and emotional, not theoretical or thought.

According to the data, the Bible *says* something, *speaks* to us or *tells* something to us. This is a typical way of referring to books. When a writer claims something, we say that his/her book claims that. There is also at least one example, where *we hear*, how Jesus speaks. That reminds us that Jesus was a real person and important for Christians. Even though reading the Bible is an intellectual process, the seed of the gospel is sowed to our hearts in Example 13. The reason for this might be the emotional topics of the Bible. In this context, these metaphors seem to emphasise the authority of the Bible. This is also emphasised by the way, how God and God's word are used, as if they meant the same. This was seen in food and growth sections above (see Examples 13 and 17).

There are also two examples related to light and darkness. The kingdom of God is said to be (21) *like a lamp in the darkness*. It was also said that Jesus (22) *may bring a man from death to life, from darkness to light*. *Darkness* can be interpreted to mean 'death' in both examples. In that case, *light* means 'life'. Example 22 can refer also to the darkness of the cave, in which case it is not a metaphor at all. However, light is a typical metaphor for the divine and goodness (Biedermann 1993: 394). Thus, it can mean 'living connected to God'.

Even though the metaphor *father* is common in Christianity, it is not very common in the data. It is used only in two sermons. It is used in a quote and its interpretation, while another sermon refers to Jesus as *Son of God* and *his heavenly father*. It is difficult to say the reason for this. It could be a personal preference. It could also be simply a coincidence, as the size of my data is rather small. In the sermons analysed, the topics do not include the character of God. That might explain, why he does not use other metaphors for God either.

5 DISCUSSION

I analysed ten rather short sermons written by a male Finnish Conservative Laestadian chaplain. In the previous section, I presented five main groupings of metaphors and five less important groupings. The metaphors are typically related to faith or religious lifestyle. The style of the sermons is down-to-earth. Metaphors include familiar images: a way, a gate, a key, bread, water, salt, a seed, a tree, a gift etc. The sermons are also quite positive, which seems to be typical for contemporary religious language (e.g. Dyck 2014: 1-4). As the pastor himself stated in one of his sermons, people are not interested in religions if they contain too much God's law and truth. The purpose of religious language in contemporary Christianity seems to be to give people an emotional experience rather than preach Christian morality.

Analysing the metaphors has shown that there are several ways of creating an impression of holiness in the data. The most obvious way of doing that is oneness. This is done by the expression *in Jesus Christ* and suggesting that Jesus is something concrete that affects us. Jesus is said to be either something inside of us, such as food or a seed, or something we go through, such as a gate or a way. According to the Bible, Jesus himself started this (John 10:9, John 14:6 and John 6:35). He wanted Christians to think that they eat his body and drink his blood. It seems that, by calling himself different objects, he wanted people to use him. Many ordinary people would not do this, and because of this, doing it with self-confidence shows his authority. It also gives an impression that he regarded himself as a spirit rather than as a human.

Another common theme present in the sermons was God's love. The metaphors *gift, bread* and *water* emphasise that God gives us what we need. God gives us what we need in our daily lives (daily bread). God nurtures us through connection with Him and helps us to grow and become stronger, happier and more loving. God gives us the gift of faith and forgiveness. God also guides us through the way to Him. God's love is an important theme in Christianity. God's unconditional love and moral purity is one expression of God's holiness.

The groupings *GROWTH* and *THE WAY TO GOD* emphasise the processual nature of life. They suggest that through transformation we can become more and more holy. The seed of the gospel grows in us and we learn to trust God and accept His gift. Being less afraid makes us stronger, more patient and more loving. Faith lives and develops in our hearts and nurtures us. The food of a soul helps us to grow on and produce good fruits. They help us to face challenges in our journey. As growth is considered the opposite of desert and a consequence of the gift of faith and forgiveness and its results are good fruits, the message is that growth feels good. The whole process is also

expressed in the metaphor *living faith*. In the end, it seems to be God Himself, who lives in us and acts through us. This shows that holiness can be a processual phenomenon, which is part of our daily lives and changes during our lives.

While the data emphasises God's love, what is not there is also remarkable. The sermons do not express the greatness of God. God's throne is not mentioned. Jesus is not called the king of kings or anything like that. Furthermore, they do not use metaphors related to war or fighting. Life is not thought to be a battlefield between the good and the evil or morality and immorality. Sin or death is not an enemy we need to win. Faith is not an armour or a shield that protects us from the devil. This is in line with Dyck's claim (2014: 1-4) that modern Christians have forgotten God's holiness and glory and concentrated on God's love and mercy. Emphasising God's love and using familiar down-to-earth metaphors makes God more approachable. That is a reflection of our modern culture, where moralizing would be against the ideal of freedom.

Metaphors create in our minds images that demonstrate the message of Christianity. Their effect is especially strong in simple non-native language, as it lacks other kind of eloquence. They add a spiritual aspect to ordinary life, and their down-to earth style reminds us to be humble. While the metaphors in my data are mostly from the Bible, the chosen metaphors are timeless and familiar. If it is true that conceptual metaphors affect our experience (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, cited by Harrison 2007: n.p.) and that conceptual metaphors are different in different cultures (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 2013: 332-333), biblical metaphors have affected deeply our western culture and thinking. In the same time, the metaphors used are connected to each other, which creates interesting new meanings and atmospheres.

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