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**Title:** The Legacy of Lutheranism in a Secular Nordic Society : An Introduction

**Year:** 2019

**Version:** Published version

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**Please cite the original version:**

Sinnemäki, K., Nelson, R. H., Portman, A., & Tilli, J. (2019). The Legacy of Lutheranism in a Secular Nordic Society : An Introduction. In K. Sinnemäki, A. Portman, J. Tilli, & R. Nelson (Eds.), On the Legacy of Lutheranism in Finland : Societal Perspectives (pp. 9-36). Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. *Studia Fennica Historica*, 25.  
<https://oa.finlit.fi/site/books/10.21435/sfh.25/>

# On the Legacy of Lutheranism in Finland

Societal Perspectives

Edited by

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**STUDIA FENNICA HISTORICA 25**

The publication has undergone a peer review.



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Cover Design: Timo Numminen  
EPUB: Tero Salmén

ISBN 978-951-858-135-5 (Print)  
ISBN 978-951-858-150-8 (PDF)  
ISBN 978-951-858-149-2 (EPUB)

ISSN 0085-6835 (Studia Fennica. Print)  
ISSN 2669-9605 (Studia Fennica. Online)  
ISSN 1458-526X (Studia Fennica Historica. Print)  
ISSN 2669-9591 (Studia Fennica Historica. Online)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21435/sfh.25>


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or by scanning this QR code with your mobile device.


BoD – Books on Demand, Norderstedt, Germany 2019

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## The Legacy of Lutheranism in a Secular Nordic Society: An Introduction

### *The religious turn in the social sciences and the humanities*

#### THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND ITS LEGACY

The history of human societies is a complex web of continuations, radical changes, and aborted paths. Societies at any moment of time are to some extent reflections of their historical legacies, sometimes with surprisingly deep historical dependencies as culture and values are passed on from one generation to the next.<sup>1</sup> In the West, Christianity was the dominant religious influence on civilization for almost 1,500 years, from Constantine to the Enlightenment. The traditional and self-understanding scientific narrative has stressed that the Enlightenment is the crucial juncture in the development of modern societies, as societies abandoned overtly religious beliefs and traditions. But while such junctures point to future paths of change, they may exhibit greater continuities than scholars tend to realize.

Since the Enlightenment the influence of Christianity has thus been widely contested by new systems of thinking, such as rationalism and individualism, which have often regarded Christianity as the legacy of an ignorant past. Instead, for increasing numbers since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Enlightenment meant the dawn of a new era grounded in the truths of Science. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such views were triumphant over much of the Western world, including Finland and other Nordic countries. Unlike some nations where traditional religion was condemned outright, the Nordic countries, however, never abolished their historic Lutheran inheritance altogether. Large majority of the populations of these countries continued as members of the Lutheran church up to the present time as Lutheranism found ways to adapt to numerous societal changes.<sup>2</sup> Lutheranism has retained its importance as a national historical and cultural symbol of the

1 Norris & Inglehart (2011).

2 See especially the chapters by Huttunen; Ihalaainen (this volume).

origins of the Nordic nations, even as it was not considered a practical guide to most major private and public decisions and actions.

In matters of private cultural practice and public governance, the Nordic nations instead looked to economics, psychology, sociology, and other social sciences for their new forms of guidance and direction. Such developments in the Nordic countries and elsewhere since the Enlightenment were commonly described as expressing a growing secularization of Western society that went hand in hand with increasing modernization. Central changes leading to modern societies, such as civil society, equality, mass education, and freedom of religion, were explained via economic development, urbanization, industrialization, the formation of non-governmental organizations, or secular rationalism. But not religion, which has generally remained outside the mainstream of academic research. Yet the separation of religious and secular domains in modern societies does not entail that they become irreligious; quite the contrary: as argued by the historian Pasi Ihalainen, such societies 'may still remain deeply religious in character.'<sup>3</sup>

At the heart of the Enlightenment vision had been a transcendent vision of the assured rapid scientific and economic progress of the modern world. The Nordic countries themselves in the 20<sup>th</sup> century became leading world symbols of the remarkable social transformations that were occurring as a result of the applications of modern science and economics. Rising from a poverty-stricken Nordic past as recently as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Nordic countries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century achieved some of the highest standards of living in the world. Partly for this reason, the Enlightenment vision of transcendent human social and economic progress had probably a greater influence in the Nordic countries than in any other nations of the world.

But a turning point in this process began to take place beginning in the 1960s. The supposed triumph of secularism began to seem less assured and indeed many people would turn away from it in the following decades. It was probably the result in part of an increasing recognition that modern science and economics was a double-edged sword; it could lead towards heaven on earth by way of decreasing poverty and evils that go with it, but it could conceivably also lead to hell on earth: the wars, mass killings, and many terrible things that happened in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were a profound shock to progressive belief. It was difficult at best to reconcile progressive optimism with an event such as the holocaust – the mass extermination using 'modern' scientific and economic methods of many millions of Jews and Romani and other minorities. Indeed, secular rationality could not begin to comprehend how such a thing as the holocaust had occurred in a historically leading Western nation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the ensuing discussion the idea of 'original sin' in its Christian statements was not revived but it was impossible to ignore the fact that human beings had seemed to include, besides a large capacity for doing good in the world, also surprisingly strong tendencies towards mass depravity within themselves.

3 Ihalainen (this volume).

Twentieth century secularism was also challenged on other fronts. The social sciences proved less scientific than had been expected in the positivist tradition.<sup>4</sup> Apparently there were no clear discoverable scientific laws of economics, for instance, that could be capable of guiding national economies on a continuously rising rapid upward path of growth – an awkward doubt reemphasized by the major and largely unpredicted sharp economic downturn of 2008 and 2009. One reflection of a growing challenge to this progressive confidence in science and economics was the more recent displacement of the social democratic parties – the leading Nordic spokesmen for Nordic progressive modern values – from a position of almost complete political dominance that they had held from the end of World War II into the 1970s. Since then the Nordic welfare state has been in successive crises and welfare services have been increasingly provided by the private sector and civil society.<sup>5</sup>

At the height of secular ascendancy, it was assumed that religion was a relic of the past that would fade and indeed disappear altogether in the not so distant future. It has not. Although church attendance has steadily decreased in general, religion is obviously back on the agenda. In public discussion religion has entered the scene more visibly especially after 2001 both in Finland and elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> Fundamentalist religion has also been on the rise in many parts of the world further jarring secular progressive optimism. For instance, in the United States attendance at the mainline progressive Protestant churches has declined precipitously from the 1960s but attendance at evangelical and fundamentalist churches has surged. The spread of terrorism motivated by fundamentalist Islam has been a particularly stark reminder that religion does not seem to be going away.

The recent influx of asylum seekers also to Nordic countries has further accelerated the need to understand religion. However, in Finland the discussion has still focused mostly on the religiosity of the others, the newcomers, and how to address it in a secular society. There has been much less discussion on the continuing religiosity of our own societies. The media occasionally raises issues related to Lutheranism and its role in Finnish national identity,<sup>7</sup> but generally it has not reflected or problematized what Lutheranism means and what its societal influences are. Some new reflections on these issues, however, have begun to emerge in 2017 as a response to the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation.<sup>8</sup>

4 Nelson (2001).

5 See Grönlund (this volume). It is true, as one reviewer points out, that other factors are also involved in the crisis of the welfare state, such as the development of the medical sciences and the ensuing huge increase in the cost of medication for welfare services. Our aim here is not to evaluate the relative strengths of the different factors involved in the crisis of welfare, but to argue that secularism and the progressive confidence in economics have been challenged on multiple fronts – the crisis in welfare services is just one reflection of those challenges.

6 See e.g., Fish (2005); Habermas (2006); Helander & Räsänen (2007); de Hart, Dekker & Halman (2013); Huttunen (2015).

7 E.g., *Helsingin Sanomat*, September 13, 2015.

8 E.g., *Helsingin Sanomat*, October 29, 2017, its main editorial October 31, 2017, and the *Helsingin Sanomat* Theme magazine 2/2017.

When the societal influences of religion have been researched in social sciences, they have tended to be framed critically. For instance, Michel Foucault argued that modern biopolitics, that is, the political power over life, has been developed on the basis of Christianity and rooted in pastoral power.<sup>9</sup> This idea has been used to show how, for example, Lutheran theology (e.g., Table of Duties) was an integral part of the Danish colonialization of Greenland and the ensuing transformation of the identity of the indigenous Inuit population.<sup>10</sup> Yet while there is much social injustice to blame for Christianity, not all evils – and not all good societal things for that matter – can be attributed to it. For one, the roots of modern biopolitics, as recently demonstrated by the political scientist Mika Ojakangas, are in ancient Greece and Christians have mostly objected to it in any form. Lutheranism, on the other hand, removed some of the obstacles to it when subjugated by the state, although it also mostly continued to object to biopolitics.<sup>11</sup>

The loss since the 1960s of full progressive confidence in the future has left an intellectual vacuum also in Finnish life. It is no longer clear that faith in science and economics will be capable of providing the value foundations that the Nordic countries will depend upon for a sustainable and happy future. On the contrary, populism has been on the rise across Europe and including the Nordic countries. Faith in scientific expertise is decreasing, and recently Nordic governments have also tended to cut funding of science – more so in Finland than in the other Nordic countries, possibly because of the neoliberal policies driven by the current Finnish government. New intellectual responses and directions are thus being explored across the Nordic academic world and in other places, if showing few signs of any emerging consensus in these countries.

#### ACADEMIC REVIVAL OF INTEREST IN RELIGION

One sign of the new directions is a revival of interest in the role of religion in the historical development of the Nordic countries, including Finland. For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this role was largely overlooked in social sciences and humanities research in Finland,<sup>12</sup> much more so than for instance in Britain, the Netherlands, and recently in Sweden. Research on the possible societal effects of religion has been mostly limited to writers in the area of theology, while other disciplines have not typically dealt with this issue in their working paradigms.

In theology the religious dimensions of society have naturally been addressed, such as religious education, values, civil society, and social work done by the church. Especially since the recession of the 1990s in Finland, theologians and the leadership of the Church have argued for the Lutheran value basis of a welfare society (e.g., the 1999 statement by the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland)<sup>13</sup>. However, there has not been

9 Foucault (2007).

10 Petterson (2014).

11 See Ojakangas (2015, 2016). See also Hagman (this volume).

12 See e.g., Hjelm (2008); Poulter (2013).

13 Suomen evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon piispat (1999).

any systematic scholarly research on the wider impact of Lutheranism on Finnish society, although isolated contributions do exist.<sup>14</sup>

As a result, Nordic scholars in general do not have a clear understanding of what role religion has played in the formation of modern Nordic societies. Religion has been epistemologically a blind spot, as claimed by the comparatist Daniel Weidner about religion in humanities research.<sup>15</sup> As for Finland, an educated Finn might readily affirm that of course Lutheranism has had an influence on Finnish society. When pressed and asked how so and in what ways, the first – and typically the only answer – may refer to the historically prominent role of the church and the traditionally close bond between the church and the state. But deeper influences on contemporary society are not usually recognized.

As a sign of changing times, however, over the past 15 years there has been a growing scholarly attention to the Lutheran past itself and to the direct historic role of the Lutheran Church in earlier centuries in shaping private and public practices that often continue in Finland today. Even more recently, there has been a new recognition that Lutheranism may have continued to strongly influence – implicitly more often than explicitly – the basic thinking and institutional forms of modern Finland and other Nordic countries.

This new trend in Nordic research is part of a wider ongoing change in social sciences and humanities research across the world. The American literary theorist Stanley Fish commented in a famous 2005 piece that in academia it is now religion ‘where the action is.’<sup>16</sup> This growing recognition has accelerated since then. For instance, leading European philosophers, such as Jürgen Habermas, have acknowledged the positive role of religion in society.<sup>17</sup> Recent historical and social science research has increasingly argued in particular that the Reformation and its legacy have influenced modern democratic societies more than they have thus far realized – especially areas such as the welfare state, systems of law, mass education, and gender equality in the Nordic countries as well as other parts of the world.<sup>18</sup> These large influences are quite unexpected from the point of view of the previously dominant secularization thesis and, therefore, require more detailed attention.

Research on religion has actually become one of the most current themes across different disciplines, such as political philosophy<sup>19</sup> and human rights.<sup>20</sup> This shift in research agenda concerning society and culture has

14 Hallamaa (1999); Saarinen (2005); Kirkon tutkimuskeskus (2015); Markkola & Naumann (2014).

15 Weidner (2012).

16 Fish (2005).

17 Habermas (2006).

18 E.g., Van Kersbergen & Manow (2009); Norris & Inglehart (2011); Tröhler (2011); Nelson (2012); Woodberry (2012); Arneson & Wittrock, eds, (2012); Christoffersen et al. (2010); Ojakangas (2015).

19 Taylor (2007).

20 Banchoff & Wuthnow (2011).



been branded a 'theological turn,' 'sociotheological turn,' or 'religious turn,'<sup>21</sup> and it has given birth to new and interesting research paradigms, such as economic theology.<sup>22</sup> There are, of course, differences in the developments in different disciplines and countries but despite these differences there seems to be a general trend of bringing religion in a new way from the periphery to the core of humanities and social sciences research.<sup>23</sup>

In Finland and other Nordic countries there is also an increasing number of publications that focus on the social impact of some aspect of religion – and much of this research is done by non-theologians. Some of these publications include the discussions on the welfare state and Lutheranism by Pirjo Markkola and her colleagues,<sup>24</sup> the evaluation of values in the speeches of Finland's rulers by Anneli Portman,<sup>25</sup> the critical evaluation of the Lutheran clergymen's role in the Continuation War by Jouni Tilli,<sup>26</sup> the application of the Weberian thesis to contemporary national differences in Europe by Robert Nelson,<sup>27</sup> and the recent Nordic discussion on the secularity of law.<sup>28</sup> However, this renewed focus on the history of religion in Finland and the Nordic countries is still relatively meagre compared to other Western countries, such as the Netherlands and Great Britain, and there is thus much room for advancing this discussion.<sup>29</sup>

This book is an outgrowth of these recent trends. It explores in various specific areas, such as contemporary education, law, and national values, the continuing powerful influence – both direct and indirect – of the Lutheran heritage of Finland. Some of the most important ways in which Lutheranism continues to influence events in Finland today are no longer communicated explicitly through the historic Lutheran messages and institutions. The most powerful form of Lutheranism, as one might say, is an unconscious Lutheranism. This could be regarded religiously in one of two ways; 1. as the birth of a brand new secular religion out of the old Lutheranism or 2. as a transformation within mainstream Lutheranism itself from a 'traditional Lutheranism' to a new form of 'secular Lutheranism' with similar societal outcomes.

Our assumption is that for researching societal effects of religion, the most productive starting point is to approach religion as a sociocultural institution. Typically, religion has been understood as traditional organized religion that is marked by participation in religious activities and by the usage of overtly religious linguistic tags, such as Creator, sin, congregation, etc. Such understanding of religion, however, may mask beliefs, behaviour, and principles that are equally religious but that cannot be so easily recognized

21 E.g., Gane (2008); Juergensmeyer (2013); Weidner (2012).

22 E.g., Dean (2019).

23 Nelson (2017a).

24 E.g., Markkola (2002); Markkola & Naumann (2014).

25 Portman (2014).

26 Tilli (2012, 2014).

27 Nelson (2012).

28 Christoffersen et al. (2010).

29 E.g., Woodhead & Catto (2012).

using easy catch-words or surface-level analysis of people's behaviour.<sup>30</sup> The religion scholar Sophie Gilliat-Ray's observation captures this idea well: 'some of the richest insights into contemporary religious life are to be found outside formal congregations, away from religious buildings, and in perhaps the most "unlikely" secular institutions.'<sup>31</sup> Our approach to religion reflects this line of thinking and is thus reminiscent of anthropological research, which has criticized more traditional definitions of religion.<sup>32</sup>

## *Two Protestant ethics?*

### WEBER'S FOCUS ON CALVINISM

In 1904 and 1905 Max Weber published a two-part article in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* that would become the seminal book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.<sup>33</sup> That book continues to influence contemporary economics and social science.<sup>34</sup> Recent trends towards a greater interest in the role of religion in forming modern Nordic societies can be seen as turning back – at least for inspiration – to Weber's original efforts in this area. The great influence of *The Protestant Ethic* has been a source of confusion in one important respect, however: Weber was not actually writing about a general 'Protestant ethic.' Rather, the great majority of Weber's analyses and case examples were taken from the history of Calvinism and other Reformed denominations. The American theologian Max Stackhouse wrote that in *The Protestant Ethic* Weber focused on the social and economic impact of 'Puritan attitudes as well as the later (Baptist and Methodist) traditions influenced by them.'<sup>35</sup> To Lutheranism he paid little attention.

Despite many similarities Luther's writings were less supportive than Calvin's for the development of capitalism. Indeed, Luther was often fiercely critical of a market economy driven by the self-interested drive for profit.<sup>36</sup> Luther in his own time, moreover, instructed the Lutheran faithful that they must be completely obedient to the German Princes – and later Lutherans would be similarly obedient to other state authorities.<sup>37</sup> A devout Lutheran might validly raise objections by the written and spoken word but must not rebel violently against his Prince. In those countries where Lutheranism later

30 Cf. Tröhler (2011: 3–4).

31 Gilliat-Ray (2005: 368).

32 See e.g., Geertz (1973); Asad (1983, 1993); Smith (1998); Beyer (2003); Cavanaugh (2011).

33 This section is largely based on Nelson (2017: 15–21, 33–42).

34 E.g., Gane (2012).

35 Stackhouse (2014).

36 Note, however, that Luther professed some ideas of self-regulated market order (Schwarzkopf 2016). But the general tone in his writings is very negative against the self-interested pursuit of profit. Although Luther was a complex figure, his distaste of the self-interested pursuit of profit is well in line with his sharply negative criticism of the sale of indulgences.

37 See Huttunen (this volume).

became the dominant religion (such as Finland, then part of Sweden), a state religion existed in which a Prince, King, or other state authority typically combined both the role of head of the church and head of the state.<sup>38</sup> Calvinists, by contrast, typically aimed to maintain a separation from state power – in matters of religion in particular.

The greater attention to the consequences of Calvinism partly reflected that the people living in nations significantly influenced by Calvinism (and its Reformed denominational followers), such as England and the United States, were much higher in total numbers than the populations of countries where Lutheranism had the greatest historical influence, such as the Nordic countries, Germany, and Estonia. Another explanation for the relative international neglect of Lutheranism is the less prominent place of the Nordic countries geographically and economically in Europe until recently. Before the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Nordic countries were economically backward, leading large parts of their populations to emigrate elsewhere, principally to the United States. The economic outcomes in the Nordic world thus were long a side show as compared with the remarkable economic developments taking place in England, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and other parts of continental Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that would transform the world.

But in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Nordic countries themselves would come to be seen as leading the advance of modern trends. Recently, in the 2019 *World Happiness Report* covering the period 2016 to 2018, and prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, the Nordic countries held the four highest positions and five of the top ten positions for overall national happiness, including Finland (1<sup>st</sup>), Denmark (2<sup>nd</sup>), Norway (3<sup>rd</sup>), Iceland (4<sup>th</sup>), Sweden (7<sup>th</sup>).<sup>39</sup> This suggests that perhaps we should be searching for new Max Webers of our time to address a different and more contemporary concern: Is the historic presence of Lutheranism somehow responsible for making people happier today, does it somehow work to spread a powerful ‘Spirit of National Happiness?’

As the Nordic countries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century became the objects of much greater world attention, leading scholars in and outside of these countries, nevertheless, still devoted little study to religion. If they did say anything about religion, they were more likely to argue that 20<sup>th</sup> century Nordic modernization resulted from the abandonment of the antiquated Lutheran religious heritage. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, leading historians, economists, and other scholars instead characteristically interpreted past events in the light of a strict economic determinism.

But one cannot really escape the fact that the Lutheran religion is one of the big factors still shared by all Nordic countries and potentially influencing their similarities. All five, for example, have almost the same national flags that differ by colours but otherwise embed the cross in a solid

38 See more in Knuuttila (this volume).

39 Helliwell et al. (2019). Interestingly, all the other top ten countries were historically Protestant – Netherlands (5<sup>th</sup>), Switzerland (6<sup>th</sup>), New Zealand (8<sup>th</sup>), Canada (9<sup>th</sup>), and Austria (10<sup>th</sup>).

background. Many nations that are grouped together by social scientists and historians have a common language, but this is not the case for the Nordic world: Finnish belongs to the Finno-Ugric language family and is thus linguistically completely unrelated to the other Nordic languages which belong to the Indo-European language family. Similar histories are another factor often giving nations a shared sense of group identity<sup>40</sup> and here there are already more affinities between the Nordic countries, especially the cultural, economic, and political ties during the long Hanseatic period in the late Middle Ages. Having the same geographical location in North Europe and roughly similar climates are also shared factors, but differences are clear again at the level of political status: Sweden and Denmark were major European powers for centuries, while Finland and Norway were very poor and became independent nations only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When trying to explain similarities between the Nordic countries, it should thus be apparent that cultural factors (including religion) must be taken as seriously as shared history, geography, climate, or economy.

In this book, the authors of the various chapters will show how, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Lutheranism provided a value foundation that was essential to the political, educational, and economic successes of Nordic societies. This 'Lutheran ethic' and value foundation – centred around education, egalitarianism, the work-ethic, and honesty<sup>41</sup> – originated in the writings and actions of Martin Luther himself and then were further interpreted by Lutheran theologians and clergy in the following decades and centuries. For the next 300 years the Lutheran ethic evolved within the Lutheran state churches of the Nordic world, culminating perhaps in the Swedish Empire in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the pace of Nordic religious change amplified as orthodox Lutheranism was increasingly challenged by Pietistic and other new revivalist influences, partly reflecting a growing Calvinist presence.<sup>42</sup> Up until then the centuries-long alliance between the Nordic states and the Lutheran Church had resulted in forms of social control that may have been even stronger than in European Catholic Churches.<sup>43</sup> As a result, and despite close censorship, religion's influence could no longer be tightly controlled by the Lutheran state clergy, but other agents began to have an increasing religious impact on society.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reflecting worldwide secularizing trends, the traditional religious character and institutional forms of traditional Lutheranism eroded rapidly. But the change for Finland and other Nordic countries was greater in the outward appearances and overt forms of religion than in the ways of thinking and behaving than what most people in the Nordic world recognized at the time.

40 See Finell et al. (this volume).

41 See the chapters by Helkama & Portman; Salonen; Niemi & Sinnemäki; Mangeloja.

42 See Mangeloja (this volume).

43 Anttonen (2018).

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, THE WELFARE STATE, AND LUTHERANISM

Indeed, as Nordic scholars themselves have begun to argue more frequently in recent years, there is one particular perspective on the Nordic world in which it is appropriately understood as grounded in a Lutheran ethic, now mostly taking a newly secularized and thus implicit form, namely, social democracy.<sup>44</sup> The sociologist Risto Alapuro, for example, wrote in 1999 that ‘after the Reformation [...] there was no rivalry between the state and the church and no protest movement from below,’ as all the Nordic nations had top-down, Lutheran state churches. Although facing greater resistance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this Lutheran orthodoxy continued into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century but then ‘the role of the Lutheran tradition in the development of the welfare state’ took new forms. As Alapuro writes, the Nordic countries saw the rise of ‘a new “secularized Lutheranism” in the form of the social democratic parties [that] continued the Lutheran tradition in the construction of the [Nordic] welfare state.’<sup>45</sup>

As recently as 2008, however, the German sociologist of religion Michael Opielka could observe that ‘little research exists reflecting the religious foundations of welfare states’ in Europe and elsewhere.<sup>46</sup> But there had been some signs of change since the 1990s, although remaining a minority position. The publication in 1997 of *The Cultural Construction of Norden* was such an early breakthrough in the study of Nordic history.<sup>47</sup> Culture, the book argued, is not a by-product of more fundamental economic and other material forces, as Marxist and many other economic determinists had long proclaimed. Addressing matters of culture, moreover, inevitably meant getting into matters of fundamental belief, also of religion.

The book included a chapter by the Finnish historian Henrik Stenius titled ‘The Good Life is a Life of Conformity: The Impact of Lutheran Tradition on Nordic Political Culture.’<sup>48</sup> Opening up new possibilities for social science study, the editors Øystein Sørensen and Bo Stråth state that ‘it is not particularly difficult to imagine the social democrats as a secularized Lutheran movement,’ indeed, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Nordic ‘social democracy [is] a continuation/transformation of Lutheranism.’<sup>49</sup>

Finnish historian Pirjo Markkola has been another pioneer in studying the impact of Lutheranism on modern Finland and other Nordic countries, examining in a 2002 book how women’s rights and responsibilities were redefined in Finland from 1860 to 1920 by urban middle-class women in a Lutheran context.<sup>50</sup> In another indication of the growing importance assigned to religion in shaping the welfare state, two volumes were published presenting the summary and research results of a large scale study of ‘Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective: A Comparative Study of the Role of Churches as Agents of Welfare within the Social Economy (WREP),’

44 See Nelson (2017a) for a recent detailed analysis.

45 Alapuro (1998: 377).

46 Opielka (2008: 98).

47 Sørensen & Stråth (eds) (1997).

48 Stenius (1997: 162).

49 Sørensen & Stråth (1997: 13, 5).

50 Markkola (2002).

organized by the Center for the Study of Religion and Society at Uppsala University in Sweden.<sup>51</sup> In presenting the WREP project, Anders Bäckström and Grace Davie explain that ‘an important starting point’ is a recognition that ‘the majority churches of Europe – as theologically motivated carriers of values – are related to the different welfare models that have emerged across the continent.’<sup>52</sup>

Based on a large body of research, the WREP conclusion was that religion is an important factor in the development of welfare in Europe.<sup>53</sup> More broadly, WREP researchers explain that

our results confirm the view that modernity does not necessarily entail the displacement of religion, but is more likely to mean a change in its form, function and content. “Religious change” is therefore a more helpful label than “secularization” when describing the position and role of religion and religious organizations in late modern European societies.<sup>54</sup>

A yet more recent contribution to this trend appeared in 2012, *Nordic Paths to Modernity*. Based on the growing body of recent religious research and reflection, a still stronger statement could be made with respect to the large role of Lutheranism in shaping the culture and the political and economic institutions of Finland and the other Nordic countries. According to the editors, Jóhann Páll Árnason and Björn Wittrock, Lutheranism has had a dominant importance for cultural developments in the Nordic countries:

The Nordic world is not the only part of Europe where Lutheran influences have counted for something in modern history, but it seems to be the region where this version of the Reformation played the most decisive and durable role.<sup>55</sup>

Modern Nordic history, in short, shows a continuing powerful connection between the social movements of the past two centuries and a contemporary Lutheran religious culture.

Danish historian Uffe Østergård explains how in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the young Danish Lutheran priest Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig ‘took it upon himself to re-establish what he took to be the original “Nordic” or “Danish” “mind.”’ His critical thinking, including attacks on Lutheran orthodoxy, led him to be ‘banned from all public appearances and publishing,’ resulting in the 1830s in an ‘inner exile’ during which he ‘formulated a program for the revival of the critical stagnant religion’ of orthodox Lutheranism. When he was free to publish again in 1839, he soon delivered a ‘massive production of sermons, psalms, and songs, a literary legacy which until at least a few years ago formed the core of the socialization of most Danes.’<sup>56</sup>

51 See Bäckström et al. (eds) (2009a, 2009b).

52 Bäckström & Davie (2009: 5, 6).

53 Bäckström & Davie (2009: 6).

54 Pettersson (2009: 15).

55 Árnason & Wittrock (2012: 11).

56 Østergård (2012: 63).



The new research on the Lutheran foundations of social democracy is just one example of the kind of influences that Lutheranism seems to have had on modern Nordic societies. More research, however, is needed to form a more detailed and solid picture of the societal legacy of Lutheranism in Finland and other Nordic countries. That is the purpose of this book.

### *What is Lutheranism?*

Before embarking on the discussion of the aims and contents of this volume it is appropriate first to say a few words about the notion of Lutheranism.<sup>57</sup> Every religion is linguistically special and has its own set of creeds.<sup>58</sup> The Lutheran confession, the *Book of Concord*, was written in 1580 as the doctrinal standard for Lutheran Churches, containing for instance the Augsburg confession as well as the small and large catechisms written by Luther. The 'creeds,' or the central doctrine, typically associated with Lutheranism have revolved around different *sola*: *sola scriptura*, *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, etc. The *sola* have expressed in a nutshell its main claims and identified it especially against the historic teachings of the Catholic Church. Luther taught instead that salvation comes on the basis of Scripture alone, through faith alone and by grace alone, independent of any institutional church's traditions.

Luther had an immense impact not only on future Christian theology but also on the institutional structures and practices of Lutheran and other Protestant churches. In 2013 the German historian Heinz Schilling published what is likely to be the definitive biography of Luther for many years to come. Translated from German into English in 2017, Schilling summarizes the many radical changes in Lutheran religious practice that followed in the wake of the Reformation.

Luther's evangelical church ordinances, which emerged from his theology of grace were [...] no less radical, as was evident for all to see in monks and nuns who left their monasteries; priests who married; the cessation of Masses said without a congregation present; preaching in German; abandonment of relics, of the veneration of the saints, and of the promises of indulgence; redirection of pious endowments; secularization of church property for the care of the poor, sick, and orphans; evangelical education within the family and in schools and universities; and, not least, regular salaries for those who served the church.<sup>59</sup>

These all remain features of the Lutheran Church today in Finland and other Nordic countries. The current state of Finnish Lutheranism is illustrated by the latest Quadrennial report of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

57 The 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in 2017 yielded an outpouring of new books about Martin Luther and Lutheranism. See, for example. Schilling (2017); Gregory (2017); Roper (2016), Hendrix (2015); Lull & Nelson (2015); and Malysz & Nelson (2015); Massing (2018).

58 Ostler (2016).

59 Schilling (2017: 359).

(2012–2015).<sup>60</sup> The report surveyed the relationship between the Church and the Finnish people; one of the central survey-points was how much the Lutheran ethic correlates with many other features of Finnish life. Sixteen sub-elements of the Lutheran ethic were surveyed, including elements related to theology (two of them related to the aforementioned *sola*), work ethic, religious education, etc. The statistical analyses showed that many of these sub-elements correlate among Finns, reflecting current aspects of Lutheranism in Finland. Those sharing a Lutheran ethic were, among other things, more likely to be tolerant of the presence of Islam than non-religious people were, whose identity was more likely associated with national pride.

When talking about Lutheranism in the Finnish setting, one thing that strikes many people as somewhat odd is the name of the Lutheran Church. While the Lutheran state church in Sweden, for instance, is simply called The Church of Sweden without any reference to it being Lutheran, in Finland the church is officially called the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.<sup>61</sup> But why evangelical? And why Evangelical Lutheran? Why not The Church of Finland?

The explanation for the name ‘Evangelical’ is historical and related directly to the Reformation. In Reformation terminology evangelical is largely synonymous with ‘Protestant’ – referring to those that hold to the doctrine of justification by faith and to the authority of the Biblical texts (especially gospel texts) instead of a church’s tradition. The term ‘Lutheran,’ on the other hand, was originally a derogatory term used by Luther’s adversaries to refer to the new heretical movement. Luther did not want to use the term, but over the course of time it became apparent that there was a need for his followers to distinguish themselves from other Protestant movements. A ‘Lutheran Church’ was explicitly named as such for the first time in 1586 in Germany.<sup>62</sup> In Finland, the churches were part of the Church of Sweden until Finland was annexed by the Russian empire and became a Grand Duchy. As a result, since the churches in Finland were no longer part of the ‘Church of Sweden,’ they identified themselves instead as the ‘Lutheran Church.’ After Finland became independent in 1917, it was natural for this to become the ‘Lutheran Church of Finland.’ The policy for naming the church was discussed last time in 2016 when the Institute for the Languages of Finland gave a recommendation for how to write the name of the church.<sup>63</sup>

In Finland, the current Lutheran Church is ‘Lutheran’ in relatively less formal ways. It is often characterized as a folk church which allows and may incorporate a diversity of different theological interpretations and practices. In addition, the revival movements that were born within the Lutheran Church in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were influenced by evangelical movements from other countries such as Britain. As a consequence, these Finnish revival movements are in their theology and practices closer to

60 Ketola et al. (2016).

61 Sometimes the name Lutheran Evangelical has also been discussed. We are grateful for an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

62 Gassmann et al. (2011: 2–3). See also Johnston (2000: 219).

63 Suomen kielen lautakunnan suositus, May 13, 2016.



Calvinism, and modern evangelicalism, than the mainstream theology of the Finnish Lutheran church.

As a folk church, the Lutheran Church has also been cautious about evangelism and proselytism. In general it has not been particularly interested in expanding its reach – in this respect unlike Calvinism – except in the form of modestly investing in missionary efforts. Lutheranism has rather historically associated more closely with nationalism and committed itself to creating a homogeneous society.<sup>64</sup>

One interesting reflection of this close relationship between religion and nationalism is offered by the immigrant Lutheran Churches in the United States. The Lutheran Churches in the US are heritage churches, but they nevertheless have more than five million members in total, mostly descendants of emigrants from German-speaking areas and the Nordic countries. According to a recent *Pew Research Center* analysis of the ethnic diversity of 30 religious groups, the two Lutheran denominations in the United States are among the three ethnically least diverse groups.<sup>65</sup> They are ethnically less diverse compared to even Judaism and Hinduism. This high American association of Lutheranism with a narrow ethnicity stems from the close original connections between Lutheranism and national identity in the Nordic countries.

During the preparations for this volume, a German theologian asked us whether it was not already passé to research national identity and its relationship to religion. While this comment may reflect a particular (even individual) stance among theologians, from the perspective of social sciences and humanities research the question is of definite importance, as suggested by several chapters in this book. Our goal is also not just to describe how religion, national identity, and nationalism are intertwined, but also to unravel and reanalyse these notions in the current societal context. Two issues are particularly relevant to mention in this regard.

First, the current relationship of ethnicity, nationalism, and religion continue to interest social scientists, as is obvious, for instance, by the contents of the journal *Nations and Nationalism* published by the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism (ASEN). Despite the strong efforts of ASEN the relations of ethnicity, religion, and nationalism have often been researched without observing their broader societal consequences. Or alternatively, the study of ethnicity and nationalism and the study of religion have been isolated from one another with little interaction, as recently suggested by the sociologist Rogers Brubaker.<sup>66</sup> Our volume suggests that there is much to be researched and reanalysed in such areas that may benefit these disciplines.

64 See especially Ihalainen (2005).

65 *Pew Research Center*, July 27, 2015. We are grateful to Risto Saarinen for pointing this survey report to us. See also Hagman (this volume) for similar ideas about religion and identity.

66 Brubaker (2015: 6).

Second, Christianity is a universal religion, whereas national identity is, by definition, a local phenomenon and not universal.<sup>67</sup> Sometimes religion can be associated with national identity, but it need not be. It can be rather a resource to be used, especially at times of national crises or threats.<sup>68</sup> One such time seems to be at moments of intense nation building and in many parts of Europe religion has, consequently, been associated with national identity.<sup>69</sup> However, as a religion, Christianity is focused on the salvation of souls and not on nations, their existence, and policies. But such beliefs can become part of the make-up of the culture and values of a country and it is this cultural and local Christianity, or in the case of Finland and other Nordic countries, cultural Lutheranism, that can be – and has been – strongly associated with their national identities. Many centuries ago, the Christianization of the Nordic world in the Middle Ages was foundational to future national identities.<sup>70</sup>

These two aspects of Christianity – salvation and culture – may of course become entangled. Such entanglement is reflected in many chapters of this book, such as in Robert Nelson's chapter on the gender equality, in Katja Valaskivi's chapter which touches on the church in mediatized society, and in the chapter by Klaus Helkama and Anneli Portman, which analyses honesty and other cultural values of Finns. The Lutheranism which is most associated with national identity and different societal institutions in contemporary Finland, however, is largely a matter of cultural Lutheranism, or secular Lutheranism. Cultural Lutheranism is the product of a centuries-long process whereby the originally religious values and practices have adapted to remain part of the people's culture. In twentieth century Finnish society they took largely secular forms. Cultural Lutheranism, therefore, is less a matter of traditional religion and more a matter of a new modern form of religious culture – or as some call it an 'implicit religion'.<sup>71</sup> From this perspective, it has even been claimed that the religion of Finland from the 1930s to the 1980s was social democracy.<sup>72</sup>

### *The current volume*

#### AIM AND QUESTIONS

The purpose of this book is to explore the influence that the Reformation and its aftermaths (e.g., Pietism) as religious-societal events have had on Finnish society, on the formation of Finnish national identity, on cultural values – and on the ways in which these influences might still be visible in contemporary society. The societal effects of Lutheranism may have been explicit and overt or implicit and covert, coming about through the secularization of traditional

67 Villads Jensen (2017).

68 Barker (2008).

69 E.g., Hroch (1996).

70 Villads Jensen (2017).

71 Bailey (2009, 2010).

72 Nelson (2017a).

religious values and ideas and their transformation into new societal forms, sometimes in quite disguised ways.

The research questions in this volume relate to the following:

- (1) In what ways may the effects of Lutheranism be visible in modern Finnish society?
- (2) What kinds of societal-political consequences have Lutheran theology and thinking had – and may still be having – in Finland?
- (3) What are the main mechanisms, social factors, and individuals by which traditional Lutheran values have assumed new secular forms in modern Finnish society?
- (4) In what ways and to what extent, are Lutheranism and national identity still intertwined today in Finland, given especially that the concept of national identity needs to be reanalysed in a pluralistic society?

The focus on Finland is interesting and justified on several grounds. Many societal changes in Finland are not home-grown but have come through contacts with neighbouring countries from which religious beliefs, ideologies and other influences have spread. As a small region situated between Norway, Sweden, and Russia and at the northern end of the Baltic Sea, Finland is a border zone where it has been on the receiving end of cultural and political influences from the east, west, and south. These influences are reflected, for example, in the fact that Finland has two official languages (Finnish and Swedish) as well as two churches (Lutheran and Orthodox) that have a special status regarding their relationship with the state. Until 1870 the Lutheran church was the state church. After the independence of Finland, the Lutheran and the Orthodox churches still have a special status in that they are governed by their own law (ratified by the Parliament), are institutions under public law, and have taxation rights.

Finland has also been shaped by the historically rapid economic and democratic developments since the 19<sup>th</sup> century Pietistic and nation-building movements.<sup>73</sup> Some of the implications of our findings can be easily extended to the entire Baltic region. Nevertheless, the geo-political situation of Finland is fairly different from the other Nordic countries and this position has triggered some developments unique to Finland – especially the complications of a long border with neighbouring Russia (and the Soviet Union for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). In this context, Lutheranism may also have contributed to nation building in ways that have not been seen in other Nordic countries.

This volume provides a multidisciplinary approach to examining the Finnish societal legacy of Lutheranism. It offers no unified methodology, but the chapters represent different approaches stemming from the authors' respective disciplines. Most chapters take a historical approach, the time-windows varying from more than two millennia (Sinnemäki & Saarikivi) to roughly a decade (Tilli), thus providing both macro- and microhistorical

73 E.g., Mangelaja (this volume).

interpretations. A few chapters narrowly focus on current issues, such as school pupils, philanthropy, and digitalization.<sup>74</sup> Many of the chapters also have a comparative aspect because of the importance of seeing Finland in its wider geo-political and cultural context.<sup>75</sup> In order to do so, we need to understand broader religious and political developments in Northern Europe and elsewhere.

#### ON FACTORS OF CHANGE

In research on the Reformation's societal impact, it is often emphasized how important the development of the vernacular Bible was. However, the Bible was expensive and only a very few people could afford to buy it. The print sizes were small up until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Bible Society began to distribute inexpensive copies to laymen.<sup>76</sup> Sweden (including Finland until 1809) was the first country to make reading skills a compulsory requirement for each citizen and these skills were examined on the basis of reading the catechism. For this reason, it is likely that the catechism has had a more significant effect on people's thinking and values than Bible reading has, at least before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>77</sup> This is why we dedicate a full chapter to the catechism but none specifically to the Finnish Bible.

But there may have been even more influential factors in Lutheran values and thinking that affected people in their everyday lives. First, Lutheranism is known for its love of hymns and it has been characterized as a singing religious movement.<sup>78</sup> Luther himself wrote many vernacular hymns to the tunes of well-known German folksongs. Hymns help create an emotional attachment to the contents of faith and they can be easily memorized by illiterate people as well. Hymnbooks were also much more affordable to laymen than the Bible. Yet in social history vernacular hymns are an almost forgotten source of how the Lutheran faith may have influenced people's thinking, culture, and values.<sup>79</sup> Occasional exceptions do exist, such as the work by the historian Christopher Brown, who presents a strong case for vernacular hymns and their role in spreading and solidifying the Lutheran

74 See the chapters by Finell et al., Grönlund, and Valaskivi, respectively.

75 E.g., the chapters by Sinnemäki & Saarikivi, Ihalainen, Nelson, and Helkama & Portman.

76 See Laine (this volume).

77 Laine (this volume).

78 Hagman (this volume).

79 The Estonians created spiritual folksongs in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that blend Lutheran hymns and traditional Estonian folksongs. These songs were strictly forbidden during the Soviet era, but they nevertheless became popular during that time. They were also sung during the so-called singing revolution between 1987 and 1991 when Estonians gathered in non-violent singing protest against the Soviet Union. On September 11, 1988, as many as 300 000 people gathered to sing in Tallinn, more than a quarter of the population. The protest culminated in Estonia regaining its independence in 1991. While Lutheranism has lost its religious and social influence in Estonia, the singing revolution is a good illustration of the potentially strong cultural influence of Lutheranism in the form of spiritual folksongs (Armstrong 2013).

Reformation.<sup>80</sup> In Finland, even recently written Lutheran hymns overtly uphold the central aspects of Lutheran ethos. For instance, the hymn *Kiitos Jumalamme* (hymn number 581 in the Lutheran hymn book; in English ‘Thanks be to God’) reflects such themes as calling, work, respect for authority, and patriotism. It was written in the 1980s and designed especially for the youth, but it soon became a kind of patriotic hymn that united people of different backgrounds.<sup>81</sup> Although in this volume no single chapter is dedicated to hymns, several chapters discuss their importance.

Second, all protestant denominations are known for their love of the sermon. The Reformers elevated preaching to a key position in worship services and especially catethetic preaching became an important aspect of expounding the Christian message, but also a crucial form of public control. As the societal importance of the church institution has decreased, the impact of the sermon has also decreased. Yet there are ways in which the sermon continues to have an important public position in the Nordic societies; this comes out clearly in the chapter by Pasi Ihalainen, which analyses contemporary sermons in Finland and Sweden.

One emphasis in Reformation research is the changing relationship between the church and the state. The church was long a part of the state in the post-Reformation era, but the specifics of that relationship have been re-negotiated over and over again in the history of the Nordic countries.<sup>82</sup> Especially at particular times of national crisis, the Lutheran Church in Finland has engaged in heated debates about its relationship to the state.<sup>83</sup> While the Lutheran Church as an institution has arguably had the largest role in providing the foundations for modern Finnish society, not all important societal influences of Lutheranism have come directly through the institutional church. One aspect that needs greater recognition is the role of deeply devout individual Christians who played key parts in building national state institutions and also institutions at the level of Finnish provinces and municipalities, even as they were not mouthpieces of the church. In this volume the chapters by Nelson, Laine, and Mangelöja, in particular, discuss some such individuals in the Finnish context.

One prominent example of such a person was Johan Vilhelm Snellman, a Finnish philosopher and statesman. Historians have tended to focus on the importance of his Hegelian philosophy, but much less attention has been given to his Christian values and the ways in which those values formed a crucial part of his nation building program.<sup>84</sup> In general, the impact of religious thinkers has been underestimated by students of the history of ideas in Finland,<sup>85</sup> thus calling for more effort to be invested in future research.

80 Brown (2005).

81 Väinölä (2009: 597).

82 Knuutila (this volume).

83 Tili (this volume).

84 See Savolainen (2006). Also Rantala (2013) discusses the Christian motivations and beliefs of Snellman at length.

85 Poulter (2013).

One further major historic influence often attributed to Lutheranism, or Protestantism more generally, is the widespread use of the printed media.<sup>86</sup> The Reformers' message quickly spread to the masses via the printed media, contributing to a growth in newspapers and the development of an early public sphere in various parts of Europe.<sup>87</sup> The spread of vernacular printed media and newspapers was also closely connected to nation building in Finland. While the Reformers were able to take advantage of the new technology of their day, the contemporary Lutheran Church has not been in the forefront of using social media and the news-sphere. On the contrary, in the face of a rapidly changing society and its increasingly pluralist values, the church has slipped into a spiral of negative media attention in Finland. It is only now slowly learning ways to handle this new information age. One means of addressing these challenges is branding, as discussed by Valaskivi in her chapter. The discussion on branding highlights the struggles of established churches today in making use of the latest technology and media possibilities for promoting their messages.

#### FROM MEDIEVAL UNIFORM CULTURE TO MODERN PLURALISM

A starting point for this book is the observation that there was a sense of cultural uniformity in the pre-Reformation society and that the influence of Catholic religion penetrated every sphere of life.<sup>88</sup> The Reformation brought many radical changes to this cultural uniformity, but there were also long-lasting continuities which will be highlighted in many chapters of this volume.<sup>89</sup> In the Catholic narrative, the Reformation can be blamed for shattering the unity of the Western Church because of its fomenting of internal doctrinal differences and disputes.

The American historian Brad Gregory has emphasized how the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura* did not lead in practice to a common accepted understanding of the Scriptures but rather to insurmountable disagreements in understanding them. In the real world, the intended biblical meaning just did not emerge from the study of the text; rather, it could vary greatly from theologian to theologian and individual believer to individual believer. This inability to find shared understandings, or even criteria for how to arrive at shared understandings, forced theologians and others to search for criteria from the secular sphere, thus paving the way for the secularization of knowledge.<sup>90</sup>

However, doctrinal differences were not the only reason for the new plurality of Protestant denominations, such as Lutheranism and Calvinism.<sup>91</sup>

86 Edwards (2005); Pettegree (2015).

87 Woodberry (2012: 249–251).

88 Gregory (2012). The Catholic Church was no monolith, however, and there was diversity in local customs, in the veneration of saints, and even in theological opinions. Variation was tolerated when it did not disturb the peace of the church or pose a threat to its unity, which was ultimately upheld by the Pope and the canon law.

89 E.g., chapters by Salonen; Knuutila; Sinnemäki & Saarikivi.

90 Gregory (2012).

91 Eire (2016).

Two further reasons are that, first, Luther was one of the first persons to stand against the Pope's absolute authority and to survive. In time it became clear that the Protestant movement needed to separate itself from the Catholic Church. This shift meant that there was no longer the unifying function of the papacy and the canon law over the new Protestant regions.<sup>92</sup> National laws and cultures, instead, began to have their impact on the specific versions of Protestantism that arose in different parts of Europe, in Germany, Switzerland, France, Netherlands, and England, as well as in the Nordic world.<sup>93</sup> Differences at all levels emerged – political, social, cultural, and economic.

Thus, once the Protestant movement left the Catholic Church, it was set, in our interpretation practically inevitably, on a path that led to different expressions of the Protestant faith. These separate movements would have strong national flavours, including in the Lutheran world that was subject to the kings, and national identity was strongly tied with the local religious expressions. These national developments would further pave the way to the political religion of modern nationalism and would connect it no longer with traditional religion but with the vernacular language.<sup>94</sup>

Second, linguistic differences have not been given much attention in the development of this plurality of Protestant denominations. Recently the linguist Nicholas Ostler has made the point that the linguistic differences among local vernaculars have influenced the ways in which different Christian traditions have developed their particular characteristics.<sup>95</sup> The linguistic differences do not seem to cause fundamental differences, but it is still notable that major Christian traditions have evolved around different linguistic settings such as the Syriac, Ethiopian, and Coptic churches, all of which take different linguistic forms.

Because of the unique historical, linguistic, geo-political, and ethno-cultural make-up of Finland, it was probably inevitable that Finnish Lutheranism would also have special emphases over its long history. One of those is the great importance of Lutheranism to Finnish nation building, probably much more so than in Sweden, for instance. Lutheranism was the only nation-wide institution when Finland was annexed by the Russian empire in 1809, and so it became an important stabilizing factor, encouraged also by the Russians who wanted to keep the population's trust.<sup>96</sup> While traditional Lutheranism is no longer so closely connected to national identity, many of the chapters of this book argue that Lutheranism as secular Lutheranism is still closely bound up with contemporary Finnish national identity, values, and society more generally.

The central motivating concept behind this volume thus is the idea of historical continuities. Research on the Reformation has often emphasized the radical changes it brought about, but especially among the current

92 Howard & Noll (2016).

93 Knuutila (this volume).

94 Sinnemäki & Saarikivi (this volume).

95 Ostler (2016).

96 Ihalainen (2005).



younger generation of historians there is now a greater emphasis and interest in continuities, which is also reflected in the wave of new books published around the fifth centennial of the Reformation.<sup>97</sup> In this volume, the idea of continuations relates first to ideas and practices that stayed roughly the same or were only changed in some outward forms from medieval Catholicism to Protestantism. The chapters by Sinnemäki & Saarikivi, Salonen, and Knuutila, in particular, examine these continuities relating to language, education, and law and legislation in Finland but also more widely in the Nordic world. Second, the idea of researching the societal legacy of Lutheranism in the first place is grounded in an assumption that there are national continuities in the transition from the traditional Lutheran faith to modern secular societies, some in more explicit and easily perceived forms, others are in more implicit forms that are less easy to perceive. Earlier research has begun to research these more implicit influences of Lutheranism and our aim has been to open up new cases that deal with different areas of Finnish society in one volume.

#### STRUCTURE AND OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUME

In addition to this general introduction by the editors, the volume contains fifteen chapters organized into four parts. These chapters have various research perspectives, and roughly follow the path to nationhood described by the Czech political theorist Miroslav Hroch, who writes:

To form a nation, you need a “memory” of some common past, treated as a “destiny” of the group – or at least of its core constituents; a density of linguistic or cultural ties enabling a higher degree of social communication within the group than beyond it; a conception of the equality of all members of the group organized as a civil society.<sup>98</sup>

The four parts of the book address: The development of national identity in Finland (Part 1), the Lutheran roots of Finnish education (Part 2), the influence of Lutheranism on Finnish social practices (Part 3), and the adaptability of the Lutheran Church to recent large changes occurring in Finnish society (Part 4). Cumulatively, these chapters paint a picture of how Lutheranism has managed to introduce thoroughly religious concepts at the core of Finnish society at the same time that it has been adapting itself to modern challenges. The entwining of the church and the state has also made inroads into the political arena, contributing to the maintenance of societal structures as an example of pious living. As Robert Nelson has recently argued, the transition in Finland might be described as one in significant part from ‘Lutheran State Church to Social Democratic State Church.’<sup>99</sup>

In Part 1 (Building Lutheranism and National Identity), three chapters discuss the basis of Finnish national identity, namely language, values, and religion, showing how closely intertwined they are in Finland. In the first chapter Sinnemäki & Saarikivi argue that there are many parallels in the

97 E.g., Pettegree (2015); Lull & Nelson (2015); Eire (2016); Gregory (2017); Roper (2017); Schilling (2017).

98 Hroch (1996: 73).

99 Nelson (2017b).



development of standardized languages under nationalism, as compared to sacred languages in traditional world religions, thus giving a general *longue durée* perspective. They show how traditional religion and nationalism both use language, a 'sacred language,' as a building block for unity and purity. In both spheres pluralism presents a challenge, is dealt with in much the same ways, and the pious react in similar ways. The following two chapters narrow the scope. Hagman focuses on Lutheranism and its developments as a distinct nationalistic project. He argues that the understanding of the three *sola* (*sola scriptura*, *sola fide*, *sola gratia*) as the heart of Lutheran theology was not the product of the Reformation era but of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Luther renaissance in Nordic theology. Helkama & Portman examine the Protestant roots of four Finnish values: egalitarianism, a work-related ethic, education-related values, and honesty. They show that it has been necessary for Finnish value researchers to develop a different approach to work-related values compared to originally American psychological value measures which have combined hard work with ambition. That combination is much more suitable to Calvinism but much less so to Lutheranism – a point that emphasizes the need for considering the two as distinct Protestant ethics.<sup>100</sup>

Part 2 (Education and Culture) discusses education in Finland and its religious roots. Key concepts promoted by the Reformation, and which still form the bedrock of Finnish education – such as respect for learning and teaching, personal responsibility, persistency, and high morals – also informed the nationalistic movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The four chapters peruse the ways in which Lutheranism has influenced Finnish educational systems but also how this legacy is increasingly becoming thinner. The chapter by Salonen traces the history of Finnish education and shows that the process of developing education in Finland was a lengthy process starting as early as the medieval period, much before the Reformation. In their chapter Niemi & Sinnemäki take a closer look at the changes the Reformation brought about. The chapter analyses the impact Lutheran values have had on the development of education in Finland and contends that the remarkable successes of the current Finnish education system can be traced, at least in part, to the values emphasized by the Reformation. In the next chapter Laine looks more closely at the development of literacy, one of the key aspects of Finnish education. The chapter argues that the egalitarian principle of the Reformation, that it was everybody's right and duty to get to know the Word of God, paved the way for the rise in literacy in general. The emphasis on good skills in reading also led to the establishment of the library system, a continuing cornerstone of Finnish cultural socialization. Finell, Portman & Silfver-Kuhlampi bring the focus closer to the present day and examine how national identity and religion intersect in school students' thinking.

The chapters in Part 3 (Lutheranism and Social Practice) focus on some key aspects of how Lutheranism influenced the development of social democracy and the welfare state. The chapters show how many of the most praised features of the social democratic Nordic societies can be

100 See also Ketola et al. (2016: 57).

seen as products of a 'secularized Lutheranism.' The chapter by Knuutila provides an overview of the relationship between the church and the state in Finland from the medieval Catholic period to the present day. Using the development of law and legislation as a basis for his analysis, he identifies four phases in this long history. In the next chapter, Mangeloja examines the political and economic impact of major new religious developments that began in Finland in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century and continued into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He proposes that they had a decisive influence in the establishment of what would become Finnish social democracy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nelson's chapter surveys a recent body of scholarship that finds that Luther and later Lutheran followers had an important influence in advancing a key feature of social democracy, namely, gender equality, which is among the highest in the world in Finland and other Nordic countries. In the last chapter of Part 3, using Finland as the case in point, Grönlund tackles the recent difficulties of all Nordic welfare states. As rapid economic growth has slowed, there is an increased strain on the ability of Nordic governments to fulfil their traditional welfare responsibilities. Grönlund explores how the roles of the state, market, and philanthropy for the provision of social welfare have been changing recently, including in Finland a greater reliance on voluntary private activities.

The theme that unifies the chapters in Part 4 (Church in Adaptation), spanning over 100 years, is transformation. The authors illustrate how the Lutheran Church of Finland has adapted to societal changes in the context of civil war, post-WWII new demands, and contemporary 21<sup>st</sup>-century society. The chapters reveal a common trajectory: while in the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the key issues were related to secular authority, that is, the state, nowadays the most pressing questions pertain to social values and the economy. Importantly, as all the chapters find, adaptation has never been a straightforward or a uniform process, nor has the church been merely a passive recipient. In his chapter Huttunen takes a closer look at the moral roots of Finnish society, especially as they relate to authority and the concept of obedience to authority. He examines the impact of the Apostle Paul's teaching on secular authorities (*esivalta* in Finnish) in the context of the Finnish Civil War of 1918 and shows that the concept of *esivalta* is an especially useful notion for demonstrating the mutual influences between the institutional church and the state. Moving the focus to the Lutheran Church, the discussion of secular authority continues in Tilli's chapter, in which the context is the immediate years after WWII, 1944–1948. Tilli examines how Lutheran priests constructed publicly the church's relationship to the state, evolving from mild optimism towards criticism and separation of the church and the state, and even 'martyrdom.' Ihalainen in his chapter, in turn, analyses the relation between the state and the church in terms of sermons given at occasions of national worship in 2009 and 2010, in Sweden and in Finland, respectively. Ihalainen argues that it is the political control of public religion that has been a characteristic of Lutheran establishments since the Reformation and that facilitates the flexibility and even resilience of Finnish and Swedish Lutheranism in reconciling its political teachings with those of the current rulers and the opinions prevailing among the political elites.

Part 4 is concluded by Valaskivi who examines another crucial aspect of the church's adaptability, the ways in which it has responded to the demands posed by the media and the digital era by directing more and more of its activities towards branding, promotion, and communication.

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