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*BAPTISM, LUTHERAN CONFESSION
AND ECUMENICAL RELATIONS: THREE CONTEXTS*

Baptism was a topic of major controversy during the Reformation era. For the Lutherans and the Roman Catholics baptism was not a topic of serious disagreements, but certain differences existed. The most serious disputes were with the Anabaptist movement. the modern Baptist, conservative Evangelical, Pentecostal, Charismatic and Independent Churches share the Anabaptist understanding of baptism. These churches have been growing fast.

Baptism has been a topic in the official contemporary ecumenical dialogues. the Lutheran World Federation has hosted a Lutheran, Mennonite, Catholic Trilateral Dialogue Commission on Baptism. the second meeting of the Commission was held in Strasbourg, 26–31 January 2014. the general topic of the dialogue is “Baptism and Incorporation into the Body of Christ, the Church”. The annual meetings of the commission are planned until 2016, after which the commission is expected to submit its final report to the Lutheran World Federation, the Mennonite World Conference and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity¹.

The World Council of Churches published in 1982 a Faith and Order document called “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry”. It was born in a long process of consultations and representatives from almost all confessional traditions including Roman Catholics took part in its formulation. the text concentrates on those aspects of the theme that have been related to the problems of mutual recognition. the main text demonstrates the major

¹ Trilateral Commission. Lutheran, Mennonite, Catholic Trilateral Dialogue Commission on Baptism Strasbourg, 26–31 January 2014, URL: http://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/Trilateral_Commission_Communique2014.pdf (дата обращения 6.10.2014).

areas of theological convergence. In addition to the multilateral dialogues, there have been various bilateral dialogues on baptism (World Council of Churches, 1982)².

In spite of convergence, the basic different concepts of baptism are part of the contemporary ecumenical relations. In the following I will investigate three different contexts which I know personally to some extent. First is my native church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland (ELCF). From 1979 until 1999 I was working in Thailand as a missionary, altogether for 15 years. After that I have been a visiting lecturer at the Luther Seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand (ELCT). I have been a visiting lecturer at the Theological Institute of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (ELCI) since 2001. Since I am not able to speak Russian, these courses have been held with an interpreter. I use my experiences in these contexts. I know that my understanding in the Russian context is limited, and therefore concentrate more on the Finnish and Thai contexts.

Baptism is important for ecumenical relations in two ways. First, Lutherans confirm that they are part of the Church Universal and accept baptisms by other churches. It is also a practical question since Lutheran Churches occasionally receive as members Christians who have been baptized earlier. Second, baptism is an important part of their local ecumenical relations.

I study Ecclesiastical Acts, Constitutions and other official documents of the above mentioned Churches which deal with baptism. Only the ELCF has had official bilateral theological dialogues with churches which draw from the Anabaptist tradition. I refer to documents born from these dialogues. Concerning Thailand, I refer also to my own research and observations.

All three Churches are members of the Lutheran World Federation. In their local ecumenical context and relations they differ from each other. the ELCF is a majority church which has official theological dialogues with Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and other Protestant churches. These include Pentecostals, Baptists and Methodists. For the ELCI, the most important relations are to the Russian Orthodox Church. the Evangelical

² Kaste ehtoollinen ja virka. Faith and Order Document 111. Suomentanut Olli-Pekka Lassila. Kirkkojen maailmanneuvosto. Geneve. 1982. P. 5–9.

Lutheran Church in Thailand is a member of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand, one of the two government-recognized main Protestant organizations. The other members include conservative Evangelical, Baptist, Pentecostal and Independent Churches. The ELCT is thus a member of an organization where most of the other members draw from the tradition going back to the Anabaptist movement.

In the ELCF, accepting baptism of other churches has been more or less a theoretical question, since most of the persons joining in it are its former members who are returning to its membership. Increasing immigration makes the question more practical. For the ELCI and the ELCT baptisms of other churches are clearly also practical questions because in addition to baptism, they receive members who had been baptized in another church earlier.

1. LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

The above-mentioned three Lutheran churches represent three different contexts. The Lutheran churches in the Nordic countries are majority churches which in recent years have been losing members. In Russia, the Lutherans are a historical minority in a country where the majority of the population identify themselves as Orthodox. In Thailand the Lutherans live in a double minority. The Christians are a minority in a predominantly Buddhist country, and the Lutherans a minority among Christians. Both the ELCI and the ELCT are growing churches. The fourth context could be fast growing new churches. As examples could be mentioned the Lutheran Churches in Ethiopia and Tanzania.

Finland

In Finland, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF) is a majority church. In 2012 76,4 percent of the population was members of the ELCF. In 1990 the number was 87,6. Part of the decrease in percentage is caused by immigration. The ELCF has succeeded in inviting only a small portion of immigrants to its membership. Between 2009 and 2012 little more than 53 000 persons joined the church while 214 000 persons left the church³.

³ Tilastollinen vuosikirja 2013 ja 2012: Kirkon tilastollinen vuosikirja 2012. 4. Kirkkoon liittyneet ja siitä eronneet vuosina 1990–2012. (Statistical

Russia

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (ELCI) celebrated its 400th year in 2011. Originally it was as a church of the Ingrians, ethnic Finns who migrated to the area called Ingria or Ingermanland (Inkerinmaa in Finnish) around the Southern end of the Gulf of Finland. During long times of war between Sweden and Russia, Ingria had become very sparsely populated. It became part of Sweden in 16th century. In the early 18th century Sweden lost the area to Russia and Peter the Great established the City of St. Petersburg as the new capital of Russia. the Finnish-speaking Ingrian congregations formed a diocese within the mostly German speaking Lutheran Church in Russia which now uses the name the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States, in German Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Russland und anderen Staaten. It is often known by the German acronym ELKRAS. In the early 20th century, the Ingrian Church became independent. During the Soviet era the Ingrian Church was heavily persecuted. By the end of the 1930s all church buildings were closed, ordained ministers and lay leaders were executed or sent to the prison camps. Ministers who were Finnish citizens were already deported earlier. During and after the Second World War the Ingrian Finns were deported to different parts of Soviet Union. Since the 1950s part of them returned to Estonia, Eastern Karelia and finally also to Ingria. the Church survived in family gatherings and secret meetings often led by female lay leaders. In the early 1970s the first congregations were reopened and later formed a deanery belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Estonia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Ingrian Church was reorganized in 1992 as an independent church. the membership statistics of the Lutheran World Federation give the membership as 15 000 persons (Inkerin evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon kirkkojärjestys. 2000, 1. (Church Order of the ELCI))⁴.

Yearbook of the ELCF 2012), URL: <http://sakasti.evl.fi/sakasti.nsf/sp?open&cid=Content240FFA> (дата обращения 6.10.2014).

⁴ On the members of the Lutheran World Federation see: Member churches, URL: <http://www.lutheranworld.org/content/member-churches> (дата обращения 6.10.2014). the pages give erroneous information by listing the ELCI as a church in Finland. Short introduction to the history of the ELCI in internet pages: Inkerin kirkon historiaa, URL: <http://www.inkerinkirkko.fi/inkerin-kirkko/inkerin-kirkon-historia> (дата обращения 6.10.2014); История

Since its early years, the reorganized Ingrian church has been a multiethnic church. Already in 1995 in St Mary's church in St Petersburg, 79 percent of the members were ethnic Finns, 19 % Russians and 2 percent of other ethnic background. Since the 1990s many of the Ingrian Finns moved to Finland, which has reduced the portion of Ingrian Finns in the membership of the ELCI. The student body at the Theological Institute in Koltushi, (old Finnish name Keltto) reflects the situation. Until the early years of the new millennium many of the students had an Ingrian Finn background, and some were able to speak Finnish. In the 2010s some still have Ingrian Finnish ancestry, but do not speak Finnish anymore. Concerning their ancestry, the largest groups have been Ingrian Finns and Russians. In addition there have been students with Eastern Karelian or German ancestry. As examples of the growth of the ELCI among other ethnic minorities there have been students with Mari, Mordvinian, Buriat, Tatar and Jewish backgrounds⁵.

According to a survey done in 2002, 80 percent of the population in Russia considered themselves as Orthodox, 6 percent as Muslims, 1 % as Catholics and 1 percent as Protestants. The identification as Orthodox has more to do with being ethnically Russian than with actual beliefs. Even half of the atheists considered themselves as Orthodox⁶.

церкви, URL: http://www.elci.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=31 (дата обращения 6.10.2014). A collection of articles in Finnish on the early years of the re-emerging Ingrian Church, especially Keltto/ Koltushi congregation: Inkerin ihme. Kirkko kohosi Kelttoon / Teksti ja taitto Hilikka Suoantila. Kustantajat, 2002. On religions during the Soviet era: Turunen M. Faith in the Heart of Russia. the Religiosity of Post-Soviet University Students. (Diss.). Helsinki, 2005. P. 15–37. On the membership of the reorganized ELCI during its early years: Ylönen K. Inkerin kirkon nousu kommunistivallan päätyttyä. Kirkon tutkimuskeskus. Sarja A. 1997. N 70. P. 17–42. The internet pages of the ELKRAS (<http://www.elkras.ru/>).

⁵ Ylönen K. Inkerin kirkon... P. 133–136. Author's observations.

⁶ Mäkelä J. Independent Churches, A Growing Section of Christianity. Reflections on Independent Churches in Russia and Thailand // Религиозная ситуация на Северо-Западе России и в странах Балтии. СПб., 2005. Вып. 2. С. 247–262. Statement is based on following sources: Turunen M. Faith in the Heart of Russia. P. 34–35. Kääriäinen K. Ateismin jälkeen. Uskonnollisuus Venäjällä. Tampere, 2004. P. 95–97, 170, 178. Statistics have also been published by the interdenominational magazine "Isthene". See: Isthene 4/2005. A collection of articles by Finnish and Russian scholars on different aspects of the religious life in Russia in the 1990s: Religious Transition in Russia / Ed. by M. Kotiranta. Helsinki, 2000.

In 2005 I studied critically different statistics on independent churches. the World Christian Database claimed that in 2005 there were 4.9 million members in the independent churches in Russia. Orthodox churches not belonging to the Moscow Patriarchate were listed as independent churches. Some Pentecostal groups were listed by the WCD under Protestant churches, but most in Independents. It was estimated that there were 200,000 people in isolated radio churches and 53,000 isolated Messianic Jews. In summary, it was claimed that there could be 1.9 million members in the organized independent churches not linked to Orthodox tradition. the largest of them was the Russian Unified Fellowship of the CEF with 1 million members⁷.

The official statistics do not support the claim of 1 million members of the Unified Fellowship of the CEF. According to official statistics, the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists had 1015 congregations in 2003. the Union of Evangelical Christians (Evangeliskie khristiane) had 645 congregations in 2003. According to the World Christian Database the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists had 91,000 members in 2005. the membership of the Union of Evangelical Christians can be estimated as 80,000. It is however possible that by Unified Fellowship of the CEF the World Christian Database refers to a loose cooperation between Evangelicals, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and others. In that case, most of membership of the Unified Fellowship is double membership⁸.

The Baptist congregations were born at the end of the 19th century as a revival among the ethnic German population at the initiative of German Baptists, and later among ethnic Russians. the Evangelical movement was born about the same time in St. Petersburg in connection to revival meetings led by Lord Radstock from Britain⁹.

⁷ Mäkelä J. Independent Churches...; World Christian Database, Independents by Country/Russia. Official statistics: Религиозные объединения. Свобода совести и вероисповедания. Нормативные акты и судебная практика. М., 2001. С. 406–407; Kääriäinen K. Ateismin jälkeen. P. 77–80.

⁸ Религиозные объединения. С. 406–407. World Christian Database, Independents by Country/Russia, Protestants/Russia.

⁹ On Baptists: Митрохин Л. Н. Баптизм: история и современность. СПб., 1997. С. 188–189; Kääriäinen K. Ateismin jälkeen. P. 80–81.

Thailand

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand (ELCT) was organized in 1994. It is a growing church with a membership of over 4000. Its roots are in the ministry of the Lutheran Mission in Thailand which began in 1976. It is a cooperation of Western Lutheran mission organizations and Asian Lutheran churches. It is part of the process where the Asian and African churches are increasingly involved in cross-cultural mission outside their own countries¹⁰.

There are different estimations on the number of Christians. the Thailand Prayer Update's Internet pages estimates the total number of Christians as 372,251, 0.58 % of the population¹¹. the Internet pages of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship quote statistics of the Operation World: Buddhist 92.34 %, Muslim 5.24 %, Christian 1.62 %, Chinese 0.4 %, Other 0.4 %¹². According to Table 3.16 in the Statistical Yearbook Thailand 2013, there were 243,795 church-going Christians¹³. The Internet pages

¹⁰ The most comprehensive research of the Lutheran ministry in Thailand is the dissertation of Marika Björkgren-Thylin. Björkgren-Thylin M. From Pioneer Mission to Autonomous Church. Lutheran Mission Cooperation and Church Building in Thailand 1976–1994. Åbo, 2009. In 2011 the ELCT and the Luther Seminary in Thailand published a collection articles in Thai and English written by some leaders of the ELCT, missionaries who had served in the Church and researches. My article on the Roots of Lutheran Theology in Thailand is included: Rejoice. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand 35 years. 2011 Luther Seminary in Thailand (LST) / Ed. by Lilja Kinnunen-Riipinen. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand (ELCT). 2011. The Lutheran University Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota published 2012 a collection of articles on Asian Lutheran Churches including an article by Pongsak Limthongvirutn on Lutherans in Thailand and its neighbouring countries: Abundant Harvest. Stories of Asian Lutherans / Ed. by E. Yee and J. P. Rajashekar. the Lutheran University Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota. 2012. Membership according to Bishop Banjob Kusawadee April 2, 2014. According to the statistics of the Lutheran World Federation the membership is 3524 (Member churches., URL: <http://www.lutheranworld.org/content/member-churches> (дата обращения 6.10.2014)). See also: Lähetystyö Thaimaassa., URL: http://www.suomenlahetysseura.fi/ls_fi/www/lahetysseura/etusivu/tyomme/maat/lahetystyo_thaimaassa/ (дата обращения 6.10.2014).

¹¹ Thailand Prayer Update, URL: <http://community.benchmarkemail.com/users/dwimar/newsletter/Thailand-Prayer-Update> (дата обращения 6.10.2014).

¹² The Overseas Missionary Fellowship statistics, URL: http://www.omf.org/omf/thailand/inside_thailand/country_profile_thailand (дата обращения 6.10.2014).

¹³ The Statistical Yearbook Thailand 2013, URL: http://web.nso.go.th/en/pub/e_book/YEARBOOK_2013/index.html#/276-277/ (дата обращения 6.10.2014).

of the Roman Catholic Church give following information on Roman Catholics in Thailand: 292,000 persons, 0.46 percent of the population of 63,922,000¹⁴.

Apparently, the Operation World statistics include both Protestants and Roman Catholics while the Thailand Prayer Update gives information only on Protestants. the figures of the Operation World are too high. It is unlikely that there could be over a million Christians. the combined figures given by the Thailand Prayer Update and the Roman Catholic Church are 664,251 Christians, 1.04 percent of the population, which is most likely close to the reality. Since the end of 1990s, the Protestant churches may have doubled their memberships; the Roman Catholic Church may have grown over ten percent¹⁵.

The Catholic and Protestant communities have had few contacts with each other. the distinctiveness is reflected also in terminology. the term khristian derived from English is used for Protestants, while the term khristang is used exclusively for Catholics. Term khristachon is used when referring to the Catholics and Protestants together¹⁶.

Prior to the Second World War, most of the Protestant Christians were members of the Church of Christ in Siam, later called the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT). It was established in 1934 as a result of the work of the American Presbyterian Mission. Its administration follows a Presbyterian model, with rather autonomous Districts. One of the founding Districts was Baptist, and later other Baptist Districts with various ethnic backgrounds have joined in it¹⁷.

After the Second World War, new mission organizations entered Thailand. Most of these have joined the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand (EFT), established in 1969. These two above-mentioned organizations have been registered by the Government as the main Protestant organizations, and new groups must join either of these. Since the 1980s mission-established local churches have been organized as national

¹⁴ The Roman Catholic Church, URL: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/sc3.html> (дата обращения 6.10.2014).

¹⁵ On the membership statistics in 1990s: Mäkelä J. Independent Churches... P. 27, 43.

¹⁶ Mäkelä J. Independent Churches... P. 25.

¹⁷ Mäkelä J. Independent Churches... P. 32–34, 42.

denominations. Simultaneously, new independent churches not related to historical Protestants have been established. In 1999, the independent churches formed roughly one-third of the membership of the EFT and more than ten percent of the whole Protestant community¹⁸.

The Lutheran Mission in Thailand joined the EFT because establishing an autonomous Lutheran Church was possible only as a member of the EFT. There were discussions in joining the CCT, but at that time the CCT required a full integration of new mission organizations wishing to cooperate with it¹⁹.

The ecumenical relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand consist of different circles. As a member of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand it interacts with the Baptist, conservative Evangelical, Pentecostal and Independent churches. There are various cooperative networks which include all Protestants and in some cases Roman Catholics for theological seminaries and Bible schools, for diakonia and for evangelism and mass communication²⁰.

2. BAPTISM IN THE CONFESSIONAL WRITINGS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCHES

The Augsburg Confession was prepared for the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. The Diet was summoned to meet for maintaining internal peace in the German Empire, because the Turkish Ottoman Empire was preparing war against it. Martin Luther was under the ban of the Empire, and could not come to Augsburg. It was Philip Melancthon who, under the influence of Luther and using the previously accepted Articles of Marburg, Schwabach, Torgau and the Large Catechism, drafted the Augsburg Confession (*Confessio Augustana*). In 1580, after long series of internal disputes among the Lutherans the Book of Concord was published. Luther's Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles were incorporated. In the Book of Concord, the Creeds belong to the common heritage of all Christians, and the Augsburg Confession is seen as the most

¹⁸ Mäkelä J. *Independent Churches...* P. 45–46, 228; Björkgren-Thylin M. *From Pioneer Mission to Autonomous Church.* P. 66–100.

¹⁹ Björkgren-Thylin M. *From Pioneer Mission to Autonomous Church.* P. 81–100. On the member organizations of the EFT: Mäkelä J. *Independent Churches...* P. 61–65.

²⁰ Author's observations.

fundamental of the confessional documents from the time of Reformation²¹.

The whole Book of Concord was first published in Finnish in 1849. Editions of Luther's Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession have been published since the 16th century. After the Second World War, translations of individual books included into the Book of Concord were published together with the Latin and German texts. the latest edition of the whole Book of Concord is from the year 1990. In Russian, there are two editions of the Book of Concord published in the 1990s. They differ quite much from each other. So far, only Luther's Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession have been translated into Thai. In addition, Luther's Lectures on Romans (1515 – 1516) have been translated²².

There are six editions of the Book of Concord in English, the latest from the year 2000. the 1959 edition translated by Theodore Tappert and others has been widely used. the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod related Internet pages, however, use the 1921 Bente Triglotta edition. Related texts are available on the Project Wittenberg pages²³.

In its confessional base the ELCF mentions the three Creeds from the ancient church, the unaltered Augsburg Confession and other books which have been included into the Book of Concord.

²¹ Evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon tunnustuskirjat. SLEY-kirjat. 1990, 16–26; The Book of Concord. The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church / Transl. by Theodore G. Tappert in collaboration with Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert H. Fischer, Arthur C. Piepkorn. Philadelphia, 1959. P. 3–16, 23–24, 463–464, 501–508. Thirteenth Printing in 1979.

²² Mäkelä J. Holy Gospel, Life and Work of Martin Luther: A Handbook with a Thai Perspective. Manuscript. Thailand, 2013. P. 46. Published in Thai and English by Luther Seminary Thailand. Tunnustuskirjat 1990, 7–14. the Small Catechism was published in 1985 by the Lutheran Mission in Thailand. Later new editions have been published. the Large Catechism was published same year as a joint project of the Lutheran Mission in Thailand and the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. The Augsburg Confession was published by the LMT in 1987. Both Russian editions are used at the Theological Institute of the ELCI. They differ rather much and this sometimes creates discussions in the lectures. Author's observations.

²³ Mäkelä J. Holy Gospel... P. 46. Editions are available online: Book of Concord, URL: <http://www.bookofconcord.org/> (дата обращения 6.10.2014); Small Catechism, edition of 1986, URL: <http://www.cph.org/t-topic-catechism.aspx> (дата обращения 6.10.2014). Project Wittenberg Home page: <http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/wittenberg-home.html>.

the ELCI refers to the three chief creeds and the Book of Concord. the ELCT confesses the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, and accepts the unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism as true expositions of the Christian faith (Kirkkojärjestys. Ch. 1, § 1; Inkerin Evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon kirkkojärjestys (Kirkon tunnustus); Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand 1994. Chapter 2)²⁴.

Baptism as Sacrament

In the Augsburg Confession, baptism and the Holy Communion are presented in Articles 9 and 10. Confession is explained in Article 11. Article 13 deals with the use of sacraments in general. According to Melanchthon in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article 13, the Papal party approved the statement that sacraments are signs and testimonies of God's will toward us, but they insisted that the Lutherans enumerate the seven sacraments. Melanchthon saw baptism, the Holy Communion and confession as genuine sacraments²⁵.

In the Catechisms, following Augustine's theology Luther defined a sacrament as an act which is instituted by God; in which God Himself has joined His Word of promise to the visible element; and by which He offers, gives and seals the forgiveness of sin earned by Christ. Luther numbered the sacraments at two: Baptism and the Holy Communion. In his work *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520) he still spoke about confession (Penance) as the third. In the closing chapter he, however, states that strictly speaking only baptism and communion are sacraments because only in them there is both the visible sign and the word of promise. Confession simply means a return to baptism. He strongly wanted confession to be maintained and gave instructions on how it should be administered. In the *Small Catechism* (1529) he spoke of confession in connection to baptism and in the *Large Catechism* (1529) in connection to the Holy Communion²⁶.

²⁴ The Church Order is in Russian and in Finnish. I use here the Finnish edition. the Finnish term *Tunnustuskirjat* refers to the Book of Concord (The Book of Concord. P. 463–465, 501–508).

²⁵ The Book of Concord. P. 33–36, 178, 211–214. For the Augsburg Confession, translations for both the Latin and German texts are presented.

²⁶ Mäkelä J. *Holy Gospel...* P. 63. For Luther's *Babylonian Captivity* I have used the Finnish translation included in *Kirkon aarteita*. S.l., 2011 (all editions

3. *BAPTISMS ADMINISTERED IN OTHER CHURCHES*

The Lutheran churches accept the baptisms administered in other churches. This principle can be found already in the Lutheran confessional writings, and it is dealt with in the Constitutions, Church Orders and other authorized documents of the Lutheran churches.

In the Augsburg Confession, Article 9 it is stated that baptism is necessary for salvation, that the grace of God is offered through baptism and that children should be baptized. Differences to its contemporary Roman Catholic teachings and practices were not emphasized. In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession Melancthon in the corresponding Article 9 writes that the Papal party approves the statement in the Augsburg Confession²⁷.

According to the contemporary Roman Catholic Catechism bishops and priests can baptize. In case of necessity, any person, even someone not baptized, can baptize, if he has the required intention and uses the Trinitarian formula²⁸.

The Faith and order document Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry of 1982 states that churches are increasingly recognizing one another's baptism as the one baptism into Christ when Jesus Christ has been confessed as Lord by the candidate or, in the case of infant baptism, when confession has been made by the church (parents, guardians, godparents and congregation) and affirmed later by personal faith and commitment. Mutual recognition of baptism is acknowledged as an important sign and means of expressing the baptismal unity given in Christ. Wherever possible, mutual recognition should be expressed explicitly by the churches²⁹.

In Finland, the majority of the persons joining the church are obviously persons who had been baptized in the Lutheran church as a child, had left the church and now returning to the church. According to the Church Order §3, a person can be accepted

of Luther's works published in Finnish and related publications in electronic form). the Catechisms are included in the Book of Concord.

²⁷ Book of Concord. P. 33, 178.

²⁸ Catechism of the Catholic Church. V. Who can baptize? 1256. Latin text copyright (c) Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta del Vaticano 1993, URL: <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/ccs.html> (дата обращения 6.10.2014).

²⁹ Kaste ehtoollinen ja virka. P. 18 (Chapter called Towards Mutual Recognition of Baptism).

as a member of the ELCF in three occasions: First, a child in baptism. Second, a person who has been a member of the Lutheran church earlier and has attended confirmation school, when she/he informs that he/she wants to confess the faith of the church. Third, a person who does not belong to the Lutheran church in baptism after needed instruction or in case if the person has been rightly baptized, when she/he confesses the faith of the church. In §13 it is stated that a person rightly baptized, shall not be baptized again. the emergency baptism is mentioned in §14³⁰.

Commentaries to the Ecclesiastical Act and the Church Order have been published. In the commentary of 2008 on Church Order §3 it is stated that the right baptism means a baptism administered in an other Christian church or community by a baptized person using water in the name of the Triune God. the Bishops' Council has stated that the following Churches in Finland accept baptism administered in the ELCF: Orthodox Church in Finland, the Methodist Church in Finland, the Private Creek Catholic community in Vyborg, the Catholic Church in Finland and the Anglican Church in Finland (Piispainkokous/09.09.2008 5§. <2008-00482> Kaste ja Suomen evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon jäsenyys. (Bishops' Council on baptism))³¹.

The Church Order of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia contains quite similar statements with the ELCF on membership, baptism and sponsors. Accepting baptism from other churches is not only a theoretical question but it has become an important aspect in the life of the local congregations (Church Order 2000, Chapter 1, Paragraph 4, Chapter 3, Paragraphs 1, 2 and 5)³².

During the Soviet era, baptisms were administered by the few ministers who survived the prison camps, in the 1950s by Estonian Lutheran ministers, sometimes by Orthodox priests. Some of the female lay leaders also baptized. In the Pre-Soviet era,

³⁰ Kirkkolaki, Kirkkojärjestys, Kirkon vaalijärjestys, Kirkon säädöskokoelma. S. I., 2012. P. 143–144, 148.

³¹ Kirkkolaki, Kirkkojärjestys, Kirkon vaalijärjestys, Kirkon säädöskokoelma. Kirkkohallitus, 2012. P. 143–144, 148; Kirkkolainsäädäntö 2008: Kirkkolain, kirkkojärjestyksen ja kirkon vaalijärjestyksen / Komm. Halttunen M., Pihlaja P., Voipio R. . Helsinki, 2008. P. 296–298, 306–308.

³² Inkerin evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon kirkkojärjestys.

confirmation school was an important part of life in the Ingrian congregations. Even during the Soviet era confirmation instruction was given by the few ministers returning from prison camps and charismatic elderly female leaders. Sometimes confirmation services were held in Estonia where the Lutheran church was in spite of restrictions able to function all the time³³.

In the 1970s when the first Lutheran congregations became reorganized, confirmation school got a new function. At present, there are two kinds of confirmation schools. the traditional instruction to youngsters has been continued. In recent years joint camps of several congregations have been organized. Second, confirmation school has become a path to church membership for adults. If the candidates have not been baptized earlier, they will be baptized. the number of persons confirmed was, however, in the early years higher than the number of persons who became members. In the early years persons attending the confirmation school were mostly of Ingrian Finn background. Quite soon people from other ethnic backgrounds, mostly Russian joined. They had often been baptized by Orthodox priests³⁴.

The Petrozavodsk Lutheran congregation in Eastern Karelia is one of the first reorganized Ingrian Finn congregations. In 1976 most baptized were children under three years old. In 1989 whole families and individual adults were baptized. By 1994 several adults were baptized. Similar trends were observed in Koltushi (Keltto) and Skuoritsa in Ingria. the gradual increase in religious freedom made it possible also for adults to join the church³⁵.

In the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand membership is defined as follows: "A member of this Church shall be a person who has received the Sacrament of the Holy Baptism in name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and has been enrolled as a member of a local congregation of this Church, or of a preaching place under the Church Council". In the By-Laws it is stated that a person may be received into membership through baptism, transfer of membership from a congregation of another denomination,

³³ Ylönen K. Inkerin kirkon... P. 171–172.

³⁴ Ylönen K. Inkerin kirkon... P. 155–165. Author's observations.

³⁵ Ylönen K. Inkerin kirkon... P. 155–160.

or restoration of membership (Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand. Ch. 4; By-Laws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand. Ch. 1)³⁶.

The Constitution or By-Laws do not mention right baptism, but it is seen as self-evident that persons baptized in other churches are not re-baptized. the Book of Occasional Services (Khumue sasanaphiti) contains, like other Lutheran Churches, a ceremony called Confirming of (Emergency) Baptism. It can be used when a seriously sick person has been baptized by a lay person and has later recovered. In the ELCT, it can be used also in receiving a new member from another church. It is seldom used, mainly in a situation when there are uncertainties concerning the baptism of the candidate, and he/she wishes to be received into membership more formally than just the usual welcoming information. During my years in Thailand, I participated in such a ceremony only once³⁷.

Apparently, most Christian groups in Thailand use the Trinitarian formula, but in the 1960s the actions of the United Pentecostal Church created a major controversy. This faction of the Pentecostal movement administers baptism only in the name Jesus. the representatives of UPC, some Thai leaders originally from other churches and American missionaries, started to re-baptize persons who had been baptized using the Trinitarian formula. the emerging Thai Pentecostal movement, which itself was born mostly as a splinter from other churches, was heaviest affected. At one time there were Christians who had been baptized several times. In my dissertation in 2000, I found persons who had been baptized four times. I have heard even higher numbers³⁸.

I have not been able to find official statements concerning baptism in the name of Jesus within the ELCT, but according to my observations the consensus is that baptisms in the name of Jesus should be considered as true baptism because in the Acts baptisms in the name of Jesus are mentioned.

³⁶ Both documents are in Thai and English.

³⁷ Khumue sasanaphiti. Sapha Khrischak Lutheran nai Prateth Thai. 1996. P. 34–37.

³⁸ Mäkelä J. Independent Churches... P. 76–82, 166, 193–195.

4. *ROOTS OF THE DISPUTE ON BAPTISM*

The Anabaptist movement was born in the 1520s and the Lutherans had to respond the challenges it raised. In the Augsburg Confession Article 9 the teachings of the Anabaptists are shortly rejected. The Latin and German texts differ. In the German text, it is simply stated that the Anabaptists teach that the infant baptism is not right. In the Latin text, it is added that the Anabaptists teach that the children are saved without baptism³⁹.

In the Large Catechism Luther rejects the teachings of some groups who claim that baptism is an external thing and that external things are of no use. Here Luther apparently refers to a spiritualist group led by Kaspar von Schwenkfeld. On Luther's other writings should be mentioned his letter *Von der Wiedertaufe an zwei Pfarrherrn* in 1528 (Large Catechism, Chapter 4)⁴⁰.

While the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Catechisms treat the Anabaptists more or less as one movement, the Article 12 of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord roughly fifty years later states clearly that there are many factions of the Anabaptist movement. The Anabaptist movement was from the beginning diverse and groups practicing re-baptisms of persons baptized as infants were born in various locations⁴¹.

The question of the legitimacy of infant baptism was first raised in Zurich in 1522. In the beginning the so-called historical argument was central in the dispute. Ulrich Zwingli, who had

³⁹ German: "Derhalben werden die Wiedertauffer verworfen, welche lehren, dass die Kindertauf nict rect sei"; Latin: "Damnant Anabaptistas, qui imbrobant baptismum puerorum et affirmant sine baptismo pueros salvos fieri" (Augsburgin Tunnustus. Suomalaisen teologisen kirjallisuusseuran julkaisu LXX. Pieksämäki, 1961. P. 25). This book contains the Finnish translation and German and Latin texts from «Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche / 3. verbesserte Auflage» (Göttingen, 1956).

⁴⁰ Book of Concord. P. 436–444. On Schwenkfeld: Arfman K. *Reformaatio vai restitutio*. Historiallinen argumentti reformaattoreiden ja kastajaliikkeen väittelyssä lapsikasteen oikeutuksesta // Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran toimituksia Helsinki. 1994. N 167. P. 129–137; Martin Luther. *Von der Wiedertaufe an zwei Pfarrherrn*. 1528 // D. Martin Luthers Werke. Bd 26. Weimar: Weimar H. Böhlau, 1909. S. 144–174. I have used the Finnish translation in the Kirkon aarteet electronic collection.

⁴¹ Book of Concord. P. 498–500. On various groups of the radicals f.e.x.: Durnbaugh D. F. *The Believers' Church. the History and Character of Radical Protestantism*. Scottdale, 1985. P. 64–93.

become the leader of Reformation there, stated that the Roman Catholic Church was teaching against the Bible concerning baptism. According to Zwingli, baptism does not save anybody. Only faith in Jesus Christ is important. Baptism means simply commitment to Christ. Zwingli concluded that the early church had mostly baptized adults. There could have been children baptized, but this was not the main practice. A radical faction emerged in 1523 with Konrad Krebel, Felix Manx and Balthasar Hubmaier as leaders. Simultaneously Thomas Mützer in Wittenberg had criticized infant baptism. the radicals in Zurich were also in contact with Andreas Karlstad. the radicals in Zurich saw rejecting infant baptism as an important part in organizing the truthful church. According to them, infant baptism was not practiced in the Apostolic era and during the early centuries after them. It had gradually become used and during Pope Nikolaus I (858-867) it became a rule⁴².

Zwingli came in 1524 to a conclusion that infant baptism was, in spite of the claims of the radicals, a correct practice. He rejected the notion of the radicals that the popes had invented the infant baptism. He also stated that in the Bible conscious faith did not always precede baptism. Crucial for him were the example of circumcision from the Old Testament and the witness of Augustine. the following year Heinrich Bullinger and Johann Oekolampadius in Basel brought up the witnesses of Origen, Cyprian and Augustine and other teachers of the early church. the radicals did not accept the historical evidences but insisted that only direct evidences from the Bible can be used⁴³.

As can be seen in the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Catechisms, it became clear quite soon that it was not possible to reconcile the theological differences between the Lutherans and the Anabaptists. In the 1520s and the 1530s Anabaptist preachers spread the movement throughout central Europe. Harsh words were used against each other. It is sad fact that the dispute did not remain as a theological confrontation but violence was used against Anabaptists. the Roman Catholics and other Protestants persecuted them in attempts to curb the growth of the movement, although

⁴² The term historical argument (historiallinen argumentti) is used by Arfman. See: Arfman K. Reformaatio vai restituuio. P. 19–31.

⁴³ Arfman K. Reformaatio vai restituuio. P. 32–82, 99–101.

some leaders did exercise moderation. A book called *Martyrs' Mirror* describes persecution and execution of Anabaptists in various parts of Europe between 1525 and 1660⁴⁴.

The Eleventh General Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation unanimously approved in July 2010 a statement calling Lutherans to express their regret and sorrow for past wrongdoings towards Anabaptists and asking for forgiveness. The statement is titled "Action on the Legacy of Lutheran Persecution of Anabaptists"⁴⁵.

BAPTISM AND FAITH

Luther insisted, against the Anabaptists and Zwingli, that baptism is a sacrament because of God's Word and the water. Applied to infants, this means that even if the infant did not have faith, baptism is still a sacrament. According to the Large Catechism, when the Word accompanies the water, Baptism is valid, even though faith is lacking. "My faith does not make Baptism, but receives it".

Further, we say that we are not so much concerned to know whether the person baptized believes or not; for on that account Baptism does not become invalid; but everything depends upon the Word and command of God. This now is perhaps somewhat acute, but it rests entirely upon what I have said, that Baptism is nothing else than water and the Word of God in and with each other, that is, when the Word is added to the water, Baptism is valid, even though faith be wanting. For my faith does not make Baptism, but receives it (Large Catechism. Baptism, Verses 52–53).

The Anabaptists emphasized that baptism came after faith and had no meaning apart from faith, but Luther insisted that baptism was

⁴⁴ Violent suppression of the Anabaptist movement begun in Zurich and Basel since 1526 (Arfman K. *Reformaatio vai restituitio*. P. 37–39, 83–99). *Martyrs' Mirror* is available online: *Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians*, URL: <http://www.homecomers.org/mirror/intro.htm> (дата обращения 6.10.2014).

⁴⁵ LWF Eleventh Assembly asks Mennonites for forgiveness for past persecutions, URL: <http://www.lutheranworld.org/content/lutheran-mennonite-dialogue> (дата обращения 6.10.2014).; Assembly Participates in Powerful Service of Repentance, URL: <http://www.lwf-assembly.org/experience/lwi-assembly-news/news-detail/article/461/8/> (дата обращения 6.10.2014).

the same whether one believed it or not. the absence of conscious faith by man does not nullify the grace of God, nor does faith create a sacrament. the Anabaptists made personal faith as a precondition for baptism and this way changed baptism from a sign and assurance of God's promise to a sign of man's faith. This is stated in the first Anabaptist doctrinal document, the Schleithem Confession in 1527⁴⁶.

5. BAPTISM AS A PART OF ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

The question of faith and baptism is a part of modern ecumenical discussions. In Finland, the ELCF has taken part in wide range of theological dialogues. the ELCF has since the 1970s had theological dialogues with the Orthodox Church in Russia and the Orthodox Church in Finland and has participated in the International Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue. the ELCF has participated in the dialogues with the Roman Catholics as a member of the Lutheran World Federation and in regional dialogues in the Nordic countries as well as bilateral relations with the Roman Catholics in Finland. the ELCF has participated in the dialogues with the Churches of Reformation (members of the Leuenberg Concordia) and signed the Porvoo Agreement with some Lutheran and Anglican Churches. Bilateral dialogues have been going on with the Finnish Free Church, the Pentecostal movement in Finland, the Baptist community in Finland and the Methodist Church in Finland⁴⁷.

The Pentecostal movement in Finland began as a revival within the members of the ELCF in the early 1910s. Traditionally it has

⁴⁶ Schleithem Confession on Baptism: "Baptism shall be given to all those who have learned repentance and amendment of life, and who believe truly that their sins are taken away by Christ, and to all those who walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and wish to be buried with Him in death, so that they may be resurrected with Him and to all those who with this significance request it (baptism) of us and demand it for themselves. This excludes all infant baptism, the highest and chief abomination of the Pope" (Schleithem Confession on Baptism, URL: <http://www.anabaptists.org/history/the-schleithem-confession.html> (дата обращения 6.10.2014)).

⁴⁷ Reports of ecumenical conferences and theological dialogues, mostly in Finnish, have been published by the Department of International Relation in the journal *Reseptio* (Teologiset oppikeskustelut, URL: <http://sakasti.evl.fi/sakasti.nsf/sp?open&cid=Content42789E> (дата обращения: 06.10.14)).

kept to the principle of the autonomy of the local congregation and has looked with suspicion at all structures above the local congregations. the congregations have been registered as free associations, not religious communities. In 2001 representatives of the Pentecostal congregations, however, gave their consent to a plan to form a religious community and in 2002 the founding document of the Pentecostal Church of Finland (Suomen helluntaikirkko) was signed. the Pentecostal movement is now divided into the Pentecostal Church of Finland and Pentecostal congregations registered as free associations⁴⁸.

A series of theological consultations between the ELCF and the Pentecostal movement was organized in 1987–1989. Later, regular meetings have been held. In the consultations it was noted that both have influenced each other. Internationally it is noted that the Pentecostal movement in Finland has been influenced by Lutheran theological thinking. This is especially evident concerning the doctrine of justification and the understanding on the Holy Communion⁴⁹.

According to a concluding declaration (Päätösasiakirja) in 1989 baptism became a topic in which there were disagreements. the Pentecostal party stated that the Pentecostal movement does not accept the infant baptism of the Lutheran churches as a New Testament baptism. the Pentecostal delegates further affirmed that a child is born in the reconciled humankind. He/she does not need baptism until he/she has become responsible in the presence of God and received faith. the birth of faith is called regeneration,

⁴⁸ Päätösasiakirja Suomen evankelisuterilaisen kirkon ja Suomen helluntaikerätyksen virallisista neuvotteluista 1987–1989. Kirkon ulkoasiain neuvosto. Suomen ev.lut. kirkon keskushallinto. 1989. Sarja D. N 1. P. 14. Internet pages of the Pentecostal Church in Finland: <http://www.suomenhelluntaikirkko.fi/>. On its founding see: Suomen Helluntaikirkon perustaminen, URL: http://www.suomenhelluntaikirkko.fi/info/tietoja_suomen_helluntaikirkosta/suomen_helluntaikirkon_perustaminen (дата обращения 6.10.2014).

⁴⁹ the Finnish Pentecostal movement is somewhere between Lutheran and Reformed traditions and is removed from the Baptist tradition which keeps the Communion only as a remembrance. See: Luterilainen ja helluntailainen käsitys ehtoollisesta — yhteenvetoa Suomen evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon ja Suomen helluntaikerätyksen neuvottelukunnan keskusteluista 2.11.2010 ja 7.3.2011. Kohta 6, URL: [http://sakasti.evl.fi/sakasti.nsf/0/215E302C60D9F6FAC225773000452F61/\\$FILE/Yhteenvetoa%20ehtoolliskeskusteluista%202010-11.pdf](http://sakasti.evl.fi/sakasti.nsf/0/215E302C60D9F6FAC225773000452F61/$FILE/Yhteenvetoa%20ehtoolliskeskusteluista%202010-11.pdf) (дата обращения 06.10.14); Päätösasiakirja Suomen evankelisuterilaisen kirkon... P. 25.

and only this conscious faith gives a person right to be baptized. This is in accordance with the Schleithem Confession, but this document is not mentioned⁵⁰.

According to Päättösasiakirja, there are, however, points where there is an agreement: baptism and faith are connected to each other as well as baptism and the forgiveness of sins. When an adult person is baptized, personal faith is required. Baptism obliges every Christian to live in the new life empowered by God's grace. Thus both parties agree with each other that both baptism and faith are needed for salvation⁵¹.

The Main Articles of Faith of the Pentecostal Church of Finland were accepted in 2001. They were accepted before organizing the Pentecostal Church in Finland and thus represent the whole Pentecostal Movement. the Finnish Pentecostal movement identifies itself clearly with the Trinitarian Christianity. It is interesting that the Apostles' Creed is mentioned. In 2013 the Committee on Ethics and Doctrines (Eettis-opillinen toimikunta) accepted a more detailed explanation on the Main Articles⁵².

Article 7 deals with Baptism. "The (Water) Baptism is connected to God's Redemptive work. Baptism is done to a believer at the command of Jesus Christ in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit by immersion in the water. the person baptized is then joined in the local assembly"⁵³.

The Main Articles do not deal with the question of accepting baptism administered in other churches. Rebaptism of members of the Lutheran Church has been one of the main difficulties between the ELCF and the Pentecostal movement. the Articles affirm immersion of adult believers as a norm, but are silent on accepting baptism of other churches.

⁵⁰ Päättösasiakirja Suomen evankelisluterilaisen kirkon... P. 8, 10, 25.

⁵¹ Päättösasiakirja Suomen evankelisluterilaisen kirkon... P. 8.

⁵² The Main Articles of Faith of the Pentecostal Church of Finland. In the Preamble it is stated: "The substance of the Confession is derived directly from the Bible. However, direct references to the Bible have been excluded due to the briefness of the text." This document is a translation from Finnish Helluntaiseurakunnan uskon pääkohdat accepted in 2001 (Suomen Helluntaikirkon uskontunnustus, URL: http://www.suomenhelluntaikirkko.fi/tunnustus_ja_opetus_2 (дата обращения: 06.10.14)).

⁵³ Helluntaiseurakunnan usko pääkohdat 2001, URL: http://www.suomenhelluntaikirkko.fi/tiedotteet/helluntaiseurakunnan_uskon_praakohdia (дата обращения 06.10.14). The online document in Finnish contains a link from the word kaste (Baptism) to the 2013 explanation.

In the 1989 document, the infant Baptism was explicitly rejected, but the 2001 and 2013 documents do not deal with the question⁵⁴.

Russia

Lutherans have been a historical minority in Russia. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia has participated in the dialogues between the ELCF and the Russian Orthodox Church. In areas surrounding St. Petersburg the relations are good, but in Eastern Karelia and in Siberia occasional difficulties have been reported. These are mainly due to the fact that Lutheran congregations are new in these regions.

Even though there have not been officially organized theological dialogues with Pentecostals and other groups drawing from the Anabaptist tradition, locally the congregations of the ELCI are in contact with congregations belonging to these groups. These contacts have a history going back to the Soviet era. According to Kaarina Ylönen, Lutherans participated in the meetings of Baptists and others, some may have even joined their congregations. My discussions with students at the Theological Institute of the ELCI confirm that contacts to these groups are still part of the life of the congregations of the ELCI. Mostly these relations are friendly, but often quite distant. It is likely that there are not many members of the ELCI joining Baptist or Pentecostal churches. On the contrary, sometimes Christians and even groups of Christians with a Pentecostal or Charismatic background have joined the ELCI⁵⁵.

Thailand

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand is a member the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand (EFT) established in 1969. The Constitution of the EFT says very little about the church. The spiritual unity is acknowledged but nothing is said how about this unity is expressed. Baptism is not mentioned. "There is a spiritual unity of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ in this world, which is the body of Christ, the Church"⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ Päätösasiakirja Suomen evankelisuterilaisen kirkon... P. 8, 10, 25. Helluntaiseurakunnan usko pääkohdat 2001, 2013.

⁵⁵ Ylönen K. Inkerin kirkon... P. 297–300. Author's observations.

⁵⁶ Constitution of the Evangelical Fellowship in Thailand.

The EFT was established for co-operation. There were different needs and purposes. the founding members were some mission organizations and a number of independent churches. the number of national Churches (denominations) is increasing. These vary from loose fellowships to more structured denominations, and groups belonging to the same theological tradition have established separate organizations. Pentecostals are prominent. By 1996 the number of Pentecostal groups had grown to more than 15. the development of national bodies is a fairly recent phenomenon, since most of the mission agencies have begun their ministries in Thailand after the Second World War. the oldest of the denominations is the Gospel Church of Thailand, in co-operation with the Christian and Missionary Alliance organized in 1948⁵⁷.

Trends leading into different directions can be observed. In the Annual Meetings of the EFT and sometimes in other connections, there were voices for strengthening the structure of the EFT. There were people who wanted to develop the EFT in the direction of a national Church. In 1985-1986, a survey was sent to the member organizations about willingness to change the Constitution of the EFT. No changes in the structure took place. It seems that a change in the understanding about the nature of the EFT took place around 1990. Though not clearly expressed, the underlying principle was that the EFT is a co-operative organization for national Churches and various Christian organizations, not a Church itself. the proposed rules for Local Church Registrations in 1991 are indicative. It was informed that the EFT aimed to have the individual local churches join together as fellowships or organizations⁵⁸.

Since the beginning of the new millennium, attempts to develop the EFT towards a more structured and unified entity have continued. the Internet pages of the EFT in Thai are indicative. the EFT members are functioning in all parts of the country and a district system has been introduced. According to the Constitution (Charter), the General Assembly elects the members of Council (*khanakammakarn*

⁵⁷ Mäkelä J. Independent Churches... P. 61-66, 151, 217-218, 220. Constitution of the EFT.

⁵⁸ Mäkelä J. Independent Churches... P. 219-220. the rules for registering new local churches were finally accepted in 1997.

amnuaykarn). the council members are elected among the delegates representing the member organizations. Now, six of the council members are mentioned to be coordinators of the districts. How they are in practice elected to these positions is not explained on the pages⁵⁹.

Fluid borders between the denominations, and entire local congregations switching denomination have been recorded. On the other hand, there is a popular slogan “mai thue khana nikai”. the slogan can be translated as “do not to care for the denominational differences”. This slogan was born in the 1950s and 1960s and it became a way for Thai Christians to cope with the arrogant foreigners competing with each other that time. Mai thue khana nikai can mean different things. First, it is used among groups belonging to the same theological tradition. It is easily understood that this is a way to deal with the confusion e. g. among the Pentecostals because of the large number of Pentecostal groups. Secondly, it expresses a wish to abolish the borders between different Protestant bodies, and to create unified structures. However, the division to the EFT and the CCT is seen more or less as given. Thirdly, it can be understood as a polite acceptance. It could be translated as: “We belong to different denominations but we are brothers and sisters in Christ”⁶⁰.

In Thailand, baptism was a topic of dispute in the beginning of the Protestant work in the 1830s and 1840s. From the 1860s until the Second World War the Presbyterian tradition was dominant. the Church of Christ in Thailand was established in 1934 mainly as a result of the ministry of the American Presbyterian Mission. However, it includes Baptist Districts. Baptism became a topic of dispute after the Second World War when new mission organizations, especially Pentecostal ones, entered the country. Most of the member organizations of the EFT have their understanding of baptism similar to the Anabaptist tradition⁶¹.

Between the years 1958–1973, there were three movements in which re-baptisms became a central phenomenon. These incidents took place before the ministry of the Lutheran Mission

⁵⁹ Mäkelä J. Independent Churches... P. 220.

⁶⁰ Mäkelä J. Independent Churches... P. 220–221; EFT Internet pages: <http://www.eft.or.th/>.

⁶¹ Mäkelä J. Independent Churches... P. 25–34, 193.

in Thailand was initiated, but their impact was seen during the early years of the Lutheran ministry. the first recorded case of a larger group being re-baptized is the organizing of the first Pentecostal congregations by the Finnish Pentecostal missionaries (Finnish Free Foreign Mission) in Chiang Rai in Northern Thailand in 1958. These congregations were born after a revival within the Presbyterian (CCT) congregations. Christians joining the revival were re-baptized and organized into five Pentecostal congregations. Their combined membership was close to 400 in the beginning. the baptism given by the CCT was not considered to be a proper baptism⁶².

The second movement was the establishment of the United Pentecostal Church in the early 1960s. the United Pentecostal Church grew mainly through transfers, and people baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity were re-baptized in the name of Jesus. Alex Smith states that 800 baptisms were administered within one year, and the church had more than a thousand members at the highest. Later the number of members was on the decrease, and was 300 in 1978. Reliable statistical accounts are lacking, but in the end 1990s the United Pentecostal Church had probably 2,500–5000 members⁶³.

The third movement was the Church of Christ (non-instrumental). the group was growing largely due to transfers from other churches. It can be estimated that by 1973, approximately 800 members transferred from other churches to the Church of Christ and were re-baptized. There was also a fourth movement, the activities of the Church of God of Prophecy from 1977 to 1984, but the information regarding it is difficult to find.⁶⁴

Re-baptisms in these three movements between the years 1958–1973 can be estimated as follows:

⁶² Mäkelä J. *Independent Churches...* P. 193–194. the number of 400 re-baptisms was my estimation based on information given by Jouko Ruohomäki and other Finnish Pentecostal missionaries: Ruohomäki J. *the Finnish Foreign Free Mission in Thailand in 1946–1985. A Descriptive History: A non-published Master of Religious Education thesis.* Grand Rapids, 1987. P. 76, 79–82, 87, 89–91, 106.

⁶³ Mäkelä J. *Independent Churches...* P. 194. Smith A. G. *Siamese Gold. A History of Church Growth in Thailand. An Interpretative Analysis 1816–1982.* Bangkok, 1982.

⁶⁴ Mäkelä J. *Independent Churches...* P. 194–195.

ВЫПУСК III

Pentecostals in Chiang Rai	— 400
United Pentecostal Church	— 800
Church of Christ (non-instrum.)	— 800
	2,000

Including re-baptisms in connection to other transfers, the total number of re-baptisms between those years can be estimated to have reached 2500. Between 1953 and 1973, the number of re-baptisms was about one tenth of the total number of baptisms⁶⁵. After the rebaptisms in the 1960s and 1970s, baptism has not been a major divisive issue. the EFT does not require a certain theological stand on baptism. Baptism is of course discussed in different situations, especially in theological institutes, but there have not been organized official theological dialogues between churches as has happened in Finland. At the Luther Seminary in Thailand students and staff members have dealt in their theses with questions related to other churches. Because of the division of the Protestant Christianity into numerous groups, organizing official dialogues on baptism would practically be challenging. Some kind of co-existence of different traditions has taken place.

CONCLUSIONS

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is a historical majority church with official theological dialogues with Roman Catholic, Orthodox, historical Protestant and Anglican churches and churches influenced by the Anabaptist tradition. the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia is a growing historical minority church in a country where Orthodox churches have been dominant. the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand is a growing minority church in an overwhelmingly Buddhist country. It is also a minority among Christians. In spite of the differences in their contextual settings, all of them share similar stands in questions concerning baptism and ecumenical relations.

In all three cases the Lutheran churches accept the baptism of other churches. This is stated in their Constitutions and Church Orders. This way they identify themselves as part of the Church Universal. Baptism is not usually a problem

⁶⁵ Mäkelä J. Independent Churches... P. 195.

in their relation to Roman Catholic, Orthodox and historical Protestant churches.

Only the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has had official theological dialogues with churches drawing from Anabaptist tradition, but the others interact with churches with this tradition. These interactions are mainly not recorded. Re-baptisms have created tension between Lutherans and Pentecostals in Finland. In Thailand, re-baptisms were a controversy in the 1960s and 1970s prior to the beginning of Lutheran ministry.

ИНФОРМАЦИЯ О СТАТЬЕ

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Заголовок: Baptism, Lutheran Confession and Ecumenical Relations: Three Contexts [Крещение, лютеранская конфессия и экуменические отношения: три контекста]

Аннотация: В статье рассматривается отношение лютеранской церкви к крещению как отражение экуменических отношений. Евангелическо-лютеранская церковь Финляндии исторически ведет официальный богословский диалог с римско-католической и православной, протестантскими и англиканскими церквями и храмами, а также находится под влиянием анабаптистской традиции. Евангелическо-лютеранская Церковь Ингрии в России представляется церковью исторического меньшинства в стране, где доминировала православная традиция. Евангелическо-лютеранская церковь Таиланда — церковь меньшинства в преимущественно буддистской стране. Представляя собой меньшинство среди других христианских конфессий, эти церкви, несмотря на различия в историко-культурном контексте, занимают сходные позиции в вопросах крещения и экуменических отношений.

Ключевые слова: Евангелическо-лютеранская церковь, Финляндия, Таиланд, Ингрия, анабаптизм

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DATA ON THE ARTICLE

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Title: Baptism, Lutheran Confession and Ecumenical Relations: Three Contexts

Abstract: The article examines attitude of the Lutheran Church towards baptisms as reflexion of the ecumenical relations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is a historical majority church with official theological dialogues with Roman Catholic, Orthodox, historical Protestant and Anglican churches and churches influenced by the Anabaptist tradition. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia is a growing historical minority church in a country where Orthodox churches have been dominant. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand is a growing minority church in an overwhelmingly Buddhist country. It is also a minority among Christians. In spite

of the differences in their contextual settings, all of them share similar stands in questions concerning baptism and ecumenical relations.

In all three cases the Lutheran churches accept the baptism of other churches. This is stated in their Constitutions and Church Orders. This way they identify themselves as part of the Church Universal. Baptism is not usually a problem in their relation to Roman Catholic, Orthodox and historical Protestant churches.

Only the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has had official theological dialogues with churches drawing from Anabaptist tradition, but the others interact with churches with this tradition. These interactions are mainly not recorded. Re-baptisms have created tension between Lutherans and Pentecostals in Finland. In Thailand, re-baptisms were a controversy in the 1960s and 1970s prior to the beginning of Lutheran ministry.

Key words: Evangelical Lutheran Church, Finland, Thailand, Ingria, Anabaptism

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