

# In this number

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## **The Roots of Laestadianism: Continuity in the History of Revivalist Movements in the Tornio River Valley and in their Study**

Laestadianism is the largest revivalist movement in Finland by membership and by supporter numbers. However, it is unclear how it is related to religious awakenings that preceded its emergence in the Tornio River valley in the late 18th century. Earlier research has given some credit to the movement that emerged around Nils Wiklund but stopped short of accepting Laestadianism as a continuation of Wiklund's movement, focusing instead on the unique nature of Laestadianism. This article discusses Laestadianism in the context of religious movements in the Tornio River valley in the 18th century, with particular reference to Pietism and Moravianism, both of which exerted parallel influences on both Wiklund's movement and the established church in the area. The article seeks to question the research tradition that has emphasised a clean break as opposed to continuity and to demonstrate how this emphasis has affected the study of the history of revivalist movements in Finland in general. The article further

seeks to illustrate how widespread and organised the Moravianist diaspora work was in northern Finland and what it was like, and also to contradict earlier claims that the Moravianists only exerted a sporadic and low influence in the region. The author considers that features of both Pietism and Moravianism may be identified in Laestadianism; these also had a strong presence in Wiklund's revivalist movement.

JOUKO TALONEN

## **The Emergence, Dispersion and Dissolution of Laestadianism**

The religious revivalist movement that came to be known as Laestadianism emerged in northern Sweden as the result of a spiritual awakening in winter 1845–1846, fired by the sermons of the Vicar of Kaaresuvanto, Lars Levi Laestadius (1800–1861). During the early period, the movement spread rapidly throughout the Nordic Arctic region. After Laestadius died, the accomplished catechist Juhani Raattamaa (1811–1899) became the leader of the amalgamated revivalist movement. The strongest expansion occurred in the 1870s, but the movement continued to attract

support in the following decades. It spread to the USA with emigrants from the end of the 1860s. Subsequently, Laestadianism has increasingly become an international spiritual movement, and measured by the common indicators of a popular movement it may be considered the largest religious movement to have been born in the Nordic countries. At the turn of the 20th century, the movement split into three main factions: the Conservative, Reawakening and Firstborn. Further splintering occurred in the 20th century. Today, seven major Laestadian factions may be identified worldwide if the cutoff point is set at a minimum membership of 1,000.

HANNU MUSTAKALLIO

### **Laestadianism in the Diocese of Kuopio and Oulu 1851–1939**

The article discusses the relationship between the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland and the Laestadian revivalist movement, born in northern Sweden, in the "northern diocese" of Finland whose seat was in Kuopio from 1851 but was removed to Oulu in 1900. This relationship was governed by internal developments in the Laestadian movement and the five Bishops who were in office during the period discussed (R.V. Frosterus, Gustaf Johansson, O.I. Colliander, J.R. Koskimies – formerly Forsman – and J.A. Mannermaa), with their various views on theology and ecclesiastical politics, but also by the general political environment of the day. Although Laestadianism had spread throughout Finland and beyond its borders from the north at an early stage in its history, the most conspicuous encounter between the movement and the established church occurred in the Diocese of Kuopio and Oulu.

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi