Sölve Anderzén

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SCRIPTUM ; 2002: 50 ; sid. 70-101

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SÖLVE ANDERZÉN

Baptisms and Baptismal Records.
Some examples of the use of church registers and records as sources in historical research.

I happen to prefer to introduce myself by simply saying: I am a Church historian. Basically, I am a theologian and an ordained minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. But, I am also deeply interested in Church history and teaching traditions within the multi-cultural and circum-polar area of northern Scandinavia, especially during the period 1600-1850. When some ten years ago I worked on my thesis, it was under the supervision of the professor in the field of practical theology at my ‘old university’ of Uppsala. But the subject of my thesis – the early teaching traditions among the Saami people in Northern Sweden – and the methods I planned to use, almost forced me into adhere an academic environment where extremely good methods and ‘know how’ – in working with church records and registers – had been developed. I was so very fortunate, that Professor Dr Egil Johansson became my supervisor. That was the start of years of fruitful cooperation with other scholars at Umeå University and the facilities developed by the Research Archives in Umeå.

My plan is to make some remarks on the following:

1. The process of historical research;
2. Databases in historical research;
3. Centrality of databases to historical computing;
4. My own research – a short review or overview;
5. The study of the ‘Practice of Baptism’ as part of northern Church history;
6. Baptisms and Baptismal registers;
7. The Baptismal Journal of Cuolajerfwi 1747 – 1777;


The process of historical research
History may be thought of as either product or a process.
As a product, a piece of history consists of a “representation of a past reality”, based on the interpretation of a body of known facts. Such representations of past realities are always bounded: they treat a subject chosen by the historian which might be static (the situation at point \(x\)) or dynamic (how the situation changed between points \(x\) and \(y\)).

The historian’s picture of a subject, whether the subject be a sequence of events or a past state of things, thus appears as a web of imaginative construction stretched between certain fixed points provided by the statements of his authorities; and if these points are frequent enough and if the threads spun from each to the next are constructed with due care, always by the \textit{a priori} imagination and never merely by arbitrary fancy, the whole picture is constantly verified by appeal to these data, and runs little risk of losing touch with the reality which it represents.


A sound piece of history, according to this view, is a logically consistent picture of a subject supported by all available data.

As a process, history may be conceived of as the dynamic and directed interplay of ideas and evidence. The word ‘dynamic’ emphasizes the fact that the process is circular rather than linear, and the word ‘directed’ emphasizes that there is an end to the process: a representation of a past reality as sharp and authentic as the historian is capable of producing.

\textbf{Fig. 1.} A model of historical research

A more fully developed model of historical research is presented in \textit{Fig. 1}. In this model, historical research is represented as a circular, continuous and incremental set of processes, which generate four related products. 1) The products are shown in boxes and 2) the processes are represented by the arrows linking the boxes. 3) The four
straight arrows describe the type of expertise the historian brings to bear on each process.

I would like to make four additional points with regard to the view of historical research embraced in *Fig. 1*.

**First.** Historians may begin a project for very different reasons. Some may be gripped by a particular issue or set of issues. Others may simply feel that a subject is worth investigation because we know little about it and consequently our representation of the past is inadequate. Equally, many projects are begun because a body of source material has been discovered which is thought to have the potential to reveal something new about the past. Likewise it may be thought that a database created for one purpose might profitably be employed in researching another subject. Yet whatever the starting point for a project, it is likely to involve, in varying degrees, imaginative and logical thought, the location and analysis of sources, the extraction and ordering of data, and systematic analysis of data of various types.

**Second.** A second point worth making is that the main processes of historical research are generic: they are not confined to any particular branch of history, nor are they dependent on any particular technology. A database, for instance, is simply a logically ordered collection of data which in the past may have been held on cards and lined paper but nowadays is more typically held in computer files.

**Third.** Thirdly, it is plain that historical research, while differing in kind from research in the natural sciences, is characterized by a similar interplay between ideas and evidence. Logic, theory, analytical methods and imagination are as vital to knowledge creation in history as in any other subject.

**Fourth.** Fourth and finally, it follows that historical research is intellectually as well as technically demanding. Many things are required if a project is to yield good results. One of them, in the modern world, is a knowledge of how database systems may be used to facilitate each of the main processes of historical research. Another, and in our case of special importance, is a well developed digital infrastructure of the archives and easy accessibility to digitised source materials.

**Databases in historical research**

Historical computing is the term – as far as I know – that has been used by computer-literate historians to describe the various ways in which they use computers in their research.

The subject matter of historical computing is summarized in *Table 1*, which illustrates how the main process of historical research – introduced in *Fig. 1* – may be supported and generally made more efficient through the use of computers and computer-based research methods.
Table 1 considers a possible start for a historical research project.

- Bibliographic and archival databases are to be searched over computer networks (local, national and international) to locate and access the sources of quantitative and qualitative data. This process is made simpler and more certain through the use of the data entry and validation procedures of the computer software selected for the project.

- The databases created by the researchers must be sufficiently flexible to enable records relating to individual items to be linked together and to enable subsets of the database to be selected as required for analysis.

- The development and testing of various statistical models to enable the researcher to develop his/her (new) interpretation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HISTORICAL PROCESS</th>
<th>COMPUTER SYSTEMS SUPPORT</th>
<th>DESIRED OUTCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locating and analysing content of sources</td>
<td>Bibliographical and archival searching</td>
<td>Detailed knowledge of sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering, organising and enriching data</td>
<td>Data capture, Database design, Database management, Image processing, Text enhancement</td>
<td>Database capable of supporting analytical procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysing data</td>
<td>Quantitative and qualitative data analysis</td>
<td>Closely identified issues of importance to the functioning and development of individuals, families, communities and societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formation and verification of ideas about the past</td>
<td>Model building and testing</td>
<td>Logically coherent representation of the past consistent with the available data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Centrality of databases to historical computing

Fig. 2. A database system for historical research.

As Fig. 2 makes plain, flexibility is one of the most important advantages of the database system for historical research. The database system provides an efficient means for gathering, organising and enriching historical data.

Such systems enable the researcher to create databases that are capable of supporting a variety of analytical procedures. In many cases, the databases consist of highly structured records that may be analysed using various statistical software.
Increasingly, however, historians are also using databases to store unstructured texts, sounds and images (still and moving). These forms of data have their own associated set of analytical tools.

However, the fundamental point remains: database systems are central to historical computing. The knowledge of how to use and get the best out of them is essential to any historian who seeks to undertake serious computer-based research.

**My own research — a short review or overview**

In my research I have attempted to describe the meeting between the different church-traditions under the title ‘The ways of the Text-word’ where Christian schooling has been covered more in-depth from a wider point of view.¹

Prior to the time of the written word and printed catechism, the knowledge of the catechism has been brought onward by oral tradition that includes basic schooling of belief, service of God and the tradition of Prayers. As the apostle John writes "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you” (1 Jh 1:3).

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One important and interesting task is to try to discover in what way different traditions of Christian teaching – and different traditions for saying prayers – have influenced church life and individuals during the years from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and possibly also today. We know that, during the years before the period of the iron curtain, cultural contacts in the Barents Region, to a great extent, depended on intensive contacts in daily life – fishing, reindeer herding, trading etc. – in the directions ‘east to west and visa versa’. The cultural contacts were much less influenced by contacts with the central areas in the south. What also has to be investigated is the way and the extent to which the area itself – with all its special ‘northerness’, remoteness and ‘arcticness’ – implies a cultural context and background to which different church traditions adjust and/or possibly even transform their content and the ways they conduct divine services.

Such studies and research must be performed in intense inter-disciplinary cooperation with colleagues interested in investigating the influence of the unique environment – or its restrictions – on their different subjects. In connection with this – one example of possible and needed research is to find ways and means to interpret some similarities between two important religious groups, in many ways typical of the northern area, the ‘Old-believers’ in the Russian Orthodox Tradition and the Laestadians in the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Tradition.2

It also has to be considered that when Christian missions reached the northern area and encountered the indigenous Saami religion – or a pre-Christian religion with different concepts of schamanism – this could be explained as a time of confrontation, when the new religion with its claims of superiority strove to push aside and replace other religions. From these confrontations some kind of mixed religion could possibly have evolved with elements both from the indigenous religion and the Christian religion, or that the religious rituals performed had a syncretistic and/or adhesive character.

My study The Ways of the Text-word in Church Tradition: Christian Mission Schooling among the Saami in Torne and Kemi Laplands in the 1700s,3 covers two examples of how dedicated functions of the laity were established within the pastoral care, or expressed differently, and how the missionary church has had the ability to adjust the ceremonial of the church to local conditions. The two examples – village prayer and private baptism – also indicate clearly how the ability to read was spread. It is reasonable to assume that it also reflects the extent to which the missionary activity was established in an environment where pre-Christian religion had formerly dominated.4

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2 This has been discussed during the years of co-operation in Religious Studies in the Barents Region and is also mentioned by my colleague Roald E. Kristiansen in his article "An Agenda for the Ecology of Spirit" in Anderzén, Sölve & Kristiansen, Roald (eds.) Ecology of Spirit. Cultural Plurality and Religious Identity in the Barents Region. (Umeå: Album Religionum Umense 6) 1998.
3 Published in Acta Borealia Volume 13, 2-1996.
These functions, which were very important for the church, having been direct handling and monitoring (supervised) by the ordained minister, were handed over to the parishioners. Unfortunately time does not permit further discussion on the subject here but it will be presented in a different context.

Within the Lutheran tradition the importance of the three media of grace, the word, baptism and Communion, is emphasised. In the above quoted article it is shown very clearly how the handling of two of these media of grace, so to speak, was handed over from the ordained minister to laity and from the church room or equivalent to private homes and to local village communities. At the same time it is also necessary to consider this realising that the Table of Duties (Haustafel), with the norms for relationships within the church, society and the individual household, has dominated. And it is possible that this can be viewed as if the house service was extended to a ‘bigger house’, where the neighbours were also included.

The present phase of my research emphasises the importance these services, certainly conducted by laymen, had in offering established local outward traditions, which were to be used partly in a different way during the period of revivalism in the 19th century in the Scandinavian areas of the Barents Region.

The study of the ‘Practise of Baptism’ – as part of northern church history

In my ongoing research I have focused my attention on the custom and ceremonial of baptism, especially on conditions for and the frequency of private baptism (baptism in the home, private baptism, baptism performed by laymen etc.). The time period reaches to approx. 1850. This deeper study also offers a better means for understanding the religious context in which the strong revival within the Scandinavian state churches takes place, with Laestadianism appearing during the 19th century.

5 In connection with this I would like to mention that my intention is to further investigate possible similarities with the so-called ‘priest-less group’ (bespopóvtsy) within in the ‘Old Believers’ - and especially the custom and use of baptism in these groups.

6 I have given one example of contacts and contradictions between revival movement and the established Church’ and School’ authorities in the article 'Faiths - more of a Hindrance than a Help in Christian Education. A Contradiction - but to some extent the probable Figure of the Contacts between Revival- movement, Church and Public Elementary School. Northern Sweden during late 1800s." (The article, based on a Paper given at International Standing Conference for the History of Education - ISCHE XIX. National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Dublin, Ireland, Sept. 3rd-6th 1997, will be published as part of a Conference Report, in the series Acta Humaniora, Oulu. The article has also been translated into Russian and published in Sveča–99 Istoki: Sbornik naučných i metodičeských statej po religiovedeniju i kul'turologii. Vyp. 2/Otv.red. E.I.Arinin.– Archangel'sk: Izdvo Pomorskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, im. M.V.Lomonosova. 1999.)
Baptism and baptismal registers

The earliest registers contained only records of baptisms, but from the mid-18th century onwards births also began to be recorded. From then on the registers had to contain the following details concerning all births, both in and out of wedlock: name, date of birth, date of baptism, place of birth and parents’ place of residence.

The oldest baptismal registers usually contain only the date of baptism, which according to the law had to take place within a week after birth, but by the 18th century it had already become common practice to enter the date of birth as well.

Many older baptismal registers provide only the father’s name, as there would have been no time for the mothers ‘churching’ (post-natal purification), and she would therefore have been unable to attend the baptismal service. When a child was born out of wedlock, only the mother’s name was recorded. Such details as name of godparents (sponsors) and other witnesses to the baptism were also recorded. Later on the records also came to include the mother’s age at the birth, and still later the father’s age and a number of other details.

Previous research on the rite of baptism has taken more general approaches, and the issue of how the custom of baptism developed in the missionary situation that existed in Lapland, has only been dealt with briefly. My ongoing studies take the opposite approach.  

For the northern Swedish area the issue of baptism has been treated by among others Karl-Gunnar Grape. An in-depth description of the rite of baptism in the Norwegian areas has been presented by Arne Bugge Amundsen. The custom of baptism in the Finnish area has mainly been covered by two scholars, Alekski Lehtonen and Pentti Lempiäinen.

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11 Lämpiäinen, Pentti, Kastekäytäntö Suomen Kirkossa 1500- ja 1600-luvulla. (Helsinki 1965: Suomen Kirkkohistorialisen Seuran Toimituksia 69.)
In the first phase of my research efforts have concentrated on establishing databases built on data available in parish records, mainly birth and baptismal registers. The Swedish-Finnish material covers geographically the Laplands from the parish of Jokkmokk in the southwest and further north, to the east and down to the south including the area of Kuolajärvi in Finland. The earliest registers contain only records of baptisms, but from the beginning of the 18th century date of birth is also recorded. When transcribed, each entry in the parish record forms a record in the database, and is broken down logically into a number of attributes or field types, such as:

Fig. 4. Major Saami provinces in the 18th century and present Saami distribution in northern Fennoskandia and the Kola peninsula.
Child’s name, gender etc.
• date of birth
• date of baptism
• number of days from birth to day of baptism
• date of ‘private baptism’
• number of days from birth to ‘private baptism’
• date of ‘confirmation of private baptism’
• number of days from ‘private baptism’ to day of ‘confirmation of private baptism’
• name of ordained minister performing baptism
• name of ordained minister performing confirmation of private baptism
• name (and thus gender) of laity performing private baptism
• name of witnesses (godparents, sponsors)
• location for baptisms etc.

The Norwegian birth and baptismal registers have been transcribed by NHDC (The Norwegian Historical Data Centre) and are available. These databases are true transcriptions of the original sources, but the parish registers differ in the way information concerning the baptism and practise of baptism is marked. Therefore the subsequent stage included a procedure to standardize variables and get logically ordered information that answers my questions and makes statistical analysis possible.

The established databases allow quantification of the records of baptism etc. and the analysis produces much statistical information where it is easy to see that the practise of baptism has shifted from time to time and in different areas. In a second phase the research will concentrate on a theological discussion, which will have to find and describe the reasons why the practice of baptism has shifted and varied. That part of the forthcoming research will in the first place consider the possibility of using contextual methods.

In the following my intention is to give some examples of results already obtained. That is to present Diagrams 1 - 5 and Tables 2 and 3 and comment on each of them.

The first example is taken from the Swedish Laplands, the parish of Jokkmokk where the Baptismal Register FDB C3 covers the years 1776-1814 and has 1425 entries. The total the population in 1749 was 1128 (563 male, 565 female), by 1800 it had risen to 1302. In 1750 the majority (90%) of the population was nomadic Saami but a major shift took place during the period. The permanent settlers increased and constituted 25% of the total population in 1800. This was due to the fact that the reindeer herding, which formed the basis of nomadic Saami life, experienced serious difficulties during these years. During the ‘bad years’ some of the Saami moved westward to the Norwegian coastline and settled there and some settled as fishermen alongside rivers.

12 In Anderzén 1997 (note 7 above) the results of the study of the practice of baptism in the parish of Jokkmokk are presented in more detail. In addition to Baptismal Register FDB C3 the following registers are also used: Baptismal Register FDB C1, years 1701-1735, with 1537 entries and Baptismal Register FDB C2, years 1736-1776, with 1537 entries.
and lakes within the boundaries of the Jokkmokk parish. From *Diagram 1* we learn that private baptism was practised during the whole period, but to a varying extent. It is also possible to maintain that a more developed practice of baptisms was established during the first decade of the 19th century. We know that one of the prerequisites for private baptisms was that the person conducting the baptism was able to read and had learned the ‘correct way of baptising’. From other studies13 we know that the ability to read among the Saami population was common among those born in 1760 and later, but we also know that during the 18th century as a whole private baptisms were used and that there were people in almost every family who were able to read to the extent that they could perform private baptism. The main reason that it took so long to establish a functioning baptism at practice, is obviously to be seen more as a result of the fact that the christianization of the parish took time and that proper fulfilment of regulations regarding the use of the baptism also took time.

*Diagram 1*. Swedish Laplands, parish of Jokkmokk. 1776-1814, FDB C3. Number of baptized children and number of privately baptized.

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The next example (Diagram 2) is taken from northern Norway, the parishes of Bardu and Målselv. During the second part of the 19th century the use of private baptism decreased radically, mainly as a result of a well-developed church life with better possibilities for the parents to have ministers perform the baptism. The third example (Diagram 3) is also taken from northern Norway, but from this we learn that there is an almost constant use of private baptism all through the 19th century. The parish Tysfjord however differs from those in example Diagram 3 in that it is a parish with more widespread settlements covering a huge area of land and water, where transportation was difficult and people were more isolated, which is also the case – but even more extreme if you compare with the results shown in Diagram 5 – with the very north of northern Norway.

Diagram 2. Northern Norway, parishes of Bardu and Målselv. 1851-1889. Percentage privately baptized. (Total 4149 entries.)
Diagram 3. Northern Norway, parish of Tysfjord, 1887-1919. Number of baptized children, number of privately baptized and number of children of Saami nation.


The example, given in Diagram 4 differs from all the others in that the parish of Gellivare was established as late as during the 1740s. The minister and schoolmaster (who was also an ordained minister) both lived in the church village and the settlers lived in settlements, of which many were far distant – taking many days to reach the church village – so there was little possibility of taking the children to have them baptized by the ordained minister. The Saami (Kaitum and Sjokksjokk villages) were nomads and visited the church village at best once a year, combining their attendance at church with their journeys to the trade fairs, or the court session, or to pay their taxes in the church village. For many Saami there was probably a lapse of several years between their attendance at church and the church village. In this the example is similar to the next given in Table 2. When the regulations– that the children were to be baptized within 8 days – were bound by law and had to be strictly observed the church had to find new ways to perform baptisms. Though it was impossible for parents to bring children to the ministers ‘in the proper time’, and the ministers could not possibly travel to every single home to baptize new-born children – and how were they to know that there was children to be baptized – the solution was to ‘elect’ laymen to carry out the baptisms. Private baptisms as shown, in Diagram 4 and Table 2 became more or less the norm.
Table 2. Swedish Laplands. Parish of Jukkasjärvi. 1792 – 1810. Number of children baptized in private baptisms distributed over number of days from birth to baptism and distance from residence to church village.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church village</th>
<th>Baptisms by ordained ministers or not baptized</th>
<th>residence within 1 day’s travel</th>
<th>residence within 2 days’ travel</th>
<th>residence at longer distance from church</th>
<th>Calasi-vuoma (nomadic)</th>
<th>Rautas-vuoma (nomadic)</th>
<th>Talma (nomadic)</th>
<th>Saari-vuoma (nomadic)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private baptism within:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 day</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 days</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 days</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 days</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 days</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 8 days</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>884</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final example of the use of databases built on information given in baptismal records is given in Tables 2 and 3. It is obvious that the use of private baptism in this case is related to possibilities of having the children baptized by the minister. From Table 2 we learn that only one out of 43 children whose parents lived in the church village was privately baptized. All the others were baptized by the ministers, who were two at that time (both residing in the church village). But the use of private baptism increases dramatically among the settlers who lived far away from the church village. We also learn that most of the private baptisms were performed within 3 days after birth, except among the nomadic Saami where the picture is somewhat different. The nomadic families lived for long periods isolated from other families, and it seems that they commonly asked someone not in family to perform the baptism, though there were no restrictions on members of the family carrying out the baptism.14

14 In the baptismal records from Norway there are notes which also indicate that the father and sometimes the mother baptized their newborn child.
Table 3. Swedish Laplands. Parish of Jukkasjärvi. 1792 – 1810. Number of children baptized privately, stillborn etc. and children baptized by ordained ministers distributed over number of days from birth to baptism and distance from residence to church village.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Church village</th>
<th>residence within 1 day’s travel</th>
<th>residence within 2 days’ travel</th>
<th>residence at longer distance from church</th>
<th>Calasvuoma (nomads)</th>
<th>Rautasvuoma (nomads)</th>
<th>Talma (nomads)</th>
<th>Saarivuoma (nomads)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Baptism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2,3%)</td>
<td>(88,9%)</td>
<td>(85,7%)</td>
<td>(93,5%)</td>
<td>(90,2%)</td>
<td>(86,3%)</td>
<td>(84,6%)</td>
<td>(92,6%)</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>176</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stillborn or dead without baptism</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptisms performed by ordained ministers within:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>146</td>
<td>143</td>
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</table>

From Table 3 it seems that there were exceptions to the ‘rule’ indicated above – that long distances hindered parents from bringing the child to be baptized by the minister. Many of the settlers living far away from the church village and many of the nomadic Saami had their children baptized by the ministers. There are at least two kinds of explanation for this. First, many of the Saami-families lived part of the winter close to the church village, an area that had been used for centuries for pasturing the reindeers. This meant that they were within easy reach of ministers either to bring the minister to baptize the child or to take the child to the ministers. Second, concerning the settled families we have to remember that during these years the ministers visited every
settlement or village at least once a year in order to conduct the so-called husförhör (catechetical examinations) and when the ministers were on the spot, they also baptized the children.

These brief comments given to the figures presented illustrate how databases built on baptismal registers present the possibility of achieving a more complete historical understanding of the process of christianisation in the Laplands. The continuation of the research will require further efforts and also increased co-operation between scholars on a wider basis, both geographically and scientifically. The improved opportunities for scientific contacts and co-operation within the Barents Region mean that there is a good chance of gaining a better understanding of the practice of baptism in the Russian Orthodox tradition. This may bring us to the point where we can lay out "The ways of the Text-word". Basic Christian teaching and the practice of prayers in one way or another also have to ‘operate’ as preparation for or part of baptism and/or as a consequence of baptism.

The baptismal journal of Cuolajerfwi 1747 – 1777

In connection with the general survey of baptismal customs and how they developed among the Saami in the northern Laplands of Sweden, Norway and Finland, I have gone, as systematically as possible, through all birth- and baptismal registers. This is a very large amount of archive material kept at archives in Härnösand (Sweden), Tromsø (Norway), Oulu and Turku /Åbo (Finland). Only the Swedish material is available completely on microfilm/microfiche.

Fig. 5. Map: Kemi Lapland, parishes and villages, northern Finland.
Fig. 6. Extract from Kemi Träsk Capelletz Kyrckio Book af åhr 1747. Förteckning öfver Lapparnas Barn I Cuolajerfwi, [Parish records, Kemi Träsk Church year 1747. The Saami children of Cuolajerfwi], page 201.
Among the documents kept as part of the Kemijärvi parish archive, in northern Finland, there are some older birth and baptismal registers, the oldest started as early as 1698. There are also some old journals on "Lapparnas barn i Cuolajerfwi" [The Saami children of Cuolajerfwi]. Kuolajärvi was the most eastern part of the Kemi Laplands (Fig. 5), and at that time on Sweden’s eastern border with Russia.

The journals from the Cuolajerfwi birth and baptisms register cover the years 1701-1710, 1747-1787. In one way they are of special interest as they also have some ‘extra’ notations, illustrated in Fig.6. There is one mark that looks like a combination of the letter ‘O’ and a cross. You could describe it in various ways:

An O with a cross in it,
a cross with a circle round it
an encircled cross

The letter O is normally used in this kind of church register as an abbreviation for various words:

1) O = L. obiit = died, death  
2) O = L. Origo = origin, village  
3) O = L. Ortum trahens = place of home  
4) O = Sw. Oäkta = born out of wedlock, illegitimate

 Alternatives 2) and 3) can easily be excluded, neither of them make sense in this context. Alternative 1) was checked by cross-reference to the registers available on deaths and burials and no connections found, not even a single example. All the children marked with this sign lived for years after their baptism. Alternative 4) can also easily be excluded, as the baptismal journal has complete notations on the parents of the children. We are able to conclude that, on the closer examination of the journal, none of these four alternatives is plausible.

From that arises the question: What does the mark stand for? We have to look for other explanations.

- Firstly it was established that the mark is consistently placed in the column where month of birth is written.
- Secondly it is possible – in combination with a quick examination of the journal – to note a clear connection between those who were privately baptized and those who have the special encircled cross mark.

As Diagram 6 shows, the custom of private baptism was established from year 1751 and becomes increasingly common during the period. We can also notice that the use of the encircled cross mark is limited to the years 1751-1763. Thus we need answers to the following questions:
Who baptized or confirmed the private baptisms?
Who filled in the register?


During those years three ministers served in the parish, and all three of them baptized and/or confirmed private baptism:

1) Rev. Nils Fellman, with a permanent appointment in Kemitråsk throughout the period baptized or confirmed baptism in 111 cases.
2) Rev. Joh. Kranck, with a permanent appointment in Kuusamo and superior to Rev. Nils Fellman, baptized or confirmed baptism in 11 cases.
3) Rev. Elias Lagus, with a temporary appointment for the years 1762-1763, as assist. to Rev. Joh. Kranck, baptized or confirmed baptism in 7 cases.

During the years 1751-1763 the journal seems to have been kept by just one person. The handwriting is obvious proof of this. And as the register was housed in the church in Kemitråsk, where Rev. Nils Fellman was the only resident minister, it seems correct to assume that he was the one who filled in the registers.

This brings us to the point where we know what was written in the register and who wrote it. But the question remains – why it was written. We are now at the point where
we always have to stop – and try to understand the ‘thinking’ of the person who filled in the register. This is by no means something special for this particular case. That kind of question must always be posed regardless of the kind of register to be analyzed. In one way or another you have to try to identify yourself with the person who filled in the register and try to use his ‘glasses’ and look and think in the way he did. Let us try to think the way in which Nils Fellman possibly thought.

The sources to be used are different and provide information to answer the following:

1) What was common praxis?
2) What was demanded by handbooks and other regulations?
3) What was discussed on the subject of baptism?
4) What was Rev. Nils Fellman’s own opinion about baptism, did he make any clear statements of his own?

Question 1) can be answered with the help of a rich source material and with help of the results from the investigations I have carried out on the subject in the other areas of the Laplands. And we know that the number of private baptisms increased all over the Laplands during this period. There was consensus to a large extent, that baptisms should be performed as early as possible and – because of national regulations – within 8 days of birth. In the remote areas where the parents had great difficulty in taking the new-born children to church and/or to the minister – or getting the minister to their homes – other solutions had to be considered. The custom of private baptisms was established and became over time more common than baptisms performed by the ministers. And we also know that private baptisms were confirmed – in the sense of accepted as valid by the church – in a ceremony conducted by the minister in connection with other services held at church or in other locations – this was known as the confirmation of baptism.

Question 2). Three vital questions were put to the parents when they went to church to have the private baptism confirmed:

- In whose name is the child baptized? (Answer: In the name of the Trinity; of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost);
- By what water (Answer: By clear and not ‘mixed water’);
- Who were the witnesses? (Answer: Names of godparents and sponsors).

In addition the parents had to give all other necessary information, such as the name of the child, the name of parents etc. (more or less what was needed to fill in the birth and baptismal register properly).

From 1766 (Oct. 17th) the government instigated clear regulations (baptism was part of the law [KyrkoLagen 1686], and was therefore to be dealt with by the government and the King) regarding the performance of private baptism. In addition to the three vital parts mentioned above, it was prescribed that the Lord’s Prayer be said before the three applications of water and that the ceremony be closed by saying the blessings. At the confirmation of the baptism – the minister used the liturgical formula as given in the
liturgical handbook for the Service of Baptism apart from the three applications of the water (and other parts [verba institutionis, the Gospel Mk. 10s, the creed, the prayer for exorcism, the sign of the cross etc.] which could have already been said or performed at the private baptism).

Question 3). We know that there were several discussions among the clergy about what had to be said and performed at private baptisms. In the year 1738 the clergy of Kemi Parish and Laplands were gathered in Kemi to consider questions of common interest under the guidance and supervision of the Bishop of Turku (Åbo) and one of the professors of theology at Åbo Academy. Among the points presented for consideration was the following: ”the predecessors of the clergy have firmly prescribed that ‘verba institutionis’ are to be read before baptism takes place, and that the clergy present were not of one mind about how to act”. In conclusion it was said: ”as the consecration consists in that ‘verba institutionis’ are said and thereafter the Lord’s Prayer and the blessing are said, but even if these are not said at a private baptism there is no reason to baptize anew”.

We also know that according to revisions and renewals of the handbooks the formula of baptism was – and had been – under discussions, and also whether making the ‘sign of the cross’ was absolutely necessary. (In northern Norway there were explicit inquiries put to the Bishop asking ‘if making the sign of the cross is allowed at private baptisms’).

Question 4). There are just a few remarks available on Rev. Nils Fellman but that part of my investigation is not yet completed.

Fig. 7. Three variant forms of crosses.

In Fig. 7 three variant forms of crosses are shown. The cross to the left is the so-called Greek cross with all the beams of similar length. The cross in the centre is Greek in nature but has trefoils at the ends of the beams. The cross to the left is the most commonly used form of the cross, and in our Western tradition it is known as ‘the cross of consecration or dedication’. This gives us one possible explanation for the mark – the encircled cross – used by Rev. Nils Fellman. He has used ‘the cross of consecration’ as a symbol specifically to mark those whom he ‘signed with the cross’ as part of the formula used when private baptism was confirmed.
Conclusion

What reasons may Rev. Nils Fellman have had for using the cross mark in the way he did. It looks as if he used a ‘cross of consecration’ or the appearance of the mark could be interpreted as: now the private baptism has been confirmed, and I (the pastor) have ‘made the sign of the cross’ on the child’s forehead and chest.

In addition it can be mentioned that there are many popular sayings that indicate that the use of ‘the sign of the cross’ was frequent, e.g. Fi. ”pessyt pois ristin ja kasteen” (>washed away the cross and the baptism>; an old saying in writing from the 1830s) among Saami that indicates a conflict between traditions within their pre-Christian religion and Christianity, which resulted in a rebaptism or renaming of the child as Saami.

Another saying is Fi. ”se on kastettu mutta ei ristetty” (‘he/she is baptized but not signed with the cross’). The word ‘ristetty’ has been considered by some scholars to be a fragment with roots in the Swedish verb kristna, which is another way of saying baptize. The main question is how the root rist- is to be understood, is it part of Fi. risti ‘cross’ (Fi. risti-merkki ‘cross-sign’) or /k/risti- ‘att kristna/Kristus’ (‘to christen/Christ’). My interpretation of the saying is clear – and simple – and also concludes my understanding of the information in the baptism journal: he/she was privately baptized (by a layman) and has not yet received the sign of the cross (by the minister).

Faiths – more of a hindrance than a help in Christian education?

The headline is a contradiction - but to some extent probably reflects the contacts between the revivalist movement, the Church and the public elementary school in Northern Sweden during the late 19th century.

This example discusses the influence of the revivalist movement – Laestadianism – on the school systems and school traditions in the north of Sweden ca. 1850 -1900, the interaction between the revivalist movement, the church and the school authorities and also the different uses of pedagogics.

Background and sources

The area under examination comprises two parishes, Jukkasjärvi and Karesuando, which together comprise the Torne Laplands. The written source material is comprehensive. The conditions within the state church, parish and school are well documented through written minutes and official reports of local, regional, and national character. The conditions within the revivalist movement, Laestadianism, are well depicted through letters and sermons (postils with Laestadius’ sermons), and L.L. Laestadius’ own written descriptions, for example in his periodical «The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness» (1852-1854).
The real reason for this study is that I have reviewed a large number of very negative statements about teaching and knowledge among the common people in the area. Official reports, written every 6th year in the period of 1871-1894 state that:

the least amount of knowledge of Christianity is probably in Jukkasjärvi and Karesuando parishes, where knowledge decreases rather than increases. The cause for this regrettable situation, according to information, which The Visitator F.W. Lidström for example has given me, is to be found in the wrong direction which the movements [the Laestadianism] took.

The official picture is ambiguous and concluded partly that the reason ‘knowledge of Christianity’ decreased was that the revivalist movement – Laestadianism – had completely dominated within that area. As a church historian I have wondered if the pietistic movement in the area could have caused such consequences when Laestadianism, by its nature, actively recommended that schools be established in the area, and from 1848 onwards established so-called mission schools in a large number of places.

Several favourable conditions encourage closer study of the teaching situation in the area to. In the first place there are the so-called parish records preserved for the entire examination period for both parishes, Jukkasjärvi and Karesuando. These parish records contain complete records about all parishioners – age, name, etc., knowledge and information about if and when the individual had been admitted to Holy Communion etc. Three different grades show the individual’s knowledge. One grade shows ‘ability to read from a book’, another grade shows ‘ability to read by rote’ and a third grade shows ‘comprehension of the content’. Secondly computer access makes it easy to register the data. As a result of this a number of databases with all this information have been established for the following parish-records (in total more than 25000 records).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Jukkasjärvi</th>
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<tr>
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<td>AI:3 1837 - 1851 1471 records</td>
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<td>AI:4 1852 - 1865 1869 records</td>
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<td>AI:7 1886 - 1895 2092 records</td>
</tr>
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<td>AI:8 1881 - 1890 3527 records</td>
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</tbody>
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**Discussion**

It has been stated that the official viewpoint concerning the levels of education and knowledge in Jukkasjärvi and Karesuando parishes was dominated by negative judgements. The examination of parish records, shown in the diagrams here (Diagrams 7 and 8) give on the contrary a more positive picture and show a distinct tendency towards increasing ‘ability to read from a book’ and ‘comprehension of the content’. It should be possible to read and understand the figures without any further explanation.
Diagram 7. Jukkasjärvi parish 1840 - 1890. Knowledge of Christianity distributed by home-village. Average mark for all inhabitants, aged 9 years or over, in various years.
Diagram 8. Karesuando parish 1840 - 1890. Knowledge of Christianity distributed by home-villages. Average mark for all inhabitants, aged 9 years or over, in various years.
In general one can say that in both parishes there were permanent residents as well as nomadic people. The permanent population were put into groups where the distances between the different home villages were short and where the socio-economic and cultural conditions were similar. The nomadic people – the Saami – were reported in the traditional communities included or based upon their livelihood. During the examination period the central places (where the church, pastor, etc. were) are Vittangi for Jukkasjärvi parish and Karesuando for Karesuando parish. The proportion of nomads is greatest in Karesuando parish.

The average grades are shown in the diagrams. Diagrams with grey backgrounds show the nomadic population.

The general impression is that knowledge was greater among the permanent population, which can be partly explained by the fact that their mother tongue was Finnish and that the learning/teaching language was Finnish. The nomads’ mother tongue was Saami.

This gives us two pictures of the conditions. A picture of crisis dramatized in the official records where one reason for the lack of knowledge is the negative impact of the Laestadian movement, and a more positive picture from the parish records. In the light of these two different views I want to concentrate the presentation mainly on discussing three questions:

1) First, why the public school system was established so late.
2) Second, the differences between the various groups regarding understanding of the teaching objectives (goal), content, and methodology.
3) Third, and given special attention, the relationship between Laestadianism and the established church (state church).

1) The answer to the first question is primarily to be found in the economic and geographical conditions in the villages. The number of school children was such that one schoolhouse in each parish would have been sufficient, but the distances between the scattered home villages required that several smaller schools be established, which again implied higher costs in building several schoolhouses and hiring several teachers etc. The local economy could not bear such an expense, and state funds had to be applied for. It is not possible to determine by using the empirical material whether or not school authorities wanted to present the local conditions as a crisis and thus influence the state to provide more economic help. In another situation, about 20 years ago, in a thesis, I gave as the main explanation that the parishioners for theological reasons preferred the so-called missions-schools and therefore did not see any need to establish public schools. This is certainly reasonable, but today I want to vary this explanation and also emphasise strongly the significance of the poor economic conditions in the region. There was no opposition to establishing schools amongst the Laestadians, but rather frequently repeated
encouragement to “offer some means to the school and the poor”, but there was opposition to the teaching methods used at “kron-skolan” (public school).

2) Secondly, there were differences between the various groups regarding the teaching objectives, content, and methods. But to what extent is it correct that Laestadianism is to be considered responsible for a reduction in the ability to read and in Christian knowledge, as was argued by the church authorities? In one way it is possible to say that the ‘living faith’ became more a hindrance than a help in Christian education. The members of the revivalist groups stressed that Christian knowledge is “the knowledge of the heart” and is a fruit of “living faith”. The school authorities’ view was that basic Christian knowledge consists in being able to read from a book and to read parts of the Catechisms and Christian books by rote. The church and the school authorities also accused the revivalists of reading too little and that the ability to read decreased due to the fact that Laestadianism stressed that ”faith cometh by hearing” and consequently people stopped reading Christian books. The information from the parish records however shows that the ability to read from a book increased during the period. But the questions arise - what were “Christian books” and were the Laestadians against the teaching of reading? From the writings of J. Raattamaa 15 we know that the books needed - and approved - were the writings and books of Luther (ABC-book/the Primer, Luther’s Catechisms, Bible explanations and Postil) and Laestadius (sermons and letters). One of the most widely used texts at the mission-schools apart from the Primer and the Catechisms, was Luther’s explanation of the Story of the Passion. Strong criticism arose in the Laestadian groups of various books - among them several postils used and favoured by the church. In writings preserved from that time, we read statements by the Laestadian leaders on postils distributed by the church such as: “postil of self-righteousness”, “the false postil”, “a postil that serves as a dismissal to hell”. But a truer picture of the Laestadians is that individuals were exhorted to use the word of God - as can be seen from the sermons and letters written at that time. It was stressed that the individual Christian gains nourishment from the word of God, but "not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life". From 1820 onwards the so-called Bell-Lancaster method was widely used for teaching, but from 1864 this method was prohibited, as stated in a royal circular. Reactions were directed against reading by rote. It was said that it became a merely mechanical skill. In this case it is worth noticing that even the so-called Laestadian mission schools applied the Bell-Lancaster method, but the monitors only guided the very beginners. The schoolmaster himself supervised the more advanced pupils with special emphasis on ensuring that they developed a good comprehension of the contents. To sum up one can say that a teaching goal of the revivalist movement was that everyone should have a good ability to read from a book and good comprehension of the content. This is to be compared to the goal of the state church and the public school which was to provide the students with good skills, mostly "by

rote", concerning the longer explanation to Luther’s Small Catechism and Bible history.

3) Thirdly: What kind of relationship did Laestadianism and the state church have? Did Laestadianism with its emphasis on order of grace and new birth come into conflict with the church and its ministers? Did the stress put on the necessity of living faith simultaneously threaten the established church and was it a judgement on its dead faith? Both questions can be answered in the affirmative. This reveals definite dogmatic differences. The conflict is, however, most significant when it comes to the theological content of the knowledge of Christendom which the Laestadians recommend and the knowledge of Christianity which is a more rational form for the traditional church. The negative judgement of the Laestadians on the part of the state church and the school authorities can also be explained by their frequent open conflict with the Laestadians about doctrine. Such conflicts took place quite often according to available sources.

In conclusion it is possible to state that the influence of the revivalist movement – Laestadianism – on the school system and school traditions was significant. The interaction between the revivalist movement and the church and school authorities is characterised by conflicts arising from different dogmatic opinions, different aims for the teaching and different teaching methods.

Excursus

Laestadianism and the mission schools

Laestadianism is a religious movement which had its beginning in the middle of the 19th century in Swedish Lapland. The cause of the revivalism was the forceful repentance sermons given by Vicar Lars Levi Laestadius (1800-1861), and the movement spread widely in his lifetime in the northern, and at that time mostly Finnish speaking, parts of Sweden and Norway and Finland. Laestadianism in Scandinavia did not separate from the state church, and received the sacraments (baptism and Holy Communion) in accordance with the ecclesiastical order. Today Laestadianism is still active and has a great influence on church life in Scandinavia (northern parts of Norway and Sweden and the whole of Finland). In North America Laestadianism is widespread in the areas where immigration from Scandinavia was extensive, and is organized in free churches with names like “The Old Apostolic Lutheran Church”.

During the early years when Laestadianism first spread in the northern parts of Sweden (1848 - 1862) it was mainly a result of the work of the so-called mission schools. These mission schools were led by lay missionary catechists, among them the most famous was Juhani Raattamaa, who also became the leader of the revivalist movement after the death of Laestadius in 1861.
These schools were part of an ambulatory school system, and were set up in different villages for some weeks at a time. The lay missionary catechists gathered the children and the young people of the village and gave them basic teaching – how to read and Luther’s Small Catechism. The school at that time can also be seen as well as part of a public elementary educational system, as the principal teaching was to prepare the young to attend the confirmation class. Confirmation – as part of the protestant tradition – was in one way a general admission to Holy Communion and in one way a sign that the individual had become adult and of age. According to both law and regulations, each individual member of the Swedish state church had to attend communion at least once a year. When of age as a church member one also had the right to enter into marriage. But the teachers – the lay catechists – did not only teach the basics, they also conveyed the message of repentance to private individuals – to the children and to their parents. As school was normally held in the daytime, in the evenings all villagers gathered in the home where the school was. In this way the revivalist movement spread widely. The catechists – as laymen – were not allowed by ecclesiastical order to preach, but on these occasions the catechists used to read sermons written by Laestadius.

The characteristics of Laestadianism from the beginning were rigorous repentance sermons, oral confession of sins and absolution, and the so-called “liikutukset” (emotional commissions). One theme of the repentance sermons was opposition to alcohol, and many sermons were also delivered in favour of rigor in clothing and in personal way of life. But the main characteristic was, and remains, “the order of grace” and the necessity of “new-birth”. That is, by preaching the righteous law of God to awaken the individual and let them realize – become aware of – that they are condemned by their sins and their lack of belief. Under pressure of the law and in deep sorrow the individual starts to ask ”is there still grace and forgiveness for such a great sinner as me” and is then led to Gethsemane and Golgotha to see the suffering of the Saviour. Thus he/she has to be brought to the point where he starts to believe ”Christ is suffering on my behalf, I am the one who is crucifying Him – my sins are upon Him”. That is the point at which the individual starts to believe that there is also forgiveness for him/her. This has to be comprehended by faith when absolution is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the point of rebirth and from that grows a new “living faith”.

Public elementary schooling

A new educational system was introduced in 1842 (separate regulations for the Laplands were given 1846) which replaced the former school system, with its accent on the idea that teaching children was the responsibility of the parents, that had developed within the realms of the Swedish Lutheran Church as part of pastoral care. From 1842 on, the responsibility for primary education was put on the secular local parish authorities. However, one of the ministers, normally the Vicar, was still to be chairman of the local education authorities in the parish. Apart from that the diocesan authorities were in charge of inspection of the only school system within
their diocese. The influence from the state church was still heavy on education, it is possible to say that during this period, the late 19th century, public schooling was of the Lutheran confession and the main aim was to teach Christianity.

In the northern areas of Sweden with its widely spread population, schooling was mostly maintained by a system of ambulatory catechists who visited the small villages or settlements where there were children to be taught. It is obvious that, during the first part of the period investigated, these catechists did not have any adequate or professional training as teachers. The jobs of catechists was paid a minimum and it was often difficult to recruit catechists, thus schooling - as a whole - was of a more temporary and sporadic nature.

It was commonly understood – on local, regional and national levels – that the way to achieve progress in the educational system depended on the possibility of having permanent schools built and opened at almost every single location where it was possible to gather the number of pupils needed. In addition it was considered of great importance to have skilled and trained teachers employed. But no schools were opened without the approval of the local parishioners, who had to decide on and provide the funds necessary to run the schools. The state offered funding on special occasions – especially when the local parish had difficulty raising the money needed to build schoolhouses and to employ teachers. But opening a permanent school in a parish meant expenditures which had to be paid for by local sacrifices when the allowances given by the state did not suffice.

The organising of public elementary schools in the two parishes Jukkasjärvi and Karesuando was much delayed and did not start until around 1880. The reasons for this were partly the poor economic conditions in the area, partly the geographic conditions with extremely difficult transportation problems among a sparse and widely spread population. They were also due to a lack of educated teachers competent in their subjects and with a command of the Finnish and the Saami languages. The official Swedish language at that time was a minority language in the region and not spoken by the ordinary people and their children.

**The catechetical training at Church**

Within the Swedish Lutheran Church it was common to consider public elementary schooling as the most important preparation for the confirmation class. The catechetical teaching at confirmation school mainly comprised lessons on the Lutheran Small Catechisms. At the time discussed, before attending confirmation-class the individual had to know how to read from a book and parts of the catechisms by rote. The catechetical training before confirmation was to extend the knowledge of Christianity and that was done by reading and learning the Explanations given in the Lutheran Small Catechisms and being familiar with “Christian books”, i.e. postils and pamphlets. Much stress was placed on every individual being able to read by rote.