

# Mormon Studies in Finland

An Overview of Literature, Sources,  
and Research Ideas

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# Contents

- ▶ Mormon studies worldwide
- ▶ Finnish studies and literature
- ▶ Archives and primary sources
- ▶ Other important sources
- ▶ Research ideas

# Mormon Studies Worldwide

- ▶ Research in many fields both as an independent topic and as a case study
  - History, sociology, psychology, anthropology, etc.
- ▶ A notable change after the 1950s
- ▶ Brigham Young University, Utah
  - A university owned and operated by the LDS church
  - <http://mormonstudies.byu.edu>
- ▶ Claremont Graduate University, California
  - A new Mormon Studies program and an endowed chair in 2006

# Mormon Studies in Finland

- ▶ A scholarly introduction to Mormonism does not exist in Finnish
- ▶ The early writings of Finnish theologians often have a negative bias
- ▶ The books *Kristuksen kirkko Suomessa* (1986) and *Muistamme* (1997) describe Finnish Mormon history from a devotional perspective
- ▶ The scholarly literature consists of a few journal articles and some M.A. theses

# Literature: Scholarly Articles or Essays

## ▶ Alarik Corander

- "Myöhempien Aikojen Pyhien Jeesuksen Kristuksen Kirkko," *Aktuella religiösa rörelser i Finland* (1981)

## ▶ Heikki Räisänen

- "Joseph Smith und die Bibel: Die Leistung des mormonischen Propheten in neuer Beleuchtung," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* Feb. 1984
- "Joseph Smith ja Raamattu," *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* 4/1984

## ▶ Pekka Roto et al.

- "Mormonien käsitykset elämäntavoista ja terveydestä," *Suomen Lääkärilehti* 19/2000

## ▶ Kim Östman

- "Nykyajan kristillistä esoteriaa: Katsaus mormonismiin temppeletraditioon," *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* (forthcoming, 2006)

# Literature: M.A. Theses (1/4)

- ▶ About 20 theses during 1965 - 2004
  - Some deal with Mormonism in Finland, others with Mormonism in general
  - Topics range from missionary work and conversion to socialization processes in Mormon congregations
- ▶ Currently at least 2 in progress
  - The teaching methods of the Church Educational System (Pedagogy, LY)
  - Masculinity in Mormon teachings (Theology, HY)

# Literature: M.A. Theses (2/4)

- ▶ Penley: "Leadership of Mormon Missionary ..." (1994)



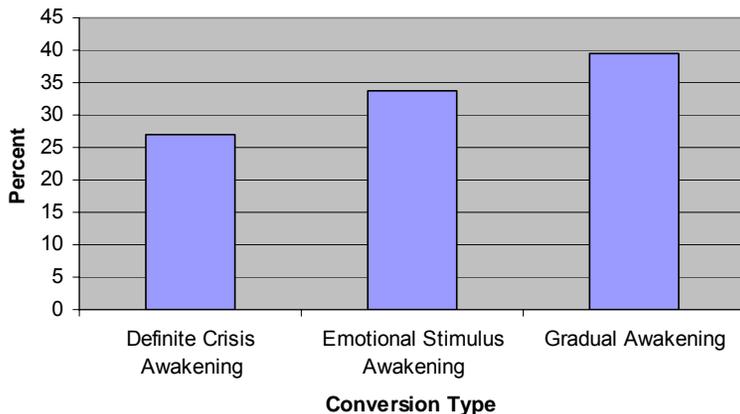
Denotes change of Mission president

- ▶ Analyzes successes and problems of Mormon proselytizing in Finland during 1947-1969
- ▶ Main sources are oral histories, missionary reports and statistics

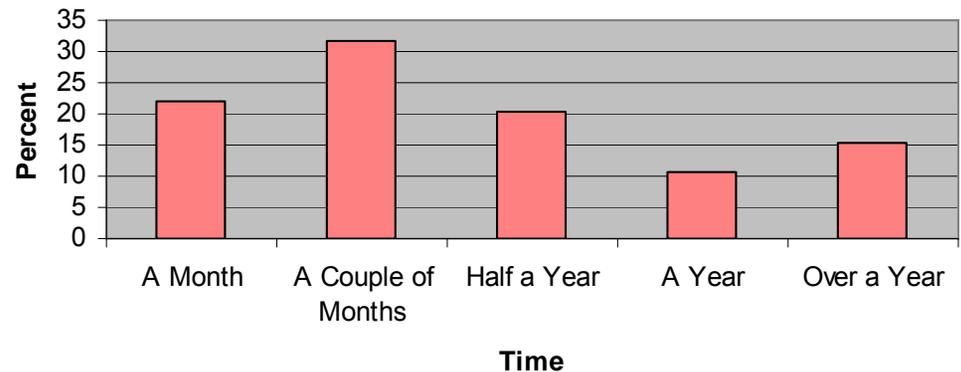
# Literature: M.A. Theses (3/4)

- ▶ Saarela, "Mormonikäätymys Suomessa" (1987)
  - Analyzes the profile and conversion types of a sample of Finnish converts to Mormonism from 1950-84 (N = 267)
  - Theoretical frameworks from Vernon, E. Clark's conversion typology and Glock's deprivation theory
  - Sources: Full survey and interviews of a small subsample

Conversion of Finnish Mormons Based on Clark's Typology, 1950-1984



Length of Investigation Period for Finnish Mormon Converts, 1950-1984



# Literature: M.A. Theses (4/4)

- ▶ Lehto: "Uskonnollisesta yhteisöstä eroaminen ..." (2000)
  - Analyzes 84 international Mormon deconversion narratives
  - Seeks to study the narratives in light of H. Ebaugh's causal (and possibly overlapping) process for disaffiliation



- ▶ Many different types of deconversion emerge
  - For example disaffiliation on the level of thought, public opposition, consideration of oneself as Mormon and life as a Mormon even after formal disaffiliation, etc.

# LDS Church Archives in Salt Lake City, Utah

- ▶ Contain enormous amounts of material on Mormonism from all over the world
  - Regional and congregational histories, published books and pamphlets, original holographs, etc.
- ▶ The most comprehensive collection of material on Finnish Mormonism
  - Chronological history with inserts since 1800s, oral history interviews, published literature, correspondence, etc.

# LDS Church Archives in Finland

## ▶ Hämeenlinna

- Church basement contains newspaper clippings (1946-), correspondence, congregational history records, oral history interviews, etc.

## ▶ Helsinki

- Mission office contains a very detailed history of Finnish mission happenings since the 1940s
- Conversion stories, missionary rosters, etc.

▶ Unfortunately these archives aren't fully organized, but resources are very plentiful

# Early Newspaper Articles and Notices

- ▶ <http://digi.lib.helsinki.fi>
- ▶ Clippings up to 1890 exist in both Finnish and Swedish, 500 - 1500 pcs
- ▶ Shed light on Finnish attitudes towards a new foreign religion
- ▶ Many types of news
  - Missionary activity in Finland
  - Mormon activities in Scandinavia
  - General church happenings
  - Descriptions of Mormonism and its teachings

— Gräs mormonilaisuuden saarnaaja Hedberg on kuten Folkw. tietää, saapunut Helsinkiin Riihtistä ja myöskentelee pöytäkirjoja, jotka sisältävät mormonein opinkappaleet ja joissa muun muosia puolustetaan myöskin moniamoisuutta. Hänen sanotaan Turussa ja Sipoossa saaneen useita sielunsa werkoja.

Meidän tietääksemme on moinen uskonkääntäjä toimi Suomessa kielletty.

*Hämäläinen* 5.11.1884

— **Diverse inhemska notiser. Mormoner i Helsingfors.** Sedan någon tid skall enligt Finl. en i H:fors boende svensk tryckeriarbetare vid namn Nyberg arbeta för spridande af mormonism, dess värre icke utan framgång.

*Östra Finland* 21.9.1888

# Research Ideas (1/3)

- ▶ The profile of the Finnish membership
  - Education, professions or trades, religious background, orthodoxy, dedication, etc.
  - Can clear trends be found in contemporary membership and converts?
  - Comparative data exists for other localities and for Finland from the past

# Research Ideas (2/3)

- ▶ Mormon growth, Finland vs. Sweden vs. worldwide
  - During 1980 – 2000: *15% vs. 37% vs. 139%*
  - Reasons for the difference?
- ▶ Mormonism's image in Finland
  - The interface to society and media
  - Christian / non-Christian / New Religious Movement?
  - What reasons have contributed to image formation?

# Research Ideas (3/3)

- ▶ Activities of the anticult movement
  - The stormy 1980s
  - Anticult presentations in schools, public gatherings, newspapers, etc.
  - How has Mormonism's image been affected?
- ▶ Comparative study with for example Jehovah's Witnesses and Scientology
  - What kind of differences are there in the anticult movement's emphasis?
  - Emphases of countercult vs. anticult?

# Conclusion

- ▶ An interesting research field, because it is nearly uncharted
- ▶ Mormonism can function as an independent research topic or as a case study
- ▶ Mormonism in Finland is different than in the USA, and results here will highlight a lot of things
- ▶ Freely available Finland-connected sources and ideas abound, and the source material is nearly untouched

*"The field is white already to harvest"*

# Thank you!

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