



Ms Inga Forsström taught deaf children in Njombe, Tanzania.

1948. Some of the employees in China were transferred to Hong Kong and Taiwan in the 1950's. The work in Pakistan and Ethiopia began in the next decade. The co-operation with the Wycliffe Bible Translators began in Papua New Guinea in 1973, whereas the African work extended into Botswana and Senegal, and the Asian one to Nepal and Thailand.

The co-operation with the local South American churches in Colombia and Venezuela began in 1989, in the same decade when FELM initiated its work among the immigrants both in Marseilles, France, and in Nürnberg, Germany. FELM is also in partnership with the Ingrian Church in Russia and with the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Estonia. Lately, FELM has increased its efforts in Southeastern Asia: working in

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Cambodia with the International Cooperation Cambodia, as well as with the Church World Service and the AFESIP in Vietnam.

The Christian aviation organisation MAF and FELM have been partners in such countries as Kenya, Tanzania, and Mongolia. FELM also supports the work of the World Service of the Lutheran World Federation in Bolivia, Colombia, Mauritania, and Zimbabwe. Two FELM employees work for SAT-7 in Cyprus.

During the 150 years of its existence, FELM has sent abroad over 1,500 employees of more than 50 professions, with competence to speak over 30 languages. Today, FELM has partnerships in nearly 30 countries.

From people to people

The parishes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland support FELM with a portion of their budget funds. A major source of income for the parishes is the Finnish church tax paid by each parish member.

Over a third of the income received by FELM originates from private donations, collections, and fundraising. The largest annual fundraising events are the

Rev. Anna-Leena Heikkilä and Rev. Pierre Séne, President of the Lutheran Church in Senegal, offer communion in Senegal.



Mr Markku Voutilainen is working in development projects in Nepal.

Equal Share Fundraising Campaign as well as the Christmas Gift for Mission collected at the Most Beautiful Christmas Carols events arranged by local parishes. The support given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland for the development co-operation projects means that 15% of the funds used in these projects comes from FELM.

Nearly two thirds of the FELM budget are used abroad. Most of the funds are spent on projects of social justice and diaconia, such as social work and diaconia work, education, healthcare, community development projects, child sponsoring programmes, and disaster aid. Many of these projects receive support from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

The second most important sector is ministry and congregational work. FELM employees work as teachers in theological faculties and seminaries, and in Bible translation. Churches and organisations call FELM employees to fulfill the positions that they are needed in. Besides the churches, FELM works in partnership with NGOs. FELM supports its partners in their goals of integrity, peace, and reconciliation, and in their fight against HIV and AIDS.

FELM

before and today



150 years of history



Cover: First FELM missionaries in 1868. Riikka-Maria Kolkka and Elsa Marion Wat have worked together on a hymn book in Tiang language in Papua New Guinea.

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Martti Rautanen was one of the first missionaries. He lived in South-West Africa 1870–1926.

■ For centuries, Finland had been a part of the Swedish realm. When Sweden lost the war it had been waging with Russia in 1808–1809, Finland was ceded to the Russian Empire, but it did receive an autonomy.

The Finnish language had been written from the 16th century onwards, when Mikael Agricola translated the Bible into Finnish. Swedish, however, was the language of speech and writing among the intellectuals, whereas only a few of them were fluent in Russian. The equal status of Finnish and Swedish was established in the 1860's when the school system of the country was revised with the beginning of compulsory primary education. This, in turn, meant an enhancement of the Finnish national identity. With the rising awareness of the nation, Finns were now willing to carry their share of the responsibility for mission. The spread of Christianity was seen as the duty of the Christian nations.

National identity strengthens and the society becomes more liberal

Kalevala, the Finnish national epic, was published in the 1830's as a result of the hard work by Dr Elias Lönnrot. The ancient verses were sung and recounted from memory to Dr Lönnrot by aged men and women during his extensive travels in the remote villages of the south- and north-eastern parts of the country. Kalevala tells about the creation of the world and

about the two nations who reside in the North, those of Kalevala and Pohjola. The lively poems depict their battles and revengeful escapades, but also their efforts to woo brides. The creation and capture of the mysterious construction, Sampo, able to bring happiness and prosperity to its owners, is a central story. Ever since its publication, Kalevala has been an inspiration for Finnish artists: Jean Sibelius composed its scenes, while Akseli Gallen-Kallela and many others have painted them. Finland was now emerging as a nation, gaining her independence in 1917.

The end of the 1850's was a time of change both for Russia and for Finland. As the despotic Czar of Russia, Nicholas I, died in 1855, the reign of his successor, Alexander II, was a great deal more liberal. The censorship eased its grip and the atmosphere in Finland became more relaxed. Civil conventions were no longer banned, which made it easier to arrange religious gatherings also elsewhere, besides the churches.

Papers were now enjoying a previously unheard liberty of publication, and that the friends of mission could legally subscribe to the Swedish mission paper, Stockholms-Mission-Tidning. As foreign countries were now reported on in the newspapers with a great deal more accuracy than before, people learnt from such important issues as Dr David Livingstone, the Scottish explorer, returning from his first trip to southern Africa in 1865. Also, they heard that Europeans were allowed entrance to Japan and China.

Mrs Ida Nummi worked in China 1920–26.



The first female missionaries.

Mission, the duty of the nation

In 1857, Finland celebrated the 700-year-presence of Christianity in the country. The occasion was also a vivid reminder of the fact that its arrival had been a result of mission. Newspapers began a lively discussion on whether Finland should also participate in mission. Particularly the intellectuals both in and outside the University were keen to support the idea, since the spread of Christianity was seen by them as the duty of each self-respecting Christian nation. Each nation needed a missionary society of her own.

When the special collection for mission during the year of celebrations was held, people donated much more money than anyone had expected. The sum was enough to establish the missionary organisation of Finland.

FELM begins work

The permission needed to establish a Finnish missionary organisation came from the Czar of Russia, as he was also the supreme ruler of Finland. His permission granted in October 1858 had one exception: the organisation could not work inside the Russian Empire. This meant that the original plans to work among the Finno-Ugric peoples in Asia could not materialize.

The meeting where FELM was founded was held on Jan 19, 1859. Soon after, FELM began to publish a mission paper both in Finnish and in Swedish. Lähetysseuran, the Mission News, is the oldest Finnish journal with an unbroken record of publication.

The first missionaries were men

The plans for a Finnish mission school began to emerge gradually, as people began to express their willingness to work as missionaries. They did, however, have very little formal education, since the country still had no compulsory education system as such. The entrance qualifications included, therefore, such vital abilities as good reading and writing skills, and a sound knowledge of the Christian dogma.

The first mission class was entirely male, and it began in March 1862. After a training of six years, ten men were ready to begin to work in Southwestern Africa, in Amboland. Six of them were missionaries trained as preachers, whereas the four laymen were to support them with their practical skills.

The slow journey by ship and bull wagon brought these men to Amboland in July 1870.

The first female Finnish missionaries sent abroad at the turn of the 20th century

At first, the role of women sent to Amboland was to accompany their husbands. The first female missionaries began their training in 1906. The opening of the Chinese mission field had given cause to this, as men were denied any chance to work among Chinese women. FELM continued to work in the province of Hunan, China, until 1953.

FELM began to work in Palestine and the Middle East in 1924. Angola followed in 1939, and Tanzania in

Dr Aili Havas started a school for children in Jerusalem in 1940.

