

A Priest among Priests?

The Finnish Bishops' Understanding of the Episcopal Office, 1965–1985



INTRODUCTION

In the revision of the 1968 Church Manual of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the heading 'The Installation of a Bishop' was altered to 'The Ordination of a Bishop'. This change was by no means theologically insignificant, despite the term 'ordination' in this context already existing in Church Law. A wide-ranging debate in the General Synod preceded the change, which representatives Osmo Alaja and Olavi Kares, later elected as bishops, spoke strongly against, arguing that it suggested a profound change in the church's theological understanding of the episcopal office.¹ This article discusses the views of the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland concerning the episcopal office between 1965 and 1985.²

in heading did not lead to any discussion in its work. Kares considers that this was because 'ordination of the bishop' was already used in Church Law. Kares stated that he noticed the problem only later. The 1958 Church Manual committee was chaired by Bishop Eino Sormunen, who had a profound understanding of Christian mysticism and belonged to what, at that time, was an atypical group of 'high church' thinkers on the theology of office: cf. Alhonsaari 1987, 81–103; Zitting 2014, 216–219. Following discussion at the General Synod, the heading was softened to 'ordination to the office of bishop'. This was something of a compromise: see Pohjola 2012, 99, 114–115; 310–311. Pohjola maintains that the term 'ordination to the office of bishop' refers to an intermediate form between installation and ordination and that the ceremony involves both simultaneously. Ylikangas also notes the events at the General Synod in his dissertation, linking them to the anti-Catholic and anti-Anglican thinking of Kares: cf. Ylikangas 2018, 147.

- 2 Little research has been done on the episcopal office in Finland, though some works have explored the thinking of individual bishops, especially in the field of church history: see, e.g., Krapu 2009; Pajunen 2008; Seppo 2013; 2015; Ylikangas 2018. Kurki (1994) has studied bishops' concepts of leadership. Hansson (2014) deals with the development of the archbishop's office in the Church of Sweden. Hansson's research suggests the views of the Church of Sweden concerning the archbishop have converged with those of the Church of England.

1 ELCF Minutes; 3.10.1958, 34–35; ELCF Minutes; 22.10.1958, 150–152; the Church Manual committee's original proposal for the heading was 'ordination as bishop'. According to Olavi Kares, who was a member of the Manual committee, the change

The article examines how the episcopal office is understood in the bishops' writings and what changes in perception can be seen in the context of increasingly closer ecumenical relations.³ The primary sources for this study are the writings of the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland that address the episcopal office,⁴ analysed across five themes: 1) what is considered a 'Lutheran theology of office'; 2) the terminology of installation and ordination to episcopal office; 3) the apostolic succession; 4) the symbols and emblems of episcopal office; 5) the spiritual, collegial and societal nature of episcopal office. The article's sections correspond to these themes. An overview of the developments in the Finnish bishops' understanding of episcopal office during this period is given at the end of the article.

WHAT IS THE LUTHERAN THEOLOGY OF OFFICE?

Many of the bishops of the period reflect on what the proper and 'Lutheran' understanding of episcopal office should be. In particular, they consider the hierarchy of office, the relationship between episcopal office and the priestly office, and the relationship between the priestly office and the universal priesthood. Some bishops' writings trace the priestly office to the universal priesthood, with the episcopal office, like the vicar's role, considered a practical expression of priestly office. Although this is the prevailing view of the time, it is by no means the only one. The bishops also note the change in thinking among contemporary theologians on the theology of office.⁵

Bishop Olavi Kares⁶ is especially critical of contemporary research into the theology of office and speaks of a deliberately 'high church' agenda.⁷ He stresses that, although recent Finnish research might point to a different picture, Lutheranism has yet to abandon the idea that

the office of preaching in its entirety is based on the universal priesthood.⁸ Kares is clearly concerned about a change in theology concerning the priestly office, maintaining that a theology which emphasises the episcopal office is detrimental to the church. The bishop states: 'Today the catholicising theology of office that is in vogue has been like a yeast that has lifted up the priestliness of the office of the Word but has correspondingly deflated humanity.'⁹ Kares's view reflects an anti-Catholic tone that was typical of bishops' writings from a slightly earlier period.¹⁰ His concern that 'a catholicising theology of the office' would deflate the priest's humanity draws on his concern that, in the view of the Roman Catholic Church, the priest and the bishop somehow magically become gradually more 'holy' and thus less 'human' at their respective ordinations. He regards this as a breach of the biblical principle of the Reformation and the view that all the baptised are equal in the eyes of God solely on the basis of their baptism.

Kares justifies his concern about a 'high-churchification' of the theology of the office by arguing that the importance of tradition is emphasised at the expense of biblical principle. According to Kares, the Reverend Timo Holma and student of theology Risto Cantell depart from the norm in their emphasis on the importance of episcopacy to Lutheranism.¹¹ The bishop states that accentuating the office may naturally be supported by extensive tradition, were one willing to allow the biblical principle of the Reformation to be compromised. This should not, however, be done. The proper Lutheran approach would instead be to emphasise that episcopacy is only one form of priestly office. Kares recalls a letter he had received from Professor Mikko Juva in which Juva had discussed the nature of episcopacy. Juva saw the great value of episcopacy lying in the special capacity of the bishop to bring the perspective of

the gospel to bear on the general contemporary debate, not that the episcopal office differed in some way from the office of a 'servant of the word'.¹² The section Kares quotes rehearses the notion that the bishop is but a priest among priests.

Juva adhered to this view even after his election as Archbishop, based his understanding on the article in the Augsburg Confession 'Of Ecclesiastical Power'. Juva points out that the tasks of the bishop this article describes are exactly the same as those that define the priestly office

and 1974. According to Ylikangas, Kares was a pietistic revivalist who reformed his own revival movement 'Herännäisyys'. His readiness for renewal in the church, however, never extended as far as an understanding of Roman Catholic or Anglican theology.

- 7 The term 'high church' is multifaceted in Lutheranism. It refers to a concept of the church which especially emphasises the church's liturgical tradition, the priesthood and sacramentalism. The name comes from the Anglican high church movement. In Finland, 'high church' can refer to any Roman Catholic influence. The opposite ecclesiastical concept to high church is often described as 'low church', a term also derived from Anglicanism. In Lutheranism, the low church position has no established definition but, in contrast to the high church position, can be thought of as emphasising the importance of the universal priesthood and a pared-down liturgy. It may encompass Pietism, the Christianity of the revival movements, and the charismatic movement. This article does not categorise bishops according to whether their thinking is 'high church' or 'low church'—even though this would be possible—because the categories are very subjective and rarely neutral. Both concepts carry negative and positive connotations, depending on the individual using them. I therefore mainly use them in quotations in this article.
- 8 Kares 1970, 167; cf. Toiviainen 1979, 24–26; 1983, 170–171.
- 9 Kares 1970, 166–168. See also 1974, 188–200.
- 10 Ketola 2018; Kotilainen 2005; Laine 2009; Zitting 2017.
- 11 Kares 1970; 164, 168; cf. Cantell 1969, 32–33: 'According to Luther and the Confessions, the church's office does not exist because of its proper administration or external order but because God has ordained it for his church. The church's office belongs to its very nature. . . Bishops have a special status in the Lutheran church, although the apostolic succession (*successio apostolica*) is less prominent than it is in the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican churches. For some Lutheran theologians and church members, episcopacy is merely a matter of expediency. Yet the Augsburg Confession recognises that office in the church is '*iure divino*', in accordance with divine ordinance. Indeed, the question of episcopacy is one of the most important problems in the internal and inter-church debate of the Lutheran churches.' cf. Holma 1967; Cantell 1985.
- 12 Juva 1982, 9–10; Kares 1979, 151. Olavi Kares greeted Juva later with these same words when he was elected Archbishop.

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- 3 The period studied begins with the end of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) and concludes shortly after the publication of the BEM document, before the opening of the priesthood to women. BEM was a pivotal statement especially towards an ecumenical understanding of episcopal succession. Eckerdal (2017) and Nguyen (2016) have studied the apostolic succession in their recent doctoral dissertations. On the effects of Vatican II on Finnish attitudes, see Laine 2009, Ketola 2018, Kotilainen 2005, and Zitting 2017.
 - 4 Alaja 1967; 1970; 1979a; 1979b; Gulin 1967; 1968; Juva 1982; 1985; Kansanaho 1967; Kares 1963; 1965; 1968; 1970; 1974; 1978; 1979; Kortekangas 1977; 1982; Lauha 1965; Nikolainen 1973; Sariola 1975; 1981; Simojoki 1966; 1971; 1978; 1980; Toiviainen 1979; E. Vikström 1985; J. Vikström 1972; 1982; 1983; 1985. Not all the bishops of the period deal with episcopal office in their writing. No works were used as sources, which the bishops wrote before their election to episcopal office. Other writings by bishops, such as newspaper and magazine articles and reviews, are excluded from the source material.
 - 5 Gulin 1968, 26–32; Juva 1982, 9–12; Kares 1970, 166–170; 1974, 189–192; 1979, 151; Sariola 1975, 125; Simojoki 1971, 88–89; 1978, 7–8; Toiviainen 1979, 24–26; 1983, 170–171; E. Vikström 1985, 82–84.
 - 6 Kares served as Bishop of Kuopio between 1962

and which belong to each priest. In his opinion, the bishop's other tasks, such as attending to administration, ordaining priests, and parochial supervision, exist for the sake of order and are based on expediency, not on any special divine ordinance.¹³

Archbishop Martti Simojoki¹⁴ also emphasises that Lutheran theology does not view the episcopal office as an *ordo* in its own right, despite the use of the word 'ordination' in the 1968 Church Manual in reference to the episcopal office. In his opening address at the General Synod of the same year, Simojoki suggests that, in Lutheran thinking, the bishop exercises only a certain function of the priestly office, and does not represent a separate *ordo*. Thus, according to Simojoki, the bishop is, in principle, a priest among priests, though one entrusted with separate tasks.¹⁵ Simojoki's understanding of how the episcopal office is determined follows a functional approach, according to which the offices of the church are derived from the needs of the church. According to Simojoki, these separate tasks are largely administrative. However, the Archbishop warns of the risk that bishops might thus become mere administrators and that the priestly nature of episcopal office might eventually be forgotten. Although the bishop is a priest and his task is 'priestly', Simojoki maintains that the notion of the bishop's spiritual mission is also alien to Lutheranism. According to Simojoki an emphasis on the spiritual task also entails a danger of an emphasis on the bishop's special status.

For the Lutheran, the doctrinal concept I have mentioned results in the bishop again emphasising his spiritual mission, and that he has his own place in the hierarchical system of God's grace, through which that grace is mediated. It is not our business to speak of the temptation of those who have such a notion of episcopacy—we have enough of our own matters to which we must attend.¹⁶

This extract reveals a pattern of thought parallel to that of Kares. The idea that a bishop receives a special 'grace' or place in the eyes of God upon ordination is seen as a threat to and contradiction of Lutheran understanding of ministry. This notion is opposed by emphasising that the bishop is a 'priest among priests', who has different tasks only for practical reasons but not through any divine ordinance. This view is especially well expressed in Kares' writing.

When the episcopal office is no longer seen only as being that of one called as a servant of the word entrusted with the task of being a shepherd of the diocese but is considered to represent another '*ordo*', belonging to a higher second-order priestly office, the issue is seen as questionable and in a strange light from the perspective of the Reformation. ... It is a powerful high church trend supported and led by certain parties, which has, as in many other cases, attained victory at the expense of the essential values of our Reformation church.¹⁷

Kares incorporates the term *ordo* in the notion of a subordinate hierarchy of value, because *ordo*, he maintains, entails 'a higher second-order priestly office'. Lutherans have typically been opposed to hierarchies of value and have stressed the equality of all Christians before God.¹⁸ The bishops appear to think that if the episcopal office is thought of as separately ordained from the priestly office, a kind of 'non-Lutheran' hierarchy of value must automatically follow. They also express concern about the apostolic succession as naturally constructing such hierarchies and resulting in the bishop being given special status. Such hierarchies are thought to violate the Lutheran concept of the inalienable equality of all the baptised in the eyes of God, while an emphasis on the hierarchy of office is thought to threaten the Bible's status as the fundamental basis of the church's doctrine. However, Kares's

remarks reveal that this is not the only view of the period. In addition, the prevailing practices of the church seem to indicate that the episcopal office is in some way distinct from priestly office.

THE TERMINOLOGY OF INSTALLATION IN AND ORDINATION TO EPISCOPAL OFFICE

The change of the heading 'Installation in the Office of Bishop' to 'Ordination to the Office of Bishop' in the new edition of the Church Manual of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland was preceded by an extensive debate on the theology of the installation in and ordination to office.¹⁹ The emergence of this debate is understandable, because installation is also a term used when vicars take up their positions. This change in terminology may therefore also be considered a statement concerning whether episcopal office is part of priestly office in the same way as the vicar's office or whether it is somehow distinct, requiring its own permanent ordination.²⁰ Even after his retirement, Kares comments on this debate on the reform of the Church Manual.²¹ Kares recalls that he and Osmo Alaja had spoken extensively to show that the reform of the Church Manual was based on 'Catholic high church and Anglican influences'. He says that, among other things, he had shown in his speech that the bishop in the Anglican church represented a higher 'second-order' priesthood, because 'it is not enough for

the theology of the office; Juva 1993, 355–358.

- 14 Simojoki served as archbishop between 1964 and 1978. Before that, he was Bishop of Mikkeli between 1951 and 1959, and Bishop of Helsinki between 1959 and 1964. Further on Simojoki's thinking and life, see Seppo 2013, 2015.
- 15 Simojoki 1971, 88: cf. 1978, 7: 'According to his ordination the bishop has no gift that is not also received at his ordination as a priest. He is a priest among priests.'
- 16 Simojoki 1971, 88.
- 17 Kares 1979, 161.
- 18 Zitting 2019, 219–221. However, the terms *hierarkia* and *ordo* do not always in principle mean a hierarchy of value or subordination. The Latin word *ordo* carries several meanings. *Ordo* may mean row, layer, military unit, class, rank, or organisation. In Teinonen's theological dictionary, *ordo* is translated as order, estate and ordination, but also hierarchically as precedence and rank, whereas *ordo diaconi*, *ordo sacerdotis*, and *ordo episcopi* are translated as the ranks of deacon, priest and bishop. *Hierarkia*, on the other hand, is a combination of the two Greek words 'holy' (*hieros*) and 'beginning' or 'source' (*arkhe*). Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, writing on ecclesiastical hierarchy in the fourth century (*De ecclesiastica hierarchica*), used the term hierarchy (in Greek *hierarches*) of the bishop, but specifically referred to God as the sacred source of episcopacy. In Finnish, however, hierarchy most commonly denotes a scale of values. Ordination, *ordinatio*, refers to a distinction of those ordained into a kind of *ordo*, the ordained office. Lutherans have typically disliked value hierarchies but have accepted a kind of 'hierarchy of service' in which, for example, the bishop represents a 'shepherd of the shepherds', while the priest represents a 'shepherd'.
- 19 Kares 1979, 160–161.
- 20 The terms are based on the Latin *installatio*, *ordinatio*, and *consecratio*. *Installatio* means installation in office and has traditionally been used, for example, to refer to the installation of a vicar in his or her role. *Ordinatio* means ordination, especially to the priesthood, and *consecratio* means consecration or "sanctification together" and is used, for example, for the ordination of a bishop and for the dedication of church buildings. *Ordinatio* and *consecratio* may only be performed once, whereas an installation is traditionally regarded as a ceremony that is repeated every time a person moves to a new role. See Pohjola 2014, 117–119.
- 21 Kares 1979, 38–39; cf. Alaja 1959, 53–54.

13 Juva 1982, 11–12; cf. CA XXVIII. Juva served as archbishop between 1978 and 1982. He resigned when he was 63, having, he said, having grown tired of his duties. He mentions that there were disagreements with the other bishops concerning

Anglicans to install a bishop to his office as our Church Manual requires', and had gone on to emphasise that 'an unhealthy emphasis on office is a phenomenon of our age'.²² According to Kares, Bishop Eino Sormunen had argued for a high church conception of office to the point of 'disorder'.²³ Kares also recalls that he had been installed as Dean of Turku a year before he had become a bishop and avers that he saw no fundamental difference between the two ceremonies. He also suspects that he is the last bishop who will have invited guests to attend an 'Installation in the Office of Bishop' rather than an 'Ordination to the Office of Bishop', as the existing ceremony was described in the forthcoming Church Manual. In his memoirs, he describes how such a change in terminology may seem completely meaningless yet reflects a doctrinal change in the very concept of the episcopal office.²⁴

The bishops' writings suggest that Kares's reflections on the change in thinking about the theology of office are at least partly correct. Attitudes strongly opposed to the terminology of 'ordination to the office of bishop' are in retreat, and a cautiously positive attitude has begun to emerge in the bishops' works.

Shortly after the 1968 Church Manual reform, two other processes initiated by the General Synod began that would influence the development of professional theological thinking about the office. First, in 1968, the General Synod established a committee for the theology of office, which was chaired by Professor Seppo A. Teinonen. Second, in 1973, a new Church Manual committee was established to revise the church's liturgy book. This committee was chaired by Professor Martti Parvio.²⁵ Both Teinonen and Parvio were ecumenically minded theologians who valued Roman Catholic and Anglican liturgy and theology.²⁶ Although the committee for the theology of office focused

on questions related to women's ordination as priests and the Church Manual committee on church ceremonies, how these issues were addressed also influenced the church's understanding of episcopacy.²⁷

Thus, Bishop Paavo Kortekangas's²⁸ work, reflects, on the one hand, his boredom with the incessant discussion about the theology of ministry and, on the other, his clear esteem for ordination to the episcopal office. In Kortekangas's opinion, an overemphasis on issues of office would mean that issues more relevant to Lutheranism would be neglected. From his own perspective, he mentions that he had found both ordination ceremonies—first as Bishop of Kuopio then as Bishop of Tampere—very important. He uses the term 'ordination as bishop' and sees the ceremony as both 'binding and authorising'. During his time, the head of state in Finland appointed bishops from a list of candidates.²⁹ This practice, Kortekangas maintains, makes ordination to episcopal office all the more important, because it marks the moment when the church authorises a bishop's election.³⁰ In his writings, Kortekangas uses the controversial term 'ordination as bishop' instead of the term 'ordination to the office of bishop'. 'Ordination as bishop' was eventually omitted from the Church Manual, because it was thought to entail a fundamental or ontological change when a priest was ordained to episcopal office. Ultimately, the term used in the Church Manual was 'ordination to the office of bishop', which was something of a compromise.

Interestingly, the suggested change in terminology also appears in the writings of Bishop Osmo Alaja. In a circular letter, Alaja recalls having used 'bishop's celebration' to describe Kortekangas's ordination to episcopal office, in which Alaja participated. According to Alaja, Archbishop Simojoki³¹ had drawn attention to Alaja's use of 'celebration' instead of 'ordina-

tion', noting to Alaja that he must still lack clarity on the matter. Alaja then contextualizes the archbishop's comment by recalling how he had earlier expressed his stance at the General Synod: that the bishop was installed in his office in the same way as deans and chaplains. He was fascinated by the notion that the bishop is no more than a priest of the diocese. Nevertheless, Alaja notes that archbishop's comment was indeed correct, as Alaja had intentionally avoided using either of the terms that were controversial at the General Synod in his circular. Alaja also suspects that the theological dispute must mainly be the result of a difference in emphasis and that 'this (humble) mentality a bishop ought to have, whether or not he was ordained or installed in or whether he entered his office'. He then refers to his own 'bishop's ceremony' as 'my ordination ceremony', despite his having been installed in episcopal office prior to the change of wording in the Church Manual.³² Alaja's writings are revealing. First, the archbishop's comment suggests that there should no longer have been any ambiguity. The terminology had been established, and the ceremony was called ordination. Second, Alaja's comment reflects the problematic nature of the term. Alaja believed that the term 'ordination to the office of bishop' in reality meant that the bishop was more than 'one of the priests of the diocese'.

Bishop Eelis G. Gulin's memoirs reveal his thinking about both the separation and unity of the priestly and episcopal offices.³³ However, according to Gulin, the Augsburg Confession maintains that the priestly and episcopal offices are essentially the same. According to the Augsburg Confession, by divine ordinance (*iure divino*), the bishop has exactly the same power as a priest. Therefore, any differences remaining between the offices' organisation are valid only by human ordinance (*iure humano*). Gulin suggests that the Augsburg Confession emphasises

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- 22 ELCF Minutes; 3.10.1958, 34–35; Kares 1979, 39.
- 23 ELCF Minutes; 22.10.1958, 150–152; Kares 1979, 39–40. Kares felt that Bishop Sorumen was responsible for the disorder, because Sormunen had returned to the topic of the episcopal office when the Synod had moved on to discussing reforms for church service.
- 24 Kares 1979, 160–162.
- 25 Pohjola 2012, 100–106; Teinonen 1973; ELCF Minutes 1968; 1973.
- 26 Haikarainen 2018; Pohjola 2012, 100–102.
- 27 Pohjola 2012, 100–106; Teinonen 1973. Among other issues, in its work the committee on the theology of office discussed the differences between functional and constitutive theologies of office. The Church Manual committee approved the use of symbolic liturgical language, e.g. at ordination. The work of the latter, which was chaired by Teinonen, deepened the understanding of the priestly office as divinely instituted (*iure divino*).
- 28 Kortekangas served as Bishop of Kuopio 1974–1981, and as Bishop of Tampere 1981–1996.
- 29 The President of the Republic appointed bishops by confirming the results of the episcopal election. This was discontinued in 2000 because, for among other reasons, the right of appointment was no longer mentioned in the Constitution. The General Synod decided to transfer the right of nomination in 1999.
- 30 Kortekangas 1977, 15; E. Vikström 1985, 82–84: Erik Vikström emphasises that the Augsburg Confession neither views ministerial office as 'from above' from episcopal office nor yet 'from below' from the universal priesthood. He suggests an episcopal structure best defends the church's apostolic unity, but that it also brings weaknesses, especially where the sharing of responsibility among parishioners is concerned. However, according to Vikström it is impossible for there to be a pure hierarchical system in the church, because he maintains that the Augsburg Confession allows no distinction between two groups, the clergy and the laity. Thus, Vikström sees the Lutheran theology of the office as a model of the middle way, in which an episcopal structure supports the church's apostolicity. However, Vikström echoes concerns raised by previous bishops about how the church's hierarchy may be reconciled with the equality of all the baptised. Vikström refers to paragraphs 5 and 7 of the Augsburg Confession.
- 31 Simojoki was archbishop when Kortekangas was ordained bishop in 1974.
- 32 Alaja 1970, 7; 1979b, 31, 65–66.
- 33 Gulin 1967, 107, 225, 258–264; 1968, 2, 25–33, 42, 50–51, 332. Gulin served as Bishop of Tampere 1945–1966. Cf. Krapu 2009.

the above as a way of resisting earthly power, then associated with the episcopal office.

However, there are also some indications in Gulin's thinking that suggest he considered the episcopacy a distinct office. He states that behind the term 'ordination as bishop' is *consecratio* (consecration), meaning a 'being sanctificatied together', a reference to the apostolic succession, whereas the term ordination, used of priestly ordination, relates to the word *ordo*, meaning that those ordained as priests become members of a 'separate estate'. However, Gulin maintains that the practice of the Finnish church shows that the episcopal office does differ from the priestly office. In Finland, in his view, the bishop is 'once ordained as a bishop', meaning that, when a bishop moves to another diocese, that bishop is simply translated to another see, or is 'enthroned'. According to Gulin, it appears that the bishop is ordained as a servant of the whole Church of Christ, despite being assigned only to a particular diocese when ordained. In contrast, when priests moves to another parish, priests must always reaffirm their vows and profess their faith. Gulin also draws attention to the fact that the episcopal and priestly vows differ in Finland from those of other countries. The priestly vows in Finland speak of an 'office of preaching' and require obedience to those responsible for oversight, whereas the bishop's vow speaks of an 'episcopal office', with no reference to those responsible for oversight. He also observes that the bishop must take a new vow when he moves 'from a priestly to an episcopal office'.³⁴ Thus, according to Gulin, episcopacy in the Nordic Lutheran churches is a distinct form of priesthood and not part of an ordained office similar to the vicar's office, but this difference is fundamentally of a *iure humano* nature.

THE SUCCESSION OF EPISCOPAL OFFICE

The term *successio apostolica*, often associated with episcopal office, also appears in the bishops'

writings. In this article, I use episcopal succession (in Finnish, *piispanviran suksessio*) whenever possible instead of apostolic succession, the term more commonly used in Finnish to translate *successio apostolica*. The more specific concept of episcopal succession is used to refer to the way in which the *successio apostolica* is understood to be connected to the apostles through the ordination of bishops by the laying on of hands. This narrow approach to the *successio apostolica* typifies the article's use of the research material, but it differs from the current understanding of the apostolic succession as the broader community of apostolic faith or doctrine, only a part of which may lie in the chain of episcopal ordinations.³⁵

In the bishops' writings, the apostolic succession is most often viewed narrowly as episcopal succession.³⁶ Their attitude to the concept is both sceptical and cautiously positive. Bishop Kares remains concerned about the significance given to the episcopal succession. In a 1965 work, he recalls ideas that had emerged in Norway and Denmark. The bishop describes how there had been 'a fresh Reformation spirit', because the episcopal succession was not recognised there. In this context, Kares observes that it is also not officially recognised in Finland. Kares maintains, however, that, unlike Finns, Norwegians and Danes are strict in their refusal to allow any foreign bishop who has received the blessing 'of apostolic successors' to participate, even as an assistant, in their episcopal installations. He calls this stark view 'Norwegian-Danish legalism' and states that it also serves to underline the importance of the succession of episcopal office, for, otherwise, 'Why fear what does not exist?'³⁷

Although Kares' perception of succession is quite sceptical, in his later work, he sees something valuable in the idea that 'the blessing is inherited'. The bishop recalls having received a letter from an Australian priest in 1966. This priest

was interested in discovering who had ordained him as bishop through a laying on of hands. Kares says he had not bothered to answer this letter, as he understood that the question concerned episcopal succession, without which his episcopal ministry would not have been considered valid by this colleague. He dismisses such an idea of an unbroken chain of the laying on of hands from the time of the apostles as a 'high church fairy-tale romance', though he concedes that 'the inheritance of the blessing is indeed precious', and calls the unbroken chain of the laying on of hands as the blessing's prerequisite a 'naked superstition'. Because the Swedish bishops have traditionally participated in Finnish episcopal ordinations, he says that Finnish bishops may belong to the same 'magic circle', based on 'the aforementioned succession thinking', as the Swedish bishops.³⁸ Kares goes on to say that there is no guarantee that the chain of ordination in England, Sweden or Finland is intact. Concerning the Finnish church, the bishop refers to the break of 1884³⁹—a break that the bishop does not note with any regret.⁴⁰

Kares's work discusses what he perceives as problematic if the 'qualification' for episcopal office requires episcopal succession. The inheritance of the blessing itself may be seen as valuable, but an unbroken chain cannot be considered its precondition. This view is understandable given that, in Finland, for example, cathedral deans presided at priestly ordinations when the bishop was unable to do so. This practice was topical during Kares's episcopacy. If the ordination of priests by bishops were considered the condition for a valid priestly or episcopal office, the bishops would be forced to concede that there had been a period in the history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland when priests had not been valid.⁴¹ Gulin also discusses this matter in his writings.

Gulin had been ordained priest by a cathedral dean, because the bishop had been too ill

34 According to Gulin, both 'high church' and 'low church' influential figures may be observed in Finnish church history. He calls Paulus Juusten 'high church' and Frans Ludwig Schauman 'low church'. It is Gulin's view that Church Law and church practice demonstrate that the high church approach had won in Finland.

35 For a broader understanding of the apostolic succession, see BEM M35. Before the BEM document, Anglicans emphasised the importance of the episcopal succession more narrowly, whereas Protestants typically emphasised other forms of continuity, such as succession of dogma. See Avis 2000, 19–23; Eckerdal 2016, 43–46, 59; for the Roman Catholic concept of the apostolic succession, see Nguyen 2016; 145–211.

36 Gulin 1967, 107; 264–265; Kares 1979, 362; Kortekangas 1977, 15–16; Simojoki 1978, 7.

37 Kares 1965, 20–21.

38 Kares 1979, 362.

39 Cleve 1993, 72; Krapu 2009, 74–76; Pajunen 2008, 31–42; Parvio 1970, 127, 132–133. The episcopal succession is thought to have endured in Finland until 1884, when all three Finnish bishops died within a very short period, and a new bishop was ordained by Emeritus Professor A. F. Granfeldt. The succession is thought to have been restored with the ordination of Bishop Aleksii Lehtonen in 1934. The background was the negotiations between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Church of England in the 1930s, although, even with Lehtonen's ordination as bishop, the recovery of the succession was not specifically raised during these discussions.

40 Kares 1974, 174–175: 'If you consider the long continuity of bishops in Finland and Sweden, Anglicans for their part have bits and pieces only to wish for the unbroken succession, I would say happily.' Kares points out that the episcopal office is an ecumenical controversy that often arises in discussions with the Church of England in particular. He also mentions that he has himself felt the threefold order and the apostolic succession in terms of the gospel to be 'very circular' and observes that their discussion seems like a 'game of theological tiddlywinks'.

41 BEM, M38: In 1982 the BEM document addressed this issue by understanding the succession of episcopal office as a 'sign' but not a 'guarantee'.

at the time to conduct the ordination.⁴² Gulin states that, according to Anglicans, he had received only a 'lay ordination' when he had been ordained priest but the apostolic succession (*successio apostolica*) as became a bishop.⁴³ Here, Gulin clearly means the episcopal succession. However, Gulin's notion of apostolic succession is not as simple as that of many of his contemporaries'. He suggests that Lutherans attach great value to the church's 'apostolic continuity', even though its 'pledge' is not considered 'the mere external laying on of hands' but the true preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Value can only be given to the early church's succession of episcopal office as 'a symbol of the preservation of the true tradition'. Recalling his ecumenical encounters, Gulin repeats that episcopal succession is, he believes, an 'external matter'. The biggest difference between the churches, he says, is that Lutherans are centred on the word, while Anglicans are centred on the sacraments. However, Gulin says that he has also heard less appreciative views from Anglicans concerning the succession of the episcopal office. These views lead him to wonder if Anglicans will continue to retain their 'dogmatic approach to office' for much longer. The bishop recalls one Anglican saying that maintaining that the succession was a constitutive element of the church was 'bad Anglican theology'. Archbishop Michael Ramsey had also complained informally⁴⁴ that 'such a minor external thing' might prevent communion with the Lutheran churches in Norway and Denmark.⁴⁵

Although Gulin mentions episcopal succession as an extrinsic circumstance, and that it also means less to some Anglicans than one might expect, some of his writings emphasise the significance of episcopal succession. For example, in Gulin's lectures on the history of the succession of episcopal office, he describes how, in the church's early days, succession had been

a central element of the church and a safeguard against heresy. He maintains that bishops of neighbouring dioceses, who, at the time, shared in the laying on of hands, did so because they 'cared for the true inheritance' and 'gave assurances' concerning the chosen bishop.⁴⁶

Gulin is not the only bishop of the era to take a positive view of the succession of episcopal office. Although Archbishop Martti Simojoki had previously been quite sceptical,⁴⁷ in 1978, he discusses the succession of episcopal office in a more positive light. Simojoki suggests that the succession of episcopal office can be regarded as an arrangement for the good order (*bene esse*) of the church, though the Lutheran church does not teach that it is part of its essence (*esse*).⁴⁸

Bishop Kortekangas's pastoral letter indicate that his thinking was also moving in the same direction. According to Kortekangas, episcopal succession⁴⁹ is not a fundamental question for the church. However, it belongs to the church's order and provides it with security. It may be considered a metaphor for Lutherans' belonging to the church of the first Pentecost and 'a stage in the great journey of Christianity'. This is despite the fact that the historicity of the succession cannot be fully proved. According to Kortekangas, 'if there is a succession, an apostolic continuity, it lies at least in this; albeit it is above all a metaphor, an external sign.'⁵⁰ He maintains that all who take part in the laying on of hands take joint responsibility for the one upon whom the blessing is conferred and that the authority to 'lay hands on' is derived from the church and the parish.⁵¹

During the period studied, the term *successio apostolica* is understood primarily as meaning episcopal succession, and the concept has not yet been used with a wider meaning. The bishops of the period generally regarded the succession of the episcopal office as a positive symbol of continuity, but, at the same time, as

an external sign that cannot be regarded as a precondition for the office's validity. However, Gulin also raised the idea that *successio apostolica* may be seen more broadly as a means of preserving the true apostolic doctrine. In this case, the succession of the episcopal office may be one form of apostolic succession, but it is not its prerequisite. This notion concerning *successio apostolica* of Gulin's anticipates the later insights about the concept that would arise in Faith and Order BEM document (Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry) and the Porvoo Common Statement.⁵²

SYMBOLS AND EMBLEMS

On appointment, the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland receive various symbols of their office, such as the bishop's cope, cross, staff, and mitre. Bishop Erkki Kansanaho⁵³ describes the increasing use of the symbols of episcopal office in his pastoral letter. He observes that Finnish bishops were already receiving staves and mitres in the thirties but that they usually dressed simply in a clerical frockcoat and black gown. He sees the mitre as something 'alien' to Finland. Instead, Kansanaho states that the gold cross has been the proper insignia of the Finnish bishops, as well as, on occasion, the bishop's cope and staff.⁵⁴ The memoirs of Kares, Gulin, and Alaja support Kansanaho in this.⁵⁵ The attitude to the external differentiation of bishops through the use of symbols correlates directly with their understanding of the office.

Except for the bishop's cross, Kares refused to use official emblems during his tenure. In his own words, he organised 'a small demonstration' when he was installed in office. He describes how he had initially wanted to dress only in a black gown, as he had done when he had been installed as a cathedral dean. However, Kares knew that Archbishop Salomies would not agree to this. Because he did not wish to wear what he

calls the 'glorious bishop's cope' of the Bishop of Kuopio, he chose an ordinary priest's gown as his liturgical dress. Kares recalls how he had smiled when Eetu Rissanen, the cathedral dean, had dressed the new bishop in exactly the same ceremonial outfit he himself was wearing and not the bishop's cope in which the other bishops in attendance were vested. This is a visual expression of Kares's theology of office, according to which there is no intrinsic difference between the priest and the bishop. The bishop also says that the archbishop had been very attentive to him and that he had not arranged a 'procession of ghosts'⁵⁶ to start the service. Because of the symbolic value of the objects and ceremonies, the bishop did not refuse to receive the bishop's staff. During his episcopacy, however, the staff

42 Gulin 1967, 107; Krapu 2009, 74. Because Gulin refers in this passage to the apostolic succession in connection with priestly ordination, the broader term *apostolic succession* is chosen rather than the term *episcopal succession*.

43 Gulin 1967, 107; Gulin 1968, 26: The terms used by Gulin are apostolic continuity, apostolic succession (both *apostolinen seuraanto* and *apostolinen suksessio*), *successio apostolica*, the laying on of hands leading to the historical continuity of episcopal office, and the continuity of episcopal office.

44 Gulin uses the term 'as a private ecclesiastic' of Ramsey.

45 Gulin 1967, 259, 262–265, 302.

46 Gulin 1968, 26–32.

47 Zitting 2014, 212–220.

48 Simojoki 1978, 7.

49 Kortekangas uses the terms *apostolic continuity*, *successio apostolica*, and *apostolic sanction*.

50 See footnote 41.

51 Kortekangas 1977, 15–16; 1982, 14–16.

52 BEM M35; Porvoo 50; also Helsinki 1982, 38.

53 Kansanaho served as Bishop of Tampere 1966–1981.

54 Kansanaho 1967, 123–127; also Alaja 1979b, 32; Gulin 1968, 25.

55 Gulin 1968, 25; Kares 1979, 162–163.

56 Kares is referring here to the alb being worn in procession.

hung as wall decoration in diocesan chapter hall.⁵⁷

Unlike Kares, Gulin tells us that he had used a cross, staff, and cope throughout his period in office, but he did not wear a mitre. According to Gulin, the mitre is thought to be a sign of the bishop's secular power. He also explains that, having seen a particularly unfortunate picture of Bishop Ingman wearing a mitre in the 1930s, he had decided never to wear one, should he ever become a bishop.⁵⁸ There may therefore also be non-theological reasons for not wearing a mitre. On the other hand, during the period, when not wearing a mitre was the common practice among the bishops, its use might have been thought of as a reference to a theology of episcopal office that emphasised the special power of the bishop.

After he had retired, Alaja recalls having used the cope associated with episcopal office six times during his tenure. On the eve of his resignation, however, he considered wearing the robe again and then ceremonially giving it away. However, the idea began to seem an unnecessary departure from the 'line he had taken', so he did not organise the ceremony. The six occasions on which Bishop Osmo Alaja wore the bishop's cope were: 1) at his own installation to episcopal office; 2) the ordination of Bishop Olof Herrlin of Visby; 3) the consecration of Skatholt cathedral; 4) the installation of Bishop Kares; 5) the ordination of Bishop Kansanaho; 6) the ordination of Bishop Kortekangas.⁵⁹ It is interesting to note that, with one exception, these occasions all involved the installation or ordination of a bishop. This may indicate either a particular appreciation of episcopal ordinations or a desire to conform to the practice of other bishops. Overall, it is striking how large a symbolic value of the theology of office these emblems contain. Vesting in robes that differ from those worn by priests reinforces the image

of the separateness of episcopal office. In my research period, the use of symbols of episcopal office had become so widespread that their lack of use by Alaja and Kares can be considered itself a statement on their theology of office. This differentiation between the emblems of the offices of priest and bishop continues beyond the research period. The use of the symbols of office has become more common, in tandem with the use of liturgical gestures in Finland.⁶⁰

THE SPIRITUAL, COLLEGIAL, AND SOCIETAL NATURE OF THE EPISCOPAL OFFICE

Many of the bishops' writings also emphasise the public influence of the office, the nature of the bishop's exercise of power and the office's spiritual aspect. It is the general view of the bishops that the office exerts a significant influence on society and that the bishop should use his voice when confronted by the flaws in the church and society. In particular, the archbishop is seen as the 'church's first spokesman'. It is also the bishop's task to defend the faith and deepen the clergy's theological expertise. At the same time, the bishop's exercise of power must be pastoral: 'to guide rather than strike with the staff'.⁶¹

Some bishops mention in passing the collegial nature of the episcopal office.⁶² However, the influence of the college is more that of a loose association of independent individuals than that of a monolithic community. Bishop Alaja reveals that, at the 1969 General Synod, he and two other bishops had brought an initiative concerning a parish faculty which they had not previously presented to the episcopal college, which he justifies by emphasising the independence of the office: 'we are free men with a right to independent thought and attitudes, who listen to and respect each other's opinions.'⁶³ In his view, the college is an association of independ-

ent people, an idea that is similarly expressed by the other bishops.⁶⁴ That is, the bishops belong to the same college while feeling that they remain independent.

One notable feature during this period is that the description of episcopal office as entailing the function of a spiritual leader is gradually accentuated. This is especially evident in the later writings of Simojoki as well as in the writings of Bishop⁶⁵ Yrjö Sariola.⁶⁶

Sariola emphasises both the spiritual and liturgical features of episcopacy. He maintains that the bishop's role as a spiritual leader is a liturgical mission, manifested, for example, in the bishop's conduct of worship and administering of the sacraments. Sariola proposes that a reform of Church Law should consider a change in which the spiritual nature of episcopal office is brought to light.⁶⁷ Drawing on Simojoki, he states that episcopal office should be understood as a work of the Holy Spirit in the world. If the administrative nature of episcopal office is exaggerated, its pneumatological depth would be overshadowed.⁶⁸

There is a clear evolution in Simojoki's thinking. In his speech at the 1968 Bishops' Conference, he states that there is 'a concept of the bishop that [departs from Lutheranism] – – in its emphasis on his spiritual mission.'⁶⁹ Yet, in

and ceremonialism.'

58 Gulin 1968, 25.

59 Alaja 1979b, 32–33.

60 Laurinkari 2012, 82. Laurinkari highlights Vatican II as a turning point. There is a more positive attitude to liturgical gestures after Vatican II. This development correlates with the attitude to symbols of episcopal office. Cf. Luomajoki 2019, 113. Luomajoki maintains that the changes in bishops' portraits correlate with how the church's understanding of the office changed. However, there is a delay in how the changes are reflected in their portraits.

61 Alaja 1967, 11, 16; 1970, 7, 14; 1979a, 10–13, 237, 240; 1979b, 40; Gulin 1968, 2; Juva 1982, 10–12; Kares 1968, 187; Kansanaho 1967, 146; Kortekangas 1977, 10, 75–76; 1982, 6, 21; Sariola 1975, 63, 122–125; 1981, 44–45; Simojoki 1971, 90; J. Vikström 1972, 5; 1982, 160; 1983, 7–10, 14; 1985, 86. According to Alaja 'at least one bishop is needed for the church to awaken'

62 Alaja 1967, 11, 16; 1979a, 10–11; Gulin 1968, 42; Juva 1982, 10–11; 1993, 355–358; Kares 1965, 38–39; Kortekangas 1977, 75–76; 1982, 21; J. Vikström 1983, 7–8, 10, 14; 1985, 93. Collegiality is also one specific aspect attached to the episcopal office also in Lutheranism especially since Porvoo; see Zitting 2019.

63 Alaja 1979a, 237, 240. The other bishops mentioned by Alaja were Olavi Kares and Eero Lehtinen. See also Kares 1979, 328–329.

64 Kansanaho 1967, 146; J. Vikström 1983, 93.

65 Sariola served as Bishop of Lapua 1974–1995.

66 Sariola 1975, 125; 1981, 44–45; Simojoki 1971, 88–89; 1978, 8. See also Kortekangas 1977, 75–76; 1982, 21: the bishop's tool is the 'pulpit' and the 'confessional'; the bishop is the 'bearer of the cross' and the 'substitute victim'.

67 Sariola 1975, 125: 'Simojoki, who ordained me both as a priest and to episcopal office, has often emphasised that the bishop is not his diocese's chief executive officer but its spiritual leader. The bishop must therefore keep an eye on the broad lines of the work and leave its practical direction to others.' According to Sariola, the section on episcopal office should have been moved from Chapter 6, on the joint administration of the Church Law, to Chapter 3, which deals with the offices and office holders of the church's sacred ceremonies.

68 Sariola 1981, 44–45: 'Episcopal office is above all to be understood as the work of the Holy Spirit in the world, and the Holy Spirit is not a doubter, a sceptic.'

69 Simojoki 1971, 88–89, cf. footnote 16.

57 Kares 1979, 162–163: 'It would otherwise be pointless to pay attention to the circular issues mentioned, but their allegorical "proclamation" is offensive to the Christian mind and the concept of shepherd'; Kares 1979, 206: 'The growth of ceremonialism is a sign that the church does not dare to be exposed among the casualties at the front, but is fleeing to the fortress of high churchiness

his later writings, he explicitly emphasises the spiritual aspect of episcopal office.⁷⁰ According to Simojoki,

a variety of administrative responsibilities belong to the bishop, but they are not essential to his office. Someone else could take responsibility for them. The bishop's duties are spiritual in nature. He has to make sure that the church abides in 'the only true faith' and that the communion of Christians is built on testimony and service 'so that the world may believe' (John 17:21). Having been a bishop for more than a quarter of a century, I have gradually come to accept this spiritual nature of the episcopal office. Instead of a defensive attitude in the church and looking back in fear, we must break up the fallow ground (Jer. 4:3). Above all, episcopal office should be understood as the work of the Holy Spirit in the world, and the Holy Spirit is not a doubter, a sceptic, as Luther says in his letter *De servo arbitrio*. There is no need to emphasise institutional features in the episcopal office, for to do so would be to blur its pneumatological foundation, and the result is legalism and other features of formalism.⁷¹

Bishop Simojoki acknowledges that his understanding of episcopal office had evolved throughout his episcopacy: 'In my more than a quarter of a century as a bishop, I have gradually come to understand the spiritual nature of episcopacy.'⁷² Previously, Simojoki connected an emphasis on the spiritual function of episcopal office with a hierarchical system of office.⁷³ This kind of structure is no longer present in his later works. In the bishops' earlier works, hierarchical structures of office were considered Roman Catholic or as reflecting an Anglican understanding of priestly office, and such views were categorically resisted as un-Lutheran. Typically, hierarchies of office are depicted in a very direct and polarised manner.⁷⁴ However, the theology of office, its threefold nature, and

the role of all the baptised are addressed in the ecumenical documents of the research period, which undoubtedly contributed to a greater understanding of other churches' views.⁷⁵ The results of the ecumenical movement are also evident in the liturgical movement in the Church of Sweden and the increased understanding of Catholic theology in Finland following Vatican II, both of which would influence, for instance, the General Synod's committees on the theology of office and the Church Manual. They would also deepen the knowledge of the theologians of my research period concerning the Roman Catholic and Anglican theology of office.⁷⁶

Discussion about the spiritual nature of episcopal office begins to appear in the bishops' writings when the revised Church Manual entered into force, and 'ordination to the office of bishop' became the accepted term. At the same time, concerns about a hierarchy of office begin to dissipate, and the use of symbols of episcopal office become more common. The emphasis on the spiritual nature of the episcopal office and the decline of a functional theology of office also stem from a growing appreciation for episcopal succession, the change in terminology concerning ordination to the office of bishop, and the increased use of liturgical apparel.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has discussed the views of the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland concerning the episcopal office in the period between 1965 and 1985. The study shows that the church's understanding of episcopal office is clearly in transition during this period, with the office of the bishop becoming distinguished in a new way. The bishops of this study generally saw the episcopal office through the prism of the priestly office, hierarchically equal to other ordained office at the early years of the studied period. The episcopal office is then

increasingly understood as an independently ordained office, in which its spiritual aspect is emphasised, after Vatican II. The transition is remarkable, since it is not only a matter of different generations but is also reflected in the development of the understandings of individual bishops. Behind the developments that followed Vatican II are the deepening of ecumenical relations and the diminishing of anti-Catholic and anti-ecumenical attitudes. The topic of the theology of the office is constantly raised in the Church Synod during the researched period, which fuels its development. The church's understandings of the episcopal office are often compared to those of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches in the early period of this study. The bishops then emphasize the difference between the Lutheran understanding of the episcopal office and that of the Catholic and Anglican churches. This is understandable, since the theological issues relating to the office of a bishop have emerged typically in ecumenical dialogues with these churches, with the hierarchical structures of office and divisions of the priestly office into separate *ordines* often being associated with the Anglican and Roman Catholic understandings of the episcopal office.

The bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland during the period oppose treating the bishop's office as a separate *ordo*, which, according to their understandings, includes the idea of a subordinate hierarchy and different degrees of priesthood. The bishops regard such a difference of degrees as alien to Lutheranism. Etymologically, the words *ordo* and ordination, or (priestly) ordination, are based on the same root. However, the Latin term *consecratio* is often used in the case of ordination to episcopal office, which is often translated in Finnish as ordination (*vihkiminen*; Swedish, *vigsel*). This use of a single term in Finland has given rise to questions about the theol-

ogy of office. The formulae used for episcopal ordination and ordination to the priesthood are very close, and, given that the same term, 'ordination', is used, any ontological difference that may exist between the ceremonies is very small. In both ceremonies, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are invoked with the laying on of hands. Both ceremonies may only be celebrated once. It is therefore difficult to argue that, in the present situation in Finland, the matter does not concern different *ordines*, or different 'ordained offices'.

However, a different arrangement of *ordines* need not necessarily be accompanied by the kind of ontological change Bishop Kares seems to fear: that the bishop might be thought of as less 'human' or 'more holy' or worthy in the eyes of God than, for instance, an ordinary non-ordained parishioner. To invest such meanings into the word *ordo* is problematic, because this also entails a difference in 'holiness' between the clergy and the laity that is alien to Lutheran theology. Yet the bishops' works are generally popular memoirs or pastoral letters, not theological studies, so questions of the theology of office are dealt with in a somewhat superficial and general manner.

In general, the bishops emphasise that the episcopal office does not fundamentally differ from the priestly office. They base their inclu-

70 Sariola 1975, 125; Simojoki 1978, 8.

71 Simojoki 1978, 8.

72 Simojoki 1978, 8.

73 cf. footnote 16.

74 cf. footnotes 16–18.

75 On the dialogue between Lutherans and Anglicans, see, e.g., the Pullach Report, 1972, 75–76.

76 Laurinkari 2012, 82; Pohjola 2012, 22, 101; Zitting 2017.

sion of the episcopal office in the priesthood primarily on the Augsburg Confession. According to these bishops, the bishop has only the same power and duties as the priest by divine ordinance (*iure divino*), and in so far as the organisation of the office differs, such differences are valid only by human ordinance (*iure humano*). Yet episcopal office is also understood as a work of the Holy Spirit in the world and as something that is *bene esse*, to the benefit of the church. Although the offices of bishop and priest are thought to be theologically the same, during the period studied, there is a difference in emphasis in the bishops' views on the matter. Such differences in emphasis are revealed in Bishops Kares's and Alaja's assertion that there was no fundamental theological distinction between the installation in office of a vicar, chaplain, cathedral dean, or bishop; meanwhile, Gulin avers that both the Church Law and the practice of the church demonstrate that the episcopal and priestly offices are distinct.

During the period studied, the term 'ordination to the office of bishop' becomes established. Those bishops whose works most fiercely oppose this are defeated. Between 1965 and 1985, there are only two bishops who still ponder this terminology's problematic nature, and whose views they exhaustively justify in their books as 'low church'. Perhaps because the term has become established, the bishops representing the 'victorious' position no longer need to deal with it. Even the views of the bishops who opposed the term appear to soften over time. For example, Alaja begins to use the term 'ordination to the office of bishop'. Paavo Kortekangas also uses the controversial term 'ordination as bishop' concerning bishops, which was problematic because it could be thought of as referring to a deeper ontological change than 'ordination to the office of bishop'. However, Kortekangas does not further elaborate on the reasons behind his

choice of terminology, so it may be assumed to have been a careless use of terminology rather than a theological statement.

The apostolic succession is generally interpreted narrowly in the bishops' works as the continuity of episcopal office through the successive laying on of hands, and the concept mirrors the opinion of the bishops. Kares is the clearest in expressing his view that the succession of episcopal office may even be damaging to the church. Gulin, Kortekangas, and Simojoki view the succession of episcopal office as having some value to the church. They value the episcopal office either as a symbol of the maintenance of the true tradition or as a beneficial order for the church (*bene esse*), but they do not consider its succession as fundamental to the office. The succession is above all an 'external circumstance' or an 'external sign'. It is certainly noteworthy that Kares in his later works also sees something valuable in the blessing being inherited. It is understandable in light of the bishops' writings that the solution in Faith and Order BEM document, where episcopal succession is considered as a sign, not a guarantee, succeeded in Finland.

The bishops during this time deal with the emblems of their office in a practical manner while stressing their symbolic value. Especially Kares and Alaja, who consider themselves 'low church', emphasise the highly symbolic value of liturgical gestures and vesture, hence almost completely refusing to wear the bishop's liturgical vestments. Alaja's attitude to the bishop's robe can also be seen to change after his retirement: having almost completely refused to wear it, he considered wearing it once more on his retirement so that he could strip himself of it 'ceremonially' to present it to his chosen successor. Pondering over such a ceremony does, however, illustrate the symbolic value given to the cope. A similar change may be observed in

his perception of the terminology of installation in and ordination to the office of bishop.

The bishops of this period also believed strongly not only in the obligations and responsibilities of their office but also in their capacity to influence the church and society. The bishop's responsibility is perceived as a responsibility concerning both ecclesiastical and social issues. The spiritual and collegial dimensions of the episcopal office are also increasingly emphasised in this period. However, this collegiality appears to be based on a 'unity of free brothers', which requires no practical unanimity. Overall, it seems that Church Manual Committees' and the committee for the theology of office's efforts had anticipated changes in the understandings of Finnish bishops. The changes in the understandings of bishops eventually aligned with the findings of the committees, though with a delay.

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