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## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

### **The role expectations faced by church elders in the Finnish pentecostal movement**

Aro-Panula, Veikko

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**The Role Expectations Faced by Church Elders in the Finnish  
Pentecostal Movement**

Samuel Aro-Panula, BA, MA

Ph.D. Dissertation

Fall 2014

Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies

University of Bangor

## SUMMARY OF DISSERTATION

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| <b>Title of Dissertation</b> | <i>The Role Expectations Faced by Church Elders<br/>in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement</i> |

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### Summary:

The dissertation researched the role of elders in the light of the role expectations they face in the Pentecostal Movement in Finland. The central question for the research was: How do church elders view their own role in the light of the expectations they face in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement?

The research approached the role expectations faced by Finnish church elders from a practical theology viewpoint. The related interdisciplinary concepts of role expectations and leadership with its voluntary aspect were defined and discussed in order to build up the framework for the research.

The research collected data via a questionnaire for church members and an interview for church elders. The purpose of the triangulation of methods was to strengthen the validity of the research by taking into account both the expectations sent by church members and the expectations received by church elders.

The research provided a better understanding of the expectations Finnish Pentecostal Church elders face in their ministry as voluntary church leaders in Finland. The research suggested a few central recommendations. First, the Finnish Pentecostal Movement should define its doctrinal understanding of the elder's role. Second, the role relationships of elders and pastors in the church should in particular be defined. Third, the elder's leadership role should be defined more clearly. Fourth, the consequences of performing a leadership role on a voluntary basis should be researched in depth. Fifth, the best ways to arrange training for church elders should be defined.

**Key words:** congregationalism, elders, role, expectations, leadership, voluntarism, triangulation, empirical data, Finnish Pentecostals

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Keuruu, October 2014

Samuel Aro-Panula

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## 1 Introduction

Eldership is a prominent element in the leadership of a Pentecostal church in Finland. However, some interesting questions could be asked about the role of elders. For example, are the elders doing what they are supposed to do? What are the role expectations they face? Do they personally feel comfortable with the role expectations they face both from their church and from the Finnish Pentecostal Movement?

This dissertation researches the role of elders in the light of the role expectations they face in the Pentecostal Movement in Finland.<sup>1</sup> The purpose is to better understand the expectations the elders encounter in their ministry.

Eldership in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement has only been researched at the graduate level, but not at the post-graduate level. As a researcher, I studied the biblical definition of the role of elders in my MA thesis (Aro-Panula 1998). The plan is now to continue to research the same theme. The study of elders is important not only for the Pentecostal Movement in Finland, but also for all Evangelical Free churches in Scandinavia. The aim of the study is to provide academic research for the use of Nordic Evangelical Free churches, which will help them to both better understand and to develop their way of lay leadership.

The concept of elders in the Finnish Pentecostal churches needs to be defined in order to understand the context of the study. It is also necessary to study the other models used elsewhere and to compare them with the Finnish one. This will help to reflect the Finnish way of applying the elder's role.

A discussion of elders' theological views is also important. The Finnish Pentecostal Movement tends to claim dependence on biblical understanding about church life mat-

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<sup>1</sup> The Finnish Pentecostal Movement refers to the evangelical free churches that belong to the fellowship of the Finnish speaking Pentecostal churches in Finland. Most of the churches function officially as associations that have a legal standing according to Finnish law. In effect, the churches have a board of association in charge of official issues and the board of elders leading the church ministry matters. The official Pentecostal Church of Finland was established on 2002. However, most of the local churches do not belong to that church organization. This research focuses on all Pentecostal churches (not only the official church), in order to understand the role expectations elders face in the Pentecostal churches in general.

ters. So, the theological reflection will help to reflect the way the idea of eldership is applied in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement.

In addition, the fact that the elders function as lay leaders emphasises the need to study the leadership aspect of an elder's ministry. It will also be important to study the concept of voluntary work, as the elders are doing their ministry voluntarily.

The central question for the research is: How do the elders view their own role in the light of the expectations they face in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement? This question may be divided into a few sub questions (presented in next chapter).

The title of my earlier research was "The Biblical Definition of the Roles of Elders and Deacons: A Study in the Finnish Context" (Aro-Panula 1998).<sup>2</sup> The research concluded that the Bible seems to give churches a lot of leeway in organizing congregational leadership. However, it also concluded that while applying the role it is important to try to maintain the spiritual leadership in a church. (Aro-Panula 1998, 81.)<sup>3</sup>

The current research differs from the earlier research in that in this research the focus is on the question of the role of church elders especially from the phenomenological viewpoint concentrating on the empirical data instead of the biblical data. The exegesis of the biblical data serves as the starting point for the research.

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<sup>2</sup> The thesis reflects my understanding and research ability of that time (1996 – 1998).

In addition, I have also served as a (voluntarily based) church elder in a Finnish Pentecostal Church since 2002. I have also seen the pastor's perspective to the leadership of church elders both by growing as a pastor's son and by working for five years as a part time youth pastor in a church. Being an insider helps me to understand the elements related to the role expectations faced by the church elders. In addition, being an insider emphasises the need to focus on an objective approach for the subject being examined.

<sup>3</sup> The first part of the research included an interview survey questionnaire, which was sent to 70 churches. (Aro-Panula 1998, 5 – 6.) The interview suggested that the churches were rather satisfied with the role of the elder, even though they expected the elders to engage in spiritual leadership to a greater degree. (Aro-Panula 1998, 18 – 19.) The hermeneutical part of the research focused on an analyses of 1 Tim. 3:1–7, in which the grammatical and historical contexts of the text were taken into an account (Aro-Panula 1998, 31). The research concluded several principles about the quality of elders from 1 Tim. 3:1 –7 (these are discussed in more detail in the next chapter). (Aro-Panula 1998, 67 – 68.) In addition, the research suggested a few models of application for the role of an elder. (Aro-Panula 1998, 72 – 79.) These suggested models are discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

In his dissertation, Hämäläinen (2005) researched the issue of church leadership. He dealt with the topic “Leadership: The Spirit and The Structure; Missiological Perspectives for Designing Church and Mission Bodies.”<sup>4</sup> Hämäläinen’s (2005, 370 – 371) research indicated that solitary leadership does not occur in the context of the Nordic European countries’ world missions. He points out that the autocratic pastor, bishop, or leader type of leadership is not totally unknown in the practices of the Pentecostals and their partners in other Nordic countries. However, his research data did not support such a model, but pointed out that the collective leadership of elders and pastors was the most popular form of church governance.<sup>5</sup>

A few MTh level studies conducted in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement come very close to the research topic. Lehto (2004, 2, 76) researched the topic “Pentecostal Pastor – Prophet, Priest, Minister, or Shepherd: The Leadership role of the Pastor in the Finnish and Ethiopian Pentecostal Movements” at the MA level. The research points out the challenge that, in some Finnish Pentecostal churches the pastor has a more prominent role in leading the church and, in other churches, the elders have a more prominent role.<sup>6</sup>

In his MTh thesis, Isohella (2007) researched the topic: “Administration without administration: What kind of opinions did Finnish Pentecostal Churches have on church administration?” The thesis focuses on the ministry tasks of a church in general. The research relates to the current research in defining the ministry task of a shepherd. The research (2007, 111) points out that the respondents are not sure whether shepherd refers to a salaried pastor of a church, or to the volunteer elders of a church. Indeed, most

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<sup>4</sup> Hämäläinen’s (2005, 2 – 3) main question was: “How can we better structure the missionary work while at the same time keeping the Spirit’s leadership?” The first two sub research questions relate to the current research. 1) Which factors have most affected the understanding of the leadership concept in Nordic Pentecostal churches? 2) How has the leadership concept been transferred to the missionary context?

<sup>5</sup> Hämäläinen’s (2005, 370 – 371) also found in his research that none of the three traditional church governing models (Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational) were practiced in their pure form in the context of the Nordic countries’ Pentecostal world missions. The practice of the churches was closest to the congregational model, but the role of elders resembled more the Presbyterian model. The leadership model seemed to be a mixture of the two.

<sup>6</sup> Lehto (2004, 89) points out that the role of a pastor is clearly acknowledged in the history of the Finnish Pentecostal Movement, but the role is not clearly defined. Even though the research is not very relevant for the current research, it emphasises the need for defining the role of a pastor. In the Finnish Pentecostal setting this emphasis the need for defining the contra role, the role of an elder.

of the respondents seemed to understand that shepherd refers to a salaried pastor. This also points to the need to define the role of elders vis-à-vis the role of a pastor.

Frestadius (2006) compared the leadership of elders with the leadership by the church's association board: "Calling or temporary position of confidence: The dual administration of Pentecostal churches: An examination of the leadership of church elders and the association board." The research pointed out that the churches recognize the challenges faced by the dual leadership of elder and association board. The churches also seem to find ways how to prevent possible challenges that this may cause to the elders' leadership.<sup>7</sup>

William Kay (2000, 119) studied the relationship of personality dynamics and the perceived role conflict among British Pentecostal pastors. The research data consisted of 930 returned questionnaires. The questionnaire was made up of a demographic survey and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (H. J. Eysenck & S. B. G. Eysenck, 1975). The respondents were also asked to prioritize 20 ministerial roles in terms of personal values and the perceived expectations of others. The research indicated that the pastors who had traits associated with neurotics were more likely to experience role conflict than those who had other kind of personality profile.

In addition, Samuel Ruohomäki (an Åbo Akademi University Ph.D. student) is currently researching the topic "understanding of the symbolic and material roles of the Pentecostal pastors as they relate to the other office holders, particularly elders, within local congregations." The approach of the research is very similar to the current research. However, the results of his research have not yet been published. (Åbo Akademi University web pages.)

In this research, the church elders refer to the board of leaders in a Finnish Pentecostal church. Traditionally the Finnish Pentecostal Movement adheres to the congregational

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<sup>7</sup> The research (2006) pointed out how the churches need to find a balance between the biblical ideal and the practical application of the leadership in the current system (for example the association laws in Finland; see <http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki> for more information). A Finnish Pentecostal Church is registered as an association in order to relate to the government and for example to own buildings and pay salaries for pastors. This is a necessary arrangement for those churches that do not belong to the official Pentecostal Church.



multi-elder church order.<sup>8</sup> This means that instead of having a hierarchical church order (Episcopalianism), or the leadership of presbyters (Presbyterianism), the churches are congregation-based independent churches, led by a group of elders (this is discussed in more detail in ch. 3).<sup>9</sup>

The research approaches the role expectations faced by the Finnish church elders from a practical theology viewpoint.<sup>10</sup> First of all this means that even though the research is theological, it will reflect on the role especially on the bases of the empirical data. This means that the focus is on the practice of the role of church elders. Theological reflection of the role of church elders will form the basis for the research. It will also examine the role expectations the elders face. However, the research will also reflect role theo-

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<sup>8</sup> Several elders of a church together form the leadership team (the church board). The leadership of a typical church is not (at least) officially in the hands of only one person. (Salo 1998, 42.) The current general practice is that only men are chosen as the official elders. The elders perform their role on a voluntary basis. Most churches have at least one salaried pastor in addition to the elders.

<sup>9</sup> The Episcopalian church order refers to the hierarchical-autocratic church government. It is practiced by Episcopalians, Anglicans, Methodists, Eastern Orthodox churches, Roman Catholics, and some Lutherans. The Episcopal Church government is based on the understanding that the bishops are the successors of the apostles, to whom Christ, as the head of the church, has given the leadership of the church. (Merkle 2008, 26.)

The Presbyterian church order refers to the hierarchical-representative church government. It is practiced by Presbyterians and other Reformed denominations. While Presbyterian churches are normally hierarchical in having different levels of authority above the local church, a local church has elders as its only level of local leadership. (Merkle 2008, 27.)

The Congregational church order refers to the local-democratic church government. It is held by most Baptist, Congregationalists, Independent or Bible churches, and most Lutherans (in the USA). Ultimately, each local congregation exercises leadership of the assembly of believers. Congregational churches do not have a denominational hierarchical structure but are independent and autonomous self-governing entities. (Merkle 2008, 27 – 28.) The model of a single elder is the most common model for congregational churches. This means that a senior pastor chosen by the congregation functions as the spiritual leader of the church. However, some other churches claim that the biblical model calls for a plurality of elders. They maintain that one person should not lead a church alone, but all the elders of the church should have equal authority. (Merkle 2008, 28.)

The Nongovernmental church order refers to a church government, in which all church structure is minimized. It is practiced by some Brethren and Quaker congregations. Often the churches have elders to lead the congregation, although the priesthood of all believers is strongly emphasised. (Merkle 2008, 28.)

<sup>10</sup> Swinton and Mowat (2006, 6) define practical theology as “the critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world.” With this they mean that practical theology aims to challenge accepted practices, assumptions, doctrines and traditions in order to understand the practices better. In addition, they emphasise the centrality of theology as the primary source in carrying out practical theology, even though other applicable disciplines are also referred to. Furthermore, they point out that practical theology aims to understand church-based practices compared to similar practices in a non-church context. They argue that practical theology does not merely have to do with applying theology as it has been claimed to be done, but as such it is a critical discipline that aims to evaluate the practices of the church in order to enable the faithful practice of Christian life. (Swinton & Mowat 2006, 6 – 10.)

ries as well as the idea of voluntary leadership (especially from the Finnish Pentecostal point of view).

First, the methodology for the research is discussed. This includes the discussions of both the methodology for the questionnaire and for the interview. Next, the theological framework for the research is discussed. This includes both theological reflection and the evaluation of the central applications. After that, the related interdisciplinary concepts of role expectations and leadership with its voluntary aspect are defined in order to build up the framework for the research. As a practical theology study, in addition to theology the research also addresses aspects of role theory, leadership theories and voluntary research.

Then both the questionnaire for the church members and the interview for the church elders are analysed in separate chapters. The conclusions about the research are drawn by both comparing the inquiries and reflecting the results with the theoretical framework. Finally, the conclusions of the research are discussed.

## **2 Methodology**

A questionnaire and an interview formed the basis for the research. The sample and procedure are described first. Next, the measurement instruments and the validity and reliability of the research are described. After that the analysis of the research approaches is explained.

The questionnaire and the interview are discussed separately due to the different philosophical natures of these types of research. The last subchapter (2.4 Triangulation) explains and justifies how these two different kinds of researches are compared with each other.

### **2.1 Research task and framework**

The research task was to find out the role expectations that the church elders face in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. This means that the research aimed to study the process of role sending and receiving involved in the role of a church elder. The task was first to survey the expectations the church members send to their church's elders. This information was collected through a questionnaire sent to church members. Second, the task was to describe how these expectations are received by the church elders. This was done through interviewing several elders. Finally the themes found out in both of these inquiries were compared with each other. The purpose was to understand the expectations faced by the elders.

The main question for the research was: How do the elders view their own role in the light of the expectations they face in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement? The main question for the research was divided into following sub-questions.

1. What kinds of role expectations do the elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement face?
2. What are the elders' expectations of their own role? This second sub-question was divided into three parts:
  - 2.1 In relation to the challenges an elder meets.
  - 2.2 In relation to the church members.

### 2.3 In relation to the other elders.

3. How do the elders view their own competence in measuring up to these expectations?
4. How do these expectations correlate with each other?

The research was based on a theoretical framework. The framework consisted of both the theological discussion of the eldership and of the theoretical discussion of the role expectations and the leadership expectations, including a voluntary aspect. The framework will be described in detail in chapters three and four.

The theological reflection of the role of an elder helped to reflect the way the idea of eldership is applied in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. This also includes a hermeneutical discussion that will help one to understand how the biblical references about the role of elders should be applied. The hermeneutical study focused especially on First Timothy 3:1-7, because it is often seen as providing qualifications for elders. However, the hermeneutical study in this research suggested that besides pointing out principles about elders, the list especially shows how the elders should differ from false teachers.

It seems likely that the chosen church structure determines to a great extent the way the leadership of the church is organized. Especially the tendency in Free Church ecclesiology to resist both tradition and organized church structure has led to applications with ambiguous structures. This background knowledge of the unique features of the Finnish situation helped to build up the contextual framework for the concept of eldership and thus to find the answer to the question.

The research also established that the concept of role is central in understanding the role expectations the church elders face. However, the concept of leadership with a voluntary aspect was also viewed as essential for understanding the expectations, because the church elders function as leaders and perform their role voluntarily. The research revealed that this aspect of leadership explains how the elders perform their role. In addition, the decision a leader makes about the form of their leadership determines to a great extent the way they conduct their leadership.

The collective form of leadership was central, because the elders function together as a collective team in leading a church. It was also concluded that the organizational aspect to leadership was likely to provide a contact point between the leadership aspect and the

role episode model used as the base for the research. This means that the leadership expectations a church elder faces occur in a church organization context, which together with the elder and their leadership role forms a dynamic entity.

In addition, training was likely to be an important aspect in leadership, because it influences the way the church elders live up to the expectations set on their leadership task. The use of authority forms the central element in the leadership expectations a church elder faces, because it is central in defining the content of the role expectations faced by the church elders. In addition, values, vision and ethics form a basis for decision-making in leadership, and thus affect the way the elders lead their church.

Furthermore, the voluntary aspect of the leadership is likely to explain why both the role performance in general and leadership in particular is sometimes very challenging for an elder. The voluntary aspect of the role of elders affects the leadership of the church elders in the Finnish Pentecostal setting, because they may be viewed more or less as non-professional voluntary leaders, who use their leisure time for the leadership of their church. In addition, the voluntary nature of the role makes the question of motivation an important factor.

The viewpoints presented above form the framework for the research. The question about the role expectation forms the basis for the study, because it is the very question the research aims to answer. In addition, the tradition and the culture of the Finnish Pentecostal Movement, the way of interpreting the Bible, and the applied church order also influence the way church elders face their role expectations. Furthermore, the fact that the role of an elder includes the aspects of leadership from voluntary bases means that these aspects are also central in forming the framework for the research. The relationship of the different interdisciplinary aspects is described in the following figure.

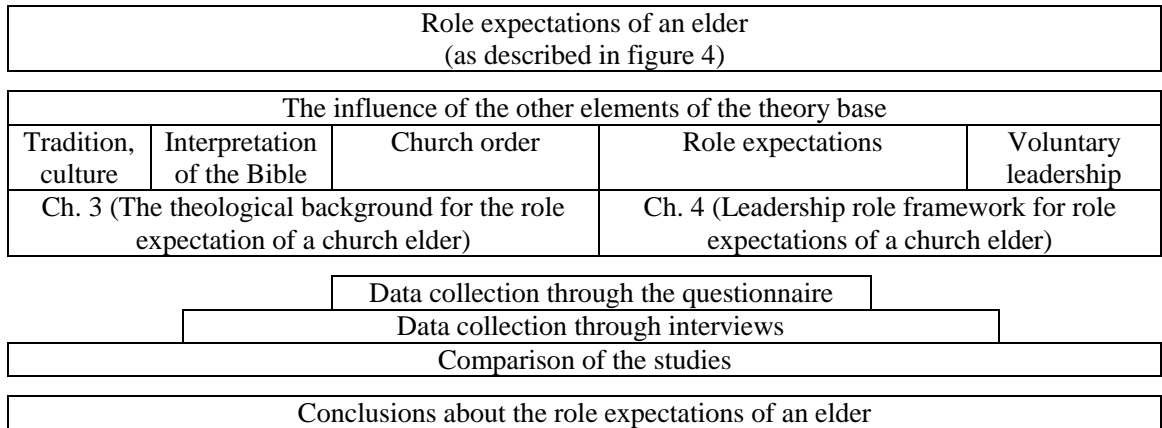


Figure 1: Synthesis of the theoretical aspects related to the research.

The central themes that were discovered in the discussion were general role expectations, conservative role expectations, conflicting role expectations, theological role expectations, general leadership expectations, leadership training expectations, and voluntary leadership expectations (presented in the theoretical map in figure 2).

The interview was based on the same themes as the questionnaire. Even though the interview was qualitative in nature and so was not very structured, it was nevertheless based on theory. This means that the interview was basically a semi-structured theme interview (explained later in this chapter).

## 2.2 Methodology for the questionnaire

### 2.2.1 Sample and procedure for the questionnaire

The questionnaire applied a stratified sampling. Next, this sample and procedure are described in detail. The first phase of the stratified sample was to choose the church clusters. The Finnish Pentecostal Movement was first divided into 15 strata. The 14 regions of the Finnish Pentecostal Movement were used as the basis for the strata.<sup>11</sup> However, the region of Ostrobothnia was divided geographically into two parts, both because of its large geographical size and because of its great amount of members.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Swedish speaking Pentecostal churches are not taken to an account, because they form their own movement.

<sup>12</sup> One reason for the great size of the Ostrobothnia region was that the regions of the Finnish Pentecostal Movement do not fully correspond to governmental districts and provinces.

The churches were divided into four categories according to their membership: under 100, 100 – 249, 250 – 699, 700 or more.<sup>13</sup> The first two size groups formed the category of small churches (under 250 members) and the two last size groups formed the category of big churches (250 or more members).

In all, 73 churches clusters were chosen for the sample. Of these churches, 43 were small churches and 30 were big churches.<sup>14</sup> The churches were chosen so that in the regions that had fewer members than the average (the average membership in a region was 3,050, when Ostrobothnia was counted as two separate regions), one church was chosen from each size category, if there was a church in that category. Then in the regions that had more members than the average, two churches were chosen from each church category, if there was a church in that category. (See e.g Parfitt 2005, 99; Holopainen & Pulkkinen 2002, 34 - 35.)<sup>15</sup>

The second phase of the stratified sample was to choose the clusters of respondents from the chosen churches. Both the sex and the age were used to stratify the church clusters. The age of the respondents was divided into four groups: 18 – 29 years; 30 – 44 years; 45 – 64 years; and 65 years or older. In the small churches, one male and one female were chosen from each age group. This made a total of 8 expected respondents for a church. For the big churches, the number of expected respondents in each age group was twice the amount of the small churches (16 respondents).

This sampling makes a total of 840 questionnaires. The pastors of the chosen churches were also asked to fill in a questionnaire. One questionnaire for a pastor was given for

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<sup>13</sup> Seurakuntaopas 2009 (Church Guide 2009) was used as a basis both for dividing the churches into regions and as a source for the sizes of churches.

<sup>14</sup> A church was counted small, when it had less than 250 members. Those counted as big churches had 250 or more members.

<sup>15</sup> However, there were a few exceptions. An additional church was chosen from the size category 100-249 in order to get as many churches as the other regions that had approximately the same amount of members (this was done with the Central Finland province). Also, an additional church was added to the Greater Helsinki area in the 250-699 size category due to its great amount of members as compared to other regions. In addition, the largest church in the Greater Helsinki area (Saalem Church with 3, 263 members) was sent extra questionnaires, because its membership is greater than the average membership (3, 050) of the regions.

the small churches and two for the big churches (a total of 105 questionnaires for pastors).<sup>16</sup> This means that in all, 945 questionnaires were sent.

The sample (945 questionnaires) represents 2.07 % of the population (the total membership of the Finnish Pentecostal churches was 45, 756).<sup>17</sup> The sample was estimated as being adequate for producing about 450 received questionnaires (about one per cent of the membership of the Finnish Pentecostal Movement). This expectation was fulfilled, as 516 questionnaires were received. Even after removing the questionnaires lacking information, the final amount of 473 accepted questionnaires for the analysis fulfilled the expectation. (See Holopainen & Pulkkinen 2002, 33; Nummenmaa 2004, 24.)

Why was a stratified sample approach chosen for the research? Erätuuli, Leino, and Yli-Luoma (1994, 18) point out that in order for a chosen group of respondents to be regarded as a sample of a population, the sample needs to be organized so that each respondent of a population has equal probability of being chosen to the sample. This requires the sample to be chosen randomly. However, it was not possible to choose Pentecostal church members totally randomly, because a general list of members does not exist. Each church has its own membership list, but it does not provide it to outsiders without the permission of each member. (Parfitt 2005, 96.)<sup>18</sup>

What procedure was used for the questionnaire? Follow-up procedures were used in order to get back as many questionnaires as possible. First of all, the pastors of some cluster churches were met face to face at a pastors' seminar. They were given more details about the research in order to motivate them to distribute the questionnaires. The other pastors of the church clusters were sent an e-mail explaining the research and motivating them to help in getting the task done. This was done when sending the ques-

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<sup>16</sup> The reason for giving the questionnaires to the pastors was to check if their expectations differed from the expectations of the church members.

<sup>17</sup> This percentage represented the average of the sample percentages of the regions, which varied between 3.712 and 1.541 percentages. However, the general variation was between 2.2 and 1.54, due to the small population of the smallest regions.

<sup>18</sup> Another possibility would have been to choose a fully discrete sample for the research (a convenience sample). (Vilkkä 2007, 58.) However, this kind of sampling would have distorted the chance of choosing respondents more equally, and would not have resulted in a real sampling, but merely an illustration of the views of the population. Stratified sampling was the best choice for the research, because it made it possible to distribute the questionnaires to the churches, but it also enabled to distribute the questionnaires with the arguments for the sample to represent the population. (see Holopainen & Pulkkinen 2002, 30 – 34.)



tionnaires to them in the post. Pre-stamped envelopes were included in order to make returning easier.

A time limit was set for returning the questionnaires. After the given time limit had expired, the pastors of the churches from which no questionnaires were received were sent an e-mail encouraging them to still distribute the questionnaires. They were also asked to remind the members who received a questionnaire to fill it and send it back. If the sending of an email did not help in receiving at least some questionnaires, the pastor was called by phone.

The pastor of a church was advised to give the questionnaires to the church members according to the instructions included in an envelope in which the questionnaires were sent to them. They were given detailed instructions on how to choose one male and one female from each church size category (twice the number in the big churches).

The questionnaires were sent to the churches in mid-October 2009. The received questionnaires were inputted into the SPSS analysis program straight after receiving them. The last questionnaires were received in February 2010.

### **2.2.2 Measurement Instruments of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. First, general background questions aimed to categorise the respondents. The questions in the second category aimed to find out the expectations for church elders. The final part of the questionnaire focussed especially on the task of a church elder. It actually covered the same themes as the second part, but asked the respondents to assess the task of an elder by choosing an opinion between opposing statements.<sup>19</sup>

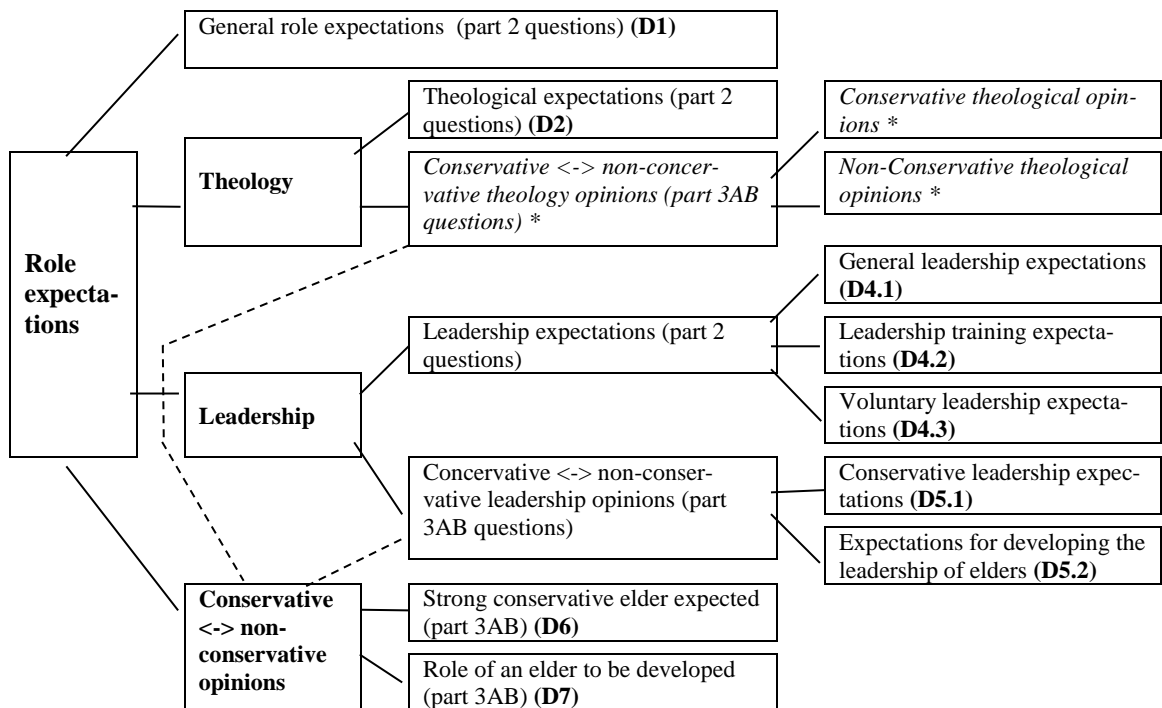
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<sup>19</sup> The questionnaire is seen in appendix 2.1. The questionnaire contained a total of 68 questions. The first category consisted of general questions defining the background of the respondents (sex, age, length of membership, and position in a church). In addition, the letters in which the questionnaires were returned were numbered. This also made it possible to get information about the size of the church and town of the respondents and the church region they belonged to. This additional background information was coded into SPSS as questions 69, 70 and 71. The second category consisted of opinion statements according to Likert's scale (questions 5 to 39). The alternatives were on 5-point scale (1 = do not agree at all; 5 = fully agree). The third category of questions (40 to 68) was made up of a differential of opinions according to Osgood's scale. The different ends represent opposing statements or ideas. These alternatives were on a 7-point scale, in which SA (1 = fully agree with SA) is statement A and SB (7 = fully agree with SB) is statement B. (see also Miller 1991, 141 – 143.)

The questions were operationalized according to the theoretical framework that will be discussed in chapters 3 and 4. Thus, the applicable theology and role theory with its concomitant voluntary leadership aspect formed the foundation for the research. The operationalization was done by first forming the central dimension for the questionnaire. The dimensions were then operationalized into individual questions.

The questionnaire was built on the idea of sending the role expectation according to the theoretical models of the factors involved in assuming organizational roles as discussed in chapter 4 (Katz & Kahn 1978, 196).<sup>20</sup> The theological basis for the role of a church elder and the leadership aspect with its voluntary viewpoint were also part of the core dimensions. The relationships of the formed dimensions are described in the following chart.

**Figure 2: Theoretical map of the dimensions of the role expectations for the research**



\* Alpha value under 0.6.

The first dimension consisted of general role expectations. It included questions 5 – 39. The second dimension dealt with theological expectations.<sup>21</sup> The theological aspect

<sup>20</sup> See both the discussion about the theory in Katz & Kahn and the chart describing it in chapter 4.1.

<sup>21</sup> Appendix 2.2 shows how the dimensions of the research were connected to the questions of the questionnaire.

formed the core elements of the questionnaire, since theological considerations are used to justify the role of eldership in the Finnish Pentecostal churches. The third dimension was the conservative <-> non-conservative theology dichotomy. This aspect aimed to enable one to understand the direction of the theological interpretation. General leadership expectations formed dimension 4.1. As the large number of questions in this dimension indicates, leadership was rather strongly emphasised in the questionnaire. However, this is justifiable, because the role of church elders is strongly involved in leadership (as explained in ch. 4).

The leadership dimension also included the sub dimensions of leadership training expectations (D4.2) and of voluntary leadership expectations (D4.3). Both were justifiable areas of research, because they are central in the leadership role of an elder. The idea of leadership expectations creates a question about the ability to lead. Because of this it was important to ask questions about leadership training expectations. In addition, the voluntary aspect was essential, because elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement do their ministry on a voluntary basis.<sup>22</sup>

The leadership dimension in part 3 formed the Conservative <-> non-conservative leadership opinion dimension. The statement B questions of the dimension formed the conservative leadership expectations sub dimension (D5.1), in which the statements were more conservative in nature. The statement A questions of the dimension are composed of the sub dimension of expectation to develop the leadership of elders (D5.2). Thus, even though the dimension is the same, the combination of opposite statements formed a distinct sub dimension.

In addition, the Conservative <-> non-conservative dichotomy setting in part 3 formed two almost opposite dimensions about the role expectations of a church elder. On the one hand, the statement B questions formed the dimension of the expected strong conservative elder (D6). On the other hand, the statement A questions formed the dimension of role of an elder to be developed (D7). The dimensions were almost equal. Hence, the questions of the dimensions were otherwise the same, except question 50, which is included in dimension 7, but not in dimension 6.

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<sup>22</sup> See the discussion in Ch. 4.2.

The dimensions were compared with the factors that were found through factor analyses. The factor analyses (as described in chapter 5) produced several usable sum variables for the research. These dimensions made it possible to reflect on the factors found.

### **2.2.3 Validity of the questionnaire**

Does the research really research what it aims to research? Are the research results valid and reliable? Validity (does the survey measure what it was planned to?) and reliability (are the results replicable?) of the questionnaire need to be addressed when discussing the objectivity of the questionnaire. (Parfitt 2005, 84.) First, the validity of the research is discussed.

The theory base for the research incorporated elements related to the main question of the research: “How do the elders view their own role in the light of the expectations they face in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement?” This means that first of all, as practical theology research, the research was based on the theological background of the idea of a church elder, and especially on its Finnish Pentecostal application. In addition, the role theory (discussed in ch. 4.1) was taken as a core theory, because the main question is based on a question about role expectations.<sup>23</sup> This included the idea that leadership theory with a voluntary aspect was discussed as a basis for the research, because the role of elder focuses on leadership and the elders perform their leadership on a voluntary basis. Thus, the theoretical framework behind the research was compatible with the main aim of the research. This strengthened the inner validity of the research. (Metsämuuronen 2006, 57.)

As theological research, the study could not only be based on empirical data. It was also important to discuss the Christian faith traditions concerning church elders. However, empirical research plays an important role in the research, because it provides field information about the role expectations of the church elders. (Heitink 1999, 221.)

It was established that the research would not cause any major physical or mental risks to the respondents or to the churches involved in it. However, in order to make sure that the respondents were treated anonymously, the background information was grouped in

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<sup>23</sup> As already mentioned, the content validity of the research reflects the theoretical model of factors involved in taking organizational roles (Katz & Kahn 1978, 196).

categories (except the sex) that blurred the exact detailed information about the respondents. This, together with the large number of questionnaires received, lessened the possibility of respondents being identified. (see Kuula 2006, 99 – 133.) In addition, reliability was also strengthened, because the questions were presented in the same form to all participants. (Valli 2001, 101.) The use of a questionnaire was an applicable method for researching the expectations sent by church members.

However, it seemed that the questions in the questionnaire were not unambiguous for all respondents. Quite a few respondents commented on the questionnaire about the meaning of some of the questions. Most of the comments seemed to be merely isolated cases. However, question 30 about choosing a remarried person for an elder received several comments that were rather similar. A number of respondents commented that if the question was about a widower, who has remarried, they would agree with choosing the person to the task of an elder. Some of the respondents continued that if the question was about a divorced and remarried person, they would not accept that person to function as an elder.<sup>24</sup>

The decision to create a new questionnaire instead of using standardized questionnaires was made with the intention of producing a questionnaire that both reflected the related theory and made it possible to work with the target group. (see Valentine 2005, 110 - 111.) This decision created a challenge for the validity of the research. In order to strengthen the validity of the questionnaire, a preliminary form of the questionnaire was given to a few Pentecostal pastors and MTh students at Iso Kirja College.<sup>25</sup> The comments received from these people were used for developing the questionnaire. However, the sample for the pre-test was not large enough to analyse it statistically in order to test the validity of the questions through analysing data received through them.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> This seemed to be a likely reason why the question received weak values in reliability tests. Indeed, due to the weak values, it was necessary to remove the question from the sum variables that were created.

<sup>25</sup> Iso Kirja College is a theological college located in Central Finland. It operates in conjunction with the Finnish Pentecostal Conference and Training Centre. See [www.isokirja.fi](http://www.isokirja.fi) for more information.

<sup>26</sup> A challenge to the validity of the questionnaire was that it was not pre-tested by conducting a full mini scale survey (for instance, 30 – 60 respondents). If this kind of pre-survey had been conducted, it would likely have made it possible to find the challenges mentioned earlier and to try to correct them.

Another challenge to the questionnaire was to get an adequate rate of answered questionnaires. The pastors of the sample churches were asked to motivate the chosen respondents in order to raise the answering percentage. This seemed to work, because in some churches most of the respondents answered.<sup>27</sup>

As already mentioned, 516 out of 945 sent questionnaires were returned. The answering percentage was 54.6%, and the received 516 questionnaires represent 1.13% of the population (the total membership of the Finnish Pentecostal churches was 45, 756). However, the questionnaires that lacked much information were not included in the research. Some questionnaires especially lacked information on the background questions.<sup>28</sup> The most typical was the more or less systematic lack of information (in 19 questionnaires) in part 3 (questions 40 – 68). It is likely that these respondents felt that part 3 was difficult to answer.<sup>29</sup>

A total of 473 questionnaires were accepted for the analysis, because 43 questionnaires were removed from the analysis. Thus, the actual answering percentage was 50% of the sample. These chosen 473 questionnaires represent 1.03% of the population (45, 756) of the research.

The removed questionnaires were mainly from the older respondents. Only one removed questionnaire was from a younger age group (18 – 29 and 30 – 44 years). 14 removed questionnaires (32,6%) were from the middle aged (45 – 64 years) and 23

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<sup>27</sup> In addition, the Pentecostal weekly magazine *Ristin Voitto* had an article introducing all theological theses and dissertations in progress by Pentecostal theologians in the Pentecostal Movement. It is very likely that the article also helped to encourage those who received the questionnaire to fill it and return it.

<sup>28</sup> Eight questionnaires were removed, because of the lack of information about one's sex. One was removed due to the lack of information of age and six more due to lack of information of one's position. There remained still lack of information about one's length of membership, but those questionnaires were not removed. The reason for keeping these questionnaires was that the question about the length of one's membership was not as central in profiling a respondent as the information of the other background questions was. However, the lack of this information is seen, when using the length of membership as the explanatory variable.

<sup>29</sup> In addition, a few questionnaires lacked the information on the second page of the questionnaire. It is possible that these people simply did not pay attention to the second page, because it was printed at the back of the first page. A few others did not answer the first part of the second page (this lack does not have a logical explanation). Some other questionnaires had some information on pages 2 and 3 of the questionnaire, but lacked most of the information on the pages.

(53.5% = more than half) from the elderly respondents (65 years or older). It looked likely that older respondents had more difficulties in filling in the questionnaire.<sup>30</sup>

Sex did not adequately explain the removal of some questionnaires. Males (16 / 37.2%) and females (15 / 34.9%) are rather equal groups (when 12 / 27.9% did not disclose their sex). However, respondents who had for a longer time been members of a Pentecostal church lacked more information on their questionnaires.<sup>31</sup> One's position in church did not adequately explain the lack of information.<sup>32</sup>

The size of a respondent's church and town and the respondent's province did not adequately explain the lack of information, either.<sup>33</sup> When it comes to the content questions, the failure to answer the questions seem to be either random in nature, or it had to do with totally neglecting or forgetting a part of the questionnaire.<sup>34</sup> (Nummenmaa 2004, 149.)<sup>35</sup>

A total of 420 questionnaires were sent to both males and to females. In addition, 105 questionnaires were sent to pastors, without specification of their sex.<sup>36</sup> In all, 230

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<sup>30</sup> It is also possible that the older respondents did not understand the importance of answering all questions. A reason might also be that majority of the returned questionnaires were from the older respondents (45 years or older). It was likely that the majority of questionnaires lacking information came from the oldest respondents.

<sup>31</sup> It is likely that the length of one's membership correlates with one's age.

<sup>32</sup> However, pastors seemed to lack less information than the voluntary workers. The reason might be that the pastors were more familiar with this kind of questions due to their work.

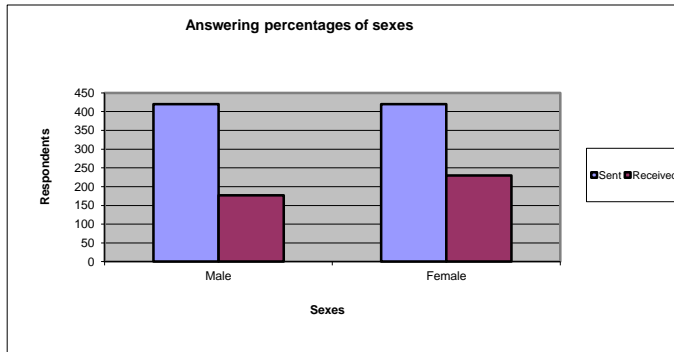
<sup>33</sup> In particular, the size of a respondent's church did not correlate with any reason. In addition, the respondent's region merely seemed to reflect the sample. Most of the questionnaires that lacked information came from the provinces where most of the questionnaires were sent. The same seemed to be true also with the size of one's town.

<sup>34</sup> The failure seems to be systematic only with regard to question 30, which asked the respondent's opinion of choosing a remarried person to the task of an elder.

<sup>35</sup> A questionnaire was included in the analyses by imputing the mean even if it did not have all the answers. This kind of imputation did not affect the results, but it made it possible to include the questionnaires that did not have answers for every variable. (Nummenmaa 2004, 149.)

<sup>36</sup> According to the stratified sample chosen, a questionnaire was sent for one male and one female to a small church in each age group. This makes 172 males and 172 females. In addition, each church was sent one questionnaire for the pastor. This makes 43 questionnaires without specification of the respondents' sex. In the same way a questionnaire was sent for two males and two females to the big churches in each age group. As explained earlier, Helsinki Saalem church received twice as many questionnaires due to its large membership. This makes a total of 248 males and 248 females. In addition, each church was sent two questionnaires for the pastor. This makes 62 questionnaires without specification of the respondents' sex.

males and 243 females form the 473 questionnaires included in the analyses.<sup>37</sup> The answering percentage of males without the pastors was 42.1% and of females without pastors was 54.8%. This is seen in the following chart.



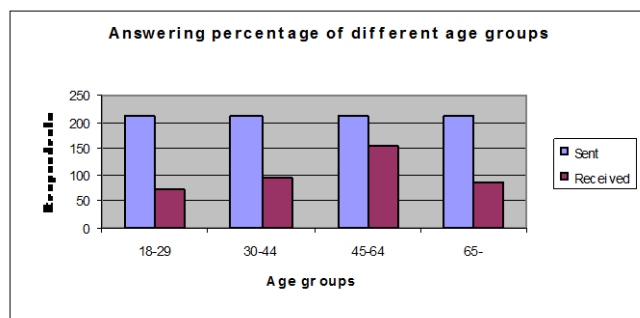
The age group of 45 to 64 years formed the largest age group of the data received with a total of 40 % of questionnaires received. The second largest group was the age bracket 30 to 44 years (24.1%). The oldest (65 years or older) group formed 19.2% of the responses. The youngest respondents (18 – 29 years) returned the least percentage of questionnaires (16.7%). This needs to be taken into account when analysing the data.

Every age group received the same number (210) of questionnaires. In addition, the pastors received 105 questionnaires without identification of age. The best answering percentage (73.8 %) was with the age group of 45 to 64 years. The weakest answering percentage was with the youngest age group of 18 to 29 years. This is presented in the following chart.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Of these 53 males and 13 females were pastors according to their position. After taking the pastors away, the result is that 177 males and 230 females as church members were included into the analysis.

<sup>38</sup> In addition, the length of a respondent's membership in a Pentecostal church seemed to reflect the same trend as the age. The data consisted mostly of those respondents, who had been longer as members. Two thirds (66.4 %) of the respondents had been members for 15 or more years.





Pastors (or other fulltime church workers) formed 14 % of the data, and the church members 86.0% of the data. Of the church members, 25.4 % were ministry team leaders, 39.3 % were members of the teams, and 21.4% were ordinary church members. It is possible to conclude from this that most of the respondents were involved in church ministry either as fulltime workers or as voluntary workers.<sup>39</sup> This then strengthened the validity of the research, because it made it likely that the respondents had personal contacts with elders and hence also better knowledge about the role.

However, the answering percentage of the pastors (62.9%: sent 105, received 66) was much higher than of the other respondents (48.5%: sent 840, received 407). It is likely that it was easier for them to fill the questionnaire and send it back, because they were the ones who initially received the questionnaires. It is possible that the pastors filled in the questionnaire, because their ministry depends to a great extent on the role of a church elder.<sup>40</sup>

Almost two thirds (63.2 %) of the questionnaires were received from the big churches. One third came from the small churches (36.8%).<sup>41</sup> This means that in general the big churches were better represented in the research than the small churches. However, the churches in the second smallest category had a higher answering percentage than the largest churches.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the data represented rather equally different sizes of

<sup>39</sup> The reason might be that it has been easier for pastors distributing the questionnaires to give the questionnaires to the people with whom they co-operated. It also is possible that the pastors gave the questionnaires to people who served in the ministry teams, because they trusted that these people knew the best what one could expect from the church elders.

<sup>40</sup> The pastors or other fulltime church workers were mainly from the 2<sup>nd</sup> (30 – 44 years, 31.8 %) and 3<sup>rd</sup> (45 – 64 years, 51.5 %) age groups. This is logical due to the usual working age, but it also explains the greater amount of the age groups among all respondents taken to the analysis.

<sup>41</sup> The answering percentage of the big churches was 53.6 % and of the small churches was 45 %.

<sup>42</sup> The answering percentages of different church sizes:

towns.<sup>43</sup> The provinces of Southern Finland (28.5 %) and Western Finland (39.3 %) were the most represented in the data. The Northern part of Finland had fewer respondents.<sup>44</sup>

It may be concluded that the external validity of the realised sample of the questionnaire is rather strong. This suggests that the conclusions about the expectations that the church elders face in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement can be generalised. In addition, it seems that the background questions made it possible to collect correct and pertinent data. For instance, the background question about sex and age were rather unambiguous questions, because most of the respondents had answered the questions. However, the rather large number of empty answers about the length of a respondent's membership in a Pentecostal church might suggest that this kind of information might be quite difficult to recall. Nevertheless, one can assume that those who answered it were able to answer it correctly.

A more difficult question was the question about a respondent's position.<sup>45</sup> When it came to pastors or other fulltime church workers, the choice was rather obvious. However, it is possible that it was difficult for some respondents to decide what their voluntary role was. This is likely because, in some questionnaires, a respondent had initially marked ministry team member and then switched to ordinary church member. However, while the question about one's position is especially important in order to differentiate between pastor/fulltime church worker and others, it is not so important if a respondent has not been able to make a correct choice between the two latter alternatives.

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0-99: 37.6%.  
 100-249: 52.0%.  
 250-699: 57.3%.  
 700-: 47.7%.

<sup>43</sup> The big towns (50,000 or more; 43.3 %) are a bit more represented than the middle sized (15, 000 – 50, 000; 30.4 %) and the small (under 15,000; 26.2 %) towns.

<sup>44</sup> In effect, South Western Finland formed two thirds (67.8 %) of the respondents. The other provinces were represented as follows: the province of Eastern Finland 13.5 %, the province of Oulu (Northern Finland) 15.0 %, the province of Lapland (Upper Northern Finland) 3.6 %.

<sup>45</sup> It is likely that it was obvious whether a respondent was a pastor or other fulltime church worker, or not. However, it is possible that for respondents who were not pastors it was more difficult to answer what their voluntary status was.

In conclusion, the questionnaire was based on a clear theoretical framework. The answering percentage for the questionnaire was rather good.<sup>46</sup> In addition, even though some target groups were less well represented than the other groups among received questionnaires, in general the differences were not very significant, however. These elements suggest an adequate validity for the questionnaire survey.

#### **2.2.4 Reliability of the questionnaire**

The data were first checked through the analysis of descriptive summaries. A few obvious input errors were found, in which a digit had been included twice (e.g. 11 when 4 was the maximum, or 66 when 7 was the maximum). The input errors were clearly mistakes. The extra digits were taken away (e.g. 11 became 1 and 66 became 6). After that the data looked clear and logical.

Before analysing the reliability, it was important to replace the missing information in the data. The lacking information was replaced with data (the mean for an age group) derived from the original questions. The means were not taken from the entire body of data, because that would not have provided credible or reliable research data. The means were obtained through splitting the data by region and then running One-Way ANOVA on the dependent variables by using the age groups as independent variables. In this way, a missing value was replaced with the mean of the same age group in the same region. This arrangement made it possible to get as equal a value as possible.

The reliability was checked by using Cronbach's alpha value.<sup>47</sup> The alpha values of the sum variables based on the factor analysis are discussed in chapter 5.1. The reliability rates suggested that in general the questionnaire measured what it was supposed to measure.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, it could be argued that overall the validity of the factors used in the research was rather good. (see Metsämuuronen 2006, 66.)

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<sup>46</sup> The answering percentage of the questionnaire is not very high, but it is adequate. However, it is important to keep in mind the stratified sampling used, in which not only the respondents needed to decide if they answer or not, but first the leadership of a sample church decided whether they distribute the questionnaires or not. In this sense the answering percentage was rather good.

<sup>47</sup> The research applied the measuring through internal consistency (at the same time with same instrument), in which Cronbach's alfa coefficient is the most used method. (See Metsämuuronen 2006, 67 – 69.)

<sup>48</sup> However, in Part 3 differential, which had two opposite statements in each question, only one factor had an alpha value of over 0.6. Thus, this part of the research did not provide much information for the research.

### 2.2.5 Analysis of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was analysed according to the following phases. First, the information in the collected questionnaires was inputted into the SPSS -programme. Second, the data were checked through descriptive summaries and the missing information was replaced with the means (as described earlier). The method of exploratory data analysis was used to point out the descriptive summary and to graphically display the variables. Different trends in data were examined and outliers were detected. A few input errors were found and removed (as described earlier). (See Lovett 2005, 209.)

Third, factor analysis was used to find out how the correlations of variables were clustered. Variables that had a similar common variance with each other were connected as factors. The purpose of the factors was to describe latent features. (See Nummenmaa 2004, 333.)<sup>49</sup> The factors were used as a base to form sum variables. After that the reliability of the factors were checked by using Cronbach's alfa value (as explained earlier).

Then, the means of the sum variables based on the factors were compared by using one-way ANOVA.<sup>50</sup> This analysis made it possible to compare the effect of several independent sum variables on the dependent variable. Then the means of the sum variables were compared with each other. Special attention was given to the variables in which the p-value was under 0.05. The significance of these variables was pointed out in the analysis. (see Nummenmaa 2004, 173).

Philosophically, the quantitative questionnaire given to church members and pastors differed strongly from the interview designed for church elders. It was thus necessary to make a distinction between it and the analyses of the interview, and to apply statistical analysis methods to it.

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<sup>49</sup> The purpose in summing the variables was to sum up the information of different variables into one variable. This was done by counting the mean from the numbers of the variables. (Nummenmaa 2004, 151.)

<sup>50</sup> The variance analysis is abbreviated as ANOVA (Analysis Of Variance). The benefit of ANOVA is to get information of the size of the variances. However, it does not disclose the cause of the variance. (Nummenmaa 2004, 173 – 174; 176.)

## 2.3 Methodology for the interview

The interview was chosen as the method for obtaining data on how the church elders have received the role expectations sent by the church members. Due to the nature of the interview, it did not provide a generalized view of the received expectations. However, it produced central themes that describe the elders' felt role expectations. This made it possible to understand better how elders encounter the role expectations set by the church members.

The interview was semi-structured. The questions were organized according to the themes arising from the theory base of the research. However, it is important to remember that in contrast to the questionnaire, open questions were used. Thus, the purpose of the interview was not to represent the received role expectations of the church elders. The emphasis was on considering the meaning elders attribute to their role and role process in their social context. (See Valentine 2005, 111.)

The questions for the interview were based on the same theoretical framework as the questionnaire in order for these two forms of research to be comparable.<sup>51</sup> Nine content questions (described later in section 4.3.2) were used in the interview. In addition, the background of the interviewees was surveyed by a few categorical background questions. The purpose of the semi-structured approach was to direct the interview so that it would help to understand the role of an elder from the same viewpoints as the questionnaire applied.

### 2.3.1 Sample and procedure for the interview

In all, 18 elders were interviewed about their felt expectations of the role of an elder. The interviewees represented all regions and different church sizes of the Pentecostal Movement. The interviewees were chosen so to that they would represent elders of different ages from different parts of Finland.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> The questions covered the following aspects: 1) Role process (the episode of sending and receiving); 2) Role expectations; 3) Role Conflict (ambiguity); 4) Leadership and its voluntary aspect; 5) Theology (Ecclesiology, Exegesis, Church order). The questions are presented in appendix 2.3.

<sup>52</sup> Although it was not possible to make generalizations from the results of interview (due to the small number of respondents) it was nevertheless important that the respondents would represent different kinds of elders in order to make sure that all central elements of the expectations of elders would be covered.

It seemed likely that the best method of choosing church elders as interviewees was to rely on pastors, who function as gatekeepers in their churches and are thus able to help in finding out and contacting elders as possible candidates for the interview. The pastors were chosen from the churches that had also been included in the sample of the questionnaire.

This meant in practice that a pastor from each region in a different church size category was contacted and asked to present an invitation for one of their elders to be interviewed.<sup>53</sup> This makes 15 interviewees, when the region of Ostrobothnia was divided into two (as with the questionnaire). An additional interviewee was chosen from each of the three regions that had considerably more church members than the others. Church size was taken into account so that approximately an equal number of elders were chosen from each size category. In all, 18 elders were interviewed.<sup>54</sup>

All the participants chosen for the interview were at least 18 years old. In addition, since elders are rarely chosen until they are in their late twenties or early thirties and since the participants were expected to have some experience of church ministry (at least three years), the participants were at least in their thirties. All this made it possible to ascertain that the elders who were interviewed knew enough about the subject.<sup>55</sup>

The interviewees were asked to sign a participant consent form. A copy was given to each participant.<sup>56</sup> An e-mail or a letter was sent to the elders, who had expressed their

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<sup>53</sup> The pastors were first contacted via e-mail and then by phone. This enabled them to receive correct information and to be motivated for the task. A letter to the board of elders was sent to the pastors so they could give it to the elders. It was accompanied with a letter explaining the interview in more detail for the elder willing to volunteer for the interview. (Valentine 2005, 116.)

| <sup>54</sup> | Church size | Interviewees |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|
|               | 0 – 100     | 4            |
|               | 100 – 249   | 4            |
|               | 250 – 699   | 5            |
|               | 700 or more | 5            |

<sup>55</sup> When contacting one of the potential interviewees a pastor had suggested, I realised that the interviewee had less than three years of experience as an elder. The reason was that the pastor did not remember the length of the elder's experience correctly. However, the elders were chosen to be interviewed due to their rather long experience in other leadership positions in their church (they were in their thirties).

<sup>56</sup> The consent form emphasised the voluntary participation of the interviewees and their right to withdraw from the interview, if wanted to do so. In addition, the consent indicated the anonymity and confidentiality of the interview. The form is in appendix 2.4.

willingness to volunteer for the interview, explaining the content of the research in more detail. After accepting to participate, they were e-mailed the interview questions (about one week before the day scheduled for the interview) so that they could prepare in advance for the interview.

At the beginning of each interview, about five minutes were used for discussing the purpose of the interview and briefing the interviewee (this discussion was not recorded). In addition, the interviewees were first asked background questions that were not recorded. The questions were basically categorical. This means that for instance when it came to the length of a participant's eldership ministry, they were not asked to give the exact length in years, but to indicate a general category (in years). The purpose of this arrangement was to make sure that it would not be possible to recognize an interviewee from the research data.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, at the end of the interview, the participant was given a chance to comment on their experience of the research process (about 5 minutes / no recording).

The background data disclosed that most of the elders who were interviewed had been serving as elders (both in their current church and previously in other churches) for either 21 – 30 years (7 elders / 39 %) or 11 – 20 years (4 elders / 22 %). In addition, three elders had between 6 and 10 years (16.7 %) and two elders (11.1 %) between 31 and 40 years of experience. Only two elders (11.1 %) had less than 5 years of experience. This indicates that the interviewed elders were rather experienced in their ministry.

Second, most of the participants had been chosen to the board of elders either at the age of 24 – 29 years (50 %) or at the age of 30 – 39 years (33.3 %). Third, 11 (61.1 %) out of the 18 interviewed church elders had a designated task. In addition, in their comments some of the other elders referred to an area of responsibility, even though the area was not officially designated for them. Furthermore, teaching or prayer meeting coordinator was mentioned by some elders as another responsibility besides the ones already listed. It seems that administrative tasks (chairmanship and finance administration) and missions were the major designated responsibilities of the interviewed elders.

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<sup>57</sup> The interview questions (including the background questions) are presented in appendix 2.3.

The participants were also asked about the number of elders in the church. Most of the respondents were from churches with either 7 – 9 (33.3 %) or 4 – 6 (22.2 %) elders.

The summaries of the background data of the interviewed elders cannot be generalised, because of the very small ( $N = 18$ ) sample size. It is also important to keep in mind that the aim of the interview was not to create any generalized information, but to make it possible to understand the phenomenon of receiving expectations. However, the background data helped one to better understand the respondents' comments and hence also the phenomenon.

The interviews were conducted between December 2009 and February 2010. All interviews were done face to face. The interviews were then transcribed. The themes were categorised during the spring and summer of 2010.

### **2.3.2 Validity of the interview**

Even though the semi-structured theme interview does not have the same kind of requirements about internal consistency and reproducibility as the questionnaire, validity is still an important factor. For instance, it is important to take into account that in this kind of professional research interview the authority structure is usually asymmetric, so that the interviewer as an expert has authority over the interviewee, who has the role of a subject. Also, the questions are more or less one-sided, flowing from the interviewer to the interviewee (in contrast to everyday conversation). (Kvale 1996, 20.)

First, the interview included some factual background questions that surveyed the interviewees. They were followed by questions categorised according to the themes that were also covered in the questionnaire. However, the interview was semi-structured. This means that the questions were open, allowing the answers to reflect the understanding of the interviewees. (Valentine 2005, 119.) The questions reflected the themes of the research, as pointed out earlier.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> The interview had a common theoretical background with the questionnaire. This strengthens the validity, because the shared background provided a basis for comparing the stated views with those in the questionnaire.



The methodology for the interview was chosen so that it helped one to understand the received data. The aim was to focus on the elements that were central in the role expectations the elders encounter. This was done by forming the main structure of the questions on the basis of the main research question, just as it was done with the questionnaire. This also served to give the interview a clear structure. However, it also restricted the interview more than, for instance, an open, deep interview would have done.

The semi-structured theme interview was seen to be a good method of researching the role expectations the elders encounter, because this approach helped the interviewees to express their values and arguments about the questions that were asked. Although the questions reflected the same themes as the questionnaire, the questions were structured openly so that the interviewees were able choose how they would answer them. (Metsämuuronen 2006, 239.)

The validity was strengthened by choosing interviewees from all over Finland and from churches of different sizes to represent the average thinking of elders as well as possible (as described earlier). In addition, the validity of the received data was strengthened by choosing elders who had served in the role for varying lengths of time.<sup>59</sup>

The honesty of the interviewees was also an important consideration. The openness of the answers suggested that they were answered honestly. The fact that the questions did not ask about intimate issues could also have contributed to honesty in answering the questions. In conclusion, there were no obvious reasons for an interviewee not to give honest answers.

Furthermore, it is important to ask whether the analysis of the interviews considered all the viewpoints included in the material. This is especially important with the cultural factors that may be characteristic of a certain region in Finland, in particular. However, the inductive analysis of the interviews helped to address the central elements mentioned. This is especially seen with the comments about spirituality. The analysis brought up typical spiritual comments and transferred them into categories. (See Metsämuuronen 2006, 251 – 252.)

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<sup>59</sup> As already mentioned, the validity was also strengthened by choosing interviewees who had served as elders for at least three years.

The final categorising of the themes of the interview was done through two different methods in order to check the categorising. Thus, in addition to categorising the data into themes based on the theoretical framework of the research, the data were also categorised independently of the themes (not from the very beginning, but they were based on the created subcategories).<sup>60</sup>

In addition, in order to check the validity of the created categories, two second categorisers (SCs) were used to categorise the data. (See Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 142 – 143.) Then the categories created by the SCs were compared with the categories I had created. The purpose of second categorising was to strengthen the validity of the questionnaire by providing a way to reflect the categorising I had made (as explained in detail in chapter 6).

### **2.3.3 Analysis of the interview**

When coding the data obtained through the interviews, it was important to keep in mind that qualitative research differs in its epistemology from quantitative research. Qualitative research pays more attention to the content of the data than to how often something occurs in the text. Thus, the purpose of coding was not to provide reproducible or countable elements, but to help one to understand the expectations the church elders encountered. (Crang 2005, 224.)

The recorded interviews were analysed by first transcribing them into text form. Second, the central themes of each question/theme of the semi-structured theme interview were derived through inductive analysis.<sup>61</sup> Third, the central themes were categorised into different types within each question/theme.<sup>62</sup> The fourth phase was to interpret how

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<sup>60</sup> These two ways of categorising were then compared with each other. Potential general differences were considered when forming the final categories (as explained in detail in chapter 6). This strengthened the validity of the research.

<sup>61</sup> The data were first reduced so that the material that was unessential for the research was left out. The reduction was done either by summarising the information, or by cutting the data into distinct parts. This kind of reduction was possible, because the coding was directed by the research task. However, the units for the analysis were defined before starting the analysis. At this stage of research the terms/words arising from the research task (and the theoretical framework) formed the analysing units. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 111 – 112.)

<sup>62</sup> A chart was drawn for each main category in order to obtain a visual image of how the main categories were formed. The received main categories (themes) were then collected together and categorised into the form of a chart in order to compare their mutual relationships. This aided in visualising the different ele-

the elders encountered the role expectations set by their churches. Finally the material was organized for a comparison with the questionnaire (this was possible due to the shared theoretical framework). (see Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 111, 116; see also Crang 2005, 222.)

## 2.4 Triangulation

The research applied multi-method triangulation, in which both the questionnaire as a quantitative method and the interview as a qualitative method were used to collect the research data (See Metsämuuronen 2006, 258 – 259; Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2011.). How were these two methods used together in this research? What are the results of this kind of combined usage?

In this research, triangulation meant that first the expectations of the church members of the Finnish Pentecostal Movement were surveyed by a quantitative questionnaire in order to find out what the church members expected of the church elders. Then, the felt expectations of the church elders were examined by a structured theme interview. After analysing the results of these two research methods, they were compared with each other.

Triangulation was first seen in the research framework. This means that the theoretical framework with the defined central concepts formed an important element both in designing and analysing the questionnaire. (See Vilkka 2007, 26; see also Mikkeli & Pakkasvirta 2007, 65.)

A major challenge was that basically, the quantitative and the qualitative approaches are totally different. While the purpose of the quantitative approach was to measure a great number of cases, the qualitative method attempted to understand the phenomena. This meant that it was not possible to compare the statistical numbers of the questionnaire with the written categories of the interview. (See Arminen & Alapuro 2004, 19.) However, the comparison was done between the themes emerging from both research ap-

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ments of the results of the interview at the same time. It also made it possible to clarify the relationships of the different parts. The categories that were found were then presented in writing in the final analysis. (See Metsämuuronen 2006, 249.)

proaches. This meant that the results of the two research approaches were first analysed separately with their distinct assumptions and methods. Then, the conclusions obtained through the analyses were compared in the light of the background discussion and the theoretical framework functioning as the base for the research. (See Räsänen 2005, 96 – 100.)

The purpose of triangulation in the research was to take into account the different aspects of the role expectations faced by the church elders. Had the research exclusively focused on the expectations sent by the church members, it would have been difficult to understand how the expectations were received. The aim was to strengthen the study by applying different methods. (See Metsämuuronen 2006, 258.)<sup>63</sup>

Although the questionnaire survey as quantitative research and the interview as a qualitative approach were philosophically different from each other, the processes used in the approaches had similarities. This means that in collecting data both the quantitative and the qualitative approaches used techniques that made it possible to restrict the observations to a form that was easier to control. The theoretical discussion at the end of the research provided a base for the themes that were used to restrict and direct the analysis of the large body of received interview data. (See Alasuutari 2011, 51.)

In conclusion, the combination of the questionnaire and the interview made it possible to both see what is expected from the church elders, and how they themselves understand the expectations they face. This combination made it possible to answer the question of how the church elders face the expectations set by the church members.

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<sup>63</sup> On the one hand, it was better to collect data about the expectations “sent” to the church elder through a questionnaire, because this made it possible to obtain more results, and, in a sense, more generalised results, about the elders. On the other hand, even though it could have been possible to get the elders to answer the same questions as the church members had received, the questionnaire would not have provided understanding on how the elders received the expectations. In this sense the interview worked better in obtaining data about the expectations of the church elders.

### **3 Background for eldership**

Eldership in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement has some specific features that very likely affect the role expectations elders face in their church. The background knowledge of the unique features of the Finnish situation will help to build the contextual framework for the concept of eldership. This then helps to answer the question: “Do the elders feel comfortable with the role expectations they face both from their church and from the Finnish Pentecostal Movement?”

The concept of elders in the Finnish Pentecostal churches needs to be defined in order to understand the context of the study. It is also helpful to survey how the concept is understood and applied in other circumstances and compare this to Finnish Pentecostal setting. This will enable one to reflect on the Finnish way of applying the role of an elder.

In addition, a discussion on the theological view of elders is important. The Finnish Pentecostal Movement is inclined to claim that they are applying the role of an elder in the way it may be understood theologically from the Bible. So, a theological reflection will help to reflect on the way the idea of eldership is applied in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement.

#### **3.1 The idea of church eldership worldwide**

The idea of church elders is applied in diverse ways in different contexts. In the Finnish Pentecostal Movement, one sometimes hears the view that the current praxis is the only possible Bible-honouring application that can be used if one is to observe biblical precepts. However, other churches in different parts of the world, even Pentecostals, do not apply the role in the same way as it is being done in the Finnish Pentecostal church, but they nevertheless also claim that they observe biblical precepts. It is thus important to understand the challenges related to the idea of elders and its different applications. This

then helps to build contextual framework for the researching of the role of an elder in the Finnish Pentecostal church environment.<sup>64</sup>

Next, the question of different applications is approached by comparing different ecclesiological views of church structure. The applications of church structure even in the same denominations in different parts of the world differ so much that the comparison of a few practical applications of eldership would not provide a satisfactory overview of the issue. A better picture is achieved by shedding light on the theological assumptions behind the central applications.

### **3.1.1 Different applications of the role of elders**

Differing interpretations of church organization, and thus also of the role of an elder, have led to some distinct theological applications of the role. Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism are the three major models of church government in history. (Cowan 2004, 12; see Hämäläinen 2005, 43 – 44 and Luoto 2006, 71 – 72 for the Finnish context.) Next, these theological viewpoints are discussed in order to better understand the idea of church elders.

#### **3.1.1.1 Episcopalianism**

Typical of Episcopalianism is an episcopate (the office of bishop), in which a bishop has a distinct and superior role over the local church officers. This indicates a hierarchical church order, in which the bishop ordains and governs the rectors and priests in several local parishes (forming a diocese). In addition, in many Episcopal denominations, an archbishop often rules over the bishops. (Cowan 2004, 12; Merkle 2008, 26; see also Morris 1992, 239.)<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> What role should the elders have? Should the elders serve primarily just like corporate executives (CEOs) (or only as advisers to their pastor), or like the pastors of a flock, but on a voluntary basis? (Strauch 1995, 16 – 17.) Strauch (1992, 65 – 66) claims that temporary church elders, who are serving as church board members, church finance committee members, or as the body of trustees for legal purposes, do not necessarily fully reflect the New Testament idea of eldership. For him the New Testament idea of eldership is more pastoral in nature.

In addition, Viola (2008, 305) thinks that the Western idea of church leadership has often had a difficult time in trying to distance itself from the Western concept of leadership. This means that the roles of pastor, overseer and elder have too often been interpreted in the light of Western political offices such as president, senator and chairman. For instance, the elders are seen as having authority because they hold an office, instead of focusing on the personality of the elder ministering in that role.

<sup>65</sup> Generally speaking, the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox churches are explicit examples of Episcopal systems. In addition, within Protestantism some versions of Episcopalianism are practiced

While Episcopalian type churches represent different theological views, they have a common denominator in that bishops are seen as the subgroup of leaders within the totality of all ordained priests or ministers. According to one application of this view, “bishop” refers to a minister who, in the hierarchy of clergy, is above the other ministers or priests. Their ministry is different and of a higher order than the ministry of other priests. The idea is that bishops belong to the historical episcopate and are “in apostolic succession.” For example the following churches observe this kind of order: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Eastern, Old Catholic, United (e.g., the Church of South India), and Anglican churches. According to another application, “bishop” refers to a clergyperson who is the superintendent of an area with many parishes and pastors.<sup>66</sup> For instance, quite many Methodist and Lutheran denominations hold to this view. (Toon 2004, 21; Merkle 2008, 26.)<sup>67</sup>

In the Finnish Lutheran Church, the bishop of Turku, South-West Finland, functions also as the archbishop for whole Finland. The archbishop is not superior to other bishops. However, they function as the chair for the Bishops' Conference, the General Synod, and the Council for International Relations. In addition to Finland, the archbishop's post exists in Swedish, Estonian and Latvian Lutheran churches, and also in Russian Lutheran churches of German origin. (Finnish Lutheran Church Webpages 2010.)

Taylor (2004, 48) proposes that the Episcopalian church order is based on the idea that there is no particular church order in the Bible, but that the order was given providentially through historical development rather than through biblical revelation. The historic roots of the episcopate structure may be traced to the second century. Due to this, Taylor (2004, 48) supports the Presbyterian view, which according to him insists that the Bible (both Old and New Testament) teaches the principles of the Presbyterian-

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by the Anglican Church, by the Episcopalian Church in the United States, by the United Methodist Church, and by some Lutheran groups. (Cowan 2004, 13.)

<sup>66</sup> Zahl (2004, 228) argues that the Greek word ἐπίσκοπος may be translated as “overseer”, or even “superintendent”. The Lutheran churches (when having bishops), as well as United Methodist church, have usually meant “superintendent” with the word bishop. Anglicans and Roman Catholics have understood bishop to be symbolic guardians of unity and of continuity.

<sup>67</sup> The simplest form of episcopacy exists in the Methodist Church, which has only one level of bishops. The Anglican and Episcopal churches also have archbishops, who rule over the bishops. The most developed Episcopal system is found in the Roman Catholic Church. There the Pope (the Bishop of Rome) is above the archbishops. (Merkle 2008, 26.)

representative form of church government. This is seen in explicit statements, examples, and precedents.

Patterson (2004, 54 – 55) challenges the idea that the episcopacy would be the best and most useful method of church government in the church of God. He admits that the hierarchical form of church government may have some functional advantages, though. However, he thinks that the Episcopalian church order has been weakened by a long history of insensitivity and abuse in the church structure.

Waldron (2004, 66) claims that Toon's (2004) view of Episcopal ordination and consecration as the way God has provided unity to the church through space and time does not seem to stand up to scrutiny. This is so, because it does not get full support from the Bible. The idea as such suggests that episcopacy is not explicitly the focus of biblical revelation and that it is only implicitly taught in the Scriptures.<sup>68</sup> Even though Waldron rightly questions the biblical evidence of Toon, he should take more clearly to an account the evidence of tradition Toon is emphasising. Toon (2004, 262) admits that in some cases the Episcopal system has been applied in a rather poor way or it has become corrupted. However, he thinks that Episcopal system has something to give to the church. With this he means that the church tradition with the evidence of centuries of clear testimony also needs to be taken into an account when forming the theology of the church. However, the Finnish Pentecostal application of the role of an elder has reflected more the view of Waldron (see for example the discussion of Klapuri 1998 in chapter 3.3.2).

### **3.1.1.2 Presbyterianism**

Presbyterianism refers to the hierarchical-representative form of church government, in which a local church is governed by a group of elders, chosen by the congregation.<sup>69</sup> It

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<sup>68</sup> Waldron (2004, 66) suggests that Toon's (2004) idea of Episcopal ordination and consecration as a "God-given focus of unity in the church through space and time" does not stem from New Testament teaching about the matter. Indeed, Toon (2004) himself seems to admit that the New Testament is not clear on the issue. He also admits that only the seed of episcopacy is found in the New Testament, and that episcopacy must be learned from later tradition. According to Waldron (2004, 66) these claims make it difficult to think that the Episcopal idea of church leadership would be the source of unity in the church through space and time.

<sup>69</sup> The congregation also votes on calling a pastor. However, the (larger) presbytery approves or disapproves the pastoral relationship between a minister and a given church. (Taylor 2004, 75.)



is practiced by Presbyterians and other Reformed denominations.<sup>70</sup> The elders lead the church collectively (as a group often called a “session” in a Presbyterian setting and a “consistory” in a Reformed setting). The idea is that the elders derive their authority from representing the congregation.<sup>71</sup> According to the system, the members of the sessions from several local churches in a certain geographical area form the presbytery, which governs several churches. Ultimately, the entire denomination is governed by the general assembly that has members drawn from each presbytery. (Cowan 2004, 13; Taylor 2004, 73 – 75; Merkle 2008, 27.)<sup>72</sup>

Reymond (2004, 134) argues that the local congregation should keep in mind that the church is not a pure democracy. This means that the task of elders is not just to carry out the will of their congregation. The elders should lead the church with the authority they have received from Christ, the head of church. They should follow especially the instructions of the Word of God, and not primarily the will of the congregation.<sup>73</sup>

Presbyterian churches have two different types of elders, i.e., ruling elders and teaching elders. The former are leaders who provide leadership in a polity setting and supervise various church ministries. They do not necessarily preach. Teaching elders have the responsibility to preach and teach in the church. (Cowan 2004, 13; Taylor 2004, 81; see

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<sup>70</sup> For instance, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Presbyterian Church in America, the Christian Reformed, and (quite loosely) the Assemblies of God (AG USA) are applying Presbyterianism. (Cowan 2004, 14.)

<sup>71</sup> Waldron (2004, 117) challenges Taylor’s (2004, 75) idea that the church government system is based on representation and connectionalism by claiming that it does not rigorously adhere to New Testament church polity and that from a legal perspective it is neither representative nor connectional.

<sup>72</sup> Morris (1984, 240) explains that Presbyterian churches are independent of one another. However, the common element for them is that they accept such standards as the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, or the Westminster Confession. In addition, the practice of a presbyterial form of church government unites them. Morris (1984, 240) continues that in a denomination a local church elects its “session” (elders), who governs the church. The church is led by the teaching elder (minister), chosen by the church. However, the minister needs to have the ordination of the presbytery (consisting of the teaching and ruling elders of the group of churches it is ruling. The general Assembly holds the final authority.

<sup>73</sup> Reymond (2004, 134) argues that the question of church government is important, because the scripture provides instructions how the church of Christ should be governed. Reymond (2004, 134) also claims that the Presbyterianism is the most biblically sound for of church government. For him it also provides the best and most balanced way for the church to decide its principles, its practices, and its priorities. He (2004, 134) continues that if the balance is lost in the church government the result is easily congregational anarchy, which is then followed by tyranny of the one or the few.

also Merkle 2008, 27.)<sup>74</sup> Waldron (2004, 115) agrees quite closely with the claim made by Taylor (2004, 81) that there are two types of elders, that there are lay elders, and that not all elders are pastors. However, he thinks that the assertion of two types of elders does not take fully to an account for example the biblical narratives that do not divide elders in two different groups of ruling and teaching elders.<sup>75</sup> Difficulty with these different views is that what is understood as a biblical text. However, the Finnish Pentecostal Movement has been following more the view of Waldron in a tendency to separate the role of an elder from the role of a preacher/pastor (see Klapuri & Salo 1998).<sup>76</sup>

### 3.1.1.3 Congregationalism

The idea of the autonomous local church is a central factor distinguishing the congregational system from other forms of church governance.<sup>77</sup> In essence, every congregation attempts to govern itself under the authority of Christ (see also Morris 1984, 240).<sup>78</sup> This also means that the local assembly of believers does not have an ecclesiastical au-

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<sup>74</sup> On the one hand, the teaching elder often refers to a salaried minister, who is usually seminary trained, ordained, and examined by the presbytery (session members from several local churches). The teaching elder concentrates on preaching and teaching. On the other hand, the ruling elders usually refer to the non-ordained “lay” elders without seminary training. The lay elders form church policies and oversee various ministries. The twofold distinction of the role of an elder is based on 1 Timothy 5:17. (Merkle 2008, 27.)

<sup>75</sup> Waldron (2004, 116) also thinks that Taylor’s view of the distinction between teaching elders and ruling elders might emphasise the difference further than what is warranted by the Bible. According to Waldron (2004, 116) the challenge is that the Presbyterian approach of making a distinction between teaching elders and ruling elders tends to oversimplify the diversity of eldership as taught in the New Testament.

<sup>76</sup> See the discussion in chapter 3.3.2 about Klapuri’s (1998) and chapter 3.3.3 about and Salo’s 1998 views.

<sup>77</sup> Congregationalism refers to two different issues in historical Christian debates. It refers first of all to the independence (autonomy) of each local church. It may also refer to a democratic way of governing a local church. In addition, it may refer to a combination of both of these ideas. (Waldron 2004, 187 – 188.)

<sup>78</sup> Morris (1984, 240) points out “Christ as the head of his church” (Col. 1:18) and the idea of the priesthood of all believers (1 Pet. 2:9) as the central scriptural support for congregational thinking. In the Finnish Pentecostal movement the reference for Christ as the Final Head of the church has been one central argument for congregational plural elder thinking (see the discussion in chapter 3.3.2).

Garrett, Jr. (2004, 192 – 194) provides five arguments for congregational polity. According to him, Congregational polity is fair to the members of the congregation. In addition, Congregational polity may be applied in different ways. There is no need for just one exact application. The Congregational polity enables well to develop loyalty to the congregation and to get their support. Furthermore, Garrett, Jr. (2004, 192 – 194) claims that Congregational polity is very likely to enable Christians to become stronger and more mature than other polities. Finally, he views that Congregational polity is not an end itself. It is rather a means to other ends.

thority above or external to it. (Cowan 2004, 14.)<sup>79</sup> The Congregational church order refers to the local-democratic church governance.<sup>80</sup> Although a church is usually led by a pastor (often assisted by deacons), the individual members of the congregation have the final authority. (Merkle 2008, 27 – 28.)<sup>81</sup>

The Congregationalist model may be divided into two prominent models, i.e., the single-elder model and the plural-elder model. Single-Elder Congregationalism refers to a system in which one elder or pastor is chosen by the congregation to oversee the church as its spiritual leader. The single elder is assisted (or supervised) by a group of deacons. This kind of system also includes churches, which have more than one pastor (for instance, a youth pastor), but which are led by one (senior) pastor.<sup>82</sup> The single-elder model is the most common model for congregational churches. Plural-Elder Congregationalism refers to a system in which a plurality of elders is seen to govern a local church according to the biblical model. It proposes that a single person should not lead a church alone, but all church elders should have equal authority.<sup>83</sup>

Akin (2004, 68) maintains that the issue of giftedness argues for the need of senior pastor teacher, even in the plurality of elders model. He thinks that it is essential that some-

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<sup>79</sup> In addition, some Congregationalist churches, (for instance, some Brethren and Quaker congregations) may be characterised as nongovernmental, because they attempt to minimize all church structure. They think that they should let the Holy Spirit lead the church and guide believers. Nongovernmental congregations suspect that external church structures might too easily lead to formalism in which the Holy Spirit does not have any room to minister. However, quite often the churches have elders as congregational leaders, and even the priesthood of all believers is strongly emphasised. (Merkle 2008, 28.)

<sup>80</sup> It is held by most Baptist, Congregationalist, Independent or Bible churches, and most Lutherans (in the USA). This form of governance has neither bishops as its highest-ranking leaders (as in Episcopalianism), nor elders as its highest-ranking leaders (as in Presbyterianism). (Merkle 2008, 27 – 28.)

<sup>81</sup> Congregational churches do not have a denominational hierarchical structure but are independent and autonomous, self-governing themselves. The idea is that there is no ecclesiastical authority outside a local church, but a local congregation is independent of other congregations, and governs itself under the authority of Christ and His Word. However, the churches often form loose denominational associations in order to co-operate in ministry. Still, these associations function on a voluntary basis. (Merkle 2008, 27 – 28; see also Waldron 2004, 188.)

<sup>82</sup> Akin (2004, 68) argues that the qualifications for several elders also work as qualifications for one elder. He continues that there are situation that only one elder (pastor) meets the qualifications. However, he thinks that the most desirable situation is the plural leadership, where a senior pastor/teacher is leader, but everyone is mutually accountable to one another.

<sup>83</sup> According to Waldron (2004, 212 – 218), the internal organization and the ecclesiastical authority of eldership are important issues in Plural-Elder Congregationalism. The plurality, the parity, and the diversity of elders are central elements in the internal organization of eldership.

one with morally good character and gifts given by God leads a church to right direction.

Although this system resembles the Presbyterian system in that both maintain the leadership of elders in a church, it differs profoundly from the Presbyterian counterpart by insisting that the elders should not be governed by anyone else. These elders (unlike in Presbyterianism) do not have any authority outside their local church. In addition, there is no distinction between teaching and ruling elders, but all elders and pastors both teach and rule. Furthermore, the difference between these two views is that Presbyterianism understands that the churches together form a synod, which has representatives from churches, but the plural elder-congregationalism stand for the independency of churches. (Cowan 2004, 14 – 15; Merkle 2008, 28.)

Plural-Elder Congregationalism differs from Single-Elder Congregationalism in that a church with only one elder / pastor is considered incomplete. In addition, all elders / pastors are seen to have equal authority. The plural-elder system does not accept the idea of a senior or primary pastor in the church. The idea is that the pastors / elders of the local church lead and teach the church together as a team. In the USA, for instance, the Southern Baptists, the General Baptists, and all other Baptists, as well as the Churches of Christ, the Bible Churches, and all other independent churches practise Congregationalism.<sup>84</sup> (Cowan 2004, 15.)

Waldron (2004, 188) points out that the plural-elder leadership challenges the idea of congregationalism, because multi-elder leadership makes it difficult to have fully democratic rule in the church. This has to do with the congregational ideal that the church should be involved in leadership as a democratic body. However, according to Waldron, the idea of the congregational church as a biblical church includes the idea of elders as its leaders. In effect, the elder-led congregational church is not really congregational, because the churches do not fully follow the idea of church democracy. These churches

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<sup>84</sup> Some Puritans in England tended to think that both the Episcopalian and the Presbyterian churches had not gone far enough with the Reformation. As a result, these churches became congregational (and independent) in their view of local church governance. (Waldron 2004, 192.)

tend to assent that they believe in eldership rule but they do not subscribe to congregationalism in the sense of full democracy.<sup>85</sup>

Patterson (2004, 241), who adheres to Single-Elder Congregationalism, seems to agree with Waldron's ideas about Plural-Elder Congregationalism to a great extent. One slight difference is that he does not see the importance of multiple elders in every case. However, Patterson feels he differs from Waldron especially in how he understands the equality of elders. He thinks that the New Testament example does not seem to teach the full equality of elders. Nevertheless, Patterson agrees with Waldron about the understanding that Christ is the Supreme Ruler of the church and that the local church is led by its elder(s).

Toon (2004, 222) thinks that if the apostolic message had intended to include precise details of church governance, it would be logical that the Bible would be more explicit about the details related to church governance. Toon also thinks that Waldron overemphasises reasoning in order to use the Bible to find the form of church governance he thinks is the best.<sup>86</sup>

Toon (2004, 158) points out that modern congregationalism, in which the congregation independently decides whom they will hire as their senior pastor, can and does work well in modern America and in other areas. However, in his view this does not prove that this kind of polity has been laid down as a definite plan in the New Testament canon. Toon (2004, 158) thinks that congregational polity is not apostolic, even though it might be functional. He admits that one may come to this kind of conclusion on the basis of the New Testament evidence if one ignores the history of the early church and if one comes from a society that has embraced democratic thinking.

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<sup>85</sup> However, Waldron (2004, 189) points out that the plurality of elders does not automatically mean the Presbyterian view of church governance. The biblical idea of the plurality of elders adjusts and controls most democratic ideas of church governance. In effect, the view of the plurality of elders prevalent in congregationalism introduces tension between multi-elder leadership and the idea of the democratic church.

<sup>86</sup> Toon (2004, 228) thinks that Waldron (2004) is in effect reading a model into the Bible. He says that Waldron picks the first model that crosses his mind and then introduces it as the biblical model. Toon proposes that Waldron would have realized his error, if he had taken seriously the history of the early church up to about AD 200.

Taylor (2004, 167) questions the idea of congregational independency in church structure and challenges churches to find out whether the Bible teaches independency of churches from each other or interdependency on each other in fulfilling their mission. Taylor (2004, 236) thinks that the issue of the independency of churches has to do with the doctrine of the universal church. The biblical images of the church (such as the bride of Christ and the body of Christ) emphasize the unity and oneness of the church, and not the diversity and the imperfections of the church.<sup>87</sup>

However, White (2004, 260) argues that the claim that local church is a unit unto itself requires one to consider two central concepts. Firstly, emphasis on the independency of a local church does not lessen the need for local churches to have cooperation with each other in order to further the kingdom of God. Secondly, the claim of the autonomy of churches just provides the positive expression of the negatively stated proposition, that a local church does not have any God-established hierarchical structure above it.<sup>88</sup>

Luoto (2006, 71 – 72) claims that the division into the described church leadership models is not often that clear in practice. The practice is of the combination of different models. He (2006, 71) argues that the Finnish Pentecostal churches have aimed to follow the New Testament model of elders.<sup>89</sup> However, according to him (2006, 71) the model has not been that Presbyterian in the sense that elders would have had the final Authority in every matter. The task of elders is to lead the church, but the whole congregation has had the authority to decide matters in all important issues. In this way the Presbyterian church leadership model is mixed with the congregational model.

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<sup>87</sup> According to Taylor (2004, 236), the church has throughout the centuries emphasised its apostolic, catholic, holy, and oneness nature. Taylor (2004, 236) also asserts that the idea of independency of church governance is not the best way of pointing out the universality and oneness of the church, although the idea of independency works well with the Western mind-set due to individualism and the entrepreneurial spirit.

<sup>88</sup> According to White (2004, 279) the biblical text collectively makes it clear that the churches were local assemblies that included the offices of elder/overseer and deacon. Only these offices are provided for the church to take care of its continuity. He (2004, 279.)also claims that it was natural for the New Testament authors to refer to elders in plural) and to their church in singular. The original readers evidently did not need any explanation to understand this format, since it was the way how churches were established by the apostles.

<sup>89</sup> According to Luoto (2006, 72) elders are chosen in Pentecostal churches to lead a church in the line with the model of New Testament. As his support he refers to references in Acts (11:30, 14:30, 20:28).

It may be concluded that the Finnish Pentecostal application of the leadership of church elders mostly resembles the Plural-Elder Congregationalist model of church governance. As the discussion later in this chapter points out, the traditional understanding has been that the elders lead the church collectively. In this sense, a discussion of Plural-Elder Congregationalism helps one to comprehend how eldership has been understood in Finnish Pentecostalism. Another question is how the Finnish Pentecostal understanding of church leadership relates to Pentecostal and Free Church ecclesiology in general.

### **3.1.1.4 Pentecostal ecclesiology**

Chan (2000, 99 – 100) argues that it is challenging that Pentecostal churches as Free Churches often have a loose relationship between the Spirit and the Word in their ecclesiology. This means that for instance the effective forming of tradition is difficult, because the church, as a voluntary association, does not provide a robust ground for the interplay between the Spirit and the Word. Chan (2000, 100) suggests that closer conjunction between Spirit, Word and Church is needed in order to have effective forming of tradition. According to him this means that the Pentecostal ecclesiology as the Free Church theology needs to ground together the Spirit and the Word in order to control the challenges it is facing due to its free and voluntary based nature.

This discussion of Chan (2000, 100) provides a base to understand the difficulties the Finnish Pentecostal ecclesiology faces when considering the theological bases for its church elders. It also challenges the Finnish Pentecostal Movement to consider its ecclesiological bases for the role, while at the same time emphasising the role of the Spirit in forming the spirituality.

Kärkkäinen (2002, 70, 71, 73) argues that Pentecostalism is mostly a grassroots spiritual movement. Pentecostalism has stressed strong spirituality and aggressive evangelism methods. According to him, the emphasis has not been on producing new theology. The idea of “full gospel” is a central identifying element in Pentecostal theology. Pentecostal ecclesiology has emphasised a desire for restoration, i.e. a return to the apostolic times. This is mainly due to the great significance given to the invisible, spiritual nature of the church. This has also left much room for improvisation in ecclesiology.

The relationship between Spirit/charisma and institution has been a central challenge in ecclesiology. For instance, the Catholic Church has emphasized the role of hierarchy, church authority, ordained ministry, and the sacramental system. In contrast, Pentecostal churches have seen the importance of freedom, i.e. of allowing charismas to flow freely in the church. However, as Kärkkäinen (2002, 74) points out, Pentecostalism has been able to leave the simplified dichotomy of “charisma versus institution”. In general, it has been able to view the church as both charismatic and in need of structure. However, this has been applied in different ways in different countries. The Scandinavian churches have not put much emphasis on structure (see Ruohomäki 2014, 229 - 230; see also discussion later in chapter 3.3.1).

Pentecostals entertain more than just one single idea of church structure and its application. Kärkkäinen (2002, 74) asserts that their views range from Congregationalist to Episcopal views. However, he points out that they nevertheless give full ecclesial status to each other, although they have ordered their churches in different ways. It seems that Pentecostals have more than a single criterion to determine the true nature of a church.

According to Kärkkäinen (2002, 73 – 74) the extended international dialogue started in 1972 with the Roman Catholic Church has forced Pentecostals to reflect their views on the church and its life and ministry. Especially the third quinquennium (1985-1989) centred to the theme of the church (*koinonia* as the general title). The essential question has been the relationship between the Spirit and charisma and the institution. In the one hand, Pentecostalism, as a revival movement, has emphasized the experience of a free flow of charisma in the church. On the other hand, the Catholic Church has stressed more the role of hierarchy, ordained ministry, church authority and sacramental system. However, Pentecostals have been able to leave the simplified dichotomy of ‘charisma versus institution’ and got to a more fruitful discussion of church both as being Charismatic and the one that has structure.

Kärkkäinen (2002, 73 – 74) argues that the dialogue shows that Pentecostal ecclesiology has been able to take to an account the role of authority and structures. In addition, the Catholic ecclesiology has pointed out that it is not content with an overemphasis on hierarchy. However, Pentecostals do not agree among themselves on how church structures and institutional viewpoints should be formed. According to Kärkkäinen (2002,



74), Pentecostals tend to think that the New Testament does not seem to point out only one structure, but several structures.<sup>90</sup>

Coulter (2010, 318 – 319) argues that the free-church viewpoint has been emphasized more in the Pentecostal theological reflection than the episcopal viewpoint. However, much of debate over theology of church existed among the episcopal wing of the early Pentecostals.<sup>91</sup>

This points out for the role of an elder that the chosen church structure determines strongly the way the church leadership is organized. The tendency in Free Church ecclesiology especially in Scandinavian Pentecostalism to resist both tradition and organized church structure (see discussion in chapter 3.3.1 about the influence of the Norway and Sweden to the Finnish application) have led to applications that lack explicit structures. This explains at least partly the resistance of organized structures in Finnish Pentecostal Movement (as the discussion in 3.3 about early Finnish Pentecostal authors points out).

### **3.1.2 Different applications of eldership**

#### **3.1.2.1 The Finnish application in comparison to other applications**

How is the role of elders applied in different settings and areas? In his dissertation, Hämäläinen (2005; described in ch. 1) compares the views of Finnish missionaries to the views of national Pentecostal pastors (in Asia, Africa and Latin America) on the question of elders. He (2005, 371) asserts that even if the leadership of elders in a church is not seen as a cultural phenomenon, the influence of culture should nevertheless be taken into account. His research shows that the opinions of the elders' leadership differ between Nordic Pentecostal missionaries and their partnering national pastors. However, it is obvious that the concepts and practices of Nordic Pentecostals have been imported to mission fields without clear contextualisation.

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<sup>90</sup> However, Clarke (2005, 133) argues that the ecclesiology of Kärkkäinen is primarily an ontological assessment that does not concentrate on functional or pragmatic ecclesiastical insights. Clarke expected a stronger discussion about leadership in the context of egalitarian and diverse distribution of the charismatic phenomenon.

<sup>91</sup> Coulter (2010, 330 – 331) argues that common with the free-church “wing” and the episcopal “wing” is the emphasis on the “fellowship” (communion) of the defined as basis for people of God and their practices.

In his research, Hämäläinen (2005, 233) found that national pastors saw that the elders' main task was to support the pastor (34 %). In contrast, missionaries emphasised the elders' shepherding role (39 %; national leaders 28 %). However, the missionaries put more emphasis (15 %) on the elders' mandate of assisting the pastor in business matters than the national leaders did (8 %). He suggests that the missionaries may have been influenced by a teaching in the Finnish Pentecostal churches, which sets pastors aside for the ministry of the Word and prayer, as it was with the apostles in Acts.<sup>92</sup>

Hämäläinen's (2005, 232) research shows that most national leaders (80 %) and missionaries (86 %) endorsed the idea that pastors and elders should lead churches. Few national pastors (14 %) and missionaries (6 %) thought that pastors alone should lead a church. This seems to support the idea that the pastors' and elders' leadership model is typical of Finnish/ Scandinavian churches, because the missionaries were from Finland and most of the churches included in the research were established by Finnish missionaries. However, the AG of Burkina Faso, which was included in the research, also preferred the model led by pastors and elders, even though its churches were started by American missionaries. Hämäläinen suggests that the model is typical of Pentecostal churches throughout the world, although he does not have enough data to confirm this.

Hämäläinen (2005, 371 – 372) asserts that, for both missionaries and national pastors, the study of the New Testament is the most important factor influencing opinions on church governance. He thinks that the 'Sola Scriptura' principle and the focus on the Bible in general among Pentecostals influence this kind of thinking. The research (Hämäläinen 2005, 233 – 234) shows that around 2/3<sup>rds</sup> of both national pastors and missionaries believed that the NT model is valid for today's church. 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of both groups saw a need for cultural adjustments. However, Hämäläinen points out that his research does not provide answers that would define what kind of contextualisation should be made.

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<sup>92</sup> Isohella (2011, 301) refers to Hämäläinen's research in concluding that the Nordic Free Churches are structurally Presbyterian/Congregational. In some churches the elders lead the congregation and in some other churches the members lead. This is partly due to the Baptist heritage and partly caused by the interpretation of the biblical text by early Pentecostal pioneers.

Hämäläinen (2005, 235) found out that the missionaries put more emphasis on the collective nature of the elders than the national pastors did. The national pastors were more inclined to give the leadership to the pastor than the missionaries were. However, neither group seemed either to endorse the leadership of only one man or to think that the system of elders was a system only applicable to the early church.

### **3.1.2.2 The Finnish application in comparison with the AoG - USA**

Some other prominent Pentecostal movements have a view of elders that is different from the view of the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. For instance, the Assemblies of God (AoG) - USA differs in its understanding of the role of elders. The position and qualifications of deacons are expressed in the official statement “Qualifications and responsibilities of Deacons and Trustees” that the Assemblies of God - U.S.A. has issued (1976).<sup>93</sup> The role of deacons in the AoG USA is much like the role of elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. This means that the study of the statement provides a base for reflecting the role of elders of the Finnish Pentecostal Movement.

The rationale behind the statement is that God’s method for a church to continue and prosper was to select a person to be the leader (the pastor) and then give the leader co-workers (deacons) to assist the leader and the whole congregation.<sup>94</sup> The pastor and deacons form the official board of a local church. (“Qualifications and responsibilities of Deacons and Trustees” 1976.)<sup>95</sup>

The statement paper finds support for the qualifications of deacons first of all in the Bible in Acts ch. 6, in which seven men were chosen for the ministry. Second, it finds support for the qualifications in 1 Tim. 3:8-13, which describes the criteria for choosing

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<sup>93</sup> The statement was based on a report of the committee that studied the eligibility criteria for deacons and trustees in the Assemblies of God - U.S.A. The Assemblies of God General Presbytery adopted the statement on August 17, 1976.

<sup>94</sup> In the statement, a deacon is seen as a board member, who is an advisor, helper, and prayer partner, a loyal supporter of the pastor. The deacon’s task is to assist in fulfilling the vision and goals God has given the pastor for the church. The statement emphasises the need for deacons to function as a team, to pray together and to develop a close relationship with each other as co-workers. (“Qualifications and responsibilities of Deacons and Trustees” 1976.)

<sup>95</sup> The statement views the pastor as the chair of the board of deacons. However, the board of deacons (or the official church board in case of there not being enough deacons) is then expected to function as the nominating committee for selecting the pastor for the church. (“Qualifications and responsibilities of Deacons and Trustees” 1976.)

deacons. In general, the qualifications have to do with character, attitude and reputation with respect to the matters mentioned in the Bible passages. When describing the requirement to “keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience” (1 Timothy 3:9), the statement paper explains that a church member aspiring to be a deacon should “fully subscribe to the tenets of faith of the Assemblies of God.” (“Qualifications and responsibilities of Deacons and Trustees” 1976.)

The scholars who wrote the statement paper concluded that the words “elder” or “elder-ship” refer to the ministry of a pastor, bishop, or overseer. They justify this by the use of the word πρεσβύτερος in the original Greek (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Timothy 5:17; James 5:14 etc.). However, they do not explain this in the paper. The statement paper makes the following conclusion: “The pastor is God’s gift to the church; board members are the church’s gift to the pastor.” (“Qualifications and responsibilities of Deacons and Trustees” 1976.)

The prominent role of voluntary church elders as distinct from pastors does not seem to be very common elsewhere than in the Nordic Countries, and in mission fields influenced by these countries. As such, this brings a challenge for the Finnish Pentecostal view of elders, questioning the biblicality of the approach. If the Finnish Pentecostal application is the biblical model, why is it not practised more widely?

### **3.2 The influence of the biblical aspect on the role of a church elder**

The Finnish Pentecostal Movement asserts that its understanding of the role of elders is based on the Bible. This might prompt one to ask how the Bible is to be understood and interpreted.

The role of an elder in a Pentecostal Church in Finland has similarities with other voluntary leadership positions in an association or organization. However, the role differs especially in two respects. First of all, the role is a ministry position, because an elder serves on a collective pastoral leadership team in a church. The second important difference is that the churches assert that their view of the role is derived from the Bible. Ac-

cordingly, the elder's role is also affected by how they and other church members understand the biblical model of an elder.

Two questions arise. How is the role affected by the interpretation of the models described in the Bible? In addition, how well does the idea of the role match up to the theologically based elder's role? It is likely that the conclusions made about the understanding of the role and the role expectations of a church elder provide a profitable basis for examining the expectations. However, when using theoretical ideas about role in examining role expectations, one needs to take into account the special features of church ministry.<sup>96</sup>

Several biblical passages refer to elders. A number of considerations need to be addressed in order to understand the passages. For instance, how do these references present the concept of elders? What is the meaning of the approach described in the passage? Do the references deal with normative teaching on the concept of elders, or do the references merely describe the concept of elder or leadership in a church? The answers to these questions will help one to understand how the Finnish Pentecostal application of the role of an elder is in line with the biblical background of the role?

The Old Testament includes several references to elders. All references will not be discussed, but in particular those that describe how the concept of eldership was understood will be considered. The New Testament references to elders are more important, because they shed light on the role of elders in the Early Church. Biblical references are often used in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement as the basis for justifying their approach to the elders' leadership in the church. New Testament references will be given more attention, because they are usually referred to more often. Special emphasis will be given to the understanding of 1 Tim. 3:1-7 as a case study.

### **3.2.1 Biblical background for the idea of church elders**

Elders are seen as the representatives of a town or nation in several Old Testament passages. In order to gain a better understanding of the idea of elders, it is necessary to consider the usage of the term in the Old Testament context.

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<sup>96</sup> The understanding of the Finnish Pentecostal Movement of the biblical concept of an elder's role is very likely one of the central elements in defining the role expectations of an elder.

In almost every society in the ancient Near East the form of government was based on leadership by a council of elders. Originally the word elder referred to a position of honour in most ancient Near Eastern cultures. (Glasscock 1987, 69.) Old Testament history indicates that it was a fundamental form of government structure in the nation of Israel (Ex. 3:16; Ezra 10:8). The eldership was a basic element in Israel as a tribal and patriarchal society. (Strauch 1995, 39.) The Old Testament word זְקֵנִים included a variety of features. The elders served as judges in both civil and religious cases. (Van Dam 2009, 12.)<sup>97</sup>

In the Old Testament, representing the people seems to have been the primary task of the elders. For instance, the elders of Israel represented the Israelites to Moses and Pharaoh in the Exodus narrative (Ex. 3:16ff). In Ex. 24:1 the seventy elders were asked to approach Mount Sinai, although only Moses was allowed to climb the mountain. In Lev. 4:15, the elders of the nation of Israel were asked to lay their hand on a bull before its slaughter on behalf of the sins of the nation. Then the bull was offered for the sins of the nation of Israel. The elders seemed to have had a representative task. In addition, another instance may be seen in the Book of Ruth. In the narrative (4:1-12) Boas asks ten of the city elders to witness the selling of a piece of land. The elders witnessed and thus also approved the transaction.

Mappes (1997a, 84 – 85) points out that moral qualities were generally expected from elders in Israel, even though these qualities may not have been codified. He argues that when term was used of a leader in an institution, old age was not necessarily required, even though the term *πρεσβύτερος* originally referred either to an old individual or to a person, who is older than another. However, an institutional leader was expected to have that kind of wisdom normally an older man has. (Mappes 1997a, 87 – 88.)

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<sup>97</sup> In the Old Testament the church and the state were closely interrelated. In the OT an elder performed societal and civic tasks as a state representative and as an elder in the religious congregation, because Israel was a theocracy (it was not possible to make a distinction between the elder's governmental and congregational tasks). While the nation of Israel and the Israelites as an assembly appeared to be distinct entities, an elder performing his governmental duties was also performing his congregational duties (see Exodus 12:38 and Joshua 8:35 where only the circumcised males living within the borders of Israel were counted as members of God's congregation). (Van Dam 2009, 12.)

It is difficult to find out how much the role of New Testament elders resembles the role of synagogue elders, because there is not much information about the synagogue elders. Mappes (1997a, 92) claim that even though the concept of eldership is transcultural and there are differences between the New Testament elders and the synagogue leaders, it is not possible to think that the New Testament eldership system would have been formed without any connection to the synagogue system of that time. However, according to him (1997a, 92) the influence of the synagogal eldership was general in nature.<sup>98</sup>

Glasscock (1987, 71) suggests that the Old Testament concept of elder influenced the New Testament usage of the idea of elder, because the early church emerged from a Jewish background.<sup>99</sup> However, Van Dam (2009, 12 – 13) argues that the New Testament church is not directly based on Old Testament practice, because the New Testament elders do not have duties in civil leadership. He also suggests that while the Old Testament elder's tasks do not tangibly apply to today's church, the principles seen in Old Testament practice have a lot to say to our current understanding.

Van Dam (2009, 58) points out that the leadership of the elders has both the aspect of the political and of the spiritual viewpoints. This means that politically elders represented the people and served them as leaders. However, he (2009, 58) argues that the institution of the elders, arising from the family and tribe, was not so political and hierarchical in nature. However, even though the king was ruling, he needed to respect the authority of elders (1 Sam.15:30).<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Mappes (1997a, 91 – 92) argues that for example the plurality of the eldership was a common factor. In addition, both were expected to take care of the well-being of the people. Both also maintained authority within their community. Both were expected to fulfill certain moral qualities. Both had a responsibility to communicate and take care of the Scriptures.

However, Mappes (1997a, 92) points out few differences between synagogue elders and church elders. The differences are for example the lack of civil or political power, the lack of New Testament analogy to the *ἀρχισυνάγωγος*, lists of significant moral requirements for eldership, and emphasis on the church elders' teaching role.

<sup>99</sup> It is possible that the role of elders is not explained in the New Testament because it was a practice that was already in use in Jewish society. It is likely that it was being incorporated into the early church setting at the time. (Glasscock 1987, 71.)

<sup>100</sup> Van Dam (2009, 59) points out that even though the monarchy weakened the tribal system and so the leadership position of the elder, the tribe still remained a very important political and social denominator especially in local level. He (2009, 59) continues that the role of the elder was central during the exile and during the rebuilding that took place after that. These factors strengthened again the role of elders.

Furthermore, Van Dam (2009, 11) points out that even though the New Testament elder's office did not adopt all details from the organizational framework of the Jewish synagogue, it nevertheless emerges from that heritage. It is logical that the office continued under the direction of the apostles, because the Jewish Christians were familiar with the office.

In order to understand better the texts of New Testament eldership in the Bible, one needs to understand the way how the eldership functioned in the Old Testament. Even though the all features of eldership have not continued from Old to the New Testament (as discussed above), the New Testament practice of the role stems from the Old Testament background.

In addition to the Old Testament background, the role of a New Testament elder has arisen under the influence of the Roman Empire. According to Parrott (1980, 29) the political strategy in the Roman Empire was that the citizens of one's own country would be better governors than foreigners would be. This strengthened the position of already existing elders in the conquered countries. The Romans were interested in building the leadership structure on the basis of aristocratic families, powerful merchants, or influential religious leaders instead of building a totally Roman government in the cities and provinces their empire had.<sup>101</sup> Parrott (1980, 34) suggests that the New Testament eldership was modelled in line with the political lines. The church as a new community in a hostile world needed people, who would both do work inside the church as well as in relation with the outside world. In the same way as the other instances of that time, it looked for elders as already existing group to perform this leadership work. The early church was a *new* community in a complex and sometimes hostile world.<sup>102</sup>

Parrott 1980, (34 – 35) suggests that this implication affects to the nature and function of eldership in a today's church. For him it for example challenges the idea of eldership as "spiritual oversight." At least it points out the question about the qualifications neces-

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<sup>101</sup> Parrott (1980, 31 - 32) suggests that when apostle Paul according to Luke appoints "elders" in the churches he founded (Acts 14:23), the system had similarities with the Roman provincial administration system, which was characterized by patronage and bureaucracy.

<sup>102</sup> According to Parrott (1980, 34) this does not mean that the chosen "elders" would have been governors, senators or representatives of the State. However, it means that the elders they functioned in political ways in and for the church.



sary for the job. For example an important question is how the qualifications in this kind of a religious task differ with the skills needed in normal political arena.

In the New Testament, the idea of eldership is mentioned in several passages. Luke mentions in Acts 14:23 that Paul and Barnabas chose elders to every church. In addition, in Acts 20:28, Luke indicates that Paul uses shepherding imagery in exhorting the elders to do their duty. In this passage, he assigns elders to church leadership. He reminds (20:28) the Asian elders that God has appointed them overseers of their flock to shepherd the church of God. The apostle Peter likewise exhorts the elders to be real shepherds of their flock (1 Peter 5:2). (see Strauch 1995, 16 – 17.)

In the New Testament, two different words are used to denote an elder: *πρεσβύτερος*<sup>103</sup> and *ἐπίσκοπος*<sup>104</sup>. Beyer (1964, 615 – 616) understands that the words do not seem to imply any distinction, or contrast, but the words seem to refer to the same office. This is already seen in Luke’s account in Acts 20:17, 28 in which Paul wants to see the *πρεσβυτέρους* of the Ephesian church at Miletus, but he uses the word *ἐπισκόπους* of them. (Hanson 1982, 32; see also Demarest 1984, 185.) In 1 Tim. 3:2, the term *ἐπίσκοπος* is used of an elder. The term *ἐπίσκοπος* is used four times to refer to a church leader in the New Testament (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7). (Towner 2006, 244.)<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> The word *πρεσβύτερος* refers to an age, older, old. It may also refer to an official, elder, presbyter. (Danker 2000, 862; see also Liddell & Scott 1996, 1461.) *Πρεσβύτεριον* referred to an administrative group of a community (council of elders) (Danker 2000, 861.) Bornkamm (1968, 663) assumes that presbytery as a body of elder, through the synagogue model, was likely especially in the early phases of the Jerusalem church, when James is in leadership (Acts 21:17-26). The church needed the older tested members, who could work as a presbytery for the church. In addition, according to Parrott (1980, 33.) A reason that the roles of elders (*πρεσβύτεροι*) and overseers (*πρεσβύτεροι*) are often equated is that Titus 1:5-9 refers to the elders with the same kind of qualifications as 1 Tim. 3:1-7 refers to the overseers.

<sup>104</sup> In the Greco-Roman world, the word *ἐπίσκοπος* referred especially to the office of guardianship over certain group of people. (Danker 2000, 379; see also Liddell & Scott 1996, 657.) Beyer (1964, 608 – 609) describes that in Greek, *ἐπίσκοπος* refers either in general to the “onlooker” as “watcher,” “protector,” “patron,” or as a title to various offices. Also according to him the term is normally used for secular appointments (with technical and financial responsibilities). However, especially the ideas “watcher” or “protector” had often a religious emphasis referring to gods.

<sup>105</sup> Waldron (2004, 218 – 219) discusses different descriptions of the church’s ruling officers. These descriptions refer to the authority the descriptive names have. For instance, a church ruler may be viewed as an elder (*πρεσβύτερος*) (e.g. Acts 11:30 and 1 Timothy 5:17). This name implies that the person is part of the ruling council of a church. In addition, a church ruler may be viewed as an overseer (*ἐπίσκοπος*) (cf. 1 Peter 2:25 in which it is used of Christ and translated, “guardian”). This name implies that an elder is a guardian, a watchman, or a public officer who has been sent by a higher authority to watch over affairs. (Waldron 2004, 218.)

Van Dam (2009, 119) suggests that the word ἐπίσκοπος refers to the same role as the word πρεσβύτερος (“elder”) (see e.g., Acts 20:17, 28). He thinks that the variety of the terms for the role of an elder is explained by the formative phase that the early church was in at the time the New Testament was being written. (See also Oden (1989, 139 and Petts 2002, 74.)<sup>106</sup>

Parrott (1980, 28) argues that the primary idea of term πρεσβύτεροί is to refer to those who are chronologically older. However, the term also referred to those in leadership position. This seems to reflect normal society’s leadership structure, in which the seniority forms the leadership.

New Testament contains several references in which the elders are referred in plural. The plurality of eldership is supported for example in Acts, 14:23 (πρεσβυτέρους) in which Paul and Barnabas appointed elders to churches. In addition, in Acts 20:17 the elders of Ephesus are referred in plural (πρεσβυτέρους). (See Vine 1985, 195.) This plurality of elders was not only referred in connection with the Jerusalem church. In Philippians 1:1 (ἐπισκόποις) Paul writes, “including the overseers,” showing by this how more than one elder or overseer was working in one local church. (See Arrington 1982, 74.) In 1 Tim. 5:17 the elders are referred in plural, when discussing the special honour of those elders, who work in preaching and teaching (πρεσβύτεροι).

In addition, Tit. 1:5-9 (Tit. 1:5 πρεσβυτέρους) indicates how councils of elders were chosen into churches in order to administrate them. This is indicated by the reference that the author of Titus gave Titus a task to appoint elders to every town in Crete. (Kent 1971, 218.) In 1 Pet. 5:3 Peter warns the elders to love power. This points to the circumstances, in which there were a group of elders, who did have some power over oth-

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Furthermore, a church ruler may be viewed as a shepherd (ποιμέν) (e.g. Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Peter 5:2). The word ποιμέν refers either to guardian, leader, or shepherd, or to the person, who herds sheep. (Danker 2000, 843; see also Liddell & Scott 1996, 1430.) Church leaders are called shepherds only once in the NT (in the list of offices in Eph. 4:11). (Jeremias 1968, 497.)

<sup>106</sup> However, Beyer (1964, 616 – 617) understands that in Acts 20:28 Paul describes the work and the task of responsible men in the congregation, but the Pastoral Epistles seem to have a more developed application. For example, in 1 Tim. 3:1, ἐπίσκοπε refers to a distinct office, and the passage seems to outline the qualifications and not the duties.

ers in the church. (Friedrich 1971, 665.)<sup>107</sup> In addition, for example James 5:14 advises a sick person to call the elders in plural (πρεσβυτέρους) of the church (singular) (Petts 2002, 77).<sup>108</sup>

Glasscock (1987, 75) also asserts that the elders are referred to in the plural (e.g. James 5:14 and Acts 14:23), when they are mentioned in connection with a church. In 1 Tim. 3:2 and Titus 1:7 the reference is in the singular, but there the elder is not connected to a church. He asserts that this fact supports the pattern of plural eldership in a church and restricts the elders' authority to a particular church. Paul, for instance, points out in Acts 20:28 that the Ephesian elders were to oversee the flock they had been given as their responsibility.

It is also important to note that in 1 Tim. 3:1-13 the author refers to two different offices, the office of elders (3:1-7) and the office of deacons (3:8-13). However, Fee (1988, 22) suggests that the term elder may be a general concept referring to both overseer and deacon. Nevertheless, the grammar of Titus 1:5-7 and 1 Tim. 3 suggests that the terms elder and overseer are interchangeable (as in Acts 20:17 and 28). (Fee 1988, 22; Petts 2002, 74.)<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> See discussion in Aro-Panula 1998, 24. The problem with the idea of separate position among equal elders is that it is difficult to support authentically. However, it still provides for thinking that even the plurality of elders could include different position for elders. For example Petts (2002, 81) suggests that it is often beneficial for a church that one person has the ultimate responsibility for the vision and leadership of the church. While the New Testament does not explicitly teach this, it seems to be in agreement with general biblical principles.

Strauch (1995, 45 – 46) argues that even though the eldership was collective, still the concept, “first among equals,” was one of the ruling factors. This means that although the church leaders seemed to be equal in authority, they still did not have equal gifts in leadership. This concept, “first among equals,” comes from the Roman concept *primus inter pares*. The principle worked also among the disciples of Jesus. According to him (1995, 45 – 46) for example, Peter, James and John were “first among equals” among the disciples (Mark 14:33; Luke 8:51; 9:28). Then, Peter was “first among equals” among the three and among the disciples as well (Matt. 10:2).

See also the discussion in Aro-Panula 1998, 24 – 25.

<sup>108</sup> The biblical references about the plural references to elders discussed indicate that the early church had several elders. However, it is difficult on the bases of the references to determine whether the biblical evidence points to the plurality of elders in church leadership. Nevertheless, the Finnish Pentecostal authors have applied the references in supporting the teaching about the plural leadership of elders. (See for example Hämäläinen 2005, 12 – 13).

<sup>109</sup> Strauch 1992, (62) suggests that the terms occur interchangeably in the New Testament, but they started to refer to two completely separate officials in the early second century churches: the overseer (or bishop) and the council of elders.

One's understanding of these two words (leadership offices) is important, because their interpretation may lead to two different kinds of applications. One will either emphasise leadership by the pastor or leadership by the elders. In the Finnish Pentecostal context in particular the elders' leadership has been emphasised. In addition, even though the elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement have officially maintained collective equal leadership power, for example the chairman of the board of elders has often in practice had more power than other elders. (See for example Salo 1998, 48 – 55.)

### **3.2.2 Two or three offices in a church?**

The different views about eldership may be seen as a spectrum that is divided into two different parts. One idea is an inflexible two-office view (elders and deacons). It emphasises the parity or equality of elders by stressing that all elders have exactly the same office and the ministry of the different elders is similar (or almost similar). The other idea is the three-office view of church governance. It makes a distinction between teaching elders (often called ministers, pastors, or senior pastors) and other elders (the ruling elders).<sup>110</sup> Although teaching elders are included in the category of elders, they tend to have a role that is almost a distinct office. This system is very typical among Presbyterians.<sup>111</sup> (Waldron 2004, 192.)

According to Knight (1985, 1-2) on the one hand, the advocates of the three-office view assert that the New Testament references to elders or bishops only apply to ministers, but not to the “ruling elders.” They point out that the latter are only referred to as “helps” and/or “administrations” or “governments” in 1 Corinthians 12:28. The responsibility of the elders was limited to ruling or administration, and did not include teaching. However, some two-office advocates maintain that there is no distinction between

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<sup>110</sup> A question is whether the phrases “the elders who rule” and “those who work in preaching and teaching” (1 Tim. 5:17) refer to two different roles, i.e., the pastor and the elder, or only to one role, i.e., the role of a ruling elder. Another question is whether the distinction between the gifts of ruling and exhorting in Romans 12:8 and 1 Corinthians 12:28 (here the gifts are also related to the offices) support this idea of distinct offices. (Van Dam 2009, 199.)

<sup>111</sup> However, Knight (1985, 1) asserts that there has been a tendency in the Presbyterian Church to entertain two views. The first is a three-office view in which the clergy is distinguished from lay ruling officers (elders) and deacons (lay serving officers). The other is a two-office view, which maintains that there are elders (teaching and ruling, clergy and lay) and deacons (lay serving officers).

the office of an elder and the teaching of the ruling elders (Knight 1985, 1-2; see also discussion in Glasscock 1987, 75 – 76.)<sup>112</sup>

Mappes (1997c, 170) understands that the task of elder-overseer-pastor concentrates on two separate areas. One central aspect is the oversight. This refers to ruling, guiding, caring for the church. The other aspect is teaching and preaching. These two aspects in an elders ministry have led to a question whether in the question are two separate offices. This means that is it so that some elders rule when other elders teach or preach.

The support of the distinction between ruling and teaching elders may be found for example from 5:17, in which the author of pastorals separately mentions those elders who are leading and those who are serving with the word and are preaching. (Mappes 1997c, 171.) However, Mappes (1997c, 171) argues that the different functions of eldership do not require distinct offices. For Mappes (1997c, 173 - 174) the distinction between ruling and teaching of elders is mainly based function and not to class or office.

1 Timothy 5:17 is the only passage that seems to suggest a distinction between teaching and ruling elders. According to Mappes (1997c, 172) the distinctions of the roles are not necessary for two reasons. First, the author is using the term *προ-εστώτες* ("rule"), which is the present participle of *προίστημι*. Mappes (1997c, 173) understands that the supervising aspect of *προίστημι* parallels with the terms that point out the function of elder-overseer-pastors. For him this means that when *ἐπίσκοποι* outlines the aspects of oversight and rule in the role of elders, the term *πρεσβύτεροι* emphasizes the element of godly wisdom and maturity. This suggests that the elders who rule (*προεστώτες*) are not functionally that much different from the elder-overseer-pastors.

For Mappes (1997c, 173) the second point to consider in relation to 1 Timothy 5.17 is the question who are especially (*μάλιστα*) those who work hard (*οἱ κοπιῶντες*) at preaching (*ἐν λόγῳ*) and teaching (*διδασκαλία*)? Mappes (1997c, 173) observes that those who labor in preaching and teaching are plural. For him this indicates that there are several teaching elders, not only one. He also views that the superlative adverb "especially" (*μάλιστα*) specifies or lays emphasis on those who preach and teach. Mappes

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<sup>112</sup> Van Dam (2009, 199) advocates the idea that the offices of ruling and teaching elders are different, but he maintains that there is unity between these two roles.

(1997c, 173) reasons that not necessarily all those who rule actually teach and preach even though while the adverb indicates that those who labor in word and doctrine are also among those who rule. He concludes that even though all elders rule, not all automatically preach and teach. This means for him that some of the elders (πρεσβύτεροι) concentrate at preaching and teaching.

In the Finnish Pentecostal movement the question of separating elders between teaching and ruling elders has not been the issue. However, the question of the role of a pastor has similar elements. As discussed later (see for example Kärnä), the thinking has been that the preacher (paid fulltime minister) should not lead the church, but the leadership needs to be left to the elders of the church. The question has been whether elders are really able to minister in preaching and teaching, or whether the preacher should be strongly involved into leading of the church. In that sense the issue in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement has reflected the similar discussion with the separation between ruling and teaching elders.

### **3.2.3 Analysis of 1 Timothy 3:1-7**

An important consideration is the extent to which the biblical texts could be used as models for today's church leadership. Fee (1985, 150) points out that it is hermeneutically difficult to decide whether one should apply specific texts or not. He views that it is necessary to decide how the text written to address and correct a historical situation could also function as the Spirit-inspired eternal Word for today's people. Consistency is an important consideration. He maintains that while common sense keeps us from going too far, it is important to keep in mind that an individual's "common sense" might not always be common. In other words, it may be influenced by diverse cultural, theological and ecclesiastical traditions.<sup>113</sup>

Fee (1985, 150) points out two central problems in interpreting first Timothy: possible inconsistencies in making conclusions and difficulties created by exegetical ambiguity. Inconsistency is seen, for instance, in that some passages are understood literally while other similar passages are not. For instance, 1 Tim. 2:11-12 has given rise to much dis-

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<sup>113</sup> Fee (1985, 150) summarises the central issues on church order arising from 1 Timothy in the following two questions. What can one learn from a text that was not originally intended to teach church order? How do the rules intended to correct abuses of wayward elders in the Ephesian church in A.D. 62 function as eternal absolute norms in every culture at any time?

cussion on whether women may teach, preach, or be ordained. However, there has been scant discussion, on the basis of 1 Tim. 5:3-16, on whether the church should care for its widows who are over sixty or require the younger widows to be married. The logical reason for this inconsistency is that our own cultural or existential urgencies are influencing us.

Exegetical ambiguity is seen in the interpretation of these two texts. Inconsistent interpretation may for instance be seen in the way the requirement in 1 Tim. 3:2 and 12 that a church leader should be “the husband of one wife” is understood. The challenge is in how one justifies, on the basis of the text, denying the ministry to a person who was divorced and remarried before becoming a believer, while allowing former adulterers to serve, although they may have lived with several women without legally marrying them. Hermeneutical discussion is needed in order to apply the text properly. (Fee 1985, 150.)<sup>114</sup>

1 Tim. 3:1-7 is a central passage on the role of elders in the Bible. It is essential, because it provides a list of qualifications for an elder. Fee (1985) points well out the challenge of hermeneutical decisions, the Finnish Pentecostal Movement also faces, while approaching the question of the form of the role of an elder. A challenging question in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement is whether this list should be viewed as a literal list of criteria, or whether it should rather be seen as a list of principles. Some considerations need to be addressed in order to understand the purpose of the passage.

Marshall (1999, 473 – 474) suggests that the author of Pastorals (see the discussion of authorship in the footnote)<sup>115</sup> of the criteria listed in 1 Tim. 3 is following a church

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<sup>114</sup> If one takes remarriage after divorce literally, should one also consider prohibiting the remarriage of widows/widowers in order to perform consistent exegesis? Inconsistency may be also seen in how the idea of “one wife” is taken literally, but then the following idea of bringing children up in the faith is not interpreted in a literal manner, i.e. by not requiring that an elder’s every child is a believer.

<sup>115</sup> The rather developed description of church order in 1 Tim. has given rise to discussion on the authorship of the epistle. Hanson (1982, 31) asserts that the Pastoral Epistles were very likely not written by the apostle Paul (but were written by a pseudographer), because the Pastorals have a more structured church organization than the other possibly earlier letters assigned to the apostle (e.g. 1 Th. 5:12 and Rom. 12:8; see also Marshall 1999, 58). Scholars have raised three basic critical issues against the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. The first is historical, which means that the epistles do not fit into the historical framework of Acts. The second is theological, which asserts that the epistles do not include all themes that are typical of Paul, and develop theology in a way that is not typical of Paul. The third is the literary style, which asserts that the vocabulary and style of the epistles differ from the other qualified Pauline epistles. (Mounce 2000, lxxxiv.)

manual, which would also have included ideas and instructions on appointing church leaders. The content of the qualification list seems to be similar to the list included in Titus 1:5-9. (Marshall 1999, 473 – 474; see also Liefeld 1999, 117.)<sup>116</sup>

Demarest (1984, 185) argues that lists similar to the list of qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 were common in the Greek context, for instance for midwives and generals (Demarest 1984, 185). Indeed, Mappes (2003, 209 - 210) points out that the list of an elder's virtues mentioned in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 could be seen as reflecting the virtue list for a general described by the Platonic philosopher Onasander. The similarity of the lists is seen in the fact that two of the eleven words on Onasander's list are also mentioned in the list of 1 Timothy 3:1-7. In addition, three other words are similar (see Onasander 1928, 375 – 387).<sup>117</sup>

However, Onasander's list and the list mentioned in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 have some significant dissimilarities. For instance, the differences between the lists of qualifications for elders and deacons seem to emphasise the purposefulness of the list of the author of pastorals. This militates against the idea that the author used the list of an elder's qualifications merely for rhetorical purposes. If the author had used the list merely as a stylised gener-

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However, Oden (1989, 145) points out that the description of a system of ordained elders in the Pastorals that is seen as reflecting a too advanced ecclesiastical polity does not as such argue for a non-Pauline authorship, because the earlier letters also include official eldership systems (see 1 Cor. 8:19; Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23, 20:17). This leaves it possible that the apostle Paul has written the letter. Nevertheless, the question of authorship is not the most crucial question for the nature of the list in 1 Tim. 3. However, I have to admit that I may not be completely certain about the authorship. The author of the epistle (1 Timothy) is referred just as "the author" in order to point out the difficulty in determining the authorship.

<sup>116</sup> The list of overseers in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 resembles the list of elders in Titus 1:6-9. The lists are nevertheless somewhat different. This fact does not necessarily mean that the documents were written by different authors. It is more likely that one person (Paul) has written the lists, but has applied them to different situations, as the contexts of the documents indicate. (Towner 2006, 240.)

<sup>117</sup> The similarity of the lists is seen in the fact that Onasander's list has the counterparts for both *σώφρονα* ("sensible"; 1 Tim 3:2) and *ἀφιλάργυρον* ("free from the love of money"; v. 3) (see Onasander 1928, 374 – 376). In addition, three other terms concerning the need to be self-restrained, family requirements, and reputation are similar on both lists. (Mappes 2003, 210; see Onasander 1928, 374 – 382.)

The dissimilarity of the lists is seen for instance in how the list in 1 Timothy mentions virtues that are not included in Onasander's list. These are for instance the ability to teach, the requirement of not being an excessive wine drinker, not being a new convert, keeping children in subjection and managing one's own family so that it is the basis for managing one's church. (Mappes 2003, 210; see also Hanson 1982, 75 – 76.)



ic list, he would not have provided a separate list for elders and deacons. (Mappes 2003, 210.)<sup>118</sup>

However, the purpose of 1 Timothy is an important consideration. The question is that do these Pauline texts suggests that the author's intention was to give instructions for Timothy on how to deal with the teachers who were led astray and on how to choose the right kind of leaders.<sup>119</sup> Fee (1988, 21) argues that the church structure was not the author concern, but he was concerned with correcting theological and behavioural abuses. (See also Liefeld 1999, 115, and Mounce 2000, lxxxi.)<sup>120</sup>

Mappes (2003, 212 – 213) is in same line with Fee in arguing that the author's primary aim in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 was to point out the difference between true and false teachers.<sup>121</sup> For him the author shows that one's personal "godliness" needs to be in harmony with one's teaching. The author emphasises in the Pastorals that the false teachers had the form of godliness (2 Tim. 3:5), but they did not practice it (Titus 1:16; 3:8-11). In addition, the false teachers taught strange doctrines (1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 4:15).<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> The sections on both elders and deacons seem to point out the same general qualifications of leaders who had to be irrefragable and have a blameless reputation. (Towner 2006, 239.)

<sup>119</sup> This is in agreement with the Fee's (1988, 78) observation that (in contrast to Titus 1:5) Timothy was not left in Ephesus to appoint elders. The text of 1 Timothy (as well as the text of Acts 20) indicates that Timothy was in a church that already had elders. Why would author of 1. Timothy then give Timothy instructions about elders? The evidence in the text seems to suggest that the reason had to do with the character and activities of false teachers. This is seen for instance in how the items listed 1 Tim. 3 are contrary to that what is said in the other parts of the letter about false teachers.

<sup>120</sup> Liefeld (1999, 115) also suggests that a major reason for the author in pointing out an elder's qualifications was to resist false teachers. He does this by listing the criteria for a morally qualified and sound teacher. This is also seen in verses 3:14-15, in the discussion on the "mystery of godliness." Liefeld maintains that the emphasis of the qualification list seems to be on moral integrity in particular. The list does not give any hints about specific doctrinal errors that the author would oppose.

In addition, Mounce (2000, lxxxi) thinks that the purpose of the Pastoral Epistles was not to provide an institutional authority for overseers and deacons. Instead, their purpose seems to be to describe what kind of persons could serve in the role. They had to teach that what is true, and to disprove the false.

<sup>121</sup> Mappes (2003, 215; 216 – 218) points out that the lists may also have had a didactic function. First of all, the lists of qualifications provide a description of the godly life that the elders, deacons and all believers should follow. In addition, this means that the purpose of the list is not to divide the believers into two classes, i.e. holy leaders and church members (even though this has often been the case), but to provide a list for leaders that the others may also try to emulate. In addition, the author seems to emphasize the significance of personal example as a way of teaching others.

<sup>122</sup> Thus, for the author of 1 Timothy 3 the list of the qualifications of church officials seems to have been a means to point out the falseness of the false teachers (1 Timothy 1:3-11; 4:1-16; 6:3-19; 2 Tim. 2:14-4:5; Titus 1:10-16; 3:9). In addition, the listed qualifications seem to reflect the description of sound

According to Marshall (1999, 473 – 474), it may at first seem that the passage in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 does not have any connection to the preceding text. This could lead one to speculate whether the list was based on a church manual. However, Marshall points out that the entire letter discusses the problem of heretical teaching and heretical teachers in the church. For Marshall the list is similar with Titus 1:5-9, but has so much literary variation that it is likely that the similarity points more to literary variation of one author than the reproduction of for example a church manual. The author has just dealt with the problem of the women who were teaching in the church, probably because of their association with heretical teachings. Seen in this light, the passage under consideration seems to promote sound teaching and to emphasise the right kind of teachers. Accordingly, for Marshall (1999, 473) the list of the elders' required qualities functions at least to some extent as a contrast to the teachers of heresy and heresy itself.<sup>123</sup>

Mappes (2003, 215) concludes that the author seemed to use the qualifications of church leaders and the element of personal instance (throughout the Pastoral Epistles) to make a case against the conduct and teaching of the false teachers. In addition, he seemed to instruct his readers about the nature of sound doctrine.<sup>124</sup>

In addition, Mappes (2003, 218) views that the author's point in presenting the qualifications and personal example in Pastoral Epistles was both to argue against the false teachers (their conduct and teaching) and to instruct the church about the sound doctrine. According to him these qualification also point to the ethically correct behavior of church leaders. Mappes (2003, 214 - 215) understands that the qualification mentioned 1 Tim. 3:1-2 describe what the elder is to be like. Then verses 3-4 point what they

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teaching. The author first points out the elder's requirements (1 Tim. 3:1-2) and then describes what they are not to be like (vv. 3-4). By pointing out what the church teachers should not be like, the author seems to demonstrate the nature of the false teachers, their doctrine, and their conduct. (Mappes 2003, 213 – 215.)

<sup>123</sup> It is also important to note that the task is presented in 1 Tim. 3 in a positive sense. The way the task is presented seems to emphasise that the task is a worthy activity. (Marshall 1999, 476.) These considerations seem to support the idea that the author wanted to provide a positive alternative for spiritual leadership in contrast to the false teachers.

<sup>124</sup> The qualifications laid down in the passage also seem to indicate the kind of ethical behaviour expected of church leaders and of all believers (Mappes 2003, 215.) Glasscock (1987, 71) suggests that the discussion of moral, ethical and spiritual qualifications in 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1 was necessary for teaching the Gentile churches about the spiritual nature of the elder's role.

should not to be like. This means that the vices mentioned in verses 2-4 seem to depict what an elder is not to be like. This then demonstrates the problem with the false teachers and their doctrine.

In addition, Glasscock (1987, 73) points out that the lists of the elders' qualifications presented in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 (and in Titus 1:5-9) seem to fall into four categories: personal character, family, public testimony, and ministry. However, these categories overlap. For instance, if one fails with one's family, it will affect one's ministry and personal qualifications.<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, Glasscock (1987, 74 – 75) asserts that the idea of “must be” in 1 Tim. 3:2 highlights the prospective elder's need to fulfil the requirements mentioned in the list that follows. Thus, the candidates had to be old enough to display these characteristics in their life.

### **3.2.4 The list of qualifications**

How the list of qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 may be understood? According to Knight (1992, 156) the qualifications listed center on two areas. For him the first group of qualifications is the personal self-discipline and maturity. The second group of qualifications is the capability to maintain good relationships with others and to teach and take care for them. However, he (1992, 156) views that these two groups are intertwined with each other. In addition, he views a tendency in the list of qualifications to move from personal to the interpersonal matters.<sup>126</sup>

Mayhue (2011, 220 – 221) points out that the elders were sufficient for the role, when they were spiritually able (1 Tim 3:4-5). In addition, the elders showed their submission to the role when they were willing to do God's will (1 Tim 3:1). Their spiritual maturity was exemplified by godly character (1 Tim 3:2-3). Furthermore, well done ministry proved the elders to be steadfast in their role (1 Tim 3:6-7, 10) (See also Doriani (1993,

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<sup>125</sup> Glasscock (1987, 74) sees that these qualifications focus on the character of the leaders and not on their education. The characteristics seem to point to godly leadership and may be summarized as follows: An elder is expected to be unselfish, a good family leader, of good reputation, and able to teach the Scriptures. Banks 1994, 197 thinks that the list in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 emphasises the work and character of the ἐπίσκοπος, and not the office as such.

<sup>126</sup> Glasscock (1987, 73 – 75) combines the list with the list mentioned in Titus 1:5-9. He groups the qualifications to four major expectations, the personal qualifications, the public qualifications, the family qualifications, and the ministry qualifications. For him (1987, 75) the qualifications indicate that an elder should be unselfish, should have good reputation, should be a good family leader, and should be able to discuss the Scripture.

76). Guthrie (1990, 92) understands that in verse 2 the qualification above reproach (*ἀνεπίληπτου*) is central requirement for an elder's character.

Knight (1992, 156) argues that "husband of one wife" and "temperate" in verse 2 point to self-discipline and maturity. Guthrie (1990, 92) argues that the words, "the husband of but one wife" either means that church leaders themselves should be examples for monogamous marriage and would serve as patterns for all new converts, or that the term refers in general that an overseer must embrace a strict morality.<sup>127</sup> He understands that the phrase does not only mean that a Christian man should leave his possible other wives and should keep only one of them. In addition, Glasscock (1983, 256) argues that even though the idea of the term "one-woman man" is not clear, the term cannot either mean that an elder cannot have been married previously or that an elder cannot have been divorced. For him the text just implies that an elder should be a one-wife husband or a one-woman type of man. This refers to the character requirement of an elder, not for example to what they have done in their life prior to their conversion.<sup>128</sup>

Furthermore, Guthrie (1990, 92) understands that in verse 2 the virtues temperate, self-controlled, respectable (first three listed in verse 3) are closely linked with each other, and describe an orderly life. Guthrie (1990, 92) argues that the requirement, hospitable, was especially meaningful for the early church, because without the hospitality of Christian people the church would have not expanded so fast. The fifth quality, able to teach, involves mental skills. An overseer should also have mental skills with the form of able to teach in order to advice people and teach the doctrine. A church does not do well if its leaders are not able to teach. Knight (1992, 156) is in the same line of thought. For him "hospitable" and "able to teach" at the end of the verse, point also to maturity. He understands that it means more than only that an elder should have a good report over his ministry. This emphasizes maturity as one central requirement in an elder's life.

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<sup>127</sup> Doriani (1993, 72) points out that the phrase "the husband of one wife" (*μιας γυναικός άνδρα*) has as a counterpart the grammatically identical phrase in 1 Tim 5:9, which says a woman must be the wife of one husband (*ένας άνδρός γυνή*). The phrase is in context of describing the right conduct of widows. The idea there is marital fidelity.

<sup>128</sup> Glasscock (1983, 252) argues that the absence of the article with the word *άνδρα* seems to refer to the idea of character, not to the marital status. This is because the definite article is used with the word "the overseer" (*τόν έπίσκοπον*), but not then with the word *άνδρα* when referring to the overseer. It is important to keep in mind that the author of 1 Timothy was working with young church influenced by the Greek culture, which need that kind of instruction today's churches would not necessarily need.

Guthrie (1990, 92 – 93) argues that qualities of denial mentioned in verse 3 pointed out what an elder should not have in their life in order to reflect fully the Christian gentle Spirit.<sup>129</sup> For him this means that an elder should concentrate on positive matters and should not tolerate any violent actions. Knight (1992, 156) points out that the center of the verse 3 lifts up gentleness. That is then supported with restrictions to not to be addicted to wine and not to be a lover of money.

Guthrie (1990, 93) understands that the reference to one's family in verses 4-5 suggest that the candidate, who is not able to govern his children tactfully and thoughtfully by applying good discipline, is not ready for governing the church. The Greek term with proper respect (μετὰ πάσης σεμνότητος) refers to dignity in discipline, but not with sternness. (Guthrie 1990, 93.) Knight (1992, 156) argues that the expectation to manage one's household and children with dignity in verse 4 point out in verse 5 how this supports that an ἐπίσκοπος will take good care of the church.

For Guthrie (1990, 94) the candidate to the office of an elder should not be a recent convert (νεόφυτος) (verse 6). This expression has often been understood as referring to the late date of Pastoral Epistles, because in a recently established church all members would have been recent converts. However, Guthrie (1990, 94) understands that the verse points out that if an elder is very young Christian they have a danger to become pride and fall as a result of that. Knight (1992, 156) understands similarly that in verse 6 the author returns back to the issue of personal maturity by pointing out that the ἐπίσκοπος should not be a new convert. Otherwise there is a danger that they will become proud or arrogant.

Mappes (1997b, 479) understands from the qualification standards (not a new convert) mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 that prospective elders should be observed over time before they are appointed as elders for example through the laying on of hands. In addition, Mappes (1997b, 477) argues that the qualification of not to be a new convert in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 is supported by the idea of not to be too fast in recognizing new elders by laying of hands in 5:22 and its surrounding context from the text. Mappes thinks that the

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<sup>129</sup> For Guthrie (1990, 92 – 93), for example, “not given to much wine” stands against drunkenness. “Not violent,” stands against irrational showing of anger. “Not quarrelsome” directs against contentious behavior. “Not a lover of money” warns against materialistic attitude.

author of First Timothy gave instructions for Timothy to take care that the elders he appoints have been properly investigated.<sup>130</sup>

In addition, Guthrie (1990, 94) argues that the idea of good reputation from the outside world (verse 7) does not mean that the world should accept Christian minister. However, for him it means that also the world persistently condemned a Christian minister, whose life is not in accordance with their profession and position. Knight (1992, 156) emphasizes that the end of verse 7 points out how also what the outside world speak affects to the possible ἐπίσκοπος. The end of the verse seven also emphasizes the danger to be trapped by elder to sin.

These requirements for an ἐπίσκοπος provide a picture of a mature person, who is able to handle the challenges they may face in the leadership of a church. The requirements provide especially the principles that help in choosing the right kind of people into the role.

I came to similar conclusions in my previous research (described in chapter 1). The research concluded that the text does not present a church manual type of list of the elder's tasks. The list describes an elder's character – a list of virtues expected of the elder. The research also concluded that both shepherding in general and the need to be a spiritual example in particular were the central expectations in the list created by the author of 1 Timothy. The research also emphasised the need for elders to have abilities both in administration and in teaching.<sup>131</sup>

In addition, the research brought up the need for elders to find their own area of service within the collective leadership of the elders (see the earlier discussion about the plurality of elders). The collective leadership of elders is argued with the form of elders (pre-

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<sup>130</sup> Mappes (1997b, 476) suggests that the laying on of hands mentioned 1 Timothy 5:22 refers especially to identifying elders publicly. The context indicates for him that the elders laid with hands were either those who had been rebuked and then removed from the eldership or those candidates, who were not previously recognized and appointed as elders. However, the context does not clarify which group was in question. However, the context in verses 5:24-25 suggest that in the question was the recognition of elders and not the reinstatement of rebuked elders. (Mappes 1997b, 476 – 477.)

<sup>131</sup> Oden (1989, 143) justifies this by pointing out that the author of 1 Timothy seems to bring up two aspects of the requirement on teaching skills. The first is that an elder should be able to teach the received Word. The second is the ability to oppose false teaching.

bytero) in plural in the New Testament.<sup>132</sup> Finally, the research concluded that the list in 1 Tim. 3 called for elders, who would provide quality leadership for their church members. (Aro-Panula 1998, 69.)<sup>133</sup>

First Timothy 3:1-7 seems to describe the characters of elders, who are unlike the false teachers. In this sense the list may be understood as a list of the elders' qualifications. However, when analysing the role expectations of church elders in the Finnish Pentecostal setting, it is important to keep in mind that the primary purpose of the list does not appear to be a description of elders. It seems that focus is on indicating how they differ from false teachers. While the list includes important principles about elders, it does not necessarily disclose precise details about the expectations.

### 3.3 Eldership in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement

Eldership is a central factor in a typical Finnish Pentecostal church. Usually, the board of elders lead the church. The pastor has traditionally been seen as the worker the church has hired under the leadership of the elders' board. In effect, the role of the pastor has varied according to the expectations of a particular church.

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<sup>132</sup> My previous research (described in chapter 1) produced the following definition of the role of an elder based on an analysis of 1 Tim. 3:1-7: "The role of an elder is a role of a spiritual shepherd, who is qualified to serve as an example of Jesus Christ, modelling Him to those he is shepherding. This means in effect that he should fulfil the character quality requirements given in 1 Tim. 3:1-7. An elder should also show maturity in administration by managing his family well. In addition, he should also be able to teach and guide his people. Furthermore, he should work together as a colleague with others having the same calling and position. Yet, he should also find his own place by focusing on the area of his talents and gifting. Thus, an elder is a spiritual leader, who is capable of providing quality leadership to the people for whom he is responsible." (Aro-Panula 1998, 69.)

<sup>133</sup> The research also concluded several principles about the quality of elders on the basis of 1 Tim. 3:1-7: 1) The elder's heart attitude is an important factor; 2) An elder should be faithful to only one woman; that is, to his current wife, if he has one. 3) The role is crucial for the well-being of the church (especially for shepherding a church); 4) The elder's role is important, as it enables church members to take part in shepherding the church (elders/bishops are not mentioned in the list of gifts for the church, but were selected by the church and approved and appointed by the apostles or their representatives); 5) An elder should not be a recent convert, but should have been in the church at least for a period of time, so that his abilities and willingness would have been tested; 6) Elders should take their spiritual shepherding roles seriously (they should provide order for church life and bring balance and stability to the church in the midst of heresies and other problems related to church order); 7) The collective eldership system (that seems to have been advocated by author of 1. Timothy and others) is beneficial as it tends to compensate for the faults and failures of individual elders; 8) Although all elders are equal in authority in the church, they do not have equal leadership gifts, or equal backgrounds in experience and the knowledge of the Word of God (the concept of "first among equals" should be taken into account). The benefit of the principle of "first among equals" is that talented and adept individuals will get a chance to focus on leading or teaching in the church. This also gives room for a salaried "Pastor," who focuses more on leading, teaching and shepherding the church. (Aro-Panula 1998, 67 – 68.)

Especially in some big churches the elders' board has given the pastor the role of church leader. In these cases the pastor has been given the *de facto* right to lead the church. However, the elders have retained the sense of ownership and hence the sense of being the church's real leaders.

In a typical small church the elders have viewed themselves as the leaders of the church. The pastor has primarily been seen as a hired worker, who is there to carry out the assigned tasks. In most of these churches the pastor has nevertheless been given the leadership of practical church life. In some churches the elders' board or one of the elders has kept the leadership, and the pastor has literally had to be content with performing pastoral duties.

### **3.3.1 History**

The Pentecostal Movement of Finland has its roots in North American Pentecostalism, in particular through Norwegian and Swedish contacts. Understanding this background will help one to comprehend the roots of the Finnish Pentecostal application of the role of elders.

Charismatic manifestations, including speaking in tongues, already occurred in Finland since 1796 in the movement known as the Awakening and since 1889 in the Laestadian Movement. It was the Laestadians who heard about a Pentecostal revival in Norway. (Anderson 2004, 86; see also Ahonen 1994, 43.)<sup>134</sup>

The revivals associated with Thomas Barratt (1862 – 1940) in Oslo (then Kristiania), Norway, may be seen as the origin of most of the Pentecostal churches in Western Europe. At the time, Barratt was a pastor in the Methodist Episcopal Church of Norway. He visited the USA in order to raise funds for his City Mission to the poor in Oslo. While staying in New York, he happened to read the first edition of *The Apostolic Faith* from Azusa Street. He then began corresponding with the leaders in Los Angeles. He

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<sup>134</sup> They invited Barratt to Finland and in 1911 he arrived for his first visit. When he returned after two weeks of meetings in Helsinki, he left behind a group of Pentecostal believers. (Anderson 2004, 86; see also Ahonen 1994, 43.)



was baptized in the Spirit in an African -American congregation. He then sailed back to Norway. (Anderson 2004, 84.)

Barratt was forced to leave the Methodist Church, because his bishops did not accept his new teaching. In Norway, he formed a fellowship of independent churches, *Pinse-bevegelse* (Pentecostal Revival). The congregational and independent nature of Barratt's church differed remarkably from the more hierarchical Pentecostalism in North America. The revival in Barratt's Filadelfia Church started a pilgrimage from all over Europe. For instance, Pentecostal pioneers such as Alexander Boddy from England, Jonathan Paul from Germany and Lewi Pethrus from Sweden visited Barratt's church. (Anderson 2004, 84.)<sup>135</sup>

Pentecostalism spread to the Swedish speaking areas in Finland in 1908, probably already in 1907. However, the actual beginning of the Finnish Pentecostal Movement was in 1911, even though the early years had prepared the ground for the revival. Barratt visited Finland in the autumn of 1911. He stayed two weeks in Helsinki and after that he also visited Vyborg, Kuopio, Saint Petersburg, Tampere and Turku. While his visit did not start the Pentecostal Movement, he left behind many people, who were interested in and enthusiastic about matters related to Pentecostalism. (Kuosmanen 1979, 335 – 337; Ahonen 1994, 48.)

Gerhard Olsen-Smidt, another Norwegian Pentecostal pastor, arrived in Finland soon after Barratt's visit. Smidt decided to visit Helsinki, Finland, late in the autumn of 1911, after Barratt had told him about his visit to Finland and the enthusiastic welcome he had received. His presence was significant in the early years, because he was its leader in 1912 – 1914 and in 1919 – 1925. In January 1912 he started to contact the people whose addresses he had received. Rather soon after that the revival began. (Kuosmanen 1979, 335; Ahonen 1994, 62 – 64; Ruohomäki 2009, 414.) In brief, it may be said that the Pentecostal revival was brought about by Barratt, continued under the leadership of Smidt, but quite soon Finns took over the leadership. (Kuosmanen 1979, 343; Ruohomäki 2009, 414.) In addition, the years 1912 – 1914 were important for Pentecostal-

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<sup>135</sup> In addition, Barratt himself made several visits to Sweden. Pentecostalism soon became the biggest church movement outside the Lutheran state church in Sweden, Norway and Finland. (Anderson 2004, 85.)

ism in Finland, because then the Pentecostal message spread throughout the country. Soon, people who had embraced Pentecostalism formed their own groups, even though the work was originally started on ecumenical bases. (Ahonen 1994, 61.)<sup>136</sup>

The autonomy of churches was one of the central challenges among early Nordic Pentecostals. Ruohomäki (2014, 141 – 143) points out that Barratt had plans to develop a Pentecostal Alliance from the churches. Ruohomäki (2014, 137, 141 – 142) explains that according to Barratt's church alliance plan different views about baptism or other doctrinal matters should not restrict the unity between believers. Everyone should maintain their personal views about doctrinal matters. Baptismal services could be organized, but they should not be organized during the common Pentecostal meetings. Parents should maintain the right to choose either baptism or baby dedication to their child, even though adults could also be baptized.

Ruohomäki (2014, 142 – 143) shows that Barratt's plan for Pentecostal alliance was based on network of Pentecostal Centers or free Pentecostal churches. Even though the Pentecostal churches were planned to be in connection with each other through conferences, central principle was the independency of local ministry. Barratt's plan was to form alliance between all who were in Pentecostal Movement, even though if they would officially belong to other movements or would support whatever form of church structure or baptism.

However, Ruohomäki (2014, 143) explains that the alliance plan of Barratt did not take place in practice. The strongest reason was that Barratt was also himself baptized by immersion on September 1913 by the Stocholm Philadelphia Church Pastors Lewi Pethrus (see the discussion about Pethrus below). The baptism then also meant that he accepted the idea of local church and the establishment of local church to Oslo. According to Ruohomäki (2014, 143) the other reason for Barratt's church alliance not to take place was that the other churches and religious denominations did not accept their members, who had experienced the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals needed to look for stronger way of unity in order to keep their faith to the Spirit Baptism.

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<sup>136</sup> A revival broke out in Finland after the first Pentecostal baptismal service was held in 1912. As in the other Scandinavian countries, the Finnish Pentecostals formed autonomous churches, and did not accept any idea of a distinct clergy. In Finland, the Pentecostal Movement is known as the Pentecostal Revival. (Anderson 2004, 86.)

In addition to the Norwegian pastors Barratt and Smidt, the Swedish pastor Lewi Pethrus (1884 – 1974) influenced Finnish Pentecostal thinking on church structure.<sup>137</sup> Pethrus was originally a Baptist pastor in Sweden, but he became a Pentecostal after visiting Barratt in Oslo (1907). There he received a new manifestation of the Pentecostal experience he had already received in private. In 1911, he moved to Stockholm to pastor the newly formed Filadelfia Baptist Church. (Anderson 2004, 85; Kuosmanen 1979, 283.)

Pethrus and his Filadelfia Church congregation in Stockholm, Sweden, were expelled from the Baptist denomination in 1912. The primary reason was not that they embraced Pentecostalism, but that they allowed non-Baptists to partake of communion. (Anderson 2004, 85.) Pethrus himself retained Baptist ecclesiology, which emphasised the independence of the local church (no need for a denominational organization). This idea has been prominent in the Scandinavian Pentecostal churches and mission since that time. (Anderson 2004, 85; see also Kuosmanen 1979, 283.)<sup>138</sup>

The leadership of Lewi Pethrus in the Pentecostal movement of Sweden was based on his position as senior pastor of the Filadelfia church in Stockholm, even though the leadership was never formalized.<sup>139</sup> Theological education was not needed, because he

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<sup>137</sup> Pethrus was the pastor of the Stockholm Filadelfia Church for forty-seven years and strongly influenced the Pentecostal Movement in Scandinavia. (Anderson 2004, 85.)

<sup>138</sup> Pentecostals began to consider the need for establishing a church at a rather early stage, but in effect the groups were merely made up of people who had embraced Pentecostal thinking. The groups did not have any organized administrative structure, even though they had leaders, who organized the gatherings. In addition, the Baptist who joined the Pentecostal groups brought with them a more organized view of church organization. (Ruohomäki 2009, 557 – 558.)

Kuosmanen (1979, 283) argues that the expulsion was officially due to a difference in the practice of communion, but in reality it had to do with the doctrine of Spirit baptism and in particular with Pethrus' teaching on the autonomy of the local church.

<sup>139</sup> Even though he believed in present-day apostles (referred to this already in 1919), his own apostleship was never formalized (Aronson 2012, 202.)

Aronson (2012, 209) argues that in practice Pethrus exercised apostolic leadership in the Swedish Pentecostal movement, even though he did not use the title "apostle". Sometimes this meant that his influence even overruled the will of local congregations. This challenged the idea of independent local church. However, at the end of his life he emphasized the sovereign move of the Spirit and so also partially revised his views of Congregationalism. This meant that the emphasis on the independence of the local congregation was preceded by the emphasis on the Spirit and the Spirit's role in restoring the body of Christ.

emphasized spiritual gifts and a divine call as central in ministry.<sup>140</sup> His belief in restorationism, in radical Congregationalism, and in the fivefold ministries (Ephesians 4:11) also supported this view. (Aronson 2012, 202; see also Kuosmanen 1979, 283 – 284.)<sup>141</sup>

According to Aronson (2012, 202) the practical ecclesiology of Lewi Pethrus had a few special features. Pethrus for example emphasized strongly the formal independence of each local congregation. He also resisted the development of a common missionary board for the Pentecostal congregations in Sweden. He resisted the development of denominational structures and the forming of a confession of faith. Indeed, these things were not accepted or adopted by the early Pentecostal congregations in Sweden in the 1920s and the 1930s. Pethrus also maintained that radical congregationalism was “the biblical model”. This kind of congregationalism gave freedom for the Spirit to move in different directions. For him it also did not create any obstacles to fellowship between Christians. (Aronson 2012, 202.)

Aronson (2012, 203) concludes that Pethrus viewed the baptism in Spirit and spiritual gifts as part of a practical ecclesiology. This then led both into radical congregationalism and into an informal apostolic leadership. As the result was also the rejection of a confession of faith, of a mission board and of the theological education. (Aronson 2012, 203.)<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Besides Pentecostal teaching, Pethrus’ strongest emphasis was on the independence of churches and the self-training of pastors. He opposed both the professional theological training of pastors and the denominational organization of churches. (Kuosmanen 1979, 283 – 284.)

However, Pethrus himself was one of the teachers in the first few weeks in a Bible school held in Helsinki in 1926. The Bible School had a strong effect on promoting the idea of the doctrine of the local church. For several years, Pethrus served as a visiting teacher at the school. (Kuosmanen 1979, 347, 354.)

<sup>141</sup> The ecclesiology of Lewi Pethrus got influence from Pietism, Holiness and Baptist theology. He also strongly believed into the restoration of God’s assembly in the last days, with emphasizes on the experience of the Spirit, Spirit baptism, spiritual gifts, and the fivefold ministries (Ephesians 4:11). However, there was a tension between radical Congregationalism inherited from the Baptist and Holiness traditions and the new experience of the Spirit in restoration. (Aronson 2012, 209.)

<sup>142</sup> Aronson (2012, 203) discusses that Pethrus’s teaching about church discipline and excommunication were influenced both by his emphasis on the bride as the image of the church and by the emphasis on the sanctifying work of the Spirit. For him this was important, because church was *ekklesia* (those called out from the world), and as bride of Christ the church was to be protected from the dangerous power of sin. The council of elders of a local congregation was supposed to carry out that act of excommunication. (Aronson 2012, 203.)

Ruohomäki (2014, 229) argues that both the inner requirements and the examples of Scandinavian Sister-Movements influenced the organization process. Especially the believers with Baptist background insisted the establishment of local churches. One of the reasons was that the use of money required the structures.<sup>143</sup> Ruohomäki (2014, 229) clarifies that even though the original dispute was over the open communion for every believer or the closed communion for those who had been baptized by immersion, those emphasizing the closed communion expected also the organization into local churches with the list of members, member cards and church offices of elders and deacons.

It may be concluded that the influence of other Nordic countries, especially the influence of Pethrus, the leading pastor of Stockholm Sweden, has created a background, in which the idea of local independent church has nourished well in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. The influence has also strengthened the idea that there exists a Biblical model for church structure and leadership. This then has also emphasised the role of elders in church leadership.

### **3.3.2 Finnish Pentecostal interpretation of the role of a church elder**

When it comes to the role of elders, the influence of other than Scandinavian thinking has been rather limited. The Finnish Pentecostal system, in which each church is considered to be independent, led by its elders, is a typical Scandinavian Pentecostal application (see the earlier discussion of the influence of Pethrus). Could there be any elements in Finnish culture that might explain the reasons for this application?

How have Finnish authors interpreted the idea of church elders? Next, a few central Finnish Pentecostal texts are analysed in order better to understand the Finnish Pentecostal application of the multi-elder congregational view of elders.

The idea of the elders' collective leadership has been a major emphasis of Finnish Pentecostal authors. In his book "The Body of Christ", Veikko Lähde (1943, 14 – 15), an early Pentecostal pastor, asserted that Scripture (the references to elders) referred to the

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<sup>143</sup> Ruohomäki (2014, 230) argues that also the examples of Swedish and Norwegian Pentecostal movements influenced on how the Finnish Pentecostal churches were organized. Stockholm Philadelphia Church led by Lewi Pethrus had originally belonged into Baptist Movement. When it was changed as a Pentecostal church, it kept its Baptist based church structure. Also the Philadelphia Church of Oslo was organized by Barratt. Ruohomäki (2014, 230) keeps it likely that the Nordic examples influence strongly to the view of Gerhard Smidt in the Finnish Pentecostal church organization dispute.

leadership of a church in the plural, but in the singular to the person, who should become a leader or overseer. With this he promoted the idea of the plurality of elders. He asserted that some people only read the verses 1 Timothy 3:1-7 that are in the singular because they promoted the idea that a church needs one leader. (Lähde 1943, 14 – 15.)

Lähde (1943, 16) also asserted that many churches have encountered quarrelling, disagreements, and disunion when one person has set himself up as the leader. He thought that a church too easily falls prey to autocratic rule, if the purpose of the church is not seen in the light of the Body of Christ. There is a danger that the leaders do everything in their own way. They may also try to choose suitable elders, who are not likely to oppose them. Outwardly it may look as if the board works together collectively, but in reality everyone has to obey the autocratic leader. (Lähde 1943, 16.)<sup>144</sup> These ideas of Lähde (1943) show how the argumentation for the leadership of elders has been strong in past decades in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement.

Tapani Kärnä (n.d., 94)<sup>145</sup>, another pastor, asserted that a bishop is not an apostle. However, he thought that according to 1 Peter 5:1, an apostle could serve as a bishop or an elder in a local church. According to him, the title “bishop” is a title equal to that of an “overseer” and “elder”. For him the role of a bishop is restricted to the local church, and does not extend outside or over it. Kärnä’s (n.d., 94 - 95) emphasis was that in a local church the permanent leadership position only belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. In this sense, a bishop is merely a bishop among the others bishops / elders and serves according to the gifting the Lord gives them.

Kärnä (n.d., 99) also thought that a church could ask a person to help in proclaiming the Word, as a fulltime salaried preacher pastor. However, the preacher should be a temporary worker and should not assume the leadership of the church from the elders (even though the leadership was offered to them). The preacher has to keep in mind that Jesus Christ is the leader of the church, and He has appointed the elders, not the apostles, to

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<sup>144</sup> In addition, Lähde (1943, 19) promoted the collective leadership of elders by asserting that the apostolic ministry was given for the universal or global church, but not for a local church. He uses this idea to explain why for instance in the biblical text the apostle Paul authorised his assistants Timothy and Titus to organize church issues on their own. With this he means that because the apostolic ministry was not for a local church, it is customary that a local church is led by a group of elders and not for instance by a pastor. (Lähde 1943, 19.)

<sup>145</sup> The book is unpublished. The year of writing is not known (probably in 1970’s or in 1980’s).

lead the church. (Kärnä n.d., 99.) Kärnä (n.d.) presents well the thinking that the leadership of a church should be in the hands of elders. The fulltime salaried preacher should concentrate just on preaching and teaching the Word of God.

In a handbook for elders written by Klapuri and Salo (1998), Klapuri describes the biblical interpretation of the elder's role at length. According to Klapuri (1998, 18 – 19), the task of the overseeing church elder is the same task as the ministry gift of the shepherd-teacher.

Klapuri (1998, 19) defines the word “elder” by explaining that the New Testament uses three different words for shepherds. His definition of the term is in line with the commentators discussed earlier (see the footnote). However, he lays a strong emphasis on the plurality of eldership.<sup>146</sup>

As to the qualifications of an elder, Klapuri (1998, 24 – 25) points out that an elder should be able to teach especially by their own life and instance and in private discussions (this kind of elder may already be apt to teach). The ability to teach verbally is also an asset for an elder, but it is not necessary for all elders to teach in public. In addition, according to him the shepherding of a church also requires spiritual gifts such as the word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, governing and leading. (Klapuri 1998, 27.)<sup>147</sup>

In addition, Klapuri (1998, 28 – 29) emphasises the importance of spiritual principles in choosing elders for a church (he refers to 1 Timothy 3 and 5 as biblical support). One's social status should not be a criterion for eldership and being related to a person in a high position should not carry weight in the choice of elders. The board of elders should scrutinise the traits of prospective elders carefully before choosing them. However, he points out that it is necessary to ask the approval of the prospective elders before choos-

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<sup>146</sup> He states that the Greek word ἐπίσκοπος refers to both supervising something and to a supervisor who is subordinate to someone else. Πρεσβύτερος refers to being older in age, being mature and having experience. The third word ποιμὴν (shepherd) is used for instance in Eph. 4:11 of shepherds who prepare the church for the service. This refers to the preacher-shepherd's task that is more comprehensive than the task of an elder. The elders are always referred to in the plural, not in the singular, as was the case with the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20:17.

<sup>147</sup> In addition, according to Klapuri (1998, 28) it is important that the older elders secure the continuity of a church by investing their spiritual capital to mentoring the younger elders (as mentioned in 2. Tim. 2:2). This is a traditional training method in which younger people learn to grow and acquire skills by working alongside older people.

ing them. After that, the elders are presented to the church, which gives the final approval for the appointment.<sup>148</sup>

The discussion of Klapuri in his handbook for elders (Klapuri and Salo 1998) provides an overview about the way how the role of an elder has been understood in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. He also maintains strongly the leadership of elders in a local church.

Kangasoja, Luoma and Tossavainen (2009, 20) understand that the New Testament mandates the elders to lead the church, preach and teach and protect the church from heresies and heretical teachers. The elders should encourage, support and guide the church with sound teaching. They are to visit the sick and pray for them. They should also be able to make decisions on doctrinal, organizational, ethical and moral issues. In biblical terms this means that the elders shepherd, oversee and lead a local church. They refer to 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Pet 5:1-4 when describing the biblical basis of the elders' duties. (Kangasoja, Luoma & Tossavainen 2009, 20 – 22.)

Kangasoja, Luoma and Tossavainen (2009, 20) assert that God has seen it good to appoint elders (also called shepherds, overseers and leaders) to a church. An elder is ultimately accountable to Jesus Christ, because He is seen as the head of the church. However, elders are also accountable to each other. They suggest that the order of accountability is first to Christ, then to other elders and then to the church. The text of Kangasoja, Luoma and Tossavainen (2009) show that the emphasis on the role of an elder is still strong.

According to Isohella (2011, 180), the Bible teaches unequivocally (Acts 14:23, 15:22, 20:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14) that a church needs several elders in its leadership. This means that a church led by one or two elders is not biblical. The reason for this biblical

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<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, Klapuri (1998, 33 – 34) emphasises that elders should always work for the good of their church. Moreover, an elder (as well as a salaried pastor) should be willing to resign their position, if it seems to be the best for the church. However, he maintains that for a church it may be easier to ask a salaried pastor to leave than to ask a voluntary elder to leave, because the latter is often local and is felt to be a part of the system.



rule of several leaders is for instance to prevent the church from becoming a stage for an elder to be in the limelight. It will also prevent a leader from controlling the church.<sup>149</sup>

The multiple-elder leadership model enables the church to benefit from the different spiritual gifts given to the different elders. In contrast, the single-elder model involves the risk that the leader destroys a church through their leadership, or at least causes harm or inconvenience to the church members, if the leader moves to another town or area. (Isohella 2011, 181.) This shows that Isohella (2011), as a recent author in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement, also emphasises strongly the leadership of the plurality of elders.

It seems that the leadership model used in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement has emphasised the prominent role of elders in leading a church. However, is there only one possible way of applying the elders' role, or could a few different models be drawn from the biblical example?

My previous research (described earlier in chapter 1), suggested a few possible models for applying the role of an elder. They were based on the principles discovered in the biblical text. The first suggestion was described as “the clarification of the Finnish model.”<sup>150</sup> The model aimed to make use of the application derived from the Bible, but to explain it so that it would be applicable to the changing needs of the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. (Aro-Panula 1998, 72.)

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<sup>149</sup> Isohella (2011, 191 – 192) thinks that *πρεσβύτερος* (Acts 20:17; 1 Tim. 4:14, 5:19) refers to the eldership given to a person. The selected leader should be spiritually mature in order to be able to lead a church. Isohella emphasises that the chosen elders should be more mature than the church members in general. Otherwise, others would need to correct what they do. In addition, Isohella (2011, 189) understands that the Biblical text emphasises the ability of an elder to be an apt teacher (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:2, 24; Titus 1:9) and an example to the flock (1 Pet 5:3 – 4).

<sup>150</sup> Both the interview connected to the research and the hermeneutical study pointed out the need for the elders to focus on spiritual leadership. It also emphasised that the elders' duties should be assigned so that each elder would be able to serve in tasks matching their talents and calling. It also emphasised the need to appoint new elders to grow alongside the older elders. In addition, it suggested that some elders should take turns to form the governing board (for instance, for five-year terms) and the other elders would then focus more on the spiritual shepherding of the church members. (Aro-Panula 1998, 72 – 74.)

The second model suggested in the research was the principle-based model, which focuses on principles found in the Bible.<sup>151</sup> This means that the most important factor is to focus on an elder's character and qualifications. The emphasis in this model is on nominating many capable persons as prospective elders. However, only a few of them would serve on the board of leaders simultaneously, leading the church. (Aro-Panula 1998, 75.) This model differs from the previous model (the clarification model) in that the church would always have a distinct governing board, because most of the suitable people would be nominated as elders for the church. (Aro-Panula 1998, 77.)

The third model suggested by the research was the situational model. It emphasised the needs of a specific context. The circumstances and needs of the church determine how the biblical principles pertaining to elders would be applied. The biblical model was seen as only being applicable to its own time, being strongly influenced by the background and culture of its time.<sup>152</sup> However, the principles derived from that situation would be used as the basis for present-day applications. If the application merely follows biblical principles, the alternative that best fits the circumstances could be chosen as the current application of church leadership. (Aro-Panula 1998, 79.)

The hermeneutical analysis of the biblical model in my previous research suggested that the role of an elder could be applied in different ways, depending on a particular context. However, the framework in which the elder's role is performed is made up of the Finnish Pentecostal context, culture, and traditions. The texts of the Finnish Pentecostal authors indicate that the first model I suggested in my earlier research is the common model to apply the role of an elder. This means that the board of elders plays a prominent role in leading a church in a Finnish Pentecostal church.

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<sup>151</sup> The idea was that the church members who fulfil the New Testament qualifications for an elder (including teaching and spiritual leadership) would be chosen as elders for a church. This means that a church would have more elders than it needs (or would be judicious to include) for its governing board. The leaders could take turns on the governing board, but being an elder would not automatically mean membership in the governing board (as is the case in many churches). However, an elder would have a central recognised position as a spiritual leader in the church. (Aro-Panula 1998, 76.)

<sup>152</sup> The church's needs and special circumstances would be the central determining factor in the way the church leadership would be organised and eldership applied. It would not even be necessary to use the word elder to describe the leaders, because the original use of the term was historically and culturally determined. The most important issue would be to assure the church's spiritual leadership. In that sense a church could develop a position and a title that could define the most appropriate spiritual leader and shepherd in a church. However, the principle of the plurality of leaders would mean that there should be a team or a board leading the church together with the pastor. (Aro-Panula 1998, 79.)

### 3.3.3 A typical role description for an elder

How is the role of an elder applied in practice? What are the elder's typical tasks? Is it typical of an elder in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement to have certain kinds of tasks?

In a handbook for elders written by Klapuri and Salo (1998), Salo describes how the role of an elder is applied in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. Salo (1998, 41) points out that at the very beginning, the Movement decided that the biblical model called for the autonomy of local congregations without a common church organization.<sup>153</sup> In order to have an official status to own buildings, for instance, the churches formed official associations. The churches faced problems, when the association board claimed that, according, to Finnish association regulations, the board should also make decisions about the matters that the elders' board had decided on or should share some of the decision-making power of the elders' board. This challenged the original idea of and the principle behind the elders' leadership.

Salo (1998, 42) claims that the Bible provides explicit instructions on how elders should lead a church and be accountable to God. The elders are collectively accountable for the decision-making. The elder's board uses different ministry teams to assist in leadership. Of these, the association board is the most important team. Salo (1998, 43) maintains that when the biblical principles are understood in the appropriate way the association board should primarily serve by assisting the elders' board.

Salo (1998, 43, 45) points out that the church can choose the members for the association board from the elders' board. However, this does not always work, because the association may have regulations that require it to have more board members than there are elders in the church. Another possibility is to define the regulations of a church association so that the elders' board functions as its board. This brings a major challenge: the board has to observe the regulations of the association and fulfil the spiritual responsibilities based on the Bible.

Frestadius (2006, 101) discusses three models that have been used in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement for settling the issue of two boards in one church, i.e. the relationship

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<sup>153</sup> Salo (1998) refers several times to the Bible. However, he does not provide Bible references as his support. It is likely that this is due to the fact that Klapuri (1998) has written the biblical part of the elder's role to their manual and he himself has concentrated to the practical aspects.

between the elders' board and the association board. In the first model both boards have the same members. The elders serve as the board members of the association. In the second model, some of the elders also serve on the association board. In the third model the boards consist almost entirely of different members.

The model in which the elders also form the association board probably avoids a conflict between the members of the two leadership boards, because the members of both boards are the same. In addition, the model avoids unnecessary bureaucracy, because there is no need for two similar but separate committees. This enables it to make quick and efficient decisions. However, the model promotes centralised leadership, in which the same people decide on all matters. (Frestadius 2006, 101.)

Salo (1998, 46) points out that both the task and the biblical model suggest the need for a servant's attitude.<sup>154</sup> Indeed, due to the fact that the elders have both authority and an important position in the church, the position is not suitable for a person who seeks power. Thus, the church has the right to evaluate the performance of the elders. The task requires vision and a divine calling, because elders may not always defend themselves. For practical purposes, Salo (1998, 51) suggests that it is best to follow the usual regulations on quorum, because the Bible does not give explicit instructions for it. More than the half of the elders should be present when deciding on important issues.<sup>155</sup>

Salo (1998, 48) thinks that it is necessary to have elders who are of different ages to ensure the functionality and continuity of the elders' board. If younger members are not chosen to the elders' board, there is the risk that a whole generation is missing from the board. The wisdom of the older elders is valuable, the middle-aged are in the best age for bearing responsibility, but younger people are needed so that they can grow up in responsibility. Salo (1998, 47) suggests training for elders (for instance, at the regional level) as a way to learn from each other. In addition, Salo (1998, 48) thinks that it may be logical that the salaried pastor leads the discussion in the elders' board meeting, be-

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<sup>154</sup> As discussed earlier, Salo (1998) does not provide Bible references as support.

<sup>155</sup> Salo (1998, 47) emphasises that the ministry of an elder always requires co-operation. If an elder tries to garner support for their own ideas from the church members in matters on which the elders' board disagrees, this will cause problems for the church. The matters that cause tension in the elders' board meetings should be resolved as soon as possible.

cause he usually presents the new matters to be discussed and has the main responsibility for implementing the decisions.<sup>156</sup>

Salo (1998, 54), also points out that it is very important that the elders keep the issues confidential, because otherwise they may hurt the whole church. The board needs to deal with the disagreement, decide on how to resolve it and keep it confidential.<sup>157</sup>

The Finnish Pentecostal Movement has its background in the Finnish Lutheran Church, because most of its new members came from the Lutheran Church. The Lutheran Church criticised rather strongly those of their members, who had for example been baptized by immersion. Ruohomäki (2014, 271) argues that this critique led to the spilt between the Lutheran Church and the emerging Pentecostal Movement. This critique also strengthened the forming of the movement. A reason was also that the movement adopted Baptist based view in baptism and church order. (See Ruohomäki 2014, 271.)

This development has influenced the Pentecostal understanding of church leadership. The Finnish Pentecostal Movement has had a tendency to reject hierarchical leadership and to favour collective leadership of elders. For example the pastor's leadership has been seen as a possible threat, which might open the door to a hierarchical institutionalised church with one person controlling the church. The idea of eldership has been a good channel for opposing hierarchical leadership and observing the idea of collective leadership, in which there is no centralised leadership and no one is invested with the authority to make overriding decisions. (See the earlier discussion about the writings of Pentecostal authors.)

The Finnish Pentecostal Movement has tended to follow the rather radical congregationalism. This has meant an aim to study the biblical narrative with literal interpretation. This reflects the first model of the application of the role of an elder, I presented in my earlier research (1998, as discussed earlier in this chapter). However, the Finnish

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<sup>156</sup> However, if the pastor does not serve as the chairman of the elders' board meetings, an elder who is best suited for the task should be chosen as the chair. In that case, the pastor should prepare the minutes for the meeting together with the chair. (Salo 1998, 48)

<sup>157</sup> In order to maintain unity, Salo (1998, 55) suggests that an elder who disagrees with others on a theological issue should be given the option of being absent from a board meeting in which the theological issue is discussed or decided. Thus, elders may have differing theological opinions, if they do not cause problems with them.

Pentecostal Movement should consider the principles on how to interpret the biblical text related to the role of an elder. This would then lead to consider also the other two models I have suggested in my earlier research.

### **3.4 Conclusions about the background for eldership**

The interview of pastors included in my previous research suggested that when it comes to church leadership, there might be some ambiguity between the elders' and deacons' role performance in the church. It recommended that the elders should focus more on spiritual matters and the deacons should focus more on practical matters. It also brought up the need to define tasks. It seems that especially when churches grow, they have to define their leadership more explicitly. (Aro-Panula 1998, 82.)

Generally speaking, the Scandinavian Pentecostal Movements are characteristically congregational. To a great extent, the Finnish Pentecostal Movement follows the Plural-Elder Model. Usually, the elders' board leads the church. In some churches, especially in the big ones, the elder's board has given the pastor the role of church leader. In this case, they have given the pastor free rein to lead the church. However, the elders nevertheless feel that they are serving as the *de facto* leaders in their church. In a typical small church the elders are often heavily involved in the leadership of their church. It may even be difficult for a pastor to assume leadership of a church.

The Plural-Elder Congregational Model explains best the context of the elder's role in the Finnish Pentecostal Church. Understanding this theological context will enable one to comprehend the research results. In effect, one has to understand the results of the leadership training expectations and the voluntary leadership expectations in this context in order to interpret the results correctly.

The definition of the elders' role, the discussion of the theological view of elders, and the survey of the other models used elsewhere enable one to reflect on the Finnish model of applying the elder's role. Often, the challenge is that the members of the Finnish Pentecostal Movement tend to assert that they are applying the elder's role in the way it should be understood biblically and theologically. Hence, this theological reflection

helps one to reflect on the way the idea of eldership is applied in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement.

It may be concluded that First Timothy 3:1-7 seems in particular to emphasise the character of the elders, who are unlike the false teachers. In this sense, the list may be viewed as a list of an elder's qualifications. However, it is important to keep in mind when analysing the role expectations of church elders in the Finnish Pentecostal setting that the primary purpose of the list does not seem to be to describe elders, but to point out how they differ from false teachers. The list includes important principles about elders, but it does not necessarily give precise details about their role expectations.

It seems likely that the chosen church structure determines strongly the way the church leadership is organized. Especially the tendency in Free Church ecclesiology to resist both tradition and organized church structure has led to applications with ambiguous structures. It seems likely that the Finnish Pentecostal Church emerges from this background.

It seems that eldership in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement has some specific features that very likely affect the role expectations the elders face in their church. Knowing the background of the unique features of the Finnish situation will help one to build up the contextual framework for the concept of eldership and thus find the answer to the question: "Do the elders themselves feel comfortable with the role expectations they face both from their church and from the Finnish Pentecostal Movement?"

An elder's role in the Finnish Pentecostal Church is a leadership role. This means that an elder has a significant role in the church as a member of the collective leadership team. Leadership refers in practice both to the definition of church polity and to leadership in practical matters. However, an elder's participation in both of these elements depends to a great extent on their personality, background and on the needs and culture of a particular church.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> The size of the church might influence the elder's role description to a considerable extent. Smaller churches tend to have simple structures. This often means that the role of an elder is also simpler. They merely serve as elders and carry out the tasks entrusted to them. In big churches the organization may be more structured, and the role of an elder more clearly defined. An elder might for instance have a certain area of responsibility. Accordingly, they may have a role, which differs from the roles of the other elders in the elders' team.

In conclusion, it seems that the Finnish application has endeavoured to meet the challenges related to the elder's role by forming practical applications that attempt to solve the issue that cause challenges. In effect, the model has been adjusted to deal with the encountered challenges.



## **4 The Leadership Role**

### **4.1 The Concept of Role in Relation to Elders**

Church elders face certain kinds of role expectations. What are the role expectations they face in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement? Before analysing the data on the sent expectations collected for this research, it is necessary to define what we mean by role and role expectations. In addition, as church leaders the elders are strongly involved in leadership. The voluntary aspect of leadership is also discussed, because the elders perform their role on a voluntary basis.

First, this chapter discusses the idea of role and role expectation in relation to the role expectations of church elders. Then it focuses on discussing the leadership aspect of the role with its voluntary application. This enables us to build the frame of reference for the research.

#### **4.1.1 The idea of role**

Are church elders doing what they are supposed to do? What are the role expectations they face? Do they feel comfortable with the role expectations they face both from their church and from the Finnish Pentecostal Movement? The concept “role” has been studied thoroughly in past decades. The studies have had different emphases depending on both the researchers and the sociological emphasis of the time.

##### **4.1.1.1 Sent and received role**

As a concept, role refers to expectations about behaviour. According to Kuusela (2005, 152), these expectations are based on an individual’s social position. This means that a role is social in nature and may be viewed as consisting of the expectations and norms that are focused on a person due to their social position (see also Eskola 1979, 174). Indeed, social psychology often connects the idea of role to one’s social position. Thus, in a given position, role is viewed as defining generally accepted activity. (Niemistö 2002, 85; Rossem & Vermande 2004, 396).<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> For instance, the social psychologists G. H. Mead, Linton, Merton, Parsons, Goffman and Bales use the concept of role (Niemistö 2002, 84 – 85). Rossem and Vermande (2004, 396), who studied role concept in the classroom setting, suggest that the idea of role is not only useful in that setting but it also works in other settings in which the focus of research is on individuals and their social surroundings. In addition, Niemistö (2002, 85) suggests that according to generally accepted role theory assumptions, roles may be described as the behavioural patterns of a person in a given situation.

Role and its concomitant role behaviour may also be defined by dividing it into categories (biological factors, semi-biological factors, society's basic institutions, and non-permanent roles) (Heddendorf 2001, 93; Eskola 1979, 175 - 176). Biological factors such as birth, age, sex, and race may be seen as the basic categories of roles (Heddendorf 2001, 93). Ethnic groups or social classes are examples of semi-biological factors. An individual is able to reject the role requirements related to these semi-biological factors. Society's basic institutions (for instance, finance and politics) form the third group. (Eskola 1979, 175 - 176).<sup>160</sup>

When it comes to church elders, their role may be viewed primarily as a non-permanent role. This stems from the fact that the church elders are not born as elders but are appointed to that position. However, for instance the biological factors of age and sex may hinder or even prevent individuals from being appointed to the role. The problem in this kind of application is that they have not been able to select their biological factors, but the factors affect their chances of being appointed to a given role. (Eskola 1979, 175 – 176.)<sup>161</sup>

A role and its concomitant role expectations may also be described as a process of sending and receiving. Katz and Kahn (1966, 182)<sup>162</sup> call this process the role episode, and enumerate four concepts that they see as the basis for the role-sending and role-receiving episode. The first is role expectations, which describe the evaluative standards for the behaviour of a person in an office in an organization. The second is the sent role, which refers to the role expectations sent by other members involved in the task. These two concepts focus on the motivation, understanding and behaviour of the other members involved. The third concept is the received role, which refers to how certain individuals perceive the role-sending sent to them. The fourth is role behaviour, which de-

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<sup>160</sup> Individuals have greater freedom to change their status in these institutions. However, there are also non-permanent roles, such as a role of a patient, which may change quite fast. (Eskola 1979, 175 - 176).

<sup>161</sup> The Finnish Pentecostal Movement does not officially appoint women as elders. Furthermore, in some churches a candidate's young age may hinder the appointment.

<sup>162</sup> The role episode model is presented in the first edition of their book *The Social Psychology of Organization* (Katz & Kahn 1966, 182). The model is also presented in their second edition of *The Social Psychology of Organizations* of Katz and Kahn (1978). However, it is not presented in the same form but is integrated into a theoretical model of factors involved in assuming organizational roles (1978, 196).

scribes the response of these individuals. The two latter concepts focus on the understanding, motivation and behaviour of these individuals. This is illustrated in the following figure.

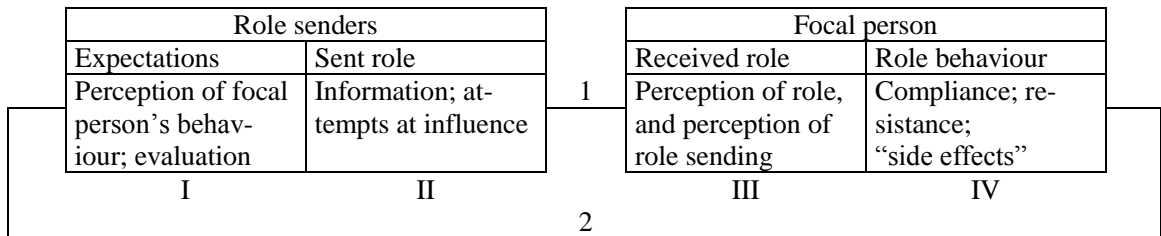


Figure 3: A model of the role episode (Katz & Kahn 1966, 182.)

According to this idea, each member of an organization has a sent role, which consists of the ways they have been acting and influencing others by performing their role. The members also have received roles; this highlights the ways they have perceived and understood what the other members have been sending them. The idea is that an organization communicates by sent roles that what the members should do and what they should not do. (Katz & Kahn 1966, 177.) The process of sending and receiving roles is used in this research especially for analysing the expectations a church and the Finnish Pentecostal Movement send to an elder. The process is also used for analysing how elders receive the expectations send to them.<sup>163</sup>

Katz and Kahn (1978, 196) present a theoretical model of factors involved in assuming organizational roles. This model is built on the role episode model. As they state it: “the role episode is thus at the core of the figure, Boxes A to D and the connecting arrows 1 and 2.” (Katz & Kahn 1978, 195.) However, the model also includes the idea of sending and receiving by pointing out the factors involved.<sup>164</sup> In the model the letters refer to the

<sup>163</sup> Katz and Kahn (1966, 187) extend this idea by adding organizational factors, attributes of the person and interpersonal factors. With this they mean that the episode is also influenced by the variables of the organization, the individuals themselves and the interpersonal aspect. These factors involved in assuming organizational roles are presented in a model resembling the model presented in the second edition of their book. Due to this fact, the model (1966, 187) is not reproduced in this chapter.

<sup>164</sup> The model is already presented in the first edition of *The Social Psychology of Organizations* (Katz & Kahn 1966, 187). However, the second edition (1978, 196) names the boxes and arrows differently and explains the process more explicitly. This research applies the model presented in the second edition.

boxes forming the content of the model and the numbers refer to the arrows describing the process of role taking presented in the model.<sup>165</sup>

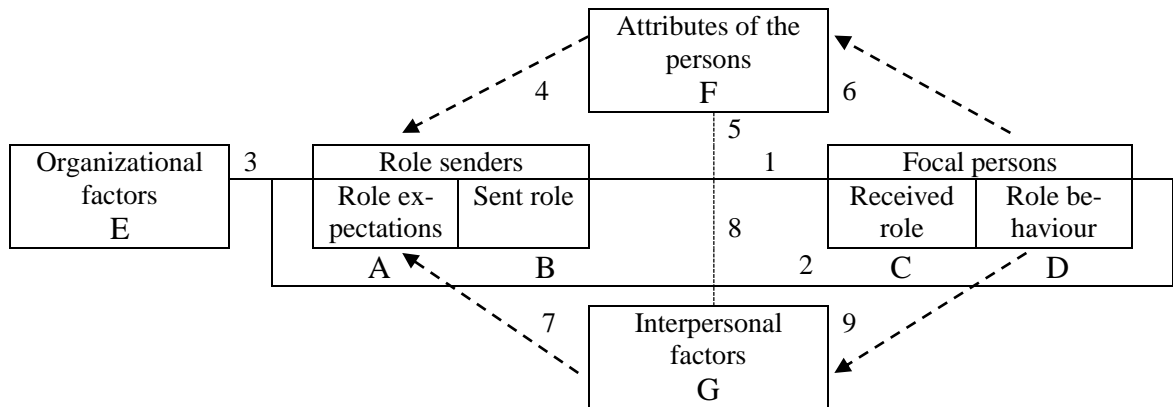


Figure 4: A theoretical model of factors involved in assuming organizational roles (Katz & Kahn 1978, 196.)

The more recent model suggested by Katz and Kahn (1978) provides a more developed model of the role process. It gives a good explanation of the factors involved in assuming organizational roles. Indeed, it provides a good tool for researching the role expectations of church elders because the idea of expectations is at the core of the model. The

<sup>165</sup> Katz and Kahn (1978) provide a detailed explanation of both of the issues listed here, and of the process connected to role expectations. The following list explains the boxes and arrows in the model (Katz & Kahn 1978, 195 – 197) (my modification). The letters present the boxes and the numbers present the arrows.

#### Boxes (letters)

- A. Role senders: Role expectations.
- B. Role senders: Sent role.
- C. Focal persons: Received role.
- D. Focal persons: Role behaviour.
- E. The organizational circle (E) represents the set of such variables.
- F. Enduring attributes of the person (circle F) refer to all variables that describe the tendency of an individual to behave in certain ways.
- G. Interpersonal relations (circle G) accomplish functions parallel to those already described as attributes of the person.

#### Arrows (numbers)

- 1. Arrow 1 represents the process of role sending.
- 2. Arrow 2 points to the process of feedback by which the role senders estimate the degree of conformity with their prior communications and prepare to begin another cycle.
- 3. Arrow 3 points to a casual relationship between certain organizational variables and the role expectations held by and sent to a particular position.
- 4. Some traits of the person tend to evoke or promote certain evaluations and behaviours from the role senders (arrow 4).
- 5. The same sent role factors act as conditioning variables in the relationship between the role as sent and the role as received and responded to (arrow 5).
- 6. Role behaviour tends to have an effect on personality (arrow 6).
- 7. The expectations held for and sent to a focal person at a certain time depend to some extent on the quality of the interpersonal relationship already existing between that person and the members of their role-set (arrow 7).
- 8. The focal person will also interpret the sent expectations of the role set in a different way, depending on their continuing interpersonal relations with the senders (arrow 8).
- 9. The behaviour of the focal person feeds back to and has an effect on their interpersonal relations with members of the role set (arrow 9).

model focuses on the idea of the factors involved in assuming organizational roles. However, the research focuses on role expectations, which is especially seen in the role episode model of Katz and Kahn (1966, 182). The research intends to use the role episode model of Katz and Kahn (1966, 182) as its theoretical framework. They describe the theoretical model of factors involved in assuming organizational roles in more detail in their more recent work (Katz & Kahn 1978, 196).<sup>166</sup>

How do others understand this idea of role process? Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn and Snoek (1964, 5, 11, 15) also approach the idea of role from an organizational viewpoint, using the concepts *sent role* and *received role*. They suggest that people live their lives by playing their roles in different organizations, which together form their objective environment. An individual's physical and emotional state is affected by the characteristics of the organizations in which they are involved. The bigger an organization becomes, the more important it is to function according to the organizational role. They assert that the influence of this all determines a person's behaviour.

Kahn et al. (1964, 5, 11, 15) also suggest that an organization communicates by a sent role to an individual what they should do and what they should not do in their role. They propose that the received role shows how the individual reacts to the sent role and motivates their role performance. In addition, they suggest that in an organization, role means that in performing a role people act in ways they do not usually act and use titles they would otherwise not normally use. Hence, they emphasise the profound significance of organizations by suggesting that an organization has a strong influence on the way its employees act and behave.

Having a profound emphasis on the organization and the process of sending and receiving roles, the model proposed by Kahn et al. (1964) accords with the ideas of Katz and Kahn (1966/1978). In this sense, it concurs with the thinking of Katz and Kahn. This might be partly due to the fact that the ideas were proposed at roughly the same time.

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<sup>166</sup> When it comes to elders, this brings up the question of what kind of sent role the church as an organization presents its elders as a guideline for their ministry in the church. Another interesting question is the message the Pentecostal Movement of Finland as a denomination sends its elders.

#### 4.1.1.2 Role as a sociological aspect

Furthermore, even though both Kahn et al. (1964) and Katz and Kahn (1966/1978) approach the issue from an organizational viewpoint, their thinking provides a good basis for understanding the role expectations faced by a church elder.<sup>167</sup> However, it is good to keep in mind that they approach the issue from an organizational viewpoint. Organizational sociology has been a major traditional approach in this kind of studies. The purpose has been to study goal-oriented social systems. Authority relations, formal rule constructions, inner task distributions, and restricted membership have been seen as the central characteristics in organizations. (Laulainen 2005, 85.) Although the organizational approach to the role process seems to provide a good basis for understanding the role expectations faced by church elders, it is good to take into account its theoretical background in order not to oversimplify the idea of role by using only this approach (this is discussed in more detail in the next subchapter).

Why are the role expectations of a church elder researched through a role episode model approaching the idea of role as a process, and not through the idea of role as such? Indeed, another way of defining the idea of role could for instance be to view role performance as role-playing. Jacob L. Moreno (1964, 153) defined role as “a final crystallization of all situations in a special area of operations through which the individual has passed”. This highlights the idea of active behaviour in connection to an individual’s role. In addition, although Moreno (1964, 161) also points out external culture as an important determining factor for formulating a person’s role behaviour, he sees that as an external factor culture is not the main issue, but merely the way an individual personally interprets the culture in which they are playing their role. Moreno’s approach differs from the approach of Katz and Kahn and the other viewpoints discussed earlier especially in its greater emphasis on the individual. (Niemistö 2002, 89).

The earlier views of role theory were based on organizational and social approaches. Moreno’s understanding of role is basically in agreement with the approach of social psychology (where role is seen as social in nature and is connected to interaction), but it expands the idea. Moreno associates role with the development of an individual’s personality. In this way Moreno’s role theory also outlines both interaction and intrapsy-

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<sup>167</sup> When it comes to elders, the idea of organization and role may mean that the Finnish Pentecostal Movement and the local churches as “organizations” communicate how the role of an elder should be performed both in the church and in the Pentecostal Movement.

chic internal activity. (Niemistö 2002, 84.) However, Niemistö (2002, 92) asserts that while Moreno's role theory surveys one's inner mental world, it does not explain it well enough. He suggests that Moreno's role theory seems to be merely an interaction theory that takes an individual's inner subjective reality into account.<sup>168</sup>

However, Moreno's thinking with its focus on the role player provides more understanding of the individual than the active role performer. Indeed, Moreno (1964, 389) thought that an observer could be able to see how the role process works on the stage because an observer could see both the collective aspect and the individual aspect of every role. This division of the role into the collective and individual aspect has similarities to the role episode model developed by Katz and Kahn (1966/1978) because the collective aspect resembles the model's organizational element and the individual aspect resembles the element of receiving.

Moreno's thinking with its emphasis on an individual does not provide a clear understanding of the process of role expectations faced by a church elder. Thus, it does not provide a clear answer to the role expectations an elder faces both from their church and from the Finnish Pentecostal Movement as a whole. Nevertheless, it helps one to understand how elders as individuals approach their role.

This research intends to use the theoretical model of the role episode created by Katz and Kahn (1966/1978) as the central element in its theory base.<sup>169</sup> This means that the main emphasis is on role expectations seen from the viewpoint of role sending and role receiving. However, the ideas of Moreno of an individual as an active role player are used in analysing how the elders approach the role expectations they face.

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<sup>168</sup> While Moreno's idea of role performance as role playing and thus of set behaviour and the emphasis on an individual's ability to develop different roles is a better explanation of an individual's inner ability to influence their role actively, it is important to remember the theatre background of these ideas.

<sup>169</sup> As described in chapter 2, the role expectations faced by the church elders are first examined with the help of the role episode model by analysing the data collected via a questionnaire given to the church members evaluating the role expectations the church elders receive from the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. Then the role process is studied by analysing the data collected through interviewing the church elders about their own expectations concerning their role. Finally, the role process is analysed by comparing these two analyses.

### **4.1.2 The background of the idea of role**

The ideas of role and role expectation are not isolated concepts that attempt to explain an individual's performance. They are connected to a specific theoretical history and background. The role episode model of Katz and Kahn (1966/1978) is part of general role theory and shares a background history with it. A discussion of this background helps one to understand the basis of the model.

#### **4.1.2.1 Role theory**

The viewpoints discussed above of the idea of role are derived from the general role theory developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In general, role theory refers to the science of studying behaviours typical of individuals in certain contexts and in various processes that are likely to explain, produce or be affected by those behaviours (Biddle 1979, 4).

In addition, role theory has in general provided a good conceptual basis for viewing the interaction between an individual and a group. However, it is essential to keep in mind that role theories are closely related to the discussion on social interaction and thus have a tendency to focus on the interaction connected to a role. (Shaftef & Shaftef 1967, 111 – 113.) In this respect it is important to keep in mind that the role episode model is merely one approach for explaining the interaction between people.

Biddle (1979, 12 – 17) points out that in general, role theory has some positive characteristics. First, it seems to fulfil the requirements of real theory. Second, it provides concepts for researching the social behaviour of people. Third, it seems to supply terms and concepts both for the tangible everyday level and for the abstract notions of research. However, on the negative side, role theory is rather confusing in its use of terms (it often uses rather ambivalent concepts). In addition, role theory seems to lack propositional organization (it is often difficult to find a structure that would tie the field together). Furthermore, Biddle (1979, 116 – 118) also emphasises the importance of keeping in mind the theatre background of the idea of role playing and its concomitant expectations. When it comes to the role episode model, this means that even though it provides well functioning concepts, it is important to be careful with the use of concepts. In addition, while the model seems to be an effective theoretical model for research, its strong focus on organizational thinking makes it quite one-sided.



The critique presented by Biddle (1979) of role theory in general suggests that the variety of viewpoints on role theory brings a challenge. It does not seem possible to find a model that would encompass all aspects of role behaviour. It seems that for instance in this research it would be important to focus on the viewpoints that explain the aspects related to the role expectations of church elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. This would justify the use of the role episode model (presented by Katz & Kahn 1966/1978) as the basis for the research. Even though the model is only one approach among many, it is useful because it provides a reasonable model especially for understanding the process connected to the role expectations faced by church elders.

In her dissertation, Tuomiranta (2002) examined the role expectations of medical doctors who function as leaders in their hospitals. Although the target group is different, this study has many similarities to the current research (the role expectations of church elders). She found in her study that even though role theory has been underestimated and has been regarded as old-fashioned (no longer applicable to modern individualistic society) it still provided an applicable approach for her research. According to her, it is true that western society has changed since the wider application of role theories. Social roles are no longer as clear and simple as they used to be. However, roles are still part of society and an important element in maintaining cohesion in society. (Tuomiranta 2002, 125.)<sup>170</sup>

#### **4.1.2.2 Macro or Micro role?**

However, the role episode model of Katz and Kahn is not only based on general role theory. It also relies on the concept of organization, which approaches the idea of role and role expectation from a macro sociological perspective. Accordingly, the way organizational theories are understood affects the way role theories are categorised and viewed. For instance, the way Katz and Kahn (1978, 20) view the organization as energy streams of human activity, or as a system of roles (1978, 186) (this also has to do

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<sup>170</sup> Tuomiranta (2002, 125) found that the indicator she used in measuring role conflicts and role confusion was applicable to measuring the role tension of doctor leaders. She also suggests that the results of her research on the role expectations of medical doctor leaders justify the view that role theory is a valid theory, which has real value in predicting social behaviour. As theoretical framework theories, Tuomiranta seems to mainly use theories from the 50s and 60s. For instance, she presents the role episode model of Katz and Kahn (1978, 46) as one of the background theories for her research even though she does not use it as the basis of her research. However, she does not seem to follow fully the organizational macro sociological approach of that time but seems to follow more closely the reflective and cognitive (and constructive) atmosphere of the time of her research.

with the role episode model in general), differs from the way for instance Max Weber (Weber 1968, 952) views an organization as social dominances. (Rajala 1997, 74.)<sup>171</sup>

The theoretical approach to understanding interaction has been changing in past decades. Generally speaking, the 1940s were a time of measuring attitudes, the 1950s a time of discovering small groups and the 1960s a time of macro sociology.<sup>172</sup> For instance, in the 60s it was usual to think that an individual's position and the hierarchical system defined an individual. Macro sociological thinking lifted the role above the individual. The idea of role was thought to rule individuals and their lives. However, in the 80s and 90s individualism and a stronger emphasis on micro sociology challenged the study of collective organizational identity. Nevertheless, team thinking and the sharing of knowledge emphasised in working societies have brought back the social and organizational viewpoint to the study of role behaviour. (Laulainen 2005, 85 – 86; see also Allardt & Littunen 1972, 68.)

In practice, this means that the macro level approach has to do with the study of organizational processes. In this study this refers to the approach of studying the role expectations coming from a church and from the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. The alternative method, the micro level approach, emphasises interaction at the individual level. In this study this would mean focusing mainly on the way an elder approaches the expectations they face. The choice of level affects methodologically both the definition of organizational reality and the focus of one's attention (who is to be heard). (Laulainen 2005, 89; Seeck 2008, 28.)<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Usually, an organization refers to a goal-oriented social system. Thus, an organization has set certain objectives as the goals for the organization. (Kuusela 2005, 150; see also Scott 1965, 490.)

<sup>172</sup> Macro sociology usually starts with the study of entire societies. The unit of research is then formed of sub-units on many different levels. These analysing units can, for instance, be society, a group and an individual. (Allardt & Littunen 1972, 68 – 70.) In macro sociology the function of the social system and society are examined on a general level. In contrast, micro sociology studies the interaction between individuals. (Kuusela 2005, 149 – 150; Laulainen 2005, 86.)

<sup>173</sup> The change in thinking towards an emphasis on micro sociology and a focus on individualism is also closely associated with the idea of constructivism that has influenced school teaching in past decades. Both the younger church generation and the younger elders in the Finnish Pentecostal churches probably had a different kind of educational background than the older generation. (See also Tynjälä 1999, 43.)

In addition, the approaches to the idea of organization and one's role in it (as presented e.g. in the role episode model) have been influenced by postmodern thinking. Postmodernism does not view the reality of organizations as objective and given from the outside but understands reality as dependent on and defined by a particular context. (Seeck 2008, 30.)

The church elders need to be viewed from both the micro sociological and macro sociological perspectives. On the one hand, seen from the micro sociological perspective, the church elders as individuals make independent decisions when performing their role. Moreover, the individual personality of each elder influences the way they perform their role. On the other hand, seen from the macro sociological perspective, both the church as an organization and especially its culture of collective eldership make it necessary to view an elder at the organizational macro level.

However, even though some sociologists tend to think that micro and macro sociology examine totally different phenomena, these two fields of sociology are basically interested in the same question: the interaction patterns of individuals. In effect, the difference has more to do with the perspective than with the content of these fields of sociology. (Sanderson 1991, 16 – 17.)<sup>174</sup>

It is good to keep in mind that the role episode model of Katz and Kahn (1966/1978) is based on macro sociological thinking with an emphasis on organizational behaviour. However, in addition of the questionnaire collecting organizational data (in accordance with the model) on the role expectations faced by a church elder, the research also attempts to understand the expectations from the viewpoint of an elder through a micro sociologically oriented interview of elders.

It is good to remember that the macro sociological approach to organizational thinking is not the only way to examine the issue of role expectations. However, this research is based on the theoretical model of Katz and Kahn (1966/1978) of the role episode of sending and receiving. While their model is based on a macro sociological approach to organizations, it is likely to work well in providing important information about the expectations the church elders face in their ministry. Both a given church and especially the Pentecostal Movement as a whole may be viewed as sending organizational role expectations. However, in the analysis of the elders' views the more individually oriented micro sociological perspective will probably be more helpful.

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<sup>174</sup> Sanderson (1991, 17) asserts that micro and macro sociologists have too often operated with totally different basic theories. He proposes that a theoretical interaction should be build between these two fields of sociology by having micro foundations in macro sociology.

This background discussion of role theory in connection to the role episode model provides a better understanding of the possibilities and restrictions involved in the framework for researching the role expectations of church elders. However, this discussion does not throw light on the background of the idea of expectations because it is discussed in chapter 3.4 when defining the concept of expectations in relation to the idea of role. However, in order to understand better the role expectations a church elder faces it is necessary to define some other central concepts used in the research.

#### **4.1.3 Role and related concepts**

The idea of role is not an isolated concept that attempts to explain an individual's performance. It is good to understand, for instance, the concepts of norm, personality, power and values in relation to the idea of role. In addition, a consideration of the team element related to the idea of role helps us to understand the influence of a group of elders (the elders' board) on the role performance of an elder. Furthermore, the uniqueness of the church context as the special environment needs to be considered in order to understand the idea of role expectations in relation to church elders.

The concept of norm is connected to the idea of role because a norm may be viewed as required or acceptable behaviour. Thus, a norm refers to that what one should do or should not do. (Bertrand 1972, 34, 49, 53). Furthermore, according to Katz and Kahn (1978, 44), norms are important for the integration of social systems. This means that norms form the normative requirements of a system, creating a solid basis for the roles people play. In this research the concept of norm is important, as it defines the generally accepted rules that underlie the expected roles the church elders face. The idea of norm is used in the role episode model especially to explain the factors behind organizational expectations.

The aspect of personality is another important concept related to the idea of role. At this stage it is good to keep in mind that the development of personality may be understood as a process of interaction between an individual's genes and the environment. Individual have not only been influenced by their environment, but they have also interpreted their environment in their own way according to their inherited features. (Pervin & Oli-

ver 1997, 14.)<sup>175</sup> When it comes to the idea of role, one might think that a role works best when it is part of an individual's personality (Allardt 1983, 60 - 61). One might think that individuals performing roles adjust their roles to their personality (Bertrand 1972, 55).

Niemistö (2002, 94, 98) asserts that the purpose of the idea of personality defining a role is that a role does not seem to be a unique reaction to a situation but an individual's consistent tendency. This consistent tendency will be ignited and extinguished according to the situations in which it occurs. However, while the idea of an individual's consistent tendency emphasises well the influence of personality on the performance, it does not as such fully explain the performance. For instance, in leadership research personality traits have traditionally been viewed as the central elements in the success of a leader in their role performance. However, current trends in leadership research also view both the development of a leader and the effect of the situation as important factors for the growth of a leader. (Northouse 2007.)<sup>176</sup> This means that although it may be good to use the idea of personality to explain role performance, a one-sided focus on the effect of an individual's personality easily neglects their own chances of influencing the way they use their personality and their ability to develop it (see Biddle 1979, 58).

In this research, personality is viewed especially as a concept relating to the role expectation of an elder from the leadership viewpoint. However, the aspect of personality resembles the attributes of a person in the role episode model, highlighting the tendency of an individual to behave in certain ways. This means that an individual's attributes are seen as an element influencing the faced role expectations (arrow 4 in the model of Katz and Kahn 1978). An individual's attributes may also be viewed as being affected by their role behaviour (arrow 6 in the model). (Katz & Kahn 1978, 11 – 16.)<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Personality may be defined as an individual's qualities, forming a consistent pattern of behaviour. For instance, family factors, and genetic, social class, and cultural factors influence to build up an individual's personality. The environmental forces may shape an individual's characteristics only within the limits of heredity. (Pervin & Oliver 1997, 15, 26.)

<sup>176</sup> This is discussed in more detail in the next subchapter 4.2 in defining the leadership aspect of a church elder.

<sup>177</sup> The association of personality with the concept of role might explain how an elder's personality affects the roles the elder gets in the elder's team. If an elder's personality influences their role performance, it also raises the question of how much it has affected their appointment to eldership.

As a leadership role, the role of an elder also has to do with a position that makes possible the use of authority. The way the elders and others involved view the use of authority in performing the role also influence how they experience the role expectations they face. However, the concept of authority is difficult to define because it does not refer explicitly to any characteristic of an individual or a group. Instead, it refers primarily to the relationship an individual or a group has with another person or group. (Eskola 1979, 112; Niemistö 2002, 85.) This means that the leader's role refers to a position of authority in which a person has the authority to rule, set norms and control how others observe rules. (Allardt & Littunen 1972, 56; Aho & Laine 1997, 153; Verkasalo 1996, 3.)

In addition, one might think that in general a person's movement in social structure affects their self-concept. This movement is either into a position of status and authority, or out of it. (Stets & Harrod 2004, 169.) In researching the effect of authority on perceptions in social networks, Simpson and Borch (2005, 285) found that the actors who were low in authority were more likely to use their more accurate perceptions of their ties with others (in relation to authority) for improving their own situation.

In this research authority is especially viewed in connection with the leadership aspect of an elder's role. However, due to the fact that role behaviour often includes the use of authority, the idea of authority is also seen in close connection with the role episode model used in this research. This means that authority is viewed as a means of influence connected to the role process. Authority may affect both the expectations sent by the church members to the church elders, and the felt role expectations of the church elders themselves.<sup>178</sup>

Another important concept related to role expectation is the value system underlying the role. Social values refer especially to an individual's preferred choices. (Allardt 1983, 51.) Values may be viewed as deriving from culture. Thus, values only give a generalised view of behaviour. Values emphasise the motivation for role behaviour but do not specify how the performance should take place. In order to find out specific interactions

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<sup>178</sup> As a leader, an elder has the right to use leadership authority in performing their elder's role. This raises the question of how they should use their authority.

in a particular social organization, it is necessary to consider the norms related to the role. (Bertrand 1972, 66 -67.)

According to Parsons (1967, 8-9, 11), the difference between value and norm is that the former is shared by all the people involved in a system and the latter refers to the behaviour connected to different parts of the system, for instance the behaviour institutionalised into an organization. However, one might think that in a way values, norms and collective goals in general control and regulate the role behaviour of the people involved. The reason is that together with roles these make up the categories that describe the structural aspect of a social system. (See also Katz & Kahn 1978, 44.) In this research, the value system is seen as a central element influencing an elder's role expectations.<sup>179</sup> In the role episode model, the value system involved influences the role expectations faced by an elder both on the organizational and on the individual level.

In addition, the group aspect is important in understanding an elder's role because an elder performs their role together with the other elders on the board. According to Shaftel and Shaftel (1967, 122, 123), a group may be viewed as a network of role relationships with role expectations connected to it (see also Eskola 1979, 174, and Hedendorff 2001, 106). Rossem and Vermande (2004, 396) point out that the idea of a role works best in a complementary situation when it is possible to view it in relation to another role.<sup>180</sup> Furthermore, the division of roles in a group is also affected by the roles, activities and responsibilities an individual has in other relationship systems (Jauhiainen & Eskola 1993, 119).<sup>181</sup>

Shaftel and Shaftel (1967, 123) also point out that groups vary in how their members face role expectations. Some groups have shared expectations for their members, thus lessening the possibility of their role conflict. A group may also allow a high degree of variability in individual role behaviour. In addition, a group may have conflicting

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<sup>179</sup> The value system connected to the role of an elder is likely to control the role, and provide a basis for the norms, which then form the role requirement for the role.

<sup>180</sup> This suggests that for instance an elder's role has meaning when it is viewed in relation to the role of another elder, or with other roles in the church.

<sup>181</sup> According to Kauppila (2000, 92 – 93), circumstances, natural tendencies, and personal backgrounds affect the development of roles in a group. Accordingly, one might understand that individuals have internalised certain adopted roles, group experiences and relational models. They then reflect these in new group situations. (Niemistö 2002, 50.)

norms, which leads to role ambiguity and unclear role prescriptions. When it comes to expectations related to the church elders, this brings up interesting questions. Is an elder alone with the expectations they face, or do the other elders on the elders' board also face these expectations? In this research, the group aspect emphasises how the church elders' role expectations relate to those of the other elders on their church's board of elders. In the role episode model an elder's role expectations are also seen in relation to the group of elders (a collective leadership team), and not only in relation to a single elder.

Furthermore, it is important to define the connection of role and role expectations to working in a church context. Hyypä (2005, 131 – 132) suggests that a work role is always connected to a task, and receives its framework from the organization in which it is performed. How is this seen in a church context in which the framework also includes the element of spirituality? Huhtinen (2002, 90 – 92) suggests that a work role in a church requires a consideration of one's personal belief experience. The consideration of one's own experience then sets borders and limits for one's work role. In order to be comfortable with the role expectations one feels, one has to have balance between the ideals and reality of one's work role. It is important to keep in mind that for a church worker, questions about spirituality are also questions relating to their work; they are not merely questions about their convictions.<sup>182</sup> It is also important to keep in mind in this research that a church elder needs balance between the practical work role and the spiritual aspect of their ministry.<sup>183</sup>

The concepts discussed above are related to the role episode model. They help us to analyse the role expectations a church elder faces. The concepts both define and explain the model. However, some central concepts are discussed more thoroughly in separate subchapters. Next, the central concept of role expectations is defined in relation to the research.

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<sup>182</sup> Huhtinen (2002) discusses church ministry and its role expectations from the viewpoint of the clergy. However, even though an elder serves in a voluntary ministry in a church, the same questions of spirituality nevertheless apply to them. Indeed, if their personal spiritual experiences and ways of understanding their role are not in agreement with the role behaviour expected of them, they are more likely to face role conflicts.

<sup>183</sup> The basic roles (such as the role of a pastor) in a church are often rather old offices. Having those roles might mean a rather heavy load of history for a person. The tradition of the previous church worker lives on with the people having these roles today. (Huhtinen 2002, 73.) One might ask if an elder in a Finnish Pentecostal Church has certain tradition-based ritualistic presupposed role expectations they should fulfil.



#### 4.1.4 Role expectations

The role expectations the elders face in a church in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement have an impact on how the elders perform their tasks. In effect, the expectations amount to a sent message about the elder's expected behaviour. How do these role expectations affect a church elder? In addition, how are the role expectations related to the role episode model of Katz and Kahn (1966/1978)?

Role expectation may be viewed as referring to the rules that guide a person's behaviour in a social system. However, more often role expectations are defined as the system in which the norms and expectations focused on a person in a specific task and position actually form the role. (Allardt & Littunen 1972, 24 – 25.)<sup>184</sup> Moreover, it is possible to see expectations as anticipating role behaviour, or as feelings or thoughts about a role. (Biddle 1979, 5 – 7.) Furthermore, one might think that people tend to have different expectations of the general role of society, due both to rapid mobility and to continual social shifts and varying cultural and socio-economic backgrounds (Shaftel & Shaftel 1967, 113). However, a more explicit definition of the idea of expectation is helpful in understanding the phenomenon.<sup>185</sup>

Katz and Kahn (1966, 174) think that in formal organizations roles do not disclose too much about the personality of a person involved but function in a similar way as the social setting functions. It is thus important to understand a social system in order to study the role behaviour in that particular organization. Katz and Kahn (1966, 175) also maintain that when some activities are seen as defining a role, these activities are also seen as the expectations of other people involved with that particular role.<sup>186</sup> In addition, they think that a role expectation especially refers to the performance expected or not

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<sup>184</sup> In sociology, the concept of role expectations is usually seen either as distinct from a role (the rules guiding one's role behaviour) or as connected to a role as a sum of expectations (the social role is formed of the sum of the norms and expectations focused on a person having a certain task or position). (Allardt & Littunen 1972, 24 – 25.)

<sup>185</sup> It is important to keep in mind that the concept of role expectations stems from the dramaturgical analogy, even though the concept of role expectation refers to much more than merely to the theatre part. (Biddle 1979, 116.) This means that one has to take into account the philosophically fragmented background of the concept of role expectations when working with the concept.

<sup>186</sup> While this thinking is mainly based on macro sociology, it is important for understanding the role expectations of related organizations (in this study a local church and the Finnish Pentecostal Movement), because the expectations of the given organizations tend to point out the required role behaviour for elders.

expected of a person, although it may also have to do with personal characteristics, style, image, ways of thinking, or a belief system. (Katz & Kahn 1978, 190.)

How are these ideas related to the role episode model presented by Katz and Kahn (1978)? The model is actually based on the idea of role expectations, because the basic idea of the model is that a person is first expected to do something. Then they consider the expectations they face, and finally perform according to the expectations.

The gist of the model is that role expectations are linked to role performance through three sequential relationships. The first relationship is between the expectations sent by the role senders and the expectations that are actually sent to the focal persons. The second relationship exists between the expectations sent by the role senders and the expectations received by the focal persons. The third relationship is between the received expectations and the behaviour that follows. This includes both the role performance and its concomitant side effects. (Katz & Kahn 1978, 201.) This means that according to Katz and Kahn (1978), the role expectations are especially seen in points of transitions, in which some kind of decision-making is involved in the expectations.<sup>187</sup>

In her thesis, Yletyinen (2005) studied the role expectations the Finnish Lutheran priests face in their ministry. In her study, she used the concept of role as the framework. She studied the expectations directed towards priests from three different viewpoints: first, in regard to a priest's work; second, in regard to a priest's personality; and third, in regard to the behaviour of a priest. According to her research (2005, 95), the central expectation that priests in the Finnish Lutheran Church face is the need to be normal human beings and get closer to people.<sup>188</sup>

Hall and Duvall (2003, 313) studied the effects of cross-cultural and self gender-role expectations on well-being, stress, and self-esteem of married women in missions. They

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<sup>187</sup> However, the thinking of Katz and Kahn (1978) and their role episode model (1966/1978) involves a major challenge, i.e. the idea of expectations is seen as determining a person's role behaviour. The reason is that the model is based on external expectations (coming from an organization). Even though the model points out the influence of personality factors, it nevertheless does not put enough emphasis on the ability of individuals to influence their role expectations. Thus, the model is helpful in pointing out the expectations the church elders get from the outside as felt expectations but is weaker with the expectations the elders themselves receive from their role.

<sup>188</sup> Is it possible to define the standard role expectations an elder in a Pentecostal church faces? If it were possible, it would make it easier for an elder to understand what they commit to do when they accept the appointment as an elder.

found in their study that “homemakers in a conservative Christian group are, in fact, better off in some ways than employed women.” Thus, it seems that when a person has strong values and is also able to make choices according to those values, they feel more satisfied than they would feel if they had the status of being employed.

The question of the role expectations of an elder is the main focus of this research. A local church and the Finnish Pentecostal Movement as social institutions and special cultural environments provide general role expectations for church elders. The way an elder faces these expectations also influences how they perform their role as a lay leader in a church.

#### **4.1.5 Role conflicts and role ambiguity**

Role conflicts may occur when an elder has challenges with the role expectations they face. Role conflict may mean that the role performance of an elder is in conflict with the role performance of another person. This other person might for instance be another elder, the pastor of the church, or a church member.

According to Eskola (1979, 178 - 179), a role conflict occurs when the felt role expectations of an individual are in conflict with each other.<sup>189</sup> This may be called an inner conflict of roles. Another type of role conflict occurs when an individual has two different roles that have contradicting role requirements (see also Katz & Kahn 1966, 184).<sup>190</sup>

Miles and Perreault (1980, 137) suggest that individuals are likely to face role conflict when they get negative personal and organizational experiences. Organizational expectations and requirements seem to predict the level of role conflict an individual experiences. Accordingly, role conflict seems to be related to undesirable individual experiences that often have a negative influence on the organization an individual is involved

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<sup>189</sup> According to Moreno (1964, 154) a person has a threefold conflict. He states: “the actor suffers from a three-way conflict; the conflict with the play-wright, the conflict with his co-actors and conflict with the public.”

<sup>190</sup> Katz and Kahn (1966, 184) define role conflict as “the simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) role sendings that are such that compliance with one would make compliance with the other more difficult”.

in.<sup>191</sup> In addition, according to Biddle (1979, 7), it may be difficult for a person to perform a role, if the role requires either several years of experience or innate ability.<sup>192</sup>

Periods of transition from one role to another seem to be especially prone to conflicts (Bertrand 1972, 60). Institutions known as rites of passage (weddings, dedications, appointments and so on) help an individual to change from one role to another (Eskola 1979, 179 – 181). Appropriate rites of passage, in which one's status and role change, make it easier for one to face expectations and role interactions the new role gives (Heddendorf 2001, 92 - 93).<sup>193</sup>

A related concept, role ambiguity, refers to a situation in which an individual is not sure about their role and about the role expectations connected to it.<sup>194</sup> This kind of role ambiguity may cause a person to become insecure in performing their role, or to lose their self-confidence because of their role performance. (Armstrong 2006.) Role ambiguity with unclear obligations and responsibilities may also hurt one's emotional commitment to one's role tasks (Drummond 2000, 72). Kahn et al. (1964, 73 – 74) use the term role ambiguity to refer to the inconsistency between what a person knows about a given task and what is required of them when performing the role.<sup>195</sup> Katz and Kahn (1978, 206)

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<sup>191</sup> Huhtinen (2002, 81) points out that a present-day salaried church worker faces different circumstances in their work than they used to do a few decades ago because the work roles in a church take various forms. For instance, a church worker may be part of different teams and needs mental flexibility to move from one role to another role according to the requirements of the role. Even though an elder's role is voluntary, they may nevertheless have similar challenges in their ministry.

<sup>192</sup> A person may also face incompatible role expectations so that they are not able to perform all tasks required of them, or they are required to perform a role that does not match their own needs or basic values. (Biddle 1979, 7.)

<sup>193</sup> The appointment of a person to the role of an elder is a considerable change of status and role expectations for a person in a church in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. The appointment may be viewed as the kind of rite of passage that serves to change a church member's role to a role of a church elder.

<sup>194</sup> The ambiguity of role expectations is likely to be a source of conflict for an individual in a situation providing easy access to new positions and roles. An individual may also face contradictory (in a sense ambiguous) expectations in addition to the role expectations of the new role. In addition, a conflict may also stem from simultaneous memberships (ambiguity about belonging) in different groups. (Shaftef & Shaftef 1967, 118 – 119.)

<sup>195</sup> Role ambiguity may occur more easily when it occurs in a conflict with others about the authority for decision-making (Johns 2000, 63). In addition, role ambiguity may either be an unintended consequence of many related factors, or it may result from quite intentional practices and procedures of the people involved. (Kahn et al. 1964, 77.)

use the term role ambiguity to refer in particular to an individual's uncertainty of what they should do in their role.<sup>196</sup>

Role conflict and role ambiguity may in general be viewed together, because the consequences of conflict and ambiguity are quite similar. (Kahn et al. 1964, 88 – 89.)<sup>197</sup> This means that it is not both possible and sensible to separate these two concepts entirely from each other.

In this research, the concept of role conflict is used in defining the conflicting role requirements a church elder faces in their ministry. In addition, the concept of role ambiguity is used in defining ambiguous role expectations, in which an elder does not really know what they are expected to do and how they are expected to perform their role. In the role episode model used as a basis for the research this means that in facing expectations, an elder may face role conflict and ambiguous role expectations. In this research, special consideration is given to those themes when comparing the results drawn from the comparison of the questionnaire given to the church members and the interviews of church elders that bring up suspicions of conflicting and ambiguous role requirements.

Huhtinen (2002, 81, 83 - 84) gives examples of conflicting role requirements a church context creates. For instance, a prospective pastor may have first of all had the ecclesiastical tasks of a priest in mind when starting to study theology. Then in practise, when working as a parson, they also face the need to handle the church administration and the role of supervising the other workers well. Church ministers are often also expected to take different roles depending on the tasks they perform.<sup>198</sup> In addition, the spiritual context of the church environment creates a special dimension for an elder's role expect-

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<sup>196</sup> However, Katz and Kahn (1978, 206) maintain that the other elements of a role may also cause uncertainty (for instance the people involved in the role sending, the content of the role performance and the evaluation of the role behaviour).

<sup>197</sup> Kahn et al. (1964, 88 – 89) point out some similarities: 1) A conflicting role pressure may create role ambiguity for a person. 2) When an individual faces an ambiguous role, their role is also likely to seem ambiguous to the other people involved. 3) Role conflict and role ambiguity seem to share some of the sources (for instance rapid change, organizational size and complexity).

<sup>198</sup> It is important to remember that Huhtinen is discussing the role expectations of the fulltime clergy in the Lutheran context. Elders carrying out voluntary ministry do not share all the expectations faced by full-time pastors. However, it is important to ask what the elders had in mind when they were appointed to their office. Did they primarily expect a spiritual role or an administrative role?

tations. The expectations that the parishioners focus on their pastor and other church workers are often based on devotional or worship contexts. (Huhtinen 2002, 81.)<sup>199</sup>

In their study of the role conflict between clergy and undertakers, Bradfield and Myers (1980, 349) found that when these two parties are in consultation with each other, conflict is lessened. Accordingly, they concluded that even though the roles of clergy and undertaker can potentially be in conflict with each other, a possible conflict does not have to hinder their co-operation in serving the bereaved, if they have mutual understanding and are aware of each other's needs.

In addition, Kay (2000, 123) found in his research that it is easier for the senior pastor to resist role conflict and role ambiguity. He suggests that this is due to their longer experience. Senior pastors are better able to balance conflicting demands and prioritise demands due to their longer experience.

In her research, Monahan (1999, 92 – 93) found two major sources of role ambiguity for clergy. First of all, the boundaries between clergy and laity may be unsettled.<sup>200</sup> Second, the boundaries between different clergy members may also be open.<sup>201</sup> In general the clergy's workload was lessened by specialized training for them, longer work experience as a pastor, a clear job description and a lighter task load.

An elder may also face similar kind of role conflicts. Even though an elder does not perform their role on fulltime bases, they face in the Finnish Pentecostal application

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<sup>199</sup> Is an elder's role expectation as a church leader also based on their church's worship context? The typical tradition is that elders have a leading role at the Lord's Supper in a Pentecostal Church. If the role expectation of an elder is mainly based on the worship service culture, then the special features connected to the role expectations of a Finnish Pentecostal elder are more understandable.

<sup>200</sup> Monahan (1999, 92 – 93) found that the clergy did not get role ambiguity because of a distinction between them and the laity. Indeed, role ambiguity was often lessened when the laity assisted them and thus lowered the clergy's workload.

Monahan's (1999, 91) research suggests a correlation between the clergy's task load and their role ambiguity. The clergy felt less role ambiguity when they focused on a few limited tasks and left other tasks to the laity. The longer job experience the clergy had and the better training they had, the less role ambiguity they felt. Role ambiguity does not primarily have to do with one's occupation but it mostly relates to the organizational issues one is involved with.

<sup>201</sup> This means that a pastor's job description, length of work experience and training may create a big difference even among the clergy. However, this does not apply so clearly to single-pastor churches.

similar kind of challenges as pastors, because they perform same task as pastors perform.

The role of an elder is not always clearly defined but may be ambiguous. Accordingly, an elder may easily be in a situation in which they do not really know what they should do. In addition, an elder may face a situation in which they know what they should do but do not nevertheless fulfil the expectations of others. The role conflict and role ambiguity faced by a church elder are analysed in this research in particular by comparing the role expectations an elder faces with the ways they face them.

## **4.2 Leadership and its Voluntary Aspect in Relation to Elders**

Next, the concept of leadership and its voluntary aspect in relation to the role expectations of the church elder is discussed. The purpose is to define how the role expectations of a church elder are affected by the leadership aspect connected to an elder's role performance and by the voluntary aspect related to leadership.<sup>202</sup>

### **4.2.1 Different ways of leadership**

Leadership is needed in order to get things done in an orderly way. However, the different aspects of leadership have been understood in diverse ways. What are the different views of leadership especially from the aspect of the church elders' role expectations? Which aspects of leadership especially relate to the elders' leadership?

Fiedler (1967, 11) defines *leadership* as an interpersonal relation in which one person has more power and influence than the others so that the leader is able to direct and control the behaviour and actions of others more than the others are able to influence the leader. For Fiedler and Carcia (1987, 2), the term *leader* refers to a person, who directs other people's efforts to achieve a given goal. Hersey (1984, 27) defines *leadership style* as a leader's behaviour patterns seen by others. This means that the leadership patterns refer to how other people view the leader's acts.

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<sup>202</sup> As the members of the leading board of elders in a church, the role of the elders involves especially leadership tasks. An extensive study of the leadership theory is needed in order to construct the framework for understanding the elements that take place in the leadership process. This then helps to evaluate the leadership role expectations the elders face.

Elliston (1992, 21) understands that leadership refers to the process of influence, in which leaders, followers and the situation of interaction are important key components. Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (1996, 91) also view leadership as the process of influencing people to achieve goals in a given situation. For them the leadership process contains three important elements: the leader, the follower, and other situational variables. Leadership is involved, when one person tries to influence another person.

Northouse (2007, 3) also approaches leadership from the process viewpoint. He sees it as a process in which an individual influences a group of people so that a common goal is achieved. In addition, according to him, leadership may be defined either from the perspective of a leader as the centre of a group or from the perspective of the leader's personality. The former suggests that a leader is essential for the activity of a group and for changes to it. The latter conceptualises leadership from the perspective of personality, suggesting the importance of the leader's special traits and characteristics in persuading others to accomplish tasks. (Northouse 2007, 2.) Furthermore, Northouse (2007, 5 – 6) points out assigned leadership and emergent leadership as two common forms of leadership. *Assigned leadership* refers to one's formal position in an organization. *Emergent leadership* refers to gained leadership because of the way other group members respond to a person.<sup>203</sup>

In this research, leadership has in particular to do with the content of the role expectations faced by a church elder. This means that leadership forms a central dimension for the expectations that are studied. A central question about the leadership dimension is its form. Is the leadership in a church expected to be assigned or emergent? The other central question is the approach to leadership. Do personality traits determine an elder's ability to become a leader, or does an elder develop to become a leader?

The trait aspect has traditionally defined a leader. In addition, the skills approach and the situational approach have been central in defining leadership. Leadership may also be approached from some other viewpoints. These are, for instance, the style ap-

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<sup>203</sup> Fiedler and Carcia (1987, 2) also see leadership either as assigned (appointed or elected) or emerged from the group.



proach,<sup>204</sup> the contingency model,<sup>205</sup> the path-goal theory,<sup>206</sup> the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory,<sup>207</sup> the transformational approach,<sup>208</sup> the psychodynamic approach,<sup>209</sup> and intelligent leadership.<sup>210</sup> Leadership may also be viewed from a team perspective,<sup>211</sup> or by comparing men and women in leadership.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Whereas the style approach emphasizes the behaviour of the leader, the trait approach focuses on the leader's personality characteristics and the skills approach emphasis the leader's capabilities. The gist of the style approach is to focus on what a leader does and how they act. The style approach expanded the study of leadership to include the actions of a leader in various contexts by focusing on examining the leader's style or behaviour. (Northouse 2007, 69; see also Sydänmaanlakka 2003, 46.)

<sup>205</sup> According to the contingency theory, the leader's effectiveness depends on how well their style fits a given context. The contingency theory emphasises style and situations in leadership, and has to do with effectively matching the leader and the situation. (Fiedler 1967, 151; Northouse 2007, 113; Sydänmaanlakka 2003, 48.)

<sup>206</sup> The path-goal theory focuses on how leaders motivate their followers to accomplish given goals. The idea behind the theory is that the subordinates are motivated, if they feel they are able to do their work and they believe that doing the work is beneficial for them. (Northouse 2007, 127; see also Sydänmaanlakka 2003, 52.)

<sup>207</sup> The leader-member exchange (LMX) theory explains leadership as a process focusing on the interaction between leaders and followers. The LMX theory has brought a new aspect to leadership research, because it has challenged the assumption of many other theories, which focus on what leaders do collectively towards all of their followers. (Northouse 2007, 151; see also Sydänmaanlakka 2003, 55.)

<sup>208</sup> The transformational approach defines leadership as a process aiming to change and transform people. The focus is on values, ethics, emotions, long-term goals, and standards. As a process, the idea has to do with integrating charismatic and visionary leadership, and it attempts to get the followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them. (Northouse 2007, 175 – 176.)

<sup>209</sup> The psychodynamic approach (consisting of several different models or theories) focuses on how a leader consistently thinks, feels, and acts towards their environment and other people. In this regard, one's personality is an important factor, because whereas an individual may be inflexible in behaviour, intelligent and shy, another person can be spontaneous, independent and creative. (Stech 2007, 237.)

<sup>210</sup> Sydänmaanlakka (2003, 13, 139 – 140) studied the leadership framework to define good leadership, areas included in it and the development of good leaders. He maintains that the leadership paradigm should shift from an industrial to a post-industrial paradigm. He recommends intelligent leadership as the framework for the paradigm. Intelligent leadership may be defined as a dialogue between a leader and their followers in a certain context and organization, having a shared culture and values, and being affected by the macro environment. In this dialogue they both try to influence each other in a given situation in order to achieve effectively a common vision and the objectives related to it.

<sup>211</sup> According to the team leadership approach, a leader's mental model of a situation (both at the team and at the organizational and environmental level) is an important starting point for effective team performance. Thus, effective team leaders are able to form accurate mental models of their team's problems by continual observation of the team. (Kogler Hill 2007, 209.)

<sup>212</sup> The early 1970s saw the beginning of research on the differences between males and females in leadership. The studies of leadership styles indicated that women tend to use more democratic and transformational styles than men. (Hoyt 2007, 291.) In addition, there have been some general explanations of why women do not fit into high leadership positions. One of these explanations was that women are not as well educated, trained or do not have enough experience for leadership. However, empirical research does not support the view that a possible lack of education and experience would be due to their womanhood. The other explanation was that there are differences between men and women. Nevertheless, evi-

Next, for the purposes of the research, the trait approach and the situational model and skills model are compared. The trait approach represents traditional thinking on leadership as something inborn in a person. The skills approach also focuses on the leader's traits and abilities, but it differs by assuming that these traits and abilities can be learned. The situational approach also emphasises the leader's central role, but points out the strong influence of a given context on a leadership situation. The team leadership aspect is also discussed, because it offers a way to understand the team dimension in leadership.

#### **4.2.1.1 The trait approach**

Leadership has traditionally been described as either a trait or a process. The trait approach to leadership was a major attempt to systematise leadership in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The aim was to study leadership traits in order to find out what enabled certain people to become great leaders. The focus on identifying the inborn qualities of great military, social and political leaders, gave the name "great man" to theories using this approach. The idea was that leadership traits came with birth, and only the "great" people possessed these traits. However, in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century studies questioning the universality of leadership traits challenged the trait approach. The personal aspect was seen as being important, but it was seen to be more relative to the requirements of the situation. (Northouse 2007, 15.)

The idea of trait is challenging as it asserts that only selected people have leadership qualities. Thus, good leadership is only expected of individuals, who are believed to have special innate talents. (Northouse 2007, 4.) However, researchers have been unable to identify a single trait of good leadership. This has led them to define several fundamental leadership traits (for instance, physical energy and friendliness). Accordingly, as this approach did not give a clear answer to what makes a leader, researchers created complex interrelationships between issues like the environment and group structure. The emphasis changed more towards group performance and satisfaction, even though personality characteristics were still viewed as important for leadership research. (Lakomski 2005, 5; Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson 1996, 101.)

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dence is lacking that these differences would have a greater influence on effective leadership. (Hoyt 2007, 291 – 292.)

However, the trait approach is still one of the major approaches to leadership. The approach started by emphasising the qualities of great people, and continued by pointing out the effect of situations on leadership. Since then it has shifted back to re-emphasising the critical role traits have in effective leadership. (Northouse 2007, 16.) The trait approach provides clear practical direction on the characteristics that one should have when serving as a leader, even though it is not possible to provide a comprehensive list of leadership traits. (Sydänmaanlakka 2003, 45.)<sup>213</sup>

In defining leadership characteristics, trait leadership in a way reflects the list in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 on the qualities of an elder. This may be the reason why the model may sound familiar for a Finnish Pentecostal thinker. It also succeeds in emphasising the importance of character traits. However, it does not give enough room for growing in the task. The theory leads too easily to explaining the shortcomings of an elder in leadership simply by indicating that the prospective elder does not have the needed personality traits for the task. This makes the theory partly problematic in defining the leadership role of elders.

#### **4.2.1.2 The Skills approach**

The skills approach is another way of defining leadership. During the early 1990s a team of researchers (funded by the U.S. Army and the Department of Defence) launched a huge research project for developing a comprehensive theory of leadership based on problem-solving skills in organizations in order to explain the central elements of effective performance. The skill-based model that the researchers (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding et al., 2000) formulated is characterised by the idea of the capability model.

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<sup>213</sup> The trait approach seems to have some advantages. First, it appeals to people, because it promotes the popular idea of leaders as special people leading the way in society. Second, several studies support this approach. Third, the approach sheds light on understanding the leader components in the leadership process. Fourth, the approach has provided individuals with a basis for reflecting on their own leadership attributes. (Northouse 2007, 35.)

However, the trait approach has not been able to provide a definite list of leadership traits, but has too easily resulted in subjective list of traits, which are not based on robust research results. At the beginning it also failed to take into account the impact of situations. In addition, the trait approach has not paid enough attention to the team dimension in leadership. Furthermore, the approach does not work well with the training of new leaders due to its emphasis on already stable and fixed personal attributes, which are not amenable to change. (Northouse 2007, 35 – 36.)

This means that it studies the relationship between a leader's performance and their knowledge and skills. (Northouse 2007, 43.)<sup>214</sup>

Leadership skills may be defined as the ability to use knowledge and competencies in accomplishing certain goals or objectives. The skills approach agrees with the trait approach in emphasising the leader's competencies. However, unlike the trait approach, instead of concentrating on fixed personality characteristics, the skills approach focuses on skills and abilities that can be learned. The skills approach emphasises the need for knowledge and abilities in effective leadership, even though personality also has an important integral role in leadership. (Northouse 2007, 39 – 40, 66.)<sup>215</sup>

The skills approach takes well into account the need for an elder to obtain quality skills to lead their church. It also considers the need for an elder to learn the skill, and does not merely maintain that leadership skills are inherited traits. However, it does not explain why an elder is able to be effective in leadership. It merely points out the necessary skills without explaining how and why they are needed.

#### **4.2.1.3 The Situational approach**

Leadership may also be understood in connection to a situation. Situational leadership is one of the most commonly recognized leadership approaches. It was first developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969). It focuses on leadership situations and emphasises that different situations require different kinds of leadership. The idea is to adapt one's leadership style to the demands of the different situations. In addition, the focus of the situational leadership model is on the leader's behaviour, although the situational variables

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<sup>214</sup> The model has five components: individual attributes, competencies, career experiences, leadership outcomes, and environmental influences. (Northouse 2007, 44.)

<sup>215</sup> The skills approach has some major strengths. First, as a leader-centred model it emphasises both the importance of the leader's abilities and the centrality of learned skills for the effectiveness of leadership performance. Second, the skills approach emphasises skills and learnable competencies and thus makes leadership possible for all people. Third, the skills approach functions as a map, guiding the way to achieve effective leadership performance. Fourth, the skills approach may be used especially in leadership training that includes teamwork, listening, creative problem solving, and conflict resolution.

However, it also has a number of weaknesses. The skills approach uses theories beyond the boundaries of leadership (for instance, conflict management, critical thinking, motivation theory, and personality theory). In addition, skills approval does not explain how a person's competencies lead to effective leadership performance. Furthermore, even though the model is not a trait approach, it nevertheless relies heavily on traits like cognitive abilities, motivation, and personality, which play major roles in the model. Finally, it may not be appropriate to make general applications of the skills approach, because it was constructed on data on military personnel. (Northouse 2007, 67.)

(leader, followers, organization, etc.) are also important. (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson 2001, 172 – 173.)<sup>216</sup>

The situational approach focuses on leadership situations, in which the situation primarily determines the kind of leadership needed. Thus, an effective leader has to be able to adapt their leadership style to the demands of different situations. (Northouse 2007, 91.) In addition, the situational approach to leadership focuses on observing the behaviour of leaders and their followers in various situations. The focus is not on the leader's abilities or potential. The idea is that leaders may be trained to adapt their leadership behaviour style to different situations. Thus, for instance education, training and development may improve the leadership effectiveness of most people. (Hersey et al. 2001, 107.)

The situational leadership model is useful for training and developing leaders, because it is easy to conceptualise and apply. It is applicable to almost any type of organization. In addition, it may be applied at any level and for almost all types of tasks. However, it is a product of the 60s and 70s, when leadership was understood and as a one-on-one relationship. (Sydänmaanlakka 2003, 50.)

The situational approach enables one to better take into account the special context in which an elder performs their role. It allows one to pay more attention to the church environment. This also means that it gives room for both the collective team leadership and for the voluntary aspect of leading. However, it nevertheless focuses on describing leadership mainly from the perspective of one elder, and does not take the organizational and collective dimensions adequately into account.

How do these three approaches relate to each other? The emphasis on the set and fixed personality attributes of the trait approach is probably one of the most important factors that distinguish it from the other approaches to leadership. However, even though the skills approach emphasises the ability of an individual to learn leadership skills, it nevertheless does not differ entirely from the others, because it focuses on personality traits underlying the learned skills. The situational approach differs more from the trait approach by its emphasis on a situation. It gives more room for elders to develop them-

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<sup>216</sup> The situational leadership model has been developed and revised several times after its inception. Blanchard has developed the Situational Leadership II model. This model differs from the original model mainly only in how the maturity/development level of a follower is defined. (Sydänmaanlakka 2003, 48.)

selves as leaders in order to better fit a particular situation. However, it shares a feature with the two other approaches in that it focuses mainly on the leader.

While these three approaches give a good description of the different ways the church members might expect church elders to carry out their leadership role, these approaches do not provide a comprehensive explanation of the elder's leadership. The intelligent leadership approach (with its emphasis on the organizational element in leadership) is also important in understanding the leadership expectations faced by the church elders. This is because a church elder performs their leadership with others. In addition, the expectations coming from the church often amount to a dialogue between an elder and the church members. However, the team leadership approach might also shed some more light on understanding the challenges related to the leadership role that the church elders face (explained below in more detail).

This research aims to use leadership models as tools for defining the leadership role expectations the church elders face. In analysing both the results of the questionnaire researching the church members' expectations and the interview examining how the church elders face the expectations, these models form a good basis for analysing the leadership dimension of the faced expectations. However, in order to understand the faced leadership expectations more thoroughly, it is necessary to define some central concepts related to the issue.

#### **4.2.2 A Team in Leadership**

In the Finnish Pentecostal Movement, a church elder forms the leadership team (board) with the other elders of their church. The leadership in a typical church is not (at least) officially in the hands of only one person. The elder's leadership role should also be viewed from a collective viewpoint in order to be understood properly. (Salo 1998, 42.)

A team refers to a group of two or more people with the members interacting dynamically in order to achieve a shared goal. Membership in the group is restricted and each member has a specific task. (Ruohotie & Honka 1999, 100.) Fiedler and Carcia (1987, 3) propose that when it comes to leadership, a team consists of a group of people, who feel they belong together in order to achieve a given goal.

What are the team's important elements? In order to exist, a group needs a shared goal. Shared goals tend to give unity to a group. However, the unity within a group may also have a negative impact by bringing the social pressure within the group to the surface. A more loosely knit group does not encounter such challenges. (Juuti 1999, 106, 112, 115.) When a team is unified and is able to settle its emotional conflicts, it is better able to achieve its goals. In addition, a team functions well, when everyone's responsibility for the overall goal is emphasised. Different roles in a team should be seen as forming a balanced entity. (Liukkonen et al. 2006, 148, 160.)<sup>217</sup>

Ruohotie and Honka (1999, 107) point out that the members' personality traits, for instance, intelligence, adaptability, ambitions, foresightedness, sociality and popularity, have an effect on the team's performance. It is likely that different personality types perform better in some task groups, because different task situations require different kinds of behaviour.

The tendency in modern organizations is that a leader shares at least some of their leadership responsibilities with their subordinates. In addition, sometimes the leadership role may be rotated among the team members. This means that leadership in a team may be given to a team member, or may vary depending on a given task. (Sydänmaanlakka 2003, 64; Liukkonen et al. 2006, 151.)<sup>218</sup>

Leadership may be viewed as a central factor in team effectiveness. Effective team leaders are able to form precise mental models of their team's problems by continuous observation of the team. (Kogler Hill 2007, 209.) However, when a team lacks unity, it is very likely that even when the individuals work hard, the team as such is not effective (Senge 1990, 234).

Senge (1990, 249, 268) points out that successful teams also face conflicts. However, conflicting ideas do not prevent the team from functioning, but they help it to be even

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<sup>217</sup> The inner dynamics (e.g. objectives, team roles, interaction) and the team's relationship to the external environment form the central features of a team. Teams tend to unite individuals and organizations. (Ruohotie & Honka 1999, 104.)

<sup>218</sup> Critics of the conservative idea of a single leader have emphasised the possibility of viewing leadership as something for many people. The idea is that leadership may for instance vary from task to task in a workplace. Indeed, traditional leadership theory does not take into account the possibility that in practice leadership in an organization is often shared. (Lakomski 2005, 63.)

more productive. It is important for a team to discuss potentially conflicting management issues, for instance, because it may help the team to leave discussions about personalities and leaderships styles aside and focus more on structure and systems.

In order for a board of elders to succeed, there should be overall balance in the team among the roles of each elder. The board does not function, if for instance the elders start to worry about the roles of other elders on the team, and then forget the purpose of their own role. (See Liukkonen et al. 2006, 151 – 152.) In practice, this may mean that the new elders should already know the strategy of the church as an organization when appointed to their office. They should evaluate whether they want to perform their leadership according to the strategy of the church, or not. (See Sipilä 1991, 76.)

In addition, in order for the board to function effectively, the elders should listen to one another and value each other's opinions. Shared leadership contributes towards an open atmosphere, which enables the members to accept different opinions and different roles. This also means that it is important to be careful about the norms the board of elders use as a system for controlling their leadership performance. (See Liukkonen et al. 2006, 153, 160.) Thus, leaders succeed best, when they enable both their organization and its members to find out and realize their own calling.<sup>219</sup> A team that knows its calling (has a clear aim) is more effective than a group of people who perform their tasks mechanically. (Aaltonen 2011, 274.)

The team approach to leadership is central in this research, because it emphasises the collective nature of the leadership the church elders are involved in when performing their roles. The team approach also makes it necessary to take into account the other elders when analysing the role expectations faced by a single elder. In this sense, the team approach enables one to understand better the leadership expectations an elder faces both alone and together with the other elders on their board.

#### **4.2.3 Leadership in relation to other concepts**

As discussed in this research, leadership is associated with both the role episode model used as the basis of the research, and with the context of a church elder defining their role and the expectations they face. Understanding the central concepts related to these

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<sup>219</sup> Aaltonen (2011, 363) defines calling as one's calling to a task, as an inner motivation to do something, or one's mission in life (a personal path).



aspects will help one to better comprehend leadership as it relates to the elders and the expectations they face. The concept of organization, which is one of the central ideas underlying the role episode model, requires our consideration. In addition, the concepts of power, values, vision, ethics and leadership training will be defined in relation to the research. The relationship of leadership to a spiritual leadership role is also discussed briefly.

#### **4.2.3.1 Leadership on the organizational level**

On the organizational level, leadership may be understood in particular as a way of coordinating activity and attempting to find some order. This does not only have to do with organising systems. (Lakomski 2005, 72.) Leading the know-how is a central factor both on the organizational and on the individual level. This suggests that the leadership's most important task is to obtain, maintain and develop the expertise needed for the organization. (Sydänmaanlakka 2007b, 174.) In addition, Sydänmaanlakka (2007b, 218) points out that an intelligent organization has the ability to revive itself regularly, learn quickly, and anticipate changes. This kind of organization is able to direct its own operation. It is more like an organism and less like a mechanical machine.

Lakomski (2005, 67) points out that it is important for leaders to remember that their position as leaders does not only mean that they are cognitively brilliant. They are also affected by the cultural-organizational context, because the patterns of cultural meanings are not connected to their structural position. However, a leader's position may put them in a different cognitive position in comparison to their subordinates, because they have access to organizational knowledge that the others do not have. Indeed, the remarkable increase in globalisation after World War II has made it necessary for leaders to understand better the cultural differences in leadership. Cross-cultural communication and practice have become important. (Northouse 2007, 337 – 338.)

According to Lakomski (2005, 15), society is facing a challenge, as the traditional understanding of a leader-centered system does not work any more. It seems that effective organizational practice is becoming more important. The idea of a leader who is leading does not explain everything. Seeck (2008, 28) says that some researchers have studied leadership theories in two different spheres. An organization may be examined on the

micro level (focusing on one organization), or on the macro level (focusing on relationships between organizations).

In this research, the organizational dimension in leadership provides a point of contact between the leadership dimension and the role episode model used as the basis for the research. This means that the leadership expectations focused on a church elder occur in the context of a church organization, which together with the elder and their leadership role form a dynamic entity.

#### **4.2.3.2 Power and leadership**

Power is another important concept related to leadership. Leadership may be described as a process of influence. Power may be seen as the potential for influence in that it makes it possible for leaders to get others to follow and obey them. In order to be effective in influencing others, a leader should understand how power works in different leadership styles. (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson 2001, 204.)<sup>220</sup>

We may make a distinction between formal power and informal power. Whereas formal power comes from the outside, informal power stems from within a group, for instance from the ability to influence others (Liukkonen, Jaakkola & Kataja 2006, 154). Northouse (2007, 7) defines power in an organization rather similarly, as either positional power or personal power. He suggests that rank or office (usually a higher status than that of the followers) in a formal organization gives positional power to a person. Personal power may be gained when the followers for instance like a leader and appreciate their knowledge (for instance expertise), competence, or behavioural values about given issues, or when followers feel that the leader is important (for instance, is a good role model).

In addition, Fiedler (1967, 22, 25) defines positional power as a level of influence leaders are able to have on their followers by virtue of their position. Usually, positional power only affects the followers indirectly by influencing the interpersonal relationship between a leader and a follower. Power as a potential or the capacity to influence is a

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<sup>220</sup> Authority may be viewed as a specific type of power that comes with the leader's position. This means that the power emanating from authority is based on an individual's formal role in a social organization. (Hersey et al. 2001, 205.)

central issue in leadership. The ability to have an effect on other people's attitudes, beliefs and course of action indicates an individual's power potential. (Northouse 2007, 4.) However, this gives rise to a question. What is the connection of power to a prospective elder's motive to be appointed as an elder? To what extent has the possibility to assume power and to influence the church members affected their willingness to be appointed? (See Juuti 1999, 110, and Liukkonen et al. 2006, 154).<sup>221</sup>

In this research, the use of power forms a central ingredient in the leadership expectations a church elder faces. The tension between positional power and personal power may in particular be a crucial question for an elder, as they reflect on the leadership expectations they face. This tension may also become an issue between the leadership authority of different elders on the elders' board, and between an elder and the pastor. In addition, this might give rise to an important question, i.e. who should exercise power in the church (the pastor, an elder, each elder, or elders as a team)? Furthermore, the question of power also connects the leadership dimension to the role dimension, because in this research both relate strongly to the expectations that a church elder faces.

#### **4.2.3.3 Values, vision and ethics**

Values, vision and ethics form the basis for decision-making in leadership. All these concepts affect the way a leader leads their organization. These concepts are also likely to define the content of the role expectations a leader faces. The challenge is that leaders should always be aware of and give priority to their values. Leadership has more to do with defining what the followers should be and become, and less with what they should do. Indeed, the practice of good values also tends to affect an individual's personality. (Sydänmaanlakka 2003, 67.)

Vision plays an important role in leadership, because it makes success possible and may turn this potential into profits. The purpose of leadership is to connect vision and results by being a link between the vision and the results. Accordingly, leadership should make sure that the organization's strategy and tactics are in agreement. (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson 1996, 94, 97.) Leaders should not only create plans, but they should in particular also try to contextualise the plans and achieve them. (Hersey et al. 1996, 95.)

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<sup>221</sup> An elder might have sought membership of the board of elders, because they feel it fulfils their expectations. For instance, social support and acceptance may be such benefits.

Weems (1993, 34 – 35) asserts that proclaiming the vision always seems to be a part of true leadership so that it becomes shared and the key people are willing to work for it. This also seems to suggest that administration and management are essential in effective leadership, but they are not the only elements in leadership, as they may be carried out without vision and values. As a moral act, leadership requires vision and values in order to be effective.

Leadership is also an ethical issue. Leaders have a huge ethical accountability (and thus also power) in how they affect people. Their position enables them to exert influence on followers. It is important that leaders treat their subordinates with respect and in an ethically appropriate way when leading them to common goals. A leader also has a central role in creating an ethical atmosphere in their organization. They have to live according to the values and ideals they promote. (Northouse 2007, 367.)

It is important for leaders to see to it that their actions comply with good morals. This is easier, if they try to learn to evaluate their established strategies critically, and also try to find alternative ways of performing things. The leaders should also train their followers and subordinates to perform their tasks in ethically appropriate ways. Ethics refers especially to the process of growing emotionally, so that individuals learn to be guided by good, positive and equitable attitudes. (Aaltonen 2011, 167.)<sup>222</sup>

The leadership expectations a church elder faces naturally reflect the values of the church members sending the expectations. However, it is likely that the issue of values together with the questions of vision and ethics are more important in analysing how elders face the leadership expectations they receive from their church. Above all, an elder needs vision in order to perform their leadership tasks effectively. However, this brings a challenge: How should the elder form the vision together with the other elders? The elder's values and ethics and the ways the board of elders form shared values have an effect on what the vision is and how it is put into practise.

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<sup>222</sup> Logically, a good example is the best way to help others to grow in their ethics. Learning to discuss matters is another good way. It is also good to keep in mind that every person has the potential to grow both in the good and in the bad. (Aaltonen 2011, 167.)

#### 4.2.3.4 Leadership training

Learning is another important aspect related to leadership. Learning affects how both an individual leader and a team of leaders progress in their leadership. Thus, learning is important for an organization such as a church. However, organizational learning occurs only when individuals in the organization learn. (Senge 1990, 139.) It is crucial that the individuals in an organization learn, because workers who are the well-trained and do their tasks well (e.g. elders and other people in leadership) are the most important resource for the organizations of the future. (Sydänmaanlakka 2007b, 259.)

The concept of learning is a central element in directing the learning that takes place in an organization. The idea of learning has changed from positivistic behaviourism (learning directed from the outside)<sup>223</sup> towards relativistic constructivism (self-directed learning).<sup>224</sup> In addition to these two opposite ideas of learning, the concept of realism is a useful idea describing both the role of a learner and the role of a teacher.<sup>225</sup> The realistic model provides the best framework for considering the training of the church elders. The reason for this is that while it emphasises the activity of an elder as a learner, it also points to the reality that does not depend on the learners themselves.

When it comes to church elders, it is especially important to emphasise the activity of learners, because they mainly learn in informal settings. (Walther, du Bois-Reymond &

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<sup>223</sup> The behaviouristic learning concept was based on a chain of external stimuli and responses. Reinforcement was used to strengthen an individual's learning. In this sense, the behaviouristic learning concept is very passive. However, it fulfils an important purpose in learning. It emphasises the importance of gradually progressing practice as the basis of learning. The knowledge and motivation of the learner are built step by step. Nevertheless, the behaviouristic model is too simplistic and is as such inadequate to describe the complex processes of learning. (Puolimatka 2002, 84 – 85.)

<sup>224</sup> The constructive learning concept was built on cognitive psychology at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was found as a counterpart for the behaviouristic learning concept that had been predominant in the first part of the century. (Puolimatka 2002, 82.) Constructivist learning has to do with the idea that learning always involves active cognitive function by the learner, so that learning is never merely a passive reception of information. The learners interpret their observations and the new information in the light of their previous experience and knowledge. The learner is actively searching for significances for new matters and also constructing the significances. (Tynjälä 1999, 37 – 38.)

<sup>225</sup> The realistic approach to learning is critical of the one-sided application of the metaphor of constructing without entirely rejecting it. Realism agrees that the metaphor of constructing describes adequately some of the features of the situation in which teaching and learning occur. However, it does not describe what realism regards as the most important ones. According to realism, learning refers to a process in which an individual comes into contact with reality. (Puolimatka 2002, 21.)

Biggart, 29.)<sup>226</sup> Well-organised informal training for young church elders, for instance, could be an effective way to prepare the young elders by providing real-life training for them in order to help them to grow in their ministry and role.

When comparing learning concepts with leadership concepts, one notices that the idea underlying the trait leadership approach resembles the behaviouristic learning concept. In contrast, the situational and the team leadership approaches seem to a greater extent reflect the constructivist and realistic idea of learning. The constructivist and realistic ideas enable one to understand that leadership traits can at least to some extent be developed and trained, and are not basically innate (as the behaviouristic model would maintain). (Sydänmaanlakka 2003, 45.)

Kinnunen (2003, 209) used the “deep leadership” model to examine the development of the leadership abilities of young Finnish army officers. His research indicated that further training seminars had a significant effect on the development of leadership. (Kinnunen 2003, 212.) This suggests that further training for church elders might have a positive influence on their role performance as church elders.

However, it might not be easy to get church elders to attend training seminars, as they serve voluntarily (in addition to their fulltime work). It would be important to check whether churches could offer Internet-based training for today’s busy church elders. Could the Internet provide training for elders that would not require them to travel or to be in a certain place at a certain time?<sup>227</sup>

Learning and training are factors that should be taken into consideration when dealing with the role of church elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement.<sup>228</sup> When it comes to

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<sup>226</sup> Informal learning may take place in situations in which the context is organized so that it promotes learning without a formally organized structure and a curriculum. (Walther, du Bois-Reymond & Biggart, 29.)

<sup>227</sup> Nevgi (2003, 20, 22) explains that a web-based learning environment refers to a website either on the Internet or the Intranet. It provides a virtual environment for teachers and students for teaching and learning. However, it is both challenging and expensive to build an Internet-based learning environment that would be didactically well designed and interactive. At least it is important to have a well-planned educational design for it to function well. (Nevgi 2003, 23; Manninen & Pesonen 2000, 64.)

<sup>228</sup> Training is an important element in leadership, because it determines to some extent the kind of leadership concept that underlies the role expectations sent by the church members and the role expectations received by the church elders.

the leadership element in the elders' role expectations, one may conclude that the decisions a leader makes about the form of their leadership mainly determine the way they exercise their leadership. Often the decisions are not conscious, but stem from the elder's attitudes and ways of understanding issues.

The concepts related to leadership discussed in this subchapter provide a strong basis for analysing the leadership role expectations the church elders face. Indeed, because the very nature of the elder's role focuses on leading, leadership forms a core element in the content of their performance. While the discussion of these concepts has provided related elements that are essential in analysing the leadership role expectations, the aspect of voluntary leadership should also be examined, however.

#### **4.2.4 Voluntary leadership**

Elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement serve in a voluntary ministry in their church. The voluntary aspect makes their leadership challenging. For instance, it means that the elders can conduct their ministry rather freely. They are not fully accountable to anyone, because they do not receive any salary. This makes it possible for them to use the voluntary basis as an excuse for not participating in a particular task, for instance. However, as they carry out their ministry on a voluntary basis, this often makes the performance of their role rather heavy and burdensome.

##### **4.2.4.1 Voluntary aspect**

Volunteering may be defined as work based on non-coercion. The volunteers do not get paid or only receive a small remuneration. This kind of volunteerism may be either formal or informal. Voluntary work may also be defined as a leisure activity, instead of a more common definition of unpaid work or unpaid productive activity. However, leisure time volunteering should be fulfilling or enjoyable, like all leisure activities should be. If the volunteers feel they are forced to perform their roles due to circumstances they would want to avoid, their activity is in effect not voluntary. (Stebbins 2004, 51 – 52.) According to Tribbensee (2008, 38), it is better, if a voluntary activity is really voluntary and the people involved in it do not get any financial benefits for taking part in it or any penalty, if they are not involved in the voluntary activity.

During history, individuals have always worked either for pay, helped their neighbours or done voluntary work. In some cases the work of the upper class people was not considered to be work, because they did not have a work contract. The idea was that they were doing their tasks in order to be thankful for the “gifts” they received from their “clients”. Providing services and returning the favour was the rationale behind this principle. Only those, who could not make their living otherwise, worked for pay. (Klami 2001, 59 - 60.)<sup>229</sup> The meaning of volunteerism has not changed very much during history, although the activities involved in volunteerism have changed considerably. (Stebbins 2004, 62.)

According to Lord (2000, 82), the voluntary principle was originally seen only in the work of voluntary societies. It may also have remained as the framework for Pentecostal missions. The Pentecostal Movement has been central in developing the understanding of the voluntary principle. Lord suggests the following definition of the voluntary principle: “The voluntary principle is that it is the Holy Spirit, working in the hearts of individual believers, who motivates the work of Christian mission” (2000, 83.) With this he gives spiritual meaning for the motive behind the idea of doing something voluntarily.

While the religious motive may be viewed as a possible impetus for doing voluntary work, the religious dimension does not explain everything. Volunteering is a central element in different kinds of organizations. However, the idealistic and moral nature of volunteerism is the main reason why the theory is put into practice. This suggests that charity and religious aims were the main reasons for the birth of volunteerism. (Kurki 2002, 118.)

Preston (2008) points out that volunteering seems to be a growing phenomenon for instance in America. Many seem to be willing to volunteer, but less actually volunteer. Individuals may feel that it is easier to donate money than to actually volunteer. Especially higher income seems to cause people to donate money instead of volunteering.

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<sup>229</sup> For instance, in the old Swedish Empire that Finland was a part of until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the peasants were not eager to work for pay. However, voluntary work, helping their neighbours and common efforts like bridge building were considered good activities for peasants. In addition, the government officials did not think that they were employed, but were merely getting an allowance for their living expenses. (Klami 2001, 61.)



Practice is the big difference between volunteering and donating money to charity (Yeung 2005, 120).

The voluntary aspect is a major phenomenon in today's Finnish society. Many Finns enjoy working for instance in different associations, in peer groups, in church settings, in positions of trust, in labour unions, and so on. (Harju 2005, 67.)<sup>230</sup> This means that the idea of volunteerism has not died with the passing of time. Older people often tend to claim that the younger generation is not interested in voluntary tasks. However, this is not always true. Yeung and Grönlund (2005, 188 – 189) point out that young people are an important resource for volunteerism. However, it is important to consider the kind of voluntary work the young people are willing to be involved in.<sup>231</sup>

#### **4.2.4.2 Challenges with volunteerism**

A challenge with voluntary work in today's society is that Western society has separated work and leisure from each other into two distinct spheres of life (especially according to Protestant ethics). Work may be seen as something uninteresting, but necessary for earning income. Leisure is a happy way to escape work. (Stebbins 2004, 119.)

However, it is not so easy to make a distinction between work and leisure. Stebbins (2004, 120) explains: "While casual leisure and non-devotee work can be seen as separate coins, serious leisure and devotee work can only be logically seen as the two sides of a single coin." This means that for instance serious leisure in the form of voluntary leadership does not differ totally from leadership as fulltime work.<sup>232</sup>

In addition, voluntary work is closely associated with the idea of non-professionalism. This means that voluntary work resembles the idea of non-professionalism, in which the workers for instance in health care are expected to be subjectively involved with their patients instead of only being professionally and objectively involved. However, volun-

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<sup>230</sup> Active citizenship has to do with the wide participation of individuals in society. (Harju 2005, 67.)

<sup>231</sup> Yeung and Grönlund (2005, 188 – 189) maintain that it is important to develop carefully the voluntary possibilities offered to young people so that they do not merely have to continue the tasks done by earlier generations, but that they would be able to develop the voluntary work they will be involved in. It is possible to get young people to do volunteer work, but it requires some effort.

<sup>232</sup> These two types of leadership resemble different aspects of the same task. However, the motives of voluntary work may more easily be unselfish, because its roots in altruism help it to be free of selfishly exploiting the people who are assisted. (Stebbins 2004, 102.)

tary work has increasingly accrued professional features. Voluntary workers are often expected to do work that is characteristically more or less professional and receive professional training. The cultural difference between professionals and non-professionals is not as pronounced as it used to be. (Mönkkönen 2005, 286; see also Rajala 1997, 255.)

In current society a potential challenge in the church setting may be that the laypeople who are serving as voluntary workers may be better able to achieve professional quality in certain aspects of ministry than the professional clergy. Johnson (2006, 31) describes the change in status in society by pointing out that in the Catholic Church the well-educated laity challenges the status the clergy has had. For instance the dissatisfaction concerning poor teaching and poorly justified official declarations may cause tension between clergy and laity.<sup>233</sup>

Stebbins (2004, 63, 66) points out that voluntary leisure activity also has its costs, which are often seen as a combination of tension, dislikes and disappointments. Each person involved confronts these costs in a personal way. When it comes to the church elders, for instance, an elder may not always feel like attending board meetings. In addition, the board might occasionally reject their ideas, or they may be asked to perform a task with which they do not fully agree. However, they may still feel that these activities are fulfilling (and serious leisure), because of the rewards they feel they get from them.<sup>234</sup>

Another important cost in voluntary work is the accountability it often gives a volunteer. This is especially true of voluntary leadership. It is good to keep in mind that even individuals who do not get paid for their work may be taken to court, if their voluntary work causes damage (Eskola & Kurki 2001, 55).<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> The clergy used to be better educated, but today the situation may be the opposite. The laity may be better educated than the clergy. This may be one reason behind the narrowing of the gap between the clergy and the laity. (Johnson 2006, 31.)

<sup>234</sup> For the church elders, the cost of volunteering often means time spent at different meetings. As the leaders of their community, elders usually have a board meeting at least monthly, in big churches even more often. In comparison, the other church members usually only have one general business meeting annually.

<sup>235</sup> Tribbensee (2008, 38) points out that volunteers often provide valuable help for instance for colleges and other similar institutions, but the use of volunteers means that they have to be supervised. This suggests that an organization also needs to make careful plans for supervising individuals who are working voluntarily (and not only fulltime employees).

In the Finnish Pentecostal setting, the church elders may to some extent be viewed as non-professional voluntary leaders, who use their leisure time for the leadership of their church. However, because they are accountable for the well being of their church, their ministry resembles professional ministry to a greater extent. This means that although they are not professionals, especially in small churches they are nevertheless often expected to have the kind of accountability that is usually expected only of professionals. An important question is how the elders find the motivation to perform their leadership role voluntarily.

#### **4.2.5 Volunteerism and Role Expectations**

What effect could the voluntary nature of the work have on the elder's role? How does it in particular impact the elder's leadership? Are the possible consequences of the voluntary dimension positive or negative, or both? What motivates an elder to engage in voluntary work? Is it likely that the voluntary dimension hinders elders from using time for their ministry? These issues are discussed next, when building the framework for examining the effect of the voluntary nature of the church elders' leadership role.

##### **4.2.5.1 Motivation for voluntary work**

Motivation is a central element in volunteer work in general and voluntary leadership in particular. Yeung (2005, 107 - 108) presents a diamond model of motivation in volunteerism.<sup>236</sup> According to her, the diamond model of motivation in volunteerism is informative on two levels. First, from the viewpoint of motivation, it takes into account the descriptions and experiences of motivation for volunteerism. Second, from a more wider perspective, it presents central elements that form a shared meta-dimension, which may sometimes be viewed as towards oneself (inward) or from oneself (outward).<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Yeung (2005, 105 – 106) based the diamond model of motivation in volunteerism on a theoretical analysis of psychological motivational theories and on a phenomenological analysis of eighteen volunteer workers in the Finnish Lutheran Church.

<sup>237</sup> The inward motivational elements have to do with the volunteers (internal discussion, distance from others, continuity of familiar themes, and getting something for oneself). The outward motivational elements describe the extroversion of volunteerism (towards social circles, different activities, new contents, and giving to others). These inward and outward motivational meta-dimensions do not contradict each other, but indicate how the different aspects of volunteerism relate to each other. (Yeung 2005, 108 – 109.)

The motivation for volunteerism is that individuals get a chance to do something they like. This may often have to do with creativity, talents, abilities, or personal interests (sometimes spiritual). Thus, it was often a joy for volunteers to be involved in voluntary work. (Yeung 2005, 109 – 110.)<sup>238</sup> In addition, Yeung (2005, 113) points out that the attraction of novelty may create motivation for volunteerism. For instance, some people may be involved, because they see the voluntary work as interesting.<sup>239</sup> Moreover, a desire for intimacy might be the element that motivates an elder to volunteer for the board of elders in a church. This means that they may want to volunteer in order to belong to a group and get to know new people. (See Yeung 2005, 114 – 115.)<sup>240</sup>

In addition, people are interested in volunteering because it works. According to Yeung's (2005, 116 - 117) research, volunteering may make it possible for some people to use their free time in a meaningful way. This may in particular be true of older elders, who are already retired, for instance. Indeed, the functionality of voluntary ministry is an important issue. If the voluntary work functions well and is organized well, an elder is more eager to volunteer. However, often the challenge is that as leaders the elders are the ones who have a crucial effect on the functionality of their church organization.

Stebbins (2004, 67) points out that an important motive for joining a voluntary organization is that membership in an organization gives an individual a sense of belonging to a unique and special community that has an impact on history and the world. Essentially, each member feels that it is a privilege to be included in the organization, while all non-members are excluded from it. Elders might feel that the board of elders is an insti-

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<sup>238</sup> The volunteers also felt that they received emotional benefits and a sense of security when performing voluntary work. Thus, they for instance felt that they succeeded in something and that they were needed. This was especially important if a volunteer was unemployed or recently retired. They also felt that voluntary work was a way of managing their use of time. (Yeung 2005, 110.) This suggests that for instance retired church elders may find positive content to their life by engaging in voluntary elder's ministry.

<sup>239</sup> Volunteering may also bring balance to one's work or life situation (for instance in personal crises, or in stressful circumstances). It may also give new experiences, new hobbies, quality of life, etc. Volunteering may also give new challenges, provide new learning opportunities, and provide new information. (Yeung 2005, 113.)

<sup>240</sup> An elder might also look for the we-spirit and a sense of co-operation that the voluntary work as an elder might bring. In addition, verbal interaction, discussion and the social function of voluntary work in general might be good reasons for volunteering as elders besides their fulltime work. An elder might also feel that voluntary church ministry is a good avenue for social interaction and a sense of solidarity. (See Yeung 2005, 114 – 115.)

tution to which they belong with other servants of God. This gives them a sense of observing God's will.<sup>241</sup>

In addition, a reason and thus the motivation for volunteering in general, or in this case volunteering as an elder in a church organization may be that individuals feel they are able to live up to their own values in voluntary work (or in the voluntary organization in which they work). (Yeung 2005, 117.) According to Yeung's (2005, 116) research, the values behind one's volunteering often reflect personal spirituality (personal belief). Thus, an elder's personal spiritual experience may serve as a motive for volunteering.<sup>242</sup> Moreover, an important issue concerning motivation for voluntary work is the question as to what extent volunteering serves as a source of strength and significance for an elder. The question is important especially in recruiting and training new elders. It may motivate new voluntary elders, if they feel they are able to use their voluntary work for promoting their personal well-being. (Sorri 2005, 139.)

However, a challenge in motivation for voluntary work is that some elders might be inclined to use voluntary work for processing their own crises and life problems. In addition, while voluntary church leadership may serve as an important forum for social networks for elders and may enable them to feel solidarity, there is the danger that they might restrict their relationships entirely to voluntary work. (Yeung 2005, 116, 122.)

It is likely that for the church elders their motivation is a central element determining their willingness to commit to the role and especially to perform the role faithfully on the long term. However, motivation for the role may also be challenging.

#### **4.2.5.2 Challenges for motivation**

The Finnish Pentecostal elders perform their role on voluntary basis. How the elders themselves understand what this means? Some elders may assume that in order to prove

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<sup>241</sup> As a serious leisure activity, eldership may also be a way for elders to do the work they want, which would otherwise not be possible for them. In addition, performing an elder's role voluntarily does not require an elder to expect to earn a living from it, because they may earn their livelihood from other work. As the elders' ministry is a voluntary leisure time activity, it may also be felt to be more democratic than paid work because everyone is on the same level. (See Stebbins 2004, 121.)

<sup>242</sup> A voluntary church ministry that is spiritual in nature may also help some elders to feel that their voluntary work is a channel for evangelism, or for helping people in need. Some elders may feel that volunteering enables them to serve as a means of spirituality for others. Moreover, religious role models like Mother Theresa and Jesus Christ may motivate some to volunteer. Some elders may also feel that working voluntarily as elders promotes their emotional and spiritual growth. (Yeung 2005, 116 – 117.)

that they are volunteering, they should do everything they are asked to do. They should never turn down a task, if they really want to volunteer. However, this approach does not easily motivate a person and may lead them to do something out of compulsion and not voluntarily. It is also important that as volunteers, elders are able to control their lives and, if necessary, to say no.<sup>243</sup> Ury (2007, 72) asserts that especially when it comes to voluntary work, a person has the right to say no. He maintains that individuals get the power to say no, when they remember that as human beings they have a fundamental right to control their own life.

Sorri (1998, 21 – 22) studied the voluntary workers of an emergency telephone service. The purpose of the research was to focus on the volunteers' personal experiences of their volunteering. It examined the volunteers' work and its connection to their life history and life experiences. Half of the respondents providing data in Sorri's research gave faith-based reasons for joining an emergency telephone service that the church operates. The research also found that volunteering occurred in particular in the phases of the life cycle that made it especially relevant to the meaning of life. (Sorri 1998, 106, 108.)

Tuorila and Siltaniemi (1999, 20) analysed the operation of the Finnish Emergency Telephone Service. The service provides support for crime victims. One of the areas the research examined was the image the emergency telephone service attempted to create. (Tuorila & Siltaniemi 1999, 20.)

Tuorila and Siltaniemi (1999, 90) found that a challenge with the motivation of volunteers working for the emergency telephone service was the question whether the volunteers had enough meaningful tasks to do. About half of the volunteers who responded to the research questionnaire were willing to do more work for the emergency service. This emphasises the need to utilize voluntary resources in order to maintain motivation. The research also pointed out that the volunteers' motivation and ability to carry on working were the central elements contributing to the success of the emergency service. It also found that a good image helped in recruiting new volunteers both to the emer-

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<sup>243</sup> The challenge is that individuals often have to say no to other people. It is even more difficult, when they depend on a person to whom they should say no. Only in the case when an individual has signed a contract with someone, it might not be very easy to say no. Ury (2007, 72.)

gency telephone service and to serve as support persons. This is due to the fact that individuals who wished to volunteer wanted to join a well-known organization with a good reputation. (Tuorila & Siltaniemi 1999, 98.) This suggests that as an organization the church should maintain a good image both in the surrounding society and in the church so that younger members are willing to consider working voluntarily as elders in their church.

The church elders are likely to need motivation for carrying out their task. Motivation is especially important, because they work on a voluntary basis. It is likely that the spiritual experience understood as God's call to ministry might function as a central element in God's call. An elder may also have a personal interest for leadership. This may have to do with their feelings about their call to ministry and shepherding, or it may be a desire for power. The social status that the role of an elder gives might also be a source of motivation for the role. It is likely that an elder needs motivation for carrying out a voluntary leadership role. It is also possible that the motivation has an effect on how long an elder has the strength to serve in their role.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

In addition to the theological aspect discussed earlier, the ideas discussed above about the role aspect of church elders, and of the leadership aspect with its voluntary dimension form the main theoretical framework for the research. Next, these aspects are summarised and related to the research.

First of all, the aspects related to the idea of role provide conclusions about the concept of role expectations. These conclusions will then be used as the basis for examining the role expectations of the elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. The summarising conclusions of each aspect will help in forming the final conclusions.

This research is based on the role episode model of Katz and Kahn (1966/1978). In effect, the research is based on the idea that the church elders receive expectations from their organization (their church and the Finnish Pentecostal Movement). These expectations are faced both by an elder alone, and by the board of elders. Both the attributes of

the elders and interpersonal factors influence this process. Then the elders face (receive) the expectations, and form their role behaviour based on the expectations (according to the model).

While the role episode model is only one aspect of general role theory, it provides a useful tool for the purposes of the research. However, it is important to keep in mind that the model views an elder's role expectations from a macro sociological perspective with an emphasis on the organization. In practice the expectations faced by an elder were surveyed through a questionnaire given to the church members. Nevertheless, the individual aspect of an elder also requires a micro sociological perspective, which would better take into account the personal aspect of the role expectations faced by an elder. For these purposes, a sample of elders is interviewed by a structured interview. Then these two studies are compared in order to understand better the role expectations the elders face.

The central concepts presented relate to the research as follows: The idea of norm is used in explaining the factors behind the organizational and environmental expectations a church elder faces. The personality factor is used in this research especially in analysing the personality factors that have an effect on the role expectations a church elder faces. In addition, the aspect of power in connection with the role expectations of a church elder has to do with how the elders are both expected to use the power they have and how they themselves understand how they should use their power.

Furthermore, the value system dimension is used in this research to analyse the values of the organizational and environmental expectations the church elders face from their church as well as to analyse the influence of the value system of the individual elders. The spiritual dimension connected to the role expectations faced by a church elder also has a significant effect on the form of the expectations a church elder faces. Finally, the church elders carry out their ministry as a group of elders in a church. For the research this means that an elder not only faces the role expectations alone but that elders also face the expectations collectively.

This research is primarily based on the idea of expectations. As seen in figure 5, the role episode model, which is used as the central theoretical model in this research, is actually



based on the idea of expectations coming from the outside (sent) and felt expectations (received) by a target person. However, the expectations are not only studied from this organizational macro sociological perspective but they are also analysed from the micro sociological perspective of a given church elder. This means that in addition to the expectations coming from the social system an elder is involved in, the personal role system of the elder also has significance.

The expectation dimension leads to the question of the fulfilment of expectations. If the expectations are not fulfilled, the result is often a role conflict. In addition, sometimes a church elder faces ambiguous and confusing expectations. In this research both the concept of conflicting role requirements and the concept of ambiguous role expectations are used for defining the situations in which elders feel that the expectations they face are challenging.<sup>244</sup>

The dimensions discussed above form the central part of the theory base for the research. How do these issues relate to the study? What is the place of each idea and concept in the study? The following chart indicates how each discussed element is related to the research.

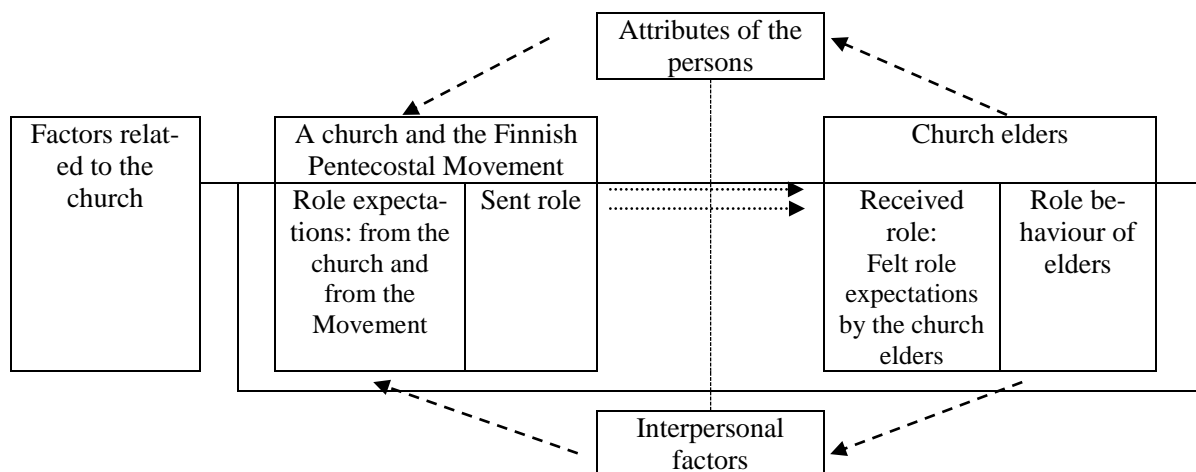


Figure 5: A theoretical model of factors involved in taking organizational roles (Katz & Kahn 1978, 196), modified with comments about the application for the role expectations faced by church elders.

<sup>244</sup> These conclusions are used as a basis both for the questionnaire given to the church members on the role expectations of church elders and for the interview with the church elders on their own perceptions of their role expectations. This means that these viewpoints are operationalised to the questionnaire given to the church members examining their expectations of the role of an elder. These aspects are used in attempting to address the hypothesis that may be made about the role expectations of the elders.

The chapter has attempted to build a theoretical framework for researching the role expectations faced by church elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. The framework was used both for formulating the questions for the questionnaire sent to the church members analysing their sent role expectations and for formulating the interview questions for the church elders analysing their received role expectations.

## 5 Analysis of the role expectations of the church members

How do the questionnaires indicate the expectations sent to the church elders? What might be regarded as the major expectations that the elders face? Next, the questionnaires are analysed in order to indicate the expectations.<sup>245</sup>

First, the factor analysis run on the data is explained and discussed. Then the means of the sum variables formed by the found factors are discussed and analysed. This enables us to make conclusions of the sent expectations.

### 5.1 Factor analysis

Explorative factor analysis was applied in order to find out the factors in which the questions correlated with each other. The factor analysis was done on the principle axes through a stepwise method. The factor analysis was run separately for part 2 and part 3, due to their different scales. Part 2 received 9 factors, in which the alpha value was over 0.6 in six factors. Part 3 also received 9 factors, with only one factor with an alpha value over 0.6. Cronbach's Alpha values of the factors are presented in chart 5.1 below.

| <b>Factor</b>  | <b>Cronbach's Alpha</b> |
|--|-------------------------|
| F1 Active Elder Expected                                 | .761                    |
| F2 Spiritual Leadership Expected                         | .798                    |
| F3 Conservative Performance Expected                     | .687                    |
| F4F5 Leadership Skills Expected                          | .665                    |
| F5 Administrative Skills Expected                        | .689                    |
| F8 Job description of elders is important                | .626                    |
| F1AB Church elders should develop their role as an elder | .623                    |

The factors that had an alpha value of over 0.6 were used as the basis for forming the sum variables. Next, the factors are presented and discussed. The means of the variables of a sum factor are compared in order to understand which elements were expected the most of the church elders.

<sup>245</sup> In all, 516 questionnaires were returned. However, 43 questionnaires were removed due to lacking information. A total of 473 questionnaires were accepted for the research, as already explained in chapter 2.

### 5.1.1 Active elder expected

The first factor that was found was named “Active (able / talented) elder expected.” The questions seem to refer to the need of elders to be actively involved in their ministry.

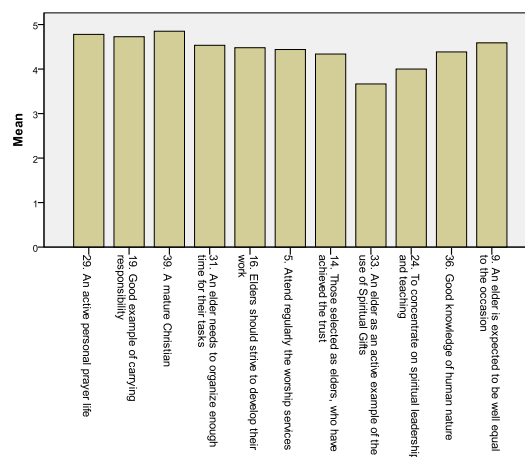
Some variables of the factor focused on an active Christian life (personal prayer life, the need to be an example, and maturity as a Christian). The other group of variables focused on activity in spiritual leadership (focus on spiritual leadership, and serving as an example in the use of spiritual gifts).

In addition, some variables focused on carrying out one’s responsibilities conscientiously (taking time for tasks, growing in taking care of one’s responsibilities, and attending worship services regularly). Some other variables pointed out the need for the ability to relate to people (having the confidence of the church members, having a good knowledge of human nature, and being equal to the occasion). The factor is presented in chart 5.2 below.<sup>246</sup>

| <b>no.</b> | <b>F1. Active (able/talented) elder expected:<br/>Statement</b>   | <b>alpha</b> |
|------------|---|--------------|
| 29.        | An elder should have an active personal prayer life   | .754         |
| 19.        | An elder should be a good example (model) of responsibility   | .608         |
| 39.        | An elder should be a mature Christian   | .562         |
| 31.        | An elder should take time for their task as an elder  | .514         |
| 16.        | An elder should endeavour to grow continually in taking care of their responsibilities  | .502         |
| 5.         | An elder should attend the worship services of their church regularly   | .400         |
| 14.        | Those individuals should be selected as elders, who have already gained the confidence of their church members in other tasks in their church | .305         |
| 33.        | An elder should serve as an example in the use of spiritual gifts   | .273         |
| 24.        | Elders should focus on the spiritual leadership of the church   | .264         |
| 36.        | In performing their tasks, elders should have good knowledge of human nature  | .296         |
| 9.         | In performing their tasks, elders are expected to be equal to the occasion (accountability)   | .273         |

<sup>246</sup> In comparison to the dimensions based on the theoretical framework of the research, the factor shared some variables with dimension 4.1, general leadership (see appendix 2.2). The shared variables had to do with active participation in church life, exemplary and trustworthy behaviour in church, and good understanding of the leadership context.

The means of the answers given for the variables included in the factor are quite high, differing between 4 (somewhat agree) and 5 (strongly agree). This is seen in figure 5.1.



It may be concluded that primarily the respondents either somewhat agreed (4) or strongly agreed (5) on the variables included in the factor indicating the expectations for an active elder. It seems that elders are expected to be fully involved in their role.

### 5.1.2 Spiritual leadership expected

The second factor that was found was named “Spiritual leadership expected”. The related variables had to do with the leadership dimension included in the role of an elder. Most of the variables also had to do with the spiritual or biblical expectations related to the role.

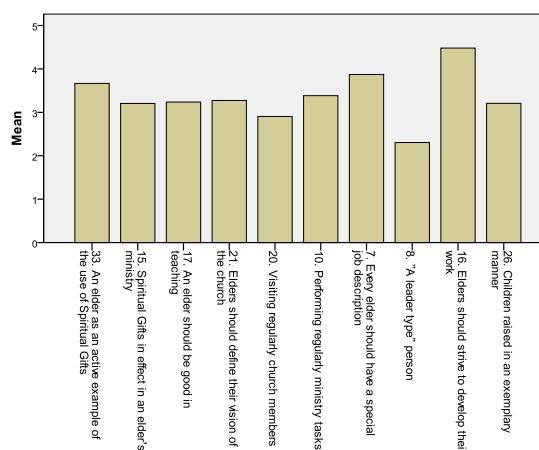
The need for spirituality was seen in the factors that indicated the need to serve as an example in the use of spiritual gifts and the need that spiritual gifts should be seen through an elder in the church. The biblical aspect was seen in the expectation of an elder to be a skilled teacher, and in the expectation that elders’ children should be raised in an exemplary manner. These two expectations reflect the list of qualities for an elder mentioned in the Bible in 1 Tim. 3:1-7.

The expectation of spiritual leadership may also be seen in the expectation of an elder to visit their church members regularly, and to perform ministry tasks regularly in worship services. The leadership expectation related to spiritual leadership was also seen in the expectation of church members to know an elder’s area of ministry responsibility, and in the expectation of an elder to grow in taking care of their responsibilities. Elders were also expected to define their vision for church ministry clearly. The variable pointing out the need for an elder to be “a leader type” person was also included in the factor

(even though that expectation was lower than the other expectations included). The factor is presented in chart 5.3 below.<sup>247</sup>

| <b>F2. Spiritual leadership expected:</b> |   | <b>alpha</b> |
|---|---|--------------|
| <b>no.</b>                                | <b>Question</b>   |              |
| 33.                                       | An elder should serve as an example in the use of spiritual gifts   | .635         |
| 15.                                       | Spiritual gifts should be seen through an elder in the church   | .631         |
| 17.                                       | An elder should be a skilled teacher  | .504         |
| 21.                                       | An elder should define their vision of church ministry more explicitly to their church                        | .497         |
| 20.                                       | An elder should visit their church members regularly  | .469         |
| 10.                                       | An elder should perform ministry tasks regularly in worship services  | .454         |
| 7.  | Every elder should have a clear area of responsibility or task and the church members should be aware of this | .333         |
| 8.  | A person who is chosen to be an elder should be "a leader type"   | .277         |
| 16.                                       | An elder should endeavour to grow continually in taking care of their responsibilities                        | .342         |
| 26.                                       | The behaviour of an elder's children should indicate that they have been raised in an exemplary manner        | .375         |

The expectations about these statements were rather strong, differing mainly between 3 = somewhat agree; 4 = moderately agree. However, the question concerning the need of "a leader type" person was clearly lower. This suggests that the idea of a leadership person does have as strong connection to the idea of spirituality. This is seen in figure 5.2.



The respondents mainly somewhat agreed (3) or moderately agreed (4) on the variables included in the factor indicating the expectation of an elder to be a spiritual leader. It seems that the theological and spiritual expectations are rather strongly focused on church elders.

### 5.1.3 Conservative performance expected

In addition, one of the factors may be called the "Expected conservative performance of the role of an elder." The related questions seemed to refer both to the requirements

<sup>247</sup> In comparison to the dimensions based on the theoretical framework of the research, the factor had some similarities with Dimension 2, Theology (see appendix 2.2). The similarities were in issues that discussed spiritual gifts, and issues related to the biblical expectations of elders. In addition, the factor shared some variables with Dimension 4.1, General leadership (see appendix 2.2). The similarities were in issues that discussed the active participation of elders, and leadership expectations.

typically seen in the Bible, and to the requirements focusing on the rather strong leadership of elders.

The biblically related expectations were all rather strongly associated with a quite conservative understanding of the qualities of an elder mentioned in the Bible in 1 Tim. 3:1-3 (see the discussion in chapter 3). The factor included for example variables expecting an elder to be male, to be married, and not to be remarried after divorce.<sup>248</sup> An elder was also expected to be a skilled teacher, and to raise their children in an exemplary manner.

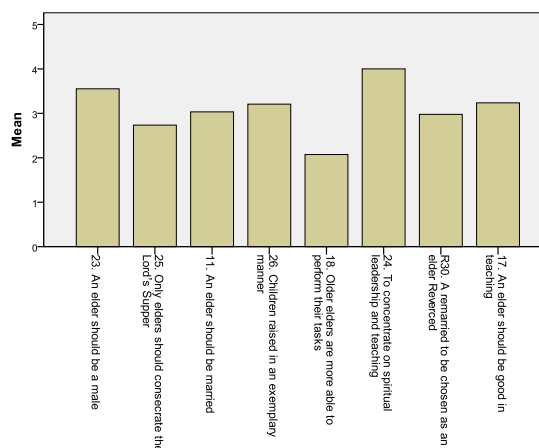
The expectation of the elders' rather strong leadership was seen in the expectation of elders to consecrate the Lord's Supper. The expectation of elders to focus on the spiritual leadership of the church also emphasised the need for leadership. The factor also included the claim that older elders are more capable than younger elders (even though that expectation was not very strong). In general, all the statements included in the factor suggested a rather conservatively interpreted biblical elder together with a rather strong emphasis on the elders' central role in leadership. The factor is presented in chart 5.4 below.<sup>249</sup>

| <b>F3. Conservative performance of the role of an elder expected:</b> |  | <b>alpha</b> |
|---|--|--------------|
| <b>no.</b>  | <b>Question</b>  |              |
| 23.   | An elder should be male  | .673         |
| 25.   | Only elders should consecrate the Lord's Supper  | .543         |
| 11.   | An elder should be married   | .448         |
| 26.   | The behaviour of an elder's children should indicate that they have been raised in an exemplary manner | .402         |
| 18.   | An older elder is more capable than a younger elder  | .394         |
| 24.   | Elders should focus on the spiritual leadership of the church  | .307         |
| R30.  | A remarried person may be chosen to the task of an elder   | -.266        |
| 17.   | An elder should be a skilled teacher   | .314         |

<sup>248</sup> The statement was originally in a positive form (A remarried person may be chosen to the task of an elder). However, it was reversed, because it correlated negatively with the other variables included in the factor.

<sup>249</sup> In comparison to the dimensions based on the theoretical framework of the research, the factor was similar to dimension 2, Theology (see appendix 2.2). Indeed, all the variables of the factor were included in the dimension (if the removed question 3 is also counted). Only the questions that referred to spiritual gifts (15, 33), role of spouse (28), prayer life (29), Christian maturity (39), and the definition of pastor versus elder (37) were removed.

The expectations for conservative performance were rather strong. They differed mainly between somewhat agree (3) and moderately agree (4). However, the variable claiming that older elders are more capable than younger elders was not very strong. This suggests that the age of an elder was not seen to be very important in connection with the conservative performance of an elder. This is seen in figure 5.3.



It seems that the respondents mainly somewhat agreed (3) on the variables included in the factor indicating the expectation for the conservative performance of elders. This suggests that elders are expected to perform their roles rather conservatively.

#### 5.1.4 Leadership skills expected

Furthermore, the fourth factor *F4* may be called “Social leadership skills expected.” Close to that was factor *F5*, “Administrative skills/abilities are important.” These two factors were combined together as a sum variable called “Leadership Skills Expected.” The reason for combining the factors as one sum variable was that factor *F4* did not receive an alpha value of over 0.6 without combining it with *F5* (as explained in chapter 2). All the questions had to do with leadership skills expectations.

When it comes to abilities, it seems that the respondents especially expected the elders to have a good knowledge of human nature, and to have situational understanding (being equal to the occasion). They thought that the elders’ personality traits (personality features) determine their success in performing their duties. They also saw that in their ministry it was useful for elders to have knowledge of generally accepted leadership principles. In addition, the expectations of financial and administrative leadership were included in the factor. The factor is presented in chart 5.5 below.<sup>250</sup>

<sup>250</sup> In comparison to the dimensions based on the theoretical framework of the research, all the variables of the factor were included in dimension 4.2, training (see appendix 2.2). This suggests that the expectation for leadership skills in the factor analysis is in agreement with the training aspect of the theoretical framework.



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**F4. & F5. Leadership Skills Expected**
**no. Question***F4. (Social leadership skills expected):*

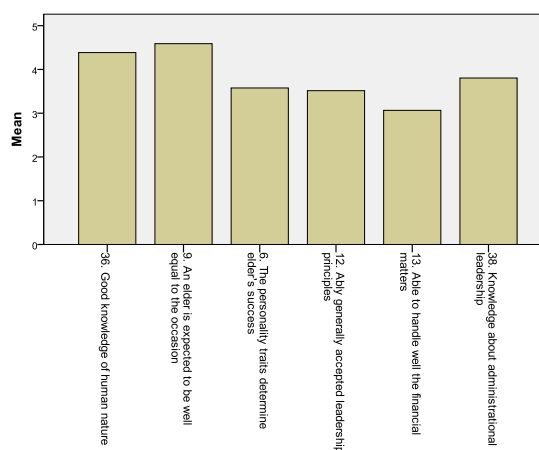
|            |  |      |
|------------|--|------|
| <b>36.</b> | An elder should have good knowledge of human nature for performing their tasks                           | .515 |
| <b>9.</b>  | An elder is expected to be equal to the occasion in performing their tasks (responsibility)              | .510 |
| <b>6.</b>  | The elder's personality traits (personality features) determine their success in performing their duties | .510 |
| <b>12.</b> | It is useful for an elder to apply generally accepted leadership principles in their ministry            | .372 |

*F5. Administrative skills/abilities important:*

|            |   |      |
|------------|---|------|
| <b>13.</b> | An elder should have knowledge and understanding of financial leadership                      | .713 |
| <b>38.</b> | An elder should have knowledge and understanding of the administrative leadership of a church | .647 |

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The expectations of these statements were rather strong, differing mainly between 3 = somewhat agree; 4 = moderately agree. However, the strongest expectation had to do with the ability of an elder to know human nature and to understand the situation when performing their leadership. This is seen in figure 5.4.



In general, the respondents quite strongly agreed (between 3 to 5) on the variables included in the factor indicating the expectation of an elder's leadership skills. This suggests that leadership skills are rather strongly expected of the church elders.

Factor F5, "Administrative skills/abilities are important," was analysed separately. The variables of the factor were also included in the earlier factor indicating the expectations of leadership skills. However, the factor produced an alpha value of over 0.6 even though it only included two variables. The first variable that was included emphasised the expectation of financial leadership and the second the expectation of administrative leadership. These factors are presented in chart 5.6.<sup>251</sup> Even though the variable closely resembles the expected leadership skills variable, it produced valuable information on the administrative aspect included in the role of church elders.

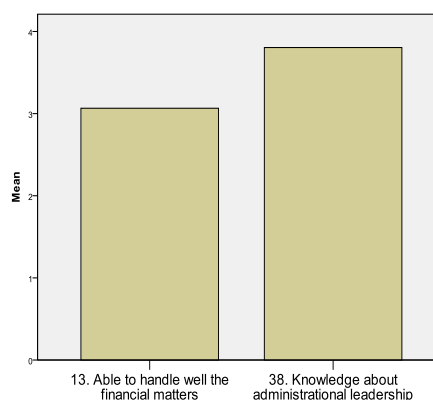
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<sup>251</sup> In comparison to the dimensions based on the theoretical framework of the research, the variables of the factor were included in Dimension 4.2, Training, (see appendix 2.2).

**F5. Administrative skills/abilities are important:**

|     |   |      |
|-----|---|------|
| 13. | An elder should have knowledge and understanding of financial leadership                      | .713 |
| 38. | An elder should have knowledge and understanding of the administrative leadership of a church | .647 |

The expectations of the knowledge of administrative leadership was stronger (4, moderately agree) than the expectation of financial abilities (3, somewhat agree). However, the overall expectation of administrative skills was rather strong. This is seen in figure 5.5.



It seemed that the respondents either somewhat agreed (3) or moderately agreed (4) on the variables included in the factor indicating the expectation of an elder to have administrative skills.

**5.1.5 Job description of elders expected**

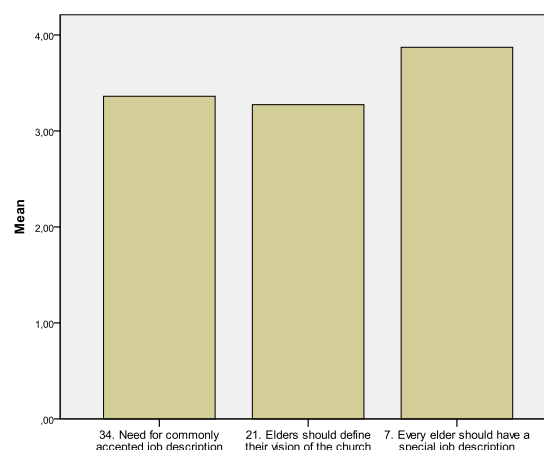
The last factor included in part 2 of the research was named “The job description of elders is important.” All questions included in it had to do with the transparency of the elder’s ministry. Two of the variables referred to the need of a job description for the elders. The first related to a generally accepted job description for elders. The second had to do with the expectation of every elder to have an explicit job description. The third variable included in the factor had to do with the expectation for elders to define their vision of the church. Even though this variable did not refer to the need for a job description, it shared a trait with the two other variables by suggesting the need for transparency in leadership with a request for a vision. The factor is presented in chart 5.7 below.<sup>252</sup>

**F8. Job description of elders is important**

| no. | Question  |      |
|-----|---|------|
| 34. | Need for a generally accepted job description       | .602 |
| 21. | Elders should define their vision of the church     | .302 |
| 7.  | Every elder should have an explicit job description | .269 |

<sup>252</sup> In comparison to the dimensions based on the theoretical framework of the research, the variables of the factor were included into Dimension 4.3, Volunteerism (see appendix 2.2).

The expectations mentioned in these statements were rather strong, differing mainly between 3 = somewhat agree and 4 = moderately agree. It seemed that both the job description for the elders and the presentation of a vision for the church were rather strongly expected of the elders. This is seen in figure 5.6.



The respondents either somewhat agreed (3) or moderately agreed (4) on the variables included in the factor indicating the expectation of a job description for elders. This suggests a rather strong expectation concerning the church elder's job description.

#### 5.1.6 Elders to develop their role

Part 3 also received nine factors, of which the alpha value of only one (see chart 5.8) was over 0.6. F1(AB). The responses for the factor were primarily between 1 and 3 (on a 7- step scale), which means that most of the factors were in the A category. The variables included indicated that the respondents expect the elders to have both mentoring and leadership training for their task in order to better serve their church.

In addition, the variables also pointed out the expectation of explicit areas of responsibility for elders. The need to utilize the elders' professional background was also emphasised (even though the elders serve as spiritual leaders). Furthermore, the last variable included in the factor points out the importance of good relationships between elders. Even though this variable is not directly associated with developing the role of elders, it nevertheless includes the idea that by developing good mutual relationships the elders also positively affect their church. The factor is presented in chart 5.8 below.<sup>253</sup>

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#### F1AB Church elders should develop their role as an elder

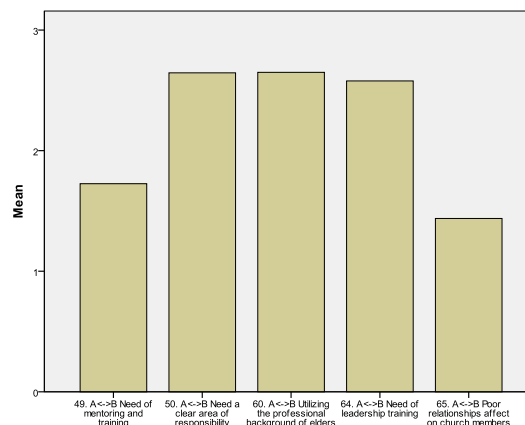
| no. | Statement A  | Statement B   |      |
|-----|--|---|------|
| 49. | The church should organise mentoring and training for elders to enable them to carry out their task and thus better serve their church | The church does not need to organise mentoring and training for elders for their tasks, because they already know how to serve their church | .791 |

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<sup>253</sup> In comparison to the dimensions based on the theoretical framework of the research, the factor seemed similar to Dimension 5.2: Expectation to develop the leadership of elders, (see appendix 2.2), by including the same questions.

|     |   |  |      |
|-----|---|--|------|
| 64. | An elder needs leadership training for their task   | An elder does not need leadership training for their task  | .590 |
| 50. | There is a need for every elder to have an explicit area of responsibility in the church                | There is no need for every elder to have an explicit area of responsibility in the church                              | .502 |
| 60. | The professional background of an elder should be utilized, even though they serve as spiritual leaders | The professional background of an elder does not make any difference, because the elder serves in a spiritual ministry | .371 |
| 65. | Poor relationships between elders have a negative effect on church members                              | Poor relationships between elders do not have a negative effect on church members                                      | .367 |

The majority of the respondents agreed with the A statements. This suggests that the church elders should develop their role as an elder. The responses varied between both statements of an issue, with the A statements getting more support. The strongest expectation related to good relationships between elders. This is seen in figure 5.7.



This suggests that the respondents mainly fully agreed (1) or agreed (2) with the A statements of the factor concerning the need of developing the role of elders. It seems that the respondents expect the elders to develop their role, because statement A advocated developing the role and statement B was against developing the role.

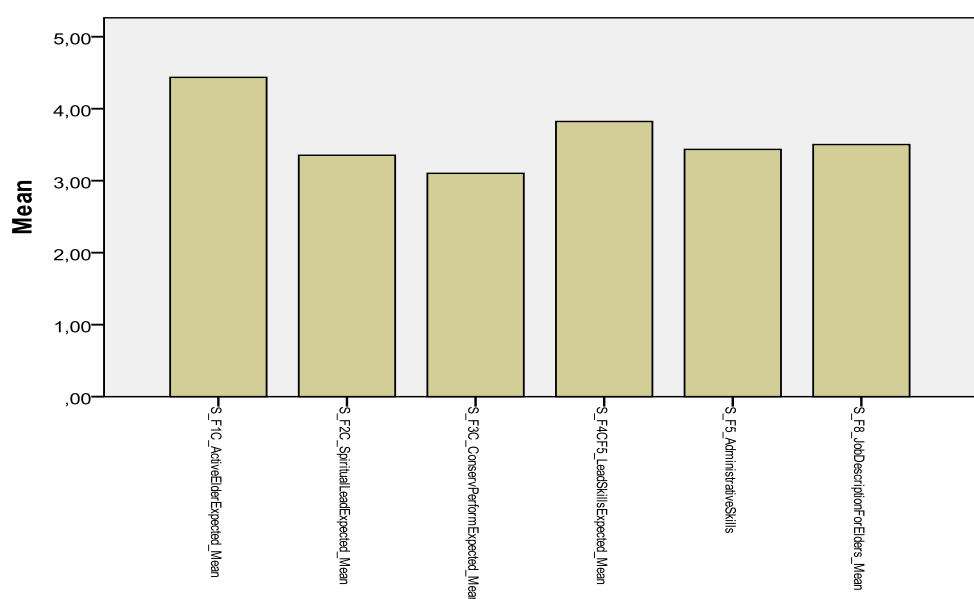
### 5.1.7 The strongest expectation?

What was the strongest expectation focused on church elders? The comparison of the sum variables indicates that the strongest expectation within part two sum variables suggested the need for an active elder (mean 4.44). In addition, expectations related to leadership were in general a bit stronger than the other expectations. Leadership development values also seemed to be strong within part 3 expectations. This is actually rather likely, because the role of the elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement primarily has to do with leadership.

An interesting issue has to do with the reasons and elements behind these expectations. Next, the means of the sum variables are compared. The means of the sum variables are presented in chart 5.9 below.

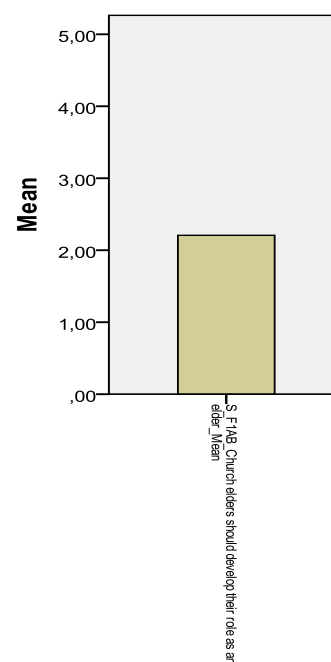
| <b>Part 2 (5-point Likert scale)</b>                     | N   | Minimum | Maximum | <b>Mean</b> | Std. Deviation |
|--|-----|---------|---------|-------------|----------------|
| F1 Active Elder Expected                                 | 473 | 2.82    | 5.00    | <b>4.44</b> | .41            |
| F2 Spiritual Leadership Expected                         | 473 | 1.50    | 5.00    | <b>3.35</b> | .64            |
| F3 Conservative Performance Expected                     | 473 | 1.13    | 5.00    | <b>3.10</b> | .73            |
| F4F5 Leadership Skills Expected                          | 473 | 2.00    | 5.00    | <b>3.82</b> | .58            |
| F5 Administrative Skills Expected                        | 473 | 1.00    | 5.00    | <b>3.44</b> | .90            |
| F8 Job Description for Elders                            | 473 | 1.00    | 5.00    | <b>3.50</b> | .84            |
| <b>Part 3 (Osgood's 7-point scale)</b>                   | N   | Minimum | Maximum | <b>Mean</b> | Std. Deviation |
| F1AB Church elders should develop their role as an elder | 473 | 1.00    | 5.80    | <b>2.21</b> | .90            |

Of the factors, active elder (mean 4.44) was most strongly expected (between moderately agree and fully agree). Leadership skills (mean 3.82) and administrative skills (mean 3.44) skills were also rather strongly expected (between somewhat agree and moderately agree). The same was also true of the expectation for job descriptions for elders (mean 3.50). In addition, the expectation for spiritual leadership (mean 3.35) and conservative performance of elders (mean 3.10) also emphasised the significance of these expectations (mostly somewhat agree).



**Figure 5.8: Part 2 factors**

The mean of the part 3 (on Osgood's 7-point scale) factor about the need of church elders to develop their role as elders (mean 2.21) indicated rather strong expectations for development (between slightly agree and agree with statement A). It uses an inverse scale. This means that a smaller value indicates agreement with the A statement. The differences of the means are shown in figures 5.8 and 5.9.



**Figure 5.9: Part 3 sum factor**

The factors that were found indicated that overall, rather strong leadership was expected of the church elders. This is seen first of all in the general expectations for an active elder. Second, it is seen in the theological expectations both for the spiritual leadership of elders and for the conservative performance of elders. Third, it is seen in expectations related to leadership, i.e., leadership skills and administrative skills. In addition, the expectations for developing the role of an elder suggest the need for the elder's job description, and for the need for elders to develop their role as an elder.

It may be concluded that the factors that were found point out the expectations faced by the church elders quite well. In general, the expectation for developing the elders' leadership and their role performance seemed to be rather strong.<sup>254</sup> However, what does this mean in practice? Are there elements that would explain these expectations? In order to find this out, the means of the sum variables based on the factor were compared with the variables defining the background of the respondents.

<sup>254</sup> It may be concluded that the factors that were found, (which also had alpha values of over 0.6) reflected rather well the dimensions based on the framework of the research. However, the spiritual expectations in particular had more differences in comparison to their closest counterpart, the theological dimension.

## **5.2 What did the respondents' background indicate?**

The variables that explained the differences between the respondents were primarily the following: the respondent's sex, age, length of membership (in a Pentecostal church), and their position in their church. The size of church, the size of town, and location in Finland were also taken into account. In addition, most of the explaining factors were divided into two groups in order to indicate the major differences between the respondents. The variables are shown in appendix 5.1.

What could be the reasons behind the differences that were found? First, the p-values of the sum variables were compared in order to find out the statistically significant differences between the means of the sum variables. As described in chapter 2, the analysis was conducted through a One-Way ANOVA analysis.

The p-values indicate that especially the age, the length of membership and the position of the respondents seem to explain the expectations focused on church elders. Next, the expectations are described by comparing the means of the variables in which the p-value was under 0.05. The p-values of the sum variables are presented together with the means of the variables.

### **5.2.1 The influence of the age of the respondents**

The sex of the respondents did not have any p-values under 0.05. This means that sex did not explain the differences between the respondents. However, the age of the respondents seemed to explain well the differences in expectations.

The second oldest group of respondents (45 – 64 y.) strongly expected the elders to be active. This also applies to some extent to the oldest respondents (65 y. or older). In general, the older respondents seemed to expect the active participation of elders most.

In comparing the age groups about their expectations for spiritual leadership, the older respondents seemed to have stronger expectations than the younger respondents. However, statistically significant differences were only found when comparing younger respondents with older respondents. The original division into four different age groups did not indicate statistically significant differences.

The oldest respondents (65 y. or older) had the strongest expectations for the conservative performance of the elders. In general, the older respondents had stronger expectations of the conservative performance of the elders than the younger respondents.

The same tendency was true of expectations related to leadership. The older the respondents were, the more strongly they seemed to expect the elders to have both leadership skills and administrative skills. The same trend was also seen in the expectations of job descriptions for the elders. This means that in general the older respondents and in particular those who were 65 years or older had the strongest opinions on the necessity of job descriptions for elders.

The second (45 – 64 y.) and third (30 – 44 y.) oldest age groups had the strongest expectations for the church elders to develop their role. What is interesting is that the oldest and especially the youngest respondents did not have as strong expectations for the church elders to develop their role. However, in general the expectations for elders to develop their role were rather strong in all age groups. The means of the variables that had a p-value under 0.05 in connection with age are presented in chart 5.11 below.

| <b>Means: 2. Your age</b>         |         |      | Active Elder<br>Expected | Spiritual<br>Leadership<br>Expected | Conservative<br>Performance<br>Expected | Leadership<br>Skills Ex-<br>pected | Administrative<br>Skills Expected | Job Descrip-<br>tion of Elders<br>is important | Church elders should<br>develop their role as<br>an elder |
|-----------------------------------|---------|------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| p -value                          |         |      | <b>p: .010</b>           |                                     | <b>p: .000</b>                          | <b>p: .000</b>                     | <b>p: .000</b>                    | <b>p: .030</b>                                 | <b>p: .008</b>  |
| 18 – 29 y.                        | N = 79  | Mean | 4.33                     |                                     | 2.84                                    | 3.59                               | 3.12                              | 3.35   | 2.51  |
| 30 – 44 y.                        | N = 114 | Mean | 4.39                     |                                     | 2.84                                    | 3.68                               | 3.23                              | 3.38   | 2.14  |
| 45 – 64 y.                        | N = 189 | Mean | <b>4.50</b>              |                                     | 3.20                                    | 3.90                               | 3.49                              | 3.58   | <b>2.11</b>   |
| 65 y. or older                    | N = 91  | Mean | 4.46                     |                                     | <b>3.46</b>                             | <b>4.05</b>                        | <b>3.84</b>                       | <b>3.63</b>                                    | 2.24  |
| Total                             | N = 473 | Mean | 4.44                     |                                     | 3.10                                    | 3.82                               | 3.44                              | 3.50   | 2.21  |
| <b>By Younger &lt;-&gt; Older</b> |         |      |                          |                                     |   |                                    |                                   |  |   |
| p -value                          |         |      | <b>p: .001</b>           | <b>p: .017</b>                      | <b>p: .000</b>                          | <b>p: .000</b>                     | <b>p: .000</b>                    | <b>p: .003</b>                                 |   |
| Younger                           | N = 193 | Mean | 4.36                     | 3.27                                | 2.84                                    | 3.64                               | 3.19                              | 3.37   |   |
| Older                             | N = 280 | Mean | <b>4.48</b>              | <b>3.41</b>                         | <b>3.29</b>                             | <b>3.95</b>                        | <b>3.61</b>                       | <b>3.60</b>                                    |   |
| Total                             | N = 473 | Mean | 4.44                     | 3.35                                | 3.10                                    | 3.82                               | 3.44                              | 3.50   |   |

It may be concluded that age was a rather strong factor in indicating the differences between the respondents. It also seems that the older respondents had stronger expectations of the role of an elder than the younger respondents.

### 5.2.2 The influence of the respondents' length of church membership

In general, the same tendency was true of the respondents' length of membership. The older members (15 y. or longer) expected more from the church elders than the younger



members. When it came to expectations about an active elder, the second oldest members (15 – 35 y.) had stronger expectations than the oldest members (35 y. or more). However, the respondents did not have statistically significant ( $p < 0,05$ ) differences about the expectations of spiritual leadership.

The respondents who had been members of a Pentecostal church the longest time (35 y. or longer) had the strongest expectations of conservative performance. The tendency seemed to be that the older members had stronger expectations of the conservative performance of elders.

When it came to the expectations of leadership skills and administrative skills, the oldest members (35 y. or longer) had the strongest expectations, and the second oldest members (15 – 35 y.) had the second strongest expectations. In addition, with regard to the expectation of church elders to develop their role as an elder, the older members in general and those who had been members for 15 – 35 years in particular had the strongest expectations for developing the role.

It seems likely that when it comes to the length of membership, the respondents who have been members of a Pentecostal church for a longer time had stronger expectations than the younger members. However, it is likely that the length of membership is partly related to age. Thus, the length of membership seemed to explain the expectations in a manner that roughly corresponds to the age of the respondents. The means of the variables that had a p-value under 0.05 in connection to length of membership are presented in chart 5.12 below.

| <b>Means: 3. The length of your membership</b> |         |      | Active Elder Expected | Conservative Performance Expected | Leadership Skills Expected | Administrative Skills Expected | Church elders should develop their role as an elder |
|--|---------|------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| p -value                                       |         |      | <b>p: .016</b>        | <b>p: .000</b>                    | <b>p: .000</b>             | <b>p: .000</b>                 | <b>p: .001</b>                                      |
| under 5 y.                                     | N = 42  | Mean | 4.32                  | 2.94                              | 3.55                       | 3.19                           | 2.62  |
| 5 – 14 y.                                      | N = 94  | Mean | 4.35                  | 2.94                              | 3.61                       | 3.19                           | 2.35  |
| 15 – 35 y.                                     | N = 196 | Mean | <b>4.49</b>           | 3.07                              | 3.82                       | 3.39                           | <b>2.08</b>   |
| 35 y. or more                                  | N = 118 | Mean | 4.45                  | <b>3.32</b>                       | <b>4.07</b>                | <b>3.76</b>                    | 2.14  |
| Total  | N = 450 | Mean | 4.43                  | 3.10                              | 3.82                       | 3.43                           | 2.20  |
| <b>Younger Members &lt;-&gt; Older Members</b> |         |      |                       |                                   |                            |                                |   |
| p -value                                       |         |      | <b>p: .002</b>        | <b>p: .003</b>                    | <b>p: .000</b>             | <b>p: .000</b>                 | <b>p: .000</b>                                      |
| Younger members                                | N = 136 | Mean | 4.35                  | 2.94                              | 3.60                       | 3.19                           | 2.43  |
| Older members                                  | N = 314 | Mean | <b>4.47</b>           | <b>3.16</b>                       | <b>3.91</b>                | <b>3.53</b>                    | <b>2.10</b>   |
| Total  | N = 450 | Mean | 4.43                  | 3.10                              | 3.82                       | 3.43                           | 2.20  |

It may be concluded that a respondent's length of membership in a Pentecostal church seems to explain their expectation of the elder's role. It seems that those who have been members for a longer time have stronger expectations of elders. In addition, the length of membership seems to correlate with the age of the respondents.

### **5.2.3 The influence of the position of the respondents**

Pastors or other full-time workers had stronger expectations of the active elder. Leaders and members of ministry teams had stronger expectations than other church members. This suggests that individuals having ministry responsibilities had stronger expectations of church elders.

In addition, the pastors or other full-time workers had stronger expectations of the spiritual dimension than the voluntary workers and the church members. This arouses a question: Do the pastors expect more from the church elders, because the elders usually have a central role in the ministry of a pastor?

The ordinary church members had the strongest and the members of ministry teams the second strongest expectations for conservative performance. However, it is interesting that pastors or other full-time workers had slightly stronger expectations of the conservative performance of elders than the leaders of a ministry team (voluntary workers). The same is also true of expected administrative skills. Ordinary church members and the members of ministry teams had stronger expectations than the pastors and leaders of ministry teams.

The pastors had clearly the strongest expectations for the church elders to develop their role as an elder. Leaders of ministry teams had the second strongest expectations. This may suggest that those involved in ministry together with the church elders also had the strongest expectations for developing the role. The variables that had a p-value under 0.05 in connection with a member's position in the church are presented in chart 5.13 below.

**Means: 4. Your position in your church**

|   |         | Active Elder<br>Expected | Spiritual<br>Leadership<br>Expected | Conservative<br>Performance<br>Expected | Administra-<br>tive Skills<br>Expected | Church elders should<br>develop their role as<br>an elder |
|---|---------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| p -value                                |         | <b>p: .000</b>           | <b>p: .000</b>                      | <b>p: .000</b>                          | <b>p: .017</b>                         | <b>p: .001</b>  |
| Pastor / or other full-time worker      | N = 66  | Mean <b>4.66</b>         | <b>3.68</b>                         | 3.10                                    | 3.31                                   | <b>1.82</b>   |
| Leader of a ministry team (vol. worker) | N = 120 | Mean 4.41                | 3.26                                | 2.87                                    | 3.31                                   | 2.16  |
| Member of a ministry team (vol. worker) | N = 186 | Mean 4.41                | 3.30                                | 3.17                                    | 3.44                                   | 2.34  |
| An ordinary church member               | N = 101 | Mean 4.37                | 3.35                                | <b>3.26</b>                             | <b>3.66</b>                            | 2.27  |
| Total                                   | N = 473 | Mean 4.44                | 3.35                                | 3.10                                    | 3.44                                   | 2.21  |

| <b>Pastors &lt;-&gt; Vol. Workers and Church Members</b> |         |                  |                |  |  |                |
|--|---------|------------------|----------------|--|--|----------------|
| p -value   |         | <b>p: .000</b>   | <b>p: .000</b> |  |  | <b>p: .000</b> |
| Pastors  | N = 66  | Mean <b>4.66</b> | <b>3.68</b>    |  |  | <b>1.82</b>    |
| Voluntary workers and Church members                     | N = 407 | Mean 4.40        | 3.30           |  |  | 2.27           |
| Total  | N = 473 | Mean 4.44        | 3.35           |  |  | 2.21           |

It seems that the respondent's position explains rather well the expectations focused on church elders. This is seen for instance in the pastors' slightly stronger expectations for leadership and development. It may also be seen in the church members' stronger expectations of administrative skills. However, the position only explains best the difference between pastors and other full-time workers in comparison to the voluntary workers and other church members. It does not explain the variance between different church members equally well.

**5.2.4 The influence of the respondent's location**

The size of the church did not explain the differences between the groups tested. This means that in general church size does not explain the differences between respondents. Only one statistically significant difference was found between the tested groups. The smallest churches (under 100 members) had the strongest expectations of administrative skills. However, this could be explained by the loose structure of small churches. The small churches might have fewer resources to organize clear administration. This could then be a reason for the expectation of an elder's administrative skills. The means of the variables that had a p-value under 0.05 in connection with the size of church are presented in chart 5.14 below.

**Means: Size of Church**

|             |         | Administrative Skills<br>Expected |
|-------------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| p -value    |         | <b>p: .015</b>                    |
| under 100   | N = 71  | Mean <b>3.65</b>                  |
| 100 – 249   | N = 103 | Mean 3.22                         |
| 250 – 699   | N = 196 | Mean 3.48                         |
| 700 or more | N = 103 | Mean 3.43                         |
| Total       | N = 473 | Mean 3.44                         |

It may be concluded that the size of the church does not explain well the expectations focused on church elders. The only tendency that the church size seems to explain has to

do with the expectation for administrative skills. In the smallest churches the expectations for the elders' administrative skills was stronger than in the other churches.

Church members living in small towns (fewer than 50,000 inhabitants) and especially in towns with fewer than 15,000 inhabitants had stronger expectations of conservative performance than members in big towns. In addition, respondents in small towns (fewer than 50,000 inhabitants) put more emphasis on the elder's job description than respondents in big towns (50,000 inhabitants or more). The means of the variables that had a p-value under 0.05 in connection with the size of town are presented in chart 5.15 below.

| <b>Means: 70. Size of town</b>         |         |      | Conservative Performance Expected | Job Description of Elders is important |
|--|---------|------|-----------------------------------|--|
| p -value                               |         |      | <b>p: .000</b>                    |  |
| under 15,000                           | N = 124 | Mean | <b>3.34</b>                       |  |
| 15,000 – 50,000                        | N = 144 | Mean | 3.12                              |  |
| 50,000 or more                         | N = 205 | Mean | 2.95                              |  |
| Total                                  | N = 473 | Mean | 3.10                              |  |
| <b>Small Towns &lt;-&gt; Big Towns</b> |         |      |                                   |  |
| p -value                               |         |      | <b>p: .000</b>                    | <b>p: .028</b>                         |
| Small towns                            | N = 268 | Mean | <b>3.22</b>                       | <b>3.58</b>                            |
| Big towns                              | N = 205 | Mean | 2.95                              | 3.41                                   |
| Total                                  | N = 473 | Mean | 3.10                              | 3.50                                   |

The size of town only explains the expectations concerning conservative performance and job description. It is possible that the stronger expectations of the elders' conservative role performance are connected to the nature of small towns. However, it is not possible to make conclusions about this based on the research results.

Respondents in Central, Eastern and Northern Finland expected more spiritual leadership than those in Southwest Finland. In particular, the members in the Province of Eastern Finland had the strongest expectations. In addition, the expectations in Central and Northern Finland of the church elders' conservative performance were stronger than the expectations in Southern Finland. In this case, the expectations in the Province of Oulu (Northern Finland) were the strongest.

The same tendency also seemed to be true of the expectations of the elder's job description. Respondents in Central and Northern Finland, and especially in Eastern Finland, had the strongest expectations of a job description. This suggests that in general respondents in Eastern and Northern Finland seemed to have stronger role expectations than respondents in Southern and Western Finland. The means of the variables that had

a p-value under 0.05 in connection with the regions of Finland are presented in chart 5.16 below.

| <b>Means: Provinces of Finland</b>                             |         |      | Spiritual Leadership Expected | Conservative Performance Expected | Job Description of Elders is important |
|--|---------|------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| p-value  |         |      | <b>p: .023</b>                | <b>p: .006</b>                    | <b>p: .006</b>                         |
| Province in Southern Finland                                   | N = 135 | Mean | 3.28                          | 2.97                              | 3.41                                   |
| Province in Western Finland                                    | N = 186 | Mean | 3.29                          | 3.08                              | 3.40                                   |
| Province in Eastern Finland                                    | N = 64  | Mean | <b>3.52</b>                   | 3.17                              | <b>3.78</b>                            |
| Province of Oulu (Northern Finland)                            | N = 71  | Mean | 3.48                          | <b>3.36</b>                       | 3.65                                   |
| Province of Lapland (Upper Northern Finland)                   | N = 17  | Mean | 3.46                          | 3.01                              | 3.69                                   |
| Total  | N = 473 | Mean | 3.35                          | 3.10                              | 3.50                                   |
| <b>Southern Finland &lt;-&gt; Central and Northern Finland</b> |         |      |                               |                                   |  |
| p-value  |         |      | <b>p: .006</b>                | <b>p: .000</b>                    | <b>p: .004</b>                         |
| Southern Finland   | N = 232 | Mean | 3.27                          | 2.97                              | 3.39                                   |
| Central and Northern Finland                                   | N = 241 | Mean | <b>3.43</b>                   | <b>3.23</b>                       | <b>3.61</b>                            |
| Total  | N = 473 | Mean | 3.35                          | 3.10                              | 3.50                                   |

Furthermore, the other areas of Finland had stronger expectations both for leadership skills and for the development of the elder's role than the Greater Helsinki area. However, the difference is not very strong, because the p-values for both variables were just under the threshold of 0.05. The means of the variables that had a p-value under 0.05 in a comparison between the Greater Helsinki area and the other parts of Finland are presented in chart 5.17 below.

| <b>Means: Greater Helsinki Area &lt;-&gt; Other parts of Finland</b> |         |      | Leadership Skills Expected | Church elders should develop their role as an elder |
|--|---------|------|----------------------------|---|
| p-value  |         |      | <b>p: .031</b>             | <b>p: .024</b>                                      |
| Greater Helsinki Area  | N = 69  | Mean | 3.68                       | 2.4337  |
| Other parts of Finland   | N = 404 | Mean | <b>3.85</b>                | <b>2.1686</b>                                       |
| Total  | N = 473 | Mean | 3.82                       | 2.2073  |

The Eastern and Northern parts of Finland seemed to have stronger expectations for spiritual leadership and the conservative performance of elders than the Southern and Western parts of Finland. The same seemed to be true of the job description of elders. In addition, the respondents in the other parts of Finland seemed to have stronger expectations of the leadership skills and of the need for elders to develop themselves than the respondents in the Greater Helsinki area.

### 5.2.5 Conclusions on the influence of background

Based on the p-values and on the differences in means, it may be concluded that the respondents' sex did not explain the differences in expectations focused on church elders at all. Both males and females seemed to have rather similar expectations.

Age was the factor that explained best the differences in expectations focused on church elders. In general, the older respondents were more inclined to expect strong leadership of the elders and a desire to develop themselves. However, the older respondents also expected conservative performance of the elders. In addition, the length of membership explained the differences in expectations almost as well as age. This is rather likely caused by the connection of age to the length of membership.

The respondents' position in the church seemed to explain rather well the differences in their expectations. In general, the pastors' expectations were stronger. However, the ordinary church members were more inclined to expect conservative performance and administrative skills.

Church size only explained the differences in the expectation of administrative skills. The size of town explained differences in the expectations of the elder's conservative performance and the elder's job description. Diving the data into geographic regions and comparing Southern Finland with Central and Northern Finland explained the expectations concerning spiritual leadership, conservative performance, and the elders' job description. Making a distinction between the Greater Helsinki area and the other parts of Finland explained expectations about leadership skills.

It may be concluded that the respondents' age as well as the length of their membership in a Pentecostal church explained the expectations faced by the church elders best. The respondents' position in their church was the factor that explained the differences in expectations second best.

### **5.3 Conclusions about the role expectations faced**

The research produced several valid factors that explain the expectations faced by the church elders. First of all, the church elders face rather strong expectations of spiritually oriented leadership. This may be seen in the expectations for elders to be active, in the expectation for elders to engage in spiritual leadership, and in the expectation for the conservative performance of elders. Second, the expectations related to leadership, in particular those concerning leadership skills and administrative skills confirm the expectation of the elders' general leadership. Third, the expectations for developing the

role of an elder were seen in the need of job descriptions for elders, and in the need for elders to develop their role as an elder. This suggests that in general the issues related to leadership and the expectation for developing leadership and role performance were rather strong expectations.

The elders' role expectations seem to focus in particular on the expectation of elders to be active. The expectations related to theology may be seen in particular in the expectation for spiritual leadership, and in the conservative performance of elders. The expectations related to leadership might be seen in the expectation for elders to have leadership skills and administrative skills. The expectations for development were seen in the expectation for the job description of elders and in the expectation for elders to develop their role.

The strongest expectation in Part 2 (on a 5-point Likert scale) was for the elders to be active (mean 4.44). The second strongest expectation had to do with leadership skills (mean 3.82). The job description for elders (mean 3.50), administrative skills (mean 3.44), and spiritual leadership (mean 3.35) were expected rather equally. The expectation of conservative performance (mean 3.10) was weaker, but still rather strong. However, all these expectations were rather strong. In Part 3 (Osgood's 7-point differential), the expectation for church elders to develop their role as an elder (mean 2.21, with a preponderance of statement A views), suggested a rather strong expectation for elders to develop their role.

The research results also suggested that age has an effect on both voluntary leadership expectations and on leadership training expectations, because the older church members seemed to have stronger expectations for these than the younger members had. The same seems to be true of the length of membership. The longer a person has been a member of a Pentecostal church, the more they tend to expect both the voluntary elements in leadership and leadership training. In addition, pastors seemed to expect voluntary leadership and leadership training more than the other church members. Furthermore, respondents in Central and Northern Finland had stronger expectations for the voluntary aspect than members in Southern Finland. This seems to be in agreement with leadership training expectations, because the other parts of Finland expect the develop-

ing of elders more than the members in the Greater Helsinki area. It seems likely that the voluntary leadership expectations correlate with the leadership training expectations.

In conclusion, the strongest expectations seem to be for the elder to be active and for elders to have leadership skills. The respondents' age and position in church in particular seem to explain these expectations.



## **6 Analysis of the role expectations faced by the church elders**

The analysis of the interviews seems to suggest that personality (who should serve as an elder?) and leadership (how should elders perform their role?) are the major concepts explaining the elder's felt role expectations. In all, 18 church elders were interviewed. After that the interviews were transcribed word for word. Then the data were categorised as described in chapter 2.

Next the interviews are analysed according to the themes that structured the theme interview. This means that first the felt expectations (questions 1 – 2) are analysed. After that the conflicting expectations are discussed. Then the general expectations (questions 3, 9, 10) and the theological expectations (question 8) are analysed. Finally the leadership expectations (general, training, voluntary) are analysed.

First the categorising was done according to the themes in the theory base. The way the categories are derived from subcategories to main categories is shown in the charts in the appendix. Second, the categorising was done without the themes of the theory base. In order to check the effect of the main themes, hypernyms were also combined without the structure of the main themes. In addition, a second categoriser was used in order to compare their analysis with the categorising done for checking the validity of the analyses. Finally, the ways of forming the main categories and uniting the concepts were compared, and the final conclusions of the results of the interview were made.

### **6.1 Role expectations faced**

#### **6.1.1 Central expectation faced**

Question 1 was: “As an elder, what do you feel the church members expect of you?”

The answers to the question may be divided into four main categories, which can be seen as the central expectations felt by the elders.

The expectation of presence is a central expectation faced by the interviewees. The expectation is based on the categories of consideration, presence in the church and involvement in the church. The respondents mentioned, for instance, the need to show

consideration for members equally, the need for supporting them, and the need to pray for people. An interviewee stated it as follows:

R1 "What I have found is in a way a therapeutic need: showing consideration for people in daily life, greeting people, and asking 'how are you?' "

Presence in the church had to do with both presence as involvement in ministry and in worship services and presence by taking part in church life in general and in spending time with the church members. The prayer meetings were seen as the special occasions that the church elders were expected to attend. This emphasises that the need of presence is seen in expectations of involvement.

R12 "There are expectations that an elder should attend the activities of their church as widely as possible."

According to the respondents' answers, leadership seems to be another central category of expectations. The expectation has to do with the categories of leadership and spiritual shepherding. Church elders seem to feel that they are expected to be accountable leaders, who provide vision and direction for their church and develop it as the following comment points out.

R5 "To have some kind of vision of the future of the church."

Another aspect of the leadership expectation is the dimension of spiritual shepherding. The elders seemed to feel that they are expected to be spiritual shepherds, who lead the church and by so doing bring continuity and safety to the church. One interviewee commented:

R11 "Walking ahead, especially in a spiritual sense."

The third expectation seems to be focused on the character of an elder. The main focus was on the expectations of the elder's personality and on the expectations focused on being a good example.

R1 "First of all, being an example and by an exemplary walk. The church members see a lot of this kind of non-verbal communication."

Example was a factor that was mentioned often. Being an example is logically connected to leadership expectations, and so are the expectations focused on one's character in general.

The fourth expectation had to do with biblical requirements. The elders felt that they are expected to fulfil the biblical requirements focused on them.

R18 "I feel that the church members expect an elder to be an exemplary and thus a trustworthy shepherd, who on their behalf leads the church to New Testament Christianity."

The important elements of the requirement (that question 1 points out) seem to be the expectations about spiritual gifts, teaching and family life. However, what is important in this question is the idea of fulfilling biblical requirements, because later on the question about the criteria indicates more explicitly the content of the requirements.

### **6.1.2 Fulfilling the faced expectations**

The felt expectations do not as yet indicate how the elders feel they have faced the expectations. The second question attempted to discover this: "In your view, how well have been able to measure up to these expectations? Could you please explain your view briefly?" Three different opinions emerged from the respondents' answers.

The first opinion suggested that fulfilling the expectations varies. The argument behind this was that fulfilling the expectations has varied. It seemed that some elders felt that it was hard to fulfil some of the expectations they faced. It also seems that the elders realised how their own expectations had an effect on this.

Another factor that had to do with the varying degree of fulfilling expectations was that it is rather difficult for elders to indicate how well they have fulfilled the expectations. Indeed, the respondents pointed out that the church knows how they have performed. However, some elders also pointed out that they feel the church trusts them and supports them in their ministry.

R2 "I have realized that at least in certain matters I have the confidence and support of the church members."

The other opinion on fulfilling the expectations was that it is possible to fulfil the expectations. This is seen for instance in the elders' views of being able to measure up to expectations. An interviewee points out how the church members understand that the good atmosphere in their church shows that the expectations have been fulfilled reasonably well:

R9 "We've been doing rather well. And in general one perceives this in the good atmosphere we're having in our church."

In addition, the respondents pointed out that they have been able to show consideration for members. The respondents also expressed how they have been able to show leadership. One interviewee stated it as follows:

R7 "When it comes to leadership expectations, I feel that I have managed very well."

It is also possible to conclude from the respondents' answers that when it comes to fulfilling the expectations, it is important to focus on the essentials. The respondents pointed out the need to concentrate on general expectations, the need to be present especially in given situations, and the need to show personal effort to the church in fulfilling the expectations.

The third opinion on fulfilling the faced expectations seemed to be that it is difficult to fulfil all received expectations. This is seen first of all in a challenge to fulfil the expectations of consideration. An interviewee commented about the need to show consideration for others through hospitality:

R12 "My wife and I have probably not succeeded very well in it."

It is also seen in the challenge to be present as often as expected. This theme received quite a lot of comments from the respondents. The theme received even more comments to a question on the voluntary leadership aspect of the elder's ministry.

R16 "When it comes to the need of being present, my understanding is that I have not completely fulfilled their [the church members'] expectations."

Another interviewee pointed out the challenge that an elder has to attend various church committee meetings, which are not seen by the church members. This means that an elder is not viewed as being present, even though they are actually involved in many church ministries at the same time.

In addition, it seems that it is difficult to fulfil the expectations of different church members. The respondents pointed out that it is a challenge to measure up to the various expectations that they receive. Indeed, it was suggested that elders should not even try to fulfil all expectations they face.

In conclusion, the answers to the first question about the felt expectations seem to indicate that the expectations of presence, leadership, character and fulfilling biblical requirements are the central felt expectations the respondents have experienced.

The second question, which had to do with the feeling of being able to fulfil felt expectations, suggests that it is a challenge to fulfil the felt expectations. Indeed, it seems that fulfilling the expectations varies. On the one hand, some elders commented that it is possible to fulfil the felt expectations. On the other hand, others argued that it is difficult to fulfil all expectations. This seems to suggest that fulfilling the felt expectations is not a simple issue.

The main categories found in the questions (1 and 2) about the role process (the episode of sending and receiving) seem to identify two unifying concepts (see chart 6.1 in the appendix 6). The first has to do with the primary felt expectations. This indicates that the elders actually face expectations from their church. The other unifying concept is that the felt expectations are perceived as a challenge. This suggests that fulfilling the felt expectations seems to be a challenge for church elders.

## **6.2 Role Conflicts Faced**

The respondents were asked (question 5): What, in your view, are the most likely conflict situations in the church in which an elder may be involved? The purpose of the question was to identify potential areas of role conflict through the comments of the interviewees. In general, the interviewees gave the impression that they have not faced many conflicts in their own church. It was not possible to find out from the data if that really was the case, or if this was their way of protecting themselves, or if the threshold for calling a challenge a conflict is rather high. However, the interviewees' comments at least indicated that they had an idea of which matters might cause a conflict in the church for an elder. Indeed, the respondents suggested some major possible conflicts that an elder might encounter.

The first opinion on conflicts suggested that they are likely. The respondents seem to consider that it is normal to face conflicts (even though several elders commented that

they had not faced many conflicts). They also suggested that conflicts provided a possibility for growth. However, several respondents commented that they have not had major conflicts. This may suggest that churches differ as to what extent they encounter conflicts. It may also suggest that elders have differing views of what is a major conflict and what is not.

In addition, the elders proposed that existing conflicts might cause new conflicts. This means that the tension and crises caused by external conflicts may cause internal conflicts. Moreover, the difficulty of dealing with conflicts may give rise to new conflicts.

It seems that it is important to deal with conflicting issues. The reason for this is that conflicting issues may become bigger conflicts, if the elders as the church leaders do not listen to the church members' complaints and feedback. The elders also commented that misconceptions and a lack of information quite often give rise to conflicts.

Doctrinal issues were mentioned as a major source of conflict. First of all, the data indicated that various doctrinal issues cause conflicts. Differing opinions may also add fuel to a conflict. In addition, the reason may be a doctrinal heresy or a new theological phenomenon. Moreover, an emphasis on a certain issue or doctrine quite often causes a conflict. An interviewee describes this doctrinal viewpoint:

R7 "A particular doctrinal emphasis may start to dominate (*in the church*). Then there is a need to deal with this kind of extreme doctrinal phenomenon."

The interpretation of the Bible was also mentioned as an obvious cause of conflict in the church. Thus, the church members may have differing views of the interpretation of some biblical issues. The interviews suggested, for instance, that the interpretation of the position of women might cause conflicts in the future. In addition, the elders proposed that the church members might have differing opinions of what should be interpreted as spiritual and what should not.

In addition, moral issues were seen as a typical source of conflict. The Adamic nature of man (i.e., human nature) and the unbiblical lifestyle of some individuals were suggested as sources of various moral conflicts. Moreover, the application of church discipline was suggested as a possible source of conflict in the church. Differing opinions about

family, broken family relationships and other societal problems were also mentioned as possible sources of conflict.

R18 "In practice today most situations [*conflicts*] are connected to the family, relationships between spouses, etc."

It was also suggested that differing opinions cause conflicts. For instance, church members may become dissatisfied with other members. The dissatisfaction may be focused either towards other church members, or towards the leadership of the church.

R11 "Dissatisfaction of individuals towards others and their actions. A potential dissatisfaction towards the pastor."

In addition, opinions on church practice seemed to cause conflicts. The challenge might for instance have to do with a difference of opinion on a church practice or worship service models in the church. Music was mentioned as a perpetual source of conflict. The elders also pointed out that a tendency to follow tradition might cause conflicts. This means that cultural issues seemed to be the focus of conflict quite often.

R4 "In a way these kinds of issues related to the church culture."

Human relations issues are also likely sources of conflict in the church. The church members' character and personality differences were suggested as challenges that might cause conflict between people. Moreover, some church members may have a problem personality, which may cause conflicts with others. It is also possible for church members to feel that they are not being treated equally. These human relations problems may occur between church members, or between an elder and a church member.

R11 "Disagreements between church members. Perhaps also disagreements between the members and the church elders."

In addition, conflicts may also occur between different age groups. These kinds of conflicts may even occur between elders of different ages. A typical reason may for instance be that different age groups have conflicting expectations of issues in the church.

R4 "The [*conflicting*] expectations of youth and the more senior members."

Leadership also seems to cause conflicts. It is possible that for instance the leaders in a church do not agree on how to lead a ministry. The leaders might have differing opinions. In addition, a church member or a church leader might have wrong or too ambitious ideas about their position in leadership (a desire for power).

R17 "An obvious case is the desire for power, and then there is a need for reducing conflict."

The strategy used in leadership might also cause conflict. It is possible that some members do not agree with the church's strategy. One respondent suggested that for instance the decisions about leading the church's foreign mission might cause conflict. A further challenge might be caused by an overemphasis of a particular ministry at the expense of others. This may mean that different groups in a church claim that their area of ministry is more important than the other ministries:

R11 "Everyone is doing great job, and greatly esteems their [own] ministry. This might cause conflict."

Conflicts may also occur between the primary leaders of the church (pastor – elders – association board). It was suggested that an elder (or a few elders) might have a conflict with the pastor of their church. It is also possible for elders to have a conflict of leadership in an issue within the board of elders. A conflict between elders seems to be really difficult, especially if the church members get to know about it.

Carrying out changes also seems to be a possible cause of conflict. The elders commented that new decisions in particular might give rise to conflicts. For instance, the elders mentioned the Finnish Pentecostal discussion on how to organize the church as this kind of issue, which is likely to divide people in a church.<sup>255</sup> This suggests that a conflict may arise, when people have differing opinions about matters related to the church.

R3 "Usually, if we [*the church*] get new matters so that the church is reorganised and new elements are introduced to church life, it always causes some kind of tension."

It was also suggested that volunteering might cause conflicts. Indeed, the voluntary basis of the elder's role may be a source of problems, because the elders do not always have enough time to perform their ministry well (as also pointed out in the analysis of the question about voluntary leadership). It is also possible that the elders get too tired while working fulltime and doing the ministry at the same time. This suggests that conflicts are more likely, when an elder or other church leader gets too tired.

R17 "One of the worst ways to reduce conflict is of course when one party to the situation gets tired."

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<sup>255</sup> See Kaipainen (2011) and Paldanius (2012) for more details about the discussion concerning the forming an official Pentecostal Church.



In conclusion, conflicts are likely to occur (for a common denominator; see chart 6.2 in the appendix 6). It seems that differing opinions and doctrinal issues cause conflicts (another common denominator). It also seems that leadership in a voluntary organization often gives rise to conflicts (another common denominator). The reason for this may for instance be human relations or the voluntary application of leadership.

### **6.3 Criteria for an elder**

Three questions (3, 9, 10) assessed the respondent's opinion and understanding of the content of the role expectation (theoretical theme 2). The purpose was also to find out what elements the respondents saw as central and ideal for an elder.

Question three surveyed general views of the criteria for choosing an elder: "3. What in your opinion are the central criteria for the election of an elder? Could you please describe your opinion briefly?" Question nine focused on the ideal expectations of an elder, as seen from the viewpoint of an ideal elder: "9. What in your opinion should the church's dream elder be like?" At the end of the interview, some elders were asked an extra question about other important matters they might want to add about the ministry of an elder: "10. What else would you like to say about the role of an elder?" The extra question was asked in situations in which the interviewer felt that the interviewee might still have something to say about the role expectations of an elder (especially when an interviewee answered the questions rather briefly).

The biblical criterion was also suggested as an important expectation for new elders. This means that first of all the felt biblical qualifications in general were viewed as important criteria for elders. Several elders mentioned the importance of biblical criteria in general. They also mentioned several biblical references in support of this requirement. The need for sound doctrine may also be associated with this criterion. However, the elders also acknowledged that it was hard to measure up to the biblical expectations.

R3 "And staying within the guidelines laid down in the Bible."

The list of requirements in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 was mentioned as the central Biblical criteria for choosing elders. The interviewees mentioned the requirement of being the husband of one wife, of the need to live a reproachable life and of not being a drinker as the cen-

tral criteria for choosing an elder. In addition, most of the features of the list in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 were seen as essential criteria for an elder. For instance, an elder should not be a new convert. However, they commented that the criterion did not necessarily refer to time as counted in years, but rather to maturity. Furthermore, the ability to teach and the ability to manage one's family well were also mentioned as criteria for an elder.

R3 "Personally, I would see that taking care of one's own family is a really central and important matter."

The importance of fulfilling the biblical criteria may also be seen as a criterion. The importance of fulfilling the biblical criteria is seen for example in the following comment.

9R11 "An individual, who would fulfil these biblical qualifications and criteria as well as it is humanly possible."

The need for spirituality seems to be another criterion for appointing an elder. For instance, the spiritual experience of a meeting with God was emphasised. This is seen in the expectation to have a personal call from God. It is also seen in the comments about the need of a personal relationship with God, the need to manifest spiritual gifts and in the need to have an experience of the Holy Spirit's presence. The same emphasis was also seen in the answers to question 9 concerning the dream elder. This means that one should do one's best to God and to submit oneself to Him. The elders also mentioned that it is important for an elder to maintain a good spiritual relationship with God and to rely on Holy Spirit.

R12 "An elder should be filled with the Holy Spirit."

This gives rise to the question of what being full of the Holy Spirit means in practice.<sup>256</sup> However, it seems likely that spirituality in general is viewed as an important criterion for an elder, because these issues were also mentioned in the extra question (i.e., question 10 in which elders commented freely on the matters they felt were important). This is seen in comments about the importance of spirituality and the need to have a call from God (God's call was mentioned in answers related to all three questions).

10R13 "To perceive that it is God's call and His gifting and that God is behind it."

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<sup>256</sup> The interviewees did not explain what they meant with "Full of the Holy Spirit". However, usually the expression refers to a person, who convinces other people by their speech and deeds that a stronger power (of God) is guiding them in their life and ministry.

The third criterion seems to be associated with the elder's character. First of all, questions 9 and 10 suggest that an appropriate character is important. This may be seen in the comments about the importance of the right kind and appropriate character. This suggests that the attitude of an elder is an important criterion.

The answers to question 3 also indicate that traits befitting for the ministry of an elder are important. This means that an elder should have features one would associate with an elder. This seems to suggest that an elder should be social, positive and calm. In addition, the willingness to serve and the need to be trustworthy were mentioned several times as essential features.

9R16 "The kind of inner strength that keeps one from changing one's views all the time and enables one to present a firm opinion."

The respondents also seemed to feel that it is important for an elder to be a normal human being with growth potential. In a way, the ability to grow in the task explains this viewpoint, because it hints that an elder does not need to be completely ready when chosen for the task.

9R9 "They do not need to be ready (for their tasks), but to be willing to grow."

However, it seems that the need to be a normal human being does not mean that elders should be what they want to be. The requirements of a balanced character and maturity define the criterion. By balanced character the interviewees obviously suggested that an elder should have a balanced personality, and should be mentally sound. Maturity seems to include both spiritual maturity and maturity as a human being and a Christian. An interviewee commented on the need for stability with the following idea:

R10 "Probably, first of all, sanity in general and balance in life."

The fourth criterion found for an elder was the need for human relations skills. First of all, it may be concluded that a good reputation with others is an important proof of human relations skills. Obviously, an elder is expected to be a good example, to have the support of the church, and to have a good reputation with people in general. The elders suggested that good human relations skills could be seen in particular in treating people equally.

9R2 "One should consider the elderly, the young people, children, everyone, the whole church body, so that one does not favour anyone at the expense of the others."

In addition, it seems that the ability to support others is an important criterion for an elder. This means that the respondents felt that an elder should support their church members in their Christian life and that they should have the ability to support them well. The elders should also be able to support the church members by representing a group in the church e.g. in the elders' board meetings.

Several respondents mentioned leadership as an important criterion for an elder. They seemed to indicate that leadership abilities in general are important. This means that elders should have leadership abilities that make them capable leaders. In this context they also pointed out that an elder should be able to have a holistic view of church ministry. They should not for example emphasise one ministry of their church more than the other ministries.

In addition, an elder is also expected to be a shepherding leader with a shepherd's mindset. This should be seen for example in how an elder treats their church members. This may also be seen in the need for an elder to be able to discipline church members in an edifying way.

R16 "The mindset of a shepherd. This is seen in the person, in their previous services, and in their personality."

The respondents also seemed to point out that an elder should be a good Christian leader. This means that they should be good examples to others. They also mentioned that an elder should be a good team worker. Thus, they should be willing to co-operate with others, and should be able and willing to engage in collective leadership with the other elders and the pastor. This is seen in particular in the ability of an elder to work in accord with the other elders.

10R8 "The elders should really make an effort to maintain mutual accord."

On the one hand the data also indicate that an elder should have an area of specialization and be versatile in their abilities. This suggests that an elder should focus on serving in a particular area of ministry. This may also have to do with an area of responsibility for an elder in their church. On the other hand, the data suggest that an elder should have versatile abilities. For instance, the church should make use of an elder's secular profession in the elder's ministry. Elders are also expected to develop themselves. However, it was also suggested that versatility is achieved through having different kinds of elders on the elder's board.

The interviewees proposed that the need to be present was one of the central criteria for an elder. As already pointed out in association with the question on the felt expectations, the answers to the criteria of an elder also seem to indicate clearly that an elder is expected to be present in church life. This underlines the need for elders to have the time to be present in their church.

9R13 "And then when one also has time and authority to serve their church."

Another important consideration seems to be that an elder should make an effort to be present in church life. This means that an elder is expected to participate in church life. An elder could succeed in this by time management (for instance by managing what events they include in their calendar).

10R17 "The idea that an elder should be able to manage their own schedule."

The comments about the age of an elder did not suggest an ideal age for an elder. Indeed, the comments pointed out that it is essential to have members representing all sections of the age spectrum on the board of elders, by having both younger and older elders. This could be arranged by having elders from different age groups.

10R3 "Age does matter. It is good that the elders' boards have members from all age categories [*across the entire age spectrum*]. ... There is a tendency to have too many elders from the older category."

The interviewees pointed out that age does matter, but is not the only criterion for new elders. They suggested that it was more important for an elder to have enough life experience. However, they proposed that the new elders should be selected from the church's younger generation. The reason for this was both to have younger elders growing in the task and to keep the age structure of the church in balance.

R13 "Those, who are chosen (*to the elders' board*), are from the younger category (*members*). So that there are elders growing and that this then also reflects the whole structure of the church."

However, the respondents' answers seem to suggest that an ideal elder does not exist. It is first of all difficult to find an ideal dream elder who would also fulfil the biblical ideal and the requirements of the church.

9R18 "I do not believe that we could at any time find all the ideal traits that we may expect in an elder."

In addition, the elders pointed out that often the need of the church affects the choice of elders. This also means that the needs of the church (the kind of elder they need) have an effect on how close an elder is to the ideal. However, they clearly pointed out that no ideal elder exists.

Even though it was suggested that an ideal elder does not exist, the role appears to be viewed as an important task. This means that the role of an elder is viewed as a confidential post and a place of ministry. The role gives perspective. While it gives much, it also requires much of the elder.

10R5 "If one is able to serve God in this task, the task is surely a ministry post in which one may in one's own location very strongly promote spreading the work of the kingdom of God."

In conclusion, it seems that the general requirement for the choice of elders emphasises their character. This means that because it is not possible to find an ideal elder, the elder's character may be viewed as a central general requirement (one unifying concept). Character seems to be more important than for instance the age of an elder. However, it seems that it is important to have the whole age range presented on the elders' board.

The expectations of fulfilling biblical criteria and spirituality seem to be essential theological requirements (another unifying concept) that an elder needs to fulfil besides the character requirements (see chart 6.3 in the appendix 6). In addition, an elder seems to face the expectations of leadership, presence and human relations skills, which together as the leadership requirements (another unifying concept) also define the expectations they face.

#### **6.4 Biblical expectations**

The respondents' opinion of the biblical criteria for an elder was surveyed through question 8: "What in your opinion are the central biblical criteria for an elder?" A few central criteria may be found in the respondents' answers. The criteria actually overlap to a considerable degree with the criteria discussed above. However, the purpose of this question was in particular to find out the biblical dimension of the criteria.

According to the respondents, a central biblical criterion for an elder is one's relationship with God. This means that it is essential to be a Christian (to have faith) and to take care of one's personal spiritual life.<sup>257</sup> They also emphasised the phenomenon that they understood as God's call. In the same vein was the idea that an elder's faith needs to be tested.

R9 "Personal faith and a personal walk. It needs to be the kind that also withstands the evaluation of outsiders [*those outside the church*]."

Spirituality was viewed as an important factor. It seems that an elder is expected to demonstrate the use of spiritual gifts at least to some extent. It was also suggested that an elder is expected to be full of the Holy Spirit. In the same vein with this was an emphasis on the fruit of the Spirit. This means that an elder should manifest the fruit of the Spirit by being peaceful, and not being quick-tempered. Similarly, love and grace were also mentioned as central biblical criteria.

It seems that another primary biblical criterion for an elder is the requirement of a stable character. This means that an elder needs to be mature, trustworthy, not a person of extremes, and to be a stable Christian.

R14 " Things such as trustworthiness."

A good reputation was also mentioned as an important biblical criterion for an elder. This means that an elder should have a good reputation with others, they should be an example to others, and their life should be beyond reproach. An interviewee describes this requirement with the metaphor of a "spiritual" pillar of support.

R10 "To be in every way a balanced and exemplary Christian, who may then serve as a spiritual pillar of support for their church."

The data also pointed out that the biblical criterion is in general important.<sup>258</sup> However, it was commented that it is not possible to find an explicit description of biblical criteria, and so they are not easy to define. This means, for instance, that it seems to be difficult to measure the biblical criteria and to measure how the Biblical criteria is realised.

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<sup>257</sup> This reflects the charismatic understanding of a personal faith relationship with Jesus Christ.

<sup>258</sup> However, some respondents felt it a challenge that this question was similar to question three.

Furthermore, it seems to be important to follow biblical guidelines. This has to do with the need for an elder to follow the directions of the Bible and to study it. They also pointed out that an elder needed to be able to make the right kind of choices.

R3 “Observing the guidelines laid down in the biblical word.”

The data also pointed out that the list in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 serves as a (central) criterion for an elder. This means that their character should reflect the spiritual features mentioned in 1 Tim 3. The respondents emphasised in different ways the importance of the right kind of character traits, the importance of spiritual characteristics, and especially the spiritual features mentioned in the list in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy. An interviewee said that their church applies the passage as a criterion for choosing new elders.

R16 ”I personally feel that the passages in the epistles to Timothy and to Titus are the main criteria. Always, when we have chosen elders, we have gone through these Bible passages.”

A few features were mentioned in this context as important moral features. For instance, an elder should not be a drunkard. One’s sexual status was also seen as an important factor (the husband of one wife). Likewise, an elder was expected to manage their family well. Moreover, it was emphasised that a person selected as an elder should not be a new convert. This suggests that the elder’s life should reflect the biblical moral criteria.

R6 ”And of course then these very high moral criteria that the Bible lays down for an elder, with regard to their life.”

Some respondents also mentioned the position of women in church leadership in connection with the biblical criteria. The position of women was not asked in any questions made to the respondents (the issue was not a research objective). However, a few comments suggested that the position of women in church leadership should be considered and discussed. It is not possible to discern a shared ambiguous opinion on the position of women in the data. Some comments seem to be more open for a stronger involvement of women in church leadership and the other comments took a more negative approach to it.

Shepherding team leadership also seems to be a central criterion for an elder. The data suggest that shepherding team leadership is often understood as a biblical form of leadership. This means that an elder should be a shepherd for the church. In addition, it was suggested that in principle, seen from a theological perspective, the elders are also pastors, but the current use of the term pastor has a different connotation. However, the



shepherding of a church should be done in co-operation with the other members of the elder's board.

R8 "I do not see that all should have all of these traits, but that together the elders' board [*would be the kind*] that there would always be someone for a task with the [*spiritual*] gifting [*for it*]. Someone may be good in organizing, another good in teaching, a third a good counsellor."

It seems that shepherding has to do with the idea that an elder should be able to make disciples. The interviewees suggested that the focus was on the church members as well as on the unchurched. This means that an elder should be ready to fulfil the Great Commission (which very likely refers to Jesus' Great Commission in Matt. 28:19-20).

R4 "It should start with the idea that making disciples of people should be the central issue and aim [of the ministry]."

The data also seem to indicate that elders with different kinds of abilities are needed. This is seen in the suggestions to choose elders with different kinds of abilities and areas of ministry concentration. Moreover, the suggestion to choose elders from different age groups supports this idea.

R7 "A board of elders should be able to give different tasks to different elders."

In addition, teaching others was seen as a criterion for elders. However, it was commented that teaching as such is not so important, but it is essential to be able to teach through instructing others. This seems to mean that it is important to be able to teach in a general sense (especially the Word of God). It was suggested that the elders (mainly pastors), who are teaching publicly should be counted worthy of "double honour according to the biblical principle". This may refer to the idea that there are actually different categories of elders (those who teach publicly and those who do not). However, the criterion of being able to teach was viewed in general as a difficult requirement.

R2 "That [the ability to teach] is in my opinion a difficult issue, because ... I see that not all [elders] qualify as teachers."

This was supported by the idea that teaching already takes place when instructing people, not only when for instance speaking from the pulpit. It was suggested that the ability to teach is already realised in small group teaching and in one-on-one discussions. This kind of idea seems to reflect the change in the understanding of what training and education in general refer to.

R6 "Of course, in our church and on the elders' board we have discussed the issue that 'the ability to teach' does not necessarily mean that one should teach from the pulpit."

It seemed important for the interviewees that an elder should be able to teach by instructing people. The setting for instruction may be a discussion with church members or a practical ministry situation (in which a ministry is for instance done together with church members).

R11 "One may teach by walking besides [another person], by discussing, by doing work together. By doing and serving together in different church ministries. Being an example is teaching."

It was suggested that an elder might teach through writing (for instance in a church bulletin). An interviewee also commented that elders teach through their personal example. Some asserted that an elder does not need to be a theologian in order to be able to teach.

R18 "So that one may lead people in different situations, in discussions, or by writing something, or whatever else [something similar]."

In conclusion, the expectation of spirituality seems to be a central unifying biblical criterion (see chart 6.4 in the appendix 6). The elder's character seems to be another unifying criterion. This is seen in the expectation of a stable character. In addition, it seems important to observe the biblical criteria, especially the list in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 on the requirements of an elder. It also seems likely that the position of women raises discussion. Furthermore, leading and teaching could be described as the essential abilities (another unifying criterion) of an elder. The leadership requirement could be defined in particular as shepherding team leadership. It seems that the expected ability to teach relates in particular to the ability to guide others in their faith (not necessarily by teaching publicly).

## **6.5 Leadership expectations**

### **6.5.1 General leadership expectations**

In this research, leadership expectations are divided into three different categories. First, the themes for general leadership expectations are discussed. Then the leadership training expectations are considered. Finally the voluntary leadership expectations are examined.

Opinions on leadership in general were surveyed through the question: "Who in your opinion should lead the church (the pastor, the elders, the chairman of the elders' board,

the church association, or the chairman of the association)? Could you please explain your opinion briefly?"

The analysis of the data seems to indicate clearly that church leadership is a multifaceted issue. First of all this is seen in comments about God as the ultimate and *de facto* leader. It was suggested that a church should be lead according to the guidelines laid down in the Bible, the Word of God. However, it seems that the leadership of a church is not a simple question. This means that for example both the dimensions of spiritual leadership and financial leadership are important in church leadership. The research data suggest that it is difficult to point out a single outstanding alternative of how to lead a church. In some churches the pastor is more prominently seen as the church's primary leader and in some other churches the elders have greater influence as leaders. Leadership by only the pastor or by solely the elders may in extreme cases lead to difficulties.

R10 "If only the pastor leads, then, if the pastor leaves or something else [*problems*] appears, they may probably be rather reluctant to resign. However, if only the board of elders leads, it may dampen the pastor's enthusiasm to do the work."

It seems that a more explicit definition of the concept of leadership would be important in order to understand leadership in the church setting. A respondent suggested that leadership is in a way the task of every believer in a church. For example different ministry teams are involved in the leadership of a church. Even though in the Finnish Pentecostal system the board of elders and the association board have a central role in church leadership, the other teams are also involved in leading a church.<sup>259</sup>

R17 "But actually, leadership based on one's position is not the only type of leadership, but situational leadership also occurs. And it often happens that in situational leadership anyone could have the leadership position."

Another opinion seems to be that elders (may include the pastor) should lead the church. This means that the pastor should lead together with the elders. The elders' leadership role would then be to support the pastor and in this sense the whole church.

R2 "I have the understanding that a pastor should lead the church together with the board of elders."

Several interviewees suggested that the lead (senior) pastor is the primary leader on the elders' board. The senior pastor could be viewed as the operative leader. They should also be visionary leaders, giving direction for a church. An elder commented that the

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<sup>259</sup> For instance, through their own work the music ministry team and the children's ministry team to some extent also have an effect on the direction a church takes.

pastor is able to lead, because they know the church better. Preaching was also seen as a way for the pastor to lead their church.

R1 "The operative and practical dealing with issues could be left to the pastor, and sometimes also the official decision-making, but the board of elders makes the greatest decisions on the direction the church should take."

Several interviewees suggested that the elders' board was the main leadership organ in the church. Thus, the board of elders should serve as the church's ultimate leader by drawing the guidelines for the direction for the church and by making the ultimate decisions on issues. They also commented that the elders' leadership provides continuity for the church. This means that if a pastor moves to another church, the elders stay and in that sense continue the ongoing ministry of the church.

R12 "He [*the pastor*] is one member of the board of elders. ... and the pastors usually change. And the elders stay [*in one locality*]."

It becomes a challenge if the pastor is not allowed to be involved in the leadership of the church. In this case, the pastor does not have a chance to have an effect on the matters they should engage in and take care of in practice. However, the challenge is that those who emphasise the elders' leadership seem to understand that a pastor mainly leads through preaching.

R9 "But when it comes to practical roles, I would say that in addition to the preaching ministry, the role of a pastor is [*to serve*] on the board of elders, in a way preparing and presenting [*issues*]."

The explicit opinion of several interviewees seems to be that the elders' collective leadership forms the basis for leading the church. This has to do with the idea that the elders should lead their church collectively. Collective leadership is seen both as a functioning model and as a biblical model (both the teaching of Jethro to Moses in Exodus 18 and the general NT teaching on elders were given as references from the Bible in support of this view).

The interviewees understood that collective leadership enabled the elders to make compromises in decision-making. This means that collective leadership allows many individuals to participate in leadership and in that sense to be involved in the decision-making. In addition, they also saw that collective leadership supported elders in their ministry (peer support). They also suggested that it was easier for an elder to represent a group in the church, when they knew that other elders would take care of other groups

and they could thus focus on their own group. The collective elders' leadership was seen to provide safety and balance to a church.

R13 "When there are many individuals on the board of elders and the board leads, it above all also serves as a safety factor for the church."

However, the interviewees commented that collective leadership is sometimes difficult. Shared decisions may for instance entail difficult compromises. It also seems that in practice collective leadership is not entirely collective, because they suggested that the elders' board had an appointed chairman. They proposed that in practice collective leadership does not work literally in daily church life.

R18 "I think that the board of elders should primarily lead, if we consider the issues of the direction [the church should take]. ... However, [*when*] leading in issues on a practical level, this kind of collective leadership does not usually function very well."

One of the strongest arguments for collective leadership suggested by several interviewees seems to be that it is not good if only one person leads the church. This means that neither the pastor nor the chairman of the elders' board should lead the church alone. Leadership by a single individual is fraught with difficulties, because of the risk that the leader may then lead the church as they want.

R6 "My opinion is that the entire board of elders should lead the church together, so that the opinion or viewpoint of just one person should not have too much emphasis, but [*the board*] should seek God's will together."

The respondents also clearly pointed out that the association board should not have the ultimate leadership in the church. The church's association board was primarily seen as an administrative element or tool for church leadership. Its main task is to take care of financial, administrative and practical matters. The board is needed in order to take care of church premises and property. However, according to the Finnish legal system the association board has the juridical responsibility for administrative matters.<sup>260</sup>

R11 "If we consider this current church or the association based church model, which we rather generally have in use in Finland, the role of the [*association*] board is of course to be accountable for the activities of the association to those, who make the laws [*the authorities*]."

The respondents commented that the association board should not have the ultimate leadership in the church. This means that the association board should not take care of spiritual matters, and should thus not lead the whole church. However, it was suggested that it is possible to have good co-operation between the board of elders and the associa-

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<sup>260</sup> See the discussion in chapter three.

tion board. This good co-operation may also be achieved by overlapping membership in the association board and the elders' board.

R15 "If all the members of the [*church's*] association board do not also belong to the board of elders, at least the majority of the association board members should also be members of the board of elders. A church should not have two boards, which would guide the church into different directions."

It may be concluded of church leadership that first of all it has many dimensions (see chart 6.5.1 in the appendix 6). Indeed, church leadership is a rather multifaceted issue. This suggests the need for defining leadership in each context. It also seems that the elders' collective leadership is viewed from the elders' perspective as an effective way of organizing church leadership. This suggests collective leadership as the basis for leading a church. It proposes that elders (often including the pastor) should lead the church. The church's association board would then be responsible for the legal administration of the church, but should not have the ultimate leadership of the church.

### **6.5.2 Leadership training expectations**

The leadership dimension also included a question (6) on the training of elders: "In your opinion, should the elders get training for their tasks? Could you please explain your opinion briefly?" The purpose of the question was to evaluate the interviewees' opinion of the need of leadership training for church elders.

It appears that the first main category of leadership training has to do with the view that the respondents considered the training of elders to be useful. This suggests that churches should organize training for elders, because it is a positive thing. A reason given for the need for training was that it could in particular help elders in remote churches who may be lonesome in their ministry. The training of elders seems to be essential in order for elders to develop themselves.

However, it was expected that if formal training was organized, it should be useful. This means that the training should enable an elder to grow. This growth should then be seen in practice in an elder's ministry. In addition, training could also have spiritual benefits, which would then be seen as the elder's spiritual growth.

The interviewees suggested that training was important at different stages of an elder's ministry. This means that training is seen to be helpful in updating the elder's skills.

They suggested that training was most important for new elders, who were preparing themselves for the role. It was also suggested that the training could be continuous.

R16 "When discussing the issue with young elders, the idea was brought up that when it comes to certain matters, for many years some have not perceived or have not fully understood as to why some things are done in a certain way or why some things are thought of in a certain way."

Training was also suggested as a way of providing a shared basis of knowledge and skills for elders, who in reality perform their role in different kinds of churches. They proposed common instructions and procedures for elders as a necessary basis for training. They suggested that these should be designed together and put into writing.

The form of training was suggested as another important main category for leadership training. It seems essential to consider how elders are trained. For instance, the training of elders should be practical (the interviewees did not elaborate as to what they meant by practical). They also asserted that the elders' instructors should be skilled experts.

R1 "There is a natural answer to this in that there should be [*training of elders*]. However, this raises another question as to how [*the training should be carried out*]."

Furthermore, the training of elders should be organized so that the distance to the venue for the training and the elder's secular job would not hinder an elder from attending the training. The comments suggested that several elders face a challenge in attending training, because their full-time secular job hinders them. The training should be organized at a rather short distance from the church. They commented that when it comes to Iso Kirja College seminars, for instance, the long distance could be a challenge.<sup>261</sup>

R12 "When living up in the North, it is not necessarily that simple. For example, if there are good courses [*seminars*] at Iso Kirja College, people who have a full-time job are not able to make it to a course during the week and not necessarily even at weekends."

The interviewees suggested that basic-level training was sufficient for elders. Some even suggested that the official training of elders is an ambiguous issue with its pros and cons. They suggested that if elders take care of themselves, they do not need training. However, the changes in society were seen as indicating the need of training for elders.

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<sup>261</sup> Iso Kirja College is a theological college located in Central Finland. It operates in conjunction with the Finnish Pentecostal Conference and Training Centre. See [www.isokirja.fi](http://www.isokirja.fi) for more information. In addition to theological training programs, the college offers various seminars, including a seminar for church elders.

It appears that the third main category of leadership training has to do with the idea that all forms of teaching may be useful for training elders. The respondents suggested different kind of methods for training new elders. For instance, training may already take place while performing the role of an elder even though this alone would not be sufficient. In addition, they suggested a possible probationary phase as a training method for new elders before they could be nominated as full members of the elders' board. The training phase could also include tutoring and mentoring given by older elders to younger elders.

R12 "I consider mentoring or a similar activity as the best form of training."

It was also commented that elders should be active self-learners. This could mean that independent, self-directed training could serve as a form of training. In practice both the reading of related good books and systematic Bible study could function as important avenues for learning.

R7 "Literature as such is a form of training. Every enlightened elder should be a friend of books in a same way as they are a friend of the Bible."

The interviewees also suggested that peer support and learning from the strategies used in other churches were good ways of learning. In addition, they mentioned regional seminars as good settings for training elders. The seminars could be church-based seminars or regional level seminars for elders. Moreover, training seminars on the national level, such as Iso Kirja College seminars for elders, were seen to be useful. They also suggested that in addition to elders' seminars, other training sessions might also be beneficial ways for training elders. This has to do with seminars on the other aspects of ministry, for instance. Internet-based training for elders was also mentioned as a possible form of training.

R18 "There is in a way a need for peer support across church borders."

R6 " [*Training sessions for elders*] in the church. Of course, a few regional training seminars as well."

R7 " A virtual interaction channel for elders could be an idea that the whole denomination might embrace."

According to the data, it appears that the fourth main category for leadership training has to do with the observation that the content of training for elders should be well planned. This suggests that the content of training should include teaching on the role of an elder and the task performances connected to it. The teaching should deal with the theological and biblical basis of the role. The content of training should also include the



spiritual dimension. This has to do with training on one's spiritual gifting and training to nurture one's spiritual life. It was also suggested that the content of training should include the leadership dimension and its concomitant team leadership dimension. The interviewees also saw that it was important to be to define the term leadership in connection with training.

R14 "In a way this kind of theological training, in which one could discuss the task of an elder. And practical teaching as well."

In addition, the content of training should include the human relations (psychology) aspect. For example, psychology, counselling, human relations skills, and family and marital mentoring skills were mentioned as important elements in the training of elders. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the training should have room for discussing specific issues raised up in the sessions.

The last main category for the need of training had to do with the idea that the church members should be taught about the role of an elder. If the members do not really understand the role of an elder, the church might face difficulties concerning what to expect from the elders.

R11 "Also, a church needs training about the role and task of a member of the board of elders. So that the expectations ... in the church would also be realistic."

It may be concluded that the training of elders was seen as a useful and positive undertaking (see chart 6.5.2 in the appendix 6). It seems important to consider well the form of training. However, all forms of training seem to be useful, if they enable the elders to learn and grow. The content of training seemed to be important and it should be well considered. In addition, the church should be taught about the role of an elder, so that the members can have realistic expectations about the role.

### **6.5.3 Voluntary leadership expectations**

The leadership dimension also included a question (7) on voluntary leadership: "What advantages or disadvantages does volunteering bring to an elder in taking care of their duties?" Comments to the question seem to distinguish between seven major categories of voluntary leadership expectations.

It was first of all asserted that a church needs volunteering. The voluntary-based elder's ministry is a major way of engaging in ministry and leading a church. When it comes to

church finances, the voluntary basis of the ministry was seen as especially important. As the Finnish Pentecostal churches are financed by voluntary donations, the churches are usually able to afford only one or two salaried workers. In this respect, the voluntary-based unpaid church elders are a necessary element for financing church ministry.

R4 "If there were more paid workers, financing the church would be much more challenging."

Motivation, another important main category, was seen as a benefit of performing the role of an elder on a voluntary basis. First of all, the interviewees pointed out that volunteering brings balance to an elder's life. It seemed that voluntary work is viewed as a good way of doing something different from one's full-time work. They also suggested that voluntary work as an elder may be compared to a hobby that motivates an elder.

R2 "But of course it then gives one much life experience and other good [*things*] as a counterbalance."

For the interviewees, motivation was not only a result of counterbalance. They suggested that in general voluntary work was a positive source of motivation for an elder. For instance, the motivation to perform the elder's tasks may also be based on one's own desire for performing the role voluntarily. According to the comments given, it seems that in voluntarily work one does not usually feel that one is being forced to assume a role. In this sense, regarding the elder's role as voluntary was seen as a positive motivational element.

R1 "When we consider a voluntary ministry, a positive feature is that it stems from one's own inner desire. It is thus very likely done from the right motives."

In addition, an elder may also be motivated for their task by perceiving that they do it because of the call they have received from God and not because of salary. It was also suggested that a positive benefit of the voluntary basis of the role is that the motivation to carry out the task is tested on the long term. The interviewees suggested that on the long term, the voluntary basis of the role tests one's willingness to perform the role and confirms the elders' call and motivation.

R15 "On the long term, the voluntary nature [*of the ministry*] also reveals one's motive."

In addition, the interviewees saw that volunteering was associated with a sense of freedom. They suggested for instance that since their secular job gives them financial independence, they see a positive motivational element in volunteering. This means that

elders have more choice in deciding what issues they could focus on in performing their role. They also commented that a positive consequence of the voluntary basis of the elder's role is that an elder has more freedom in choosing how much effort they put into carrying out their task. It was even suggested that the voluntary basis of the role enables an elder to put less effort into their role, if they are busy with other things in life.

R13 "Of course it is a benefit that it [*an elder's ministry*] is voluntary, because it certainly provides freedom, when one is not a salaried church worker."

As the third main category, the data suggested that the elder's role enables them to identify with people. They felt that the voluntary-based elders are better able to understand the church members who are likewise involved in church ministry on a voluntary basis. It also appears that the voluntary-based elders were better able to understand both the people outside the church and daily life in general. For instance, the elders are likely to understand rather well both the possibilities and challenges of working life.

R18 "The role of an elder [*as a voluntary worker*] is to be closer to the church members [*who are also serving on a voluntary basis*] and to identify with them. [*For instance*] when it comes to church activities, the use of time, and so on."

The interviewees did not only describe the voluntary basis of an elder's role in a positive manner. Indeed, the proposed fourth main category identifies the order of priority as a central challenge in performing the role of an elder on a voluntary basis. It seems likely that elders face challenges in prioritising their lives so that they would also have time for their role as an elder. Sometimes it seems very difficult to balance different matters in life. For example, an interviewee commented that one's family might suffer due to one's voluntary work as an elder. It was suggested that especially an elder with (small) children would be likely to face challenges with their use of time.

R4 "Sometimes it [*the elder's ministry*] means that one gives up spending time with one's nearest and dearest and leaves some matters undone in that area."

R8 "If an elder is young and they already have small children in their family, and their full-time job also requires a lot of time, then it is [*a challenge*]."

However, it was argued that one could find a satisfying order of priority that would take into account one's work, family and church ministry (the elder's role), if one made an effort to find the balance. This may mean for instance that one has to consider what activities one would focus on in the church. The interviewees also thought that one's family should take priority over the church. They also suggested that it was essential to prioritise one's secular job, because one needed to earn one's living from it. The salary that an elder receives from their work enables them to support their family.

R12 "One has to do one's full-time job, because otherwise one would not get paid. In that sense it [*the job*] is the first [*in priority*]. And one takes care of one's family with the income one has been able to get from one's secular job."

It seems that elders from all age groups tend to have less time for their family while performing the role on a voluntary basis. It also seems that older elders are more likely to have more time for the voluntary role of an elder than the younger elders have. However, prioritising one's family exclusively would make it impossible to do ministry at all. It seems likely that one simply has to search for a good and functioning balance between family and church ministry.

R18 "As a starting point, I try to prioritise so that I would not neglect my family because of church ministry. However, if one takes it to extremes, it would be an impossible equation."

This seems to indicate that the voluntary role of an elder naturally has an effect on how much time they can spend with their family, for instance. However, it also suggests that one cannot avoid this kind of conflict of interests, if one wants to do ministry as a voluntary elder.

The fifth main category is that the challenges related to the voluntary basis of the elder's role seem to culminate in the use of time. It is difficult for a voluntary elder to have enough time for all activities in which they either want to participate, or they are expected to participate. Lack of time is a challenge especially for the elders, who have a full-time work outside the church. In addition, the use of time seems to be a problem in particular for elders, who also have many other tasks in their church. Moreover, a long distance to the church may worsen the problem with the use of time.

R13 "The question is that how one has enough time [*for everything*] and how one prioritises matters."

The data also indicate that it is a challenge to combine a full-time secular job and the voluntary role of an elder. This may have two opposite effects. On the one hand, the full-time job might have an effect on the voluntary work, and on the other hand, the voluntary work as an elder might have an effect on the full-time job. However, it was suggested that it is possible for an elder to find balance between their secular job and church work. It was also suggested that the full-time work might provide experience and knowledge, enabling the elder to perform the role better.

R17 "The work done in addition to one's working life is very heavy. And it also affects one's full-time job. ... However, the full-time job provides experience that one can make use of in the church."

It was also pointed out that the elders' board should take into account that sometimes an elder has more time for the role and sometime less time. At times an elder might have more time for their voluntary role. It was also suggested that an elder might ask for leave from the role, if they are too busy to perform it.

R9 "If one has a busy time or something like that, one may say so and it is beneficial to say [*ask*] whether one could take time off from the elders' ministry while one works [*for instance*] on a project."

The sixth main category was that voluntary leadership might be a challenge. For instance, the structure of the organization is a possible challenge in a voluntary based organization. The way of organizing things has an effect on the kind of influence the elder's voluntary work creates. It was suggested that even the schedule of the elders' board meetings (how often and when) might have an effect on how easy it is for an elder to participate. It seems that leadership in general is a challenge in a voluntary based organization, such as the church. An interviewee commented that voluntary work is a challenge for a leader, because they cannot by virtue of their position order someone (a church member) to perform a task.

R4 "In that sense voluntary work is always challenging at least from the leadership perspective because one cannot, by virtue of one's position, order anyone to do anything."

It was also commented that leadership in a voluntary based organization (the elders' leadership) might also activate the church, because the elders simply do not have the time to do everything by themselves.

However, it was pointed out that the freedom inherent in volunteering should not lead to irresponsibility. This means that the elders' voluntary based role performance has a risk of degenerating into irresponsibility, in which, for instance, no one takes care of an important matter. This indicates that commitment and dedication to the tasks related to the role is an important issue for an elder when performing their role on a voluntary basis.

R1 "However, it is possible to misuse this freedom. ... It may lead to irresponsibility in which in reality no one takes the responsibility."

As the last main category for the voluntary leadership dimension, the data seemed to suggest the observation that it is important to take into account the possibility of chal-

allenges or even problems in the elder's voluntary based role performance. Some reasons were mentioned as challenges that have an impact on how the elders perform their role on a voluntary basis. For instance, due to the voluntary basis of their role, elders have to perform their tasks in much less time than it would take in a full-time job. This means that if an elder were a salaried full-time worker, it would be easier for them to find the time for their tasks and to concentrate on performing their role. This seems to be especially difficult for the elders when they try to find the time to support church members. An interviewee pointed out that it is easier to find the time for the customary worship services and other similar tasks, but more difficult to find the time for supporting the church members on a personal level.

R9 "An elder will probably not encounter this that much in worship services and elders' board meetings, or things like that. However, the challenge has to do with the expectations of how an elder keeps contact with the church members on a personal level."

The interviewees also mentioned the possibility that the elders may become exhausted while performing their role voluntarily. Indeed, they suggested that combining full-time work with voluntary elder's ministry was a real challenge and a major reason for an elder to become exhausted. It was also suggested that voluntary work might cause stress. They even thought that burnout was possible in voluntary elder's ministry.

R6 "An elder may sometimes become rather exhausted after all other tasks they have done [*in general in life*]. How could they then after that still have the strength to be in the church and to take care of the church members?"

It also seems to be important to teach the church about the challenges a voluntarily serving elder has in using their time. Furthermore, it is important for the church members to understand the elements related to the voluntary performed church ministry. It also seems to be important for an elder to be candid about the challenges they encounter in performing their role on a voluntary basis. It was even suggested that an elder should openly tell the church for instance of the reasons for the lack of time they usually have in performing their role. The elder's candidness may then help the church to understand the elders' problems with their use of time.

R16 "I have told our church members what I do and where I travel. I have also said that I am simply not able to attend [*church that often*]. That I have a family and children and things like that. I have felt that the church has been really merciful. And I believe that my openness has had a great significance for it."

It was also commented that spirituality in the form of the sense of having a good relationship with God helps an elder to serve in a voluntary role. This suggests that one's

relationship with God has an effect on how one is able to perform one's (voluntary based) ministry.

It may be concluded that the analysis of the voluntary leadership aspect of the elder's role seems to identify two major themes. On the one hand, voluntary leadership is beneficial and has positive consequences. A church needs voluntary based eldership in order to survive. In addition, motivation seems to be a central benefit of the voluntary based role. It appears that voluntarily serving elders are also able to identify well with people, because they live similar lives as the people.

On the other hand, voluntary leadership has several challenges (see chart 6.5.3 in the appendix 6). Priorities and the use of time may be difficult issues in the voluntary based role performance of an elder. Indeed, as the final main category for the voluntary leadership dimension, the data suggest that it is important to take into account the possibility of challenges or even problems in the voluntary based role performance of an elder. The interviewees also mentioned the possibility that the elders may become exhausted while performing their role voluntarily. In addition, it seems to be important that elders are candid about the challenges of performing their role on a voluntary basis and tell the church about this. It was also commented that a good relationship with God helps elders to carry out their voluntary ministry.

## **6.6 Conclusions of the analysis of the interviews**

What could in general be concluded from the main arguments found through the analysis of the interviews? The conclusion depends on the chosen approach. This has to do with the way of categorising the effect of the categories and the received concepts. The concepts received thus far have been derived through the themes of the theory base of the research. The final conclusions of the interviews were drawn by using the themes as the basis for the final categorising. The challenge then was that the theory base tended to control the received categories to a great extent.

At this stage, the essential part was to compare these two ways of categorising, and make conclusions about the main arguments that the interview indicated. This then

made it possible to identify the final concepts that were the results of the interviews with the church elders. It may be concluded that the categorising carried out according to the themes provided a good understanding of the structure of the role expectations faced by the church elders. It also established an equal basis for comparing the themes and concepts with the concepts found through the questionnaire given to the church members and pastors, due to a similar theoretical framework.

All the hypernyms that were found were also collected and categorised independently of the structure of the themes in the theory base. This made it possible to have a more independent category with which to reflect the original category. Then the two categories were compared to each other. In addition, the categories were also compared to the categories and concepts identified by the second categorisers (this is explained later).

#### **6.6.1 The categories in comparison to each other**

The categorising carried out through the research themes identified some main categories concerning the role process (interview questions 1 & 2). The main categories were 1) “central felt expectations”, and 2) “the feeling that the felt expectations (are) a challenge”, which then formed the concept of “expectations are faced”. However, this category did not find a counterpart in the categorising carried out independently of the research themes. The reason might be that when the categorising was done without the direction of the research themes, the idea of expectations was related to the other categories.

For the second theme (role conflict and role ambiguity, interview question 5) the categorising done through the themes of the research identified the following main categories: 1) “conflicts are likely”, 2) “differing opinions as a source of conflicts”, and 3) “voluntary leadership as a source of conflicts”, which then formed the concept of “conflicts are expected”. The categorising done independently of the research themes identified a similar concept, i.e., “conflicting expectations”. It was based on the main categories of “conflicts are expected” and “elders face conflicts when performing their role”. These two concepts reflected each other.

In addition, the categorising carried out through the research themes formed several main concepts for the third theme of the research framework (role expectations, inter-



view questions 3, 9, 10). These main categories were: 1) “general (role) requirements,” 2) “theological (role) requirements,” and 3) “leadership (role) requirements,” which then formed the concept of “general role expectations”. This concept did not have a clear counterpart in the categorising done independently of the research themes. However, the concept of “personality”, based on the main categories of “no ideal elder” and “character” seemed to have some similarities.

Furthermore, the categorising done through the research themes of the fourth main theme of the research framework (theology, interview question 8) formed some main categories. The categories identified the centrality of spirituality, character, biblical criteria, and the abilities of leading and teaching, and formed the concept of “theological expectations”. The categorising done independently of the research themes formed the related concept of “biblical criteria”, based on the main categories of the “need to fulfil biblical criteria,” the “centrality of the biblical requirements,” and the “centrality of spirituality”. These two concepts seemed to have similarities and they seemed to overlap. This suggested that the concepts supported each other, even though they had differences and they had been obtained through different means.

When categorising through the research themes, the theme of leadership (interview question 4) produced the main categories of 1) “church leadership has many aspects” and 2) “collective elders’ leadership”. This led to the concept of general leadership expectations. In addition, leadership training (question 6) produced the main categories of 1) “training of elders has a positive effect,” 2) “form of training matters,” and 3) “content of training matters”. This led to the concept of “leadership training expectations”. When the research themes did not determine the categorising, leadership did not obtain different concepts for leadership in general and for leadership training. The main categories of leadership were 1) “leadership is expected,” 2), “leadership as a challenge,” 3) “elders’ leadership,” 4) “training is needed,” and 5) “the form of training to meet needs”. This led to the concept of “leadership”. However, even though these different ways of categorising provided slightly dissimilar concepts, their main concepts nevertheless overlapped and thus supported each other.

In addition, the categorising done through the research themes of the voluntary aspect of leadership (question 7) produced the main categories of 1) “voluntary leadership is use-

ful” and 2) “voluntary leadership is a challenge,” leading to the concept of “voluntary leadership expectations”. In comparison, the categorising carried out independently of the research themes suggested the following main categories: 1) “the voluntary based elders’ role as a good basis for church ministry,” 2) “presence expected,” and 3) “prioritising one’s use of time is a challenge in a voluntary based role,” led to the concept of “voluntary basis for the role.” These concepts are otherwise similar, but the latter, which is independent of the research themes, also indicated the expectation of presence.

On the one hand the concepts produced through the research themes might be characterised as two major unifying concepts. The first unifying concept seemed to be that different kinds of expectations are likely for two reasons, i.e., because expectations are faced and because conflicts are expected. The other unifying concept appears to be that the expectations include general, theological and leadership aspects. On the other hand, when categorising independently of the themes of the theory, basic personality (who?) and leadership (how?) seemed to be the two central unifying concepts. It appears to be important that an elder has a suitable personality and that they also fulfil the biblical criteria for the role. It also seems to be essential that an elder should be a leader, who is able to manage potentially conflicting expectations. In addition, an elder should be able and willing to serve in their role on a voluntary basis.

(Chart 6.7.2) Comparison of the two ways of categorising

| Categorising through the research themes                         |                                   |                                 |           | Categorising independently of the research themes |                    |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|---|--------------------|
| Unifying Concept   | Concept                           | Q?                              |           | Concept   | Unifying concepts  |
| Different kind of expectations are likely                        | Expectations are faced            | 1                               |           | Biblical criteria                                 | Personality (who?) |
|  |                                   | 2                               |           | Personality                                       |                    |
| Expectations include general, theological and leadership aspects | Conflicts expected                | 5                               |           | Conflicting expectations                          | Leadership (how?)  |
|  | General role expectations         | (3, 9, 10)                      |           | Leadership  |                    |
|  | Theological expectations          | 8                               |           | Voluntary basis for the role                      |                    |
|  | <b>Concept (theme)</b>            | <b>Sub-Concept (theme)</b>      | <b>Q?</b> |   |                    |
|  | Leadership expectations           | General leadership expectations | 4         |   |                    |
|  | Leadership training expectations  | 6                               |           |   |                    |
|  | Voluntary leadership expectations | 7                               |           |   |                    |

In conclusion, the categories obtained through the themes did not seem to produce as clear unifying concepts as the categorising done independently of the themes did. It seemed that the categorising done independently of the themes was able to provide clearer final conclusions. However, the categorising done independently of the themes

was better able to identify the categories included in the specific themes. Nevertheless, it appears that the different methods of categorising did not provide so much difference in themes that they would have had a specific influence on the categorising.

### **6.6.2 Comparison of the categories with the second categorisers**

In order to check the validity of the interview, two second categorisers (SCs) were used to categorise the data. The themes of general expectations, general criteria, and leadership (general, training, and voluntary aspects) were chosen for the first SC. The themes of role conflict, theological criteria and general leadership expectations were chosen for the other SC. General leadership was a category shared by both categorisers in order to compare their ways of categorising.

The obtained categories were rather similar for the question: “1. What do you feel the church members expect of you as an elder?” The SC categorised “action” as the main category, including similar items as my category of “presence”. The “personality” category of the SC mostly corresponded to my category of “character”. The leadership categories were almost similar. The biblically related categories also reflect each other. It may be concluded that the expectations faced by the church elders categorised by the SC were in agreement with my research categories.

When it comes to the second theme on fulfilling expectations, the SC categories differed more from my categories. The idea is the same, but the approach differs. While the SC referred to “immanency,” “prowess,” and “interaction”, my own categories included the ideas that “fulfilling the expectations vary,” “it is possible to fulfil the expectations,” and “it is difficult to fulfil all expectations.” The dissimilarity is likely to be explained through the differing approach in categorising.

For questions on the criteria for the ideal elder and the election of an elder, the themes categorised by the SC reflect my categories very well, even though there are some differences. The “biblicality” category of the SC seems to correspond to my categories of “biblical criteria” and “spirituality”. In addition, both suggested the category of “character”, and the “involvement” of SC was very close my category of “presence”. Similarly, the SC’s “relations” resembled my category of “human relations skills”. Furthermore, the “church ministry capability” (SC) corresponded to my category of “leadership”, and

“challenge” (SC), corresponded to my category of “no ideal elder”. Even “growth” (SC) could be seen to have similarities with my category of “whole age range”.

The question on role conflict (role ambiguity) included several similar concepts. “Conflicts are part of church life” (SC) reflected my concept “conflicts are likely”, “doctrinal issues” (SC) reflected my category “doctrinal issues cause conflicts”, “church culture” (SC) resembled my category “differing opinions cause conflicts”, and “relationships” (SC) reflected my category “relationships cause conflicts”. In addition, to some extent SC’s “conflicts within the leadership team” resembled my category “personal leadership causes conflicts”. However, my concept “volunteering may cause conflicts” did not seem to have any obvious counterparts, even though SC’s “leadership skills” might be seen as being connected to it in some way.

The question on theology and the biblical criteria also had some overlap, even though the similarities were not very pronounced. Both “character” and “maturity” (SC) resembled my concept of “stable character”. “Spiritual calling as shepherds” (SC) reflected my concept “relationship with God”, and “ability to teach” (SC) reflected my concept “to be able to instruct others by teaching”. However, my categories of “biblical criteria important”, “the list of 1 Tim. 3:1-7 as criteria,” and “shepherding team leadership” did not have any clearly corresponding SC categories. My concept “the position of women raises discussion” may be viewed as being loosely connected to SC’s “different backgrounds”.

Church leadership did not include many shared elements. The strongest connection appeared to be between SC’s “collective leadership” and my category “collective leadership as a basis for leading the church”. SC’s “definition of leadership,” “perceptive leadership”, and “leadership structure” may have some connection with my category “church leadership as a multifaceted issue”, “elders (including the pastor) to lead the church,” and “the association board not the ultimate leader of the church,” even though the connection is not very pronounced.

However, the themes categorised by the SCs for question six on the training for elders resemble and reflect my categories very closely. In effect, “relevance” (SC) reflected my category of “it is useful to train elders”, “methods” (SC) reflected my category of

“the form of training is important”, “content of training” (SC) reflected my category of “the content of training elders should be well considered”, and “the nature of training” (SC) reflected to some extent my category of “all forms of training are useful for training elders”. In addition, “benefits” and “the need for comprehensive training” proposed by the SCs may in some respects be seen as resembling my category “the church should also be taught (about the elder’s role)”.

For question 7 on the advantages and disadvantages of the voluntary aspect of the elder’s leadership role the categorising of the SC is much more detailed but on the whole it seems to reflect the same elements as those included in my categories. “Structure” (SC) appears to refer to the same elements as my category “the church needs volunteering”. “Use of time and prioritising” and “demarcation between secular and spiritual work”(SC) suggested similar priority challenges as my categories “order of priority a challenge” and “use of time a challenge”. The same seemed to be true of SC’s “leadership” and my category “voluntary based leadership may be a challenge” as well as SC’s “risks” and my category “taking into account the possibility of challenges in the voluntary based role”. The mentioned benefits also suggested the same elements. Thus, “freedom” and “personal benefits” (SC) had similarities with my category “motivation a benefit” and “enables one to identify with people”.

It appears that the categories of the second categorisers resemble and reflect my categories rather well. Especially the questions on expectations, the criteria for elders, role conflict, and training contained elements that were rather similar in both categories. The categories for the advantages and disadvantages of the voluntary aspect were different, but contained the same elements. Fulfilling expectations, theology and the biblical criteria, and church leadership in particular had more differences between the categories of the second categoriser and my categories. However, even then similar elements were included. The differences may in particular reflect the differences between the categorisers. On the whole, the categories of the second categoriser seemed to support my categorising.

### **6.6.3 Conclusions on the interviews**

In conclusion, the interviews indicated that the church elders face different kinds of expectations. The elders seem to understand that facing the expectations may also bring

conflicts. In accordance with the research themes the expectations may include general, theological and leadership expectations. Leadership expectations may also include the dimensions of leadership training and voluntary leadership.

In addition, categorising independently of the research themes suggested two central issues for eldership. The first issue has to do with the personality of an elder. This includes the question of who is serving as an elder. In this both the biblical criteria and the elder's personality are essential factors. The second issue is related to the elder's leadership. This includes the question of how an elder performs their role. Central in this are the ways in which leadership is performed and how the voluntary nature of leadership is taken into account. It is also essential to be aware of conflicting expectations.

While the methods of categorising that were applied may have produced categories that differed from each other, the differences appear to be rather slight. In this sense it may be argued that these two methods of categorising (i.e., my own categories and the categories of the second categorisers) support the validity of the created categories rather well. This strengthens the validity of the themes and concepts received through the analysis.

How do the themes and concepts found through the interview relate to the themes found through the questionnaire given to the church members and pastors? Next, this important issue will be discussed. A related issue has to do with the conclusions that can be drawn from these themes.

## **7 Conclusions**

The overall aim of this research was to improve the understanding of how the elders view their own role in the light of the expectations they face in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. The following questions summarise the research objectives: 1) What kinds of role expectations do the elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement face? 2) What are the elders' expectations of their own role? 2.1) In relation to the challenges an elder meets. 2.2) In relation to the church members. 2.3) In relation to the other elders. 3) How do the elders view their own competence in measuring up to these expectations? 4) How do these expectations correlate with each other?

This section will summarize the findings, offer conclusions based on the findings, and finally revisit the research objectives mentioned above. It will include a comparison of the expectations sent by the church members and pastors with the expectations received by the church elders. In addition, it will include a discussion of recommendations for future research, as well as a suggestion of a few central conclusions.

### **7.1 The comparison of the studies**

The church (i.e., pastors, other voluntary workers and church members) sends role expectations to the church elders (as seen in chapter 5). The church elders receive these expectations and have a rather clear understanding of the role expectations (as seen in chapter 6). However, how do these expectations correlate? What could be viewed as the role expectations that the church elders face?

The expectations sent by the church and received by the church elders are compared in the first part of this concluding chapter. The purpose is to discuss the sent and the received expectations separately for the three central areas of the research, the theological dimension, the leadership dimension, and the role performance dimension. With each dimension first the sent and then the received expectations are discussed and summarised. After that the expectations are compared and summarised.

The idea of sent and received expectations follows the theoretical model created by Katz and Kahn (1978, 196) of the factors involved in taking organizational roles. The assumption was that a church “sends” role expectations to its elders. This was researched through a questionnaire. However, the sent expectations were not the main issue. A further aim was through an interview with the church elders to analyse what kind of expectations the church elders feel they face, what they think of their own role, and how the expectations they face affect their own behaviour. In comparing these expectations the intention was to take into account both the attributes and the interpersonal factors of the people involved in the process.

### **7.1.1 Theological expectations**

The role of a church elder in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement relies to a great extent on the understanding that in order to formulate doctrine one should interpret the Bible literally. The model that the Bible appears to present has been maintained as the correct application of the role (as discussed in chapter 3). In this sense the theological understanding and application of the elder’s role forms the basis for the research on the elder’s role expectations.

The theological expectations were not clearly seen in the factors that were found. However, some of the factors included theologically related matters. They were considered and discussed in order to understand the sent theological expectations. In addition, the theological expectations received by the church elders were then discussed and compared with the sent expectations.

#### **7.1.1.1 Spiritual leadership**

The factors related to the expectations for spiritual leadership were basically theological. The factors included, for instance, ideas concerning the expectations of being an example in the use of spiritual gifts. The expectation for spirituality was also seen in the factors concerning the need to fulfil biblical requirements. The expectations received by the church elders consisted of similar themes. The interviews with the elders also indicated the centrality of spirituality by emphasising the need to have a relationship with God.



The centrality of biblical requirements was seen in both major parts of the study. In the questionnaire the factor of spiritual leadership included statements that seemed to indicate biblical requirements. These requirements included, for instance, the expectations to be a skilled teacher and to raise children in an exemplary manner. Both of these expectations are included in the list of qualifications presented in 1 Tim. 3:1-7. The elders also referred to the centrality of biblical criteria. The passage they most frequently referred to was the one dealing with the qualifications list, i.e., 1 Tim. 3:1-7. As a related issue, the interview data suggested that the position of women would raise discussion in the future in connection with eldership.

In the questionnaire the factor of spiritual leadership also included the expectations for being present in the church. This was indicated by statements on the need to visit church members and to carry out ministry tasks in worship services. It was also seen in questions related to leadership. In addition, the related factors included expectations for accountability (clearly defined areas of ministry responsibility and continual growth in taking care of ministry responsibilities). The leadership expectations felt by the church elders also included (as sub-categories) the expectation for elders to take responsibility. This was confirmed by the elders' felt expectation that they are supposed to have a stable character.

The elders were also sent expectations for a clearly defined vision of the ministry of their church. In the interviews the elders also referred to the expectations to have a clear vision. However, the elders likewise emphasised the expectation for shepherding team leadership. In addition, they referred to the expectation to instruct others by teaching.

The received theological requirements seemed to focus on two main types of felt expectations, on the expectations for spirituality and on the expectations for fulfilling the biblical criteria. How did the explanatory factors explain these theological expectations? First of all, the sex of the respondents did not have any p-values under 0.05. This meant that the sex of the respondents did not explain the differences between the respondents. However, the expectations for spiritual leadership were explained by age. The older respondents (45 years or older) had stronger expectations than the younger respondents.

It also seems likely that the respondent's position in their church explained their spiritual leadership expectations. The pastors' expectations of the elder's role appeared to be stronger than the expectations of the other respondents. However, when it comes to spiritual expectations, the differences among the respondents who were not pastors were not very significant. It seems that in this respect the role of the pastor of a church was especially central. The Plural-Elder Congregational Approach to church order places the pastor on the same level with the church elders. However, the pastor is in a different position than the elders, due to receiving salary from the church.

In addition, regional differences also seemed to explain the spiritual leadership expectations. Respondents in Central and Northern Finland had slightly stronger expectations for spiritual leadership than those in Southern Finland. Similarly, respondents in Central and Northern Finland and the province of Eastern Finland had slightly stronger expectations than those in the provinces of Oulu (Northern Finland) or Lapland (Upper Northern Finland).

It may be concluded that the church elders are expected to use spiritual gifts. The elders themselves also see the need for spirituality in general. In addition, it appears that the church elders are expected to fulfil biblical requirements, especially the requirements mentioned in the list of the qualifications for elders in 1 Tim. 3:1-7. The elders also saw the need to fulfil these biblical requirements. Furthermore, the church elders were expected to be present, i.e., to attend church events and to carry out ministry duties (for instance ministry tasks in worship services). For their part, the elders also had a strong need to be present and to show consideration for others. In this respect the elders also felt that they were expected to have a stable character.

The need for vision may also be seen as a strong theologically oriented expectation for elders. The elders were also expected to have the ability to shepherd and teach the church. The elders likewise felt the need for leadership and teaching. However, they understood that in their case, teaching had more to do with instructing others than with teaching the congregation from the pulpit.

### **7.1.1.2 Conservative performance**

The factor pertaining to the expectations for the elders' conservative performance was also related to theological expectations. The factor included elements that are associated with a rather conservative interpretation (as pointed out in chapter three) of, for instance, 1 Tim. 3:1-7 (to be male, be married, raise children in an exemplary manner, be a good teacher, not to be remarried). These expectations seemed to correlate in particular with the felt biblical expectations. This means that especially the elements connected to the list of qualities for an elder in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 seem to be the expectations that are both sent by church members and felt by church elders. This is seen in the expectation for an elder to be male and to be married. The other elements related to the list in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 that confirm these expectations was the felt expectation for an elder to teach (at least in the form of instructing others) and the prediction that the position of women in connection to eldership will raise discussion.

The factor also included the following ideas: elders should focus on the spiritual leadership of the church, older elders are more capable than younger elders, and only the elders should consecrate the Lord's Supper. The expectation for the elders' role to be characteristically a spiritual leadership role may also be seen in their felt expectation to guide others as shepherds. However, the expectation that older elders are more capable as elders was statistically weaker than the other expectations included in the factor. This means that while it seems to reflect the sent expectations, statistically it is not very significant.

The idea that only the elders should consecrate the Lord's Supper has been a rather typical application at least in rural areas. However, the purpose of the tradition has not been very obvious. It is possible that both the elders and the other church members associate the custom with the elders' shepherding role. Thus, the tradition could be related to the church elders' felt biblical expectations. The elders did not include this tradition in the descriptions of their felt expectations.

The expectations of the elders' conservative performance were explained by the age of the respondents. The older respondents (45 years or older) had stronger expectations than the younger respondents (18 – 44 years). The same was true of the length of membership. The older members (15 years or over) appeared to have stronger expectations

than the younger members (under 15 years). In addition, the ordinary church members and ministry team members had slightly stronger expectations of conservative performance than the pastors and the voluntary leaders of ministry teams. It seems likely that the members in leadership positions in a church did not have as strong conservative expectations.

The data also seemed to suggest that respondents in small towns had stronger conservative expectations than those in big towns. In addition, Central and Northern Finland had stronger conservative expectations than Southern Finland. Respondents in Central and Northern Finland and the province of Oulu (Northern Finland) had the strongest expectations and those in the province of Eastern Finland the second strongest expectations.

In conclusion, the data seemed to indicate expectations for a rather conservative interpretation (see chapter three) of the qualities mentioned for instance in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 (to be male, be married, raise children in an exemplary manner, be a good teacher, not to be remarried). The elders felt similar biblical expectations, which also focused especially on the elements connected to the list of qualities mentioned in 1 Tim. 3:1-7. It seems that the expectations emphasised the elders' strong conservative leadership. This also included the idea that elders should be strong shepherds of their church.

### **7.1.1.3 Other theologically related expectations**

In addition, the factor that indicated the expectation of elders to be active in their role also included some elements related to theological expectations. Elders were for instance expected to have an active personal prayer life. They were also expected to be mature Christians and to serve as examples in the use of spiritual gifts. In particular, when it comes to one's relationship with God these expectations seemed to be in agreement with the felt expectations of the centrality of spirituality. In addition, the expectation of maturity seemed to be compatible with the felt expectations of a prospective elder having a stable character.

Furthermore, the Part 3 factor (on a different scale) indicating the need of church elders to develop their role as elders included a variable that was associated with theological expectations. Most of the respondents chose statement A, which stated that the church should make use the elders' professional background, although they serve as spiritual

leaders.<sup>262</sup> This seemed to suggest that most of the respondents expected the elders' professional background to be useful in their ministry, even though their role is basically spiritual. As such, the idea of utilizing the elders' professional background was not supported by the felt theological expectations. Indeed, the variable suggested that although the elders have a spiritual role, their professional background was important. It is likely that the respondents' emphasis on the professional expectation of the elder's role in a way defines the form of the theological expectations. This would suggest that while spirituality is felt to be important, the mature use of the role could be even more important.

When it comes to the question of the need for church elders to develop their role as elders, the strongest expectation came from respondents who were either 45 – 64 years or 30 – 44 years old. Thus, both the oldest respondents (65 years or older) and especially the youngest respondents (18 – 29 years) did not have very strong expectations for the church elders to develop their role. However, when it has to do with the length of membership, the older members (15 years or more) had clearly stronger expectations for elders to develop their role than the younger respondents (under 5 years) had. However, the second oldest members (15 – 35 years) had slightly stronger expectations than the oldest members (35 years or over).

Furthermore, in general the pastors had stronger expectations for elders to develop their role than the other respondents. Of the other respondents, the ministry team leaders had the strongest expectations for elders to develop their role. However, the ordinary church members indicated slightly stronger expectations than the ministry team members. Furthermore, respondents in the other parts of Finland had slightly stronger expectations for elders to develop their role than the church members in the Greater Helsinki area.

It may be concluded that the need of church elders to develop their role as an elder were related to theological expectations. Most respondents' answers reflected the expectation that although the elders serve as spiritual leaders, the church should make use of their professional background. This seemed to suggest that most of the respondents assumed that the elders' professional background is useful in their role, even though the role is spiritual in nature.

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<sup>262</sup> The contra statement (SB) was: "The professional background of an elder does not make any difference, because it has to do with a spiritual ministry."

#### 7.1.1.4 Relation to the theoretical context

The comparison between episcopal, Presbyterian, and congregational (both single and plural) helped to reflect the Finnish Pentecostal application of elders. The research results seemed to reflect the congregational understanding of church leadership. This is seen especially in the interview of elders. They pointed either that they as a group of elders or them as a team together with a pastor should lead a church. The comments seemed not to give room for Episcopalian or Presbyterian church-order.

Both the sent and the received expectations seemed to comply with Finnish Pentecostal thinking. For instance, the research results seemed to be in agreement with my earlier research. The results of the current research confirmed the clarification model I proposed in my previous research (Aro-Panula 1998, 81) as a good application of leadership in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. This has to do with the idea that the current application of the elders' leadership could work, if it is clarified and adjusted to the current context and culture.<sup>263</sup>

The second conclusion seems to be that the results are in agreement with Klapuri's (1998, 27 – 28, 30) ideas on spiritual gifts. He thinks that when choosing elders to a church, it is necessary to look for spiritual gifts. However, he suggests that the most important thing is the way in which the gift of prophecy is used. He mentions the word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, governing and leading as examples of the gifts an elder should have.

Furthermore, Klapuri (1998, 18 – 19) thinks that the task of the overseeing church elder has similarities with the task of the spiritual gift of the shepherd-teacher. Indeed, Klapuri (1998, 24 – 25) agrees with the respondents, pointing out that the ability to teach refers first of all to the idea that the elders should be able to teach both believers and unbelievers especially by their own life and example and in private discussions. For him this also means that it is not necessary for all elders to teach publicly.

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<sup>263</sup> It may be concluded that the current research results compare and contrast the findings of my previous research. This means that a comparison with the earlier research points out that the suggestions of the earlier research are to a certain extent still valid. (See the discussion in chapter 3.)

In addition, the data suggested an expectation for the elders' collective leadership. However, as already discussed in chapter three, Fee (1985, 149-150) challenges the (typical Pentecostal) thinking that 1 Tim. refers to the plurality of elders as a paradigm that should be understood as a normative commandment. He asserts that this paradigm does not automatically take away the risk that an individual could become a dictator or an authoritarian leader. Thus, the paradigm of collective leadership as such does not make leaders more willing to serve their church. However, as Glasscock (1987, 75) asserts, it is important to take into account that the biblical teaching seems to refer to elders in the plural when they are mentioned in connection to the church.

All these matters emphasise the issue of how the biblical text is interpreted, and how it should be interpreted. Indeed, in discussing the application of the elders' qualifications, Fee (1985, 150) points out that it is necessary to decide hermeneutically whether the text written to address an original situation and to correct the historical situation should also be applied to the current context. Would it for instance be important to teach the church to interpret the passages related to church leadership consistently?

The research data seem to suggest a similar emphasis on the importance of the biblical text as Hämäläinen (2005, 371 – 372) found when researching the understanding of national leaders and Finnish missionaries of the role of elders. He found that the typical Pentecostal understanding relies on the principle of 'Sola Scriptura'. However, the challenge is how the Bible is interpreted. Who determines what the right kind of biblical application should be?

What could explain this challenge in interpretation? Kärkkäinen (2002, 70, 73 - 74) points out that the failure to interpret the elder's role consistently in a biblical way may be related to the tendency that in general Pentecostals have not produced new theology, but have instead focused more on strong spirituality and aggressive evangelism. The Finnish application also seems to share an element with typical Pentecostal ecclesiology in that it has included a great deal of improvisation in ecclesiological applications both due to a strong emphasis on the invisible spiritual nature of the church, and on a restorative desire to return to the apostolic times.

These elements discussed above suggest that the interpretation of the biblical texts dealing with the ministry of an elder is an important factor. This means that in particular the way the historical situations mentioned in the Bible are interpreted mainly determines how the situations are applied in practice (or if they are interpreted at all). The main question before application is what the text really says. In this case: how is eldership seen in its biblical context? The other issue has to do with the application of the text.

It is also likely that the interpretation applied in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement as well as the applications of church leadership in general in Finland have an effect on the expectations the church members focus on the elders. Huhtinen (2002, 80) thinks that the priest's special role causes expectations for their parishioners, based on their basic assumptions of the priest's role. While the Finnish Pentecostal church elders do not serve as full-time clergy, the same principle also seems to apply to them. The role is likely to have certain expectations, which then define the role.

The research results correlate with the definition of the elder's role I came up with in my previous research. This suggests that an elder is a person, who fulfils the biblical character requirements and does their best to model Christ for the people entrusted to them. Their main task is spiritual leadership, including both teaching the people and providing administrative guidance. (See Aro-Panula 1998, 82.) A difference in the research is that the current research also collected data from the church members and elders, and not only from pastors.<sup>264</sup>

Kay (2000, 121) surveyed how the British Pentecostal pastors' perceptions of role conflict related to their personality. His research indicated that the pastors had a high regard for spiritual tasks (for instance preaching, being a man or woman of prayer, pastoring, teaching, and being a fellowship builder). However, most pastors gave less priority to non-spiritual roles (serving as a manager, administrator, social worker, and fund raiser). The pastors felt that their church members expected them to fulfil the roles of visitor, counsellor, and administrator. (Kay 2000, 121.) This tendency is also seen in the current research, in which the church members also expected the elders to visit them and serve

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<sup>264</sup> The research also has much in common with the research setting of PhD. (cand.) Samuel Ruohomäki (as described in chapter 1). However, Ruohomäki's research has not yet been completed. Thus, it was not possible to compare the results of the studies.



as administrators. Although Kay researched salaried pastors, similar expectations seem to apply to voluntary church elders.

In addition, Kay's (2000, 123) research indicates that older pastors are better able to withstand role conflict and role ambiguity. This suggests that the experience acquired in ministry helps church workers to face the conflicting demands of pastoral ministry. The older pastors seem to prioritize the expectations they face in accordance with their theology and values. Whereas the younger pastors might easily fall into the trap of merely trying to fulfil the (even conflicting) expectations of the church, an older and more experienced pastor is able to direct church life. This is in agreement with the current research, suggesting that the older elders may face fewer discrepancies in role expectations than the younger elders.

Kay's (2000, 123) research also indicates that the existence of conflict in role prioritisation relates to the personality dimension. In particular the respondents with a high neurotic profile were more likely to experience role conflict. In addition, neurotic pastors were susceptible to social pressure from many sources. When it comes to the current research, this suggests that the church elder's personality may have an effect on their approach to the role conflicts they encounter.

The following issues may be identified as the conclusions on the church elders' leadership role. First, the roles of elders and pastors are in need of a thorough theological examination. Second, the roles also need a clearer practical application to the Finnish context. Third, the central challenge associated with the elder's role seems to be its relationship to the role of a salaried pastor. Fourth, the elder's spiritual shepherding role should be examined in depth. This includes an emphasis on the spiritual gifts the elders use as well as on the elder's personal call.

### **7.1.2 Leadership expectations**

The question of leadership is an important issue related to the role expectations the church elders face. On the one hand this means that the question of leadership becomes a central issue in the research, as it stems from the very nature of the idea of elders. This means that the idea of elders includes the idea of leadership, because the elders serve as leaders in their church. Accordingly, the elders' leadership was examined in both major

parts of the research. On the other hand, leadership appeared to be a central explanatory factor in the questionnaire, and it also seemed to become an important explanatory factor for the research as a whole.

First, the sent leadership expectations are discussed in overview. Then the leadership training expectations and the voluntary leadership dimension are analysed separately. The sent leadership expectations seem to indicate that the leadership expectations were strong. This was seen in particular in the way both the sent expectations and the received expectations focus on leadership.

#### **7.1.2.1 General leadership skills expectations**

The factor related to leadership skills indicated general leadership skills expectations. These expectations were related to a good knowledge of human nature, the need to be equal to the occasion in performing tasks, and the benefits of applying generally accepted leadership principles. However, the interview did not seem to identify exactly the same elements. In general, it suggested that church leadership is a rather multifaceted issue. However, the elders' collective leadership appeared to be its core element. Indeed, collective leadership was suggested as the basis for leading the church. This seemed to mean that in practice the elders, including the pastor, should lead the church. It was also suggested that the association board should not have the ultimate leadership of the church.

The expectations for leadership skills also included the idea that the elders' personality traits (personality features) would determine their success in performing their duties. The expectations for financial and administrative skills were also included in the factor. In general, the interview indicated similar elements related to leadership skills, but not in exactly the same way. It referred to the expectations for leadership, the need to attend church events, and the need for human relations skills. It also referred to personality by pointing out that the elder's character is important, and that the church should consider choosing elders who are of different ages (i.e. apply the entire age range). However, the interview results also suggested that an ideal elder does not exist.

Older respondents (45 years or older) had stronger expectations for leadership skills than the younger respondents (18 – 44 years). The length of membership followed the

same trend. Older members (15 years or more) had stronger expectations for leadership skills than the younger members (under 15 years). Furthermore, the other parts of Finland had stronger expectations for leadership skills than the Greater Helsinki area. This would suggest that the respondents' age and length of membership have an effect on the leadership expectations they have for church elders.

It may be concluded that the leadership expectations seemed to be rather strong. This was seen especially in how both the sent expectations and the received expectations focus on leadership. The sent leadership expectations pointed out the expectation for leadership skills. Even though the interview suggested that church leadership is a rather multifaceted issue, collective leadership was felt to be the basis for leading the church. The sent expectations also emphasised the importance of the elders' personality traits (personality features) for their success as elders. This was confirmed by the elders' emphasis on character. The elders were also expected to have financial and administrative skills. The leadership expectations also included expectations for attending church events, and for human relations skills. While the elders did not explicitly emphasise these elements, the elements may be seen to be included in how the elders themselves emphasised the need for them as biblical elders to lead a church.

#### **7.1.2.2 The need for financial and administrative skills**

The variables indicating the need for financial and administrative skills also formed a distinct factor. This suggested that the expectations for church elders to have good abilities in financial and administrative leadership were rather strong. However, the church elders' felt expectations did not relate significantly to administrative expectations or to the need to have a job description. First of all, the theme interview questions did not include this kind of questions. In addition, it is possible that the administrative elements were not mentioned, because they are often inevitably assumed to be a part of an elder's leadership role.

The administrative expectations were mainly explained by age and length of membership. The older respondents (45 years or older) had stronger expectations for administrative skills than the younger respondents (44 – 29 years). Of the older respondents, the oldest respondents (65 years or older) had stronger expectations than the second oldest group (45 – 64 years). The length of membership followed the same trend. Older mem-

bers (15 years or more) had stronger expectations for administrative skills than the younger members (under 15 years).

However, the pastors did not have the strongest expectations for administrative skills. Ordinary church members had the strongest and ministry team members the second strongest expectations. Ministry team leaders (voluntary workers) and pastors had almost equal expectations for administrative skills. Members with leadership roles had weaker expectations for the elders' administrative skills than members who did not serve in leadership positions in the church.

When it comes to the size of the church, the expectations for administrative skills did not follow a clear tendency. This means that for instance the smallest churches (under 100 members) had the strongest expectations, but the second smallest churches (100 – 249 members) had the weakest expectations for administrative skills. In addition, the second largest churches (250 – 699 members) had slightly stronger expectations than the largest churches (700 members or more). However, it is interesting that the smallest churches had the strongest expectations for administrative skills. This could suggest that some improvement was expected in small churches, due to a possible lack of clear administration. This would mean that small churches do not expect strong administration, but merely expect improvement for weak administration.

It may be concluded that the expectations for church elders to have good abilities in financial and administrative leadership were rather strong. The church elders' felt expectations did not relate significantly to administrative expectations or to the need to have a job description.

### **7.1.2.3 The need for a job description**

The factor including the job description also seemed to be connected to the expectation for leadership. This was suggested by the expectations for a generally accepted job description, for an explicit job description, and for the definition of the church's vision. However, the church elder's felt expectation of the challenges connected to the voluntary aspect of the elders' leadership may in particular explain the need for a job description as well as the need for leadership and administrative skills. Seeing the voluntary leadership as a challenge seems to suggest this. For instance, the priorities involved in

the voluntarily performed role were seen to cause problems. The use of time was also felt as a challenge. While the interviewed elders did not mention the job description as a concept, they mentioned related issues suggesting the difficulties involved in performing all expected tasks. This could also suggest that the elders do not think that all elders could fulfil all the expectations sent to them.

However, the interview data pointed out that the voluntary basis of the elders' leadership was also seen to be useful. This was seen in the idea that a church needs volunteering and voluntary leadership in order to manage financially. Volunteering was also seen as a source of motivation for church members involved in the ministry. In addition, volunteering was seen as a way of identifying with the church members, who were also involved in church ministry on a voluntary basis.

The expectation for a generally accepted job description was also explained by age. Older respondents (45 years or older) had clearly stronger expectations for the elders' job descriptions than younger respondents (18 – 44 years). In addition, respondents in small towns had slightly stronger expectations for the elders' job descriptions than those in big towns. It is possible that in bigger churches in big towns the job descriptions are already clearer. Furthermore, Central and Northern Finland had stronger expectations for the elders' job descriptions than Southern Finland. In effect, respondents in Central and Northern Finland and the province of Eastern Finland had the strongest expectations.

In conclusion, it appears that the respondents expected a more explicit job description for elders. However, the church elders' felt expectation of the challenges related to the voluntary aspect of the elders' leadership may in particular explain the need for the job description as well as the need for leadership and administrative skills. In addition, the voluntary basis of the elders' leadership was also seen to be useful due to its financial and motivational benefits.

#### **7.1.2.4 Church elders to develop their role**

The part 3 variable on the expectation for church elders to develop their role as elders was also related to the idea of leadership. For instance, it included the need for clear areas of ministry responsibility. The elders did not refer this to, although it could be

seen in their views of the impossibility of fulfilling all expectations. In addition, they alluded to the expectation of training. The elders also thought that the training of elders was useful. However, they suggested some conditions for it.

While the respondents thought that all forms of teaching are useful for training elders, they nevertheless pointed out that the form and content of the training should be well considered. They also suggested that the church should be taught about the elder's role.

It appears that the challenge of the leadership training for the church elders has to do with designing the training so that it would enable the elders to co-operate more with the pastors and to support them, but it would not hinder the elders from participating in church ministry. This means that at least the short-term effect for the church may be negative if the training takes too much of the elders' time.

Age seemed to explain the question about the need for church elders to develop their role as elders. The strongest expectations came from members who were either 45 – 64 years or 30 – 44 years old. This means that both the oldest respondents (65 years or older) and especially the youngest respondents (18 – 29 years) had weaker expectations for the church elders to develop their role. However, when it comes to the length of membership, the older members (15 years or more) had clearly stronger expectations for elders to develop their role than the younger respondents (under 5 years). However, the second oldest members (15 – 35 years) had slightly stronger expectations than the oldest members (35 years or more).

In general, pastors had stronger expectations for elders to develop their role than the other respondents. Of the other respondents, ministry team leaders had the strongest expectations for elders to develop their role. In addition, the other parts of Finland had slightly stronger expectations for elders to develop their role than the Greater Helsinki area.

When comparing the categories found through the leadership training expectation theme with the categories identified through the voluntary leadership theme, it may be concluded that both themes are viewed in a positive manner. However, both themes also include some conditions. On the one hand, the form and the content of leadership train-

ing are described as factors that matter. On the other hand, the voluntary basis of elder-ship is seen as a challenge. These factors identify two general questions: 1) How could leadership training be organized so that it would strengthen the positive elements of voluntary leadership and help to avoid the challenges of voluntary leadership? 2) How could voluntary leadership be organized so that it would make leadership training both a positive and a useful matter?

In conclusion, the research seems to identify the possibilities and challenges involved in organizing training for voluntary leaders (church elders) in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. The research results are first of all applicable to the training organized in the Finnish Pentecostal context. However, the research results also provide ideas and suggestions that could be applied in organizing training for voluntary leaders and for individuals in a position of trust in other adult education settings.

#### **7.1.2.5 Theological reflection**

How do these results correlate with my previous research and discussion on the leadership role? In the previous research most of the respondents saw some need for change. However, the changes suggested in the research were rather small. The main idea was the need to clarify the elders' leadership role. In addition, the results emphasised the need for elders to focus more clearly on the central biblical elements of shepherding and spiritual leadership (Aro-Panula 1998, 11 – 12.) This correlates with the results of the current research.

The earlier research also suggested that elders should be allowed to take a leave (for instance a gap year) in order to hinder them from becoming exhausted in their ministry. (Aro-Panula 1998, 11 – 12.) Some interviewees also suggested a similar idea in the current research. Taking a leave could help elders when they face too many issues in their life at the same time.

Hämäläinen (2005, 232 – 233) found similar results in his research on the understanding of missionaries and local pastors of issues related to church leadership. His research pointed out that it was typical for churches established by Finnish and Scandinavian missionaries that the pastors (as well as missionaries) of the churches strongly agreed with idea that pastors and elders should lead the church together. However, it was inter-

esting that while both the missionaries and the pastors proposed that the pastors + elders model was the right model, the pastors mostly practiced the congregational model. This means that the pastors practiced the congregational model, although they did not see it as the biblical method of church governance.

Hämäläinen (2005, 371) also found that the partnering national pastors' views differed from the Nordic Pentecostal missionaries' views of the elders' prominent role in church leadership. This should cause one to pay careful attention to the cultural dimension in the way the church leadership is organised. Indeed, the research indicated that the Nordic Pentecostals missionaries have imported the concepts and practices of their homeland to the mission fields without too much effort on contextualization. This tendency is also seen in the current research in the issue of the influence of Nordic and Finnish culture.

Indeed, the research has similarities with the current research by indicating that the Finnish tradition of church leadership emphasises the elder's role. This was especially seen in the influence of Finnish tradition on the mission field. However, the research does not provide enough information for drawing explicit conclusions of what the Pentecostal churches expect from their elders.

In addition, a potential challenge to the leadership structure in the Finnish context has to do with the tendency that Pentecostals have often felt that the Lutheran-Episcopal church order is a hierarchical, unbiblical and institutional model of church governance. This might be one of the reasons why for instance the interview data suggest that the relationship of elders and pastors should be equal and not hierarchical (see the discussion in ch. 3). In addition, the challenge is that although the Finnish Pentecostal model has traditionally tended to be contradictory to the Finnish Lutheran model (i.e., not expecting a prominent pastor/priest), the church members' expectations might nevertheless stem from Lutheran expectations (expecting the pastor to be the leader and being in charge of the church). (See Huhtinen 2002, 81.)

To some extent, the model presented by the interviewed elders also seemed to reflect the idea of the elders' central leadership in the Presbyterian model of church leadership. This means that although the Pentecostal churches have emphasised the congregational



nature of the church, the congregation has not been able to exercise leadership in the church. It is the elders who have primarily had the leadership in the church.

Furthermore, when it comes to understanding the difference between ruling elders and teaching elders, it appears that the Pentecostal model also seems to reflect the Presbyterian model to some degree. In effect, the pastor, who used to be called a preacher, has often been given a role that has mostly reflected the idea of the teaching elder (discussed below). Partly due to this tendency the elders have rather often been reluctant to give the preacher/pastor the ruling role (see the discussion in ch. 3).

The research results indicated the need to define the leadership relationship between the pastor and the elders in the church in more detail. This suggests that the Finnish Pentecostal Movement needs to define whether the Bible refers to two church ministries (elders and deacons), or to the three different ministries (ruling elders, teaching elders, deacons). The former view would mean that all elders share the same ministry. However, often, for instance in the Assemblies of God-USA, elders would be understood to refer to pastors. In the Finnish Pentecostal context this view is difficult, because traditionally leadership was primarily assigned to elders and teaching to pastors. This is a question of interpretation that should be taken into account (see the discussion in ch. 3).

In practice this means that the Finnish Pentecostal model differs in its understanding of eldership and deaconship for instance from the model the Assemblies of God-USA applies. In AoG-USA pastors are called elders, and pastors have a board of deacons to assist them, but in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement elders are viewed as being equal to pastors, or even being above them. Deacons are seen as a group lower in hierarchy, primarily ministering to the elderly and the sick.

This means that the Finnish Pentecostal Movement reflects the congregational model especially through the idea of the autonomy of the local church, in which no one is officially above the congregation. However, the interview data suggest that the model does not follow Single-Elder Congregationalism (the leadership of a pastor or of a leading elder).

The data seemed to reflect the Plural-Elder Congregational Model, in which the elders as a collective group of leaders together lead the church. In keeping with Plural-Elder Congregationalism, the Finnish Pentecostal Movement has had difficulties in accepting the idea of the senior or lead pastor in the church. Finnish Pentecostalism has favoured the biblical interpretation that the elders should lead the church collectively. However, the elders' strong leadership means that in contrast to Plural-Elder Congregationalism the churches are not fully congregational. This is because the elders lead the church, so the church leadership is not fully democratic.

In this respect the role of the pastor of the church (who according to the questionnaire clearly expected the elders to take part in leadership training and carry out voluntary tasks) is especially central. The Plural-Elder Congregational approach to church order places the pastor on the same level with the church elders. However, the pastors are in a different position from the elders, because they receive salary. The challenge in the leadership training of the church elders is to organize the training so that it would enable the elders to co-operate with the pastor and support them, but would not take too much time from their ministry, allowing them to carry out their tasks in church leadership.

The interview data emphasised strongly that the church's association board should not have the ultimate leadership in the church. This reflects the discussion of Salo (1998, 41 – 43), described in chapter 3. The association board members may feel that as they have legal capacity (according to Finnish Association Law<sup>265</sup>) they should also be entitled to make decisions on the matters that the elders' board has already decided on or should get some of the decision-making power of the elders' board. However, the interview data support the idea that most churches have solved this tension by emphasising the elders' biblical authority as well as by emphasising the supportive role of the association board in legal matters. This idea is also in agreement with the research of Frestadius (2006, 101) (see the discussion in chapter 3). However, according to Frestadius, the challenge is that while the emphasis on the elders' leadership makes the leadership structure clearer and more efficient, it also too easily restricts leadership to a few individuals.

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<sup>265</sup> See [www.finlex.fi](http://www.finlex.fi) for more information.

The elements that Monahan (1999, 93) found in her research could also be pertinent to the elders' leadership. She concluded that specialized training, longer job tenure, a formalised job description and a lighter task load reduced role ambiguity among the clergy. The variables found through the questionnaire research (except for the job tenure) indicate that the clergy or others could limit their responsibilities. Monahan suggested that the clergy, congregations and denominations could consider applying these limits to the work of the clergy when designing it. These limits might also be applied to the role of an elder.

In addition, when it comes to explicit areas of ministry responsibility, it would be important for elders to observe democracy in decision making in the church and limit their role so that they would not cause stressful situations, when others, for instance their followers, take part in the decision making. Ingram's (1981, 128) research indicated that usually the leaders are reluctant to limit their own role. A potential weakness is that while the church might officially be democratic, in practice it is not, because the elders still control the decision-making.

Furthermore, some general conclusions that could be drawn of the training of voluntary leaders could be applied to the training offered by other adult education colleges. First, it would be important to take into account the possible tension between salaried workers and voluntary workers in an organization. Second, the long-term members of an organization tend to have the clearest understanding of the needs and elements that are central in training voluntary leaders. This also suggests that it would be wise to take into account the needs of the target group, when planning the content of the training for the voluntary leaders in an organization. In addition, it seems essential to try to organize the leadership training so that it would strengthen the positive elements of voluntary leadership and help to avoid the challenges the voluntary leadership cause. Finally, it seems wise to take into account the needs of the group for which the training is intended.

The research results seemed to emphasise the trait approach to leadership. This is due to the importance given to the elder's biblical qualifications. From a leadership perspective, the qualification list in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 seems to provide a list of leadership traits prospective elders need in order to become ideal elders. However, Sydänmaanlakka (2003, 45) asserts that at least to some extent most of the traits in trait leadership are not per-

manent. This could mean in the eldership context that it could be possible to train new elders to adopt the traits they need in church leadership. This suggests that it could be good in the future for the church to put more emphasis on the possibility that elders could develop themselves, instead of looking for elders, who are already ready for their task. However, when it comes to the biblical text, the challenge is that some of the qualities or “traits” mentioned for instance in 1 Tim. 3 are interpreted to be physical (husband of one wife). This emphasises the need to examine the interpretation of the biblical text.

The voluntary leadership expectations seen as the research results emphasised the benefit of voluntary leadership and the possibility of challenges included in this form of leadership. As Yeung (2005, 117) suggests, spirituality was felt to be important in volunteering. The results also indicated that the voluntary basis of the elder’s role is likely to be a source of motivation. It is expected that the motivation and desire to find the time for performing the task mainly determine how the task is performed. The challenge is that elders are not entirely accountable to anyone, because they do not get any salary. This means that while the voluntary basis is likely to motivate the elders it also makes the performance of their role unstable, because the elders may freely either perform the role well or do as little as possible. (See Klami 2001, 62.)

In conclusion, the different approaches to leadership enabled to evaluate the way how the Finnish Pentecostal movement relates to the leadership and how individual elders relate to leading. In addition, the leadership expectations seen in the research results seemed to point out that the traditional expectation for the traits of a leader was rather strong, even though both the skills and the situational approaches to leadership seem also to be addressed.

The power question did not seem to be that strongly emphasized in the expectations. However the question in interview for elders about who should lead a church is in connection with power. The elders did not seem to think that the leadership of a church is a power question. Still, they seemed to think that they themselves or they together with a pastor should lead a church. The reason appeared to be the need to have stability in the church.

The voluntary aspect pointed out that the elders often have a difficulty to find time for the ministry. Especially the prioritizing between different issues of life seemed to be a challenge. This suggests that something should be done in this respect. The ministry of elders should be arranged so that they would have a possibility to organize their life to fit the needs of their fulltime work, family and the church as well. However, elders seemed to be motivated to do voluntarily (without salary) their ministry, if they feel satisfaction from it. It would be important to enable elders to organize their involvement into to the ministry in the way that it would strengthen their motivation to the role.

The following issues may be pointed out as conclusions on the church elders' leadership role. First, the central challenge related to the elder's role is its relationship to the role of the salaried pastor. Second, the elders' leadership needs clarification. Indeed, the results indicate that leadership is an important aspect in recognizing the role expectations of a church elder, because an elder has a central task in leading a church in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. This conclusion is closely related to the earlier conclusion of the definition of the roles of elders and pastors. Third, the elders' spiritual shepherding role also needs to be defined. Fourth, the voluntary aspect of the elder's role should be taken into account to a greater extent. Fifth, it would be advisable to organize leadership training for elders.

### **7.1.3 Role performance expectations**

What kind of performance does the church expect of the elder? The theological expectations pointed out the theologically oriented expectations. The leadership expectations indicated the expectations related to leadership. However, neither of these explicitly reveals the general expectations for the elder's performance. Next, the purpose is to identify these general role performance expectations that are both sent and received.

#### **7.1.3.1 Active elder**

The expectations for an active elder included several elements that may be seen in connection with the expectation for role performance. A major expectation concerned active spirituality. This was seen for instance in the expectation for an active personal prayer life and the expectation to be a mature Christian. In comparison, the church elders referred to the need for fulfilling the biblical requirements as central felt expectations. The elders were also expected to be good examples. This included the need to be

a good example or a role model of accountability and the expectation to serve as an example in the use of spiritual gifts.

A further expectation had to do with confidence. This included expectations for continual growth in taking care of one's responsibilities, and the expectation to select elders from members who have already gained the church's confidence. In comparison, the church elders mentioned the need of leadership, and the need for the right kind of character as their central felt expectations.

The respondents' sex did not explain the differences between the respondents. The size of the church did not create any significant statistical difference, either. However, the older respondents (45 years or older) had stronger expectations for an active elder than the younger respondents (18 – 44 years). Similarly, older members had stronger expectations for an active elder than younger respondents. In addition, pastors had stronger expectations for an active elder than the other respondents. Of the other respondents, ministry team members had slightly stronger expectations than respondents who indicated that they were ordinary church members.

It may be concluded that the expectation was for a rather strong leader. The expectations for an active elder included several expectations that may be seen in connection with the expectation for role performance. This was seen for instance in the expectation for active spirituality, and in the expectation to be an example. In comparison, the church elders referred to the need for the right kind of character, and the need to fulfil the biblical requirements. The same seemed to be true of the expectations connected to confidence.

#### **7.1.3.2 Challenges faced in the role of an elder**

The church elders also felt that conflicts are likely to occur. They felt that there are several reasons for conflicts to take place. For instance, differences in opinion or disagreements over doctrinal issues were seen to cause conflicts. They also suggested that the voluntary basis of the elders' leadership was a potential source of conflict. This means that voluntary leadership as such could be a challenge. In addition, they suggested that difficulties in human relations could cause conflicts.

In the questionnaire defining the sent expectations, the included variables indicated the need for elders to prioritise their ministry. This referred especially to the need to take time for their tasks, the need to attend worship services regularly, and the need to focus on the spiritual leadership of the church. The elders themselves pointed out as received expectations that voluntary leadership is a challenge. This is especially seen in difficulties in prioritising one's life as well as in difficulties in using one's time for church ministry.

In addition, elders were expected to have good knowledge of human nature, and to take into account the context of their leadership when performing their responsibilities. This correlates with the elders' felt expectations. They felt that as voluntary workers they were able to identify with the church members, who also carry out tasks in the church on a voluntary basis.

Furthermore, the church elders were expected to have a specific job description and the job description was expected to be generally accepted. Similarly, it seemed that for the church elders fulfilling the felt expectations was a challenge. However, fulfilling the expectations varied, because on the one hand some felt that it was possible to fulfil the expectations, and on the other hand, some others felt that it was impossible to fulfil all faced expectations.

Older respondents (45 years or older) had clearly stronger expectations for the elders' job description than younger respondents (18 – 44 years). In addition, small towns had slightly stronger expectations for the elders' job description than big towns. It is possible that in big churches in big towns the job descriptions are already clearer. Furthermore, Central and Northern Finland had stronger expectations for the elders' job description than Southern Finland. In practice this meant that respondents in Central and Northern Finland and the province of Eastern Finland had the strongest expectations. The province of Lapland (Upper Northern Finland) and Oulu (Northern Finland) had rather equal expectations.

It may be concluded that the church elders were expected to have a specific and generally accepted job description. It seemed that for the elders, fulfilling the felt expectations was a challenge. The expectation for clarity in leadership by defining the vision of the

church was likewise mentioned. The elders were also expected to make use of their professional background, even though they serve as spiritual leaders. In addition, the sent expectations also suggested that the elders should take good care of their mutual relationships.

On the whole, it seemed that the expectation was for a strong leader. The felt expectation was that in general leadership is a multifaceted issue. The expectations for an active elder included several expectations that may be seen in connection with the expectation for role performance. In addition, it seemed that the church elders also felt that conflicts are likely to occur. The voluntary basis of the elders' leadership was suggested as a potential source of conflict. The elders felt that their voluntary leadership is a challenge (especially prioritising time). Elders were expected to engage in contextualised leadership. The church elders were also expected to have a specific and generally accepted job description. In addition, the sent expectations suggested that the elders should take good care of their mutual relationships.

### **7.1.3.3 Theological reflection**

How do the results correlate with the previous research and discussion on the elders' role performance? Several perspectives may be pointed out. The results referred both by the church members and church elders reflect mainly the macro sociological church organizational level expectations. Macro sociological viewpoint helped to analyze the expectations focused from the church level to the elders of the church. This means that the expectations focused to the church elders were referred especially from the viewpoint of a church as an organization. This is partly due to the way how the research setting and the questions in general were set.

The results also reflected that the church elders may have some kind of role ambiguity. It may not always be that clear what the elders should do. The idea of role ambiguity enabled to understand the challenges they face.

In addition, the results suggest that the church should appoint elders of different ages. Elders from different age groups enable an elders' board to function well. This provides continuity for the work of the board. There is the risk that if younger members are not chosen to the board, the board may lack an entire generation. This is in agreement with



Salo (1998, 48), who points out that while the middle-aged are in the best age for bearing responsibility, it is important for a church to have younger elders who are growing up to take responsibility.

The research results also suggested that the elders' role expectations should be clearly defined in order for elders to perform their role well. This reflects the idea that if individuals with a specific role do not adjust their behaviour to new expectations, they may face difficulties in fulfilling the expectations they face. (See the discussion in Hedden-dorf 2001, 94, 99.) In addition, it is compatible with the idea that the clarity and conformity of the role expectations faced by individuals with a specific role also have an effect on how they carry out their role. (See the discussion in Eskola 1979, 178.)

An elder may also face role conflict due to the ambiguity of their role (as the interview data points out). Kahn et al. (1964, 73 – 74) assert that it is likely that all individuals face role ambiguity in life and its concomitant roles. For elders, this means that their state of knowledge does not fulfil their personal needs and values. It is important especially in times of conflict that the church elders have developed good teamwork in order to be better able to deal with conflicting situations. It would be important to either have supporting discussions for elders on the elders' board, or to offer elders the possibility to join a support group for processing frustration and complex feelings that are often related to conflicts. Otherwise elders might easily either become exhausted in their ministry, or discuss the conflicting issues with individuals, to whom they should not disclose the matters.

The interview data seem to indicate that the most important counter role for an elder in the church is the role of the pastor. As the results seem to suggest, the counter role of the pastor could be a major source of conflicting role expectations for an elder. If this is so, then it is also important to understand how these counter roles function. The challenge is that according to the theology applied in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement, the roles are equal. However, when it comes to the opportunity to engage in ministry, the roles are not equal. As salaried workers, pastors are able to use their work time for the ministry. Elders only have the time that is left after their full-time work (except for retired individuals). The results suggest that the elder's role in relation to its central coun-

ter role (the role of the pastor) should be defined more clearly. (See the discussion in Niemistö 2002, 49-50, 86).

Furthermore, the interview results pointed out that the elders might often find it difficult to balance their tasks as an elder with their other tasks. As Huhtinen (2002, 74) states, the work role is not the church worker's only role. They also have roles related to their family life and to their leisure time, for instance. While elders are not official church workers, the same is true of them as well because in addition to their possible full-time work, they perform their ministry voluntarily. Indeed, it is even more so, because the elders need to adjust their full-time work role to their voluntary elder's role, while also performing the other roles they have.

In addition, Huhtinen (2002, 76) points out that the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church has had a tendency to create new task roles (especially in big cities). The amount of new roles and the variety of new, different elements in the church community have created new challenges for the church. There are now more different task roles in the church than before. This could also explain the challenges the current research points out. It is likely that a church needs other new roles in order to meet the changing needs the church encounters. However, the creation of other roles gives rise to a need to define how the elder's role relates to these other roles. Otherwise the tension created by the new roles may hinder church ministry.

My research also shares some of the results that Kemery's (2006) research indicated. Kemery (2006, 565 – 566) found that the clergy's work satisfaction was highest when role conflict was low and role ambiguity was high, and lowest when role conflict and role ambiguity were both high. He found this by accounting the joint effect of role conflict and role ambiguity on clergy appointment satisfaction. Kemery (2006, 566) also found that correlations between role conflict, role ambiguity and the clergy's degree of satisfaction with their work were consistent with most other social science studies.<sup>266</sup>

The results are in agreement with the results of the current research in pointing out that

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<sup>266</sup> Faucett, Corwyn & Poling (2013, 301) found in their research, that their research results partially replicate Kemery's (2006) findings. The common element was that role ambiguity and role conflict may interact in predicting job satisfaction. Faucett, Corwyn & Poling (2013, 301) claim that their results build a better understanding of the relationships between role stress and job satisfaction. Their results also provide a stronger understanding of similarities and dissimilarities between clergy job attitudes and the attitudes of other working contexts.

role ambiguity and role conflict affect the church elders' role performance negatively. This is in line with the need to clarify the church elders' job descriptions, as well as in line with the training expectations. However, it is important to keep in mind that the research does not reflect exactly the context of the church elders who serve voluntarily.

My research also has similarities both with Monahan's (1999) research. Monahan (1999, 81 – 82) found that the pastor's role ambiguity tends to have significant consequences for both them and their church. In studying the relationship between the role ambiguity among clergy and the leadership of lay church leaders, Monahan (1999, 89) also found that when the lay leaders carried out tasks related to the pastor's role, the distinctiveness of the clergy's role decreased. Indeed, in her research Monahan (1999, 92) pointed out that the difference between clergy and lay people lessened role ambiguity among the clergy. This relates to my research, as the data indicate that church elders may for instance face role conflict in relation to the pastors, the board members and the church association. There may also be tension between elders, or in relation to other church leaders, such as the deacons. This suggests that 1) the roles of elders and deacons should be defined, and 2) that the relationship of the elder's role to the pastor's role should be defined.

In addition, the research had similarities with Ingram's (1981) research. In researching role ambiguity among Southern Baptist pastors, Ingram (1981, 127) found out that the problem was inbuilt in democratic organizations. However, it was exacerbated by the charismatic definition of ministerial authority held by the group. He found that the reason for the traditionally high rates of turnover among Baptist pastors could be explained by the structural and cultural tension inherent in the pastor's role. This suggests that the role relationship between a pastor and an elder may also be explained by a too vague understanding of democracy in both the church organization and in the performance of the roles. Although Ingram did not research collective leadership, his study nevertheless implies that in the current research especially the vague cultural understanding of collective eldership and the idea of democracy among elders may explain the difficulties seen in the role.

The following issues may be pointed out as conclusions on the church elders' leadership role. First, the application of the elder's role is unclear. Second, the expectations for the

elder's role differ slightly in different parts of Finland. Third, the elders are often in the midst of conflicts in a church. Fourth, the elders' job description needs clarification. Fifth, the elders need to find out how they could meet the need to attend church events more often. Sixth, each church needs to recruit new leaders in order to face the future and enable the work of the church to continue.

## **7.2 Discussion and prognosis**

### **7.2.1 Conclusions and recommendations**

What could be recommended on the basis of the research? First the recommendations based on the conclusions are discussed. Then suggestions for future research are proposed. In addition, the benefits of the research for the issue are discussed.

The first conclusion was that both major parts of the study indicate that the elder's role has been applied ambiguously. The data suggests that the biblical idea of elders is understood as a clear model. However, many practical issues remain unsolved. It is recommended that the Finnish Pentecostal Movement would enlist the help of biblical scholars, who would seek to better understand First Timothy and thus adjust the expectations faced by the church elders.

A recommendation for future research is to study how biblical models such as the model for church leadership are built in other denominations and how their interpretations have an effect on the expectations of church leadership in these denominations. This could for instance take place so that a group of distinguished researchers in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement would study the pertinent passages. It could then be followed by public seminars and workshops dealing with the model of elders.

A benefit of the recommendation is that it would enable the Finnish Pentecostal Movement to better understand what the Bible passage in First Timothy really says about the role of an elder. This would enable the church to get more explicit applications of the biblical text.

The second conclusion was that the expectations for the elder's role differ slightly in different parts of Finland. This means in practice that in some areas of Finland the prob-

lems occurring in other areas have already been solved. Although one might think that eldership has been applied similarly in different local churches, the application seems to differ, depending on the region, however.

A recommendation is to collect data from churches on how they apply the elder's role. After the data is collected, different applications of the elder's role in different parts of Finland would be compared with the help of co-ordinating pastors and scholars. The team would also make suggestions on the differing ways the role is applied and could be applied. A recommendation for future research is to conduct a study comparing the different ways the elder's role is applied in different parts of Finland.

A benefit of the recommendation is that churches in different parts of Finland would get a more precise idea of how other churches apply the role. This would then make it possible for churches to evaluate whether their own application of the role is the best in their context.

The third conclusion was that elders are often in the midst of conflicts in a church. Sometimes the elders are the cause of the conflict. This might stem from strained human relations or from differing views for instance on vision, leadership, or other related issues. It is also possible that an elder is not personally involved in the conflict, but due to their position as an elder they take part in it.

The study recommends that the most common conflicting issues should be defined with the help of co-ordinators or studies. This would enable Pentecostal leaders to write a manual for churches and church leaders, which would instruct them to avoid unnecessary conflicts, and to deal with conflicts when encountering them. A recommendation for future research is to conduct an interview study in which several elders are interviewed on the kind of conflicts they have faced and how they have solved the conflicts. This would enable the church to profile the conflicts the church elders usually encounter.

A benefit of the recommendation is that the elders, pastors and other leaders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement would get systematic information on the conflicts they may encounter and suggestions for solving these conflicts. As such, this information is too

problem-centred, but together with the other types of information the research produces, it could provide valuable knowledge for church elders.

The fourth conclusion was that a central challenge for the elder's role is its relationship to the role of the salaried pastor. The interviewed elders either suggested that elders should lead the church, or that the elders should lead the church together with the pastor. It seems that in general the elders are not sure how the pastor's role relates to their role. Is the pastor their supervisor, or is he a co-elder together with them, or is he a church worker whom they supervise?

A recommendation is that with some assistance from biblical scholars, the leaders should search for a better understanding from the Bible of the idea of elders, pastors, and shepherds. It would also be important to examine the models used in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement as well as worldwide. This would enable Pentecostals to understand how the role is applied and how it could be applied. A recommendation for future research is to study what the Bible actually says about the pastor's role. This could mean that a group of distinguished researchers in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement would gather to study the pertinent passages.

A benefit of the recommendation is that the elders and other church leaders would be better able to understand the biblical concept of the elder's role. This would then equip the church to form healthier relationships between elders and pastors in practice.

The fifth conclusion was that the elder's spiritual shepherding role should be examined and defined in more depth. The question is whether elders should serve as spiritual shepherding leaders or as board leaders. This conclusion also includes the idea that the elder's leadership needs to be defined more thoroughly.

A recommendation is that the church should define the elders' spiritual shepherding role with the help of prominent Pentecostal pastors or scholars. This would also include the definition of the main purpose of the elders' leadership. If the research would indicate that the elders' main task is to serve as spiritual shepherds, then their role and its concomitant tasks should be modified to fulfil this requirement. In this case it would also be important to reorganise the tasks in the church so that other church leaders would take

care of the practical matters in order for elders to get more time for spiritual leadership. A recommendation for future research is to examine what the New Testament biblical model of eldership that is often referred to in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement actually entails.

A benefit of the recommendation is that it would enable the church to understand the primary idea of the elders' role. This would also enable it to understand the role of spiritual shepherding in the elders' role performance, but apply it in a contextualised manner. In addition, it could also provide a basis for the elders to restructure their tasks with the church so that the elders would get more time for leadership issues instead of practical tasks.

The sixth conclusion was that the elder's job description needs to be defined in more depth. The questionnaire indicated rather strong expectations for a clearer job description for elders. This recommendation is closely related to the earlier recommendation on the elder's leadership role. This means that when the leadership role is defined, it would then also be possible to define the tasks and responsibilities related to the role in detail.

A recommendation is that the elders' job descriptions should be defined with the help of the leading pastors. The elders would then know more clearly what is included in their role. In addition, it could also be important to research the elders' job welfare. This would require taking into account an elder's workload from a holistic viewpoint, i.e., their life as a whole. A recommendation for future research is to examine the elders' work welfare (either via a questionnaire or an interview). This would enable the churches to organize their church structure so that they would take the elders' workload into account.

A benefit of the recommendation is that it would indicate the need for churches to take into account both the general welfare and especially the total workload of elders. This would make it more possible for elders to perform their voluntary leadership role with quality.

The seventh conclusion was that the church should pay more attention to the voluntary dimension of the elders' role. The questionnaire did not emphasise the influence of the

voluntary dimension on the elders' leadership. However, the interviews with the elders strongly indicated that the voluntary aspect affects the elders' role performance.

A recommendation is that the Pentecostal Movement should enlist the help of scholars to draw up recommendations for churches of how much an elder could be expected to volunteer in different life situations. A recommendation for future research is to conduct a questionnaire research to find out in general the total amount of working hours the elders use for full-time work, hobbies, church ministry, and work at home. A comparison of different groups of elders would enable the church to find out how much voluntary work it would be reasonable to expect from an elder in different life situations.

A benefit of the recommendation is that the elders and their churches would get a better understanding of how the other elements in life influence the role of an elder. In addition, the elders and the churches would get tools for drawing up a job description for elders that could match their resources for serving in church ministry.

The eighth conclusion was that leadership training should be organized for elders. Both the questionnaire respondents and the interviewed elders emphasised the need for training. However, the elders in particular underlined the importance of the venue for the training and especially the form of training.

A recommendation is that the church should enlist the help of scholars and leading pastors to conduct a survey of church elders that would examine what themes the church elders especially need, what are the best forms of training, and where the training should be held. A recommendation for future research is to examine what could be the best forms of training for elders who serve in church ministry in addition to their full-time work. The research would enable the church to arrange the training of elders so that it would fit in with their life circumstances. (8)

A benefit of the recommendation is that the survey on the training for elders would provide essential information for planning the training so that it would benefit both the elders and their churches. This would make it possible for the organisers to contextualise the teaching processes.



The ninth conclusion was that the elders need to find out how they could meet the need to be more visible in their church. The questionnaire indicated strongly the expectation that elders should attend church events more often and in particular carry out their ministry tasks in the church. In the interview the elders also suggested that they are expected to be present in their church and they are also expected to show consideration for their church members.

A recommendation is that the church should authorise the leading pastors to send a questionnaire to pastors to survey both the expectations focused on the elders to be present in the church and to show consideration, and how the elders could meet these expectations. The survey would provide important information on what the church could reasonably expect from elders, and what it cannot. A recommendation for future research is to conduct a questionnaire survey that would examine the church members' expectations of the church elders to be present in the church and to show consideration for the members.

A benefit of the recommendation is that it emphasises the need for church elders to see to it that they are aware of the expectations of being present and showing consideration and that they meet the expectations in an appropriate way. This would make it easier for the elders to perform their role.

The tenth conclusion was that each church needs to recruit new leaders in order to face the future and to enable the work of the church to continue. Thus, if the Finnish Pentecostal Movement continues to hold on to the model of elders as church leaders, churches would need new elders in order to face the future. This would also enable a church to have elders of different ages, as new elders would tend to be younger.

A recommendation is that the Pentecostal churches would authorise leading pastors to draw up instructions for recruiting new elders. They might, for instance, set up a recruitment programme. These instructions (or programs) would emphasise the need for new elders and would provide practical advice on how churches could recruit elders. A recommendation for future research is to examine how new elders or other church leaders are recruited and chosen in different parts of the world.

A benefit of the recommendation is that it would help the churches in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement to get new elders or spiritual leaders. The churches would get new insights into and practical tools for recruiting new elders or leaders.

The recommendations may be summarised as five central theses. First, the Finnish Pentecostal Movement should define its doctrinal understanding of the elder's role. This would require a clarification of the way the biblical text is interpreted, an ecclesiological discussion of church structure, and a reconsideration of the way the role of an elder should be applied in practice. Second, the role relationships of elders and pastors in the church should in particular be defined. This could help both pastors and elders to carry out their ministry more effectively. Third, the elder's leadership role should be defined more clearly. It would be important to know whether the elders should focus more on leadership in general, or on spiritual leadership in particular. Fourth, the consequences of performing the leadership role on a voluntary basis should be researched in depth. This should include a definition of the elders' job description. Fifth, the best ways to arrange training for the church elders should be defined. Finally, it would also be important to see to it that in every church new younger elders are appointed at an early stage, giving them time to grow in assuming the leadership responsibility for the future.

### **7.2.2 Contribution to knowledge**

An important issue has to do with how the research contributes to the knowledge of the church elder's role. Actually, the above-mentioned recommendations already indicated the contributions. The first and general contribution is that the research provides information and knowledge that make the application of the elder's role more explicit. All other contributions relate more or less to this contribution by confirming the clarification of the role. The research for instance clarifies the role by enabling one to understand the differences in expectations in different parts of Finland. Understanding the different models emphasises that there is no standard model that would apply to all circumstances, and it enables one to see that there are practical ideas in other models that could be applied.

Another contribution is that the research provides insights into developing the relationship between elders and a salaried pastor. This enables the church to avoid role conflict between these ministry positions. The research also helps one to understand how to clar-

ify the elders' leadership role. This helps one to define whether the elders should serve as spiritual shepherding leaders or as board leaders. In addition, the research provides tools for clarifying and creating a reasonable job description for elders. It also enables one to comprehend the voluntary dimension of the elder's role, and makes it possible to take the voluntary dimension better into account. All this enables one to understand how to organize contextualised and well-fitting leadership and ministry training for elders. This would offer tools for elders as well as for the church to avoid conflicts and to solve them when facing them.

The research also enables the elders to better understand the expectations they face especially concerning their presence in their church. The research results provide a better understanding of the expectations of being present that the elders face in the church. Finally, the research suggests that new leaders should be recruited in order secure the future for the church and to enable the work of the church to continue. This is based for instance on the expectation to have elders of different ages in a church.

### **7.2.3 Findings**

The research produced significant findings that contribute first of all to the Finnish Pentecostal understanding of the role of an elder. In addition, several findings also contribute to the general academic understanding of the issues related to the role.

First of all, the research provided important information about the expectations the Finnish Pentecostal church members have of the elder's role. The information will be helpful, when evaluating the role and the possibilities for developing it.

Second, the research collected important information from several elders throughout Finland on how they face the expectations they receive from their churches. This information is also useful when developing the role of an elder.

Third, the research pointed out the importance of a true and well-justified interpretation of the passages in the Bible dealing with the role of an elder. This information would be useful when arguing for the need for a better interpretation of the biblical passages dealing with the role of an elder. Based on a more thorough examination of the text, it could also be used in the actual interpretation process.

Fourth, the research has provided a more robust theological understanding of the effect of church structure on the role of an elder. This will enable the church to increase its knowledge of the views stemming from a theological understanding of the church's leadership structures. It will also enable one to assess the leadership model used in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement.

Fifth, the research indicated various challenges stemming from the leadership role. This provides insights into developing the elder's role. It also provides general understanding of the elements that should be taken into account in a contextualised collective leadership role.

Sixth, the research has given insights into the leadership challenges voluntary leadership causes. First of all, this dimension provides understanding of the elements that should be taken into account when developing the role in the Finnish Pentecostal context. In addition, it provides new knowledge of voluntary leadership in general. Even though volunteering and its different aspects have been researched extensively, voluntary leadership and its effect on an organization have received less attention.

Seventh, the research indicated challenges that need to be faced when organising training for voluntarily serving leaders. The information is useful when organizing training for elders and it provides insights into the elements that need to be taken into account when organizing training for voluntary leaders in general.

Eighth, the research has shown that role theory is still a useful tool for researching the role behaviour of a group; i.e., in this case elders as voluntary leaders. This means that the research has increased the understanding that role theory is still a valid basis for researching issues related to role performance.

Ninth, one of the benefits of using role theory as the basis for researching the performance of Finnish Pentecostal church elders is that role theory has provided a way of viewing how elders relate to other elders as well as how they relate to other church members in a church. This means that the research has provided an appropriate lan-

guage and valid concepts for analysing the behaviour and performance connected to the elder's ministry.

Tenth, the research made it possible to draw conclusions on the training of voluntary leaders that could be applied to the training offered by other adult education colleges. The foremost conclusion concerns the idea that it would be important to take into account the perspective of possible salaried workers when organizing leadership training for voluntary leaders. The other is that the long-term members of an organization tend to have the clearest understanding of the needs and elements that are central in training voluntary leaders. This also suggests that it would be wise to take into account the needs of the target groups, when planning the content of the training for the voluntary leaders of different organizations. It also appears that it is essential to design the leadership training so that it would heighten the positive elements of voluntary leadership and help to avoid the challenges that voluntary leadership causes.

Finally, it seems pertinent to take into account the needs of the group for which the training is intended. Indeed, these elements seem to be important when organizing training for the voluntary leaders of different organizations. It appears that it is useful to organize leadership training for voluntary leaders, if the training is arranged so that it best supports them in their tasks.

## **7.2.4 Validity and reliability**

### **7.2.4.1 Validity of the theoretical framework of the research**

How well do the theoretical framework and methodological choices augment the validity and reliability of the research? First of all, the research approach followed rather closely the practical theological reflection model presented by Swinton and Mowat (2006, 94 – 98). This means that the research made it possible to identify current practices and it also proposed to examine methods that can be used to achieve knowledge about the elders. In addition, the research enabled one to make theological reflections about the practice while taking into account the pertinent Scripture passages and tradition. Finally, the research results provided a basis for discussing how unsound practices could be revised.

In this respect the research agrees with the ideas of Heitink (1999, 225), who maintains that one of the central aims of practical theology is to provide knowledge of how to improve a given situation. It also follows the idea of Farley (2000, 119), who emphasises the challenge research on ministry faces in carrying out hermeneutics in a context in which faith is engaged with real life situations.

It also seems likely that the theoretical model of factors involved in taking organizational roles (Katz & Kahn 1978, 196) augmented the validity of the research. This is so, because the theory provided the framework especially for combining the quantitative survey of church members and the interview with church elders. Indeed, it provided a basis for multi-method triangulation, in which two different techniques, such as a questionnaire and an interview, were used to collect data for the research. (See Metsämuuronen 2006, 258 – 259.). In other words, the role theory enabled one to combine the micro and macro sociological approaches in examining the role of an elder in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement.

However, because the questionnaire as a quantitative and the interview as a qualitative method were basically entirely different approaches, it was not possible to directly compare the results of the two main parts of the research. Nevertheless, it was possible to compare the identified themes, because both studies were based on the same theoretical framework. This meant that after first analysing the studies separately in accordance with their own assumptions and methods, the conclusion received through the analysis were then compared in the light of the background discussion and theoretical framework serving as the basis for the research. The comparison was only carried out with the identified themes and not with the actual results of the studies. (See Räsänen 2005, 96 – 100.)

Furthermore, collecting data from both church members and church elders augmented the methodological validity of the research. The purpose of the triangulation in the research was to take into account the different aspects of the role expectations faced by the church elders. On the one hand, if only the expectations sent by the church members were studied, it would have been difficult to understand the expectations from the elders' viewpoint. On the other hand, it was justified to use a quantitative survey in addition to the interview in this kind of practical theology research, as it indicated the rela-

tionship between the church members and the expectations they focus on the church elders. (See Heikkilä & Lampela-Kivistö 2010, 205 – 206.)

One might for instance ask how well leadership theory fits in with theologically oriented research. Aaltonen (2011, 39) points out that while the relationship between theology and leadership theory involves some tension, the relationship inspires both disciplines and approaches the central issues in a useful, evaluative and critical way. This may in particular be seen in leadership ethics research. Thus, it appears that the use of leadership theory as an interdisciplinary approach is justified in this kind of practical theology research.

#### **7.2.4.2 Limitations**

However, the research has limitations that need to be addressed. The central limitation had to do with empirical research. Both a questionnaire and an interview were used to collect information for the research. In particular, the use of the interview, which is characteristically a subjective method, includes the risk that the respondents answer the interview questions in the way they assume they are expected to answer. If this occurs, the research data become biased. However, the rather large number of interviews increased the objectivity of the research. Accordingly, 18 interviewees were deemed to be adequate to saturate the interview data.

In addition, objectivity was improved through a search for latent features behind the individual questions in the questionnaire. This means that the focus was on a group of questions based on the dimensions of the research instead of individual questions (as discussed in chapter 2).

The sampling for the questionnaire was a challenge for the validity of the research. Random sampling would have been the best form of sampling for obtaining results that could be generalized. However, random sampling would have required access to the lists of names and addresses of the entire population (all Pentecostal Church members in Finland). Due to the independence of churches, this was not possible (a common register does not exist). A stratified sampling was chosen in order to ascertain that the whole population was as well presented in the sampling as possible. A fully convenient sampling would have resulted in more returned questionnaires, because it would have been

possible to send questionnaires to church members who were more likely to answer. In effect, the stratified sampling used in the research meant that the number of questionnaires equalled to roughly one per cent of the research population. (See the discussion in chapter 2.)

It could be concluded that the results might be generalised to the extent that the results of a stratified sampling can be generalised. Nevertheless, when it comes to a generalisation of the results, the random nature of a systematically carried out sampling would have produced more credible knowledge. However, as explained above, that kind of sampling was not possible in the research.

Another challenge is the questionnaire as such. The questionnaire was built by emphasising the individual questions as well as by grouping them together as dimensions. On the one hand, this made it possible to take into account many detailed issues that have an effect on the role of an elder. On the other hand, this caused the dimensions measuring the latent features of the respondents to become somewhat broad and general. An explorative factor analysis was carried out in order to correct this. The analysis formed factors that were more explicit combinations of questions. However, if the dimensions behind the questionnaire had been more detailed, the factor analysis would probably have provided more factors with alpha reliability values over 0.6.

In addition, the two different scales that were applied in the questionnaire caused a challenge (part 2 with a 5-point Likert scale and part 3 with Osgood's 7-point differential, as explained in chapter 2). In order to draw valid conclusions from the data, it was necessary to build the dimensions separately for both parts. This meant that the dimensions of both parts had similar questions, but they had to be analysed separately due to different scales. It might have been better not to use Osgood's scale, but only use the 5-point Likert scale as the measurement instrument.

A further challenge with the questionnaire was that it was not tested thoroughly. The questionnaire was sent to several people for comments. However, the reliability of the questionnaire dimensions would have been better, if it had been pre-tested for reliability. This would have involved collecting roughly 30 to 60 questionnaires and analysing



them. A reason why a pre-test was not conducted was the risk that the collected answers would not have represented the population well.

In addition, it is important to keep in mind that the results of the interview with the church elders cannot be generalised. As a subjective, qualitative type of research, the purpose of the interview was to provide data that would make it possible to understand how the church elders face the expectations focused on them. This means that the purpose of the interview was not to provide generalised information, but to produce knowledge about the received expectations.

Furthermore, the generality of the data collected via the interview as well as the interview as a method in general may be challenged. As already pointed out, the results of the questionnaire may be generalised to a certain extent, but the results of the interview cannot be generalised due to the small number of respondents, and to the non-random sampling. This raises the question of how these two approaches (i.e., the interview and the questionnaire, which differ entirely in their methodological philosophy from each other) could be compared with each other. However, as explained above, the data of the approaches were not compared with each other, but only the concluding themes of the approaches were compared.

The results of the analysis of the questionnaire may be generalized on the following conditions. The results of the questionnaire may be generalised especially to younger and older middle-aged adults (30 – 44 and 45 – 64 years), because they returned most questionnaires. The fact is that especially the youngest respondents (young adults, 18 – 29 years) were not very well presented in the realised sample. As discussed in chapter two, a potential reason is that especially in small churches the members who distributed the questionnaires containing the instructions in churches found it difficult to contact younger members, who are often studying in other towns. It is important to keep in mind that only the results of the questionnaire may be generalised, as discussed above.

#### **7.2.4.3 Increasing the validity**

An important question has to do with the extent of bias in the interview research. Could it be possible that in particular the results of the interview research are biased, because I collected the data personally? However, the strong theory basis stabilises the interview

by giving structure for the questions as well as by providing a basis for the analysis of the interviews. In addition, the use of second categorisers in analysing the interview results corroborated the identified themes and increased the reliability and validity of the results.

However, the following efforts were made to ensure that the interview (and empirical research in general) was, as far as possible, fair and free of bias. First of all, the sampling of the questionnaire was carried out through stratified sampling so that all different groups within the population would have had as equal a chance as possible to be part of the research. It would have been easier to apply convenient sampling and to send the questionnaire only to the members who would have been willing to answer.

Second, the use of sum variables as the basis of the analysis in the questionnaire data corroborates the results by basing them on many questions instead of a single question. Thus, the objectivity of the results was improved by including several individual questions within a dimension.

Third, the use of second categorisers in the analysis of the questionnaire improved the validity of the themes identified in the interview data. This means that the identified themes were not only based on an analysis of the research, but they also reflected the analysis made by the second categorisers.

The above-mentioned limitations could be eliminated in future research by adhering to the following suggestions: First of all, the empirical questionnaire should be developed so that it would only use one primary scale, for instance a 5-point Likert scale. This would make it possible to construct clearer dimensions, producing more credible results.

Second, the dimensions created on the basis of the questionnaire should be more specific. Now the dimensions were rather general. While this would increase the number of dimensions, it would also produce more specific information. Third, the questionnaire should always be pre-tested with at least thirty respondents. Pre-testing would have improved the reliability of the questionnaire.

It may be concluded that the research had some weaknesses in validity. In particular, the weaknesses had to do with the questionnaire. Although the questionnaire provides important information on the expectations for church elders, the interview data are more focused on the research. Thus, the overall validity of the research is rather good.

### **7.3 Conclusions**

How have the results answered the research questions? The main research problem was: How do the elders view their own role in the light of the expectations they face in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement? The question was divided into several sub-questions. Next, the answers to all of these sub-questions are discussed.

Sub-question 1: “What kinds of role expectations do the elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement face?” First, it seems that the respondents appealed to biblical requirements in justifying their views. The biblical expectations appeared to be rather strong. Second, the sent expectations seem to be rather conservative.

Moreover, the leadership expectations seemed to emphasise strong leadership. In particular, the respondents expected the elders to lead the church collectively. However, they also referred to the need to develop leadership.

The training of elders was also expected. Pastors seemed to have stronger expectations than the other respondents. This is logical, because the pastors have the church elders as close fellow workers. However, the form and content of leadership training were felt to be important.

Sub-question 2: “What are the elders’ expectations of their own role?” This question was divided into several sub-questions. How well do the research data answer these sub-questions?

Sub-question 2.1: “In relation to the challenges an elder meets.” The respondents emphasised biblical expectations. They felt that it was important to observe the true biblical interpretation. They also felt that spirituality was important. However, the data did

not define the true biblical interpretation, or indicate how spirituality could be measured.

It was also pointed out that elders face challenges in their role. For instance the need to deal with various conflicts may be difficult for elders. In addition, the elders' voluntary leadership role was seen to be both a benefit and a challenge. It was assumed that a church needs voluntarily serving elders in order to survive financially. It was also emphasised that getting their priorities right could be challenging for voluntarily serving elders.

Sub-question 2.2: "In relation to the church members." The church elders face the expectation of attending church events, for instance. The elders also face the expectations to develop their role, to get training and to draw up more specific job descriptions. They felt that the differing expectations coming from different groups was challenging. However, the elders felt that it was difficult to meet all expectations presented by the church members.

It seems that the elders face strong expectations that would be difficult to meet even if they were working full-time. While performing the role on a voluntary basis the best they can do is to see to it that the needs of the church members are met. This may require the elders to prioritize their own tasks well and to delegate some tasks to other workers.

Sub-question 2.3: "In relation to the other elders." It appears that the collective leadership of elders is an important expectation. When it comes to relations to the other elders, an important question is the way the ministry tasks are assigned to various elders. This also suggests that elders need to define how they relate to the pastor of their church. This is seen for instance in the comments that a pastor should not lead a church alone.

In addition, the elders pointed out that it is important to have elders of different ages on the elder's board. This suggests that the elders see the need to have elders of different ages in their group.

Sub-question 3: “How do the elders view their own competence in measuring up to these expectations?” According to the research data, prioritising is a problem and a challenge for elders. It appears that the church elders felt in particular that their spiritual call sustained them in their work. Otherwise it would be difficult for elders to perform their role. However, other life issues can easily have an effect on the task. For instance, the performance of the role is more difficult when an elder has young children at home. In addition, if an elder is exhausted due to a full-time job or another reason, the elder’s role performance may be weakened.

It is likely that the elders’ felt call to engage in ministry is a factor that gives them strong motivation for meeting the expectations and withstanding the pressure connected to it. In addition, it seems that the elders need to get their priorities right in order to have enough time and strength for their voluntary ministry tasks. However, especially when encountering many other issues at the same time, elders should see to it that the ministry tasks are carried out although they might not have much time for them.

Sub-question 4: “How do these expectations correlate with each other?” As already seen in the conclusions, the expectations correlate rather well. This is partly due to the theological similarities between the questionnaire respondents and the interviewees. This also means that the leadership expectations are rather similar. The elders’ felt expectations seem to correlate rather well with the church members’ and pastors sent expectations. However, especially their age and position seem to make a difference.

When comparing leadership training expectations with voluntary leadership expectations, two central questions arise. First, how could leadership training be organized so that it would increase the positive elements of voluntary leadership and help to avoid the challenges often related to voluntary leadership? Second, how could voluntary leadership be organized so that it would make the leadership training into a positive and fruitful enterprise?

The research indicated the possibilities and challenges in organizing the training of voluntary leaders (church elders) in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. While the research results are primarily applicable to the training offered either by Pentecostal churches or by Iso Kirja College, the research provides ideas and perspectives that could also be

applied to organizing training especially for voluntary leaders and decision-makers in other colleges that offer adult education.

Some of the preliminary general conclusions drawn of the training of voluntary leaders could be applied to the training organized by other adult education colleges. First, it would be important to take into account the views of possible salaried workers when organizing leadership training for voluntary leaders. Second, the long-term members of an organization tend to have the clearest understanding of the needs and elements that are central in training voluntary leaders.

This also suggests that it would be advisable to take into account the needs of the target groups, when planning the content of the training of the voluntary leaders of different organizations. In addition, it seems essential to organize the leadership training so that it would heighten the positive elements of voluntary leadership and help to avoid the challenges that voluntary leadership causes. Finally, it would be advisable to take into account the needs of the group for which the training is intended.

It may be concluded that the research has provided a better understanding of the expectations the Finnish Pentecostal Church elders face in their ministry as voluntary church leaders in Finland. The research has also provided some central suggestions that could be implemented in order to develop the elders' ministry. First of all, it has pointed out the importance of defining the biblical and theological understanding of the role. Second, it has emphasised the need to define the relationship of the roles of the pastor and elders. Third, it has given insight into defining the dimensions that need to be taken into account in the elders' voluntary leadership role. Fourth, it has provided information for developing the job description and training for the role. Fifth, it has provided ideas on how an elder may perform the role and meet its concomitant challenges. In addition, the research has brought to light both the positive elements and the challenges the role includes. The role provides a good avenue for taking care of the leadership of a church in the Finnish Pentecostal setting, if it is put into practice skilfully and efficiently.

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## Appendix 2.1: Questionnaire

# QUESTIONNAIRE

## Expectations concerning the role of church elders

The questionnaire provides information about the expectations the church members have for the church elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. The questionnaire is meant to at least 18 years old church members, who are not members of the board of elders. Paid pastors/preachers other similar church workers are not called elders in this context. The purpose of the questionnaire is to provide information about the expectations the church members have regarding their church's elders in the Finnish Pentecostal Movement. In the other part of the research elders are interviewed on the role expectations they are sent by the church members. The results of this questionnaire are used as a comparison in analysing those interviews. The questionnaire is anonymous. Do not put your name on this paper.

### Mark the best alternative!

#### Part 1: General questions

Your sex

1.  Male  Female

Your age

2.  18 – 29 y.  30 – 44 y.  45 – 64 y.  65 y. or older

The length of your membership in a Pentecostal church (altogether in the current church and in the previous churches)

3.  under 5 y.  5 – 14 y.  15 – 35 y.  35 y. or more

Your position in your church?

4.  Pastor / or similar fulltime worker  Leader of a ministry team (voluntary worker)  Member of a ministry team (voluntary worker)  A normal church member

#### Part 2: Expectations about church elders

##### What do you expect from a church elder?

**Instruction:** Consider the following questions from the viewpoint of your own church. Choose only the alternative with each question that describes the best your opinion.

1 = do not agree at all; 2 = slightly agree; 3 = somehow agree; 4 = quite much agree; 5 = fully agree

| no. | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        | Statement:  |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 5.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should attend regularly the worship services of their church   |
| 6.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The personality traits (features of personality) of an elder determine their success in performing their duties                       |
| 7.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Every elder should have clear area of responsibility or task that is known also by the church members                                 |
| 8.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder to be chosen should be "a leader type" person  |
| 9.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder is expected to be well equal to the occasion in performing their tasks (responsibility)                                      |
| 10. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should be seen performing regularly ministry tasks in worship services   |
| 11. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should be married  |
| 12. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | It is useful for an elder to ably generally accepted leadership principles in their ministry  |
| 13. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should have knowledge and understanding about financial leadership   |
| 14. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Those people should be selected as elders, who have already achieved the trust of their church members in other tasks of their church |
| 15. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Spiritual Gifts should be seen through an elder in the church   |
| 16. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should strive into continual growth in taking care of their responsibilities   |

| no. | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        | Statement:   |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 17. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should be good in teaching  |
| 18. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An older elder is more capable than a younger elder  |
| 19. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should be a good example (model) about responsibility   |
| 20. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should visit regularly their church members   |
| 21. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should define to their church more clearly their vision for the ministry of the church          |
| 22. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Working from the basis of voluntarism complicates the task performance of an elder                       |
| 23. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should be a male  |
| 24. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Elders should concentrate on the spiritual leadership of the church                                      |
| 25. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Only elders should consecrate the Lord's Supper  |
| 26. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | It should be seen from the children of an elder that they have been raised in an exemplary manner        |
| 27. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should delegate tasks to other church members   |
| 28. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder's spouse has a strong influence on the elder  |
| 29. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should have an active personal prayer life  |
| 30. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A remarried may be chosen to the task of an elder  |
| 31. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should reserve time for their task as an elder  |
| 32. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should get training for their task  |
| 33. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should function as example of the use of Spiritual Gifts  |
| 34. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Elders need a commonly accepted job description (created e.g. by pastor's and elder's winter conference) |
| 35. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The voluntary bases of the elders is a well working approach for the leadership of a church              |
| 36. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should have good knowledge of human nature for the performing of their tasks                    |
| 37. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A pastor of a church is at the same time an elder of the church  |
| 38. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should have knowledge and understanding about administrative leadership of a church             |
| 39. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should be a mature Christian  |

### Part 3: My opinion about the task of an elder

#### Alternative statements:

**Instruction:** Consider the following questions from the viewpoint of your own church. Choose only the alternative with each question that describes the best your opinion about the statements.

Note: The questions are aiming to measure opposing opinions about asked questions.

1 = fully agree with SA;

4 = I do not know;

5 = slightly agree with SB;

2 = agree with SA;

6 = agree with SB;

3 = slightly agree with SA;

7 = fully agree with SB

| no. | Statement A = SA   | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        | 6                        | 7                        | Statement B = SB   |
|-----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 40. | A church should be lead (spiritually) by a pastor                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A church should be lead (spiritually) by its elders                              |
| 41. | Church members should be able to select new elders                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Elders themselves should be able to select new elders                            |
| 42. | An elder is not in the same position in a church than a paid pastor/shepherd | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder is in a church in a position of a voluntary functioning pastor/shepherd |
| 43. | The task of an elder resembles the best the administrative position of trust | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The task of an elder resembles the best the position the spiritual position      |

| no. | Statement A = SA  | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        | 6                        | 7                        | Statement B = SB  |
|-----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 44. | An elder may not be expected of taking as much responsibility about the ministry of the church as the pastor, or other paid church workers                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder may be expected of taking as much responsibility about the ministry of the church as the pastor, or other paid church workers                            |
| 45. | It is injurious, if an elder builds their identity on their position and task   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | It is not injurious, if an elder builds their identity on their position and task   |
| 46. | The board of the association of a church has the juridical responsibility about common the practical matters of the church                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | It would be better, if the board of elders of a church would have the juridical responsible for all matters of a church (also about the common practical matters) |
| 47. | Only a pastor(s) may perform services in a church (e.g. baptism, marriage ceremony)   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder may perform services in a church (e.g. baptism, marriage ceremony)   |
| 48. | The ministry teams of a church do not need a representative of the elders' board as their member  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The ministry teams of a church need a representative of the elders' board as their member   |
| 49. | An elders should be organized mentoring and training for their task so that they may serve better their church  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder does not need to be organized mentoring and training for their tasks, because they already know how to serve their church                                |
| 50. | There is a need for every elder to have a clear area of responsibility in a church  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There is no need for every elder to have a clear area of responsibility in a church   |
| 51. | Elders have to consult their church in every bigger decision  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Elders have to consult their church only in the most important decisions  |
| 52. | The personality traits of an elder are only one criteria in their election  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The personality traits of an elder are the most important criteria in their election  |
| 53. | Pastors' and elders' Winter conference, or a similar forum, should define the task of an elder  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The eldership of a church should independently define its own task  |
| 54. | The tradition of not choosing a woman to the board of elders is primarily a cultural question   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The tradition of not choosing a woman to the board of elders is primarily a theological (dogma of the Bible) question   |
| 55. | Working as a volunteer leads easily to the situation that an elder leaves their church ministry tasks to the second priority in comparison to their wage work | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | In spite of working as a volunteer an elder is able to keep their church ministry tasks at least in the same priority level as they keep their wage work          |
| 56. | The consecration of the Lord's Supper in a worship service is not connected to the position of elders. A  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The consecration of the Lord's Supper in a worship service is connected to the position of elders. The  |

| church member may as well perform the consecration |  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          | consecration may not be performed by other members of the church   |
|--|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| no.  | <b>Statement A = SA</b>  | <b>1</b>                 | <b>2</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>4</b>                 | <b>5</b>                 | <b>6</b>                 | <b>7</b>                 | <b>Statement B = SB</b>  |
| 57.  | The duty of an elder should be periodic  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The duty of an elder should be lifelong  |
| 58.  | An elder may tell to the church in which matters they do not agree with the board of elders  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder may not tell to the church in which matters they do not agree with the board of elders  |
| 59.  | The pastor should have the operative leadership of the church (leadership of the ministry of the church in practice)                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The elders should have the operative leadership of the church (leadership of the ministry of the church in practice)   |
| 60.  | The professional background of an elder should be utilized, even though they function as the spiritual leader  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The professional background of an elder does not make any difference, because in the question is a spiritual office  |
| 61.  | An elder's spouse should not participate to the task performance of the elder  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder's spouse should participate to the task performance of the elder  |
| 62.  | A remarried may function as an elder   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A remarried may not function as an elder   |
| 63.  | A younger elder performs their task better than an older elder   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An older elder performs better their task than a younger elder   |
| 64.  | An elder needs leadership training for their task  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder does not need leadership training for their task  |
| 65.  | Poor relationships between elders affect negatively on church members  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Poor relationships between elders do not affect negatively on church members   |
| 66.  | Working from the voluntary basis lessens the ability of the elders to function as the operative leaders (leading the ministry of the church in practice) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Working from the voluntary basis does not lessen the ability of the elders to function as the operative leaders (leading the ministry of the church in practice) |
| 67.  | An elder should ask opinions concerning their area of responsibility primarily from the other workers of the area of responsibility                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An elder should ask opinions concerning their area of responsibility primarily from other elders   |
| 68.  | Elders are poorly acquainted with the church members   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Elders are well acquainted with the church members   |

Your comments about this questionnaire

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## **Appendix 2.2: Dimension of the research**

Dimension 1: General expectations, part 2 questions 5 – 39 (questions 30 and 35 were removed).

Dimension 2: Theology, part 2 questions 11, 15, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 33, 37, 39, (question 30 was removed).

Dimension 3: Conservative theological opinions 40, 42, 43, 47, 53, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 62 (Alpha value under 0.6).

Dimension 4.1: General leadership, part 2 questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 31, 32, 34, 36, 38, (question 35 was removed).

Dimension 4.2: Training, part 2 questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, 24, 32, 36, 38.

Dimension 4.3: Voluntarism, part 2 questions 5, 7, 10, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 29, 31, 32, 34, 35.

Dimension 5.1: Conservative leadership expectation, part 3 questions 49R, 50R, 60R, 64R, 65R.

Dimension 5.2: Expectation to develop the leadership of elders, part 3 questions 49, 50, 60, 64, 65.

Dimension 6: Strong conservative eldership, part 3 questions 41, 45, 49, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 62, 64, 66.

Dimension 7: The role of an elder needs to be developed, part 3 questions 41R, 45R, 49R, 50R, 54R, 55R, 56R, 57R, 58R, 62R, 64R, 66R.



## Appendix 2.3: Interview questions

### The research about the role expectations of elders

The interview is meant for the elders of the Finnish Pentecostal churches. The purpose of the interview is to give information about the expectations the elders have about their own role. These interviews are compared with the results of the questionnaire questioning the expectations of church members about the elders. The interview is anonymous, so the identity of the interviewees will not be seen in the research report.

#### The questions for the interview (Structural theme interview)

##### **BACKGROUND QUESTIONS:** (The purpose is to collect the answer for these question before starting to record the interview)

For how long you have been functioning as an elder in a Pentecostal Church (both in the current church and in the previous churches)?

0 – 5 y.     6 – 10 y.     11 – 20 y.     21 – 30 y.     31 – 40 y.     41 y. or more

At what age you were chosen to the board of elders? (To the first board, if you have been working in the boards of different churches)

under 24y.     24 – 29 y.     30 – 39 y.     40 – 49 y.     50 y. or older

Do you have a designated task in the board of elders? Yes  / No

If you have, what is it? \_\_\_\_\_

(You may choose not to tell your designated task, if you are afraid that it will enable you to be recognized)

How many members you have in your church?

0 – 100     100 – 249     250 – 699     700 or more

How many (actual) elders you have in your church? (Pastors, evangelist, students doing their internship and so called "honoured" elders are not counted)

1 – 3     4 – 6     7 – 9     10 – 14     15 – 19     20 or more

##### **The questions for the interview:**

1. What do you feel the church members are expecting from you as an elder?
2. How well in your opinion you have been able to answer to these expectations? Could you please explain shortly your opinion?
3. What in your opinion are the central criteria for the election of an elder? Could you please describe shortly your opinion?

4. Who in your opinion should lead a church (the pastor, the elders, the chairman of elders, the association of the church, or the chairman of the association)? Could you please explain shortly your opinion?
5. What in your opinion are the most likely situations of conflict in a church an elder may get involved in?
6. In your opinion, should the elders get training into their duty? Could you please explain shortly your opinion?
7. What advantages or disadvantages voluntarism brings to an elder in taking care of their duties?
8. What in your opinion are the central biblical criteria for an elder?
9. What in your opinion is the kind of a dream elder for a church?

Your comments about this interview (5 min. / no recording)

## Appendix 2.4: Participant consent form



### SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

#### Participant Consent Form

**Researcher's name:** Samuel Aro-Panula

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. This means that I have the right to turn off the recording at any time without giving a reason to withdraw. I also understand that, within the constraints of the research, my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

I agree to having the interview recorded.

Signature of participant .....

Date.....

Signature of researcher.....

Date.....

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy will be given to the participant and the other copy will be kept by the researcher.

## Appendix 5.1: Variables of the questionnaire

| Explanatory variables       |   |   | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------|---|---|-----------|---------|
| <b>Sex</b>                  | Your sex  | Male  | 230       | 48,6    |
|                             |   | Female  | 243       | 51,4    |
|                             |   | Total   | 473       | 100,0   |
| <b>Age</b>                  | Your age  | 18 – 29 y.  | 79        | 16,7    |
|                             |   | 30 – 44 y.  | 114       | 24,1    |
|                             |   | 45 – 64 y.  | 189       | 40,0    |
|                             |   | 65 y. or older  | 91        | 19,2    |
|                             | Younger_Older                                     | Total   | 473       | 100,0   |
|                             |   | Younger (< 45 y.)                                     | 193       | 40,8    |
| Older (45 y. and older)     |   | 280   | 59,2      |         |
| <b>Length of membership</b> | The length of your membership                     | under 5 y.  | 42        | 9,3     |
|                             |   | 5 – 14 y.   | 94        | 20,9    |
|                             |   | 15 – 35 y.  | 196       | 43,6    |
|                             |   | 35 y. or more   | 118       | 26,2    |
|                             | Younger Members <-> Older Members                 | Total   | 450       | 100,0   |
|                             |   | Younger members (under 15 y.)                         | 136       | 30,2    |
|                             |   | Older members (15 y. or more)                         | 314       | 69,8    |
| <b>Position in church</b>   | Your position in your church                      | Pastor / or similar fulltime worker                   | 66        | 14,0    |
|                             |   | Leader of a ministry team (vol worker)                | 120       | 25,4    |
|                             |   | Member of a ministry team (vol worker)                | 186       | 39,3    |
|                             |   | A normal church member                                | 101       | 21,4    |
|                             | Pastors <-> VolWorkers and Church Members         | Total   | 473       | 100,0   |
|                             |   | Pastors   | 66        | 14,0    |
|                             |   | VolWorkers or Members                                 | 407       | 86,0    |
| <b>Size of church</b>       | Size of church                                    | under 100   | 71        | 15,0    |
|                             |   | 100 – 249   | 103       | 21,8    |
|                             |   | 250 – 699   | 196       | 41,4    |
|                             |   | 700 or more   | 103       | 21,8    |
|                             | Smaller Churches <-> Bigger Churches              | Total   | 473       | 100,0   |
|                             |   | Smaller churches (< 250)                              | 174       | 36,8    |
|                             |   | Bigger churches (250 or more)                         | 299       | 63,2    |
| <b>Size of town</b>         | Size of town                                      | under 15000   | 124       | 26,2    |
|                             |   | 15000 – 50000   | 144       | 30,4    |
|                             |   | 50000 or more   | 205       | 43,3    |
|                             |   | Total   | 473       | 100,0   |
|                             | Smaller Towns <-> Bigger Towns                    | Smaller towns   | 268       | 56,7    |
|                             |   | Bigger towns  | 205       | 43,3    |
|                             |   | Total   | 473       | 100,0   |
| <b>Area in Finland</b>      | Provinces of Finland                              | Province of Southern Finland                          | 135       | 28,5    |
|                             |   | Province of Western Finland                           | 186       | 39,3    |
|                             |   | Province of Eastern Finland                           | 64        | 13,5    |
|                             |   | Province of Oulu (Northern Finland)                   | 71        | 15,0    |
|                             |   | Province of Lapland (Upper Northern Finland)          | 17        | 3,6     |
|                             | Southern Finland <-> Central and Northern Finland | Total   | 473       | 100,0   |
|                             |   | Southern Finland (South and West Finland)             | 232       | 49,0    |
|                             |   | Central and Northern Finland (East and North Finland) | 241       | 51,0    |
|                             | Capital City Area <-> Other Finland               | Total   | 473       | 100,0   |
|                             |   | Capital city area                                     | 69        | 14,6    |
|                             |   | Other parts of Finland                                | 404       | 85,4    |
| Total                       | 473   | 100,0   |           |         |

## Appendix 6: Interview category charts.

Chart 6.1: Faced expectations.

| Uniting concept                           | Main Category                              | Q? |
|---|--|----|
| Central felt expectations                 | Presence                                   | 1  |
|   | Leadership                                 |    |
|   | Character                                  |    |
|   | Biblical requirements                      |    |
| Feeling the felt expectations a challenge | Fulfilling the expectations is varying     | 2  |
|   | It is possible to fulfil the expectations  |    |
|   | It is difficult to fulfil all expectations |    |

Chart 6.2: Role conflicts faced. (Question 5)

| Uniting concept                  | Main Category                       |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Conflicts are likely             | Conflicts are likely to occur       |
| Differing opinions as a source   | Doctrinal questions cause conflicts |
|                                  | Differing opinions cause conflicts  |
| Voluntary leadership as a source | Relationships cause conflicts       |
|                                  | Leadership causes conflicts         |
|                                  | Voluntarism may cause conflicts     |

Chart 6.3: Criteria for an elder. (Questions 3, 9 and 10)

| Uniting concept          | Main Category       |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| General requirements     | No ideal elder      |
|                          | Character           |
|                          | Whole age range     |
| Theological requirements | Biblical criteria   |
|                          | Spirituality        |
| Leadership requirements  | Leadership          |
|                          | Presence            |
|                          | Relationship skills |

Chart 6.4: Theological expectation. (Question 8)

| Uniting concept                           | Main Category                                     |
|---|---|
| Spirituality central                      | Relationship with God                             |
| Character central                         | Stable character                                  |
| Biblical criteria central                 | Biblical criteria important                       |
|   | The list of 1 Tim. 3:1-7 as a criteria            |
|   | Position of women raises discussion               |
| Leading and teaching as central abilities | Shepherding team leadership                       |
|   | To be able to teach in the form of guiding others |

Chart 6.5.1: General leadership expectations. (Question 4)

| Uniting concept                    | Main Category   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Church leadership has many aspects | Leadership of a church as a versatile question            |
| Collective leadership of elder     | Elders (including a pastor) to lead a church              |
|                                    | Collective leadership as a base for leading a church      |
|                                    | Board of association not for final leadership of a church |

Chart 6.5.2: Leadership training expectations. (Question 6):

| <b>Uniting concept</b>                   | <b>Main Category</b>                                      |
|--|---|
| Training of elders has a positive effect | It is useful to train elders                              |
| Form of training matters                 | Form of training is important                             |
|  | All the forms of training are useful for training elder   |
| Content of training matters              | Content of training elders should be well considered      |
|  | A church should also be trained (about the role of elder) |

Chart 6.5.3: Voluntary leadership expectations. (Question 7)

| <b>Uniting concept</b>              | <b>Main Category</b>  |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Voluntary leadership is useful      | A church needs voluntarism  |
|                                     | Motivation a benefit  |
|                                     | Enables to identify with people   |
| Voluntary leadership is a challenge | Order of priority a challenge   |
|                                     | Use of time a challenge   |
|                                     | Voluntary based leadership may be a challenge                               |
|                                     | To take to an account the possibility of challenges in voluntary based role |