

## **THE UNKNOWN LAESTADIUS**

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Lars-Erik Wikberg, Biblioteka Laestadiana, Haparanda

### **Foreword**

I have – when I accepted to come up to Tromsø the first ever time for me – also accepted a Mission: Impossible. In 30 minutes to speak about my publishing work as well as the greatness, importance and signification of Laestadius in the North Calotte.

And also to speak in English, but God hasn't given me enough intellect to say no to do it, so he has to take care of it 😊

So let's start this very personal journey with Laestadius!

- 1. Biblioteka Laestadiana – The beginning**
- 2. Laestadius – Revival leader**
- 3. The unknown Laestadius – his theology and his doctrines!**
- 4. Laestadius – Importance and significance on the North Calotte**

### **1. Biblioteka Laestadiana – The beginning**

My background is 100% secular – I knew very little about the Dean Laestadius until I was involved with Christianity during my teenage years.

During those years I met Laestadius 3 times. Someone maybe is lifting up their eyebrows and are beginning to think – what kind of fool have we invited to speak today?

The truth is very simple – I am not crazy, but I really met the Dean Laestadius! The first time I met him – was in Pajala at a weekend with Christian youths gathering together. A man spoke about Laestadius and for me it was a meeting with him. Unknown for me – but anyway – it become clear for me. He has a “complete system” of understanding concerning the creator, the creation and men.

The second time I met Laestadius was in my home. Bengt Pohjanen visited me and told me: You have the witness of the water and the blood, but you also need the witness of the Spirit. Now I saw Laestadius in the pulpet in Karesuando church preaching before my eyes. – For me it was a message: This message was the same as Laestadius proclaimed in Karesuando. – It was truly the same spiritual wind that blows today as during Laestadius' days.

The third meeting with him was on Monday morning after this experience. My friend Bengt Pohjanen told me – read Laestadius sermon on Easter day in the Church postilla (Kyrkopostillan). I read Laestadius and it became clear for me – all

words in this sermon were about my life, my condition and my heart! This is the true gospel and the true life for me!

All this is the beginning of my great work Biblioteca Laestadiana. I don't understand much Finnish, and most of Laestadius' sermons and also Rattamaa's letter are in Finnish. I wanted this in Swedish! I want to be able to read all this!- I was looking at people and wondered if they would translate this material.....at last it was clear for me - do it yourself! I also dreamed of having Laestadius' main theological, psychological work - Dårhushjonet (The Lunatic) reprinted. I went to the bank and took a bank loan, and decided if I could have 300 copies pre-ordered, I will reprint it. After orders for about 230 copies, I decided - this is almost 300 - print it! And now this great book is translated also into English and is now being printed in America as The Lunatic.

I tried to find translators for this great project and found first Henry Kero. He translated Raattamaa and Erkki Antti to Swedish. Laestadius' sermons- the big issue was still open. Then some years later I asked Tore Töyrä (from Kuttainen, Karesuando) if he could do this. After a short time he accepted my suggestion! A man that was unable to sit on a chair for a long time...sat down and began to translate Laestadius during 6 years!

My project developed into many more titles, and will end with about 20 books with material mostly translated from Finnish to Swedish, and covering a lot of the time during the revival that began in Karesuando until the beginning of 1900, with some few exceptions in the timeline. Mostly from the revival's dawn and "floral time".

I was captivated in the sermons of Laestadius and for me it has been a personal journey together with Laestadius and his sermons have come very close to me - within my heart thru the experiences of the new birth. I am colored by Laestadius, and influenced deeply by his sermons. And I never want to be free of them and his teachings. I really look forward to meet him in a warmer land and to visit with him.

## **2. Laestadius - the revival leader**

How was it possible that this fire could start in such a remote area, almost without any people, and also see the branches of the living tree spread out all around Finland, Estonia, northern Norway and also parts of the county Norrbotten, and even further to America? Today we can also see these branches spread out to Guatemala, West Africa and other places.

Many factors need to be united to have this happen!

1. Right time
2. Right place
3. Right person (leader)
4. Right receiver of the message
5. Right state of these people to become partakers of the message

But this is of course is not enough to have this revival begin. Read a sermon of Laestadius today and you will see about the same type of situation of life – as it is today in Western Europe. People are in many ways living the same ungodly life in sin. And nothing will happen. Lily-Ann Östtveit-Elgvin has in her study of Laestadius in many ways found the key to this – his extremely clear metaphors and vivid expressions of the natural behavior and life in colorful pictures. But even if you take the greatest poets and let them write and read their poems, most surely nothing will happen!

6. Another factor is the most important to add to all these others, before we can see any result of this preaching.

The right time of God and his Holy Spirit!

Laestadius was a very simple but intelligent person – a genius in a great number of disciplines.

1. A linguistic man –he spoke many languages, and learned very fast the most important languages in this area – Karesuando Lappish and Finnish.
2. He was able to speak a language they really understood – the language of the day
3. He knew the mythology of the people.
4. He was a very good speaker
5. He was a very sharp author
6. He had through his own life and the knowledge of his passions understood what really controls men during all their life.
7. A very sharp analytic of life and death. What is the engine of mankind?
8. Psychology, physiology, religious psychology
9. His simple life when he grew up educated him to meet people with the same experiences and life.
10. His very sharp eyes to see the big difference between God's righteousness and men's self-righteousness. To live by faith (grace) or by deeds.
11. A leading botanist (by some put before Linné in importance)

Laestadius' way to living faith is in many ways amazing to read about.

The meeting with Lappish Mary and the true importance for his new birth and spiritual life.

The great mystery of the reconciliation (atonement), that all began on January 10<sup>th</sup> 1845 – his day of new birth.

Laestadius' sermons - "a higher color" difficult to see - but a very true experience in his life – when his sermons began to change the hearts of the people and the new life to begin within the hearts of the members of the congregation.....

### **3. The unknown Laestadius – his theology and his doctrines!**

In one way this is of course not unknown. We have it in his main work The Lunatic (Dårhushjonet). But when we speak about Laestadius, we mostly are speaking of

him as a very sharp, hard and condemning speaker. We, and all people that know anything about his sermons, talk about his rough words – The devil’s crap, drinkers and whores, hell etc. Very few are talking about “words of honey” that for sure are in his sermons! When I read and work with his sermons I can clearly experience that he is very evangelical in his expressions!

In *The Lunatic* he writes the explanation why he preached as he did. It is surely the true source where we find what the origin of his doctrine and his sermons is. This book is as he writes on the first page:

### **An insight into the order of grace**

commonly known as “Servant in the Crazy House”

**systematically presented in the form of observations of the characteristics and states of the soul, in accordance with the psychological perspectives of the Biblical authors, pertaining to the highest idea of Christianity—reconciliation**

The red line in this work is to reveal/disclose the rationalists and their dead faith. Very much of *The Lunatic* contains explanations and clarifying of the devils – also called passions - so it will be easier for the rationalists, the self-righteousness, the flesh and the dead faith to read and hear about them. The virtuous can hardly listen to the word – devil.....

These writings about the passions – the devils – that are within our flesh and blood is the doctrine of Laestadius, and this is also why he spoke as he did. This is **THE UNKNOWN LAESTADIUS!**

Especially today it is unknown for the world outside laestadianism and also for the active laestadians. They are “laestadians”, but NOT “laestadic!”

The doctrine of the passions – how they work within men and mankind - this is truly the main topic of what he spoke and taught the people. *The Lunatic* (Dårhushjonet) is still very real today, when we speak of Laestadius and what he has done.

Laestadius’ teaching or preaching is about the doctrine of the passions – the nefarious passions, the opposite of the Heavenly passion, so clearly stripping men of ALL of their own goodness and for salvation. Nothing is left of our goodness with his doctrine of the passions – except a one way ticket to hell. But he also reveals the only way away from Satan – the devil – it is thru true grace and faith or to believe – as Lappish Mary might have said to Laestadius – Believe as you are – a condemned sinner.

The other topic in his doctrine is the unmerciful struggle against self-righteousness. A great portion of his sermons is clearly against self-righteousness and unbelief!

When Laestadius was speaking of the suffering Christ he put a lot of emphasis on the suffering of Jesus in Gethsemanie where the brokenness of the sinners happened - and not so much at the cross! (Gustaf Dahlbäck writes of this in “Den gamla och nya människan i Laestadius teologi”). But we can also see that the preaching of the cross is also a very central part in his sermons.

The doctrine of the passions - This is also why the revival started in the North Calotte and also why it became such a great fire all around this area.

Most revivals are quite small and restricted in a geographical area, but this revival spread out in the North Calotte and also in most parts of Finland, as well as Ingria (Ingermanland), Estonia, Hungary, and through emigration to America and Canada.

The seven deadly sins, or the seven primary passions, are the following:

1. egoism
2. ambition
3. selfishness
4. fornication
5. wrath
6. envy
7. the spirit of lying.

Of these, egoism, ambition, and selfishness are devils of the first order, since, as “*devils*”, they possess natural man from the beginning of life to its end. Wrath, envy, and lying are devils of the second order, since these are the servant spirits of the former. The devil of fornication is a singular passion, but it recedes with age.

### **T.T. The seven deadly sins, seven devils, or seven principal passions**

**250.** The names of these seven devils are:

1. *Self-righteousness* (egoism), which drove Judas to hang himself. He is the blackest of them all and can easily disguise himself as an angel of light.
2. *Selfishness*, which drove Judas to betray the Savior. This devil now rules the entire world, but dominates most of all among the masses.
3. *Ambition or lust for honor*, which induced Judas to deny his criminal intentions when the other disciples wanted to know who the traitor was. This passion dominates chiefly among persons of rank.
4. *Wrath*, which entered Judas after the dipped sop. This passion is manifest, although it is more concealed when it takes the form of spiritual hatred; it disguises itself as a conscientious demand in the consciousness of the inquisitor.
5. *Fornication*, which is widely accepted among nobleman and peasant alike. This desire is an important part in all matters of worldly love.
6. *Envy*, which is manifest in many guises.
7. “*The spirit of lying*,” which is widespread throughout the world.

**251.** These are the principal wretched passions that now govern the world. Others are less depraved, such as love, grief, happiness, fear, courage, friendship, among others. There are also acquired passions, which are able to destroy both body and soul, such as, for instance, drunkenness, desire for dancing, and desire for gambling. As we go on to examine the relationship of the passions to the objective faculties of the soul, we will use some passions as comparative examples, for instance love, grief, wrath, jealousy, and drinking. Experience shows that we are not able to nullify these passions; it would be a difficult battle to vanquish love, and how difficult is it not for the drunkard to conquer his passion for vodka?

**915.** Manifests himself within man as “drive for self-preservation,” and awakens together with self-awareness in the womb prior to the drive for nourishment, and preserves itself with undiminished strength until the end of life. Egoism is most developed in bulls and is related to the liver, which, in the reindeer bull, swells up prior to mating. The liver is also the first visible organ within man. Egoism is greatest during pubescence (Bichat). Viewed as a drive, it affects the will evenly and without interruption, where it manifests itself as “*self-will*”; it affects the intellect and is then called “*obstinacy*.” In the heart it produces “*self-love*”, “*pride*,” in conscience it produces “*self-righteousness*,” in the imaginative faculty, “*conceitedness*.” Within reason, egoism awakens false ideas about right and wrong, about good and evil.

### **U.U. Egoism, or Beelzebub, the chief devil, the prince of this world**

**V.V. Ambition, or the devil of honor, also called vainglory**

**W.W. Selfishness, greed**

**X.X. Wrath, vengefulness and hatred**

**Y.Y. Envy and jealousy**

**Z.Z. The devil of fornication and true love**

**Å.Å. The spirit of falsehood**

#### **4. Laestadius importance and significance on the North Calotte.**

Sweden

Princess Eugénie invited August Lundberg to be leader of the Lannavaara Mission among the Lapps. There he became connected with the revival and also was an important person among the Vanhollis (Old Laestadians). Bengt Pohjanen told me many times – he ruined the the Vanhollis (Old Laestadians).....

Prince Oscar visited Lannavaara and I have heard that he had a sermon at a Laestadian meeting.

The Royal family of Sweden

Pastor PO Grape and lay ministers visited the Royal Castle. They went there to defend their faith and belief as well as the Laestadian doctrines before the King.

Finland

President Kyösi Kallio – his mother was a Laestadian, and he also promised to repent after his Presidential time. He died on the train home.....

President Urho Kekkonen – repented before he died to SRK ministers. His close relatives belonged to Laestadianism.

Former Prime Minister of Finland Martti Miettunen – he had a Laestadian background (his brother was a lay minister)

Prime Minister Juha Sipilä – his uncle was a Laestadian lay minister, and Juha also belongs to the Laestadians (attended their summer meeting in Finland this year) –

The Small Firstborns.

Professors like Hannu Mustakallio (his father was a Laestadian church minister), Jouko Talonen (his brother is a lay minister). Jouko also speaks at Laestadian services and conventions.

Members of Parliaments in Finland and Sweden in modern time (Håkan Östman among others in Finland, and Erling Wälivaara in Sweden).

Norway – printed a postal stamp – Laestadius as a botanist.

Mission: Impossible completed!