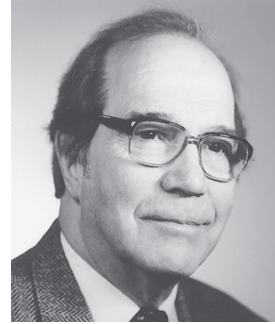


Kalevi Tamminen

* 5.4.1928 † 29.8.2018



PROFESSOR KALEVI TAMMINEN died at the age of 90 years in Helsinki on 29th April 2018 after a long illness. He had been born at Raunistula in Maaria and had matriculated from the Finnish Coeducational School in Turku in 1946. He then began his academic studies at the University of Turku at once and gained a master's degree after only two years of work, in 1948. He subsequently switched to studying theology at Åbo Akademi, but it was at the University of Helsinki that he eventually took his basic degree in that subject in 1952.

The next significant year in his academic career was 1967, when he had two doctoral theses approved. Employing a historical approach, he submitted a study of the primary school curriculum in religious education at the beginning of the 20th century for a doctorate in education from the Section of History and Philology within the Faculty of Philosophy and a study of religious education in Finnish primary schools in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for a doctorate from the Faculty of Theology.

The use of empirical methods was becoming more common in the educational sciences at that time and the need for applying such methods in theological re-

search had also been recognised in the situation in which Finnish society found itself in the post-war era, so that Tamminen was suitably oriented towards applying quantitative empirical methods in his future research projects. Meanwhile, the Faculty of Theology, which had continued to operate with the traditional system of disciplines established in the early 19th century, underwent a major reform of its teaching posts around 1970 that meant the introduction of three new subjects: comparative religion, religious education and church and social studies. Thus Kalevi Tamminen was recruited to lay the foundation for a curriculum in religious education, which constituted a separate subject from 1969 onwards, occupying the position of a professor extraordinary at first and gaining a full professorship in practical theology with specialization in religious education in 1977. From that time onwards church and social studies together with religious education, with its accent on the psychology of religion, formed a pair of disciplines within the Faculty of Theology in which empirical research played a prominent role.

His appointment to a permanent position inspired Tamminen to create a degree

course based on the testing of bodies of material gathered by the students against cognitive theories of religion. In particular, the theory of the development of faith put forward by the American James W. Fowler and the Swiss educational psychologist Fritz Oser's theory of the development of religious appraisal played a prominent role in Tamminen's own research and also in the dissertations produced by both undergraduate and post-graduate students. This in turn opened the way to contacts with both European and American research in the same field. All in all, six works were published in Finnish during the period 1975–1985 that dealt with issues affecting the lives of children and young people, religious experiences and thinking and the religious beliefs of parents of young children. Among the larger group of post-graduate students, Juha Vermasvuori and Kari E. Nurmi belonged to his inner circle of researchers, those with whom it was necessary to attempt more complicated computer runs requiring new applications.

Tamminen presented the results of his research at a number of international symposia, and he also gathered the most important findings together in his book *Religious Development in Childhood and Youth*, which appeared in Series B of the Publications of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters in 1991 and in a German translation two years later. Attempts had been made within this new field of study to measure in a simplified manner the dimensions contributing to cognition in children and young people in different countries and to trace changes in the key concepts related to religion. These aims as such were nothing unusual for Tamminen's own research reports as published in Fin-

land, but this volume of collected papers published in English adopted a new perspective, attempting on the basis of his own research findings to construct a holistic picture of the course of personal religious development from childhood into youth. This caused consternation among researchers in many parts of the world and led the American Psychological Association to present him with the William James Award in 1995 in recognition of the international interest that his book had aroused.

In his capacity as an educationalist who was open to new initiatives, Tamminen began from the late 1960s onwards to be invited increasingly often to take part in working groups set up in teacher training circles, the scope of which activity gained new elements and structures in the 1970s when it was extended to the degree reforms taking place in universities and faculties throughout the country. Tamminen came to be responsible for the chairmanship of the degree reform committee in his own faculty, and soon afterwards he was made chairman of the corresponding committee for the whole of the University of Helsinki (in 1976–79) and chairman of the committee for planning monitoring of the reforms at the university level throughout the country (in 1979–80). Although a substantial proportion of permanently appointed university teachers had reservations with regard to the models put forward by the Ministry of Education, Tamminen, who was an optimist at heart, could also perceive the opportunities that they offered, which aroused his enthusiasm to a point at which he was optimistic enough to decide in favour of the reforms.

As an experienced researcher scientist, Tamminen was invited to member-

ship of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters in 1982. He also served as dean of the Faculty of Theology in 1984–87, chairman of the Finnish Theological Literature Society in 1978–83 and chair-

man of the Educational Committee of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland. He received the medal of a Knight Commander of the Order of the White Rose of Finland in 1990.

Obituary by Markku Heikkilä

*Photo:
Finnish Union of
University Professors*