

PhD-topic Heta Hurskainen

From Individual to Society. Social Ethics in the Bilateral Dialogues Between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland 1970 – 2008

In my study, I examine the development of the negotiations' social ethics, which is bound up with the political, societal and cultural ruptures that took place during the decades in question.

I argue that the interpretation of social ethics presented in the so called "Russian dialogues" has developed out of two separate reasons. On the one hand, changes in the Soviet Union's, later Russia's social, political and cultural circumstances in society have made it possible for the churches to ever more intensively turn to socio-ethical discussion. On the other hand, the theological approach established early on in the negotiations has created the basis for a doctrinal breakthrough that is best seen in the way the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland handles social ethics.

The negotiations have managed to be a credible forum between Eastern and Western Christianity. As an example of this are the ongoing negotiations and the continuous development of their substance through societal changes. External political and societal reasons have never determined the existence of the dialogues. On the contrary, they have been taken advantage of in the socio-ethical discussions, where borderlines have been broken and new contacts found between Eastern and Western Christianity.