

**MISSION ATLAS PROJECT**  
**Europe**  
**Finland**

**Snapshots Section**

**Country Name:** Republic of Finland; Locally—*Suomi*

**Country Founded in:** December 6, 1917—Independence

**Population:** 5.2 million

**Government Type: (national, regional and local):** Constitutional Republic—civil law system.

**Geography/location in the world:** Northern Europe. Finland is located between Sweden and Russia, and is surrounded by the Baltic Sea, Gulf of Bothnia, and the Gulf of Finland.

**Number of people groups:** 30

**Picture of flag:**



**Religion Snapshot**

**Major Religion and % of population:** Christianity –Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland—84.2%

**All religions and % for each:**

Lutheran (National Church)—84.2%

Greek Orthodox—1.1%

Other Christian—1.1%

Other—0.1%

None—13.5%

**Government interaction with religion:** The 1919 Finnish Constitution provides for freedom of worship, and that freedom has been guaranteed since 1923.

# Mission Atlas Project

## Country Profile Republic of Finland

### Basic Facts

**Name:** Republic of Finland Locally—*Suomi*

#### Demographics –

Population—5,231,372

Population Growth Rate—0.14%

Finland's population density is on average 17 people per square kilometer, making Finland the third (after Norway and Iceland) most sparsely populated country in Europe. However, population distribution is not even throughout the country, where 60% of Finns live in urban areas, concentrated in the south. About 1.2 million live in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area alone. On the flip side, in Lapland, an area in the arctic, there are only 2 people per square kilometer.

Birth Rate—10.45 births/1,000 population

Death Rate—9.86 deaths/1,000 population

Migration Rate—0.84 migrants/1,000 population

Total Fertility Rate—1.73 children born/Woman

#### Age Structure:

- 0-14 years—17.1%
- 15-64 years—66.7%
- 65+ years—16.2%

Median Age—41.3 years ( Male—39.7/Female—42.8)

Sex Ratio—0.96 males/females

Life Expectancy at birth—78.5 years (Male—74.99/Female—82.17)

The vast majority of the Finnish inhabitants are Finns, but there are a few other ethnic groups and significant minority groups from other European nations.

- Finn—93.4%
- Swede—5.7%
- Russian—0.4%
- Estonian—0.2%
- Roma—0.2%
- Sami—0.1%

## Language –

Four languages are recognized as being spoken in Finland: Finnish, Swedish, Russian, and Sami. Finnish and Swedish are both official languages. Sami is recognized as partially official, and Russian is spoken by the Russian speaking minority.

1. Finnish—Finnish is a Finno-Ugric language and is not related to any of the other major European languages. It has some similarities to Estonian and has a remote resemblance to Hungarian. Finnish uses numerous vowels and few consonants; it is a completely phonetic language. Finnish is spoken by approximately 6 million people, most of which reside in Finland. Finnish has the status of “official minority language” in Sweden. The Finnish speaking population is on a steady incline, and is growing faster than the Swedish speaking population. Finnish is recognized as an official language of the European Union.

Two main types of Finnish are used in Finland—the Standard Language and the Spoken Language. The Standard is formal and generally used in church sermons and political speeches. It is typically used when writing books and official documents. The Spoken language on the other hand is spoken amongst the common people in everyday life, including the work place, and is used on television and radio programs. It is common in personal letters and emails.

Finnish is also divided into Eastern and Western dialects which are mutually intelligible, with only minor vowel, diphthong, and rhythm differences.

- Western—The South-West dialects are spoken in Finland Proper and Satakunta. The Tavastian dialects are spoken in Tavastia. The Southern Ostrobothnian dialects are spoken in Southern Ostrobothnia. The Middle and North Ostrobothnia dialects are spoken in Central and Northern Ostrobothnia. The Far Northern dialects are spoken in Lapland.
- Eastern—The Eastern dialects are influenced more by the Savonians and Karelians, as opposed to having a Scandinavian and Finland-Swedish influence. The East Finnish culture and language is thought to be closest to the original Finnish culture—the Kalevala. There are Savo Finnish dialects and Karelian Finnish.

## 2. Swedish

Swedish is a Germanic language spoken in Sweden and parts of Finland. Swedish is also classified as a Scandinavian language, and is mutually intelligible with two other Scandinavian languages—Danish and Norwegian. Swedish uses the basic Latin alphabet with three additional letters.

Finland-Swedish is a term for the family of Swedish dialects spoken within Finland by Finland-Swedes. Finland-Swedish is distinguished from yet mutually intelligible with Standard Swedish speakers. It should be noted however, that Finland-Swedish is not simply Swedish being spoken with a Finnish accent.

3. Russian—The Russian language is the most widespread Slavic language. It is in the Indo European language family and is an official language of the United Nations. Russian does not use the Latin alphabet, as do many of the Slavic languages, but actually uses the Cyrillic alphabet instead.
4. Sami—Sami in itself is a general name for the Uralic languages spoken in various regions North European countries including Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Sami is sometimes mistakenly considered as simply one language spoken by all the Lappic peoples, but there are actually numerous Sami languages alternately known as Saami, Sámi, Samic, Saamic, Lappish, and Lappic. The use of “Lapp” is often considered derogatory and is typically avoided.

The Sami languages are divided internally into two groups—western and eastern. These groups are further divided into various subgroups and individual languages. There are currently nine living Sami languages. There are sharp language boundaries, especially between Northern Sami, Inari Sami, and Skolt Sami, where the languages are not generally mutually intelligible.

Northern Sami, Inari Sami, and Skolt Sami are spoken in Finland.

- Northern Sami—An estimated 15,000 speakers across Norway, Sweden, and Finland speak Northern Sami. This is about 75% of all Sami speakers. There are three major dialect groups—Torne, Finnmark, and Sea Sami. The language is used with an extended version of the Latin/Roman alphabet.
- Inari Sami—There are an estimated 500 speakers in Finland. The majority of the speakers are middle aged and live in the Finnish town of Inari. It is spoken exclusively in Finland, and the only Sami language where that is the case. The language is seriously endangered as very few children learn and use the language. Inari Sami uses an extended version of the Latin alphabet.
- Skolt Sami—An estimated 400 speakers throughout parts of Finland and Russia. Skolt Sami is recognized as an official Sami language in Lapland and is used in official business dealings. Skolt Sami uses the Roman alphabet. Skolt Sami is an endangered language.

A large percentage of Finns speak English competently, and a small population of Finns actually speak English as their second native language.

[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)  
[www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)  
[www.virtual.finland.fi](http://www.virtual.finland.fi)

## **Society/Culture –**

Finns have a strong sense of national pride and identity. However, they are undemonstrative in public settings and highly value privacy.

A Finnish proverb reads, “Silence is a person’s best friend, for it remains behind after the rest has gone.” Finns tend to carry themselves in a reserved, quiet, and cautious manner. They further support the Chinese proverb, “Your speech should be better than silence, if not, be silent.”

Finns carry the world record for having the highest rate of coffee consumption per person. In fact, Finnish coffee drinking has become such a ritual that is equated to Japan’s ritual tea ceremony. Coffee is shared during various occasions, from a simple afternoon or evening coffee, to name-day coffee, engagement coffee, or sauna coffee. Coffee can mark any noted time, place, or event. Often sweet breads, cookies, or cakes are enjoyed along side the coffee.

Finland gave women the right to vote in national elections in 1907, being the first country to do so. Today, it is reported that more than 37% of the legislators in the Finnish government are women. In fact the current president is a female. Women make up more than half of the university student population. Nevertheless, men are still receiving higher average earnings, where the average female income is 75% of that of a man.

Finns wear modern western style clothing.

In greeting, Finns shake hands and make eye contact. Kisses are rarely shared as greetings.

Food is traditionally plain and simple, including fish, meat, potatoes, berries, and vegetables. Spices are used sparingly

The age for military service can begin at 18 years. There is compulsory military service for boys 18 years of age for 12 months.

Finns tend to enjoy athletic activities, but they excel in individual rather than team sports. The national sport is skiing, which its invention is actually attributed to the Finns. Finnish skis have been found that date back more than 3,700 years. Skiing is used for leisure as well as transportation. There are around 200 ski jumps located in Finland, and cross country skiing is also popular even among children. Every 45 minutes during the school day, the children get to break for recess which involves some type of outdoor activity.

Finns enjoy most things that require stamina and endurance, and are famous for their long distance runners.

Hockey, swimming, skating, soccer and Finnish baseball are also popular among Finns.

The Sauna—

The sauna has been a part of Finnish culture since ancient times. In fact, it was originally thought to be a holy place—women used them to give birth and they were used to cleanse the bodies of the deceased. Finns built the first wooden saunas more than 2000 years ago. There are approximately 5 million people living in Finland, with more than 2 million recorded saunas in existence. The Finns are known to use saunas to relax, cleanse their minds, and refresh their spirits. Saunas are an important part of life, and almost every home or apartment has a sauna included. Saunas are found in homes, schools, hotels, hospitals, the workplace, summer cottages, prisons, and even churches. Saunas are enjoyed by Finns in all social circles, from individual families, to Parliament, to the military.

Titles are not typically recognized or addressed while in the sauna, as it is a place to completely relax. The use of the sauna is seen more as a necessity rather than a luxury, and most people use them at least once a week.

Families often bathe in the sauna together, but most public saunas are gender specific. The sauna experience is completely natural to Finns, as they begin as a young child. While everyone may have a slightly different method, there is no right or wrong way in going about it. The Finns stress the idea of following your bodies own rhythm is rotating between the steam room, washing room, and open air.

The sauna is perhaps the only place where Finns actually forget about work and will talk about various topics freely.

The sauna experience begins by taking a shower, then entering the heated room. It is against Finnish sauna etiquette to wear any kind of clothing while in the sauna, but one will typically sit on a towel. Sometimes Finns will gently hit themselves with silver birch twigs (*vihta*), which helps in muscle relaxation. When the heat begins to become unbearable, one will step outside into the cool temperature and take a swim in the lake, sea, or pool. Sometimes people will even roll around in the snow. After cooling down, they will re-enter the heated room, beginning the cycle again. This is repeated for anywhere from thirty minutes to two hours. The cycle is completed by a shower, followed by a sausage and a beer.

The average temperature in a Finnish sauna is anywhere from 160-180 degrees Fahrenheit, but it can exceed 200 sometimes. The extreme temperatures are possible due to humidity control.

The Finns are avid readers. Finland proudly boasts one of the highest literacy rates in the world, and most people put this skill to great use. Finnish libraries are thoroughly used, bookstores are extremely popular, and Finns continually buy and read books. Finland is home to one of the world's largest bookstores in its capital, Helsinki. Finland produces numerous newspapers, magazines, and books each year.

Holidays—

- January 1—New Year's Day
- January 6--Epiphany
- May 1—Spring Celebration, Student Celebration Day, and Socialist labor day.
  - It is celebrated with speeches and parades.

- Spring—Good Friday and Easter
- June—Midsummer Celebration
  - This is celebrated in late June and marked by bonfires through Finland.
- November 3—All Saint’s Day
- December 6—Independence Day since 1917.
- December 24, 25—Christmas Eve and Christmas
- December 26—Boxing Day

Santa—

Christmas is the most important holiday for Finns. Those in Finland take Santa Claus very seriously, claiming in fact that the real Santa actually lives in Lapland, the northernmost region of Finland. Santa lives there with his wife—Mother Christmas. Nearby is his toy shop where he and the elves make toys. Reindeer are native to the area. Finland is also home to the only Santa theme park.

Santa travels around Christmas Eve, visiting children in his reindeer drawn sleigh, bringing gifts. Children often greet him with Christmas carols. Finnish children do not hang stockings since Santa personally visits them Christmas Eve.

The tradition holds that because there are no reindeer actually in the North Pole, based upon the 1925 discovery, it became known that Santa’s residence is officially in Lapland.

WorldMark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, Volume 4, 1997.

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

<http://www.didyouknow.cd/xmas/fatherxmas.htm>

<http://virtual.finland.fi/netcomm/news/showarticle.asp?intNWSAID=25001>

[www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)

## **Government –**

Finland is a republic with a civil law system. Finland gained its independence December 6, 1917. Helsinki is the capital, and the nation is divided into six provinces—Aland, Etela-Suomen Lanni, Ita-Suomen Laani, Lansi-Suomen Laani, Lappi, and Oulun Laani.

The government is divided into three branches—Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. There is universal suffrage at 18 years of age.

- Executive—
  - Chief of State—President (elected by popular vote for 6 year term, up to two terms.)
  - Head of Government—Prime Minister (appointed by the president).
  - Cabinet—Council of State (appointed by the president and responsible to Parliament)
- Legislative—
  - Unicameral Parliament—200 seats, members elected by popular vote and proportional distribution to serve four year terms.)

- Judicial—
  - Supreme Court—Appointed by the president

Every local government is self-governing and lead by a popularly elected council.

According to Nationmaster Statistics, Finland is the second least politically corrupt nation in the world.

[www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)  
[www.nationmaster.com](http://www.nationmaster.com)

## **Economy –**

Finland has developed a strong and stable economy in recent years. They have a highly industrialized, free market economy. Their primary economic sector is manufacturing, but they also do a lot of trading. During the fall of communism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Finland's economy experience a severe recession. They had highly depended on foreign trade with nations that were suddenly broken and suffering. Finland's unemployment sky-rocketed, going from 3.2% in 1990 to 16.6% in 1994. Unemployment is still a problem today. The recession for the most part, bottomed out in 1993, and began steadily climbing once again. Finland's growth rate is one of the highest in the OECD countries. Their currency is the Euro.

Finland's largest company is known worldwide—Nokia. The Nokia Corporation is actually the largest mobile telephone manufacture in the world.

### **Budget**

- Revenues—\$99.61 billion
- Expenditures—\$97.14 billion

Public Debt--\$39.6% of GDP

External Debt—\$211.7 billion

GDP—\$161.5 billion

GDP exchange rate—\$184.2 billion

GDP real growth rate—2.2%

GDP per capita—\$30,900

GDP composition by sector

- Agriculture—2.8%
- Industry—29.5%
- Services—67.6%

Labor Force—2.61 million

Unemployment Rate—8.4%

Key Economic Sector—Manufacturing:

- Wood



- Metals Engineering
- Telecommunications
- Electronics

#### Agriculture Products

- Barley
- Wheat
- Sugar beets
- Potatoes
- Dairy Cattle
- Fish

#### Industries

- Metals and Metal products
- Electronics
- Machinery and scientific instruments
- Ship building
- Pulp and paper
- Foodstuffs
- Chemicals
- Textiles
- Clothing

#### Exports—\$67.88 billion

- Machinery and equipment
- Chemicals
- Metals
- Timber
- Paper
- Pulp

#### Export Partners

- Russia—10.9%
- Sweden—10.7%
- Germany—10.3%
- United Kingdom—6.6%
- United States—6.2%
- Netherlands 4.8%

#### Imports—\$56.45 billion

- Foodstuffs
- Petroleum
- Chemicals
- Transport equipment
- Iron and steel

- Machinery
- Textile yarn and fabric
- Grains

#### Import Partners

- Germany—15.9%
- Sweden—13.9%
- Russia—13.8%
- Netherlands—6%
- China—4.5%
- Denmark—4.4%

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

2006 CIA Report—[www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)

#### **Literacy –**

Finland has a 100% literacy rate, meaning everyone over the age of 15 is able to read and write. School is compulsory and free, and so all students at the minimum complete a basic nine year education program. Besides being literate in Finnish, most Finns are capable in other languages as well, as they study two foreign languages throughout primary school, and add others in middle school.

WorldMark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, Volume 4, 1997.

[www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)

#### **Land/Geography –**

Finland is a part of Fenno-Scandia, situated in Northern Europe. Finland shares its borders with the Baltic Sea, the Gulf of Bothnia, the Gulf of Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Russia. The capital, Helsinki, which is located in the southernmost region of the country, is actually the northernmost continental European national capital

Finland is a little smaller than the US state of Montana. Finland is actually one of the only countries which is still growing. Due to the post-glacial rebound it gains about 7 square kilometers a year. Finland consists also of various islands off the coast, the largest group being the Aland Islands.

Finland lies in the extreme Northern region of Europe, and roughly one third of Finland lies above the Arctic Circle.

Finland has a varied topography, ranging from coastal plains and numerous islands in the southwest, to an extensive plateau in the central region, to dense forests and mountains in the north. Finland contains 60,000 lakes, thus approximately 9.9% of Finland is fresh, inland water. Finland's climate is cold but temperate, but it could be potentially sub-arctic. Despite Finland's extremely northern latitude, the climate is surprisingly mild due to its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf Stream. Finland has four distinct seasons with cold winters and warm

summers. The average temperature ranges from 7-27 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter, to 55-63 degrees in the summer.



<http://www.airtool-yutani.co.jp/Finland.htm>



<http://www.condor-organic.org/organic331.html>

## History

### Prehistory

The area of present day Finland was settled in a time known as the Stone Age around 8500 BC, immediately following the Ice Age. The people living in the land are thought to have been hunter/gatherers and fishermen. Sometime around 5300 BC, pottery became a part of the Finnish culture. The pottery remains are found to have distinct decorative style, and belong to the Comb Ceramic Culture. A form of community exchange networks came into existence around this time between Finland and Northeastern Europe. Rock paintings have been found in Eastern Finland. These early peoples are believed to have spoken a Uralic language, that later developed and evolved into the Sami and Finnish languages. Beginning in about 3200 BC, there was a strong cultural influence, if not an actual people migration, from peoples south of the Gulf of Finland. The influence was mostly in southwestern Finland and the culture became a part of the European Battle Axe culture. The Battle Axe and Comb Ceramic cultures merged and brought about the Kiukainen culture, which existed from 2300-1500 BC.

The cultures moved into the Bronze Age around 1500 BC. The coastal areas were marked with a Nordic influence, whereas the inland cultures had a Northern Russian influence. Then, iron tools were discovered from about 500 BC onward. It appears the tools were imported. Roman artifacts have been found in the area from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Finland was being influenced from the west, the south, and the east.

By the 1300-1400's, during the Terminal Iron Age, Finland was divided somewhat into the Finns, Tavastians, Karelians, and Sami.

### Middle Ages

While the Finns had knowledge of the Vikings and their reputation, there is no evidence of Scandinavians settling or invading inland Finland during the Viking Age. The exception is the Aland Islands, an area belonging to Finland that lies off the western coast. The island was settled by both Finns and Swedes.

Christianity appears to have entered the area around the 11<sup>th</sup> century, as Bishop Henry Upsala, likely an Englishman or Scot, came to Finland in 1155. He is assumed to have been supported by the Swedish king, with the purpose of organizing a church and the respective ecclesiastical taxes. Henry was martyred soon after he arrived. However, a substantial cult did develop in his wake. Nevertheless, the Church of Finland is recorded to have been in a state of disorder and disarray by the close of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. At the opening of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Thomas, a missionary bishop arrived to bring stability.

Meanwhile, the nation was also in a vulnerable state as it lacked any central unity or power. Various known secular powers were looking to step in and rule, such as Sweden, Denmark, and Novgorod. Sweden won the competition, and after a small crusade sometime from 1238 to 1249, Swedish regent Birger Jarl, stepped in and brought organized rule and order to Finland. The area known as Karelia, just east of Finland, came under the rule of Novgorod. Thus, the eastern Finnish border became the line between Catholic and Orthodox Christianity.

Finland entered into the medieval European society in the midst of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The Dominicans arrived about this time, exerting a huge influence in the culture. For the first time in 1362, Finland representatives were invited to be involved in the election of the king for the Kingdom of Sweden, officially recognizing Finland as a part of this kingdom.

There were not many large urban areas throughout Finland, but the area of Turku began to develop in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, attracting even German merchants and craftsmen. This city/bishopric in Turku was practically the only urban area and the only See, so it was practically the equivalent to today's Finland. There were populations of Sami developed around hunting and fishing lifestyles, as well as populations of farmers organized into parishes scattered throughout. There was a large migration of native Swedes onto the western regions of Finland, from the north to the south, and particularly to the Aland Islands, located between present day Sweden and Finland. The Swedish language in particular was adopted in these areas, and is widely spoken still today. As the Swedes had the upper hand in the kingdom, Swedish became known as the superior language.

Sweden and Novgorod struggled over control of Finland during the Middle Ages. The Swedes had a stronghold in Viipuri, on their eastern border of Finland. In 1323, Sweden and Novgorod signed the Peace of Nöteborg, but it was short lived. For most of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Finland actually experienced population and economic prosperity. While there was a declared peace during the time, the peace was actually somewhat unstable; struggles and minor collisions erupted through the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

During these times of strife, the kingdom was also undergoing internal struggles, as there was civil war in Scandinavian Sweden in 1380. Denmark prevailed, thus Queen Margaret I unified Sweden, Denmark, and Norway into the Scandinavian kingdom known as the Kalmar Union. For more than a century, Sweden attempted to break free, often times pulling Finland into the struggle. By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the tensions on the eastern border intensified. Moscow ended up defeating Novgorod, ending the republic's power. As Russia gained power, relations with Sweden grew worse, and from 1495-97, the two fought a bloody war.

## 16<sup>th</sup> Century

Gustav Vasa became the King of Sweden once the Kalmar Union collapsed in 1521. Vasa brought in a time of reformation. For instance, the state administration went through major reforms, increasing their power and stronghold within the local communities. The Swedish church also went through a reform in 1527. The New Testament was successfully translated into the Finnish language in by Mikael Agricola, bishop of Turku, in 1551.

Helsinki, originally named Helsingfors, was founded by Gustav Vasa in 1550. The city was nothing more than a fishing village for a couple of centuries.

After Gustav Vasa's death in 1560, his crown was passed to his sons. Each of his three sons had a separate turn with the crown. King Erik XIV was first, introducing the era of expansion as he took Estonia's capital Tallin in 1561. This marked the Kingdom of Sweden's entrance in the Livonian War, which brought about a war era lasting for 160 years. The Finns suffered during this era, as they experienced drafts, high taxes, and abuse by the military. Thus, in November of 1596, the Finnish peasants revolted in what is known as the Cudgel War. The war lasted for three months, and the Finnish peasants experienced a bloody and brutal defeat and suppression by the Swedes' army.

Meanwhile, from 1590-1595, the Russo-Swedish war was fought. In 1595 a peace treaty was signed with Russia, moving Finland's border inward, to the north and the east.

## 17<sup>th</sup> Century

The Kingdom of Sweden experienced a time of transformations in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. King Gustavus Adolphus, who ruled the Kingdom from 1611-1632, brought in military reforms. He was successful at transforming Sweden's army that had been nothing more than a peasant militia into one of the most efficient fighting machines in all of Europe. The Livonia conquest was ended, as well as the Ingrian War, which was another battle between Sweden and Russia. Sweden acquired a few territories from the internally divided, partially defeated Russia in the Peace Treaty of Stolbova.

The Swedish Kingdom established a colony in the Americas from 1638-1654, in the modern day Delaware-Pennsylvania area. More than half of the colonists were Finnish.

With military confidence, the Swedish and Finnish armies decided to join the Protestant/Catholic struggle in Germany known as the Thirty Years' War in 1630. The Finnish cavalry in particular, known as the Hakkapeliitat, with brutal means, successfully communicated a spirit of fear among the Catholic troops. Once the Peace of Westphalia was signed in 1648, ending the war, Sweden was considered to be among the great European powers.

During the time of war, significant reforms were made in Finland. For one, Count Per Brahe served as the governor from 1637-40, and 1648-54, and he is known to have implemented several beneficial reforms. Under his leadership, many towns were founded, greatly aiding Finland's development. Second, in 1640 the Academy of Abo, which is the first Finnish

university, was founded in Turku. It was founded upon Count Per Brahe's request, but officially by Sweden's Queen Christina, making it the only European university founded by a woman. And then in 1642, the entire Bible was completed and published in the Finnish language.

Despite the beneficial reforms, the era was somewhat dismal for the Finnish peasants. As the Little Ice Age began, issuing in a time of a much colder climate, they also were experiencing a bitter period of high taxes and continual wars. Finnish military was used in all of the Swedish endeavors. In 1655-1660, Finnish soldiers were back fighting bitter wars on the fields of Livonia, Poland, and Denmark.

In 1676, Sweden became an absolute monarchy, further limiting Finland's role in the kingdom.

A famine broke out in 1697, lasting until 1699, killing about 30% of the Finnish population. Immediately after the famine, Finland was again ushered into a time of war.

### **The Age of Reason**

The 18<sup>th</sup> century opened up with the Great Northern War, which began in 1700 and lasted until 1721. During this war, Finland was occupied by Russian troops. By the close of the war, Sweden lost their absolute monarchy as well as their position as a great European power. Russian emerged as the leading Northern power. Parliament began ruling the Swedish nation, with the Hats and the Caps as the primary parties. The Caps desired peace with Russia, and had the support of many Finns. On the other hand, the Hats wanted to fight for revenge against Russia.

The Finnish population began rapidly growing towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Finnish society was divided into four Estates: peasants, clergy, nobility, and burghers. At the turn of the century, 90% of Finns were peasants. Overall, life was good for the Finns during this brief span, as it was a time of relative peace.

In 1741, as the Hat party dominated the government, the country made a failed attempt at winning back the lost territory and provinces from Russia. This brought another round of Russian occupation, known as the Less Wrath, from 1741-42. In the peace treaty, the Peace of Abo, the Russian border moved westward.

In the next years, the Swedish political system's integrity began faltering as they began taking bribes from other governments. King Gustav III decided to take action, and in 1771 he reinstated royal power by staging a coup and abolishing parliament. About a decade later, he entered a discouraging war with Russia, which was detrimental to his reputation. In the meantime, a group of Finns attempted to establish a separate state with Russia's support. This move was stopped by Gustav III, and in 1789 a new Swedish constitution was provided, giving more royal power. The constitution also improved the life of the peasants, yet most Swedes viewed their king as a tyrant.

As the 18<sup>th</sup> century was nearing an end, Finland began to experience some developments. New inventions were created such as a hot air balloon, which made its appearance only a year

after being created in France. Potato farming became a major part of life for many, and trade began to increase. The Age of Reason brought in a sense of greater self-consciousness, and Finns especially became more aware and involved in society matters. The Finns major hindrance was that many spoke only Finnish, and newspapers and information primarily were composed in Swedish or French.

Russian influence was great in Finland, especially in the southern areas. As the 18<sup>th</sup> century came to a close, Finland was prepared to reassign loyalty to their strong Eastern neighbor. However, their territories already controlled by Russia due to peace treaty, known as “Old Finland”, were experiencing a period of frustration as they were governed by Swedish laws, yet lived ultimately under the Russians decisions. This was increased as Russia sent numerous non-Finnish troops into “Old Finland” to be trained and developed for the Imperial Army.

The Swedish King Gustav III was assassinated in 1792, and his son Gustav IV Adolf became king. The new ruler did not prove to be the strong, competent ruler the Swedish Kingdom needed to survive the next era.

### **Russian Grand Duchy**

A new war broke out in February of 1808, referred to as the Finnish War. This war was fought between Sweden and Russia for the control of Finland. The Russian army, under the leadership of Tsar Alexander I, conquered Finland. The four Estates of Finland were gathered to swear their allegiance to Russia in 1809. Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. “Old Finland” was given back to the Finns in 1812. While their degree of autonomy varied throughout the years, the Swedish law stayed intact and the peasants retained their freedom. In fact, their four-chamber Diet was reinstated in the 1860’s, and shortly after Finland began the process of industrialization. These steps laid the way for Finland’s future prosperity.

After Finland’s long lasting incorporation in the Swedish Empire, the Swedish language dominated and took official status. It was not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after a surge of Finnish Nationalism that the Finnish language gained a notable place in society. As a boost to the Finnish Nationalism, *Kalevala*, a national epic based upon myths and legends of the early eastern Finns, was published in Finnish in 1835. In 1892, Finnish finally became an official language, with an equal status to Swedish.

As Russia strove to improve relations with their Finnish Grand Duchy, they replaced the four-chamber Diet based on Swedish law, with a Parliament. The Finns were given universal suffrage, making the Finnish women the first in the world to be fully eligible to vote.

### **Independence and Civil War**

After the Russian February Revolution in 1917, the Tsar was removed from power. Finland was provided with a new Senate, with parallel structural power to the already operating Parliament. The Finns came to the conclusion that their union with Russia ended upon the Tsar’s abdication of the throne. The Social Democrats of Parliament made a bold move, known as the

Power Act, to restrict Russia's influence, yet retain Russia's defense protection and foreign affairs policies. According to the Russians, the Finns had gone too far, and Parliament was dissolved. All of the non-Socialists of Finland were satisfied with the decision, and were anxious to have non-Socialists win the majority in the Parliament elections. They were hoping to cooperate with the Russians' new provisional government. The Socialists on the other hand, were obstinately maintaining their opposition to the Russians, and did not recognize the government's move to dissolve Parliament.

The whole ordeal over the Power Act caused the Social Democrats to leave Senate. Those in Parliament however, continued to ignore Russia's dissolution of Parliament, and reconvened for the new year in August of 1917. The Socialists and supporters of the Power Act were the only ones in attendance. The Russians came in, taking over the chamber, and officially dissolved Parliament and administered new elections. A small bourgeois majority led Parliament, and the Senate was completely free of Socialists. These actions evoked hostility among the Socialists, which led to numerous politically motivated terror assaults and assassinations.

As the Russian Revolution continued, the October Revolution acted to completely transform Finland's political development. The non-Socialists in majority in Parliament felt it could be time to make great efforts towards complete independence, and in time, the Socialists had come to see the Russians as an example to follow. Thus, on November 15, 1917, the same day that Russia declared complete succession "for the Peoples of Russia," Finland's parliament issued a declaration assuming Finnish Sovereignty. On December 6, Parliament issued a declaration of independence. Russia's new revolutionary government acknowledged the independence on January 4, 1918.

While Independence was granted, Finland was not free of war. The bitter and bloody Finnish Civil War plagued the Finns from January to May of 1918. There were the "Reds", who were the Social Democrats, and the "Whites," who were commanded by the conservatives and fought for the bourgeoisie. The Reds were predominately tenant farmers and workers, and were supported by the Russian Bolsheviks. Germany joined the battle, helping to defeat the Reds.

Once the Finnish Civil War was finished, despite the declaration pronouncing Finland to be an independent republic, Parliament voted to establish the country as the *Kingdom* of Finland. The Finns elected a German prince, Frederick Charles of Hesse, to be King—Vaino I of Finland. Nevertheless, Germany's defeat in WWI prevented the idea from materializing and Finland instead became a democratic parliamentary republic. Kaarlo Juho Stahlberg was elected president in 1919.

One of the first issues the new Republic faced was dealing with a dispute over the Aland Islands. The Isles were located between Sweden and Finland, with Sweden being the predominate language spoken. The Aland Islands sought to be ceded to Sweden, but Finland declined the request, instead granting them autonomy. The Islands were not content with the decision, and thus the League of Nations picked up the dispute. They declaring Finnish sovereignty over the Islands, but also making the Islands a neutral, autonomous province.



Finland experienced a couple of more disputes, particularly border disputes with Soviet Russia. Two of which include the Aunus expedition and the Pork mutiny. The relations were improved by the Treaty of Tartu in 1920, where Finland gave up East Karelia to the Soviets, but gained Petsamo. As Finland entered the 1930s, the Soviet Union began to tighten its policy with Finland. They initially just limited merchant ship navigation around the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga, but they totally blocked access in 1937.

Nationalist feelings from the Civil War continued on for some decades. Eventually, the proto-Fascist Lapua Movement evolved from this sentiment in 1929, initially gaining much anti Communist support. However, in 1932 after a failed coup attempt, the movement was banned and the leaders were put in prison.

## **World War II**

Finland found herself heavily involved in the Second World War. In fact Finland ended up fighting against the Soviet Union twice—the Winter War of 1939-1940 and the Continuation War of 1941-1944. Throughout the war Finland was able to maintain independence and democracy. Finland was adamantly anti-Communist.

As a result of the war, being allies with Germany, Finland lost an eighth of its territory, requiring resettlement of an eighth of the population, and they had to pay heavy reparations. During the time of the wars and immediately following, the Finns evacuated around 80,000 children. Most went to Sweden, while a few went as far as Norway and Denmark. In 1948, after the war was completely over, the majority of the children were sent back to their families, yet about 15-20% stayed with their new families. This repeated separation from home, family and language, turned out to be scarring and has proved to be a generally forgotten tragedy.

## **Post-War Era**

Finland went in and came out of WWII having a democratic constitution, and was able to maintain it even through the Cold War era which followed. While the economy was not originally strong, Finland had a developing free market economy in place. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union had Finland sign treaties in both 1947 and 1948, which placed restrictions and requirements on the Finns, these were both dissolved in 1991, as the Soviet Union was broken up.

Finland practiced much caution in foreign affairs adopting a policy known as “Finlandization.” As far as political matters are concerned Finland declared neutrality. About this time Finland also began interacting with their Nordic neighbors. They entered a passport union with the Nordic Council in 1952, and they joined the Nordic Council in 1955. They had actually been prevented from doing so sooner do to the Soviet Union’s grip on them, fearing they were becoming too Western. Finland also joined the United Nations in 1955. Finland joined the European Free Trade Association in 1961 as an associate member, and became a full member in 1986.

This post-war era turned out to be productive for the Finnish nation, who experience a time of high economic growth and development. Finland became much more politically stable, and by the 1980's became one of the most technologically advanced nations world-wide, with an equally high standard of living.

## **Recent History**

During the 1990s, immediately following the break-up of the Soviet Union, Finland's economy underwent a disastrous decline. The Soviet Union had been one of Finland's principle trade partners, and thus their collapse caused a depression for Finland as well. Finland found themselves with many unemployed, and has yet to fully recover. The economy was able to pick back up, and is back to being a strong market economy. Nokia, Finland's top company, greatly aided the economic recovery. Finland joined the European Union in 1995.

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, 10<sup>th</sup> edition, Volume 5

## **Christian History**

Christianity arrived in Finland in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Catholicism came first from the west, but Orthodox influences were soon to follow from the east. The Catholic missionary endeavors proved more effective, and by the 14<sup>th</sup> century most of the country was under Roman Catholic influence. The Roman Catholic Church brought in a structural society and served to unite the peoples of Finland. The Church also provided education for the Finns. As the Middle Ages came to a close, Finland had completely adapted and fully fallen under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church.

By the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Protestant Reformation had made its way to the Kingdom of Sweden. Its grip and impact in Sweden and Finland however, was not due to the passion of the people, or even the clergy, it was instead adapted into a royal decree by King Gustavus Vasa. A particular portion of Luther's doctrine intrigued the king—a doctrine which moved to reduce secular power in the church, and place it instead with the crown. Thus, the King was more than interested in transferring the income and properties of the Church into his hands.

Lutheranism brought a sense of unity to the kingdom. The Swedish kingdom accepted the Augsburg Confession in 1593, and Lutheranism soon became the state religion. The Kingdom demanded all the people to strictly adhere to Lutheranism, severing all ties with Rome and allowing no deviation in religion. The King assumed all the authority the Pope held in Rome, and stripped all of the church's assets.

Good things developed nonetheless. For example, portions of the Bible were first translated into the Finnish language after the transition to Lutheranism. Mikael Agricola, the first Bishop of the Lutheran church in Finland, translated the New Testament. Soon to follow, services were even conducted in Finnish. The Lutheran church also brought about other changes, such as priests could now marry and all the monasteries were closed.

The Lutheran church had much the same affect on the kingdom as the Roman Catholic Church had held throughout the Middle Ages. The Lutheran church assumed the roles of instilling unity, calling for loyalty to the state, teaching Christian morality, and educating the Finnish population.

At the opening of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a movement known as Pietism began to make its way to Finland. The movement placed an emphasis on individual conversion experiences, emotions, and spirituality. As the movement gained ground in Finland, the, revivalist movements, including Pietism, Evangelism, and Laestadianism emerged in Finland. The state and church leaders opposed these movements, fearing political unrest and instability. The clergy further feared the movements would spread heresy. Eventually the state denied Finns the right to assemble and the leaders of the revival movements were given restrictions.

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century Finland was experiencing drastic political changes. In 1809, Finland was separated from Sweden and joined with the Russian Empire. While Russia's Orthodox Tsar was now the ruler of the Finns instead of the Lutheran King of Sweden, the Lutheran church maintained its role of the Finnish state church. In 1869, there was an Ecclesiastical Act issued, creating some separation of church and state. At that point, church founded the Synod, which was created to be the church's ultimate decision making body, in place of the state government.

Finland declared independence in 1917, but civil war soon plagued the nation. The Lutheran clergy tended to support bourgeois Finland, and relations with the working class grew distant. The bourgeois began to see the church as the stronghold and supporter of western culture, legal structure and national tradition. During the World Wars, the church proved to be a unifying source and support for the national cause. However, also during the wars, the separation of church and state continued. The Church Central Fund was founded in 1941, and the Ecclesiastical Board in 1944. These furthered administrative and financial independence. Once the wars were over, the church adopted new social roles, such as family counseling, social work and youth programs.

By the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Finnish population began migrating to urban areas, opening the doors to outside influences, secularism and pluralism. This led to a feeling of indifference towards the church, with many seeing its ways as old fashioned. However, in the 1970s, there was a rise of discussion on ethical issues, and so religious interest again began to increase. Strong revival movements began again, which brought on multiplying growth of religious groups.

Even up to the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, every Finn was required to be a member of either the Lutheran or the Orthodox Church. It was in 1889 that the Act on Nonconformity was established, allowing Protestant churches official status and allowing membership within. The Baptists and Methodists were the first denominations recognized. Then in 1923, Freedom of Religion was guaranteed within the Constitution, and Finnish citizens were completely allowed to choose which, if any, denomination to belong. It was at this point that the state adopted a neutral attitude towards religion. The Evangelical Lutheran as well as the Orthodox Churches still maintains some duties that could actually be shifted to the state. For instance, the churches keep population records and burial registries.

The Finnish Ecumenical Council was created, to act as a cooperative organ for Finnish Christian communities. In 2000 members included Evangelical Lutheran, Orthodox, Finnish Free, Catholic, Salvation Army, Olaus Petri Congregation, Swedish Speaking Baptist, Finnish Speaking Methodist, Swedish Speaking Methodist, Swedish Speaking Mission Covenant, and Anglican churches.

Today, nonetheless, religion plays a minimal role in the everyday life of typical Finns. Finns, as with most Europeans, are becoming more and more liberal. Sociologist Kimmo Ketola has stated, “Finns are neither very attached to religion, nor very opposed to it.”

[www.virtualfinland.fi](http://www.virtualfinland.fi)

[http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?story\\_id=6983140](http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?story_id=6983140)

## Religions

### Non Christian

- *Islam*
  - There were an estimated 20,000 Muslims in Finland in 1999 ○ 0.18%. The first Muslims to settle in Finland were Baltic Tartars, who arrived at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
  - The Finnish Islamic Association was founded in 1925.
  - The Majority of the Muslims live in the Helsinki area.  
[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)
  
- *Judaism*
  - Judaism first entered Finland in the opening of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, by merchants and workers involved with the Russian Imperial Army. By the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the population had grown to 1,000, which is about what it is now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Jewish religions followers make up around 0.02% of the population and are experiencing a – 7.5 % decline annually.
  - There are synagogues in Turku and Helsinki.
  - While Finland and Nazi Germany were allied during WWII, Finland refused to take action against the Finnish Jews, who actually maintained their full rights and status through the duration of the war.  
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Finland.html>  
[www.virtualfinland.fi](http://www.virtualfinland.fi)
  
- *New Kadampa Tradition (Kadampa Buddhism)*
  - Kadampa Buddhism is a part of the Mahayana Buddhist school which was founded by Atisha, a great Indian Buddhist master, who lived from 982-1054. The Kadampas, or followers of this school, value the Buddha’s teachings as personal instructions, and put them into practice following Lamrim (stages to path of enlightenment.)
  - Sumatikirti Buddhalainen Keskus—Kadampa Buddhist Center for meditation located in Helsinki.

- Sumatikirti Buddhist Center was established to provide the Finnish people with an opportunity to meditate and develop peaceful states of mind.  
<http://www.kadampa.org/>  
<http://www.meditoi.com/en/>
- *Sami* [www.virtualfinland.fi](http://www.virtualfinland.fi)
  - Most of the indigenous Sami (Saami) living in northern Finland are either a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as are the majority of Finns, while the others, mostly Skolt Sami are associated with the Orthodox Church. In the past, the Sami practiced an indigenous religion, where they worshipped natural objects and practiced animism, but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Laestadianism, a strict pietistic movement, influenced the population, bringing them to Christianity. Some remains of the Animistic practices are still found in today's culture, such as the shaman's drum, which is even played within Christian services. The drums are used to bridge and keep communication between the worlds of the living and the dead.
- *Non-religious* The non-religious claims as many as 12.60 percent of the population. Primarily under the influence of secular humanism, these followers show a typical negative outlook on life. The condition of the country stimulates these feelings. Over 670,000 people follow a basic non-religious lifestyle and this group is increasing at + 1.1% as compared to + 0.1% for all related to the Christian Religion.

## Cults and Sects

- *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)* <http://www.lds.org>; *Operation World*
  - 3,300 Adherents and 25 Local Churches.
  - There is one Temple in Finland, located in Helsinki. It was dedicated on October 22, 2006.
- *Jehovah's Witnesses* [http://www.watchtower.org/statistics/worldwide\\_report.htm](http://www.watchtower.org/statistics/worldwide_report.htm); *Operation World*
  - 19,044 Witness Adherents in 2005 (some reports as high as 21000)
  - 319 Baptized and 301 Congregations (some reports for as many as 320 congregations)
  - Memorial Attendance in 2005 was 26,951

## Catholic/Orthodox Churches

- *Catholic*—<http://www.netsonic.fi/~scjregfi/scj-hist-fin.htm>
  - There are 6,500 registered Roman Catholics in Finland, this is approximately 0.13% of the population. Surprisingly, the Catholics report a + 5 % increase annually
  - There are 7 Parishes in the Finnish diocese
- *Orthodox*

- The Orthodox family in Finland numbered 53000 or 1.02% of the population
- . The annual growth rate was – 0.4%
  
- *The Greek Orthodox Church* in 1997 there were 51,373 members of the Greek Orthodox Church in Finland, making up 1% of the population
  
- *Orthodox Church of Finland* [www.virtualfinland.org](http://www.virtualfinland.org)
  - The Orthodox tradition was the earliest form of Christianity in Finland. In fact the largest Orthodox Cathedral in Western Europe is located in Helsinki
  - The church was reorganized in 1918, after ties were broken with Russia. Shortly after Finland declared independence from Russia in 1917, the Finnish Orthodox Church declared its autonomy from the Russian Church. Finland's first constitution (1918) granted the Orthodox Church an equal status with the (Lutheran) Church of Finland.
  - In 1923, the Finnish Church completely separated from the Russian Church, becoming an autonomous member of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople. At the same time the Gregorian Calendar was adopted
  - the Orthodox Church of Finland became the second national church in Finland. The autonomy of the church was recognized in 1921.
  - After the WWII, the church lost 90% of its property and the members were dispersed throughout Finland. New churches were built by the government during the years of 1950-60.
  - Total membership of the church throughout Finland was 60,000 in 2002.
  - There are three dioceses—Karelia, Helsinki, and Oulu; 25 parishes; and 150 churches.
  - There is one monastery and one convent in Finland.
- *Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia*
  - There is one unit in Finland

[www.adherents.com](http://www.adherents.com) ; *operational World*

## Christian

Protestant and other Free Churches claim as high as 88 percent of the population of Finland. These groups are often highly evangelical and active.

- *Anglican* <http://www.anglican.fi/>
  - The Anglican Church in Finland is a part of the Church of England in Europe.
  - There are about 100 members and one congregation, which meet at Cathedral Chapel in Helsinki.

- *Baptist* [www.ebf.org](http://www.ebf.org)
  - At least three major groups of Baptists serve in Finland: Swedish-speaking, Finnish-speaking, and Independent Baptists.
  - Finnish Speaking (Finnish Baptist Union)—11 congregations and 692 members.
  - Swedish Speaking (Baptist Union of Finland)—19 congregations and 1,290 members.
  - The Baptists in Finland, the Finnish Baptist Union, and the Swedish Speaking Baptists have recently celebrated the 150 year anniversary in Finland.
  
- *Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland* <http://www.evl.fi/english/index.html> , [www.virtualfinland.fi](http://www.virtualfinland.fi) ; *Operation World*
  - The Lutheran Church is a major part of the Finnish way of life—89% of infants are baptized, 90% of teenagers attend confirmation classes, 80% are married within the church, and only 2% of Finns are buried without a church service.
  - 84% of the Finnish population is registered as Evangelical Lutheran—with members standing at 1,721,000 but with 4.3 million adherents.
  - There were 548 congregations and 9 dioceses in 2006 (other reports claim as many as 1400 congregations).
  - The supreme decision making body of the church is the Synod, which meets two times a year. All members 18 and older in a parish have a right to vote in council elections.
  
- *Finnish Free Church* <http://www.uta.fi/FAST/FIN/REL/jt-free.html>
  - 13,000 Adherents, in 98 congregations, makes the Church of Finland
  - the third largest registered church in Finland.
  - The Evangelical Free Church of Finland is independent and free from state control.
  - It was first registered in 1923 and has been a member of the Finnish Ecumenical Council since 1999.
  
- *Methodist*
  - There are 1,300 Methodists in Finland in some 23 congregations
  - There are Finland—Finnish as well as a Finland—Swedish United Methodist Churches.
  
- *Seventh Day Adventist* The Adventists report some 70 congregations with almost 6000 members and 8000 adherents
  
- *The Salvation Army* The Salvation Army has some 45 congregations with 1200 members in Finland
  
- The Church of Finland (Luthern) has 3 congregations and over 1000 members
  
- *Pentecostal*
  - There are approximately 60,000 Pentecostals in Finland.

- The Finnish Pentecostal group claims over 210 congregations and 49,000 member (70,000 adherents)
- The Siloan Pentecostal group has 2800 members in one congregation
- The Maranatha Pentecostal group reports 26 congregations with 2600 members.
- The Free Pentecostal Revival has 34 congregations with 2500 members.

[www.adherents.com](http://www.adherents.com) ; *Operational World*

## People Groups

00000

American (2,600)

The Americans are a North American People of the Anglo-American people cluster. They primarily speak English and are predominately Christian adherents.

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Arab (1,300)

The Arabs are from the Arab World affinity block and the Arabian people cluster. Alternate people names include Angolan Arabs, Bedouin Arabs, Coast, Hemat, Lebanese Arab, Nawar, Palestinian Arab, Syrian Arab, Baggara, Bosnian Muslims, Iraqi Arab, Levantine Arab, Palestinian Arab, Saudi Arab, and Syro-Lebanese Arabs. They speak Arabic Standard which is a Semitic language of the Afro-Asiatic language family, and are primarily Sunni Muslims. Of the Arabs living in Finland, 0.50% are Christian. They are among the least reached.

Arabs number over 200 million and form the majority population in 22 countries. The Arabs are “the largest, most diverse and most politically influential Muslim ethnic group in the world.”

(From Richard V. Weekes, ed., *Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey*, 2d ed., *Acehnese-Lur* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984), 35).

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British (4,600)

The British are of the Anglo Celt people cluster of the Eurasian affinity bloc. They are alternately named Anglo-Pakistani, Euronesian, Scottish, White, and Anglophone. The British in Finland speak English and are primarily Christians (77.98%).

111

Deaf (8,000)

The Deaf in Europe, including the Finnish Deaf, are among the least reached peoples. The Finnish Deaf use the Finnish Sign Language. The deaf in Finland also use Finnish-Swedish Sign Language. The New Testament is in the process of being made into a video recording using Finnish Sign Language.

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Estonian (10,000)

The Estonians, also known as Estlased, are also a Finno-Ugric people cluster who speak Estonian. They are primarily Christian (79.99%).



109

Finnish—Finn (4, 829,000)

The Finns are a Eurasian People of the Finno-Ugric People Cluster. They speak Finnish and are primarily Christian adherents—89.4%. The Finns are 12.50% Evangelical.

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French (1,000)

The French in Finland, referred to also as Franco-Mauritian Mulatto, and Metropolitan, speak primarily French. The French are mostly Christian (76%).

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German—Swiss (1,500)

The German Swiss, also known as Alemannic, Alemannisch, Alsatian, German, Liechtensteiner, Schwyzerdutsch, and Swiss, are of the Germanic people cluster. They primarily speak Swiss German. The German Swiss are primarily Christians—78%.

00000

Gypsy—Finnish (5,100)

The Finnish Gypsies are a South Asian People. They speak Finnish and are primarily adherents to Christianity (80 %).

00000

Han Chinese—Mandarin (4,300)

The Han are the most numerous ethnic group worldwide. While the majority live in mainland China, the Han also reside in nearly every nation around the world. Most of the Han worldwide continue to maintain their own culture and language, feeling it is superior. The Han Chinese are also known as Beijinghua, Cantonese, Chinese, Mandarin, Guanhua, Guoyu, Hakka, Hoton, Huizui, Kreol, Northern Chinese, and Pei. The Han Chinese in Finland, primarily speak Mandarin and are non-religious. The Han of Finland are among the least reached peoples.

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Italian (500)

The Italians are a Eurasian people, speaking primarily Italian. They are 83% Christian adherents—predominately Roman Catholic.

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Jew (1,600)

The Jews in Finland speak Finnish and adhere primarily to Judaism (95%). The Jews in Finland are 0.07% Christian. The Finnish Jews are among the least reached peoples.

113

Karelian (44,000)

The Karelian, also known as Norgorod, live in the Eastern Finland and Oulun Laani provinces. They are a Finno-Ugric people who speak Karelian. The Karelian language, like Finnish, is a Finno-Ugric language, but is clearly distinguished from Finnish. There is actually no standard

Karelian language or dialect. The Karelian are 75% Protestant Christian Adherents, with 1% being Evangelical.

00000

Kurd—Northern (1,300)

The Northern Kurds are a part of a great long lasting, Kurd population, divided among many clans and tribes. They are for the most part Shafite Sunni Muslims, who embraced Islam after the Arab conquests in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century. The Northern Kurds have been displaced and separated, particularly throughout the former USSR. Alternate people names include Kermanji, Turkish Kurd, and Yezidi (Yazidi). They are of the Iranian-Median affinity bloc and Kurdish people cluster. They primarily speak Northern Kurdish. The Northern Kurds in Finland are primarily Sunni Muslims. They are among the least reached people, with few if any known Christian believers among the group.

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Olonestian—Livvikovian (5,100)

The Olonestian—Livvikovian, also known as Karelian, Olonets, and Livvikovian, are a Finno-Ugric people. They are resettled members of the former USSR. They primarily speak Livvi, but are also competent in Finnish. They are 75% Christian Adherents.

00000

Persian (1,900)

Persians compose a large, tribal ethnic group, unified originally by both language and location. Persians are also known as Ebhele, Farsi, Irani, and Parsiwan. They are an Iranian-Median people who speak Western Farsi. Persians throughout Finland are predominately Shiite Muslims. They are among the least reached peoples of the world.

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Polish (1,200)

The Polish, also referred to as Pole and Silesian, are a Western Slavic people. They are primarily Christian adherents.

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Romani—Finnish Kalo (5,100)

The Romani are a South Asian Gypsy people, who have numerous alternative names, including Arliski, Baltic Gypsy, Dzambazi, Jerides, Kochi, Roma, and Zargari. The Romani primarily speak Romani—Kalo Finnish. They primarily adhere to Christianity. The Romani are 75% Christian. There is not a completed Bible in the Kalo Finnish Romani language. Translators are currently working to produce a recording of the NT in the language.

The Roma came to the Kingdom of Sweden in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century they were forced to settle within Finland. By the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the plan was to assimilate the Roma within the Finnish population. This was done through various methods, such as separating the children from the parents, and forbidding the Romani language. This continued until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when the government began to allow the Roma to integrate within the

society, attempting to maintain their identity. After a constitutional amendment in 1995, the Roma have the right to maintain and develop their distinct cultural identity and language.

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Romanian (1,000)

The Romanians, also known as Istrio-Romanian or Oltenia, are a Eurasian People. The Romanians primarily speak Romanian and adhere to Christianity.

119

Russian (25,000)

The Russian people, also known as Eluosi, Russ, and Olossu, are an Eastern Slavic people who speak Russian. Russians are 70% Christian adherents, with 1% being reportedly evangelical.

110

Finnish Lapp—Saami

The Saami are the only indigenous people of the European Union.

- Saami—Finnish (400)
  - The Finnish Saami, also named the Finnish Lapp, Inari Saami, Inari Lapp, and Ruija Lapp are a Eurasian People of the Finno-Ugric cluster. They live primarily in northern Finland, in the Lappi province. Their first language is the Saami—Inari language, but they tend to speak Finnish as well. There are becoming less and less children speakers of the Saami—Inari language. The Bible has not been completed in the language, and translators are in wanting to create a New Testament recording. The Finnish Saami are 89.99 % Christian adherents, with 1% of those being Evangelical.
- Saami—Northern (1,600)
  - The Northern Saami, also called Northern Lapp, Ruija, Ruija Saami, Ruija Lapp, and Samish, live in the Lappi province of Finland. They primarily speak Saami North, but are also fluent in Finnish. The Northern Saami are primarily Christian adherents.
- Saami—Skolt (500)
  - The Skolt Saami are alternately named Kola Lapp, Russian Saami, Skolt, Russian Lapp, Saami, and Skolt Lapp. They are of the Finno-Ugric people cluster, and primarily speak Skolt Saami. Finnish is their secondary language. The Skolt are 89.99% Christians. There has yet to be a completed Bible in the Skolt language.

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Serb (2,600)

The Serbs in Finland are alternately known as Bosnian, Muslmani, and Serbian. They are of the Southern Slav people cluster and speak the Serbian language. The Serbs in Finland are primarily Christian.

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Somali (3,000)

The Somali people, also known as Issa, Sab, Ogaden, and Shabelle, are of the Horn of Africa-Cushite Peoples. They are among the least reached peoples of the world. They speak Somali and adhere to Islam. They are predominately Sunni Muslims.

122

Swedish (299,000)

The Swedes in Finland live predominately in the provinces of Aland, Lappi, Southern Finland, and Lansi Suomen Laani—Western Finland. The Swedes are of the Scandinavian people cluster and speak Swedish. They are 68% Protestant Christians and 1% Evangelical.

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Tatar—Turkish (1,000)

The Turkish Tatars in Finland are also named Dada, Kazan Tatar, Tata'er, and Tura. They are a Ural-Siberian Turkic people. They speak Tatar and primarily adhere to the Islamic faith, specifically mostly being Sunni Muslims. Less than 0.1% are Christians. The Turkish Tatars are among the least reached peoples. There are substantial Tatar populations in all of the republics of the former USSR. While they identify with Islam, they do not strictly observe the rules and guidelines.

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Thai—Central (1,000)

The Central Thais, also known as Bangkok Thai, Khon Tai, Siamese, Tai Noi, Thai Klang, Lao Song, Thai Khom, and Thai Song, are a Southeast Asian People. They are among the least reached peoples. They speak Thai, and are predominately Theravada Buddhists.

00000

Turk (1,000)

The Turks living in Finland are alternately called Anatolian, Meskhetian Turk, Rumelian Turk, Baharlu Turk, Ottomon Turk, and Urum. They speak Turkish and are strict adherents to Islam. Most Turks are Sunni Muslims. Turks have a great sense of cultural pride and community. They are among the least reached peoples of the world.

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Vietnamese (2,600)

The Vietnamese are alternately called Annamese, Ching, Gin, Jing, Kinh, Cing, Jhing, King, and Viet in Finland. They are a Southeast Asian people who speak Vietnamese. The Vietnamese are largely Mahayana Buddhists and among the least reached people of the world.

### **Missiological Implications**

The Finnish culture effectively made religious devotion a part of the culture, however the Finn's individualistic nature as well as the ever increasing urbanization and secularism has led to great level of tolerance towards varying opinions and beliefs on God, religion, and truth.

1. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek ways to contribute to the evangelization of the large non-religious population in Finland. Signs of opening in this group should be

followed up and attempts to reach them intensified. Perhaps, Evangelicals could send in trained witnesses precisely to this group.

2. Evangelical Christians and Churches should emphasize some witness and church starting ministries among the minority groups such as Kurds, Han Chinese, Vietnamese, Persians, Turks, and Jewish peoples. Opportunities for harvest exist among the immigrant populations.
3. Evangelical Christians and Churches should pray for a spirit of revival to flow through the existing Christian groups and lead them to increasing evangelism and church starting in Finland.
4. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek ways to enhance the movement toward house churches and small groups that is arising in the nation. Training in small group methods and emphasizing the correctness of such efforts could contribute to the spread of the house church movement in Finland. Finnish Christians should be trained and used in missionary endeavor around the world.
5. Evangelical Christians and Churches should find ways of using the Finnish custom of Sauna to spread the gospel. Could there not be “Christian Saunas” where believers shared their faith? Could Finnish Christians not be trained to share the Good News in the Sauna?
6. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek ways to encourage Finnish believers to reach the youth. Using young, dedicated Christian believers to stimulate Finnish youth for evangelism could contribute most positively to Finnish evangelism.
7. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek ways to help the believers in Finland develop a vision of national revival and outreach.

Links –

<http://virtual.finland.fi>

<http://www.visitfinland.com>

<http://www.finnfacts.com>