

## How did it happen that so many became Laestadians?

Some researchers believe that the reason why the movement spread among the Sami is that Lars Levi Laestadius had a Sami background and spoke Sami. He also had knowledge of Sami mythology. He preached in a language they understood and connected to things people knew.

Now the Christian message made sense.

Others believe that Laestadianism can be seen as a cultural counter-movement in a changing society. In the middle of the 19th century, the immigration of northerners to Sápmi increased. New winds swept in and new values spread, where the Sami way of life had no higher value. The larger society saw the Sami as poor, but through Laestadianism, the material poverty of the Sami was transformed into spiritual wealth. The revival became a haven for Sami culture and lifestyle.

Perhaps it was simply that Laestadianism gave people hope and confidence in a better life?