

**Assessing initiation training and mentoring of priests in the congregation of
Riihimäki**

Hanna Juvonen

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Authors Hanna Juvonen	Group or year of entry 2009
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Supervisors Tuuli Tukiainen	
<p>The objectives of this thesis were to assess the initiation training and mentoring practices of priests currently associated with the congregation of Riihimäki. This congregation is a middle-sized Lutheran parish belonging to the diocese of Tampere.</p> <p>The focus of this research to assess only this group of priests, as this territory has not been researched from the perspective of organizational communication.</p> <p>With the help of background information and organizational communication theories, the goal of the empirical part of the study was to reveal common truths and beliefs among these priests. The research was conducted during the period from February 2010 to April 2012. The qualitative method was used and a theme interview formed the empirical part of the study. The research group consisted of all priests working for the congregation at the time of the interviews, altogether 11 people. The answers were analyzed using inductive reasoning and all of them were weighted separately, by meaning clauses and whether they had a negative or positive emphasis.</p> <p>One of the main objectives of the study was to make improvement suggestions for the congregation; it is up to the commissioning party whether to apply them or not.</p> <p>As an outcome of this research, these improvement suggestions are feasible not only by the congregation of Riihimäki, but also by various other congregations in Finland.</p>	
Key words initiation training, mentoring	

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1 Introduction

My approach to this thesis is to assess the initiation training process and mentoring of priests, in the congregation of Riihimäki from the perspective of internal communication, in order to locate possible challenges in initiation training processes and in order to give suggestions that enable improvement of the current practices. My aim is to find some solutions for improvement suggestions on the basis of my research and previous knowledge that would be feasible in practice by the commissioner party.

When I was thinking the topic for my thesis, the choice of subject was easy – initiative training. I have worked as an employee in few different customer service positions over fifteen years, and according to my own experiences, problems or challenges with the initiation training exists at some level in almost every work place that I have come across. New employees' initiation training is quite often very nominal or it does not exist at all. My experience on this matter is basically the fact that I have been as initiator, as well as the one that was initiated into the work methods of the work place .I have seen the challenges from both sides and this is the starting point for my investigations.

As a commissioner of my thesis the congregation of Riihimäki was enthusiastic to find out possible problems or challenges in their initiation and mentoring practices and to solve them in the basis of my research. In the congregation of Riihimäki, there has been in use an initiation instruction, in the form of initiation guidebook that was conducted in the middle of 1990's. The guidebook has been a good source of information for new workers, when it comes to practical things, however updating the guidebook has suffered in the times of computers and internet and the information seems to be unfortunately quite outdated. The guidebook was updated last time at 28th of March 2007. From this perspective, they did not want me to redo the guidebook as such. They wanted me to dig deeper of the subject of experiencing the communality in the work place, and how the professional identity is made up, in the connection of developing the initiation training and mentoring processes.

I had just moved to city of Riihimäki and I wanted to find the cooperation organization from that area. Initiation training as a thesis topic is quite used in the field of business life, and I did not expect to make any new and big discoveries in that field.

In the field of congregations, the initiation training is hardly investigated, although the initiation topic is well recognized and developed in the diocese level, which you can see from the guide lines of the diocese that could be found in the web pages of the diocese. These details lead to decision to contact the congregation of Riihimäki in order to suggest cooperation with this topic of my thesis. The object of the study was totally undefined at that point, but the carrying thought was initiation training and how it could be developed I was eager to find out through my investigations. The contact person in the congregation of Riihimäki was enthusiastically interested to develop the topic so that it would benefit both sides of the cooperation. On the basis of all this, my approach to this topic is purely to assess and hopefully enhance the communication among priests, in the form of initiation training and ongoing process of mentoring.

When we negotiated narrowing down the topic, I came up with the working title; *Developing mentoring and initiation training of priests in the congregation of Riihimäki*. As I realized later on, the *developing* was not the most appropriate word to use. It was not going to be me who would actualize the improvement suggestion or actually develop initiation training or mentoring processes, but the commissioner party if they decide to do so. I was only to give improvement suggestions.

2 Initiative training and mentoring

The purpose of this thesis is to assess the initiative training process and mentoring of priests in the congregation of Riihimäki. With this thesis I wish to emphasize the importance of proper initiative training and importance of mentoring especially at the beginning of one's career. Building young priests professional identity and how would a priest experience the communality are very essential parts of the initiation process. In order to get committed priests to the congregation, they should feel comfortable and

confident about their duties by getting enough training and peer evaluating after they have been consecrated priests. (www.tampereenhiippakunta.fi)

The questions that I was seeking answers to arose from the very basic research problems, I was concentrating on the practices currently used as such, assessing them and trying to analyze how appropriate the current practices were. Not to forget the end result of developing the practices and giving some improvement suggestions. The congregation of Riihimäki was actually the main architect of defining the questions that I was supposed to find answers to. In the basis of their expertise and experience they were able to point out possible problems arising from the current practices. Some special features of priests' work defined also the actual research questions and were a guideline for the whole study.

Induction process shouldn't be carried out just because the law requires it or that it has to be done, but as being a part of building up a professional identity and experiencing communality of the work place in a positive way (www.tampereenhiippakunta.fi).

The research problem, as well as the research questions, was divided into two main sections; initiation to one's work and initiation to the work place. Addition to that I am reflecting both sides from the organization's point of view and from the new employee's point of view. Questions that handled more practical things, like getting started at the work place, going around the premises, giving the keys etc. were merely meant to clarify the circumstances where the priests are familiarized and starting to act as a part of the working community. This is not to understate the practical aspect of the whole induction process but to give a perspective to my research.

The majority of the research questions were concentrating on revealing the deeper meanings of initiative training process and common beliefs of the priest's about induction. The subcategory of the research is assessing mentoring practices and their appropriateness. The process of my research has taken two paths that have been crossing each other's all the time. First I started by finding background information of the topic and theoretical background for the subject. Secondly I kept clear in my mind the interest of the commissioner party and our discussions about the topic. Commissioners'

interests and their objectives of this study influenced significantly my selection of the research problem and actual research questions. As I found out quite soon, there have not been that many researches of this topic before this. As stated before, the initiation training and mentoring are starting to be in the interest of all businesses' no matter what field are you in, but in the field of congregations, I found out that it is quite unrevealed territory.

2.1 Background

I contacted the diocese of Tampere and Lutheran Church's research center, Kirkon tutkimuskeskus, in order to be informed of previous studies on this topic. The result of these phone calls was that they were more or less stunned that some student from Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences wants to study this kind of subject. I guess Haaga-Helia is considered as a business school and this topic related to the church and congregation was perceived to be a field of theology students. (Kirkon tutkimuskeskus) My previous communication teacher is quite familiar with the operations of the Lutheran church in Finland and she either had no knowledge of previous studies on this specific topic.

Studying critically initiation training process and finding some issues to develop is always useful and topical in any workplace. Mentoring is even more unstudied field in Finnish business life than initiation training. In the diocese level the need of development is well recognized on both topics; initiation training and mentoring.

As an occupational group of priests and studying their initiation training, is a whole new perspective when assessing the mentoring and initiation practices inside a congregation. I believe that my research benefits both the congregation of Riihimäki as well as all other congregations in Finland, by being a guideline in a way of developing the initiation training practices, because, no matter where the young priest is starting one's career, he or she is struggling with the same issues as all of her or his fellow colleagues, at the beginning of their careers. All the special features remain the same despite what congregation is in question.

Developing the initiation training processes and mentoring practices is always useful, and the results of developments improve the productivity and meaningfulness of the work (www.ttl.fi).

In this report I am presenting first the commissioner party, the congregation of Riihimäki. Theoretical concept is studied after that, to be able to analyze the results of my study. After theoretical part I am explaining in chapter 5 the research methods that I have used when getting the material for this thesis and also explaining the method of analyzing the material in chapter 6. In the chapter 7 I am opening the results of my empiric research with the terms of qualitative research methods, by categorizing the answers and quantifying the results that emerged from it. The research results are presented in the chapter 7 as a whole. I am trying to interpret the results in the light of previous studies and the theoretical background information. Chapter 8 is to summarize the study all in all and make some conclusions. As a starting point of my thesis project was to find some improvement suggestions to their current practices, I am giving improvement suggestions alongside with my overview of the whole project. My aim is to show that the congregation of Riihimäki could and will benefit from this study and utilize the results to the full when planning and renewing their initiation training and mentoring practices.

3 Presentation of the organization

Congregation of Riihimäki is a middle sized Lutheran parish, where they have also earlier, taken into consideration the importance of initiation training. Willingness to pay attention into this matter also in the near future, was good starting point for our cooperation.

The congregation of Riihimäki belongs geographically to the deanery of Janakkala, being the biggest parish of the deanery, at the same time being the most south parish of the diocese of Tampere. Geographically the congregation of Riihimäki is located in the

south Finland, in a half way between Tampere and Helsinki in a province of Kanta-Häme. (www.evl.fi,2012)

The branch of business of Congregation of Riihimäki is quite obvious. The congregation acts as one single parish of the deanery of Janakkala and in a bigger context a parish of the diocese of Tampere. The purpose of a congregation in a Lutheran church in Finland is to spread the message of Lutheran church, to offer services of Christian faith and to be a base of Christian values in a particular area. Congregation offers services like The Sunday service and the Holy Communion, pastoral counseling and services concerning marriage burying and baptizing. In the congregation of Riihimäki there are about 70 employees. The number of employees varies a bit because of leave of absences, parental leaves and etc. The congregation consist of almost 23 000 members, which is nearly 80% of the population in this area. (www.evl.fi,2012)

3.1 Organization structure

Below you can see the organization structure from the charts and the division of the organization into two main areas of operating. These charts hopefully clarify the definition of my research group and limiting it only to one occupational group.

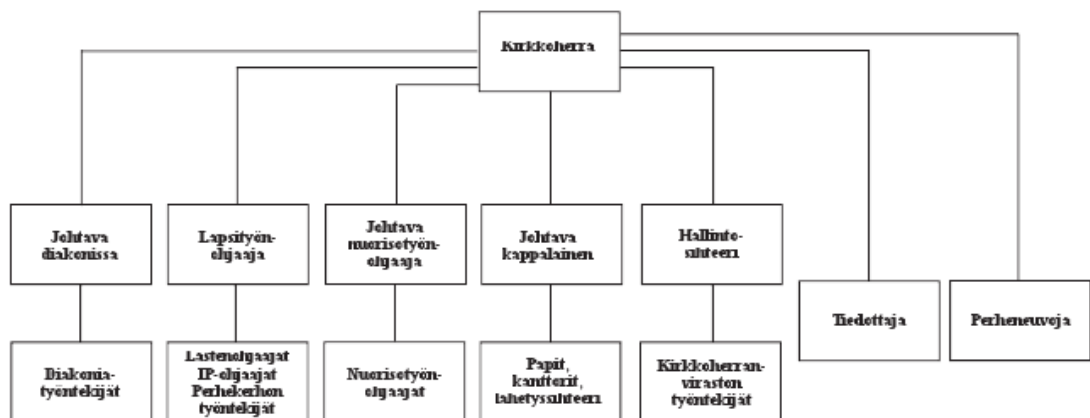


Chart 1 Organization chart (Congregation of Riihimäki, 2012)

Although these charts were not available in English the structure is visible and at the top in the chart 1 there is the vicar and below are all the chaplains, communicator, deaconesses and all priests from all different operational teams.

The chart number 2 handles all the other professional groups in the congregation than priests and is supervised by the financial director.

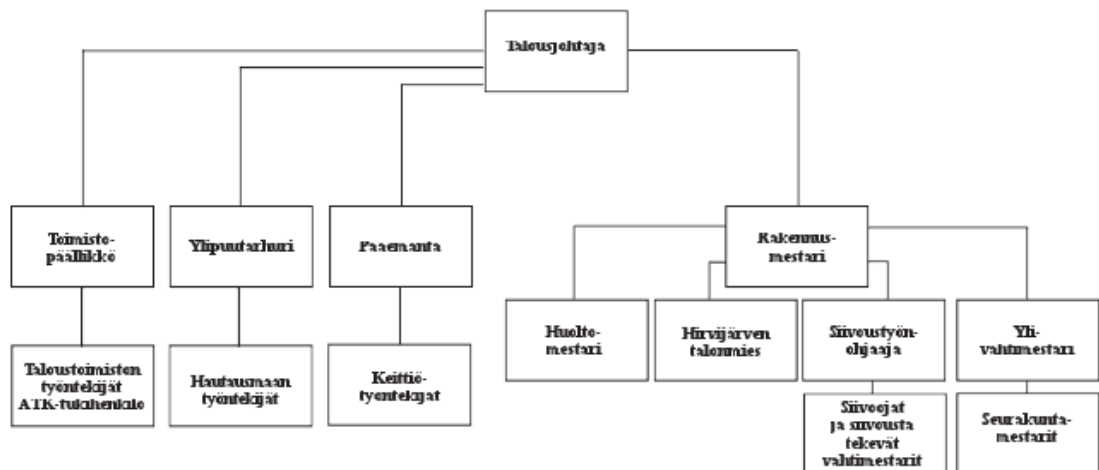


Chart 2. Organization chart (Congregation of Riihimäki, 2012)

3.2 Communication of the congregation

Public law (L 621/ 1999) prescribes all the public administration actions, especially communication. When we talk about the Lutheran church, the exceptional thing is the membership, almost 80 per cent of the population of Finland, belongs to Lutheran church and therefore there is no actual contest in that field (www.evl.fi,2010). Then almost all population would be the target group of Lutheran church's internal communication. Consequently the traditional division into internal and external communication has been replaced in the Lutheran church of Finland with the terms *internal* and *public* communication. (Hakala & Sumiala-Seppänen,2003)

Public communication means the communication which purpose is to “tell about the operations to the public, brighten the picture and rouse the favorableness, interest and demand” towards the church (KT/ Vältiä viestiä!-verkkosivut) (Hakala&Sumiala-Seppänen 2003, 32)

Internal communication means the communication between the Lutheran organizations and congregations, different work communities and church administrations and its employees’ flexible cooperation and communication inside the Lutheran organization. (Hakala&Sumiala-Seppänen 2003, 32)

Communication strategy of the congregation of Riihimäki is based on the communication strategy of Lutheran church of Finland, “Vuoropuhelun kirkko” and it is done for the years 2004-2010. In a general level the communication of the Lutheran church of Finland has been studied in a book; *Kirkon viestintä – kohtaamisia ja sanan levitystä*, 2003. Lutheran church has published some booklets of the same topics as well. Mirja Kontio has studied the internal communication of the Lutheran church of Finland in the book; *Seurakuntaorganisaation sisäinen viestintä yhteisöllisenä prosessina*, 1997. Strategy is principled and the conclusions in practice are made by the communication working group of the congregation (Riihimäen seurakunnan viestintästrategia).

The basic idea in the communication strategy is that the congregation of Riihimäki should be a communicating community regarding its constitution, operations and its mission. The purpose of the communication functions of the congregation is to create a condition for the Christianity to grow and spread, in the means of producing transparent, accurate and diverse information about congregation’s message, mission, functions, finances and administration to the members of congregation.

The channels and the purpose of internal communication is explained in the following paragraphs with the words of communication strategy but to make the purpose clearer, I try to spell it out more explicitly. The communication strategy of the congregation of Riihimäki is giving an indication of the purpose and channels to be used but does not make it very concretely. The aim is to serve all members of the society, communities, individuals and media. Feedback channels are developed constantly for better interac-

tion between congregation and its members to make them engage themselves and involve in the matters of congregation. The external i.e. public communication is based on the success of the internal communication and every employee of the congregation is responsible from her/his side. Ongoing development of the internal communication is an important factor for the working community and at the same time it enhances the conditions for the external i.e. public communication to succeed. Methods to accomplish the aims of the communication strategy are as diverse and appropriate as possible to deliver the message. As all the Medias are in use for example news papers, radio, religious magazines, web pages, television and target group communication, the most important messenger is the human being; the employee or the member of the congregation (Riihimäen seurakunnan viestintästrategia).

I would try to spell out the purpose as follows; the aim of internal communication is to inform employees of current relevant matters and enhance the message delivery to the outside world through employees. All parts of the internal communication should be planned so that they support the ultimate goal of the communication strategy, to create a condition for the Christianity to grow and spread. The same goes with the members of the congregation. The aim should be crystal clear for every employee when communicating with “clients”. As it is said in the strategy; producing transparent, accurate and diverse information about congregation’s message, mission, functions, finances and administration to the members of congregation. In practice this means providing coherent message of congregation to its members. In practice this means newspapers, events, posters, letters that are sent to the members. In other words all the material that is spread by the congregation.

As an organizational level all the employee meeting and team meetings are conducted by the practice areas. Most of the staff meetings are held among the smaller group of professionals that are working for the same cause in the same team. Of course these teams consist of many other professionals than just priests. There are deaconesses, youth leaders and perhaps family counselors, depending on the team. Most of the internal communication goes around in these meetings. The meetings that are held for the entire staff are quite rare, once or twice a year. (Viherä, S.18.2.2010)

In the congregation of Riihimäki there is one communicator and she is to handle both internal and public i.e. external communication. Resiina-personnel paper, staff meetings and e-mail are the main channels for the internal communication (www.riihimaenseurakunta.fi).

In the following chapters and through my research questions it comes quite clear that the initiation training always have two sides. Induction to the workplace and induction to ones work. This is very important detail to bear in mind when planning the initiation practices of the workplace because addition to these two sides there is relevance of these two aspects to the organization and to the individual. I am trying to follow this division when opening up my empiric results as well as when giving some improvement suggestions at the end.

3.3 Research group

I chose the priests of congregation of Riihimäki to be my research group very consciously, due to that fact that there are tens of different occupational groups represented as work force, in the congregation. Just to mention the range from vicar to cleaner and from sexton to financial manager. The research group of priests was 11 people as it is the size of the clergy and I managed to interview all of them. It was very easy to narrow it down to one occupational group- priests, because they are the biggest unified group of professionals among all employees of the congregation. If I would have included all the staff in my research, no matter what profession they represent, the results of my research would have been too cursory and the burrowing into the deeper meaning of initiation training would have been challenging. The interviewees' personal background information was gathered quite minimally, because I thought that it wasn't relevant information regarding my research. Gender or age is not playing a significant role and therefore I didn't record that data from the interviewees. As a cursory note, gender distribution was very close to 50% - 50%. The research group consisted of one vicar, five chaplains, four reverends and one family counsellor. Every priest has their

specific role in the functions of congregation. All the operations have been divided into practice areas and teams that a focusing on some client group. In the research group there are priests from almost all practice areas; hospital priest, youth priest, children activities or elderly people priest.

I really wanted to have profound comprehension with one occupational group than just cursory results with all of the staff. Priests' job description and occupational group differ so much from all the other personnel that I wanted to obtain deeper understanding on the members of clergy just because its special features. Especially with young priests that just have been consecrated, it is very important to pay attention to building one's professional identity. The experience of communality in a work place and building professional identity connect to the theoretical framework of my thesis in the deepest. Mentoring as a constant learning and peer supporting tool is also a big part of experiencing the communality in a work place. The diocese of Tampere could be seen as a forerunner of initiation training and mentoring developer, as they give very advanced instructions to their parishes about the policies they expect them to use.(www.tampereenhiippakunta.fi)

4 Theoretical concepts

In order to understand what familiarization and mentoring are all about inside a Lutheran congregation, it is important to have a proper understanding of organizational communication and what is the connection and relevance of mentoring and initiation training with a respect to communality and organizational communication.

Organizational communication can be divided into two main sections of ideological communication; political and religious, after this division comes into picture also feelings and personal experience of communicating. Initiation training is a function which aim is to improve the quality of the current practices. The quality of organizational communication may be improved by mapping out the thresholds of the communication with a research. In a strategic level the improvement may externalize as better in-

tegrated communication or more efficient sounding. In an operational level the improvement may be executed with the communication technology and by developing the internetworking of an organization. (Juholin, 2009)

One important aspect of an induction process that I want to bring up in this context is workplace bullying, which is quite often forgotten. There are many characteristics that are noticeable in many working community but it is not been paid enough attention to. (www.Työterveyslaitos.fi) My study did not handle the workplace bullying as such but when I was analyzing the answers of my research questions, I found out few similarities between workplace bullying characteristics and some answers for example dealing with the hierarchy of the clergy.

In a big picture the initiation training and mentoring being a part of internal communication and internal communication being a part of organizational communication will make the whole chain complete from the theoretical communication perspective. All the communication layers are connected to each other as they are a smaller part of the big communication chain. Elisa Juholin (2008) writes about the new agenda of organizational communication in her book *Viestinnän vallankumous*. In her book Juholin describes six elements of new agenda that are the main elements of internal communication and communality. This all comes together with the views that the diocese of Tampere gives to its parishes as guidance for initiation training and mentoring. The directions that the diocese of Tampere is expecting the parishes to use in their initiation and mentoring practices are the most important guide line that I am following when assessing the meaningfulness of the practices. Detailed instructions include different sections of; initiation training, its contents and goals, directions of executing the initiation training process and as a detail there are separate directions for the initiation training for priests who are going to work inside the congregation and for the priests who are having a so called special job description outside the actual congregational work. In the web pages of the diocese of Tampere, there are very good prescription of what they mean by initiation training and mentoring and what are the common goals.(Juholin, 2008) (www.Tampereenhiippakunta.fi)

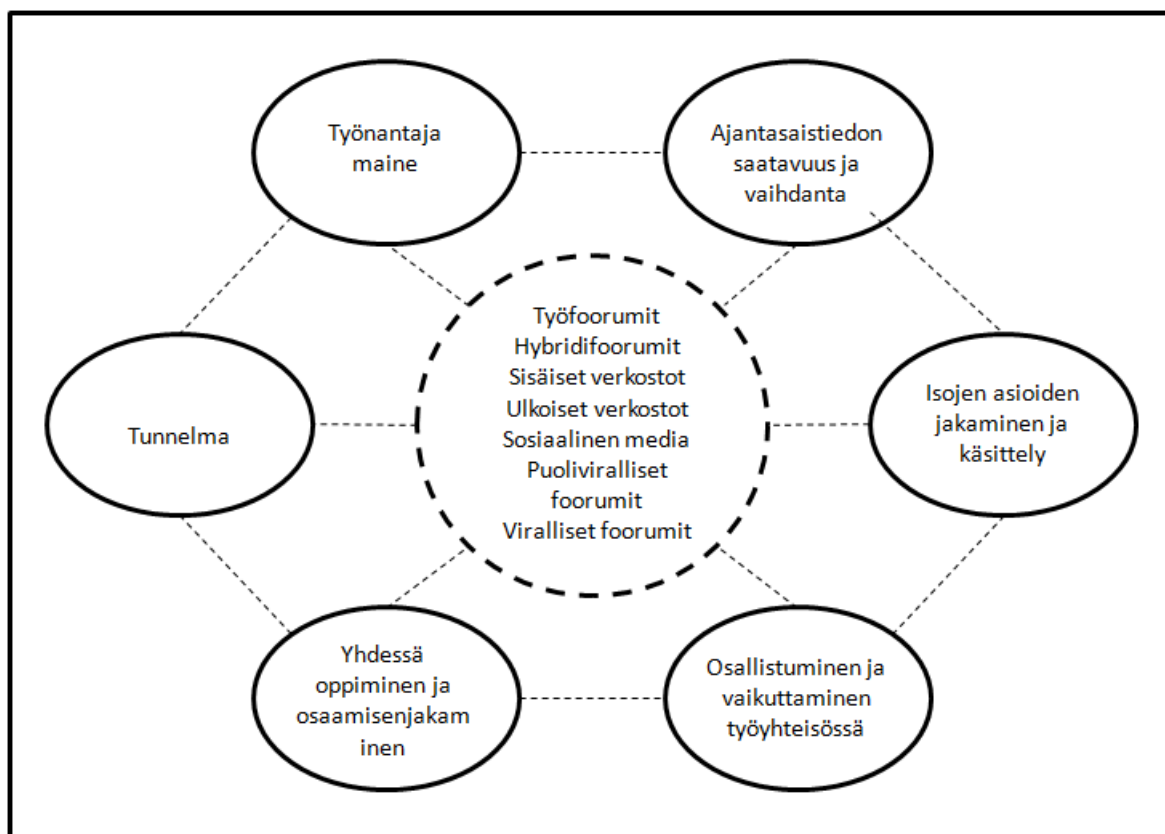


Figure 1. Elisa Juholin's six elements of the new agenda of organizational communication (Juholin, 2008)

As mentioned before, Juholin's six elements is very appropriate theory regarding my study and in the following paragraphs I will explain element by element some focal points in connection to my study and the communication practices in the congregation of Riihimäki;

1. Big and important issues are discussed interactively, they are discussed and it should be made sure that there prevails an understanding. Different opinions are valued and people do not have to be always unanimous. (Juholin, 2008)

As she also writes in the same book, the old fashioned model of initiation training has been the thought that the organization is a perfect creation and a newcomer should just adapt as soon as possible. There was no thought of that a new employee might bring with him/her something beneficial to the whole work community. One problem that she also mentions about earlier practices of initiation training that it was not seen

as a process, but as a one single action that was done once, and that is it. In her book *Viestinnän vallankumous*, there is an important fact mentioned that the initiation training has been quite technical. It has been more or less all about location of premises, who is who, who you can turn to, how to use information systems, how to manage your timetables and so on. All that is important but not sufficient, says Juholin (Juholin, 2008). These technical things are covered quite well already now in the congregation of Riihimäki.

2. Up-to-date information should always be available and everyone should understand one's role and responsibility on producing, exchanging and refinement of information. This element is stated almost with the same in the communication strategy of congregation. (Juholin, 2008)

As I described earlier the communication strategy of the congregation of Riihimäki, their aim is to provide transparent and accurate information to its members and employees. The communication strategy also emphasizes the responsibility of each member and employee of the congregation as a messenger.

3. The atmosphere is informal and relaxed, everyone feel comfortable enough to share one's thoughts, insights and experiences and are not afraid to ask questions and contest. (Juholin, 2008)

These two above mentioned elements of Juholin have been taken into consideration in the communication strategy of the congregation of Riihimäki; engage members and try to be of assistance to all members of the community: individuals, organizations and media. Team and staff meeting are to improve the opportunity of influencing and you have a chance to give your insights and tell your experiences.

4. Participating and influencing in organization is possible for everyone. Influencing may have an impact on vicinity or on whole organization. (Juholin, 2008)

5. Learning together and sharing the knowledge support individuals and the whole organization. It is made possible through straightforward communication that includes multilateral and continuous way of giving and receiving feedback. (Juholin, 2008)

The lack of getting enough feedback was one of the main concerns when we started to plan the contents of my empiric research with the commissioner party. One of the main purposes of the whole study was to make some improvement suggestion regarding the feedback and peer support between colleagues. The feedback channels for the members of the congregation and developing them, is also mentioned in the communication strategy of the congregation and my study was to give tools for improvement suggestions.

6. The employer reputation is everyone's business. Each and every one of us produces and reflects the employer reputation by our actions. In the same way the organization reputation is reflected back to each employee and to their professional identity.

(Juholin, 2008)

The communication strategy of the congregation states it almost with the same words than this sixth element of Elisa Juholin, that every member of the congregation and staff is responsible of delivering the message. Also it states that the person, who is responsible of the communication, watches over the overall image of the congregation and makes necessary corrections. For example if there has been a misinterpretation of some issue in the media, it is her responsibility to correct wrong new or assumptions concerning the congregation.

This agenda is not complete until the six elements are combined with the factor *plus one* (Juholin, 2008,63).

I think all of these six elements are essential, when thinking the initiation training and mentoring of priests. If I open this agenda from the perspective of congregation and in more detailed initiation training and mentoring, it is easy to connect it to the theoretical framework of internal communication. Both transmission view of communication and a ritual view of communication emphasize same facts, concerning building one's professional identity, participating, interaction, sharing and the atmosphere in a work place.

According to Elisa Juholin (2008), initiation training consists of three different stages: *prior starting*, at the *early point of starting* and *after few months of starting* to work in a new occupation. Therefore a good initiation process should fulfill at least following criteria.

Process-like approach. Things should be handled within a few months period, long enough to be able to assimilate the things told properly. The process should also be methodical and coherent, and the big picture is all the time in the knowledge of employee.

Interaction in a way that things should be discussed with many different people and questions should be asked, to get the most out of the process. You should always be able to return to the matter afterwards.

Individuality, so that the initiation training should be planned individually in every single case. *Management level involvement* should be visible so that the new employee feels herself respected by the presence of the management level.

Utilization of many different forums. The same material should be available in many different forms. Own activeness plays a major role in this, because if a new employee asks a lot of questions, he/she is more likely to get good answers. (Juholin, 2008)

I will not go that deep into the three stages of initiation training process, but the stages are taken into consideration all along in my research. I am especially interested in deeper meanings of initiation training as a continuing process along ones career and how mentoring is supporting the whole process. As I listed new agenda and the characteristics of it from Elisa Juholin, as well as the three stages of initiation training from the same author, I just wanted to point out the connection of an ordinary organizational communication and a Lutheran parish that I am investigating. Also comparing these elements from Juholin to the guide lines set by the diocese of Tampere you'll find more similarities than differences. This is a clear indication that the basic theories of communication are utilized when planning a communication strategy for the congregation or creating the guide lines of initiation training in a diocese level.

I go through shortly two different existing approaches from theoretical perspective, they are a transmission view of communication and a ritual view of communication, innovated by communication theoretic James W. Carey. The more relevant to my study is the ritual view of communication. These two alternative conceptions of communication, both derive from religious origins, though they refer to somewhat different regions of religious experience (Carey, 1989, 15), helps me as a researcher to understand the nature of communication. A ritual view of communication emphasizes the fact that communication is at the same time, both confirmation, in other words confession of common faith, and information, in other words traditional information sharing.

The basics of internal communication are the starting point of my theoretical context going deep into the concept of ritual view of communication by James W. Carey. The ritual view of communication is linked to terms such as; *sharing, participation, association, fellowship* and *the possession of a common faith*. This definition exploits the ancient identity and common roots of the terms commonness, communion, community and communication. A ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space, but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs. (Carey, 1989, 18)

A ritual view of communication is not alone a comprehensive way to examine the communication practices of the Lutheran church or one single congregation. A ritual view of communication, accordingly to its name, perceives the communication as building up communality. It does not discuss the informativeness of communication. The purpose of communication is to deliver a message and a sender has a need of getting his information transmitted. When examining the communication in the congregation level it is important to become aware of the angle or view of transmitting a message. In a communication theory it is called transmission model. Shortly explained the transmission view of communication is the commonest in our culture and is defined by terms such as; *imparting, sending, transmitting* or *giving information to others*. The center of this idea of communication is the transmission of signals or messages over distance for the purpose of control (Carey, 1989, 15). When thinking of transmission model of communication, emphasis should be in investigating the interaction of sender and re-

ceiver that are apart from each other. The most interesting thing though in transmission model is; *who says, what, through what channel and with what kind of impact* (Hakala & Sumiala-Seppänen 2003, 16).

5 Research methods

My goal is to investigate this subject as it has never been investigated in Finland before. I have the experience that initiative training process is very important part of any work relations. There is still a huge difference about the importance of orientation training when it comes to profession of priests because of the spiritual and mental aspect of the profession.

In the following chapters, I will go through the connection of the organizational communication, communality in a work place and how the initiation training and mentoring are essential part of the whole communication system in the congregation of Riihimäki. If I start from the basics, the communication itself is sending and receiving messages and interpreting them. Initiation training and mentoring are pure communication at its best or worse. My study is based totally on the theories of internal communication, due to a fact that I am studying internal communication methods, used to achieve the best possible results in current practices concerning initiation training and mentoring in the congregation of Riihimäki. (Carey James W, 1989)

The initiation process is divided into two main sections; initiation to one's individual tasks and initiation into the working community (Juholin, 2008). There would have been many options to choose from when selecting the level of my study. Am I investigating the initiation process as whole or separate familiarization to one's own work, initiation to the work community? Initiation training includes those two parts and it was on my opinion too big to investigate as a whole. Addition to those, workplace bullying and mental distress at workplace is a part of the initiation process as well, want it or not. According to Finnish Institution of Occupational Health among other studies, distinctive mark of the workplace bullying is for example the situation when one or

several members of the working community are the target of a systematic and repeating negative or hostile behavior. The bully may be a colleague, superior or subordinate. The experience of being bullied is always subjective and should be assessed individual level in every case separately. (Terveysnetti, 2006)(www.tyoterveyslaitos.fi) With the help of the background information and basic knowledge of my topic, I chose to concentrate on the individual familiarization to one's work and experiences of communality in a work place. Keeping all this in mind, I chose to refer to the theories presented in the chapter 4, being the most relevant to my study and supporting the basic idea of my research. The research questions are the reflection of the theories that I went through, and the previous knowledge of the topic. The commissioner party had their own wishes of the emphasis of my research and I took those into consideration as well. As the initiation training practices in the congregation of Riihimäki were more concentrating on those practical and technical things, they wanted me to get more information how priests are experiencing so called mental part of the initiation process.

5.1 My work process

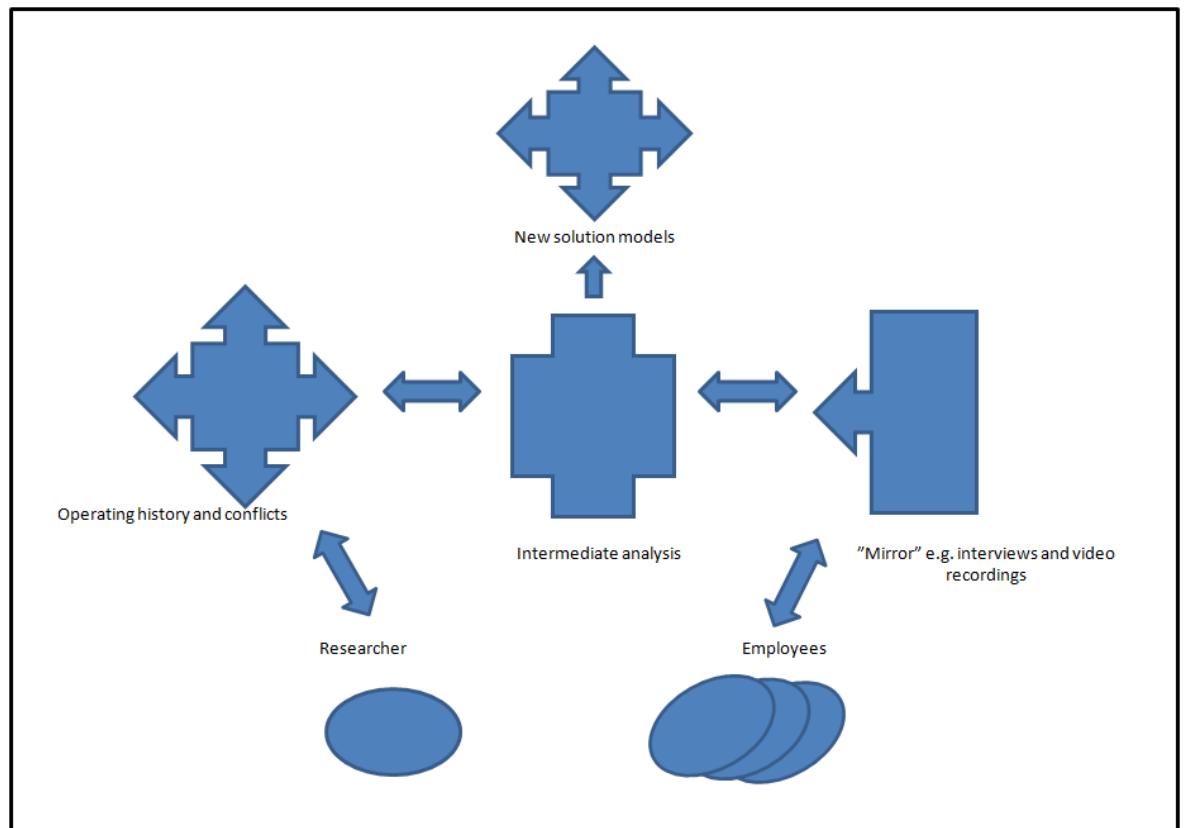


Figure 2. General framework for the study of workplace development (Engeström 1998, 125)

This figure above describes the whole process that took place in my study. The Engeström's general framework is just to the point of how my research was executed and how the organization should see the process of developing the communication practices.

The strategy of my research was first get to know what kind of references do the diocese have on the subject, what other background information can I find and then planning and conducting an interview among the selected research group. The topic being as delicate as this, the planning of the interview was essential. In order to make interviewees talk, feel relaxed and reveal their inner feelings, the planning and executing the research interviews was in the main role. The other background information could be found just by digging hard enough, but messing up the situation with an in-

interviewee, would have wide-ranging consequences. With the commissioner part representative we deliberated many options of how and where to conduct the interview.

Due to nature of my study I did not have that many options, on my opinion, when choosing the research methods. The occupational group of priests is so separate from other professions represented in the congregation of Riihimäki, and they have so unique features concerning their profession that it helped me with my choice of methods. The key point is that the approach of my study is research-based, but still reflecting the theoretical and previous knowledge of the topic.

I have used already existing material as a basis of my research. Addition to that I implemented a research interview including all priests of the congregation of Riihimäki, to be my research group of interviewees. See Attachment 1, the theme interview question frame. The mentoring and familiarization of priests is quite unrevealed territory of the sector of familiarization and mentoring in Finland, so already existing material would not have offered adequate wide scope to cover this topic. My focus was to reveal some unwritten rules and common beliefs inside the work community. I wanted to have a proper deep aspect on this subject and that reasoned my decision to conduct face to face interviews instead of totally structured questionnaire. Researchers own assessment plays a big role in this kind of hermeneutic understanding of your whole research material. With my supervisors advice I decided that I want to implement the interviews with open questions to get more wide answers. My goal was to make interviewees to talk more openly and tell their own experiences as freely and open as it is possible in the circumstances of an interview.

To be able to understand the common beliefs inside the work community, I had to be open-minded and ready to widen my perception of priest's job description.

5.2 Research questions

In early stage of my study I planned the questions for the interview on the basis of the discussions with the commissioner party and back ground information that I got. I also

got to explore the already existing initiation training guide folder in order to locate possible visible faults in it.

I conducted test interviews with two priests from the congregation of Lappeenranta; Reverend, Reetta Karjalainen and Provost, Reijo Moilanen. Moilanen is experienced and has a long career as a priest as Karjalainen represents the younger generation of priests. As I hoped for, I got very valuable comments and ideas to formulate my research questions as they were presented to the group of interviewees. This decision and possibility, of test interviews conducted with the same group of professional, proved to be excellent choice although the whole process was more time consuming than I anticipated.

Set for the interview was agreed to be on the premises of the congregation after deliberating the options of café, my own home, interviewees' own home among other options. With the mutual understanding with the commissioner party and with the help of them, I decided that the premises of the congregation, more precise the vicar's office, is the best place for the interviews like this. Most interviews were carried out in their own offices or in the conference room. Afterwards it is easy to say that the selection of the place where the interviews were carried out was as good as it can get, all the interviewees seemed quite relaxed and they did not have to be careful with their sayings, because we were the only ones present at the moment of an interview.

Procurement of the research material was to execute an open and quite freely conducted oral theme interview, face-to-face with an interviewee. I used a list of questions in order to keep the interview under control and to be able to steer the answering order of questions. The structure of the research interviews was constructed the way that the interviewees were lead to more important issues later on, during the interview. First three questions comprised the first part of my interview handling more the implementation of initiation training and how it was planned. Although those questions revealed most clear and specific answers to the questions among the interviewees they were merely basic information that I had to gather in order to be able to understand the composition of the following questions. The amount of questions was nine; (see the

attachment 1) all of them were carefully deliberated to exploit the expertise of priests in their own field.

The second part of the interview went more deep to the initiation training process and mentoring of the priests. I wanted to get an overall picture of the deeper meanings of the spiritual part of the profession of priests.

After getting acquainted with my theoretical frame work, it was time to approach my selected group of interviewees. As a first chaplain, my contact person in a congregation, announced my attention of contacting the whole professional group of priests in near future, so when I actually send my letter of interview request by e-mail, I got very positive response. Only difficulty was managing the timetables because of summer time and all the camps priests are attending, along the annual holidays. I managed to get the interviews done by the end of the summer 2010 and all priests participated in the interview, all together eleven priests.

As explained earlier I used half structured interview method to get a wider scope on the subject. I wrote down as much as possible as interviewees were talking and in addition to that I recorded the interviews, just to make sure that no detail is misunderstood or misremembered. The digital recordings are more in a role of back up, because of the way I conducted the interviews.

With the notes that I made during the interviews and by listening to the recordings, I have analyzed the material according to methods explained in section 6.

I was able to capture the most essential parts of the interviews. I did not plan nor did any transcription of my material from the interviews, because I felt I was able to collect adequate information at the time of each interview. Of course the backup recording is still available for the closer investigation if I would need to do so.

I wanted to study the things that came up from the commissioner side when we planned our co-operation. These hypotheses that I based my research questions on, were merely an assumption of a personnel and were delivered to me by one chaplain. The commissioner party wanted me to find out some I would say common assump-

tions that have come up during the development discussions. The main thing that reasoned my questioning was to study the whole initiation process in the congregation, how functional it is and what's in it to improve. Lack of getting feedback and loneliness aspect of the profession might become an issue if that is not paid enough attention to. With my investigations I am trying to come up with new solutions of these challenges and improve the situation on constant mentoring between colleagues.

I'll explain some of the hypotheses, just to give a better picture of our starting point. Assumption number 1: *The priests work is very lonely and it is hard to get feedback because of that.* It has come up in many development discussions that while the work is done alone in most cases, it is hard to get feedback or comments from your colleagues and this fact has been bothering some priests. In connection to that, there were also a discussion of *peer support and lack of it.* That was basically the second assumption. The dilemma is that if you do not see your colleagues performing it is pretty hard to comment on that. The majority of the feedback comes from the members of the congregation e.g. clients.

6 Research material analyzing methods

Analyzing methods was chosen to serve the purpose to get most out of my research. As we wanted to achieve the benefit for the commissioner party, the whole study was research oriented. As the interview being the empiric part of my study I chose to discuss it through the inductive reasoning that is supposed to indicate the collective truth or belief on some matter, but does not ensure it. To be able to deduct the material through inductive reasoning, the whole starting point in my study has been along the way material generative. I needed answers to my research interview questions, in order to be able to see the phenomenographical point of the profession of priests in the congregation of Riihimäki.

I analyzed my empiric results by finding out the communication related meaning clauses that emerged from the material. Interview results were counted of all the nine questions as a whole and additionally I analyze the emerged meaning clauses by their

weighting. As you can see from the Figure 3, all the meaning clauses that I brought up as a result of the study were mentioned numerous times by the interviewees and therefore I see them as meaningful common truths or beliefs. As the interviewees were answering the questions, I wrote down the actual answer and essential message of it, but also the attitude and feelings towards the issue that was handled at the moment by categorizing the answers and quantifying the results that emerged from the research material. The interviewee's attitudes were quite easy to see and I felt that they did not feel the need to hide their emotions from me as an external researcher. I was neutral receiver at that moment. As it can be seen from the general framework of the study for workplace development from figure 2, I think this Engeströms picture shows it quite clearly that the organization can benefit from the impact of external researcher functioning as mirror but still reflecting the things little bit in the new light.

7 Research results

Results in the following paragraphs are presented quite superficially only because I wanted to guarantee the anonymity to all the participants. One concern was brought up during the interviews that they do not want this study to lead to any, conflicts in the work place because of what someone had said in the interview. Although the research group was altogether eleven priests the group is so small that if I would have opened the answers more thoroughly here in my report, there might be a risk of recognizing someone based on their sayings. (Attachment 2) First two questions were to reveal the practicalities of the induction and how well they seem to work. These two questions are the starting point of the whole induction process not least according to the rules and guidance from the diocese. See the question frame as attachment 1. Diocese of Tampere has very clear instructions on how the initiation process should be conducted and that is the ideal that every congregation should follow and why that was the leading thought that I wanted to make the comparison with (www.tampereenhiippakunta.fi). The third question was to test the knowledge and usage of the currently existing guide book for the new employee; Tervetuloa Riihimäen

seurakuntaan – uuden työntekijän opas-. The need for this kind of question aroused from the assumption from the commissioner party *that the guide book is not that much in use any more*. This assumption number 3 was the reflection of what is happening all around. Everything is in the internet and there is not that much demand for the printed version of the guide book. It is heavy to maintain and update and that was actually the reason why the commissioner party didn't want me to redo the guide book as such. We decided together that it is more beneficial for the commissioner party to utilize my improvement suggestions that are explained later some other way than to have me redo a new printed guide book.

As relation to the first question, the one concerning the implementation plan of initiation training and whether it was conducted properly, inclusive going through the goals of the induction period. Answers were more or less negative oriented as you can see from the Figure 3. Most of the priests started to work either without any kind of written plan, nor going through the mutual goals of the training period.

General belief	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
No actual iducton period		7		7
Own activity is important	1	2	2	5
Introduction of premises		3	3	6
Going through the initiation plan	5	3		8
I was able to interact during my iduction		4	4	8
Vicar's office ladies are a goldmine			7	7
Sexton is knowledgeable and helpful			5	5
Updating a guidebook is problematic			3	3
Guide book work as a memory refresher			4	4
"I am getting enough feedback"	3	1	3	7
Previous knowledge disproves the need for initiation	3	1		4

Figure 3. Meaning clauses emerged from the interviews

One thing that might have been good to know before I decided on my research questions was the age distribution or when each priest had started to work in the congrega-

tion of Riihimäki. This came very obvious already at the time of the interview with the first question. Many of the older priests by their professional seniority have worked for the congregation for numerous years and at the time they started, there were no knowledge about initiation training or anything like it. It was more or less starting from the scratch with no support. Many of the currently working priests also have the background of working in some other position in the congregation of Riihimäki, for instance youth leader or horticulturist. These previous experiences lead to the situation that the working community and superiors didn't think that it was necessary to have a induction period at all. They thought that the person knew the organization already.

It also seems to be some kind of an occupational culture that if you have been initiated to your work in some other congregation, you are supposed to know everything because the servings and the spiritual work doesn't vary that much between the congregations. So if you had gained working experience from some other congregation it seems to be the common belief that you don't need any initiation training period. As you can see from the figure 3, many of the interviewees emphasized it as a negative thing.

I started each interview session with each person by showing the guidelines of the diocese about how the new employee should be treated, inducted and welcomed to the working community. Some of the interviewees knew about the guidelines and some have never heard of them. The first three questions gave quite easy-to-analyze answers. Not that much to draw conclusions from, but never the less as important as the other questions in order to improve the initiation training and mentoring processes I deliberately separated these questions into two parts, to get clearer answer to more practical and secular matters. On the other hand more serious and refined answers to the questions that concern the spiritual side of the profession, building professional identity and managing the mental side of the profession to be able to handle also the burdensome matters, for example when facing the mourning relatives of the deceased.

Question about the length and the quality of the initiation training process, was not answered as such, because at the time I prepared the questions I did not know the age distribution of the group of priests. Most of the priests felt that they have not been

familiarized when they started, or that the familiarization has been very minimal without any proper induction plan made together. Nearly half of the research group thought that the lack of proper initiation training was the cause that they have been in some way already acquainted with the congregation. They were treated the way like they would have been old employees because of some connections outside the work, and they don't need to be told the things from the beginning. The fact that came to my knowledge just then was that most of the priests have been working in the congregation of Riihimäki, at the time of the interview, more than 15 years. As we all know the initiation training was not acknowledged back then, as it is now.

The first question was: *Was the length of the initiation training period convenient and did it fulfill your expectations?* If I would just look at the answers that I received without thinking about this background situation explained in the previous paragraph, I would have been very concerned. Seven people out of eleven said that they didn't have any initiation training period, and that is because of the age distribution of the congregation. Most of the interviewees thought that it would be beneficial for both sides to have a proper induction period and saw that it's been improved all the time. There weren't any big feelings connected to this issue. The interviewees just mentioned it as a fact. Those few, who had some kind of induction, didn't have any specific expectations so the other part of the question whether the expectations were fulfilled remained more or less unanswered. From the perspective of Juholin's new agenda of the organizational communication and six elements, it would have been quite worrying from the employer's reputation point of view.

Second question was: *Was there an initiation plan and did someone go through it with you?* As it can be seen from table 3 the answers to second question reflects the situation that was explained with the question number one. If an interviewee had started ones career more than few years ago, there was no initiation plan nor was it gone through together with new employee. Nine out of eleven interviewees brought this up and more than half of them saw that extremely negative. As they all got to know the current recommendations of the diocese at the beginning of the interview, they felt that it is good to have those recommendations and every organization should follow them. Answers to

this question brought up the aspect of employer's reputation as well the aspect of learning together and sharing the knowledge. Without aiming to this kind of results, I was getting answers that could be connected straight to the six elements of Juholin's new agenda of organizational communication.

The third question was merely to test the interviewees' awareness regarding the *Employees guide book* currently in use. The guide book is not as much in use, as it used to be, because all the information can be found from the intranet and from the web pages, but still I wanted to know as a comparison how they perceived the guide book as a induction tool. The question was: *Do you see the guide book as a user friendly and how often have used/ use it?* Four out of eleven answered that it is a great tool to help you refresh your memory but three of them thought that the updating in printing is challenging. Many of interviewees said that it is easy to check some practical matters like travel expense claim instructions from the guide book. Many mentioned as well, that it is very practical to check someone's name from the book, especially when you are new in the organization. In other words it helps you to connect the face and name. The user friendly part of the question was less weighted and only one said that it is easy to use, two said that it is not attractive at all and one didn't even remember that it existed. This question and its answers can be connected to the third element of new agenda; exchange and availability of up-to-date information. Once again emphasize was on one's own activity and some of the interviewees said that in the congregation of this size e.g. small, things are solved the easiest way by asking. This same aspect of one's own activity came up in numerous answers as a side comment.

The fourth question was: *Do you feel that you had a possibility to influence the interaction between you and your working community during your induction?* With this question I wanted to emphasize the fact that it is always two way street and you, as a new employee, shouldn't expect that every little detail is given to you on a silver plate. The answers that I got were surprisingly similar. While the question might have been leading, nevertheless almost all the answers brought up the aspect of participation and influencing in a working community, completing the Juholin's six elements. Eight out of eleven thought that they have had a possibility to influence the interaction during their induc-

tion, but many of them added that it depends a lot of your own activity whether you are able to influence or just taking a passive receiver's role. The interaction during the induction period was handled more from the perspective of a newcomer although there hadn't been any specific period of induction. The answers reflected the feeling of a new comer in a general level.

Questions that handled the most secular matters were easiest to analyze. As I used the inductive reasoning with my empiric material, I tried to find some common affections, consequences and dictums that are essential to this specific work community (Carey James W, 1989).

What kind of support would you have needed during the induction period was the question number five. In these answers the variety of opinions was quite wide depending on the length of one's career before joining the congregation of Riihimäki, the age and overall experience of an individual. Quite many said that they would not have expected any more support that they got because of their background as an already familiar individual to the congregation and this supports the idea of good atmosphere in the new agenda of organizational communication. Some would have wanted support with theological issues and dealing with spiritual side of the profession, which connects straight to the element of sharing and discussing important and big issues of the work itself and working community. On the other hand few mentioned just the opposite; more support with the practical things such as allowances of using one's own vehicle, travel claim expenses and budgeting in their own team of expertise. Few brought up in their answers that it might have been helpful if there would have been priests as role models from the same generation or sex of their own. Once again one common opinion arose from the answer that if you need something, is it support or practical advice, you will get it by asking.

The sixth question was; *Addition to your initiator, who else gave you support and guidance during your induction period?* Actually these answers took me by surprise by their broad consensus. I would have expected some answers to bring up the supportive role of one's family and friends but none of them did. Almost all the answers gave the same final

result. Sexton, vicar, deaconesses, senior colleagues and ladies in the vicar's office were the most popular answers as well as administrative secretary, administrative chaplain, caretaker and female proprietor of the congregation. In these answers the most important message concerning the organizational communication and the new agenda, was the overall supportive atmosphere in the vicar's office.

To a question number seven, concerning getting feedback, was built on an assumption that priests' job is quite lonely and independent. The majority of interviewees felt that it is easier to get feedback from the parish members as clients, but that they are often insecure of what their own colleagues think of their performance or way of approaching for example grieving relatives. Also the majority thought that there should be more feedback among colleagues. Getting and giving feedback is an important tool of developing yourself. Very common belief was also that the feedback from a colleague would be valuable, because it is very hard to notice whether the parish member is genuine when saying "great speech", or is it just a compliment that he/she says after every sermon.

One common feeling was that the feedback is given more inside the teams which is concentrating on their field of expertise. Staff meetings are running smoothly according to the interviewees, but one common dictum was that the meetings should handle more of mental side of the work instead of calendar maintenance. Most of the priests also mentioned that they would need support on dealing with the difficult matters with facing the members of the parish, which once again is like straight from the book *Viestinnän vallankumous* and its six elements, concerning the sharing and discussing the big and important issues.

Eighth question was to find out *whether the priests get enough support and guidance during their careers*. This was one of the two questions that dealt the mentoring aspect. The previous question number seven was also to reveal the ongoing process of getting feedback and level of peer evaluation and support of one's career. These answers gave me an indication of some possible problems concerning the hierarchy of the congregation and lack of getting feedback. Many answers showed that the feedback is given more between

colleagues but when it comes to the vicar and his/her position the situation is no longer as simple as you might think. There comes to picture the hierarchical dilemma that no one is giving feedback to their superior and that the vicar is not getting any. It would be very beneficial to the vicar among all the other priests to learn from the feedback but if you are not getting any you cannot develop as an individual. This is the essential part of the participating and influencing in the working community and the answers brought up a piece of the puzzle of the new agenda and six elements.

To conclude the whole interview I asked as the ninth question as; *how the communality of the working place could be improved?* As all the other elements emerged already from the answers it was quite amazing to realize that the *plus one* element came up in these answers to this ninth question. Many of the interviewees were looking after the unofficial forums to keep in touch with colleagues. Some even suggested keeping in touch with the help of social media for example Facebook. One very common belief and truth that emerged from the answers was that the priests would prefer less staff meetings with calendar maintenance and more spiritual discussion and support with connecting work and free time. Many brought up the idea of organizing semiofficial gatherings and get-togethers for example in Hirvijärvi summer camp.

8 Conclusions

Starting to conclude the results and sum up the study I want to start from the general level. The purpose of this thesis was to reveal some common beliefs and truths about initiation training practices that are currently used in the congregation of Riihimäki by assessing the current practices.. The main goal was to find some improvement suggestions in order to give tools for the congregation of Riihimäki for them to develop the practices if they decide to do so. I found some issues that should be taken into consideration if some changes are planned when improving the practices. I believe that the suggestions that I am going to make are feasible and could improve the commitment of new comer priests to the working community. I followed the basic communication theories and the linkage between my study and theoretical framework is very easy to

see. The initiation instructions from the diocese are based totally on the very basics of internal communication theories.

The very first comparison that I could do is to look at the guide book of a new employee and what is the status quo right now. Already when I started my research information was on its way to intranet of the congregation. That would have been my first improvement suggestion to start with but I guess today's internet society make the rules of using on-line tools and information dissemination and if you are not following the mainstream, you are out of the modern game of communicating. As it came very clear from my results, the printed guidebook is old fashioned and hard to maintain and up date. The intranet, extranet or internet are the tools of today and I am happy to notice that congregation of Riihimäki is following the progress before I took the chance to mention it.

Continuing with the secular matters and from the perspective of initiating to the workplace with practical issues, I found out that this part of the induction is handled quite traditionally. As many of the interviewees mentioned, the practical part consisted more or less of giving the keys, introduction of the premises and perhaps some IT related instructions. I believe that the congregation would benefit from the more structured and organized induction period that would consist of currently covered topics, some detailed information and down to earth perspective of the topics like; travel expense claims, allowances, budgeting and IT systems in use. My insight is that if there would be a team of priests or other personnel planning the contents of the induction period and instructions for example of the basis of my research results, the whole induction would reach its targets better just because the contents is opinion of many individuals and perceptions. This opinion is straight reflection from my research, as it was very visible in many answers that there are as many answers as there are answerers. In some questions the variety of answers was wider than with some other questions. I believe that it could be a good idea to have one person that is responsible of this practical workplace induction as a whole and addition to that, there would be a personal initiator dealing with the other aspects of the initiation. From the organization's point of view it would be beneficial to have clearer structure and proper knowledge what information

is delivered and in which form to the new employee. On the other hand the practice of having above mentioned structure of two initiators, would assure that every single new employee gets the same information and it is not affected by the personal initiator and how much or little he/she has got time to spend with initiation. I think that this would be also a time saver for both, organization and the employee and that way it would make the initiation process more efficient and productive. As in every communication process, let it be in this case internal communication of the congregation of Riihimäki, the evaluation and monitoring is essential part of the process. In the basic light of the communication theories, I would see beneficial to have a monitoring session for example a year after the employee have started one's work. The one year time frame comes straight from the interviews, as many said that the initiation process should be a year of length, because then all the Christianity related church holidays would have been covered with the initiator as they all have special characteristics of their own. Follow-up should be an open dialogue between three parties; new employee, personal initiator and the induction responsible person. They should together evaluate openly how the induction has succeeded and what could have done better. I think this is the only way how the process truly can be developed and improved.

When we think about diocese level instructions of initiation and how it should be implemented, one single thing that I see as a very important issue is the written initiation plan and how it should be utilized. As an end result of my study, there weren't actual initiation plan made in writing to any of the interviewees. Some, who thought that they have seen something in writing, mentioned that it had to do more with the pastoral training than initiation training to the congregation. So that is one thing for sure that should be taken into consideration more. With the written plan it would be easier to evaluate the induction process afterwards from employees and employers side. It should be interactive discussion between parties and benefit both. Diocese instructions also mention outside mentoring and peer support and I think that the diocese of Tampere offers many tools to support the communality in the work community. Somehow I experience that I have been like outsider consultant that have a different perspective to the whole working community and its habits. This lead unintentionally to the situa-

tion that this research came out to be emancipatory as people were realizing along the interviews that, “Oh, I haven’t thought about it before...”. I got the feeling that many of the interviewees started to think about some drawbacks at the time they were telling me about them. The emancipatory effect could have been positive, negative or constructive and that would be next interesting thing to find out. My role as an outsider researcher reflected the Engeström’s general framework of workplace development and that is why I think, that it might be useful to have an outsider consultant to give a perspective to some challenges that the working community is facing.

Many side comments of an actual answer were bringing up the perception that the person’s own activity is very important when getting the information during the induction period or otherwise. Also the feedback and perhaps the lack of getting it were evaluated as an interaction between your audience and you. It is also your own attitude that matters whether you are getting feedback or not and on the other hand how you are giving it to your colleagues. This leads my thoughts to the issue of collegial competitive situation. You might think that it has nothing to do with the congregation atmosphere but it does. Results reveal the underlying feeling of jealousy and professional competition. The common belief seems to be that this comes from the old habits and Lutheran church hierarchy and it is a taboo to break this hierarchical system. Although all the traditional ways of doing things are not meant to be broken, I think this thing should be brought into the daylight so, that it doesn’t lead into worse consequences, like workplace bullying and distress, of which there are no signs in the working community not yet. Not to give too negative picture of the atmosphere in the work place, many interviewees mentioned also as a side comment to some other question the fact that the overall atmosphere is very good.

As all the aspects of the organizational communication and the new agenda were brought up when discussing the results, I would like to emphasize the fact that in the communication strategy of the congregation of Riihimäki, there are all the pieces of the puzzle that are needed to create a functional communicative working community as it is said in the communication strategy of the congregation, but not all the parts are utilized to its full. There could also be a team which purpose is an ongoing research and

development of the initiation practices bearing in mind the important basic aspects of organizational communication for instance just by placing the six elements of new agenda to the wall of a coffee room to remind all about the common goal. As the emphasis is on the fact the initiation training process should be targeted to develop the quality of the working processes, the internal message to the employees of the congregation should be that we are doing this together and as it is said in the new agenda; all opinions should be evaluated equally, the atmosphere should be relaxed and people are not afraid to share their insights and thoughts.

If we conclude the results from the perspective of induction process to one's work there opens a whole new sight. This is the issue that the commissioner party wanted me to find out deeper meaning of initiation training and mentoring. When assessing and reflecting the results to the theories of organizational communication and diocese instructions I realized the importance of proper mental initiation to one's work. It makes a big difference whether you get enough support and guidance at the beginning of one's career. It can possibly have long lasting impacts on one's career, positive or negative. The effects might come visible in many forms but as the results pointed out quite clearly, good induction can mentally help a young priest to build one's professional identity but it might even reach to your self-esteem and how well you are able to handle and face the difficult matters in your work and would not be devastated. Results showed quite unambiguously that the better you get connected to the work place at the beginning and how the working community is welcoming a new employee the better is the feeling of communality and that is the link to get committed new priests to the congregation.

The whole study took longer than was anticipated and planned due to family life issues. Negotiations with the commissioner party were started already in spring 2010 and the theme interviews were carried out during summer 2010.

9 Discussion

Assessing the succeeding or failing factors of this study, I am quite glad with the outcomes of my research. I got some very valuable information gathered with the help of my research interview questions and the empiric part of the study is quite satisfying. I chose the research group very consciously and I believe that it paid off. I reached profound comprehension about my topic by focusing only on one professional group in the congregation. As I have heard from my advisor that my research group was quite big and that I had quite many questions to analyze, I feel comfortable about the amount of information I gathered through interviews. Empiric part gave me adequate amount of information and the topic was handled thoroughly.

I truly believe that I got what I was aiming for. My plan was to assess the initiation practices and mentoring in the congregation of Riihimäki and that is what I did. I followed quite strictly the guidelines of the diocese of Tampere and addition to that I relied to the basic internal communication theories concerning especially organizational communication.

As I presented the research results to the commissioner party few weeks ago I felt satisfaction and pride of my work. The vicar was pleased and genuinely interested to hear the results. Some answers took her by surprise and some other answers she had anticipated but nevertheless I was asked to present the essential parts of my research to the clergy at the end of May and once again at the near superiors meeting in the coming fall. The congregation of Riihimäki was interested to utilize my research results when developing their practices.. The usage of my research results is a bit a question of courage and somehow I would like to challenge at least the congregation of Riihimäki to take the brave step on improving the current practices. I am not suggesting that it is an easy way but in the long run it will pay off.

Alongside of the congregation of Riihimäki I would like to think that these results are beneficial and useful to almost all the congregations of Finland. I also think that diocese of Tampere should be interested of this research and its results and my genuine

feeling is that they are when they hear about this research. Kirkon tutkimuskeskus is a one organization that might be interested in this, because there hasn't been any this kind of studies before this one, at least that I would be aware of and I raked through the background very carefully.

If I may use the figure of speech now about the feeling that I have about my whole study, I would say that I am enlightened. This study made me realize that in the congregation as a work place, they have many implicit rules that outsider can't never understand unless you are "forced to dig deeper than the surface". One other thing is that there is an amazing intersubjectivity among the priests as one unified group employees, they all believe in something that unites them.

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Riihimäen seurakunnan viestintästrategia

Viherä Sirpa, 18.2.2010, haastattelu

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Attachments

1. Theme interview question frame
2. Covering letter sent by e-mail with the research question

Papiston perehdyttämisen ja mentoroinnin kehittäminen Riihimäen seurakunnassa

1. Oliko perehdyttämisjakso mielestäsi sopivan pituinen ja vastasiko se odotuksiasi?
2. Tehtiinkö sinulle perehdyttämis-suunnitelma ja käytiinkö perehdyttämisen tavoitteet yhdessä läpi etukäteen?

3. Onko perehdyttämisohjeistus mielestäsi käyttäjäystävällinen ja kuinka usein käytät/olet käyttänyt sitä?
4. Pystyitkö mielestäsi vaikuttamaan riittävästi työyhteisön (perehdyttäjän) ja sinun väliseen vuorovaikutukseen perehdyttämisen aikana?
5. Millaista tukea olisit kaivannut perehdytysjakson aikana?
6. Keneltä muilta perehdyttäjän lisäksi, sait tukea ja ohjausta perehdytyksesi aikana?
7. Saatko työssäsi tarpeeksi palautetta ja vertaistukea kollegoiltasi? Mitä parannettavaa, kerro esimerkki?
8. Saatko tarpeeksi tukea ja ohjausta työssäsi?
9. Miten yhteisöllisyyttä voisi parantaa ja vahvistaa vastaviihityn papin ammatti-identiteetin rakentumista työyhteisössäsi?

Hyvä Riihimäen Seurakunnan Pappi!

Hei, olen Hanna Juvonen ja opiskelen Haaga-Helia ammattikorkeakoulussa Helsingissä, Johdon assistenttityön- ja kielten koulutusohjelmassa. Teen opin-
näytetyötäni yhteistyössä Riihimäen Seurakunnan kanssa ja pyytäisin kaikkia pa-
piston jäseniä osallistumaan tutkimushaastatteluun.

Aiheeni on Perehdytyksen ja mentoroinnin kehittäminen Riihimäen seurakun-
nassa.

Tutkimushaastattelu on luottamuksellinen ja henkilötiedot eivät tule missään
vaiheessa julki. Tarkoitukseni on saada arvokasta tietoa haastattelun avulla, joka
auttaisi kehittämään perehdytys ja mentorointi käytäntöjä Riihimäen Seurakun-
nassa.

Ohessa liitetiedostona on kysymysten runko. Voit tutustua kysymyksiin ja miet-
tiä asioita hieman etukäteen, että saisimme mahdollisimman arvokasta tietoa itse
haastattelutilanteessa.

Haastattelu toteutetaan Seurakunnan tiloissa ja siihen varataan aikaa noin 1 tun-
ti/haastattelu. Teen haastattelusta äänitallenteen tulosten purkua vasten.

Voit ottaa minuun yhteyttä puhelimitse tai sähköpostitse ajankohdan sopimista
varten.

Hanna Juvonen
HAAGA-HELIA AMK
050-3070 453
hanna.juvonen@myy.haaga-helia.fi