

MEMORIAL WORDS AT THE FUNERAL OF
EERO MÄKELÄ ON THE
17TH OF APRIL, 2024

* 27.1.1949 † 13.3.2024

*“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me:
Write: Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord
from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may
rest from their labours; and their works follow
them» (Rev. 14:13).*

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These words of the Book of Revelation come into mind as we have gathered to follow our teacher Eero Mäkelä to the grave which our Savior has sanctified as a place of rest.

He was born in Honkilahti in Southern Finland, the 27th of January, 1949, as the sixth child of Severi and Anna Mäkelä. Six children were born after him. There were six sons and six daughters in the family, of which two daughters already have come to rest from the troubles of the journey.

We were allowed to grow up in a Christian family and hear the Word of God, because our father diligently read the Bible and sermons of Laestadius and other books of God's word. He even investigated the children's condition of soul, and raised children in discipline and admonition of the Lord. He also asked for forgiveness where he found himself faulty. Thus, the seed of the Word of God had already at a young age been able to have an impact on Eero's heart. As we often have heard Eero tell how he had rolled restless on the night bed. When the father had noticed the affliction of his son, he came and asked if he had something on his conscience. So Eero got the opportunity to confess his sins, and dad preached all sins forgiven in the name and blood of the Lord Jesus. This gave rest and peace into the heart of the little child. Many times Eero has told about this in his sermons, which has been precious and edifying to hear. Already in an early stage God has awakened in him the mind that he never wants to leave the Christianity where there is such a good place of comfort and shelter.

Nevertheless, after reaching teen age, he became to some extent weary, even though he did not intend to forsake Christianity. Anyway, he could not talk about matters where he had become bound in his conscience. When he at the age of 15 years began to feel an ache in his stomach, he said that he has got stomach flu. He went to sleep, but at night his appendix broke. In the morning, he was brought by taxi to the hospital, and father went with him. He had asked if Eero had something on his conscience, but he did not have the strength to confess. Then he was in a poor condition at the hospital, and he thought that if he now died, he would go to hell. He could nothing but pray that God would yet allow him to recover, so that he could open his heart. He has often talked

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about how hard the enemy binds a wretched person. When father came to visit him, and one of his brothers, he could not talk about what was troubling him. Afterwards he said that he was so ashamed that he shut his eyes. Dad said that he is so tired that it is better for us to go away. After all, Eero recovered from this illness.

Eero made decisions that he shall talk about his matters, but then he began to feel that he does not have any penitence, and how can he as such begin to talk. The conscience demanded that he should talk, but the heart felt dry. He feared that death would come, and he would go to hell, as he doesn't obey the voice of the Holy Spirit. At last he had to go and wake up his father, and talk about everything that he had on his conscience. Father preached all sins forgiven. Eero has said that he did not have any high feelings of grace, but he got peace in his heart. In the morning, dad talked about Christ's work of redemption which he has done on the cross. Then Eero could taste the sweetness of grace, and he got a promise in his heart, like the disciples on the Mount of Ascension.

Eero has told about a thing that took place some years later, and after we had got contact with Levi Älvgren and those who were in one mind with him. We were at Sunday prayer in the small cottage of Manta Uusitalo, when Eero had such bad feelings that everything only grieved him. Anyway, he went to ask for forgiveness. One can guess what the situation is like when one feels worse than a heathen. But suddenly Eero got a clear lightning from the heaven of grace, so that the dark room shined in that light. Then he sang with a loud voice and full breast. Often he has told about this occasion, and expounded the Scriptures alongside this, like the words of apostle John: *«If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things»*. And again: *«If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God»* (1 John 3:20, 21).

Father had talked to Eero like this: *«If I were in your place, I would go to Swedish Lapland and take Abrahamsson's daughter to wife»*. Eero said that he had already thought about that, but he hoped that he would get a sign if that was a right thought. He believed that this was guidance from God. Then, after

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a while he said this to his father, and requested him to ask Edvin, and if Inga consents, then he is ready to marry her.

This is a right example of how marriage should begin. Eero moved to Kiruna, got a working place in the mine, began to study Swedish, and lived alone for several months. After this, they entered matrimony and moved in together.

Levi was happy to get a young man to Lapland, and soon Eero was asked behind the table at prayers and meetings, first to read, and after a while to preach.

In 1975, Levi took Eero as a companion on a missionary trip to Finland. At that time, Lauri Koistinen who had been placed as preacher at the same time as Eero, had through God's revelation got a thought that soon all the old people in Lapland have gone from time to eternity, and taken with them knowledge about what had taken place in the sky of Christianity. Therefore, he wanted to gather facts about the stages of the spiritual government in Lapland. While Levi is alive, it would be safe to do this, as Levi could control the text. Then Lauri made many journeys to Lapland in order to better ask how things had gone. Levi's desire was to get Lauri as mission companion to Eero.

When the congregation sent Sten and Eero to America in 1976, Levi wanted Lauri to follow with the trip. Levi was already very ill, and he was happy that God arranged so that there are two young preachers left in Lapland after him. There is no need to write here more about the trials that followed, as we have written notes about them. However, these events have brought a lot of sorrow to the lovers of truth, so that faculties of soul have become shaken, as so many have lost confidence. Under all these trials, these mentioned Eero and Lauri have continued with the missionary work through many troubles and toils. People have mocked that two boys from Finland go to Lapland, and come from there as elders of Lapland. Levi had anyway risen from the fallen condition while Isak Kuoksu and Frans Wettainen were alive, and he had been a member of missionary work, and labored in the truth of the doctrine for many decades. Levi found it suitable to put these young men in missionary work.

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Missionary work has been continued after Levi's death, to America, Norway, and Finland, in which labor Eero and Lauri have one-mindedly sacrificed themselves. In this matter even the wives of the preachers have been of great aid, as they have sacrificed their beloved spouses to missionary trips, although there would have been work at home in a family with many children, like Eero and Inga have 11 children. Never have we heard any complaints, but Inga has considered the work of Christianity so important that she has not wanted to be an obstacle in this precious matter.

Eero has been a confessor for many Christians, where he had become used to opening knots which the enemy of the soul wants to bind for broken hearts. Herein he has sacrificed himself so that one has to marvel if this is not too much that one is awake almost until the morning, listening and teaching, even though he in the morning has to drive a distance of more than 600 miles.

Eero has even left a beautiful example on how to remember the bound ones in their troubles. He has rejoiced with them that do rejoice, and wept with them that weep. He has been a helper of the feeble-minded. He has helped many people even in earthly need. Self-sacrificing love has become visible in his life. He has not spared himself in the labor of Christianity. He has grieved over the fallen ones. Maybe all the troubles that he has seen have consumed vitality from his body, only the Lord knows this. But we know that he has not gathered merits from the burden and heat of the day. His children who took care of him during his last days have told that when he could hear the testimony of the forgiveness of sins, he joined his hands together, and said that it is blessed that such an unworthy person may believe that he is saved.

When there was a question about the mission to Finland, Eero hastened that you shall soon write an answer to the mission request. Juhani Heinonen wrote the answer letter with the promise of a mission to Finland in 2024. When Eero's daughter read the letter to him, he fell asleep. The daughter interrupted reading, then he opened his eyes and said: «*Just read*». After a while he again fell asleep. The daughter interrupted reading. Again he opened his eyes and said: «*Just read*». The daughter continued reading, and could read the letter to the end. Then Eero sat up in a sitting position, and was able to write his

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name in some copies of the letter. The letter is written on the 10th of March, 2024. Eero could pass away from this valley of sorrow and grief on the 13th of March, 2024.

He has left his spouse, children with their families, Christian brothers and sisters to miss him, but let us not mourn like those who have no hope, because if we are diligent to struggle, hasten and yearn, even we will see what we have here believed with a weak hope, and we can meet each other in joy and peace.

Rest now, thou faithful servant of the Lord, in the rest chamber which our Lord has sanctified as a chamber of rest.

written by a younger brother,

Toivo Mäkelä