

Religion

Just as in other countries, new religions in Greenland fully have replaced the traditional faith. Or have they?

The Christian church is present everywhere in Greenland. The churches are centrally located and visible in the settlements, and the church plays a central role in important anniversaries such as baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals. The Greenlandic parliament, Inatsisartut, start their session with a service in a church in Nuuk.

As an institution the Christian Church is a major conservative power just as in other western countries. But the traditional faith in the power of nature also exists in the modern Greenland. Many artists continue to find inspiration in the traditional faith.

A central theme of the Inuits self-understanding is the relationship with nature. The nature in form of, for example, animals and stones is in the traditional faith given a personality and a soul. The traditio-

nal faith requires that people maintain in harmony between themselves and the nature. If this relationship is thrown out of balance, it can have fatal consequences and result in the death of human beings.

In the Christian narrative the last pagan in Greenland first was baptized in 1934. But the traditional faith lives on throughout the society. Although the narrative of the traditional Inuit faith from time immemorial only has survived in the oral tradition, I often experience that Greenlanders tells about events that is based on a view of life that dates back to the time before Christianity was introduced in Greenland.

A lot of people tell about experiences that have to do with another world. It may be the *qivitoqs* (the mountain wanderers), who live secluded from modern life, but which can be experienced walking around visible in the settlements. It can also be traditional ghosts, which also plays a key role in other countries.



The church, Narsaq, South Greenland,
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