



September 2016

'Praise the Lord, all nations; extol Him, all peoples. For his kindness overwhelms us, and the Lord's steadfast truth is forever. Hallelujah'. Psalm 117

This wonderful two-verse psalm is both the shortest psalm and also the shortest chapter in the whole Bible, yet to it contains so much about our God. While other psalms give specific details of what God has done, this psalm offers only the great measure of his kindness and steadfast truth as a reason for our praise of the Lord. In its context in the Old Testament some have described this as a 'zero-degree psalm of thanksgiving', succinct and direct. Yet what makes it stand out is that this is not Israel but all nations and all peoples who are to praise God. Paul alludes to this psalm in Romans 15 as it is in Christ that the kindness and steadfast truth of the Lord are to be found in their fullness. *'For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.'* (Rom 15:8-9). It is for this reason that we are to praise and extol him, because of his overwhelming kindness he has done something to save us. He sent his own divine son into our world to become a man—Jesus of Nazareth. What a privilege it is to be part of his plan of reaching the nations here in Finland.

Last week while I was at the college I noticed that the leaves on the trees were starting to change. Autumn has arrived and the start of the new academic year was marked by the 'Explaining your Faith in English' course. It was exciting to discover all of the far-flung places the current students are going to this autumn. Little did I realise when we came to Finland that the students I teach at the bible college would be going to so many nations to proclaim Christ. Many this year are on their way to South America but all were envious of the couple who were on their way to Honolulu. It has been a real joy to help them in talking about their faith, encouraging them in giving their testimonies and sharing the gospel.



In class one group prepared their own felt-board figures to go with their presentation of the gospel. They wanted to create a resource that they could take with them to Croatia in their work. Earlier during the spring I was in contact with one couple who after having attending my classes were sent to Iceland where they created an evangelistic website for Icelandic teenagers using the two ways to live materials. It has been very exciting to see the enthusiasm and creativeness that these students have in finding ways to explain their faith to others using a foreign language.

During the summer we were able to spend a week in Tallinn, just a three-hour boat journey from Helsinki. It is a lovely city with lots of interesting places to visit and friendly people. It was the first time that the boys had visited a former Soviet country. They found the contrast between the new and the older areas of the city a challenge as the oppression of the Soviet era was made clear. As we walked round the city we saw a number of churches but as we talked to the Estonians the real lack of Christian presence in the city became clear. One lady told Jess that she knew that people did go to church but could not think of a single person who went to church.

At the end of August Nathan moved to the UK to start his internship with Christian Heritage in Cambridge. We are very excited for him as he is living in a house with other Christians and has found a church to attend. We would value your prayers for Nathan as he has to find part-time work to be able to fund his year with Christian Heritage. We are so grateful that his godmother is living close by and is helping him find his feet and adapting to living back in the UK.

Jean-Paul started the summer helping at a beach mission in Greece and has then been working as a volunteer in the chemistry department of the University of Helsinki. It has been a good experience for him as he has been involved with helping some PhD students with the research. When he returns to Nottingham at the end of September he will be continuing his role as a 9:20 bible study leader in his hall. Currently he is waiting to hear how many new students will be joining his group, but he knows of at least one lad.

This summer we have been aware of the all-encompassing work of the Lord, in that all nations and all people are involved. At Nathan's graduation party there were representatives from many different countries all brought together because of what the Lord had done. Then recently we had the joy of a visit by a Crosslinks Mission Partner, Anna Read, who is from our own home church. We had the opportunity to learn from her what the Lord is doing in Hungary. In all this it makes us want to join in praising and extolling the Lord with all nations and all peoples. *'For his kindness overwhelms us, and the Lord's steadfast truth is forever. Hallelujah.'*



Prayer:

- We give thanks for the teaching opportunities and the continued co-operation at the bible college. Pray especially for the idea of developing the Explaining Your Faith in English course into a weekend conference.
- Pray for Jean-Paul in his role as a 9:20 leader at uni. Give thanks that there is at least one other Christian in his halls.
- We give thanks that Nathan has accommodation with other Christians in Cambridge and is settling in well at Christian Heritage. Pray for him as he looks for part time work because he is self-funding.
- We give thanks to God for the blessing of our current house and the opportunities it gives us to reach out to others in need. Please pray that in all the bible studies and pastoral care we would hold firmly to the gospel and keep God sovereign.

Please contact your local Crosslinks office to change your contact details

Crosslinks, 251 Lewisham Way, London SE4 1XF Tel: 020 8691 6111 pletters@crosslinks.org
Crosslinks, 32 Montgomery Road, Belfast, Co. Antrim BT6 9HL Northern Ireland Tel: +44 (0) 28 9079 6028