



Special Edition

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God's Citizen

For my whole life I've considered myself to be Finnish. I was born to two Finnish immigrants- but in Canada. I lived my whole life in Canada; spoke mostly English. Sometimes I used Finnish when I was in church or with my grandparents, yet I always thought of myself as Finnish. It had never really sunk in that I am in fact Canadian, until I moved to Finland for a year with my husband Jarno (who, with his quiet nature, is much more Finnish than I am).

While in Finland it struck me that I am, in fact, a Canadian as well. Everywhere I went, I was introduced as 'from Canada'. People asked me where my interesting accent was from and I responded that I was 'from Canada'. Everyone thought it was amazing that someone from Canada could know so much Finnish. At one point, someone even told me that I was in 'their country'; I couldn't believe it! My whole life I have cheered for Finland during the Winter Olympics, identified with Finland and have been proud that my grandparents fought to keep my country's independence. Despite my dual citizenship, I didn't really belong there. Even something as simple as asking how a store cashier's day went, was out of the ordinary. I was shocked when the cashier asked me: "Why? No one ever asks me that."

I could write about many other funny culture shock

incidents I came across while living in Finland, but there would be too many. As much as my heart loves both countries, I know that, in the long run, it doesn't really matter which country I belong to. Everywhere I have travelled in my life from South Africa, to different parts of Canada, to different countries in Europe I can identify with one nation- and that's God's nation. It's amazing how God can connect his people together to create a "unified nation" that has one united goal and purpose to be a follower of Jesus and to spread the Gospel message. Many times I have experienced that as soon as I have contact with someone who is a follower of Christ, there is an immediate connection through the Holy Spirit where I feel comfortable praying, singing, having fellowship and worshipping together.

I feel amazingly blessed to know Jesus as my personal Saviour and to be a "citizen" of God's nation. The Bible says that even though we live on this earth we are citizens of heaven and we are to encourage each other and stand together (Philippians 1:27). So even though I know that on paper I am a dual citizen of Canada and Finland, in my heart I know my citizenship is in God's nation. Do you know where yours is? "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Philippians 3:20)

LIISA KARJANLAHTI



I Dare You

I always love telling people how I came to know Jesus. Partly because everyone I know loves a good game of truth or dare, and partly because it has a love story, both earthly and spiritual, wound through it.

My brother was the first of my family to come to the Lord. After becoming saved, he began to pray for me to know Jesus as well. I remember having many in-depth conversations on the phone with him as he tried to convince me that God was real. One night, he dared me to ask God for what my heart most desired.

I was at a point in my life where I was lost, lonely and tired. I was a single parent to an almost 5 year old boy. I was working rotating shifts as a nurse. I was searching for love and a reason for life. I didn't even have to think about what the deepest desire of my heart was. I knew it instantly, because I had been searching for it for years without ever finding it. I wanted a husband, a good man who would love me, and even more so, love my son.

I sat quietly that evening, contemplating my brother's challenge. Finally I spoke out loud, not even sure of whom I was speaking to. "Okay God, if you are really there, bring me the deepest desire of my heart; bring me a husband who will love my child and me."

Two days later, I met my husband Joel. He was helping to move his brother and sister-in-law into the basement suite of the house I was renting. I knew instantly that I liked him, and within several weeks that I would marry him if he asked me. It didn't really have anything to do with God at that point, but I had found a good man, one who just happened to have a heart for Jesus.

I truly understood that God existed and had heard my prayer early in our relationship. One night when we were lying out on the trampoline talking he shared with me how he had felt when he met me. He was attracted to me from the first moment. But, when he saw my son, he felt the Lord say to him that this boy needed a father. He felt almost more drawn into our relationship by that urging than by his interest in me.

We got engaged four months after we first met, and were married four months after that. We have now been married for five years. We have had our ups and downs, as every marriage does. It never fails to amaze me how well he balances me out. As we continue on our Christian journey together, I am grateful to God for answering my prayers. I also know that if God had not been central to our marriage relationship, we would not have had the strength to persevere in loving each other and walking this life together.

NADINE BEST



A Suitcase Full of Love



Audrey Clarke first saw the need when she visited her daughter in Africa in 1993. Shelley, a nurse, was there as a medical missionary with the PAOC, giving medical attention to people in the area that needed it. Nothing could have prepared Audrey for the utter poverty there. Even the programs on television only showed a portion of the need in that country.

When Audrey came home, she tried to think of ways that she could help these people. When she heard of a missionary couple going to the same place that Shelley was working, she asked if they would be willing to take along an extra suitcase with them. Once they agreed, she set to work collecting donations of gently used clothes, blankets, toys and medical equipment, filling the suitcase until it was almost bursting. Somehow she still managed to stay within the weight restrictions.

Since then, Audrey has sent over 100

suitcases per year all over the world, to places like Malawi, Uganda, India, Pakistan, Haiti, Namibia, Philippines, and South America. Even Anne and Riku Tuppurainen, the former pastors of Saalem in Toronto, have taken several of her suitcases with them overseas. Over the 18 years since she sent the first one, the total number of suitcases that have been sent by Audrey would probably approach the 2000 mark! At first suitcases were sent with missionary couples who were travelling to places in need, but these days, a suitcase full of necessities can be hand-delivered by anyone visiting an impoverished area who is willing to take an extra one with them. In fact, her living room is always full of items ready to go to someone who needs them, almost at a moment's notice.

Mrs. Clarke, who recently celebrated her 75th birthday, has also expanded her ministry to include raising funds to fill various other needs. She has raised



funds to build a well, in Turkana, Africa. She has also raised funds to build a school, and is in the process of raising funds for a second school. Her latest project is to raise \$12,500.00 in funds to send a truckload of food to Malawi, where there is currently a severe famine.

What started with a single suitcase has expanded to so much more. Many people all over the world have felt the loving touch sent by this pair of hands in Toronto, Canada. As is so often the case, God can take our small gestures of kindness and turn them into so much more than we could have ever imagined.

ANITA KUPARINEN

Sault Ste. Marie

Youth Rally 2011

This year's youth rally was held in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and was directed and organized by youth pastors Teppo Haapoja and Jacob Puiras. With roughly 60 youth from all over North America, I believe no one left unchanged. Many encountered God in a powerful way.

The theme of the rally was "Made Alive". Our prayer as youth leaders was that people who came would be truly set free from any bondage and sin and could live to the full potential of who they are in Christ. Our desire was that for the whole weekend, everything that went on, not just meetings

but every event and even every conversation would be God focused. As a result, the presence of God throughout the weekend was clear.

"Coming into youth rally, I had certain expectations of what a youth rally is like. They are always a fun weekend to catch up with old friends, go sauna and swimming, and learn more about God. But, I can personally say, that my expectations were blown out of the water. God moved not only mightily in my life, but it was evident that he was doing powerful work in many youth's lives. All I can say is, "God is faithful", said Teppo of his experience at Youth Rally.



Worship was lead by Matt Walsh and band from Thunder Bay and Mika Yrjola, an author/speaker based out of Valparaiso, Indiana was the main speaker for the

weekend. Thursday night his message was called "What does God Need?" where he said that God does not need anything, but God still decided to need us to fulfill his mission to save all people. Friday night Mika spoke on faith. God is looking for faith filled believers. He said we can have faith for ourselves, our friends, and for our families. Saturday night was about hearing the voice of God. Mika shared about the most common ways we can hear God's voice.

Throughout the whole weekend, people were touched by God, fuelled and set on fire to reach the world around them. It was an amazing weekend filled with intense encounters with God that the youth will never forget.

MATT WALSH

GOD'S FIRE BURNS ON ICY KAMCHATKA

Kamchatka's people had never heard of Christ. Isolated from the mainland by a mountain ridge, this peninsula of fiery volcanoes and icy weather juts from Russia's eastern coast toward Alaska. Because the government had designated it a restricted natural preserve and military region, no one could enter without special permission.

hungry souls came to hear the Gospel for the first time. God then sent Anatoli, a Russian preacher reared in the Ukrainian underground church, to pastor six hundred brand new believers. The Petropavlovsk church was born.

God's Spirit impacted the entire city. He created such a favorable environment within local government that they gave the church a prime building site. Trusting God to provide resources, these believers began constructing a building designed to seat 1,000 people.

Believers from the Petropavlovsk church scattered across the peninsula, spreading the Gospel wherever they went. They founded over twenty new indigenous congregations with members from many different ethnic backgrounds: Koryak, Itelmen, Evens and Aleut natives, Asians, Jews, and white Russians.

These Kamchatkan churches needed trained leaders so a two year Bible training school formed in 1998. Fifty students crammed into a tiny office building. In 2000 God enabled the school to buy a vacant communist youth camp. Boris, a Jewish atheist who had attended that camp, was gloriously converted during the 1992 evangelistic crusade. He later became the school's academic dean and teaches God's Word where atheism once reigned.

In Petropavlovsk today construction of the church building nears completion. For some time services met in the church's finished basement. Last year government officials ruled a building violation and threatened to jail Pastor Anatoli if the congregation didn't immediately vacate the premises. Because the church cannot renew their building permit, they must completely finish the building and pass all inspections before the end of this year. If they don't, work must cease and they permanently forfeit use of the building.

Government officials also tried to shut down the Bible training school in 2010. On the basis of trumped up fire code violations officials evicted everyone from the living and dining facilities of the main building. Fortunately students were leaving for summer break. God then provided a

retired fire chief qualified to re-inspect the building. He found it in compliance with all codes, submitted necessary paperwork to the government, and received clearance for occupancy one week before school reopened last fall. Please pray for these Kamchatka believers as God continues His work despite growing government opposition.

SHERRIL WHITTEN



Students from the Bible training institute present a special program at the Petropavlovsk church dressed in ethnic costume

Then communism fell and government restrictions eased in 1991. God led Pentecostal evangelist R.W. Schambach to hold evangelistic meetings in Kamchatka's main city Petropavlovsk during the spring of 1992. Russian evangelist Nicolai translated. From day one the crowd overflowed an indoor theatre, filled the parking lot outside, and spilled into the street. They moved to an outdoor stadium. God kept snow away as thousands of

ages, cultures, and backgrounds, yet we got to know one another as good friends. We came together from every continent with a desire to learn and God's voice echoing in our ears, which helped to create a very positive atmosphere throughout.

SHERRIL WHITTEN

A New Calling Tugging On My Heart.

Near the end of last May, my father and I traveled some twenty-five hours by airplane and bus to reach the city of Bergen in Norway. When we finally arrived at the building where the GO Equipped course was being held, I was exhausted but excited for things to begin.

Why was I there? To learn how to become a Tentmaker – someone who travels abroad to share about God's word, using a work visa to enter countries that are otherwise closed to missionaries. They follow the example of the apostle Paul, the original tentmaker, and support themselves with their jobs rather than relying on donations from home. They also work to plant small house churches that will remain in the country even when they eventually leave.

Over three days of information-packed sessions, taught by some very talented speakers including my own father, I learned more and more about God and His will for His children, and the world around me. It was an eye-opening experience for me in many ways. Even though, at 17, I was the youngest person ever to take the course, I still found it perfectly applicable and understandable, not to mention fascinating.

The rest of the students were of a wide variety of

ages, cultures, and backgrounds, yet we got to know one another as good friends. We came together from every continent with a desire to learn and God's voice echoing in our ears, which helped to create a very positive atmosphere throughout.

Of course, ten hours in any classroom is a challenge, and the difference in time zones didn't help me, but I kept in mind that the course is specifically designed to fit into the schedule of the average working person. In any case, the knowledge I gained from it was certainly worth the effort. I walked away from this experience with a new perspective on things, and a new calling tugging on my heart. I now feel that God plans to send me to Southeast Asia, perhaps as an English teacher, and, come next September, I will begin working towards that goal in college.

I strongly urge anyone reading this, regardless of age or



identity, to look further into GO (Global Opportunities) and the GO Equipped course. I can safely say that it will make a difference in the way you see things – and it may even change your future in the way it did mine.

- MAIA ROCKLIN

Toronto Saalem Camp - 2011

Surf's up, dude! This year's beach themed camp at Camp Kwasind had over 100 campers! Among them were 7 little campers in training (under the age of 5). The camp also included over 40 volunteer staff, under the direction of Kimmo Hämäläinen.

A glimpse into the day of camp begins with stretches and a morning run, devotions, sports, arts and crafts, swimming (with a chance for a nice heat-up in the portable sauna), bible study, siesta, cabin cleanup, skit special, worship, bonfire, and evening prayer meeting. New this year was a giant waterslide, which the kids (and even counselors) thoroughly enjoyed.

Much to our surprise (and I'm sure to many parents as well), the second oldest boys cabin (ages 11-13) won the overall cleanest cabin. Pristine care was taken to clean, but also to add special attention to detail. This included leaf/flower arrangements on everyone's beds, scripture references, and kind notes written by the kids for the cabin "judge". One particular note that left all of the counselors bent over backwards laughing was this poem, "Our love for you is like diarrhea; we just can't hold it in". Camp sure is full of lots of laughs and a lot of fun!!

The impact that camp has on children, particularly a camp that is squarely focused on God and having lots of fun doing it, can never be overstated. Kids learn about God, experience him, see how others openly and freely worship him, and hopefully draw nearer to God in the process. One particular camper, leading up to the week of camp, could be classified as a shy, nervous, soft spoken, and even anxious child. But throughout the week, we saw the camper begin to blossom, to grow confidence in themselves and in God, and start to worship God with outstretched arms, without worry of who was around. By the end of the week, the camper was not only changed on the inside, but on the outside was always smiling, and then felt compelled to start to minister to other children via prayer in his newfound confidence. We thank God that only HE can change and impact these little hearts in this powerful way.

Even with all the different activities offered during the week, when asked what their favourite part of the camp was, the vast majority of the kids would answer, "Prayer meeting!" as though it should be immediately obvious. In fact, during one prayer meeting,



several campers were seeking out the counselors in the room, in order to pray for them. What a beautiful sight, to see children and young people praying for their elders!

One particular camper this year, had never read the bible, or even been to church before in their lives. On the last night, she testified about how much she had learned during her week at camp and what a powerful week it was! This is the reason that this camp has been in existence for the last 4 decades, and the reason the staff volunteers their time... So that children can come to know God, and experience his love!! As one worship song says "And we'll never be the same..."

WRITTEN BY KIMMO HÄMÄLÄINEN AND ANITA KUPARINEN

VANCOUVER KID'S CAMP



Sunshine, smiles, and the Spirit graced the grounds of the Cultus Lake camp where Finnish Bethel Church's kids' camp was held in mid-August.

The camp's theme this year was Power Lab, which focused on Ephesians 3:20: "To him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us." This year seemed to be a year of simplicity; we really tried to focus on sharing the good news of the gospel and equipping the kids with a basic understanding of the four elements of the Christian walk: the Bible, prayer, worship, and fellowship. The camp's location changed this year as well, to a much older, more basic camp site- it was really a great opportunity to focus on fellowship in a smaller, community-like setting. The days were filled with solid teaching, great food, and

plenty of swimming, sauna, kayaking, hiking, and sports! Despite the sunshine and heat that weekend, it was the first year in a long time that there wasn't a fire ban during camp, so we were finally able to spend the evenings gathered around a campfire for worship and fellowship; we had some great teaching from speakers during those campfires as well. We were blessed once again with amazing staff and counselors who worked hard to ensure that everything ran smoothly and most importantly, that the campers were having a blast! Many thanks to Jarno Karjalainen (Camp Leader) and everyone who helped out with organizing, fundraising, and prayer to physically being at the camp helping out with smiling faces and willing hearts! Hope to see all of you at camp again next year!

NINA HEISKANEN