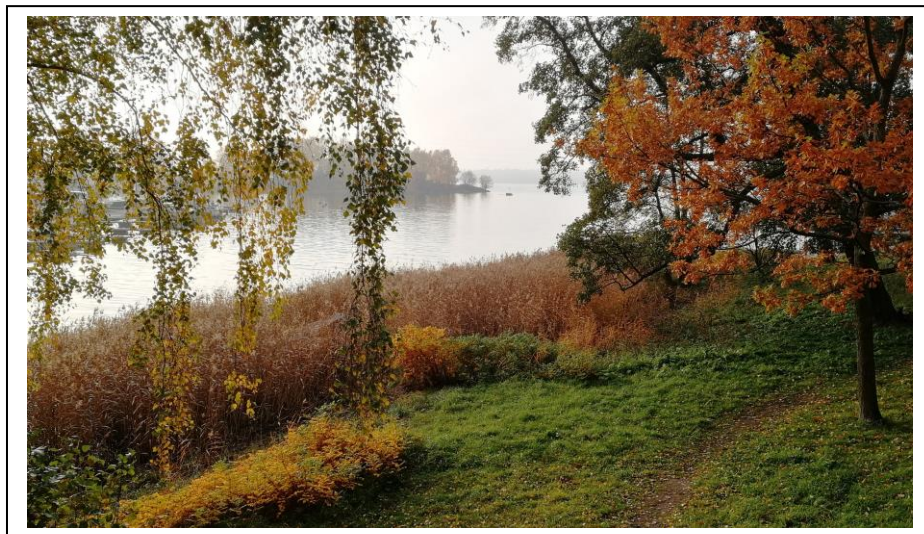


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Autumn colours at the seaside of Helsinki in 2018



Dear friends,	Many greetings from snowy Finland. This year we really have snow in all parts of Finland, even here near the southern coast of the country.
Voluntary service	As we have been retired now for four years, we are quite much at home here, near (some 12 kilometres away from) city centre of Helsinki. This does not mean we would not serve any more - one cannot get retired from the service of the Kingdom.
January in Hongkong	In the beginning of 2018 we served for 4 weeks in Hongkong. A Finnish missionary couple serving in a Rest Home called Bethany Hong Kong needed to travel abroad. We volunteered to replace them for couple of weeks. Bethany is located on a beautiful island called Cheung Chau, just a short ferry ride from the centre of Hong Kong. We had many scheduled and non-scheduled discussions with missionaries or church workers, who came for rest there from various countries. – If you ever happen to need such a place of rest, we recommend Bethany: http://www.bethanyhk.org/
April-May in Nepal	While still at work we travelled four times to Nepal to support the local Family Ministry Project as trainers and consultants. Later, after our retirement as of 2015, we have served in Nepal two months in late 2015 and now five weeks in early 2018. We are not any more needed there as basic level trainers, but more to encourage, support and coach. In a word, we are part of the Nepal Family Ministry team of “Master Trainers”. - This year we had two Training of Trainers’ (TOT) Refresher Courses and for the 2 nd time a TOT Master Trainers’ Course for those, who then may arrange TOT Courses independently. We were also supporting the Nepalese co-workers in planning the future continuation of Family Ministry in Nepal.
Summer Cottage	Since 2009 we have had a small (25 m ²) allotment garden cottage nearby, some 2 km. from our home. We spent some 3 months there this year summer. One of the great joys to Matti were the Tandem-bike rides with grandchildren. This year, as we got snow only late in December, the cycling season lasted long. Thus, Matti made his record: 4.000 km. within this year. Anna-Kaarina has cycled some 625 km. in 2018.
Cambodian visitors	The Felm had invited co-workers from Cambodia to visit Finland in September-October. We volunteered to host for 2-3 weeks Pastor Joseph and Mrs. Makara, who are leading the Family Ministry Cambodia. They were our participants during our training courses in Phnom Penh in 2012-2013, and now we were joyfully introducing them the various activities in Church of Finland and different Family Ministry organizations here. We also visited the Family Centre of Church of Estonia in Tallinn.
Congregation	<p>Anna-Kaarina has now served four years as a member of the Congregational Council of our local Lutheran Vantaankoski congregation (27.000 members). As well she has been a member of Vantaa parish (some 132.000 members in 7 local congregations) administrative committee. She was not re-elected in November 2018 elections. Thus, much time will be set free now for her and us – we are curiously waiting, what the Lord expects us to do from now onwards in His work fields.</p> <p>Last Saturday evening the two of us led a Christmas carols programme in our home congregation (Myrämäki church), as we did one year ago. Between the carols we were presenting shortly about the mission work of our congregation: 13 missionaries in various countries: Angola, Bangladesh, Germany, Hongkong, Ethiopia, Russia and Israel. Our congregation is also supporting various mission activities or projects in Nepal, Israel, India, Iraq, Mongolia and China.</p>
Meeting missionaries	We have two kinds of monthly meetings of missionaries here. Every first Thursday of a month the Ethiopia missionaries gather in an Ethiopian Restaurant for an injera-be-wot meal in Helsinki city centre. The other monthly one is the gathering of the any-country-missionaries living within our local congregation here in Western Vantaa.

Family

On the 2nd Christmas Day, Dec. 26th, we are planning to travel to Tampere, some 170 km. northwest from here. There we gather in our youngest son's home, all the family members now in Finland: Our firstborn daughter Outi (Osaye) and the families of our son Jouni (Senbetu), a family with three daughters (16, 14 and 11 years), and the hosting family of Sauli (Tamiru) with two sons (9 and 7 years).

Our son Lauri (Fasika) and his wife are still serving as missionaries to Japan; they have a son and 2 daughters (16, 14 and 10 years). In addition to those, we have 3 “bonus-grandchildren” who also call us Grandma and Grandpa; the parents are immigrants from Asia and Africa, living next door to us.

We wish you a joyful Christmas time of 2018, and a very blessed New Year 2019. Thank you for the friendship – let's keep in touch!

Yours in Christ,

Anna-Kaarina and Matti, the “Palmus of Ethiopia”



[A scene in early December 2018 from Matti's study room towards south, i.e. towards Helsinki direction]