

Overcoming Problems in Finland by Singing

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Helsinki members at holy ground in a park

The change in weather here is quite abrupt from long nights to long days--between the two extremes are only some weeks. So we now face in every respect a new situation. Several members have joined in the last month, so we had to search for a new flat in Helsinki. Going from door to door asking if a flat would be free, we rather soon found a suitable flat right in the center of Helsinki, half a minute from our witnessing street. There we started our second family enterprise, first the cleaning business and now a beauty salon.

One of our members is a licensed cosmetician, and she started to work in her old profession. She sells cosmetics to hair dressers, and in this manner gets customers to her own salon. We thought that for the future we would prepare a good customer network if our Ginseng factory in Korea is developing Ginseng cream. We have learned that this is already being produced by other firms.

Our goal for the autumn is to free six or eight members to start a mobile team that would visit our centers in five cities. This will really awaken the Finnish people. Finnish people are very subtle, like deer perhaps, coming out of the large forests and becoming afraid of life in big cities. They are trying to run back, to have peace, with no need to fight. The alcohol problem is extremely big, as it is one method of killing thoughts. The people here are rather heavy-minded and very serious, in a way too serious. So they do not see a solution to problems, or if they do, the responsibility weighs them down so much that they have not enough energy to fight.

Throughout their history, they have been suppressed by either the Swedes or the Russians. So they think anyone who wants to rule and bring order into the chaos is bad, because they cannot imagine that a ruler could be good. Christ is to them something mysterious, very far from everyday life, something they dream about when they stand at the shore of their large lakes, looking into the blue sky and forests with their great silence around them. The noise of cities is almost unknown in this country.

There are only two industrial cities, Helsinki, the capital, and Tampere, with its linen factories. The other cities are smaller country towns, and one is reminded of the good old times when streets were still big enough to support the daily traffic. Outwardly, the towns are astonishingly clean, people are dressed

nicely, and in the shops you can find everything you need in a plain and solid manner, without luxury.



Helsinki members in the center

The country is wide and large, without any mountains to hinder you from moving on and building a house just a half a mile further away, if your neighbor is coming too close. So they are not yet adjusted to making compromises. If they have an opinion, they maintain it.

For twenty years the country has been shaken by long strikes every year, lasting three to eight weeks. The population is only 4.5 million, but there are ~n different political parties, showing the splinteredness of the people.

There is also a race problem.

There are about 8,000 gypsies living all over the country. They have kept their 700-year-old customs and wear their fine gypsy costumes. The women have long, wide black velvet skirts, over which they wear a silk apron in shining colors. Their shirts are made of colorful silk, too. As a whole, they are very clean, and the women keep the family alive by selling handmade tablecloths.

But in spite of these problems there are so many good sides. That they are not an aggressive people at all was shown already in the very old national epic "Kalevala." They overcome their problems by singing rather than fighting. The young people are very well educated-almost everybody is a college graduate.

Very strikingly, it is a feminine country, with 46,000 more females than males. Everywhere the women are dominant: in the streets, cafes, shops, and offices. In the north, the women are usually leading the family. No wonder Finland was the first European country to allow women to vote.

"Finnish design" is famous all over the world, producing all kinds of fine glass and porcelain dishes, clothes, and furniture. I haven't met many young people who did not paint or write poems.

I am thankful and happy that I can work in the country, spreading the joyful message of Reverend Sun Myung Moon, so that problems can be solved and people can laugh again and become members of one great family on earth.