

**THE MEANING OF THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH
COMMUNITY FOR THE RAAMATTU PUHUU (THE
BIBLE SPEAKS) CHURCH MEMBERS**

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Thesis Spring 2016
Diaconia University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in Social Services
Bachelor of Social Services (UAP) (+
Option in Diaconia)

ABSTRACT

Saarinen, Merja. The Meaning of the Bible and the Church Community for the Raamattu Puhuu (The Bible Speaks) Church Members. 48 pages 6 appendices. Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Degree Programme in Social Services. Degree: Bachelor of Social Services (UAS) option in Diaconia. Helsinki. Spring 2016. Language: English.

This thesis is telling about the meaning of the Bible and church fellowship to the participants of the Raamattu Puhuu Church. I collected material for this thesis by interviewing six people from the church, and by reading the church web sites, Raamattu Puhuu Helsinki and Greater Grace World Outreach. In my theses, I am writing about the value and the meaning of the Bible for one's everyday life. Furthermore, I will discuss the significance of the church community to an individual church member.

My aim is to report why the Bible is important to the people I interviewed. Also, one of the objectives of this study is to take a closer look at one of the so called free church fellowships in the Helsinki area, and to describe what they are doing and what their status is as being a part of the local community and surrounding neighborhood.

In my studies, I have included the option of diaconal orientation. Therefore, my personal Christian world view can be seen in the background of this thesis.

Keywords: The Bible, Church, Raamattu Puhuu Church Helsinki, Psychosocial health

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1 INTRODUCTION

My interest for the topic of this thesis started to grow in my mind, when I was watching from the media how much the persecution of Christians all over the world had been increasing during the past few years. Also, the same development became evident when I was reading different newsletters sent by Christian organizations. I also thought that, if Christians, who believe in the Bible as the Word of God, are a threat to some people, what is the reason behind it? Perhaps the Bible is a powerful book after all, if it makes some people kill the ones who believe in it. In many countries, it is a crime to distribute or even possess a Bible.

However, my main subject for research is the meaning of the Bible and the church community for the Raamattu Puhuu Church and its members. I conducted my research by interviewing people and by data gathering from the current web site contents of the organization in Finland and in the United States. I made different research questions for pastors and church participants. Qualitative research, which is the method I used, enables the voice of the interviewees to be heard. My main questions were about church life and the meaning of the Bible in one's life. I will also discuss what the Raamattu Puhuu Church is, and how it operates.

While noticing how the Christian values are becoming less important for people in Finland and all over the world, it made me wonder why the Bible seems so important for certain churches and individuals.

The people I interviewed had their own Bible reading times, and they regularly attended the church events with the purpose of hearing Bible teaching. The Bible had an essential place both in their private and social lives. For the interviewees, to be a part of the church community was a strengthening experience, and to meet fellow Christians there was empowering.

A question might arise, what does this kind of a thesis have to do with social work studies? Indeed, Christianity and Christian institutions have been the major forces in initiating social work. That is also why I chose to study diaconal work.

In my study, I wanted to find out from the interviewees whether the Bible is applicable for today's life. For the people I interviewed, the Bible was very much applicable, and in a meaningful way. On the basis of my study, believers in Jesus Christ seek wisdom and guidance for their lives from the Bible. They also look for comfort and encouragement from this book.

In the church community at its best, one can receive spiritual nourishment, get guidance and encouragement. Still we have to remember that we all are just people, no one is perfect. If someone seeks a perfect church to fulfill all their expectations, they probably cannot find it. From the interviews, I also found that both reading the Bible alone and going to church fellowship to hear Bible teaching, are equally important.

When I mention the word "church" in my text, if I am not referring to Raamattu Puhuu Church (RP), I do not mean the Lutheran or any other specific church. I do not refer to the church building either. The word "church" comes from the Greek word "*ekklesia*", which means 'called out', and the church in my text context refers to the Christian churches in general. The Word of God in my thesis means the Bible. Interview answers are placed in the thesis text, either as quotes or I have edited them into the text.

2 THE RAAMATTU PUHUU CHURCH (RP)

2.1 Raamattu Puhuu Church: history and today

Raamattu Puhuu is a Christian, independent church denomination. It was founded in 1975, when a small group of missionaries came to Finland from the United States. Now the Church has its own property in Pukinmäki, and estimated 150 people are involved in it. Raamattu Puhuu Churches are located also in other cities in Finland: Turku, Pori, Vaasa, Jyväskylä, Tampere and Kuopio. Raamattu Puhuu functions closely with the Greater Grace World Outreach (GGWO), which has more than 500 churches over 60 countries.

Raamattu Puhuu Church has various activities to all ages and especially to children and to young people. Children have their own program during the mass. Youth meetings are held at Saturday evenings. Church has a Russian language and English language fellowship. All the Sunday morning services are translated in English and that makes it easy for foreigners to come especially to Sunday morning meetings. Also International café houses are few times during the year and spoken language there is English. Church Choir goes regularly to sing the metropolitan area nursing homes and hospitals. Lot of evangelism is happening in this Church.

Structure

The Raamattu Puhuu Church is a registered association with seventeen official members. The church operates almost entirely through voluntary work. There are four paid employees: senior pastor, assistant pastor, financial office manager and office secretary. The number of people who come to church activities is approximately 100-150 people. There is no official membership record.

Values

Here are some of the values of the Raamattu Puhuu Church:

- 1) Grace received and given
- 2) Respect for the individual (not depending on one's background and abilities)
- 3) Sacredness of life at birth and death
- 4) Sanctity of divine institutions: free will, marriage and church, human government
- 5) Moral purity (sexual, business, social morality)
- 6) Sharing Christ with others in evangelism
- 7) Financially supporting mission work
- 8) Prayer
- 9) Helping them that are in trouble
- 10) Honesty
- 11) Being corrected by anybody that is right
- 12) Thanksgiving
- 13) Hospitality.

Central goals

Helping people in their everyday lives by bringing faith, hope and love is one of the most important aims of the Raamattu Puhuu. Another purpose, equally important, is teaching the Bible, which the name of the church also indicates. The church is involved in serving people in a practical way. People are invited to join church activities. Both the ones who are already coming to church and the newcomers are taken care of as much as possible.

Another important goal of this particular church is evangelism and worldwide missions. Since 1975, when the church was founded in Finland, many Finnish missionaries have been sent to different countries to evangelize and to establish new churches.

Approach

The church considers everyone to be valuable just as they are. People are God's creation; "God created man in his own image" according to the Bible (Gen. 1:27). Even though the church members evangelize, i.e. openly tell people about their Christian faith, and do missions work, it is the church policy that nobody is pressured in any way, but everyone's free will is respected. The love of God is for everyone, and it is the only thing that draws people.

2.2 What does Raamattu Puhuu mean to you?

From the interviews and discussions with the Raamattu Puhuu Church members, there were two things that came out most clearly concerning the meaning of the church: spiritual home and spiritual nourishment. Thompson (2008) writes in his introduction part of his book "Christian Spirituality" that in Christian spirituality there is a connection with the life inspired by the Holy Spirit, understood as the third person of the divine trinity. Some who do not have religious faith can claim they are a "spiritual person" or they have "spirituality." Thomson points out, that Christian spirituality is to do with a person, the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual nourishment means that hearing, receiving and learning the Bible gives satisfaction for the human soul the same way when a person eats food and gets the stomach full. It could be explained that the human soul hungers for God, and only the Word of God can fill that hunger.

Some of the comments from the interviewees, when asked about the meaning of the Raamattu Puhuu Church for them, are listed in the following:

"It means a spiritual home and spiritual food."

"It always feels like home to come here. I learn new things every time I come to a church service."

“It is a spiritual home and shelter. There are many people whom I can ask questions. And I get answers.”

3 BIBLE TEACHING AT RAAMATTU PUHUU CHURCH

Pohjoismainen raamattukoulu (The Nordic Bible School) has been operating without interruption since 1977. It functions with the Raamattu Puhuu Church and under its administration. The aims of the school in core are; that students will learn to know God more personally and to live a life according to God's will. Schools' basic philosophy is the objective teaching of the Bible and how it relates to living according to the will of God. In the bible school each student learns to know the Bible, learns to study the Bible independently and built his or her faith upon Bible teaching.

The values of the school are biblical foundation, ability to ably the teaching for everyday life, grace as a center of teaching, encouragement for students for spiritual life and for personal thinking. Bible school education is the same as studying eternal values set by God. It is not only learning knowledge, but learning the eternal knowledge of God. Biblical studies help students to find a way to serve God. Anyone can study at this Bible Collage according to one's capacity, and take courses suitable for oneself. Bible school can be a life enriching experience, because the Word of God brings spiritual nourishment for each believer.

By getting to know the Bible, a student learns to know God in a personal way. When the students learn to know God's nature, love, grace and truth, they will also learn to trust God more deeply. In the Bible School, students learn to think the way God thinks about people and the world, and through that they find God's will for their own lives.

At Bible school students learn the importance of the local church in God's plan. They will learn e.g. basic knowledge and skills for the church work. Mission work and evangelism are also a part of the studies. During the studies, the student has an opportunity to put the great commandment into practice by joining missionary teams in Finland and abroad. (Raamattu Puhuu Helsinki 2016)

3.1 The Bible School's position

The Bible School is an essential part of the Raamattu Puhuu. During the 1960s and 1970s, the latest revival was experienced in Finland and many parts of the world. In the very beginning, when the Raamattu Puhuu Church started its operation in Finland, they also started a Bible School. In the 1970s, the number of students was the highest at this Bible School. Nowadays, the School is functioning as an evening school.

Students, who attend the Bible School, learn the theology and the history of the Bible and the Christian church. Furthermore, they are also learning about the nature of God and what the Bible says about living one's life to the fullest and according to the will of God.

One of the students interviewed said that the classes are never boring, and studying in the Bible School helps him to live his life. Another student who had just started the school, taking only one course, said she has enjoyed what she has been learning. One church member, who had already graduated from the Pohjoismainen Raamattukoulu, told that she knew she had a calling to go to Bible School and that she wanted to obey this calling.

Carl H. Stevens (1929-2008), founder of the Raamattu Puhuu Church, writes that in order to learn about God one must learn what God thinks about the details of life. In his booklet, he discusses how the Word of God is a doctrine which should provide us with definition of thinking and direction in our daily walk (Stevens 1983,1).

3.2 Home base at Baltimore – history and today

The following information originates from the Greater Grace World Outreach web site. (2016)

“God called Pastor Carl H. Stevens to preach over four decades ago. At the age of 23, he became a believer in Christ after hearing the witness of his wife. From that moment on, Pastor Stevens dedicated himself to learning about Jesus and to the study and the ministry of the Bible. A farm boy born in West Sumner, Maine, in 1929, and raised by his widowed mother from the age of 3, Pastor Stevens approached Bible study and Christianity the way he approached everything in life - with intensity and concentration. His dedication to this life with God helped establish thriving churches in Maine, Massachusetts, and Maryland.”

“Pastor Stevens communicated the vision that the ministry would be dedicated to seeking the lost in all parts of the world. Toward that end, he led in the establishment of Bible colleges, where academic and practical training in the Word and the ministry would be fostered.”

“Northeast School of the Bible was founded in Maine in 1972. Its first graduating class, in 1975, included Thomas Schaller, now the Presiding Elder and Pastor of Greater Grace World Outreach. With the growth of the Bible College, there came a need for more space. That space was found in Lenox, Mass., where The Bible Speaks World Outreach relocated in 1976. There, Stevens School of the Bible was founded and what followed was a period of great activity. The students of the college proved instrumental in establishing New England’s largest bus ministry and Sunday school. Also, waves of teams headed out to various countries.”

“In 1987, the ministry moved to Baltimore, Maryland and became Greater Grace World Outreach (GGWO). The diverse urban center located between Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia proved a fruitful ground for more growth. Maryland Bible College and Seminary was founded and continued the training of pastors, missionaries, and servants to go into all the world.”

“GGWO continues to provide Christian education for children ages 2 to grade 12. Maryland Bible College and Seminary is a place where disciples of Jesus Christ are taught in deed and word to go into Baltimore, Maryland, and around

the world practicing a historical, biblical, Christian life, propagating the message of salvation in Jesus Christ and teaching the Bible.”

3.3 What is the relation between the home base and the Helsinki assembly?

The interview reveals that the relationship with the Baltimore home base is purely spiritual, and Helsinki Raamattu Puhuu is an autonomous church. It decides its own issues independently. There are no bureaucratic ties between Helsinki Raamattu Puhuu and Baltimore Greater Grace World Outreach. Rather, there is like a heart relationship that maintains the tie. The senior Pastor of Raamattu Puhuu tells that he has a close friendship with the leading Pastor of GGWO Baltimore and considers him as his personal mentor and Pastor. He also points out that he likes to listen to the opinions and the Bible teaching from Baltimore. The support from Baltimore is not financial, but spiritual. It is encouragement, friendship and counseling. Raamattu Puhuu Helsinki, primarily as a church, receives teaching from Baltimore, which is the origin of the Raamattu Puhuu Church.

3.4 Position of the Bible at Raamattu Puhuu Church

Raamattu Puhuu Helsinki has its regular church services three times a week. In addition to these meetings, there are Bible studies, either at Pukinmäki facilities or in someone's home. Children's program during the church gathering includes Bible teaching according to a plan. At youth events, there is always Bible teaching. It could be said that Raamattu Puhuu, which means the Bible Speaks, is a church where the emphasis is on the Bible at every church event.

The senior Pastor of Raamattu Puhuu Helsinki says that it is quite unambiguous that the church values the Bible as the highest authority and the Word of God as the authentic truth. And through that truth, individual believers live their lives. Like Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew chapter four, “the man shall not live by

bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”, he continues. (Matt 4:4)

The Word of God inspires a person’s mind when it is read through the Holy Spirit. John says in the Gospel of John about the Holy Spirit that it is a “Spirit of truth” and John also said that “He will guide you into all truth” (John. 14:17, 16:13).

It is as if God’s spirit breaths onto us through the word of God and produces godly living. The position of the Bible is the highest authority that God has given. Through that one can have a revelation about who God is, and how a person can have a relationship with Christ. All teaching culminates in the Bible, explains the Pastor of Raamattu Puhuu.

4 WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

Still in the 1970's in Finland, it was a normal thing at schools, to read Bible in religion classes. Bible stories were taught at school, and it was also habitual to say grace at meal times. Also missionaries could visit schools and tell about their missionary work. The times are different now. Not all children hear the Bible stories, because perhaps they are not read at home, daycare or at school. It is not common anymore in Finland for children to go to Sunday school. Young people might not know the content of the Bible or the main message of Christianity.

4.1 The Bible in a nutshell

The Bible includes sixty-six books, written by about forty authors; thirty authors in the Old Testament and ten in the New Testament. The Bible was written in three different ancient languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. It was written over a period of about 1500 years. The authors were kings, priests, fishermen, government officials, shepherds, doctors. The Bible itself tells that it originates from God and that it is without error in everything it says. (Biblica 2011)

The Bible contains a few different styles of writing such as law, history, prophecy, poetry and narration. It includes books of law, historical books, books of poetry, and books of prophecy, biographies, and epistles (formal letters). It is divided to two main parts the Old and the New Testaments. ((Gotquestions 2002) (Biblica 2011))

The Bible is God given, Word of God which is given to God's nation, to congregation from generation to generation. It is meant that the Holy scriptures are to be read at church services and at home. (Iso Raamatun Tietosanakirja, 1991, 185)

Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible there may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book it did not come from the God of truth (John Wesley, founder of Methodism (Waterhouse, 2003,12)

The Bible tells about the origin of man in the Garden of Eden and his fall into sin and out of fellowship with God. Then it describes how God called out His chosen people, the Israelites and how he promised them that the Messiah would come and restore mankind's relationship with God.

The Bible is the account of the work of God in history. It implements God's prophetic message concerning Jesus Christ. Jesus was born of the virgin, He died on the cross, and paid for the sins of the whole mankind. Crucifixion of Jesus was prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament. For Christians, the Bible is more than just a book. It is the written Word of God and has great authority (Carm 2016).

The scriptures cannot err. It is certain that scripture cannot disagree with itself. It is impossible that scripture should contradict itself, only that it so appears to the senseless and obstinate hypocrites (Martin Luther, founder of the Lutherans. 2003,11)

4.2 Personal importance of the Bible

One of the world's best known evangelists, Billy Graham (2006, 116), says that the first tool God has given to man is the Bible. It is a necessary tool to use, if a person wants to grow spiritually. He also reminds that the invention of the printing press changed everything. Hundreds of years, people had to live without the Bible and the only way they could get to know the Bible was when it was read in churches. Nowadays, there are many different Bible translations and the Bible has been translated into numerous different languages. Yet, there are many people who never open this book, Graham notes.

What does the Bible mean to you, was asked in my interview. One interviewee told that the Bible means instructions for life and something that is sustainable. She also told that she needs the Bible and it is good for her.

Another one said, that the Bible means life for her. She expressed that she cannot do anything without it and that she is nothing without it. She also said that a believer cannot function without the Word of God, the Word of God is like spiritual oxygen for her.

One interviewee expresses that the Bible is the manual for his life. It teaches meaning, purpose and value of life.

Another one said that it is the truth. She thinks that she is not a good Bible reader and interpreter by herself, still she finds answers from this book for everyday things. She also thinks that the Bible is not only a book, but it is a “library” where you always find right things for every situation in life.

4.3 The Bible speaks

The Bible says in the book of Romans 10:17 in the Amplified Bible version that “So faith comes by hearing [what is told], and what is heard comes by the preaching [of the message that came from the lips] of Christ (the Messiah Himself)”. The interviews revealed that everyone had a personal relationship with the Bible and when the question “Do you feel that the Bible speaks to you personally?” was asked, it was not difficult for the interviewees to answer that question. Immediately everyone said “yes it does”. The Bible speaks to people, giving comfort, wisdom and encouragement.

Some findings from the interviews were that the Bible gives direction, understanding and nurtures the soul of the person. It helps when one needs wisdom for a specific life situation and understanding for living one’s everyday life. Also, the words of the Bible are nourishment for the soul. Those words can satisfy and calm the human soul.

One interviewee told that the Bible “speaks directly” to her, and it carries her, whatever situation she is in. It strengthens and holds her up when she is down, she said. Other comments were, “Yes the Bible indeed speaks. Sometimes you understand, and things can brighten up. Sometimes, through some Biblical principal, you know how you should function. The Word nurtures the soul.”

Also, “Yes it does in many moments. Sometimes if I have been fearful and I open the Bible in those moments, and read the book of Psalms, the fear goes away.”

4.4 Theology of reading the Bible

To read the Bible theologically means to read it so that the focus is on God. The Bible can be read from different standpoints and different points of interest. The Bible itself gives an answer to why it is important to read and study it. There are many Bible verses to explain that, below there are some of them. The Bible does not teach to take only some parts of it and leave some others out. These verses are from the New King James version.

Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever. (Psalm 119:160)

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (Is. 55:10-11)

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2 Tim 3.16)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

Graham (2006,117) in his book “The Journey” asks what will make the Bible so different compared to other books? He says that all the generations have kept the message of the Bible irreplaceable and it has had a huge impact for individuals and societies surrounding them.

Graham brings out that the Bible deals with timeless issues, such as who we are, where we come from, why we are here, where we are going, how should we live our lives? This is the reason why the books of the Bible are applicable today the same way they were for the times when they were written.

The question was asked from the interviewees, “Are there times when you read the Bible more than other times?” The idea behind the question was to find out if there are factors that cause the interviewees to open the Bible more than other times. And if there are, what are they.

It seems that in difficult times in life, the Bible was read more and wisdom for situations was searched from there. The Bible was a trusted source to lean on when facing challenges in life. Time was a challenge for opening the book, today’s busy schedules. However, when there was a big need for finding answers to challenges of life, Bible was the book to open. Also, going to silent places like country side, where there were not so much noise and distractions, helped Bible reading.

5 A CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY

Many times when people hear the word “church”, “Kirkko” in Finnish, they think of a building. Biblically thinking, a church, congregation, is more than a building. In the Bible Jesus never talked about buildings in that sense, i.e. that there is value in the building itself, that He would dwell in the building, but that he would live in people’s hearts. He spoke about the church as being one universal body, which does not mean a building, but people.

Christians are the temple of God. Of course in practice there has to be a place or a building for a congregation to meet and to be able to function. Though, many countries, where Christianity and the Bible are forbidden or limited, people gather in the forests or other secret places to worship God without having any church building.

Now, 2000 years after Christ, Christianity has gone through a lot, and different Christian churches are thousands. Raamattu Puhuu Church in Helsinki is one of them. It is rather small in number, and many people have known each other for long, some over 40 years. Some have been taking part in the ministry from the very beginning, ever since the church was established. For some, a church community is a lifelong relation and deep friendships are made in the church fellowship. For some it is a seasonal home church, for some others a place to come to only every now and then.

5.1 Expectations from the Raamattu Puhuu Church

The interviews revealed that people expect from the church to get good teaching and through that to get to know God in a deeper way. Also to have an English Bible School at Raamattu Puhuu was one wish. There was a hope to have enthusiastic activity at Raamattu Puhuu and that a church would reach also new people. There was also a desire to have good conversations with others after church services.

“I have been at Raamattu Puhuu Church only for a short time, but I hope that it will be my lifelong home. Also, that I could learn more about God and grow in faith and have a closer relationship with God“

5.2 Open community, people are welcomed

A simple definition for the word community is “a group of people who live in the same area” (such as a city, town, or neighborhood) or “a group of people who have the same interests, religion, race, etc.” (Merriam-Webster 2016). It can happen that some communities are more closed than open in their atmosphere. An ideal Christian church community is not closed, but open and welcoming.

A church is more than just a community because of its spiritual dimension. A church should be a place where people feel safe and secure and are able to share life with each other. The word “outreach” is used in Christian circles when the aim is to reach people with the gospel (good news about Jesus). Early Christians spread the gospel from city to city and they usually gathered at each other’s homes.

“Who do you meet there?” was a question asked from the interviewees, meaning, what kind of people do you meet at church activities. People meet old friends and get new friends. They meet international people from multicultural backgrounds. Also it was mentioned that people are from different professional backgrounds, rich and poor meet together.

“I meet friends whom I got through the Raamattu Puhuu Church. Spiritual parents, my own parents live far. From the Church I got second mothers (varaäitejä).”

5.3 “Yhdessä Pukinmäessä” Together in Pukinmäki

Raamattu Puhuu Helsinki, which is located in North Helsinki, Pukinmäki, is an active participant in local events such as Pukinmäkipäivät and Poutamarkkinat.

Pukinmäkipäivät, in English Pukinmäki days, is an event where local associations introduce their activities and sell different products. Raamattu Puhuu Church has created its own brand for community work which is called “Yhdessä Pukinmäessä” in English “together in Pukinmäki”.

It is an open invitation for local people to come and get to know the people and activities of Raamattu Puhuu Church. There have been various events, such as lecture about creationism, art gallery, flea market and football tournament for young boys. The aim has been to lower the threshold for people to come to visit Raamattu Puhuu. One part of the campaign was to have a tent outside, to offer free coffee and cookies, and to talk with people about the Christian faith along with Raamattu Puhuu Church activities. Many conversations were held during those weeks, and it was obvious that many people are interested to talk about spiritual things.

People might have presumptions about free churches that are independent from the Finnish Lutheran state church. It is good for the church to reach out a hand to people and give them an opportunity to visit a church outside the church's weekly activities. Some people might find this place to be their spiritual home while some may just visit and not find it suitable for them. There are also those who will be interested to participate in some special events like concerts, special lectures, or other similar events.

6 CHURCH AS A SPIRITUAL HOME

“You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). This means that God is living inside a worldwide temple, literally constructed out of human souls (Stevens, 2007)

6.1 A Church as a covering

An assisting Pastor of Raamattu Puhuu says that the church is like a covering for a person. He points out that there are lots of lonely people and the order, which is in the church, protects people as a covering and does not offend or hurt them. He says that the church can be a shelter for a person, a place where one can feel acceptance.

“God’s plan is to give people a family”, he says. He carries on telling that God wants to lead families and single people to church. He point out that church is not a substitute for the earthly family, but it is a place where one can be connected with a Heavenly Father. For some it can be a more constructive environment than home. A church can become a place one can lean onto, maybe even for many decades. It comes from the connection with other people. If people are received with love, it draws people to the church community, people come if they feel acceptance.

He says that a church home is versatile, because there people can have contacts that they may not have in everyday environments. As the Bible says in first Corinthians twelve, there are many portions in the church and that makes enriches one’s life. He continues to say that, if he was just alone he would not have that experience.

6.2 What makes people to come to Church

According to the Raamattu Puhuu Helsinki assistant Pastor, there are different reasons drawing people to come to church. He says it depends on the person's motivation, what one is looking. He thinks if the church is healthy and the Holy Spirit functions in a Word of God service, it motivates people to come again to church gatherings and other events.

The relationship with God is strengthened, and a person learns something new. Friendships are built and the place to serve at church is found. Those two things; personal relationships network and serving others. It takes time for Finnish people to develop trust in each other. When they finally open up, it happens, as they feel they have been received and accepted.

He continues to tell that people want to experience acceptance in their lives. When people are received by love it makes them return. Love draws people. There are people who seek the truth. In the church the Word of God is shared, and it is not watered down by compromise. This seems to be rare today.

“It has an exceptionally good and diverse Bible teaching. The community is quite close-knit and there is a sense that we are studying the Bible together.”

“Pastor is god given and I have known him many years. I love Raamattu Puhuu Church, because it is not a religious church. There are churches now days that are like cocktails; they mix culture and religion. Here in Raamattu Puhuu, is pure Word of God and finding this kind of church it is not easy.”

“I do not have to to try to be anything else that I am. There is a connection between people and all are so friendly to me and they receive me as I am.”

6.3 What made you to choose Raamattu Puhuu Church to be your home church?

When people are looking for a home church, they can have different expectations. Some look for a traditional church, and some feel that charismatic movements are better for them. Since there are so many different Christian local congregations, it can be very confusing. However, it seems that most of the so called believers can find their spiritual home among these churches. However, there will always be people who do not feel that any of these congregations fulfill their expectations and they either do not go to church, or they go from church to church and become “homeless” believers.

The reasons the interviewees choose the Raamattu Puhuu to be their home church were; need to find a home church, good Bible teaching, calling, desire to serve, warm and welcoming atmosphere. It also was meaningful to see, that people have a personal relationship with God and are willing to talk about e.g. what they have been experiencing with God during the week. Good Bible teaching at Raamattu Puhuu was one of the main reasons for choosing Raamattu Puhuu. One interviewee had experienced a time when she was looking for a church and went to some of them, but then felt that Raamattu Puhuu was the most home like.

6.4 Loneliness

Loneliness is common and anyone can experience it. It can cause anxiety and pain and lead to depression. Even when surrounded by other people person can feel loneliness. Being lonely and being alone are two different things. Person can be alone without feeling loneliness. In other ways one can be lonely in the midst of a crowd. Loneliness is a state of mind; it is a feeling that comes from feeling separated from other people physically or mentally. (mtkl. 2016)

A church can be a place where a person can feel togetherness with other people and does not have to be alone. A church at its best is a place where anyone can come as they are and feel themselves accepted.

It is interesting that in the Bible, God talks about people as sheep, and sheep cannot survive if they are alone.

“The sheep that are My own hear My voice and listen to Me; I know them, and they follow me.” (Joh. 10:27)

Sheep are known for their strong following and flocking instinct. Also they are directionless and defenseless. Sheep should not be housed alone because isolation of a single sheep can cause health problems due to stress of being alone. This is the practical teaching for Christians concerning the importance of being together with others and not being alone. There is a place for everyone in various Christian assemblies in Finland.

In Finland, there has been a lot of talking about elderly people and issues related to them. One issue is loneliness among older people which is very common in Finland. It is researched that loneliness can weaken the quality of life and functionality and weaken the memory.

There are three dimensions, which we can be seen when we talk about elderly people's loneliness: emotional, physical and social (Tunnemieli 2016). Raamattu Puhuu Helsinki has participants from all age groups. There are some elderly people who come to services or other activities whenever they physically can.

6.5 Participation

Most of the action at Raamattu Puhuu Church happens, by the people participating and giving their free time to serve and help. Many people help the church

in many various ways such as by making lunches which are served after the church services, or cleaning the property.

All the interviewed people had one or more voluntary tasks at Raamattu Puhuu Church. Both of the Pastors are employed, the assistant Pastor for part time, but other interviewees are serving the church on a voluntary basis. All of them come to services and to various other events that Raamattu Puhuu Church offers.

“I’m part of the coffee team. I participate at youth nights, twice a week at church services.”

It seems to be important to take part in the church activities besides listening to the Bible teaching. The activities that people participate in are e.g. choir, annual conferences, Bible studies, prayer meetings, children’s camps, music, coffee team, youth nights and Bible School.

7 FAITH

For some people Christian faith is more than just going to church once or twice a year. People that were interviewed seemed to be very committed to going to church services. All of them expressed that the reason to go is primarily to learn from the Bible and not for a social reasons. People come to services to seek connection with God and spiritual connection with each other. Faith in an invisible God is the operating power for that.

A well-known psychologist and Bible teacher Larry Crabb in his book 'Soul Talk` (2003) describes a pattern for the kind of communication that God not only desires for people to have with each other, but also which He alone enables by His Spirit. He writes that "soul talk" happens when two Christians talk to each other, but when God is involved in it through the Holy Spirit, it is more than just a talk. Talking will be deeper and not superficial.

Most people go through their entire life never speaking words to another human being that come out of what is deepest within them, and most people never hear words that reach all the way into that deep place we call the soul. (2003, 13)

Interviews and after church coffee table talks made it clear that many people come to Raamattu Puhuu Church to seek a fellowship and conversations with each other. People share their prayer requests with each other and discuss their daily lives, bringing thoughts about God and the Bible to their discussion. Faith in God is a connecting element between people.

For the people outside the Christian faith it may sound unfamiliar that people speak example for example like this; *"I pray that God would show me the way and what decision to make"* or *"I just read the book of Psalms and it really comforted me and I got so encouraged"*. For many believing people this is a normal conversation, but might sound odd for people who do not believe in Christ.

8 PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH

The following information comes from a web page, a guide on Community Based Psychological Support. “The term psychosocial reflects the dynamic relationship between psychological and social processes.” (Actalliance 2016)

8.1 Psychosocial health

Psychological processes are internal, including thoughts, emotions, feelings, understanding and perception. Social processes are external and they contain family, social networks, community, and environment. What happens in one of these areas can affect aspects of the others. (Actalliance 2016)

There is a theory, that psychosocial health encompasses the mental, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of what it means to be healthy. (Health 2011)
An atheistic world view would probably leave out the spiritual part, but most of the people in the world somehow believe in a spiritual dimension and in some level. Atheism is rare around the world and 90% of the world’s population is involved in some form of religion or spiritual practice. (Koenig, 2009)

Psychosocially healthy people: emotionally, mentally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually resilient; respond to challenges and frustrations in appropriate ways when they slip, they recognize it and take action to set right the situation.

Mental health – Is a thinking part of psychosocial health which includes attitudes, values, and beliefs. A mentally healthy person can respond to life’s challenges constructively. Such a person can also accept his or her own mistakes and does not have to blame others for them. The person knows when to seek help, talk to a trusted friend, and take time out for resting and regrouping.

Emotional health – Is a feeling (love, hate, anxiety, joy etc.) part of psychosocial health and includes emotional reactions to one’s life.

Social health – Includes the ability to interact with other people and have social bonds. A socially healthy person also knows how to use social support.

Spiritual health – To seek answers for life’s ultimate questions and to find the meaning of life. There is a belief in a force that gives meaning to life and a sense of purpose.

8.2 Spiritual health

Spirituality refers to the personal quest to seek answers to life’s ultimate questions and to find out what is the meaning of life. It is to do with the sense of purpose and meaning of life. It is nothing to do with material things and it is the longing in one’s soul for something that cannot explain before it is found.

In every man’s heart there is an emptiness that only God can fill with his son Jesus Christ. (Blaise Pascal 1623-1662, 2016)

There are numerous stories about people with a longing inside for something. Sometimes they did not even know what they were longing for, but had a deep sense in them, that something was lacking in their lives. Then one day they somehow found Jesus and the empty spot was filled. Basically the stories go like that, but there are of course different variations of these stories.

Psychosocial health includes some components such as; people take care of themselves, like themselves, have empathy for others and accept their own mistakes (Health 2011). This kind of a list could be longer, but these are some of the most important and basic things concerning psychosocial health. All of these four points are also Bible based viewpoints.

Firstly, the Bible teaches that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and we should not treat it in any such way that might harm it. “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? (1 Cor. 6:19)

Secondly we ought to love ourselves “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matt 19:19) Loving ourselves is based on the fact that God created us for His image and we are valuable in His eyes. People should not put themselves or others down verbally or mentally or any other way. If people do not like themselves and have very negative thoughts concerning themselves, it can affect them negatively in many areas of their lives.

Thirdly, accept their mistakes. Probably we all have met people who are never wrong and we know how difficult it is to be around these kind of people. The problem is that they do not listen to others. Graham (2006) mentioned a Bible verse from the book of Proverbs. “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise” In his book, he tells about a man who fell into a great financial trouble in his old age, because all his life he had not listened to his friends’ advice, and ended up losing everything. Sometimes the fault is in us and we should examine ourselves in prayer to find out if it is so, he continues to write.

9 PSYCHOSOCIAL HARM

“Psychosocial harm can occur in many forms, including: damage to the self-sufficiency of a community, loss of self-esteem amongst the community members, loss of dignity amongst community members, a loss of cohesion amongst members of a community, creation of an atmosphere of mistrust, stigma or conflict in a community or displacement of members of a community”. (Actalliance 2016)

9.1 Broken and wounded

Christian counselor and Lutheran priest Petri Välimäki has written a lot about people who have been broken and wounded. In his book (2006) “Lähellä ihmistä” in English “Close to a human being”. He speaks from the Christian and Biblical point of view of how to face and help those people in their distress.

For example, if we think about one of those harms that are described above. ‘A loss of dignity amongst community members’ and put it into the light of Christian perspective and ask if it can happen in a Christian community, the answer is that of course it can, and it happens, but should it happen? From the Biblical point of view, it should not. Välimäki (2006,23) says that we should learn to make a difference between the person and his or her actions. Even if we could not accept what a person did, we can accept the person. He writes about forgiveness and an atmosphere of acceptance. He says that the love of God does not demand something from the outside, but the love of God first gives something and then changes the inside.

He continues to say that this kind of love is not familiar to people. Conditional love is more familiar to people, but it has wounded many people. Unconditional love can heal a person. People need to experience that they are loved as they are, even if they have failed, and they do not have to pay for their failures, because Jesus already paid the penalty of the sins. (Välimäki, 2006)

9.2 Church as a healing environment

Because of sin people's relations have been broken in many ways, Raamattu Puhuu Church assistant Pastor expressed. To have a church is a part of God's plan. The mission of the church is to bind the wounds of the broken. Broken people can become whole.

Here are some thoughts of the other interviewees, about church being a healing environment. One said that it is the truth of the Bible which makes people free and when time passes, it will heal internally. Another thought was that "Mental health cannot affect your spirit, but the spiritual can affect your mental health. If you are depressed, you go to the word of God"

"Yes it is a healing environment. I have had few moments where I have been broken inside and when I went to Church I felt the warmth and I got healed and felt that everything is just fine."

9.3 Counseling in Raamattu Puhuu Church?

The Raamattu Puhuu Church is able to give pastoral, Bible based counseling, but the church does not have professionally educated Christian counselors. People who come to seek help for example for a difficult marriage situation or mental problem issues, are guided to seek professional help. Pastoral counseling is Biblical and always free of charge.

The following thoughts are from the interview. Sometimes people who have a need for deeper counseling, come to seek help and advice from Pastors. There could be couples in the middle of a marriage crisis or people in other various challenging life situations. They are guided to look for professional help outside the church.

Many times pastoral counseling is enough, but not always. Some people find enough answers for their lives from the teaching or the preaching at the church services, and some want to have personal counseling. Counseling is not the

first means of helping, the preaching of the Word is the main plan, assistant Pastor explains.

9.4 How the healing happens at church

At Christian churches it is quite normal to talk about healing. It can be inner healing, which is not clinically explainable, or healing from the physical sickness. It can be deliverance from a bad habit, addiction or mental attitude like hatred or envy.

The New Testament is full of examples of cases where a person gets healed or delivered or both. The Raamattu Puhuu Church does not emphasize healings from sicknesses in its activities, but rather encourages people to trust the Word of God to do the inner work in one's life. However, there are special occasions for praying for the sick, such as a prayer services where people are prayed for.

Välimäki (2006,21-24) writes under the chapter "love heals" that, the word love (1 Joh. 4:8) in the Bible is not an adjective, which would describe only one side of God. Nor is it an adverb, which would describe how He works, but it is a subjective, which reveals what He is like in His essence. "God is love". Välimäki says that the love of God is not just any love, but it is very special and unique. The Greek word is *agape* and a comparable word is not found from any philosophy or other religion or doctrine. He explains how the love of God in its nature is healing because of its essence; it does not demand, it forgives, it is enduring and it is merciful.

According to the Raamattu Puhuu Church assistant Pastor, healing is not a human plan or human work, but something that God does and what he wants to do. He says that, our primary purpose is to live in *God's* purpose and plan. We nurture that kind of fellowship. Inner healing comes through church services, where through the Word of God, the Bible, God's loving nature is revealed.

The Raamattu Puhuu Church does not have a methodology saying; “this way it will happen” referring to inner healing. It is more organic. Receiving can happen through the singing, preaching or prayer, he adds.

9.5 Would you like to be healed?

Erik Ewalds (1985, 81-86) in his book, “Would you like to be healed?” (Tahdotko tulla terveeksi? Has a chapter named “congregation as a healing environment.” He writes that a congregation should be a healing community, and many times it is so. He mentions four aspects why it can be a healing environment.

First, the congregation is a place for communion (connection), a place where you can be without any need to defend yourself. Ewalds writes that there is a place in the world where you do not have to be perfect or play any role. There you can feel that you are safe and that you can trust people.

Secondly, the congregation is a place where you are needed. Everyone is needed as a living stone to build God’s house. This means that there is a place for everyone to serve. Ewalds mentions the word “meaningful” in this context. He says that a congregation desperately needs its members for work that is beneficial for them.

Furthermore, it is a place for forgiveness. Moralizing and judging does not belong there. We have a need to learn mercy, understanding and empathy towards others. A church is a place where forgiveness is taught.

Fourthly, the congregation is a place, where we are accepted. Ewalds writes that the congregation should especially be a place, where people are accepted and not excluded. He also notes that sometimes it happens, that congregations have different inside groups, where people from outside those groups, have difficulties to join in.

10 RESEARCH RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS

The interview research data was collected in a time period of one week, and it was done at Pukinmäki, in Raamattu Puhuu Church. One interview was done in the person's home. Six people from the church were interviewed. Different research questions were made for Pastors and church participants. The Pastors were mainly asked questions concerning the position of the Bible and Bible teaching at the Raamattu Puhuu Church.

The aim was to interview Raamattu Puhuu Church members from different age groups, long time church goers and one new person at Raamattu Puhuu. Unfortunately the interview with the elderly person did not come true. The ideas for the questionnaire were mostly given by the supervising teacher.

To arrange for the interviews at appointed times was easy. Everyone, who was asked to give an interview, was willing to participate. They were ready to talk about the Bible and church life and about the other things the interview contained.

The interview showed that people firmly believed that everything in their lives is in the hands of God. This belief gives them certain kind of peacefulness concerning their future. Worrying is common to everybody, but how to handle worrying is an essential matter. Everybody has experienced stress, more or less. Faith in God does not take troubles and stress away, but gives people a confidence that something bigger than them is in control today and takes care of the future. Nothing in this world is sustainable, but the Word of God stands forever.

“Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in Heaven”. (Psalm 119:89)

It was obvious that the Bible was at the very center of their lives and all of them felt that the Bible *does* speak to them personally. The church and its activities were weekly routines. Fellowship with other believers was essential and all except one said that the Raamattu Puhuu Church is their spiritual home. Teaching

of the Word of God was the main reason for attending church services. Interviewees came to church to become spiritually fed, and they wanted to learn more about God through the Word.

A church is also a place for inner healing. One of the most important things is to notice that people felt it important that they could come to Church as they are and feel acceptance. No one said they want to change to become a better person, but that they trust God to do the needed internal work in them.

In my opinion, there could be more open minded discussion between the social field and Christian churches. The social field could benefit from knowing more about what the different Christian churches can offer for service users. Maybe Christian counseling would be beneficial for some social service customers. Even if the social field worker has no personal faith in God, it does not mean that the worker could not give information to the service user about Christian options, especially in cases where the service user shows interest in Christianity. On the basis of my study, it is very likely that many social service customers could very well benefit, for example, from going to church and feeling the kind of atmosphere the people I interviewed had experienced.

In Finland's history, it has been a normal thing for people to attend church. Why could it not be today?

11 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONCLUSION

If I think about my process of studying over all, I might say that the most important thing for me has been to learn to think about people's situations from many different sides, not from just one. I have realized that there are other colors besides black and white. It is difficult to, say if this learning process would have happened without these studies.

I am grateful for the diaconal side studies, because without them I would not have been able to freely express my Christian views. Only in those classes was it possible for me to do so. Thinking about the meaning of the Bible while writing this paper, strengthened my belief that it truly is the Book of books.

I have been a member of the Raamattu Puhuu Church now for more than thirty years. I have seen many people dedicate themselves to the Bible and to church life. Also, I have seen the fruit of it: thinking of others. Learning the Bible doctrines causes people to look away from themselves and start to think about others and how they could be helped.

Others, Lord, yes others
 Let this my motto be
 Help me to live for others
 That I may live like Thee.

Let "Self" be crucified and slain
 And buried deep; and all in vain
 May efforts be to rise again
 Unless to live for – Others.

Lord help me live from day to day
 In such a self-forgetful way
 That even when I kneel to pray
 My prayer shall be for – Others.

And when my work on earth is done
 And my new work in heaven's begun
 May I forget the crown I've won
 While thinking still of – Others.

Help me in all the work I do
 To ever be sincere and true
 And know that all I do for you
 Must needs be done for – Others.

Others, Lord, yes others
 Let this my motto be
 Help me to live for others
 That I may live like Thee.

(Charles D. Meigs 1902)

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire

Questions to Pastors

1. What is the position of the Bible at Raamattu Puhuu Church?
 2. What is relation between the home base (Baltimore) and the local assembly?
 3. What Raamattu Puhuu Church teaches about Bible teaching?
 4. How the Raamattu Puhuu Church teaches about Bible?
 5. Why it is important that people attend to church activities?
 6. What helps people to feel church as a spiritual home?
-
1. What kind of church activities do you participated?
 2. What Raamattu Puhuu church means to you?
 3. Who do you meet there?
 4. What made you to choose Raamattu Puhuu Church to be your home church?
 5. What does the Bible mean to you?
 6. Are there times that you read the Bible more than other times?
 7. Do you feel that the Bible speaks to you personally?
 8. Are there some specific challenges for being Christian today and going to church? If yes, what kind of challenges?
 9. The Bible School is essential part of the Raamattu Puhuu Church have you gone that? Tell about your experience.
 10. What do you think about Raamattu Puhuu Church as a spiritual home?
 11. What do you think about Raamattu Puhuu Church as a healing environment?
 12. What are your personal expectations from the Raamattu Puhuu Church?

1. What kind of church activities do you participate?

(A) Church services on Sundays and Wednesdays, choir, annual conferences, sometimes bible studies, prayer meetings and evangelism. Children`s camp`s.

(B) Sunday morning services always and every second Wednesday evening service. Mostly Bible studies, women`s study and English study. Partly in music, our group we sing once a month.

(C) I`m part of the coffee team. I participate youth nights, twice a week a church services.

(D) Church services and to all youth activities and the Bible School on Monday`s.

2. What Raamattu Puhuu Church means to you?

(A) It means a spiritual home and spiritual food.

(B) Women`s bible studies Multicultural background, different ages, single people, and different kind of people.

(C) It always feels like home to come here. I learn new things every time I come to service.

(D) It is a spiritual home and shelter. There are many people to whom I can ask questions and I get answers.

3. Who do you meet there?

(A) I meet many kinds of people, from different professional backgrounds, poor and rich. I meet new and old church goers.

(B) In women`s Bible studies are international, main speaker is Finnish there are ladies from multicultural backgrounds, different ages, single, married, different kind of people.

(C) I meet my friends and sometimes new people. In street evangelism I meet new people.

(D) I meet friends whom I got through the Raamattu Puhuu. Spiritual parents my own parents live far. From the Church I got second mothers (varaäitejä).

4. What made you to choose Raamattu Puhuu Church to be your home church?

(A) I was looking a home church and I had been in Kuopio church earlier and Raamattu Puhuu was a familiar that is why I went there. The Bible teaching is a good thing and that is nice. I noticed that people love each other's. People have a personal relationship with God and they willingly talk about what they have been experience with God during the week.

(B) Calling that I have, singing. I have been singing around other churches, but God spoke to me and asked is it what you want or what I want? I had to go deeper to the Word of God. Listening to Pastor preaching and going to bible studies plus prayer it showed me this is my home church for sure. The main point was that is not about what I can give to God, but what God wants to give me what He has planned for my life. Not what I have planned. That God showed me here learning His Word and getting to know Him better.

(D) First touch to Raamattu Puhuu Church was my trip to International Conference in Baltimore. Then I was invited to youth camp in Finland and went there. I felt myself welcomed and the Church felt my own.

5. What the Bible means to you personally?

(A) Instructions to my life and something that is sustainable. I know I need it and it is good for me.

(B) Life, I cannot do anything without it. I am nothing without it. A believer cannot function without the Word. It is a same thing that how a person cannot live without oxygen, it is my spiritual oxygen

(C) It is the manual for my life. The Bible teaches meaning and purpose and the value of my life.

(D) It is the truth. I am not a good Bible reader and interpreter, but I find answers from the Bible to everyday things. The Bible is not only a book, but it is a library, you always find right things for every situation in life.

6. Are there times that you read the Bible more than other times?

(A) If there is a difficult time in life I seek more answers from the Bible.

(B) Busy schedules are challenge. I started reading from beginning of Genesis. I read it in the mornings and I try to wake up earlier that I have a time to read my Bible. Sometimes the chapters are too long for one time to read. My favorite Bible verse is Revelation 12:11.

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” (NKJV, Rev 12:11)

(D) It goes like cycles; sometimes I read more and sometimes less. When I am more alone then I read more, example when I go to countryside I read more.

7. Do you feel that the Bible speaks to you personally?

(A) Yes it does, sometimes you understand and thing can brighten up; sometimes through the principal of the Bible you know how you should function. The Word nurtures the soul.

(B) Yes it does directly to me. Whatever situation I am, it carries, it keeps me going when I am happy. When I am down it holds me up. The Word is my strength. It may come from different sources but direct. I listen Pastor Schaller`s teachings from Baltimore through internet. Friend gives me a word through phone.

(C) Yes, in everyday situations when I acknowledge, that God is with me.

(D) Yes it does in many moments. Sometimes if I have been fearful and I open the Bible in those moments and read the book of Psalms the fear has gone away.

8. Are there some specific challenges for being Christian today and going to Church?

(A) Little bit, you have to make some choices where do you give your time up. Not all appreciate those choices, you are different. I do not seek the company of those kinds of people who do not appreciate my values but relatives and work-mates you have to face.

(B) Yes, especially in Finland. People have a very busy schedules and work, family, interrupts a little bit. Environment, it is not easy to live ungodly environment and try to live godly life. When you come to church the local train can be full of drunken people.

(C) Yes, every time when I talk about my faith to unchristian it ends up being negative or shallow conversation. Thinks that depend on my mood, if I'm week or feel lost, sometimes I don't attend.

(D) My things are fine there has not been lot of challenges, I do not have to hide that I am believer at school. However it is a challenge, because I am studying in media sector. I have felt that if I am challenged for being believer I got strength from above in those situations.

9. The Bible School is essential part of the Raamattu Puhuu Church have you gone that? Tell about your experience.

(A) It was a good time I am happy that I went. I had a calling to do that and it was worth for following the calling. I learned in those times that to church you can go whatever condition; you can go as you are. I learned how good it is to listen the Word of God constantly. I learned also that in the challenges of life you can draw from what you have learned in the Bible school.

(C) Bible School has great teachers; usually the classes are not pouring. It helps me to live my life.

(D) This is my firs Bible School course, book of Romans. I have really liked it and I do not want to miss any classes.

10. What do you think about Raamattu Puhuu Church as a spiritual home?

(A) It has an exceptionally good and diverse Bible teaching. The community is quite close-knit and there is a sense that we are studying the Bible together.

(B) Pastor is god given and I have known him many years. I love Raamattu Puhuu because it is not a religious church. There are churches now days that are like cocktails; they mix culture and religion. Here in Raamattu Puhuu it is pure word of god and finding this kind of church it is not easy.

(D) I do not have to to try to be anything else that I am. There is a connection between people and all are so friendly to me and they receive me as I am.

11. What do you think about Raamattu Puhuu Church as a healing environment?

(A) The truth makes you free, if you faithfully continue hearing the teaching of the Word, as time passes, it will heal you internally. I believe that miracle healings could happen also.

(B) I think Raamattu Puhuu is how you take it. If you came to look word of god I get healing. If you look social is fifty-fifty. Church members are quite friendly, most of the people. Maybe because I speak English not everybody speaks to me. Young people select them self aside I think we should integrate. In this church everyone is equal.

“Mental health cannot affect your spirit, but spiritual can affect your mental, if you are depressed you go to the word of god” (B)

(D) Yes it is a healing environment. I have had few moments where I have been broken inside and when I went to Church I felt the warmth and I got healed and felt that everything is fine.

13. What are your personal expectations from the Raamattu Puhuu Church?

(A) To get teaching what I already do get. Enthusiastic activity and that the church would reach also new people. That I would have friendships and that I would feel belongingness. Most important thing is spirituality, overall how the Bible affects my life. Not only knowledge, but with prayer the Bible can have effect in one`s life.

“Mix faith with what you have heard” (B)

(B) My expectation is to have an English bible school and graduate from here. Finnish language is too challenging for me.

(C) I expect good teaching and after the preaching conversations with people. Conversations don't happen so often.

(D) I have been at Raamattu Puhuu Church only a short time, but I hope that it will be my lifelong home. Also, that I could learn more about God and grow in faith and have closer relationship with God.