

# Our Mission Trip to Iceland: A Sunday Morning, Coffee House Update

September 24, 2017

by David Schrock

On [Facebook](#), I've had a chance to share a few updates from our mission trip. Today, as we get ready to go to church (at 2pm [UTC](#)), we are stopping in a local coffee shop—the Flagship Coffee House of the North Atlantic—and stopping to give a brief update on our trip. So, here are six highlights from the trip.

## Six Highlights from Iceland

### The Landscape

The first thing to mention about Iceland is the stunning beauty of the Iceland. The word Reykjavik, which hosts about 80% of the population (280,000 of 340,000), means “smoky bay.” The reason: Iceland is situated on a volcanic rock jutting out of the Northern Atlantic. Accordingly, it has beautiful black beaches, rocky mountains, long bays (called [fjord](#)), and rainbow-filled skies. In short, the landscape looks like something from a [C. S. Lewis](#) or [J. R. R. Tolkien](#) novel—and that's fitting because both were affiliated with Iceland.

### The Weather

Next, the weather. When I first thought of Iceland, I (wrongly) thought of ice, snow, blizzard, and sunless winters. And to be sure, Iceland is cooler than Virginia and darker in the Christmas season. But at the same time, it has been far more pleasant than I imagined. Our weather has been wet, but the houses are more than adequately warmed. With lava-heated water pumped into every home, windows stay open most of the time. And the landscapes and people more than make up for the Seattle-like wetness.

### The People

Just as warm as the homes is the hospitality. For instance, last night Gunnar's mom prepared an Icelandic meal for all the pastors visiting—lamb, sugar brown potatoes, corn, peas, and cole slaw. The feast was prepared with love and affection. And the meal was held at a local church—Filadelfia Church—that has been very kind and hospitable to Loftstofan's budding ministry. Indeed, throughout Iceland the kindness shown to strangers has been noticeable.

In particular, there is a warmth of spirit among the believers who live here. Many, to be sure, are beleaguered, like the two we meet with in Akureyri (a town 150 miles from Reykjavik). But others are primed with optimism for what God is doing in Iceland. One of these is Mike Fitzgerald. For 25 years, he has overseen a Christian radio ministry throughout Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands.

## The Food

As we have met people we have enjoyed the food and coffee of Iceland. In particular, we have met in cafés and even a Thai Restaurant—Thai in Iceland, who knew? But in a host of these bakeries, we have found a Panera-like atmosphere with all sorts of bread, pastries, [snúðar](#), and [vínarbrauð](#).

So, when you think of Gunnar discipling others and meeting with people about church, you might imagine him loading up on carbs and feeding others with the Word of God.

## The Church

More important than the food though, we have sought to bring food to the people of God in Iceland. Earlier this week, Gary and I traveled to Akureyri to have a Bible study with two people who are hopeful for a church to begin there. Friday, Saturday, and today we have met with a band of believers from Gunnar's church studying the Old Testament. (It was supposed to be a class on the whole Bible, but questions, discussion, and my inability to be brief has made this a two-part class).

In short, the people are hungry for God's Word, for help in understanding it and sharing it with others. Indeed, this is a great need in Iceland, a spirit of boldness to share Christ with others. If you pray for Iceland, pray for believers to share their faith and to know how to speak a word for Christ in public.

## The Need

Truly, an evangelistic witness is one of the greatest needs in Iceland. While the presence of Christianity goes back before 1000 A.D., the presence of a vibrant gospel-sharing faith is lacking. The whole nation is "Christian," but in point of fact most in the state church either do not practice or do not believe. In recent years, ministries like the Gideon's have been ejected from schools in Reykjavik. Although they continue to share Scripture in other places in Iceland, the progressive ways of Reykjavik is inhospitable to Christianity.

Nonetheless, there are pockets of believers who are praying and working to share Christ. This is why we came this week and why we continue to pray for and support the [Iceland Project](#) and the work of Gunnar Ingi Gunnarsson at [Loftstofan Baptist Church](#).

In short, there is a great need in Iceland. But we pray to a greater God and we look forward to seeing what he will do as we, his people, pray, seek his face, and labor to share Christ. In the weeks ahead our children's ministry (NextGen Kids) will be learning more about Iceland. And I pray in the years ahead we will continue to pray, give, and go to see this beautiful nation recapture the beauty of the gospel.

To that end we labor and pray!

Soli Deo Gloria, ds