



He is Savior, Acts 4:12

August 4, 2014

H.I.S. Ministries August 2014 Newsletter covering June and July 2014

We are back! Our flight from Helsinki via Paris to Salt Lake City took 22 hours. Plane was 298-passenger aircraft – every seat filled. Now we are back to work and happy to be home. Dennis started his cabinet building project the very next day and has been busily working ever since. (He had an urgent order and he has to have them finished by tomorrow.)

As I mentioned in our June newsletter, because most of our July would be spent in Finland, we did not plan to write a newsletter for July. We have received many requests for information about Finland before our trip as well as during it, and after coming back home. Answering these questions well would require writing a book, but I will try to condense this to what may be an answer to most of your questions about Finland.

Finland is located between Russia and Sweden, having longest border (over 1200 kilometers) with Russia. About 1/3 of Finland lies **above the Arctic Circle**. From about the middle of June till middle of July the sun does not set there at all. (Way up north there are 73 days when sun is always above the horizon.) I was born in Tornio, and most of my young childhood was spent around and above the Arctic Circle. When we arrived (7/9/14) in Helsinki (southern tip of Finland), at midnight it was just dusk – not dark at all, with sun seen over 23 hours a day. It took a while to get used to the lightness of the nights and sleep was hard to find, due also to the 9-hour time difference between Finland and Utah.

Finland is part of the Scandinavian Peninsula, and known as a “*land of a thousand lakes*”, counting **over 62 thousand of them**. Size-wise Finland is comparable to the state of Montana. In spite of about 5000 years of evidence of some population, the population of Finland didn’t begin to grow until around 100 A.D. Finland used to be part of Sweden from about the 11th century Crusades till 1809 when Russia invaded Finland and took her as part of **Russian Grand Duchy** under the Russian Emperor Alexander I, who, under pressure from Napoleon had conquered Finland in an effort to force Sweden to abandon its pro-British policy. **Finland gained her independence from Russia on Dec. 6, 1917**. Population today is just a little over 5 million. In spite of suffering from continuing wars with Russia from 1917 until about 1948, Finland has bounced back due to her strong patriotic and *stubborn people* (known as people having “*sisu*”). Finland is today known as a highly industrialized country. The largest industries are *electronics* (21.6%), *machinery, vehicles* and other engineered metal products (21.1%), *forest industry* (13.1%) and *chemicals* (10.9%). Finland has timber and freshwater resources and thus forestry, paper factories and agricultural sectors are politically sensitive to rural residents. **Finland has one of the largest economies in Europe in spite of being a small country with a small population. The economy of Finland ranks at the top of Global Technology as reported by the World Economic Forum.** Finland is highly integrated in global economy and international trade is a third of its GDP. **Finland has excelled in electrical engineering**

with generators and electric motors built by Gottfried Stromberg, now part of ABB group. Other well-known Finnish companies as *Instru, Vaisala and Neles*, now part of *Metso*, have succeeded in areas as industrial and medical technology. Finland's *Nokia* was one of the world leaders in mobile telecommunication. Cell phones are owned by all Finns, young and old. **Finnish motor industry consists of manufactures of tractors** (*Valtra, formerly Valmet*), world-renowned **forest machines** as *Ponsse*, **military vehicles** (*Sisu, Patria*), **trucks** (*Sisu Auto*) and **Valmet Automotive**, and contract manufactures that produce *Fisher electric cars*. **Shipbuilding is an important industry in Finland: the world's largest cruise ships are built in Finland, and a Finnish company, Wartsila, produces world's largest diesel engines.** Many *Nordic design firms* have their headquarters in Finland. They include names such as *Fiskars* and *Iittala Group*. **Architect and designer Alvar Aalto's Artek furniture firm and many more have made Finland known, including Marimekko fabrics, designs and clothing, made famous in US by late First Lady, Jacqueline Kennedy.**

All these successes have come, of course, by "people-power", a result from noted Finland's education system that is studied worldwide (see: www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3749880) You'll find that **Finland is #1 in education** of her young. **Finland's 15-year olds topped the science tests besting students from 56 other countries, US included. Finland's teens are #1 in education in the entire world.** Educators from 50 countries around the globe have visited Finland over the past few years, including numerous groups from USA. They say that some things they learned there, however, cannot be copied, **because Finland is so far ahead financially and economically.** "First of all there is a near **absence of poverty in Finland**", says Julie Walker, a board member for *21st Century Skills*, who has visited Finland along with Sweden and Denmark. She continued, "Then secondly, **children of Finland do not start school until they are 7 years old. They come to school to learn! They come to school healthy and well nourished. All students learn at least three languages right off – they are fluent in Finnish, Swedish and English. Students do not carry lap-tops, but most of them have 2-3 cell phones with better features than Americans see. Learning in schools is more individualized because all teachers focus in knowing their students and all of the teachers are involved in their betterment. 93 % of all Finns graduate from high school (nearly 20% higher than in USA). 66% of graduates go to college (highest rate in all of Europe) and 43% go also to vocational schools. The third reason for success in Finland is the degree of respect and trust teachers are given in Finland, similar to the status that doctors receive in USA.**" *America's National School Board's* representative Ann Flynn added, "I was left with the most amazing sense of respect for the teaching profession among people of Finland. It is how this profession was viewed in this country (US) 75 years ago. The best and brightest students want to become teachers in Finland. All teachers in Finland must have a master's degree. The school system is 100% funded by the state of Finland. Teachers are selected from the top 10% of college graduates. Teachers receive the same level of respect that doctors and lawyers receive in US." (Source of this information is from *Smithsonian*.)

Finland is a clean and beautiful country, full of trees and lakes. One hardly can travel a mile or two without seeing water. Rivers and lakes are clean and unpolluted. As we travelled by car (2194 kilometers) and visited grocery stores in large cities as well as in small country villages, we saw that every store had immaculate displays of fresh produce, fresh fish caught daily from the lakes or Baltic Sea, meats of many kinds (pork, veal, beef, chicken) and beautiful displays of berries in abundance, such as raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, gooseberries etc. Food in Finland is more expensive than similar products in Utah, but people did not seem to be stressed about the cost. Same with all else sold in stores that we visited – everything to us seemed to be *way more expensive*, but people were buying as if it was not a concern. This all indicated financial "well-being" that is held together with secular views of the world and self-confidence. There seems to be no interest in life after death, no interests in knowing what the Bible says, and no interest in knowing Jesus and

eternal salvation. *Continuation of life* is seen as life and future they give to the next generation, and has nothing to do with God. *“Unbelief is actually perverted faith, for it puts its trust not in the living God, but in dying men. The unbeliever denies the self-sufficiency of God and usurps attributes that are not his. This dual sin dishonors God and ultimately destroys the soul of man.”* (A.W. Tozer.)

Faith in God was alive during the hard times, when Finland was in war. ***It has been said that we as people can stand affliction better than we can prosperity, for in prosperity we forget God.*** We saw most of the Finns as good and successful people, but spiritually dead. **We know that the Lord sent us there to share the gospel with them, with our first focus being to former Mormons that are now promoting atheism,** as they look at all religious beliefs as victimizing its faithful. We had many hours of long discussions with very intelligent former LDS, some of them born and raised as Mormons, but who, after having found Mormonism false, now totally reject all religious beliefs. We were saddened by that, but **yet we were confident that we were following God’s will regardless of how they now seemed to reject our message.** Instead of being crushed, our hearts were reminded that conversion is always God’s work – our work is to share information and pray for them. During our 3 weeks of travel we only saw three persons who seemed to agree with what we presented – **one of them accepted the Lord with her heart and promised to study the Word of God.** We also met with my childhood friend who had visited us here in Utah about 5 years ago and here had accepted Jesus. Her husband is not a believer, but is against her faith, and she cannot even mention God or Jesus to him. I was able to have a brief private conversation with her, and **she promised to keep her faith in the Lord, even under her circumstances.** We had with us a suitcase full of materials – 60 pounds of booklets and DVDs. We were able to deliver just about all of them, except 3 booklets that we had planned on leaving in the plane’s pockets at the end of the trip, but we had them in our carry-on luggage which due to the fullness of the plane (298 passengers), we could not get into our luggage during the trip... We also passed lots of Mark Cahill’s little tracts and booklets to people who had never even thought of God or eternity, praying that the Lord would speak to their hearts as they read them. For Mormons and former Mormons we also gave our booklets and DVDs exposing the falsehoods of the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith. **Early on in our trip, we came to see that God had planned our trip to Finland a bit differently than we had expected.** We had a deep impression in our hearts that we are indeed in the very last days, and that the Lord wants to warn all people of coming Judgment Day. We were to present the gospel to anybody and everybody we could, and not only to Mormons. We learned that Mormonism is not growing hardly at all there. They still have 120 full-time missionaries there now as during our LDS missionary time, but their membership has not increased even though they say that it has. There are fewer Mormons on their records now than there were a few years ago – some smaller cities have even closed their wards. One of the former Mormons we talked with, whose parents and siblings are still actively involved, said that they have received 10 or less new members per year during last several years and there are more than 10 deaths per year among older Mormons. Another huge problem he related to us is that young Mormons have no one to marry. The government of Finland will not issue marriage licenses to people who are related to each other and most of the young Mormons are from *“the same core LDS families”* who joined the LDS Church in 1960s or early 1970s. Thus they are related to each other as first or second cousins and thus are not allowed to marry. New converts lately have been older people that are not able to bring a new bloodline to the church. Still young Mormons are counselled not to marry outside of the church – so they have to either go to Sweden or elsewhere to find a spouse... So Mormonism may be naturally *dying on the vine*, so to speak, not only in Finland, but perhaps elsewhere in Europe too. Sweden has had a big loss of membership do to the crisis we have reported earlier this year.

My cousin, Maikki, who lives on the Swedish side of the Tornio river (in Haparanda), had organized a get-together with 15 of my cousins at Kukkolankoski (Finnish side of the river), by my father's family home. We had a wonderful meal of Salmon-soup, sour-dough rye bread, fresh (uncooked) salt-cured fish, and lots of berries for desert. This was typical summer-meal I recall from my childhood. It was interesting day for Dennis also, for most of them were as new to me as to him for I had never known or even met most of these cousins. From there we drove north to Ylitornio (about 60 km) to visit my parent's grave in the old pine-tree covered cemetery that is next to the Lutheran church that my mother's funeral was also held. I recalled as an 11-year old child coming often to my mother's grave, laying face down on top of it and crying for my mother. It was my attempt to be close to my mother – and there was no one to comfort me. My father's urn is buried next to my mother. Deep sadness again filled my heart, for I do not know if my mother knew the Lord – and I am quite sure my father did not. This visit to my parent's grave made me feel the same sadness I feel for my country – they, most of them, are so lost. All I could do is to cry bitter tears. This was my farewell to Finland. We believe that the Lord is coming soon to take His own from this world, and more than likely I/we will never be going back there again. Please pray with us for my countrymen, and that there would be spiritual awakening and that our witness and distribution of gospel-tracts would not have been in vain.

From our mailbox:

A Christian brother and friend had asked a question that is often asked, and since I was not able to answer it when he needed it, I am answering it here for others to see how we'd handle this when we are faced with this dilemma.

He wrote: *"I live in a mostly LDS neighborhood-no surprise, right? We are having a block party tonight and I've have been asked to do the prayer before the meal. Generally, I begin my prayer "Heavenly Father", but since that means something different to Mormons than it does to me, should I change my opening or not worry about it. I don't serve the God that Mormon's call "Heavenly Father", but I also don't know that it is appropriate to hijack the prayer as a teaching moment. Your thoughts? Thanks!"*

My thoughts on this: Prayer is a perfect way not only to talk to our Lord and ask for His involvement on occasion, but also to use it *"as a teaching moment"* – and why not? For that reason, I would not use the words *"Heavenly Father"*, for our God, as you noted, is not their Heavenly Father, thus you should use words that will not identify you as agreeing with their false understanding of God. As you know, God becomes our Father when we receive Jesus and are born again. (John 1:12.) Since the gods of Mormonism are not the God of the Bible, you could simply start your prayer addressing Him as *"Lord God..."* (ref. to Triune God) and then ask His blessings for this gathering, also asking that He will be honored and acknowledged as the only true and loving God – and concluding your prayer in the *name of our Lord and only Savior, Jesus Christ*. How would they (Mormons) become aware that there is a difference unless it is expressed even in the prayers we offer when gathering with them? I hope this is helpful.

A Mormon question: *"You speak of having faith in God. We Mormons have faith – so what is the difference?"*

Answer: What is faith and what it is not? *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (Romans 5:1.) **Faith is not "faith in faith" – faith's object has to be God, the true One. It is faith in God** that enables us to live the Christian life. In order to know what true faith in God is, let us look first at what faith in God is not. **Faith is not a hunch. Faith is not positive thinking. Faith is not responding to emotions, feelings, or icicles up and down your spine or miracles, signs and wonders.** Faith in God is not just believing that God can do something! **Faith in**

God is knowing that God will do it if we ask according to His will. (1 John 5:14-15.) **Faith is taking God at His Word - found only in the Bible. Faith is deaf to discouragement. Faith is blind to impossibilities. What kind of faith you have depends on what kind of God you have? Ask the God of the Bible to reveal Himself to you through His Word. Do it today. You must be born again! (John 1:12; 3:3,7.)** Pastor Rogers has correctly said *that we who belong to true Jesus are twice-born in a world of once-born people, and we're going to find ourselves going against the tide most of the time. It's like a deep sea diver who is underwater and outside his natural environment. He could not live if he weren't linked to his life supply above. That's the way we need to live. If we are to survive, we must stay linked to Jesus who is our life and we do it through His Word, the Bible. The Bible says we're not to set our affections on things beneath (this world), but on things above where Christ sits at the right hand of the Father.* (Colossians 3:1.) We have a promise of God that if we seek Him, we will find Him – if we seek Him with all our heart. (Jer. 29:11-13; 24:7.) – Sincerely, Rauni

A “Christian” wanted to correct us and say that Mormons are Christians too, for as she says, *she knows many that are very good people and say that they believe in God and in Jesus Christ, and anyone who believes in Jesus is a Christian!*

My brief reply (for this issue has been tackled many times before in our letters): Those who have not been true believers in Mormonism or who have not compared the meaning behind the words they use, may think that it is all the same. But is it? **We must define the terms – God who? Jesus who? Can they be born again from the Spirit of God, if they do not know true God? What does belief in God mean?** We need to remind ourselves that the Devil and his demons also believe in God, and they believe without question, **for they absolutely know who God is and who Jesus is!** (James 2:19; Matt. 8:28-29.) The Devil believes that **God is the Father, He is the Son and He is the Holy Spirit, and they are One God,** i.e. Trinity. (1 John 5:7-8.) The Devil is an enemy of God and **he blinds the minds** of those who do not know the true God yet. (2 Cor. 4:3-6.) **To become a child of God, i.e. born again,** requires that **we first know who true God is** (Ps. 90:2), **who Jesus is** (Matt. 1:23; John 1:1, 14) and His eternal personhood as God (John 8:23-24, 58) and that He became a man **for our salvation.** (John 1:1, 14; Col. 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:1-4.) We become *born again when we believe from our whole heart* (Rom. 10:9-10) and *receive Jesus of the Bible* (John 1:12) and surrender our lives to Him (Eph. 2:8-10). Belief in a false god, and acceptance of *another Jesus* will not make anyone a Christian, regardless of what words they use. The “Jesus” they believe in is a created being, just as they are, their spirit-brother from the preexistence and also a brother of Lucifer. That knowledge cannot bring them to salvation – not unless and until they surrender themselves to the True God and Jesus, who is God. Can a false god and a “counterfeit Jesus” save anyone? **We are not God’s children until we receive and acknowledge Jesus as God and are born again.** (John 1:12; 3; 3,7.) Jesus said that He alone came from above, we did not (John 8:23-24) – and He added, **“Unless you believe that I AM He (God) you will die in your sins.”** Only God can forgive sins, and if we **“die in our sins”** we cannot go to heaven no matter how nice we are or how much *good* we have done, even in His name (see Matt. 7:22-23), or no matter how faithfully we have served in the Mormon Church.

We want to express our thankfulness for those of you who helped us (and may I say, without our asking) to make this trip to Finland possible. We had prayed for months about this, and by faith in our Lord, who confirmed that we should go, we made our commitment to go without yet knowing how we are going to pay and afford it. **For it did not seem possible that we could do it – unless God would make it possible!!!** Our friend from Finland even wrote and warned saying, *“Finland is a very expensive country. Are you sure you want to make this trip?”* We found out that our God is able when we are not! When He calls us to do *“whatever it is”*, He will stand behind us and with us and He speaks to His own about what is needed. We received from these people of our Lord exactly what we ourselves lacked! Is that not God’s

doing or what!!! We are waiting and wondering what God will do there and how He is going to “bring it all to pass”. We cannot see it yet, but we are confident that He is at work. This trip was very hard for me physically – I had very little sleep and we were “*on the go*” all the time – driving across the country (2194 km) with very little rest. I got ill, getting severe cough during our last 4 days there – and flying home (22 hours from Helsinki to Salt Lake City) took all the strength I had left. Dennis was amazingly strong all the time. He was able to adjust to the time and to the lightness of nights well, but the most amazing to everyone was that he spoke Finnish to all through the entire trip as if he has been speaking it all his life – and yet it was 50 years ago when he was there and we have not been speaking it at home! That is another miracle of the Lord. We praise His holy name for all He did and all He is going to do, and we ask His blessings on you all, our friends and partners in this work.

Please pray for health restoration for Dick, Dale, Max, Merridy, Debbie, Tom, Dave and also others who have asked prayer for help in their trials. The Lord knows who they are and He will answer.

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." Jeremiah 29:11 . We who love the Lord also know that He first loved us and that **God's delays are not God's denials**. Pastor Adrian Rodgers said: *"Many a Christian feels that he is out in the wilderness - that all he is doing is being led about in circles. It may be that God is grooming you. Maybe He is not ready to thrust you into heavy responsibilities as yet. He has you in a holding pattern for His holy purpose. Life is a journey that does not end. God is preparing something wonderful for you. He doesn't want you to settle for less than His optimum for your life and your work."* ***"Trust in the Lord and do good. Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord and trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass."* (Ps. 37:3-5.)**

We send our love and prayers for you.

Serving Him with gladness,

Rauni & Dennis Higley

2890 E. Willow Bend Drive

Sandy, Utah 84093

Website: www.hismin.com – Email: hismin@xmission.com Tel. 801.943-5011

Thought for the month: "If I ever reach heaven, I expect to find three wonders there: first, to meet some I would not have expected to be there; second, to miss some I would have expected to be there; third, the greatest wonder of all – to find myself there!" John Newton

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