



[H.I.S.] He Is Savior, Act 4:12

August 1, 2022

HIS MINISTRIES AUGUST 2022 NEWSLETTER, COVERING JUNE-JULY 2022

These last months have been perhaps hardest months of our lives and are painful to report, but since you who are receiving our letters have requested them and many of you have been *our spiritual support-base* for a very long time, we will tell you what happened.

We already sent you a notification in June that our beloved daughter, *Minna Johanna*, had passed away *in her sleep* (as we were told) on June 12th 2022. Our hearts are broken though we know that she is now with our Lord Jesus. (2 Cor. 5:6-8.) We trust that all this was foreknown to our Lord, and we must rely on His promises that He will sustain us through this and that *He intercedes for us* (Rom. 8:34b-39) and He weeps with us as He did when His friend Lazarus had died. (John 11:33-35.)

We thank you for praying for us through these hard times.

We'd like to tell you more about Minna since most of you have not known our sweet daughter during her earthly life.



Minna was born in Helsinki, Finland, on May 29th, 1968. By legal definition she is our *“adopted daughter”*, but there was a lot more to her birth-story than legality of it. Perhaps telling her story will help you to understand how Minna was truly our daughter, born to us, for she indeed was our expected baby, and we became her parents even before she was born. [We told Minna her birth-story when she was 4 years old and *what had taken place before she was able to come home to us.* We desired her to know how much we wanted her and what a struggle it was to get her, more than most parents experience when they just *go to a hospital and come home with a baby.* She understood and was as happy to be our child as we were to be her parents.]

Her story began in Helsinki (Espoo) Finland: A young lady, Eeva, whose fiancée had accepted an over a yearlong work-assignment in Germany (before they knew that she was pregnant), and after he had left, she realized that she didn't have a way to contact him and let him know about the baby. Eeva was living with her mother and when she told her that she was expecting a baby, she wanted her to have an abortion, but Eeva refused. Our friend, Silja (in Finland) found out about Eeva's situation and contacted us, relating to us that if we promise and commit to take Eeva's child as our very own baby, be it a boy or a girl, she would go through her pregnancy, fully understanding that the child she is carrying, will not be her child AFTER he/she is born. Dennis and I made that commitment to her, and from that day on we were anxiously waiting for our child's birth. We hired an attorney and he started the preliminary procedures for adoption. As we got closer to the time of our baby's birth, we also had to begin the immigration process that couldn't be fully started until the baby was born and we knew the sex of a child and could give her/him a name. She was born on

May 29th, 1968, and we gave her the name, **Minna Johanna Higley**. [We chose as her middle *Johanna*, for Johanna was one of my mother's first names – my mother's name was Aili Maria Johanna).

[We gave my mother's first name, Aili, to our next daughter who was also born in Helsinki, Finland, in 1970, abt. 2 years later. Her name is Aili Elina Higley]. [Our older daughter, Paivi Kristiina, was born in Oulu, Finland.] [Although all our daughters were born in Finland, and they are *fully and completely our daughters*, though they do not have our genes or our blood in their veins.]

[Here is another addition to Minna's "birth-story" that assured us that the Lord had arranged her to be ours long before we even knew about her:

We had made a promise to Minna's birthmother that we will keep her informed about Minna's growth and send often pictures of her, etc. When Minna was almost 10 months old (in March 1969), we received a letter from her letting us know that her fiancée had come back from Germany, and that he was very sad to find out that they had a baby girl who was given up for adoption to a couple in America (us). She added that they were going to get married in June. Though she did not indicate that she/they wanted "*their baby*" (now our baby) back, we became concerned for we were aware that according to *Utah adoption laws* Minna would have had to be living with us a full year before adoption could be finalized/legalized in Utah. In March, 1969 we had had Minna with us only 7 months (since September 5th 1968). [That was because it had taken 3 months for *US Immigration Department* to do their part and issue her a visa to come to the USA. It was so ridiculously long (and could have been even longer), but we convinced US Senator Bennett to get involved, and he put pressure on them to get it done!] Now we were worried that after they are married we could still lose our child because of the Immigration Department's slowness, for even in June we would not have had her with us a full year!

Then, just about 2 weeks before their planned wedding in June, we received a sad letter from Eeva saying that her fiancé had died in a car accident! How drastic that was for her, but now our child was safe here!]

Our happy family life continued, and we were blessed to have Elina added to our family in 1970: and now we had three daughters.

We were active members of the Mormon Church, both having served LDS missions in Finland and married in the SL Temple. I had been working for the Mormon Church as a *translator, interpreter and language coordinator* (which I did over 14 years), and Dennis had been in various LDS ward- and stake leadership positions since his mission, and lastly he had been a Stake High Councilman over 3 years.

It was in the early 1980's when Dennis and I decided that even though we thought we knew our LDS Church's doctrines well and had taught it for years in our wards and stakes, we wanted to study Church History and doctrines from the beginning (1830) and even deeper than we had done before. We came to see that even the doctrine of God was changed (in 1844) from what is presented in the Book of Mormon, etc. While digging into all that, we literally "*studied ourselves out of Mormonism*", and after that into biblical Christianity. As we studied that Bible, we soon learned that *we must become new persons, we must be born again*, as the Lord has commanded. (John 3:3,7.) Dennis and I were *born again*, we received the Lord Jesus, and became children of God. (John 1:12-13.) Each one of our daughters also were *born again and we all had become God's children, adopted by God*. (Rom. 8:15b-17.) Our daughters are our children "*here and now*", but they too are eternally God's children. God's love for those whom He adopts is great and everlasting. It has been said that many *adoptive parents* love their children perhaps deeper because it took a *real desire and effort* to have them rather than what many "*fleshly parents*" experience when they have their "*naturally born*" children. The Bible teaches that before we are born from above (*born again*), we are just Adam's posterity, "*children of the flesh*". As Paul wrote to the Romans, "*those who are children of the flesh, these are not the children of God.*" That is why Jesus said, "*You must be born again.*" (John 3:7.)

God does not have grandchildren, so we do not either... [Every person has to be first born from above before becoming God's very own child.]

It was very soon after we separated ourselves from Mormonism that we started to study the Bible together with our young teenage-daughters, Minna and Elina. Because they knew that Dennis and I had already been *born again*, they wanted to understand what that meant. (We had already begun our studies of the Gospel of John with them, *“word for word”*, and explained what the words in John 1:1-3, 14 meant.) Therefore they had already learned that *Jesus is God who became a man* and that He *had died for our sins, was buried and resurrected, according to the Scriptures*. (1 Cor. 15:1-4.) We explained that when we repent of our sins (*wrong doings*) we are *“born again”* (John 3:7) and *receive Jesus* into our hearts and life and thus *become children of God* (John 1:12-14) and can live with Him forever. When we then reasoned from Paul’s letter to Romans (3:22-26), it became easier for them to understand why we must be born again - *it is because every person has a sin-nature, received at our physical birth*, thus the *new birth is mandatory* for everyone who wants to go to heaven and live with the Lord in *the Kingdom of God* when it comes, or when we leave this earthly life. As we continued to study together, both Minna and Elina understood, and they *received the Lord Jesus and were born again*.

We actually studied the Bible at home with our girls almost 2 years, *going book-by-book, verse-by-verse*, making sure that they knew and understood the *“fundamentals” of the Christian faith and doctrine* (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16) which is contrary to what we all had been taught while we had been members of the Mormon Church. After learning the necessary differences we, together as a family, started to attend the local Baptist Church (SBC) in Vernal, Utah.

Many of you know that *we were* relatively soon *called* to start a *ministry (HIS Ministry, Acts 4:12)* to expose differences between Mormonism and biblical Christianity, and teach others how to be saved and *live in this world but not be of it* – keeping our eyes on *Jesus who is Immanuel, God with us* (Matt. 1:23; John 1:1-3,14; 8:24). Vernal was over 85 % LDS and they took a stand against us personally, and began also boycotts against our businesses until we lost everything (materially that is), even our way to make a living there. We had to move away. Our faith and trust in the Lord did not waiver. He was with us in all this, but our life became very difficult, not just for Dennis and I, but for our children also, for we were now considered *“anti-Mormons”* in this strong Mormon-community. We ended up moving away, first to Park City, and 3 years later to Salt Lake City, for our ministry, after all, was for Mormons.

Minna married way too young. Her husband was not a believer, though she had thought that he was. (His family belonged to the “Church of Christ” in Vernal.) Her marriage ended up in divorce. Later she remarried, again outside of her faith, hoping *that she can change her husband...* That never works! Although she acknowledged that she had made mistakes, *she assured us that her faith in the Lord had never changed*, and she said that *she prays daily that the Lord will help her to correct the wrongs she has made and help her raise her 3 children properly...* But her problems and trials didn’t end and rather than getting better, they seemed to get even worse. She kept it all from us. We didn’t know how bad her life (during the last 3-4 years) had become, until about a month before her death, when she came to tell us what was really happening in her life. She told us that she believed in the Lord regardless of what was happening! We reminded her that the Lord loves her, and that she belongs to Him. *“One who is born again cannot ever be unborn!”* It is the Lord who holds on to us and He will never let us go. *“Once saved, always saved”* is not just a phrase! Jesus said to those who believe in Him, *“I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone* (not even ourselves) *snatch them out of My hand.”* (John 10: 27-28.)

We are confident that the Lord took Minna home to Him, and away from her incredibly hard situations, though we do not yet fully know what actually happened to her and why. We trust that the truth will come out. [We are told that the results of the extensive autopsy will come back by the end of September.] We are learning to accept the will of the Lord and we are adjusting accordingly, trusting that He knows all the *‘whys’* even though we do not yet see it.

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purposes.” (Romans 8:28.)

Minna's death, and what has happened to our lives and relationships after that, has hurt us more than anything in our entire lives ever has. All we can do now is to thank the Lord that Minna is now with Him, safe and secure. ***"Absent from the body, present with the Lord."*** (2 Cor. 5:6-7.)

Regardless of the trials that are part of our work for God in this fallen world, HIS MINISTRIES has been blessed during our 38 years of us working in it. It is ***His work*** and we are blessed to do what He lays before us. We praise and thank Him that we have been allowed to see over these many years literally hundreds of Mormons coming out of that cult and becoming born again believers in the *true Jesus Christ, who is God*. All we have had to do was to let Him lead and give us words to use when needed. It has been *God's Holy Spirit that has inspired us to teach and inform –and all for His Glory*. We understand that it is the *Enemy of God and our souls* that had been attacking and trying to hinder us during all these Ministry years.

But this attack on us was personal. The enemy came after us, for he hates us and he knows how to hurt us most. ***But our God is good, all the time. We praise His Holy Name.***

We thank you for being our friends and supporting us in our deep sorrow.

We want to thank you for many, many beautiful cards we have received from you expressing your sorrow for our loss. Floral arrangements that you have sent and have been brought to us have been exceptionally lovely, and we thank you very much. We acknowledge how blessed we are for having friends like you are, and we ask the Lord's blessings on you, for all that you have said and done for us during these last couple of difficult and sad months. Your love, so beautifully expressed, has made our sorrows easier to bear.

We thank you also for supporting us in prayer for our ministry-work and that we would be able to continue to put the ministry needs and requests we receive above our personal struggles. God has indeed blessed our physical health and we both have been doing quite well, and He also has met our needs in many unexpected ways. We pray daily for you all that the Lord will meet your needs whatever they are and that He rewards you for your goodness towards our work and us personally.

We ask again that you'd pray for our friends who have asked prayer for their illnesses, needs and trials. Because the Lord who knows exactly what their needs are, we only need to give their first names to you: They are Judy, Sandy, Al, Marlene, Aira, Richard, Heber, Mark & Virve, Greg, Lisa, Suzi, Pastor Mika (and his sister), Eeva-Liisa, Mary, Sharon, Bruce. We trust that the Lord will take care of what they are desiring that He'd do in their behalf. (1 John 5:14-15.)

Our very hot summer will be soon over, and perhaps we can even take a week or so to go camping. We had planned to go earlier, but fall is always beautiful time to spend time in God's nature. God bless you all.

With the Love of Christ,
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