



PO Box 1765, Grass Valley, CA 95945
530-272-8170
www.piministries.info piministries@ncws.com

September 2015

Dear Co-worker:

It would seem that this month it would be fitting we pay tribute to Leah Heidema's passing and her very strange and puzzling story. To begin, "Leah" was the only biblical name we gave to our four children. The others were Penelope, Cory, and Pamela. Why did we do it? We do not know.

Biblically, "Leah" means "wild cow." In one sense, Leah was no wild cow. In another sense she was every bit of one. Leah knew that her task in life was to be a missionary and also a mother. She lived in the sight of God with a deep and quiet passion for obedience. Whether she knew it or not, she followed the biblical Leah who "together with Rachel built up the house of Israel." The biblical Leah was fruitful, obedient, took second place, but she was said to have "weak eyes." But I like what other scholars say: "Leah had tender, delicate, attractive eyes." That fits much better to an interesting fact: "eye" in the Bible can often be translated "spirit"?

Our own Leah had a lovely spirit. But she needed special attention. Doug noticed that in her early on. He saw it when courting her. And something happened shortly after they arrived in the Sepik in late 1978 that furthered his mystifying thoughts. When visiting a Sepik village a huge domesticated boar roared out from under a house and focused on going after Leah, no others. It was a strange harbinger of things to come. Something deep-seated was going on. That solid Christian character was being attacked that one could not fathom. She was being targeted.

After considering the evidence, let's give an appropriate name to the Leah story. It's a Job story. Let's correct that. *The Leah Story is the Job Story of the 21st Century.* What's the Job story? It's *Why? Why? Why?* Why does the Sovereign God back in the 3rd or 4th Century BC permit the devil to destroy family and everything else that belonged to a God-fearing, righteous man who is driven almost to despair to sit in dust and ashes with boils all over his body? And why does the Almighty God permit Satan to target easy-going Leah by driving her into the pits when she presents the missionary model for building Christ's kingdom? Why does the Triune God of mercy and justice let the devil hit capable



1960



1978 just engaged



2000 furlough in Michigan

Leah between the eyes to keep her from doing a fabulous work of witness? Why did He permit Satan to hinder Leah from continuing to produce lessons for PIM's huge and successful Sunday school program?

If the Leah story is not a Job story, everything's pointless. If that's not the way it is, all we experience makes no sense, all we see is an illusion. If the Leah story is not a Job story, then all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

What do we know about Leah? This is what people say about her. Easy going. Contemplative. Rational. A thinker. A reader. Wise. No people-pleaser. Deeply spiritual, held strongly and resourcefully to her biblically based opinions. Not materialistic. Smart, intelligent, good grades. Though she had migraines she was non complaining, made friends easily, always had friends or a friend. She was a receiver and received things nobly. But she was quick to discipline her children for misbehavior with the wooden spoon. She didn't wait for Doug to come home. Her motto? When kids sin and disobey, get the punishment over with, and go on with life. No wonder she was targeted. She was a dangerous threat to Satan's dominion.



The family in Reno in January 2014

It didn't take long for the devil to get into his dirty work. In Ambunti in October of 1981 little 13 month old Benjamin while playing in the fenced yard found a way under the house through a new opening left by plumbers. He went around another house and then to a pond where he wanted to get his hands on some fuzzy little ducks. Benjamin slipped into the pond and drowned before his mother and others could find him.

Next, Leah had thyroid cancer. Then, her appendix ruptured and she had to be rushed to a hospital in Australia. When Joel was born in Wewak, Leah had lost her water and he was born with meningitis and couldn't breathe. Fortunately, an English or Scottish doctor with the Shell Oil Company came along at the right time and gave mouth to mouth resuscitation. The little tot was given 50 shots the first three weeks to beat the infection, and the doc said, "Maybe this kid is going to be the prime minister." Then their daughter came down with anorexia nervosa. That finally over, in the early part of the century Satan hit his master blow and struck Leah with MS.

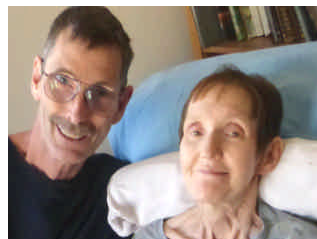
Satan doesn't know it, but Leah won. She married a man of kindred spirit who cared for her to her dying day when not a muscle in her body would respond to her wishes and she had to be fed with needle through a hole in her stomach wall and had to be served in her every need.

She's now reigning with Christ, preparing for that new earth when all believers will obtain that new body of flesh and bone. She's also preparing Satan's obituary to come when he will be cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone. The Job-Leah story reminds us to hang on. Great things are in store for you and me. She's fortunate to have preceded us.

In His grace,

Orneal Kooyers

Format and photos, Doug Heidema



Spring 2015