



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on August 17, 2012

Pastor “at Peace” After Conviction in Lesbian Partners Custody Case

An Amish-Mennonite pastor who helped a woman flee the country with her daughter in order to keep the little girl from being handed over by court order to her lesbian former partner has been convicted by a Vermont jury of “aiding and abetting a parental kidnapping.”

In 2009, pastor Kenneth L. Miller of Virginia helped former lesbian Lisa Miller (no relation) leave the country with her daughter Isabella, after a court granted custody of the child to Miller’s lesbian former partner, Janet Jenkins. Jenkins is not biologically related to the girl, and never went through legal proceedings to adopt her.



[LifeSiteNews.com](#) reported that “Isabella was conceived by artificial insemination while Jenkins and Miller were in a Vermont ‘civil union,’ which was dissolved in 2003. Following the end of her relationship, Miller returned to the Baptist religion of her youth and consequently disavowed homosexual behavior. She has raised Isabella with the same values.”

LifeSite [previously reported](#) that in sworn affidavits, two experts testified that the little girl suffered from emotional trauma following court-ordered visits to Jenkins. “The documents illustrate the concerns that presumably led Miller, who had repudiated the lesbian lifestyle and converted to Evangelical Christianity, to flee the United States to avoid further contact between her daughter and Jenkins,” reported LifeSite.

In 2007, one of the experts, clinical therapist Sylvia Haydash, concluded after interviewing and observing Isabella that her visits with Jenkins were causing the child serious psychological and emotional harm. “Isabella appears to have been traumatized by the limited visitation thus far,” wrote Haydash, “a serious consequence, taking Isabella in a negative direction as compared to Isabella’s condition before the recent visitations where she was a child that was well-adjusted, flourishing, above-the-curve developmentally, verbally gifted, and readily able to separate from Lisa and meet with other people.”

Haydash concluded that “leaving Isabella unsupervised with Janet for visitations would needlessly exacerbate Isabella’s trauma.... I further believe that unsupervised visits would be detrimental to Isabella at this time and could cause permanent damage to normal development.”

The [Mennonite World Review](#), which identified the Rev. Miller as a “[Beachy Amish minister](#),” reported that in late 2009 a Vermont family court judge gave Jenkins custody of the child, “but by the time the transfer date arrived, Lisa Miller and the child were in Nicaragua,” the country to which Miller escaped with her daughter.

The Mennonite publication reported that the Rev. Miller “knew a Vermont judge was threatening to transfer custody to Jenkins. The judge had indicated this about a month before Lisa Miller was due to



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appear in court. However, the defense claimed he did not know Jenkins had court-mandated visitation rights and did not believe it was illegal for Lisa Miller and her daughter to travel out of the country because he thought she had full custody throughout the journey.”

The prosecution in the trial worked to prove that Miller’s actions, as well as his comments to others, revealed that he was consciously trying to aid Lisa Miller to avoid court orders to relinquish her daughter to Jenkins. “Assistant U.S. attorney Eugenia Cowles said Ken Miller told others that Nicaragua was chosen because it lacks an extradition treaty with the U.S.,” reported the *Mennonite World Review*. “She said Ken Miller dressed the two females in Beachy Amish dresses and head scarves as a disguise. She said Miller also directed them not to fly through an American airport.”

Among the issues Federal Judge William K. Sessions III had to rule on in the case was the extent to which Miller’s defense attorneys could use his faith in the case they built for him. “Though Mennonite faith could be used as part of character testimony, Sessions did not allow Miller’s religion to be used as basis for his motivation,” reported the Mennonite publication.

Following only four hours of deliberation August 14, the jury convicted the Rev. Miller of aiding in the removal of a child from the United States with intent to obstruct the lawful exercise of Jenkins’ parental rights. While Miller remains free pending sentencing, he could serve up to three years in prison.

Following the verdict Miller said that he was “willing to accept the consequences of my actions. I am at peace with God. I am at peace with my conscience and I give it over to God, and at the same time I respect the decision of the court.”

In a [subsequent letter](#), Miller recalled that “just after the verdict was read, while we were sitting there trying to absorb it all, [Janet Jenkins’ attorney] Sara Starr, bless her (and I mean that) walked over to the defense table where I was still sitting and served me another thick legal document which charges me [in civil court] along with about 10 other people and organizations with various racketeering etc. charges in regards to Isabella’s disappearance. That should have finished me off, but instead I felt irrationally calm and at peace. Right now I’m just about ready to head off to bed for a good night’s sleep. And I intend to sleep real good.”

The Rev. Miller added that while the verdict was not what he and others had necessarily hoped for, he emphasized nonetheless that “the prayers of people affected the outcome of the trial. I believe the prayers being offered were done in yieldedness to the will of God. We remember that throughout history advances in the Kingdom have almost always been preceded by struggle and tribulation. God works not in spite of persecution and tribulation, but by and through it. I don’t know how God wants His kingdom to advance through this, but it will, mark my words, if we stay true to Him.”

Photo of Rev. Kenneth Miller: AP Images



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