

Restoration Village Newsletter

OCTOBER 2013

My eyes are worn out from weeping; my stomach is churning. My insides are poured on the ground because the daughter of my people is shattered, because children and babies are fainting in the city streets.

...the children that I nurtured, that I raised myself, my enemy finished off. (Lamentations 2; 11, 22)

Breaking the Silence

Obituary in the Reno Gazette Journal (Reno, NV) published September 10th, 2013 reads:

“Marianne Theresa Johnson – Reddick born January 4, 1935 and died alone on September 30, 2013” (obituary had wrong date, actual death was August 30). “She is survived by 6 of her 8 children whom she spent her lifetime torturing in every way possible. While she neglected and abused her small children, she refused to allow anyone else to care or show compassion towards them. When they became adults she stalked and tortured anyone they dared to love. Everyone she met, adult or child was tortured by her cruelty and exposure to violence, criminal activity, vulgarity, and hatred of the gentle or kind human spirit.

On behalf of her children whom she abrasively exposed to her evil and violent life, we celebrate her passing from this earth and hope she lives in the afterlife reliving each gesture of violence, cruelty, and shame that she delivered on her children. Her surviving children will now live the rest of their lives with the peace of knowing their nightmare finally has some form of closure.

Most of us have peace in helping those who have been exposed to child abuse and hope this message of her final passing can revive our

message that abusing children is unforgivable, shameless, and should not be tolerated in a “humane society.” Our greatest wish now, is to stimulate a national movement that mandates a purposeful and dedicated war against child abuse in the United States of America.”

The Reddick family story is a piece of Nevada history in that in the late 1970's the State Supreme Court ruled that “parent's rights usurped children's rights” and their mother continued with custody until state senator Sue Wagner heard about the situation and introduced legislation that allowed children to terminate parental rights.

On September 16th, 1963 a bomb exploded at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama killing four young black girls and wounding another 22 young children. At the funeral for these little girls, Dr. Martin Luther King delivered a “Eulogy for the Martyred Children” where he said: “They say to us that we must be concerned not only about who murdered them, but about the system, the way of life, the philosophy which produced the murders.” There was an odd occurrence in the events of that day in that there was one stained glass window of the church not destroyed by the bomb blast but the face of Jesus was blown out

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Village News

This year has seen a decline in food and staples gifts to the Village and it shows up in our pantry. Our current needs are: sugar, canned fruit, soups, large tea bags, lemonade mix, cold/allergy meds for adults and children, paper products, dish soap, pump hand soap white vinegar, Lysol spray and cleaning supplies. A constant need is laundry detergent, think how much you need for yourself and then add 25 other people to the use of same. It has been years since I have seen our pantry this empty. We acknowledge that God is our source, but God uses people sometimes for that source. We would appreciate considerations of our needs.

AND NO MAN HAVING PUT HIS HAND TO THE PLOUGH, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62). I think it was Watchman Nee who said: "When you see someone putting his hand to the plow, you will usually see his other hand wiping away tears." Beverly and I were privileged to visit Eastwood Baptist Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma the last Sunday of September. It was the first time publicly we have had an opportunity to thank the church that prayed for us, sent us to Arkansas with \$1400.00 dollars and allowed us to borrow their big utility truck to haul furniture. It was most pleasant to visit with some old acquaintances, teach in the Sonshine Singles class, and thank the church from the pulpit. Going back was an opportunity to wipe a tear from our eyes and relive some cherished memories with our Oklahoma friends.

Beverly and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary on September 1 of this year. During the summer all of the children and their spouses and all of the grandchildren gathered together for a portrait gathering (even our Marine flew home for the gathering), secured a photographer with a wide screen lens and snapped some pictures, actually a lot of pictures as grandma Beverly likes those pictures. Thanks to all of you for being a part of the life story for all of these years. Thank you for our children, they are an integral part of allowing us to serve "mommies and babies and those in need" for most of their lives.



Restoration Village, 2215 Little Flock Drive, Rogers, AR 72756

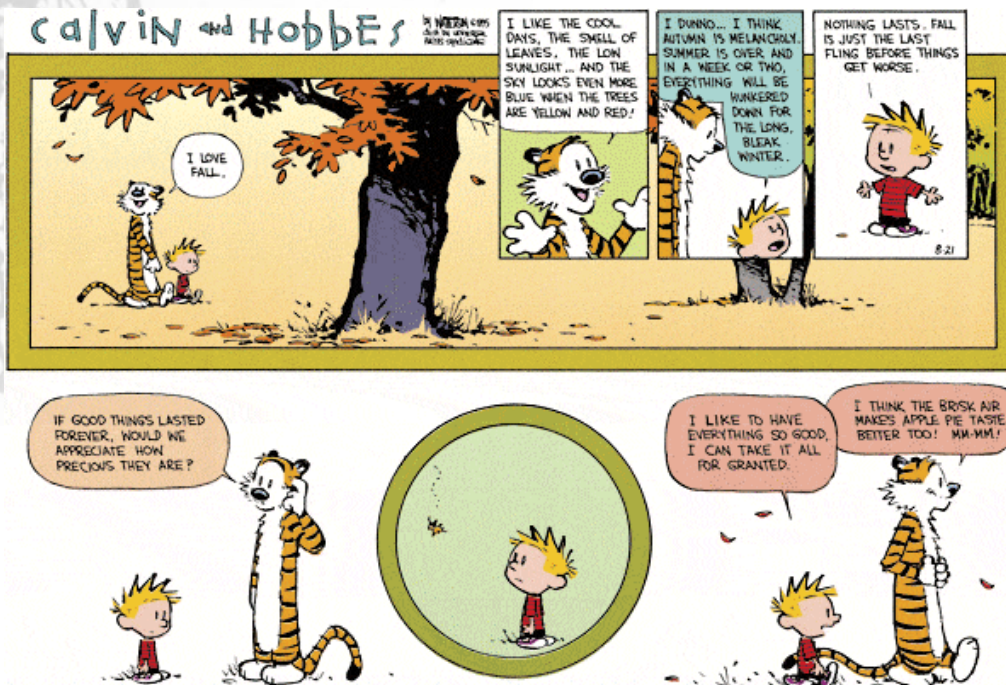
THE GUEST SPEAKER AT THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER DINNER THIS YEAR

was Erin Merryn from Schaumburg, Illinois. Erin wrote a book about her childhood abuse, *Stolen Innocence* in 2005, and a second book *Living for Today*, in 2009. In 2010 she helped create Erin's Law which encourages schools to educate children about sexual abuse prevention. Arkansas was the eighth state to pass Erin's Law and it has or is being introduced in 15 other states. Her testimony before the combined House and Senate of the Arkansas Legislators brought some to tears and a voice vote was taken after her speech. The Governor of Arkansas signed the bill two weeks later. As Erin shared her story of abuse by a male neighbor and later by a cousin I kept thinking of "give the child a voice" and the soon grand opening of the National Child Protection Training Center in NW Arkansas and the anticipation of ending child abuse in the third generation. In her closing remarks she showed a picture of the Children's Advocacy Center in Chicago where she found her voice, "When someone believed me."



Erin Merryn with Michelle and Jim Bob Duggar (TV show "19 Kids and Counting" on TLC) at the Cherishing Children Dinner.

You can see a full description of her endeavors, follow the progress of the bill as other states consider it and see her tear-bringing testimony to the Arkansas legislators on her web site by googling Erin Merryn. We may be able to have the video of her speech at the banquet on our web page restorationvillage.net by the time you get this newsletter.

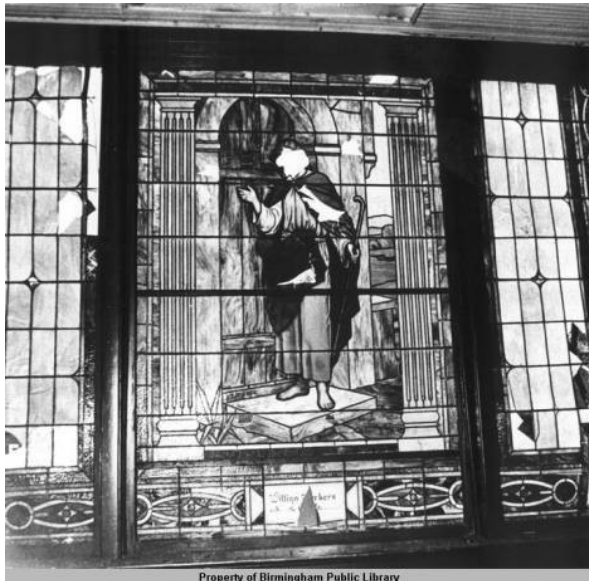


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while the rest of the glass window remained intact. It was if Jesus had withdrawn his tear streaked face from the scene of man's inhumanity to fellow man. And sometimes I think of that stained glass window when I know and/or read of how the church, schools and society as a whole turn away from the continued abuse and neglect of children in our country and around the world. Far too often institutions, churches, and schools choose to protect their name, their institution with "that's the way of life" and a philosophy of "they will get over it" and children are forgotten and abused by the system.



Restoring the face of Jesus (figuratively speaking) will require that some of us begin to lead in the way of Jesus to wage relentless pursuit of justice and restorative justice for children in the most formative way of "we will love our children more than we love our wars, our selfishness, and our self protective bureaucratic programs." It will require us to extend grace that allows children and adult victims of childhood mistreatment to find their voice to tell their story and we choose to accept them and to believe them. Their story

and our acknowledging the same is the first step in the process of restoring a wounded soul. Acknowledging and accepting the victim of atrocities sets the precedent for grace and shame riddance.

What is the face of Jesus? Just a few examples will explain what I mean. In John chapter 4 is a lady with a series of failed marriages and his conversation with her is without judgment or exhortation. He just tells her that the gospel is for her also and does a risky thing in becoming vulnerable by telling her he "is the Messiah." And Zacchaeus, the tax collector and short man who needs a tree to climb to see but Jesus doesn't list his sins or why people in town dislike him. Jesus says, "Come on down, must visit your house." Jesus is criticized often for hanging out with prostitutes, wine bibbers and roustabouts. The only thing that eliminates shame is vulnerability and accepting the other.

In March of this year, Arkansas passed a law, "Erin's Law" which will put together a program in schools where children will learn about abuse and will be able to talk about it. It is about empowering children to feel confident enough to speak up for themselves if something bad does or is happening. This law has been enacted in eight states and has been presented in 15 others including Oklahoma next spring.

You can help carry the sorrows and wipe the tears from children and change the course of history or you will be crushed by the tides of the quiet sorrows of wounded, hurting children. You must choose to grow strong to love the world and yet compassionate and trusting enough to sit down with the worst horrors of the world. The face of Jesus just may be yours and in the life of a child that is the first face of Jesus they see and begin to know.

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