
❖ Restoration Village ❖

November 2011

WORMWOOD OR PRAISE?

The beautiful classical portico Parish of Trinity Church, St. Paul's Chapel was completed in 1766 in a field south of the main ports of the city. George Washington often attended, members of the first Continental Congress often attended, and Alexander Hamilton, an officer in the militia would drill the recruits in the court yard. On September 11, 2001, the church across the street from what used to be the tallest buildings, The World Trade Center, was to take on a new role. The church survived that terrible day without even a broken window, and some say the sycamore tree in the northwest corner adsorbed the blast and most of the debris from the falling buildings. The oldest public building, still in use in New York City though has another story that you probably do not know about – you are about to learn a part of that story.

The Rev. Lyndon Harris of St. Paul's was to spend months after that fatal day walking around in the debris asking others if they needed anything even as he stopped to say the last rites over body bags. The church became the counseling, comfort, and place to eat during the days of digging out (over 500,000 meals were served) and a place for the living to leave markers, flowers, inquiry notes and ribbons on the fencing as memorials to the dead. St. Paul's has been the refuge for thousands and became known as "The Little Chapel that Stood". The church was open twenty four hours per day after the tragedy but an enlarging discontent by some church leaders who now called the church the "Barbeque on Broadway" because of all the meals served was causing dissention. The publicity of the church's work was creating jealousy and power struggles among the leadership and in October 2002 Rev. Harris said, "I was pressured to resign."

During the next three years after the "forced resignation", the Priest began a descent into bitterness, despair, chronic respiratory problems and personal counseling for post traumatic stress disorder. Foreclosure on his house, divorce and internal anger at the terrorists, the church leadership, himself engulfed his life. He continued to serve as a part pastor at another church hoping that he "...might find some peace in his life." One day a friend called him and told him that he was not going to ever discover peace until he forgave the offenders. Lyndon went into a tirade and hung up the phone.

Lyndon did ponder the friend's words and thought about Nelson Mandela's words: "Resentment is like a glass of poison that a man drinks; then he sits down and waits for his enemy to die." Harris called his friend back and said, "Maybe you are right." Today Rev. Lyndon Harris is the founder of the Forgive to Give Project, an organization that creates and plants Gardens of Forgiveness. His journey is not over, but he says that "it takes bravery to forgive. "His journey from St. Paul's to his new life he calls "the detour in his journey and he doesn't second guess."

A resident of Restoration Village who is a refugee from another continent was recently granted amnesty to America because a Federal judge believed her story. She is a survivor of atrocious heinous acts against a human being, acts too incomprehensible to even try to mention. Her younger brother was

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kidnapped by a marauders gang that with alcohol and drugs manipulated him, forced him to become a soldier, which created serious drug and alcohol dependency problems. Through a series of remarkable circumstances (I call them miracles and so does she) she made it to America. However, after arriving in America she once again found herself betrayed and abused while living in the home of her sponsors. She was referred to Restoration Village by a local church and after several months on our waiting list, was finally able to find refuge and safety. She has become an inspiration of grace and admiration to all who know her.

She is a remarkable example of genteel spirit and patient determinism. Despite the reprehensible crimes against her by others, she is diligent in her duties, persistent in her determination to become an American, wants to pursue a college education, and worship God. After telling her story to an Attorney, the firm chose to represent her pro bono. Several trips to Memphis to appear before the Judge sharing her story, the cruelty detail by detail, weeks of waiting for a ruling, finally she was granted asylum. A few Sundays after her asylum was granted, during Sunday lunch at the Village her personal phone rang and she answered and then began to wail. We did not know what brought this deep groan from the deepness of her soul. Finally Beverly was able to calm her and she told us that the younger brother, who had been taken before she left her home county and she had not known for these past few years if he was even alive. He had just called . . . he was finally able to get free and to let the family know of his whereabouts. The groan and overwhelming emotions was in knowing he was alive.

In order to help her during the long months of seeking asylum we hired her to do some child care. What we didn't know was what she was doing with the little monies that we gave her. We have since found out that she was sending \$50.00 per month to her brother and sister still in her home country and with those funds they were able to build a thatched home. She is a beautiful lady of soul and spirit and an inspiration of courage to us, a babysitter some of our granddaughters delight to be with, and a lady of prayer and praise.

I think of the Rev. Harris and our friend from another continent during this Thanksgiving season and praise God for each of their stories. One went through a dark valley of being a Good Samaritan and having his own church leadership eventually turn against him. The other was brutalized, traumatized and discarded like a piece of trash. Each has found that God did not abandon them, even though it seemed as if that was the situation. Bitterness comes about as the result of what others do to us or say about us. Sometimes bitterness results from life events themselves and we blame God or others for the troubles. Bitterness affects every relationship within a person's life and it affects a relationship with the Lord the most.

Elizabeth Scalia wrote a marvelous article for "First Things" (Sept. 27, 2011) entitled "Within the Clutch". The story line of the eighth inning of a Boston Red Sox baseball game telling of a man close to the announcer's booth who kept wailing with a guttural voice that went over the whole parks sound system, "*For the love of God....*" He cried "*For the love of God...*" over and over again as Bosoxs' swung and missed to strike out. Scalia writes that the heartbreak for the fans is "the clutch – those moments when everything meaningful fades into a peripheral nothingness - balanced on a thin wire of hope – holding our breath in the name of love." She reminds the reader that only in "surrender is the clutch resolved." The "*For the love of God...*" relates to the continual process of the life of faith – a life of swings and misses, stupid errors, the clutch of despair, the release, the trust, the clockless innings of new chances that stretch out before us, endlessly, and so full of promise. "

Little reminders "in all things give thanks for that is the will of the Lord" is hard during the trials, but so far better in the long run than the root of bitterness that destroys. We are to give thanks because as Yogi Berra reminds us, "It ain't over till it's over."

Have a blessed Thanksgiving season, Hebrews 12:15

David Engle

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Village News



LANE WAS JUST 22 DAYS OLD when his mother stopped his crying by placing her hand over his face until the crying ceased. She was adjudicated to 40 years in prison last month. Under the statue of “Rachel Weeping for the Children” we placed a marker and boy statue in the *Lest We Forget* Memory Garden as a forever reminder of “They are precious in His Sight.” This is the sixth marker for a child murdered in our county since the opening of the Children’s Advocacy Center in the year 2000.

WE WERE UNABLE TO POST PICTURES OF THE FALL FESTIVAL in this newsletter, but we will post some of the pictures on the web page after November 1. You will be able to see the pictures and other news of the Village at [www. Restorationvillage.net](http://www.Restorationvillage.net).

WHEN YOU RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER, we will be in Minneapolis/St. Paul for the first National Child Protection Training Center banquet. Hopefully within the next few years there will be one of these special banquets in our area as the Second Training Center inaugurates here in Northwest Arkansas by 2013.

OCTOBER 19TH WAS A HISTORICAL MOMENT especially for the children and the future of America. Dr. Becky Paneitz, President of the NorthWest Arkansas Community College, (shown in picture) announced the fund raising campaign “Know abuse. No abuse.” for the second National Child Protection Training Center in the United States in Bentonville, Arkansas at the NWACC campus. The former Highlands Oncology building on the campus will be renovated to include, class rooms, exam rooms, mock court rooms and an indoor house where students can learn to collect evidence while examining the same. One of the values of this training center is that people in the child protection services can receive the needed education that usually takes years of on the job experience.



I WAS PRIVILEGED TO BE THE ONLY male speaker at the Lutheran Synod for Oklahoma and Arkansas women last month. One of the ladies had to get the computer working to show the Village film (where are the grandchildren when I need them?), they brought foods and personal items for the Village residents, and were most gracious and kind through the morning. Preparing for addressing them I spent some study time refreshing myself in regards to Martin Luther and found the following quote: *“If Christ had arrived with trumpets and lain in a cradle of gold, his birth would have been a splendid affair. But it would not be a comfort to me. He was rather to lie*

in the lap of a poor maiden and be thought of little significance in the eyes of the world. Now I can come to him.”

GOD IDENTIFIED WITH THE MOST BASIC LEVEL OF HUMANITY. He met us at our humblest place, conditions and realities. The unsanitary picture of the Nativity should change our attitude toward Jesus, the Incarnate Lord that came to live with us. No place to lay His head should, in reflection, alter our attitude regarding the homeless, the rejected, the vulnerable, and the little children. It has been a straining year at times for the Village, and during this season of the year, your extra financial gift would be a gift that keeps on giving to those we serve.



**ONE OF OUR
RESIDENT CHILDREN
HAD HIS 6TH
BIRTHDAY** this past month. I mention it as we always remind the children during their special day, **WE ARE GLAD YOU WERE BORN!**

From all of us here at Restoration Village,
We thank you for your love, support and continued interest
In providing the opportunity for the future.

We extend our prayers for you a most blessed Thanksgiving season.

