
❖ Restoration Village ❖

March 2011

“There is sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition and

OF UNSPEAKABLE LOVE

Washington Irving

“...a voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted...” (Jeremiah 31:15)

“**A voice was heard in Ramah...**” Ramah, God’s chosen metaphor (Jeremiah 31:15, Matthew 2:17-18) for the apogee of anguish. Ramah was where the Babylonians gathered the Jews to be led off naked into captivity. Ramah was where Rachel, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, was buried after giving birth to Benjamin. Ramah is on the road to Bethlehem and the birth site of Jesus. To Jeremiah, Ramah and Rachel are brought to mind as he observes the pain and sorrow at the misery of exile and slavery. To Matthew it is the metaphor for the pain and sorrow associated with the “slaughter of the innocents.”

Today, Rachel’s tomb at Ramah is walled off from Bethlehem by the so called “segregation barrier” that winds through the West Bank and Jerusalem. The 30-foot graffiti painted wall, to this day, is still where Christians, Muslims and Jews gather to pray for the blessing of childbirth. It is oxymoronic that a mixture of religions and cultures will gather at the tomb and wall to pray for the gift of children—where there are wars and rumors of war—where the killing of children still exists. The assault on children of abuse, neglect, sex slavery and child labor in America and abroad is vastly ignored by the masses and governments. Will a Rachel figure arise again in mourning for the children and cause us to tear down the wall of separation between the love of children and self-centeredness?

Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, predicted “no hope” for the nation of Israel and Judah except for a final solution and the extinction of the Jews until chapter 31. The lament of Rachel’s tears became the words that the heart could not express; sacred, tiny drops of liquid, little messengers that bring definition and clarity to the inner pain and become the runoff of a melting soul.

“Wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children....” Oh the stillness with no children laughing, dancing, and

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Weeping is a powerful language that lends understanding, strength, and color to our passions.

chasing each other in their games. Playgrounds and in homes where the absence of the noise of care free children permeates the atmosphere with an unspoken premonition that there is no hope for a future. The Herods and the Pharoahs and those who value not, nor protect children create a mismatch between the tyranny of power and the powerlessness of children. Her weeping is explained in the *Midrash, Lamentations Rabbah Petihta 23*: “She weeps and moves others to weep with her. Thus: she weeps and moves the Holy One, blessed be he, to weep with her, as it is written, The Eternal One, the God of Hosts, called to weeping, and to lamentation (Isaiah 22:12). She weeps and moves the ministering angels to weep with her...She weeps and moves heaven and earth to weep with her...She weeps and moves mountains and hills to weep with her...She weeps and moves the seventy nations to weep with her...She weeps and moves the Community of Israel to weep with her...” The weeping and brokenness of Rachel, who is in mourning with the pain of loss, exposes everyone and everything to that “because they are no more.”

My wife, Beverly, wrote years ago, “As I sat in my office recently hearing one more story of a child being wounded at the hands of those who God intended to nurture and protect, I began to cry. The stories continued that week...a child bearing the imprint of her father’s fist on her cheek, a child being kicked and spat upon by her mother, a child being ruthlessly exposed to the nakedness and sexual violations of his father, a child being demeaned by the words, “Why don’t you just go live with your father?” and the incredible words from a mother, “I don’t love you anymore.” I wept and I wept. The pain for the children now, the pain for the adults that still bear the marks of abuse deep in their soul...I cry for the children.”

In the wonderful book, *Seeing Through Our Tears*, by Dr. Dan Bagby he writes: “Through our tears we express our hopes, fears and passions. They are like a bridge that unites our inner and our outer selves. Our tears are instruments of cleansing and release. They draw toxin and tension from our bodies. They warn us of our needs, alert us to our vulnerability, and heal our emotional wounds...Weeping is a powerful language that lends understanding, strength, and color to our passions. Tears are a window through which we share our deepest selves with those we love....”

In Miroslav Volf’s book, *Against the Tide*, in the chapter, “A Cup of Coffee” is a short story that made me cry: A Bosnian father carries his three-year-old daughter to the hospital where she soon dies from a sniper’s bullet, shot while she played in their front yard. The stricken father tells the reporter that he would like to invite the sniper to have a cup of coffee so “that he can tell him, like a human being, what has brought him to do such a thing.” Then he says, aware that this question may not elicit any human response: “One day her tears will catch up with him”. The hope of the world lies in the belief that the power of tears will catch up with the enemy, the abusers, the molesters, the murderers of children for as E.M. Cioran writes, tears are not “swallowed up by the earth” but “paths unknown to us, they all go upwards.”

There is a promise of hope to Jeremiah’s passage, and a birth at Matthew’s use of the metaphor, but that will be next month’s lead article. April is child abuse awareness month, may the tears of today be the hope of tomorrow “of unspeakable love”.

David Engle

Village News



SOME WEATHER RECORDS WERE SET IN FEBRUARY in the amount of snow on the ground (2 feet in some parts of Northwest Arkansas) and in temperature (minus 18 in Fayetteville). For all of us at the Village despite the snow and temperatures, we were not without electricity and the water lines were still working. The kids had fun and we made it!



Pictures: - Top left—deer on the property; bottom left—clearing the Children's Advocacy Center parking lot; right—There's a car under here somewhere!

APRIL HAS SOME EVENTS THAT YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN:



Child abuse awareness month will kick-off on Monday April 4 with hotdogs and the judge reading a proclamation declaring April Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month at Dave Peel Park in Bentonville at noon. Then we will proceed to three local police stations and the Benton County Sheriff's office to plant pinwheels.

The 11th Annual Cherishing Children Challenge 1-mile walk/5k run will be April 16 this year. (moved up from September) This annual event in Little Flock, Arkansas is a wonderful morning of inspiration, fellowship, good brunch food, and a tough 5k course that even the champion runners enjoy. Entry fees and sponsorships are one of the fundraisers throughout the year for the Children's Advocacy Center of Benton County. Online registration at www.signmeup.com/74105.

"Together We Shine—A Dinner Celebrating Hope" will be held, Thursday, April 28 at Cross Church Pinnacle Hills Campus in Rogers.



TO THE SOUTH OF THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER AND EAST OF THE MAIN LODGE is the gazebo and memorial garden area. The memorial garden is dedicated to the memory of children who have died at the hands of those who were supposed to love, care for and nurture them. There have been six children die as a result of abuse since the opening of the Center in January 2000. There are two approaching trials in the near future. Soon we will have the 4 1/2 foot tall sculpture, Rachel Weeping for Her Children, placed at the Memorial Garden. This beautiful sculpture, by Sondra Jonson of Cambridge, Nebraska will arrive in March. Rachel's silent cry is for a child lost, symbolized in the empty blanket across her lap. The rose laying at her side is a sign of life. The first bronze casting was given to Pope Paul II when he visited the United States in 1999. Once

the placement and setting is complete we will announce a dedication of the site in remembrance of the children we memorialize.

sljonsonstudios.com has pictures of Mrs. Jonson's masterful works and stories of inspiration that illustrates her grace and talents unto the Lord.

LOCALS CAN SEE THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OF BENTON COUNTY billboard at Exit 85 south on Interstate 540.



**Some monsters are real.
Report child abuse.**

**CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE:
1-800-482-5964**



The Main lodge needs to be repaired **for the long haul and into the future.** The estimated costs are \$50,000.00 to \$60,000.00. These plans are to expand the bathrooms and make them more private. Repair some of the roofing situations (leaks especially). Expand the size of several bedrooms. Correct and redo the plumbing to handle the new sinks and bathroom repairs (this will require some concrete work and possibly some septic overhaul).

