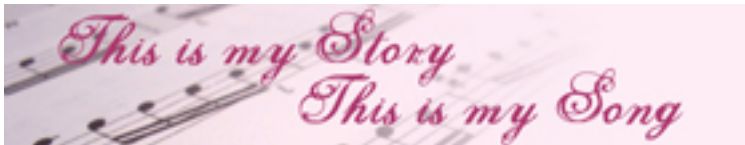


Blessed Assurance

Written by Michelle K. Johnson
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My name is Michelle K. Johnson and I have twice contributed to Insight News, and have appeared multiple times on "Conversations with Al McFarlane." Always, the topic has been related to children of color and child protection. As a former social worker, and current court advocate for allegedly abused and neglected children, I have a professional perspective on this critical community issue.

As a formerly fostered adult, I have a personal stake in this matter. I have been invited to share my journey as I begin again the search for my birth family. Mine is a story of inter-ethnic placement as I am African American to my knowledge, and my adoptive parents are Swedish American. I have been asked to interweave the dynamics of class, ethnicity, gender and education throughout the telling of my story. For confidentiality reasons I will use only first names.

Today's headliner is a phrase in Fanny J. Crosby's "Blessed Assurance," written in 1873. It has long been spoken to me on multiple levels. As a Christian, it has given me much hope while hanging on through tough times. As a person displaced from family through situations beyond my control, it serves as a reminder that there is a bigger plan than I may be aware of.

"My Story, My Song" is on the first page of the life book I created 9 years ago at 34 when I began an unsuccessful search. These books are documentation for children in out of home placement, or foster care. In this introductory selection of my story I say "It began long before the accompanying photo was taken at 22 months in my adoptive home" and as to my song, "It is a life in progress, filled with faith, hope and never ending love."

So it is with optimism we set out on this road less traveled. I pray you enjoy being my companions upon this voyage of discovery!