

THE HEALING TIMES

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My name is Mike Skinner; I am a survivor of child abuse and have been advocating around the issues of child abuse for many years now. Because of my ongoing efforts to make the public aware of the seriousness of childhood sexual abuse, and it's long term consequences, through my music, public speaking, and my web site, people on a nationwide basis have been making others aware of my work. It is the networking of others that made Christine Dolan aware of me. Recently she asked me to attend and speak at a conference being held on November 12th in Washington, DC that will be dealing with the controversy in the Catholic Church. I am honored to do so and have written the following speech to present at the conference. Please keep me in your prayers and thoughts to help me speak for all of us.

-Thank you & take care, Michael Skinner

WHY?

Why am I speaking today at a conference addressing the concerns of the Catholic Church hierarchy and their complicity in the sexual abuse of children and adolescents? My own experience and the nightmare I endured of having suffered through many years of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse at the hands of my parents and their perverted friends gives me the right to speak here. For it goes back to the question of WHY, and how could so many members of society ignore and allow the torture I lived through to continue. The abuse I suffered did not take place in a vacuum, people were aware of something not right going on at my home. The police came to my home countless times, school officials knew something wasn't right, the local minister, the family doctor, nurses, teachers, & neighbors, they all knew something was wrong. Apathy and indifference allowed for my extreme sexual, physical, & emotional abuse to continue. The very same apathy and indifference displayed by the Cardinal Laws, the Bishop McCormacks, and countless others who ignored and then swept under the rug, the sufferings of those entrusted in their care. This apathy and indifference then leads to an even greater crime of complicity in allowing the sexual abuse and perversion of young people to flourish and continue. I have asked the question, WHY was this allowed to happen to me for most of my young life. I still ask the same question when I see and hear of the despicable exploits, the sexual perversions, the crimes that were practiced upon so many young people by members of the Catholic Church ministry. For the leaders of this Church and others who allowed this to continue goes beyond appalling and shameful, their inaction, their complicity in these crimes is in and of itself a crime, a crime to humanity, a crime to God's children. For this sexual abuse survivor, I would welcome back seeing these entrusted leaders ridden out of town, tarred and feathered to a rail. The shame and embarrassment that these officials would suffer would pale in comparison to what victims of sexual abuse have suffered, endured and now must contend with on a daily basis for the rest of their lives.

We must get past the war of words spun by the Cardinal Laws and their respective legal counsel in deflecting the heat off of themselves and onto the victims. Instead we must get down to what the "inappropriate touching" of young people is all about. The coerced and forced penetration of a young child or teenager is rape. To allow for these rapists [male & female] to carry on

with great impunity for all these years is also a crime; these supposed leaders of the Catholic Church allowed for these rapes to continue at the expense of so many victims. Being forced to endure such rape is a lasting legacy that never leaves you. To also be forced to commit fellatio and cunnilingus on an adult, and made to sodomize the adult perpetrator also never leaves you. The gag reflex, the shame, and the horror is something that stays with you for a lifetime. Those memories, those thoughts, those feelings are burned into your psyche, your soul, your whole being and with it comes a lifetime of pain and shame. A shame you should not feel, for it was done to you. But the ignoring of your cries of help, for help, by the Cardinal Laws of this world make you internalize a shame that is not yours, but theirs. So instead of asking why am I speaking here today, I need to ask why are these leaders still in power? It has nothing to do with the care and concerns of their parish. It has to do with their own selfish gain. When society starts to hold people who were complicit in the sexual abuse of children accountable, then and only then will it start to help and protect children from this despicable crime of rape inflicted upon those who cannot defend themselves.

Michael Skinner's Train of Tears, is now available at The Healing & Arts Gallery & Gift Shop; \$10 for CD or cassette.

Michael Skinner



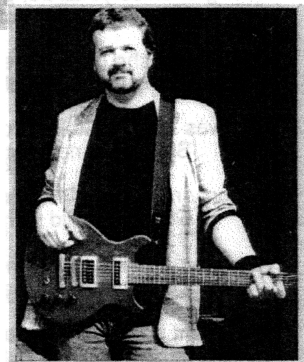
Train Of Tears

"FOR HOPE, HEALING, & HELP"

relative to Trauma, Abuse, & Mental Health please visit www.mskinnermusic.com. Since February 2002 over 40,000 people have accessed and utilized the resources and music available at this web site in their healing journey. Please see for yourself why they have done so.

Michael Skinner's CD *Train of Tears* features many original tracks and a few classics revisited. A powerfully moving performance; provocative songwriting as a vehicle for social change.

-E.K., The Healing & Arts Studio



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