



Issue #41  
October 11, 2004

THERE IS A PLACE OF QUIET REST,  
NEAR TO THE HEART OF GOD,  
A PLACE WHERE SIN CANNOT MOLEST,  
NEAR TO THE HEART OF GOD.

THERE IS A PLACE OF COMFORT SWEET,  
NEAR TO THE HEART OF GOD,  
A PLACE WHERE WE OUR SAVIOUR MEET,  
NEAR TO THE HEART OF GOD.

THERE IS A PLACE OF FULL RELEASE,  
NEAR TO THE HEART OF GOD,  
A PLACE WHERE ALL IS JOY AND PEACE,  
NEAR TO THE HEART OF GOD.

O JESUS, BLEST REDEEMER,  
SENT FROM THE HEART OF GOD,  
HOLD US, WHO WAIT BEFORE THEE,  
NEAR TO THE HEART OF GOD.  
(CLELAND B. McAFEE)



*As I sit by the pond and listen to the sounds of birds, and the gentle voice of the breeze moving through the trees; as I walk through the woods and hear squirrels quarrel with their neighbors, turkeys mutter and gobble to each other, and the steps of deer through the bed of fallen leaves; as I hear the night yips and chattering of coyotes announcing dinner to their young, and the soft yet unnerving hoot of the invisible owl; when I listen to the music of nature all around me I wonder why it is so much easier for me to find God here than in the city. I wonder why these sounds more readily point me to God than do the sounds of what we call civilization.*

I have lived in the city and I have lived in the woods. I have lived where one is awakened by the sounds of a police raid being conducted across the street, and I have lived where one is awakened by the sounds of a wren inviting a mate to his newly made nest. I have lived where from my own bed I could hear the telephone conversations of someone in the house next door, and I have lived where I haven't heard another human voice for a week. I have lived where one could not hear the sounds of nature at all over the sounds of people with their mechanical and digital companions, and I have lived where the noise of a cell phone ringing sounded so alien as to be something from another planet.

Why is God so much more present in the sounds of the birds, the croaking of the frogs, the bleating snort of the deer? Why do I hear God more in silence itself?

### Insulating Noise

God desires that His voice be dominant in the ears and hearts of people, but man has successfully muted that by the sounds and activity of his own creation. We are a people made deaf by the music of our own machines.

When a man-made sound does waft by from some distant source—say from the limestone quarry two miles away, a passing jet or helicopter, or even a pickup truck on the gravel road—I do not find myself being drawn *toward* God by those sounds. When I step onto the busy streets of the city, dodging the noisy cars and belching delivery trucks; when I hear the scream of tires and the tiresome arguments of passing pedestrians; when I am forced to listen to someone's inane cell phone chatter simply because I need to buy a tube of toothpaste at the drug store, I am not lifted by these sounds into the throne room of God.

While the sounds manufactured by civilization most often insulate us from Him, the quietude of nature draws us one step closer to the presence of God. The sounds of the city more often represent society's bent *away* from God, and as such, work against the indwelling Spirit's bent *toward* God.

### Come Away

"Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."  
(Psalm 46:10 niv)

We all need a quiet place where we can cease our striving, cease our noisemaking, and commune with God. It may not always be a forested glen. It may not be alongside a babbling brook. We can commune with Him in the arid solitude of the desert; on the shoreline, with the white noise of its pounding breakers to mask the sounds of everything else; on the freeway in the privacy of our car; or in a quiet, inner room of the house.

Our quiet place is one of our own design. No one else can define it for us. What is a perfect environment for one person to commune with God, may be perfectly wrong for another. Set one person in the stillness of a green forest and he may spend all of his time yearning for the more familiar cacophony of the city! Turn off one person's cell phone and he may hyperventilate from a panic attack. It is not important what or where the place is. *It is* important that it be a place without distractions—a place of comfort and peace.

Whatever it is, and wherever it may be, we must find and use often that personal place where it is easier for us to find God's holy presence. We must find and frequent that place where His voice is not muted or masked by the invasive cacophony of the world. If it was important for Jesus, it should be important for each of us.

When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city had gathered at the door. And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was. In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.

(Mark 1:32-35)

IN THE FIELD WE HAVE A  
STUDY HUNG ROUND WITH  
TEXTS FOR THOUGHT. FROM  
THE CEDAR TO THE HYSSOP,  
FROM THE SOARING EAGLE  
DOWN TO THE CHIRPING  
GRASSHOPPER, FROM THE  
BLUE EXPANSE OF HEAVEN  
TO A DROP OF DEW, ALL  
THINGS ARE FULL OF TEACH-  
ING, AND WHEN THE EYE  
IS DIVINELY OPENED, THAT  
TEACHING FLASHES UPON  
THE MIND FAR MORE VIV-  
IDLY THAN FROM WRITTEN  
BOOKS. OUR LITTLE ROOMS  
ARE NEITHER SO HEALTHY,  
SO SUGGESTIVE, SO AGREE-  
ABLE, OR SO INSPIRING AS  
THE FIELDS. LET US COUNT  
NOTHING COMMON OR  
UNCLEAN, BUT FEEL THAT  
ALL CREATED THINGS POINT  
TO THEIR MAKER, AND THE  
FIELD WILL AT ONCE BE  
HALLOWED.

(C.H. SPURGEON)