



# REFLECTIONS

June 23, 2019

**a time to be silent and a time to speak,**

*Ecclesiastes 3:7b*

## Church Choirs and Crickets

The scene is mostly lost in today's air-conditioned world, but a few generations past, evenings commonly found man and wife winding down their day on the front porch swing. There they would share the happenings of the day just ended, discuss matters to be faced in the days ahead, or simply listen to the sounds of the night. As a child, I joined my grandparents on a few summer evenings on their front porch swing.

One of those evenings we sat in the swing listening to the nightly sounds when my grandmother remembered a funny story. "One time," she began, "a man and his wife sat on their front porch listening to the sounds of crickets chirping, a church choir singing in the distance, and other sounds of the landscape. After listening to the choir a few minutes, the wife said to her husband, 'Isn't that beautiful.' 'Yes,' he answered. 'And just think they do it all with their legs.'"

Now I think my grandmother had to explain that crickets used their legs to make their chirping sound before I caught the humor in the miscommunication; but I remember her story today less for its humor than for the example of how we hear messages differently—one heard the choir; the other heard the crickets.

We all seem to suffer from hearing impairments of some kind. My grandmother was a mainstay at the church only a block away; and since she sang in the choir, she would naturally be attracted to the music. My grandfather, on the other hand, might well have had his attention drawn to the crickets. Maybe that's the reason I can't help but wonder if my grandmother's story really happened, and my grandparents were the subjects of it.

We hear church choirs and crickets but fail to sense the fullness of the landscape. It awakens our minds when we hear each other in the spaces between the spoken words and when we find oneness together. We come alive from companionship as we wander through this life unsure where life is taking us.

That's why, in the midst of church choirs and crickets competing for our attention, we should stop once in a while just to hear what God is telling us about glowing sunrises, twinkling stars, about loneliness and pain, about joy and love, and about each other. And we just might also feel God's power and grace around us and his loving voice saying:

"You are my workmanship, fearfully and wonderfully made, and loved with an everlasting love. For you I gave my only begotten Son so you may have everlasting life."

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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