

CULTURE *shock*

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**PIERCED HEARTS
LIFE IS LOUD
WILL YOU?**





LIFE LOUSE

FROM *The President*

by: **Robert Johnson**

Our fear of being alone drives us to the noise and the crowds. Silence is too scary, too penetrating and too lonely. We keep up a constant stream of words even though they are meaningless. We buy portable music players, have noise makers for night time sleep, or start up a conversation on a cell phone just so we are not condemned to silence.

If I was to give you an example of what many of our lives “sound” like it would be this. Go over to your stereo and push play. Then take your alarm clock and tune it to a radio station, and turn it up louder. Next download a song on your cell phone and start that playing too. We get so much going on at one time that the noise around us is so loud and deafening it is hard to focus on just one thing.

This noise could come from anywhere. Your job is encouraging you to climb the ladder, school projects, sports, church activities, families. Everything that you get involved in vies for your attention.

It really is quite an easy situation to find yourself in, and if we are all honest here, even though I might not have mentioned your “noise”, there is a good chance the volume of your daily activities has gotten turned up way past the comfortable level.

The David Crowder Band has an interlude on their newest album “A Collision” that really got me inspired to think about and write this. It simply says “be more quiet now and wait for the voice to say.” Simple words that really speak a lot when you think about them.

Here is what I want you to take away from this:

- 1. realize the volume level of your life**
- 2. realize the need to BE MORE QUIET...in the words of the David Crowder Band...AND WAIT FOR THE VOICE TO SAY...**

Look at what happened to Peter in Matthew 14:28-30. Here is the famous story of Peter getting out of the boat and walking toward Jesus.

You have heard sermons on having the faith to get out of the boat...faith to walk on water, but I want to look at what made Peter lose his focus and his faith, and what caused him to sink. NOISE. If I can try to insert myself into this situation, I am pretty sure the wind’s howl, the lightning’s crash, the rain pelting me in the face and the waves that would make any pro surfer drool would cause me to lose focus too. But I think we can see a set of events here to teach us a lesson about life and NOISE.

It starts with a divine moment of connection with the Creator, the Center, the Caller. Peter connects and senses and audibly hears His call. So because he was called, what does he do? He answers the call and throws one leg over the side of the ship, followed by the next. His feet land on a surface and feeling his weight supported he takes a step. Another



Robert and his family live in Goodlettsville, TN where he is working as a Youth Pastor and at Sonic - America’s Drive Thru! He is definitely learning the art of time management.

step. Another step. Another. There in front of him is the Caller, the Creator...Peter can see him silhouetted, if you please, against the stormy sky. The rain is pelting down in a rhythmic pattern that is adding to the nail-biting soundtrack for this divine walk. The lilting waves are the string section, if you can hear it, and the celestial symphony is playing together flawlessly. **BAM!** The lightning interrupts. Suddenly the pelting rain is no longer in rhythm. The waves are bigger than Peter imagined, and now what was once a beautiful melodic piece has become NOISE, all being played in separate ways. Peter hears the noise, but only for a second because the next thing he knows he has slipped under the once supporting surface and is fighting to get back above it. The noise took his focus off of the one voice that made his actions so understandable. The voice that called, the voice that assured him everything would be OK. Everything just got too LOUD!

Noise can be anything. I have already mentioned it could be all of your activities, but it can also be the clutter, problems, trials, finances, stress, guilt, depression, shattered dreams or whatever you want to put in the blank that would/could cause you to lose your focus and cause your symphony of life to be overcome with noise.

Society pushes us to turn up the volume of our lives. Do more, be more, get more, accomplish more, which then leads to worry more, stress more, be more tired, more unhappy...Yet God calls each of us to get away from focusing on the noise and to turn our eyes and our ears upon Him. You have got to realize the volume level in your life. Is it too loud, can you still hear that voice that was gently calling you and guiding you not so long ago? Peter had a moment where he realized that his ear got tuned to the wrong sounds. You too must acknowledge the volume level of your life...

Second part of this...once you have a volume level check, a noise inventory, you have got to set up a space for silence. **BE MORE QUIET AND WAIT FOR THE VOICE TO SAY.** It is so easy for us, when things are going so well, to claim we don't have time to take in some silence. Let us look at Jesus' life for an example:

- Matt. 4:1-11 Jesus starts His ministry alone in the desert
- Luke 6:12 Before choosing the 12, He spent the entire night alone
- Matt 14:13 upon hearing the news of John the Baptist's death Jesus "withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place apart."

- Matt 14:23 (right where we picked up Peter a few moments ago) after feeding the 5000 Jesus sends the disciples off, dismisses the crowd and "went up into the hills by himself..."
- Mark 6:31 when the disciples returned from a "preaching and healing mission" Jesus instructs them "Come away by yourself to a lonely place"
- Luke 5:16 after healing a leper Jesus "withdrew to the wilderness and prayed"
- Matt 17:1-9 Jesus seeks a mountain away from everything for the transfiguration
- Matt 26:36-46 Alone in Gethsemane

Taking the time to be quiet and listen for the voice of God is time well spent. Daily communion with God will keep you focused on your purpose. Listening will keep you reminded of what he would have you do/say. This "solitude"

does not have to mean all by yourself out in a Forest Preserve underneath the leaves and the bushes. You can take moments in your life that are "little solitudes"...refocusing points...listening breaks. Take those little moments to block out the noise and listen intently to hear what the voice of God is saying to you.

The main thing is that the volume has to get turned down. LIFE IS LOUD, it takes a conscience decision sometimes to filter out the noise, the activities, the pressures and focus on the voice of God! I have to admit that I don't do this daily like I should...I get wrapped up in me, I get wrapped up in my NOISE. Could it be a

Peter moment where I begin to focus on my situation, what I am doing, and the environment surrounding me? Whatever it is, it means I have pushed the volume notch past where it should be.

You have to realize what the volume level of your life is and learn to BE MORE QUIET.

Has God been trying to speak into your life, but you have the volume of your noise up too loud? Maybe you are allowing the clutter in your life to dictate how you live. You let the clutter tell you to be depressed, or the clutter is saying "it's hopeless; you're in too deep". Yet the voice of God wants to tell you that He loves you and that nothing is too impossible or hopeless for Him. Or maybe you have felt like your other activities are tying up too much of your time, and where you once were ministry driven, you now find yourself being driven by money, position...or just not interested. The voice of God is trying to speak through the noise to remind you of what He has called you to. Turn down the volume and LISTEN.

can you still
hear that
voice that was
gently calling
you and
guiding you?

by: Rev. Bruce A. Howell

marked
lifore

PIERCED HEARTS

Ever wondered why I call this series “Marked for Life”? Global Nomads bear the marks of their cross-cultural experiences—mostly positive and occasionally negative—throughout life. The marks are seldom visible, but they are there just the same. Anyone involved in the sights and sounds of another culture and reaching the lost is never quite the same again. It is as if an arrow has pierced our hearts. We’ve been marked—heart, mind, and soul. As you can probably tell, I’ve been thinking about pierced hearts today. I’m writing this close to Valentine’s Day. At this time of year, I often picture an arrow shooting a gigantic heart. I also think of my list of loved ones which include my precious wife, Diane; my kids; grandkids (Did I tell you I have another grandbaby on the way?); and my Global Nomad friends. Hi, ya’ll! Oh yeah, there is one more group on my list—our lost world.

Remember it was Love (1 John 4:7-8) that brought salvation to us (John 3:16; 15:13); and love that took us to the mission field to start with. It is only through love (and God’s

grace) that we manage to cope and remain on the field. Jesus said the first commandment was to love the Lord. The second, to love others (Mark 12:29-31). It is by this mark that all know that we are true disciples (John 13:34-35). Love is not merely a word; it is action (1 John 3:16-19). The world doesn’t fully understand true love, only lust which is self-seeking, self-centered, and self-satisfying. Lust asks, “What can I get?” Love asks, “What can I give?” Oops! Sounds like I’m preachin’ so I better get back on track here.

Steve Green sings, “To love the Lord our God is the heartbeat of our mission. The spring from which our service overflows; across the street or around the world the mission’s still the same. Proclaim and live the truth in Jesus’ name.”

Interestingly, Steve not only captivates our mission, but reflects someone that has been marked for life. He is a Global Nomad, raised by missionary parents in South America until he was eighteen. He recently commented, “I have spent my life trying to safeguard myself, building



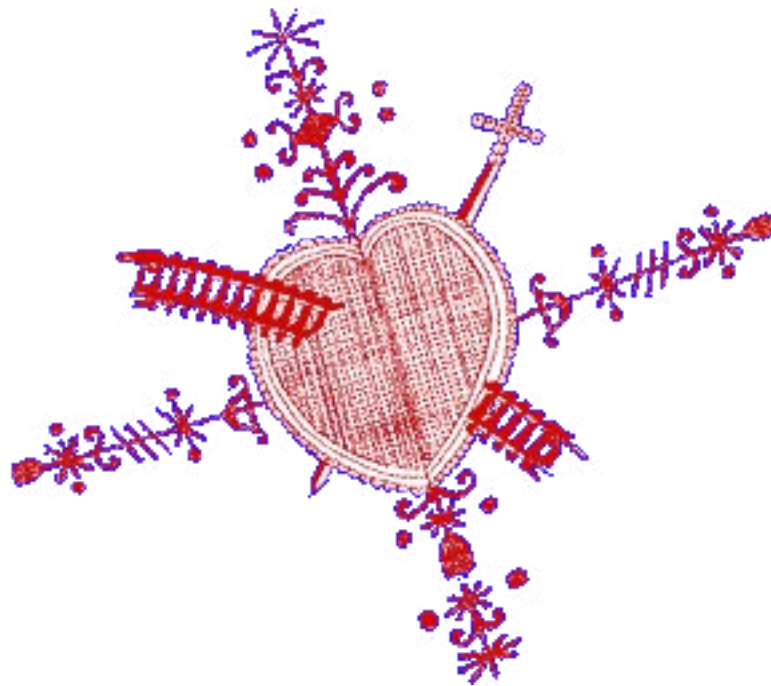
Bro. Howell is currently the General Director of the Foreign Missions Division. He and Sis. Howell raised three MKs who are all involved in ministry across the United States.

walls of security, independence and provision, but God has spent my life undoing me. The reason He dismantles these walls is because I'm prone to trust what I know, and God is committed to keeping me weak, looking to Him." Marks in life keep us fragile and our eyes fixed on Jesus. One of Green's newer songs says, "When I reach the end, you are just beginning. In you alone I soar on borrowed wings."

What marks did Steve Green's missionary encounters leave on his heart? Years ago he sang and made popular, "People Need the Lord." His words still move me as I type, "Everyday they pass me by. I can see it in their eye. Empty people filled with care. Headed who knows where? People need the Lord... At the end of broken dreams, He's the open door. People need the Lord. When will we realize—people need the Lord?" Yes, I recognize I may be dating myself; that the song may be before your time, but it still has a powerful message. It puts it all into perspective, from a pierced heart to pierced hearts. The song continues, "Through His love our hearts can feel all the grief they bear!"

Another group of Christian artists you may be familiar with is "Selah"—three gifted musicians that include a brother and sister brought up in the heartland of Africa. They can't get away from their roots, and do an African song or two or each project. A recent article released by Curb Records explained that Jim Smith, following in his own father's footsteps, took his family to a life of missionary work in the Congo. Todd, Nicol, and two other children grew "to see the world as a place of trees—mango, palm, and coconut—many planted by their grandmother...They came to know the Congolese people, to speak their Kituba language and love their music." Nicol expresses

her heart, "When you need to be comforted, there is nothing like these hymns, because so many of them were written from a place of suffering." Perhaps, you can relate to this experience: "Our dad drove a seven-ton army truck, the only kind that would make it on those muddy roads in the rainy season. We'd have to cross these bridges made of six planks, forty feet above the river, and we'd always pray that the planks wouldn't break under the truck. That's what life was like there. You had to pray—just to survive."



I may not agree with their doctrinal slant—or even be aware of it—and I'm not promoting their music, or starting the Howell Record Company. I'm not even sure I always like their style. What attracts me to them is they are missionary kids; Global Nomads. They are marked for life and it shows through in their lyrics, musical expression; in their interviews and

articles. They have found a way to express their pierced hearts and to bless others. I pray that each of our Global Nomads, throughout the United Pentecostal Church International, will do the same. Many of you are equally talented and can, and will, impact our church and our world. Here's my advice:

Love the Lord your God. Love others. It's the heartbeat of our mission. You are marked for life. Thank God for it! Your heart has been pierced. It is for a purpose. You cannot lead others, where you have never been. Your pain is the seed of healing for the hurting.

Find outlets for your experiences and bless your world. People need the Lord!

Will You?

YES
 NO

by: Melinda Poitras

“Adventures in Odyssey” is a radio show popular among MK’s of this generation (probably because it helps to pass the time during all that deputational driving.) I recently heard an Odyssey about Valentines Day. It answers the question: “What is Valentines Day all about anyway?” I had to admit that I was a little curious about that myself. This was the answer:

When Claudius II (A.K.A. Claudius the Cruel) was Emperor of Rome, he felt that his soldiers were too eager to get home to their families; that their minds were often at home instead of on the battlefield. The solution was clear in his mind – ban all marriages. (I am sure I am not the only one who hears cuckoo clocks sounding at this point.) So, in obeisance to the Emperor, most people (being of the human persuasion and liking their heads where they were) stopped performing marriages. The generalization “most people” did not include a man named Valentine. Holding steadfast to the belief that marriage is a sacred and important institution of God, Valentine performed ceremony after ceremony until word reached the Emperor. Anyone could guess that this is the part of the story where “bad guy” throws “good guy” in jail. However, what might surprise some of you is that “good guy” falls in love there. That’s right, Valentine falls in love with the warden’s blind daughter (the Emperor’s niece). In fact, he prays and she is healed of blindness. However, not even Cupid could pierce the heart of this Claudius dude and he offers Valentine one last option. He can renounce his faith and stop performing marriages, or he can burn. Choosing the “burn now, feast for eternity option” Valentine goes back to prison to await his execution. The jailer even offers to help him escape, but at the risk of endangering the man’s life, Valentine refuses asking only for paper and a pen. You’ve got it; he writes what (to my romantic mind) can be considered the first valentine to his love Julia. Then, on February 14, 269 (A.D.) he lays down his life for his faith. (And what a faith it was.)

Ya know, the Lover of our soul sent us a valentine of sorts. In it, He expresses the essence of His being. He tells us of His great love for us, and how He would give everything (and *did* give everything) to attain our love; to be with us forever. He asks, “Will you forsake *all* and follow me? Will you keep my commandments? Do you love me enough to feed my sheep? Can I truly be *first* in your life? Will you ***be my Valentine?***”

So, I guess the question is (check yes or no) **“Will you?”**



Melinda is an outstanding writer and communicator. She and her sister are known for their “tag-team” emails that are guaranteed to leave you in stitches. To subscribe to these, simply email her.



IN CLOSING

**DO ALL THE GOOD YOU CAN,
BY ALL THE MEANS YOU CAN,
IN ALL THE WAYS YOU CAN,
IN ALL THE PLACES YOU CAN.**

**AT ALL THE TIMES YOU CAN,
TO ALL THE PEOPLE YOU CAN,
AS LONG AS EVER YOU CAN.**

—JOHN WESLEY