

## The Beauty around Us

It was autumn, and I was walking through an incredible explosion of color. The day was silent except for the crunching of leaves under foot. I was so inspired by the smells and a feeling of expectation that I began a commentary, directed toward the Almighty. The conversation took place in my mind, of course, since it wouldn't do to be seen talking to myself.

“What a beautiful world you’ve created, Abba. The colors are so pretty. Everything fits together so nicely. Why, even the birds don’t even seem to collide in mid-air very much. Have you done this sort of thing often?”

I really wasn’t expecting an answer. (One doesn’t, you know; conversations with what-one-expects-to-be one’s self usually end up being a bit one-sided.) Even so, a soft voice stirred like the whisper of a gentle wind in my mind.

*“How often have you taken a breath?”*

Whoa! Hello there! Suddenly I saw all of Creation as a single breath of God: a “breathing in” and a “breathing out,” as it were. It was as if all of Creation emanated from a single point, and I tried to conceptualize how big such a God might be.

Life can be so simple...until you try to share what you've heard or seen with someone else...and that person happens to register angry disbelief.

"Who do you think you are?! And...How do you know it was God you were talking to, anyway?!"

OooooKay. Let's try again...

I suppose I should have known better. No one likes a truly euphoric person. Rational, maybe. Euphoric? Hmmm.

So...one must try to explain things rationally: How did I know that it was God?

The answer is the same, whether you're trying to identify God...or a voice on the telephone. Seen or unseen, we are all recognized by the essence of our being, by who we *ARE*. Once we get to know someone, there is no mistaking that person for someone else. To recognize God is to get to know Him and to learn Who He is, too. Perhaps, that's why the writer of Philippians said,

"Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute... think on these things"; [Ph. 4:8]

because (and here's a concept!) whatever we go in search of, either physically or spiritually, is probably what we're going to find. Consequently, if God isn't what's wrong with things, but rather what's right with them, then always looking at what is wrong with the world probably won't help us find Him.

God always speaks in peace, truth, and understanding.

He surrounds us with ways of seeing, like the seasons of the year. Everything has its "season", you know. Even people. Some can be cold and forbidding, or warm and inviting. Some can even be a bit...colorful; but I've found that if I look for what is good, I'm always astounded (euphoric, even) at the beauty I see...in the people, in their hopes and dreams and, yes, in the incredible variety of the landscapes of their souls.