



Whispers in the Mountains

BY STEVE BRUNER

When I was 17, I went on a retreat with my church's youth group to West Virginia. On Saturday night, I found myself straying from the path of convention, skipping the planned events, and feeling almost summoned to walk on a mountain trail toward the unknown. Then, destiny led me to traverse a trembling contraption—a swinging bridge suspended high above a meandering stream.

At that moment, I sat on the bridge, my feet dangling as if soaring on the wings of liberation. In all the fullness of night, the resplendent moon cast its gentle radiance upon the undulating mountains, bestowing a celestial glow. Rays of ethereal light intertwined with wandering shadows, birthing a magnificent ballet of stillness and motion. It was as if the very elements of nature had orchestrated a symphony of beauty, harmonizing the tranquility and dynamism of existence.

Here I was, a solitary silhouette amidst the majesty of creation, I sensed another presence. I felt no need to cast my gaze elsewhere to the surrounding wilderness, for this presence did not evoke my instinct to defend myself. Instead, time stood still, and in that suspended moment, a newfound liberation washed over me, dissolving fears, aspirations, and longings. And then, a tender whisper resonated within, and I knew all this was not by accident as

I continued to soak in the splendid masterpiece. Two words emerged “I AM” and I knew without thought, comment, or the need to explain anything.

In the embrace of the mountains, beneath the veiled canopy of night,
I am in awe, bathed in celestial light.
Countless stars adorn the velvet tapestry above,
Their brilliance beckons, a cosmic symphony of love.
As I gaze upward, my spirit takes flight,
Transcending the boundaries of earthly sight.
Endless galaxies stretch beyond my reach,
An infinite expanse of lessons that they teach.
Infinity and eternity dance in the starry haze,
Whispering secrets of the ancient cosmic maze.

This cherished moment resides, forever etched in my soul. Years have passed, and I find myself drawn back to those mountains. Once, living in the city, I was burdened by sorrow and confusion. I sought solace in the same mountains where Indians once roamed and pioneers explored. I hiked to a summit and unleashed all my tumultuous emotions that had built up like flood waters bursting a dam. Yelling at heaven with a tempestuous rage, my screams would have turned you around if you'd been walking up the trail toward me. I don't know how long it took, but exhausted, I collapsed upon the rocks, the weight of my anguish released into the burning bush of mountain air.

Without any expectation, once more, a celestial voice reached out, gently whispering to the essence of my being. In that sublime moment, my soul awakened, embracing serenity and purpose again. I eventually wandered out on the edge, sitting on a cliff perched over the valley below, again, my feet freely dangling. I felt a profound connection to the eternal rhythms of “I AM,” and I was okay.

Almost every day, I feel the sway of mountains calling my name. I need to stop, reflect, remember, and meditate. From sunrise to sunset, I choose to

breathe the fresh air of mountains, if not there, in my soul. My spirit looks out over the horizon of our lives, seeing mountain range after mountain range disappearing into the smoky mist. I feel awakened, knowing with all the uncertainties of life, that I am not alone. We are not alone. These memories are never too far from my consciousness. They remind me to treat you respectfully because you are my brothers and sisters in this celestial dance of heaven and earth.

David said it thousands of years ago all that I have come to know, “I lift my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.” Today, I live on top of a mountain in those same mountains. Every day, I stop and remember the whispers of the mountains.