

## Maggie's Musings

### Beautiful Noise

September, 2005

I hate motorcycles. Not the seething kind of hate but hate nonetheless. They make too much noise. I especially hate Harleys. They make more noise and supposedly people like it that way. The louder the better, I've heard. I've never been able to figure that out.

I prefer bicycles. On a bicycle I can hear the birds sing and streams cascade over rocks. I can actually feel a gentle breeze against my face. I've been on a motorcycle. The bugs collided against my face and the wind was so strong I couldn't move the muscles in my face and I could hear nothing except the sound of the engine.

On a recent visit to my dentist he jokingly suggested that I should ride my bicycle down to the Harley convention and trade my bicycle in for a Harley. Hundreds of Harley's would be in town. I could feel a huge "NOT" arise in me and my judgments of Harley's bubble up. I also realized that since there were so many Harley's in town I might encounter them on my weekend ride in the country. I wondered where I could go to avoid them.

As I rode out in the country that Saturday I had completely forgotten about those noisy things. I found myself taking a route I don't normally take. I looked to my right and saw a stream of Harley's heading the opposite direction I was going to ride. It was timed perfectly for me to miss them. I thanked God for leading me away from them. I felt blessed and grateful. I didn't have to listen to the awful noise.

About 45 minutes later as I headed towards home I noticed a large gathering at a country convenience store. I had never seen this many people here before. It seemed like a hundred people were looming up ahead. And yes, they each had a Harley. It seems they had all stopped for a break. As I rode up on my bike I heard one of the guys yell out to the others, "Ready to go?" Many yelled back in the affirmative and I realized that they would be leaving soon and that they would ALL be heading in my direction. A scream of, "Oh No." pierced my brain and the peace I had been experiencing. Just in case, I yelled out, "Which way are you going?" A couple of them pointed in my direction and I laughed. If I had arrived at this spot only five minutes later I would have missed them!!

I rode on and in under a minute I could hear them coming. Then, it occurred to me. It was another opportunity to thank God. I had thanked God for sending me in a different direction so I didn't have to hear them the first time. Could I now thank God for putting me in a place where I would now be forced to hear them? Could I thank God, no matter what happened?. I gave it try. I asked God to help me love them as they passed instead of hating them. Might as well, they were coming no matter what I did and it was worth giving the experiment a try.

Then I had the thought that I should count each one as it passed – just so I could tell others how many I had to listen to and how miserable it was. It would make a great story of endurance for my fellow cycling friends. They began whizzing past me and the counting quickly ended. And instead, to my surprise, I noticed that they weren't as loud as I had anticipated. It was the first of many surprises to come in the next few minutes. I began to notice each one as it passed. Although each was a Harley I noticed that each was different and each held a wonderful surprise. Different colors, different styles and different riders with

colorful clothing, one with a side cart carrying a dog. All of the riders were smiling and enjoying their trip as much as I was enjoying mine. A few of them waved and I waved back.

In less than five minutes they were gone and the silence of the country scene was restored. What I noticed next surprised me the most – I missed them! I missed the “beautiful noise” that they made, the sites of each cycle and the people on them, the joy that they were having. And in that noticing I found tears streaming down my face. I couldn’t imagine why I would be crying after this seemingly simple, short encounter. It was gratitude. Gratitude for being capable of turning hate into love through a simple request and finding joy and appreciation on the other side.

I don’t think I’ll ever see a Harley in the same way again. They make a “beautiful noise” I have learned.

Is it that easy to transform hate into love I wondered? If so, why is it that I still hold on to anger and resentment at times when love is so easily accessible? I am hoping that this simple encounter will teach me more about the magic of love.