

# More Light, Less Noise

Sadly, we live in a world of all sorts of pollution – and noise is one of them. Years ago, on my first visit to New York City, I was overwhelmed by the sounds of traffic and the almost-constant wail of sirens all night long.

And the tongue can generate its own brand of pollution. Words cascade down on our ears from all directions, it seems. In political debates and on television talk shows, guests “talk over” one another in an effort to advance their own ideas to the exclusion of others.

President Abraham Lincoln, in response to people who kept criticizing his administration, told a story that certainly has application for us today.

A traveler on the frontier found himself, as night came on, in a wild region. A terrible thunderstorm added to his trouble.

He floundered along until his horse gave out and then had to get off to lead him. Occasional flashes of lightning afforded the only clue to the path, and the crashes of thunder were frightful. One bolt, which seemed to crush the earth beneath him, made him stagger and brought him to his knees.

Being by no means a praying man, his petition was short and to the point: “Oh Lord! If it’s all the same to you, give us a little more light and a little less noise!”

To that story, I would add some advice I learned as a youngster: God gave us two ears and one tongue for a reason.

– Beecher Hunter