

FROM SPRING TO FALL, 2011 * THE G. RICHARD THOMPSON JOURNAL,
MISSIONARIES, 1950-1989 (ret.) TEAM, WHEATON, IL, PAKISTAN, IRAN,
the UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, and still serving.

Spring came. Out came the shovel. I rid the yard of emerging weeds, rearranged pine straw mulch, and waited for the flowers to open in our tiny backyard, all the while meditating on God's creation. Who tells the sun to warm the earth and open the seed pods? How do bulbs know when to rise out of the ground? Flowers to know that special moment to push through, bud and open? What knowledge do birds have? They nest in trees, leaves hide them. The fat caterpillar which ate every sprig of my large parsley plant--how did it know when it was time to hide and prepare the cocoon? Was it acting in obedience to the laws of God? Did it know the transformation gladdened my heart when I saw butterflies?

Water and rivers surround this area, the mighty Atlantic is close by. In chapter 38, Job speaks about God's voice to the seas, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." They are, most of the time, until God unlooses them. Then, storm surges can swallow up everything, just as Japan and other countries have experienced. Apart from Scripture, our finite understanding of God cannot find meaning to the complexities of life. God does not answer Job's questions. Instead, He spells out His awesome power and tells Job about His storehouses of WMDs. There is an intelligence in all of life. We accept by faith what God's creation understands and obeys.

This Sovereign Creator has endowed us and all His creation with an infinitesimal bit of His mind. What a wonderful God He is. As praise fell from the psalmist's lips, so it falls from ours. God's goodness for over 8 decades has known no boundaries. *You* have been a part of that, by your prayers, your friendship and by your giving. *THANK YOU!*

With the busyness we face in the time crunch of daily living, most of us rarely take time to marvel at God's creation and give Him thanks for that which we enjoy. I want to remember to do that today and every day.

The summer heat was more draining this year. We stayed inside, grateful for air conditioning, overhead fans, a refrigerator, cold water, and electric power that stayed on. Not everyone had it so good. When news that Hurricane Irene was approaching, Elizabeth took us out of town. David stayed in the city to be near his elderly parents. Their house did not escape; a tree fell on their roof causing a lot of damage. In our development, damage was minimal.

Richard and I had talked of going to Israel "someday." The day came for me in September, but by then, his elderly frame could not support an exhausting trip. He is unsteady on his feet, has continual pain from a spine problem and the eczema is relentless; meds help only a little. With sons Bob and Jim, along with Linda and Anna, I felt safe knowing I was in good hands with a pastor and a doctor and their wives. The trip was incredible, unbelievable. Seeing the evidence-- inscriptions from past millennia-- I know God gave the land of Israel to Abraham and his descendants. I saw places I had "visited" only on the map. We walked through King Hezekiah's deep underground tunnel, carved out of sheer rock 2700 years ago without modern technology, sailed on the Sea of Galilee, saw where Abraham entered the land with a promise for

his descendants through Isaac. Temple ruins, Herod's harbor on the Med, Masada, the memorial to Holocaust victims, Engedi-- made famous to Joshua, King David and Solomon-- the Garden of Gethsemane, so many places, almost all with a gracious welcome mat out for tourists. Israel was clean, neat, orderly, welcoming; we felt secure. The Arab (Palestinian) section seemed neglected, garbage bins were overflowing, even a slight sense of hostility in some parts. A sense of community was lacking.

Sunday School teaching continues. This is a large class of faithful older people, One new person, a young neighbor mom has been coming. We finished lessons in the Song of Solomon, a reminder of pure human love. The next Sunday we looked at the metaphor of Christ as the Bridegroom and the Church as the Bride of Christ (Revelation 21, 22.) A visitor from out of town was there. He returned home on Monday. While getting something out of the back seat of his car, he slumped down and was gone. Such is the brevity and uncertainty of life.

We are now in the Beatitudes. Seeing Israel and learning of the harshness of Roman enslavement, then reading what Jesus said about kingdom living and forgiveness was very thought provoking. I fall so short of the teachings of Jesus. I pray for an increased understanding in my own and in the lives of God's people—

After speaking to a group of seniors in the church in which I grew up and in which a missionary circle is named for me, a member reminded me how the church prayed weekly for us when we were active in ministry. What else will be revealed about prayer answers when we see the Lord?

Anna is sharing Jim; he will be with us for Thanksgiving. Elizabeth and David are hosting the dinner. Their girls, husbands, and our great granddaughter Tristyn will all be there. Doug, Renee and their kids will be nearby with her Dad. We will all be together on Friday. Both Bob and David have phoned greetings from their families. What a wonderful family reunion it is when families who love each other can get together!

Let's celebrate *Thanksgiving* every day. **Maranatha!** Our Lord Jesus is coming! As we get into the Christmas season, let's remember why He came.

MVT

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