

After a great seminar on "Listening/Healing Prayer," I was ready to get home to beautiful warm San Diego and hoping for a late afternoon mountain bike ride. On final approach into San Diego I saw sand blowing over the hills and mountains. I had never seen anything like it and was fascinated as I watched. As we got closer to San Diego, I noticed huge flames moving quickly toward the west. Then it dawned on me that there were people living in those areas that were in danger, and some were losing their homes. Just before landing I could see a thick layer of smoke! It was early afternoon on October 21<sup>st</sup> and I had just flown over the first day of the Santa Ana driven fires.

Kathy picked me up and we headed north on highway 5 (close to the ocean). As we drove, we encountered heavy smoke which drastically slowed the traffic. How could the smoke be that far West already? It was becoming apparent that there were more fires burning than just the one I had flown over.

Fires were developing all over San Diego County and from our town of San Marcos, there eventually were fires north, south, east and west of us. Even the main highways would be closed for a time. After we got home and turned on the news, we began to realize what was happening. I remember thinking that we had a few days before we had anything to be concerned about and hopefully the winds would die down by then. But at two a.m., I was called by a friend informing me that the hills behind our home were on fire and that parts of nearby neighborhoods were being evacuated. Startled, we began to pack and plan our exit, in case we needed to leave.

The following days were spent watching and waiting. Most people stayed home or were on the run from the fires. FINALLY, the winds died down and the firefighters began to get containment. We were able to clean up outside, wash our cars and recover very quickly, unlike hundreds of others who were assessing heavy losses. Thursday Kathy and I boarded an early flight to St Louis to attend our Navigator National conference that is held every four years. It felt strange to leave after so many traumas to our county with the fires still burning and containment projected by Friday.

Thanksgiving is filled with a mixture of feelings. We are grateful that God spared us, our family and friends from heavy losses. We learned what is important as we considered what to take and what to leave behind. We were also reminded of how rich we are in friends from all over the world, who mobilized prayer for us and the whole fire stricken region. Please continue to pray that our region would seek the Lord as we recover from all that has occurred.

Wishing you a Blessed Thanksgiving!