

REFLECTIONS

May 25, 2008

**Most assuredly, I say to you,
unless a grain of wheat falls
into the ground and dies, it
remains alone; but if it dies, it
produces much grain.**

John 12:24NKJV

A Celebration

Cotton fields blanketed the dry sandy countryside each summer in the farming community where I grew up. So cotton plants offered no particular intrigue to me—unless, that is, the plants appeared in some unsuspected place as one did during a summer of my youth. Who knows how it got there; and who knows why it was not pulled up before we realized what it was. But that summer a single cotton plant appeared in the flowerbed adjacent to our front porch. It was to become my summer project and I learned a life lesson from it.

As I nurtured this solitary cotton plant, my imagination for it grew and grew. Even at a young age, I knew that at summer's end the plant would have journeyed through its cycle of life. It would grow tall before it bloomed. The blooms would become a host of nutlike pods that would soon dry and tear open to form a bowl that hosted the plant's fruit. But it was not the fruit of soft, snow-white cotton that had captured my imagination.

My thoughts were drawn to the seeds that were wrapped within the sinewy strands of each cotton ball. After all, it was a wayward seed that found its way into our flowerbed and my imagination abounded with what might come from it. Not the fruit, but ingredients for next year's crop to produce even more seeds until finally large new cotton fields would blanket the land—all from the death of a wayward seed. And so life goes.

We all have cottonseed stories to tell—the human kind. After all, we are seeds ourselves—each of us. While on this earth we have grown into blossoming plants. We are producing fruit. And from our fruit more seeds will be born. The seeds become fields of flowering plants, and find their way into unsuspected places to bear fruit where we could never imagine. But it all begins with death.

A seed dies so a plant will grow; a plant flourishes so flowers bloom. Blooms wither so fruit is born; and fruit ripens so seed is restored.

Seeds are born to die; but they begin the cycle of life. And death becomes a celebration of it.

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +

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