

“It’s amazing how God works.”

Darlene Pitman as quoted by Wiley

**How do we regular church goers know that the churchy things that we cram into our routine schedules of family and livelihood are really what God wants us to do???** Georgianne has been doing a series of sermons and Bible study on *Fan or Follower* that has caused me to think. I felt I should write down the following experience. It’s kind of a complex story even in an abbreviated version.

Three of us were on the way to Black Mountain for Yearly Meeting. A NC FDS volunteer had called Wiley about an upcoming trip and their discussion turned to the recent flooding in Louisiana and concern for their friends (whom they had built houses for) in Jean Lafitte, just below New Orleans, LA. With a call to one of the community leaders, Wiley learned that they would be allowed to return to their homes for the first time later that day. With a follow-up call, he learned that the situation appeared worse than before (Katrina) and that they had a night curfew.

The Yearly Meeting was filled with its own concerns of business, finances, how to get things done including a load of school supplies to Choctaw, Alabama, and ended with wonderful testimonies of God’s miraculous care for the physical lives of individuals.

In the meantime, Wiley had talked with someone in Lafitte and asked if they needed a shower trailer. “Yes” was the answer. How to get it there was the question. Wiley assumed he would go and possibly me, but considering I was just beginning to get over a back problem and was then dealing with some head congestion, he asked around. No one could go soon. If I was to go, I wanted to go NOW and get it over with. (We had to get back for our granddaughters’ football games Friday and Saturday nights. We had already missed special games during Yearly Meeting.)

A call to Ohio about getting the shower trailer revealed another problem – their truck was in the shop for repairs and they could not get it out until at least a day after Labor Day. That put us to leave Wednesday at the earliest. That worked for Wiley - he had a job he wanted to do on the farm anyway. I suggested we should plan to go by Choctaw and take the school supplies. With a call to Randy, that was set into motion including an overnight stay for us.

Since some things at our place were now on hold, I took advantage of the situation to get Walter to help me get another job finally done – clean out a bunch of stuff we had stored that a family had left in one of the boys’ rent houses a year or so before. Hallelujah! Some of the boxes had gotten squashed, so we dusted and sorted and discussed what to do with it. He thought it would go to *Goodwill*. I thought most of it would go to *Choctaw Restore sometime*. He did agree with me, but we would need to box it and store it again. Sooo, we said, “Well, why couldn’t we take it now if there is room left in the back of the truck?” So to the house it went to get washed and cleaned.

I set up to wash – a few things in the dishwasher, but most in the sink. Not even thinking that the hardest thing that I have done in the last several months is work in the kitchen. There is something about that slight bending over the sink and cabinets that causes the stinging in my side to be worse (according to my therapists, a radiation of pressure on a nerve by a bulging disk). Walter and then even Wiley (after he returned from servicing the truck and meeting Darlene, who commented about how amazing God works, to get the school stuff for Choctaw) carried in and came and went as I washed and scrubbed and moved pots and pans, Pyrex, flatware, dishes, glasses, cut glass, candle holders, baskets, etc. to the table and cabinet for grouping to their matching sets. Walter began packing in boxes. Later, as Wiley was moving things for me, he decided he needed to go to bed since he would be driving the next day. I asked “What time is it??” Then I realized, “I have been washing dishes for over FIVE hours and my back and side are not even hurting!” Everyone else was in bed when I cleaned a handmade metal toy with beeswax polish and left it on newspaper at 1:00 AM.

The next morning when I got up, Walter had repacked the school supplies and added our 12 large boxes of household items as I crammed in some towels from the stash that I had put in the clothes washer while washing dishes. By 10:00 AM, I had packed pillows for my back and Claritin-D for my head and Wiley packed bananas, nabs, water, soft drinks and the GPS. Finally, we were off toward Ohio to meet the guys with the trailer. Near noon, we stopped at Wytheville, VA to fuel-up. As we were finished, Wiley called to see where they were. Guess what? – As we looked up, they were pulling in across the street.

The guys switched the trailer to our truck. We had a quick sandwich together to talk a few minutes and off we were through Tennessee. We stopped to get some milk to go with our bananas and nabs for supper on the road (save some for next day lunch) – spent the night in Meridian, Mississippi. After a continental breakfast Thursday morning, we were off and arrived at our designated location in Jean Lafitte about 2:00 PM.

Although that community had flooding problems, the situation was worse farther down. Lafitte was the designated area for workers. The mayor said to set up the trailer at the Senior Center. Wiley went in and some National Guard guys followed him out to help. We took one of them in the trailer to explain how everything worked - the four showers and vanity with towels and soaps, washer and dryer, hot water heater, etc. and discussed getting the propane tanks filled, which we were going to do. One of the young guys just stopped and looked at me and said “God must have sent you!” He was so serious; I just looked at him for a minute as I wondered what to say and then replied “Well, I guess He did”. He explained they had to go up to the school to shower and there were not enough showers (I’m thinking he said 2). He said someone had brought a shower house for them and, as he pointed to it, “it was falling apart when it came.” I had already seen the mess. Wiley assumed there were about 40 National Guard guys because he had seen that many cots when he went inside the building.

The homes FDS had built before appeared to have withstood the storm well and even still had the FDS signs on the front deck. On our way to locate the propane, we saw the awful devastation – people wearing boots to protect themselves from the black slime that covered everything. The smell was horrible. All the families’ belongings were in the yards for trash and a sign on one house read “Where is our levy protection?”.

We left the propane at the shower trailer and were off toward Choctaw to deliver our last supplies. We were later than we had hoped to arrive at Choctaw, but had talked with someone on the phone. Two ladies and a guy met us to unload all the book bags and other school supplies and our boxes of stuff for the store. For future reference, I asked “What do you need most for the store?” The reply was “Household items, knickknacks and things like that for the home. That is what people buy.” We told them, THAT’s in the boxes we brought. They gave us a key to the lodge and said they had put on clean sheets for us in the cook’s room. That was perfect.

After a good night’s rest, we left the key, locked the door and were on our way for another long day’s drive. Had a McDonalds biscuit for breakfast, finished off the bananas for lunch and stopped for a break at Kentucky Fried Chicken for our first real meal and were off again – arrived home just in time for a bathroom break and change vehicles for a short 30 minute drive, got to the football game just as it began.

Were we tired? Yes! I was wondering if I should have little enough sense to do that again. In my tired state even questioned, “Was that whirlwind trip really God’s work?”

I have thought some more about our experience and my question about *Fan or Follower*. It seems... God reminded me – *I had Darlene to tell you “How amazing God works”; I had the young National Guard guy tell you “God must have sent you.”; I delayed your time to leave (so you could clean out your stuff) and even helped you wash dishes and then ... had the ladies at Choctaw tell you “What we need most is household items”. And... you got back to the ballgame on time. What more do you want me to say???*

Thank you God for choosing me to be one of your “Followers”. Help me be worthy.

*Shelby Shore*