

DOWN HOME: Balls of fire & divining God's will

August 18, 2006

Posted: 8/18/06

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Some people try to discern God's will through every detail of life. But I'm glad the Lord's plan is broader. Otherwise, I might have left the ministry exactly 25 years ago.

Joanna and I thoroughly enjoyed our lives in Georgia in 1981. But we realized I needed to get a seminary education.

The natural response would have been to return to Texas, to Southwestern Seminary in Jo's hometown, Fort Worth.

But a job opened up at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and we moved about as fast as you can say "rental truck."

I recall my confidence when the truck we rented turned out to be only a few months old, with air conditioning. "This'll be easy," I thought. Hmmm.

We planned to drive from Atlanta to Nashville on Day 1, then trek on up to Louisville on Day 2. Jo led in our car, and I followed in the truck.

Just outside Murfreesboro, Tenn., I heard a huge "BAM!" and lost power. When I pulled onto the shoulder and looked under the truck, I saw the muffler glowing red.

Four hours later, a mechanic gashed some holes in the muffler with an air hammer, since the truck company was too cheap to give us (a) a new muffler or (b) a new truck, and since we were too young and inexperienced to throw a walleyed fit.

The truck roared like a Huey helicopter. Minutes later, I was broken down on the outskirts of Nashville. Overnight, a mechanic decided the gas pump was bad. He “repaired” it with wire and duct tape, since the truck company was too cheap to Oh, you know.

We believed Day 2 would be better. But we knew what to do when the truck lost power north of Bowling Green, Ky. Jo went for help, while I sat in a lawn chair on the side of I-65, protecting all our earthly goods and seeing who would wave to a guy in a lawn chair behind a rental truck.

Another mechanic tinkered with the fuel pump, and we headed north. We reached Louisville in time to break down in the middle of the city’s busiest traffic interchange in the middle of rush hour. A nice police officer helped me get started. Again.

A bit later, a carload of kids motioned for me to roll down my window. “Great balls of fire are shooting out the back of your truck,” they shouted. I smiled and drove on.

At the next light, a young woman ran up to my window. “Great balls of fire are shooting out the back of your truck,” she yelled.

Since I didn’t want to incinerate all our earthly goods, much less blow myself to Kingdom Come, a wrecker dragged the truck to our duplex.

If Jo and I had been looking for God’s validation in our move, I never would have set foot in a seminary classroom. And if we had divined God’s will through great balls of fire, we would have missed out on one of the great blessings of our lives.

If you're trying to follow God's leadership but feel like you're broken down on the side of the road or besieged by great balls of fire, keep the faith and keep on truckin'.

God is with you on the journey.

— *Marv Knox*

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