

Column

I spoke with a former neighbour and friend earlier this week. It was the day after her annual family reunion held in a park near Tampa, Fla. The event was glorious but did not begin that auspiciously.

It seems she and her husband arrived first at the event site, but no sooner than they got out of the car and began transporting items to set up the serving tables, her husband stumbled and rolled down an embankment. Dropping what was in her hands, she ran to where he was and found his face and other parts of his body covered with blood.

At this point, she looked up for help and saw the people at the next event site – a group of owl watchers with expensive cars and caravans parked all around –staring in their direction. Would you believe not one person came over to help? In recounting the incident, she said: “All I remember were those eyes.”

Then, as out of nowhere, she saw a black arm reaching down in the direction of her husband. It was a jogger. He immediately took charge of the situation and helped her husband to the car where his wounds, which in the end proved superficial, were dealt with.

The man, an immigrant from an African nation, then left to change and go to his local church, but the story does not end there. He returned twice to check on them. The last time, when my neighbour turned to thank him, he was gone.

An angel or a man? No doubt, both. Sent from God to help, but no doubt a real flesh and blood human being. The only way she could describe him was that he was a 21st century Good Samaritan.

Stories like this warm our heart, but the first bit – the bit about the owl watchers that refused to get involved – is troubling and should cause each one of us to ask: Which am I?

May God grant us not only eyes to see the needs of those around us, but the will to do, the courage to get involved, the compassion of the Good Samaritan in the Bible. No doubt, with such service God is well pleased.

O LORD our heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; We beseech thee to bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of their fellow men. Endue them with

wisdom, patience, and courage, that they may strengthen the weak and raise up those who fall; and, being inspired by thy love, may worthily minister in thy Name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the sake of him who laid down his life for us, the same thy Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Rev. Victor H. Morgan is rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Blue Ridge.