“...love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”Matthew 19:19

I picture the phone call, my dad’s slight hesitation and—in my mind—hear him agree to the unusual request.

He gets in his Buick and drives to the motel where the caller said a couple would be waiting. I see my dad take the woman’s arm and guide her to the backseat. He then helps the husband, disabled from a work accident, and situates him in front before placing the man’s walker in the trunk.

As they leave the parking lot, the couple’s four young children peer out from behind the motel door.

They motor down the interstate under brilliant sunshine. The husband—Joseph—does most of the talking since Nyalak, who my dad calls “Little Mama” because he can’t pronounce her name and because she’s pregnant, does not know much English.

When they arrive in Lincoln, Dad takes them to the state capital where he once spent a decade, crafting legislation and helping others, before moving to Washington D.C. for another 10 years doing the same in Congress.

This time he’s the one asking help, without assistance from aides, for a Sudanese couple trying to rent a home.

Dad helps them sign papers at the capital and in a housing office at another location. They visit a Sudanese market before arriving at the couple’s prospective new home next to the

Burlington-Northern railroad tracks.

The proximity to the tracks doesn't bother "Little Mama" who tells my dad she "likes trains" as one rumbles by, blaring its horn.

Spirits are high as he wheels the Buick toward home.

The threesome stop in York for an early supper at Burger King ("Little Mama's" choice)—a white-haired gentleman in his early 80s, a very tall man with a walker and a woman dressed in native garb.

Upon reaching home, Dad is bone tired. Joseph and "Little Mama" are grateful for his help.

He tells me about his whirlwind adventure the next day, noting that he experienced firsthand how folks from different countries and cultures have similar dreams and desires to those of us born and raised in the United States.

By listening to his inner voice and reaching out to Joseph and Nyalak, he was given a gift much more satisfying than those that come wrapped in paper and bows.

To borrow from Dr. Seuss, I believe my dad's heart "grew three sizes that day."