

# One Nation Under God - Walk Across America

Vol. 4 No 3

March 2005

On Monday evening March 14<sup>th</sup>, I told Patti Bello, intercessory prayer leader for Prayer for the Lost, that I had an unsettled feeling about the upcoming walk through the town of Philippi, West Virginia. I felt like a soldier preparing to enter battle at an unknown place. The city of Philippi was the site of the first land battle of the Civil War fought along the Main Street and at its charming covered bridge on June 3, 1861. By the end of the war, over 140,000 Americans would die in battle and another 224,000 men would die from disease, starvation and hypothermia. Recently this small city of 3,100 people was honored by receiving the All-America City Award in 2004. Little did I realize that Nadine and I would learn so much more about America's needs by walking the American Discovery Trail through this All-America City by asking one simple question, "What can I pray for?"

Since Steve Herrell's grandmother was recovering from a heart-attack and Terry Harman would not be able to walk with us till this summer, I would walk most of trail near Philippi alone with Nadine providing support by car. At ten minutes before noon on March 18<sup>th</sup>, the walk resumed at Brushy Fork Church on Route 38. This small white church with two white painted out-houses behind it is an example of a church in Appalachia during the Depression era. Apparently some of these churches still survive. The day was fairly uneventful as the road descended from the snow-covered mountains into the warmer foothills. Walking through the villages of Valley Furnace, Nestorville and Tracy, I had only witnessed to one person, a man, who walked me past his home so his dogs would not attack me. He told me that only security was his two dogs. This was not Fort Ashby, where people leave their doors unlocked. After a long exhausting walk uphill with logging trucks speeding by me, I heard a small voice inside me say, "Jim, why are you doing this?" Any doubt was quickly dispelled as I looked to the southwest and gazed at a solitary cross on a hill on the horizon. "This is why I was prayer-walking across America, the cross," was my answer to myself. To the northwest there was a trio of crosses on a hill, a large yellow cross with two adjacent pale blue crosses. These crosses are the ministry of Crosses Across America. 1,800 sets of crosses were constructed across America by one man, Bernard Coffindaffer. This once wealthy West Virginia businessman eventually went broke after sending \$2.5 million on his ministry and died in 1993 after more than ten years of cross building. They are reminders that Jesus, Son of God, died for our sins and whoever shall confess with their mouth, the Lord Jesus and believe in their heart that God has raised him from the dead, shall be saved. Thank you, Mr. Coffindaffer.



After ten miles of walking, Nadine drove us into Philippi for a meal at a fast-food place. After eating we drove north on Main Street and saw the covered bridge that spanned the Tygart River. We only took passing notice of an old Victorian house that had some fire damage as we drove back to Belington where we would stay the night at a motel. We noticed that there were many churches in Philippi, Belington and on the road connecting the cities. Many of these churches were Methodist. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Methodist church evangelized

this area with circuit riders, a traveling minister on horseback. Today in America, there is one remaining practicing circuit rider preacher, Robert E. Harris, who rides into small towns of western North Carolina as well as rest areas along Interstate 40. God bless him.

The next day, I was joined by Nadine as we both walked along Main Street by the Victorian houses, courthouse, and shops. The downtown area seem alive compared to many downtowns that appeared to die after a mall or Wal-Mart is built on the outskirts of town. This town could be a movie set for the 1950's except for the ultra-modern service station situated near the covered bridge. The Philippi Covered Bridge, built in 1852, is the best known of West Virginia's seventeen covered bridges. During its early days, a toll was paid to cross the bridge, a horse and rider – 10 cents, carriage with two horses – 35 cents and a score of sheep – 5 cents. In June of 1861, Colonel George Porterfield led a Union attack on Confederate troops to secure the bridge. The Confederates retreated giving the Union its first victory. Later West Virginia seceded from Virginia to rejoin the Union.



Alongside of the bridge is old railroad station, which is now a museum. There we have our first conservation with a person from Philippi. Olivia Susan Lambert, better known as Susie, proved to be another divine appointment. Not only is she the town's historian; she is also an intercessor. When asked, "What can I pray for in Philippi?" Her answer was that the illegal drugs culture had entered the city and the number of men attending church has declined. She is also an artist who has written and illustrated a children's story, *The Firefly and the Jar*. It is a story comparing the releasing of a firefly from a jar to our soul departing our body at death to go to heaven.

Before I left the museum, Susie warned me about walking alone on the roads that I was about to travel. She told us about the arson that occurred one month before on Main Street that resulted in the deaths of a man and a woman. It may have been drug related. Nadine stayed behind to talk to Susie while I continued my trek. The road wined north out of town to a point where a side road followed the east bank of the Tygart River. Just before leaving the main road, a driver of a pickup truck rolled down his window and warned me. "Do not walk on that road." I never walk alone. I have the Holy Spirit, which dwells within me. (II Tim 1:14) There are angels, who shall protect me. (Ps 91:11) I carry a bible, which is a sword. (Heb 4:12, Eph 6:17) No weapon formed against me shall prosper. (Isa 54:17) If God is for me, who can be against me? (Rom 8:31) As I started down the road, my car with Nadine driving turned on to the road. For the next four miles this isolated road followed the blue-green waters of the Tygart River. The boulder slewed river was very picturesque as it snaked its way to the bridge at Arden, where we ended the walk. God was with us.

Invited by Susie, we attended Crim Memorial United Methodist Church in Philippi on Palm Sunday. During Sunday school class, I again asked, "What can I

pray for in Philippi?" More commerce, tourism, something for the youth to do, and the drug problem were some of the answers. This was the adult Sunday school class and besides me there was only one other man. I responded with an answer that what the city needed strong family units headed by Godly men. In America, our churches, governments and schools need Godly men, but most of all our homes need Godly men.

In the service Pastor Alicia Rapping told the congregation that the waving of palm branches was similar to waving flags at sporting events. She led members of the church onto the sidewalk waving palms shouting hosanna to the king. After the service, Lucille Malone invited us to lunch at the Medallion restaurant on Main Street. She blessed us with meal and we blessed her with two hours of Christian fellowship.

Last month, I read an article on gobbledygook or doublespeak. What was once plain English is translated into a word that sounds more important or conceals the true meaning of the word. Here are some examples: Urban transportation specialist (bus driver), service technician (repairman), career associate scanning professional (checkout clerk), non-goal-oriented member of society (street person), interdental stimulator (toothpick). The one gobbledygook that I thought should have a different meaning was member of vertical transportation corps (elevator operator). I think that describes anybody that is in the ministry. We are going up. There some of my examples of gobbledygook.

fashionably late - disrespectfully  
Planned Parenthood – abortion clinic  
abortion – legalized murder  
liberalism – faith in self  
conservatism – faith in God

Since 1962, when prayer was taken out of public schools there has been a civil war in our nation between the liberals and conservatives. It has taken place in our courts and our governments. It has resulted in collateral casualties, the abortion of 45,000,000 innocent unborn children. Please pray for more Godly men in our government and in our homes.

To learn more about the One Nation Under God –Walk Across America, go to our new web site, [www.walkacrossamerica.info](http://www.walkacrossamerica.info).

God bless,  
Jim Shaner  
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Total miles walked of the American Discovery Trail	- 463 miles
Number of walkers	- 43 walkers
Number of people praying for America	- 36, 524 prayer warriors

**In our lifetimes, we meet many people, who affect our lives. Our parents, teachers, pastors and employers are but a few. There is another group of people, who affect our lives. They are intercessors, the people who pray for us. Pat Baldwin was an intercessor. She often prayed for hours for my wife, my children and for me. When I was down her prayers lifted me. On March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005, at the age 54, Pat Baldwin was called home to be with our Lord. I am dedicating the walk this year in loving memory of Pat.**