

One Nation Under God - Walk Across America

With the advent of the interstate highways, it is possible to travel seventy miles in one hour and not see anything. From September 10th to 15th, I walked seventy miles through the western part of West Virginia and saw more than some people do in a lifetime. I also heard the voice of the people crying for righteousness in America, something you do not hear while driving on a busy turnpike or freeway.

On Saturday September 10th, Nadine and I met an old friend, Alan Crum, whom we have not seen for fourteen years. For the next six nights we would be staying with Alan and his wife, Monika, but first Alan joined me in Salem on the seventy-two mile long North Bend Rail Trail. That day we reminisced as we trekked for the eleven miles from Salem, a town founded in 1792 by a group of Seventh Day Baptists, to the quaint village of Smithburg. That night Monika Crum served us a delicious meal of salmon.

Next morning, it was off to church at the First Assembly of God in Harrisville. Pastor Ron Blevins, a former state trooper, introduced me to the congregation before starting his sermon on being a trailblazer pioneering a new ministry. I listened intently as Pastor Ron spoke. After the evening service, Nadine and I stayed for about an hour afterwards sharing and praying with Jim and Gloria Morton. Tuesday morning in the town of Cairo, Gloria joined our team of prayer walkers by walking one mile of the America Discovery Trail, which coincides with the North Bend Rail Trail.

From Monday to Thursday our expedition went through the towns of West Union, Central Station, Toll Gate, Pennsboro, Ellenboro, Cornwallis, Cairo, Petroleum, Walker, into the city of Parkersburg and then across the Ohio River into Belpre, Ohio. This was the route of Northwestern Virginia Railroad, which was completed in 1857. Now very peaceful this area is now very peaceful, but in the early part of the Civil War, Confederate raiders known as the Night Hawk Rangers and the Moccasin Rangers kept destroying bridges, railroad tracks and telegraph lines. War has appeared to touch everywhere in which we have walked. Just ten miles south of the village of Walker is the small town of Palestine, home of Jessica Lynch. War is still touching lives throughout our nation.

Alan walked with me every day except Tuesday. That Tuesday, I felt that I had the favor of God. At the B & O Railroad Depot in Pennsboro, Nadine and I prayed for divine appointments before I set alone out towards Ellenboro. God heard and answered our prayers that day. Before taking twenty steps, I asked a lady to pray for America. Of course, she answered yes. The day was just starting. Just outside of town a man wearing a green baseball cap and his wife were walking their dog along the trail. When I asked them if they were Christians and would pray for America, he replied, "Yes, I am a pastor." I had just meet Pastor Dan and Nina Martin of Riddles Chapel Church. After discussing prayer needs for the area, they walked slowly towards Pennsboro, praying as they went. Two more names were added to the list of prayer walkers.

After about four miles of trail with one short tunnel, I reached Ellenboro with its glass factories. Mid-Atlantic Glass Company, which manufactures decorative glassware and marbles, is situated on both sides of the trail. Nadine was

waiting for me at the Rt. 16 Overpass. After eating lunch at the Dairy Queen near the trail, we separated again with Nadine going into Harrisville to meet Monika at Berdine's 5 & Dime, America's oldest dime store. On Tuesdays and Friday, Monika works at the store, which even sells penny candy. After it passed south of Route 50, the trail became very tranquil as it skirted North Bend State Park. There were three more tunnels including the Dick Bias Tunnel, named after the man considered the father of North Bend Rail Trail. After the village of Cornwallis, I sat down by a gravel road to rest my feet. A couple of minutes later, a voice startled me. An older gentleman in a dress shirt was standing behind me. It did not take me long to ask him to pray for America. Soon we were chatting about God and America. Then Roy gave a testimony about when he was in the hospital and saw and was spoken to by an angel. Roy's heart had three arteries that had 95% blockage. The doctor said that angioplasty was out of the question. He needed open heart surgery. Later an angel in the form of man came to his bedside and say that he was sent from God and that he did not need open heart surgery. When the doctor came to see Roy four days later, Roy was smiling and appeared to be in much better condition. Roy told him that his God informed him that he did not need open heart surgery. The doctor was so taken by Roy's testimony that he performed the angioplasty instead. God's healing power was so evident that day that the doctor and all the nurses that performed the angioplasty came to the Lord. Roy is a 76 year-old man, who does not keep his God a secret. He was holding a cup of coffee from the Dairy Queen that Nadine and I visited four hours ago. He told me that the two young ladies behind the counter were saved by his witnessing. When I asked him why he introduced himself to me, he said, "You looked like you needed to talk to someone." Roy would have witnessed to me if I were not a Christian. Roy knows that he serves an awesome God.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Mark 16:15

About twenty minutes after leaving Roy, a man and lady wearing a cowboy hat or should I say cowgirl hat, approached me on the trail. Soon Joe and Karen were walking and praying along the American Discovery Trail. Just ahead was the town of Cairo (pronounced Care-o), with a total population of 263 hearty souls. In the late 1800's and early 1900's Cairo was a boomtown with oil and gas as the chief reasons for the boom. It was said that Cairo had one of the highest per-capita incomes in the nation during those years. Now the oil is mostly gone and the towns that were built on oil are struggling to survive. To the west was the striving town of Volcano, which was one of the first towns to use natural gas in its streetlights. With more than a thousand residents, it boasted of its schools, churches, hotels, saloons, post office and opera house. That town is now a ghost town. The railroad helped keep Cairo alive, but in 1971 passenger service was terminated. Then in the 1980's freight service was discontinued. With the rail line dead and also possibly the future of the town, Dick Bias had the foresight to turn the former railroad into a recreational trail and the American Discovery Trail decided to use the North Bend Rail Trail as part of its trail. Because of the success of Lance Armstrong, cycling was become a huge pastime in America. With the North Bend State Park several miles to the north, whole families bike from the park to Cairo and back. A bike

shop, restaurant and new 1940's ice cream parlor opened. The Ritchie County Tourism & Visitors Bureau now occupies the old Bank of Cairo building. This was the town where I would meet Nadine to end my day of walking.

From the north the North Bend Rail Trail enters Cairo into the middle of a small town square. The railroad depot once sat there but was destroyed by a train derailment in the 1970's. To the right is Country Trail Bikes and to left the Hillbilly Gift Shop. Nadine was not parked in the town square or Main Street, so I walked into Country Trail Bikes and bought a soda from the proprietor, D. J. Allen. We immediately struck a friendship when I informed her of my prayer-walk on the American Discovery Trail and asked her to pray for America. D. J. is also a Christian, free-lance newspaper reporter and very involved with events in Cairo such as Pioneer Days. She asked if she could write an article about the walk and if I would be interested in leading a prayer-walk in Cairo. Of course I said yes.

On the trail I saw a beautiful butterfly. It was once a caterpillar, then a cocoon. Now it is new magnificent creature. When we ask Jesus into our heart, we become a new creature.



If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Others should be attracted to us by the light in which we carry. We should share that light by witnessing to others about our faith in Jesus. Just by asking a complete stranger to pray for America the town of Cairo may be changed. With prayer and Jesus, nothing is impossible.

To learn more about the One Nation Under God –Walk Across America, go to our web site, www.walkacrossamerica.info.

God bless,
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Total miles walked of the American Discovery Trail - 613 miles
Number of prayer walkers - 52 prayer walkers
Number of people praying for America - 40,556 prayer warriors

The prayer requests that Nadine and I heard were varied. From the pastors we heard for revival, commitment within the church and that the spirit of religion be diminished. Others asked that gambling be removed from West Virginia, unity of the churches, peace, more jobs in state and the removal of illicit drugs in the area.