

One Nation Under God - Walk Across America

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This spring the One Nation Under God – Walk Across America will continue its journey westward into Ohio. Although I live in the adjacent state of Pennsylvania, I know less about Ohio than I know about Texas, Colorado or many of the other states. I have been in Ohio four times in my life, twice at airports, once traveling through the state with my parents to California and last year for perhaps all of five minutes after walking across a bridge from Parkersburg, West Virginia into Belpre, Ohio. I know of the cities in Ohio, Toledo, Cleveland, Akron, Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati, but except for their sport stadiums and airports, I know very little about the cities. It is very unfortunate that we learn geography from the news media and sports. Until last month, who ever heard about the towns of Tallmansville and Melville, West Virginia? Mine disasters changed all of that. Generally, for a town to make the national news, it takes a tragedy, bad news.

Next month, I will be walking into Ohio, carrying the good news, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Presently Reformation Ohio, a partnership of local and national ministries, is committed to present the Gospel to more than one million people in Ohio, so at least 100,000 will accept Jesus as their savior in four years. Now that is good news!

Two hundred years ago, a man named John Chapman also brought the Gospel into Ohio when it became the 17th state. Before 1800, Ohio was part of the Northwest Territory and the scene of many battles between settlers and Indians. John, better known as Johnny Appleseed, assisted in creating a land centered on the Bible and the plow. John's father, Nathaniel Chapman, was a farmer and carpenter in Massachusetts and was one of the Minutemen, who fought at Concord, the second battle of the Revolutionary War. John Chapman was also a soldier, but he did not carry a rifle. He joined God's army when he embraced the Swedenborgian faith and became a missionary. In the late 1790's, he could be seen along the banks of the Potomac River picking seeds from the pumice of apples at cider mills. In 1800 armed with the Bible, a kettle, a plate, a spoon, apple seeds and little else not even a pair of shoes, he arrived in largely uninhabited Licking County, Ohio. There he first started developing a series of nurseries. He selected the land, fenced it in with fallen trees and sowed his seeds. He would then return to tend his trees and later to sell them. He often lived in a small hut, sleeping on a bed of leaves. Over several decades, he bought and sold many tracts of land while selling thousands of apple trees. While looking impoverished, John had more money than he ever needed. Along with apples, he also grew medicinal herbs and often gave them to the new settlers in the area.

Peacemaker was another facet of his life. He would visit the Indian villages and every cabin in the area in which he lived. By learning many Indian languages, he became friends with many tribes that held him in great regard because he lived to serve others. He would often give apple trees to those early settlers who could not afford to buy them. Apples were a practical necessity in the settlers' diets and were required by law to plant apple trees on their new homesteads the first year. He would also preach the Word of God.

How many Americans do we know of that have the Christian virtues of John Chapman? Without fear, he went alone into the wilderness armed with the Word of God. He planted seeds, nourished them and watched them blossom to bear fruit; not only with trees but also with people nourishing them with the Word of God. When his work was finished in one area, he would relocate to another area. He was blessed because God met all his needs because his needs were simple and not worldly. He lived to serve, not to be served.

God, please send more Johnny Appleseed's, into our cities, into our towns, into our work places, into our malls, into our universities, into our churches and into our homes. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

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 - 42,112 prayer warriors**