

One Nation Under God - Walk Across America

Vol. 5 No 4

April 2006

Less than one hour into our walk on March 31, Matt Misciagna said that I should write about his hiking boots that he just bought. Two months before, Matt, a member of Praise Fellowship in Downingtown, Pennsylvania, asked me about what weather to expect in Belpre, Ohio. Even though I walked 17 days in a row without rain, I told him to expect rain. Then Matt decided to go to a nationally well-known department store and buy a pair of hiking shoes that would match what he could afford. I also bought a pair of new hiking boots but from a shoe outlet store. Since I could afford to buy a more expensive pair of boots, I purchased a pair that was waterproof. I made a wise choice and Matt did not. His feet were soaked. Matt wore a waterproof hat and I wore a cheap poncho. Matt made a wise choice and I did not. His head was dry and my head, with the rest of my body, was soaked.

As we walked in the rain along Blennerhassett Avenue, we could see an exquisite mansion built on an island in the Ohio. This was the home of Harman Blennerhassett, a man who made a number of wrong choices that destroyed his name and his fortune. Son of a wealthy Irish landowner, Harman became an attorney. At the age of 27, his father passed away, leaving Harman very wealthy. He ceased practicing law and began practicing the art of squandering his unearned fortune. Rebuked for marrying his niece, he moved to America and built his mansion on this island in 1798. Many renowned people visited his home, including George Rogers Clark, King Charles X of France, John Chapman (Johnny Appleseed) and former US vice-president, Aaron Burr.



Burr is one of the most controversial figures in American history. He shot and killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. When tales of the Blennerhassett fortune reached Burr's ears, he headed to the island in hopes of finding an investor to finance his dreams of forming a new nation out of the western territories. Then President Thomas Jefferson issued a proclamation calling for the arrest of Burr and his followers, including Harman Blennerhassett. Arrested and imprisoned, Burr and Blennerhassett stood trial for high treason, but both were acquitted. The Blennerhassett's fortune was gone and he returned to Ireland, a poor man. He had made many wrong choices in his life.

Just when Matt and I thought that we could not get any wetter, we reached Washington Boulevard, the main street of Belpre. Now we had cars and trucks splashing us with more water. Now Matt was finding out the hard way that prayer walking across America is not always fun. The trail turned to the north into the countryside of southeastern Ohio. Matt headed back to my car parked at Civitan Belpre Park while I walked along a hilly country road. After three hours of walking in the rain, I decided to stop, find a motel, dry off, and eat a hot meal. Of course, it stopped raining once I got into my car. By the time we were eating dinner, we watched the sun set. That evening instead of watching television with Matt, I went for a walk along Washington Boulevard under a clear starlit sky. Within one mile

on Washington Boulevard were located five fast cash loan businesses (\$800 for 21 days) and a bingo parlor offering an instant drive thru bingo. After seeing the word, heroin, in a newspaper headline, it seems some people in the area were making bad choices. Drugs, gambling and quick loans are not a good combination.

The next day proved to be dryer and a lot more fruitful. After walking about a mile, I spotted two cars in a parking lot of Living Faith Church. The first Saturday of the month proved to be the day for the men's prayer breakfast and bible study. There were two people, Pastor Terry Cavanaugh and one other person, who made a choice to honor God that morning with prayer. Pastor Terry also invited me to have breakfast and asked how his church could help me. I gave him an answer and said that Matt and I would be back in the evening for their Relay for Life Spring Concert that the church was sponsoring.

Back on the road again, the trail turned left, then right onto Veto Lake Road. Of course, the road bordered Veto Lake. As I rounded the lake, a man called to me from the porch of his house, "Are you walking the ADT?"

A trail angel is a person who helps hikers. Tim Cowan is an example of one. Last year he allowed two hikers of the American Discovery Trail to set up camp in



his yard. Matt and I spent about thirty minutes talking with him. Tim is planning to walk the Maryland section of the American Discovery Trail. After showing him some photos of the trail that I have taken, he gave us his testimony. Tim knows the power of prayer. Tim had a very serious accident and went into a coma. His grandmother, a Christian, prayed and called other Christians to pray for the life of her grandson. After spending nine months in a hospital, Tim

recovered and gave his life to the Lord. In addition, Tim made a commitment to me to walk and pray along the ADT near his home. Praise God!

Next was the small town of Vincent and Lighthouse Family Worship Centre. After taking a photo of the small white church, a family came out of their fellowship hall and asked me if I wanted a free meal. Soon Matt and I were fellowshiping with Pastor Ron Williams and some members of his congregation. The meal was an outreach program to the community of Vincent, Ohio. I don't believe that the church had any idea that their offer of a free meal and fellowship would touch the lives of two men, Matt and I, who live about five hundred miles away and who were just walking by their church that day. With God, all things are possible.

That evening, Matt and I were back at Living Faith Church and the Relay for Life Spring Concert (Songs of Hope). There I saw God given talent being used to fight cancer. Featured were Crossroad Messengers, a five-man southern gospel band; the Living Faith Praise Team; Tonal Vision, a high school girl barbershop quartet; Spiritual Road, a country gospel duo; and Ashley Blackburn. Ashley did interpretive dance while using sign language to the songs, *I Can Only Imagine* and *We All Bow Down*.

During the intermission, I was politely surprised when Pastor Terry introduced me to the audience, asked them to talk to me and learn my ministry. Sitting in front of me was a woman wearing a Relay for Life shirt and a maroon beret. Sandy turned and began talking to me. We shared the reasons that we were both at the concert. Sandy's husband passed away two years ago from cancer. By her walking in the Relay of Life, the monies donated will make a difference in the future in the lives of those who now have cancer. One day through prayer and hard work, the word, cancer, may be eliminated from our vocabulary.

After attending Sunday service at Living Faith Church, Matt and I drove back to Downingtown, Pennsylvania. While Matt was driving, I quietly reflected on the events of our latest walk. The word, choice, was magnified. The Ohio State Government made a choice when it adopted its state motto, "*With God, All Things Are Possible.*" The United States Government made a choice when it adopted its motto, "*In God, We Trust.*" Pastor Terry, Tim, Pastor Ron, Ashley and Sandy made choices to serve Jesus, each in their own way. From the time, our alarm goes off in the morning we face thousands of choices. Do we turn the alarm off and get moving, or do we hit the snooze button, or do we turn the alarm off and go back to sleep? What do we wear and what do we eat? Some of our choices affect us for a moment, some for hours, some for days, some for years, some for a lifetime and some for eternity. Some of our choices affect only us, some affect our family, some affect our communities and some may even affect our nation.

Each step that we take is a choice. Is it along the straight and narrow path or do we veer to the left, or to right or even retreat? More important, each word that we speak is also a choice. Proverbs 18:21 states, "*Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it shall eat the fruit the thereof.*" Two thousand years ago, God made a choice and sent His only begotten Son to die on a cross on Calvary that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Jesus also made a choice to follow His Father's will and allowed Himself to be crucified for our sins. Today, if you have not accepted Jesus as your Savior, make the right choice now, confess with your mouth and believe with your heart that Jesus is your Lord and Savior. It is a choice that will last for eternity.

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

God bless,
Jim Shaner
jims19372@yahoo.com

One Nation Under God –Walk Across America
P.O. Box 72692
Thorndale, PA 19372-0692

Total miles walked of the American Discovery Trail - 626 miles
Number of prayer walkers - 54 prayer walkers
Number of people praying for America - 43,693 prayer warriors