

One Nation Under God - Walk Across America

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If the loneliest person in sports is the long distance runner, is the long distance prayer walker the loneliest person in ministry? On August 11 and 12, I realized that I was not the only person in America that was a need for true Christian fellowship outside the church environment. Many times when I fellowship with Christian men, the conversation turns to sports, computers or work. Very seldom does the conversation lead to the Word of God. If Christian men cannot talk about the Word to each other, how can the same men lead unbelievers to the Lord? Recently, I read that a friend asked Gandhi, "If you admire Christ so much, why don't you become a Christian?" It is said that he replied, "When I meet a Christian who is a follower of Christ, I may consider it." Did anybody witness to Gandhi? Apparently not!

For two days, I prayer walked with two followers of Christ, Alan Crum of Hazelgreen, West Virginia and Terry Harman of Downingtown, Pennsylvania. Both are veterans of the One Nation Under God – Walk Across America, totaling over three hundred miles between them; however this was the first time that they have met. During the two-day walk from Shinn Bridge, Washington County to near Burr Oak State Park in Morgan County, we joined the Buckeye Trail in the town of Chesterhill. The American Discovery Trail coincides with the Buckeye Trail from Chesterhill to Cincinnati before entering Kentucky.

A small concentration of Amish farms surrounds Chesterhill. Ohio is called home to more than 45,000 adult Amish. Unlike the Lancaster County area of Pennsylvania, where busloads of tourists gawk at the Amish like they were rare animals in a zoo, in this area there is very little tourism. The Amish are very conservative Christians with many of their beliefs identical to those of many Fundamentalist churches. There are differences. The most obvious is their appearance and lack of modern conveniences. The married men grow beards but not mustaches and dress in plain dark colored clothes. Women wear plain colored dresses with long sleeves and prayer caps. Since the Amish do not use electricity, they have no televisions, radios, computers or electric stoves. They manually pump well water or use windmills to draw water. They do not allow the owning of cars or farm tractors. Instead they use horses or mules to pull their farm equipment.

Most Amish do not evangelize. However, a few Amish groups have become active in evangelization.

The Amish believe that each congregation to remain autonomous with no centralized organization to enforce beliefs and behaviors. The services are held in the homes of the members with singing, prayer, a Bible Reading, a short and a main sermon.

The knowledge of one's salvation with the Amish is very different from most Christians. The Amish consider it arrogant or prideful to claim the certainty of salvation. As a result, an Amish believer dies not knowing that they will go to heaven.

On the second day of the walk through the rolling countryside, we noticed a sign for Shew's Orchard. Hoping that there was some cold apple cider at the store, we stopped. Unfortunately the apple cider season was still three weeks away, but

Pete Shew filled all our empty containers with cold water. He told us about an American Discovery Trail hiker that passed by last year. Pete also rents a cabin on this property to hikers of the Buckeye Trail and the American Discovery Trail for \$15 a night per person. If you wish to have more information on this cabin, go to www.shewsorchard.com.

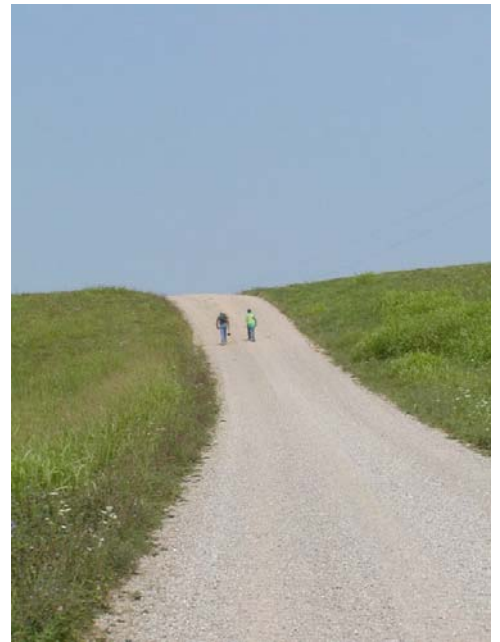
During the two days of walking, I was usually hiking behind Terry and Alan. Alan was very happy to talk to Terry, a graduate of Valley Forge Christian College. The Bible was their number one topic of discussion. Along the 24 miles of the trail that we hiked during the two days, we met only six people and passed only one church, which doors were locked. I wanted to talk to more people but that would wait until the homeward journey.

That night, Terry and I stayed at the Burr Oak State Park Campground while Alan proceeded home to West Virginia. On Sunday morning, we broke camp and drove northward to Interstate 70, then eastward. We decided to stop at the first church that we saw where people were entering. To do that, I drove off the Interstate and onto US Route 40 near Cambridge, Ohio. 15 minutes later, I found myself speaking to an adult Sunday school class of the Salvation Army in Cambridge on the prayer needs of America. I felt honored when Captain Robert Sears asked me to speak to a group of believers that I knew very little about except for their fundraising at Christmas. Then Captain Sears led the adult Sunday school class and the morning service, which I found to be similar to many Protestant services.

Who are the Salvation Army? William Booth, an ordained Methodist minister, preached salvation to the lost in London's East End, and founded the Salvation Army in 1878. The Army also became involved in the feeding and shelter of the hungry and homeless and in rehabilitation of alcoholics in this area. Today its outreach has expanded to more than one hundred countries. The Salvation Army is a conservative Christian group, but unlike the Amish who isolate themselves from the world, the Salvation Army reaches out to the poor, the downtrodden, and to the hopeless. Their social services now include disaster relief services, day care centers, services for the aging, AIDS education, shelters for battered women and children and substance abuse rehabilitation.

News along the American Discovery Trail

On June 3, Stuart Hamilton and Dave Toolan began their quest to walk the American Discovery Trail from east to west. Like the Salvation Army, they come from England. They, like me, look for fellowship along the trail. They find it in taverns while I find it in churches. Since taverns are open more hours than churches, they are quite successful in meeting people. We are all looking discovering America in our own way. I pray that they will succeed in their two-year journey across America. Their web site is www.walkingthestates.com. However, their site does contain some r-rated language, but is very a honest look from two



Englishmen on their views on politics, patriotism, religion, food any many other things in America.

This brings me to this question: why are churches in America generally closed more hours than they are open? I read about a small church in West Virginia that is open 24 hours a day for prayer, but that is an exception. If the church in America is to aid those that are lost or downtrodden, the doors of our churches must be open not only for prayer, but for fellowship as well.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be open.

Luke 11:9-10

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 - 694 miles
Number of prayer walkers - 58 prayer walkers
Number of people praying for America - 47,569 prayer warriors**