

One Nation Under God - Walk Across America

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There is a law in physics: all objects that are at rest tend to stay at rest and all objects that are in motion tend to stay in motion. It seems that this law may apply to churches and Christians as well, but with churches and Christians being in motion does not always mean traveling forward. It can mean going backwards or going in circles.

With churches going forward does not necessarily mean that its attendance or membership is increasing. Dynamic churches are ones that have its membership growing spiritually and touch their communities, their states, their nation and even the world in a positive way. Dynamic churches teach the whole Word of God, not just the words that will tickle a person's ears. A dynamic church will preach holiness, a word, which is not spoken often enough in our services in America, and is not understood by many church attendees. Too often in America, a church allows the world to come in and affect it, instead of the church going out and affecting the world. A church can never go forward for a long period of time unless it teaches its youth, the future generation, who will one day be leading that church. A dynamic church will send people out, so other churches may grow. A church that goes forward will never compete with other churches but will join forces with other churches to advance the kingdom of God. And last but not least, a dynamic church prays and knows the power of prayer.

There are many different kinds of people that attend church. The first, I named the pew warmer. He or she attends Sunday service because of tradition or obligation to someone other than God. That person is very stationary in their relationship with God. He seldom reads the bible at home.

The second, I named the Christian couch potato. He or she attends church, helps at some church functions but spends much of his leisure time being entertained by television, music, sports or video games and seldom interacts with people outside his employment and church. He rarely helps the community outside of his church.

Then there are the rollercoaster Christians. You can see them whenever an evangelist or a Christian performer is in town. They can be very visible inside the church walls. They may get an emotional high during a commentary worship service but during the week the trials of life can cause a depression. Their relationship to our Lord is based on emotions and incidents during their life not the Word of God.

There are the doers. Often they are behind the scenes helping in the church and in their communities. They may type the church bulletin, work the sound system, help in children's church or even mop the floor. In their town, they may serve on the school board, coach a little league team, shovel snow for an elderly neighbor or baby-sit for a single mother. These are the true Christians who can make a difference in someone life's in a world outside of the four walls of a church.

It may seem that I am very critical of many Christians. I am not. Almost all Christians at one time or another have been stationary in their spiritual walk in life, backslid or traveled in circles. Once I was a Christian couch potato and a rollercoaster Christian. Even today, I may still be a rollercoaster Christian, but my

drops are farther apart and not as steep and long. We need to encourage other Christians. How? Invite them to your house for a meal. Go to a ball game with them. Fellowship with them and get to know them and their family. Our Lord made us in His image, not to condemn others who were made in His image, but to show them love.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it does not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

During the last four years, I met a number of outstanding Christians along the America Discovery Trail. These new found friends are doers of the word. The following three men are fine examples of Christians, whom we can all learn from. They live in different states but all live near the American Discovery Trail. They are all married to a wonderful wife and are all united by the blood of the Lamb.

Since meeting this man, he has encouraged me more than anyone. On March 14, 2004, Nadine and I attended the Sunday morning service at Keyser Assembly of God. Pastor Eric asked us to speak about our mission. We both spoke and neither of us asked the congregation for volunteers to walk with us. Pastor Eric, instead of preaching that Sunday morning, started a prayer service. During this time, Steve Herrell asked if he could walk with me and gave me his phone number. After the service, Pastor Eric volunteered the intercessory prayer team to walk with me, our next time in West Virginia.

During the next prayer walk, six members of the prayer team joined Steve, Terry Harman, a friend from Downingtown, Pennsylvania, and myself that day. One by one, members of the prayer team ceased walking, but not Steve. He walked 13 miles that day and volunteered for the next walk. During the next walk, I asked Steve hoping to hear a profound answer, "Why are you walking with me?"

His answer was short and to the point, "Because you need help." Help is one thing that Steve does best. Steve has walked 63 miles with me, pointing out wildlife, buying me a meal while I was short on cash and just being a friend. Nadine and I have stayed at his home in Rawlings, Maryland several times during our trips. Steve along with his wife, Jeanne, are now close friends and we phone each other about once a month. I have been amazed how the America Discovery Trail and the prayer walk are bringing people together.

Have you ever heard of a successful Christian businessman in the Appalachia area of West Virginia? That sounds like an oxymoron. Nadine and I during one of our trips stayed at the Smoke Hole Caverns Log Motel near Cabins, West Virginia. The proprietors of the motel are Jerry Hedrick and his wife, Janet. Jerry not only owns the motel, he also owns the Caverns, a gift shop, a second motel near Seneca Rocks and the Smoke Hole Log Cabin Resort. He also is a guide and outfitter to the fishermen, hunters, hikers and rock climbers that visit the area.

The one thing that makes Jerry different than most motel owners is that on Sunday mornings he invites the guests to attend church with him at Cabins Assembly of God. Jerry proved it by driving me to the church in his Cadillac. The

church is nestled between the mountains with the south branch of the Potomac River flowing past the back of the church. Jerry introduced us to the congregation during the service. After church, we left with Jerry to go back to the motel and ate at their gift shop, West Virginia's Largest/Souvenir Gift Shop. Our meal was "on the house." Jerry and Janet Hedrick are precious hosts. If you are ever in their neck of the woods, please visit them. You'll be sure glad you did.

We picture a motivational speaker as a young energetic man on a stage of an auditorium. At the Hocking Hills Regional Welcome Center in Logan, Ohio, Nadine and I met a man, who shatters that mold. Jerry Smith is mostly confined to a wheelchair. Once Jerry was a healthy man, who worked in sales. He was also an agnostic. One day, Jerry was rushed to the hospital with two aneurysms, one on both right and left sides of his brain. For five months, he stayed in a deep coma. Doctors gave up all hope on his condition and he was transferred to a different hospital, where after seven days he awoke. Jesus spoke to him and he felt a warm sensation inside his body. Although paralyzed on his left side, Jerry is the most joyful person I know because he knows our Lord. He knows that he would rather be in a wheelchair and headed for heaven, then have a healthy life and go in the opposite direction. With 40% of his brain dead, Jerry can still talk, eat, stand and even take several small steps. He is the only American alive today who survived two brain aneurysms. Today, he works as a greeter and in sales at Wal-Mart in Logan. In his spare time, he is a volunteer at the Welcome Center. The one thing that Jerry does is to be a full time witness for our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Just like the pew warmer, the Christian couch potato and the rollercoaster Christian, neither Steve Herrell, Jerry Hedrick or Jerry Smith are not perfect. Neither are you or I. We all have flaws and we need to remember that He is the potter and we are the clay. He is still working on you and me.

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 - 731 miles
Number of prayer walkers - 58 prayer walkers
Number of people praying for America - 47,815 prayer warriors