

One Nation Under God - Walk Across America

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It's raining, so this must be Ohio. After meeting Bill Binder, an avid hiker of the Appalachian Trail and The Continental Divide Trail, I walked just two hundred yards into Wayne National Forest from Salem Road, when the rain commenced. As I put on raingear, an old saying was brought to mind: raindrops are God's tears. In less than 48 hours, I would be leading a prayer walk in Logan. Two weeks before, I went to Pastor Bruce Mulberry of Praise Fellowship and asked for wisdom for the upcoming prayer walk. He gave me a simple two-word answer, "Be yourself." As I walked, I asked myself, "Who am I?"

I know I am a child of the Living God, Jesus Christ. Some people called me a Joshua, since I am taking ground step by step across America; but four years ago, a woman from Coatesville, Pennsylvania, Sister Cora, called me a Jeremiah. Can one be both a Joshua and Jeremiah? By Saturday, I would know the answer.

Because of the long drive to Ohio, time permitted me to prayer walk only two miles that day. My wife, Nadine, was waiting for me and we drove to Shawnee Restaurant for dinner. Soon we would meet our friend, Shelia Hatfield, again. Besides being the cook/waitress/manager/dishwasher/owner of the restaurant, Shelia also makes deliveries. Since the sun was now shining on the village of Shawnee and Shelia left to deliver a meal, I left the restaurant to take some photos of the town. As I was photographing the Shawnee Village Hall, where the offices of the mayor and police department are located along with the town jail, a man called to me. Jim Proctor, a former coal miner, asked if I wanted to see the Shawnee Ohio Coal Mine Museum. He drove me back to the restaurant where Nadine joined us even though our meals were waiting on the table. Just outside of town, a simple building serves as the museum. Inside the building, Jim along with his friend introduced us to the life of the coal miner. Black and white photos showed teams of dogs, goats or oxen pulling the coal cars from the mines. Mining equipment adorned the walls, some not unlike the equipment that Jim first used in the mines at age eleven. This probably occurred during World War II when manpower in America was very limited. Jim Proctor and many like him are keeping alive the history of America with their passion of times past.

Back at the restaurant, our meals were waiting. After quickly eating my meal, I overheard our waitress telling a customer, who was a nurse, that she had leukemia. The nurse responded by telling her about the power of prayer. Then I heard a small still voice inside of me. Soon I found myself standing alongside of waitress and asking, "Would you like me to pray for you?" Then I told them why I was in the area. Before I started to pray, Shelia and then Nadine stood beside of me. Too often we pray for people in church or in a hospital and nowhere else. Jesus can hear our prayers from the deepest coalmine to the highest mountaintop.



That evening we met Pastor Cheryl Miller at the Fathers House in Logan. The Father's House would be our home away from home for four days. After unpacking the car, we awaited the Thursday evening prayer and worship service. As church members arrived, a woman approached me and told me her name, Meriam and that she missed the service last October, which Nadine and I attended. Later Meriam and Pastor Cheryl led worship. After the service, Pastor Cheryl, who invited forty churches to join in the prayer walk on Saturday, told me that there was a conflict. She never received the schedule for the events for the National Day of Prayer and the other churches were holding a prayer walk on Sunday. Just then the wale of sirens came from the police station across the street. As lightning streaked across the sky, Meriam told Nadine and I that it was tornado warning. After everybody ran to his or her cars in a driving rain, we were alone in a strange building, but we had no fear. I remembered in my March newsletter that I wrote that the Father's House is a safe house. Later a tornado touched down near Zanesville, but Logan was spared.

Friday morning, Nadine and I prayed in the sanctuary before driving to the Shawnee area again. This time I walked eastbound, so Nadine could pick me up at the same place as the day before. The walk through the forest was fairly uneventful until I missed a turn and ended up on a bridle trail that wasn't going my way. After approximately 45 minutes, I found the trail again. While walking I kept praying about what I was going to say to the



group of prayer walkers the next day. Who was I suppose to be, Joshua or Jeremiah? By 3 o'clock, Nadine and I headed back to Logan. Nadine told me that Shelia Hatfield wanted us to eat at her restaurant again. With the bottom of my jeans covered with mud from the bridle trail, I told Nadine that I needed to wash up and change my clothing before eating. At the Father's House, Meriam left a message stating that she and her husband, Joe Christman, invited us to dinner. She left a phone number and gave me a choice of four places. The events, which followed that weekend, were largely dependent on my choice, a steak house near Lake Logan. After we ordered our dinners, a friend of the Christmans saw them and started conversation. During this time, we learned of the unfortunate death of the Christmans' youngest son. As soon as the gentleman left our table, tears freely flowed down Meriam's cheeks as she made known the tragedy of her son's death. Engaged to be married this month and with an IQ of 190, his future appeared very bright. Last September, her son and his friend were thrown from the their vehicle in an accident. According to the coroner, her son survived the crash for only one minute before passing from this world into the next, while the other young man survived.

There are two things that can pierce my heart, a child's cry and a mother's tears. I wanted to wipe the tears from her eyes, but Meriam continued by saying that they never heard their youngest son make a confession of faith and for three days they did not know where their son's soul was. Then the unexpected happened, someone told them that the first person at the scene of the accident was a minister. He ran to their son first and led him to the Lord before he passed away. A mother's prayers for her son's salvation were answered.

On Saturday April 28 at noon the service started at the Father's House with Joe and Meriam, who are also gospel-recording artists, leading worship. Their pace was as fast as a revival tent meeting worship; singing six songs in a row without pausing, then restarting to sing more songs. Then Pastor Cheryl spoke for about ten minutes before I was called forward. The Nickel Mines tragedy last October happened seven days before I spoke the first time at the Father's House. This time, the American flags were at half-mast because of the Virginia Tech tragedy. I opened by saying that many Americans ask why did this disaster happen. Then I played a song from a CD that was in my car CD player the day of the tragedy. Written in 1997, White Ribbon Day was the name of the song for a day of prayer in Canada for abused women. This adapted version had sound bits added of President Franklin D. Roosevelt radio address announcing the bombing of Pearl Harbor, President George W. Bush on 9/11, President John F. Kennedy with his Inaugural Address and Dr. Martin Luther King, *I Have a Dream*, speech. The song starts with these words; *How can it be that God is Love? When blood rolls down upon our land....*

I glanced at the congregation when a voice from the past on the CD said these words; *"Prayer should not be the last resort. It is the first choice."* The voice was President Kennedy. By this time most of women in the sanctuary were weeping. After the song was over, I read from the Bible, 2 Chronicles 7:14:

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Today too many Christians in America seek God's hand and not His face. No longer in our nation are our children safe in our schools because we have allowed Jesus to be taken out of our schools; and no longer is a child safe in its mother's womb because we have allowed the sin of abortion. While our sons and daughters are dying in faraway lands, our Congress argues whether to support the war effort. In addition, our country is now redefining the words, marriage and family. We need to repent and return to prayer.

After I was finished, we formed a circle and anointed each other with oil. While in the sanctuary, many became Jeremiahs while shedding tears. As we left the sanctuary, we all became Joshuas since we were about to reclaim land for our Lord. First we divided into groups to prayer walk around the local schools. Nadine and I were teamed with Joe and Meriam. We drove to Union Furnace Elementary School, where we prayed at the main entrance and consecrated the school grounds. Then Nadine and I prayer walked around the school and anointed

each doorpost. Next we drove to the construction site of the new Logan High School, where we prayed at the construction gate then we returned to the church.

Back at the Father's House, we divided into three groups; one to pray at the church and prepare dinner, one group led by Pastor Cheryl to prayer walk in the area to the east of the church; and one group led by me to prayer walk in the area to the west of the church. Joe and Meriam were again teamed with me along with one other member of the Father's House and a member of World Harvest Church from Columbus. Nadine went with Pastor Cheryl and several members of the Father's House. Our group encompassed the Hocking Court House with prayer before traveling eastward again. As we passed a restaurant, a well-groomed older gentleman sitting at an outdoor table said hello to me. I asked him if he needed prayer. He replied yes and the rest of the group began to talk to him. John, the member from World Harvest, asked if he had the assurance that if he were to die today he would go to heaven. His answer was no and began to tell of his good works. We tried to tell him that good works alone will not open the gates of heaven, but his heart did not receive our words. We sowed seeds; and someone else would have to do the harvesting.

We continued our prayer walk by turning northward at the next street corner. Soon the sight of 207 red, silver and blue pinwheels would break my heart. The pinwheels represented the cases of child abuse in Hocking County during the year 2005. Since most cases of child abuse are not reported, how many children are abused each year in America? We as a nation need to repent.

Back at church, we had dinner. During the fellowship, Pastor Cheryl's daughter mentioned that tonight was 'Get High Night.' That is what the locals call prom night. The prom was held at Logan Middle School, one of the schools, which we prayer walked. Did our prayers make a difference with the youth of Logan? The answer lies in James 5:16. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

In the Sunday morning service, Joe and Meriam again led worship. During worship, Meriam stalled the singing and began to weep. The weeping turned into travailing. Through the tears, she told the congregation about the gentleman, whom we met the day before at the outdoor restaurant, who rejected salvation. Heaven is an open door. Whosoever believes in their heart and confesses with his mouth that Jesus is Lord will have eternal life with the Father. Meriam helped sow the seed of life and also helped to water the seed with her tears. Later during a meal and fellowship after the service, Meriam's laughter was heard throughout the building. Though the trials of life during the last year were very heavy, the joy of the Lord is Meriam's strength.

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose until the heaven: a time to weep, and a time to laugh.

Ecclesiastes 3:1&4

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Psalm 126:5-6

News along the American Discovery Trail

Debbie Schachner, a missionary to Kenya, is now walking eastbound in southern Illinois. She has already met her goal of raising \$47,000 for a library in Kenya. Later this year, I hope that we will be walking together.

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 - 747 miles
Number of prayer walkers - 58 prayer walkers
Number of people praying for America - 48,320 prayer warriors**