

# **One Nation Under God - Walk Across America**

While at a church picnic in our hometown of Downingtown, Pennsylvania last summer, Nadine and I learned a valuable lesson in Christianity in America.

While prayer walking through my neighborhood several days before, a woman from a local church recognized me and invited Nadine and I to a church picnic. Since we knew the pastor and many members of that congregation, it was an easy decision to attend. It was a time to renew old acquaintances and start new ones. As in many church picnics, there was an abundance of food to eat such as hot dogs, hamburgers, cakes, pies and many other goodies. During the time that we were waiting in line for our food, I overheard a woman inquire if anyone saw one of the four children whom she brought to the picnic. The missing nine-year-old boy was her neighbor and not a member of the church. I like most of people at the picnic assumed that the boy would be quickly found and did not go searching for the lost boy. Why should I go looking for him? I am not responsible for him and do not even know what he looks like.

Nearly an hour later, while sharing my testimonies of the prayer walk with a member of the congregation, the woman returned still looking for the lost boy and asked the pastor for help. This time the pastor, Nadine and I stood up and began searching for the boy. The boy's younger sister joined the pastor and me, while Nadine searched alone.

Located near the center of Downingtown, Kerr Park is not a particularly large park. The park is bordered on the north by a dense wooded area, on the south by a busy street, on the east by a strip-mall and to the west by the east branch of the Brandywine Creek. Scattered in the northern part of the park are picnic pavilions and a fenced in playground. In the southern part are a softball field and tennis courts. A large grass field occupies the south west corner. Since the area is flat, one can view nearly the whole park from nearly any vantage point. While Nadine began to walk clockwise around the park, pastor and I checked the rest room first but to no avail. I had an intuition that a boy would find the creek a very interesting area for play, but first we went to the playground. The pastor asked the little girl if her older brother was here. She shook her head and politely said no.

Next we walked towards the Brandywine Creek. At first we saw no one, then the tops of two fishing rods. As we approached that spot, I saw Nadine walking towards us. We converged at the bank of the Brandywine to see some people fishing and a boy matching the description of the lost boy. He was having a good time catching minnows for the fishermen. Quickly the boy put on his sneakers and joined us, As we turned to walk back to the picnic pavilion, another person walked toward us. He was a policeman. He told us that he was about to call the local fire department to have them join the search. Now the frightened little boy was taken by the policeman to his guardian. Unfortunately the lost boy did not get a prodigal son welcoming.

Why am I telling you this? First and foremost, I heard the cry for help and did not respond the first time. I do know that not all the people at the picnic knew that there a possible emergency (the pastor was not at the picnic at that time), but I

do know many people did hear the call for help. Also since I did not help the first time, I do not know if anybody responded to the first call for help.

Second, would more people search if that child was a five-year-old? I hope so. Would more people search if that child was the pastor's five-year-son? I know the answer would have been yes.

Third, if the firemen were called to search, how would Christians look to the eyes of an unbelieving fireman?

Fourth, I felt very sorry for the young boy. He did not know that he was lost. He was just having fun. He did need a prodigal son welcoming. The scared boy needed comforting first and the discipline at a later time.

The church in America needs to open its eyes and ears to the events that are happening around us and not leave everything for the pastor to do. We are called to a lost and dying world, and the lost do not know that they are lost. We need to comfort the lost and not condemn them. Where are the lost? They are in our cities; they are in our towns; they are in our schools and places of employment. They are even in our churches. They are our neighbors. Please open your eyes and help.

*Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you. That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which is lost. How think ye? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.*

Matthew 18:10-14

### News

My monthly newsletters will discontinue until I start walking again which will be in late April or early May. The reason for this departure from my normal monthly newsletter is that I am attempting to write two books. The first book will be about Debbie Schachner's walk across America and her work in Kenya. We can all learn from this remarkable woman's faith and sense of purpose in her life.

The second book will be about prayer walking from my point of view, a long distance prayer walker. I have never written a book so keep me in your prayers.

To learn more about the One Nation Under God –Walk Across America, go to our web site, [www.walkacrossamerica.info](http://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