

# Peace Pilgrim Keeps Walking After 21 Years, 25,000 Miles

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You may see her along any roadside walking, just walking. That's what the little gray-haired woman in a jogging outfit has done for 21 years, and she stopped counting the miles 10 years ago when she clocked 25,000 miles—

walked for the cause of peace.

Her vow: "I shall remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace, walking until I am given shelter and fasting until I am given food."

And Peace Pilgrim (she refuses to reveal her former name) is not kidding.

She is now on her sixth pilgrimage that will walk her through all 48 continental states by 1977.

But Peace doesn't see herself as a beggar panhandling from a street corner. When she spoke to the Women's Fellowship of First Presbyterian Church, Fullerton, she said, "I never accept money. I never take collections. I just walk until I'm given shelter and I fast until I'm given food."

Her five-foot-four-inch frame doesn't show a lack of food, especially for one who burns up more calories and shoes than most people. (She gets about 1,500 miles to a pair of shoes).

When she ran up on stage to begin her talk she looked like a Barnum and Bailey side show performer in her jogging outfit. "My dear friends, most of you new friends, I love you all and am so glad to be with you," she said in a barker's voice.

But then a distinct, trained voice, slowly enunciating her words, came forth, as she took a poised position on the stage.

## TRADITIONAL JOURNEY

"A pilgrimage is a traditional journey," she said with clear blue eyes penetrating her audience. "In the middle ages the pilgrims went out as the disciples (of Jesus) did—without any money, without food and on faith. That is how I travel.

"I do not belong to any organization, and by the way," she said with a pause, "you see me and all of my earthly possessions." She stood with outstretched arms showing her blue slacks and matching children's-type thick-soled canvas shoes. Out of pockets encircling her waist she pulled a plastic black comb, collapsible toothbrush, ballpoint pen, unanswered letters and a map she had squirreled away. "See how free I am," she said with a grin.

"Let me tell you that you are in a much better position to talk with people when they approach you than when you approach them. So that's the job my tunic does," she said showing the white lettering on her shirt. On the front of her tunic is stitched "Peace Pilgrim" and the back says "25,000 Miles On Foot For World Peace."

## SPEAKING IS PRIORITY

"I walk intermittently now and put speaking first." If I were a missionary I would say that my mission is the 48 states, and that is because this country is so influential." But Peace has also visited and spoken in Canada and Mexico.

She accepts speaking engagements at college campuses, with church groups, "or with just anyone who wants to talk about peace. My record is seven sermons on one Sunday."

The little lady with silver-white hair pulled back into a ponytail said her pilgrimage began 36 years ago. "I had money and things, and I learned that that didn't make me happy. (She never details her past life, but one woman Peace stayed with said the pilgrim told her she came from a wealthy family and had a college education). I stopped living to get and started living to give. And my life just blossomed out," she said.

## BLESSING OF HEALTH

"The first thing I obtained was the blessing of health. I haven't had a cold or headache since," she said with Jack LaLanne enthusiasm.

"But I didn't start talking about inner peace until 15 years later when I obtained it. In that 15 years I had to spiritually grow up."

The beginning of her growth was an "absolute resolution to GIVE my life without reserve. We are all cells in the same human body. You must see yourself that way. Then you know that anything that hurts anybody in any way hurts everyone. Then you want to work for the good of the whole."

She said that during those 15 years she began to "put my religious beliefs, the teachings of Jesus, into practice. As people, we do not lack in beliefs. We lack in living them." She wanted to put all her beliefs to the test to see the result of living them.

An example, she said, is the belief that it is more blessed to give than to receive. After 36 years of giving herself to people she said, "Look at me, I'm rich; I have health, happiness and inner peace, things you couldn't buy if you were a billionaire. And believe it or not, I have trouble remaining a penniless pilgrim. That must be a spiritual truth, too—if you aren't interested in the stuff then you can't get rid of it. I can refuse money if you offer it to me, but when I open my mail I sometimes find it in there. But I don't use it for myself. I use it for mailing literature."

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