

# CHATTANOOGA NEWS-FREE PRESS

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## 'Peace Pilgrim' Here To Offer Her Message To Students



**PILGRIM VISITS UTC** — Peace Pilgrim, who has traveled the country by foot the past 23 years, speaks with UTC students, from left, B.J. Odom, Joyce Cooke, Howard Wright and Phyllis Haley. (Staff photo by Robin Hood)

By **BARRY PARKER**  
Staff Writer

Bringing only the clothes on her back and a philosophy of how to live in peace, a silver-haired, bright-eyed lady known simply as Peace Pilgrim arrived in Chattanooga Monday to talk with high school and college students.

"I'm doing all one little person can do for peace," explained the much-traveled Pilgrim who has criss-crossed the

country on foot seven times the past 23 years.

Since beginning her pilgrimage on Jan. 1, 1953, she has spoken to thousands of groups and individuals on how nations can resolve conflicts and how people can find inner peace.

She preaches that resolving a conflict is a more noble objective than gaining an advantage and that being concerned that you do not offend is more important than worry about being

offended.

Wearing slacks, shirt, a short tunic with the inscription "Peace Pilgrim" on the front and "25,000 Miles On Foot For Peace" (a distance she long ago exceeded) on the back, the penniless Pilgrim said she walks until given shelter and fasts until given food.

"A pilgrim's job is to rouse people from their apathy and

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make them think," she told a small group drawn up in a circle at UTC's University Center.

Making her fifth visit to Chattanooga, she spoke earlier in the day to three classes at Brainerd High School.

### "CELLS IN SAME BODY"

She said people should realize they are "all cells in the same body of humanity. We are all equal in each other's eyes, and God's eyes."

She believes inner peace is attained when the struggle ceases between the self-centered nature and the view of the individual as a part of the whole.

"Life is a series of choices," she said at UTC, "and I've chosen freedom from unnecessary possessions, vices, worthless acts and negative thinking."

Peace Pilgrim believes peaceful coexistence can be taught through culture, declaring no one has ever been harmed by a Hopi Indian or an Amish farmer.

### STARTED YEARS AGO

Her pilgrimage on foot began in the midst of the Korean War and the McCarthy hearings, what she called "a time of both great fear and apathy."

"War was considered a natural part of life. I felt like a voice in the wilderness," she said.

Now she notes public sentiment toward war has changed and "I'm on the popular side."

Refusing to divulge specifics of her life before beginning her peace mission, the pilgrim did note she was born poor but had reached a position of affluence.

### FRIENDS' THOUGHTS

"When I told friends I was about to change my lifestyle and walk across the country for peace, they thought I had lost my senses," she said.

She chose to travel by foot, she said, because walking is a prayer discipline. "Now I have learned to pray without ceasing."

She said the tunic, a walking advertisement of her mission, draws people who "are either interested in peace or have a good lively curiosity."

She said she speaks only to

those persons who approach her and addresses church, school and community groups only by invitation.

### MIDDLE CLASS HELPERS

While she has been given food and lodging by the rich and poor, most of her benefactors are middle class people "with an extra room in the house."

She said the Golden Rule has profoundly affected her life. She has vowed to remain a wanderer "until mankind has learned the way of peace."

Peace Pilgrim said people should never underestimate the power of love and positive attitude in dealing with others.

"We can destroy ourselves with negative thinking," she said. "I just think about the best that can happen. I fear nothing and expect only good."

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