

# 'Inner Peace' Keeps Pilgrim Walking

by Gene Forrest

She is a small, silver-haired woman clad in a light blue sweat-shirt with "25,000 MILES ON FOOT FOR PEACE" written on the back.

She calls herself "Peace Pilgrim," and since 1953, has walked in all 50 states, 10 Canadian provinces, and parts of Mexico, averaging 25 miles a day.

Peace Pilgrim said she finished walking her 25,000 mile journey about 11 years ago, but she continues to walk, saying: "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."

## Walks as a Prayer

Peace Pilgrim says she walks as a prayer and as a chance to inspire others to pray and work with her for peace. She says she believes this is a crisis period in history, and that we must choose between "a nuclear war of annihilation and a golden age of peace."

"Unless we, the people of the world, awake from our lethargy and push firmly and quickly away from chaos, all that we cherish will be destroyed in the holocaust which will descend."

"This is the way of peace: Overcome evil with good, and falsehood with truth, and hatred with love. The Golden Rule will do as well."

"When we disregard these laws in any walk of life, chaos results."

When she was asked where her energy for walking comes from, Peace Pilgrim replies, "I walk on the endless energy that comes from inner peace."

"Most of us remain immature because we do not fully grow up. We make an attempt at emotionally growing up, but we do not even attempt the spiritual growing up, which takes us from the self-centered life into the life which sees us in proper perspective as part of the whole and works for the good of the whole."

"It was doing this growing up that prepared me for my pilgrimage," she said. "When I started out, my hair had turned

silver, and my friends thought I had taken leave of my senses."

## Preparation Period

"There was a 15 year preparation period which took me from my life of money and things and brought me into a life of giving instead of getting. Then after another 15 years, it took me into a life of inner peace, when I felt guided or called to begin my pilgrimage of peace."

Peace Pilgrim said she has seen some encouraging changes since she started out. "At that time, the Korean war was on, and a Congressional committee was considering people guilty until proven innocent. People accepted war as a necessary part of life."

"Now, I'm on the popular side. At that time, there was little interest in the inner search for peace. Now, everyone is interested in the search for inner peace. But I would keep on working even if I didn't see fruit because all good effort eventually bears good fruit."

## Bicentennial Suggestions

She said she had two suggestions for the bicentennial: to establish a peace department in our government, and to ask the United Nations

to give us a world language as a bicentennial birthday present to be taught as a second language.

"I speak to college classes in sociology, psychology, and philosophy on human potential and society potential," she said.

Peace Pilgrim spoke at Fort Sanders Presbyterian Church Tuesday at the request of Epworth Ministry.

Peace Pilgrim came to Knoxville from Nashville and is on her way to Kentucky—on foot.