



(Photo by Jim Burton)

Peace Pilgrim's Progress

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I GET ACQUAINTED WITH FLORIDA

If you want to get acquainted with a state try walking 1,000 miles, which is what I did in Florida. It was a continuous walk, beginning in Pensacola and - after much zigzagging to touch all the large centers of population - ending in Miami. In the beginning I got acquainted with the Gulf Coast - where the water is such a beautiful green and the sand is so white it looks like snow. Toward the end I got acquainted with the Indian River - a wide, salt water river separated by a sandbar from the sea. In between I got acquainted with a variety of lakes and streams and springs. I got acquainted with the abundant water birds - especially the graceful white herons with long black legs. I got acquainted with numberless pine trees and palm trees and palmettos, and with the flexible banyan tree which can climb a palm tree like a vine or put down roots from high branches. I got acquainted with air plants. One of them like the top of a pineapple, but the one you cannot fail to notice is Spanish moss. Here a holly tree is so festooned with silvery Spanish moss and so laden with bright red berries that it looks like a Christmas tree. There a deciduous tree is so hung with Spanish moss and so covered with clumps of mistletoe that you do not realize it has lost its leaves. I got acquainted with sandspurs - but that was not my first acquaintance with them, as they are widely scattered throughout the country. If it had not been for the freezes I would have gotten acquainted with more flowers, but there were some and they were lovely. Most important of all, I got acquainted with lots of friendly people, both natives and visitors. If you want to meet people from all over the United States and Canada, just visit Florida in the winter.

IF YOU LIKE VARIETY

One thing I can truthfully say about Florida weather - it is changeable! It reminds me of the rhyme about the little girl with the curl right in the middle of her forehead. You recall that when she was good she was very, very good, but when she was bad she was horrid. I'm afraid Florida showed its worst side while I was there, for there were three bad freezes - which were tragic for the farmers and the migrant workers. In spite of this I remember Florida weather favorably, for the good days were just about perfect. The evening of the first freeze I was surprised to see that folks had turned on their lawn sprinklers. In the morning grass and bushes were coated with ice, which, strange as it may seem, saved them from the killing frost. I did see some frozen citrus groves, but I noticed no shortage of citrus fruit. All through Florida I feasted on delicious oranges and grapefruit, and if no grove was handy there always seemed to be fruit by the roadside which had rolled off the trucks. A scientist I was talking to explained that the unusual weather was due to nuclear explosions, and he said that if we survive we will look back upon these times as a period of madness.

HOW SIMPLY CAN WE LIVE

Our physical needs depend somewhat on the climate in which we live, the state of our health, etc. In general we will need a shelter to protect us from the elements, a fire - a blanket - some clothing for warmth, pure air and pure water and sufficient food for sustenance. Material possessions much in excess of our needs tend to become burdensome. There are, of course, needs beyond the physical. These often involve little or no expenditure of money, but this is not always so. For instance, there are

some people whose lives are not complete unless they can listen to good music or play some musical instrument. While suggestions may be made as to simple living, simplifying our lives is an individual problem for every one of us.

A ROADSIDE EXPERIENCE

A fine car stopped, and a well-dressed couple began to talk with me. I started to explain to them what I was doing. Suddenly, to my amazement, the man burst into tears. He said, "Because I have done nothing for peace, you have to do so much!"

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

A minister I know spent some time in Russia. He saw no Russian children playing with guns. He visited the large toy stores in Moscow, and discovered that there were no toy guns or other toy implements of destruction for sale.

THOUGHTS TO LIFT SPIRITS

Love is the greatest power on earth. It conquers all things. One with love has more strength than an army, for he need not subdue his adversary - he transforms him.

The entirely self-centered life is not worth living. If what you are doing will no benefit others besides yourself it is not worth doing.

Judging others will avail nothing and injure you spiritually. Only if you can inspire others to judge themselves will anything worthwhile have been accomplished.

When will we learn to try to help instead of hurt? Insofar as we hurt others we hurt ourselves, and insofar as we help others we help ourselves.

In our spiritual development we are often required to pull up roots many times and to close many chapters in our lives, until we are no longer attached to any material thing and can love all people without any attachment to them.

If you want to teach people, young or old, you must start where they are - at their level of understanding. If you perceive that they are already beyond your level of understanding, let them teach you. Since steps toward spiritual advancement are taken in such varied order, most of us can teach one another.

The trend in the world is toward togetherness - toward cooperation - and youth feels this trend. For instance, I know of a religious group which was divided into two parts. To the young folks this seemed most unfriendly, and they began to meet together. As a result the division no longer exists.

The number of peacemakers is increasing - and we are always together in spirit - praying and working together for peace across the miles between.

THOUGHTS FOR OUR WORLD

Nuclear weapons must be controlled - this demon of destruction that we have unleashed must be harnessed - that men may live!

Wisdom demands that we stop preparing to wage a war which would eliminate mankind and start

preparing to wage a war which would eliminate the enemies of mankind.

We have now reached a point in human history when all nations will need to give up one right to the United Nations, the right to make war - just as all of our states once gave up that one right to the United States.

Problems should be handled as near to the grassroots as they can be fairly and efficiently dealt with, so the main job of the United Nations would be to maintain a peaceful situation in the world.

The United Nations will undoubtedly have a Police Force to deal with individual offenders against the peace of the world, but I believe it should also have an unarmed Peace Force to go into trouble spots and remedy the cause of the trouble before strife begins.

What we suffer from is immaturity. If we were mature people war would not be a problem - it would be impossible.

WRITE A LETTER

I would like to emphasize again that right prayer leads to right action - that "faith without works is dead." An excellent way to put thoughts into action is to write a letter - to Congressmen or other officials, to the editor of your local newspaper, to friends and relations. Write a letter for peace!
