

Peace Pilgrim strolls the nation to raise spirits, offer inspiration

By CINDY DOMMER
Staff Writer

Peace Pilgrim has been on the road for peace, love and freedom for 26 years.

She has a lot of worn out tennis shoes to show for it, but she doesn't count her blessings that way.

"I haven't had an ache or pain or cold or headache for 41 years," the silver-haired woman of indeterminate age said. "I'm so very thankful for that."

Peace Pilgrim (that's her legal name) passes her days tramping from one end to the other of the United States, speaking to university and college groups, churches and individuals.

Her message? An injunction to obey God's laws of human behavior and to find one's own job in the divine plan — the way to inner peace.

"This is the way of peace," she tells her audiences and acquaintances. "Overcome evil with good, and falsehood with truth, and hatred with love. Through obedience to these laws this frightened, war-weary world of ours could enter into a period of peace and richness of life beyond our fondest dreams."

Peace Pilgrim began her pilgrimage on Jan. 1, 1953, but her decision to do it reaches much further back in time.

"Forty-one years ago I made the first significant changes in my life — I started to live to give instead of to get," she said.

"It was then that I recognized that I had good health, that I knew my life work must be for peace and that I started my spiritual growing up, a God-centered life working for the good of the whole."

She said those recognitions followed an experience she had when after walking through a woods all night she felt a complete willingness to give up all worldly things and live for others.

"I had an increasing realization that money and things would not make me happy," she

by a disturbed teenage boy," she said. "We were out walking; I was trying to help him. A thundershower came up and scared him. But I was able to face his hatred with love. What were a few bruises on my body in comparison with a human life?"

Her second test was when she was called to defend a young girl from a man. "I stepped between them, looked at him with love, and he stopped and left," she said. "Never underestimate the power of the way of love."

She was investigated for vagrancy several months later, but the case was dismissed and she has since had no trouble with the law.

Finally, she came close to dying in a snowstorm, an experience she counts as one of the most beautiful in her life.

"I saw the color and heard the music from the other side," she said. "After that experience I will never again fear death."

Fear of any kind attracts danger, she believes. "We create constantly through thought. Fear thoughts attract danger. By the same token, good thoughts attract good. That's why only good happens to me."

During her second year she undertook a 45-day fast as a "prayer discipline." "I went from 115 to 85 pounds," she said. "I had pure water and made out fine. I did it for a prayer discipline — my last one. After that I learned to pray without ceasing."

Her subsistence now as for the last quarter-century has been dependent on the charity

Please turn to Page 17, Column 5