Help raise money for hunger relief

Walkers here are from churches, schools, businesses and civic groups. Since CROP Walks began here in 1983, walkers and donations have rapidly increased.

Last year, 1,100 walkers raised more than $60,000, bringing the total raised in all the city’s CROP walks since 1983 to $575,000.

About 25 percent of the money raised goes to four agencies here: Crisis Control Ministry, Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina, Sunnyside Ministry, and Samaritan Ministries. The remaining money goes to Church World Service. “I think a lot of people think we just drop bags of rice in villages. But that’s not really all we do. The money goes for education, and for food and water, all kinds of things,” Cannino said.

(Early registration will be held at Parkway Presbyterian Church Oct. 9 from 6 to 8 p.m., and Oct. 10 from 10 a.m. to noon. Walkers with pledges of $50 or more will receive a free CROP walk T-shirt and be eligible for prizes donated by local businesses.)

Ethicist Simeon Ilesanmi asks if American Christians should stay aloof from the world’s travails

said. “My initial response was that he must be kidding.”

That seemingly outrageous suggestion planted a seed that soon sprouted. Within weeks, Ilesanmi had decided to abandon his original plans and — above the protests of friends who thought he had lost his mind — enroll in a seminary.

“Up to this day, it’s a mystery that I’ve not been completely able to unravel,” Ilesanmi said of his sudden interest in the Christian ministry. “But it’s something I’ve never regretted for a second.”
ANSWERS: A woman’s quest becomes one of spirit

As the remnants of Hurricane Danielle whipped the North Atlantic into mean mountains of turquoise and foam all around her, Tori Murden waited for death.

Her 23-foot-long rowboat had already capsized 11 times in the waves that ran as high as 50 feet, and blood from a head injury tasted like saltwater in her mouth. She held on, alone, and thought about 35 years of life that were ending in this failed quest that began on North Carolina’s Outer Banks:

She had dreamed of being the first woman to row the North Atlantic.

Her dream died in a storm one month and thousands of miles ago.

Murden survived and is now back at her home in Louisville. This week, she talked about the spiritual side of her odyssey.

A graduate of Harvard Divinity School who once planned on becoming a minister, Murden caught a few blinding insights out there in the darkness.

For an amateur kayaker like me, and maybe for anybody on a spiritual journey, her story is heady stuff.

Down to the sea

The daughter of a homemaker and a schoolteacher, Murden has long taken on challenges of the mind, body and spirit, from scaling mountains around the world to studying at Harvard. She grew up Presbyterian but began to question conventional Chris-

By John Railey

Area residents will help fight hunger next weekend by walking in Winston-Salem’s 17th annual CROP Walk.

Registration for the walk begins at 1 p.m. Oct. 11 in Corpening Plaza. At 2 p.m., walkers will begin making through their way through downtown and Old Salem.

As many as 2,000 walkers are expected to participate, said Jennifer Cannino, the chairwoman of the walk. “I just want everybody and walk because the possibility to give back a small thing that we got far-reaching potential.”

CROP stands for Overseas Program, a hunger-relief agency.

It was started after farmers who sell their produce to feed the hungry.

The tradition of walking for CROP began in

By Stephen Martin

ucked into a corner on the third floor of Wingate Hall, Simeon Ilesanmi’s office at Wake Forest University offers a quiet retreat from the hustle of the college’s busy walkways and main roads. Flooded with sunlight and crammed full of...
After earning his theology degree, Ilesanmi shifted gears again and began his study of politics and ethics at a secular university in Nigeria. "I wanted to be a theological scholar," he said. "I did not see my vocation in the parish setting."

A fellowship offer drew Ilesanmi to Southern Methodist University in Dallas, where he earned his doctorate in 1993. He had hoped to return to Nigeria at that point, but the persecution of scholars there persuaded him to stay in the United States. "Nigeria has not been a country that is hospitable to academic freedom," Ilesanmi said.

Instead, Ilesanmi settled in Winston-Salem, where he lives with his wife, Bola, and their two small children. Unable to go home, he has made his native country the focal point of his work.

Particularly troubling to Ilesanmi is the conflict between Nigeria's two dominant religions, Christianity and Islam. The former is a force in the southern part of the country, and the latter reigns supreme in the north. Missionaries from each faith constantly enter the other's territory to win converts. Violence often erupts when they do. Such bloodshed has had some Nigerian intellectuals calling in recent years for the eradication of all religions. "The challenge for scholars was to give another

See ILESANMI, Page B8

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Couple find redemption and found a ministry to help others

Saving Grace

By David Briggs
RELIGION NEWS SERVICE

CLEVELAND

Darrell Scott was mixing PCP for sale and smoking crack the night that his girlfriend found God and his life changed forever.

Early that evening in 1981, the couple had run out of run, and he sent Belinda for the 151-proof alcohol that would be used to pour on cotton stuck to the end of a coat hanger — an improvised torch to keep the crack pipe lit.

Already high, she ran into a devout neighbor on the way to the liquor store. "To shut him up," she agreed to go to his church, and ended up giving her life to God.

When she came back after midnight speaking in tongues, Scott at first thought his girlfriend had found her own party. But two weeks later, "to have her shut up," he found himself in the same church, and ended up running home to flush $3,000 worth of drugs down the toilet. He was baptized that same night, and within a month, he and Belinda were married in the pastor's study.

"We went to McDonald's, and then I went back to work," said Scott, lost in a thoughtful smile standing outside the old, red-brick Christ Temple Apostolic Church in Cleveland where he was married. "I let her buy anything she wanted."

From those humble beginnings in 1981 evolved a spiritual odyssey that has led to one of the most successful new church starts in...
erected a 3,600-mile journey. She jumped at the chance to abandon Spirit rescued her about 950 miles west of Brest, France — her target destination. She had been in the water 86 days, rowing 2,653 miles and completing two-thirds of her projected 3,600-mile journey.

Ebb tide

Now she is back at her urban challenge in Louisville, applying what she learned in the Atlantic.

"I think the experience strengthened every part of my being: faith in myself, faith in other people, being able to see that spark of enlightenment that's all around me. Coming back here and really getting the sense that heaven is spread before us, and all we have to do is open our eyes to see it."

She would attempt the journey again, she said, only if she thought there was more to learn from such a voyage.

Her journeys are quests for spiritual knowledge. And until she finds the answers she is seeking, she resists being pigeonholed into any one religion: "I'm an explorer, and I need to be allowed to wander all over the mountain rather than to stick to one path."

I lack the guts and the cerebral depth to push the edge as Murden does. I stick close to the shore — in my faith and in life in general.

Considering her story, I wonder if I might be playing it too safe.