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**Mildred Lisette Norman, AKA Peace Pilgrim**  
**July 18, 1908—July 7, 1981**  
**Spiritual Teacher, Non Violence Advocate, Peace Prophet**

**By Marta Daniels**

**Family Background and Early Life**

Mildred Lisette Norman, spiritual teacher, non-violence advocate and self-designated “peace pilgrim” who walked more than 25, 000 miles over three decades, spreading her peace message across America, was born on July 18, 1908 on a small poultry farm in Egg Harbor City, New Jersey, the eldest of three children. The family was poor, but well respected in the town their ancestors had founded in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> C as an immigrant settlement, established as a refuge from conflict and militarism in Germany.

Mildred Norman grew up in a loving, close-knit, extended family of nine, including six adults—her parents and three unmarried aunts and a bachelor uncle. Her father, a carpenter, and her mother, a tailor, instilled a strong peace ethic in their children, encouraging discussion of social and political issues, and pursuit of moral questions. The family practiced no religion, did not belong to a church, and with the exception of the Ten Commandments, especially, the Golden Rule, they did not provide formal religious training to their children. The three spinster aunts— particularly Aunt Lisette Norman, for whom Mildred was named—encouraged her intellectual and cultural development, as well as her respect for the natural world.

Mildred Norman was precocious with an inquisitive nature and a remarkable memory. She was able to recite long poems at age three, could read at age four, and one summer, she taught herself to play the piano. In high school she was a bright, articulate, strong-willed student with a dare devil attitude in sports and physical efforts, at which she which excelled. Academically she maintained the highest grades and headed the debating team, becoming well known as an excellent public speaker.

Due to limited family finances, after high school graduation in 1926, Norman took secretarial jobs. She led an active social life, dating and partying, wearing makeup and buying fancy cars and expensive furniture. She also wrote plays for the local Grange in which she was director, costume designer, lighting manager and producer. In 1933, she eloped with Stanley Ryder, an unsuccessful businessman, who the family did not approve of. The marriage was fractious from the start, with a strong clash of wills, styles and goals. Norman soon longed for more independence and meaning in her life.

In 1938, she underwent a “great spiritual experience” after walking all night through the woods praying for guidance. Increasingly uncomfortable about having so much while others were starving, she walked and asked God to use her. Coming to a moonlit opening in the woods, she described her experience:

*I felt a complete willingness, without any reservations, to give my life – to dedicate my life – to service. “If you can use me for anything, please use me!” I prayed to God. “Here I am—take all of me; use me as you will. I withhold nothing.” Then a great peace came over me. I experienced a complete willingness without reservations whatsoever, to give my life to something beyond my self.*

This was the first great turning point for thirty-year old Mildred Norman. She said, “I tell you it’s a point of no return. After that, you can never go back to completely self-centered living.” This was the beginning of Norman’s “living to give, not to get.”

In 1939, she moved with her husband to Philadelphia where he had an opportunity for work. When Stanley Ryder was drafted into WWII, Norman believed he should become a conscientious objector. When he refused, she wouldn’t talk to him, and then decided that she would have nothing more to do with him. Unlike other wives, she refused to go to the army training camp with him. Eventually, after he arrived in Europe, he sued for divorce. Their divorce was final about 1945.

### **1940—1952 Preparations for Inner Peace**

For the entire decade of the 1940s, Mildred Norman searched actively for the service she felt she was called to undertake. She first worked with senior citizens and those with emotional problems. Then she began doing volunteer work for peace organizations, such as the Quaker American Friends Service Committee, the Philadelphia Fellowship Commission and the United Nations Council of Philadelphia. She stayed at the Jane Addams House and worked there for the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. For a time, she was their Washington, DC peace lobbyist. Sometime in the mid forties, she also met and worked for Scott Nearing, a radical economist and staunch pacifist, who was then a Professor of Economics at the University of Pennsylvania. He published a newsletter, *World Events*, and Norman assisted in its distribution.

In this same period, she began radically simplifying her life. She decided to get rid of unnecessary possessions and frivolous activities. She became a vegetarian, and disciplined herself to live

on ten dollars a week, and reduce her wardrobe to two dresses. She joined the Endurance Hiking Club, and undertook wilderness treks, to increase her physical strength and to gain experience in simple living. She said that she wanted to practice putting material things in their proper place, “realizing that they are there for use, but relinquishing them when they are not useful.” She wanted to “experience and learn to appreciate the great freedom of simplicity.”

During her 15-year inner preparation, she discovered the difference between the *willingness* to give of herself and the actual giving. She described this period as a time when she was engaged in a great struggle between ego and conscience, or between her “lower, self-centered nature,” and the “higher, God-centered nature.” She said:

*The body, mind and emotions are instruments which can be used by either the self-centered nature or the God-centered nature. The self-centered nature uses these instruments yet it is never fully able to control them, so there is a constant struggle. They can only be fully controlled by the God-centered nature. When the God-centered nature takes over, you have found inner peace.*

She cautioned vigilance over the formidable enemy the “self-centered nature” represents:

*The self-centered nature is a very formidable enemy and its struggles fiercely to retain its identity. It defends itself in a cunning manner and should not be regarded lightly. It knows the weakest spots in your armor...During these periods of attack maintain a humble stature and be intimate with none but the guiding whisper of your higher self.*

She believed that overcoming selfishness and gaining release from its power were key to attaining inner peace and spiritual maturity. She believed that when she attained that maturity—physical, mental and emotional—she would be in total harmony and know what to do.

### **Stages to Inner Peace**

Through years of contemplation and volunteer work, through spiritual seeking and walking in receptive silence amid nature, she worked out her own steps towards inner peace. She described her journey as going through “stages of maturity,” or “spiritual growth.”

The first stage (1933-1938) represented her emotional ups and downs of discontent and struggles within her “self-centered life.” Those years between the second stage and the sixth (1938-1953) brought her to the complete inner peace she sought. She gained it slowly, in a series of spiritual plateaus. Her very first plateau, or glimpse of “inner peace,” she said, came in the fourth stage; and then in the fifth, she experienced plateaus for longer and longer periods; and finally, in the sixth stage, she achieved complete inner peace and was ready to embark on her life’s work. (All of these stages and the steps to achieve them were later translated into her pamphlet, *Steps Toward Inner Peace*.) She described what she felt the very first time “inner peace” descended upon her in her fourth stage:

*I was out walking in the early morning. All of a sudden I felt very uplifted, more uplifted than I had ever been. I remember I knew timelessness and spacelessness and lightness. I*

*did not seem to be walking on the earth...but...every flower, every bush, every tree, seemed to wear a halo. There was a light emanation around everything and flecks of gold fell like slanted rain through the air...The most important part was not the phenomena: the important part of it was the realization of the oneness of all creation...*

### **Transformative Appalachian Trail Experience, 1952**

In the fall of 1952, after nearly 15 years of searching, she arrived at what she was meant to do. Standing high on a hilltop in New England, just after becoming the first woman to hike the entire length of the Appalachian Trail in one season, she had another vision. She had been hiking for five months over 2500 miles, living out of doors completely, supplied only with a pair of slacks, one shirt and sweater, a blanket and two plastic sheets. Her menu, morning and evening, was two cups of uncooked oatmeal soaked in water and flavored with brown sugar; at noon, two cups of double strength dried milk, plus any berries, nuts or greens that she found in the woods.

Life on the trail agreed with her. Hiking reinforced her belief in simplicity and confirmed her ability to live *in harmony* at *need* level, for long periods of time, in *all* weather conditions. She felt her faith in God—as perceived through nature—strengthen and solidify as a clear and omnipotent source of inspiration. She became convinced that material possessions were simply a burden, and that to achieve a daily state of grace, she would need to maintain that simplicity after she got off the trail. The idea to become a pilgrim, walking cross-country for peace, came at this time in a vision. She wrote:

*I sat high upon a hill overlooking rural New England. The day before I had slipped out of harmony, and the evening before I had thought to God: “It seems to me that if I could always remain in harmony I could be of greater usefulness – for every time I slip out of harmony it impairs my usefulness. And when I woke up in the morning I was back again on the mountaintop and I knew I would never need to descend again into the valley.*

*After that...there is a feeling of always being surrounded by all the good things, like love and peace and joy. It seems like a protective surrounding, and there is an unshakeableness within, which takes you through any situations you need to face....*

*I then saw in my mind’s eye, myself walking along and wearing the garb of my mission...I saw a map of the United States with the large cities marked – and it was as though someone had taken a colored crayon and marked a zigzag line across, coast to coast and border to border, from Los Angeles to New York City. I knew what I was to do. I will talk to everyone who will listen to me about the way to peace. I’m even planning to wear a sign, the back of which will read, “Walking Coast to Coast for Peace” and the front, “Peace Pilgrim.” And that was the vision of my first year’s pilgrimage in 1953.*

### **Peace Pilgrim Sets Forth, 1953**

On January 1, 1953, at age 44, Mildred Lisette Norman changed her name to Peace Pilgrim, put on a pair of canvas sneakers, donned dark blue slacks, blouse, and a tunic—on which she had sown her new name—and set out to walk the length of the country leaving from Pasadena, CA.

She chose blue for her clothing because it is the international color of peace. She chose Pasadena because she wanted to set off marching in the Rose Bowl where thousands of people could see her. On that first trip, in the midst of the Cold War, and at the height of the McCarthy era, she walked 5,000 miles from California to New York, from coast to coast and from border to border, sharing her message of peace. She wrote:

*I realized in 1952 that was the proper time for a pilgrimage to step forth. The war in Korea was raging and the McCarthy era was at its height. There was great fear at that time and it was safest to be apathetic. Yes, it was most certainly a time for a pilgrim to step forward, because a pilgrim's job is to rouse people from apathy and make them think...."*

*The world situation is grave. Humanity, with fearful, faltering steps, walks a knife-edge between abysmal chaos and a new renaissance, while strong forces push toward chaos. Yet there is hope. I see hope in the tireless work for peace of a few devoted souls. I see hope in the real desire for peace in the heart of humanity, even though the human family gropes toward peace blindly, not knowing the way..I think that those of us who have found the way to peace, should be shouting it from the housetops.*

### **The Way of Peace: Her Message**

Carrying in her tunic pockets her only possessions—toothbrush, comb, pen, and later, her *Steps to Inner Peace* pamphlets—she took a vow to walk penniless, and to remain a wanderer until mankind had learned the way of peace, “walking until given shelter and fasting until given food.” She had no organizational backing and never accepted money. She owned only what she wore on her back. She stepped out for peace on faith alone. During this particular period it was a daring and groundbreaking feat to undertake, especially with the Cold War, McCarthyism and the Korean War as a backdrop. It bespoke moral courage not seen before or since.

She introduced herself to people as a pilgrim—walking not *to a place* but *for an idea*. Her message was a simple one about the *way to peace*: She said over and over to all who would listen: “This is the way of peace: Overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love.” Her definition of peace included peace among nations, among people and individuals, and the most important peace—within oneself— for only with inner peace, she believed, can the other kinds be achieved. She believed that her way should not be taken lightly, or viewed simply as impractical religious concepts, but rather, as universal truths to be lived:

*These are laws governing human conduct, which apply as rigidly as the law of gravity. When we disregard these laws in any walk of life chaos results. Through obedience to these laws this world of ours could enter into a period of peace and richness beyond our fondest dreams.*

Setting out at the dawn of the nuclear age, she carried three petitions: one to end the war in Korea, the second to establish a U.S. Peace Department (both directed at President Eisenhower and Congress); and a third petition directed at the United Nations, urging world disarmament and the redirection of arms spending towards human needs funding. She delivered all three.

On her journeys, she preached that the basic conflict in the world was not between nations, but between two beliefs: 1) that evil can only be overcome with more evil (the dominant, present belief); and 2) that evil can only be overcome with good (the belief for which she walked). “What we suffer from in the world is immaturity,” she said. “If we were mature people, war would be unthinkable and peace would be assured.” In her life, her belief in maturity was put into daily practice. She wrote:

*No one walks so safely as one who walks humbly and harmlessly with great love and great faith. For such a person gets through to the good in others (and there is good in everyone), and therefore cannot be harmed. This works between individuals, it works between groups and it would work between nations if nations had the courage to try it.*

She would walk non-stop for the next 28 years, weaving back and forth across the country, and making several trips into neighboring countries. From the start, her life on the road—walking, talking, eating, sleeping—was undertaken as a reverent, loving prayer, integrating, what she believed were all the important things of life into a penniless, simple, committed existence of love and service.

She never approached anyone, but waited for people to approach her. Her commitment was to make herself available to the serious, the concerned and the curious. She spoke tirelessly to those who stopped her and wanted to talk. With her message covering the entire peace gamut, from the international to the individual, she asked people to overcome the selfishness and pride within themselves first, and then do whatever they felt called to do for peace in the world.

For those who asked, she gave out her *Steps Towards Inner Peace* pamphlet, which outlined her preparations for *inner* peace, including simplification of life and purification of the body, bringing the inner and outer well being into harmony. She always noted that there was no particular order to the steps, but rather, one should begin wherever it made sense. (These *Steps* were first printed in 1966, when, during a radio interview, a friend asked her to share them with listeners. The friend copied them down and made a little booklet, *Steps Toward Inner Peace*, which has been in print ever since).

### **Peace Pilgrim, the Messenger**

Peace Pilgrim was a small woman with a large message, delivered in a clear, high-pitched voice. Only 5 feet 2 inches tall, she was slim, with gray hair and bright blue eyes. She perfectly fit the stereotypical image of the “little old lady in tennis shoes.” In her dark blue tunic with white lettering, she would disarm listeners with her direct questions: “Wouldn’t it be better to uplift each other rather than destroy each other?” Or, “How are you going to live your life? Is your life an answer, or is it part of the problem?”

She was a spellbinding, forceful speaker with a storehouse of powerful, inspiring one-liners that were easy for people to hear and remember: *Hate injures the hater, not the hated. Prayer is a concentration of positive thoughts. Problems that help us grow are really opportunities in*

*disguise. In all things be thankful. Never be impatient, all good things take time. Be not concerned that you are injured, but that you do not injure. A calling means what you like to do.*

She claimed people needed two things in life for it to be meaningful: something to lift them up spiritually and inspire them to awaken to their higher nature (religion, art, nature); and a *calling*, a path of service—something to do that will help someone—because, in this world, she said, “you are given as you give.”

Her message was a personal one, directed at the individual, and delivered in a simple, direct way, one on one. She was not political in the traditional sense, though her message, if adopted, would have a powerful political result. Her genius was that her message and its manner of delivery changed consciousness, one person at a time, empowering and liberating. What a person did with that new consciousness was their choice, and not one for her to make.

For almost three decades, from 1953 to 1981, she crossed the country seven times, including trips to Hawaii and Alaska, as well as Mexico and Canada. In 1955, when she began her second pilgrimage, she walked at least 100 miles in each state, visiting every state capital. In 1957, she walked 1000 miles in Canada, crossing its 10 provinces and walking at least 100 miles in each province. In 1964, arriving in Washington, DC, she completed 25,000 miles on foot for peace and stopped counting. But she continued walking for another 17 years, going through 29 pairs of dime store sneakers, averaging 1,500 miles a pair. (At that rate, she actually walked 43,500 miles). Her fourth pilgrimage began in 1966; her fifth in 1969; her sixth in 1973, and her seventh (and final one) in 1978.

Wherever she went, she gave presentations, speeches and lectures in community centers, churches, schools and homes. By the end of her 28 years of wandering, she had been a guest on every major radio and TV station in the country at least twice. Her correspondence with thousands of followers was steady and voluminous because she answered every letter addressed to her (sent care of her sister in Cologne, NJ) over a 28-year period, and sent out her own newsletter, “Peace Pilgrim’s Progress.”

### **Peace Pilgrim—Sojourner with an Attitude**

Usually, Peace Pilgrim averaged about 25 miles a day, moving north in summer and south in winter to avoid the worst weather. She never missed more than three or four meals before someone offered to feed her. Shelter was provided most nights (by those who encountered her) but when not provided, she slept in fields, under bridges, in haystacks, drainage pipes and by the roadsides. Her vow of simplicity—down to the level of need—was both spiritual and practical: want and need were the same for her.

She had her share of what most would call “dangerous encounters,” but which she called “tests” and “opportunities,” no different than all life experiences. She was arrested twice for vagrancy, but once jailed, found receptive female audiences for her philosophy and songs. She also convinced the arresting officers that she was a true pilgrim, and was released. On another trip, a disturbed teenager began to beat her, but Peace was able to contact what she called “the spark of good” in him, and convinced him to stop. Oftentimes, drunks would accost her, and she would

spend time with them, sharing her life with theirs, calming their aggressive behaviors. She put into practice her faith in nonviolence, her belief that everyone has good that can always be reached, producing only good in return.

Her faith in the power of the mind was unshakeable. She believed that we constantly create through our thoughts. “If you are fearful,” she said, “you will attract the thing you fear! I fear nothing—I expect only good—so to me, only good comes.” She believed that all life’s problems are learning and growing experiences, and that with “the right attitude—you can solve anything.” Her fearlessness was a source of awe and inspiration, especially for women, who could not imagine themselves walking alone through the desert at night or the inner cities either. Her positive attitude and undaunted faith in human goodness provoked consternation, but attracted converts. It acted as a spiritual chain reaction that empowered others.

Peace Pilgrim seemed to drink from an endless source of energy that she tapped effortlessly in her walks across America, and which she claimed was available to everyone. The source, she said, was her inner peace. She was also in robust health, and said that she never “suffered a cold or an ache” after she found inner peace. She walked with sparkle and verve and a serenity that had no match. Those who met her immediately noticed the sense of calm she conveyed, as though she was free from all burdens. Some even felt that she seemed to live in another dimension. She also had a magnetism that was instantly felt. Combined with her wit, physical stamina and mental discipline, she commanded the admiration of even the most skeptical. Her boundless sense of joy and freedom often disarmed audiences.

*Some people think that my life dedicated to simplicity and service is austere and joyless, but they do not know the freedom of simplicity. I am thankful to God every moment of my life for the great riches that have been showered upon me.*

Individually, people were moved to change their lives. Thousands were influenced to work for peace, but thousands more were influenced to change themselves and their personal relations. “Begin in your own life, then move out to your surroundings, and finally this will affect institutions,” was her constant message.

### **The Uniqueness of Peace Pilgrim**

She has been called a prophet, a mystic, a saint, and a person who walked her talk. Her message was not new, but practicing it was. Here was someone who had relinquished all earthly possessions to live a focused life based upon spiritual truths and immutable principles. Hearing any part of her message was like hearing any one of the world’s great religions. Those who were Christian were sure she preached the beliefs of Jesus Christ. Those who were Jewish, felt she represented the way of Yahweh. Buddhists, Bahais and Jains were sure she spoke their religions. And those who were Muslim were certain that she preached the teachings of Islam.

In her message, were the teachings of all the world’s great religions. She was *original* in the sense that she gave her message only after she had tested, verified and demonstrated its efficacy in her own life. She had found the “kingdom within” and lived to share it with others. She has been described as “a gentle, soothing, spiritual tornado” whose simple, direct message delivered



a compelling challenge to conscience. A friend from India wrote that “it was not the scholar’s erudition that spoke through her, but the saint’s imprisoned splendor, released in its full effulgence for three decades.”

What was also unique about the Peace Pilgrim was that she was the living example of the *potential* that can be unleashed when someone is fully engaged in doing what they believe is the most important thing in the world for them to be doing. She believed people only scratched the surface of their real potential. To all who came in contact with her, she was the living proof that changing your life was possible. Her own life said, “You can do it too!”

She lived by faith, and by the energy of her own Inner Light. In our time, and certainly in our country, no one else was like her. She has been called a 20<sup>th</sup> century St. Francis of Assisi, and is often compared to Mahatma Gandhi and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. Like them, she had “a peaceful heart, and a warrior’s spirit.” But unlike them, she had no political organization, no religious institution, and no specific cause or people to champion. The whole world was her cause and wherever she walked, she called it home. She is probably the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s most underrated and least known spiritual leader and peace activist.

### **Glorious Transition**

In the mid 1950s, her message of inner and outer peace did not find as great a reception as it did by the 1960s and 1970s, when working for peace and especially spiritual harmony, was becoming more popular. “When I started out, people accepted war as a necessary part of life. Now, people are looking for alternatives. Now people are looking inward,” she said. As the years wore on, she was in greater and greater demand as a speaker, often booking herself a year in advance. She spent fewer nights along the roadside, and began accepting more rides to keep her engagements, always being returned to the spot she had left off walking.

The last spot for Peace Pilgrim was Knox, Indiana. The day before she had given her last speech in Valpraiso, Indiana. In order to make the next scheduled meeting, she had to be driven. She was on her way, just outside Knox in the afternoon of July 7, 1981, when an on-coming car crossed the median strip and struck the car she was riding in head on. She and her driver were killed instantly. She finally went to what she called her “glorious transition” to a “freer life.”

Mildred Lisette Norman was cremated, and on July 18, 1981, the date of her 73<sup>rd</sup> birthday, her ashes were interred in the Norman family cemetery plot in Galway Township, NJ, not far from Egg Harbor City where she was born. Her ashes were interred in the gravesite of her favorite aunt, Lisette Norman.

### **Peace Pilgrim’s Legacy**

Her peace legacy was large and compelling especially when measured by her own principles:

*We must walk according to the highest light we have, encountering lovingly those who are out of harmony, and trying to inspire them to a better way. Whenever you bring harmony into any unpeaceful situation, you contribute to the cause of peace. When you*

*do something for world peace, peace among groups, peace among individuals, or your own inner peace, you improve the total peace picture. No action is fruitless.*

*There is within the hearts of people deep desire for peace on earth, and they would speak for peace if they were not bound by apathy, by ignorance, by fear. It is the job of peacemakers to inspire them from their apathy, to dispel their ignorance with truth, to allay their fear with faith that God's laws work – and work for good....My simple peace message is adequate – really just the message that the way of peace is the way of love. Love is the greatest power on earth. It conquers all things...*

Beyond those lives that she touched directly during her life, what was her legacy? 2003 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her first walk across America. What can we point to as her “achievements”? Did she plant the seeds for fundamental change, or did many of those seeds fall on fallow ground? Like many powerful individuals whose message—if followed—is world changing, qualitative results are most potent but difficult to gage, while quantitative results are more concrete and limited as a true measurement.

Perhaps the greatest testament to her influence is the fact that the bulk of her teachings and writings have been published and distributed posthumously, and with it, the recognition that her life and teachings were of enduring value. Otherwise, interest in her would not have grown exponentially each year, without money, marketing or organization. She has become known exclusively through word of mouth, and the dedication of a few friends.

### **Friends of Peace Pilgrim Continue Her Work**

After her death, the *Friends of Peace Pilgrim*, a non-profit, all-volunteer group composed of people directly touched by her life was set up in California in 1981. Ann and John Rush, who gave their home for this purpose, have devoted their retirement to this service, in the spirit of Peace Pilgrim. The Friends' purpose is to publish and disseminate the words and work of Peace Pilgrim. They also serve as a repository and distribution site for her teachings. They distribute a newsletter that serves as an information source describing on going Peace Pilgrim work, related activities and influences.

**Peace Pilgrim Book** Soon after Peace Pilgrim's death, five Friends of Peace Pilgrim got together and compiled a 224-page book, *Peace Pilgrim, Her Life and Work in her Own Words*, first printed in 1983. This book pulled together the major teachings and talks of Peace Pilgrim in one place. It has been reprinted dozens of times, with 500,000 copies in 11 languages in circulation—all without marketing or funding. Contributions from supporters have been sufficient to keep it in circulation. It is now distributed commercially by Ocean Tree Books, Santa Fe, NM

**Spirit of Peace, 1<sup>st</sup> Documentary** The Friends also created a documentary film, *Peace Pilgrim: The Spirit of Peace*, in 1997, and several other shorter documentaries of her speeches recorded live as she preached and spoke. *Spirit of Peace* is a 71-minute video that captures the life and

teachings of Peace Pilgrim on celluloid, and provides a sense of the impact of her life on those who knew her. It has been widely distributed and served as a forerunner for the 2<sup>nd</sup> video film.

**An American Sage, 2<sup>nd</sup> Documentary** The Friends also produced a TV-quality, 60-minute documentary in 2000, entitled *Peace Pilgrim: An American Sage Who Walked Her Talk*. This film contains extraordinary television footage from Peace Pilgrim's early pilgrimages in the 1950's and early 1960's as well as testimony from well-known religious leaders, spiritual teachers, academics, cultural figures, writers, poets and everyday people who had either known Peace Pilgrim or were deeply affected by her life and teachings.

**Peace Pilgrim Movie** A full length, professional feature film portrayal of the life of Peace Pilgrim is currently under development. A script has been produced, industry supporters are working to make the necessary connections, and it is expected to be under production in the near future. The goal is for the Peace Pilgrim's life to go beyond entertainment and serve to inspire a global renaissance of the eternal principles of peace, as taught and lived by Peace Pilgrim.

**Web Site** In 1997, a web site, [www.peacepilgrim.net](http://www.peacepilgrim.net), was created, bringing together many important aspects of Peace Pilgrim's life and achievements. It was originally set up by volunteers and was updated and upgraded by a volunteer webmaster in 2000.

**Steps to Inner Peace Pamphlet** The Friends also continue to reprint the Peace Pilgrim's *Steps* pamphlet. Today, over 1.5 million copies of *Steps toward Inner Peace* are now in print in English. It has been translated into 25 languages including Russian, in which over 30,000 copies have been printed and distributed, and a Peace Pilgrim Center in Moscow has been established. Reports come to the *Friends Center* that the *Steps* pamphlet keeps "showing up" in distant places — African villages, in the shadow of the Pyramids, in the jungles of Thailand, at a Bedouin inn, in the ancient ruins of Central America, in an Ashramic Library in the Himalayas, and in China.

**Steps Prison Project** For years, the *Steps* pamphlet has been an important source of inspiration to this nation's prison population. The *Human Kindness Foundation* now sends a copy of *Steps* to all new prisoners who contact the organization. On average, they send out 15,000 copies a year. In addition, prisoners have initiated "inner peace" projects and study groups within state prisons, using the *Steps* pamphlet. It is reported that there is a near 100% non-recidivism rate for all prisoners who have participated in a program, or come in contact with the *Steps* pamphlet.

**Legal Mediation Project** Because of contact with the Peace Pilgrim's message, lawyers who wished to find an alternative to the combative, adversarial legal system started mediation projects such as the one in Dallas, TX. Through the local Bar Association, the Dallas Mediation Project trained 1000 attorneys as mediators for settling civil disputes. They have been using Peace Pilgrim's principles since 1987, trying to find creative solutions and win-win-scenarios for their clients. They say the difference between mediation and litigation is that in litigation, the dispute is resolved by somebody "dying", whereas in mediation, dispute is resolved by everybody finding a solution that they can all live with. The project uses the Peace Pilgrim's "golden rule of resolution" as its primary teaching principle: "Have it be your purpose to resolve the dispute rather than to gain an advantage." In their first six months, with 1000 cases in Dallas County referred for mediation, approximately 80% of them settled voluntarily.

**Peace Pilgrim Statue, Costa Rica** On November 9, 2000, a life-size bronze statue of Peace Pilgrim, created by sculptor Fernando Calvo, was dedicated at the United Nations University of Peace in Colon, Costa Rica. It was placed near that of Gandhi and other world peacemakers such as Tolstoy and King on the grounds of the University. Rodrigo Carazo, former President of Costa Rica, gave the keynote address at the dedication ceremony. Robert Muller, former assistant secretary general of the United Nations and chancellor emeritus of the UN University for Peace, originated the idea of the statues a few years ago. He wanted to honor individuals who “dedicated their life’s work to world peace.” Costa Rica is the first and only country to unilaterally abolish its army, which occurred 50 years ago. The University of Peace, founded in 1980, is the world’s only United Nations-sanctioned learning center dedicated to peace studies.

**Peace Pilgrim Statue, Egg Harbor, NJ** Another statue of Peace Pilgrim has also been created—in ceramic—by New Jersey artist Sally McInermey. It is destined to be placed in her hometown of Egg Harbor City, NJ, sometime in the near future.

**Nominations** More recently, Peace Pilgrim was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, despite the fact that the Prize cannot be awarded posthumously. In addition, she has also been nominated for the National Women’s Hall of Fame.

In July 2000, the Dalai Lama tried to sum up the impact of her life, for the documentary film, *Peace Pilgrim: American Sage*. He said, while holding a copy of her book:

*Her motivation and activities are effective methods. Her commitment to propagate peace through actions, the peace walk, without seeking money or fame, is wonderful. We need such determined people everywhere, irrespective of culture, race, religion. It doesn’t matter. We are all brothers and sisters. Peace Pilgrim is a real peacemaker.*

