Abstract
Contemplation, Preparation, and Action: Peace Pilgrim’s
Prophetic Witness for Our Time

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This paper explores the life and teachings of Peace Pilgrim as an example of one who acted on her beliefs and became a powerful witness for peace. Specifically, I suggest that her practices of contemplation, preparation, and action can provide a model for anyone seeking to contribute to the common good by putting their beliefs into action.

From 1953 to 1981, "Peace Pilgrim walked alone and penniless and with no organizational backing. She walked 'as a prayer' and as a chance to inspire others to pray and work for peace" (Peace Pilgrim: Her Life and Work in her Own Words, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1982). She spoke a simple message to all who approached her: “This is the way of peace: overcome evil with good, and falsehood with truth, and hatred with love.”

My paper summarizes and places in historical context Peace Pilgrim’s life and teachings, with specific attention to the following elements:

- Her message of the destructiveness of war and the necessity for peace, which is still needed in our day as we hear threats of nuclear war from Iran and calls for increased military spending.
- Her message of inner peace, which she talked about most often since that is where peace begins.
- Her message about the need for simplicity. She believed that she could no longer accept more than she needed while others in the world had less than they needed.

The paper also offers some reflections about the appropriateness of Peace Pilgrim’s story for use in a liberal arts university curriculum. I discuss my incorporation of her story in my section of Liberal Arts and Critical Issues, a senior general education capstone course required of all students at George Fox University.

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