

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **In the Footsteps of Templars Past, Two Men Create a New Path of Peace — One Step at a Time**

In this year of political grandstanding, it is refreshing to hear the true story of someone who quietly, and quite literally, “walks the talk.” Author/photographer Brandon Wilson and his 68-year-old French friend recently completed an eleven-country, two-continent walk for peace to Jerusalem along a trail long associated with war.

Wilson’s inspiring new book about their odyssey, **Along the Templar Trail: Seven Million Steps for Peace** (Pilgrim’s Tales, 2008) interweaves adventure, intrigue, wit and sharp social commentary into an entertaining Chaucerian tale about overcoming odds and discovering the secret to creating peace.

Their courageous journey from France to Jerusalem traced one marched a millennium ago by Crusaders and those who became the first Knights Templar. Like those men, their walk was difficult. There was always the uncertainty of how Middle Easterners would react once they discovered Wilson was an American. However, they frequently stumbled upon “angels” whose random acts of kindness bolstered their resolve and rekindled their belief in humankind.



It was an expedition filled with extreme highs and lows. The men trekked 2620-miles (the equivalent to crossing the U.S.) across difficult terrains in extreme climates, from the near-freezing Black Forest to Turkey’s broiling plains. There was the mental test of completing 30-50 km., a virtual marathon, each day. When war erupted in Israel and Lebanon, violence mounted in Damascus, and Hemorrhagic Fever raged in Turkey, everything became uncertain – except for their steadfast and perhaps life-threatening resolve.

Asked why he set-off on this quest, Wilson explained, “I’m convinced that one person can still make a difference in today’s world – and the time is now. It’s time for truth and tolerance, instead of blindly following a road of mutual destruction. I’m re-establishing this trail as an international path of peace for people of all cultures, faiths and nationalities. Let’s set aside our differences; let’s walk as one.”

Their trek attracted the attention of national television networks and major newspapers along the way, allowing them to spread an impassioned message of peace to millions of Christians, Muslims and Jews alike throughout eleven countries. Without fail, those ordinary people echoed their call to focus on our commonality instead of our differences – and the urgency of resolving our problems before it’s too late.

This tale of empowerment stands as a strong testimony to the courage of the human spirit. Arun Gandhi, president of the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, calls it, “A fascinating testimony of faith and gumption...A must read.”

With 44 photos, maps/illustrations and stages with distances, **Along the Templar Trail** provides a signpost for those who dream of making a similar journey—on foot themselves—or just in spirit and mind.

(MORE)

## About the Author



Brandon Wilson is no novice to these types of journeys. This world adventurer and “perpetual pilgrim” has walked five of the world’s most important pilgrimage trails: the Camino de Santiago and Via de la Plata across Spain, the St. Olav’s Way across Norway, and he was the first American to walk the 1150-mile Via Francigena from England to Rome. His fascination began when he and his wife Cheryl became the first western couple to walk a traditional Buddhist trail from Lhasa, Tibet to Kathmandu.

Wilson is the award-winning author of *Yak Butter Blues: A Tibetan Trek of Faith* (2004) and *Dead Men Don’t Leave Tips: Adventures X Africa* (2005). His story “Life When Hell Freezes Over” appeared in *They Lived to Tell the Tale: True Stories from the Legendary Explorers Club* (The Lyons Press/Globe Pequot, 2007). His photos have won awards from *National Geographic Traveler* and *Islands* magazines. He is a member of the prestigious Explorers Club.

### Early Reviews

“A vivid and eye-opening blend of history, adventure, religion, mysticism and modern conflict... We cannot resist being swept along with the fervor of this quest. It is simply one of the most remarkable adventure stories of our time, and one that proves that with the right combination of character and determination great things can be done, and the eyes of the world can be opened.” ~ Richard Bangs, über-adventurer/author/host of the PBS series *Richard Bangs’ Adventures With Purpose*

“More than the mere adventure of two brave men, it is a grand and noble quest for peace, as well as a spiritual voyage that will leave readers emotionally and intellectually replenished...I immensely enjoyed reading this book. His writing combines a marvelous sense of Zen with good humor, and his personal style makes you feel as if you were there taking part in it all...” ~ Mayra Calvani, *Midwest Book Review*

“If we want peace on earth, we must make the effort to embody peace with each step. Brandon Wilson's inspiring journey, told beautifully in this book, is a living example of peacemaking.” ~ Cindy Sheehan, noted peace activist

“Brandon Wilson is strictly fast-forward in his exhilarating *Along The Templar Trail: Seven Million Steps for Peace*... He movingly describes the divorce between power politics and ordinary Arabs and Israelis: the “wall,” the threat of war and the hope for peace dominated their conversation... Wilson’s remarkably attractive account will galvanize couch potatoes...” ~ *ForeWord Magazine*

“A rhapsody on the theme of pilgrimage. May Brandon Wilson's goal of fostering peace along the glory roads of the world inspire a trail of pilgrims to create their own sacred journeys in the interest of world peace.” ~ Phil Cousineau, author of *The Art of Pilgrimage* and *The Book of Roads*

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### ALONG THE TEMPLAR TRAIL: SEVEN MILLION STEPS FOR PEACE

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