

# Green Pilgrimage Network

A handbook for faith leaders, cities,  
towns and pilgrims

“PILGRIMS LEAVING A POSITIVE FOOTPRINT  
ON THE EARTH”



By the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC)



***This guide is intended for faith leaders, businesses that work with pilgrims, city municipalities and pilgrims themselves. It is intended to provoke discussion and inspiration. Please distribute it widely, crediting ARC where possible. And keep an eye on [www.greenpilgrimage.net](http://www.greenpilgrimage.net) for up-to-date stories and examples.***

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## **ILLUSTRATIONS**

COVER: Pilgrim feet by Katia Marsh

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS by Marsha Hollingsworth

ARC  
The House, Kelston Park  
Bath  
BA1 9AE, UK  
+44 1225 758004

[www.arcworld.org](http://www.arcworld.org)  
[arcworld@arcworld.org](mailto:arcworld@arcworld.org)

Contact Alison Hilliard [alisonh@arcworld.org](mailto:alisonh@arcworld.org)

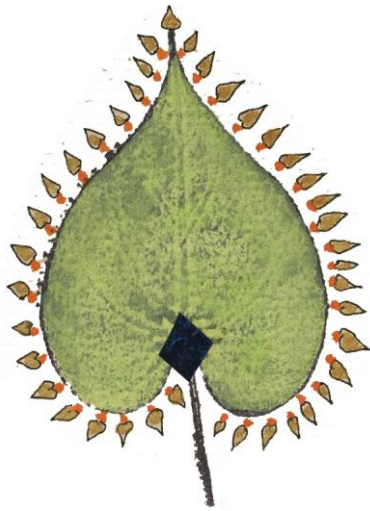




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# INTRODUCTION



More than 330 million people become pilgrims each year, whether for hours, days, weeks or months. And numbers are increasing. Pilgrim cities all round the world are receiving record numbers. In 2013 more than 100 million pilgrims attended a single event: the 12-yearly Maha Kumbh Mela Hindu, in Allahabad, India. In addition, each year around 30 million Sikh pilgrims visit the Golden Temple in Amritsar, 30 million Hindus go to Ayyappan Saranam in India; 20 million Christians go to Our Lady of Guadalupe; three million Muslims go on Hajj (which would be more, but there are quotas). Pilgrimage in Europe is booming as well: ancient routes to Santiago de Compostela, Spain as well as Trondheim in Norway, Vadstena in Sweden, Canterbury in England and many other places are popular as never before and new routes are being rediscovered and developed.

You could imagine that these holiest destinations on Earth might be the most cared for places on Earth. But sometimes the opposite is true. Most pilgrimage routes are littered by overwhelming amounts of plastic bottles and rubbish. And sometimes the very act of going on pilgrimage increases local pollution and use of pesticides, disturbs threatened wildlife, increases carbon emissions and causes other types of environmental damage.

The Green Pilgrimage Network (GPN) is a global network of pilgrim cities and places around the world, which have in common an intention to be models of green action and care. The shared vision is that pilgrim cities, routes and sites will be cleaner and greener, and that pilgrims will leave a positive footprint on the earth while promoting a message of environmental care as a religious responsibility.

This is a faith-led network where faith groups, local authorities, municipalities and other secular groups — from local businesses to food suppliers — can come together to work alongside each other to green their pilgrim cities and places. Moreover, it pays attention to how pilgrims come to be inspired and changed by their experience and works to help encourage them to take that change home with them, and understand how *their* faith is an environmental faith. This is the GPN's unique opportunity: to raise awareness about environmental care while promoting new ways of sustainable living to protect our planet, with the aim of reducing the negative environmental impact of pilgrimages while increasing the positive environmental impact.

The GPN was born in 2009, at a meeting held by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) at Windsor Castle, UK. Two years later it launched formally at a meeting in Assisi. Today faith leaders and municipalities in at least 20 major pilgrim destinations are working actively on this issue.

We have the commitment of Bahá'í, Christian, Confucian, Daoist, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Shinto faith groups; a Green Guide for Hajj has been published in English, Arabic,

The slow conversion of our manners, as St Benedict put it, occurs when our journeys lead us to new perspectives about ourselves and the world we inhabit... a stirring within the human spirit for mystical renewal and a life lived at pace with the earth and its rhythms.

– Rev Dr Richard Frazer,  
Greyfriars Kirk Edinburgh,  
GPN advocate

Hausa, Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Malaysia for pilgrims travelling to the Hajj. Regional GPN hubs are planned in Europe, China, Indonesia, India and the Holy Land.

As a direct result of the work of the GPN there are new guides for greening places of worship all over the world; there are annual celebrations of the environment by Hindus (Hindu Environment Week) and Sikhs (Sikh Environment Day) with communities taking active steps to protect the natural world, often starting with their pilgrim cities. Confucianist and Daoist bodies in China, with the support of the Chinese government, are now committed to greening their towns and cities on an unprecedented scale.

It was Mahatma Gandhi who said: “Be the change that you wish to see in the world.” Our hope is that pilgrimage cities and places can, through the GPN, become models of the world in which we want to live; a world we want to pass down to our children and future generations.

Alison Hilliard  
Director, Green Pilgrimage Network  
October 2014



*“Different religions, different holy sites, yet on the same page, working towards the same goal. This is a valuable lesson for the world. It is an important reminder that despite difficult times – be it the crushing weight of austerity measures here in Europe or revolutionary turmoil in the Middle East – we need to stay focused on what is truly important: how we treat each other as well as the world around us... It is this spirit of diversity and shared responsibility embodied in the greening of pilgrimage cities and routes that the world needs so much right now. The example of the Green Pilgrimage Network shows us that we need to hold communities up to high standards of behaviour and remind ourselves of what we have in common, not our divisions. The Network will only work if it engages secular partnerships as well as religious groups. From transport providers to solar power experts; from local NGOs to academic institutions and environmental organisations. Only then will it be possible to receive and accommodate millions of pilgrim visitors sustainably. Only then will it be possible to spread greener living habits within our community.”*

*-- Thorbjorn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe and former Prime Minister of Norway, speaking at the second meeting of the GPN in Trondheim, Norway, July 2013*



## Part One: how to start

*"Being a Green Pilgrimage city or town means far more than just dealing with tourism responsibly: this is an ethos that can have a role in every element of urban decision-making"*

– Tony Juniper, former head of Friends of the Earth.

An agreement between the faith group or groups and the secular authorities in a pilgrim city is at the heart of the GPN. Therefore to join the GPN you must represent either a municipality or a faith group significant to a pilgrimage place. You must, with your tradition, organisation or municipality supporting you, sign the GPN vision statement:

*The vision of the Green Pilgrimage Network is of pilgrims, and the pilgrim cities and places that receive them, becoming models of care for the environment and leaving a positive footprint on this earth.*

*We, the members of the Green Pilgrimage Network support this vision, and commit to create an action plan to transform our pilgrim city, place or route into a green, sustainable model in keeping with the beliefs of our faith or the faiths of our pilgrimage place.*

*This action plan will be the roadmap for improving the environmental impacts of the city or place and pilgrimage routes. We will share this action plan with other members of the Green Pilgrimage Network.*

*Each of us also commits to bring faith and secular groups together to work in partnership towards this vision.*

*We pledge to promote this in the local media, and we will work with visiting pilgrims to make their journeys as environmentally friendly as possible. We will do this through greening our transport, accommodation, food, water supply, waste, sanitation and wild places, as well as encouraging green parks, environmental education and wildlife protection for and by local residents.*

*We also pledge to support and help each other, and to promote green pilgrimage ideas where we can.*

SIGNED .....

DATE .....

WITNESSED BY.....



## Step 1: A theology

*"It is our profound conviction that the future of the human family depends also on how we safeguard – both prudently and compassionately, with justice and fairness – the gift of creation that our Creator has entrusted to us. Therefore, we acknowledge in repentance the wrongful mistreatment of our planet, which is tantamount to sin before the eyes of God. We reaffirm our responsibility and obligation to foster a sense of humility and moderation so that all may feel the need to respect Creation and to safeguard it with care. Together, we pledge our commitment to raising awareness about the stewardship of creation; we appeal to all people of goodwill to consider ways of living less wastefully and more frugally, manifesting less greed and more generosity for the protection of God's world and the benefit of His people." ---Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew 1, May 25 2014: A Common Declaration, Jerusalem*

The GPN is a faith-led initiative, arising from a conviction that caring for the environment is a religious responsibility. Many GPN members have started with defining their faith's theology of the environment, explaining how the traditional teachings of their religion show it is important to engage with green issues. Not just because it is a nice thing to do, but because it's a fundamental part of everything they believe.

Drawing up a theology outlining the reasons for engagement in green pilgrimage is the first step in giving pilgrims a message of environmental care. It's the reason behind a commitment to make faith buildings or celebrations or festivals greener and it's the motivation to engage with secular groups to work together on greening pilgrim cities and places. On our website you will find green pilgrimage theologies from some of the network's founding faith members, drawn up as part of this process.

*"The preservation of the environment is one of the central principles of the Bahá'í faith. And green pilgrimage is a natural step in fulfilling one of our guiding principles of respect for nature." --- Jalal Hatami: Deputy Secretary-General, Bahá'í International Community*



## Step 2: A roundtable of all interested partners

Great things can often come from bringing people together to have a conversation about what they can do together. Often faith groups and municipalities in a pilgrim city have never sat down together to share their vision for their city. Other groups can be included too, ranging from tourist offices, hoteliers, food providers, local businesses and environmental groups. For example, the Church of England's Diocese of Canterbury joined the GPN in July 2013. Their action plan took more than a year to draw up and has involved consultation with around 40 groups in the city including churches along the pilgrim routes, environmental organisations, tourism and produce-related organisations, local authorities and places of higher education. Each group signed a partnership agreement, not only committing to the GPN, but also to working with at least one other partner organisation to make their pilgrim city greener.



### Step 3. An environmental assessment

The roundtable conversation will give a clearer idea of what both faith leaders and civic authorities are already doing for the environment, and where the major environmental problems and issues lie. The next step is to carry out a more formal environmental assessment to indicate where you could have a more positive impact. Use this handbook to inspire you and your action team with ideas of what GPN members have already been doing, to see what your pilgrim site could do.



### Step 4: A strategic plan

Without a clear plan, many great ideas come to very little. Start by asking the following questions:

- What does it mean, for us, to be a green pilgrim city or town?
- What do we want to have achieved in the next five years?
- In the next ten years?
- In the next generation?
- Who will help us?
- Where will we look for funding?
- What are the next steps?



### Step 5. Being active members of the network

After you have signed the vision statement and sent your action plan to the Green Pilgrimage Network we will discuss it with you, then share it with other members. This is largely a web-based network, inspiring others through newsletters and emails, and sharing best practice and stories among members and also the wider public.

GPN members are responsible for drawing up their own action plans and funding their own programmes. However some have found that being part of the Network, and using this constructive, planned approach to environmental action, can often attract local funding from faiths or municipalities. Sometimes new initiatives or ideas for spreading green pilgrimage practice require little funding but rather a change in behaviour, practice or mindset.

There are occasional meetings to share best practice and welcome new members. Cities hosting meetings are largely responsible for bearing the costs of each meeting. Local and regional groups of the GPN are developing in Europe, China, India and for Muslim countries sending pilgrims on Hajj. These will work to support and encourage members while sharing what works locally and promoting partnerships that may lead to funding.





## Part two: Eight key areas to make your pilgrimage site greener

- I. Green infrastructure and buildings
- II. Waste management
- III. Energy efficiency and transport
- IV. Water resources
- V. Greening food
- VI. Conserving land, biodiversity & wild places
- VII. Greening celebrations
- VIII. Promoting green wisdom, education & awareness





## I. Green infrastructure & buildings

*"Simple, green, modest pilgrimage is touching the beauty of God in a concrete way."*

*- Father Pierrebattista Pizzabella, Custodian of the Holy Land*

### 1. Greening your buildings

Faiths and municipalities often own many buildings in pilgrim cities and along pilgrim routes. Not only the traditional places of worship but offices, halls, hostels, pilgrim centres, cafes, welcome centres, tourist offices, housing, bus stations etc etc. These are obvious places for people to go to, and if they are green and sustainable and have information about how and why they are green and sustainable, this is a very good place to start. Any new buildings should be environmentally friendly, but also existing buildings can be adapted to be wiser about their impact on nature. It is also a case, rarely publicised, that the construction industry worldwide wastes an average of 30% every project, and sometimes that can be more than 50% of materials, time and resources wasted. Sometimes because of misunderstandings at the drawing and project level.



#### *What you could do:*

- Improve the ecological footprint of all your faith and municipal buildings and places of worship by developing a sustainable management plan.
- Establish trusted green building certification criteria systems
- Make sure all new buildings are eco friendly from the planning stage
- Publish or distribute a handbook on making your places of worship greener.
- Use eco lightbulbs; cut down heating and air-conditioning; install solar energy, insulate your buildings more efficiently; establish policies about purchasing of furniture, carpets, paint etc; introduce composting.



#### *Some examples:*

E.G. Daoists are installing solar panels at temples throughout China. The first Daoist ecological temple, at Taibaishan pilgrimage mountain in Shaanxi Province, was built in 2007 with local sustainable materials. It is now a model for ecological temples throughout the country, and the place where the Daoist Green Temple Network started. The full story can be read in *Sacred Mountains* by Allerd Sticker, Bene Factum Press 2014. The Daoists have produced a handbook, *How to Green Your Temple*.



E.G. The Daoist GPN member city of Louguan in western China is encouraging the use of solar panels, bio-fuels and renewable energy, not just around the temple of Louguantai but across the whole local area, including building sustainable housing and a low-carbon hotel for visitors.

E.G. A Green Temples Initiative has been launched through the GPN in India, where temples are improving their waste and water management, energy use, greening landscapes and nearby areas, protecting biodiversity and launching green education initiatives.

E.G. In 2014 the UK-based Muslim Agency for Development and Enterprise (MADE) published the Green Up My Community toolkit as part of an inspiring campaign for greening mosques.

E.G. The Jagganath Temple in Puri has installed solar panels on temple buildings. Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh has solar water heaters in place of conventional water heaters in its charitable hospital as well as all residential and guest buildings.

E.G. Through its Good Water Neighbors project Friends of the Earth Middle East holds regional workshops on eco-friendly building, particularly around the River Jordan, pilgrim destination for Jews, Christians and Muslims. Skills include mud-building techniques for outdoor seating areas and outdoor classrooms, constructing wetlands for wastewater treatment, rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling.

**Contact hostels and accommodation in your pilgrim city, and ask:**

1. Is the accommodation as kind as possible to the environment and community?
2. Are your cleaning chemicals gentle?
3. Do you compost and recycle?
4. Do you source ethical/organic/local breakfast and food ingredients?
5. Are all eggs free-range?
6. Are new buildings planned to have a minimal environmental footprint?
7. Is toilet paper (where relevant) recycled or FSC-certified on principle?
8. If you have gardens, are they maintained to take care of bees and birds and mammals?
9. What do you do to ensure staff are employed fairly at a fair wage?
10. Is the furniture environmentally sourced?
11. Does the company doing the laundry have a sustainable ethos?
12. Is there a sign in the room giving an option to have linen and towels washed?
13. Have you shampoo/soap from dispensers rather than throwaway bottles?
14. Is there a mechanism to switch off aircon/heat when there's nobody in the room?
15. Is your lighting LED and energy-saving?
16. Do you use green energy?
17. Do you provide a walking, bike and public transport guide to the city?
18. Do you call itself an "eco" hotel?
19. Do you tell guests about what you do for the environment, and why it is faith-consistent to do so?

## 2. Greening pilgrim accommodation



### *What you could do:*

- Recommend green hotels and hostels based not only on cost, proximity and attractiveness but also on a faith-consistent attitude to resources and nature. Use the GPN logo on maps and signs to identify places making an effort.
- Use your leverage: Ask hotels to do an environmental audit and see whether they can improve their footprint, on the understanding that once they have done this, you will be able to recommend them to pilgrims.
- See the UNEP-supported European Hotel Energy Solutions project. It comprises: a carbon calculator, an energy benchmarking tool, information on best practice and capacity building materials.

- Contact AirBNBs in your area. Are they green?
- Produce a green map of your pilgrim route, showing where pilgrims can find the more eco-friendly hotels and hostels. Send the information to tour guide publishers like Lonely Planet.
- Use the GPN logo.





### *Some examples:*

E.G. The Wesley Hotel, a Methodist-owned four-star hotel in London, won the first ethical hotel mark in the UK. It offers seasonal, local produce; uses eco cleaning and catering standards (to ISO14001 standard), has signed up to the City of London Climate Pledge, and has radically changed its waste disposal policy so that almost everything is composted or recycled. It has actually increased its profit and is a better, more popular hotel.

Along the 400km Abraham Path in the Middle East pilgrims can stay with families in homestays, benefiting the local economy without the need for building additional hotel accommodation. Meanwhile the GPN member, Friends of the Earth Middle East, has developed three EcoParks (Sharhabil bin Hassaneh Ecopark in Jordan, Auja Ecopark in Palestine and Ein Gedi in Israel), each with community-based accommodation options.

E.G. In the pilgrimage city of Etchmiadzin in Armenia, there are no hotels (it is only 20km from the capital) but through its work with the GPN, sustainable bed and breakfast accommodation has been set up in local homes, offering closer acquaintance with the local culture and people.



E.G. The Norwegian government has established a National Pilgrim Centre in Trondheim. This centre has developed an accreditation system for accommodation along the different pilgrimage routes to Trondheim, with guidelines and requests for greening of the places. Some restaurants, food outlets and hotels/hostels are awarded the already well-established Eco-Lighthouse (Miljøfyrtårn) accreditation and more are working to achieve this e.g. the Nidaros Pilgrim Centre next to the Cathedral of Trondheim, the ultimate goal for pilgrims following the Route of St. Olav Ways.

## **II. Waste Management**

### **1. Refuse, re-use, recycle and compost**

**Recycling in the UK saves between 10 and 15 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year, equivalent to taking about 3.5 million cars off the road. In many countries there are no recycling or even waste collection facilities. In some of these places pilgrim cities are potential models for introducing waste collection, with the possibility that other cities may see the advantages and follow suit. Better is to avoid producing waste in the first place, by choosing not to buy things with wasteful packaging, and reusing things before buying replacements.**



### *Things you could do:*

- If there are waste management and sewage problems in the local area, work at a high level with the municipality, media and the local faith communities to find a solution together.



- Identify a model city in your region or country where these issues have been addressed, and find out how they did it. Then write it up and make sure decision makers know how you can adapt this to your local situation.
- Organise faith clean-up days to help out the city authorities and be an example for people not to throw their rubbish onto the street.
- Promote no-litter-lout campaigns in schools and colleges, work with your city on a campaign, contributing ideas and energy... and then tell your faith followers and pilgrims about it.
- Examine whether faith buildings, schools, cafés, and faith meetings are disposing of waste in environmental ways. If not then talk to them.
- Ensure there are enough toilets for pilgrims: investigate how some could be bio-toilets where the waste is used to fertilise the land or provide energy.



### *Some examples:*

E.G. At Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh in India, different types of waste are sorted into coloured bins for as much recycling as possible. Worship flowers and garlands go into a separate pit as they are regarded as sacred. The compost is used in gardening.

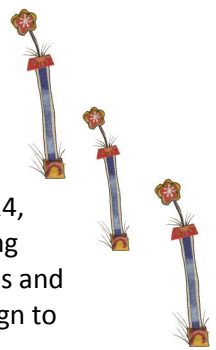
Amritsar in India has almost no municipal cleaning system, meaning that rubbish rots in the streets. Sikh priest, Baba Khadur Singh, brings villagers into the city every night to clean the streets leading to the Golden Temple. With the help of EcoAmritsar, he is being helped to bring this voluntary Sikh service to other Amritsar gurdwaras and communities so they can take responsibility. EcoAmritsar is using the example of Chandigarh city in Punjab (where there is municipal rubbish collection) as a model for their own action. Cleaning gurdwaras, streets and community spaces is now an established part of Sikh Environment Day every March 14.

E.G. During the first Hindu Environment Week in March 2014, Hindu organisations across India took part in temple cleaning drives, removing rubbish and organising cleanups at temples and bathing ghats, as well as launching the Clean Ganga campaign to remove rubbish and pollution in the sacred Ganges.

E.G. The Mayor of the pilgrim city of Varanasi was finding it almost impossible to make the municipal collectors clean up the medieval city, and pick up the litter from its tiny medieval streets. So in 2012 he started calling up the garbage collectors, personally, and randomly, at 6am, to check where they were. It worked.

E.G. Pilgrims to the Daoist temples at the GPN city of Louguan are restricted to burning three sticks of incense; previously the custom had been to burn as much incense as you could afford, which made temples into places where birds could not live and people could not breathe. This not only prevents waste and reduces pollution, but also passes on the Daoist message of simplicity and moderation. The Three Incense Movement has now been taken up nationally and promoted by the China Buddhist Association, the China Daoist Association and the State Administration of Religious Affairs, all supporting burning of only three incense sticks in all temples in China.

E.G. The Kagyu Buddhist tradition in India and Tibet has encouraged all its schools, as well as its temples and one million followers, to recycle all materials. It has set up boxes for all recyclable items, even in remote places where there is nowhere



to send the items yet – in the hope and faith that it will encourage local government to act. This is an example of where faiths walk ahead, in the hope that governments will come and walk beside them.

E.G. GPN member Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan, India, has started using some of the funding earned from its parking lot to support sweepers who remove trash from the park during pilgrimages (of millions of people). When it is not picked up, this plastic trash can be eaten by animals, and sometimes they die from it.

## 2. Ban free plastic bags

In his book *How Many Lightbulbs Does It Take To Change a Planet?* former head of Friends of the Earth, Tony Juniper, cites a survey by the Angalita Research Foundation discovering six kilos of plastic for every kilo of plankton caught in the Pacific. Plastic bags threaten sea birds and all seven marine turtle species.



E.G. At the Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar, despite the intense heat, there are no plastic water bottles to be seen. Instead volunteers arrange water stations all around the site, cleaning the stainless steel cups with traditional, eco, cleaning products. A few hundred miles further south, the Sikh city of Ludhiana has banned plastic bags less than 30 microns in size. Bags need to be made of virgin plastic, without colours, and with the manufacturer's name printed on it.

E.G. In Etchmiadzin, Armenia, the local NGO Zangakatoun has come up with a novel way to recycle plastic bags. Children from vulnerable families, together with their mothers, collect, wash and cut waste plastic bags into narrow bands with which they crochet bags, phone cases, etc as souvenirs for pilgrims. Since 2012 books and souvenirs bought from the Cathedral shop are put into recycled paper bags, with signs that they are indeed recycled.



Hindusim considers the area of Vrindavan, south of Delhi, to be the land of Krishna and his cows. Over recent years increasing numbers of cows all around India have died or suffered from eating plastic bags. Recently, a law was passed in Vrindavan stopping shopkeepers from giving plastic bags to customers. They now hand out cloth bags. Similar laws have been passed in other towns and cities across India.

E.G. According to *The Green Guide for Hajj* about 100 million plastic bottles were left behind on Hajj sites in 2010. Indonesia sends the largest number of pilgrims to the Hajj, and as part of the country's pre departure Hajj programme, pilgrims are asked not to buy or use plastic bags or plastic bottles during Hajj. In 2014, for the first time, pilgrims were provided with roll up floor mats made from environmentally friendly material instead of plastic.

E.G. At the launch of the Mongolian Buddhist Eight-Year Plan in Ulaanbaatar in 2010, small flasks in the ochre colour of Buddhist robes were distributed. The aim was to reduce the number of plastic bottles. Could souvenir pilgrim flasks be provided on your routes and destination? Could these be beautiful, desirable, affordable, and personalised with tags and pilgrim badges?

E.G. Several thousand tons of used polyethylene water bags are dumped everyday in Nigeria. Sheik Qaribullah Kabara is the leader of the Qadiriyyah Sufi Movement, with 15 million followers. He heads a programme which encourages each schoolchild to pick up 100 pieces of used poly-bags each week, rewarding them with academic

points. Collected poly-bags are used to hold tree seedlings in a tree nursery project run by his schools. He plans to expand the scheme to all public schools in Kano and to establish an eco-friendly “poly recycling” facility in Kano city.



### III. Energy efficiency and transport

#### 1. Energy efficiency



##### *What you could do:*

- Look at energy conservation policies for your pilgrimage area.
- And see what can be done to improve them.
- Consider installing solar power in your temple.
- Look into using energy efficient light bulbs.
- Use fuel-efficient cooking methods for your celebrations
- Establish pledges, eco-certification schemes and awards



##### *Some examples:*

E.G. Sikh gurdwaras around the world all have free community kitchens, or langar, feeding millions of people every day, regardless of creed or need. Some are now running their stoves on bio fuel, made from their compost. Amristsar’s Golden Temple recently shifted langar to solar energy. It has also installed solar water heaters.

E.G. Some of the largest solar cooking systems are being used in Shirdi and the Tirupati Hindu temple complex in India, where food is served to millions of devotees every year. In Tirupati, clean energy feeds over 70,000 people every day. The Temples has installed solar powered lights, a solar cooking system, windmills and a water recycling station that purifies all waste water which is then reused in the Temple’s city gardens. The system has reduced carbon dioxide emissions by 1.2 tonnes per day and has the added benefit of saving Rs 1.7 million (about US\$30,000) a year.



E.G. The Bahá’í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, is a place of pilgrimage for more than 5 million Bahá’ís worldwide. After the Centre introduced a policy of energy conservation: it saw an 11.5% saving in energy consumption from 2011 to 2013. Initiatives included fine-tuning heating and cooling systems in several buildings and completing the replacement of all incandescent bulbs (in these buildings, as well as gardens surrounding the Holy Shrines) with compact fluorescent bulbs.

E.G. In 2008 the City of London developed a Climate Change Pledge. This is now something businesses, hotels, restaurants, transport providers can sign up to – and then by signing, gain publicity from making this ethical choice.

E.G. In 2008, GreenFaith set up an interfaith environmental certification program for houses of worship in the USA. It has conducted hundreds of energy audits for churches, synagogues, mosques, temples and gurdwaras.

E.G. The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, a partnership of US Catholic organisations, including the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, has since 2009 been inviting parishes, schools, campuses and youth groups to join the Catholic Climate Covenant by taking the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor, both in their communities and online.

E.G. The US-based Interfaith Power and Light has issued a Cool Congregations challenge to help faith communities engage members to save energy. They have provided “energy efficiency” packs and promoted an alternative to carbon credits, involving faith communities linking with other faith communities in the developing world to help them protect against deforestation. It is called the “carbon covenant.”

## 2. Transport infrastructure

**Transport generates about 75% of carbon emissions contributed by tourism.**



### *What you could do:*

- Encourage walking, cycling and using public transport through faith outreach, travel agencies, tour groups or tour leaders.
- Work with municipalities and cycling groups like Sustrans in the UK to revitalise town centres by connecting them to suburbs via safe cycle routes, walkways and buses.
- Campaign for a more cycle-friendly road network, including slower traffic speeds, segregated cycle lands, and better cycle parking facilities.
- Recommend walking. Well-maintained and well-lit paths would make walking more appealing, and maintain the beauty and diversity of neighbourhoods.
- Work with rail and coach companies to promote pilgrim rail-passes and bus-passes to help people not to choose air flights
- Try to reduce the use of on-site vehicles in any events organized by the city and use electric or bio-diesel powered vehicles.
- Consider using shuttle buses powered by green energy.
- Encourage car-pooling.
- Provide information about how pilgrims can use public transit by showcasing maps, bus and subway routes.
- Work with the local authority and local environmental NGOs to improve the green transport network in your city.
- Ask the city authorities to introduce mandatory environmental labelling for all new vehicles, with the aim of doubling fuel efficiency within a decade.
- Replace diesel-powered buses with buses powered by hydrogen fuel cells.
- Use carbon off-setting as a last resort, because it might delay action to cut emissions, but if opted for, pursue Gold Standard accredited schemes only.
- If pack animals are used for transport at the pilgrimage site, make sure they are treated well and compassionately, and that this is not only monitored but also that pilgrims understand how they need to be careful with the animals they hire.







### Some examples:

E.G. 1.5 million Muslim pilgrims from West Africa visit the tombs of the local Qadiriyyah Saints for the annual Maukib festival in Kano, Nigeria. On Maukib day, private vehicles are banned, with buses bringing pilgrims to the site. Pilgrims are encouraged to travel to the shrine on foot or horse. This is led by their spiritual leader, Sheikh Qaribullah Nasir Kabara travelling on horseback.



E.G. At the pilgrim city of St Albans in the UK, a St Albans cycle trail has been created on a former railway track while the town council has established a Green Ring of cycle routes through the city to reduce traffic in the centre. At the pilgrim city of Canterbury, national bicycle route charity Sustrans has developed a cycle programme connecting the city to the rest of Kent.

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs has introduced wide-bodied aircraft to reduce the number of flights carrying pilgrims to the Hajj. Believers are encouraged to stay in Saudi Arabia for fewer days to reduce the impact on energy and water consumption in this desert country.

E.G. The Sikh holy city of Amritsar has made the area in front of the Golden Temple accessible by foot and cycle only.

E.G. The GPN city of Trondheim in Norway, has introduced over 200 gas-powered buses and 10 hybrid buses. The buses currently run on natural gas but aim to use biogas in the future. A local, regional and state level partnership in Trondheim has produced a policy for sustainable transport aiming to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emission from transport by 20% from 2008 to 2018. An extensive bicycle network has been developed. As a result, public transport use in Trondheim and the region increased by 54% between 2008 and 2013 and bicycling in the city centre increased by 20%. This comes with a sizeable reduction in the use of private cars. Local signage encourages walking, with the routes of St Olav's Way connecting pilgrim paths in Norway with Denmark and Sweden. The City, the National Pilgrim Centre, the Nidaros Pilgrim Centre and Visit Trondheim (which is the tourism office) are jointly developing pilgrim routes in the city as a new environmentally-friendly walking tourism opportunity for all kinds of tourists, including those coming with the coastal steamers and cruise ships.

E.G. The Daoist pilgrim town of Maoshan, Jiangsu Province, China, has banned all cars from the town centre as part of being a green pilgrim town.

E.G. The Abraham Path Initiative is a long distance walking trail across the Middle East retracing the cultural memory of the journey of Abraham and his family and celebrates its story of hospitality and kindness to strangers. It involves using local guides, local signage and local accommodation. In 2014 it was rated the National Geographic number one walking trail in the world.

## IV. Greening Water Resources

Water is sacred. It cleans the body, and purifies it. It is vital to provide water for drinking, hand washing, flushing, cleaning, school meal preparation and for clean toilets and



urinals in schools in order to keep children healthy. Yet in so many holy places, water provision is inadequate.



### *What you could do:*

- Conserve water.
- Look at the sewerage and sanitation facilities available along the pilgrim path and in schools etc in your city and work out a plan to improve them.
- Ensure that appliances are water-efficient.
- Store rainwater from roof run-off for garden use.



### *Some examples:*

E.G. Jewish, Christian and Muslim volunteers from Friends of the Earth Middle East have all worked to clean the River Jordan, a sacred site in all three faiths. The charity has developed a series of *Water, Ecology and the Jordan River* publications for the three faith-based communities, on the importance of protecting the shared Lower Jordan River. It hosts river valley tours for faith leaders and congregations. Faith leaders are encouraged to endorse the Covenant for the Jordan River with its vision of a healthy, living river.

The Green Guide to Water - The Hajjar Story is an animation and booklet for schools and for children looking at the importance of water conservation in Islam. It has a detailed list of recommendations for how pilgrims should use water wisely. It is inspired by the story of Hajjar, and by the Muslim teaching that food is blessed when you wash your hands before and after it.

E.G. Water use in the famous gardens of Haifa, surrounding the Bahá'í holy places at the Bahá'í World Centre is carefully monitored. Efforts to conserve water have resulted in a more than 25% reduction of water use since 2008.

E.G. At the Golden Temple of Sripuram, in Tamil Nadu, India, canals and ponds have been created within the temple complex to help recharge groundwater. The temple generates water for its own needs and supplies some for public use.



E.G. Parmarth Niketan Hindu ashram in Rishikesh, India is partnering with the Indian Ministry of Defence to install hundreds of bio toilets in communities along the River Ganges. Swami Chidanand Saraswati, the head of the ashram, is the co-founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, a global interfaith initiative to promote safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

E.G. Until 2008, there were just two taps and one toilet block for more than 200 monks in Dechen Phodrang Monastery and monastic school in Thimphu, Bhutan. The bushes around were filthy, and some 80% of monks had lice. The cooks had nowhere to wash their hands before cooking. With government funding and the endorsement of the now King of Bhutan a new toilet block and water supply were installed, there were classes in environmental awareness and new electric stoves,

saving tonnes of wood. Monks were taught to grow flower gardens, supported by a manual prepared for them by Bhutan's Royal Society for the Protection of Nature.

E.G. In the Sikh GPN city of Amritsar, Sikh volunteers operate water points with well water, to ensure clean and safe water is available to all pilgrims. Pilgrims can pick up steel bowls of water; these are then washed with eco-friendly products by teams of volunteers.

E.G. The Art of Living, Bangalore, has been undertaking water management on a large scale, especially in nearby villages. Initiatives include teaching farmers to construct dams to store rainwater for use in the non-rainy seasons. Several pilgrim cities in India are looking to this as a model.

## V. Having greener, kinder food

*"As we commune with nature we must never forget to commune with one another. We should be asking people to "smell the green pilgrimage": to eat our olive oil, apricots and cucumbers, to eat at local restaurants and have green hospitality." Bishop Munib Younan, President Lutheran World Federation*



**Faiths run hotels, guesthouses, gift shops, cafeterias, retreat centres and restaurants all around the world. With up to 30% of our carbon footprint coming from our food, choosing planet-friendly food is the most important everyday way to reduce environmental impact.**



### *What you could do:*

- Introduce minimum standards and targets. For example the Soil Association (the UK's leading organic certifier) advocates the 70-50-30-100 principle: that we should aim for our food to be at least **70% fresh or unprocessed; 50% local, and 30% organic, with 100% free-range eggs. For many people this is both ambitious and attainable.**
- Look at all pilgrim hospitality and retail outlets to see if the sourcing is ethically and environmentally sound. Use the GPN logo on maps and products to guide people to where to go.
- Develop a green award scheme to places that promote green eating and standards, including both secular and faith based establishments.
- Build links to organic farms.
- Recommend pilgrims and residents cut down meat consumption to reduce pressure on natural habitats, reduce pollution and help combat climate change.
- Review what you are doing as a city and community to support less intensive and more compassionate food systems such as organic or low-pesticide farming with higher standards of animal rearing.
- Read *Faith in Food* (2014, Bene Factum Press,

**THE 70-50-30-100 PRINCIPLE:**  
**That all the food we serve and buy should be at least 70 per cent fresh & unprocessed; 50 per cent local, and 30 per cent organic, with 100 per cent free-range eggs.**

London) for further inspiration



### *Some examples:*

E.G. In the Friends Quaker House in London, the restaurant and café are building on their initial Good Egg Award (for using only free range eggs) by gradually implementing a strict ethical food policy for all catering services. Customers are appreciating their improvements.

E.G. In Etchmiadzin, the Armenia Inter-Church Charitable Round Table Foundation has established a canteen where up to 100 pilgrims can get simple and healthy food cooked to traditional Armenian recipes. They have incorporated the **70-50-30-100** standards and food is cooked over traditional fires using wood trimmed for forestry purposes. It is a valuable way to train young Armenians in their own cooking traditions, including the favourite lavash flatbread. The kitchen revives the traditional Armenian dormer kitchen window, built in the centre of the ceiling as a green source for natural light and ventilation.

**“Slow food unites the pleasure of food with responsibility, sustainability and harmony with nature.”**  
**Carlo Petrini, Slow Food founder and president.**

E.G. The Slow Food network offers ideas, case studies and information about local food cultures and how to conserve and promote them.

E.G. St Alban’s in the UK has a claim to have invented the hot cross bun (a traditional Christian Easter fruit bun) and the Cathedral has recently partnered with a local watermill to use only local organic corn to produce these traditional delicacies, advertising the sourcing, and making a clear connection between food, faith and local supply. Inspired by GPN membership the Cathedral has also revived the tradition of planting potatoes on Good Friday, the Friday of Easter week. In the autumn the Good Friday harvest is dug up, and served in the Cathedral’s café, to illustrate the connection between faith and care for creation.

E.G. The Coptic Orthodox Monastery of St Pishoy is a model of self-sufficiency in the Egyptian desert, with some 400 acres of desert land reclaimed for organic farming to feed its monks, labourers and the many pilgrims. The monastery has developed best practice guidelines to share with other desert monasteries.

E.G. Holland House is a Christian retreat centre in rural Worcestershire, UK. In 2007 its new director decided to take steps to go green. Four years later Holland House came first in the Community category of the annual Footprint Awards

E.G. US-based Jewish environmental organisation Hazon has pioneered a faith-based Community-Supported Agriculture programme, and currently has 40 places in North America and Israel supporting local, sustainable agriculture. It involves setting up a partnership between synagogues and local organic farmers to buy shares in the farm





In January 2007, the head of the Tibetan Buddhist Kagyu tradition, the Karmapa Orgyen Trinle Dorje, became vegetarian. That month he made a statement that no meat is to be prepared in any Kagyu Monastery or Centre, and that no students or monks in robes should buy or sell meat. He condemned the practice of using *tsok* (offerings during a gathering) as an excuse for eating meat. This statement had immediate impact on his million followers (many of whom became vegetarian) and also on the eating habits during annual pilgrimage to Bodhgaya in northern India.

produce at the beginning of the year. That way the farmers have already sold a proportion of their produce. Fresh boxes of vegetables are delivered to the synagogue each weekend, trips to the farm are organised and cookery classes are held to involve all generations.

E.G. The Board of Deputies of British Jews in the UK has published a *Jewish Guide to Fairtrade* brochure outlining the theological and moral reasons for buying fair trade goods. It encourages synagogues to buy Fairtrade tea, coffee, sugar etc for all meetings. It suggests that kosher cafés and restaurants not only serve Fairtrade products but that they make their customers aware of why it matters.

## VI. Conserving land, biodiversity & wild places

### 1. Greening the land

The faiths own or manage around 7% of the habitable land surface of the planet, and more than 5% of the world's forests. They can be leaders in working out how to protect the land and its species in better and more compassionate ways.



#### What you could do:

- Check how your sacred sites are maintained ecologically, and to what extent, forests, mines and quarries around your sacred city are managed sustainably.
- Pilgrim trails often pass through long stretches of land: can you work with the landowners to make this holy land more environmentally sustainable?
- In the city, town or the shrines along the route, could you green a space beside your place of worship that is testimony to your commitment to be green? Could this space also stimulate the recovery of lost skills, such as the restoration of intricate traditional architecture and ancient gardens?
- Speak with city officials about whether city parks can be better protected, and whether there could be more urban trees along roads to the pilgrim site. Can communities be involved?

Stress relief comes in four minutes through contact with nature: the heart rate slows and the muscles relax. Green in a city is therefore a critical message" -- GPN consultant, Professor Chris Baines



#### Some examples:

E.G. Solan is a community of Orthodox nuns in France's Rhone valley. In 1991 they took over a building in an abandoned farm complex, without water or electricity, and built it into a working organic farm, producing wine, apricot jam, chestnuts and figs. The local authority initially offered a 75% subsidy for them to chop down their forest, sell the logs, replant new trees and leave them for 30 years – but they wanted to do it differently. Instead, a forester felled selected trees and planted 5,000 new saplings by hand. The result for the nuns is a constantly mature forest, which provides wood and income, while maintaining a sense of a special and sacred place. The result for the local authority is a change in practice: it now subsidises hand planting. For local landowners there is another proven (and subsidised) model of forestry to follow. And wild animals and plants have places to thrive.

ARC and Muslim NGO Global One published an Islamic farming toolkit linking Islamic values with the principles of conservation agriculture. Farmers have already seen significant improvements in crop yields, grown without chemical pesticides.

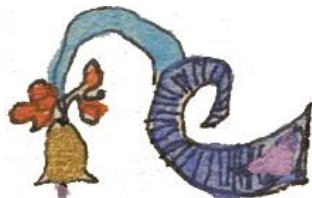
E.G. During the Soviet era there were just half a dozen churches operating in Armenia, and many trees in parks and forests were cut for cooking and heating. But with independence, most church buildings have returned to the Armenian Apostolic and Catholic churches. They have repaired and reopened many of the buildings, and have now begun to replant trees around them. A major programme is reforesting the ancient Nersisyan forest which formerly stretched for 100 hectares around the Mother Cathedral of Holy

Etchmiadzin, but by 1990 had almost disappeared. The aim is to turn this spiritual centre for Armenians into the greenest city in Armenia and a model for every other city in the region.

E.G. Sikhs plant thousands of trees around Gurdwaras on Sikh Environment Day. Even Gurdwaras with space problems have introduced potted plants on rooftops, stairwells, and inside office areas.

E.G. Ganga Action Parivar in Rishikesh is planting thousands of trees and shrubs to provide shade, fruit, medicines and other benefits for communities.

E.G. In 1999 British Sikhs planted woodland on the outskirts of Nottingham. Oaks were chosen for their longevity, to be enjoyed by generations to come; fruit trees were chosen for their blossom and beauty for today's generation. Now Khalsa Wood is a quiet place used for walks, picnics, ceremonies and meditation by many communities – and has become a model for faith-created woodland. The initiative came when Sikhs were beginning to distribute saplings at ceremonies, in place of the traditional prasad of sweets.



E.G. Chicago has set up more than 50 community gardens in its parks. “Visually, the community garden can reflect the health, unity, creativity, beauty, culture and diversity of its community. Physically, the community garden can become a natural outdoor gym. Socially, the community garden can bring neighbours together by providing a setting for acquaintances to become friends. Mentally, the community garden is a safe place for residents to connect with nature through caring for ornamental and edible plants.” Link [here](#) to set up a garden, and [here](#) for how Chicago achieved this.

“The world is facing the danger of environmental destruction. It is time for us, the Japanese, to re-evaluate the spiritual values we have inherited from our ancestors. Being considerate to each other, not as individuals but as a community, and living with nature, means to live with deities and ancestors within nature. In Shinto, human beings are a part of nature. Respecting the awe in nature, appreciating the blessings of nature, and living together with nature are principles we would like to share with our own pilgrims and pilgrims worldwide.” -- Tsunekiyo Tanaka, President Jinja Honcho, Association of Shinto Shrines. GPN meeting, Ise, Japan 2014

E.G. The Grand Shrine at Ise in Japan is the holiest place for Shinto. It is rebuilt every 20 years – everything is replaced, including the wooden buildings, the sacred bridges, the Torii gates and the ritual objects. A century ago the Shinto leadership looked up to the groves where in previous times the wood was sourced, and they saw only bare mountains, so they put in place a 200 year forest conservation plan, to ensure a constant supply of cypress wood for all the shrines in the future. In 2013 the shrine was rebuilt for the 62nd time, with 12 million pilgrims and visitors. The Shinto, ARC and GPN held a major meeting at Ise in 2014 to celebrate this event.

## 2. Protecting Biodiversity in cities & wild spaces

**Wildlife and their habitats are in crisis. Threats include poaching, illegal land clearing and encroachment. As wild natural places become more accessible, more and more people are visiting these once remote, fragile areas, putting increasing pressure on natural landscapes.**



### *What you can do:*

- Include the theme of religion and wildlife protection in religious teachings, sermons and educational materials
- Reach out to local conservation organizations about how you can help with protection efforts in nature reserves and around your temple
- Establish city gardens where birds, bees, butterflies, bats and other pollinators can thrive
- Make sure that there are systems in place for trash disposal so the forest is not littered with plastic and other waste.



- Take measures to limit the noise made in the forest during religious celebrations so as not to disturb wildlife populations, particularly at night.
- Remind all pilgrims that when they step into a nature reserve during pilgrimage, they are in a sacred place.
- If pilgrimage occurs in or near a forest, ensure that pilgrims stick to designated pathways and do not infringe upon the homes and pathways needed to protect animals.
- Lead by example and encourage the religious community to respond to the wildlife crisis by advocating for greater protection, respect and compassion.



### *Some examples:*

E.G. ARC and the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) in India have launched a partnership to green religious festivals in tiger reserves, where at times millions of people pass through, causing severe disruption to wildlife. In Kalakkad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, for example ATREE and local partners launched a programme to reduce the pressure of the annual pilgrimage on the park.

E.G. Daoists are increasingly prohibiting the use of ingredients from endangered animals and plants in their Traditional Chinese Medicine.

E.G. In March 2014, the Indonesian Council of Ulama issued a fatwa, or edict, requiring Indonesia's 200 million Muslims to take an active role in protecting threatened species including tigers, rhinos, elephants and orangutans. The fatwa is one of the first of its kind and it is accompanied by an education programme to help communities put it into practice.

E.G. The Pollinator partnership in the US encourages faiths to plant "B" gardens to attract birds, bees, butterflies and bats. In 2012 they developed brochures for Buddhists, Christians, Jews and Muslims to explore why it is faith-consistent to create these pollinator gardens.

### **HOW TO ATTRACT BIRDS, BEES, BUTTERFLIES AND BATS TO YOUR SACRED PLACE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 1. Find** a patch of appropriate land on the faith's property that can be converted to B-friendly plants.
- 2. Consult** local botanical gardens to find appropriate native plants.
- 3. Involve** youth groups, congregations, volunteers, unemployed, schools in maintenance, and start a "B garden" club.
- 4. Watch** the nests, the chrysalises, hives, blooming flowers, visiting birds, and butterflies, and count them and enjoy them.
- 5. Encourage** your congregation and local schools to do the same.



E.G. Swifts journey thousands of miles in an unbelievable 'pilgrimage' between summer nesting sites in the Middle East and Europe and winter-feeding territories in southern Africa. The fact that they are mostly urban, that they are global travellers, and that they frequently nest in places of worship, make them ideal symbols for the GPN. They are natural examples of the everyday miracles of travel and journeys, and reminders of our connection with nature, creation and each other. Several GPN members, including St Albans Cathedral in England, have installed nesting boxes on their holy buildings to encourage swifts. A ceremony to welcome swifts on their annual return to Jerusalem is held at the Western Wall each year.



## VII. Green celebrations and festivals

Faith festivals can be exciting, but they can also make a lot of mess. If faith groups start changing their own festivals, others will follow.



### *What you could do:*

- Make all your festivals, services, conferences and other events more eco- friendly. Introduce greener standards to all religious rituals and services. Be creative
- Look at funerals too: are they gentle to the environment?
- Restore the original environmental significance of traditional festivals. For example, the Jewish pilgrimage festivals of Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (Pentecost) and Sukkot (Tabernacles) were initially related to the cycles of the agricultural year. Pesach as the holiday of spring rebirth, Shavuot as the holiday of harvesting first fruits and Sukkot as the holiday of acknowledging our interdependence on the natural world.
- If there's no obvious eco festival, create one.
- Pilgrimages around these special times can be focused on protecting the environment, where pilgrims can do service in the local community to create gardens, clear litter or engage in other ways with protecting the holy site.
- Join or set up green award schemes.
- Celebrate your achievements with services, rituals or blessings. Use or write special prayers, and share them as a resource for others.



### *Some examples:*

E.G. At the annual pilgrimage to the tombs of local Qadiriyyah Saints in Kano, Nigeria, pilgrims are encouraged to drink from natural cups made from the *duma* dried gourd, while traditional clay pots are used for cooking. Khalifa Sheikh Qaribullah Nasir Kabara, with an estimated 15 million followers in Nigeria, gives an annual green message and asks all pilgrims to plant one tree.

1. **Many people actually want green events.** A poll of music festival attendees in Canada suggests that over 80% think noise, waste and traffic have a negative impact, 48% would pay more for greener events, 36% say green is important when buying a ticket
2. **Green events can save money** e.g. collecting name badge holders for reuse at an event with 1,300 attendees can save nearly \$1000.
3. **Green events can save the Earth's resources.** e.g. using biodegradable cups and plates (or, better, reusable, traditional cups and plates) instead of Styrofoam and plastic at an event for 2,200 people can prevent one tonne of rubbish from going into a landfill.
4. **Other benefits include: motivating people, creating company or organisational loyalty, satisfaction from creating more beautiful things and events, and satisfying regulatory requirements.**

E.G. The 9-day Durga Puja in Kolkata and Howrah in India attracts 30 million visitors each year. Nearly 30,000 idols were painted with lead-free colours in 2011 after organisers realised the lead paint was poisoning the fish.



The Bhumi Project launched the first ever Hindu Environment Week (HEW) in February 2014. Hindu communities, organisations and temples in India, Europe and the US provided discussions and special celebrations alongside clean-ups and tree-planting campaigns. In India, thousands participated in cleaning up sacred sites and temples and universities hosted environmental programmes, some for the full week. The aim for HEW 2015 is to have activities occurring simultaneously in 100 different places.

E.G. In 2014, March 14<sup>th</sup> was celebrated as the fourth Sikh Environment Day, with more than 2,000 schools, communities and gurdwaras taking part. Gurbani hymns celebrating nature were sung in the gurdwaras and on Sikh radio. Eco notice boards were set up, saplings were given as offerings, lectures were held, clean-ups organised. Spearheaded by EcoSikh ([www.ecosikh.org](http://www.ecosikh.org)), this event has become an important annual reminder to Sikhs of their spiritual duty to care for nature.

E.G. Many Christians now recognise October 4<sup>th</sup>, the feast day of St Francis of Assisi, as a Christian environment day. Others have adopted the weeks between September 1 and October 4 as a “Creation Time” for respecting and celebrating the bounty and harvest of the natural world.



E.G. Muslims in Uganda are pioneering Greening Friday on the second Friday in Ramadan when the sermon preached in the National Mosque in Kampala focuses on Islam and the Environment, and is broadcast live across the country. Afterwards thousands of tree seedlings are distributed to worshippers and the chief Imam plants trees at the national Mosque.

E.G. In 2013 EcoSikh pledged that the annual Foundation Day of GPN member city Amritsar would be a green festival engaging with the people of the city to care for natural resources and preserve natural habitat.

E.G. The Bhumi Project, cofounded by the Centre for Hindu Studies at Oxford University, sees religious festivals as opportunities to offer home-grown produce at the temple. It recommends devotees bring their own plates to temple gatherings, or at least promote biodegradable plates, cups and spoons.

“Allah has made Muslims to be His stewards on Earth. What more noble and authentic expression of the Da’wa process could there be than serving Allah’s beautiful and precious creation through environmental activism?” -- Shaykh Abdal Hakim Murad, Dean of the Cambridge Muslim College

## VIII. Promoting green wisdom, education & awareness

### 1. Green Wisdom

**All faiths have traditional teachings about nature; some have forgotten them.**





### **What you could do:**

- Locate and redistribute (or if one is not available then produce and distribute) a theology of the environment for your faith tradition as a basis for action. See [www.greenpilgrimage.net](http://www.greenpilgrimage.net) for examples.
- Train the clergy in environmental issues. Could the training colleges in your pilgrim cities be models for training colleges in the rest of the country?



### **Some examples:**

E.G In November 2009, 31 faith traditions produced long term plans to care for the environment based on their theology, teachings and traditional wisdom. Faith groups in Sub-Sahara Africa launched 27 further plans in September 2012.

E.G. The Green Guide for Hajj recognises that pilgrims will undertake a series of rituals that include: performing the circular walk (Tawaf) around the Kaa'bah; running or brisk walking between the Al-Safa and Al-Marwah Hills seven times; drinking water from the Well of Zamzam and carrying out a vigil on the plains of Mount Arafat. All of these, actually or metaphorically, can hold a message about our relationship with the natural world.

E.G. At the Vaskenyan Theological Seminary in Armenia all students are trained on nature protection and ecology, and there are plans to set up a publishing unit for books on eco-theology.

E.G. After Vadstena in Sweden joined the GPN it became part of training for the Church of Sweden (with Vadstena as an example) that all pastors must take a course in eco-theology.

In 2007 the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People noted that tourism contributes considerably to global warming, if only through the sheer movement of so many people. It urged Catholic pilgrims and tourists to remember the Biblical text in which the Earth is described as "a garden, a place in which creatures praise the love of Him who created them and where equilibrium is the norm", and to remember that as tourists they can choose between being for or against the planet. "Perhaps we can travel on foot, opt for hotels and hospitality facilities that are closer to nature, and carry less luggage, so that means of transport emit less carbon dioxide... We can also eat more eco-friendly meals, plant trees to neutralise the polluting effects of our journeys, choose local handicrafts and make use of recyclable and biodegradable materials."

## **2. Environmental education through schools**

**Around half of educational institutions around the world are founded, managed, or associated with faiths. Are the schools in your holy city included in the plan to make it greener?**



### **What you could do:**

- Look at the schools in your green pilgrim city and see how they might be greener, both in terms of their environmental impacts, and the long-



term aim of educating children in a beautiful place where they learn to value the natural environment.

- Include more faith-consistent teachings about the environment into the curriculum of all schools in your holy city. Develop multi-disciplinary environmental curriculum in faith schools that incorporates knowledge of pilgrimage, green pilgrimage, and your own pilgrimage history.
- Have vegetable patches where you teach how to grow food, and promote preparation of food grown without pesticides.
- Take students into nature to paint and study birds and wild plants, to help young people appreciate their beauty.
- Develop waste, water and energy conservation policies for your educational buildings.
- Organise environmental monitoring by students of rivers, flora, fauna and pollution, especially in holy areas.



### *Some examples:*

E.G. In 2006 around quarter of a million Bahá'ís participated in study circles, devotional meetings and school classes on the environment. Such courses, and the acts of service associated with them, “represent a significant transformative process for Bahá'í communities worldwide”. The environment was set as the focus for all such Bahá'í education initiatives from 2009-2014.



In 2009 the most ecological school in England was the Krishna-Avanti Primary School in Harrow, North London, the UK's first state-funded Hindu school. It has: ground source heat pumps; an eco-friendly timber structure; hardwood larch cladding; sedum roofs; rainwater harvesting; a building management system monitoring heating, oxygen concentration and natural light; vegetable gardens for lessons, vegetarian locally cooked food; an eco-curriculum. It is also beautiful. Before it was built, the community was consulted to see what a Hindu school should be. Everyone agreed that if it was truly Hindu it should be environmental. Hinduism emphasises simplicity, and that all living beings are sacred because they are elements of God.

E.G. St Albans' green pilgrimage plans include involving local schools and the community. The Cathedral Trust held a competition to calculate the number of Roman bricks used to build the Cathedral, as an example of early recycling.

E.G. Trondheim municipality has an extensive environmental programme with kindergartens and schools. It has introduced a green flag programme teaching recycling, reusing and energy conservation to children up to 16. The children grow food in the school garden, learn to make compost and are encouraged to spend time in the garden to develop their connection with the outdoor environment. The material is distributed through an international green network of schools and kindergartens through Eco-Schools. Trondheim has started a similar programme for teenagers aged 16-18.

### **3. Informal education and youth camps**

**Often children will learn some of their most important lessons while out of the classroom. Of the “Big Six” youth organisations in the world (all of which take the environment seriously) the YMCA and YWCA are explicitly faith-based, and two others — the Scouts and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts — have considerable faith elements.**





### *What you could do:*

- Work with the youth organisations in your pilgrim town or city to inspire them to care for the environment.
- Have faith-associated youth events where green ideas are integrated, through organising youth camps in nature, street cleaning projects, forest schools etc.
- Examine the potential for ensuring that all new builds and extensions are rigorous in their attention to the environment, and that any playing fields and gardens pay attention to the needs of wild flora and fauna as well as children.
- Develop waste, water and energy conservation policies for all educational buildings.
- Encourage children to walk, cycle or take public transport.



### *Some examples:*

E.G. The New Psalmist Baptist Church in Baltimore, USA holds an annual Science Fair for children and young people. It is part of an educational Voyage of Exploration Programme that includes entrepreneurship, environmental science and engineering training to explore creative ideas to preserve our living planet and celebrate God's creation.

E.G. Local schools and tourist agencies in the China Daoist pilgrim city of Louguan run summer camps for students and their parents to learn more about Daoism and agriculture.



## **4. Green volunteering**

Some pilgrims would like to stay longer and become involved in the life and issues of their holy route or city.



### *What you could do:*

- Develop interesting eco-volunteering possibilities for pilgrims, many of whom will be young: what could they do that would be good for the city, good for them, and good for the Earth?
- Work with local NGOs and charities and gardeners and others who might never have thought of making links with the pilgrims who pass through on the road.
- Advertise opportunities on the internet and in pilgrim hostels.

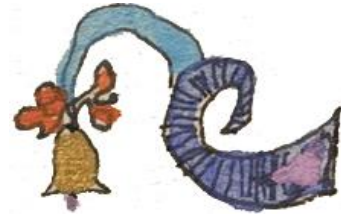


### *Some examples:*

E.G. Volunteers at the "Embracing the World" centre run by Mata Amritanandamayi Amma in India are collecting rubbish and recycling it. Plastic that cannot be recycled in a standard way is used to weave bases for foldaway beds for disaster survivors.



E.G. Luss, near Scotland's Loch Lomond, has been a place of pilgrimage since 520 when Kessog, a Celtic saint and bishop, was martyred. In the Middle Ages people came in great numbers to pray at the place where Kessog was buried. Today Luss sits in Scotland's first National Park and, although it is just a small village, welcomes 750,000 visitors each year. The challenge taken up by the local faith community is to help visitors become pilgrims. The Parish Church has been equipped with a sound and light show which tells the story of Luss; 25 acres of meadowland, riverbank, loch-shore and forest have been criss-crossed with new pilgrim paths challenging the visitor to recognise God's handiwork in creation as they admire the hills, loch and the local wildlife; plaques with poems and Bible verses challenge modern pilgrims to think on those things which are ultimately important. Paths tell the story of Saint Kessog, while others remind people of the challenges and the promises of the Gospel and others encourage those who walk to think through themes such as love and conservation. New paths describing the lives of Saint Francis and St. Columba opened in 2014. The church has initiated an international youth project bringing young people together to share through working on constructing the pathways.



## 5. Green messaging through media

One of the most important things about becoming a Green Pilgrimage place is telling people about it and why being careful of the environment is such an important part of being faithful. This is not just about launching programmes, but about sustaining them in the long term, so your pilgrimage place becomes a living lesson in how to respond to the environmental crisis.



### *What you could do:*

- Decide where on your website you will have a special section, blog, picture galleries, etc, on green pilgrimage? How will it be easily findable?
- Assess how to engage with the local and national media. How can you pass on the message (again and again in different ways) that a dedicated pilgrim must prepare mindfully for pilgrimage and aim to leave a positive footprint?
- Engage faith media to promote simpler living and looking after the natural environment with more care.
- How can you use social media and social networks to pass on the message? What hashtags? Put the logo on your facebook page, your email signatures, on posters and booklets, badges and patches.
- If your pilgrim destination has a shop dedicate an area to green pilgrimage items, with a noticeboard to explain?
- Think creatively about other ways of telling people.



### *Some examples:*

E.G. The Armenian Orthodox Church runs the Shoghakat TV Company in Armenia, which in 2010 launched the Green Theology project to broadcast environmental programmes.

As part of the Diocese of Canterbury's membership of the GPN, more help and advice is being offered to pilgrims walking the Pilgrims Way from Winchester to Canterbury. The [Pilgrims Way Canterbury](#) website has been launched to help pilgrims plan their journey in an ecological way, including recommended eco-accommodation and places that serve local food.

E.G. In 2007 WWF in Australia invited people in Sydney to switch off their lights and appliances for one hour, Earth Hour. More than 2,000 businesses and 2.2 million people did that. It reduced the city's energy consumption by 10.2 per cent that day, equivalent to taking 48,000 cars off the road for a year. It was a good reminder what privilege electricity is, and how we can take steps to stop wasting it. Could your pilgrim city join Earth Hour every March? And could faiths use the privilege of electricity, and importance of saving energy, in their sermons and teachings that week?

E.G. As its contribution to Earth Hour in 2013, Jerusalem turned off the lights on the city walls and Green Pilgrim Jerusalem screened a solar powered film on the walls instead.

E.G. The [Abraham Path Initiative website](#) provides practical, spiritual and environmental information for this 400km walking route that passes through many spiritually significant sites in the Middle East.

E.G. The Green Guide to Hajj in Bahasa Indonesia has a [Facebook page](#) spreading news of new resources and developments in Islamic environmentalism.

There is also a travelling exhibition to promote greening the Hajj and environmental care at home.



## 6. Engagement with pilgrims



### *What you could do:*

- Make sure there are plenty of relevant brochures in tourist information centres and in all visitor information, incorporate how green pilgrimage is part of a continuous ancient tradition of looking after sacred places in a responsible, loving way.
- Produce a well-written Green Guide for Pilgrims to your city and make this available online and at secular tourist information offices as well as in your place of worship. Make it interesting and entertaining. When possible, print everything on sustainably sourced or recycled paper, with eco-friendly ink.
- Train people employed to look after pilgrims, whether as guides, clergy or in any other capacity on why this city is now a green pilgrim city and what this means.
- Prepare a green pilgrim map (on eco-friendly paper). Make this a self-financing or even profitable enterprise, with profits from advertising returning to a green fund. Find ethical hotels, restaurants, taxis etc with green credentials, and ask them to advertise on it.
- Use the GPN logo as a pointer to where people can find green businesses. Create information boards made of FSC or recycled materials on which the map is shown.



- Run a campaign for residents outside the faith community to engage with making the city more environmentally friendly?
- Develop a marketing campaign promoting the Green Pilgrim concept, with sustainable local travel options as well as promoting local heritage and cottage industries associated with the pilgrimage. This could involve leaflets and brochures, sending newsletters linking relevant parties, publishing green pilgrim guides, and publishing tourist guides to pilgrimage designed specifically for secular visitors, emphasising the importance of Creation, or the natural world. Can you sell your city as a green city?
- Get in touch with companies producing travel guides, like Lonely Planet or Rough Guide, and tell them about how your pilgrim site is green.
- Make sure souvenirs are local and handmade, or at least promoting the local economy and safeguarding the environment.



#### *Some examples:*

*"It's the gardening competition you don't need to have a garden to enter... Pavement side patch or postage stamp size plot. Colourful roof terrace, balcony or simple windowsill. Alleyway or serene sacred space away from the urban rush. Community area cared for by many or playground green corner for children's flowers and veg." Categories in the Conservation Foundation's innovative 2008 Green Corners Award competition in London included sacred spaces. Could your pilgrim city run a similar competition?*

E.G. The *Green Guide for Hajj* gives the pilgrims advice on how to be green in their pilgrimage and their life. It identifies simple steps to help people make their pilgrimage a blessing to the Earth rather than a challenge. It is available in English, Arabic, Bahasa Malaysia and Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesia has 250,000 pilgrims on Hajj every year) and Hausa (Nigeria has 100,000).



The Coptic Orthodox Church has produced a leaflet for pilgrims visiting St Bishoy Monastery in Egypt, visited by 100,000 pilgrims a year. It tells what the monks are doing to reclaim the desert and protect the environment and asks pilgrims to take care of the environment once they are at home. The Church's long-term plan to care for the environment was endorsed by its then leader, the late Pope Shenouda III. Such endorsement on a leaflet or plan can give additional authority to the environmental message. The leaflet itself will often be kept as a treasured blessing and keepsake.

E.G. Kano in Nigeria has appointed green vanguards to spread the message of environmental care during their annual Maukib pilgrimage

E.G. Thoughtful use of souvenirs can engage pilgrims with green messages: in Vadstena, Sweden, the Diocese of Linköping produced a 'pearls of life' bead bracelet to aid meditation and prayer. Each bead represents a theme and recently a green 'pearl' has been added to ensure pilgrims give time to reflect on nature and the environment. Vadstena joined the GPN in 2014.

E.G. During the enormous Kumbh Mela celebrations in Allahabad, India in 2013 the Parmath Niketan and Prem Baba pilgrim camps tried to be as green as possible in the way they were organised (waste disposal, use of water dispensers, giving saplings to be planted) and to pass on the green message to all who visited the camp.

E.G. One of the pledges of St Albans, UK, is to ensure that everybody who makes a pilgrimage knows it is a Green Pilgrimage City. A logo will be on all visitor information, interpretation panels will be placed in the cathedral, website and on café menus. All cathedral guides will include the environmental element of pilgrimage in their presentations.

E.G. The Green Map movement operates in 775 cities in 60 countries developing maps to inspire both tourists and locals. This non-profit organisation creates mapmaking tools used by schools, colleges, NGOs, governmental and tourism agencies. Places of worship, eco-spiritual sites, green living sites etc are highlighted with special symbols. It has launched easy to use tools for engaging your community in a green mapping process! It helped the green pilgrimage network design our logo.



E.G. In 2009 the Daoist monastic community, working with ARC, created a Daoist Eco Handbook including ecological prayers, case studies of green temples and suggestions of how pilgrims and monks can beautify the environment, preserve water, protect animals and follow the “three sticks are enough” principle to reduce all the air pollution and waste that comes from people offering armloads of incense at temples around the country.

E.G. The livesimply Parish Award is a national UK prize for Catholic parishes making a difference to their community and the planet. It asks: Do people in your parish care about the environment? Do they support people in need? Do they enjoy the chance to put their faith into action? Since 2006, more than 60 Catholic organisations had been encouraging all Catholics to live sustainably with creation, and in solidarity with the poor. From “greening” church buildings to supporting Fairtrade, there are many ways parishes can win an award.



### PART 3: Partnerships & funding

*“When it comes to moving the world to a sustainable, low-carbon, clean energy future, I believe the science is in; the debate is over; and the time for action is now. But despite clear scientific evidence and overwhelming support of the people, not to mention so many fantastic technologies and investors looking for opportunities, our national and global leaders are failing to seriously combat climate change. That’s why I have made a clean energy future my mission through the R20, just as I have done with physical fitness for decades. And I strongly believe that religious and faith leaders can demonstrate, in their respective pilgrim cities, that this better future is possible, inspiring hundreds of millions of pilgrims to take action, just like Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi inspired human rights revolutions. That’s why I’m excited to welcome the Green Faith in Action campaign launched by the Green Pilgrim Network and the R20. Together, we can really make a difference.”*

*Arnold Schwarzenegger, founder R20 Regions of Climate Action*



## 1. Partnerships

The key to a successful green pilgrimage city is a strategic partnership between the faith leadership and the local authority or municipality, as well as other relevant bodies.



### *What you could do:*



- From the religious side, appoint a Pilgrim City Manager to link with secular authorities, highlighting environmental issues and opportunities.
- On the municipality side, strengthen relationships with the faiths in your city by inviting faith leaders to discuss greening your city. Ask them from a very early stage not only to be part of the process, but also to participate in creative ideas, getting things changed and getting the word out. Some faiths have very strong traditions of volunteering and community participation, and where this is the case, faith volunteers could and should be an intrinsic component in the planning process.
- Work with enterprises along the pilgrimage supply chain, including wholesalers, tour operators, ground operators, safari operators, travel agents, restaurants, tourist boards, attractions, museums, national parks, nature reserves, suppliers, retailers, insurance companies, publishing, hotels and resorts, lodging facilities, convention centres, cruises, operators, airlines, airports, air service companies, airline catering companies, train/rail operators, coach companies, car hire, travel associations, faith leaders, parishes, souvenir makers, souvenir sellers, cafes, local councils.
- Be creative in thinking about new partnership opportunities to promote green pilgrimage

### 21 QUESTIONS TO ASK ALL BUSINESSES ON PILGRIMAGE ROUTES

1. What is your environmental policy? Do you adhere to it? How do you monitor it?
2. Do you hire local staff? What training do you give your staff?
3. If there is a staff uniform, does this use sustainable materials, eg organic cotton?
4. Do you source supplies locally?
5. Do you recommend clients to buy local products?
6. Do you have a supply-chain policy for fair trade and equity?
7. How do you take responsibility for your environmental impact e.g. by using water in a dry area?
8. What conservation/reduction measures are you undertaking for water, waste and energy?
9. Do you benchmark yourself against other companies? How?
10. What incentives do you offer staff to carpool, use public transport or bicycles or walk to work?
11. Do you offer such alternatives to your guests or clients?
12. What information do you provide to staff and guests/clients on how to be more environmentally responsible? (This will save you money).
13. How do you reduce waste, water and energy?
14. Do you print on recycled paper, use biodegradable ink?
15. Do you plant indigenous trees or shrubs in your garden or other areas?
16. Do you have dual flush toilets, bricks to reduce water in cisterns, or other simple measures?
17. If you offer tours, what size are the groups? Small groups have lower impact on flora and fauna.
18. How do you ensure you do not purchase products made from endangered species?
19. What local projects do you support? Do you give a percentage of profits to wildlife protection or social causes?
20. Do you tell your clients/guests about all of this? And do you tell them why it is important?
21. How does your business make being environmental fun?





### Some examples:

E.G. GPN has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with R20 Regions of Climate Action. R20 was founded in 2010 by Arnold Schwarzenegger, former Governor of California, and other civic leaders in co-operation with the UN. It is a non-profit public-private partnership, bringing together subnational governments, businesses, financial institutions, academic institutions, NGOs, intergovernmental organisations etc. Its mission is to support local governments in financing renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure projects. These projects will give environmental, social and economic benefits, as well as attractive financial returns. The partnership aims to extend the innovative solutions to appropriate pilgrimage towns and cities.



E.G. The Armenia Inter-Church Round Table Charitable Foundation has close links with the mayor and the Etchmiadzin municipality. One person has been assigned to identify city priorities regarding GPN. The plan includes a specific vision to partner with UNDP Armenia (already supporting a programme to promote local companies managing collection and recycling of plastic bottles), and NGOs such as the Armenia Tree Project and the Urban Foundation for Sustainable Development.

E.G. The GPN city of Trondheim has twinned with the GPN city of Bethlehem to support practical green initiatives, including exchange of expertise and knowledge on greening hotels and managing waste as well as supporting local food, accommodation and handicrafts. The city of Sarpsborg, already a twin city of Bethlehem, is also supporting this environmental project.

In 2014 the tiny village of Luss in Scotland signed a memorandum of agreement with Argyll and Bute Council – a huge council which covers much of the west of Scotland including many places which are important in the Christian story of Scotland. This agreement will lead to a new pilgrimage initiative called ‘In the Footsteps of the Celtic Saints’. This will encourage pilgrims from around the world to come to the area, creating business opportunities

E.G. The local authority in St Albans is working with the St Albans Cathedral to make the experience of visitors and pilgrims to the Cathedral and city more ecologically based. This involves a substantial building project, for which they are applying for funding. The Diocese of St Albans has joined a ‘green triangle’ partnership with Rothamsted

Agricultural Research Station (a pioneer in agricultural science), the Building Research Establishment (which has introduced the internationally recognized BREEAM standard to assess sustainable building design and operation) and Hertfordshire University to promote St Albans as a pilgrim place at the forefront of environmental development.

E.G. GPN has partnered with ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability), the world’s leading association of cities and local governments dedicated to sustainable development). ICLEI is conducting environmental assessments of selected pilgrim cities in India with the aim of promoting government and donor support for green initiatives in these cities.



## 2. Funding

*Investment in the tourism sector represents almost 10% of total investment worldwide. In some countries this figure is as high as 50%.*

Finance for sustainable tourism and pilgrimage is complex. And to be sustainable it has to be funded. Often there is a need for substantial up-front funding for initiatives to green an area, and also for ingenuity in securing new sources of finance. Tourism investment can be effective for generating sustainable economic returns, conserving environmental biodiversity, and creating employment. Tourism can fund conservation programmes through:

1. Direct contributions from park entrance fees, diving licences, etc.
2. Indirect contributions to government revenues including user fees, income taxes, taxes on sales or rental of recreation equipment, and hunting and fishing licences.
3. Alternative employment.

The Sustainable Investment in Financing for Tourism network, associated with UNEP, has the vision of sustainability as a normal consideration in ALL tourism development investment.

**So get the tourism office on board early.**



### *What you could do:*

- Set up funds and bursaries for environmentally friendly schemes in your pilgrim cities, to which pilgrims would contribute.
- Find local, regional or national eco and climate change funds you can apply to.
- Find investors who will benefit from a greener, more lovely city, and broker partnerships to help them improve the city because it is sacred.
- Introduce an “eco” fountain into which pilgrims throw money for green programmes and outreach. This would be an awareness-raising tool as well as a fund-raiser.
- Encourage pilgrims to go and visit some of the eco programmes.
- Sell some special environment souvenirs (eg green pilgrim water flasks or green pilgrim patches for bags and rucksacks) specifically in support of the eco fund?



For more information about the GPN, including pilgrim theologies, action plans, leaflets, case studies and the most up to date version of this handbook, please see our website

**[www.greenpilgrimage.net](http://www.greenpilgrimage.net)**