



AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PASTOR, RABBI OR SPIRITUAL LEADER OF A FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION:

Do you love to travel? Do you know members of your faith community who love to travel? With all of the responsibilities of your position, it may be hard to imagine where the time and resources will come from to start or expand an annual faith-based travel ministry in your organization. However, consider some of the possible benefits:

- Strengthening a sense of community within your most active member group
- Compelling attraction for non-members and less active members to get involved
- Discovering the wonder of God's world and its many cultures and faith-traditions
- Cultivating and deepening each member's faith by visiting holy sites at the origins of the earliest stories
- Anticipating the potential of life-changing experiences for new mission and outreach ministries at home
- There can be many others – you may wish to add a few of your own

One of the most natural affinity groupings of individuals is one sharing the commonality of a faith-based experience. Although the ideal group size to be cost effective is at least 30-35 people, groups of all sizes can be planned to produce a memorable experience for all participants. Some churches consider partnering with another church in order to achieve critical mass as they launch a new travel ministry.

Group travel for spiritual renewal, planning retreats and religious pilgrimages has been part of the faith-based community experience throughout the history of the church. Intriguing opportunities for faith-based **sea cruises**, an extraordinary alternative to traditional land-based travel, are increasingly available as the industry adds new ships and destinations.

Cruise Holidays is a nationwide cruise travel franchise organization specializing in group cruising and affiliated with The Travel Leaders Group (formerly The Carlson Leisure Group), global leaders in the travel service industry. My training and experience as a part of Cruise Holidays are focused on the distinctive and multi-layered requirements for group travel. Combining my education and experience in the cruise industry with many years of devoted lay work within the church, I help faith-based organizations experience the joy of affinity travel to all parts of the world by cruise ship.

One of my professional affiliations is the World Religious Travel Association whose mission is to guide and facilitate faith-based travel to all parts of the globe (<http://wrtareligioustravel.com/WRTA>). My mission is to help faith-based organizations such as yours plan and implement customized group cruises that cater to the mission, purpose and expectations of church members. A summary of my faith-based volunteer activities covering a period of more than twenty-five years is included in another location on this site. You will see the church has always been, and continues to be, a significant and motivating force in my life and uniquely qualifies me to assist your organization as an alternative to services from most other travel professionals. Working with faith-based organizations is more than just a business; it is also my sense of calling.

Sea cruise travel is an amazing adventure that includes breath-taking scenery and a multi-port sampling of cultural and religious diversity best experienced from the comfort, convenience and safety of a cruise ship. Notable cruise advantages include all inclusive meals; accommodations (only unpacking once); shipboard activities and entertainment all priced in U.S. currency; group and private activities that complement port-of-call adventures; and an infinite variety of destinations and experiences from close to home to the other side of the globe - from small, intimate vessels to large, floating resorts.

Blended with the distinctive amenities of shipboard travel, faith-based activities and workshops can be designed to serve your group's mission. Whether you travel for a spiritual renewal, contemplative retreat or religious pilgrimage, I can offer your church members cruise experiences that build community and provide lifetime memories.

A brief telephone call can begin our dialogue about faith-based cruises. This conversation can be with you or others in the church or synagogue who would enjoy learning about religious travel by ship. If you have not already done so, please contact me to begin this conversation. I look forward to working with your faith-based organization to design and implement an amazing group sea travel experience. Blessings to you in your continued ministry.

With all good wishes and best regards,



Ron Hermanson

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