



August 20, 2009  
Issue #003

## Featured Spotlight Members - Meeting the "Who's Who" in Faith Tourism

[Passport Health](#)

[Christian Tours](#)

[Faithful Holidays](#)

[Travel Guard](#)

[The Shrine of Christ's Passion](#)

[Lifetree Adventures](#)

[NEW Member Benefit - Update Your Online Profile](#)

[Submit Your Profile - and be Featured!](#)

---

## Featured Spotlight Members Meeting the "Who's Who" in Faith Tourism

---

### Passport Health



**PASSPORT HEALTH**  
*First Class Medical Care for Travel Anywhere*

**If you could summarize your organization in one sentence, what would it be?**

We are the largest provider of travel medical services and immunizations in the United States and counsel and immunize international humanitarian/faith-based travelers, as well as leisure travelers prior to their international departure.

**How is your organization involved in religious travel and hospitality?**

We provide expert support to missionary groups and leaders and to anyone who is traveling overseas to volunteer or tour. We educate groups before their departure with critical travel health information, security and safety precautions and outbreak information. Lastly, we give the immunizations that are needed/required as well as malaria medicine and specialty travel supplies such as portable water purifiers.

**What specific products and/or services does your organization provide for faith-based travelers, groups and organizations?**

We work closely with religious organizations in the planning phase of their trip. We address the group prior to their trip and provide each traveler with a personalized travel health booklet which contains important information regarding the risks that they will be exposed to: from mosquitoes that carry malaria, to water precautions and consular information. Specific products for faith-based travelers include diarrhea, malaria and water purification kits.



**What is your organization's competitive advantage in the marketplace, and more specifically, within religious travel?**

We have 170 offices throughout the nation. We also come on-site for large groups. We are travel medicine specialists who understand that you cannot help others unless you are healthy when you are overseas.

**Tell us about the "people behind your organization." What makes your personnel among the best in the industry for both the travel trade and consumers to work with?**

All our registered nurses and board-certified doctors share a passion for travel medicine. They are rigorously trained in this medical specialization. Our focus is to provide superior customer service and the most up-to-date information regarding health and safety risks that might affect faith-based travelers. We know how devastating some diseases can be if you are not vaccinated or know what to do in case of an emergency, i.e. what if someone breaks a leg? who do they call, where do they go, how can they be brought back home to receive adequate medical care?

**If there is one thing about your organization that you would like for every travel professional and planner to know about (and remember you by), what would it be?**

Superior customer service and a genuine desire to do everything possible to minimize the risk of injury or illness while abroad for all of our clients.

**Contact Information**

Jorge Eduardo Castillo  
Director, Business Development & Marketing  
Passport Health  
[jorge.castillo@passporthealthusa.com](mailto:jorge.castillo@passporthealthusa.com)  
[www.passporthealthusa.com](http://www.passporthealthusa.com)  
[www.internationaltravelvaccines.blogspot.com](http://www.internationaltravelvaccines.blogspot.com)  
410.727.0556

**Christian Tours**



**If you could summarize your organization in one sentence, what would it be?**

service travel company.

A family-owned and family oriented full-

**How is your organization involved in religious travel and hospitality?**

We provide opportunities for people to travel, world-wide, in a Christian atmosphere.

**What specific products and/or services does your organization provide for faith-based travelers, groups and organizations?**

Fully escorted, pre-planned domestic motorcoach tours and fly tours, cruises, and international tours. We also offer custom designed tours and motorcoach charter services to preformed groups, schools, organizations and churches.



**What is your organization's competitive advantage in the marketplace, and more specifically, within religious travel?**

We believe we offer the very best tours and service for the customer's money!

**Tell us about the "people behind your organization." What makes your personnel among the best in the industry for both the travel trade and consumers to work with?**

This year, 2009, marks our 32nd year in the travel business. The founders of our company, Nancy and Udean Burke, are involved in the day-to-day operations of the company. Many of our employees have been with our company for 15, 20 or more years. Our tour directors and motorcoach operators are knowledgeable and eager to give the customer the best travel experience possible.

**If there is one thing about your organization that you would like for every travel**

**professional and planner to know about (and remember you by), what would it be?**

While we work hard to make every travel experience exceed our customer's expectations, we know from Whom all blessings flow and are grateful for our successes!



**Contact Information**

Mellonee Owenby  
Vice President Operations  
Christian Tours  
[mellonee@burkechristiantours.com](mailto:mellonee@burkechristiantours.com)  
[www.burkechristiantours.com](http://www.burkechristiantours.com)

800-476-3900

**Faithful Holidays**



**If you could summarize your organization in one sentence, what would it be?**

Faithful Holidays offer faith-based where all the happiness and excitement of a destination is enhanced by emphasizing attractions and events that reinforce our beliefs.

**How is your organization involved in religious travel and hospitality?**

We offer churches, organizations and other affiliated groups the opportunity to travel together to those places that will enhance their beliefs. We also make available to travelers who do not belong to such a group the chance to be with like-minded people. Clergy and group organizers are encouraged to contact us. Faithful Holidays can enhance the experience of faith-based travel while contributing to the overall well-being and enthusiasm of your spiritual family.

**What specific products and/or services does your organization provide for faith-based travelers, groups and organizations?**

Our current faith-based journeys: Israel, Shrines of France and two itineraries featuring the 41st Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany and the Footsteps of Pope John Paul II and the 41st Passion Play in the Footsteps of Martin Luther.

**What is your organization's competitive advantage in the marketplace, and more specifically, within religious travel?**

Our 31 years of group travel expertise and service to the traveling public, and the over 400 years of experience on the Faithful Holidays team.



**Tell us about the "people behind your organization." What makes your personnel among the best in the industry for both the travel trade and consumers to work with?**

The owners, John and Mary Stachnik, are first-generation owners and are active in the company. Both John and Mary are incredibly active in travel industry associations. John is currently the vice-chairman of the United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA) and has previously served as its chairman. He has also served three terms on the Board of Directors of the National Tour Association (NTA) and has even taken on the responsibility of serving as NTA's president. John has also served as a member of the board and executive committee of Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) and chaired NTA's Global Task Force. He is also currently an officer of Tourism Cares and holds both a Certified Tour Professional (CTP) designation awarded by NTA and a Certified Travel Counselor (CTC) designation awarded by The Travel Institute (formerly ICTA).

Mary has been involved in the industry as well in various capacities, including serving on the Board of Directors of the National Tour Association. *Travel Agent Magazine*, a leading travel trade publication, has recognized Mary's continued success, naming her one of the Most Powerful Women in the Travel Industry for four years.

Other key leaders of the Faithful Holidays team include Torre Ossmo, Vice President and General Manager with over 30 years in the travel industry; Nish Patel, Chief Operating Officer with 27 years of experience in the hospitality industry and Robert Morgan, Director of International Operations and Product Development with over 35 years of experience in the travel industry.

**If there is one thing about your organization that you would like for every travel professional and planner to know about (and remember you by), what would it be?**

For over 30 years our parent company, Mayflower Tours, has been uniting people through the group travel experience. Church groups and ministries, universities and colleges, bank clubs, travel groups and more have chosen us to the world to them through travel due to the excellent service, product and benefits of working with us.



**Contact Information**

Torre Ossmo  
Vice President and General Manager  
Faithful Holidays  
[info@faithfulholidays.com](mailto:info@faithfulholidays.com)  
[www.faithfulholidays.com](http://www.faithfulholidays.com)  
800.365.5359

## Travel Guard



### **If you could summarize your organization in one sentence, what would it be?**

With more than 25 years of industry experience, Travel Guard is America's leading travel insurance and assistance plan provider and the top choice of travelers embarking on mission trips, pilgrimages, volunteer vacations, conferences and retreats.

### **How is your organization involved in religious travel and hospitality?**

Travel Guard has supported the religious travel industry by providing a variety of travel insurance plans available for travel to almost any location. In 2008 we launched our Faith Travel plan at the first WRTE, further supporting the religious travel industry.

### **What specific products and/or services does your organization provide for faith-based travelers, groups and organizations?**

Our Faith Travel insurance plan provides comprehensive coverage at a competitive price and has a focus on religious Concierge Services. Clients can call us 24/7 for information such as religious holiday information, local customs, places of worship, and much more.

### **What is your organization's competitive advantage in the marketplace, and more specifically, within religious travel?**

Travel Guard's competitive advantages are within our 24/7 services that are kept in-house. We never close. Our comprehensive coverage is second to none and the experience we have gained in over 25 years helps to make us the leader in the industry in the U.S.

### **Tell us about the "people behind your organization." What makes your personnel among the best in the industry for both the travel trade and consumers to work with?**

Travel Guard is widely recognized for its unique customer care philosophy resulting in the industry's most highly acclaimed customer service record. In a competitive marketplace, we understand the importance of going the extra mile with each of our clients and customers. Whether it's coordinating an emergency medical evacuation halfway across the globe, or taking that extra minute to clarify a particular insurance coverage to one of our industry partners, we make it a priority to be here 24/7 with a friendly voice and expert advice.

### **If there is one thing about your organization that you would like for every travel professional and planner to know about (and remember you by), what would it be?**



Service to our agency partners is exceptional. With an inside and outside combined sales force of over 60 representatives our partners find us easy to reach and get exceptional service from.

#### **Contact Information**

Gregg Solner  
Business Development Manager

Travel Guard  
[gregg.solner@travelguard.com](mailto:gregg.solner@travelguard.com)  
[www.travelguard.com](http://www.travelguard.com)  
800-826-7791 x13318

## The Shrine of Christ's Passion



### **If you could summarize your organization in one sentence, what would it be?**

This project was built to "touch peoples' hearts and to inspire them to change the

world."

### **How is your organization involved in religious travel and hospitality?**

We are becoming a "destination" and have greeted people from all over the US and from over 20

different countries.

**What specific products and/or services does your organization provide for faith-based travelers, groups and organizations?**

The Passion of Christ as it has never been told before; 40 life size bronze statues starting with the Last Supper and ending with the Ascension.

**What is your organization's competitive advantage in the marketplace, and more specifically, within religious travel?**

Very easy to get to, very unique and no charge.

**Tell us about the "people behind your organization." What makes your personnel among the best in the industry for both the travel trade and consumers to work with?**

We have only 4 employees, but over 100 volunteers that love their jobs!



**If there is one thing about your organization that you would like for every travel professional and planner to know about (and remember you by), what would it be?**

There is no charge for "the Journey." All visitors have been absolutely amazed.

**Contact Information**

Paul J. Anderson

General Manager

The Shrine of Christ's Passion

[paul@shrineofchristspassion.org](mailto:paul@shrineofchristspassion.org)

[www.shrineofchristspassion.org](http://www.shrineofchristspassion.org)

219-365-6010

---

**Lifetree Adventures**



**If you could summarize your organization in one sentence, what would it be?**

Serving those in need one volunteer at a time!

**How is your organization involved in religious travel and hospitality?**

Lifetree Adventures is a non-profit Christian organization offering volunteer/service trips around the globe. We provide scheduled trips that people can book or we also do customize trips for groups of 8 or more. Many of our destinations are family friendly and we always include cultural experiences so that our groups get a well rounded program of service and culture. Our projects range from helping the elderly to building a house to working with orphans...our service projects are numerous and varied.

**What specific products and/or services does your organization provide for faith-based travelers, groups and organizations?**

We work with ministry partners in-country and ask them what their needs are. Our participants get to work alongside these local pastors, mission agencies, and NGO's. They leave the experience knowing that their service will be make eternal difference. We also incorporate into every trip evening debriefings where our groups can meet and discuss the day's events. They share their stories and are given the opportunity to process what they are involved with.

**What is your organization's competitive advantage in the marketplace, and more specifically, within religious travel?**

We have decades of experience doing mission/service trips with teens and their youth pastors. Our connections with organizations in need are plentiful and because we have strong relationships with them we can send groups in at times that are best for them. We really do take care of everything - even bottled water, so our participants can focus on the real experience -

service to those in need.

**Tell us about the "people behind your organization." What makes your personnel among the best in the industry for both the travel trade and consumers to work with?**

Our staff has over 30 years experience in missions and over 12 years in the travel industry. We love what we do, because we believe in it wholeheartedly. The first question we ask our ministry partners is, "What is your greatest need now?" then we follow that up with, "What is your vision for your ministry?" We're invested and so that makes us accountable. More than anything we want to see these experiences happen because we know the good that will come from them. Our customers know that we will go above and beyond so that their experience is unforgettable. Most importantly we do what we say we will, but take it one step further.

**If there is one thing about your organization that you would like for every travel professional and planner to know about (and remember you by), what would it be?**

We're in the business of service! We strive to provide the best experience for our customers and our ministry partners. One of our core values is Servanthood - we take that very seriously.



**Contact**

Michelle Clavijo-Diaz  
Lifetree Adventures Leader  
Lifetree Adventures  
[www.LifetreeAdventures.com](http://www.LifetreeAdventures.com)  
[MClavijoDiaz@LifetreeAdventures.com](mailto:MClavijoDiaz@LifetreeAdventures.com)  
800.747.2157

---

## Update Your Online Member Profile

**Are you a WRTA Member?**

NEW to our website are online applications designed to build your clientele and business. On the [WRTA homepage](#), find the 'Update Your Profile' link on the right sidebar. This will take you to a page to log-in with your member username and password. If you are unsure what your username and password are, please email Emily at [members@wrtareligioustravel.com](mailto:members@wrtareligioustravel.com). Update your [profile information](#) and your company/destination will be featured in:

- Supplier/Wholesaler Search
- Vacation Search

**Not a member?** You will be able to use these new tools, but you won't be able to have your company profile published. It's an easy fix if you'd like to list your company--you will just need to register as a WRTA Member. [Join now!](#)

---

## Submit Your Profile - and Be Featured!

**Are you a WRTA Member?**

If you are a WRTA Member, you are eligible to submit your online profile for possible publication in an upcoming issue of Spotlight on Members. Fill out your Profile Questionnaire now!

[http://bit.ly/WRTA\\_Submit\\_Member\\_Profile](http://bit.ly/WRTA_Submit_Member_Profile)

*Note: Only WRTA Members are eligible to have their profiles published. Non-members are welcome to complete and submit the questionnaires, however - before WRTA can publish your profile, you will need to register as a WRTA Member. [Join now!](#)*