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## **WRTA Expo to Host Industry's Largest-Ever Educational and Business Seminar Program on Faith Tourism**

LEXINGTON, Ky. (Oct 7, 2009) – After hosting the industry's first-ever, historic international gathering for the \$18 billion religious travel marketplace in fall 2008, the World Religious Travel Association is expanding its vision and reach yet again in 2009. At this fall's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual World Religious Travel Expo, WRTA will host the industry's largest and most comprehensive educational seminar and business program ever assembled. As a result of the remarkable caliber of the event and presentations scheduled, Expo delegates can earn a maximum of 3 CEUs through The Travel Institute.

The all-star line-up of impressive speakers includes the globally-recognized religious travel expert, Kevin J. Wright, WRTA president; North America's top faith-based marketing authority, Greg Stielstra, *Faith-based Marketing* and *Pyromarketing* author; travel industry's leading retail expert and NACTA president, Scott Koepf; as well as government officials including Jordan Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, Her Excellency Mrs. Maha Khatib, and Palestine Minister of Tourism & Antiquities, Her Excellency Dr. Khoulood Daibes.

Numerous travel industry executives and authorities have also been selected to speak including Torre Ossmo, vice president Faithful Holidays/Division of Mayflower Tours; Bob Faucett, vice president Unitours; George Vella, sales manager North America, German National Tourist Board, Jim Buddendorf, president MTS Travel; George Van der Wath, president Groups 2 Africa; Mirko Capodanno, Switzerland Tourism; Fuad Kattan, president ACA Travel & Tourism (Palestine); Michelle Clavijo-Diaz, Lifetree Adventures; Cindi Brodhecker, president Faith Travel Development and Consulting, and many more. With dozens of speakers planned for Expo 2009, the presenters represent a wide variety of backgrounds and destinations including India, Armenia, Cyprus, Africa, Germany, Switzerland, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Canada, Mexico, the United States, and more.

"I'm like a kid in a candy store with this remarkable array of speakers," said Kevin J. Wright, WRTA president. "The sheer wealth of knowledge and wisdom among these speakers is exactly what is needed for every Expo delegate to plan and prepare for their best year ever in 2010. It is simply a tremendous honor for WRTA to host such an extraordinary and inspiring group of speakers. This is a testament to the power and prestige of today's faith tourism marketplace."

The Expo 2009 General Sessions and Educational Seminars are listed as follows, each expanding upon the convention theme: *Make 2010 Your Best Year Ever*.

### **GENERAL SESSIONS**

- **Soundbites from the Global Faith Tourism Industry: What's Happening & What's to Come in 2010** (Speakers include leading tourism representatives)
- **Faith-based Marketing: How to effectively reach, and serve, America's highest spending consumer group** (Greg Stielstra, North America's Top Authority on Faith-based Marketing)
- **Five things to do to Make 2010 your Best Year Ever!** (Scott Koepf, NACTA President)

- **Signature Event: The Holy Land Panel** Moderated by Malia Asfour, Director North America, Jordan Tourism plus leading tourism officials from Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Cyprus, and Greece

## **EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS**

- **How to build a thriving religious travel program with the right products, experiences, and quality.**  
Moderator: Cindi Brodhecker, President, Faith Travel Development and Consulting
- **Discover fascinating new trends, destinations and faith vacation experiences for the 21<sup>st</sup> century religious traveler: Faith-based cruises, missionary travel, African safaris, India, Armenia, and much more.** Moderator: Darrell Burrow, Director of Sales, Premier Christian Cruises
- **Make 2010 your best year ever in religious group travel: Learn about Oberammergau, Santiago de Compostela's Holy Year, Shroud of Turin, Year of the Priest, and Much More** Moderator: Bob Faucett, Vice President, Unitours
- **How to effectively use Social Media and PR to build your religious clientele: Includes LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, blogging, creating your own social network, writing press releases and much more.**  
Moderator, Kevin J. Wright, WRTA President
- **PyroMarketing: Igniting "group travel planner" evangelists and keeping them for life** Moderator: Greg Stielstra plus prominent group planners/leaders

For a complete listing of all educational opportunities and speakers, visit [www.wrtaexpo.com/WRTA+Expo/Education/](http://www.wrtaexpo.com/WRTA+Expo/Education/).

"As a speaker and exhibitor for the second year, I am honored to play such an important part again this year," said Torre Ossmo, vice president and general manager for Faithful Holidays. "I want to congratulate and thank WRTA for having such a great line up for the educational conference this year. The presentations, discussion topics and information provided at the educational conference will be crucial to the attendees, especially as we're all looking for success as we address the market challenges ahead."

WRTA is currently taking registrations for the World Religious Travel Expo & Educational Conference 2009, which will be held November 14-16, 2009, at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center in Reno, Nevada (USA). Serving as the most important meeting and tradeshow in the religious travel and hospitality industry, the event is expected to draw tourism organizations, travel professionals, and group planners from 30-plus countries.

A new highlight for the Expo includes co-locating with the National Tour Association Convention '09, offering members of both associations unprecedented opportunities for business growth, networking, and access to new market opportunities.

For more information about attending or exhibiting at the World Religious Travel Expo, contact the World Religious Travel Association at 888-255-WRTA (9782) or +1-859-219-3529 or by email [headquarters@WRTAreligioustravel.com](mailto:headquarters@WRTAreligioustravel.com). For more information about WRTA and the Expo, visit [www.WRTAreligioustravel.com](http://www.WRTAreligioustravel.com) and [www.WRTAexpo.com](http://www.WRTAexpo.com) respectively.

### **World Religious Travel Association (WRTA):**

WRTA is the leading global network for the \$18 billion faith tourism industry. WRTA's primary purpose is to guide, enrich, and expand religious travel and hospitality around the globe via the trade, consumer, and media. Its membership is comprised of tour operators, travel agents, group planners, destinations, DMOs, accommodations, attractions, transportation services, media and other key players in the tourism industry.

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