

# Expand Your Ministry

*A Group Leader's Guide to Faith Based Travel*



## **Christian Travel is a Powerful Resource for Your Ministry**

*Teach Where Biblical Events Took Place • Pray in Spiritually Moving Places  
Explore Places You Have Dreamt About • Read and Discuss the Scriptures Where They Took Place  
Share the World with Your Church Members*





# Reasons Why YOU Should Lead a Faith-Based Tour or Cruise

**Train your church leaders** the way Jesus did—by teaching and traveling with His disciples.

**Empower your sermons** with first-hand knowledge gained from your travels.

**Shepherd your church members** through a tremendous time of renewal.

Become immersed in the values and traditions of **the world Jesus knew**.

Give your church members a **new appreciation for your church roots and heritage**.

Offer students and teachers of the Bible the **ultimate hands-on learning adventure**.

**Strengthen family and congregation relationships** through a shared journey.

Discover how **recent archaeological discoveries** continue to reaffirm the truth of the Bible.

Develop a more Christ-like **understanding of other cultures and religions**.

See your church **develop a hunger and thirst for God's Word** as never before.

**Most tours only involve  
one Sunday away  
from home & church!**



## Clergy Testimonies

"We celebrated many inspiring worship experiences and **had great fellowship and a deep sense of spiritual renewal**. Already several of our group members have asked me to plan another trip."

Rev. Dr. Steve Rettenmayer  
United Methodist Church  
Washington, D.C.

"I experienced a new appreciation for all that Christ did to gain our salvation. **The Bible, both O.T. and N.T., came alive** as we walked the lands of the Bible. The organization was superb and ALL went so smoothly."

Rev. Albert Bierlein  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

**"It was the experience of a lifetime. ... It really just brings the Word of God to life."**

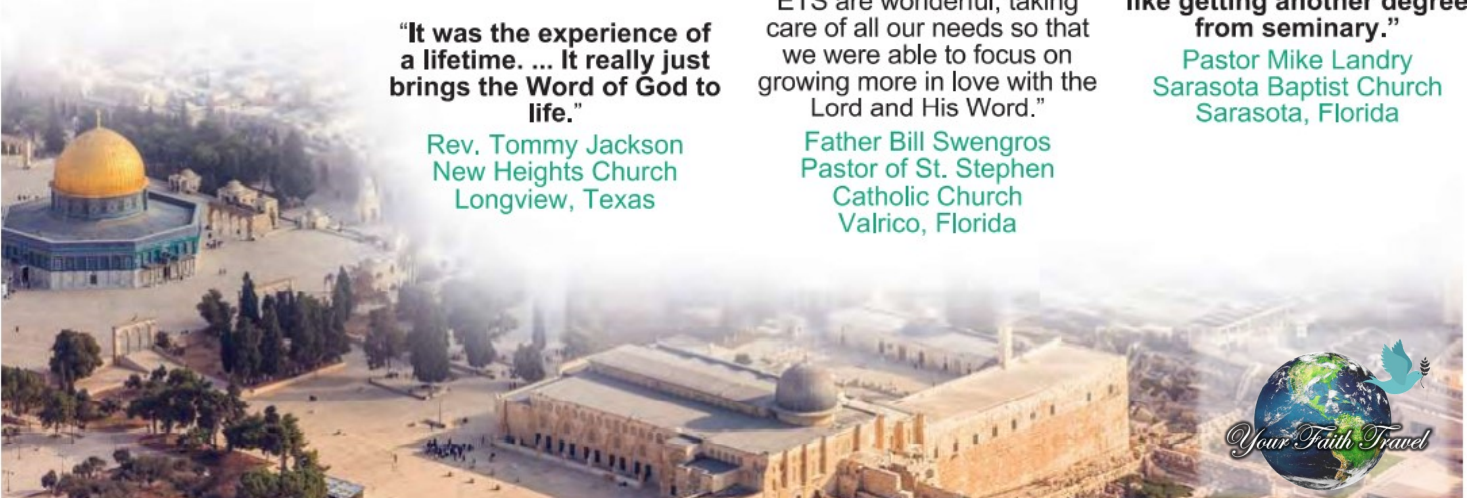
Rev. Tommy Jackson  
New Heights Church  
Longview, Texas

"I can't begin to express what a difference my pilgrimage made in my life and in my ministry. For me and our group of pilgrims, it was a spiritual experience we will never forget. The Sacred **Scriptures now come alive in a way we never imagined possible**. As a result, our entire parish has been enriched. The folks at ETS are wonderful, taking care of all our needs so that we were able to focus on growing more in love with the Lord and His Word."

Father Bill Swengros  
Pastor of St. Stephen  
Catholic Church  
Valrico, Florida

"Since going on this journey, I cannot read the Bible the same anymore. The locations and the settings all mean so much more now and help me to better understand the truth of God's word. Talk to anyone who went on the journey with me and they'll tell you the same thing. **It's amazing. This journey was like getting another degree from seminary.**"

Pastor Mike Landry  
Sarasota Baptist Church  
Sarasota, Florida





# Spiritual Formation Through Christian Travel

By Pastor William (Bill) Barnes

**“I regard Christian travel as an absolutely essential part of my ministry.”**

For 25 years I have been leading members and friends of my churches on Spiritual Formation tours. People who travel with me gain a new perspective on discipleship as believers. Without exception, these pilgrims return home more engaged in worship, Bible study, service, and giving. New and existing relationships grow stronger and leaders are developed.

There are a variety of destinations and modes of travel to experience. I have led groups to the Holy Land, Egypt, Jordan, Greece, Turkey, the Passion Play and more. No matter where we go, I see the same outcomes:

- The time we spend together allows me to really get to know my members.
- Seeing ancient sites, standing on holy ground, reading the Bible, praying, and receiving Holy Communion where Jesus, Paul, and other disciples walked and lived are priceless gifts that cannot be duplicated elsewhere.
- Individuals formerly intimidated by Bible study actually become leaders of Bible study groups after returning home.
- Group members develop new friendships that continue to grow after our return.
- This time is an incubator for new, committed leaders in the congregation.

These trips have become easier to plan each year. New travelers eagerly anticipate my annual trips to the Holy Land, and after so many years of positive experiences, I do very little personal recruitment. That is done spontaneously by the hundreds of former tour participants who so passionately and honestly encourage others to take advantage of the opportunity to travel in confidence with fellow members. The response has been so great that I limit the number of participants for each tour so that I can effectively minister to and teach each group of believers.



**William S. Barnes** recently retired as Lead Pastor of St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Orlando, Florida in July 2015. He is founder of Shepherd's Hope, a faith-based volunteer health care organization for the uninsured. Bill has led groups on Christian travel tours for over 25 years.

I encourage you to consider making Christian Travel part of the Spiritual Formation plan at your church. Here are some things to consider:

- Plan ahead. People will need more than a couple months to plan for 7-12 days away from their regular schedule and to make financial plans.
- Announce that this is a time for Spiritual Formation and not just a vacation so that no one is surprised and they prepare for the trip appropriately.
- Consider travel as a change of pace for a retreat you have held elsewhere. Travel ministry is the same concept as retreat ministry.
- Prepare what you will teach on each tour but be ready to take advantage of many unplanned teaching moments.
- Schedule a series of travel opportunities; this is better than a one-time special event. A trip every 12-18 months can be very effective and allow more people to participate.
- Visit different locations and vary the program. Some people may travel more than once, and people have different time and financial resources available.
- Work with a reputable Christian travel company that can handle all the details of the trip from start to finish. Not all travel companies provide the same level of service. The process can be very easy with the right help.

Don't be surprised when you are changed by these trips. The Spiritual Formation growth that occurs through Christian travel is not limited to the passengers; these trips are an important factor in my personal growth, Biblical understanding, and worldview. Sometimes I wonder who receives more from my trips: the first time participants or the seasoned pastor who leads them!

