

**Achievement of Market-Friendly Initiatives and Results Program
(AMIR 2.0 Program)**

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**Supporting The Jordan Tourism Board in Global Promotion of Religious Tourism:
Participation in the Catholic Press Association Annual Conferences**

Final Report

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1. Executive Summary

The following is a summary of activity conducted by A. Larry Ross Communications (ALRC) on behalf of Jordan Tourism Board, N.A. (JTBNA) during the annual convention of the Catholic Press Association (CPA), a group representing more than 600 news outlets with a combined circulation of nearly 27 million.

Religious tourism in Jordan has been one of the main components of tourism that witnessed significant growth over the past few years, with yet additional potential for growth provided adequate promotion and marketing activities supported the industry. To this end, the conference targeted the membership of the Catholic Press Association in an effort to promote Jordan in the context of religious tourism.

Christine Moore of A. Larry Ross Communications worked with Priscilla Philippi of the Jordan Tourism Board North America (JTBNA) to educate members of the Catholic Press Association (CPA) about Jordan and promote opportunities for religious-themed tourism to this less-explored part of the Holy Land. The following message points were used during discussions with association members:

- Jordan is a viable stand-alone destination for Holy Land travel or a must-see addition to any trip to the Holy Land
- There is an unbroken chain of Christianity in Jordan
- The land in what is now Jordan played an important role in the Bible and in the early Christian period, especially as a place of refuge
- Jordan plays an important role in the Middle East
- Jordan has a history of inter-faith cooperation

To further capitalize on the positive output of the conference, JTB took the opportunity to roll out the joint familiarization tour planned for September of 2002 among the conference attendees. The scheduled familiarization trip will include a tour among Jordan's biblical sites in addition to a visit to the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) facilities in Jordan. The conference proved to be a successful networking opportunity for JTB with several linkages resulting from the Conference.

2. The CPA Annual Conference

In exploring ways to attract Catholic tourists to Jordan, JTB entered into a venture with the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) - A papal agency serving churches and people in the Middle East, NE Africa, India and Eastern Europe – and cosponsored the Annual Press Association Conference held during May 29-31, 2002 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The short-term objective from sponsoring the event was to provide access to Jordan's authentic biblical sites and the charitable work being done by the Catholic Church in Jordan as incentive for these editors to not only feature Jordan in their magazines but also inspire them to try build an affinity with Jordan among their audiences. In the past, other tourism boards have sponsored this banquet which proved to be beneficial in building relationships and reinforcing its identity among CPA members. This year's conference provided JTB the opportunity to present the

moderate face of Jordan to this key audience with immense potential to influence editorial content.

In the longer term, the CPA Annual Conference will help establish greater awareness among the Catholic population of Jordan's (a) biblical significance (b) accessibility/accommodations for tourists, and (c) opportunities for involvement in charitable work in tandem with tourism.

A special component of JTB's presence at this convention was the promotion of the September 2002 press tour for Catholic journalists jointly sponsored by JTB and the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), a Vatican humanitarian agency. Since this press tour has the imprimatur of the Vatican and will feature opportunities not only to visit the biblical sites but also to hold meaningful discussions / interviews with leaders from various faith communities and to see the ongoing work of the Church, it proved a success in attracting interest from CPA journalists. With strong editorial coverage of a wide variety of issues relating to Jordan, stories generated from this press tour should provide a solid base to build a stronger affinity for Jordan among Catholics in North America.

The highlight and "buzz" of the convention was the opening banquet attended by approximately 400 conventioners, jointly sponsored by JTB and CNEWA, in which JTB urged CPA members to visit Jordan to experience the reality on the ground and to bring about a broader knowledge and understanding not only of biblical history but also of current affairs through their reporting. JTB showed its video about the baptism site and other significant biblical destinations in Jordan that generated tremendous applause and positive feedback from conventioners. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive to the entire presentation, and CPA leadership expressed strong support for JTB and Jordan in general.

In addition to signing up members for the Sept. 24 JTB-CNEWA press tour and for the Catholic leader-press tour in late October, the consultant explored these other opportunities for JTB:

- CPA convention in Jordan in 2004: the consultant will continue to discuss this opportunity with Owen McGovern, executive director of CPA, especially once he has had an opportunity to evaluate Jordan's facilities during the Sept. 24 press tour.
- Reduced rates in advertising: the consultant will work with O. McGovern and members of the Catholic Advertising Network to place any future ad buys at a reduced rate. In addition, she will follow up with Michael La Civita of CNEWA, to advise and support him in his effort to obtain a grant from Catholic Communications to place ads for Jordan at the same time the feature stories generated by the press tour are run later in the year.

3. Major Successes:

1. Joint press trip with the CPA in the fall – After promoting Jordan and providing the audience with relevant background, the CPA journalists trip which is set for September 24-October 2, 2002 was announced by JTBNA. Immediately following the dinner and during the course of the CPA Conference, journalists contacted JTBNA / ALRC to obtain more details and express their interest in joining the proposed trip. The image of Jordan as a moderate Arab Muslim country

was further boosted both by attending this conference as well as teaming up with a Papal agency to bring Catholic journalists to Jordan to visit both the Biblical sites as well as experience the example that Jordan has set for interfaith cooperation and understanding. The list of participants is still a work in progress, but major Catholic publications are signing up to join the trip.

2. Arranged for EWTN (largest Catholic television network - 70 million cable homes, audiences in North America, Pacific Rim, Africa, India, Europe and Latin America) to come out to film in the fall - During the Catholic Press Association Conference, the consultants met with Scott Hults, Director of Communications for EWTN, to discuss the details of their proposed travel to Jordan. JTBNA will work with EWTN to arrange for the trip logistics which is set to take place during October 16-23, 2002. JTBNA is working on their itinerary ensuring that all items on their wish list are met. The purpose of EWTN's visit is to film a teaching program with Father Mitch Pacwa for the network's most watched "Mother Angelica" program. The program will air late in the year on EWTN and the network will also provide a video to JTB to use for its own purposes.

Annex 1 - Consultation Highlights

The following is a list of specific consultation provided by Christine Moore:

Pre-Convention

- Held discussions with leadership of CPA and CNEWA about a jointly sponsored familiarization trip to Jordan for CPA journalists
- Secured co-sponsorship of opening banquet
- Advised JTB about content for booth, hand-outs, banquet presentation, etc.
- Prepared copies of statement by Holy Father about Jordan's holy sites
- Developed preliminary fact sheet, press tour itinerary and list of Jordan testimonials
- Coordinated logistics with CPA staff (booth, banquet arrangements, video presentation, etc.)

Convention Week

- Arranged set-up with P. Philippi of JTB booth (hung banners, arranged brochures/materials, etc.)
- Provided representation at JTB booth
- Pitched JTB-CNEWA press tour to CPA journalists. Favorable responses include:
 1. Heidi Schlumpf, Assistant Editor, U.S. Catholic Magazine
 2. Debra Mayeux, reporter, The Daily Times (New Mexico); Managing Editor, Voice of the Southwest
 3. Renee Schafer Horton, columnist and freelance writer, Texas Catholic, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Catholic Vision (Tucson, AZ)
 4. Vincent Gragnani, staff writer, Diocese of San Diego
 5. Gretchen Keiser, editor, Georgia Bulletin
 6. Stephen Kent, executive editor, Catholic Northwest Progress
 7. Bronson Howard, Texas Catholic
 8. Wallace de la Vega, editor, Spanish-language Texas Catholic (El Catolico de Texas newspaper)
 9. Dr. Joseph McAleer, director of communications and editor, Fairfield County Catholic
 10. Barbara Stinson Lee, editor, Intermountain Catholic (Salt Lake)
 11. Elizabeth O'Connor, Long Island Catholic
 12. James Cassidy, general manager, newspaper of the Diocese of Trenton
 13. Rev. Allen Weinert, editor, Liguorian (Liguori, Missouri)
 14. Patria Rivera, editor, Catholic Missions in Canada
 15. Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda, freelance writer with several English-language and Hispanic Catholic magazines (Our Sunday Visitor, North Texas Catholic, the Sooner Catholic, etc.)
- Networked with CPA journalists to build relationships that can lead to future opportunities for JTB interviews and/or editorial input. [Had several discussions with and obtained commitment from Patricia Morrison, managing editor, National Catholic Reporter (influential, independent Catholic newsweekly) to participate in future JTB press tour, but

she will have to go late this year or early next year because she is in a new position; she will be in the middle on a special project in Sept./Oct.; she wants to recover sufficiently from surgery scheduled prior to the JTB-CNEWA trip.]

- Held in-depth, follow-up discussions to previous agency communication with Scott Hulst, director of communications for EWTN, the largest religious cable network in the world (70-million cable homes; audiences in North America, Pacific Rim, Africa, India, Europe and Latin America). Secured commitment from EWTN to send a crew to Jordan in October to film a teaching installment with Father Mitch Pacwa (an Old Testament scholar who speaks Arabic) for the network's most-watched "Mother Angelica" program. The program will air late in the year on EWTN, and the network will also provide a video to JTB to use for its own purposes
- Held discussions with M. La Civita on specific CNEWA elements of the joint press tour and logistics of scheduling, etc. C. Moore will continue to work with him on finalizing meetings and other itinerary highlights, and coordinate all efforts through JTBNA and JTB Amman
- Consulted with P. Philippi on talking points for banquet remarks and made final edits
- Finalized list of testimonials; Jordan fact sheet; JTB-CNEWA press tour itinerary
- Represented JTB at opening banquet attended by approximately 400 guests
- Wrote and disseminated press release (sent to religion editors of top 50 dailies; Christian radio networks; Catholic press; and RNS Press Release services, which distributes electronically to approximately 450 news outlets – secular newspapers, religious publications, non-profit agencies, radio and TV broadcasts and consumer magazines) announcing historic cooperative effort between JTB and CNEWA to educate the Catholic community about Jordan's holy sites and its historic and continuing importance to the Catholic Church (Refer to annex 2)
- Evaluated materials of tour operators to determine how they are promoting Jordan and talked with exhibiting operators to qualify their interest in Jordan as a stand-alone destination as well as a must-see addition to any trip to the Holy Land. Obtained interest from three representatives for any possible future religious-themed tour operator familiarization trip:
 1. Gary Foster, president, Pentecost Tours, Inc.
 2. James Adair, president, Regina Tours
 3. Scott Scherer, president, Catholic Travel Centre
- Discussed advertising possibilities with O. McGovern, M. La Civita and Ed Michelson of Catholic Advertising Network (see above)
- Discussed possibilities with O. McGovern of holding future annual convention in Jordan (see above)

Post-Convention

- Pursued other key members of the Catholic media to participate in JTB-CNEWA press tour. Secured Dan Morris-Young, columnist with Catholic News Service (CNS) and editor pro tem of Arkansas Catholic. (CNS is distributed not only to North American audiences but also to 40 other countries)

- Followed up with CPA and CNEWA leadership to evaluate response to joint press tour, make any necessary cuts, finalize details, etc. It was agreed that the response to the trip was overwhelmingly positive and that the journalists represented a good cross-section of Catholic press. M. La Civita also committed to follow up with a few key contacts to secure commitments from them to participate in the press trip (Barbara Beckwith, managing editor, St. Anthony Messenger newsmagazine; Penny Wygert, Rockville, Maryland diocesan newspaper; and Dan Menninger, Baltimore diocesan newspaper that sponsors many tours to the Holy Land)
- Followed up with journalists interested in press tour to inform them they would be included in the trip

Annex 2 – News Release



News Release

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PAPAL AGENCY, JORDAN TOURISM BOARD LAUNCH JOINT EFFORT TO TAKE CATHOLIC JOURNALISTS TO JORDAN **Historic Partnership Highlights History of Inter-Faith Cooperation, Centuries of Christianity in Region and Continued Work of Church in Jordan**

MINNEAPOLIS, May 30 – A Vatican agency and the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB) have announced a joint effort to bring Catholic journalists to Jordan to help the more than 75 million Catholics in North America to get a better understanding of a portion of the Holy Land that is stable and peaceful; to discover some of the country's 200 authenticated biblical sites and shrines; and to learn more about the ongoing work of the church in the region.

“The Holy See – through the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) – is happy to announce this joint endeavor with the Jordan Tourism Board to provide an opportunity for journalists of the Catholic Press Association (CPA) to visit the holy sites in Jordan – a land of peace, a land of inter-religious cooperation, a land sanctified by Christ, by the blood of his disciples and martyrs, and a land where the church is at work,” said Michael La Civita, communications director of CNEWA.

CNEWA is a papal agency serving the churches and peoples of the Middle East, Northeast Africa, India and Eastern Europe. In Jordan, the agency runs many programs that help refugees and poor communities, such as the Mother of Mercy Clinic in Zerqa and the CNEWA Needy Child program in Gaza Camp, Jerash. JTB is a non-profit public/private sector partnership that promotes tourism to Jordan. The announcement was made during this week's annual convention of the Catholic Press Association (CPA) in Minneapolis.

“The part of the Holy Land that is now Jordan was known throughout the Bible as a place of refuge and peace,” Priscilla Philippi, JTB spokesperson, told the CPA audience gathered during Wednesday's opening banquet of the convention. “Jordan has been blessed with leaders who have worked hard towards fostering an environment of peace, inter-faith and ecumenical understanding and tolerance. His Majesty King Abdullah II, a direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammad, continues the family tradition of furthering these noble works.

“As editors and writers of the Catholic Press Association, you serve a higher purpose – your unique position compels you to seek and spread the truth,” Philippi continued. “I urge you to visit Jordan to experience the reality on the ground. You have the power to bring about a broader knowledge and understanding of current affairs and bridge the information gap necessary for the enrichment of future generations.”

Owen McGovern, executive director of CPA, says Jordan plays a pivotal role. "Jordan is like the Switzerland of the Middle East," McGovern said. "As a land of peace and moderation, it is a beacon of hope for stability in the region."

(more)

The Jordan Tourism Board launched a major campaign last year designed to inform North American Christians about the holy places in Jordan. With sites of major importance to the Christian faith, such as Bethany-beyond-the-Jordan, where Jesus was baptized, the land in what is today the country of Jordan played a prominent role throughout the Old and New Testaments and the early Christian period.

The JTB-CNEWA trip for CPA journalists will take place Sept. 24-Oct. 2, 2002. The itinerary will feature biblical sites, visits to CNEWA projects and opportunities for inter-faith dialogue. Highlights include:

Holy Sites

- Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan, where John the Baptist lived, preached and baptized Jesus and where Elijah ascended to heaven from what is now known as Elijah's hill. *
- Mount Nebo, where Moses stood to glimpse the Holy Land that he would never enter. The site is cared for by an order of Franciscan Monks. *
- Petra, the Ancient Nabatean fortress city carved out of rock, near the Valley of Moses and located off the ancient King's Highway.
- Jerash, one of the cities of the Decapolis, where Jesus preached to thousands and one of the best preserved Greco-Roman cities in the world.
- Gadara, or Um Qais, where Jesus cast out the unclean spirits that fled and entered into a herd of swine, which then ran in to the Sea of Galilee and drowned.
- Madaba, the "City of Mosaics" that is home to the oldest Byzantine mosaic map of the Holy Land.
- Aqaba, site of a church believed to be the oldest in the world.
- Amman Archaeological Museum, which houses some of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other priceless pieces of history.
- Elijah's home region of Tishbeh in ancient Gilead: the ancient tumbled village remains on a low hill at Listib, and the nearby mountaintop remains of a large, 7th Century Byzantine church, known as Khirbet Mar Elias (Khirbet el-Wahadneh). *
- The modern Shrine to Our Lady of the Mountain at Anjara. *

**Designated by the Catholic Bishops of the Middle East as the five pilgrimage sites in Jordan set for the year 2000.*

CNEWA Projects

- Mother of Mercy Clinic, Zerqa
- Italian Hospital, Amman
- CNEWA Needy Child program, Gaza Camp, Jerash

Meetings/Interviews

- Father Michele Piccirillo, Franciscan Bible Institute, Jerusalem
- Rami Khouri, former editor-in-chief of the Jordan Times, author and writer/presenter of “Jordan Ancient Cultures,” a weekly archaeology program on Radio Jordan
- Latin Patriarchal Vicar, Bishop Selim Sayegh
- Greek Orthodox Bishop Benedictos
- Greek Melkite Catholic Bishop George al-Murr
- Father Charles Miller, Rector of Ratisbonne Pontifical Institute, Jerusalem