



# Message to Church Leaders FUN! FELLOWSHIP! OUTREACH!

by Richard Frehofer, Editor & Publisher

Those three words reflect how Branson, Missouri can help your church's ultimate mission. It's a mission all of our churches share: to build a strong, vibrant church family that has an impact on our neighborhoods, communities, our nation and our world. To do that, we need each member of the church to be in a strong, personal relationship both with the Head of the Church and with each other.

During these high-octane, often frenzied times, our mission certainly is presented with challenges. Schedules, commitments and obligations are competing for everyone's time and energy. The new financial pressures from our troubled economy are pushing many to take on even more to make ends meet. But with these challenges, also comes opportunities. As the world at large is learning that finances and human endeavors are not a sure foundation, people are becoming more open to hearing of a God who is faithful to His Word and to the people who "build their house upon the rock."

But people need help. The church family needs help building relationships among themselves. Others outside the church need help crossing that seemingly wide chasm in their minds that separates them from the Kingdom of God.

Here's where those three words come in. A fun getaway is a proven technique for turning strangers into friends and friends into devoted members of the church family.

Taking it one step further, a fun getaway is a perfect opportunity to invite the unchurched to join the fun, a half-step for many which is a whole lot easier than taking a giant leap to brave that foreboding church door. It's one thing to muster enough courage to confront a new church environment among a multitude of unfamiliar faces. Being invited to join a lighthearted bunch of friendly folks on their way to a destination of good times shared by all is quite another thing. That's a threshold easy to cross.

Once the getaway begins, no cheesy ice-breakers are needed. Getting away from the routines, the ruts, the schedules and obligations and embarking on a shared adventure causes relationships to unfold in no time.

Of course fun times can be found anywhere, but fun times designed with you in mind are rare enough indeed. Which brings us, as you would guess, to the subject (and destination) of Branson, Missouri, our storied village deep in the heart of the Ozarks. Here's a place full of theme parks, attractions, live shows, mountains and lakes, and with an added element you will appreciate most. Love of God, family, and country are values and themes that resonate throughout every show, theme park, and nearly every contact with the local people.

Check out the ads in this magazine: the fun excludes no one. Any show, attraction or outdoor activity can be

enjoyed by all ages, and people of a diversity of interests—together!

Let's drop a few zingers here to build on that point. Where else can you walk into one of the world's top theme parks and hear Gospel music on a variety of stages and even in the background music as you walk the attraction's streets? Where else does every venue of live entertainment contain a Gospel segment, often even a Christian testimony and a short Gospel message, whether it be a show of music, comedy, magic or dance? Where else does the hospitality in restaurants and lodgings feel almost like extensions of the church family? Where else can you enjoy mountains and lakes and all the splendors of the great outdoors at the same locale as world-class shows, attractions and shopping wonderlands? Where else can you find dozens of theater venues offering all-denominational services on Sunday where you are invited to fellowship with the locals as well as other church families from around the country? What other destination is more like-minded, providing a getaway experience that is encouraging, edifying and even faith-building?

What other destination can contribute to your mission by living up to those three key words—*fun, fellowship, outreach*?

And what other destination is reaching out specifically to you, a destination populated by many who believe helping your mission is part of *their* mission? ♦

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## MILEAGE GUIDE to Branson, Missouri



Right in the Heart of America!

Branson is a quaint little Ozarks community (pop. 6000) located 35 miles south of Springfield, MO. Close to major highways and interstates, Branson is right in the heart of America!

Arkansas	Kansas	Oklahoma	Tennessee	Texas
Eureka Springs .....50	Dodge City .....553	Oklahoma City .....333	Memphis .....300	Dallas .....464
Fort Smith .....158	Topeka .....271	Tulsa .....228	Nashville .....560	Houston .....701
Little Rock .....173	Wichita .....302		Knoxville .....737	San Antonio .....796
Illinois	Missouri	Other Cities		
Chicago .....546	Jefferson City .....174	Albuquerque, NM . 875		
Peoria .....419	Kansas City .....213	Atlanta, GA .....687		
Springfield .....349	St. Louis .....252	Birmingham, AL ... 541		
		Boston, MA ..... 1445		
		Charlotte, NC ..... 978		
Iowa	Nebraska			
Davenport .....517	Lincoln .....408	Cleveland, OH .....812		
Des Moines .....401	Omaha .....400	Denver, CO ..... 810		
		Detroit, MI ..... 804		
		Indianapolis, IN ..... 494		
		Jackson, MS ..... 509		
		Jacksonville, FL . 1032		
		Las Vegas, NV ... 1446		
		Los Angeles, CA . 1660		
		Miami, FL ..... 1380		
		Milwaukee, WI ..... 633		
		Mobile, AL ..... 697		
		Minneapolis, MN . 644		
		Montgomery, AL... 630		
		New Orleans, LA .. 694		
		New York, NY ..... 1200		
		Orlando, FL ..... 1124		
		Philadelphia, PA . 1140		
		Phoenix, AZ ..... 1338		
		Pittsburgh, PA ..... 856		
		Portland, OR ..... 2011		
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		Salt Lake City, UT 1287		
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		Tallahassee, FL ..... 841		
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