

GREAT COMMISSION FAMILIES - Summer 2019

With Families at Heart and a Heart for the World



Dear Friends in Christ,

Amazingly, 2019 is halfway over. As I think back over our ministry the last several months, this thought comes to mind:

“The world comes to Washington, DC!”

Looking at our calendar in recent months, I noticed our ministry has served five different types of groups, with about five groups in each type. :-)

1. International Guests

Typically the most evangelistic of our ministry outings are with international students who are brought to DC by various Christian friends.

Photo 1a: Group photo with an international student group in front of the U.S. Capitol Building where inside and all around DC I shared many quotes and stories about America’s Founders “In Their Own Words.”



Photo 1b: In one museum in DC, after they saw a presentation that included Noah’s Ark, I shared a dramatic story about the apparent biblical origins of the Chinese character for “boat.” It is made up of three parts: vessel, eight & people. There were eight people on Noah’s Ark. The Chinese language, which pre-dates written Hebrew by 700 or more years, includes this and many other details consistent with the Bible. My int’l friends eyes grew wide with amazement. Shortly thereafter, on the way to more museums, we passed David’s Tent DC on the National Mall. As I explained that there are people inside giving praise to Jesus 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for years on end, one of them snapped this photo of me. In sending it to me later, my int’l friend wrote, *“I think you are an outstanding storyteller. Thank you for bringing us a wonderful story. Thank you for making us an unforgettable journey. Thank you very much.”*



Photo 1c: We also serve int’l business leaders and int’l ministry leaders. This photo is part of several groups of local ministry leaders who are African immigrants, African Americans and people who serve in Black communities. The feedback has been wonderful, including this from a ministry network leader: *“I’m so thankful for my friend who connected us. Your energy for biblical truth along with your diversity in sharing the truth and contributions African Americans made to U.S. history is very much needed. Thank you!”*



2. Family Groups

Nearly every month a group of families from somewhere in the area makes plans with me to learn spiritual insights from our local history. We especially enjoy seeing the children and teenagers light up with that “Wow, that’s amazing” look in their eyes. Most significant is that they grow in understanding God’s hand in our history and how that should help us trust Him more in our own lives today.

Photo 2: Here’s a historic sketch of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. With a group of about 10 families, I shared 12 spiritual life lessons during our “Confluence of American History in Harpers Ferry” spiritual heritage outing. Other locations: Gettysburg, Antietam, Manassas & Monocacy Battlefields; Frederick & Annapolis.



3. Christian Schools

A delightful addition to our ministry outings in recent years has been Christian school groups who come for up to five days each, and repeat from year to year.

Photo 3a: This is a Christian school group from California at the White House. Do you know the White House Prayer? FDR had it carved into the mantelpiece during the dark days of WWII, but it was written by our 2nd President (John



Adams) on his 2nd day there in November 1800: ***“I pray Heaven to bestow the best of Blessings on this House and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise Men ever rule under this roof.”***

Photo 3b: With up to five days in DC, I get to share many of my creative presentations with Christian school groups. For instance, here we are at Mount Vernon with 8 student helpers at the end of my presentation entitled, “Four Flags That George Washington Served Under, or How We Got Our American Flag.” With each flag I share its interesting history, a God-centered quote from George Washington at that time in his life (at ages 23, 44, 57 & 64), and an associated key Bible verse with a spiritual life lesson for us today.

Photo 3c: At the Iwo Jima Memorial I typically share history and spiritual lessons about how the Navy & Marines got their early flags. I.e. “Join or Die,” “An Appeal to Heaven” and “Don’t Tread On Me.”

Photo 3d: In advance, I often ask Christian school groups if any student has a relative buried at Arlington National Cemetery, or if their family knows someone whose name is on the Law Enforcement Officers Memorial (located at Judiciary Square). After sharing the moving story of a fallen officer that her family knew, this young lady is taking a picture of his name carved in stone to share with her parents. I’ve had multiple groups and many tears shed there. This Bible verse is also inscribed on that wall: ***“The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.”*** - Proverbs 28:1

4. Local Ministry Groups

Photo 4: We also serve local churches and visiting missionary groups either in DC or at their location by sharing Bible-centered powerpoint presentations. This photo of the Sentinels in the pouring rain at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is from my “No Greater Love” Walking Loop of Arlington. Ideally, after sharing it in a church, sometime later we actually go to Arlington together!

5. National Ministry Groups

Photo 5: Again this year we have served several national ministries when they come to the DC area: Officers Christian Fellowship, ALERT, BJU Press and Patrick Henry College. For PHC this year they asked me to help create a Bible-centered guidebook for the U.S. Supreme Court Building to give to the busloads of folks they took there this spring. If you’d like my draft copy, let me know!

Closing Encouragement from One of My Heroes

As you may know, Linda & I met at Penn State in the late 70s. By the time we were there, the Campus Crusade for Christ movement was one of the largest in the country. How it got that way significantly traces to the couple that founded the ministry there. They were gone by the time we were students, but we would occasionally hear their names spoken, typically in hushed tones of reverence: *Bart & Joan Trowbridge*. They had left Penn State to eventually pioneer ministries behind the Iron Curtain. We finally met Bart at a Penn State CCC Reunion six years ago. They are retired in Pennsylvania. Recently, Bart called to connect me with a Russian visitor who was among the first people to trust Christ with him in Moscow decades ago. Bart wanted to know if it would be possible for his Russian friend to spend time with me in DC. We did, and my new Russian friend was eager for the many, many spiritual truths I shared with him. A few days later, Bart called with some encouraging words for me: *“Bernie, I want to thank you so much for all you did for [our Russian friend] while he was here. What a joy to hear from him about the time you spent together. What an influence. God continues to pour out His grace. We appreciate you so much. What a ministry you have. Lord bless you!”*

Thank you, Bart! That means a lot to me coming from you, one of my heroes!

And **Thank YOU**, dear friends, for helping to make our ministry possible!

In Christ, *Bernie for the Bealls*

“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah” - Psalm 46:10-11

