

SHIP OF MERCY SAYS NO AID TO ISRAEL

To my Jewish friends: We have come more than 7000 miles, across the Atlantic with "Spirit of Grace", an old 1944 World War II navy cargo ship of war. We have worked hard on the ship for 2 ½ years and with great love, we filled it with hundreds of tons of everything good we could find. Nearly \$400,000US dollars were paid for fuel alone. We have assembled a crew who has put aside their own priorities - jobs, homes, personal dreams, left universities and careers to turn to serve this ship. We have great knowledgeable engineers and an unlimited US licensed Captain. People from the US, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Guatemala, Sweden and Canada have all put their hands to the plow as a labor of love, the entire staff working without pay, to put this US flag ship to sea for the sake of Israel. The ship itself was a gift from by a Christian couple, Peter and Leslie Strong to the organization Friend Ships.

We sailed from Louisiana, cut our way through three hurricanes and 35 days at sea to finally arrive at the Port of Ashdod. We do this not because we think that your worries will be over because our ship has arrived but as a gift of friendship – to say not by words but by actions that we love you and that we believe in you.

We realize, as you do, that Israel has many enemies. Just listen to your neighbors who threaten your existence at every border and beyond. Hear what the UN says, representing most of the nations of world, pointing fingers, and making ugly accusations that you are the blame for every problem in the world. We Christians have watched this hatred directed at Israel from afar. We have talked and talked and talked about it and talked some more.

Finally, some of us have said that enough is enough. Israeli people must know that they have friends, people who truly love them. A group of us are tired of just talk. Words are cheap. There are people in the United States and around the world who deeply love the Jews and Israel. Some would say, "Oh those are just right wing evangelical fanatics." Yes, this is probably correct and there are millions of us. Although we are a small group of people who decided to make this demonstration so

that the world would know that you have friends that believe in and love you, we are not alone.

So we inquired what goods were needed from many Israeli groups. We collected these goods, loaded them aboard ship and sailed. We are here to tell the Jewish people that we think they are beautiful and that their children are beautiful, and that there are those of us that love you. You are the apple of God's eye.

Sometimes we are asked if we bring help to Israel because we think you are like a third world nation. In America, we have our poor and needy and we know that Israel has problems of her own. But your nation is the greatest demonstration in man's history of a nation rising out of nothing and just 50 some years later emerging as a great world power. Since Israel's rebirth, with a brick in one hand and a sword in the other, like Nehemiah at the wall, with 11 to 1 odds and people in all four directions challenging you, you have built an amazing country. You welcome the world through tourism. Your ports, both sea and air host ships and planes from everywhere. There are forests and trees, a country running over with every great thing to eat and large exports to other nations, universities second to none, hospitals and medical care that outshine the US with our hundreds of years in the making, fabulous highways, lit and beautiful, buildings and a nuclear power of such strength. And still you reach out to help your neighbors and try and live in peace. **No, we are not bringing aid to Israel, a mighty first world nation, but we bring a gift of love and of friendship.** It is our great privilege and honor to make this visit to your country

WE OWE THE JEW

Every good thing that we as Christians possess, we owe to you. Everything of great value, we have gotten from the Jew. Money is just another commodity but the real coin of the realm is the basic moral and spiritual values that make up a man's true character. Your great ancestors kept their eyes on God. While the rest of us were running around picking up a stick, looking at a rock, wondering if the moon or the stars were divine,

the Jews kept their eyes on the great I Am, looking not to the right or the left but steady focused on their God.

We are Christians and not ashamed of it. Our Lord is a Jew and his earliest followers were an assortment of great Jewish men. The Master of our lives is a full blooded Jew from the lineage of David. And through a group of Jews thousands of years ago, we have adopted your morality, your laws, how we run our courts, Moses Ten Commandments, how to relate to our brothers and our parents.

There are thousands of individuals and organizations who contributed to this effort. Trinity Broadcasting Network, the largest Christian broadcasting network in the world and Joseph Project along with thousands of other donors, helped to provide the funds needed for this voyage.

This is a gift to the Jewish people from the Christian people of the world who admire you. This is not a gift from a government to a government but a simple gift from people to people - from people of the world who love you, a gift of friendship in its simplest form. The goods will be distributed by the public organization Joseph Project from their disaster relief warehouse to public and nonprofit organizations such as the Ministry of Welfare, IDF, hospitals and others that help war terror victims, children, the elderly, the disabled and many others in need.

All aboard our ship "Spirit of Grace" come for one reason. We love God and we believe what He says. The word of God tells us that He who blesses Israel will be blessed. We want to bless our friend Israel by bringing a gift of love from the Christians to the Jews, to say that you are beautiful and demonstrate by our efforts - we stand with you both in your time of trouble and your time of plenty. And if Israel will allow us, we will return to the US, load and come back to Israel as a bold statement by our deeds, to strengthen the bond of love between Israel and those who care deeply about her. The ship "Spirit of Grace" is dedicated to this end.

Your friend, Don Tipton
Founder & Executive Director- Friend Ships