

Dear Friends

'Go and do likewise'

In helping in the aliyah of the Falash Mura Jews from Ethiopia, Operation Exodus has answered the call to support this group of most needy people. I believe this 'love in action' is a modern example of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37). I began to see this parable in a new light recently. Jesus taught it as **an answer to the question of how much we should love God and our neighbour**, which is the foremost commandment.

He began by saying: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem' (NKJV). In AD 70 the Jewish people had to leave Jerusalem when it fell to the vengeful Romans. In 'going down' to Jericho (a symbol for the Diaspora) they 'fell among robbers,' were badly beaten and left half-dead (something of this is seen in the pogroms and the Holocaust). The established Christian churches (represented by a priest and a Levite) recognised the Jew in need of desperate help and in almost every country had many opportunities to show their real love to rescue them. But 'they came and looked and passed by on the other side of the road!' An unbelievable description, but sadly it has happened again and again. Replacement theology stopped them from obeying the Lord's command to 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 19:19). Yes, we Christians, generally, have failed to understand that **helping 'one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'** (Matthew 25:40).

The Samaritan – an example for the Body of Christ

'But a certain Samaritan ... came. And when he saw him, he had compassion.' The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans and despised them (John 4:9). So this man had plenty of reasons to ignore his plight. Is not the Body of Christ in a similar situation – not recognised and sometimes misunderstood by the Jews, but **commanded by God to show compassion to His much-persecuted ancient chosen people**? This is the calling of Ebenezer – Operation Exodus! The Samaritan showed **love in action**, 'went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine...' He did not look after his own interests but gave his best – a wonderful example for us (Philippians 2:4-5). Finally, 'he set him on his own animal' and helped the needy Jewish man to safety. He sacrificed his time and stayed through the night with him. Then he gave two denarii to the innkeeper and said, "'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, **when I come again, I will repay you**'" (verse 35).

Our challenge and commitment today

I believe that the two denarii, equivalent to two days' wages, are a parable for such 'love in action' towards the Jewish people during the last 2,000 years. Thank God that, through the centuries, there have always been 'certain' people who served them with love and compassion. But **today we have 'to spend more'**. Why? Because the Lord is in the process of bringing the Jewish people back to Israel from all the nations, just as He has promised it. This is a worldwide sign of God's faithfulness. They return for His name's sake and because He has made an everlasting covenant with them. Through their aliyah the way for the coming of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, is being prepared.

It is the worldwide Body of Christ, which not only recognises the blessings through Israel but is growing in the task to stand alongside the Jewish people for such a time as this. Romans 15:27 shows the debt we owe to them: '... if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things' (NKJV).

Are we willing to tend, comfort and carry the wounded Jewish people back to Jerusalem? In the fulfilment of our entrusted mandate (Isaiah 49:22), we are facing today manifold additional costs. Our office in Jerusalem is one example: often in amazing ways it is encouraging new immigrants and helping

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them to settle in Israel. Although it is costing us more, we know **the Lord will bless those who bless Israel** and will repay everything when He comes again. So let us obey Him to 'Go and do likewise'!

Will you join us in blessing not only the Falash Mura of Ethiopia, but also our ongoing work for the Jewish people in the former Soviet Union? And beyond this will you help us to prepare for the coming exodus from the Western countries? Thank you for being a partner in what the Lord has laid on our hearts – to get ready for the time of need. Your love and faithfulness is a great encouragement to us. We are grateful for your much appreciated support through prayers and finances!

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