

AJCongress Cruise Aboard TV's 'Love Boat' Features 500-Year History Of Caribbean Jews

On-board seminars on Jewish life and history in the Caribbean will be featured during a 9-day American Jewish Congress Caribbean Cruise over Lincoln's Birthday. Departing from San Juan, Puerto Rico on February 8 and returning February 16, the cruise also includes specially arranged tours of Curacao, St. Thomas and Caracas, Venezuela that highlight not only the cities' general sights but points of particular Jewish interest as well.

The on-board seminars on Jewish history and

culture in the Caribbean are conducted by an AJCongress staff member.

The cruise, aboard the S.S. Sun Princess -- television's "Love Boat" -- includes stops at Martinique and the Grenadines as well as Curacao, St. Thomas and Caracas.

Jewish history in the Caribbean is almost 500 years old, going back to the Spanish Inquisition. August 2, 1492, the date that Christopher Columbus set sail for what he thought was India, was also the deadline set for Jews who were expelled by the Spanish Inquisition to leave Spain. Columbus' crew included Marranos, Spanish Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity but continued to practice Judaism in secret. Many of the Marranos settled in the New World and became the first Caribbean Jews.

The Mikve Israel synagogue in Willemstad capital of the Dutch island of Curacao, was built

in 1732, and is the oldest synagogue in the Western Hemisphere still in use today.

The Caribbean Cruise is one of many tours sponsored by AJCongress' International Travel Program to further Jewish education, cultural identity and nurture connections between the Jews of America and those of distant lands. Participation in the travel program requires membership in AJCongress.

Low cost round trip flights from some 50 U.S. cities to San Juan, Puerto Rico, the port of embarkation, are available to cruise passengers. The cruise also includes two nights in San Juan prior to the ship's Saturday evening sailing, enabling passengers to observe the Sabbath in Puerto Rico.

For information on the Lincoln's Birthday Caribbean Cruise or other AJCongress' tours, call 212-879-4500.

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Falwell Confronts An Angry Crowd At Forum Hosted By New York Rabbi

NEW YORK (WNS) — The Rev. Jerry Falwell confronted a group of angry protestors and dodged eggs and other items hurled at the stage at Town Hall to engage with Rabbi William Berkowitz in a wide-ranging discussion on domestic issues and his views on Israel and the Jewish people.

At least 50 persons were forcibly removed from the hall by security officials. Nonetheless, many of those who remained continued to jeer and catcall during the course of the two hour dialogue. The demonstration at the outset of the forum set back the scheduled starting time by nearly 30 minutes.

Falwell, the leader of the Moral Majority, told the equally partisan crowd of several hundred people that "I became a lover of the Jewish people by becoming a student of the scriptures" while in his second year of

college. That remark was greeted by loud catcalls and other signs of displeasure.

Falwell repeated many of his views enunciated at past forums in the Jewish community asserting his right to preach the gospel, while maintaining that he has not singled out the Jewish people for mass conversion. "Our mission is a universal one," Falwell said.

He said he had no ulterior motives for his friendship with the

Jewish people, as some critics have charged, and that his right to preach the gospel should not be misinterpreted or misconstrued as anti-Semitic, just as, he asserted, an Orthodox rabbi's rejection of the theology of Christendom should not be regarded as being anti-Christian.

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