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## A Bible Fun Park Wholly Planned

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A Chechen mogul, an Israeli exporter and a Russian poet are joining forces to build a Bible theme park where Muscovites can dine from the Last Supper and watch temple adulteresses dance in Canaan.

The Bible Land park, which is to open its doors in 2005, is aimed at children and will occupy 32 hectares in western Moscow announced Wednesday.

Banking and real estate tycoon Umar Dzhabrailov, the chairman of the joint venture Holy Land Exhibition Co., said he hoped would improve the image of Moscow and Russian business.

"This is a project that will put more international attention on Moscow and Russia," he said. "We businessmen should be seen who launder money and export capital but as people who unite to do something good."

Dzhabrailov -- who ran for president in 2000 and whose cousin was linked to an assassination attempt against top city official Ordzhonikidze last month -- is working on the park together with Russian-born Israeli businessman Emil Pagis, who exports souvenirs, and poet Andrei Dementev, who headed RTR television's Jerusalem bureau in the 1990s.

The three partners said they will put up part of the park's \$40 million to \$60 million startup cost, and they hoped other business provide the rest.

Pagis said the nondenominational park would not simply serve as a place to earn money through tickets and souvenirs. It will children more tolerant of other people's traditions and encourage them to read the Tora, the Gospels or the Koran.

"Children who come here will definitely be enlightened and reject the idea of hitting a boy in the face because he is different,"

He signed a contract with sculptor Zurab Tsereteli's Children's Miracle Park Foundation last year for the 32 hectares. The plot 320 hectares in Nizhniye Mnevniki that President Boris Yeltsin gave Tsereteli in 1992 for the construction of a Moscow version Disneyland.

"He [Tsereteli] understands that Disneyland is not the right thing for Moscow because Moscow is a spiritual center," Pagis said. Tsereteli could not be reached for comment Thursday.

Pagis, who said he was a practicing Jew, said he presented the park plan to the Interconfessional Council of Russia -- which is level representatives of Orthodox Christian, Moslem, Jewish and Buddhist groups -- last month and got a positive reaction.

He told reporters Wednesday that he understood the need to be sensitive to other people's beliefs.

"I provide souvenirs from the Holy Land, and I know that if I provide a souvenir for an Orthodox Christian, it should not smother Protestantism or Catholicism," he said.

Attractions at the park will include a Solomon-era Jewish town, a Roman fortress, an Arab palace and a replica of the Church Nativity in Bethlehem. A Canaan town will showcase the dances of the temple adulteresses. Ponds will be dug to represent the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean.

One restaurant will offer a menu from the Last Supper, while others will have dishes from other historical and religious backgrounds.

In the run-up to the park's opening, the Holy Land Exhibition Co. plans to open an exhibition of replicas of Holy Land temples -- Christian, but also Jewish and Moslem -- in Gostiny Dvor next year. It is also considering producing a television game show about the Bible and the Koran.