



**European Evangelical Alliance
Call to Action Against
Antisemitism**

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Hatred against people because of their ethnicity or religion is on the rise across Europe. This is not something that Christians should ignore. The European Evangelical Alliance is issuing this statement about antisemitism along with one about anti-Muslim hatred.

A call to action is followed by a review of the phenomenon of antisemitism, biblical thoughts on hatred and the Jews being chosen by God and finally a brief reflection on Christian responses to antisemitism.

In broadest terms, antisemitism involves the hatred or unfair treatment of the Jewish people.

a call to act

With antisemitism increasing across Europe, the European Evangelical Alliance believes that action is needed. It calls upon Evangelical Christians to

- Renounce and condemn the charge of deicide and the false teaching that Jews are uniquely responsible for the death of Christ;
- Renounce and condemn all antisemitic acts that were committed in the past, especially by men and women who claimed to be Christians, but whose words and deeds contradicted the teachings of Jesus and of the Bible;
- Notice and pray for the Jewish community around them; neighbours, colleagues, synagogues and Messianic communities in their area;
- Notice and pray about incidents of antisemitism around them and in the news.
- Seek ways to build friendship with Jews and Messianic Jews (who are also often called Jewish believers in Jesus and Jesus-believing Jews)
- Reach out in solidarity with the Jewish people, standing side by side with them when they or their property are attacked. Be ready to provide sanctuary if the situation gets serious.

Finally, the European Evangelical Alliance calls for the clear, respectful and compassionate communication of God's Gospel message of love to all people, including to the Jewish people.

Antisemitism – A Lamentable Past

The story of European antisemitism stretches at least as far back as Roman times (Acts 18:2). Tragically, much of that story is connected to the Church. We honour those who have protected Jews from danger, sometimes paying a great price for doing so. But, too often, there has been apathy or complicity. It is a story that includes: charges of deicide and assertions that the Jewish people are uniquely responsible for the death of Christ, the destruction of European Jewish communities by Crusaders, the burning of Jewish people at the stake for allegedly causing the Black Death, the persecutions of Jewish people during the Inquisition, the expulsions of Jewish populations, the blood libels that accused Jewish people of killing children and using “Christian” blood to make Passover matzahs (unleavened bread),^[1] the loss of Jewish life and the leveling of Jewish shtetls (villages) during the pogroms of Central and Eastern Europe, and the silence of much of the Church during the Holocaust. The history of European antisemitism stands out as a tragic stain upon our continent and as a deplorable blight upon the body of Christ.

Within the Church, such great leaders as Ambrose ^[2] and Martin Luther ^[3] uttered fiercely anti-Jewish statements. “What started out as a thin fissure in the Judeo-Christian foundation continued to expand to become the chasm that it is today.” ^[4]

Most devastating of all was the destruction of some six million Jewish people, including Jewish believers in Jesus, during the “Final Solution” of the Second World War. Of the nine million Jewish people who lived in Europe at the start of the war, only three million survived its end.

The rise of fascism in the twentieth century added a secular, racist face to antisemitism. While supposedly “Christian” antisemitism had sought to suppress the Jewish people in order to safeguard the purity of the faith, this new antisemitism sought to exterminate the Jewish people in order to safeguard the allegedly superior Aryan race.

A Portentous Past

Sadly, hatred of the Jewish people cannot be consigned to the past. Today, religious, racial, and political antisemitism are often fused. Whether born out of religious bigotry, racist ideology, or political animosity, appalling acts of violence against the Jewish people continue: from Holocaust denial; to the demonization of the state of Israel that goes far beyond reasonable criticism; to the banning of Jewish lecturers at universities; to variations of the hashtag “Hitler was right” (over 17,000 in one week in 2022);^[5] to random stabbings on streets; to murderous attacks at synagogues and Jewish schools; to blanket calls for boycotts of all Jewish goods and enterprises—antisemitism remains a virulent, dangerous reality in the present. Its rise has not been paralleled since the 1930s.

And let us not forget that Jewish believers in Jesus are also attacked, with Messianic congregations being vandalized, and swastikas being graffitied on walls.

What Does the Bible Say About Hatred?

We serve a God of love, who, from the very beginning of our existence has loved us, cared for us, and provided for us. (Deuteronomy 7:9) Loving and serving God means following His example to love all His creation, including those we find easy to like and love and those who we find difficult and challenging to like and love (Matthew 5:43-45).

To hate or desire the destruction of any people group, including the Jewish people, clearly violates God's commandment to love our neighbour as we love ourselves (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:31). Hatred of any kind is contrary to the will of God, the example of Jesus, and the teaching of Scripture. (1 John 2:11) Christians are called to "get rid of" all hatred and be compassionate and forgiving towards one another as in Christ, God forgave us (Ephesian 4:31-32).

God does not hate his creation, rather, He loves the world (John 3:16), and that includes Jewish people. Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1). Jesus died for their sins and rose from the dead, and He longs to see them saved (as He does for all mankind) (Matthew 23:37).

While Jews were present at Jesus' death, so too were Romans and other Gentiles. Still, Jesus died for the sins of the world, thus making *all* people responsible for His death (Acts 4:27; Romans 5:6, 8). To accuse Jewish people of deicide and to hold them uniquely responsible for the death of Christ contradicts the foundational biblical truth. Yes, the Acts of the Apostles tells how Jewish leaders opposed the early Church but the Church was, of course, led by Messianic Jews. There is no excuse for antisemitism.

What does the Bible say about the Jews being chosen?

In Genesis 12, God calls Abram to leave his family and to go where God shows him. With that call, God makes a series of promises to Abram. God chooses to bless Abram and his family (including his future family) in a very special way. Abram will be made into a great nation, and he will be blessed. Abram's name will be great, and he will be a blessing. Those who bless Abram (and his family) will be blessed and whoever curses them will be cursed; and finally, all peoples on earth will be blessed through him. God chose Abram and his family to be His special people, but also to be His people with a purpose. Abram and his family were not called to keep the blessing to themselves, but to be a blessing to others, it was to be extended to all peoples.

Israel had moments where they used their position to bless the nations around them and at other times, kept the blessing to themselves. But God remained faithful to His promise and the whole world was

indeed blessed through Abraham's family with the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who redeemed the whole world from sin.

The call to be a blessing that Abraham received has now been extended to the Church as adopted members into Abraham's family. It is all our responsibility to bless the nations with the good news of Jesus. That message never gets out through hate, but only through love. Christians are not enemies of the Jewish people, we are family.

Ultimately, antisemitism is a spiritual evil, grounded in an attempt to thwart God's plans for the redemption of a fallen humanity that He sent his Son to save. Through the Jewish people, God gave to the world the written Word (the Scriptures) and the Word made flesh (the Saviour).

The Christian Response to Antisemitism

The Berlin Declaration on the Uniqueness of Christ and Jewish Evangelism in Europe Today declares, "We acknowledge within the sad record of European Christian history the 'teaching of contempt,' intolerance toward Jewish people and Judaism, abhorrent acts of coercion, antisemitism in attitude, word and deed." [6]

Similarly, in *the Willowbank Declaration*, church leaders write, "Concerned about humanity everywhere, we are resolved to uphold the right of Jewish people to a just and peaceful existence everywhere, both in the land of Israel and in their communities throughout the world." [7]

When the land of Israel is mentioned, some say that criticism of the modern Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians is antisemitic. Others say the opposite. Of course, challenging developments in the state of Israel must never turn into antisemitism. At the same time, the affirmation of the rights for the Jewish people to live peacefully in the land of Israel does not justify any "actions that contradict biblical ethics and constitute oppression of people-groups or individuals." [8]

Non-Jewish Christians and Jesus-believing Jews are brothers and sisters in Christ. The Church's complicity in antisemitism has tarnished the name of Jesus. It is time for believers in Jesus, whether Jewish or Gentile, to stand together against modern-day acts of hatred and terrorism against any Jew.

Jesus is the only way of salvation for all people, including for His fellow Jews (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 1:16). Therefore, to withhold His message of salvation from people is not an act of love. If Christians love people, including the Jewish people, then they must respectfully share God's message of love so that they can be saved. (John 3:16)

A time for action

Antisemitism happens around us in Europe in the form of words, boycotts and attacks on property and people. We see it. The European Evangelical Alliance calls upon its members not just to see it but to act.

Resources: Materials and Organizations

- [The Berlin Declaration](#) on the Uniqueness of Christ and Jewish Evangelism in Europe Today
- *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, A History* by James Carroll
- [The Willowbank Declaration](#)
- *Luther and the Jews: Putting Right the Lies* by Richard S. Harvey
- *Our Hands Are Stained with Blood: The Tragic Story of the Church and the Jewish People* by Michael L. Brown
- "Antisemitism Today," Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada, Inc., <https://www.jhcwc.org/antisemitism-today/>.
- The Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism <http://lcje.network/>
- [Christian Witness in a Multi Religious World](#)

Endnotes

[1] "Blood Libel: A False, Incendiary Claim Against Jews," Anti-Defamation League, accessed November 10, 2022, <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/glossary-terms/blood-libel>.

[2] Ambrose called synagogues "a home of perfidy, a home of impiety." Quoted in *Jewish Encyclopedia Online*, s.v. "Ambrose," by Louis Ginzberg, accessed November 10, 2022, <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1377-ambrose>

[3] Martin Luther advocated that synagogues should be burned, and Jews be subjected to harsh labour. see Richard S. Harvey, *Luther and the Jews: Putting Right the Lies* (Eugene: Cascade books, 2017), 81.

[4] J. Randall Price, *What Should We Think About Israel?* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1995), Chapter 11.

[5] “Antisemitism Today,” Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada Inc., accessed November 10, 2022, <https://www.jhcwc.org/antisemitism-today/>.

[6] Darrell L. Bock, “The Berlin Declaration on the Uniqueness of Christ and Jewish Evangelism in Europe Today,” *Welcome Bible.org Blogs*, August 29, 2008, <https://blogs.bible.org/berlin-declaration-on-christs-uniqueness-and-jewish-evangelism-in-europe-today-aug-29/>.

[7] “The Willowbank Declaration,” Lausanne Committee on Jewish Evangelism, accessed November 10, 2022, <http://www.lcje.net/willowbank.html>.

[8] Ibid.

Graphic Note

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