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**Mine Eyes Do Fail with Tears: *Antisemitism and the Christian Response***

**Abstract**

Anti-Semitism is on the rise in the United States and Europe. There has been an alarming increase in the number of hate crimes targeting Jewish people. Currently only twelve states in the U.S. mandate education on the Holocaust, leading to a profound lack of awareness of the effects of anti-Semitism. Sadly, Christian attitudes toward Judaism over the centuries have strongly contributed to anti-Semitic behavior. It is imperative that Christian congregations provide opportunities to educate about anti-Semitism and to establish and strengthen empathic relationships with Jewish congregations.

**Shortened Title for Running Head**  
***Antisemitism and the Christian Response***

## **Mine Eyes Do Fail with Tears: *Antisemitism and the Christian Response***

In 1938, Marc Chagall's *White Crucifixion* was displayed in Paris. This painting was the first in a series that depicted Jesus as a Jewish martyr using the Crucifixion as its central theme. Chagall created the painting as his artistic response to the horrific events of the *Kristallnacht*, in which synagogues were a principal target of the Nazis. Over one thousand would be damaged or destroyed in Germany during this attack while the police were ordered not to intervene. *Kristallnacht* or the 'Night of Broken Glass,' would serve as the catalyst for the Nazi's systematic persecution of the Jews, ultimately leading to the Holocaust.

Chagall sought to intertwine the Jewish heritage of Jesus with the symbol of the cross, central to Christian understanding of suffering, sacrifice and redemption. "While Chagall included many recognizable elements of the traditional Christian iconography on the canvas, he combined them with markers of Jesus's Jewish identity. His loincloth is made from a ritual Jewish prayer shawl, or *tallit*. The mourning angels that are typically seen in Crucifixion images here become three biblical patriarchs and a matriarch, all dressed in traditional Jewish garments." (Chagall Homecoming, 2016) In this way, Chagall brought the suffering and persecution of Jesus on the cross into a direct comparison with the tragic circumstance of the Jews living under the control of the Third Reich.

With this painting, Chagall hoped to raise the awareness of Christians to the dire situation that was Jewish existence under the Third Reich. He endeavored to remind them of their roots in the Jewish faith. "He did not have to explain to Jews what was happening — they already knew. Instead, he wanted to explain the deeper meaning of events in Germany to Christians, and to do so he decided to address them in their own symbolic language, through the use of the Crucifixion." (Amishai-Maisels 1991, 151) Chagall took on the complicated and difficult relationship between Christians and Jews, seeking to bring the deeply rooted Judaic tradition of Christianity into focus. Chagall's *White Crucifixion* was an attempt to bring hope to a situation fraught with peril by "stating that what was happening in Germany was a re-crucifixion of the Jewish Jesus, an act that only a world forgetful of Christ's teaching could tolerate. He wanted this message to be understood by the Christian world, and to have a positive effect on that world's behavior." (Amishai-Maisels 1991, 153) *White Crucifixion*, the favorite painting of Pope Francis, is once again a reminder of the need for Christians to remember and cherish our Jewish heritage and to work toward a time when antisemitism is relegated to the past.

In order to develop a Christian response to antisemitism it is necessary to explore the reasons for its current rise. The White Supremacy movement and its intrinsic relationship to Nazi doctrine will be examined. The legacy of the Holocaust and the impact of Christian prejudice against the Jews will be surveyed. With the ability to learn from the past, the possibility for a way forward for Christians to respond to antisemitism in our time will be presented.

It should be stated that Christians have made great strides to correct the sins of the past. By the 1960s the notion that the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus finally receded. The Holocaust was the watershed event that brought about a strong desire to foster understanding between Christians and Jews. Since the end of the Second World War, there has been a concerted effort on the part of mainline Christian denominations to establish meaningful dialogue and bring about positive relationships with Jewish congregations. As the number of antisemitic incidents continues to rise exponentially, Christians must take the responsibility to educate their congregations about the effects of prejudice and hatred directed toward the Jewish people. “Treating other people as if they were just objects is one of the worst things you can do to another human being, to ignore their subjectivity, their thoughts and feelings.” (Baron-Cohen 2001, 7-8) As Christians, we must be able to raise awareness of the need to confront dehumanization.

Antisemitism is a symptom of the desire to hate, and to degrade. It arises from a darkness in the human psyche that must be addressed. After the horrors of the Holocaust, it is a wonder that antisemitism did not finally become a specter of behavior that was utterly deplored and abandoned. This was not to be. “Of those perpetrators actually brought to court in the Federal Republic of Germany before the end of the twentieth century., only 164 individuals were eventually sentenced as perpetrators of murder, rather than for lesser crimes. In view of the hundreds of thousands of individuals who have been involved in the machinery of mass murder and the six million people who had died in what we now call the Holocaust, 164 convictions for murder is not an impressive total.” (Fulbrook, 2019, 356) Antisemitism is poised to resurface since it never was truly reckoned with.

### ***Current Rise of Antisemitism***

Antisemitic acts of violence have increased exponentially not only in the US but worldwide. “In 2017, anti-Semitic incidents surged nearly 60 percent, according to the 2017 ADL Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents. This was the largest single-year increase on record and the second highest number reported since ADL started tracking such data in 1979.” (“Anti-Semitism in the US 2017.) There has been no respite since the ADL Audit.

An almost inconceivable event occurred when a disturbing antisemitic cartoon appeared in the New York Times International Edition on April 25, 2019. It featured Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu as a guide dog wearing a collar with the Star of David being walked by President Trump wearing a skullcap. This cartoon was grossly antisemitic and its appearance would not have been out of place on a white supremacist website. It is beyond comprehension to realize that it was allowed to be published by the New York Times International Edition. The apology for this gross error was not immediate. All the more perplexing considering the gravity of the situation. “The Times apology came Sunday afternoon after it issued an earlier statement

saying it was wrong to run a cartoon that contained "anti-Semitic tropes." But that statement did not contain any apology." (Isadore & Stelter CNN Sun. April 28, 2019)

Antisemitism has been embedded into the fabric of our society and attempts to eradicate it have never been close to successful. The Christian antipathy toward the Jews has endured throughout the existence of the faith. Philosophers in the Age of Reason and beyond contributed to the marginalization of the Jewish people. This form of behavior is not an aberration but is reflective of an ingrained pattern of thinking that arises from suspicion of "the other" and the Jews are often the first target. The Holocaust could not have been realized only from the musings of a madman and his henchmen. It was, according to historian David Nuremberg, "the product of a history that had encoded the threat of Judaism into some of the basic concepts of Western thought, regenerating that threat in new forms fitting for new periods, and helping far too many citizens of the twentieth century make sense of their world. We will fail to understand those terrors or their effects if we sunder them from what came before." (Nirenberg 2013, 459) This is a difficult concept to accept because of the very nature of its context and yet, it is vital to understand how antisemitism continues to exist. It is ingrained in our social construct.

### *Antisemitism and White Supremacy*

The cries of "Jews will not replace us" during a torchlight parade in Charlottesville, provided a haunting reminder of the reality of antisemitism being alive and well in the United States. "One of the most disturbing recent manifestations of anti-Semitism in the U.S. was the alt right "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017, where hundreds of marchers threw Nazi salutes, waved swastika flags and shouted "Sieg Heil." (Antisemitism in the US 2017) This event demonstrated that "...the more this kind of invective is repeated, the more it has a way of bleeding beyond its original borders and becoming part of the national discourse. As that happens, ideas that were once considered to be outside the pale of civil conversation become mainstreamed." (Lipstadt 2019, 41) This incident was emblematic of the need to scapegoat Jewish people as an antidote to the fear and uncertainty engendered by the rise of globalization. The perceived loss of national identity for groups threatened by changing demographics and cultural shifts provide a catalyst for extremist behavior. "White supremacists have committed at least 73 murders since Charlottesville, 39 of which were clearly motivated by hateful, racist ideology. These numbers include the deadly white supremacist shooting rampages in Parkland, Pittsburgh, Poway and El Paso, the deadliest white supremacist attack in more than 50 years." (Antisemitism in the US 2017)

Economic consequences brought about by cultural shifts that create a feeling of insecurity can also contribute to the rise of antisemitism. Witness the resurgence of a document entitled, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The Protocols "describe a secret Jewish plan for global domination and was first published in Russia in 1902." (Neuberger 2019, 19) Although discredited as a hoax in the 1920s, this text was embraced by Henry Ford and distributed throughout the United States in 1920. It continues to stir conspiracy theories on the internet and the dark web. "The Internet has dramatically increased access to the Protocols. Even though

many websites expose the Protocols as a fraud, the Internet has made it easy to use the Protocols to spread hatred of Jews..” (“The Protocols of the Elders of Zion”) The Protocols inspired those who organized and participated in the Charlottesville Rally.

Holocaust denial is another component of white supremacy. It manifests itself in a myriad of forms. The aspersions are cast on whether the Holocaust was an enormous hoax designed to engender sympathy for the Jews. Often the death tolls are blamed on typhoid epidemics or as the expected casualties of war and nothing more. Nazi atrocities are downplayed to make the ideology more palatable and acceptance more plausible. “Examples of denying the Holocaust abound in neo-Nazi circles. On the Daily Stormer website, founder and editor Andrew Anglin has described the Holocaust as a “ridiculous fake shower room bug-spray death chamber hoax” that forms “the core of [Jewish people’s] identity.” His vitriolic antisemitism alleges that white people are being duped into complacency under a Zionist-controlled government.” (Holocaust Denial [splcenter.org](http://splcenter.org)) Holocaust denial supports the outrageous claims of Jewish controlled media and the Jewish conspiracy to control the world espoused in *the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

The act of Holocaust denial is an act to erase memory. To revise history in a deliberate and manipulative manner supports and agenda of hate. “They deny the Holocaust not because they believe it never happened but precisely because they know it happened: they do not initiate but rather *continue* the war against the Jews in the mode of a war against memory.” (Patterson 2015, 326) This desire to reframe history is perhaps the most dangerous action the white supremacy movement undertakes. “The Holocaust denier does not hate the Jews because they allegedly lie about the Holocaust; rather, he lies about the Holocaust because he hates the Jews. Antisemitism, then, is not caused by context or contingency, but rather the context or contingency occasions its manifestation.” (Patterson 2015, 327) There is an explicit danger in the act of Holocaust denial. It creates a hermeneutic of suspicion regarding the murder of six million Jews. Elie Wiesel lamented, “To forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time.” In order to confront the false narrative of white supremacy, it becomes imperative for Christians to be aware of its ramifications and to repudiate this egregious aspect of antisemitism.

### ***A Framework for Virulent Christian Anti-Judaism***

The complicated relationship of Christians and Jews throughout Christianity’s history has been fraught with attempts at marginalization at best and extreme cruelty and injustice at its worst. From the beginning, the emergence of the new faith struggled with coming to grips with its Jewish heritage. Christianity was birthed from the Jewish religion and this foundational faith tradition is forever intertwined with it. Embracing this legacy adds a richness and depth to the Christian understanding of who Jesus was in his context. “When Jesus is located within the world of Judaism, the ethical implications of his teachings take on renewed and heightened meaning; their power is restored and their challenge sharpened.” (Levine 2006, 21) It is imperative for Christians to fully engage with the Hebrew Testament since it formed Jesus. When this engagement has not been realized, it has brought about misunderstandings and

heightened antagonisms that have resulted in “the creation and perpetuation of millennia of distrust, and worse, between church and synagogue.”(Levine 2006, 21)

Understanding how the hatred of Jews permeated the Christian story is imperative to dealing with antisemitism in the current context. A verse found only in the Gospel of Matthew states, And all the people answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children.’ Matthew 27:25 NIV. This verse has predicated egregious suffering upon the Jewish people. “From this verse, generations of Christians over hundreds of years concluded that all Jews for all times, and not just those present on that fateful day, bore special responsibility for the death of Jesus. The guilt is inherited; it is a stain on Jewish identity; all Jews are “Christ killers.””[Levine 99] This verse gave license to centuries of abuse. “Only in the twentieth century did the view of “Christ killers” begin to wane.” [Levine 2006, 101]

There are numerous incidents that have occurred in Christian history that have had a very negative impact upon Jewish people. The specter of these events loom large in white supremacist thought and action. Blood libel and Martin Luther’s essay *Concerning the Jews and Their Lies* continue to motivate white supremacists hundreds of years after they were conceived. Accusations of ritual murder were prevalent beginning in the late 12th century and spread throughout Europe. “In 1255, a five-year-old boy was found dead in a well in Lincoln, England.” (Goldstein 2012, 82) Christians were convinced the boy had been murdered by the Jews. A Jew named Copin, who lived in the vicinity was accused of the murder and tortured until he confessed. “King Henry III traveled to Lincoln to order Copin’s execution. Henry also imprisoned all of the other Jews in Lincoln in the Tower of London. Sources suggest that as many as 100 Jews were held there and at last 18 were hanged.” (Goldstein 2012, 82) The child, Hugh, would become an unsanctioned saint. His story is included in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*.

Tales of ritual murders would foster the anti-Jewish propaganda of blood libel. This defamatory deception claimed that Jews murdered Christian children and used their blood for religious rituals. The story of William of Norwich would spawn a web of similar falsifications that would continue into the twentieth century with echoes still sounding in the twenty-first. “On Good Friday in 1144, a forester stumbled upon the corpse of a young boy named William in a woods just outside of Norwich, England.” (Goldstein 2012, 75) The cause of William’s death was undetermined but became the cause of much speculation and rumor. William worked in the tanning trade and closely associated with the Jews near his home. The day the body was discovered, the commemoration of the death of Jesus, contributed to the mystery surrounding his death.

Five years after William’s death, Thomas Monmouth, a monk, wrote about the missing boy and had his work published. His account included descriptions of a ritual murder that detailed injuries that were extremely similar to the crucifixion of Jesus. According to Monmouth’s account, “William’s murder was the fulfillment of the Jewish community’s annual practice of selecting one Christian child to murder during Passover. That child’s blood would be

used to make matzah (unleavened bread) for Passover.” (Moffic 2019, 114) There was a portion of the Christian community that all too readily accepted this tale as truth. “As a result of the “blood libel” and other lies, Christians in Europe in the thirteenth century and beyond increasingly saw Jews as a depraved and evil people. In many countries, Jews were now required to live apart from their neighbors and wear distinctive badges or clothes that alerted strangers to the “dangers” they posed.” (Goldstein, 2012, 91) Blood libel would become integrated into the fabric of anti-Jewish propaganda and would be incorporated into the lexicon of hate by the Nazis. Antisemites still remain attracted to this insidious concept.

One of the most Martin Luther’s essay *Concerning the Jews and Their Lies* was written in 1543. This document was a radical shift in his attitude toward the Jews which originally was conciliatory and accepting. “Luther’s rage and increasing religious and political power were accompanied by a program for protecting Christian society from Jewish influence and contamination by burning or razing synagogues, destroying Jewish homes, confiscating Jewish holy books, banning Jewish religious worship, expropriating Jewish money, and deporting Jews.” (Marans 2017) This essay, written in the final years of Luther’s life, was the result of his anger at the Jews because they did not conform to his plan for their conversion to Christianity. “The aging Luther worked tirelessly to achieve the elimination of these enemies, this misfortune, from German lands. He did not seek the Jews’ conversion, since he now believed that Jews could become true converts only at the apocalypse. In the interim, he once suggested, the only effective way to baptize them was in rivers with millstones tied around their necks.” ( Nirenberg 2013, 266) The vitriol exhibited in Luther’s essay is deeply shocking, but it goes beyond repellant. This dreadful polemic brought about consequences that Luther could never have imagined. The Nazis seized upon this document and used it as a blueprint for their extermination of the Jewish people.

The scope of anti-Judaism throughout Christian history is not commonly recognized or known by most Christian communities. It is imperative to understand how pervasive it has been and how the legacy of this hate continues to do harm. The Holocaust brought this tortured history into the Christian consciousness.

### ***Christians in the Shadow of the Holocaust***

*What would I have done?* This question haunts any Christian confronted with the horrors of the Holocaust. The desire to do everything possible to challenge and resist the Third Reich’s agenda should have been the impetus of every Christian. Tragically, this was not the case. The situation was much more dire.

Historians generally agree that the Third Reich’s agenda, motivated by Hitler’s pathological zeal, was a racial issue. “Traditional anti-Semitism had been based on religion. If the Jews converted to Christianity then they had a chance of escaping persecution. But the idea that ‘Jewishness’ was something inherent in an individual - that it was present, as the Nazis came to believe, in the blood -meant there was no escape. Your ‘race’, over which you had no control,



was your destiny. “ (Rees 2017, 8) The desire for the racial purity of the Aryan nation required that the preservation of German bloodlines be of utmost priority. Jewish bloodlines were an anathema and therefore, the Jews needed to be eradicated. Therefore, conversion from Judaism to Christianity did not allow Jews to be accepted into the realm of the Third Reich. Nazi racial policies were eerily similar to actions taken against European Jews in previous centuries. Spain, England and many parts of Germany expelled the Jews for long periods of time. Parsing out the distinction between religious and racial persecution against the Jews was a difficult proposition. “Some of the ideas to be found in Nazi antisemitism had their roots in particular historical aspects of Christian thought. Purity of the blood became a key part of Nazi ideology, and may have had its roots in a concept that originated in fifteen-century Spain.” (Neuberger 2019, 32) It called into question the authenticity of the conversion of Jews who had chosen to be baptized Christians. It was stated that, “Anyone can change religion, but a person cannot change his or her “blood.” (Goldstein 2012, 106) Jews were expelled from the Spain in 1492. The religious identity of the Jews was already a cause for prejudice and hatred throughout Christian Europe and now, bloodlines were factored in.

In Germany, there was great consternation following World War I. War reparations caused a great strain on the country’s economic recovery. Nationalism was on the rise and the hope for relief was attached to the rise of the völkisch movement, which would become intrinsic to the belief system of Hitler and the Nazis. Völkisch ideology “meant the almost mystical connection a group of people, all speaking the same language and possessing a shared cultural heritage, had with the soil of their native land.” [Rees 2017, 3] Jews were not considered native to the country but of a distinct race that did not originate in Germany. They were, therefore, excluded from the Nazi system of government. Jews were now scapegoats because their heritage and bloodlines called them into question. “The old Christian-based prejudices against German Jews did not disappear as the völkisch movement grew, but were reinforced.” [Rees 2017, 5] The Third Reich gained dominance and Christians were either silent or complicit. The völkisch movement was popular with the German people and offered a respite from the shame and disgrace brought about by the aftermath of the Great War. Many Christians were willingly swept up in this tide of nationalism.

Although Germany was a predominantly Christian nation when the Third Reich rose to prominence, people of faith acquiesced to Nazi ideology by their silence or their consent. Various factors motivated Christians to look away from the abuses being perpetrated against their Jewish neighbors. Fear of reprisals that would be exacted upon anyone who dared to defend the Jews was the grim reality. Nazi oppression was not subtle and opposing it meant imprisonment, exile or death. Financial gain and power for those willing to be complicit was also a powerful incentive. If a Christian could attain status and power with the Nazi regime it meant the possibility of economic security and safety from Nazi terrorism. Since the Third Reich seemed destined for incredible success acquiescence seemed a prudent choice. In either case, there was a moral decision to be made for those who had a conscience. “Witnesses to the cruelty were attempting “to eliminate “cognitive dissonance”—mental anguish caused by the divide between one’s beliefs and one’s behavior—the human response is to rationalize one’s choices as quickly

as possible. If someone was not disposed to think ill of the victims because of pre-existing prejudices—perhaps that “they” even “deserved” their treatment—Nazi leaders and propaganda provided ample reasons to help them, with time, to come around to this point of view.” ( “Causes and Motivations” ) The insidious nature of Nazi force was not hidden or implied. It was overt, oppressive and designed to control. “This was a distinctive form of violence: not individual acts of violence arising from personal motives but rather collective violence initiated, sanctioned and ordained from above and enacted, carried out, and in many ways enhanced by initiatives from below. Moreover, this was violence that was not hidden from sight, tucked away in faraway places, but all around and plain for all to see, even within the heart of the Reich.”(Fulbrook, 2019, 22-23) Succumbing or accepting Nazi rule was facilitated by the predisposition to accept a framework of anti-Jewish prejudice imbedded in the religious and cultural narrative. While there was no shortage of reasons for Christians to succumb to the Nazi policies of hatred, there were Christians who sought to resist this evil. Many stories of valor, selflessness, and compassion can be related about them. The following example of those who lived in a remote French village is a narrative worthy of emulation.

The people of the village of Le Chambon, located in rural south-eastern France, united to provide sanctuary to Jews fleeing the Nazis. Their faithful witness provided shelter, food, clothing and protection to all who came pleading for help. They engineered escape routes for Jewish refugees to find sanctuary in Spain and Switzerland. “According to one estimate, some 5,000 Jews passed through Le Chambon and the surrounding villages until liberation. The people of Chambon acted on their conviction that it was their duty to help their "neighbors" in need.” (the Village of Le Chambon.)

The Protestant church in Le Chambon under the leadership of Pastor Andre Trocmé and his wife Magda refused to capitulate to the Vichy government. He stated, “These people came here for help and for shelter. I am their shepherd. A shepherd does not forsake his flock... I do not know what a Jew is. I know only human beings.” Neither the authorities’ pressure nor the security agents’ searches diminished the resolve of the Trocmé and their team, and their activity did not cease.’ (The Village of Le Chambon) The people of Le Chambon and its environs used non-violent resistance to save the Jews in their care. The risk was formidable. Pastor Trocmé’s cousin and Roger Le Forestier, the village physician were executed and ultimately, Pastor Trocmé had to go into hiding. His wife continued to coordinate rescue efforts. “Trocmé urged the congregants to “do the will of God, not of men” and stressed the importance of fulfilling the commandment in Deuteronomy 19:2-10 concerning the entitlement of the persecuted to shelter.” (“Under the Wings of the Church” ) No citizen of Le Chambon ever revealed the whereabouts of those being hidden from the Nazis. They remained steadfast in their quest to shelter and save all who came in need of help. “When Magda Trocmé reflected on her choices years after the war, she said, “When people read this story, I want them to know that I tried to open my door. I tried to tell people, ‘Come in, come in.’ In the end I would like to say to people, ‘Remember that in your life there will be lots of circumstances where you will need a kind of courage, a kind of decision on your own, not about other people but about yourself.’ I would not say more.” ” (“Le Chambon: A Village Takes a Stand”. 2019.) This courage of conviction

came out of the authenticity of their Christian faith. The ability to live into the conviction that all people are children of God brought about their ability to withstand the fear and anxiety of the evil that surrounded them. Many children were taken into care by the people of the Le Chabon. One of them was Elizabeth Koenig-Kaufman. She recalled that "Nobody asked who was Jewish and who was not. Nobody asked where you were from. Nobody asked who your father was or if you could pay. They just accepted each of us, taking us in with warmth, sheltering children, often without their parents—children who cried in the night from nightmares." ("Le Chambon - Sur- Lignon") The empathy and compassion demonstrated by Le Chambon illustrates what is possible when people of faith respond with a resolute will that puts others above the interest of self. "Without empathy we risk the breakdown of relationships, we become capable of hurting others, and we can cause conflict. With empathy we have a resource to resolve conflict, increase community cohesion, and dissolve another person's pain." (Baron-Cohen 2001, 183) The people of Le Chambon epitomized empathy and the Nazis demonstrated what happens when it no longer exists.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel was asked "how God could have allowed the murder of so many innocent people. He replied that the Holocaust is not a problem for God. It is a problem for human beings. It was human beings who murdered one another. It was human beings who destroyed the image of God that reside in every human being." (Moffic 2019, 180) This is the crux of the matter. Human beings must take the responsibility to care for one another. Seeing other people as God's creation, taking the time to listen to another's narrative, finding ways to express compassion are all ways to form authentic relationships between Christians and Jews. The tragic consequences of a seldom examined or questioned Christian past have left a legacy of brokenness and sorrow. We can learn from the past but it requires the desire to bring about transformative change.

### *A Way Toward a Christian Response*

Jesus was a practicing Jew and his religion is intrinsic to the Christian faith. The aftermath of the Holocaust has caused Christians to reflect deeply upon the implication of how Judaism is understood. The restoration of the deep connection between Christianity and Judaism offers rich ground for exploration and understanding. Much effort has been directed toward a better comprehension of the Judaic context of Christian scriptures. Educating Christians to better understand the Hebrew Testament must be embraced. "Today's interfaith conversations are at a critical point. We have acknowledged the problems of the past; we have realized the major points of contention for the present; the next step is to see what solutions we can bring to the concerns of the future." (Levine 2006, 226) Instructing Christians about Judaism and anti-Semitism will foster the possibility for meaningful dialogue and mutual understanding.

Education, however important, is the beginning of dialogue and not the summation of the process of understanding. Rabbi Evan Moffic states, "I began to understand that we cannot erase hatred with reason or by simply teaching tolerance. Thinking and learning from others is

essential. Yet, a faith—a commitment to a set of values with human dignity at its core—matters more.” (Moffic 2019, 179) This is the essence of fostering understanding, respect and compassion. Recognizing one’s shared humanity with another establishes empathic relationships. Even if a Christian congregation is miles away from a Jewish congregation, the ability to connect through websites and social media can be facilitated. In this way, empathic relationships are formed.

Education about Judaism, anti-Semitism and the Holocaust will provide the foundation for establishing understanding and empathy. For far too long the Jewish people have had to carry the primary responsibility for defending against anti-Semitism. The Christian community must learn how to provide support to Jewish communities and be a source of compassionate action.

Film, art, music and theatre provide a narrative for Christians to understand and engage the Jewish experience. “There are many everyday opportunities to develop and maintain empathy. Indeed, empathy is promoted whenever we reflect on the human experience, read a novel, act in a play or watch a movie. The recognition that a strong empathic sensibility, whether emotionally or cognitively inspired, tends to make us more moral, pro-social and community minded and has encouraged many people to seek its promotion in both children and adults.” (Howe 2013,160) A production of “The Diary of Anne Frank” or watching the film “Schindler’s List” or the “Woman in Gold” are just some of the examples of bringing the Holocaust experience into perspective. The outstanding documentary “Defiant Requiem” is also a powerful resource.

There are outstanding materials sources for Holocaust and antisemitic education. The Southern Poverty Law Center, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Anti-Defamation League and Facing History provide detailed and accessible study materials for congregational use. It should be noted that “Only 25% of the states in the US require mandatory education on the Holocaust. Recently, a Florida High School Principal, in a state that *does* require Holocaust education stated, “I can’t say the Holocaust is a factual, historical event because I am not in a position to do so as a school district employee.” (Will 2019, July 9) This is unacceptable. Christian congregations need to be diligently working toward informing their members about antisemitism and the Holocaust. A yearly commemoration with a liturgy on or near the Shoah is a way to raise the awareness of the narrative of suffering that haunts the Jewish people. It is the moral imperative of Christian congregations to eradicate antisemitism. In the words of Rabbi Moffic, “We have seen the rise of extremist religious groups. They have proved, as history has shown so many times, that religious ideals bring forth sacrifice from their believers. Secularism does not. Consumerism does not. Without a foundation in faith, the culture of freedom and human dignity forged in the West will diminish.” (Moffic 2019, 226) As a review of the bibliography of this paper will demonstrate, the materials cited are predominantly from sources produced in the past five years. That these books must still be written is an indication that the Christian call to eradicate antisemitism has never been more urgent

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There may  
be nutrient  
gaps in  
your diet.

Adding  
One A Day  
can help  
fill them.

(Vitamins A, C, E, B, & K)





