

Is Christianity Anti-Semitic?

"For, behold, Thine enemies make an uproar; And those who hate Thee have exalted themselves. They make shrewd plans against Thy people, And conspire together against Thy treasured ones. They have said, 'Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation, That the name of Israel be remembered no more'." (Psalm 83:2-4, NASB).

In the over half-century since the conclusion of World War II, there has resided in the Jewish community a tendency to blame Christianity for the rise of Nazism and the unspeakable evil that befell the Jewish people during the tyrannical reign of, and the Holocaust conducted by, the Third Reich. The senior inter-religious advisor at the American Jewish Committee, Rabbi James Rudin once expressed this conviction: "Christianity and Christian teachings over the centuries created the seedbed for Nazism to grow in." [1] Wrongly, I believe, some historians assign blame for the rise of modern European anti-Semitism to Martin Luther. [2] Lately however, such linkage is being questioned.

In a statement called *Dabru Emet* (which means "speak truth" in Hebrew), nearly 170 Jewish leaders and thinkers from all branches of Judaism agreed that, "Without the long history of Christian anti-Judaism and Christian violence against Jews, Nazi ideology could not have taken hold . . . [but] Nazism itself was not an inevitable outcome of Christianity." [3] Though there may exist a historical-ideological relationship between Christendom, anti-Semitism, and the rise of Nazism, no relation exists between the emergence of that godless military and political movement with biblical Christianity.

Alike, Jews and Christians are people of *The Book*, the former being the physical descendants of Abraham and the later being his spiritual heirs (See Galatians 3:6-9.). Those who muse upon a possible historical connection between Christianity and the rise of Nazism would do well to keep in mind that the Reich's symbol was not the Christian cross, but rather the "twisted cross"! One definition of twisted means, "to pervert." Any relationship that history, religion, or politics might assign between Nazism and authentic Christianity is exactly that--perverted and twisted.

The fact of the matter is that anti-Semitism predates Christianity by hundreds of years. Israel has always had enemies. Read the following words of the psalmist:

For, behold, Thine enemies make an uproar; And those who hate Thee have exalted themselves. They make shrewd plans against Thy people, And conspire together against Thy treasured ones. They have said, 'Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation, That the name of Israel be remembered no more'." (Psalm 83:2-4).

The world is ever against both Jew and Christian. Hitler and his henchmen targeted more than just Jews for liquidation. They killed millions of Christians also during the holocaust. Not only was Nazism anti-Semitic, the movement was also anti-Christian. One humanist scholar noted that, "World War II represents the biggest killing spree in the history of man." He continued to state:

If the Christian reader dismisses what happened in Germany as something which affected a few million Jews only, he has not merely shown his contempt for the 7 million Christians murdered by the Nazis but has betrayed his Christian heritage as well. And if the Jewish reader forgets the 7 million Christians murdered by the Nazis, then he has not merely let 5 million Jews die in vain but has betrayed his Jewish heritage of compassion and justice. It is no longer a question of the survival of the Jews only. It is the question of the survival of man. [4]

During the World War II era, tyrants perpetrated crimes against the Jewish people, crimes the Nuremberg Trials labeled to have been against humanity. At a deeper level however, those crimes were satanically inspired offenses against God and the people of His *Book*, both Jews and Christians.

In contrast, the Old Testament promises that God will bless Gentiles who by faith bless Abraham's heritage (Genesis 12:3), as the New Testament also calls for unity between and amongst all Gentiles and Jews who have placed their faith in *Yeshua Ha'Mashiach*, Jesus Christ (See Ephesians 2:11-22).

ENDNOTES

[1] "Jews Urged to Abandon Mistrust, Fear of Christianity," *The Indianapolis Star*, September 8, 2000, A1.

[2] Of the German Protestant leader Martin Luther (1483-1546), Shirer wrote that he "was both a passionate anti-semite and a ferocious believer in absolute obedience to political authority." Desiring Germany to be rid of the Jews, he advised that "all their cash and jewels and silver and gold" be confiscated, and "that their synagogues or schools be set on fire, that their houses be broken up and destroyed . . . and that they be put under roof or stable, like gypsies . . ." Shirer commented that Luther's advice was "literally followed four centuries later by Hitler, Goering and Himmler." See William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960) 236. My view is that if the Nazi's inveighed upon Luther's remarks to justify anti-Semitism, then his words were hijacked out of a particular theological and historical context. Luther, like all of us, had his faults. But how can one who lived four-hundred years before the Holocaust be blamed for the Holocaust? My guess is that critics of Protestant Christianity have a bone to pick and will go to any measure to pick it.

[3] "Jews Urged to Abandon Mistrust," A14.

[4] Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God, and History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962) 387, 388.