

1. Common

2. Maoz

3. Outline

Disclosure

4. Disclosures bar mitzvah

1998 Orthodox Bar Mitzvah; Kotel rabbi; Mikveh immersion; from Jew to Judaism; name / destiny change

5. Sabbatical year

1996-1997 Sabbatical year at Hebrew University in Jerusalem

6. First book

1996 *SM & RL* immersion into Judaic literature

7. First academic article

1993 Talmudic positional prioritization for Talmudim; ‘get out of my way (stumbling stone)’

8. PhD NT Greek Grammar

1986 “Le Grec du Nouveau Testament: Considérations morphologiques, syntaxiques, et stylistiques”

9. MA Luther’s Use of Scripture

1981 ‘Martin Luther’s Use of Scripture (James)’ *Luther’s Works* (Philadelphia edition, 55 vols.) + *Werke* (2 yrs / 3X)

10. Marriage Lutheran family

1986 Met and married a Canadian Lutheran while in France

Birthright Jewish mother; Eastern European flight; crypto-practices; paternal sobriquet

11. Martin Luther University College

2016-present Jewish Scholar in Residence and Professor of Hebrew Scriptures, Martin Luther University College

Catholic AntiSemitism

12.Catholic AntiSemitism

“As strange as it may seem, the place to begin is almost 2 centuries before Luther’s birth, when the Black Death – a form of bubonic plague - swept through Eurasia. ... the plague was one of the most devastating pandemics in human history.” Harris

This is an equally relevant time frame for us to begin to address Luther and antiSemitism as it sets a stage for what Luther inherited in terms of views and treatments of Jews from the religious setting of his day.

13.The Christian World before Martin Luther

Of the two founding Christian traditions – Constantinople in the east and Rome in the west – both established longstanding antiSemitic positions. Because Luther came from the Catholic and not the Orthodox tradition, my focus will be on the antecedent and contemporary Roman Catholic world in order to understand the context from which Luther emerged and in which Luther engaged.

14.Catholic Context – forced conversion; expulsion; host desecration; blood libel

Jews blamed and persecuted for starting the Black Plague

1235 German Emperor Frederick II held a conference to determine if blood libel was true, denouncing it as untrue the next year.

1096-1291 – four major Catholic Crusades targeted Jews

1236 Crusade murder of 3000 Jews in Anjou and Poitou, France who refused to be baptized and convert

1240 Pope Gregory puts Talmud on trial for allegedly blaspheming Jesus and Mary, and for attacking the Church

1242 twenty-four cart loads of Talmud manuscripts were burned in Paris streets

1243 Eleven Jews tortured to death following a blood libel: Kitzingen, Germany

1247 Pope Innocent IV (enemy of Frederick II) also denounced blood libel as false.

1272 Pope Gregory X repudiated blood libel.

BUT Christian majorities continued to ignore official proclamations and persecuted Jews.

1283 ten Jews slain after claims of blood libel: Mainz, Germany

1285 blood libel murders 68 Jews in Munich, Germany; 180 more Jews burned alive at the synagogue

1407 blood libel accusations led to anti-Jewish riots in Krakow, Poland

1450 Jews expelled from Bavaria, Germany

1494 sixteen Jews burned alive for blood libel in the capital of Slovakia, the seat of a Catholic bishopric

1496 forced conversion or expulsion from Portugal

1497 Jews expelled from Graz, Austria

1489 French Jews expelled from most of France

1499 Jews expelled from Nuremberg, Germany and Verona, Italy

1504 Czech Jews expelled for allegedly desecrating the Eucharist host

1510 forty Jews executed in Brandenburg, Germany for allegedly desecrating the host

1510-1543 Jews expelled from Slovenia, Switzerland, Hungary, Croatia, etc.

Jewish Thought

15. Jewish Thought – Torah = instruction from Sinai

Not Law – largely narratival with laws included as instruction for life
“do this and live”

Fourth Gospel Prologue – “The Law came from Moses – grace & truth came from Jesus Christ”

16. The “Christian Problem”

Stuart Rosenberg, *The Christian Problem: A Jewish View* (1987)

Publisher's blurb: "This is a hard-hitting, no-holds-barred study of anti-Semitism, which the rabbi-author contends is a Christian problem because of the triumphalism of the Christian church and the negative, distorted view of Jews and Judaism found in much of the New Testament. Rosenberg shows the essential Jewishness of Jesus, defends the Pharisees, rigorously argues that Judaism remains a living covenantal faith, and attempts to dispel the many Christian myths that denigrate the mother religion. This is a controversial and "impolite" book sorely needed by the ongoing Christian-Jewish dialogue, at present overly genteel."

Photo: "Vision of hell: a boy walks amid the corpses at Belsen concentration camp on its liberation in April 1945"

"At the start of World War II, there were about 1.6 million Jewish children living in Europe. Fewer than one in 10 of those children survived German leader Adolf Hitler's reign of terror."

Just over 100,000 Jewish children survived.

17. Christian Theology versus Jewish Thought

Christians and Jews may quibble over details in the Christian testament (that Allen Jorgenson calls the Jesus testament) such as Jewish expectation of a Messianic figure appearing on scene during the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles as interpreted from a passage in Zechariah (14.7-9, 16-19) whereas Jesus makes a "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem during Passover. After all, why else would Peter suggest to Jesus that he will make three booths or tabernacles – one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah – on the mount of transfiguration when Jesus became illuminated in his presence (Matthew 17.3, 4)? Or why did the people during the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem sing Hallal psalms, including *Hoshiah Na* (save now), and throw willow and palm branches onto his path in accordance with a belief that texts from Psalm 118 (verse 25) and Leviticus 23 (verse 40) – Tabernacles, not Passover, activities – heralded in a Messianic age. While interesting, these are not reasons for Jews to question Christianity's messianic claims of Jesus to the point where Jews will not – and frankly cannot – accept theses

teachings. However, if we are to appreciate the dilemma Jews faced and continue to face in light of Christian proselytism we do well to look at a few of the reasons from authentic Jewish perspectives as to why Jews do not accept the claims of Christianity. And this will give context to the Catholic and Lutheran responses of initial frustration and ultimate hostility toward Jews thereafter (if indeed hatred can be reasonably explained).

Let me first state that, technically speaking, Judaism does not have a theology. It only has thought – religious and non-religious. For this reason and others, the early Greek philosophers taught that Jews formed a community of philosophers rather than a religious community (for example, late fourth/early third century BCE students of Aristotle, Theophrastus and Clearchus of Soli). Any literature that speaks of Jewish theology does so in terms of accommodated language. For this reason, Judaism includes but is not exclusively comprised of religious Jews, in contrast to the false stereotype that “Judaism represents or equals Jewish religion.”

18. Original sin versus imperfect humanity

Original sin is a Christian belief based on Paul's statement, “Therefore just as sin entered into the world through one person, and death through sin, and so death spread to all humanity, because all sinned” (Romans 5.12). The doctrine was fully developed by the church father, Augustine of Hippo (354-430).

For Jews, however, whether humans are sinners by nature or not is immaterial. Judaism teaches the biblical way to repentance and reconciliation with God. Sincere repentance in which the sinner pledges to rectify sinful ways and lead a righteous life is one means that is open at all times to all of humanity (Consider Jonah 3.4-10 – “Jonah started out and made his way into the city the distance of one day’s walk, and proclaimed: ‘Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.’ And the people of Nineveh believed God. They proclaimed a fast, and great and small alike put on sackcloth. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his robe, put on sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he had the word

cried through Nineveh: “By decree of the king and his nobles: No man or beast – of flock or herd – shall taste anything! They shall not graze, and they shall not drink water! They shall be covered with sackcloth – man and beast – and shall cry mightily to God. Let everyone turn back from his evil ways and from the injustice of which he is guilty. Who knows but that God may turn and relent? He may turn back from His wrath, so that we do not perish.’ God saw what they did, how they were turning back from their evil ways. And God renounced the punishment He had planned to bring upon them, and did not carry it out.”). God counsels Cain, “Why are you annoyed, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do good [that is, change your ways], will it not be lifted up [that is, you will be forgiven]. But if you do not do good, sin rests at the door; and it desires you, but you may rule over it” (Genesis 4:6-7). God informs Cain that repentance and subsequent forgiveness are always open to him. The remedy for sin is clear. Biblically, God's loving-kindness depends on right conduct and extends to all humanity.

[<https://jewsforjudaism.org/knowledge/articles/question-do-jews-believe-in-the-doctrine-of-original-sin>]

19.Immaculate mother – immaculate conception

Following the teaching of original sin, the birth of a sinless child required sinless parentage. In Roman Catholic Christian theology, the Immaculate Conception is the conception of the Virgin Mary free from original sin by virtue of the merits of her son Jesus. The Catholic Church teaches that God acted upon Mary in the first moment of her conception, keeping her “immaculate.” No one questions the Jewishness of Mary, or Miriam as she would have been known in Jewish circles. What is not part of Jewish thought, however, is the Christian theological teaching that Mary was herself conceived without sin. If her son was to be without sin, an important question arose among Christian theologians: was she *Theotokos* or *Christotokos*? That is, was Mary the mother of God or only the mother of the humanity of Christ. While a fifth century council at Ephesus determined the former, it necessarily – wittingly or

unwittingly – placed emphasis on her virginity and holiness to the disregard of her humanity and Jewishness. Jewish monotheism eliminates the need for such a distinction since One God cannot mean separate and coexisting full manifestations of that One God here, there, and elsewhere. Since a son of God cannot be divine, a Jewish mother cannot be a mother of God.

Jewish humour brings to light the attempt to reconcile Mary's Jewishness with Christian theology: three reasons why Jews unquestionably believe that Jesus was Jewish – first reason , he lived at home until he was 30 years old; second reason, his father was preparing him to take over the family business; and third reason, like all Jewish mothers, Mary was convinced that her son was God.

20. Virgin birth

Jaffé's article (2012) considers all extant Talmudic material that references Jesus and identifies the content as response to Christian teachings as early as the second century CE. Abstract The article proposes a philological and historic analysis of the Talmudic name Ben Pantera. It is suggested that this ancient expression has to be understood as corresponding to a period in which the Jews wished to think of Christianity, choosing the person of Jesus as an emblematic figure of this reality. The expression Ben Pantera expresses mockery and even scorn towards Jesus. It must be placed back in a period in which, on account of the doctrinal controversies between Jews and Christians, the two religions had consummated a Parting of the Ways and acknowledged each other as rivals. Thus, Ben Pantera appears to be the oldest mention of Jesus in the Talmudic literature.

21. Divinity of Jesus

God is incorporeal

22. Body and blood – eat and drink

Jews are forbidden to eat human flesh and to drink human (or any other) blood.

This is in line with the Rambam's view that human meat is prohibited because of an *asei*. Since the Torah never permitted it, human meat remains prohibited as it always was. But that original prohibition did not render the item a non-kosher food. It only means that we cannot eat it.

Leviticus 7.26 "You shall not eat any blood." As well, when Noah exited the ark, God said: "Every moving thing that lives shall be for food for you; as the green herb have I given you all. Only flesh with the life in it, which is the blood in it, you shall not eat." (Genesis 9.3, 4) We are forbidden to eat any blood. When an animal is slaughtered, its blood is poured away. Afterwards, we must soak and salt the meat. This process drains the blood which is in the meat. After the meat is soaked and salted it is considered properly "koshered" and fit to eat. (Negative commandment 183)

In contrast In a Jewish synagogue, on a Sabbath day, Jesus said to his disciples: "Truly, truly, I tell you that unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; the one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. (John 6.53-54, 59)

Certain modern historians, deny that Jesus could have said such things, even though they are recorded in all four Gospels and in the writings of Saint Paul (see Matthew 26.26-29; Mark 14.22-25; Luke 22.14-30; John 6.53-58; 1 Corinthians 11.23-26). An editorial comment in the Fourth Gospel brings the inconsistency of Jewish tradition and Jesus' teaching to a point: "This is a hard saying, who can listen to it?" (John 6.60). Jesus' words were so offensive to their ears that they could barely listen to him. And so, we read, many of them left him, and "no longer walked with him" (John 6.66). And he let them go. From the very beginning, people found Jesus' command to eat his body and drink his blood extremely offensive. We should not be surprised, then, that some Jews disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (John 6,52). From a Jewish perspective, we rather should be surprised that any Jews

followed Jesus after this teaching and practice, whether it be theologically construed as actual body and blood (transubstantiation), miraculous divine presence (consubstantiation), or memorial conceptualization of the event at the last seder meal before Jesus' crucifixion.

23. Messiah son of Joseph – Messiah son of David

Moshiach = Messiah = anointed = every prophet, priest, and king of Israel (Greek *christos*) => more than one

Bavli, Sukkah 52a speaks of a Messiah ben Yosef (Messiah son of Joseph) who dies “prior to the ultimate redemption” of Israel Zechariah 2.3 “Then the Lord showed me four smiths/carpenters” Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah 2.28 on Zechariah 2.3 “The ‘four carpenters’ to whom the prophet also refers, are Elijah, Melchizedek, the Messiah of war, called by some Messiah son of Joseph, and the true Messiah.”

Bavli, Sukkah 52a “the ultimate redemption with the coming of Messiah ben David”

Shir HaShirim Rabbah 2.28 “The 'four carpenters' to whom the prophet also refers, are Elijah, Melchizedek, the Messiah of war, called by some Messiah son of Joseph, and the true Messiah.” ('true Messiah' = Moshiach ben David)

24. Ecce Homo – Behold the man

Image In 2001 forensic anthropologist Richard Neave created a model of a Galilean man for a BBC documentary, Son of God, working on the basis of an actual skull found in the region. He did not claim it was Jesus's face. It was simply meant to prompt people to consider Jesus as being a man of his time and place, since we are never told he looked distinctive.

Jewish Thought For some Jews, the name alone is nearly synonymous with pogroms and Crusades, charges of deicide and centuries of Christian anti-Semitism. Other Jews, recently, have come to regard him as a Jewish teacher. This does not mean, however, that they believe, as Christians do, that he was raised from the dead or was

the messiah. While many people now regard Jesus as the founder of Christianity, it is important to note that he did not intend to establish a new religion, at least according to the earliest sources, and he never used the term “Christian.” He was born and lived as a Jew, and his earliest followers were Jews as well. Christianity emerged as a separate religion only in the centuries after Jesus’ death.

More than 1,000 years after Jesus’ crucifixion, the medieval sage Maimonides (also known as Rambam) laid out in his *Mishneh Torah* specific things Jews believe the messiah must accomplish in order to confirm his identity — among them restoring the kingdom of David to its former glory, achieving victory in battle against Israel’s enemies, rebuilding the temple (which the Romans destroyed in 70 CE) and ingathering the exiles to the land of Israel. “And if he’s not successful with this, or if he is killed, it’s known that he is not the one that was promised by the Torah,” Maimonides wrote.

Some have interpreted certain verses in the Gospels as rejections of Jewish belief and practice. But ... Jesus and his earliest Jewish followers continued to follow Jewish halakhah (from the Hebrew verb, halakh / “to walk”).

The first-century Jewish historian Josephus mentions Jesus, although the major reference in his *Antiquities of the Jews* appears to have been edited and augmented by Christian scribes. There are a few references in the Talmud to “Yeshu,” which many authorities understand as referring to Jesus.

The Talmud tractate Sanhedrin originally recorded that Yeshu the Nazarene was hung on the eve of Passover for the crime of leading Jews astray. This reference was excised from later versions of the Talmud, most likely because of its use by Christians as a pretext for persecution.

In the medieval period, a work called *Toledot Yeshu* presented an alternative history of Jesus that rejects cardinal Christian beliefs. The work, which is not part of the canon of rabbinic literature, is not widely known.

Maimonides, in his *Mishneh Torah*, describes Jesus as the failed messiah foreseen by the prophet Daniel. Rather than redeeming

Israel, Maimonides writes, Jesus caused Jews to be killed and exiled, changed the Torah and led the world to worship a false God.

Personal note In 2013 I was planning to travel to Jerusalem where I organize a seminar on Jewish Midrash and Christian Literature every four years. I like to stay in the Old City and take public transit up Mount Scopus to Hebrew University where the Congress is held. That year I decided to inquire about a bread and breakfast at the second station of the cross, the Ecce Homo. In speaking on the telephone with one of the sisters at the site, I mentioned that I was attending the World Congress of Jewish Studies at Hebrew University to which she asked, “Are you Jewish?” I affirmed that I was. There was a pause, and then she added: “Do you know that we are Christian and that we are a station of the cross on the Via Dolorosa?” to which I replied that I did know this. “You are most welcome, Daniel, but you know that there will be Christian pilgrims staying with us and we are a community of Catholic sisters.” I decided to be playful, to relieve her of her concern. “Yes, and if there is any one thing upon which Christians and Jews can definitely agree, it is the name of your station: Ecce Homo – Behold, the man.” Again, there was a pause, and then she began to laugh at the notion that Jews and Christians both agree that Jesus was a human being. “You will be most welcome to stay with us, Daniel,” she concluded. I did stay there, and even was invited to give an evening talk on “the Jew Jesus.”

Luther’s Initial Ambivalence to AntiSemitism

25. Luther’s initial disregard for antiSemitism – no better than a Turk (Muslim) or a Jew
Not a Judeophile

Luther’s Ultimate Contribution to AntiSemitism

26. Luther’s ultimate contribution to antiSemitism
1543 “On the Jews and Their Lies” – Luther’s last publication

27. On the Jews and Their Lies

“Section XI of the treatise advises Protestants to carry out seven remedial actions, namely: 1-7”

28. 1543 beginning of troubles

Luther’s “influence on Protestant rulers was said to have contributed to the expulsion of Jews from the German region of Saxony in 1543.”

29. 1933 1938

“This propaganda poster from 1933 reads, ‘Hitler’s fight and Luther’s teaching are the best defense for the German people.’”

“Mobs broke into synagogues, vandalizing their interiors, smashing everything they could find. View of the old synagogue in Aachen after its destruction on Kristallnacht. *The US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Stadarchiv Aachen.*”

Christine Helmer, “Martin Luther and the Creation of the Myth of Modernity” *Consensus* 40.2 (Nov 2019) “Luther’s words from 1543 preaching violence against Jews would be used by the Nazis to promote the November pogrom (known as Kristallnacht) that they staged on the eve of Luther’s birthday, November 9, 1938.” “We must rewrite Luther’s contribution to it. Luther’s polemic against Jews must be critically assessed and a Christian theology that promotes peaceful co-existence between Christians and Jews must be constructed.”

“Chillingly, in November 1938, just two weeks after *Kristallnacht*, Martin Sasse, bishop of the Evangelical Church of Thuringia, published a pamphlet titled *Martin Luther and the Jews: Away with Them!* Sasse wrote:

On 10 November, Luther’s birthday, the synagogues are burning.... At this moment, we must hear the voice of the prophet of the Germans from the sixteenth century, who out of ignorance began as a friend of the Jews but who, guided by his conscience, experience and reality became the greatest anti-Semite of his age, the one who warned his nation against the Jews.”

“Luther’s words from 1543 preaching violence against Jews would be used by the Nazis to promote the November pogrom (known as

Kristallnacht) that they staged on the eve of Luther's birthday, November 9, 1938."

30. 2005

"In early January 2005, some 20 members of the Russian State Duma publicly made a blood libel accusation against the Jewish people. They approached the Prosecutor General's Office and demanded that Russia 'ban all Jewish organizations.' They accused all Jewish groups of being extremist, 'anti-Christian and inhumane, and even accused them of practices that include ritual murders.'"

31.2018

Pastor Steven "Uncle Steve" Anderson leads Faithful Word Church, a Baptist congregation in Tempe/Phoenix, AZ

From Bystander to Perpetrator (acknowledgements)

32. Facing History and Ourselves

Facing History and Ourselves; Brookline Institute – Holocaust as most documented hatred in history: toward addressing genocide, hatred, and bigotry from lessons learned in history

Addresses responsibilities of Victims (psychological; physical consequences) – Perpetrators (legal; social culpabilities) – Bystanders (moral; ethical obligations)

33. Vatican II

"From the hell of the Shoah came Christian self-reflection on centuries of Christian anti-Judaism and culpability that enabled the persecution of the Jews throughout the ages, culminating with the Holocaust. The Catholic Church's 1965 document *Nostra aetate*, which rejected the charge of deicide against the Jews, is the most widely cited of Christian documents in this new era of Christian-Jewish relations. But it is not the first or only one."

"the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God"

“God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers”

“the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone”

34. Lutheran 1984 1995 2016 2020

Lutheran documents are, by and large, remarkable in that they have confronted the challenging task of rejecting Luther's anti-Jewish teachings that have led to global anti-Semitic behaviour while sustaining an appreciation of his religious heroism and legacy. I will select only five relatively recent Lutheran documents, four which exemplify the sobriety and seriousness of the Lutheran Church's commitment to facing history and themselves.

35. Statements from the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Consultation, Stockholm, 1983

“The sins of Luther's anti-Jewish remarks, the violence of his attacks on the Jews, must be acknowledged with deep distress. And all occasions for similar sin in the present or the future must be removed from our churches.”

“Lutherans of today refuse to be bound by all of Luther's utterances on the Jews.”

36. 1984 Lutheran World Federation

“We Lutherans take our name and much of our understanding of Christianity from Martin Luther. But we cannot accept or condone the violent verbal attacks that the Reformer made against the Jews. Lutherans and Jews interpret the Hebrew Bible differently. But we believe that a christological reading of the Scriptures does not lead to anti-Judaism, let alone antisemitism.”

37. 1984 Lutheran World Federation

“When engaging in Christian-Jewish dialogue today, the question which must be asked is: ‘What has really been achieved in “Christian-

Jewish dialogue” when antisemitism and an uncritical condemnation of the state of Israel tend to increase rather than to decrease throughout Europe (and worldwide)?”

38. 1984 Lutheran World Federation – Uncritical condemnation of Israel

“We acknowledge the importance of the land of Israel to the Jewish people and its central place in the promises of God. We therefore affirm that the connection of the Jewish people to the land is not a racist ideology, but a central element of the Jewish faith.”

39. Connection to land of Israel = central to Jewish faith

“Antisemitism and anti-Judaism are present in every church and society represented in this consultation. The expressions are many, and the roots are several.”

“We encourage the member churches to raise their voices against antisemitism and anti-Judaism wherever they appear and actively to support Jewish communities in maintaining their traditional observances.”

40. 1983 Missouri Synod (Lutheran Church in United States of America and Canada)

In contrast to the Lutheran World Federation’s declaration:

“While The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod holds Martin Luther in high esteem for his bold proclamation and clear articulation of the teachings of Scripture, it deeply regrets and deplores statements made by Luther which express a negative and hostile attitude toward the Jews. In light of the many positive and caring statements concerning the Jews made by Luther throughout his lifetime, it would not be fair on the basis of these few regrettable (and uncharacteristic) negative statements, to characterize the reformer as ‘a rabid anti-Semite.’ The LCMS, however, does not seek to ‘excuse’ these statements of Luther, but denounces them (without denouncing Luther’s theology).” By this statement, the LCMS retained its supersessionist position that Jews must be saved through faith in

Christ: “Resolved, That, in that light, we personally and individually adopt Luther’s final attitude toward the Jewish people, as evidenced in his last sermon: ‘We want to treat them with Christian love and to pray for them, so that they might become converted and would receive the Lord.’”

41.1995 ELCIC resolution

“We hold that an honest, historical treatment of Luther’s attacks on the Jews takes away from modern anti-Semites the assumption that they may legitimately call on the authority of Luther’s name to bless their anti-Semitism. We insist that Luther does not support racial anti-Semitism, nationalistic anti-Semitism, or political anti-Semitism. Even the deplorable religious anti-Semitism of the 16th century, to which Luther’s attacks made an important contribution, is a horrible anachronism when translated to the conditions of the modern world. We recognize with deep regret however, that Luther has been used to justify such anti-Semitism in the period of national socialism and that his writings lent themselves to such abuse. Although there remain conflicting assumptions, built into the beliefs of Judaism and Christianity, they need not and should not lead to the animosity and the violence of Luther’s treatment of the Jews. Martin Luther opened up our eyes to a deeper understanding of the Old Testament and showed us the depth of our common inheritance and the roots of our faith. Many of the anti-Jewish utterances of Luther have to be explained in the light of his polemic against what he regarded as misinterpretations of the Scriptures. He attacked these interpretations, since for him everything now depended on a right understanding of the Word of God. The sins of Luther’s anti-Jewish remarks, the violence of his attacks on the Jews, must be acknowledged with deep distress. And all occasions for similar sin in the present for the future must be removed from our churches.”

42. 2016 EKD Evangelical Church of Germany resolution

In 1983, 500 years after Luther's birth, the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland called Luther's anti-Jewish texts "calamitous." In 2000, the EKD reiterated the point:

'Fifty years ago, at its second session in Berlin-Weissensee, the Synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany . . . declared: We state clearly that through omission and silence, we too have become guilty before the Merciful God of the outrage perpetrated against the Jews by members of our [German] people.' The Synod thereby admitted the church's complicity in the persecution and murder of European Jewry.

In 2016 the EKD stated: "In the lead-up to the Reformation anniversary we cannot bypass this history of guilt. The fact that Luther's anti-Judaic recommendations in later life were a source for Nazi anti-Semitism is a further burden weighing on the Protestant churches in Germany."

Contra International Director of Jews for Jesus, David Brickner, commented, "It is disheartening that in this special year of celebration, an even more virulent form of anti-Semitism than Martin Luther's 'The Jews and Their Lies' is being perpetrated. If Jesus is Messiah and Savior of the world, and as Jesus said in John 14:6, 'No one comes to the Father but by me.' then withholding that message from Jewish people is a grossly misplaced way of showing love."

43. 2020 Luther Legacy series
44. Martin Luther University College, under the direction of Mark Harris, Principle-Dean, has called into being an annual Luther Legacy conference series. The first full-day conference began this year, on January 20, 2020, with the topic of "Luther and AntiSemitism." It featured as keynote speaker internationally recognized author, Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, with respondents from Lutheran, Indigenous, and Jewish perspectives.
45. Representatives from federal, provincial regional, and local governance attended in support of the event. The National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Bishop Susan Johnson, introduced the speaker and Eastern Synod Bishop Michael Pryce gave

the blessing before lunch. Support in the form of letters, donations and/or attendance also came from the local Orthodox Jewish community, the local Reform Judaism community, and the ultra-Orthodox Jewish Chabad community as well as from the Conservative-Orthodox Jewish community in Guelph. Muslim leadership attended as did members of several Lutheran Churches and other Christian denominations, both Protestant and Catholic. The event concluded with a letter of strong support from Chief Brian Larkin of the Waterloo Regional Police Services by Dr. Mark Harris. With such a public and widely acknowledged event, Martin Luther University College leads in the continued path of reconciliation called for by global, national, and local Lutheran authorities. It is a privilege and honour for me to be a part of this historic moment in Canada.

Dénouement

46. (Initial) Presentation summary

The evidences are too strong to redeem Martin Luther from crimes against humanity. My initial presentation summary is flawed in that it permits a generous reading of Luther's virulent antiJudaism and antiSemitism, offering a way out for anyone today who would hold to his views or ascribe their own culpability to him instead. However, and perhaps due largely if not solely to shame and guilt created by a post-Holocaust conscience, there is a valid way to modify the statement and arrive at a viable summary statement.

47. (Revised) Presentation summary

"How a flawed human legacy invites critical validation in a way that reinforces neither anti-Jewish animosity nor anti-Lutheran rhetoric when recognition, apology, and commitment to ongoing correction is irresolutely set in place by the Lutheran Church and its educational cognates."

Sources

48-56. Sources