

EUROPEAN CHRISTIANITY, THE GERMAN CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT AND ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

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Woe to the shepherds who lose and scatter My sheep of pasture – the word of the Lord. Therefore, thus said the Lord, God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who tend My people: You scattered My sheep and dispersed them, and you did not pay attention to them; behold, therefore, I visit upon you the wickedness of your deeds --- the word of the Lord. And I shall gather together the remnant of My sheep from all the lands wherein I had dispersed them, and I shall bring them back to their cotes, and they will be fruitful and multiply. I will establish shepherds for them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid nor be terrified nor suffer losses – the word of the Lord. Jeremiah 23:1-4.

If Israel was the root from which Jewish Christianity had its life and Israel's Messiah was considered by Christians as the Lord of the Church, then those who hate the Jews must also hate Jewish Christianity and hate the Jewish Messiah.¹ The 19th and 20th century European Protestant and Catholic churches with negligible exceptions failed to identify themselves with their Jewish roots, did not clearly protest against deadly anti-Semitism, and lost their true faith in their witness to the world.² Anti-Semitism destroys the rootstock of Christianity.

The 19th century German Protestant theology separated Jesus from his Jewishness by the image of the Aryan Christ, which influenced Roman Catholicism.³ The German philosopher Johann Fichte (1762-1814) denied the Jewishness of Jesus, which influenced theologians throughout the century.⁴ With Otto von Bismarck's pan-German nationalism, a unifying racial theory evolved with the purified notion of a German *Volk* and de-Judaizing Christianity.⁵ Professor Susannah Heschel has explained that the Aryanizing of Jesus was a *völkisch* movement "to create a *judenrein* Christianity for a *judenrein* Germany."⁶

The great German philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe argued that man must replace God as the center of art, philosophy and history and religion must be rethought and made to glorify man rather than God.⁷ Georg Hegel (1770-1831), chair of philosophy at Berlin University, rejected the uniqueness of Christianity and held that the Old Testament must be rejected because of its Jewish roots.⁸ Hegel's dialectical philosophy preached that a pure Christian faith could only be achieved by a pure race, the Germans.⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) argued that Christianity with its emphasis on the virtues of mercy and forgiveness made Germany weak and, since God is dead, humans should be unrestrained with no fear of judgment and no belief in the virtues of morality.¹⁰

Hitler adopted Nietzsche as his spiritual inspiration and whose writings were used "to unleash all the devils of hell."¹¹ Nietzsche announced that God was dead by equating self with God, which led Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), the Nazi philosopher, in 1933 to proclaim "the Führer himself and he alone *is* the present and future German

reality and its law.”¹² Nazism was the ultimate result of Heidegger’s German existentialism and nihilism.¹³

As rector of the University of Freiburg, Heidegger delivered on May 27, 1933 his Rectorial Address that glorified the “magnificence and greatness” of the National Socialistic movement and declared that “all abilities of will and thought, all strengths of the heart, and all capabilities of the body must unfold *through* battle, heightened *in* battle, and presented *as* battle.”¹⁴ Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* was recognized by the German people as the “sacred text” of this “battle,” which was to provide the ideological justification for the Nazis’ extermination of the Jews.¹⁵ Holocaust survivor Victor Frankl wrote:

*The gas chambers of Auschwitz were the ultimate consequence of the theory that man is nothing but the product of heredity and environment – or, as the Nazis liked to say, “Of Blood and Soil.” I’m absolutely convinced that the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Maidanek were ultimately prepared not in some ministry or other in Berlin, but rather at the desks and in the lecture halls of nihilistic scientists and philosophers.*¹⁶

The defining element of Nazi ideology was epitomized by the statement by Julius Streicher in 1936 that “who fights the Jews fights the devil” and “who masters the devil conquers heaven.”¹⁷ The Nazis’ object of conquest was not just the world, but the conquest of heaven, requiring the erasing from history the Jewish teaching of the sanctity of human life.¹⁸

In 1899, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the son-in-law of Richard Wagner, in *Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Foundations of the Nineteenth Century) defined Jesus as Aryan without any Jewish blood based upon the claim that Galilee’s Jewish population never recovered from the Assyrian invasion and Jesus was “the God of the young, vigorous Indo-Europeans” who constituted the majority of Galilee’s population at the time.¹⁹ The “philosopher” Chamberlain was accepted as a forerunner of the National Socialist movement in the 1930s with his *völkisch*-racist theology.²⁰ Kaiser Wilhelm II and the general public were impressed by Chamberlain’s efforts to “anchor German nationalism within a Christianity purified of Jewish dross.”²¹

In 1905, Pastor Gustav Frenssen published an extremely popular theological novel, *Hilligenlei*, conceptualizing the gospels as an allegory of Germany and Jesus as a savior from Schleswig-Holstein.²² With the novel selling over 250,000 copies in Germany between 1905 and 1944 and with the success of Chamberlain’s book, most Germans would believe misguidedly that Jesus was not a Jew.²³

Friedrich Andersen, a pastor from Schleswig-Holstein, was greatly influenced by Chamberlain and in Andersen’s 1907 tract, *Anticlericus*, called for a reassessment of the place of the Old Testament in Christianity.²⁴ In 1921, Andersen published the tract, *Der deutsche Heiland*, calling for a German Christianity that would proclaim a teaching of salvation without “Jewish muddiness.”²⁵ In 1923, he rejected the Old Testament based upon the noted early Christian historian, Adolf von Harnack, who wrote that the

elimination of the Old Testament from Christianity would complete Luther's Reformation.²⁶

The *völkisch* Aryan Christianity out of the *völkisch* movement propagated by Lagarde, Chamberlain, Eckart, Dinter and others provided the religious ideology that the National Socialists would later use to create a *judenrein* Christianity for a *judenrein* Germany.²⁷ In the early years from 1924 to 1930 while attaining political power, the National Socialist Party maintained a distance from the *völkisch* movement to gain wider political support of the German Protestants.²⁸

Johannes Kunz, a pastor in Stollberg, called for the church at a 1932 synod in Brandenburg to eliminate the references to the Old Testament in sermons, liturgy and the hymnals and change certain Hebrew terms to German.²⁹ The search for the Aryan roots of Christianity included expanded debate in the field of Assyriology by arguing that the population of Galilee, following the Assyrian conquest in the 8th century BCE, was partially Aryan and Jesus descended from an Aryan family and his teachings were as a Galilean distinct from Judaism.³⁰ In 1908 at the Third International Congress for the History of Religions, the distinguished Assyriologist Paul Haupt, Director of the Oriental Seminary at Johns Hopkins University, who had been a student of Friedrich Delitzsch, professor at the University of Leipzig and Germany's leading Assyriologist, spoke on "The Aryan Ancestry of Jesus."³¹

Until 1918, essentially all Germans belonged to a religious community, either the Catholic Church or the Protestant State Church.³² The collapse of the Kaiser's empire destroyed the political support and economic foundations of the Protestant State Church.³³ The Protestant Churches had needed no political grouping or party, since the monarchy under the Kaiser also governed the churches as the political representative; whereas, the German Catholic Churches had the Centre Party for political representation in parliament.³⁴

In 1922, the major Protestant denominations formed the United Evangelical Church of Germany, composing of 28 provincial churches and the Prussian synod and electing national officers to control church affairs out of Berlin.³⁵ The Protestant church accounted for about 40 million official members, or around two-thirds of the German population with the Catholics and other Protestant sects representing the other one-third of the population.³⁶ With the new German republic and without the monarchy, the masses of involuntary church members could no longer be counted as belonging to the official Protestant State Church system, but could expressly resign and so the German church struggle began with the emergence of the "German Christians," supporting National Socialism and challenging the Protestant State Church for members.³⁷

On January 8, 1931, a Protestant theological conference led by Pastor Eduard Putz of Munich was held in Steinach in Franconia with 140 pastors to discuss, if it were possible to influence National Socialism in a Christian way.³⁸ However, Nazi actions in 1933 destroyed that illusion and Pastor Putz joined with the Bavarian church leadership against the "German Christians" and, beginning with the Barmen Synod and the 1934

Barmen Declaration, was a representative of the Bavarian Lutherans in the Confessing Church.³⁹

During 1931 and 1932, the leaders of the Evangelical church elected large Nazi majorities to the government and, during the campaigns, the Nazis published Luther's anti-Semitic works that called for the outlaw of Judaism, the seizure of Jewish property, the burning of synagogues and the driving out the Jews.⁴⁰ Reason, science, enlightenment, progress and all the other advances in modern civilization, distinguishing modern man from his medieval predecessors, failed in Europe and the world, and did not prevent the anti-Jewish libels that transmuted the Christ-killer myth into demonic rituals rising up from the early Christian centuries.⁴¹

From 1930 to 1933, the German Catholic church formed a solid ideological opposition to the nationalism and racist ideology of the National Socialists and the Catholic Centre Party was the leading political party in Germany.⁴² After the end of the First World War, the German Catholic Peace Union (*Friedensbund deutscher Katholiken*) was formed with over 41,000 members by 1932.⁴³ The organization was singled out by the Nazis as a "subversive" group and was officially dissolved by the Nazis on July 1, 1933.⁴⁴ With many of its leaders in prison or in hiding, the movement disappeared.⁴⁵

On June 6, 1932 a new religious movement, the Faith Movement of German Christians (*Glaubensbewegung Deutsche Christen*), held their first public appearance in Berlin with their agenda to reform the church.⁴⁶ Joachim Hossenfelder, a former member of the *Freikorps* (a rightist paramilitary organization) and a Berlin pastor, became the head of the movement and Dr. Alfred Rosenberg was its theologian.⁴⁷ Prior to this movement, Pastors Hossenfelder, Julius Leutheuser and Siegfried Leffler founded the Thuringian German Christians (*Thüringer Deutsche Christen*), which sought to abandon Christian orthodoxy for Christian activism through the revelations of Adolf Hitler.⁴⁸ Hitler suggested that this movement join forces with the Christian German Movement (*Christlich Deutsche Bewegung*) with Hossenfelder as the Reich leader for Hitler's purpose in demoralizing the official Church establishment.⁴⁹

This new movement of the German Christians began with principles reflecting the National Socialist Party ideology, which was based on "positive Christianity," preservation of race purity, defense against degeneration and a fight against Marxism, Jews, internationalism and Free Masonry.⁵⁰ The concept of "positive Christianity" would lead to a German god, German re-interpretation of Christianity under "blood and soil" and a German national church. The German Christian movement demanded that the Old Testament no longer be accepted as canonical; that Paul's rabbinic principle of redemption be eliminated; and that Jesus' death be presented as a heroic sacrifice in line with Germanic mysticism.⁵¹

The Old Testament was considered as offensive to the "moral and ethical sense of the Germanic race" and the Letters of Paul were denounced as the "rabulistic reasoning's of a Jew whose *zersetzende* (subversive) intellect was foreign to Nordic

feelings.”⁵² In German elementary schools, the Old Testament was replaced by German history and folklore in 1933.⁵³ Nazi “theologians” proclaimed that Jesus of Nazareth was an Aryan and presumably of German descent.⁵⁴

Upon becoming the Reich Chancellor, Hitler on February 1, 1933 over the radio made an “Appeal of the Reich Government to the German People” that although the “blessing of which the Almighty had deprived the people since the days of betrayal” [defeat in the First World War by world Jewry] we vow “to God, our conscience and our *Volk*” to “consider as . . . [our] . . . supreme and first task . . . of restoring a unity of spirit and purpose among our *Volk*” and “preserve and defend the foundations upon which the power of our nation depends” and “will take Christianity under . . . [our] . . . firm protection, as the basis of our entire morality, and the family as the cell in the body of our *Volk* and state.”⁵⁵

When Hitler became chancellor in 1933, Germany was a Christian country with 97 percent Christian church membership, represented by two-thirds Protestants and one-third Catholics and only 1.4 percent without church membership.⁵⁶ The 40 million Protestants were divided into dozens of regional churches and denominations; whereas, the 20 million Catholics formed a solid unity under the Pope.⁵⁷

On March 1, 1933, the Nazis’ *Völkischer Beobachter* emphasized in a lead article the slogan: “The Basis of Adolf Hitler’s Government: Christianity.”⁵⁸ After taking power, Hitler remarked to Dr. Hermann Rauschning that:

*Neither of the denominations – Catholic or Protestant, they are both the same – has any future left. At least not for the Germans. Fascism may perhaps make its peace with the Church in God’s name. I will do it too. Why not? But that won’t stop me stamping out Christianity in Germany, root and branch. One is either a Christian or a German. You can’t be both.*⁵⁹

On February 27, 1933, the Reichstag fire symbolized the destruction of the outer shell of a German parliament that died in March 1930 when the Social Democrats overthrew their own chancellor and with him the last parliamentary government in Germany.⁶⁰ Hermann Göring bragged to Dr. Hermann Rauschning, the Nazi Party’s president of the Danzig Senate in 1933, “that ‘his boys’ had set fire to the Reichstag and that his only regret was they hadn’t made a thorough job of it, and destroyed every vestige of ‘the old shack’.”⁶¹

The executive cabinets of the Weimar government under Heinrich Brüning, who was the German Chancellor from 1930 to 1933, began the downward trend toward dictatorship by emergency decrees allowed under Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution.⁶² The constitution adopted in the National Theater in Weimar in 1919 was in the hands of a sham parliament.⁶³ On February 28, 1933 under Hermann Göring’s emergency decrees “for the protection of nation and state” against “Communist assaults,” the presses were banned including the press of the Social Democrats.⁶⁴

Following the Reichstag fire blamed on the Communists and the March 5, 1933 election of fear against a Communist take-over, in which the Nazi-Nationalist coalition received a majority of 52 percent of the votes, Cardinal Faulhaber on March 13th before a conference of Bavarian bishops stated that Pius XI “publicly praised the Chancellor Adolf Hitler for the stand which the latter had taken against Communism.”⁶⁵

On March 28, 1933, the German Catholic episcopate called the Fulda Bishops’ Conference, which declared the reversal of the Church’s prohibition against membership in the Nazi party and encouraged the full support for the new government under National Socialism.⁶⁶ On April 26 during a meeting with Catholic bishops, Hitler remarked about the fundamental agreement between National Socialism and Catholicism on the Jewish question, in which “the Church always had regarded the Jews as parasites and had banished them into the ghetto. He was merely going to do what the Church had done for 1,500 years.”⁶⁷

With Nazi flags on the altar of the Magdeburg Cathedral, Dr. Martin declared in 1933 that “whoever reviles this symbol of ours is reviling our Germany . . . the swastika flags around the altar radiate hope; hope that that day is at last about to dawn.”⁶⁸ Pastor Siegfried Leffler preached that “Christ has come to us through Hitler . . . through his honesty, his faith and his idealism, the Redeemer found us . . . We know today the Savior has come . . . we have only one task, be German, not Christian.”⁶⁹

On April 1, 1933, the Nazis began their boycott of Jewish businesses across Germany and as Saul Friedlander commented that it was “the first major test on a national scale of the attitude of the Christian Churches toward the situation of the Jews under the new government” and there was silence across Germany and from the Vatican.⁷⁰

On April 25, 1933, Hitler chose Ludwig Müller, who would accept the National Socialism ideology, over Hossenfelder to lead the German Church movement.⁷¹ By force and violence, the Nazis were able by July 1933 to place Ludwig Müller as the first national bishop and he was confirmed in a national synod in Luther’s Wittenberg, symbolizing a second historic German Protestant church revolution.⁷²

On September 5 and 6, 1933, the old Prussian General Synod met in Berlin and adopted the Aryan Clause, which barred those who were of Jewish blood from the pulpits of German churches, and required all pastors to sign an oath of unconditional support to the National Socialist State.⁷³ On September 21, 1933 as a result of the “Brown Synod” meeting (the Nazi SA brown uniforms were worn by the delegates), Martin Niemöller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer formed the Pastors’ Emergency League to protest the Aryan Clause and the oath.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, Ludwig Müller was elected Reich bishop on September 27, 1933, unifying all Protestant denominations under one national organization with the swastika adopted as the new cross.⁷⁵ Müller, a militarist pastor, was known for his nationalistic sermons and *völkisch* anti-Semitism since the 1920s.⁷⁶ His Association of German

Christians preached a virile racism that harmonized belief in Christ with the “blood and soil” doctrine of Nazi ideology.⁷⁷ At a rally in Berlin in November 1933, Reinhold Krause, a German Christian leader, called for eliminating the Old Testament as an expression of an inappropriate Jewish “morality” of “cattle traders and pimps,” and denounced the Apostle Paul as a Jewish theologian to be ignored.⁷⁸

The German Christians preached the divine election of the German people and the saving work of Adolf Hitler and the finding of God’s revelation, not in the Scriptures of dead orthodoxy, but in the events of history.⁷⁹ The German Christian movement replaced Jesus with the belief that “race, nationality and the nation [the *Volk*] [are] orders of life granted and entrusted to us by God, for whose preservation God’s law requires us to strive.”⁸⁰

The *Ordinance concerning the Restoration of Orderly Conditions in the German Evangelical Church* (the “muzzling decree”) was made public by decree on January 4, 1934, which dictated the authority of the Reich Bishop to link up the Protestant Church with the National Socialist state, prohibited all church political statements, and enforced the Aryan Paragraph.⁸¹ The Pastors’ Emergency League (*Pfarrernotbund*), led by Martin Niemöller, with 7,000 members, representing about 37 percent of all serving Protestant ministers, protested the new decree of the Reich Bishop.⁸² The leadership of the Pastors’ Emergency League publicly broke away from Reich Bishop and declared that it was not bound by his orders.⁸³ By February 1934, over 70 protesting pastors had been sent to concentration camps.⁸⁴

Earlier in 1931, Martin Niemöller had been called to the Dahlem parish in Berlin, the most prestigious Protestant church in Germany with a congregation of professional men, high-ranking government officials and military officers.⁸⁵ Initially, Niemöller approved of Hitler’s seizure of power in 1933, the Nazi economic plans and hoped that Hitler would revitalize the churches to counteract the growing secularization of Germany.⁸⁶ However, the “German Christians” soon requested Hitler to be the interpreter of the scriptures and claimed that God had “set his seal on the Third Reich,” arguing that Christ was an Aryan and “the maintenance of racial purity [was] a commandment of God and Christian duty.”⁸⁷

As of May 1934, Niemöller maintained Luther’s position of loyalty to the Reich as long as scriptural theology was not endangered.⁸⁸ There was no protest during 1933 and early 1934 over the increased anti-Semitic Nazi policies, except the persecution against converted Jews.⁸⁹ As Anna Rauschnig stated in her book, *No Retreat*, “[b]y the beginning of 1934 there was no God in Germany.”⁹⁰

A week after Hitler became both chancellor and Reich president upon Hindenburg’s death on August 2, 1934; the National Protestant Church Synod convened and by its Nazi majority approved the “coordination” of the provincial churches into the Reich Church with all pastors taking the oath of loyalty and obedience to Adolf Hitler, Führer of the German people and state.⁹¹ Martin Niemöller and certain protesting Protestant leaders and Bishops Wurm and Meier, who directed the resisting

churches in Württemberg and Bavaria, were dismissed and placed under “protective custody” and the old church leadership received general Gestapo harassment.⁹²

The German Christian movement became the very essence of evil and the embodiment of the Antichrist. In his *Berlin Diary* on November 15, 1934, foreign correspondent William Shirer commented that Hitler in his attack against the Protestant church was gradually forcing on the country “a brand of early German paganism which the ‘intellectuals’ like Rosenberg are hatching up.”⁹³ Rosenberg was one of Hitler’s ‘spiritual’ and ‘intellectual’ advisors and his book *Myth of the 20th Century*, which was selling in Germany second only to *Mein Kampf*, was called “a hodgepodge of historical nonsense” by William Shirer.⁹⁴ Rosenberg had been appointed on January 24, 1934 deputy of the Führer for the supervision of the spiritual and ideological training of the National Socialist party.⁹⁵

The German Christianity movement adopted the paganism of National Socialism, as outlined in the attack on Christianity in Alfred Rosenberg’s *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Wertung der seelisch geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit* (“Myth of the 20th Century”) published in 1930.⁹⁶ Rosenberg argued that Christianity could be reformed and saved from the Judeo-Roman disease and maintained that Jesus was not Jewish but a Nordic Aryan savior.⁹⁷ The *Mythos* was a summary of the ideology of German *völkisch* mysticism as it developed in the 1920s from the myth of Nordic blood overcoming and replacing the old sacraments.⁹⁸

Rosenberg wrote of the concept of *Rasenseele*, “race-soul,” in which body and soul are one and inseparable, that “Soul means race viewed from within . . . And vice versa, race is the externalization of soul.”⁹⁹ Since character and soul are in the blood, the Jew with his creed in the blood is the disease that threatens the body of humanity from within that cannot be changed with a Jew’s denial of Judaism, or Christian conversion.¹⁰⁰ According to Rosenberg, the metaphysical nature of race-soul requires the complete extermination of the Jew and his Judaism from humanity, for a non-Aryan can never become an Aryan.¹⁰¹

With Rosenberg as the Party’s spiritual leader, Catholic bishops in Germany at that time before Hitler’s attack against the Communists in March of 1933 excluded National Socialists from worship and regarded the Party as anti-Christian.¹⁰² However, the Catholic Church in Rome favored the anti-Bolshevism of National Socialism and had reached an understanding with Italian Fascism in 1929.¹⁰³ In August 1931, Hermann Göring from the Nazi party was received by Cardinal Pacelli, the Pope’s secretary of state to improve the Church’s image of National Socialism.¹⁰⁴ The nomination of Eugenio Pacelli as Nuncio in Munich in May 1917 was one of the pivotal events in 20th century German Catholicism after he later became the Nuncio in Berlin and then Pope Pius XII and determined the ecclesiastical and political destiny of German Catholics.¹⁰⁵

During the 1930s, the Catholic bishops did oppose the attack by Alfred Rosenberg’s *Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* and his efforts to create a neopagan state religion.¹⁰⁶ Cardinal Faulhaber defended the Old Testament against Nazi efforts to de-

Judaize the Christian religion and spoke out against Rosenberg's "new paganism."¹⁰⁷ From the pulpit of St. Michael's Church in Munich, Cardinal Faulhaber during December of 1933 preached against the Nazi denunciation of the Old Testament because the books were Jewish.¹⁰⁸ His sermons were directed supposedly against theological anti-Semitism and not political anti-Semitism, for he did not intend to comment on the Jewish persecution or defend Germany's Jews.¹⁰⁹

However, Saul Friedländer remarked that Faulhaber's Advent sermons contained the "common clichés of traditional religious anti-Semitism."¹¹⁰ Faulhaber's sermons distinguished between the people of Israel as a vehicle of Divine Redemption before the death of Christ and their dismissal by God for not recognizing Christ's revelation, in which the "daughters of Zion received their bill of divorce and from that time forth, Ahasuerus wanders, forever restless, over the face of the earth."¹¹¹ Faulhaber's sermons also distinguished the Old Testament between its transitory value and its permanent value concerned only with those religious, ethical and social values that remain as values for Christianity.¹¹² After a meeting with Hitler, Faulhaber issued an Episcopal letter to be read in churches in Bavaria in January 1937 that encouraged cooperation between Church and State in combating communism and called for respect for the Church's rights under the 1933 Concordat between the Nazi Reich and the Vatican.¹¹³

The major opposition organization to the German Christians and to challenge by means of a "confession" to the adoption of the Aryan Paragraph was the Pastors Emergency League in September 1933.¹¹⁴ Under the leadership of Bonhoeffer and Niemöller, the Pastors' Emergency League became the Confessing Church (*Bekennnis-Kirche*), which in May 1934 adopted the Barmen Confession drafted by the Swiss theologian Karl Barth and proclaimed the church to be accountable only to the Christ of the Scriptures.¹¹⁵ The name Confessing Church was chosen because its members confessed their faith in the Old and New Testaments despite Nazi opposition.¹¹⁶ Karl Barth was dismissed from the University of Bonn faculty in 1935 for not signing the Nazi loyalty oath and moved to Basel to continue conducting his seminars for German theologians and to continue his anti-Nazi writings.¹¹⁷

The Barmen Theological Declaration was confiscated by the Secret State Police as dangerous to the state and such other publications by the Confessing Church were pursued also by the Special Courts for judgment.¹¹⁸ The Reich Ministry for Church Affairs implemented the *Law for Safeguarding the German Evangelical Church* in December 2, 1935, in which all circulars and information bulletins of the Confessing Church were considered illegal publications and to be confiscated by the State Police.¹¹⁹

Although the Confessing Church and other Christian churches objected to the "German Christianity" movement, the Reich Church and Hitler's campaign in the destruction of all human rights, they failed to present united opposition against the Hitler Reich and were silent with the atrocities against the Jews.¹²⁰ Except for some members such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Confessing Church was not against Hitler or the Nazi

Reich, but opposed the German Christian movement that attacked Christian doctrine.¹²¹ While the Confessing Church defended Jews who had converted to Christianity, the majority of the movement agreed with the German Christians that Germany must eliminate its Jews and Judaism was an immoral influence on German Christians.¹²²

On June 4, 1936, the Provisional Board and Council of the Confessing Church¹²³ did send a Memorandum to Hitler protesting the anti-Christian and pagan character of the Nazi Reich and condemning anti-Semitism, racialism, concentration camps, the actions of the secret police, the violation of the ballot, the oaths of allegiance contrary to God's Word, the destruction of justice in the civil law courts and the corruption of public morals.¹²⁴ Unfortunately, there were no other actions of comparable significance taken by the Confessing Church as an organization during the twelve year conflict between the Church and the Nazi Reich.¹²⁵

However, more than 800 pastors of the Confessing Church were arrested¹²⁶ and three of the protesting leaders were placed in concentration camps with one dying in Sachsenhausen.¹²⁷ Over 3,000 pastors from all the churches went to prison for various periods during the Nazi era.¹²⁸

As examples of Nazi persecution of the church, Pastor Hans Karl Hack was sentenced to 8 months in prison for "malicious attacks on state and party" and for misuse of the pulpit.¹²⁹ Pastor Wilhelm Jannasch was sentenced for 2 months in prison for interceding for Martin Niemoller, who was in a concentration camp.¹³⁰ Protestant leader Ludwig Steil who defended the Jews, died in a concentration camp and Protestant leader Karl Stellbrink, who criticized the war, died in a concentration camp.¹³¹ Protestant war critics Helmut Thielicke and Hanns Lilje were sent to concentration camps.¹³² Bishop Otto Dibelius of Prussia was a continuing opponent to Nazi policies¹³³ and was placed on trial for breaches of the Conspiracy Law in June 1937.¹³⁴ In November 1937, Pastor Paul Schneider was sent to Buchenwald concentration camp and died 18 months later for refusing to leave his parish upon orders of the Gestapo.¹³⁵

When the Jewish deportations began, Pastor Heinrich Grüber, a Protestant minister, and his group of clergymen did protest for Jews who had been wounded in the First World War and those who had been awarded high military decorations and for the elderly and widows of those killed in the First War.¹³⁶ Pastor Grüber did attempt to help Christian Jews to emigrate from Germany and set up a relief agency, Protestant Committee for Christian Non-Aryans, to expedite passports, visas and other documents and to comfort the non-Aryan Christians in Germany.¹³⁷ He was arrested before Christmas 1940 and sent to Sachsenhausen and then Dachau, when he tried to reach the concentration camp of Gurs in southern France, where German Jewish refugees and Jews from Baden and Saarpfalz were interned.¹³⁸

Protestant politico-religious opposition to the Nazi policies was carried out by the Oster circle, the Kreisau circle and the Beck-Goerdeler group.¹³⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a member of the Oster resistance, which did save the lives of some Jews.¹⁴⁰ Helmut, Count von Moltke, created the Kreisau circle with pastors Poelchau and

Gerstenmaier.¹⁴¹ The Beck-Goerdeler group of Beck, a retired general, and Goerdeler, a former mayor of Leipzig, worked on the July 1944 assassination attempt on Hitler with the Kreisau circle and von Stauffenberg.¹⁴² In April 1945, Bonhoeffer was hanged at Flossenburg Prison in Berlin.¹⁴³

Niemöller's trial began on February 7, 1938 and he was confined for seven years in concentration camps, ending up in Dachau until liberation by Allied troops.¹⁴⁴ In 1945, he led the Confessing Church in the *Stuttgard Declaration of Guilt* to acknowledge the guilt it shared with the German people for World War II, but he was denounced as a traitor to Germany by the general public.¹⁴⁵

On November 10, 1938, Hitler launched his pogrom known as *Kristallnacht* against the Jews in Germany to determine any public opposition to his actions to *Judenrein* Germany. No German organizations condemned the Nazi actions during *Kristallnacht*, except for a few brave clerics, who suffered punishment.¹⁴⁶

Pastor Julius von Jan in Swabia told his congregation that "Houses of worship, sacred to others, have been burned down with impunity – men who have loyally served our nation and conscientiously done their duty have been thrown into concentration camps simply because they belong to a different race. Our nation's infamy is bound to bring about Divine punishment."¹⁴⁷ Jan was beaten and imprisoned and his home was vandalized.¹⁴⁸ Bernhard Lichtenberg, rector of Saint Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin, was a prominent German prelate who condemned the destruction against the Jews.¹⁴⁹ After *Kristallnacht*, Pastor Karl Barth, pointing out the Christian blindness to the linkage of Christian faith to the persecution of the Jewish people, wrote:

*Many of the best men in the Confessing Church still close their eyes to the insight that the Jewish problem and even more the political question, in particular and in general, have today become a question of the faith.*¹⁵⁰

On November 15, 1938 after *Kristallnacht*, Bishop Martin Sasse of Thuringia issued his pamphlet, *Martin Luther on the Jews: Away with Them! (Martin Luther über die Juden: Weg mit Ihnen!)*, supporting the destruction of Jewish property and including excerpts from Luther's 1543 pamphlet, *Against the Jews and Their Lies*.¹⁵¹ On November 21, 1938, Walter Grundmann called for the establishing of a research institute to investigate the Judaism problem at the University of Jena, where he was on the faculty of theology since 1936.¹⁵²

In March 1939, Bishop Heinrich Oberheid and other German Christian leaders from eleven regional churches met in Bad Godesberg outside Bonn and drafted the Godesberg Declaration asserting that National Socialism is an extension of Martin Luther's efforts to repudiate Judaism and that Christianity is in opposition to Judaism.¹⁵³ The Confessing Church, the Reformed Confederation for Germany and the World Council of Churches issued statements opposed to the Declaration, but primarily with regard to excluding baptized non-Aryans from the church.¹⁵⁴

On May 6, 1939, Protestant theologians and pastors meeting at Wartburg Castle launched the opening of the Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life (*Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben*).¹⁵⁵ Wartburg Castle was where Martin Luther fled from his enemies on May 4, 1521 to translate the New Testament into German over a ten month period.¹⁵⁶ On May 6, 1939, the Institute revised the New Testament at Wartburg Castle, which purged Jewish references for the Nazi Reich.¹⁵⁷

The Institute's objective was to deJudaize the church in Germany by writing revised biblical interpretations and liturgical materials.¹⁵⁸ The Institute redefined Christianity as a Germanic, Aryan religion whose founder, Jesus, was not a Jew but fought to destroy Judaism and fell in that struggle.¹⁵⁹ Also, the Institute argued that Paul, as a Jew, had falsified Jesus' message by changing it from a local movement of Aryan opposition against Jewry.¹⁶⁰

Walter Grundmann, the academic director of the Institute and professor of New Testament at the University of Jena, claimed that the present era was similar to the Reformation where Protestants have to overcome Judaism as Luther overcame Catholicism.¹⁶¹ Grundmann said any opposition to National Socialism within the church arose from Jewish influence, such as claims from Jewish scholars that Jesus was a Jew.¹⁶²

Grundmann claimed that the Jews destroyed the Germans' *völkisch* (racial) thinking and with the support from Bolshevism are striving for world domination of Jewry (*Weltherrschaft des Judentums*).¹⁶³ In defining the Institute's purpose, Grundmann said that the war against the Jews was a spiritual battle in which "Jewish influence on all areas of German life, including on religious-church life, must be exposed and broken."¹⁶⁴ Grundmann had the benefit of prior German theologians and Assyriologists, writing that Jesus was not a Jew, but Aryan, and Galilee at his time was populated partly by non-Jews, Aryans. The Institute incorporated Teutonic myths into Christian settings, including prayer, with the goal to illustrate that the teachings of Jesus and the Teutonic myths were essentially identical and the essence of Christianity was Aryan.¹⁶⁵

The Institute's great achievement was the publication of a deJudaized version of the New Testament in 1940, *Die Botschaft Gottes* (The Message of God), which became the most popular of Nazi-era bibles.¹⁶⁶ Previously, Hans Schöttler, director of the German Christian movement's Bible school in Bremen had published in 1934 *Gottes Wort Deutsch* (God's Word in German), a bible in the spirit of National Socialism.¹⁶⁷ In 1934, the German Christians published a nazified hymnal, *So singen deutsche Christen* with militaristic and racist themes and the removal of Jewish and Hebrew references. In October 1939, Bishop Weidemann published a hymnal, *Lieder der kommenden Kirche* (Songs of the Coming Church) for the German Christian movement, adding 20th century folksongs.¹⁶⁸

In June 1941 as a joint project of the National Union of German Christians, the Working Group of German Christian church leaders and the Institute, the hymnal

Grosser Gott wir loben dich! (Holy God, We Praise Thy Name) was published and purged of references to the Old Testament and Judaism with many hymns referring to the Führer, Volk and Fatherland.¹⁶⁹ In 1941, the Institute created a new catechism of nazified liturgical materials under the title *Deutsche mit Gott: Ein deutsches Glaubensbuch* (Germans with God: A German Catechism), which promoted Teutonic and Nordic sources of German religiosity.¹⁷⁰

The Institute became a successful achievement of the German Christian movement, which claimed a membership of over 600,000 pastors, bishops, professors of theology, religion teachers and laity and created a nazified Christianity.¹⁷¹ Although the Institute was disbanded after the war, its major achievements of removing the Old Testament from church teachings, portraying an Aryan Jesus and dejudaizing the New Testament and hymnals were not repudiated after the war, but continued to have influence in Germany as Institute theologians continued to lead respectable careers in religious positions.¹⁷²

As summarized by Professor Susannah Heschel, the Institute changed “Christian attention from the humanity of God to the divinity of man: Hitler as an individual Christ, the German Volk as a collective Christ, and Christ as Judaism’s deadly opponent.”¹⁷³ The theological change reflected the Nazi supersession of Christianity.¹⁷⁴ However, Hitler gave the German people something that the traditional German churches could no longer provide and that of a religious belief in a meaning to existence beyond the narrowest self-interest and material things.¹⁷⁵

When the Institute was disbanded after the war, Grundmann’s career continued during the postwar years within the Protestant church in the German Democratic Republic, similar to other Institute theologians who continued to have active careers.¹⁷⁶ After the war, the Institute members claimed they were scholars of Judaism and defenders of the church rather than “Nazi anti-Semitic propagandists.”¹⁷⁷

Susannah Heschel wrote that the success of Institute members after the war in retaining professorships and church leadership positions was “facilitated by a collaboration of allied officials and church leaders in concocting a fiction of Christianity’s resistance to National Socialism.”¹⁷⁸ Both universities and churches dismissed the connection between Nazis’ anti-Semitism and expressions of Christian theological anti-Judaism.¹⁷⁹

In the postwar period, the anti-Semitism of Christian theology was not recognized as racial anti-Semitism, but as an expression of historical or dogmatic truths about Jews and Judaism.¹⁸⁰ However, German theologians during the Nazi era used racism as a tool to Aryanize Christianity and to use racial theory to provide scientific legitimacy of a racial hierarchy to religion and the degeneracy of the Jews.¹⁸¹

Walter Wüst, professor of linguistics at the University of Munich and University Rector from 1941 to 1945, became head of the *Ahnenerbe*, a research center formed by SS Chief Heinrich Himmler to study Indo-Germanic origins, and redefined the German

Christian religion as a racial phenomenon by stating “[t]oday we know that religion is basically a spiritual-physical human activity and that it is thereby also racial.”¹⁸²

Hitler recognized the threat of Catholic resistance to National Socialism and wrote in *Mein Kampf* that a confrontation with the Catholic Church must be avoided based upon the consequences of the *Kulturkampf* with Bismarck.¹⁸³ The German Catholic center Party fought the persecution of the Catholic Church during the 1870s, referred to as the *Kulturkampf*, in which Catholics were viewed as an “enemy within” Bismarck’s new Reich.¹⁸⁴

To remove the Catholic Church from the political stage and avoid the Bismarck church conflict, the Nazi Reich concluded a Concordat with the Vatican on July 10, 1933 that guaranteed the freedom of the Catholic religion and its schools and was signed by the papal Secretary of State, Monsignor Pacelli (later Pope Pius XII).¹⁸⁵ The Concordat provided Hitler with the needed prestige at the time of the increased anti-Semitism by the Third Reich.¹⁸⁶ The Concordat gave Hitler his first major diplomatic victory and entrance into legitimate international society.¹⁸⁷ The Catholic Church became the first foreign power to sign a bilateral treaty with Hitler and the Roman Catholic Church overturned the earlier ban on Catholic membership in the Nazi Party.¹⁸⁸

A secret annex to the Concordat was finalized shortly after the promulgation, granting Catholic clergy an exemption from any conscription for military service.¹⁸⁹ Since Germany was forbidden under the Versailles Treaty to raise an army, this provision indicated the Vatican’s knowledge of future German rearmament and general military service.¹⁹⁰

For this Concordat, Hitler offered to Pacelli greater Catholic school funding, increase in Catholic teachers, more school buildings and more educational places for Catholic students, while Hitler was conducting mass dismissals of Jewish teachers and university professors and drastic reduction in Jewish students under the *Law Against Over-Crowding of German Schools and Universities* on April 25, 1933.¹⁹¹ Hitler abolished Germany’s Catholic political and social associations in exchange for certain benefits and privileges to the Catholic Church in Rome.¹⁹²

The Concordat authorized the papacy to impose the *1917 Code of Canon Law* of a new “top-down” power relationship on German Catholics, who had been very independent of Vatican authority.¹⁹³ Pacelli had been the principal architect of the *1917 Code* to establish a new power relationship between the papacy and the Church.¹⁹⁴ The *1917 Code* became the means for the Vatican to control the universal Church by withdrawing local discretion and imposing infallibility in the areas of faith and morals to the papacy.¹⁹⁵ Pacelli as the Papal Secretary of State had worked toward a concordat since his appointment as Papal Nuncio in Germany in 1920.¹⁹⁶

During a cabinet meeting on July 14, 1933, Hitler boasted that Pacelli’s guarantee of nonintervention allowed the Reich to resolve the Jewish problem.¹⁹⁷ The minutes stated that “[Hitler] expressed the opinion that one should only consider it as a

great achievement. The concordat gave Germany an opportunity and created an area of trust that was particularly significant in the developing struggle against international Jewry.¹⁹⁸ On July 22, 1933, Hitler wrote to the Nazi Party “[t]he fact that the Vatican is concluding a treaty with the new Germany means the acknowledgment of the National Socialist state by the Catholic Church. This treaty shows the whole world clearly and unequivocally that the assertion that National Socialism is hostile to religion is a lie.”¹⁹⁹

In the summer of 1933, Monsignor Ludwig Kaas, head of the Catholic Center Party and the last democratic party in Germany, persuaded his party members to vote for Hitler’s *Enabling Act*, which gave Hitler total dictatorial powers in a one-party Nazi state.²⁰⁰ Kaas was Pacelli’s close friend and, on Pacelli’s urging, Kaas disbanded the Catholic Center Party.²⁰¹ The *Enabling Act* provided Hitler the power to pass laws and to make treaties with foreign governments without the consent of the Reichstag.²⁰² Kaas’ endorsement of the *Enabling Act* was linked to the first treaty under the *Enabling Act* of the Reich Concordat.²⁰³

Ex-chancellor Heinrich Brüning from the Center Party commented later in 1935 about the Reich Concordat that:

*[b]ehind the agreement with Hitler stood not the Pope, but the Vatican bureaucracy and its leader, Pacelli. He visualized an authoritarian state and an authoritarian Church directed by the Vatican bureaucracy, the two to conclude an eternal league with one another. For that reason Catholic parliamentary parties, like the Center, in Germany, were inconvenient to Pacelli and his men, and were dropped without regret in various countries. The Pope [Pius XI] did not share these ideas.*²⁰⁴

After Pacelli’s election to pope on March 2, 1939, Brüning relayed to everyone, who would listen during his exile in London, that Pacelli forced the disbanding of Germany’s Center Party in exchange for the Concordat that demoralized potential Catholic protest and resistance and silenced and surrendered German Catholics to Hitler’s power.²⁰⁵ Almost half the population of Hitler’s new Greater Reich with Austria and the Sudetenland was Catholic, including a quarter of the SS.²⁰⁶ In 1939, the official Catholic population of “Greater Germany” represented 40.3 per cent of the total population.²⁰⁷

The largest and most powerful Catholic communities in the world abdicated their sociopolitical associations and democratic party politics in 1933, conveying an impression of Catholic endorsement of Hitler.²⁰⁸ Hitler delivered to Pacelli his dream of a super concordat that would impose the full force of canon law equally on all German Catholics and in return Hitler received the complete voluntary withdrawal of political Catholicism by the disbanding of the Center Party, the sole surviving democratic party.²⁰⁹

During the 1920s and 1930s, there were Catholic groups that considered the real enemies of Germany and the Church to be the Marxists, the Jews and Freemasons and there were many Catholic priests who were supporters of the National Socialists, such as Josef Roth who later became an official in Hitler’s Ministry for Ecclesiastical

Affairs.²¹⁰ In 1933, the well-known Catholic theologian Karl Adam of Tübingen declared that:

*. . . not only were National Socialism and Catholicism not in conflict one with the other, but belonged together as nature and grace. In Adolf Hitler Germany at last had found a true people's chancellor. 'Now he stands before us, he whom the voices of our poets and sages have summoned, the liberator of the German genius. He has removed the blindfolds from our eyes and, through all political, economic, social and confessional covers, has enabled us to see and love again the one essential thing: our unity of blood, our German self, the homo Germanus.*²¹¹

The Catholic theologian Karl Eschweiler of Braunsberg described the National Socialist truth and the Catholic truth were the same and he approved of the compulsory sterilization law enacted on July 14, 1933.²¹² Bishop Berning of Bremen declared from the pulpit that Catholics should serve the new Germany with love.²¹³ During this time, the Catholic books and periodicals appeared with the approval of Church authorities to align themselves with National Socialism.²¹⁴ The Catholic bishops indicated that they supported or acquiesced to the destruction of all anti-Nazi organizations and they had no objection to the Nazi movement monopolizing the state and society as long as the Nazis held the same attitude to the Church as Mussolini's relationship of "live-and-let-live."²¹⁵

Monsignor Hartz of Schneidemühl in his pastoral letter issued for Lent 1934 praised Hitler as saving Germany from "the poison of Liberalism . . . [and] the pest of Communism . . ." ²¹⁶ Bishop Hilfrich of Limburg also on Lent 1934 declared that the Church has always supported the principle of secular authoritarian leadership.²¹⁷ Canon Algermissen saw the German people's natural values, given by God, symbolized in the swastika and called for a close link between natural and supernatural values, between the swastika and the cross, a "synthesis of Teutonism and Christianity."²¹⁸ Dr. Anton Stonner, an expert on religious instruction, remarked on the similarities between Christian institutions of mission and monastery and the leadership principles followed by the S.A. and S.S.²¹⁹ Dr. Jakob Hommes declared the Nazi movement a healthy force, preventing the suicide of Western civilization threatened by individualism, rationalism and humanitarianism, and Franz Taeschner, a Catholic publicist, praised "the Führer, gifted with genius," who had been sent by providence to achieve fulfillment of Catholic social ideas.²²⁰

Archbishop Gröber declared in his *Handbuch* the "Führer of the Third Reich has freed the German man from his external humiliation and from the inner weakness caused by Marxism and has returned him to the ancestral Germanic values of honor, loyalty and courage . . ." ²²¹ Both Gröber's *Handbuch* and the Catholic theologian Professor Otto Schilling defended the right of the German people to *Lebensraum* and to regain the lost Eastern European territories and the colonies from the First World War.²²²

However, the position of the Catholic Church in Germany on the Nazi Reich was mixed with both support and opposition among the general population.²²³ Many

German Catholics were more humiliated than felt protected by the Concordat.²²⁴ On November 29, 1933, Dr. Muhler, head of Catholic Action in Munich, was arrested for spreading reports about the torture and murder in the concentration camp at Dachau near Munich.

During the Blood Purge of several hundred people on June 30, 1934, the Nazis murdered the head of Catholic Action in Berlin Dr. Erich Klausener, the Catholic youth leader Adalbert Probst, editor of *Der Gerade Weg* Dr. Fritz Gerlich and the Catholic student leader Dr. Fritz Beck.²²⁵ After the Blood Purge of prominent Catholic leaders, the German Catholic Church was silent to Hitler's religious killings for the defense of the state and the silence of the German bishops destroyed the last moral authority in Germany.²²⁶

When the "Pulpit Paragraph" for the abuse of the pulpit for political purposes in December 1934 was enforced by imprisonment of many Catholic priests to concentration camps, Monsignor Bernard Lichtenberg was the sole church official to protest against the atrocities.²²⁷ Monsignor Lichtenberg in the Berlin diocese protested against anti-Semitism and human-rights abuses from 1933 until his death on the way to Dachau in 1943.²²⁸

Bishop von Galen of Münster denounced the Nazi euthanasia program and the Nazi attacks on Church teachings and Church properties from the pulpit during July and August of 1941.²²⁹ However, the Bishop of Münster still preached of the "honored duty" and moral obligation to fight in the wars undertaken by the Nazi Reich for German *Volk* and *Vaterland* against the evils of "godless Bolshevism."²³⁰

Many Catholic priests were sent to concentration camps under the charge of "misuse of the pulpit."²³¹ Father Franz Seitz, a parish priest from the Palatinate in Western Germany, was the first German priest to be sent to Dachau in 1940, although Polish clergymen had arrived in 1939.²³² Father Rupert Mayer of Munich was imprisoned for six months in 1937 for preaching against Nazi anti-Semitism, which was followed by a time in Sachsenhausen concentration camp and then under house arrest in a Benedictine monastery in Bavaria during the war.²³³ Father Max Joseph Metzger, a priest in the Freiburg diocese, was an open opponent of Hitler's wars and was condemned to death in 1943 by the Gestapo.²³⁴

The Christian church opposition to the violence and immorality of National Socialism sent over 2,720 clergymen to Dachau of which almost 95 percent were Catholic.²³⁵ When the American Army reached Dachau on April 26, 1945, there were 326 German Catholic priests alive after thousands passed through the camp and had died of starvation, disease or were murdered.²³⁶

Bishop Johann Neuhäusler informed the Holy Father and the other bishops about the Nazi injustice and violence and was "cooled off" by the Gestapo beginning on February 4, 1941 in Gestapo prisons in Munich and Berlin, then two months in Sachsenhausen-Otanienburg and Dachau from July 12, 1941 until April 24, 1945 and

rescued by the Americans on May 4, 1945 in the South-Tyrol.²³⁷ Father Franz Goldschmitt was in Dachau from December 16, 1942 to liberation in May 1945 and wrote about Dachau in *Zeugen des Abendlandes* (“Western Witnesses”).²³⁸

Gordon C. Zahn, a Catholic sociologist, in *German Catholics and Hitler's War* concluded, after reviewing all of the relevant statements of the German Catholic hierarchy made from 1933 to the death of Hitler, that the majority of the Catholic hierarchy reaffirmed its judgment for the German Catholic population of having a moral obligation to obey the legitimate authority of the Nazis.²³⁹ The Catholic Military Bishop, Franz Josef Rarkowski, was the spiritual leader of the military and encouraged the soldiers' duty to *Führer, Volk* and *Vaterland* until bitter defeat at war's end.²⁴⁰

Guenther Lewy in his book *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* concluded that the Catholic Church in Germany “shared the widely prevailing sense of nationalism and patriotism” and the “bishops, many of the lower clergy and their parishioners concurred in certain Nazi aims.”²⁴¹ In interpreting all of the facts, Guenther Lewy wrote:

*When thousands of German anti-Nazis were tortured to death in Hitler's concentration camps, when the Polish intelligentsia were slaughtered, when hundreds of thousands of Russians died as a result of being treated as Slavic Untermenschen, and when 6,000,000 human beings were murdered for being 'non-Aryan,' Catholic Church officials in Germany bolstered the regime perpetuating these crimes. The Pope in Rome, the spiritual head and supreme moral teacher of the Roman Catholic Church, remained silent. In the face of these greatest of moral depravities which mankind has been forced to witness in recent centuries, the moral teachings of a church, dedicated to love and charity, could be heard in no other form but vague generalities.*²⁴²

Sadly, Professor Lewy further stated that “in the final analysis, then, the Vatican's silence only reflected the deep feeling of the Catholic masses of Europe” and the “failure of the Pope was a measure of the Church's failure to convert her gospel of brotherly love and human dignity into living reality.”²⁴³ In his essay in *Commentary* (February 1964), Lewy writes:

*Finally, one is inclined to conclude that the Pope and his advisers – influenced by the long tradition of moderate anti-Semitism so widely accepted in Vatican circles – did not view the plight of the Jews with a real sense of urgency and moral outrage. For this assertion no documentation is possible, but it is a conclusion difficult to avoid.*²⁴⁴

Before Pope Pius XI died, he condemned Hitler during a public appearance on October 21, 1938, comparing Hitler to Julian the Apostate (the Roman Emperor Flavius Claudius Julianus) who attempted to “saddle the Christians with responsibility for the persecution he had unleashed against them.”²⁴⁵ Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli (the future Pope Pius XII), the Vatican's secretary of state, was provided a detailed report of Pope Pius XI's position by the papal nuncio in Berlin.²⁴⁶ Pius XI considered breaking relations with Hitler's Germany, but Pacelli dissuaded him and Pius XI died before taking any action.²⁴⁷ After the death of Pius XI on February 10, 1939, Pacelli prevented the distribution of Pius XI's written speech, denouncing Nazism and recalling the papal nuncio from Berlin, and Pacelli destroyed all of the copies and its printing plates.²⁴⁸

When Cardinal Pacelli was selected as Pope Pius XII, Hitler was the first head of state that he notified of his selection and he instructed the official Vatican paper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, to cease its anti-German statements.²⁴⁹ Cardinal Pacelli had spent twelve years in service in Germany and was supportive of German conservative nationalism. Pius XII was pro-Nazi to the end of the war, for he perceived the war as a battle to the death against Judeo-Bolshevism.²⁵⁰

Pius XII was very much aware of the persecution of the Jews in Europe from the many official reports. Konrad von Preysing, the Bishop of Berlin, wrote to Pius XII on 17 January 1941:

*Your Holiness is certainly informed about the situation of the Jews in Germany and the neighbouring countries. I wish to mention that I have been asked both from the Catholic and Protestant side if the Holy See could not do something on this subject, publish an appeal in favour of these unfortunates.*²⁵¹

In March 1942, Giuseppe Burzio, the Vatican's representative in Bratislava, reported to the Vatican of the deportation of 80,000 Slovak Jews to the Polish death camps.²⁵² Also, in March 1942 Gerhart Riegner of the World Jewish Congress and Richard Lichtheim of the Jewish Agency reported to the Vatican through Filippo Bernardini, the Swiss nuncio in Bern, that more than a million Jews were exterminated by the Germans in Poland and Europe.²⁵³ Conrad Gröber, archbishop of Fribourg, reported to the pope on 14 June 1942 of the massacres of Jews by the *Einsatzgruppen* in Russia and that "[t]he Nazi conception of the world is characterized by the most radical anti-Semitism, going as far as the annihilation of Jewry, not only in its spirit but also in its members."²⁵⁴

Beginning in the fall of 1942, the Vatican ambassadors from Britain, Brazil, Poland, Belgium and the United States tried to pressure Pius XII to publicly protest the atrocities in Poland against the Jews and Poles by the Nazis.²⁵⁵ On 13 December 1942, Sir Francis d'Arcy Osborne, the British ambassador at the Vatican wrote in his diary:

*The more I think of it, the more I am revolted by Hitler's massacre of the Jewish race on the one hand, and, on the other, the Vatican's apparently exclusive preoccupation with the effects of the war on Italy and the possibilities of the bombardment of Rome. The whole outfit seems to have become Italian.*²⁵⁶

The Pope's Christmas Eve broadcast on December 24, 1942 was hoped to be a clear denunciation of the Nazi extermination of the Jewish people, but his evasive words were shocking with no mention of the term Nazi or Jew.²⁵⁷ The Pope's famous statement intended to protest and denounce Jewish extermination by the Nazis was "[h]umanity owes this vow to those hundreds of thousands who, without any fault of their own, sometimes only by reason of their nationality or race, are marked down for death or gradual extinction."²⁵⁸ Mussolini, who scoffed at the broadcast, remarked that:

*[t]he Vicar of God, who is representative on earth of the Ruler of the Universe should never speak; he should remain in the clouds. This is a speech of platitudes which might better be made by the parish priest of Predappio.*²⁵⁹

When Harold Tittmann, Assistant to the U.S. President's Personal Representative at the Vatican, expressed disappointed in the Christmas speech, the Pope stated that he could not name the Nazis without including the Communists.²⁶⁰ Tittmann speculated that the Pope's unwillingness to comment about Nazi atrocities in Poland was based upon the fear of the German people rebuking him similar to when they accused Pope Benedict XV of pro-Allied sentiments during the First World War.²⁶¹

Also, the Catholic Church was against using Palestine as a sanctuary for Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis. In June 1943, the apostolic delegate in Washington wrote to Myron Taylor, the U.S. representative to the Vatican, that to give a large part of Palestine to the Jewish people would interfere with the religious rights and attachment of Catholics to the Holy Land and, if a "Hebrew Home" is desired, a "more fitting territory than Palestine" could be easily found.²⁶² In May 1943, Cardinal Luigi Maglioni, the Vatican's secretary of state, gave one of the reasons for the pope's refusal to rescue 2,000 Jewish children from Slovakia was the fear of an entry of Jews into Palestine would threaten Catholic interests.²⁶³

Guenter Lewy summarized the failure of Pacelli to issue a warning to the Jews of Europe once the exterminations were known by stating:

*A public denunciation of the mass murders by Pius XII, broadcast widely over the Vatican radio and read from the pulpits by the bishops, would have revealed to Jews and Christians alike what deportation to the East entailed. The Pope would have been believed, whereas the broadcasts of the Allies were often shrugged off as war propaganda. Many of the deportees, who accepted the assurances of the Germans that they were merely being resettled, might thus have been warned and given an impetus to escape. Many more Christians might have helped and sheltered Jews, and many more lives might have been saved.*²⁶⁴

On October 16, 1943, the Germans emptied the ancient Jewish Ghetto in Rome within sight of the Apostolic Palace of more than 1,200 Jews, who were arrested and held in a temporary jail at the Italian Military College within a few hundred yards from the Vatican before they were taken to Auschwitz.²⁶⁵ The Jewish ghetto area survived as a residential district for the poorer Jews of the city until 1943.²⁶⁶ Rome's Jewish community was the longest-surviving Diaspora in Western Europe for over 2,082 years with about 7,000 in central Rome at the time of German occupation.²⁶⁷

The German ambassador to the Holy See, Weizsäcker, informed the Pope that his government would honor the extra-territoriality of the Vatican and its 150 properties around Rome, if the Holy See would cooperate with the occupying power.²⁶⁸ No voice was ever raised by the Vatican as the Italian Jews were sent by box car to the gas chambers of Auschwitz.²⁶⁹

Settimia Spizzichino, the only Jewish woman to survive the deportation to Auschwitz from Rome, was interviewed by the BBC in 1995 and said:

*I came back from Auschwitz on my own. I lost my mother, two sisters, a niece, and one brother. Pius XII could have warned us about what was going to happen. We might have escaped from Rome and joined the partisans. He played right into the Germans' hands. It all happened right under his nose. But he was an anti-Semitic Pope, a pro-German Pope. He didn't take a single risk. And when they say the Pope is like Jesus Christ, it is not true. He did not save a single child. Nothing.*²⁷⁰

Professor Wistrich wrote that:

*Pius XII's refusal to make a public denunciation of the Roman razzia (roundup) was no different from the position he had adopted when vast numbers of Jews had been deported from across Europe in 1942 or murdered in Russia, the Ukraine, and Poland. Had such a protest been made, it is quite possible that more Catholics might have helped to rescue Jews in occupied countries or that more Jews might have fled in time from their Nazi hunters. Nor did the Vatican oppose discriminatory laws against Jews or the social segregation that resulted, even as the Holocaust was raging in the heart of Europe. . . the Jews . . . were still identified theologically as a 'deicide' people in most Catholic minds . . .*²⁷¹

Gordon C. Zahn in his book *German Catholics and Hitler's Wars* held that the German Catholic clergy become channels of Nazi control over Catholics as proclaiming the required Christian duty of support to Hitler.²⁷² The Catholic leadership rallied their "followers to the defense of *Volk*, *Vaterland* and *Heimat* as Christian duty."²⁷³ A pastoral letter of Archbishop Gröber issued for the People's Memorial Day on March 15, 1942, and adopted by Bishop Galen, praised the victorious German soldiers advancing into Russia "who were fighting a crusade against Bolshevism and were protecting Europe against the Red tide."²⁷⁴ The archdiocesan chancery of Breslau issued a payer in May 1942, asking for God's blessing for the German soldiers so that "their weapons would be victorious in the struggle against godless Bolshevism."²⁷⁵ Archbishop Jäger favored the Nazi campaign against the Slavic *Untermenschen* (sub-humans) and considered Russia as a country whose people, "because of their hostility to God and their hatred of Christ, had almost degenerated into animals."²⁷⁶

One fourth of the SS were Catholic, but no camp guards, *Einsatzgruppen* troops, or Catholic Nazi leaders, including Hitler, Himmler and Goebbels, were ever denied the sacraments.²⁷⁷ If it was necessary to keep silent about mass murder of millions in order to hold on to the German faithful and not lose millions of Catholics, then that faith is dead.²⁷⁸ Lewy wrote that the "Church, in its dealings with the Nazis, compromised its absolute spiritual essence . . . faced with an absolute evil, such as the Germans posed . . . the Church failed by not bearing witness to her moral essence . . . in the face of an upsurge of monstrous barbarism . . . [the Church was] . . . guided by 'reasons of state'."²⁷⁹

Gordon Zahn said that the German Catholic bishops and most Evangelical leaders called for the martyrdom of Christians in serving Nazi ideals, but were silent

about the murder of innocents.²⁸⁰ Zahn highlighted in his book *German Catholics and Hitler's Wars* that it was an indisputable historical fact:

*... at no time was the German Catholic population released from its moral obligation to obey the legitimate authority of the National Socialist rulers under which those Catholics were placed by the 1933 directives of their spiritual leaders; at no time was the individual German Catholic led to believe that the regime was an evil unworthy of his support.*²⁸¹

Professor John Conway stated in *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches 1933-1945* that the Nazi campaign against the Protestant churches could not have been achieved without the fatal weakness of the faith of the millions of Christian church members.²⁸²

In 1949, Pius XII excommunicated all Communist Party members worldwide, but was silent with the Nazis. Hitler was never excommunicated and he died on the baptized rolls of the Roman Catholic Church.²⁸³ When Cardinal Adolf Bertram of Breslau who led German Catholicism during the war heard of Hitler's death on April 30th, Bertram requested all parish priests of his diocese to "hold a solemn requiem mass in memory of the Führer."²⁸⁴

At the war's end, the Vatican and its associates helped thousand of Nazi war criminals, including extermination camp commandant Franz Stangl of Treblinka and others, escape Germany.²⁸⁵ A Franciscan monk in Genoa obtained a refugee passport in the name of Ricardo Klement and a visa for Argentina and in the middle of July 1950 Adolf Eichmann arrived in Buenos Aires as Ricardo Klement.²⁸⁶

Bishop Alois Hudal, rector of the German Catholic church in Rome and representative of the Nazis in Rome during the war and a personal friend of Pope Pius XII, helped Nazi war criminals escape to South America.²⁸⁷ Hudal provided false papers and hiding places in Rome for Nazi criminals.²⁸⁸ Hudal hid Otto Wächter, the German Governor of the Ukrainian territories, who died in his arms.²⁸⁹ Earlier in 1937, Hudal had published *The Foundations of National Socialism*, dedicating it to Hitler, the "Siegfried of German hope and greatness," and explaining that Nazi ideology and Christian faith were compatible.²⁹⁰

The previous Nazi supporters in the Catholic and Protestant hierarchies continued to advance within their respective churches, such as Bishop Wilhelm Berning, a virulent anti-Semite and a member of Göring's state council, who was made an archbishop in 1949.²⁹¹ Pro-Nazi clergy retained control of the church and continued with successful careers.²⁹² On March 26, 1957, the West German Federal Constitutional Court upheld the continued validity of Hitler's Concordat for the German Federal Republic.²⁹³

In 1948, the German Evangelical Conference at Darmstadt proclaimed that the Holocaust was a call to the Jews to cease their rejection and ongoing crucifixion of Christ.²⁹⁴ In 1953, Pius XII excommunicated the communist states of Hungary, Rumania and Poland, but he was silent with the neo-pagans of the Third Reich.²⁹⁵ Pius XII was silent while eighteen percent of Polish priests were murdered by the Nazis, but

the Pope appealed to the Allies to commute the death sentences of the Nazi war criminals condemned at Nuremberg.²⁹⁶

*When our children wept in the shadow of the chopping block,
We heard not the warmth of the world,
For You chose us from among the nations,
You loved us and longed for us.*

*And day and night the ax devours,
As the Holy Christian Father in the City of Rome
Would not emerge from his sanctuary with the image of the
Redeemer
To stand for even a day in the midst of the pogrom.*

*To stand for even a day, not one single day,
In the place where for years, like a scapegoat,
A small child has stood,
Nameless,
A Jew.*

*And there is much ado about portraits and sculptures
And works of art to be protected from the bombs,
But the true works of art, the heads of the little ones,
In the end will be crushed against roadways and walls.*

"From among All the Nations" by Natan Alterman.²⁹⁷

The Holocaust raised a crisis in Christianity, in which 1900 years after Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of love, his own people were murdered by baptized Christians. The Christian church may not have collaborated openly with the Nazis, but they kept their silence. Professor Wistrich wrote that "the annihilation of the Jews had a profoundly symbolic as well as an ideological and political meaning: it simultaneously brought the Christian anti-Semitic tradition to a twisted and horrific climax, while destroying every positive value that Christianity had ever contained."²⁹⁸ Emil Fackenheim wrote "the 'Final Solution' was the result of 'a bi-millennial disease within Christianity *itself*, transmuted when Nazism turned against the Christian substance."²⁹⁹

Although the Bulgarian Orthodox Church opposed the Jewish persecution by the Nazis, the centuries of anti-Semitism could not be overcome in their messages to the people.³⁰⁰ Metropolitan Stefan of Sofia in September 1942 delivered a sermon saying that God had already punished the Jews "for having nailed Christ to the Cross" by driving them from country to country and depriving them of their own homeland and it is God and not man, who determines the Jewish fate and man has no right to persecute them.³⁰¹

Pastor Martin Niemöller survived the concentration camps of Sachsenhausen and Dachau and narrowly escaped execution³⁰² and as a vocal religious leader against Nazism Niemöller earned the right to say in March 1946 that:

*Christianity in Germany bears a greater responsibility before God than the National Socialists, the SS and the Gestapo. We ought to have recognised the Lord Jesus in the brother who suffered and was persecuted despite his being a communist or a Jew.*³⁰³

During the German occupation of Western European countries, such as Holland, the attitude toward Jews changed with anti-Semitism creeping up where before the war it did not exist in Holland and it was hoped among the Jews in hiding that this attitude would pass.³⁰⁴ The diary writings of Anne Frank contained sadness and suffering, but also an idealistic hope of joyous days returning “because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart.”³⁰⁵ People like to identify idealistically with her faith in the ultimate redemption of humanity in her Diary; however, the world seems not to care for redemption but to only ignore or rewrite history for its own agenda of self-interest. Near the end of the war, Anne Frank died with the redemption of humanity in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp at age sixteen.³⁰⁶

Martin Niemöller in his book, *Exile in the Fatherland: Martin Niemöller's Letters from Moabit Prison* on why Nazism was successful, especially during the 1930's, was frequently expressed by him in his famous parable of indifference.

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Jew.

*Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me.*³⁰⁷

However, his parable, universalizing the Holocaust by shunning distinctions between the dissidents and the Jews and suggesting that the hostility to Jews in Nazi Germany was common for all dissidents, ignores the mystery of that evil's mass appeal to anti-Semitism.³⁰⁸ When Niemöller was arrested in 1938, there were millions of Germans, including the Christian clergy who could have protested, but most were more enthusiastic about their Führer than the fate of a few dissident pastors.³⁰⁹ The pseudo-spiritual unity of the Third Reich led to the Holocaust and the eventual collapse of the nation that spawn that demonic world.³¹⁰

The Memorandum which Martin Niemöller and nine other leaders of the Confessing Church sent to Hitler on June 4, 1936 stated:

*We beg . . . that our people may be free to pursue their way in the future under the sign of the cross of Christ, that our grandchildren may not one day curse the fathers for having built up a state on earth for them and left it behind, but shut them out of the Kingdom of God.*³¹¹ (Emphasis added).

Ordinary men and women were involved in the routine and daily murder of millions of defenseless and innocent men, women and children as “only a job.”³¹² Most were not members of the SS or even the Nazi Party and Nazi ideology did not motivate their behavior.³¹³ The majority of the manpower to operate the death camps in Poland

was composed of the Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Latvians with supervision by German Order Police Battalions of ordinary lower and middle class people.³¹⁴

David S. Wyman in *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945* wrote that the Holocaust was not only a Jewish tragedy but a Christian tragedy, a tragedy for Western civilization and a tragedy for all humankind.³¹⁵ The perpetrators arose from a Christian culture and the bystanders most able to help were Christians.³¹⁶ The enormities of the Nazi atrocities are beyond moral outrage to ever be concealed or forgotten as expressed by the Soviet wartime correspondent Vasilii Grossman in the *Red Star*, October 1943:

*People arriving from Kiev say that the Germans have placed a cordon of troops around the huge grave in Babi Yar where the bodies of 50,000 Jews slaughtered in Kiev at the end of September 1941 are buried. They are feverishly digging up corpses and burning them. Are they so mad as to hope thus to hide their evil traces that have been branded forever by the tears and the blood of Ukraine, branded so that it will burn brightly on the darkest night?*³¹⁷

The largest single Nazi shooting of Jews in the Soviet Union ensued on the western outskirts of Kiev in a ravine known as Babi Yar on September 29 and 30, 1941.³¹⁸ Dina Pronicheva, one of the few survivors of Babi Yar, testified about the actions of the local Ukrainian auxiliary policemen who prepared the Jews for slaughter by stripping them and chasing them one by one up a hill.

*The people reached the crest and there, through a cut in a wall of sand, neared the ravines . . . Before my very eyes people went insane, they turned gray, all around there were heartrending cries and moans. All day long, there was machine-gun fire. I saw how Germans took children away from their mothers and threw them from the precipice into the ravine.*³¹⁹

Do the deep-seated prejudices still remain in Eastern Europe with insignificant Jewish populations today when the memorial plaque at Babi Yar was desecrated in 2003 by anti-Semitic hoodlums?³²⁰

In the summer of 1944 when the Germans left the killing fields of Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka, rumors spread among the local populations that some of the Jewish victims had been buried in their clothes without any search for hidden money, gold, and diamonds in the seams of the garments and without the removal of gold teeth.³²¹ Rachel Auerbach, visiting Treblinka on November 7, 1945 with the Polish State Committee for the Investigation of Nazi War Crimes on Polish Soil, described the scene that was repeated at Belzec and Sobibor in the search of treasures:

Masses of all kinds of pilferers and robbers with spades and shovels in their hands were there digging and searching and raking and straining the sand. They removed decaying limbs from the dust [and] bones and garbage that were thrown there. Would they not come upon even one hard coin or at least one gold tooth? They even dragged shells and blind bombs there, those hyenas and jackals in the disguise of man. They placed

*several together, set them off, and giant pits were dug in the desecrated ground saturated by the blood and the ashes of burned Jews . . .*³²²

Has the Holocaust shut out the people of Europe from the Kingdom of God?

Before Hitler came to power, the churches had a powerful presence and influence in Europe. Catholic theologian Professors Didier Pollefeyt at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, and Jürgen Manemann at the University of Münster, Germany, have stated that Europe has entered a post-Christian period for having purged itself of the Jews and European Christendom has lost its Christianity.³²³ Have they killed their God? Is the Christian church in Europe dead forever and are they left with the curse of Cain filling the void? *May they be erased from the Book of Life, and let them not be inscribed with the righteous. Psalms 69:29. Has the first generation died without repentance and have the second and third generations inherited the curse of Cain?*

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' Matthew 7:21-23.

Depart from me, all evildoers, for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping. The Lord has heard my plea; the Lord will accept my prayer. Let all my foes be shamed and utterly confounded, they will regret and be shamed in an instant. Psalms 6:9-11.

Uri-Zvi Grinberg's poem entitled "They Have Killed Their God" describes the appearance of Jesus in a small village in Eastern Europe.³²⁴

He is looking for his brothers – he is looking for his people. When he does not find them, he asks a passerby, 'Where are the Jews?' – 'Killed,' says the passerby. 'All of them?' – 'All of them.' – 'And their homes?' – 'Demolished.' – 'Their synagogues?' – 'Burned.' – 'Their sages?' – 'Dead.' – 'Their students?' – 'Dead too.' – 'And their children?' What about their children? Dead too?' – 'All of them, they are all dead.' And Jesus begins to weep over the slaughter of his people. He weeps so hard that people turn around to look at him, and suddenly one peasant exclaims, 'Hey, look at that, here is another Jew, how did he stay alive?' And the peasants throw themselves on Jesus and kill him too, killing their God, thinking they are killing just another Jew.³²⁵

When the genocide of the Jews began, the Christian churches were paralyzed and they failed to grasp how dangerous Nazi anti-Semitism was to the future of Christianity in Europe.³²⁶ As Wiesel has stated by trying to kill the Jews, the Christians killed their God.³²⁷

As in the 1930s and 1940s, Christianity is under attack worldwide by Islamic Jihadism and the secular universalism of ignorance and church members are asleep or deluded. The sermon on the 4th Sunday before Easter 1934 delivered by Martin Niemöller in Germany could be delivered in the churches around the world today for we are once again being thrown into the Tempter's sieve:

We have all of us – the whole Church and the whole community – been thrown into the Tempter’s sieve, and he is shaking and the wind is blowing, and it must now become manifest whether we are wheat or chaff! Verily, a time of sifting has come upon us, and even the most indolent and peaceful person among us must see that the calm of a meditative Christianity is at an end . . .

It is now springtime for the hopeful and expectant Christian Church – it is testing time, and God is giving Satan a free hand, so that he may shake us up and so that it may be seen what manner of men we are!

Satan swings his sieve and Christianity is thrown hither and thither; and he who is not ready to suffer, he who called himself a Christian only because he thereby hoped to gain something good for his race and his nation, is blown away like chaff by the wind of this time.³²⁸

The Presbyterian theologian Arthur C. Cochrane wrote that the message from the Barmen Theological Declaration in 1934 out of the German Christian struggle showed that anti-Semitism “struck a blow at the heart of the Christian faith” and the church today must recognize and acknowledge “the indissoluble unity of Israel and the church, of Jews and Christians.”³²⁹ Cochrane profoundly wrote in 1970:

“Salvation is from the Jews” – not only two thousand years ago but in every generation as well . . .

. . . the Jewish question is the question about Jesus Christ, that the spirit of Antisemitism is the spirit of antichrist, and that where the Jews are hated and persecuted, the faithful followers of the Jew, Jesus of Nazareth, will also be hated and persecuted. They realized that in the last analysis the Church Struggle and World War II were waged because of Israel and that in spite of the Holocaust, Israel could not be annihilated . . . [Jer. 31:35-36]

The new theological understanding of Israel was accompanied by a profound sense of the enormous guilt of Christians against their Jewish brothers. It was learned that if the church is to look to the rock from which it was hewn and to the quarry from which it was dug, it must look to Abraham our father and to Sarah who bore us (Isa. 51:2). And if it is to look to the future, the hope of Israel is the only hope of the church and the world, namely, the faithfulness of God to his promises to Israel fulfilled in the Messiah who has come and who is yet to come.

This, then, is the message of Barmen for the contemporary churches. But have our churches and congregations heard and believed that message? I leave it as a question.³³⁰

In January 1980, one of the largest Protestant churches in Europe, the Rheinlander Synod, issued overwhelmingly a statement on the Jewish people as follows:

. . . recognition of Christian co-responsibility and guilt for the Holocaust . . . new biblical insights concerning the continuing significance of the Jewish people for salvation history . . . the insight that the continuing existence of the Jewish people, its return to the Land

*of Promise, and also the creation of the State of Israel are signs of the faithfulness of God toward God's people . . .*³³¹

Christian theologian Franklin H. Littell has stated that the Jew is a beacon to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and for the Christian is the anchor by which a vague "faith" or "love of humanity" or "spirituality" can be prevented from floating into nothingness with Christian identification with the God of Israel.³³² For the End of Days is "a vision proclaimed by Jewish prophets: the Kingdom of God, in which the peoples and tribes of the farthest corners of the earth shall gather about the Hill of the Lord and hear His voice and do His will."³³³

Littell has written that the Jews who perished in Hitler's Europe perished for a truth which the Christians, except for those few who kept the Christian faith and were also hated and persecuted, betrayed: that "the Author and Judge of history was made manifest to us out of the Jews."³³⁴ The reality which the Christian culture-religionists have not begun to grasp is the fact that most of the martyrs for Christ in the 20th century were Jews and the moral claims of the Christian church in Europe died at Auschwitz.³³⁵

Yet, the continuing existence of the Jews, God's witnesses on earth, should be a beacon for strengthening Christian faith, since their eternal survival proves the presence and existence of God. The rebirth of the Jewish state of Israel is the guarantee for the fulfillment of God's scriptural promises to the Christians. Unfortunately, the lessons from the Holocaust has yet to be considered in most Christian seminaries and churches and the rooting out of the underlying anti-Semitism of replacement theology in Christian teachings in seminaries and churches has not occurred.

During Hitler's Germany, the vast majority of Christians abandoned their faith by denying the Truth of the Word and no longer considered the Bible to be sacred and absolute truth but only a set of rules to bend to reflect one's own theology. Apostle Paul wrote of

. . . the coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.

If the mainline Christian churches continue today to downgrade the authority of the Word of God, redefine biblical values in terms of morality and marriage and disavowal Israel's and the Jewish people's right to exist as promised in His Word, this refusal *to love the truth* creates a vacuum in one's heart where Satanic deceptions can fill. Christian churches need to be firmly rooted in the Word of God to be a continuing testimony to the world and not close the door to the prophetic voice of God's Spirit as was done in Nazi Europe. Israel's existence is an invitation to aggression by those who hate God and direct their anger against God by attacking Israel. In every generation evil rises to destroy the Jewish people for it is their fate in Israel's role as Isaiah's suffering servant.

Be glad with Jerusalem and rejoice in her, all you who love her; exult with her in exultation, all you who mourned for her . . . Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river and the wealth of nations like a surging stream . . . You will see and your heart will exult, and your bones will flourish like grass; the hand of the Lord will be known to His servants, and He will show anger to His enemies. For behold, the Lord will arrive in fire and His chariots like the whirlwind, to vent His anger with wrath, and His rebuke with flaming fire. For the Lord will enter into judgment with fire and with His sword against all mankind; there will be many who will be slain by the Lord.

...
I [know] their actions and their thoughts; [the time] has come to gather all the nations and tongues, they will come and see My glory. I will put a sign upon them and send some of them as survivors to the nations – Tarshish, Pul, Lud, the Archers, Tubal and Javan, the distant islands who have not heard of My fame and not seen My glory – and they will declare My glory among the nations. They will bring all your brethren from all the nations as an offering to the Lord . . . to My holy mountain, Jerusalem, says the Lord; just as the Children of Israel bring the offering in a pure vessel to the House of the Lord.

...
And they will go out and see the corpses of the men who rebelled against Me, for their decay will not cease and their fire will not be extinguished, and they will lie in disgrace before all mankind. Isaiah 66:10-24.

I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth . . . I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood? Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed. Revelation 6:8-11.

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- ³³ Scholder, vol. I, p. 3.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
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- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.
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- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*
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