



BRIDGES FOR PEACE
YOUR ISRAEL CONNECTION ®



■ INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
P.O. Box 1093, Jerusalem
Tel: 972-2-624-5004
intl.office@bridgesforpeace.com

■ AUSTRALIA
P.O. Box 1006, Tewantin
Queensland 4565
Tel: 07-5474-3626
bfpaust@optusnet.com.au

■ CANADA
P.O. Box 21001, RPO Charleswood
Winnipeg MB R3R 3R2
Tel: 204-489-3697, bfp@mts.net

■ JAPAN
Taihei Sakura Bldg. 5F
4-13-2 Taihei, Sumida-Ku
Tokyo 130 0012
Tel: 03-5637-5333, bfp@bfpj.net

■ NEW ZEALAND
P.O. Box 10142, Te Mai, Whangarei
Tel: 09-438-8376
bfpnz@paradise.net.nz

■ SOUTH AFRICA
P.O. Box 15263, Panorama 7506
Tel/FAX: 021-975-1941
bfp@mweb.co.za

■ UNITED KINGDOM
Victoria House, Victoria Road
Buckhurst Hill, Essex IG9 5EX
Tel: 020-8559-2479
info@bridgesforpeace.co.uk

■ United States
P.O. Box 33145
Tulsa, OK 74153-1145
Tel: 800-566-1998
postmaster@bfpusa.org

■ SPANISH RESOURCE CENTER
PMB 133, 100 Gran Bulevar, Ste. 112
San Juan, PR 00926-5955, EUA
Tel/FAX: 787-782-0868
bfp@isla.net

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Israel

Teaching Letter

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The Source of Anti-Judaism, Anti-Semitism, and Anti-Zionism

Editor's note: The author of this Israel Teaching Letter is the Reverend NOEL SANDERSON, the ministry team leader of the Olive Tree Congregation in Durban, South Africa, who is also the director of Christian Action for Israel and an adviser to Bridges for Peace. He is currently authoring a special pastor-to-pastor letter to graduates of our BFP Pastors Forum, a one-day course on Israel and the Hebraic roots of Christianity.

Anti-Semitism is a special kind of hatred, because it spans time, location, and culture. Could it be that it is not just a natural phenomenon, but has a supernatural source in the struggle between good and evil?

In this *Israel Teaching Letter*, I will discuss anti-Semitism as having two distinct, yet intricately connected, levels of existence. The discussion will examine how these levels manifest themselves and how they have had an impact on the Jewish people and, also, on the Church. A previous *Israel Teaching Letter* more than adequately addressed the history of Christian anti-Semitism (Vol. #779806/07). In this letter, the intention is to take another approach to this ever new-ever old problem. In addition, Bridges for Peace has recently published a remarkably comprehensive book by Clarence H. Wagner entitled *Where Was Love and Mercy? Christian Anti-Semitism: Overcoming the Curse*. It is an important book that you should get for yourself and for your pastor. Ordering details can be found at the end of this letter.

So exactly what is anti-Semitism? The answer comes in many forms and yet, as believers in the God of the Bible, it is important that we grasp hold of the fundamentals of the problem. This leads us to explore the reason why anti-Semitism exists—a question that has occupied Jewish thinking from time immemorial. As a believer, it is my view that anti-Semitism has its source close to the source of evil. To facilitate our understanding, evil must be demystified and personified. God has an enemy and he has a name.

Anti-Semitism: Bad Socialization or Demonic?

Psychologists tell us that humans have two parallel levels of mental existence—conscious and subconscious. These levels constantly interact and affect each other. While they are independent of one another, in reality they are integrated and interdependent. I will use a layman's illustration to explain the relationship between the two levels that make up anti-Semitism, what I call the lower and upper levels.

The first level is the lower level, the invisible, spiritual, or metaphysical level, where we find the source, the bubbling cauldron of hatred that spews forth the fumes and toxic gases fueling the flames of antagonism toward the Jewish people. The second level is the upper level, which is the manifested, physical expression of anti-Semitism. At this level, we have what we call history—a stage upon which actors come and go, play their scenes, and deliver their lines. Change and variety is the hallmark of this level, but the underlying theme is always the same. The upper level has frequent changes in actors, scenes, and costumes, while on the lower level, the nature of the evil that fuels the upper level is unchanging through time. If one can imagine that only the thinnest of ceilings separates these two levels of anti-Semitism, then it is no surprise that the levels interact and reinforce each other in their wickedness.

The Lower Level

Let us first pay attention to the level at which we find the source of the hatred—one could say, the engine room of this timeless evil. Anti-Semitism is an idea, a vision in the eye of Satan. One could argue it is an obsession of his. At the heart of this idea is the total destruction of the Jews. The Jews here are defined as the natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel). *“And He said, ‘Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed’”* (Gen. 32:28). Less

specifically, but just as important, is the total destruction of those who have attached themselves to that line, either by faith or, if one would allow, by the intervening hand of God. This refers to the non-Jews grafted into the commonwealth of Israel by the grace of God.

God's eternal purpose is to bring about the redemption of the world. God chose the Jewish people for three things:

- to bring to the world the example of God by their life of faith and action;
- to record and preserve the Word of God, the Bible; and
- to be the human channel for the Messiah.

Note: The Church was called to take this redemptive message to the whole world.

“Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth... at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:11–13).

“And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you” (Rom. 11:17–18).

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:19–20).



Just as God, by the Holy Spirit, is at work to redeem the world from spiritual death and hell, so Satan is at work to frustrate the purposes of God. This is a spiritual battle that has been going on ever since the Garden of Eden. As with all such battles, the enemy has built strongholds of deception, lies, and death to hold the minds and souls of humanity captive to his work. One such stronghold is anti-Semitism, which is why I refer to it as an idea in the mind of evil.

The elements that make up this idea are simple and can be expressed as follows:

One

Satan must destroy the Jews. Why?

Two

a) Through the Jews, God brings the light of His presence: *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path”* (Ps. 119:105). *“Many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths.’ The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem”* (Isa. 2:3). *“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”* (John 3:19).

b) The Jews were to bring the Messiah to the world: *“The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things”* (John 4:25).

c) The Jews brought the knowledge of God’s righteousness and awaiting judgment to the nations: *“Say among the nations, ‘The Lord reigns; the world also is firmly established, it shall not be moved; He shall judge the peoples righteously”* (Ps. 96:10). *“He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries”* (Ps. 110:6).



*“Your word
is a lamp
to my feet
and a light
for my path.”*
Ps. 119:105

Photo by Ron Cantrell

Note: We would do well to remember that Satan’s end is in the hands of Yeshua (Jesus). *“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son”* (John 5:22). *“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48).

Three

Because salvation, Torah, the knowledge of God, service, and glory (Rom. 9:4) pertain to the Jewish nation, their elimination is the key to Satan’s survival. However, the truth is that he cannot survive, as his destruction is assured. *“And suddenly they cried out, saying, ‘What have we to do with You, Yeshua, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?’”* (Matt. 8:29).

It is my view that Satan has purposed to destroy the people through whom God has granted salvation and the knowledge of Himself to the world. The Jew stands first in line in the redemptive good news of God. *“For I am not ashamed of the Good News of the Messiah, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek”* (Rom. 1:16).

The spiritual world has exploited the history of mankind throughout time. This includes the natural development of societies, cultures, and philosophies, which have held sway over humanity through the ages. The sheer

antiquity of anti-Semitism leads one to conclude that it is not the product of one irritated culture, religion, or social class. Every society that has persecuted the Jews has had what they considered a just reason. The origins, however, lie beyond the vision and scope of historians, sociologists, or educators—although these disciplines are critical for the study and analysis of the phenomenon.

The Nature of Evil

The Bible gives us limited but sufficient insight into the nature of evil, Satan, and demons.

“Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel” (1 Chron. 21:1).

“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. And the Lord said to Satan, ‘The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’” (Zech. 3:1–2).

“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44).

“Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, ‘This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons’” (Matt. 12:24).

“And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon” (Rev. 9:11).

Clearly, the Bible reveals that evil exists, and has life and a distinct purpose. That purpose is to destroy or—if that is impossible—to marginalize or neutralize the works of God on the earth. Satan’s plan has been to destroy the works, the people, and the plans of God from the beginning. This is to be achieved by any means, using whatever willing agent (society, political movement, religion, or cause) is available and with total dedication to the intended end. Anti-Semitism, anti-Jewishness, anti-Judaism, anti-Zionism, or just old-fashioned Judaeophobia can be said to be primary manifestations of evil. The names have changed, but the intent remains as deadly as ever.

The Upper Level

At this level, anti-Semitism is visible; it can be measured and observed. It is evil manifested in the flesh, mind, and policies of the Church, mosque, and state. If the first level of anti-Semitism is that which occupies the intercessor, preacher, and Bible teacher, then the second level is that which occupies the historian, educator, and sociologist.

An Old Story

Anti-Jewish policies and pogroms¹ can be traced back to the earliest days of recorded history, well before the Christian era began. Christianity, however, does, rather tragically, hold the longest record for being a channel for anti-Semitism, having held sway as the dominant religion in many countries of the world for nearly two millennia. One of the earliest recorded cases of anti-Jewish activity dates back to 474 BC. This is recorded in Esther

3:8 and relates to the plot of Haman to destroy the Jews under Xerxes’

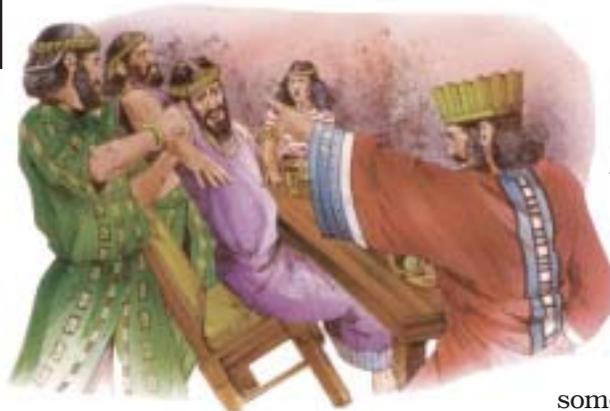
rule—which is still remembered today during the festival of Purim. Another incident is reported to have occurred in 410 BC in Elephantine (Egypt). A local pagan priest of the Egyptian god Chnum led an attack on local Jews because they sacrificed lambs, which were holy to the Egyptians. These cases reveal two of the most commonly recurring justifications for attacking the Jewish people: a failure to live up to the local laws of the “host” nation and perceived improper religious behavior in the context of the prevailing faiths. In short,

somewhere along the road of life, Jews have always found themselves at odds with the culture and worldview of the Diaspora cultures into which God had sent them.



Top:
Egyptian god
Chnum

Right:
King Xerxes
orders Haman’s
hanging.



- In Egypt, Pharaoh said, “They don’t fit in here anymore, there are too many of them, let us contain them by killing their sons and reducing them to forced labor.”
- In Persia, Haman said, “They don’t belong here, they are not loyal subjects, let them be killed.”
- In Christendom², it has been said, “They don’t belong, they killed Christ and stubbornly refuse His baptism—they must convert or leave.”
- In Nazi Germany, it was said, “They are *untersmensch* (subhuman) as a race and thus unfit for life in a world dedicated to the survival of the fittest race of all—the Aryan.
- In Islam it is said, “They don’t belong here (in “Palestine”), they are interlopers in the House of Peace (Islam)—they must die or submit.”

In essence, Satan has had little preference as to whom he uses, what methods he employs, or how he carries out his plan to destroy the people by whom God brings us salvation. Satan has never been fastidious about who does his bidding. They die in the end anyway.

Anti-Semitism: What’s in a Word?

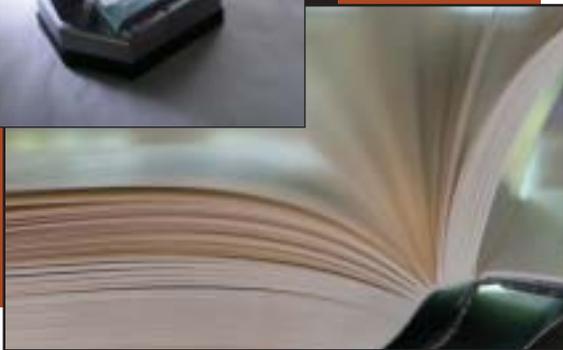
The word anti-Semitism³ has gone through a number of revisions since it first began to be used in the latter part of the 1800s. It could be described as a “modern” word and can be traced back to the 1870s. Before that time, historians tell us, there was only anti-Judaism or anti-Jewishness. The simple distinction is that, prior to the 1870s, any anti-Jewish thought, act, or sentiment was, insofar as European history was concerned, primarily built upon religious sentiment, i.e., Christian anti-Jewishness.

Yet in the late 19th century, important developments took place in Europe that were to affect profoundly Christianity and, in fact, the entire European and Western world. Secularism, in various guises, had emerged as the new religion. A close ally of secularism was Darwin-ism, which had emerged to leave the newly emancipated European as creator of his own destiny. Science

was the new messiah. Europeans, tired of war, tired of an uninspiring Christianity, embraced the new wave of hope that philosophy and science offered the “old world.” It was science that gave intellectual explanations for the mysteries of the universe; it was science that gave the world electricity and penicillin. Even theologians began explaining that God was “dead.” Such was the European and Western world-view of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Into this “enlightened” environment, liberal theologians rushed to adapt their thoughts to the new order. A cold and cynical theology was the product of the new learning: God explained away, God in a test tube, God in a casket. With no more mystery, no more faith, God had become expendable. What was to become of the Jew in such a Europe?

The Jew was perceived as a residue from an ancient and increasingly irrelevant age. Despite all that passed as benefits of this new world, hatred of the Jew remained as an ingrained part of the collective psyche of many Roman Catholic and



Protestant Europeans, whose influence powerfully affected United States society and politics, including foreign policy. Historically, that hatred had been built upon centuries of Christian anti-Jewish bias. But in the new world order of that time, Christianity itself was under increasing scrutiny for relevance. Its days were numbered.

Many European Jews hoped that the decline of Christianity, together with the new era of secularism, science, and learning, would also be the end of anti-Jewishness. After all, they reasoned, many Jews were among the leading intellectuals and scientists of the new day. Anti-Semitism was part of the now fading Christian worldview and had no place in a modern, scientific age. In essence, the ancient charge of “Christ killer” and the blood libels⁴ had no relevance or appeal to the modern scientific mind. So the reasoning went. The hope was that now they could live as citizens, as good Frenchmen or Germans, with rights and protection under law—no longer as inferior Jews in Christian Europe. They had, in all fairness, every good reason to have real hope in this new day.

The truth, however, was that the decline of Christianity resulted in *increased* hostility toward Jews. Traditional Christian thinking had been that Jews could always be “converted.” But the new anti-Semitism, based on racial theory, was far more dangerous for the Jew—simply because while one could change one’s religion and so escape persecution (at least in theory), one could not change one’s race. Once anti-Semitism condemned the Jew merely for being a Jew (irrespective of what he believed), he had no hope of escape.

Hatred, then, does not die so easily. Like a chameleon, it changes color and adapts to any new environment. Anti-Semitism was coined as a secular word, in keeping with a scientific age, to describe an ancient, religious sentiment. It was intended to be a modern word, aimed at providing Jew-haters with a nonreligious word to express what for centuries had been known as anti-Jewishness or anti-Judaism. At the turn of the 20th century, it was considered somewhat backward to base any prejudice on grounds of religion. The new prejudice had to be scientifically based to be acceptable.

It is interesting to note that the new (nonreligious) anti-Semitism of the 20th century was the product of the European intelligentsia and not the street thug. It was the scientists, thinkers, philosophers, playwrights, and journalists who formulated the most dangerous kind of anti-Semitism—the kind that ended in the Holocaust⁵. Their

anti-Semitism differed in style from that of the poor, less educated classes in European society. Nevertheless, the anti-Semitism of both the intellectual and the thug converged in what would become, between 1930 and 1945, the largest systematic murder of people based (ostensibly) on their race. As a race, they were condemned for being any or all of the following: Marxists, capitalists, revolutionaries, socialists, liberals, rigid, intolerant, alien to the European world, subverters of civilized society.

It was the scientific study of race⁶ and the eugenics⁷ movement that would provide the new platform for what in the 20th century became Nazi anti-Semitism. At the forefront of this new order was the Eugenics movement. Dedicated to proving through science that race and intelligence were connected to issues of productivity, criminality, and human worth, this movement provided much of the scientific basis for Nazi experimentation in Germany. Many of the race policies adopted by the United States before World War II were justified on this scientific or quasi-scientific basis. Prejudice during the late 19th and early 20th centuries desperately needed to legitimize itself through the use of “irrefutable” science.

By the middle of the 1800s, science had provided society with sufficient “evidence” for the notion of racial superiority, which would widely be accepted as legitimate. Nazi anti-Semitism was in essence racial, even though it was built upon almost every previous foundation that had historically supported anti-

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Jewish sentiments and policies—as far back as pre-Christian times. The Nazis were not anti-Semitic because they wanted to punish the Jews for “killing Jesus.” They didn’t care who killed Jesus. Their prejudice was racial. To Nazis, the Jews (among others) were biologically inferior and had to be exterminated, as such. It was the Nazis who took the racial theories (based on science) and applied them to Jews and others to whom they took a dislike. The superiority of the Caucasian became the superiority of the Aryan. In many ways, the old distinction between Christian and Jew had simply been replaced with Aryan and Jew.

The simple fact is that Christianity did practice anti-Jewish measures, and the collective weight of that history substantially helped the Nazis build the death ideology that became the Holocaust. But Christianity did not do it alone. Science, secularism, communism, Islam (even during World War II), Persians, Greeks, and Egyptians all added their load of misery to Jacob. Sometimes willingly, sometimes unwittingly perhaps, Jacob has borne an extraordinary burden for the glory, the Torah, the presence, and the knowledge of God. The world has preferred darkness. Woe to those who bear the light.

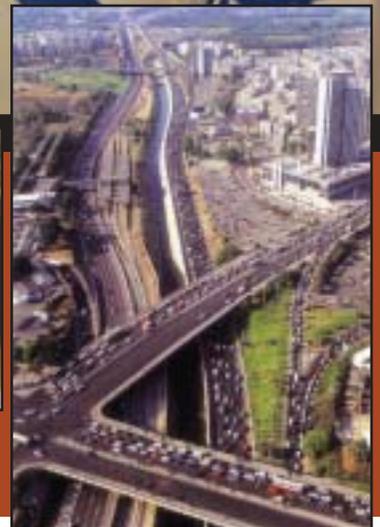
So What Does This Mean to Us?

Thus, to the Jewish people, the Christian world owes a great deal. Even in the first century, Paul understood this principle (Rom. 15:27). Today, with the prophetic restoration of Israel as a political, economic, and agricultural reality, we should be doubling our efforts to encourage the fullest restoration of Zion. Even if anti-Semitism is demonic in source, inspiration, and direction, it has taken human beings to act out those demonic aspirations. God is building Zion, and He invites and needs the active partnership of His children in this restoration. It has been said that it was people who killed Jews in all the pogroms of history—ordinary people. This is true. But God also uses people, ordinary people, who will obey His voice and follow in His way.

Let us be inspired, not by evil, but by the everlasting mercy of God, who will finish the work He has started in Jacob. We can be a part of the prophetic age in which we are privileged to live. At Bridges for Peace, it is said, “Why just read about Bible prophecy when you can be a part of it?” We don’t have to sit on the sidelines; we can participate. Evil has an expiry date; righteousness is forever—just like His promises to Israel.

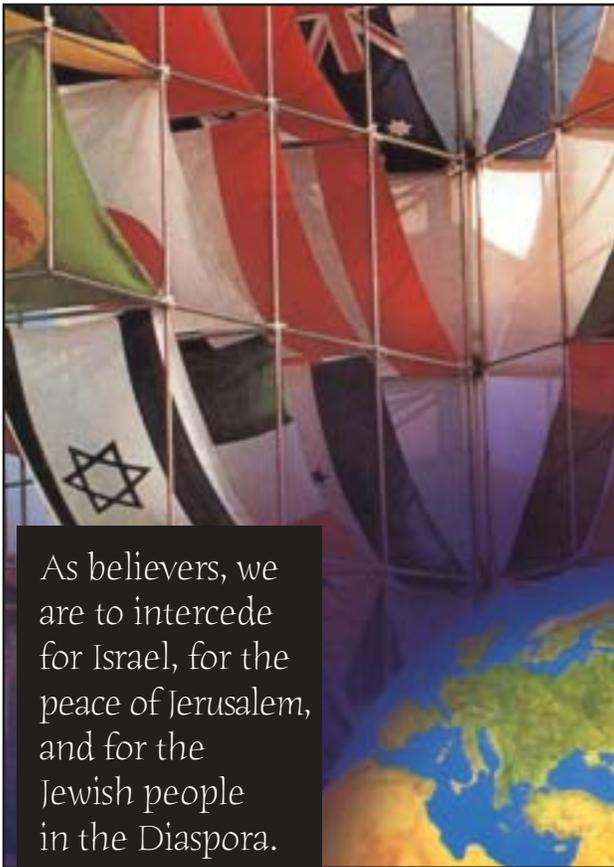
The Children of Israel have, for most of their existence, lived as an easily identifiable minority among the nations. From the earliest times, they have experienced intense opposition, ranging from antagonism to mass murder. Of course, this opposition can be explained in human terms. The Jews have found that they are frequently seen as representing whatever a society fears or loathes. If a society is capitalist, they are the communists; if it is poor, they are the rich; if it is downtrodden, they are the oppressors. They are the ever-present scapegoat of almost every society, including societies where Jews are hardly found, e.g., Japan and the Muslim nations.

Yet, as believers, we see another reality, one that has fed this hatred from time immemorial. It is spiritual, eternal, and, as Yeshua said when speaking of His kingdom, “not of this world”. Our responsibilities are enormous. We are to intercede for Israel, for the peace of Jerusalem, and for the Jewish people in the Diaspora. We



GOD IS BUILDING ZION

Photo by Facts about Israel



As believers, we are to intercede for Israel, for the peace of Jerusalem, and for the Jewish people in the Diaspora.

“WHY JUST READ ABOUT BIBLE PROPHECY WHEN YOU CAN BE A PART OF IT?”

are to render material support because we have received such a salvation as Messiah brings us (Rom 15:27).

We are wild olive branches grafted into the olive tree among some of the natural branches. We Christians are to keep our hearts free of arrogance over the fallen, natural branches of Israel (Romans 11), for they can be grafted in again. Remember, the Church is not the tree. The tree that supports us wild olive branches represents the covenants and the redemptive promises of God. Its root is the Messianic hope, and its sap is God’s Holy Spirit, which nourishes both the natural and wild branches. We both stand by faith, and we wild branches are not in competition with the Jewish people. We are part of the same covenants and promises because of Messiah, and God wants to fulfill His redemptive purposes for Israel, for the Church, as well as for the world.

Footnotes:

- ¹ Pogrom: an organized attack (often fatal) on Jews, originally in Russia.
- ² Christendom: a word referring to Christians worldwide, especially as expressed in political and temporal terms.
- ³ According to Robert Wistrich, it was the German journalist Wilhelm Marr who is credited with “creating” the word anti-Semitism.
- ⁴ Blood libel: the belief that Jews killed Christian babies to use their blood in the making of *Pesach* (Passover) *matza* (unleavened bread).
- ⁵ Two of the commanders of the four *Einsatzgruppen* (death commandos responsible for the murder of tens of thousands in the east) had doctorates! This dispels the notion that anti-Semitism is the preserve of ignorant or uneducated people. These mobile killing units are considered (taking their own reports into account) to have killed, one by one, 1.3 million Jews. This figure does not include the hundreds of thousands of Soviet prisoners they murdered. Most notorious of the commanders was former businessman Karl Jager.
- ⁶ Petrus Camper (d. 1789), professor of anatomy at the University of Groningen (Netherlands), was one of the foremost contributors to the development of the concept of race, especially as this related to citizenship. His work had a deep and lasting effect on European and American racial theory.
- ⁷ Eugenics movement: defined human differences in terms of racially superior and inferior traits, mainly in the United States.

Many pastors, Bible teachers, and laypeople have written and asked if they can use these notes for preaching and teaching. The answer is a resounding “yes”! That is why I am sending out this *Israel Teaching Letter*. It is my hope that the information contained herein will be disseminated over and over again, whether through the spoken word or by photocopying and redistributing these teachings. “For out of Zion shall go forth the law, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3).

