

To the American Jewish Community: The Synagogue Shooter Was Not a Christian

I don't care what this demented young man claims. I don't care how much Scripture he can quote or how much Christianese he uses. The man is not a Christian. And I can say that on the authority of the New Testament. Jesus Himself deplores such heinous, murderous, cowardly acts.

How can I be so sure?

Jesus taught us to judge a tree by its fruits.

James (actually, Jacob) wrote that we must prove our faith by our works and that faith without accompanying works was dead.

And John (*Yochanan* in Hebrew) said that "no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15b).

The man is a murderer. He does not have eternal life. The New Testament is clear. "In this the children of God and the children of the devil are revealed: Whoever does not live in righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother" (1 John 3:10).

It is one thing to be a repentant murderer. It is one thing to commit a terrible crime—even to take another life—and to ask God for forgiveness, turning to Him in contrition and welcoming the legal penalty for your misdeeds.

It is another thing to murder innocent people in Jesus' name. Such a person denies the very faith they profess.

As soon as I heard about the shooting, I emailed a dear friend who is a Chabad rabbi, expressing my pain and grief. (The shooting in Poway, California was in a Chabad synagogue.)

We are staunch theological opponents. I am a Jew for Jesus (not organizationally but by faith), and he works for Jews for Judaism.

I am considered a missionary, and he a counter-missionary.

We work tirelessly across the theological divide, I telling Jews that Jesus is our Messiah and he urging Jews to turn away from Jesus and embrace traditional Judaism.

But we are fellow Jews, fellow human beings and friends.

And as one who lives in both the Jewish and Christian world, I wanted to reach out to him, knowing how pained he would be by the news.

But I had not yet read the shooter's manifesto, a screed that repeated virtually all the major antisemitic tropes. A screed that justified the shedding of Jewish blood in Jesus' name. A screed that quoted the New Testament in support of murderous hatred.

This only heightens the pain and the grief.

Once again, a false Christian brings mockery to the name of Jesus and the Christian faith.

Once again, a hypocritical believer feeds into the lie that the role of Christians is to kill the assassins of Christ, those evil, subversive Jews.

Once again, the Jewish community associates bloodshed and hatred with the name of Jesus.

How awful, deplorable and evil.

The bloodshed itself is horrific enough. But to associate that bloodshed with the one who laid down his life for his enemies is to take the evil to another level.

In the words of the Russian Christian philosopher Nicolai

Berdyaev, reflecting on church history, "Christians set themselves between the Messiah and the Jews, hiding from the latter the authentic image of the Savior."

Or, as expressed by Franz Delitzsch, an 19th-century German Old Testament scholar, "The Church still owes the Jews the actual proof of Christianity's truth. Is it surprising that the Jewish people are such an insensitive and barren field for the gospel? The church itself has drenched it in blood and then heaped stones upon it." (For much more on this, see the new edition of *Our Hands Are Stained with Blood*.)

In recent weeks, I have repeatedly warned professing Christians that their anti-Semitic words will lead to violence against Jews, no matter how much they repudiate violence. (See [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).)

For saying this I get blasted as a Zionist-shill, a Jew-loving hypocrite, a false Christian, a deceiver, a misleader and much more.

So be it. The alarm must be sounded. The warning must be given.

You can renounce violence all day long. But when you constantly demonize a people, when you make them responsible for all the evils in society, when you claim they are a direct threat to your personal safety and well-being, violence will necessarily follow. It always does.

We hear this day and night.

The Jews want to take over the world and behead Christians. (Yes, this is actually being taught.)

The Jews have enslaved the entire world in debt.

The Jews are moral subversives who destroy every society where they live.

The Jews are evil. No Jew is innocent. The "Jewish problem" must be addressed!

How can this not lead to violence?

There is a new wave of "Christian" anti-Semitism rising rapidly in America, something I have not seen in my lifetime.

It behooves all true Christians to separate themselves from this dangerous trend.

That means renouncing erroneous theologies that lead to Jew-hatred as well as renouncing the standard anti-Semitic lies and tropes.

And may every true Christian in America demonstrate true Christian love to America's Jewish community.

It is a community that is far from perfect, like every other community. It is a community that has its strengths and its failings, like every other community.

But it is a community loved by God and deserving of full protection under the law.

No Jew in America should ever have to worry about their safety simply because they are Jews.

As expressed by George Washington in his letter to a synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, our country was to reflect, "A Government which to bigotry gives no sanction, to persecution no assistance but generously affording to All liberty of conscience, and immunities of citizenship:—deeming every one, of whatever nation, tongue or language equal parts of the great Governmental Machine."

Yes, "May the Children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while everyone shall sit under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid."

With broken hearts, we pray, may it be so!

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