

This Is Why Anti-Semitism Continues to Thrive After 2,500 Years

In an exclusive interview with Charisma News, Susan Michael, USA Director of International Christian Embassy Jerusalem weighs in on the tragic shooting at the synagogue in Pittsburgh over the weekend in which 11 people were killed by a gunman.

C: This was another senseless attack on a section of the Jewish community. None of the victims were under the age of 54, and one was 97. Can you share your thoughts on this tragedy?

SM: It's almost indescribable. It's just reprehensible. It's so disconcerting over the state of our society and the anger and the hatred that is happening in our day. To think this could happen in America is very upsetting. For those of us born in this country, we know the goodness of the American people and American society. It's a real wake-up call for us.

C: It seems like the authorities could have seen this coming with the shooter's posts on social media. These situations seem to be prevalent these days. Do you think something could have been done to prevent this?

SM: Hindsight is always 20-20. What definitely could have been done was the shutting down of a website such as this Gab social media platform that allows for a degree of freedom of speech that is just not allowed on other platforms. That means that there were regular anti-Semitic posting and these anti-Semitic postings enable the building of followers. Anti-Semites are able to come together and share conspiracy theories and share hatred and build a movement. That's what should have been stopped, and not just by the Pittsburgh or

Pennsylvania authorities but by our federal government.

C: This was obviously a case of blatant anti-Semitism, judging from the shooter's social media posts. Why does this hatred of the Jewish people keep on spreading worldwide?

SM: It has been coined by historian Robert Wistrich as the longest hatred. Anti-Semitism has been alive in the world for almost as long as the Jewish people have been here, for well over 2,500 years. The first documented case of anti-Semitism was found in the Bible in the book of Esther. What happens is that anti-Semitism never really goes away. It just changes its face and comes back in a new form. So the form of anti-Semitism that took place in ancient history during the empires, that changed under Christian history because it became religious, and then after that began to weaken, it came back as a racial form, and that was under the Nazis. Hitler carried out his plan of genocide based on racist theories of the Jewish people. And today, while those ancient or older forms of anti-Semitism are no longer acceptable, today what we have is a political form. It is against the Jewish nation. But it's nothing but classic, old anti-Semitism because of the demonization of the people of Israel, which is a subset of the Jewish people. Based on theories and demonization of Israel, we will have crazy people go and attack Jews anywhere in the world. That shows it is simply classic anti-Semitism. We have to recognize that today's form is the anti-Israel form. We have to learn to recognize it and stand against it everywhere we find it because it is every bit as dangerous as the racial theories of the Nazis.

C: Anti-Semitism exists in the United States, but it hasn't reared its ugly head much in this form of violence.

SM: No, this is the worst attack on American soil toward the Jewish people. But it does show how some of the rhetoric, whether it is found on the far left or the far right, is building. It's building to a crescendo so much so that it's

building to this size of an attack. That's what is so upsetting and why it should be a wake-up call to all of us to stop this evil rhetoric on both sides.

C: What does the ICEJ do on an ongoing basis to help fight this hatred of the Jewish people?

SM: We educate at every turn. We have an educational website call . It is built to defend these lies against Israel and the lies against Christians that support Israel. We have a partnership with Yad Vashem in Israel. Yad Vashem is the memorial to the six million that died in the Holocaust. They also have an educational wing. We do educational seminars for Christian leaders and Christian educators where they come to Jerusalem for a week, learn the issues of the Holocaust and how to educate our people on those very tough issues. We take a stand when things like this happen with statements, and it's something we're going to have to focus more on in the United States. We have actually helped the Jews leave France because anti-Semitism has gotten so bad. We have helped them make Aliyah to Israel. Let's hope that doesn't happen here in the United States. More and more we are seeing this growing menace of anti-Semitism here, and it will become a growing focus of our branch here in the United States.

C: Talk about the work the ICEJ is continually doing to help bring Christians and the Jewish community together.

SM: We've been very involved in building Jewish-Christian relations and developing a whole new relationship with the Jewish people based on respect and honor, which is what the apostle Paul told us should be our approach to the Jewish people and honoring them as the root of our faith. We've been teaching Christians all around the world to do just that.

C: What can Christians do to help in this time of sadness?

SM: A simple thing. If you have a local Jewish community, just send a note to the synagogue to the rabbi and let them know

that you are very upset about this and that you stand with them and are praying for their well-being. A lot of synagogues are having memorial services this week. Show up, just as a friend, not really to say anything but simply to show that you are standing with them and are mourning with them. Little things like that go a long way in an upsetting time like this.