

## Christians and the Holocaust – What Should Be Our Response?

Are you old enough to remember the cheesy movie from the 1970s about the college guy who married the working girl who dies of cancer? *Love Story* was the “chick flick” movie of the decade. The movie also has one of the dumbest lines in cinematic history – “Love means never having to say you’re sorry.” **Actually**, if you really love someone than you will find yourself apologizing a lot as the last thing you would want to do is to hurt or dishonor someone you claim to love.

Recently, Tzedakah Ministries wrote a blog post entitled “Answering the Unanswerable” (<http://mysterysolvedwithmessiahjesus.wordpress.com/2012/05/22/answering-the-unanswerable>). The argument made in the blog was that the actions and/or inactions of alleged Christians and churches during the Holocaust make the task of Jewish evangelism very difficult today. The response was interesting and basically revolved around two issues – (1) **true Christians** did not participate in the Holocaust and so our slate is clean and (2) why should we apologize for something that was done more than half a century ago?



I wrote back a rather long response to one of the emails but I have struggled with what to say to the other email. Therefore, and because I believe many of you have the same questions, Tzedakah Ministries will use this edition of *Tzedakah Times* to try and answer this most difficult of questions.

It is correct that **true Christians** could never have participated in such a heinous action that we now call the Holocaust (aka Shoah). Caspar ten Boom (Corrie’s father) once stated that the Germans would be judged for touching the apple of God’s eye. He was a true believer in Jesus and he died after being arrested for protecting and hiding untold numbers of Dutch Jewish people.

However, one has to realize a couple of important historical/sociological principles. First, many who claimed to be Christian did not participate in the brutality at Auschwitz, they instead did nothing at all. They were apathetic to the need of other humans, specifically God’s Chosen People. Their apathy in many ways was as great of a sin as those who fired the bullets or released the Zyklon-B. They could have done something and they did not. They were bystanders and for their actions, we must apologize.

Second, Christians today can rightfully argue that true churches and believers love the Jewish people and would never harm them. We can argue that those organizations which called themselves a church or

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## Christians and the Holocaust

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people who professed to be church leaders were the farthest thing from a church or pastor as can be imagined. However, and this is crucial for you to understand, this offers no comfort at all to the Jewish people. In defending ourselves, we only appear to be justifying the actions or the inactions of the past. This ultimately then leads God's Chosen Ones to push back against the Gospel because they do not wish to be guilty of "finishing what Hitler began". One can argue that Hitler was not a Christian but that does little to soothe the loss of a person who lost everyone in the Holocaust by the hands of murderers who wore a belt buckle that states "Gott mit uns (God with us)."

Today, unfortunately, many Christian denominations have reacted to the horrors of the Shoah by either doing nothing at all in regards to Jewish evangelism or making official statements denouncing any call for Jewish missions. At best, this is falling prey to the heresy of dual covenantalism. At worst, this is unintentionally but, nevertheless, the most atrocious action of anti-Semitism ever committed by any alleged Christian organization. This response will condemn Jewish people to an eternity without Messiah Jesus.

Therefore, Tzedakah Ministries hopes that you will join with this ministry in a simple pledge (see text box). A simple pledge that acknowledges the errors of Christian past but hopes that a simple three word statement will open a door for Jewish people to begin to at least hear the message of Jesus the Jewish Messiah. Will you join us in this pledge? Will you "swallow your pride" for the sake of one Jewish soul? Please email your affirmation of the pledge to the ministry at [info@tzedakahministries.org](mailto:info@tzedakahministries.org).

We cannot change the past. We can only perform actions in the present that will prayerfully change the eternal future of the Jewish people. It is not too much to ask when one considers what Jesus was willing to do for our salvation. Shalom. God bless.

**IF I HAVE TO  
APOLOGIZE TO EVERY  
JEWISH SOUL IN THE  
WORLD FOR THE SIN  
OF CHRISTIAN APATHY  
DURING THE  
HOLOCAUST, I WILL!**

***Acts 20:24,***

***Amy Downey***

**ALSO IN THIS ISSUE ...**

**THE JEWISH SORROW OF TISH B'AV**

**BOOK REVIEW ... *UNORTHODOX: THE SCANDALOUS REJECTION OF MY HASIDIC ROOTS* (DEBORAH FELDMAN)**

## The Jewish Sorrow of Tish B'Av



A dear friend of Tzedakah Ministries was recently traveling in Holland/Netherlands and sent the ministry the picture to your left. By all appearances this is a non-descript building that appears to be any other building one might find along the canals of Amsterdam.

However, this building is different. This building once protected eight Jewish souls during World War II until Anne Frank and her family was arrested in August 1944. The story of this “Secret Annex” has become immortal due to the publication of her diary, a young woman who died shortly before her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday of Typhus at Bergen-Belsen.

However, the Holocaust is only the apex of what the Jewish people have suffered throughout the ages. Pogroms in Russia, rampaging Crusaders in the Holy Land/Europe, the Spanish Inquisition, and the two destructions of the Jewish Temple are only a few of the horrors that have occurred throughout history. Interestingly enough, many of these tragedies all occurred on the same day – Tish B'Av.

Tish B'Av is officially the ninth day of the month of Av on the Jewish calendar. Tish B'Av is also officially one of the most heartbreaking of anniversaries for the Jewish people as both Solomon and Herod's Temple were destroyed on this day. In addition, the decree for the expulsion of Jews from England occurred on this date in 1290 as well as the expulsion for Spanish Jews in 1492. Finally, at least for now, the beginning of the deportation from the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942 was on Tish B'Av. Additional information on the sadness and loss of Tish B'Av is available on the internet as well.

Therefore, Tish B'Av is observed by fasting and prayers. This day which is actually a culmination of three weeks of remembrance is considered a day of tragedy and loss. There appears to be no opportunity for joy or happiness during this time period as the losses have just been too great throughout history.

However, I would like to propose that this might be the perfect time period in which to share the joy and peace that one might have through a personal relationship with Messiah Jesus. For is there a better time to share hope and promise than when someone is overwhelmed by the memories of losses and pain? This need for security in an increasingly insecure world could be an anchor for a Jewish soul that needs possibility when nothing seems possible.

Anne Frank and the other seven occupants of the “Secret Annex” were arrested on August 4, 1944. Is it mere coincidence then that the 70<sup>th</sup> remembrance of the arrest in 2014 will be on Tish B'Av?



## **Book Review ... *Unorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots* (Deborah Feldman)**

Deborah Feldman wrote a book of startling honesty and heartbreaking loss. One's heart will ache for her while reading her life story. One's mind will be blown away by the difficult words she found on the pages of her book. Tzedakah Ministries also hopes that that the reader will walk away with a renewed burden for Jewish evangelism and for Deborah Feldman herself to find the peace she is seeking through the *Sar Shalom* (Prince of Peace) – Jesus the Messiah.

Deborah Feldman grew up in the Satmar community in Williamsburg (Brooklyn), New York. Satmars are Ultra-Orthodox who are anti-Zionists and believe that the modern state of Israel is an apostasy as only the Messiah can re-establish the nation. Some Satmars have even gone as far as to support rallies against the nation of Israel (<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/152805>). They are in many cases isolated from the world and if one walks in their neighborhood, stares and whispers will follow you until you leave their unique environs of Orthodoxy and legalism.

Deborah begins her story as a child of divorced parents that is being raised by her grandparents. She maintains that her father is mentally challenged and her mother was unaware of this fact until the arrangement for marriage (*shidduch*) was finalized. Her British mother leaves the community shortly after Deborah's birth and we later learn in the book that her mother is living a homosexual lifestyle.

Deborah as a young Jewish girl is married in a similar arrangement and thus the crux of her story begins. The marriage is difficult from the very beginning and only the birth of her son brings her any joy, but only after a period of what we might call post-partum depression. She ultimately leaves the Satmar community and her life story becomes a major best seller – albeit not without controversy! Articles and blogs are written denouncing her and the allegations she makes. She is a pariah among her own people.

However, and ultimately, Deborah and untold numbers of current and former Orthodox women need Messiah Jesus. He is the only one who can answer the ache of their heart. He is the only one who can provide the meaning and purpose to life that one can tell that she longs for in the pages of her book.

Who will reach out to her with the Gospel? An email has been sent but as of yet no response has been received. Perhaps, God is waiting for someone reading this review to do it. So ... will you?

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