



CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO MOVEMENTS AND EFFORTS FOR GOOD WILL AND BETTER UNDERSTANDING

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I. A STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM IN THE UNITED STATES

A. *Its Historical Setting*

A study of the historical sources of the United States since Colonial times reveals that this country has intermittently established a record of intolerant manifestations against many of its minority groups. On various occasions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, state legislatures passed discriminatory and oppressive laws against Catholics, Jews, and Quakers. However, following the successful War of Independence, the new Constitution of the United States gave written assurance of religious freedom to all Protestant groups, Jews, and Catholics through its first amendment which provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Despite its own commitment, the Federal Constitution did not prohibit the enactment of discriminatory laws by individual state legislatures. Several states, as a result, retained well into the nineteenth century Protestant state churches and legal discriminations against Jews and Catholics. Eventually most of these state religious disabilities disappeared.

Moreover, the constitutional guarantees of religious liberty did not prevent the development in the United States during the nineteenth century of a number of anti-alien movements with Catholics, for the most part, as the objects of attack. Economic rivalries and political fears gave rise to the Know-Nothing Party and the American Protective Association during the second half of the last century. These organizations, before their dissolution, waged bitter campaigns of hatred and terrorism against the Catholics of this country.

B. *Prejudice Against the Jew*

The Jews of the United States did not become an important factor in the field of intergroup relationships until after 1880. Just prior to that year, there were only 250,000 Jews in this country. Whatever unfavorable treatment they were accorded took the form, for the most

part, of social discrimination. After 1880, however, the problem of Christian-Jewish relations became aggravated through the unprecedented immigration of millions of Jews to these shores from European countries where they were politically and economically oppressed. In view of the latent anti-alien feeling that is known to exist in America, and which is expressed periodically, the arrival of so many Jews seemed to lay the foundations for later difficulty.

Following the World War, the 1920's witnessed the first open attacks against the Jews of the United States in modern times. They, along with Catholics and Negroes, became the objects of a campaign of hostility and calumny that was directed against them by a revival of the old Ku Klux Klan. Within a few years, the Ku Klux Klan began to lose ground and eventually lost its influence. However, following the financial debacle of 1929 and the subsequent years of depression, the population of the United States was once more warned against the "Jewish menace" by a number of anti-Semitic organizations and publications that came into existence. Thus, during the past 57 years, a Christian-Jewish problem, which requires correct analysis and adequate measures for its solution, has evolved in the United States.

II. THE CAUSES ASSIGNED FOR ILL WILL BETWEEN CHRISTIAN AND JEW

As the Christian-Jewish problem in the United States entered its more serious stages, there were initiated at the same time a number of efforts and movements to bring about good will and better understanding between Christian and Jew. In order to essay a satisfactory evaluation of these efforts and movements, it was necessary to determine the extent to which they dealt with one or more of the basic causes which have been assigned as responsible for the existence of a Christian-Jewish problem. The following are the principal causes of this problem as they were revealed by an examination of written sources and by the results of a questionnaire which was sent to 200 communal leaders in as many communities in the United States:

A. Religious

One of the accepted grounds for dislike of the Jew by the Christian is the theological picture contained in Christian religious sources of Jewish responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus. Many students of the problem are convinced that the story of Calvary, as well as the rejection by the Jews of Christ's Messiahship, forms the basis of all anti-Semitism.

B. Socio-Psychological

A number of sociologists, who have adopted the techniques of modern psychology in their approach to the problems of group conflicts, trace the origin of antipathy for the Jew to the same sources that account for all our dislikes of people who differ from us. We are not born with prejudices. There are no instinctive prejudices. We acquire them from the accepted patterns of thought and behavior in our im-

mediate social environment. From this environment, we learn to accept certain stereotypes of emotions about another group; and then are moved to pre-judge all individuals of that differing group in accordance with our fixed ideas and emotions about them.

C. Economic

A school of thought has arisen in modern times which advances proof for the conviction that the substratum of Christian hostility toward the Jew is economic in nature. It cites numerous historical instances of persecution of the Jew by Christians in the name of religion as a means of cloaking their real desire to eliminate a competitor in business. Evidence is also adduced to show that in the contemporary world economic depressions, with their consequent social and political dislocations, coincide with attacks upon the Jew.

D. Racial

In recent years, increasing emphasis has been accorded by individuals and nations to the rôle that racial origin plays in determining the physical, moral, and intellectual qualities of a given people. Disciples of race theories have catalogued the groups of mankind in terms of their superior and inferior sources and characteristics. The Jews, we are informed by these theorists, belong to a congenitally inferior group and hence should not be permitted to associate in any way with their superiors.

E. Results of the Questionnaire

The results of 163 responses to the questionnaire that was sent to 200 communities indicated that, in the judgment of the respondents, matters involving economic considerations, social dislike, religious disagreements, and racial differences, mentioned in the order of their importance, are responsible for the presence of a Christian-Jewish problem in the United States.

III. INDIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS TO GOOD WILL

While a number of formal attempts have been made to establish improved relationships between Christian and Jew, the history of the United States reveals three major trends in matters pertaining to inter-group associations that constitute an important and hopeful basis for all agencies of good will. These salutary developments in our part are:

A. The Legal Separation of Church and State

The absence of a state religion in this country since its inception as a nation has gone far to remove or ameliorate those areas of difficulty which trouble the internal life of other countries that do not have a long tradition, if any, of religious freedom. While the United States has witnessed periodic rises of nativism, no religious group has acquired legal status or the right to impose its will upon the secular phases of our national existence. In practice, the American ideal of equality for

each individual, regardless of race, color, or creed, is frequently more honored in the breach than in the observance. However, the guarantees of personal liberty contained in our Constitution have provided and sustained a moral atmosphere in this country which has rendered impossible here, until now, the excesses committed against minority groups in other parts of the world.

B. The Official Humanitarianism of the United States

Until shortly after the close of the World War, when serious economic problems compelled a change in policy, the United States was for decades the haven of refuge for millions of men and women who were the victims of every type of persecution in their native lands. In addition, on numerous occasions, our government has intervened in behalf of persecuted Jews in other countries. It went so far as to break a trade treaty with Russia in 1911 because of the latter's discriminations against Jewish holders of American passports who were travelling within its borders.

C. The Democratic Ideals of Public Education

The United States has become a land made up of people who have immigrated here from practically every country in the world. These people have brought with them diverse customs, traditions, and religious beliefs. Their presence has inevitably become a challenge to every implication of the democratic way of life. Many of our leading philosophers and educators have accepted this challenge in their definition of the aims and in their development of the content of public school education. They have discovered that the breadth of democracy includes a place for differences, that in America each culture group may find itself respected and appreciated through the contributions which it can make to the well-being of the country as a whole.

IV. GOOD-WILL ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

A. Good-Will Literature

The writing of books in behalf of the Jew represents the initial efforts on the part of individual Christians to improve the status of Christian-Jewish relations. As a result of these efforts, there has come into existence during the past 50 years a modest library of good-will literature. A careful examination and evaluation of this type of literature has revealed that most of the books which it encompasses have been written in an uncritical fashion. They abound in friendly exaggerations in behalf of the Jew which are not only ungrounded in fact but potentially dangerous. While a few of the books were found to be valuable in their approach and content, the greater number demonstrated the unhelpful results which issue from the activities of untrained minds in a field that demands the maximum of understanding and careful treatment.

B. Good-Will Organizations

In 1924, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America authorized the formation of a Committee on Good-Will Relations between Jews and Christians in the United States. This Committee on Good Will continued to function until 1927 when, because of financial and other difficulties, it recommended that its work be taken over by individual committees in local communities throughout the United States who would finance their own activities.

As a result of the initiative taken by the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America and through the active co-operation of its members with a number of Jews and Catholics, the National Conference of Jews and Christians was organized in the year 1927-1928. Among its aims the National Conference of Jews and Christians includes that of promoting justice, amity, understanding, and co-operation among Jews, Catholics, and Protestants in the United States.

In attempting to achieve its purposes, the National Conference of Jews and Christians has stimulated the establishment of interfaith round-tables in many communities of the United States under the supervision of local committees. It has sponsored seminars on group relations in cities and college campuses. It has inaugurated a number of Institutes on Human Relations and introduced the practice of sending minister-rabbi-priest teams on occasion to various communities and educational institutions. It has also published a number of pamphlets and books in explanation and extension of its program.

The evaluation of the work of the National Conference of Jews and Christians was predicated in largest measure on that phase of its activities which is more or less continuous in individual communities of the United States. A questionnaire was sent to 200 correspondents of the National Conference of Jews and Christians, in as many cities, who are in close touch with the work of this organization in their respective communities. One hundred sixty-three replies were received to this questionnaire. In addition, a separate questionnaire was sent to the leading rabbis of 20 cities having large Jewish populations. Fifteen responses were received to this questionnaire.

The results of both questionnaires show that the work of the National Conference of Jews and Christians has made little progress in the large cities of the United States where most of the Jewish population is concentrated. Concerning the nature of the individuals interested in good-will activities it was determined that the leadership is centered for the most part in the hands of liberal Protestant clergymen and rabbis of the liberal wings of Judaism. As to the number of good-will meetings held in the various communities studied, it was established that such assemblages are usually held at infrequent intervals. These meetings, when convoked, were in the majority of cases initiated by Protestant or Jewish clergymen. Also from the standpoint of the clergy, the average good-will meeting includes a major number of Protestant ministers, a few rabbis, and, on occasion, one or a few Catholic priests.

The findings of the questionnaires also indicated that less than 40 per cent of the communities studied have organized their good-will committees on a permanent basis. The majority of the committees

have apparently met once or twice and then ceased to exist. With reference to a follow-up program, more than 78 per cent of the communities reported that they did not project their good-will activities beyond occasional meetings. Not many committees were able to interest agencies other than religious in their program. Only on rare occasions were the local educational agencies enlisted in behalf of good-will activities. While union religious services were reported as being held on occasion in 58 per cent of the communities, the available evidence points to the conclusion that the participants were for the most part representatives of the liberal groups of Protestantism and Judaism.

With regard to suggestions for the increasing effectiveness of good-will work, the majority of the respondents favored the indirect approach of co-operation between Jews and non-Jews in the furtherance of common civic tasks and the realization of common ideals. As a result of this study, the conclusion is reached that, while the motivations of the National Conference of Jews and Christians are unquestionably commendable, its program, from the standpoints of extent, continuity, and depth of influence, has been largely ineffectual.

C. Organizations Which Contribute Indirectly to Good Will

From the standpoint of their contributions to the improvement of Christian-Jewish relations, an analysis was made of the following organizations: The National Committee for Religion and Welfare Recovery, The American Committee on Religious Rights and Minorities, The Fellowship of Reconciliation, World Conference for International Peace Through Religion, Foreign Language Information Service, Young Men's Christian Association, The Jewish Welfare Board, The Jewish Chautauqua Society, The B'nai Brith, The American Jewish Committee, United Jewish Laymen's Committee, The Church of the Air, and *The American Hebrew*.

The conclusions derived from the study of these organizations indicate that there are many groups in the United States which are seeking to preserve the values of religion and democracy. These groups, some of them Jewish, some of them non-Jewish, and some of them combinations of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, apparently recognize the need of co-operation among all faiths in dealing with the problems which they share in common. In this way, the opportunities for mutual understanding and good will among differing groups are enhanced.

While a few of the organizations listed have attempted to achieve their objectives through concrete educational projects, most of them still place their main reliance on abstract appeal either through spoken or written word. Furthermore, the problem that confronts these groups and others that may be engaged in kindred tasks is to devise means of engaging the interest and participation of millions of American citizens who do not have the opportunities for interfaith fellowship that is presently vouchsafed unto a select body of leaders of the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faiths.

D. Specific Projects and Studies in the Field of Good Will

In connection with this study, an investigation was made of studies and projects that deal concretely with one or another of the causes which have been assigned for the presence of a Christian-Jewish problem. On the religious level, a number of inquiries were examined that deal with the education of clergymen, the equipment of religious school teachers, and the materials of religious school instruction. These inquiries indicate the need of better educational background for clergymen, particularly in view of the conclusions reached by an authoritative source that nearly half the present Protestant ministry has had neither a college nor a seminary training, and that less than a third have had both. It was also found that religious school teachers need more resources to cope successfully with the problems of interfaith suspicions and prejudices. Religious school textbooks also have to be re-written with a more positive and appreciative approach to differing faiths.

In connection with the field of race relations as it touches upon the problem of Christian-Jewish associations, an effort has been initiated in this direction by the Commission on Intercultural Education of the Progressive Education Association. This group has conducted a series of interesting experiments in a number of public schools with a view of developing more desirable relationships among the various groups that make up American life.

The economic reasons for Christian-Jewish misunderstandings have received very little attention. The Jews themselves have commenced to think in terms of economic reorientation. Two of their organizations have published studies to guide Jewish youth in the selection of vocations that are not overcrowded and that do not place restrictions on their admission because of their Jewish ties.

V. CONCLUSIONS

A. The presence of a number of efforts and movements in behalf of good will and better understanding between Christian and Jew represents a comparatively new and hopeful development in the field of human relations in the United States.

B. Thus far, the agencies advancing the cause of good will and better understanding between Christian and Jew have achieved little success in dealing effectively with the manifold aspects of the problem which confronts them. They have only touched the surface of those areas in our American life which generate suspicion, prejudice, and hatred against minority groups.

C. It has been shown in this study that the Christian-Jewish problem does not exist in a vacuum which makes it amenable to private and individual treatment. It exists within the confines of a society whose many forces influence it for good or for evil at all times. Thus, it becomes the task of all concerned to condition these forces favorably in behalf of better intergroup relationships. In this connection, our educational and religious institutions can make valuable contributions.

D. Ultimately the possibilities of a desirable solution of the Christian-Jewish problem depend to a large extent upon the maintenance of our democratic institutions and the development of a social order that will decrease or eliminate the antagonisms of economic competition.

VITA

Bable Benedict Glazer was born in Dallas, Texas, August 18, 1902. He received his elementary and high school education in Montreal, Canada. In 1922, he received the A.B. degree from the University of Cincinnati and the M.A. degree from the same institution in 1926. In 1926, he received the ordination of rabbi from the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati. From 1926 to 1927, he served as regional rabbi of Pennsylvania. He was assistant rabbi of Rodef Shalom Congregation, Pittsburgh, from 1927 to 1934. In September, 1932, he was enrolled in the Graduate School of the University of Pittsburgh. Since 1934, he has been on the rabbinical staff of Temple Emanu-El, New York City.

