



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Preserving American Jewish History

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 22, Folder 7, Graham, Billy - Key 73, 1973.

BILLY GRAHAM

Montreat, N.C. 28757
February 28, 1973

Dear Marc:

Enclosed is a statement that I am releasing to the press relative to the concerns over KEY '73. I am hopeful that this statement will help in part to clarify the problems that have arisen.

You may use this statement in any way that you see fit.

With warmest personal greetings, I am

Cordially,



Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
The American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

STATEMENT BY DR. BILLY GRAHAM:

The reports about a growing misunderstanding in Christian-Jewish relationships over KEY '73 have become a source of concern to me. In order to help ease some of these tensions, I want to explain my own position. While I have not been directly involved in the developing organization of KEY '73, I have from the beginning publicly supported its concept.

First, as an evangelist, I am interested in establishing contact with all men concerning personal faith in Jesus Christ. Implicit in any belief is the right of sharing it with others. The message that God is love, prompts any recipient of that love to declare it to others.

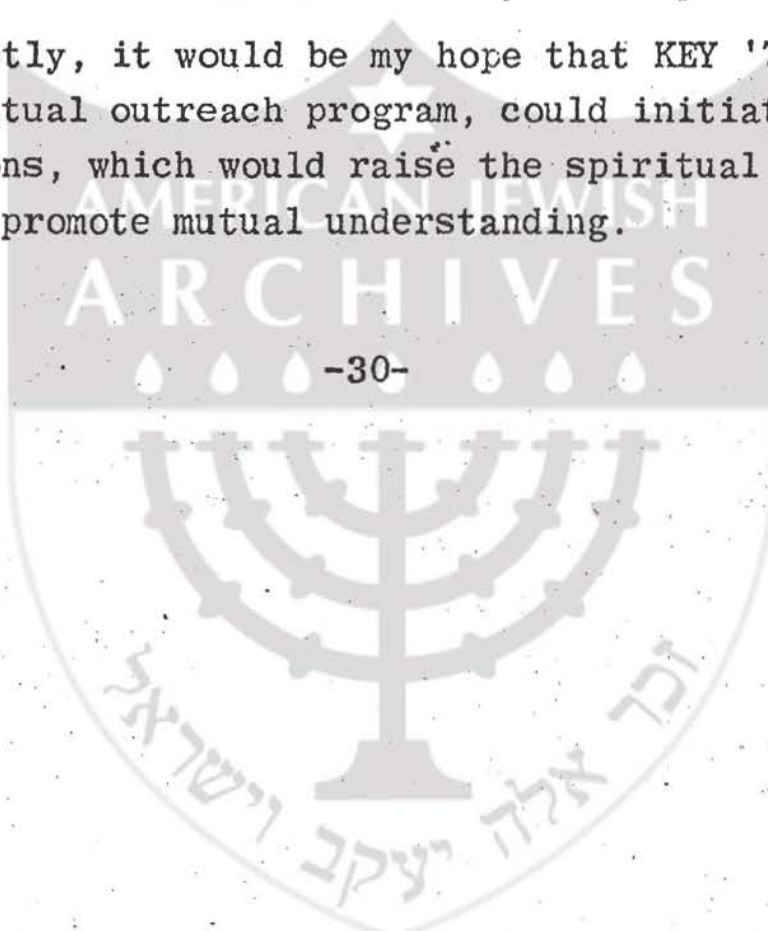
Secondly, just as Judaism frowns on proselyting that is coercive, or that seeks to commit men against their will, so do I. Gimmicks, coercion, and intimidation have had no place in my evangelistic efforts, certainly not in historic Biblical evangelism. The American genius is that without denying anyone an expression of their convictions, all are nevertheless partners in our society. The Gospel's method is persuasive invitation, not coercion.

Where any group has used an overbearing witness to seek conversions, the Bible calls it "zeal without knowledge". I understand that it is the purpose of KEY '73 to call all men to Christ without singling out any specific religious or ethnic group.

Thirdly, along with most evangelical Christians, I believe God has always had a special relationship with the Jewish people, as St. Paul suggests in the Book of Romans. In light of that I have never felt called to direct my evangelistic efforts to Jews or any other particular group.

Lastly, it would be my hope that KEY '73, and any other spiritual outreach program, could initiate nation-wide conversations, which would raise the spiritual level of our people and promote mutual understanding.

Feb. 28/73



STATEMENT BY RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM, NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE IN RESPONSE TO DR. BILLY
GRAHAM

We regard the statement by Dr. Billy Graham clarifying his views on Key 73 and the Jewish people as one of timely significance. It is an important and constructive contribution to helping overcome the misunderstanding and stress that have developed between many Christians and Jews in the absence of any policy statement by Key 73 leadership regarding proselytizing efforts aimed at the Jewish community. The views of Dr. Graham assume particular importance in light of the findings of our latest American Jewish Committee survey which documents that a growing number of incidents are taking place in public high school and colleges in which Jewish young people are being subjected to psychological harassment, intimidation and social ostracism by fervid evangelists and missions-to-the-Jews groups who are using Key 73 as a sanction for their disruptive activities.

In our judgment, the statement by Dr. Graham breaks new ground on several critical levels of relationships between evangelical Christians and Jews, a development that is especially significant in light of Dr. Graham's position as the leading evangelist in our nation and, indeed, in the world today. To our knowledge this is the first time that Dr. Graham has publicly affirmed his belief that "God has always had a special relationship with the Jewish people"

based on St. Paul's teachings that God's promises and covenant with the Jews are eternal and not subject to recall. This is also the first time that Dr. Graham has made clear that he does not direct his "evangelistic efforts towards the Jews or any other particular group." Dr. Graham also articulates his commitment to American pluralism in which all religious groups are partners in our society, a reality which some evangelical views would undermine. And, finally, Dr. Graham declares his opposition to all forms of coercion, intimidation, and proselytizing which is a valuable clarification in view of some episodes that have developed in connection with evangelizing activities in several communities in the United States.

Beyond that, Dr. Graham's statement is of significance in that it will undoubtedly give impetus to other Christian leaders in many parts of the country who are beginning to make clear that Key 73 is aimed at reaching uncommitted Christians and has no intentions of proselytizing the Jewish community. Paradoxically, the emergence of a majority Christian consensus in the United States that abandons the proselytization of the Jewish community may be one of the lasting achievements of this national dialogue over Key 73.

PRESS RELEASE BY DR. BILLY GRAHAM

The reports about a growing misunderstanding in Christian-Jewish relationships over Key 73 have become a source of concern to me. In order to help ease some of these tensions, I want to explain my own position. While I have not been directly involved in the developing organization of Key 73, I have from the beginning publicly supported its concept.

First, as an evangelist, I am interested in establishing contact with all men concerning personal faith in Jesus Christ. Implicit in any belief, is the right of sharing it with others. The message that God is love, prompts any recipient of that love to declare it to others.

Secondly, just as Judaism frowns on proselytizing that is coercive, or that seeks to commit men against their will, so do I. Gimmicks, coercion and intimidation have had no place in my evangelistic efforts, certainly not in historic biblical evangelism. The American genius is that without denying anyone an expression of their convictions, all are nevertheless partners in our society. The Gospel's method is persuasive invitation, not coercion.

Where any group has used an overbearing witness to seek conversions, the Bible calls it "zeal without knowledge." I understand that it is the purpose of Key 73 to call all men to Christ without

singling out any specific religious or ethnic group.

Thirdly, along with most evangelical Christians, I believe God has always had a special relationship with the Jewish people, as St. Paul suggests in the Book of Romans. In light of that, I have never felt called to direct my evangelistic efforts to Jews or any other particular group.

Lastly, it would be my hope that Key 73, and any other spiritual outreach program could initiate nationwide conversation, which would raise the spiritual level of our people and promote mutual understanding.



RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

DOMESTIC SERVICE

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THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 1973

'PERSUASIVE INVITATION, NOT COERCION'
GRAHAM'S METHOD FOR EVANGELISM

By Religious News Service (3-1-73)

MONTREAT, N.C. (RNS) -- Evangelist Billy Graham has described the Gospel's method of evangelism as "persuasive invitation, not coercion," in a statement issued here to ease tensions that have arisen in Christian-Jewish relations over Key 73.

He declared that although the right of sharing a belief with others is "implicit in any belief," he frowns on proselytizing that "seeks to commit men against their will."

The evangelist also pointed out that in his evangelistic efforts, he has never singled out Jews or any other groups for special attention.

Full text of Mr. Graham's statement follows:

"The reports about a growing misunderstanding in Christian-Jewish relationships over Key 73 have become a source of concern to me. In order to help ease some of these tensions, I want to explain my own position.

"While I have not been directly involved in the developing organization of Key 73, I have from the beginning publicly supported its concept.

"First, as an evangelist, I am interested in establishing contact with all men concerning personal faith in Jesus Christ. Implicit in any belief is the right of sharing it with others. The message that God is love prompts any recipient of that love to declare it to others.

"Secondly, just as Judaism frowns on proselytizing that is coercive, or that seeks to commit men against their will, so do I. Gimmicks, coercion, and intimidation have had no place in my evangelistic efforts, certainly not in historic Biblical evangelism. The American genius is that without denying anyone an expression of their convictions all are nevertheless partners in our society. The Gospel's method is persuasive invitation, not coercion.

"Where any group has used an overbearing witness to seek conversions the Bible calls it 'zeal without knowledge.' I understand that it is the purpose of Key 73 to call all men to Christ without singling out any specific religious or ethnic group.

"Thirdly, along with most evangelical Christians, I believe God has always had a special relationship with the Jewish people as Saint Paul suggests in the Book of Romans. In my evangelistic efforts, I have never felt called to single out the Jews as Jews nor to single out any other particular groups, cultural, ethnic, or religious.

"Lastly, it would be my hope that Key 73 and any other spiritual outreach program could initiate nationwide conversations which would raise the spiritual level of our people and promote mutual understanding."

RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

DOMESTIC SERVICE

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1973

"Object of the Game: First player to hold in his hand any four cards in sequence (i.e., 10, 9, 8, 7 or 2, 1, K, Q, etc.) within the same suit declares himself the winner.

"The Play: The undealt portion of the deck, placed face down, is the stock. Its top card is placed beside it to start the discard pile. Non-dealer either draws the top card (top card of the discard pile) or the top card of the stock, and then must discard one card face up on the discard pile.

"The first player to assemble a four-card sequence in his hand is the winner and after so declaring, he reads aloud as a WITNESS the scripture text on each of the four sequence cards."

-C-

GUARD AGAINST 'ANTI-SEMITISM,'
GROUP URGES KEY 73 LEADERS

By Religious News Service (2-26-73)

CHICAGO (RNS) -- Eight Christian scholars associated with the Chicago Institute for Interreligious Research have called on Key 73 advocates to guard against things "which subtly and manifestly give rise to anti-Semitism."

In a joint statement on the continent-wide evangelistic effort, they cautioned that "Key 73, for all its religious motivation and good intentions, harbors within itself factors that have historically proved to be explosively dangerous for Jewish people."

The statement said that "when Key 73 is attended by overtones of patriotic triumphalism, a notion of disloyalty and divisiveness easily develops toward those who refuse to go along. This kind of an ethos has proved disastrous for Jews in numerous historical situations."

It added: "Hitlerian Nazism did not erupt in this nation; in fact this nation has a tradition of religious pluralism and toleration, but we must not delude ourselves that persecution cannot happen here because many groups deemed to be out-of-step with the national ethos have on various occasions suffered grievously, e.g., Catholics; Quakers, Jews, Mormons, Hutterites, Jehovah's Witnesses, Amish, atheists, and conscientious objectors."

The signers called on advocates of Key 73 "to guard scrupulously against tactics which derogate others -- to guard against advertisements, arguments, actions, and avowals which subtly and manifestly give rise to anti-Semitism."

"Unfortunately," they said, "committed Christians with 'good' intentions have been the source and instigators of pogroms that have resulted in the deprivation and death of millions of Jews. Let us witness to love, human dignity, and the fulness of life for all, but let us avoid steps that have led to recriminations and disparagement."

The statement was signed by Sister Margaret Traxler, executive director, National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice; W. Widwick Schroeder, professor of religion and society; Sister Ann Gillen, executive director, National Coalition of American Nuns; Dr. Walter L. Michel, professor of Old Testament; Victor Obenhaus, professor of Christian ethics; Clyde L. Manschreck, professor of the history of Christianity; Dr. John T. Pawlikowski, professor of Christian ethics; and Andre Lacocque, professor of Jewish-Christian studies.

5754 Bounty St.

5846 ELDERGARDENS ST.
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92120**Billy Graham -- and the Jews**

March 29, 1973

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum,

The "GAME, FISH & HUNTING LAWS" clearly prohibit use of TRAPS, NETS and shooting with BUCK-SHOT; used or "aimed at reaching un-committed (uncaptured) Christians"...

INTENTION is determined by the actual methods used or the results obtained, and not not by any so-called protestations of innocence, or that "Key 73 has no intention of proselytizing the Jewish community".

Their words are betrayed by their 'door to door' canvassing, and Campus activities.

The law protects those struck by shots "aimed" at "others".

Rev. Graham has never clearly opposed or disengaged himself from the UN-AMERICAN activities of Key 73; nor has he opposed its results among Jews.

ON THE CONTRARY, "its a call to EVERY person in the Continent to Christ.." and Rev. Graham has "never been called upon to single Jews 'in or out' ANY MORE THAN ANY OTHERS..." nor any less.

AREN'T JEWS "PEOPLE"?

What is so "timely" and "constructive" about Rev. Grahams's statements?

It's one thing for Christians to mislead Jews; but it's inexcusable and unpardonable for those in a position of leadership. "RABBI".

Norway had its Quislings and cowards that the Jewish people cannot afford.

Sincerely
Sol. A. Dann

A prominent rabbi has welcomed as "a constructive contribution to interreligious understanding" a recent statement by Dr. Billy Graham in which he expressed his opposition "to all forms of coercion, intimidation and proselytizing" and declared that "God has always had a special relationship with the Jewish people" with whom the Covenant is eternal.

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, national director of interreligious affairs of the American Jewish Committee, commented at a news conference on Dr. Graham's statement, issued in the context of "growing misunderstanding in Christian-Jewish relationships over Key 73." Rabbi Tanenbaum expressed confidence that the Graham statement would encourage other Christian leaders "to make clear that Key 73 is aimed at reaching uncommitted Christians and has no intention of proselytizing the Jewish community."

Key 73 is a nationwide ecumenical Evangelism campaign designed "to call the Continent to Christ" and "to share with every person in the North American continent the gospel of Jesus Christ." Since the campaign got under way last December, a number of Jewish leaders have expressed concern over charges that evangelical groups have sought to proselytize Jews, particularly young people on high school and college campuses, in many parts of the country.

Rabbi Tanenbaum called attention to Dr. Graham's expression of his own evangelist philosophy — "I have never felt called to single out the Jews as Jews, nor to single out any other particular groups, cultural, ethnic, or religious" — and to his commitment to American pluralism, "in which all religious groups are partners in society."

Calling the Graham statement one of "timely significance," Rabbi Tanenbaum called it "an important and constructive contribution to helping overcome the misunderstanding and stress that have developed between many Christians and Jews in the absence of any policy statement by Key 73 leadership regarding proselytizing efforts aimed at the Jewish community."

At the news conference Rabbi Tanenbaum made public a 36-page survey of the impact that Key 73

already had made on relations between Jews and Christians, adding that Dr. Graham's statement was the most recent of a number of similar clarifying declarations by Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Evangelical spokesmen agreeing that the Jewish community was "off limits" to proselytizing activity.

"These expressions recognize that Jews will not accept passively a relationship with Christians that reduces Jewry to an object of conversion, and that does not respect Judaism as a living faith and source of permanent truth and value to the Jewish people," Rabbi Tanenbaum said.

As an example, he pointed to a statement issued February 3, 1973, by the San Diego District of the United Methodist Church:

"Some over-zealous campus organizations and Christian groups consider Key 73 a mandate to convert Jews and those of other religions to their particular brand of Christianity. This interpretation is unfortunate and deplorable. The primary purposes of Key 73 are those of calling Christians to a deeper understanding of and commitment to their faith, and to reach those of our Continent who are not actively related to any of the religious organizations in our society. Any assumption that those of other religious traditions are without a meaningful faith is arrogant and presumptuous. There are plenty of prospects for conversion on this Continent, and hence no need for proselytizing those who are already committed to another faith."

Paradoxically, Rabbi Tanenbaum said, this national dialogue over Key 73 may well result in the emergence of a majority consensus of Christian relations in the United States a policy of opposition to proselytizing the Jewish community — and that may become one of the lasting consequences of Key 73.

File
Key 73

April 3, 1973

Dr. Billy Graham
Montreat, N. C. 28757

My dear Billy:

I was delighted to read in this morning's paper of your safe return to this country following your visit in South Africa. I met last night with several United Nations officials who are in charge of the UN African development program and you will be interested to know that they were extremely pleased by the reports of your visit to South Africa. In fact, Dr. Gilpin, who represents the UN in Zambia, expressed the hope that you might find it possible to carry out similar integrated missions in other parts of Africa where your presence would be regarded as a very constructive contribution to breaking down barriers between races and religions. I will tell you more about this conversation when I have the pleasure of next visiting with you.

I thought that you would be interested to know that your statement regarding Key 73 and Jewish-Christian relations made a very strong and positive impact on the Jewish community. Enclosed are some clippings from the English-Jewish press which gives you some indication of the attention that it received. I'm sure that you know that it also received considerable attention in Religious News Service, Christianity Today, and other publications.

In keeping with our spirit of complete candor, I do need to tell you that there has been some critical reaction in Jewish circles, which felt that your statement fell short of clarifying your attitudes towards Judaism and the Jewish people in a clear-cut way. I do hope that we can pick up our conversation and ascertain whether you feel ready to proceed with the further clarification on biblical and theological grounds of the views that you expressed to me during our last meeting.

Dr. Billy Graham

April 3, 1973

If you are so inclined to move forward on this vital issue, as I devoutly hope you are, I should like to speak to you about the possibility of your addressing an appropriate and carefully selected group of national Jewish leaders in a congenial setting that would lead to a national improvement of understanding between the Christian and Jewish communities.

I will be in New York City for the next two weeks and would look forward to hearing from you at your early convenience.

With warmest personal good wishes and my best regards to Mrs. Graham and your associates, I am

Cordially as ever,

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
National Director of
Interreligious Affairs

MHT:MSB
Encls.



BILLY GRAHAM

Montreat, N.C. 28757
April 12, 1973

My dear Marc:

Thank you for your good letter of April 3. I am delighted that my statement had such a good reception in the Jewish community. Naturally I expected there would be some negative reaction. I seriously doubt if a statement could be devised that would please everyone.

Unfortunately I am completely and solidly committed till September 15 -- with more crusades, speeches, etc. than I have ever had in my entire ministry in so short a time. I hope you will forgive me if I postpone any further study on this matter until I have more time to think and pray it through -- and consult people in both the Jewish and Christian community.

With warmest appreciation and admiration, I am

Cordially yours,



Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

LT. COL. M. H. DAINA
Chaplains Corps
United States Army (Ret.)

44 Fairfield Avenue
Oceanport, New Jersey 07757

15 April 1973

Rabbi M.H. Tanenbaum
National Director
Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum:

I will appreciate it, if you will kindly send me the full text of your statement on Rev. Billy Graham's declaration on Judaism and on KEY 73 with regard to the Jews.

With many thanks for your favor and with best wishes to you and yours for a Happy Easter, I am

Sincerely,


MAX H. DAINA

File
Graham - Key 73

Dem
1) WINS report on Billy Graham & Judaism
2) KTC press release on BG press conference
not my card

sent
4/19