



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 45, Folder 14, Smith, Bailey, 1981.

Dr. Bailey Smith, President
Southern Baptist Convention
Pastor
First Southern Baptist Church in
Delaware City, Oklahoma,

Dear Dr. Smith,

It has just been brought to my attention by a colleague who attended the National Affairs Briefing at the Reunion Arena in Dallas, Texas, on Aug. 22, that you made a statement critical of the established American practice of inviting "a Jew to pray" together with other American Catholics and Protestants at "great political rallies."

It is also attributed to you ~~that~~ as having said, "With all due respect to those dear people, my friend God Almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew." I enclose the full text of your remarks as they were transcribed from a recording of your statement.

As one who has pioneered in building bridges between the Southern Baptist convention and the Evangelical Christian community generally, I must tell you in all fraternity that I am horrified that a responsible Christian leader - no less than the President of the Southern Baptist Convention - could allow such words of religious and moral defamation to escape his lips in the year 1980.

It would seem from your offensive remarks that you know/little or nothing about Jew~~s~~ nor Judaism. Have you ever read a Hebrew prayer book? Have you ever attended a worship service in a Synagogue or Jewish Temple? Have you ever experienced the depth of piety and devotion that has sustained the Jewish people across the past two thousand~~x~~ years and that lives vitally today in the souls of millions of Jews who continue to uphold the covenant with Israel that God, out of His own grace, freely elect~~ed~~ to confer upon His chosen people?

Together with millions of other Jewish people, I stake my existence on the truth of the Bible. In Deuteronomy 7, The Lord declared "..... Again, in Psalm 89, " " "

Lord's

What mortal has the right to abrogate the ~~word~~ plighted words to the people whom He has permanently elected to be His people? I cannot believe that you are prepared to say that the Chosen People ~~have~~ have been living a lie for 4,000 years.

Do you not take St. Paul seriously? Read Romans 9-11

In all brotherly respect, I think you owe the Jewish people a public apology for your defamation of our beloved faith. I also think you owe the American people an apology for your ~~offense~~ offense against the spirit of religious liberty and religious pluralism which are the very foundations of our precious democracy.

FO-SFB

January 20, 1981

Rabbi James Rudin

Ernest Weiner

SOUTHERN BAPTIST ADVOCATE - OCTOBER 1980 ISSUE

Rev. Tom Prevost, whom you met here in San Francisco, called my attention to this publication which Tom stresses is not associated as a publication of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The articles dealing with the Bayley Smith problem, particularly the reply by Jimmy Milliken, are intriguing but even more so is the "denunciation" attributed to Marc Tanenbaum and the bizarre comments of Rabbi Marvin Antleman from Boston (this article begins on the front page with the headline "Jesus, Prayer and the Jews" and picks up on page 10). Who is Rabbi Antleman and has he been on a collision course with Marc prior to this? What the hell is he talking about when he states: "his (Tanenbaum) ordination violates Jewish law." The idiotic comments which Antleman makes on AJC would not be disturbing (please note that he refers to Marc as Mr.!) but the fact that this publication must have some kind of circulation, which, according to them, is mailed to 14,000 Southern Baptist churches, is troubling.

Tom does want me to get back to him with some kind of intelligence on this, particularly a reading on Rabbi Antleman.

cc: Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
Harold Applebaum

Encls.

[start]

Original documents
faded and/or illegible



Southern Baptist

ADVOCATE

NOT A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION!

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 3

SPECIAL PASTOR'S EDITION

OCTOBER, 1980

Thirty-Six Years And Going Strong!

What do 36, 83, and 21,000 all have in common? These are all numbers that can describe the ministry of First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas. Add to that numbers like 2,000; 6,700; and 8.5 million and quite a story unfolds. Let's sort these all out and see what we have.

To begin with 36 is the number of years Dr. W. A. Criswell has served as pastor for the church. Not rare, but a bit unusual as length of pastorates go. The 83 represents the tenure of the last two pastors: W. A. Criswell and George W. Truett. Only about 10-percent of the 2,500 people gathered to celebrate the pastor's 36th anniversary, October 5, could remember when he came as pastor. No one there could remember the coming of his predecessor.

The average Baptist Church would have gone through twenty pastors in the same period of time. But for the great downtown church in Dallas, the fact there have been only two pastors in 83 years is both a reason for and a testimony to its greatness.

Arriving in Dallas as pastor, Criswell was confronted with a staid, stoic, somber congregation of upper-middle class mature adults. Realizing the necessity of a church that appealed to all age groups, Criswell began to work toward a family-centered ministry. That is still his goal today. In a recent interview, Dr. Criswell stated that one of his goals for the next several years is a greater, more expanded family ministry. "As you know," he said, "on any given day there are over two thousand people in our church involved in some kind of ministry activity. I want to see that grow so that First Baptist Church is a veritable lighthouse in this great city."

That brings us to the third number — 21,000. That represents the membership of the downtown congregation. In a recent message Dr. Criswell indicated that the crowds were larger now than they have ever been. When asked why, he responded, "Two or three things come to mind. First is the preaching of the gospel. There is no substitute for that. It is first and above everything. The expounding of the scripture is the most important thing I do."

"Secondly," he continued, "this is an evangelistic church. We do not do all that we ought to do in winning people to faith in Christ, but we are evangelistic. Each year we baptize between 500 and 650 people. We are evangelistic. We have set a goal for next year to baptize 1,000 people. That is what has helped to grow this church. Of course that will only make me half the pastor Bailey Smith is. He's baptized over 2,000 this year."

The 6,700 represents average Sunday School attendance and now an



average of 7,000 is in sight. This makes it the largest Sunday School program in the SBC. "But," Dr. Criswell added, "I want to see our educational program grow, our Sunday School, our academy, and our Criswell Center for Biblical Studies."

See Criswell page 11

Jesus, Prayer, and the Jews.

Dr. Bailey Smith's statement on prayer and the Jews has been quoted far and wide. One editor has already predicted this to be the story of the year in Baptist life.

The statement has been analyzed, criticized, and discussed in a variety of papers and from a variety of people. Nearly everyone's view has been expounded and the opinion of anyone remotely related has been aired. That is, all but one.

What does the orthodox Jew think? The Advocate sought out one of orthodox Judaism's finest spokes-

See Jews page 10

SPECIAL EDITION

NOT AN OFFICIAL S.B.C. PUBLICATION

This is a special edition of THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST ADVOCATE. For many of you it represents the first look at Southern Baptists' newest national magazine. This issue of the monthly Education is being mailed to each of our 1,000 plus Southern Baptist Churches. It is being done to introduce you to a magazine dedicated to presenting items of interest to all Southern Baptists. If you would like to receive the ADVOCATE on a regular basis see page 13. There you will find a special offer that should be of interest.

[end]

Original documents
faded and/or illegible



GOLDEN GATE BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

JAN 19 1981

January 15, 1981

William M. Pinson, Jr.
President

Ernest H. Weiner
Bay Area Director
The American Jewish Committee
703 Market Street, Suite 1500
San Francisco, CA. 94103

Dear Ernie:

Thank you very much for the letter and for the article. I've tried to keep up with some of these developments and appreciate your input. As you know, a number of us monitor and respond to this sort of thing. With James Dunn being the new Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs director in Washington, I think we'll have even a better team. The very best to you in this new year.

Sincerely,



William M. Pinson, Jr.

WMP:bm

An Open Letter to Bailey Smith

First Southern Baptist Church

Del City, Oklahoma

The Open Letter to Bailey Smith first appeared in The Western Recorder, the publication of the Baptist Convention of Kentucky. Dr. Hinson is a professor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

Dear Dr. Smith:

No Baptist will claim to speak for all other Baptists. The office of president of the Southern Baptist Convention, however, is so visible many persons outside this convention may interpret your words as representative of all Southern Baptists and even as "official."

One ought always to have the freedom to express one's personal views. Yet when you became president of the SBC, inevitably in the minds of many people (one might even say, most), you became a symbol of the SBC. Thus, when you speak, people tend to interpret what you say as the "official" position of the convention. Among the populace, it would be the rare person who would make a distinction between your statements as an individual and as the president of the SBC.

It is with this in mind I write to express my dismay at a statement attributed to you.

You were quoted at the national Affairs Briefing Aug. 22:

It is interesting at great political rallies how you have a Protestant to pray and a Catholic to pray, and then you have a Jew to pray. With all due respect to those dear people, my friend, God Almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew. For how in the world can God hear the prayer of a man who says that Jesus Christ is not the true Messiah? It is blasphemy. It may be politically expedient, but no one can pray unless he prays through the name of Jesus Christ. It is not Jesus among many, it is Jesus and Jesus only. It is Christ only. There is no competition for Jesus Christ.

My first reaction on hearing his statement was: "Surely he didn't say that. He has been misquoted." My next reaction was: "It was a slip of the tongue. He probably spoke without notes and let some of those things slip."

My hope now is that, whether a misquote or a slip, you will prayerfully rethink what you said and make an apology to Jewish people everywhere and beg God's forgiveness for claiming to make judgments He alone should make. Let me note some problems I see in what you were quoted as saying.

1. You may have disfranchised Jesus' prayer when you said, "My friend, God Almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew." Jesus was a Jew. He lived and died a Jew. Christianity began with the conviction of the first followers that He had risen from the dead. Though He did not "deny" He was the messiah, neither did He openly claim, "I am the messiah." Others confessed that about Him.

2. You disfranchised the prayers of everyone from Abraham to Jesus—the entire Old Testament—when you said, "No one can pray unless he prays through the name of Jesus Christ." Which of the patriarchs or prophets prayed invoking His name? Neither human reason nor scriptures themselves will support the argument that they did so.

3. You cast aside our long Baptist heritage concerning religious liberty when you questioned the right of any person to pray at a political rally or in some other political or social context. I am confident you know Roger Williams' famous analogy used to explain and defend his argument for separation of Church and State against those who argued his approach to liberty would bind the magistrate's power completely.

There goes many a ship to sea, with many hundred souls in one ship, whose weal and woe is common, and is a true picture of a commonwealth, or a human combination or society. It hath fallen out sometimes, that both papists and protestants, Jews and Turks, may be embarked in one ship; upon which supposal I affirm, that all the liberty of conscience, that ever I pleaded for, turns upon these two hinges — that none of the papists, protestants, Jews, or Turks, be forced to come to the ship's prayers or worship, nor compelled from their own particular prayers or worship, if they practice any. I further add, that I never denied, that notwithstanding this liberty, the commander of this ship ought to command the ship's course, year, and also command that justice, peace and sobriety, be kept and practiced, both among the seamen and all the passengers. (Letter "To the Town of Providence," cited by Anson Phelps Stokes, Church and State in the United States (New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), I, 1979.)

May I point out how remarkably well this "lively experiment" with religious liberty has worked in the United States? Observe what has happened in Europe, where religious establishments held sway for centuries. Pluralism in America has been a major factor in the vitality of religion here.

4. The Bible teaches an unbeliever can pray and have his or her prayers answered. Cornelius, the Roman centurion, did. Observe Peter's remark on this incident in Acts 10:34-35 (a revelation for him too!): "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who hears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." Your "God Almighty" seems to have a bigger heart than your statement implied.

5. Statements such as this one are the stuff from which holocausts come.

Prayerfully yours,
E. Glenn Hinson □

"Much attention has been drawn to Dr. Bailey Smith's remark concerning the prayers of Jews. Critical editorials have appeared in several secular newspapers. The critical position of the secular media is not surprising. What is surprising is the total negative and critical attitude of the Baptist press and a great many Southern Baptist leaders. Excerpts of critical remarks from these denominational leaders have appeared in various publications, both religious and secular, but the fullest published statement is that of E. Glenn Hinson, Professor of History at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

An "Open Letter to Dr. Bailey Smith" by Dr. Hinson was published

in the September 17, 1980, issue of the *Western Recorder*, the news journal of Ken-

tucky Baptists. In his "Open Letter" Hinson lists five problems he sees in Dr. Smith's prayer statement. In stating these problems he raises issues far more serious than the question of answered prayer. He strikes at the doctrinal center of the Christian faith — the doctrines of Christ, biblical authority, and salvation.

First, Hinson's objections have serious implications concerning Christology. In his letter he states:

Jesus was a Jew. He lived a Jew and died a Jew. Christianity began with the conviction of the first followers that he had risen from the dead. Though he did not "deny" he was the Messiah, neither did he openly claim, "I am the Messiah." Others confessed that about Him.

Standing alone without explanation this statement presents some very serious questions concerning the person of Jesus Christ and his relationship to the Christian movement. Is Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah, and if so, did he know that he was? Did Christianity begin with the "conviction" of the first followers that he had risen from the dead; or was the Christian movement actually started by Jesus' own conscious intent through his teaching about his person and his redemptive mission? Is the hope of a Christian based upon the conviction of early followers of Jesus or upon the historical fact of the bodily resurrection?

Surely Professor Hinson believes that Jesus is the Messiah and that he actually rose from the dead. However, he does not explicitly say so, and he definitely leaves the impression that there is some doubt. But regardless of his personal view, is his statement true? Did Jesus lay claim to Messiahship?

According to the Gospel records, Jesus not only laid claim to Messiahship but much more. In the Synoptic witnesses Jesus accepted without qualification the title put upon him by his disciples, and even commended them for their insight (Mt. 16:13-20). When he was on trial before the high priest, upon being asked if he was the Messiah, the Son

A Reply to Hinson's "Open Letter" to Dr. Bailey Smith

by Jimmy Milliken

of the Blessed, he gave an unequivocal yes as an answer (Mark 14:61,62). For this answer he was condemned to death by the Sanhedrin for blasphemy. In John's Gospel there is an incident in which Jesus directly applied the title to himself (John 4:25-26).

In dealing with the question of Jesus' Messiahship one must not limit the data to the use of the term "Messiah". There are other Messianic titles to be considered. For example, the title "Son of Man" is generally conceded by new Testament scholars to be a Messianic title. It was Jesus' favorite designation for himself and there can be no question that by it he meant more than just his identity with man.

According to John's Gospel, Jesus went beyond claiming Messiahship. He claimed a relationship to God that was tantamount to making himself equal with God. The Jews of Jesus' day understood clearly the implications of Jesus' claims and accused him of blasphemy. If Jesus had not meant to make such a claim, he could very easily have corrected their misunderstanding of his language. (see: John 5:17-47; John 8:49-59; John 10:30-42).

A second question raised in Hinson's remarks concerns the integrity of the biblical records. There can be no doubt that as they stand, all

four Gospel records present Jesus as the Messiah, as one who was very much aware of his person and mission. Even Jewish scholars recognize this. A very crucial issue at state here is, can the Gospel records be trusted?

Until modern times no one doubted the trustworthiness of this clear picture of Jesus in the Gospels. With the rise of modern Gospel criticism scholars began to doubt the historical reliability of the Gospel records. According to the prevailing viewpoint in modern criticism the Gospels do not give us any dependable information of what Jesus taught but only what his followers came to believe he taught. The Gospel of John in particular is said to be unreliable as history.

Professor Hinson's statement clearly reflects this historical skepticism of

modern criticism. It is difficult not to draw this conclusion when he states that Christianity arose from a "conviction" of his disciples and that while Jesus' followers confessed him to be the Messiah he laid no claim personally to Messiahship. This is a plain denial of the biblical records.

A third issue involved in the professor's objection is that of the doctrine of salvation. He states:

You disfranchised the prayers of everyone from Abraham to Jesus — the entire Old Testament — when you said "No one can pray unless he prays through the name of Jesus Christ." Which of the patriarchs or prophets prayed invoking his name?

Obviously, Professor Hinson either missed or is deliberately distorting Dr. Smith's position. Dr. Smith would not deny that the prayers of the Old Testament saints were heard. Smith's point is that the hearing and answering of prayer is based on a right relationship with God. Jews were obviously saved in the Old Testament dispensation, but they were saved through atonement and not because they were Jews. It is interesting to note that only the prayers of God's covenant people addressed to Jehovah were acknowledged in Old Testament times. While it is true the Old Testament saints may not have invoked the name Jesus Christ, they did approach God through mediation. The New Testament plainly

See Milliken page 10

teaches that Jesus Christ was and is that mediator. To deny this, as Hinson appears to do, is to deny the unity of God's plan of salvation. The New Testament clearly reveals that there is only one plan of redemption. It is by faith in the atoning work of the Messiah, who is now revealed to be Jesus of Nazareth.

Hinson uses the case of Cornelius as an example of God hearing and answering the prayers of unbelievers. He fails to point out that Cornelius' prayers were answered in the context of salvation. We are not told what the entire content of Cornelius' prayers were, but we are told what prayer was answered — the prayer which resulted in salvation. (Acts 10:4-5, 43).

This entire controversy over Dr. Smith's remarks raises the question, Is Jesus the only way to God? The entire New Testament answers that question with a resounding yes. Jews and adherents of other religions may be offended by this answer, but they cannot deny it is there. Hinson's objections should not be addressed to Dr. Smith, but to Jesus and the apostles.

Again, it may be understandable why those who reject the deity of Christ, the authority of scripture, and hold to a universal salvation would object to Dr. Smith's statement. However, it is unfathomable as to why a Southern Baptist professor and denominational spokesmen who are supposed to be committed to the authority of the Bible, the Lordship of Christ, and the one-way salvation of the Christian faith should be so embarrassed.

A final observation needs to be made. A question of honesty is involved here. Dr. Hinson has accused Smith of anti-Semitism, "the stuff from which halocaust came." The professor knows better than that or should. To say that a non-Christian Jew's prayers are not heard has nothing to do with racial superiority or inferiority. He knows full well that these same charges have been made against the Gospel of John and the writings of Paul. Dr. Smith would say the same thing about his father or mother should they not know Christ. Dr. Smith's critics are apparently look-

Spain Moves Toward Religious Liberty

MADRID, SPAIN (EP) — In 40 years, Spain has moved from religious repression through various degrees of religious toleration to genuine religious liberty. In July, the Spanish government took final steps to ensure enactment of the religious liberty clauses in Spain's recently rewritten constitution. Those steps will have far-reaching impact on missions efforts.

The Law of Religious Liberty, which elaborates the meaning of the constitutional guarantee of religious

liberty, went into effect July 2, 1980. Specific guarantees of religious liberty include such things as changing religion, manifesting beliefs, worshiping, teaching, associating with other believers, choosing religious leaders, and owning property for religious purposes. Religious bodies which have property registered in the names of individuals or other entities will be allowed a year to get it registered in their own names without paying legal fees or taxes.

Jews

continued from page 1

men, Rabbi Marvin Antleman in Boston, Massachusetts. In a telephone interview he raised some interesting points.

He began his response to queries concerning the statement by saying, "We (Jews and Evangelicals) are brothers, but no one ever accused us of being twins. We come from a different theological perspective."

In response to the question, Does the orthodox Jewish community see the statement as anti-semitic? Antleman said, "Definitely not. At least not in the classical sense of anti-semitism."

There are theological differences. There are certain prejudices innate in Christianity against Judaism, but that is a far difference from being overtly anti-semitic. The classical Rabbinical statement defines an anti-semite as one who hates Jews more than he is supposed to."

The editor questioned the Rabbi about all the statements being made to the press by the Jewish community. He responded by saying that the Jew-

ing for something with which they can smear his name and diminish his influence.

Dr. Hinson implores Smith to "make an apology to Jewish people everywhere and beg God's forgiveness for claiming to make judgments He alone should make." I would implore him to apologize to Dr. Smith and ask God's forgiveness for deliberately associating him with the fascism of Hitler's Germany. □

ish Holographic Agency had sole responsibility for press releases and that their express intent was to divide the Jewish and Christian Communities. "They do not represent the religious Jewish community," he said.

When asked about Marc Tannenbaum who has appeared repeatedly with Jimmy Allen and James Dunn denouncing Bailey Smith, as well as the entire new political right, Antleman replied, "to me he is not a Rabbi. His ordination violates Jewish law and he is surely not representative of the religious Jewish community."

"He is part of a group that makes unholy alliances and violates all that orthodox Judaism stands for," added Antleman.

"The American Jewish Committee from which Mr. Tannenbaum speaks is neither American nor Jewish. It is not American for they do not support the U.S. Constitution nor are they Jewish for they do not follow the teachings of classical Judaism."

"The issue is not anti-semitism, it is theology," says Antleman. "I understand where it comes from and can appreciate Dr. Smith's consistency with his belief. The only trouble I have with evangelicals is their intense evangelistic fervor. They want to change us all and make us Christians. I realize as Christians you are under a mandate to evangelize, I just don't agree with it."

You are correct Rabbi Antleman. Dr. Smith is far from anti-semitic. He, like this editor, loves the Jew, and yes, if given the chance he too would share his faith in the Prophets' Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. □

SOME PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The missionary imperative of Evangelicals toward Jews does remain a hard knot. I see two issues here that need to be separated: one is a question of theology, the other of some missionary practices. On the theological level, Jews would of course prefer Christians to acknowledge our covenant with God as continuous and binding, our faith as valid and complete for ourselves.

Since we are the trunk onto which the branch of Christianity has been grafted, Jews would of course like to see Christians eschew missionary endeavors directed toward our community. However, many Jews are prepared to accept that that thrust and goal is a central affirmation of Evangelicalism and that Evangelical Christians must be free to pursue it, so long as they do not employ methods of *single out Jews as special targets, or* deception, coercion or psychological and emotional pressure. In practice, however, many of these methods have been employed and should be renounced by Christians. Examples: sectarian prayer in the schools, High Holy Day Services in New York, etc.

Another aspect of missionary activity which many Jews find highly objectionable is the tendency to focus on individuals who are, in some sense, marginal to the Jewish community or emotionally vulnerable for a variety of reasons. In some sense this is understandable: Christian missionaries are unlikely to approach a Jewish family thoroughly grounded in its faith and nourished by a comfortable practicing knowledge of Jewish faith and tradition. Therefore, many missionary efforts have been directed, for example, to newly-arriving Soviet Jews, some of whom are disoriented, unaffiliated and not yet integrated into American life, to say nothing of Jewish life. Many efforts have also been directed at Jewish students on college campuses -- frequently a period of vulnerability, when young people are cut off from home and family ties, emotionally

uprooted, and some of them are searching for a "quick fix" solution to troubling problems and questions. (It is not only Jewish students who are vulnerable at such a time, and it is not only to Christian missionary efforts that we lose our young people; college campuses are a rich recruiting ground for a variety of cults and sects. However, these realities do not cancel out Jewish resentment over Christian conversionary efforts. I suspect it is because Jews feel that Christians ^{who} above all other religious groups, share our scriptures and ^{are} aware of -- in some cases, responsible for -- the tragic history of Jews ⁱⁿ and ^{an} Christianity, should know better than the Moonies or the Hare Krishnas.)

In my personal view, the most difficult point of contention has been the question of what Christians call Jewish Christians, Hebrew Christians or Messianic Jews -- the latter a tautology, since Judaism is Messianic. Christians find it hard to understand why Jews cannot be "both," and why the Jewish community excludes from its ranks those who call themselves Jewish Christians. The only way I have gotten this across is to make analogy with Christian Muslims: i.e. to imagine a group of Christians who come to believe that the Koran is the ultimate and final revelation, ^{and} of Mohammed the true prophet of God. However, since they still honor Jesus and Mary, they retain some Christian symbols in their worship and celebrate essential Christian holy days, while investing them with Islamic symbolism and viewing them as preparatory to acceptance of Islam. They may still claim to be Christians, but "fulfilled" Christians -- Muslim Christians. How would the Christian community feel about them, and would they want them missionizing among their young people?

at Deerfield, Evang. speakers spoke movingly of their enrichment from Jewish sources -- not just scriptures, but contemporary writers. But never faced anomaly that if Jews stop being Jews, they would lose this enriching.