

Statements from the period before 1945

- “At the moment when the terrible persecution of the Jewish population in Germany and in other Central European countries has come to a violent climax, it is our duty to remind ourselves of the stand which we have taken as an ecumenical movement against anti-Semitism in all its forms. The World Alliance at the meeting of its Executive in Sofia in 1933 and at its recent Assembly in Larvik in August 1938, and the Conference on Church, Community and State at Oxford in 1937 have unequivocally expressed the Christian attitude on this point and called upon the Churches to help those who suffer from racial persecution. We suggest that at this time all Churches should take immediate action based on these statements. . .” – ***Statement issued by the provisional World Council of Churches, World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, and the Office of Inter-Church Aid, Geneva, November 16, 1938***
- “. . .we view with profound misgivings the evidence of a growing anti-Semitism in America. We believe that the Christian Church dare not be silent in the presence of anti-Semitic propaganda. We urge that anti-Semitism be combated aggressively in our Churches, by informing people as to the truth about the Jewish race, by laying renewed emphasis upon the Christian principle of human brotherhood and by encouraging fellowship between Jews and Christians.”—***Resolution passed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA, May 1939***
- “The reports which are reaching us concerning the incredible cruelties towards the Jews in Nazi occupied countries, particularly Poland, stir the Christian people of America to the deepest sympathy and indignation. It is impossible to avoid a conclusion that something like a policy of deliberate extermination of the Jews in Europe is being carried out. The violence and inhumanity which Nazi leaders have publicly avowed toward all Jews are apparently now coming to a climax in a virtual massacre. We are resolved to do our full part in establishing conditions to which such treatment of the Jews shall end. . . We confess our own ineffectiveness in combating the influences which beget anti-Semitism in our own country, and urge our constituencies to intensify their efforts on behalf of friendly relations with the Jews. . . We urge that all plans for reconstruction in Europe shall include measures designed to secure full justice for the Jews and a safe and respected place for them in western civilization. . . We recommend that the officers of the Federal Council transmit this action to the Jewish leaders in person.”—***Resolution on Anti-Semitism, Federal Council of Churches, United States, December 11, 1942***

- “It is one of the most terrible consequences of war that the sensitiveness of people tends to become hardened...there is a great moral danger in the paralysis of feeling that is liable to be brought about. It is most important for our own moral health and vigor that we express horror at the persecution of the Jews, (which)... almost baffles imagination and leaves one horrified at the power of the evil that can show itself in human nature.”—*William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, December 1943*