



New York Bishops of the Episcopal, Lutheran and Roman Catholic C | 29.06.1996

### Two Different Statements on “Jewish Evangelism”

*In June of 1996 the [Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution](#) affirming the Convention's commitment to evangelization of the Jewish people. In response, New York bishops of the Lutheran, Episcopal, and Roman Catholic Churches issued a statement affirming the commitment of their communions to Jewish-Christian Dialogue.*

#### **STATEMENT ON CHRISTIAN-JEWISH DIALOGUE**

**New York Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic Bishops  
June 25, 1996**

Recent developments regarding the question of whether Jews should be singled out specifically for evangelization programs have given rise to Jewish concerns about proselytizing. We, the New York bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church, and archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church wish to make clear once again, that we are committed to the Christian-Jewish dialogue.

The Decree *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council states that "Although the Church is the new people of God, the *Jews* should not be presented as repudiated or cursed by God, as if such views followed from the holy Scriptures." (no. 4)

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 11:28b-29, tells us, "in respect to the election they (the Jews) are beloved by him because of the patriarchs. God's gifts and his call are irrevocable."

The Episcopal Church's *Guidelines for Christian-Jewish Relations* of 1988 state, "Christians believe that God's self-revelation is given in history. In the Covenant with the Jewish people at Mt. Sinai, the sacred law became part of our religious heritage. Christians see that same God embodied in the person of Jesus Christ, to whom The Church must bear witness by word and deed among all peoples. It would be false to its deepest commitment if the Church were to deny this mission. The Christian witness toward Jews, however, has been distorted by coercive proselytism, conscious and unconscious, overt and subtle." (IV. 1.)

We Lutherans, Anglicans, and Roman Catholics, as well as many other Christians continue in a dialogue relationship with rabbinic and lay associations and agencies representing most religious Jews in New York. We see no conflict between a dialogue based on mutual respect for the sacredness of the other and the Christian mission to preach the Gospel. An aggressive direct effort to convert the Jewish people would break the bond of trust built up for over thirty years and recreate enmity between our "elder brothers and sisters" and ourselves at the start of a new millennium, a millennium which should begin with hope for reconciliation.