

## Honors 290: Philosophy and the Holocaust

### SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW CHRISTIANITY CAN PURGE ITSELF OF RELIGIOUSLY-BASED ANTI-SEMITISM (OR, TO BE MORE PRECISE, ANTI-JUDAISM, WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO ANTI-SEMITISM)

The Seelisberg Theses (the work of Christian scholars from different denominations [including Catholic] and the Jewish historian, Jules Isaac, after the war, 1947):

*Positive, affirming that:*

1. the Old and New Testaments were inspired by one and the same God
2. Jesus was Jewish
3. Disciples, apostles, and first martyrs were Jewish
4. Command to love God and neighbor can be found in both Old and New Testaments

*Negative, denying that*

1. the Jewish religion ended with Christianity
2. "Jew" means "enemy of Christ"
3. blame for death of Christ rests on all Jews
4. Jesus dying on cross cursed his crucifiers
5. Jewish people are cursed by God
6. First members of Church were not Jewish

(source: Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965* [Indiana University Press, 2000]: 204-207)

From Catholic Documents in the wake of *Nostra Aetate* (1965):

1. remember that Christians received the revelations of the Old Testament through the Jews, with whom God made a covenant.
2. Remember that Paul says that Jews remain dear to God
3. Remember that Jews and Christians have a common spiritual heritage
4. Remember that faith is a free gift of God and one should not judge the consciences of others [Q]
5. Christ's death can not be blamed on all Jews living at the time, nor on Jews today

Guidelines for dramatic presentations, such as the "Passion Play" at Easter

1. Jesus should be portrayed as an observant, pious Jew of his time
2. Do not set Old Testament against New, as if Old had no appeal to love of God or neighbor but only religion of fear, justice, legalism
3. Jews should not be portrayed as avaricious, bloodthirsty, or implacable enemies of Christ
4. Do not array Jesus's enemies in dark, sinister, costuming and makeup, with Jesus and his friends in lighter tones. Effect can be "disastrous" if the effect is to isolate Jesus and the apostles from "the Jews" as if all them were not part of the same people.