

To Hate Crimes No Sanction Statement Concerning Swastikas on Sixth Avenue in New York City

Michael Jenkins, Cecil G. Riley, and Bruce Grodner
January 10, 2012

The New York clergy of the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) stand together with our Jewish brothers and sisters to condemn the hate crime that was committed this week in Manhattan. The crime is an outrageous and dangerous offense to our Jewish community as well as to all people of faith as well as to people of conscience. The ACLC has clergy in all boroughs of the New York metropolitan area. Although the majority is Christian pastors, we also have clergy from all faiths.



Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, left, and NYPD Chaplain Rabbi Abe Friedman at press conference in front of Bryant Park on January 10th, 2012. (Courtesy of Shimon G. Yeshiva World News)

The swastika was the symbol of the most heinous evil led by Hitler and was founded on pure God-denying hatred that killed more than 6 million Jews. Nazism started with the manifestation of hatred toward the Jews in the book, *Mein Kampf*, and was ignored. After that, open statements of hatred were also ignored. It continued to grow until public degradation, condemnation and outright violence toward the Jewish people were perpetrated in Germany. Still, people ignored it, saying, "I'm not Jewish – this is someone else's trouble." Because many non-Jewish faith leaders didn't stand up against the injustice, the cancer grew until it exploded in a world war. We must not allow this hatred to take root in the slightest way. Religious freedom and human rights are God-given rights – which are rights paired with the responsibility that people of faith come into unity and follow their scriptures – which are rights that call for love and understanding toward all who seek the Lord. We proclaim, as the New York clergy of ACLC, that we will stand with our Jewish family in absolute commitment to condemn and stop this bigotry and vile hatred. Our Constitution protects our religious freedom and our New York laws prohibit hate crimes. These principles only come alive when people of conscience and people of faith join together, cry out and invoke the moral authority that God has given to protect and defend these God-given rights for all people, races, faiths and cultures.

We stand together with the Mayor of New York, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and the City Councilmen, as well as the New York Police Department fully to engage the Hate Crimes Task Force to apprehend these criminals and prosecute them.

Sincerely,

Rev. Michael Jenkins
Manhattan, Chair

Bishop Cecil G. Riley
Brooklyn, Co-Chair

Rev. Bruce Grodner
Manhattan, Co-Chair