

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Dear sisters and brothers,

We write as leaders of Christian communities in Queensland wanting to express our solidarity with you in the wake of recent antisemitic attacks, which have left the Jewish community generally feeling vulnerable and threatened.

Queensland has not felt the force of these attacks as other parts of Australia have; but there is no cause for complacency here. We had thought that antisemitism was deeply alien to this country, not part of our DNA as it is elsewhere in the world. But recent events have shown that this ancient and irrational hatred lurks deep in the national psyche, awaiting a trigger like the current conflict in the Middle East to unleash its venom.

The recent commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz recalled the Shoah and highlighted the danger of forgetting. We remember that the Shoah came as the climax of an entire history of exclusion and persecution. We remember that demonic forces in the human psyche made of the Jewish people an innocent scapegoat on to whom were projected the sins of others. We remember that antisemitism, at least in the West, is a form of self-hatred, since we are all spiritually semites.

Yet as Albert Camus writes at the end of his novel *The Plague*: “The plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good; it can lie dormant for years and years”. Transported from another world, the antisemitism bacillus has, it seems, lain dormant for many years in this country, only to strike in a way and at a time we did not see coming.

It strikes us all, but the Jewish community most particularly. Therefore, we come to you with the antidote of solidarity and the balm of fraternity. That is why we wanted to speak to you in a letter rather than about you in a statement. You are our flesh and blood, and we will do whatever we can to accompany, support and defend you. Our prayers surround you: may the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Father of Jesus, grant you protection and peace.



Reverend David Baker
General Secretary
Queensland Churches Together



Bishop Bartholomew
Greek Orthodox Diocese of Brisbane



Archbishop Mark Coleridge
Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane



Major Mark Everitt
Divisional Leader
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Mr Richard Giesken
District Superintendent
Church of the Nazarene Australia North and West



Archbishop Jeremy Greaves
Anglican Archdiocese of Southern Queensland



Bishop Timothy Harris
Catholic Diocese of Townsville



Mr Gary Hourigan
National Director of Church Health
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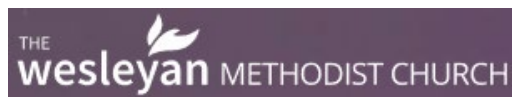
Bishop Ken Howell
Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba



Reverend Bruce Moore
Moderator
Uniting Church in Australia
Queensland Synod



Reverend Stewart Pieper
Director of QB Church Services
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Reverend Rob Simpson
District Superintendent
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Reverend Dr Mark Vainikka
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