

Regional Officers

Regional Chair
Judith Finkel

Regional Chair-Elect
Ian Scharfman

Vice Chairs

George Gibson
Scott Hochberg
Sylvia Mayer
Joe Pryzant

Mark Trachtenberg
Karen Westall

Immediate Past Chair
Jerry Axelrod

Honorary Vice Chairs
Morris Atlas
Walter Kase
Naomi Warren

Committee Leadership

Chair's Council
Karen Dow
Sue Hauenstein
Larry Lachman
Marcy Margolis
Jessica Mason

Civil Rights

Chair, George Gibson
Vice Chair, Karen Westall

Community Engagement

Chair, Bruce Edison
Vice Chair, Sue Hauenstein

Strategic Development

Chair, Jonathan Paine

Education

Chair, Emily Deakins
Vice Chair, Janet Pozmantier

Governance

Co-Chair, Jerry Axelrod
Co-Chair, Rochelle M. Jacobson

International Affairs

Chair, Irwin Barg
Vice Chair, Noga Tobias

Latino Jewish Relations

Chair, Alan Bernstein
Vice-Chair, Lyn Schmulen

Security

Chair, Don Maierson
Vice-Chair, Dee Dee Dochen

Young Leaders and

Professionals

Co-Chair, Nicole Soussan
Co-Chair, Allison Wilden

Regional Staff

Regional Director
Martin B. Cominsky

Senior Associate Director
Jodi Bernstein

Associate Director/Communications
Dena Marks

Associate Director/Education
Susan Shaw

Assistant Director/Development
Stacey Fields

Events Manager

Angela Atlas

National Officers

National Chair
Barry Curtiss-Lusher

National Director
Abraham H. Foxman



Anti-Defamation League®

October 2, 2014

Dr. H. Edwin Young
Senior Pastor
Second Baptist Church
6400 Woodway Drive
Houston, Texas 77057

Dear Dr. Young:

We write to you as leaders of the Jewish community of Houston to share our concerns about a recent sermon you delivered on the third chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans. In your "Winning Walk" sermon entitled "Fearing G-d" you make several references to the Jews which, taken together, could easily be misunderstood to suggest that Jewish people are evil and dangerous. Indeed, several of us have been receiving calls from concerned congregants and constituents who are deeply hurt and dismayed by these references. We, too, as faith and community leaders share their sentiments.

We are confident that you did not intend to defame Jewish people. However, someone hearing your "Fearing G-d" sermon could easily come away with the view (or have that view affirmed) that Jews are in league with Satan; that "inside" they are "dirty, corrupt and manipulative"; that they are "exclusive, self-righteous, and greedy", especially given your authority and international outreach and the fact that you used these words and phrases specifically in this sermon.

These are precisely the images that have been at the root of much of the hatred of Jews throughout history, and that are increasingly being used to foment hatred and violence today, even here in the United States. We know all too well that rhetoric in a sermon, whether written 2000 years ago or today, can be misunderstood or misused, inadvertently or maliciously, to fuel the flames of prejudice and hatred.

In expressing our concerns, we in no way mean to impugn your faith or to limit your ability to preach and teach what you believe. We recognize that both Jews and Judaism figure prominently in the New Testament (not to mention the Old) and therefore are an appropriate subject for a Christian preacher. However, we believe it is important, especially in light of the recent surge of anti-Semitic speech and violence around the world, that faith leaders, and especially you given your worldwide impact, take extra care not to perpetuate images that have led to persecution and murder.

Continued

Imagine a World Without Hate®

Southwest Region

4635 Southwest Freeway, Suite 400, Houston, TX 77027, T 713.627.3490 F 713.627.2011 www.adl.org

Therefore, we respectfully request that you remove this sermon from your website and other public media and that you issue a clear and unambiguous statement disassociating yourself from any suggestion that you intended to malign or bring harm to the Jewish people.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this issue in more detail and will call you shortly to arrange a mutually convenient time for us to meet.

Sincerely,

Martin B. Cominsky
ADL Southwest Regional Director

Rabbi Barry Gelman
Senior Rabbi, United Orthodox Synagogue

Rabbi David Lyon
Senior Rabbi, Congregation Beth Israel

Rabbi David Rosen
Senior Rabbi, Congregation Beth Yeshurun

Rabbi Ranon Teller
Senior Rabbi, Congregation Brith Shalom

Lee Wunsch,
CEO, Jewish Federation of Greater Houston

Imagine a World Without Hate®

Southwest Region

4635 Southwest Freeway, Suite 400, Houston, TX 77027, T 713.627.3490 F 713.627.2011 www.adl.org