

ואם לא עכשיו אימתי

**If Not Now, When?**

**Review | August 2015**

# **If Not Now, When is CCJ`s bespoke response to the persecution of Christians in the Middle East.**

**This review highlights some of the media coverage the initiative generated & endorsements from leading figures across the Jewish and Christian communities as well as some activities that took place during August.**

***There is no doubt that the scourge of hatred, intolerance and oppression remains the most urgent global challenge of our time. In this context, recent reports suggest that Christians face persecution in over a hundred countries worldwide, more than the adherents of any other religion. Each one of us bears a responsibility to reflect on what we can do for those who are suffering because of their faith. The Council of Christians and Jews` If Not Now When resource provides a wonderful vehicle for embarking on that process and I commend it to Jewish communities across the UK and beyond.***

**- Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis**

# Contents

<b><i>Introduction to the Initiative</i></b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b><i>Media Coverage &amp; Endorsements</i></b>	<b>Page 5 - 9</b>
<b><i>Selected Engagements</i></b>	<b>Page 10</b>
<b><i>Twitter Highlights</i></b>	<b>Page 11</b>
<b><i>Additional Resources</i></b>	<b>Page 12-13</b>
<b><i>Acknowledgements</i></b>	<b>Page 14-15</b>

**If I am not for myself, who will be for me?  
But if I am only for myself, what am I?  
*And if not now, when?***

Mishnah Avot 1:14

# Introduction to the Initiative

The initiative encouraged Jewish communities to join Christians reflecting on the persecution of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa in two main areas:

## 1. Information

To provide an educational resource so that people in the Jewish community are able to easily access information about the plight of Christians in the Middle East, raising awareness of this issue.

## 2. Spiritual Engagement

For communities to take time to reflect on this modern-day tragedy and pray that peace can be restored to the region. The resource provides both information and suggestions for how communities might reflect on the issue.

*I am very appreciative of the If Not Now When prayer initiative for Christians in the Middle East, who are currently bearing the brunt of brutal persecution in the region...These prayers, along with those of so many others around the world, will contribute greatly toward empowering them through these challenging times.*

- General Bishop to the Coptic Church in the UK Bishop Angaelos

# Media Coverage

ACNS Anglican Communion News Service

31 July 2015

*If Not Now When? British Jews Pray for Middle East Christians*

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has endorsed and welcomed an initiative from the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) in the UK which will see British Jews spend a month reflecting on the persecution of Christians in the Middle East...

*If Not Now When is a timely and pioneering resource from the Council of Christians and Jews. It galvanises the Jewish community to use their current and historical experience of persecution as a catalyst for a compassionate and prayerful response to Christians facing persecution in the Middle East. A deeply impressive contribution to the work of reconciliation and peace building, this resource will be an invaluable tool for active grassroots engagement.*

- Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby

**If Not Now, When?**

## **Jewish News**

**6 August 2015 | Elizabeth Harris-Sawczenko**

**OPINION: When Christians fear for their lives, it's time for Jews to show solidarity**

...it wasn't until I heard a first-hand account from a Syrian priest, who not only had been subject to significant violence himself, but also graphically described scenes that could have been taken out of any genocide, that I knew we had to start working on this issue the very next day.

**Well done on a superb initiative! I am preparing to give a lecture to an American Graduate Summer School on peacemaking and the CCJ materia resonates with my theme...Be assured of my continuing prayerful interest in the work of CCJ**

**- Reverend Dr David Coffey OBE**

**United Christian Broadcasters**

**11 August 2015 | Elliot Steinberg and Vicky Gibbens**

**If not now, when? Jews pray for persecuted Christians**

...we created a resource that was particularly rooted in Jewish prayer and Jewish faith but also as open and inclusive as possible...to engage in it in a way which is suitable and comfortable for them...

**The Tablet**  
**10 August 2015 | Katherine Backler**

**British Jews to pray for persecuted Christians**

Britain's Jewish community will pray this month especially for persecuted Christians in the Middle East, as part of an initiative organised by the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ)...Jewish members of the CCJ have conceived and designed the campaign to encourage synagogues, youth movements and other Jewish groups to pray and reflect together on so-called Islamic State's violent persecution of Middle East Christians...

***We as Jews have known what it has meant when others have stood by us, and when they have failed to do so. We should speak out for, stand up for and pray for those suffering such persecution today.***

**- Senior Rabbi For Masorti Judaism Jonathan Wittenberg**

**The Jewish Chronicle**  
**14 August 2015 | Elliot Steinberg**

**We can ensure horrors of the past are not repeated**

...Prayer and reflection are incredibly simple, but powerful beyond words. By engaging in such actions we demonstrate that this is an issue that is at the centre of our consciousness. By praying for another, we generate the compassion and empathy that is central to all human relationships...

**If Not Now, When?**

**OPINION: The Plight of Middle East's Christians**

...Hillel is often known for his formulation of the “Golden Rule” (while standing on one leg) but I was delighted to see it was rather “if not now, when?” that was used as the title of a really excellent, thought-provoking resource that has been produced by the Council of Christians and Jews and arrived recently in my inbox...

***The plight of Christians in the Middle East is a tragedy and a travesty and I applaud the Council of Christians & Jews` initiative. I -on behalf of Liberal Judaism- am proud to be associated with the CCJ`s call for a month of reflection and activities titled If Not Now When.***

**- Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism Rabbi Danny Rich**

**The Times of Israel**

**9 August 2015 | Elliot Steinberg**

**Pray for the Christians of the Mideast: If not now, when?**

...we are in a unique, unprecedented position to show concern for and empathy with those Christian communities that are under attack, and the British Christians who are supporting them...



***Congratulations to the CCJ for taking a leading role turning the attention of Jewish communities towards the suffering of Christians in the Middle East. If Not Now When encourages us to delve into our Jewish traditions of social justice and of reaching out to the stranger, and to consider the plight of our Christian sisters and brothers.***

**- Senior Rabbi to the Reform Movement Laura Janner-Klausner**

## **Premier Christian Radio**

**30 July 2015 | Hannah Tooley & Elizabeth Harris-Sawczenko**

**Christians offer support as antisemitic attacks rise**

**It's very much a Jewish response to persecution of Christians in Syria and Iraw, and it's really captured the imagination across the community and been widely endorsed by Christians and Jews from across the spectrum...**

***I warmly endorse the If Not Now When initiative which seeks to encourage the engagement of the Jewish community with the current crisis being experienced by Christians in the Middle East. Given the unique bonds between Christianity and Judaism this is both appropriate and welcome. The materials acknowledge, of course that many religious groups are suffering because of the present situation but this initiative can make a significant contribution to peace in the region by raising awareness and deepening spiritual solidarity between Christians and Jews.***

**- Archbishop Emeritus of Southwark Kevin McDonald**

# A Selection of Engagements in the Initiative

Liberal rabbis across the country used the IfNotNowWhen resource to hold reflections in their communities and write their own pieces on this issue

The Masorti Jewish Community in Oxford introduced the initiative in a sermon during a Shabbat service and shared the resource at a local convent

New North London Synagogue hosted Bishop Angelaelos of the Coptic Orthodox Church to discuss the initiative and build relationships across communities

Ohr Yisrael Synagogue in Borehamwood and Muswell Hill United Synagogue included special sermons about the initiative during August

The Parish Church of Christchurch in Blacknall Heath held a vigil for persecuted Christians on 25th August and invited the local Jewish community

Hillingdon CCJ Branch met during August and invited Christine Elliott of CTBI to talk about Christians in the Middle East and North Africa

Kol Chai Reform Synagogue in Hatch End held a special breakfast to discuss the initiative before the service on 22nd August

Rabbi Wittenberg held a discussion group for teenagers using the resource as a springboard to consider persecuted minorities in the MENA region

Southend CCJ Branch will be joining the Jewish community for celebrations at Simchat Torah and will reflect on persecuted Christians

# Twitter Highlights



Jonathan Wittenberg @RabbiWittenberg 13 Jul 2015  
We must pray together & act together for all who are persecuted. Every human being carries God's  
image; all life matters. #synod #CCJUK

Adam Wagner @AdamWagner1 6 Aug 2015  
When Christians fear for their lives, it's time for Jews to show solidarity - powerful article by @ElizabethHS3  
[jewishnews.co.uk/opinion-when,...](http://jewishnews.co.uk/opinion-when,...)

Michael C Hilton @MichaelCHilton 24 Aug 2015  
@KolChaiReform Great discussion on Shabbat on @CCJUK project to reflect on persecution of  
Christians in the Middle East

Pierre Whalon @bppwhalon 31 Jul 2015  
If not now, never... "If Not Now, When?" British Jews pray for Middle East Christians"  
[anglicannews.org/news/2015/07...](http://anglicannews.org/news/2015/07...)

# Additional Resources

## If Not Now When Resources

CCJ's original resource

<http://www.ccj.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/If-Not-Now-When.pdf>

Supplementary material from Liberal Judaism and the Movement for Reform Judaism

<http://www.ccj.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/If-Not-Now-When-MRJ-LJ-Resource.pdf>

## Media Coverage

Anglican Communion News Service - Jews Pray for Middle East Christians

<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2015/07/if-not-now,-when-british-jews-pray-for-middle-east-christians.aspx>

Church Times - Jews to join prayer for Christians in the Middle East | Hattie Williams

<http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2015/7-august/news/world/jews-to-join-prayer-for-christians-in-the-middle-east>

International Council of Christians and Jews | If Not Now When

[www.jcrelations.net/If\\_Not\\_Now\\_When.5019.0.html?L=3](http://www.jcrelations.net/If_Not_Now_When.5019.0.html?L=3)

**Jewish News - The Plight of Middle East`s Christians | Rabbi Paul Freedman**

<http://www.jewishnews.co.uk/opinion-the-plight-of-the-middle-east-s-christians/>

**Jewish News - When Christians Fear for Their Lives its Time for Jews to Show Solidarity | Elizabeth Harris-Sawczenko**

<http://www.jewishnews.co.uk/opinion-when-christians-fear-for-their-lives-its-time-for-jews-to-show-solidarity/>

**Jewish News - Empathise with Christian plight**

[www.jewishnews.co.uk/opinion-empathise-with-christian-plight/](http://www.jewishnews.co.uk/opinion-empathise-with-christian-plight/)

**Liberal Judaism - We Need To Show Solidarity With Christians Being Attacked | Elliot Steinberg**

<http://liberaljudaism.org/news/1138-we-need-to-show-solidarity-with-christians-who-are-being-attacked.html>

**Premier Christian Radio | Christians Offer Support As Antisemitic Attacks Rise | Hannah Tooley and Elizabeth Harris-Sawczenko**

[www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Christians-offer-support-as-anti-semitic-attacks-rise](http://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Christians-offer-support-as-anti-semitic-attacks-rise)

**The Tablet - British Jews to pray for christians | Katherine Backler**

<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/2338/0/british-jews-to-pray-in-synagogues-and-youth-groups-for-persecuted-christians>

**Times of Israel - Pray for Christians of the MidEast, If not now, when? | Elliot Steinberg**

[http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/mideast-christians-if-not-now-when/?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=twitter](http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/mideast-christians-if-not-now-when/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter)

**United Christian Broadcasters | Vicky Gibbens and Elliot Steinberg (from 44 min 28 sec)**

<http://www.ucb.co.uk/catchup/893271/stream/311?client=ucb>

# Acknowledgements

**We would like to thank all of the leaders and communities who lent their support to and participated in this initiative**

His Grace Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop to the Coptic Orthodox Church in the UK | Reverend Canon John Barnett, Interfaith Officer for the Wolverhampton Episcopal Area, Interfaith Adviser to the Bishop of Lichfield | Kat Brealey, Presence and Engagement | Aron Carr, CCJ Intern | Reverend Dr David Coffey OBE | Zaki Cooper, CCJ Trustee | Rabbi Joseph Dweck, Senior Rabbi to the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation, CCJ President | Reverend Bonnie Evans-Hills, Interfaith Adviser to the Diocese of St Albans | Wendy Fidler MBE, CCJ Trustee | Rabbi Paul Freedman, Radlett Reform Synagogue | Lord Maurice Glasman of Stoke Newington | The Venerable Archdeacon Martin Gorick, Christ Church Oxford | Rabbi Michael Hilton, Kol Chai Reform Synagogue | Lord Michael Howard of Lympne, CCJ Trustee | Rabbi David Hulbert, Bet Tikvah Liberal Synagogue | Bishop Michael Igrave, Bishop of Woolwich, CCJ Chair | Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner, Senior Rabbi to the Movement for Reform Judaism | Rabbi Sandra Kviat, Crouch End Chavurah Liberal Synagogue, Education Officer for Liberal Judaism | Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence, Finchley United Synagogue | Rabbi David Mason, Muswell Hill United Synagogue | Archbishop Kevin McDonald, Archbishop Emeritus of Southwark, CCJ Trustee | Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, CCJ President | Maurice Ostro OBE, CCJ Vice-Chair | Andrew R Pratt, Bishop's Adviser and Coordinator for Interfaith Work, Blackburn Diocese | Rabbi Danny Rich, Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism, CCJ President | Rabbi Jonathan Romain, Maidenhead Reform Synagogue, CCJ Advisory Board Member | Rabbi David Rosen CBE KCSG, International Director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee | Lord George Weidenfeld of Chelsea | Father

Patrick Morrow | Archbishop Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, CCJ President | Reverend Canon Steven Williams, St Gabriel's Church, Co-Chair of Manchester CCJ | Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, Senior Rabbi for Masorti Judaism, CCJ President | Rabbi Charles Wolloch | Christ Church, Blakenall Heath | Members of the Glasgow Jewish Community | Hillingdon Branch, CCJ | New North London Synagogue | Oxford Jewish Congregation | Ohr Yisrael, Borehamwood | Southend Branch, CCJ | Southend and Westcliff Hebrew Congregation | And many other participants around the country

Office of The  
**CHIEF RABBI**



The movement for  
**REFORM JUDAISM**

liberal  **judaism**

Masorti  
Judaism 

**If Not Now, When?**



**If Not Now When**

**The Council Of Christians and Jews  
Collaboration House  
77-79 Charlotte Street  
London  
W1T 4PW**

**Tel: 020 3515 3003  
www.ccj.org.uk  
Twitter: @CCJUK | Facebook: /TheCCJUK**

Registered Charity Number 238005