

Adventists apologize for failures during Nazi era: German and Austrian leaders issue statement

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German and Austrian leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have issued a statement of apology for any support of or role in Nazi activities during World War II. In their declaration, the church bodies “honestly confess” to a failure “in following our Lord” by not protecting Jews and others during the Holocaust, reported Adventist News Network. The statement was issued as observances marked the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II.

“We deeply regret that the character of National Socialist dictatorship had not been realized in time and distinctly enough, and the ungodly nature of [Nazi] ideology had not clearly been identified,” reads the statement, translated from German.

They added their regret “that in some of our publications . . . there were found articles glorifying Adolf Hitler and agreeing with the ideology of anti-Semitism in a way that is unbelievable from today’s [perspective].”

According to the statement, German and Austrian Adventist congregations “excluded” and “separated” church members “of Jewish origin” and left them “to themselves so that they were delivered to imprisonment, exile or death.”

Gunther Machel, president of the South German area for the Adventists, said the declaration, which he and two other leaders signed, first appeared in May in the *Advent Echo*, a monthly German-language church magazine, and will be published in other German publications. -*Religion News Service*