Christians and Jews, ruling powers and the institutional church have perpetrated odious persecutions. History is a tragic bloodbath of oppressors wreaking havoc on the oppressed. If we were to disavow the name “Lutheran,” then we must also disavow the name “Christian” because of the heinous sins of the past. To do so would, however, deprive us of centuries of solid Christian scholarship, theology, the arts, and contributions to the betterment of humanity. In spite of Luther’s unquestionable flaws, he liberated the laity from legalistic ecclesiastical power and made Scripture available in the vernacular, among other substantial contributions.

But this is now. Please accept our repentance for Luther’s anti-Semitism in the spirit in which it is given. We can neither deny nor undo the past, but must commit ourselves never to repeat its evils. We can be enriched in our diversity and reconciled in our sister-brotherhood, working together for peace, justice, and care of the earth.

Michael Lerner replies:

The complaining nonvoters are more likely to be motivated by decent actions of the president like ending the war in Afghanistan; taking action on the environment (see Gore’s statement in The New York Times criticizing what Obama has not done); and demanding that Congress pass an emergency jobs bill like the New Deal’s WPA. That, not fear about the “evil” Republicans, is what will bring those complaining nonvoters back into enthusiastic support for him.