

Virtual Jewish World: Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France

Le Chambon-sur-Lignon is a Protestant village in Haute-Loire in southern France. During World War II, it became a haven for Jews fleeing from the Nazis and their French collaborators.

The Chambonais hid Jews in their homes, sometimes for as long as four years, provided them with forged I.D. and ration cards, and helped them over the border to safety in Switzerland. With their history of persecution as a religious minority in Catholic France, empathy for Jews as the people of the Old Testament, and the powerful leadership and example of their pastor and his wife, Andre and Magda Trocme, the people of Chambon acted on their conviction that it was their duty to help their "neighbors" in need.



Jewish children hidden in Le Chambon

The Chambonais rejected any labeling of their behavior as heroic. They said: "Things had to be done and we happened to be there to do them. It was the most natural thing in the world to help these people." After the round-up and deportation of Jews in Paris in July 1942, Pastor Trocme had delivered a sermon to his parishioners, "The Christian Church should drop to its knees and beg pardon of God for its present incapacity and cowardice."

The American Friends (Quakers) and other Protestant organizations and Catholic clergy provided assistance to Chambon to set up homes for children whose parents had been deported. The head of one of these homes was Daniel Trocme, the young cousin of Pastor Trocme. In June 1943 he and "his" children were arrested and deported to the East. Daniel Trocme died in Majdanek.

The Trocmes have been recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous among the Nations; a tree was planted in honor of Andre and Magda Trocme and another in honor of Daniel Trocme. A small garden and plaque were dedicated to the people of Chambon.

Sources: [Yad Vashem](#). [U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) | photo.