



CHRISTIAN ZIONISTS

ON THE ROAD TO ARMAGEDDON

Dr. Stephen R. Sizer

CHRISTIAN ZIONISTS: On the Road to Armageddon

**The historical roots, theological
basis and political consequences
of Christian involvement in the
Arab-Israeli conflict**



Stephen R. Sizer

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The Historical Roots of Christian Zionism



Introduction

“Only one nation, Israel, stands between ... terrorist aggression and the complete decline of the United States as a democratic world power... If Israel falls, the United States can no longer remain a democracy. ...Arab money is being used to control and influence major U.S. Corporations, making it economically more and more difficult for the United States to stand against world terrorism.”¹

Over the next three chapters we are going to examine the historical roots, the theological basis and political consequences of Christian Zionism. While many would not necessarily recognise themselves as such, nor go as far as Mike Evans in his claims, it is nevertheless assumed by a large proportion of evangelicals in Britain and America that being biblical is synonymous with being pro-Israeli. Dale Crowley, a Washington based religious broadcaster, however, describes this movement as the ‘fastest growing cult in America’:

‘It’s not composed of “crazies” so much as mainstream, middle to upper-middle class Americans. They give millions

¹ Mike Evans, Israel, America’s Key to Survival, (Plainfield, NJ: Haven Books), back page, p. xv.

of dollars each week – to the TV evangelists who expound the fundamentals of the cult. They read Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye. They have one goal: to facilitate God's hand to waft them up to heaven free from all the trouble, from where they will watch Armageddon and the destruction of planet earth.¹²

Christian Zionism Defined

Christian Zionism is essentially Christian support for Zionism.

Grace Halsell summarises the message of the Christian Zionist in this way: "every act taken by Israel is orchestrated by God, and should be condoned, supported, and even praised by the rest of us."¹³ Whether consciously or otherwise, Christian Zionists subscribe to a religious Jewish agenda best expressed by Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, who claims: 'We should not forget ... that the supreme purpose of the ingathering of exiles and the establishment of our State is the building of the Temple. The Temple is at the very top of the pyramid.'¹⁴ Another rabbi, Yisrael Meida, explains the link between politics and theology within Jewish Zionism: 'It is all a matter of sovereignty. He who controls the Temple Mount, controls Jerusalem. And he who controls Jerusalem, controls the land of Israel.'¹⁵

This paradigm may be illustrated by way of three concentric rings. The land represents the outer ring, Jerusalem the middle ring and the Temple is the centre ring. The three rings comprise the Zionist agenda by which the Land was claimed in 1948, the Old City of Jerusalem was

¹² Dale Crowley, 'Errors and Deceptions of Dispensational Teachings.' Capital Hill Voice, (1996-1997), cited in Halsell, op.cit., p5. Grace Halsell herself defines Christian Zionism as a cult. See Halsell, op.cit., p31.

¹³ Grace Halsell, 'Israeli Extremists and Christian Fundamentalists: The Alliance', Washington Report, December (1988), p31.

¹⁴ Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Hacohen Aviner, cited in Grace Halsell, Forcing God's Hand, (Washington, Crossroads International, 1999), p71.

¹⁵ Yisrael Meida, cited in Halsell, Forcing, op.cit., p68.

occupied in 1967 and the Temple site is being contested. For the religious Zionist, Jewish or Christian, the three are inextricably linked. The Christian Zionist vision therefore is to work to see all three under exclusive Jewish control since this will lead to blessing for the entire world as nations recognise and respond to what God is seen to be doing in and through Israel.⁶

The Significance of the Movement

Christian Zionism as a movement is very diverse, ranging from individual Christian leaders whose denominations have no stated position on Zionism,⁷ to major international evangelical organizations which are unapologetically Zionist. Some have an explicit political agenda, such as Bridges for Peace and the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, which also enjoys diplomatic status in several Central American countries.⁸ Both have disavowed or redefined evangelism and identify with right-wing Israeli opinion, lobbying the US government to continue to finance Israel's expansionist agenda. Other organisations such as Jews for Jesus are primarily evangelistic or messianic but also espouse Zionism on biblical grounds. Exodus and the Ebenezer Trust, for example, are representative of smaller organisations specializing in facilitating the transportation of Jews to Israel from Russia and Eastern Europe, while Christian Friends of

⁶ 'Biblical Zionism, Cutting Edge Theology for the "Last Days"' Word from Jerusalem, International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, September (2001), p9.

⁷ For example, David Pawson, *When Jesus Returns*, (London, Hodder, 1998); 'Israel in the New Testament' Israel & Christians Today, Summer (2002), p5; John MacArthur, *The Future of Israel*, (Chicago, Moody Press, 1991); R.T. Kendall, 'How literally do you read your Bible?' Israel & Christians Today, Summer (2001), p9.

⁸ ICEJ have diplomatic status in Honduras and Guatemala and have been implicated in facilitating the funding of the US-backed Contras during the 1980s. Donald Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon*, (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, Herald, 1995), p109.

Israel Communities encourage churches to adopt Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories.⁹

Contemporary Christian Zionist leaders include Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Hal Lindsey, Mike Evans, Charles Dyer, John Walvoord and Dave Hunt. They have achieved considerable influence in popularising an apocalyptic premillennial and largely dispensational eschatology, legitimising Zionism among Western Christians. That their teaching also warrants the description 'Armageddon Theology' is evident from the provocative titles of many of their recent books.¹⁰

Dispensational Christian Zionism, which is the dominant form, with its teaching on the Rapture of the Church, the rebuilding of the Temple and imminent battle of Armageddon, is pervasive within mainline evangelical, charismatic and independent denominations including the Assemblies of God, Pentecostal and Southern Baptists as well as many of the independent mega-churches. Crowley claims they are led by 80,000 fundamentalist pastors, their views disseminated by 1,000 Christian radio stations as well as 100 Christian TV stations.¹¹ Doug Kreiger lists over 250 pro-Israeli organisations founded in the 1980s alone.¹²

⁹ Sarah Honig, 'Adopt-a-Settlement Program', *The Jerusalem Post*, 2nd October (1995); <http://www.bridgesforpeace.com/publications/dispatch/lifeinisrael/Article-12.html>

¹⁰ Notably, Hal Lindsey, *The 1980's Countdown to Armageddon*, (New York, Bantam, 1981); *The Road to Holocaust*, (New York, Bantam 1989); *The Final Battle*, (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front. 1995); Edgar C. James, *Arabs, Oil and Armageddon*, (Chicago, Moody Press, 1977); Marius Baar, *The Unholy War, Oil, Islam and Armageddon*, (Worthing, Henry E. Walter, 1980); Mike Evans, *Israel, America's Key to Survival*, (Plainfield, New Jersey, Haven, n.d.); John F. Walvoord, *Armageddon, Oil and the Middle East Crisis*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1990); *The Final Drama*, (Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1993); Moishe Rosen, *Beyond the Gulf War, Overture to Armageddon*, (San Bernardino, Here's Life Publishers, 1991); Dave Hunt, *Peace, Prosperity and the Coming Holocaust*, (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House, 1983).

¹¹ Halsell, *Forcing*, op.cit., p50.

¹² Grace Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics*, (Westport, Connecticut, Lawrence Hill, 1986), p178.

Estimates as to the size of the movement as a whole vary considerably. While critics like Crowley claim, 'At least one out of every 10 Americans is a devotee', advocates such as Robertson and Falwell claim the support of 100 million Americans with whom they communicate weekly.¹³ Dale Crowley's own estimate is that there are between '25 to 30 million' pro-Israeli Christians in America, a number that is growing.¹⁴ Robert Boston, for example, argues that Pat Robertson's, Christian Coalition, with an annual budget of \$25 million and over 1.7 million members, is 'arguably ... the single most influential political organisation in the U.S.'¹⁵

Likewise, the National Unity Coalition for Israel which brings together 200 different Jewish and Christian Zionist organisations including the International Christian Embassy, Christian Friends of Israel and Bridges for Peace, claims a support base of 40 million active members.¹⁶ These organisations make up a broad coalition which is shaping not only the Christian Zionist agenda but also US foreign policy in the Middle East today.

So where did Christian Zionism come from? This first chapter will focus on the historical development of the movement from its small beginnings in 19th Century rural England to its 21st Century power base on Capitol Hill. In the second chapter we will consider the biblical case for Christian Zionism and then in the third we will examine its political agenda.

¹³ 'Christians Call for a United Jerusalem' New York Times, 18 April (1997), <http://www.cdn-friends-icej.ca/united.html>

¹⁴ Halsell, *Forcing*, op.cit., p50.

¹⁵ Robert Boston, *The Most Dangerous Man in America? Pat Robertson and the Rise of the Christian Coalition*, (New York, Prometheus, 1996).

¹⁶ <http://www.israelunitycoalition.com>

The British Roots of Christian Zionism

The genesis of Christian Zionism lies within the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation brought about a renewed interest in the Old Testament and God's dealings with the Jewish people. From Protestant pulpits right across Europe, the Bible was for the first time in centuries being taught within its historical context and given its plain literal sense. At the same time, a new assessment of the place of the Jews within the purposes of God emerged.

Puritanism and the Conversion of the Jews

Puritan eschatology was essentially postmillennial and believed the conversion of the Jews would lead to future blessing for the entire world. In 1621, for example, Sir Henry Finch, an eminent lawyer and member of the English Parliament, published a book entitled, *The World's Great Restauration (sic) or Calling of the Jews, (and with them) all the Nations and Kingdoms of the Earth, to the Faith of Christ*. By the late 17th Century and right through the 18th Century, especially during the period of the Great Awakening, postmillennial eschatology dominated European and American Protestantism.¹⁷ The writings and preaching of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758),¹⁸ as well as George Whitefield, were influential in the spread of the belief that the millennium had arrived, that the gospel would soon triumph against evil throughout the world. God's blessings of peace and prosperity would follow the conversion of Israel, prior to the glorious return of Christ.¹⁹

¹⁷ Cornelis P. Venema, *The Promise of the Future*, (Edinburgh, Banner of Trust, 2000), pp219-229.

¹⁸ Jonathan Edwards, 'The History of the Work of Redemption', *The Complete Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Volume 2 (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1974).

¹⁹ Other leading theologians to espouse this view included J. A. Alexander, Robert Dabney, Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, B.B. Warfield, Loraine Boettner and Charles H. Spurgeon. See also 'Postmillennialism' in *The Meaning of*

Adventism and the End of the World

The late 18th and early 19th Centuries saw a dramatic movement away from the optimism of postmillennialism following a sustained period of turmoil on both sides of the Atlantic.²⁰ There was the American War of Independence (1775-1784), the French Revolution (1789-1793) and then the Napoleonic Wars (1809-1815). In 1804, Louis Napoleon had been crowned Emperor of the Gauls in the reluctant presence of the Pope. In 1807 he plotted the division of Europe with the Czar of Russia and began a blockade of British sea trade with Europe. Two years later he arrested the Pope and annexed the Papal States. He then began the systematic destruction of the Roman Catholic Church in France, seizing its assets, executing priests and exiling the Pope from Rome. By 1815, Napoleon's armies had fought, invaded or subjugated most of Europe and the Middle East, including Italy, Austria, Germany, Poland, Russia, Palestine and Egypt.

Napoleon appointed his brothers as kings of Holland, Naples, Spain and Westphalia in what is today Germany. He even gave his own son the title 'King of Rome'. His plan was to create a United States of Europe, each state ruled by a

the Millennium: Four Views, edited by Robert G. Clouse, (Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity, 1977), pp17ff.

²⁰ A small number of 19th Century Postmillennial theologians did continue to espouse a form of Jewish Restorationism but only as a consequence of Jewish people coming to faith in Jesus and being incorporated within the Church. These include Charles Simeon (1759-1836) and David Brown (1803-1897), who was Edward Irving's assistant at Regent Square and who wrote *The Second Advent* (1849) and *The Restoration of Israel*, (1861). Erroll Hulse also identifies with this position, *The Restoration of Israel*, (Worthing, Henry Walter, 1968). Since the Restorationist movement became dominated by Covenant premillennialists and dispensationalists from the early 19th Century, this thesis has concentrated on their contribution. The previous chapter has explored the early intimations of proto-Christian Zionism within the Reformation and Puritan period which was dominated by Postmillennialists. See Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology, The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, (Tustin, California, Ariel Ministries, 1989), pp14-122.

compliant monarch, subject to himself as ‘supreme King of Kings and Sovereign of the Roman Empire’.²¹ Numerous preachers and commentators speculated on whether Napoleon was indeed the Antichrist.²² Charles Finney, for example, predicted the imminent end of the world by 1838. In 1835 he speculated that ‘If the church will do all her duty, the Millennium may come in this country in three years.’²³ Joseph Miller narrowed the return of Christ down to the 21st March 1843, while Charles Russell more prudently predicted that Christ would set up his spiritual kingdom in the heavenlies in 1914. For many years, Russell’s popular sermons linking biblical prophecy with contemporary events were reproduced in over 1,500 newspapers in the USA and Canada.²⁴ This sectarian speculation came to be embraced by mainstream evangelicalism through the influence of J. N. Darby and the Brethren.

Dispensationalism and the Restoration of the Jews

The development of Dispensationalism in the 19th Century and the revolution in futurist prophetic speculation concerning the Church and Israel can be largely attributed to Edward Irving²⁵ and John Nelson Darby together with others

²¹ G. H. Pember, *The Great Prophecies of the Centuries concerning Israel and the Gentiles*, (London, Hodder, 1902), pp236-241.

²² J. N. Darby, ‘Remarks on a tract circulated by the Irvingites’, *Collected Writings*, edited by William Kelly (Kingston on Thames, Stow Hill Bible and Trust Depot, 1962), Doctrinal IV, 15, p2; Andrew Drummond, *Edward Irving and His Circle* (London, James Clarke, n.d.), p132; Janet M. Hartley, ‘Napoleon in Russia: Saviour or anti-Christ? History Today’, 41 (1991); Richard Kyle, *The Last Days are Here Again*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker, 1998), p71.

²³ Charles Finney, *Lectures on Revival*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1960), p306.

²⁴ Clouse, Hosack & Pierard, op.cit., p116.

²⁵ Murray, op.cit., p188. Irving was also one of the forerunners of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement. Arnold Dallimore, *The Life of Edward Irving: The Fore-runner of the Charismatic Movement*, (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1983); Gordon Strachan, *The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving*, (Peabody, Massachusetts, 1973). George Eldon Ladd, however, attributes the revival of ‘futurist’ or historic Premillennialism in the 19th Century to S.R. Maitland, James Todd and William Burgh. See

associated with a series of prophetic conferences held in England and then Ireland between 1826 and 1833.²⁶ If you wish to trace the development of this movement I commend to you Don Wagner's book, *Anxious for Armageddon* (Herald Press), or my pre-publication book, available on CD.

On the first day of Advent in 1826, Henry Drummond (1786-1860), a city banker, politician, and High Sheriff of Surrey, England,²⁷ opened his home at Albury Park to a select group of some twenty invited guests to discuss matters concerning 'the immediate fulfilment of prophecy'.²⁸ Topics included speculation on the fulfilment of biblical prophecy, premillennialism, the imminent return of the Jews to Palestine and the search for the lost tribes of Israel. These conferences continued in the early 1830's at Powerscourt in Ireland under the growing influence of John Nelson Darby.

John Nelson Darby—the Rise of Dispensationalism

John Nelson Darby is regarded by many as the father of Dispensationalism and the most influential figure in the development of Christian Zionism.²⁹ He was a charismatic figure with a dominant personality. He was a persuasive

George Eldon Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1956), pp35-40. Maitland's first publication is dated 1826, James Todd's 1838, and William Burgh's 1835. While they may indeed have been influential, since Irving acknowledges his indebtedness to Hatley Frere and his own premillennial sermons are dated as early as 1824, it is still appropriate to regard Irving as the earliest proponent of this view in the 19th Century.

²⁶ Rowland A. Davenport, *Albury Apostles*, (London, Free Society, 1970).

²⁷ Twelve elders called 'angels' were appointed to pastor the congregation and administer the church in the expectation that the Lord would return to Albury in their life time. Consequently, as each elder eventually died they were not replaced until there were none to pastor the congregation.

²⁸ Edward Miller, *The History and Doctrines of Irvingism*, volume 1 (London, Kegan Paul, 1878), p36.

²⁹ Donald E. Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon*, (Waterloo, Ontario, Herald Press, 1995), pp81,88. This is disputed by Charles Ryrie who attempts to place the origin of Dispensationalism, some 150 years earlier, allegedly finding evidence in the writings of Pierre Poiret (1646-1719) and John Edwards (1639-1716) as well as Isaac Watts (1674-1748). See Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, (Chicago, Moody Press, 1995), pp65-71.

speaker and zealous missionary for his dispensationalist beliefs. He personally founded Brethren churches as far away as Germany, Switzerland, France and the United States, and translated the entire Scriptures into English.³⁰

The churches Darby and his colleagues planted with the seeds of Premillennial Dispensationalism in turn sent missionaries to Africa, the West Indies, Australia, New Zealand and, ironically, to work among the Arabs of Palestine. From 1862 onwards his controlling influence over the Brethren in Britain waned due, in particular, to the split between Open and Exclusive Brethren in 1848.³¹

Darby consequently spent more and more time in North America, making seven journeys in the next twenty years. During these visits, he came to have an increasing influence over evangelical leaders such as James H. Brookes, Dwight L. Moody, William Blackstone and C. I. Scofield. His ideas also helped shape the emerging evangelical Bible Schools and 'Prophecy' conferences, which came to dominate both Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in the United States between 1875 and 1920.³²

Clarence Bass, in his definitive history of Dispensationalism describes Darby's abiding influence on American Evangelicalism:

'Suffice it to say that he stamped his movement with his own personality. Much of its spiritual atmosphere undoubtedly belongs to his influence; and certainly its interpretative principles, its divisive compartmentalization of the redemptive plan of God, its literalness as to prophetic

³⁰ Turner, op.cit., p53.

³¹ Darby disagreed with Newton's Christology and forced a division between those who came to be known as the Open Brethren led by men like George Muller and Henry Craik and his own Exclusive Brethren who became increasingly legalistic and separatist. See G. C. D. Howley, 'Plymouth Brethren' The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. J.D. Douglas (Exeter, Paternoster, 1978), pp789-790.

³² Wagner, op.cit., p. 89.

interpretation, and its separatist spirit may be traced to this personality.³³

Lord Shaftesbury and Restorationism

Zionism would probably have remained simply a religious ideal were it not for the intervention of a handful of influential aristocratic British politicians who came to share the theological convictions of Darby and his colleagues and translated them into political reality. One in particular, Lord Shaftesbury (1801-1885) became convinced that the restoration of the Jews to Palestine was not only predicted in the Bible,³⁴ but also coincided with the strategic interests of British foreign policy.³⁵ Others who shared this perspective, in varying degrees and for different reasons, included Lord Palmerston, David Lloyd George and Lord Balfour. Ironically, this conviction was precipitated by the actions of an atheist, Napoleon, in the spring of 1799.

During the Syrian campaign of Napoleon's Oriental expedition, in which he had sought to defeat the Ottoman rulers, cut off Britain from its Empire, and recreate the empire of Alexander from France to India,³⁶ he became the first political leader to propose a sovereign Jewish State in Palestine:

'Bonaparte, Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the French Republic in Africa and Asia, to the Rightful Heirs of Palestine. Israelites, unique nation, whom, in thousands of years, lust of conquest and tyranny were able to deprive of the ancestral lands only, but not of name and national existence...She [France] offers to you at this very time, and contrary to all expectations, Israel's patrimony...Rightful

³³ Bass, op.cit., pp176.

³⁴ Wagner, op.cit., p91.

³⁵ Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, (London, Macmillan, 1982), p115.

³⁶ Merkley, op.cit., p38.

heirs of Palestine...hasten! Now is the moment which may not return for thousands of years, to claim the restoration of your rights among the population of the universe which had shamefully withheld from you for thousands of years, your political existence as a nation among the nations, and the unlimited natural right to worship Yehovah in accordance with your faith, publicly and in likelihood for ever (Joel 4:20).³⁷

Napoleon believed that with sympathetic Jews controlling Palestine, French imperial and commercial interests as far as India, Arabia and Africa could be secured.³⁸ Neither Napoleon nor the Jews were able to deliver. Nevertheless his proclamation 'is a barometer of the extent to which the European atmosphere was charged with these messianic expectations'.³⁹ The European Powers became increasingly preoccupied with the 'Eastern Question'. Britain and Prussia sided with the Sultan of Turkey against Napoleon and his vassal, Mehemet Ali. The necessity of preventing French control had led not only to the battles of the Nile and Acre, but also to a British military expedition in Palestine. With the defeat of Napoleon, Britain's main concern was how to restrain Russia.⁴⁰ The race was on to control Palestine.⁴¹

Stirred by memories of the Napoleonic expedition, Lord Shaftesbury argued for a greater British presence in Palestine and saw this could be achieved by the sponsorship of a

³⁷ Cited in Franz Kobler, Napoleon and the Jews, (New York, Schocken Books, 1976), pp55-57. See also: http://www.napoleonicssociety.com/english/scholarship98/c_jews98.html

³⁸ See Albert M. Hyamson, Palestine: The Rebirth of an Ancient People, (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1917), pp162-163; Salo W. Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1937), 2. p327, cited in Sharif, op.cit., p52.

³⁹ Baron, *ibid*.

⁴⁰ Sharif, op.cit., p54.

⁴¹ John Pollock, Shaftesbury, (London, Hodder, 1985), p54.

Jewish homeland on both religious and political grounds.⁴² British protection of the Jews, he argued, would give a colonial advantage over France for the control of the Middle East; provide better access to India via a direct land route; and open up new commercial markets for British products.⁴³

In 1839, Shaftesbury wrote an anonymous 30 page article for the *Quarterly Review*, entitled 'State and Restauration (sic) of the Jews.' In it Shaftesbury advocated a Jewish national homeland with Jerusalem the capital, remaining under Turkish rule but with British protection.⁴⁴ Shaftesbury predicted a new era for the Jews:

'...the Jews must be encouraged to return in yet greater numbers and become once more the husbandman of Judea and Galilee ... though admittedly a stiff-necked, dark hearted people, and sunk in moral degradation, obduracy, and ignorance of the Gospel...[They are]...not only worthy of salvation but also vital to Christianity's hope of salvation.'⁴⁵

When Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary, married Shaftesbury's widowed mother-in-law, he was 'well placed' to lobby for this cause.⁴⁶ His diary for 1st August 1840 Shaftesbury reads:

'Dined with Palmerston. After dinner left alone with him. Propounded my scheme which seems to strike his fancy. He asked questions and readily promised to consider it. How singular is the order of Providence. Singular, if estimated by man's ways. Palmerston had already been chosen by God to be an instrument of good to His ancient people, to do homage to their inheritance, and to recognize their rights

⁴² Lord Shaftesbury, cited in P. C. Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism 1891-1948*, (London: Frank Cass, 1998), p14.

⁴³ Wagner, op.cit., p91.

⁴⁴ Pollock, op.cit., p54.

⁴⁵ Earl of Shaftesbury, 'State and Prospects of the Jews', *Quarterly Review*, 63, London, January/March (1839), pp166-192, cited in Wagner, op.cit., p91, and http://www.snunit.k12.il/heb_journals/katedra/62018.html

⁴⁶ Pollock, op.cit., p54.

without believing their destiny. It seems he will yet do more. Though the motive be kind, it is not sound ... he weeps not, like his Master, over Jerusalem, nor prays that now, at last, she may put on her beautiful garments.⁴⁷

Two weeks later, a lead article in *The London Times*, dated 17 August 1840, called for a plan 'to plant the Jewish people in the land of their fathers', claiming such a plan was under 'serious political consideration'. Palmerston commended the efforts of Shaftesbury, the plan's author as both 'practical and statesmanlike'. Fuelling speculation about an imminent restoration, on 4 November of 1840, Shaftesbury took out a paid advertisement in *The Times* to give greater visibility to his vision. The advertisement included the following:

'RESTORATION OF THE JEWS. A memorandum has been addressed to the Protestant monarchs of Europe on the subject of the restoration of the Jewish people to the land of Palestine. The document in question, dictated by a peculiar conjunction of affairs in the East, and other striking "signs of the times", reverts to the original covenant which secures that land to the descendants of Abraham.'⁴⁸

The influence of Lord Shaftesbury, therefore, in promoting the Zionist cause within the political, diplomatic, and ecclesiastical establishment in Britain was immense. Wagner claims, 'He single-handedly translated the theological positions of Brightman, Henry Finch, and John Nelson Darby into a political strategy. His high political connections, matched by his uncanny instincts, combined to advance the Christian Zionist vision.'⁴⁹ Indeed it was probably Shaftesbury who inspired Israel Zangwell and

⁴⁷ Anthony Ashley, Earl of Shaftesbury. Diary entries as quoted by Edwin Hodder, *The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury*, (London, 1886), 1, pp310-311; See also Geoffrey B.A.M. Finlayson, *The Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury*, (London, Eyre Methuen, 1981), p114; The National Register Archives, London, Shaftesbury (Broadlands) MSS, SHA/PD/2, 1 August 1840.

⁴⁸ Wagner, op.cit., p91.

⁴⁹ Wagner, op.cit., p92.

Theodore Herzl to coin the phrase, 'A land of no people for a people with no land.' Shaftesbury, a generation earlier, imagining Palestine to be empty, had come up with the slogan, 'A country without a nation for a nation without a country.'⁵⁰ Like Moses, Shaftesbury did not live to see his 'Promised Land' realised. However, through his lobbying, writings and public speaking he did more than any other British politician to inspire a generation of Joshuas to translate his religious vision into a political reality.

British Political Support for Jewish Zionism

Of those Christian political leaders to take up the mantle of Shaftesbury and achieve the Zionist dream, a small number stand out. These include Laurence Oliphant (1829-1888), William Hechler (1845-1931), David Lloyd George (1863-1945) and probably most significant of all, Arthur Balfour (1848-1930).

By 1897, when the first World Zionist Congress met in Basle, Switzerland, Jewish leaders who favoured a Zionist State already had sympathetic support from many more senior British political figures. This was largely due to the efforts of one man, William Hechler. The son of LJS missionaries in France and Germany, Hechler was an Anglican priest and became chaplain to the British Embassy in Vienna in 1885, a position of strategic significance for the Zionist movement.⁵¹ 'Imbued with evangelical millenarianism, he even formulated his own exact date for the re-establishment of the Jewish State.'⁵² As with Shaftesbury's slogan, so Hechler's booklet, The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine (1894), predated Herzl's Der Judenstaat

⁵⁰ cited in Wagner, op.cit., p92; also Albert H. Hyamson, Palestine under the Mandate, (London, 1950), p10, cited in Sharif, op.cit., p42.

⁵¹ David Pileggi, 'Hechler, CMJ & Zionism' Shalom, 3 (1998).

⁵² Sharif, op.cit., p71.

by two years, and spoke of the need for 'restoring the Jews to Palestine according to Old Testament prophecies.'⁵³ Hechler became Herzl's chief Christian ally in realising his vision of a Zionist State, one of only three Christians invited to attend the World Congress of Zionists. Herzl was not religious but he was superstitious and records a meeting with Hechler on 10 March 1896 in his diary:

'The Reverend William Hechler, Chaplain of the English Embassy here, came to see me. A sympathetic, gentle fellow, with the long grey beard of a prophet. He is enthusiastic about my solution of the Jewish Question. He also considers my movement a 'prophetic turning-point' - which he had foretold two years before. From a prophecy in the time of Omar (637CE) he had reckoned that at the end of forty-two prophetic months (total 1260 years) the Jews would get Palestine back. This figure he arrived at was 1897-98.'⁵⁴

In March 1897, the year Hechler expected the Jews to begin returning to Palestine, Herzl described their second meeting at Hechler's apartment. Herzl was amazed to find books from floor to ceiling, 'Nothing but Bibles' and a large military staff map of Palestine made up of four sheets covering the entire floor of the study:

'He showed me where, according to his calculations, our new Temple must be located: in Bethel! Because that is the centre of the country. He also showed me models of the ancient Temple. 'We have prepared the ground for you!' Hechler said triumphantly ... I take him for a naive visionary ...However, there is something charming about his enthusiasm...He gives me excellent advice, full of unmistakable genuine good will. He is at once clever and mystical, cunning and naive.'⁵⁵

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Theodor Herzl, *The Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, (New York, 1956), cited in Sharif, op.cit., p71.

⁵⁵ Merkley, op.cit., pp16-17; Pileggi, op.cit.

Despite Herzl's initial scepticism, Hechler kept his word and gained access to the German Kaiser William II, the Grand Duke of Baden as well as the British political establishment for Herzl and his Zionist delegation. Although sympathetic to the evangelistic ministry of the LJS, Hechler's advocacy and diplomacy marked a radical shift in Christian Zionist thinking away from the views of early restorationists like Irving and Drummond who saw restoration to the land as a consequence of Jewish conversion to Christianity. Now, Hechler was insisting instead, that it was the destiny of Christians simply to help restore the Jews to Palestine.

David Lloyd George, who became Prime Minister in 1916, was another self-confessed Zionist, sharing similar views to those of Shaftesbury. In his own words, he was Chaim Weizmann's proselyte, 'Acetone converted me to Zionism.'⁵⁶ This was because Weizmann had assisted the British government in the development of a new explosive using acetone and Palestine appears to have been the reward.

The Balfour Declaration and Zionism

Probably the most significant British politician of all, however, was Arthur James Balfour (1848-1930), who pioneered the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Like Lloyd George, Balfour had been brought up in an evangelical home and was sympathetic to Zionism because of the influence of dispensational teaching.⁵⁷ He regarded history as 'an instrument for carrying out a Divine purpose.'⁵⁸ From 1905 Chaim Weizmann, then a professor of chemistry at

⁵⁶ Weizmann had discovered how to synthesize acetone, a solvent used in the manufacture of explosives.

⁵⁷ Wagner, op.cit., p93.

⁵⁸ Sharif, op.cit., p78

Manchester University, began to meet regularly with Balfour to discuss the implementation of that goal. At Balfour's invitation, in July 1917, the Zionist Organisation offered a suggested draft to Balfour:

'1) His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the National Home of the Jewish people. 2) His Majesty's Government will use its best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object and will discuss the necessary methods and means with the Zionist Organization.'⁵⁹

Balfour amended this to emphasize the prerogative of the British government. On the 2nd November 1917, Lord Balfour made public the final draft of the letter written to Lord Rothschild on the 31st October which became known as the Balfour Declaration:

'His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of that object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done, which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish Communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.'⁶⁰

Balfour was in fact already committed to the Zionist programme out of theological conviction and had no intention of consulting with the indigenous Arab population. In a letter to Lord Curzon, written in 1919, Balfour insisted somewhat cynically:

'For in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country...the Four Great Powers are committed to

⁵⁹ D. Ingrams, Palestine Papers 1917-1922, Seeds of Conflict, (London, John Murray, 1972), p9.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Zionism. And Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires or prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land...I do not think that Zionism will hurt the Arabs ...in short, so far as Palestine is concerned, the Powers have made no statement of fact which is not admittedly wrong, and no declaration of policy which, at least in the letter, they have not always intended to violate.⁶¹

What the Balfour Declaration left intentionally ambiguous was the meaning of a 'national home'. Was this synonymous with sovereignty or statehood and if so what were to be the borders? Would it occupy all of Palestine or just a portion? What was to be the status of Jerusalem? Furthermore, while it stated that 'the civil and religious rights of the existing population' were to be safeguarded and the territory was designated 'Palestine', there was no reference to Palestinians. 'They were an actual, but awkward non-identity.'⁶² It was clearly Balfour's opinion that 'the present inhabitants' need not be consulted, either before or after.⁶³ That 90% of the population of Palestine were Arabs of whom around 10% were Christian seemed irrelevant to the politicians and Zionists who had another agenda.⁶⁴ So the awkward questions were left unanswered and it is these ambiguities which have plagued Middle East peace negotiations for the last hundred years, right up to the present 'Road Map to Peace'.

⁶¹ Ingrams, op.cit., p73.

⁶² Kenneth Cragg, *The Arab Christian, A History in the Middle East*, (London, Mowbray, 1992), p234.

⁶³ Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine*, revised edition, (London, Vintage, 1992), p19.

⁶⁴ A report to the British Foreign Office in December 1918 revealed that Palestine consisted of 512,000 Muslims, 61,000 Christians and 66,000 Jews. Ingrams, op.cit., p44.

This momentous declaration gave Zionism for the first time a measure of 'political legitimacy' and provided the impetus for the colonization of Palestine.⁶⁵ From the mid 19th Century, a similar marriage between religious dogmatism and political expediency in the United States was to lead theologians and politicians alike to support the Zionist cause. However, while Dispensationalism became marginalized in Britain, limited to the sectarianism of the Brethren, in the United States it was to become a dominant influence within mainstream Evangelicalism.

Dispensationalism in America (1859-1945)

During the Colonial period and even beyond the Civil War (1861-1865), American Christianity was essentially postmillennial in outlook. Strengthened by the Wesleyan Holiness movement,⁶⁶ there was a strong focus on evangelism, personal morality and civil responsibility.⁶⁷ The Revolutionary War provided a stimulus to popular apocalyptic speculation and by 1773, King George III was being portrayed as the Antichrist and the war a 'holy crusade' that would usher in the millennium.⁶⁸ In parallel with Britain, the late 18th and early 19th Century also saw an explosion of millennial sects including the Shakers, Mormons and Millerites. Influenced by the French Revolution and the destruction of the Papacy in France, historic Premillennialism gradually became more popular.

Between 1859 and 1872, resulting from his extensive tours throughout America, and reinforced by the trauma of

⁶⁵ Wagner, op.cit., p94

⁶⁶ Timothy L. Smith, 'Righteousness and Hope: Christian Holiness and the Millennial Vision in America, 1800-1900,' *American Quarterly*, 31.1 (Spring 1979).

⁶⁷ Richard Kyle, *The Last Days are Here Again*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker, 1998), pp77-98.

⁶⁸ Ibid. p81.

the Civil War, Darby's premillennial dispensational views about a 'failing' Church and revived Israel came to have a profound and increasing influence upon American Evangelicalism. It resulted not only in the birth of American Dispensationalism⁶⁹ but also influenced the Millenarianism associated with the Prophecy Conference Movement, as well as later, Fundamentalism.⁷⁰ Kyle suggests Darby's influence on end-time thinking was 'perhaps more than that of anyone else in the last two centuries.'⁷¹

In the absence of a strong Jewish Zionist movement, American Christian Zionism arose from the confluence of these complex associations, evangelical, premillennial, dispensational, millenarian, and proto-fundamentalist.⁷² Those most closely influenced by and associated with Darby who also contributed to the development of Christian Zionism in America were James Brookes, Arno Gaebelein, D. L. Moody, William E. Blackstone and C. I. Scofield.⁷³ Tonight I am simply going to focus on Blackstone and Scofield. The contribution of the others is covered in my CD book.

William Blackstone Promotes Zionism (1841-1935)

William E. Blackstone was an influential evangelist and lay worker for the Methodist Episcopal Church, as well as a financier and benefactor. He also became an enthusiastic disciple of J.N. Darby.⁷⁴ In 1887 he wrote a book on biblical

⁶⁹ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, (Chicago, Moody Press, 1966).

⁷⁰ Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930*, (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1970); Reuben Archer Torrey, *The Fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Faith*, (New York, Doren, 1918); *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, (Chicago, Testimony Publishing Co., 1910-1915).

⁷¹ Kyle, op.cit., p104.

⁷² David Rausch, *Zionism within Early American Fundamentalism 1878-1918, a Convergence of Two Traditions*, (New York, Edwin Mellen, 1979), p2.

⁷³ Wagner, op.cit., p89.

⁷⁴ Beth M. Lindberg, *A God-Filled Life: The Story of William E. Blackstone*, (Chicago The American Messianic Fellowship, n.d.).

prophecy entitled *Jesus is Coming*, which by 1927, had been translated into thirty-six languages. The book took a premillennial dispensational view of the Second Coming, emphasizing that the Jews had a biblical right to Palestine and would soon be restored there. Blackstone became one of the first Christian Zionists in America, like Hechler in Britain, to actively lobby for the Zionist cause. Blackstone took the Zionist movement to be a 'sign' of the imminent return of Christ even though its leadership like Herzl were agnostic.

Blackstone, like Hal Lindsey a century later, interpreted Scripture in the light of unfolding contemporary events, something which Charles Spurgeon warned of as 'exegesis by current events'.⁷⁵ No longer were Christian Zionists expecting Jewish national repentance to precede restoration; it could wait until after Jesus returned. Although popular with proto-fundamentalists, the book became more widely known in 1908, when a presentation edition was sent to several hundred thousand ministers and Christian workers, and again in 1917 when the Moody Bible Institute printed 'presentation copies' and sent them to ministers, missionaries and theological students.⁷⁶ Jesus is Coming was the most widely read book on the return of Christ published in the 20th Century until the publication of Hal Lindsey's Late Great Planet Earth superseded only by Tim LaHaye's fictional Left Behind series.⁷⁷

In March 1891, Blackstone lobbied the US President, Benjamin Harrison and his Secretary of State, James G. Blaine with a petition signed by no less than 413 prominent Jewish

⁷⁵ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, (London, Passmore & Alabaster, 1893), p100.

⁷⁶ Rennie, op.cit., p48; Rausch, op.cit., p264.

⁷⁷ W. M. Smith, 'Signs of the Times', *Moody Monthly*, August (1966), p5; Tim LaHaye & Jerry B. Jenkins, *Left Behind*, (Wheaton, Tyndale House, 1995). Sales of the *Left Behind* series now exceed 32 million copies. See Nancy Gibbs, 'Apocalypse Now' Time, 1 July 2002, p45. Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth* (London, Lakeland, 1970) has reputedly sold over 18 million copies in English.

and Christian leaders including John and William Rockefeller. The petition called for an international conference on the restoration of the Jews to Palestine. The petition, which became known as the Blackstone Memorial, offered this solution:

‘Why not give Palestine back to them [the Jews] again? According to God’s distribution of nations it is their home, an inalienable possession from which they were expelled by force. Under their cultivation, it was a remarkably fruitful land, sustaining millions of Israelites, who industriously tilled its hillsides and valleys. They were agriculturalists and producers as well as a nation of great commercial importance - the centre of civilization and religion. Why shall not the powers which under the treaty of Berlin, in 1878, gave Bulgaria to the Bulgarians and Servia to the Servians now give Palestine back to the Jews?’⁷⁸

Although President Harrison did not act upon the petition, it was nevertheless pivotal in galvanising Christian and Jewish Zionist activists in the United States for the next sixty years. Justice Louis Brandeis, the first Jewish Justice of the US Supreme Court, who led the Jewish Zionist movement in the US from 1914, became a close friend of Blackstone and for twenty years they laboured to convince the American people and in particular, successive Presidents, to support the Zionist agenda. During that time, Blackstone sent Brandeis ‘very large sums of money for support of Zionist work.’⁷⁹ Responsible for disbursing millions of dollars of dispensational funds entrusted to him for missionary work, Blackstone promised Brandeis that if he should not be raptured with Blackstone, he was to use the funds for the relief of Jews who would come to believe in Christ and need

⁷⁸ Reuben Fink, *America and Palestine*, (New York, American Zionist Emergency Council, 1945), pp20-21, cited in Sharif, op.cit., p92.

⁷⁹ Merkley, op.cit., p92.

supporting as missionaries throughout the world during the millennium.⁸⁰

In 1917, Blackstone was excited by the developments in Palestine following the defeat of the Turks and the triumphal entry of the Allies into Jerusalem. He claimed they were 'welcomed as deliverers by the people, and a Jewish Commission, authorized by the Allied governments already taking charge of the development of Jewish interests in Palestine – all of this does indeed thrill my heart.'⁸¹ In January 1918, Blackstone spoke at a large Jewish Zionist meeting in Los Angeles and declared that he had been committed to Zionism for 30 years. 'This is because I believe that true Zionism is founded on the plan, purpose, and fiat of the everlasting and omnipotent God, as prophetically recorded in His Holy Word, the Bible.'

During his lifetime, Jewish Zionists honoured Blackstone more times than any other Christian leader. On one occasion, Brandeis wrote, 'you are the Father of Zionism as your work antedates Herzl.'⁸² In 1918, Elisha Friedman, Secretary of the University Zionist Society of New York, similarly declared, 'A well known Christian layman, William E. Blackstone, antedated Theodor Herzl by five years in his advocacy of the re-establishment of a Jewish State.'⁸³ What Blackstone expressed in his speeches, books and petitions, Cyrus Scofield was to systematise and canonise through his Reference Bible.

Cyrus Scofield Canonises Zionism (1843-1921)

Scofield may be regarded as the most influential exponent of Dispensationalism, following the publication of

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Lindberg, op.cit., pp12-13.

⁸² Currie, op.cit.

⁸³ Cutler B. Whitwell, 'The Life Story of W.E.B.–and of "Jesus is coming"', *The Sunday School Times*, January 11, (1936), p19, cited in Rausch, op.cit., p265.

his *Scofield Reference Bible* by the Oxford University Press in 1918.⁸⁴ Ernest Sandeen insists ‘in the calendar of Fundamentalist saints no name is better known or more revered.’⁸⁵ Yet while biographical works on the early Brethren, such as J. N. Darby and dispensationalists like D. L. Moody abound, Scofield remains an elusive and enigmatic figure. Only two biographies have been published, one by a fellow dispensationalist eulogises Scofield,⁸⁶ the other, from a Reformed perspective, portrays him as a charlatan, accused of perjury, fraud and embezzlement. He also deserted his wife and children and married again only three months after his divorce became final.⁸⁷

As a young and largely illiterate Christian, Scofield was profoundly influenced by J. N. Darby’s writings. Scofield popularised Darby’s distinctive futurist Dispensationalism, basing his reference notes on Darby’s own distinctive translation of the Bible. Bass notes, ‘the parallel between

⁸⁴ C. I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1917); *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, edited by E. Schuyler English (New York, Oxford University Press, 1967); *The Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition*, (Chicago, Moody Bible Institute, 1994); *The New Scofield Study Bible*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1984); *Scofield Study Notes*, (QuickVerse, Parsons Technology, 1994).

⁸⁵ Sandeen, op.cit., p222.

⁸⁶ Charles G. Trumball, *The Life Story of C. I. Scofield*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1920).

⁸⁷ Joseph M. Canfield, *The Incredible Scofield and his Book*, (Vallecito, California, Ross House Books, 1988). Canfield refers to a third source by William A. Bevier, *A Biographical Sketch of C.I. Scofield: A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Southern Methodist University in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Master of Arts with a Major in History*. May 1960; See also Albertus Pieters, *A Candid Examination of the Scofield Bible*, (Grand Rapids, Douma Publications, n.d.). Scofield’s wife Leontine divorced him in 1881 while he was pastor of Hyde Park Congregational Church, St. Louis. Her divorce papers charged Scofield with, ‘gross neglect of duty’ having, ‘failed to support this plaintiff or her said children, or to contribute thereto, and has made no provision for them for food, clothing or a home...’ The court decided in favour of Leontine after some delay in 1883 and issued a decree of divorce in December of that year, describing Scofield as, ‘...not a fit person to have custody of the children.’ From the papers in case No. 2161, supplied by the Atchison County Court, cited in Canfield, op.cit., p89. He married Hettie Van Wark on 11th March 1884. Ibid., p100.

Scofield's notes and Darby's works only too clearly reveals that Scofield was not only a student of Darby's works, but that he copiously borrowed ideas, words and phrases.⁸⁸

It is significant, however, that neither in the Introduction to his *Scofield Reference Bible* nor in the accompanying notes does he acknowledge his indebtedness to Darby.⁸⁹ The combination of an attractive format, illustrative notes, and cross references has led both critics and advocates to acknowledge Scofield's Bible to have been the most influential book among evangelicals during the first half of the twentieth Century.⁹⁰ Craig Blaising, professor of Systematic Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary and a dispensationalist, similarly acknowledges, 'The *Scofield Reference Bible* became the Bible of Fundamentalism, and the theology of the notes approached confessional status in many Bible schools, institutes and seminaries established in the early decades of this Century.'⁹¹ Sandeen observes, 'The book has thus been subtly but powerfully influential in spreading those views among hundreds of thousands who have regularly read that Bible and who often have been unaware of the distinction between the ancient text and the Scofield interpretation.'⁹² William E. Cox offers this appraisal of his abiding influence:

'Scofield's footnotes and his systematized schemes of hermeneutics have been memorized by many as religiously as have verses of the Bible. It is not at all uncommon to hear

⁸⁸ Bass, op.cit., p18. See also Loraine Boettner, *The Millennium*, (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1958), p369.

⁸⁹ C. I. Scofield, 'Introduction', *The Scofield Reference Bible*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1909).

⁹⁰ Dwight Wilson, *Armageddon Now!*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1977), p15; Sandeen, op.cit., p222.

⁹¹ Craig A. Blaising 'Dispensationalism, The Search for Definition' in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church, The Search for Definition*, edited by Craig A. Blaising & Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1992), p21.

⁹² Sandeen, op.cit., p222.

devout men recite these footnotes prefaced by the words; “The Bible says...” Many a pastor has lost all influence with members of his congregation and has been branded a liberal for no other reason than failure to concur with all the footnotes of Dr. Scofield. Even many ministers use the teachings of Scofield as tests of orthodoxy!⁹³

Scofield’s influence extended well beyond his published writings. In the 1890s during Scofield’s pastorate in Dallas he was also head of the Southwestern School of the Bible, the forerunner to Dallas Theological Seminary, which became Dispensationalism’s ‘most scholarly institution’.⁹⁴ The Seminary was founded in 1924 by one of Scofield’s disciples, Lewis Sperry Chafer, who in turn became Scofield’s most influential exponent. Chafer wrote the first systematic pro-Zionist dispensational theology running to eight large volumes. Shortly before his death, Chafer described his greatest academic achievement. ‘It goes on record that the Dallas Theological Seminary uses, recommends, and defends the Scofield Bible.’⁹⁵ It is perhaps therefore not surprising that Dallas Theological Seminary has since then, especially through the writings of Charles Ryrie and John Walvoord, continued to be the foremost apologist for and proponent of, Scofield’s classical dispensational views and of Christian Zionism in particular.

Contemporary American Evangelical Zionism

For Christian Zionists, the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 naturally came to be seen as the most significant

⁹³ William E. Cox, *An Examination of Dispensationalism*, (Philadelphia, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1974), pp55-56.

⁹⁴ Gerstner, op.cit., p46.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

fulfilment of biblical prophecy,⁹⁶ and ‘the greatest piece of prophetic news that we have had in the 20th Century.’⁹⁷

Following the war of 1967, Billy Graham’s father-in-law Nelson Bell, then editor of *Christianity Today*, expressed the sentiments of many American evangelicals when, in an editorial for the magazine he wrote, ‘for the first time in more than 2,000 years Jerusalem is now completely in the hands of the Jews gives a student of the Bible a thrill and a renewed faith in the accuracy and validity of the Bible.’⁹⁸

In 1976 a series of events brought Christian Zionism to the forefront of US mainstream politics. Jimmy Carter was elected as the ‘born again’ President drawing the support of the evangelical right. In Israel, Menachem Begin and the right wing Likud Party came to power the following year. A tripartite coalition slowly emerged between the political Right, evangelicals and the Jewish lobby. In 1978, Jimmy Carter acknowledged how his own pro-Zionist beliefs had influenced his Middle East policy.⁹⁹ In a speech, he described the State of Israel as, ‘a return at last, to the biblical land from which the Jews were driven so many hundreds of years ago ... The establishment of the nation of Israel is the fulfilment of biblical prophecy and the very essence of its fulfilment.’¹⁰⁰ However, when Carter vacillated over the aggressive Likud settlement programme and proposed the creation of a Palestinian homeland, he alienated the pro-Israeli coalition of Jews and evangelicals who switched their support to

⁹⁶Stanley J. Grenz, *The Millennial Maze*, (Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity, 1992), p92; Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, (London, Lakeland, 1970), pp43, 53-58; Hannah Hurnard, *Watchman on the Walls*, (London, Olive Press, 1950), pp11-12.

⁹⁷Louis T. Talbot & William W. Orr, *The Nation of Israel and the Word of God!*, (Los Angeles, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, 1948), p8.

⁹⁸Donald Wagner, ‘Evangelicals and Israel: Theological Roots of a Political Alliance’ *The Christian Century*, November 4, (1998), pp1020-1026.

⁹⁹Jimmy Carter, *The Blood of Abraham*, (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1985).

¹⁰⁰Speech by President Jimmy Carter on 1 May 1978, *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 78, No. 2015, (1978), p4, cited in Sharif, op.cit., p136.

Ronald Reagan in the 1980 elections. Reagan's election as President gave a considerable boost to the Christian Zionist cause:

'The election of Ronald Reagan ushered in not only the most pro-Israel administration in history but gave several Christian Zionists prominent political posts. In addition to the President, those who subscribed to a futurist premillennial theology and Christian Zionism included Attorney General Ed Meese, Secretary of Defence Casper Weinberger, and Secretary of the Interior James Watt.'¹⁰¹

'White House Seminars' became a regular feature of Reagan's administration bringing leading Christian Zionists like Jerry Falwell, Mike Evans and Hal Lindsey into direct personal contact with national and Congressional leaders. In 1982, for instance, Reagan invited Falwell to give a briefing to the National Security Council on the possibility of a nuclear war with Russia.¹⁰² Hal Lindsey also claimed Reagan invited him to speak on the subject of war with Russia to Pentagon officials.¹⁰³

In a personal conversation reported in the *Washington Post* two years later in April 1984, Reagan elaborated on his own personal convictions to Tom Dine, one of Israel's chief lobbyists working for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC):

'You know, I turn back to the ancient prophets in the Old Testament and the signs foretelling Armageddon, and I find myself wondering if - if we're the generation that is going to see that come about. I don't know if you've noted any of

¹⁰¹ Donald Wagner, 'Beyond Armageddon', *The Link*, New York: Americans for Middle East Understanding; October-November, (1992), p5.

¹⁰² Halsell, *Prophecy.*, op.cit., p47

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

these prophecies lately, but believe me they certainly describe the times we're going through.'¹⁰⁴

While George Bush Sr., Bill Clinton and George W. Bush do not appear to have shared the same dispensational presuppositions of either Jimmy Carter or Ronald Reagan, they nevertheless have maintained, however reluctantly, the strong pro-Zionist position of their predecessors.¹⁰⁵ This is largely due to the influence of the Zionist lobby considered by many to be the most powerful in the United States.¹⁰⁶

Aluf Ben, a spokesman for Shimon Peres, was quoted in the mass-circulation Tel Aviv daily Ha'aretz as claiming "60 percent of all financial help to Democrats came from Jewish sources."¹⁰⁷ According to the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, "Most pro-Israel fund-raisers estimate that at least 60 to 90 percent of Democratic campaign funding comes from Jewish sources, which also supply perhaps 40 percent of Republican funding."¹⁰⁸ Perhaps this is why it is hard to find a single elected American politician willing to criticise Israel publicly.

Three Christian leaders, in particular, each given a White House platform by Reagan, have probably achieved more than any others in the last forty years to ensure American foreign policy remains pro-Zionist. They are, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and Hal Lindsey. I will focus on the influence of Jerry Falwell tonight since he is representative of the movement. Tomorrow we will examine the views of Hal Lindsey in more detail.

¹⁰⁴ Ronnie Dugger, 'Does Reagan Expect a Nuclear Armageddon?' Washington Post, 18 April (1984).

¹⁰⁵ George Bush, Speech to the American Jewish Committee, May 3, (2001), <http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/US-Israel/presquote.html>

¹⁰⁶ Michael Lind, 'The Israel Lobby and American Power' Prospect, April (2002), pp22-29; Halsell, Prophecy., op.cit.

¹⁰⁷ Israel Shahak, "Ability of U.S. Jewish Groups to set Clinton Agenda Depends on Media." Washington Report, June 1995, pp. 10, 94.

¹⁰⁸ Publisher's Page, Washington Report, June 1995, pp. 122.

Jerry Falwell is the pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church and the Founder and Chancellor of the 10,000 student independent Baptist Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia.¹⁰⁹ Jerry Falwell Ministries sponsor the Liberty Broadcasting Network TV channel and syndicated Old Time Gospel Hour programme which is broadcast on 350 stations in the USA and has a budget of \$60 million.¹¹⁰ In his early ministry, Falwell shunned politics. In 1964, he wrote:

‘Believing the Bible as I do, I would find it impossible to stop preaching the pure saving gospel of Jesus Christ and begin doing anything else, including fighting communism, or participating in civil rights reform. Preachers are not called to be politicians but to be soul winners. Nowhere are we commissioned to reform the externals.’¹¹¹

Falwell’s change of mind came in 1967 after Israel’s Six Day War. He entered politics and became an avid supporter of the Zionist State. Grace Halsell describes Falwell’s conversion:

‘The stunning Israeli victory made a big impact not only on Falwell, but on a lot of Americans ... Remember that in 1967, the United States was mired in the Vietnam War. Many felt a sense of defeat, helplessness and discouragement. As Americans, we were made acutely aware of our own diminished authority, of no longer being able to police the world or perhaps even our own neighborhoods ... Many Americans, including Falwell, turned worshipful glances toward Israel, which they viewed as militarily strong and invincible. They gave their unstinting approval to the Israeli take-over of Arab lands because they perceived this conquest

¹⁰⁹ <http://falwell.com>

¹¹⁰ Iwan Russell-Jones, ‘Give me that prime time religion’ New Internationalist, 133, March (1984).

¹¹¹ James Price and William Goodman, Jerry Falwell, An Unauthorized Profile, cited in Grace Halsell, Prophecy and Politics, Militant Evangelists on the Road to Nuclear War, (Westport, Connecticut, Lawrence Hill, 1986), p72-73.

as power and righteousness ... Macho or muscular Christians such as Falwell credited Israeli General Moshe Dayan with this victory over Arab forces and termed him the Miracle Man of the Age, and the Pentagon invited him to visit Vietnam and tell us how to win that war.¹¹²

In 1979, the same year Falwell founded Moral Majority, the Israeli government gave Falwell a Lear jet to assist him in his advocacy of Israel. A year later in 1980, Falwell also became the first Gentile to be awarded the Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky medal for Zionist excellence by Israel's Prime Minister, Menachem Begin. Jabotinsky was the founder of Revisionist Zionism and held that Jews had a divine mandate to occupy and settle 'on both sides of the Jordan River' and were not accountable to international law.¹¹³ When Israel bombed Iraq's nuclear plant in 1981, Begin phoned Falwell before he called Reagan. He also asked Falwell to 'explain to the Christian public the reasons for the bombing'.¹¹⁴ During the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, Falwell similarly defended Israel's actions:

'When the massacres occurred at the two Palestinian camps, Falwell just mimicked the Israeli line: "The Israelis were not involved." And even when The New York Times was giving eyewitness accounts of Israeli flares sent up to help the Phalangists go into the camp, Falwell was saying, "That's just propaganda".'¹¹⁵

In March 1985, Falwell spoke to the conservative Rabbinical Assembly in Miami and pledged to 'mobilize 70 million conservative Christians for Israel'.¹¹⁶ In January 1998,

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Allan C. Brownfeld, 'Fundamentalists and the Millennium: A Potential Threat to Middle Eastern Peace' *The Washington Report*, June (1999), pp82-84.

¹¹⁴ Donald Wagner, 'Evangelicals and Israel: Theological Roots of a Political Alliance.' *The Christian Century*, November 4, (1998), pp1020-1026.

¹¹⁵ Brownfeld, op.cit., pp82-84.

¹¹⁶ Wagner, 'Evangelicals', op.cit., pp1020-1026.

when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Washington, his first meeting was with Jerry Falwell and with The National Unity Coalition for Israel, a large gathering of more than 500 fundamentalist Christian leaders, rather than with President Clinton.

According to Donald Wagner, the crowd hailed Netanyahu as 'the Ronald Reagan of Israel.' This time Falwell promised to contact 200,000 pastors and church leaders who receive his *National Liberty Journal*¹¹⁷ and ask them to 'tell President Clinton to refrain from putting pressure on Israel' to comply with the Oslo accords.¹¹⁸ In an interview with *The Washington Post* in 1999, Falwell described the West Bank as 'an integral part of Israel.' Pressing Israel to withdraw, he added, 'would be like asking America to give Texas to Mexico, to bring about a good relationship. It's ridiculous.'¹¹⁹

In 2000, Falwell revived Moral Majority under the name People of Faith 2000, 'a movement to reclaim America as one nation under God' and which also takes a strong pro-Israeli stance.¹²⁰ Falwell has succeeded, probably better than any other American Christian leader, to ensure his followers recognise that their Christian duty to God involves providing unconditional support for the State of Israel.

While Jerry Falwell may be one of the most influential Christian Zionists, he is also a figurehead, along with Pat Robertson, for a much wider alliance of over 150 influential fundamentalist Christian leaders including Oral Roberts, Mike Evans, Tim LaHaye, Kenneth Copeland, Paul Crouch, Ed McAtee, Jim Bakker, Chuck Missler and Jimmy Swaggart

¹¹⁷ <http://www.nljonline.com/feb02>

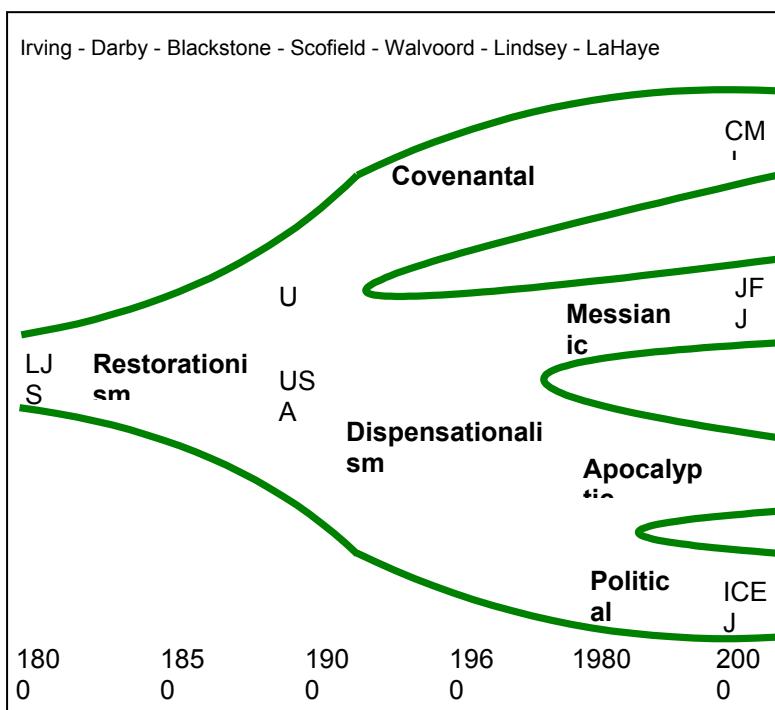
¹¹⁸ Wagner, 'Evangelicals', op.cit., pp1020-1026.

¹¹⁹ Brownfeld, op.cit., pp82-84.

¹²⁰ Jerry Falwell, <http://falwell.com/action%20alerts/actnow.htm>

who have all taken a pro-Zionist stance in their writings or broadcasts.¹²¹

These Christian leaders and their organisations have regular access to over 100 million American Christians, more than 100,000 pastors and combined budgets of well in excess of \$300 million per annum. They form a broad and immensely powerful coalition which is both shaping and driving US foreign policy on the Middle East as well as Christian support for Israel today.



The Historical Development of Christian Zionism

¹²¹ Regular meetings between Christian Zionist leaders and Israeli officials take place such as at Harvard Business School.

The Theological Basis of Christian Zionism



As the navel is set in the centre of the human body,
so is the land of Israel the navel of the world...
situated in the centre of the world,
and Jerusalem in the centre of the land of Israel,
and the sanctuary in the centre of Jerusalem,
and the holy place in the centre of the sanctuary,
and the ark in the centre of the holy place,
and the foundation stone before the holy place,
because from it the world was founded.¹

This quote is taken from the 9th century Jewish Midrash Tanchuma. It explains the deep significance of and attachment to the land, the city and temple within religious Judaism. Christian Zionists identify with these Jewish aspirations for the land of Israel, for Jerusalem and the Temple.

To use a simple analogy of three concentric rings, the Land represents the outer ring, Jerusalem the middle and the Temple the centre. The three rings comprise the Zionist expansionist agenda of which part of the outer was claimed in 1948, the middle ring in 1967 and the inner is eagerly sought

¹ Midrash Tanchuma, Qedoshim. Cited on www.templemount.org

and under constant threat. The three therefore ultimately stand or fall together.

In this chapter we want to consider the way the Bible is used by Christians to justify the Zionist agenda. Christian Zionism can be distinguished by seven basic tenets and these will now be evaluated in the light of scripture.

An Ultra-Literalist Biblical Hermeneutic

Christian Zionism is constructed upon a novel hermeneutic in which all scripture is generally interpreted in an ultra-literal sense; the prophetic parts of scripture are seen as pre-written history; and eschatologically are believed to find their fulfilment in the interpreter's generation. This type of hermeneutic has been described as 'pesher' from the Aramaic for 'interpretation'.² This differs from a traditional Protestant hermeneutic which, while also based on literalism, nevertheless begins with the setting of the author as well as recipients and is also shaped by the historical, cultural, grammatical and theological context.³

The origin of this literalist hermeneutic can be traced to the early 19th Century and in particular to the writings of Hatley Frere, George Faber, Lewis Way, Edward Irving and those who attended the Albury conferences from 1826.⁴ Bebbington argues,

'There is a tight logical connection between high hopes for the Jews and a new estimate of scripture ... The beginning of the innovative interpretation can be located precisely...

² Richard Kyle, *The Last Days are Here Again, A History of the End Times*, (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1998), p199.

³ Ibid.

⁴ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, A History from the 1730's to the 1980's*, (London, Unwin Hyman, 1989), p88; Edward Miller, *The History and Doctrines of Irvingism*, volume 1 (London, Kegan Paul, 1878), p36; Lewis Way, *The Latter Rain*, 2nd edition (London, 1821).

innovations in the fields of prophecy and understanding of scripture went hand in hand.⁵

Patterson describes how Albury's premillennial system redefined revelation in historicist terms, 'from the self giving of God in history to an interpretation of history'.

'The French Revolution became the key to understanding God's revelation, not only as a point of temporal triangulation, but as an unveiling of the very spiritual issues at work in the Last Days. The French Revolution unveiled the fact that prophecy and history were inextricably and beautifully interlaced ... Thus Albury looked to history to discern this principle and history again to see it manifested ... The malleable character of prophecy allowed the scriptures and history to assume the very shape determined by the Albury presuppositions and literal typical hermeneutic ... a self perpetuating system in which theory, scripture and history combined in ever tightening symmetry, to form a system that explained each constituent part in terms of a single narrative and teleology.'⁶

John Nelson Darby, who subsequently pioneered this hermeneutic in a more explicitly futurist and dispensational form, summed it up in one sentence when he admitted, 'I prefer quoting many passages than enlarging upon them.'⁷ Based on his commitment to literalism, Darby formulated the doctrine of Dispensationalism and the rigid distinction between Israel and the Church which forms the basis of much contemporary Christian Zionism.

Central to Dispensationalism is the assumption that seven dispensations are self-evident in biblical history, if a literal

⁵ Bebbington, op.cit., p88.

⁶ Mark Rayburn Patterson, *Designing the Last Days: Edward Irving, the Albury Circle and the Theology of the Morning Watch*. PhD. Kings College, London, 2001, pp117, 166.

⁷ Darby, *Collected Writings*, edited by William Kelly (Kingston on Thames, Stow Hill Bible and Trust Depot, 1962) 11, p363.

hermeneutic is applied consistently. Darby was not the first to discover dispensations within biblical history, nor was his own scheme universally accepted even within Brethren circles.⁸ Prior to the rise of Dispensationalism it was common to divide history into two or three dispensations. Jonathan Edwards had acknowledged the lack of unanimity even on the distinction between the Old and New Testaments. ‘There is, perhaps, no part of divinity attended with so much intricacy, and wherein orthodox divines so much differ, as in stating the precise agreement and difference between the two dispensations of Moses and Christ.’⁹ In his principal work on the dispensations published in 1823, George Faber distinguished three stages in God’s gracious dealing with mankind: Patriarchal, Levitical, and Christian. However, unlike Darby, he did not regard them as necessarily consecutive nor was each a remedy for the failure of the previous.

Irving was also using the term dispensation to contrast God’s contemporary dealings with Israel and the Church by 1828.¹⁰ Edward Miller quotes Irving’s notes of the first Albury conference: ‘perfect unanimity on the following ... that the Christian Dispensation was to be terminated, ending in the destruction of the visible Church, like the Jewish; during which “judgements” the Jews were to be restored to Palestine.’¹¹

The clearest expression of Darby’s thinking on the dispensations is to be found in ‘The Apostasy of the Successive

⁸ Ryrie attempts, unconvincingly, to show that the idea of dispensations were latent in the writings of the French mystic Pierre Poiret (1646-1719); an amillennial Calvinist John Edwards (1639-1716) and Isaac Watts (1674-1748). See Ryrie, Dispensationalism, (Chicago, Moody Press, 1995), pp. 65-71.

⁹ Jonathan Edwards, ‘On Full Communion’, The Complete Works of Jonathan Edwards, volume 1 (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1974), p160.

¹⁰ Edward Irving, The Last Days A Discourse on the Evil Character of These Our Times, Proving Them to be The ‘Perilous Times’ and the ‘Last Days’, (London, James Nisbit, 1850), p10.

¹¹ Edward Miller, The History and Doctrines of Irvingism, (London, 1878).

Dispensations' published in The Christian Witness in October 1836. It was only later in the writings of Scofield that seven dispensations became fixed within dispensational thinking, long after any association with Irving was ignored or forgotten. Ryrie's interpretation of Darby's dispensations is actually significantly at variance with Darby's own writings but more consistent with Scofield and closer in fact to that of the Morning Watch. It is an understatement therefore when Ryrie claims Darby's scheme is, 'not always easily discerned

The Morning Watch ¹²	Darby's Dispensations ¹³	Ryrie's Version of Darby ¹⁴	Scofield's Dispensations ¹⁵
1. Adam		1. Paradisaical state	1. Innocency (Gen. 1:28)
2. Noah	1. Noah (Government)	2. Noah	2. Conscience (Gen. 3:23)
3. Patriarchs		3. Abraham	3. Human Government (Gen. 8:20)
4. Jewish	2. Moses (Law) 3. Aaron (Priesthood) 4. Kingly (Manasseh)	4. Israel - under law under priesthood under kings	4. Promise (Gen. 12:1) 5. Law (Exod. 19:8)
5. Gentiles	5. Spirit (Gentile)	5. Gentiles	6. Grace (John 1:17)
6. Millennium		6. Spirit	
7. Resurrection		7. Millennium	7. Kingdom (Eph. 1:10)

A comparison of the dispensational schemes of the Morning Watch, John Nelson Darby, Charles Ryrie and Cyrus Scofield

¹² Patterson, op.cit.

¹³ Darby, Apostasy., pp124-130.

¹⁴ Ryrie, Dispensationalism, pp68, 71.

¹⁵ C. I. Scofield, 'Introduction,' The Scofield Reference Bible (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1909), p5.

from his writings'.¹⁶ It is suggested that Ryrie has read back into Darby's mind, a scheme that suited his own purposes. From Darby's own pen we may attempt to reconstruct his dispensational chronology and compare it with Ryrie's interpretation, together with Scofield's later 1909 version, itself at variance with the further revision made by Schuyler English in 1967.

'But this does not hinder me from enquiring by the teaching of the same spirit ... what God has with infinite graciousness revealed to me concerning His dealing with the Church.'¹⁷

'...because it was in this the Lord was pleased, without man's teaching, first to open my eyes on this subject, that I might learn His will concerning it throughout.'¹⁸

Darby therefore justified his own dispensational scheme on the basis that others had not studied the scriptures correctly and his interpretation was right because the Lord had revealed it to him personally.

Scofield's own dispensational scheme draws heavily on Darby's writings.¹⁹ Nevertheless, he claims Dispensationalism recovers for the Bible, 'a clear and coherent harmony of the predictive portions':

'The Dispensations are distinguished, exhibiting the majestic, progressive order of the divine dealings of God with humanity, the "increasing purpose" which runs through and links together the ages, from the beginning of the life of man

¹⁶ Ryrie, Dispensationalism, p68.

¹⁷ J. N. Darby, 'Reflections Upon the Prophetic Inquiry, and the Views Advanced in It,' Collected, op.cit., Prophetic I, II. pp6-7.

¹⁸ J. N. Darby, 'Evidence from Scripture for the passing away of the present dispensations' Collected, op.cit., Prophetic I, II. p108.

¹⁹ 'The parallel between Scofield's notes and Darby's works only too clearly reveals that Scofield was not only a student of Darby's works, but that he copiously borrowed ideas, words and phrases.' Clarence B. Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1960), p18. See also Loraine Boettner, *The Millennium*, (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1958), p369f.

to the end in eternity. Augustine said: "Distinguish the ages, and the scriptures harmonize."²⁰

A comparison between the dispensations as they appear in the Scofield Reference Bible and subsequent revisions, where they have moved and been renamed, would suggest that they are not as clear as Scofield claimed.

Scofield Reference Bible (1917)²¹	The New Scofield Study Bible (1984)²²
1. Innocency (Gen. 1:28)	1. Innocence (Gen. 1:28)
2. Conscience (Gen. 3:23)	2. Conscience or Moral Responsibility (Gen. 3:7)
3. Human Government (Gen. 8:20)	3. Human Government (Gen. 8:15)
4. Promise (Gen. 12:1)	4. Promise (Gen. 12:1)
5. Law (Ex. 19:8)	5. Law (Ex. 19:1)
6. Grace (John 1:17)	6. Church (Acts 2:1)
7. Kingdom or Fulness of Times (Eph. 1:10) ²³	7. Kingdom (Rev. 20:4)

A comparison of the dispensations in the Scofield Reference Bible and the New Scofield Study Bible

Scofield's rigid adherence to these dispensations also required him to make some unusual assertions to ensure consistency. So for example, in describing the transition

²⁰ Scofield, Scofield, op.cit., piii.

²¹ Scofield, Scofield, op.cit., fn. 4, p5.

²² The New Scofield Study Bible, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1984), p3.

²³ Scofield, Scofield, op.cit., fn. 3, p1250.

between his fourth dispensation of promise and his fifth dispensation of law, Scofield argued that all that Abraham's descendants needed to do was 'abide in their own land to inherit every blessing.' He goes on to claim, 'The Dispensation of Promise ended when Israel rashly accepted the law (Ex. 19:8). Grace had prepared a deliverer (Moses), provided a sacrifice for the guilty and by divine power brought them out of bondage (Ex.19:4); but at Sinai they exchanged grace for law.'²⁴ In doing so, Scofield reduces the giving of the Law by Moses from being God's gracious initiative to the 'rashness' of the Jewish people.

Similarly, in his introduction to the gospels, Scofield artificially imposes stark divisions before and after Calvary which lead him to the surprising assertion that, 'The mission of Jesus was, primarily, to the Jews ... The Sermon on the Mount is law, not grace ... the doctrines of grace are to be sought in the Epistles not in the Gospels.'²⁵ Surprisingly, Scofield ignores the one division that is self-evident between the old and new covenants. Mark 1:1 categorically states, 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ', while Matthew 11:13 further informs us, 'For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John'. However, Scofield places the life and ministry of Jesus within the dispensation of Law along with John the Baptist and the Old Testament prophets, arguing that the sixth dispensation of grace only 'begins with the death and resurrection of Christ.'²⁶ So, for example, the Lord's Prayer, and in particular the petition, 'Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors' (Matthew 6:12) is, according to Scofield, not applicable to the church, since it is 'legal ground'.²⁷ This is because Scofield believed the gospels were

²⁴ Ibid., fn. 1, p20.

²⁵ Ibid., p989.

²⁶ Ibid., fn. 2, p1115.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 1002. Many other dispensationalists take the same view. See Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, (Dallas, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1975), volume 4, p221.

essentially for the Jews and therefore not relevant for the church. So, in the note attached to Ephesians 3 he states, 'In his (Paul's) writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the church.'²⁸ Scofield seems to have imposed divisions that do not exist in scripture and ignored those that do. Scofield explained his own literalism in this way:

'Not one instance exists of a 'spiritual' or figurative fulfilment of prophecy...Jerusalem is always Jerusalem, Israel is always Israel, Zion is always Zion ... Prophecies may never be spiritualised, but are always literal.'²⁹

Dallas Theological Seminary, founded by one of Scofield's students, Lewis Sperry Chafer in 1924, has probably accomplished more for the cause of Dispensationalism and Christian Zionism than any other institution in the world. Through its faculty and students, for nearly eighty years Dallas has contributed to a proliferation of dispensational thinking, from the Classical Dispensationalism of Cyrus Scofield and Lewis Chafer to the Revised Dispensationalism of Charles Ryrie and John Walvoord; the Apocalyptic Dispensationalism of Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye; the Messianic Dispensationalism of Moishe Rosen and Arnold Fruchtenbaum; and the Progressive Dispensationalism of Craig Blaising and Darrel Bock.

Blaising and Bock represent a new generation of younger dispensationalists among the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary who have attempted to redefine their movement and engaged in constructive dialogue with covenantal theologians on the relationship of the Church to Israel.³⁰ They

²⁸ Scofield, Scofield, op.cit, p1252.

²⁹ C.I. Scofield, Scofield Bible Correspondence Course, (Chicago, Moody Bible Institute, n.d.), pp45-46.

³⁰ Clarence E. Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1960); Daniel P. Fuller, *Gospel and Law, Contrast or Continuum? The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1980); Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock eds., *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1992); David E. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel, One Covenant or Two?*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1995).

distance themselves from what they regard as the ‘naïveté’ of the founder’s vision,³¹ distinguishing the traditional Dispensationalism of Lewis Sperry Chafer and Charles Ryrie³² from ‘Scofieldism’,³³ as well as from the popular apocalypticism of ‘Lindseyism’.³⁴ They regard themselves as less land centred and less future centred.³⁵ Ryrie is sceptical, unwilling to concede to such revisionism. He prefers to describe the position of Blaising and Bock as ‘neo-dispensationalist’ or ‘covenant dispensationalist’, for holding to what he terms a ‘slippery’ hermeneutic.³⁶

In 1936, Chafer defined Scofieldian literalism in the following terms: ‘The outstanding characteristic of the dispensationalist is ... that he believes every statement of the Bible and gives to it the plain, natural meaning its words imply.’³⁷ Like Chafer, Charles Ryrie suggests that it is only dispensationalists who are consistent in applying a literal interpretation: ‘To be sure, literal/historical/grammatical interpretation is not the sole possession or practice of dispensationalists, but the consistent use of it in all areas of biblical interpretation is.’³⁸

‘Dispensationalism is a result of consistent application of the basic hermeneutical principle of literal, normal, or plain interpretation. No other system of theology can claim this ... The nonliteralist is the nondispensationalist, and the consistent literalist is a dispensationalist.’³⁹

³¹ Blaising & Bock, *Dispensationalism*, op.cit., p19.

³² Charles C. Ryrie, *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith*, (Neptune, New Jersey, Loizeaux Brothers, 1953); *Dispensationalism Today*, (Chicago, Moody Press, 1965); *Dispensationalism*, (Moody Press, Chicago, 1995).

³³ Blaising & Bock, *Dispensationalism*, op.cit., pp21-23.

³⁴ Ibid., pp14-15.

³⁵ Darrell Bock, cited in ‘For the Love of Zion’, *Christianity Today*, 9 March (1992), p50.

³⁶ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, op.cit., pp171, 175, 178.

³⁷ L. S. Chafer, ‘Dispensationalism,’ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 93, October (1936), pp410, 417.

³⁸ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, op.cit., p40.

³⁹ Ibid., p92.

Patrick Goodenough of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) explains the consequence of this literalist approach: 'We simply believe the Bible. And that Bible, which we understand has not been revoked, makes it quite clear that God has given this land as an eternal inheritance to the Jewish people.'⁴⁰

Rob Richards, former UK Director of the Churches Ministry Among Jewish People, (CMJ) offers a modern paraphrase of their position. "Israel is Israel is Israel."⁴¹ The other six tenets of Christian Zionism follow from this literal and futurist reading of the Old Testament.

The fundamental error made here is the refusal to acknowledge how Jesus and the Apostles reinterpreted the Old Testament. The implicit assumption made by Christian Zionists is that Old and New Testament run at times parallel into the future, the former speaking of Israel and the latter of the Church. This is at variance with the way the New Testament interprets, fulfils, annuls and completes the Old. For example, Jesus annulled the Levitical food laws.

"Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.") (Mark 7:18-19)

In Acts 10, a vision of unclean food is specifically used by God to help the apostle Peter realise that in Christ there is now no longer any distinction between Jew and Gentile. Both are accepted as equal in the kingdom of God. Only when Peter encounters Cornelius does he begin to realise the implications of the vision for the way he should now view Jews and Gentiles. "I now realise how true it is that God does not show

⁴⁰ Kathy Kern, 'Blessing Israel? Christian Embassy Responds' Christian Peacemakers Team, mennno.org.cpt.news@MennoLink.org (2 November 1997).

⁴¹ Rob Richards, *Has God Finished With Israel?* (Crowborough, Monarch, 1994), p. 23.

favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right." (Acts 10:34-35). If God does not show favouritism, the Jews cannot presume to enjoy a favoured or exclusive status. The movement in biblical revelation is explained more fully by the writer to the Hebrews. The Old Testament revelation from God often came in shadow, image and prophecy. In the New Covenant that revelation finds its consummation in reality, substance and fulfilment in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2).

By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear. (Hebrews 8:13)

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming-- not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship (Hebrews 10:1)

It is fundamental that Christians read the Scriptures with Christian eyes, and that they interpret the Old Covenant in the light of the New Covenant, not the other way round. In Colossians, for example, Paul uses a typological hermeneutic to explain this.

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. (Colossians. 2:16-17)

The question is therefore not whether the promises of the old covenant are to be understood literally or allegorically as Christian Zionists like to polarise the issue. It is instead a question of whether they should be understood in terms of Old Covenant shadow or in terms of New Covenant reality. This is the most basic hermeneutical error which Christian Zionists consistently repeat. This is illustrated in the way

Christian Zionists continue to regard the Jews as God's 'chosen people'.

The Jews Remain God's 'Chosen People'

Darby and Scofield taught that God has two separate but parallel means of working, one through the church, the other through Israel, the former being a parenthesis to the later.⁴² Thus there is, and always will remain, a distinction, 'between Israel, the Gentiles and the Church.'⁴³

Darby's Ecclesiology was indeed a form of "Replacement Theology" although he taught that Israel would replace the Church. Darby's strong and repeated condemnation of the visible church as apostate, clearly influenced his innovative belief that the church era was now merely a 'parenthesis'⁴⁴ of the Last Days. 'Satan having beguiled the church, the church is in the position of earthliness and united in system with the world.'⁴⁵

Darby regarded the church as merely one more dispensation that had failed like the previous five. Each in turn had lost its place in the divine economy and was under God's judgement. Just as Israel had been cut off, so he believed the church would also be. Just as only a small remnant of Israel had been saved, so would only a small remnant of the church be saved. The remnant taken from the ruins of the church would conveniently be, he claimed, his own followers, also known as 'the Assembly'.

His answer to the condition of the visible church was not to insist on the need for a new reformation, national

⁴²Charles Ryrie, Dispensationalism Today (Chicago, Moody Press, 1965), p. 48.

⁴³Ryrie, Dispensationalism., p. 137.

⁴⁴J. N. Darby, 'The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times', Collected Writings., Critical. Vol. I, p. 236.

⁴⁵J. N. Darby, 'Reply to the Remarks... 'Our Separating Brethren,' Collected Writings., Eccl. III. Vol. XIV, p. 222.

repentance or even a revival, since to attempt to restore or repair the ruins would actually be sinful.

We insist on the fact that the house has been ruined, its ordinances perverted, its orders and all its arrangements forsaken or destroyed; that human ordinances, a human order, have been substituted for them; and what merits all the attention of faith, we insist that the Lord... is coming soon in His power and glory to judge all this state of things.⁴⁶

Darby was not the first to insist on a radical distinction between Israel and the Church.

Marcion stressed the radical nature of Christianity vis-a-vis Judaism. In his theology there existed a total discontinuity between the OT and the NT, between Israel and the church, and even between the god of the OT and the Father of Jesus.⁴⁷

It was, however, Darby who first insisted that, 'The Jewish nation is never to enter the Church.'⁴⁸ Likewise his disciple Scofield elaborated, 'Comparing then, what is said in Scripture concerning Israel and the Church, we find that in origin, calling, promise, worship, principles of conduct and future destiny all is contrast.'⁴⁹ In its classical form, Charles Ryrie insists the sine qua non of Dispensationalism to be:

1. A dispensationalist keeps Israel and the Church distinct...
2. This distinction between Israel and the church is born out of a system of hermeneutics that is usually called literal interpretation....⁵⁰

⁴⁶J. N. Darby, 'A Glance at Various Ecclesiastical Principles', Collected Writings., Eccl. II, Vol. IV, p. 10.

⁴⁷W. Ward Gasque, 'Marcion,' The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church, J. D. Douglas, gen. ed. (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1978), p. 620.

⁴⁸J. N. Darby, The Hopes of the Church of God (London: G. Morrish, n.d.), p. 106.

⁴⁹C. I. Scofield, Scofield Bible Correspondence Course, 19th edn. (Chicago, Moody Bible Institute), p. 23.

⁵⁰Ryrie, Dispensationalism., pp. 39-40.

Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, elaborates further on this dichotomy between Israel and the church,

The dispensationalist believes that throughout the ages God is pursuing two distinct purposes: one related to the earth with earthly people and earthly objectives involved which is Judaism; while the other is related to heaven with heavenly people and heavenly objectives involved, which is Christianity.⁵¹

For Chafer, ‘Israel is an eternal nation, heir to an eternal land, with an eternal kingdom, on which David rules from an eternal throne’⁵² so that in eternity, ‘...never the twain, Israel and church, shall meet.’⁵³ Ryrie even concedes the conclusion of his critic Daniel Fuller in stating that the, ‘...basic promise of Dispensationalism is two purposes of God expressed in the formation of two peoples who maintain their distinction throughout eternity.’⁵⁴

Certain implications follow the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic covenant. Based on their literal reading of the Old Testament Christian Zionists believe that the Jews remain God’s ‘chosen people’ enjoying a unique relationship, status and eternal purposes within their own land, separate from any promises made to the Church.

So, the promises made to Abraham remain true today for the physical descendants of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Based on passages like Genesis 15, Christian Friends of Israel, for example, insist, ‘The Bible teaches that Israel (people, land, nation) has a Divinely ordained and glorious future, and that God has neither rejected nor replaced His Jewish people.’⁵⁵

⁵¹Lewis Sperry Chafer, Dispensationalism (Dallas, Seminary Press, 1936), p. 107.

⁵²Chafer, Systematic Theology (Dallas, Dallas Seminary Press, 1975), Vol. 4. pp. 315-323, cited in Gerstner, Wrongly., p. 184.

⁵³Gerstner, ‘Wrongly., p. 185.

⁵⁴Ryrie, Dispensationalism., pp. 44-45.

⁵⁵Christian Friends of Israel, Standing with Israel, information leaflet, n.d.

Similarly, Jews for Jesus perpetuate the dispensational distinction between God's purposes for Israel and that of the Church. 'We believe that Israel exists as a covenant people through whom God continues to accomplish His purposes and that the Church is an elect people in accordance with the New Covenant, comprising both Jews and Gentiles who acknowledge Jesus as Messiah and Redeemer.'⁵⁶

David Brickner affirms the position first propounded by Darby, that the Jews remain 'God's chosen people' while the church is merely 'a parenthesis'⁵⁷ to God's future plans for the Jews. The implicit assumption is that the Jews continue to enjoy a special covenant relationship with God apart from through Jesus Christ. This contradicts John the Baptist and Jesus own clear and unambiguous statements to the contrary.

Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." (Luke 3:8-9)

"Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did... You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire." (John 8:39, 44)

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

For this reason Peter warned his Jewish audience soon after the Day of Pentecost that if they persisted in refusing to recognise Jesus as their Messiah, they would cease to be the "laos" (people) of God, 'Anyone who does not listen to him

⁵⁶Jews for Jesus,, Our Doctrinal Statement, www.jews-for-jesus.org

⁵⁷David Brickner, Future Hope, A Jewish Christian Look at the End of the World, 2nd edn. (San Francisco, Purple Pomegranate, 1999), p. 18.

(Christ) will be completely cut off from among his people.'
(Acts 3:23)

Jesus and the apostles repudiated the notion that the Jews continued to enjoy a special status or relationship apart from faith in Jesus as their Messiah. Christian Zionists fail to recognise that 'chosenness' is the gift of God's grace in Jesus Christ to all who trust in Him, irrespective of their racial origins. In the New Testament the term is never used exclusively of the Jewish people, apart from as members of the Church. Jesus Christ is the 'chosen' one. Indeed in the New Testament the term is always used to refer to the Church, the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:11).

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (Colossians 3:12)

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

It is therefore no longer appropriate to designate the Jews as God's 'chosen people'. The term has been redefined to describe all those who trust in Jesus Christ.

The Restoration to and Occupation of Eretz Israel

Since Christian Zionists argue that the Jews remain God's chosen people, they also insist the promises concerning the land made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob still apply unconditionally and in perpetuity to their physical descendants. On the basis of such promises they actively encourage Jews to 'return' to Zion. The contemporary State of Israel is seen as evidence of God's continuing protection and

favour toward the Jews. However, they insist that the present borders of Israel are only a fraction of those God intends for the Jews. The geographical extent of 'Eretz Israel', as Arnold Fruchtenbaum explains, is nonnegotiable and covers everything from Egypt to Iraq.

At no point in Jewish history have the Jews ever possessed all of the land from the Euphrates in the north to the River of Egypt in the south. Since God cannot lie, these things must yet come to pass.⁵⁸

Fruchtenbaum makes this deduction from his literalist reading of Genesis 15:18. "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates." In doing so, however, he ignores the way in which both Joshua and Nehemiah interpreted the promise.

Joshua insists, 'So Joshua took the entire land, just as the Lord had directed Moses.' (Joshua 11:23). At the end of the book of Joshua, the same assessment is repeated but more emphatically, 'So the Lord gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their forefathers, and they took possession of it and settled there ... Not one of all the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.' (21:43-45). It is hard to see how this fulfilment can be reconciled with the futurist claims of dispensationalists. Neither Scofield nor Schuyler English footnote either passage. However, Scofield, like many dispensationalists since,⁵⁹ bases his belief in a third restoration on Ezekiel 37 and the vision of the valley of the dry bones.⁶⁰ Following the publication of the Balfour Declaration, for example, a CMJ editorial of 1918 was one of the first to assert that a Jewish State would be the fulfilment of Ezekiel's vision:

⁵⁸ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, 'This Land is Mine', Issues, 2. 4. www.jewsforjesus.org

⁵⁹ Lindsey, Late, op.cit., p51.

⁶⁰ Scofield, op.cit., fn. 1, p881.

'We believe we are actually seeing that come to pass which was prophesied by Ezekiel (ch. 37) viz., the movement amongst the "dry bones" of Israel, bone is uniting with bone ...The uniting element being the possibility in the very near future of their being allowed to organise a Jewish State in their own God-given country of Palestine.'⁶¹

With the benefit of hindsight, Lindsey also elaborates on this, using capitals for emphasis in case his readers miss the plot:

'Ezekiel 37:7-8 ... is phase one of the prophecy which predicts the PHYSICAL RESTORATION of the Nation without Spiritual life which began May 14, 1948 ... Ezekiel 37:9-10 ... is phase two of the prophecy which predicts the SPIRITUAL REBIRTH of the nation AFTER they are physically restored to the land as a nation ... The Lord identifies the bones in the allegory as representing "the whole house of Israel." It is crystal clear that this is literally predicting the restoration and rebirth of the whole nation at the time of Messiah's coming [Ezekiel 37:21-27].'⁶²

It is difficult to conceive how such an entirely futuristic interpretation would have brought comfort to the Jewish exiles in Babylon to whom Ezekiel was sent to minister, yet this and similar passages provide the motivation for the restorationist movement today.

Scofield also claims two passages in the New Testament speak of this third return, Luke 1:30-33 and Acts 15:13-17. Scofield dwells on the latter in which James simply quotes from Amos to show that Pentecost had been predicted long ago, promising that Gentiles would also seek the Lord along with Jews. 'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the

⁶¹ Kelvin Crombie, 'CMJ and the Restoration of Israel' Shalom, 1, (1998). See also Anne Dexter, 'The Eternal Covenant, Part 3, Exile and Restoration,' Shalom, June (1989), pp10-11.

⁶² Lindsey, Road, op.cit., p180. Emphasis in the original.

remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things that have been known for ages' (Acts 15:16-18).

For Scofield, 'dispensationally, this is the most important passage in the NT', since he claims, 'It gives the divine purpose for this age, and for the beginning of the next.'⁶³ Scofield, however, reads considerably more into this passage than is there and obscures its most obvious and direct meaning. Scofield interpreted the 'after this' not simply as meaning 'after James' or even 'after Pentecost,' but rather 1900 years afterwards, God would some day 'rebuild the tabernacle of David' in a literal and permanent return of Jewish people to the Land. In doing so Scofield ignores the fact that James is simply appealing to Amos to vindicate the universality of the gospel and the results of the 1st Century Gentile mission in particular.⁶⁴ If this is seen as 'spiritualising' the Old Testament text, then it must be acknowledged that it is James who does so.⁶⁵ Using the passage to teach a predetermined and futuristic plan for national Israel, separate from the Church, appears to be the opposite of what James intended.

Undaunted, at the Third International Christian Zionist Congress held in Jerusalem in February 1996 under the auspices of ICEJ, some 1,500 delegates from over 40 countries unanimously affirmed a proclamation and affirmation of Christian Zionism including the following beliefs,

⁶³ Scofield, Scofield, op.cit., fn. 1, pp1169-1170

⁶⁴ "In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name," declares the LORD, who will do these things. "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills. I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them.' (Amos 9:11-13).

⁶⁵ Fuller, op.cit., p180. Also James Barr, Fundamentalism, (London, SCM, 1977), p355.

The Lord in His zealous love for Israel and the Jewish People blesses and curses peoples and judges nations based upon their treatment of the Chosen People of Israel.... According to God's distribution of nations, the Land of Israel has been given to the Jewish People by God as an everlasting possession by an eternal covenant. The Jewish People have the absolute right to possess and dwell in the Land, including Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan.⁶⁶

Christian Zionists fail to recognise how Jesus universalises the land promise made in Psalm 37. "But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace." (Psalm 37:11) "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5). Meekness was always a precondition of remaining in the land, whereas arrogance or oppression were reasons for exile. It is also significant to note the way Zionists must also downplay the repeated warnings of the Hebrew Prophets who insist the land belongs to God and residence there is always conditional. For example, "The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants." (Leviticus 25:23)

Because the Land belongs to God, it cannot be permanently bought or sold. It cannot be given away, let alone stolen or confiscated as has occurred in the Occupied Territories since 1967. The Land is never at the disposal of Israel for its national purposes. Instead it is Israel who are at the disposal of God's purposes, tenants in God's Land. The ethical requirements for occupancy of Canaan were clearly outlined in Leviticus.

But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the aliens living among you must not do any of these detestable things, for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became

⁶⁶International Christian Zionist Congress Proclamation, International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem. 25-29 February 1996.

defiled. And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you. (Leviticus 18:24-28)

The prophet Ezekiel amplifies the same warning to those tenants.

Thus says the Lord God of Israel: You shed blood, yet you would keep possession on the land? You rely on your sword, you do abominable things... yet you would keep possession of the land?... I will make the land a desolate waste, and her proud strength will come to an end. (Ezekiel 33:25-29)

On the basis of such sober warnings is it not more likely that Israel will experience an imminent exile rather than restoration? The tension between Christians who call for the implementation of international law and Zionists is no where more clearly polarized than on the issue of the status of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem: Eternal and Exclusive Jewish Capital

The place and purpose of Jerusalem, or 'Zion' as it is sometimes called,⁶⁷ is deeply felt within Christian Zionism. Margaret Brearley insists, 'Jerusalem is the place where the Lord has 'chosen to place his name'. Lindsey also points out that

'Jerusalem's importance in history is infinitely beyond its size and economic significance. From ages past, Jerusalem has been the most important city on this planet ... More prophecies have been made concerning Jerusalem than any other place on earth.'⁶⁸

The New Testament, however, knows nothing of this preoccupation with a nationalistic and materialistic earthly

⁶⁷ Zion more specifically refers to the hill on the western edge of the Old City of Jerusalem.

⁶⁸ Lindsey, Israel, op.cit., p20.

Jerusalem. Instead through faith in Christ we already inhabit the heavenly Jerusalem and look forward to its appearing.

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. (Hebrews 12:22-23)

But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother (Galatians 4:26)

In Galatians 4 Paul criticises the 'Jerusalem-dependency'⁶⁹ of the legalists who were infecting the Church in Galatia. Galatians 4:27 is a quotation from Isaiah 54:1 which referred to the earthly Jerusalem. Paul now interprets the passage as now referring to the home of all who believe in Jesus Christ.⁷⁰ Access to heaven no longer has anything to do with an earthly Jerusalem. Jesus had already made this clear to the woman of Samaria.

Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. (John 4:21-23)

At his trial Jesus explained why. 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.' (John 18:36)

Subsequent to Pentecost, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles begin to use Old Covenant language concerning the Land in new ways.

⁶⁹Peter Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), p. 129.

⁷⁰Walker, *Jesus.*, p. 131.

So for example, Peter speaks of an inheritance for Christians living in exile which, unlike the land, ‘...can never perish, spoil or fade.’ (1 Peter 1:4). Paul similarly asserts, ‘Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.’ (Acts 20:32) There is no evidence that the Apostles believed that the Jewish people still had a divine right to a kingdom centred on Jerusalem, or that this would be an important, let alone central aspect of God’s future purposes for the world. In the Christological logic of Paul, the Land, like the Law, have now been superseded and become irrelevant to God’s redemptive purposes.

The contradiction between the flow of biblical revelation in the New Testament and the Zionist agenda is nowhere more clearly seen than in the question of the Jewish Temple. This is also the most controversial issue uniting Christian Zionists with the more extreme Jewish Zionists.

The Rebuilding of the Jewish Temple

Just 500 metres by 300 metres it is according to Hal Lindsey, the most disputed 35 acres on the Planet.⁷¹ “I believe the fate of the world will be determined by an ancient feud over 35 acres of land.”⁷² Lindsey is representative of many Christian Zionists who are convinced that the Jewish Temple will be rebuilt very soon.

Obstacle or no obstacle, it is certain that the Temple will be rebuilt. Prophecy demands it... With the Jewish nation reborn in the land of Palestine, ancient Jerusalem once again under total Jewish control for the first time in 2600 years, and talk of rebuilding the great Temple, the most important sign of

⁷¹Hal Lindsey, *Planet Earth 2000 AD* (Palos Verde, California, Western Front, 1994), p. 156.

⁷²Hal Lindsey, ‘World’s fate hangs on 35 acres’ *FreeRepublic.com* 21 February 2001.

Jesus Christ's soon coming is before us... It is like the key piece of a jigsaw puzzle being found... For all those who trust in Jesus Christ, it is a time of electrifying excitement.⁷³

David Brickner basis his belief on a futurist reading of Daniel 9.

Obviously the Temple has been rebuilt because Daniel tells us this ruler puts an end to sacrifice and sets up some kind of abomination (a loathsome horror that would be anathema to Jewish worship) right inside the Temple in Jerusalem. Ultimately this ruler is destroyed in a final conflagration of enormous proportion.⁷⁴

The conviction that the Jewish Temple must be rebuilt is, ironically, the Achilles' heel of Christian Zionism for it is inevitably also associated with the reintroduction of the Mosaic sacrificial system.

"You are to give a young bull as a sin offering to the priests, who are Levites, of the family of Zadok, who come near to minister before me, declares the Sovereign Lord." (Ezekiel 43:19).

Scofield in his Reference Bible claimed that the sacrifices mentioned in Ezekiel 43:19, would, however, be only 'memorial' offerings.

Doubtless these offerings will be memorial, looking back to the cross, as the offerings under the old covenant were anticipatory, looking forward to the cross. In neither case have animal sacrifices power to put away sin (Heb. 10.4; Rom. 3.25).⁷⁵

In fact the verse explicitly refers to the sacrifice of a 'young bull as a sin offering.' If Scofield appears to fudge the issue

⁷³Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (London, Lakeland, 1970), pp. 56-58.

⁷⁴Brickner, Future.,

⁷⁵C.I. Scofield, *Scofield Reference Bible* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 890.

suggesting this is only a memorial sacrifice, the New Scofield Reference Bible note on the same verse goes further, undermining the entire hermeneutical premise of Dispensationalism.

The reference to sacrifices is not to be taken literally, in view of the putting away of such offerings, but is rather to be regarded as a presentation of the worship of redeemed Israel, in her own land and in the millennial Temple, using the terms with which the Jews were familiar in Ezekiel's day.⁷⁶

If this particular reference to sacrifice in Ezekiel 43 need not be taken literally then the ultra-literalist distinction between Israel and the Church collapses, flawed by its own internal inconsistency.⁷⁷ A literalist hermeneutic precludes the possibility that the sacrifice of a young bullock can be synonymous with a memorial offering consisting of grain and oil.⁷⁸

The immediate context for Ezekiel vision of a rebuilt Temple is the promised return of the Jews from Babylonian exile, not some long distant eschatological event. This would have been utterly meaningless to the exiles longing to return to Israel. How could Ezekiel be referring to some future millennial age, when Jesus Christ fulfilled the role of the sacrificial system, once for all, by the shedding his own blood.⁷⁹ To suggest that animal sacrifices must be reintroduced undermines the New Testament insistence that the work of Christ is sufficient, final and complete⁸⁰. Nevertheless, Zahava Glaser claims, 'when God instituted the sacrificial system, it was instituted for all time.'

⁷⁶The New Scofield Reference Bible ed. E. Schuyler English (New York, Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 864.

⁷⁷Cornelis P. Venema, *The Promise of the Future* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 2000), p. 285

⁷⁸Leviticus 2:2, 9, 16.

⁷⁹Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness* (Atlanta, American Vision, 1997), p.85.

⁸⁰Hebrews 2:17; Romans 3:25.

What flour is to bread, the sacrificial system is to the religion revealed in the Jewish Scriptures. It is not a garnish. It is not a flavoring. It is the very substance out of which the Jewish religion was constructed. We can forever design our own substitutes, but they cannot satisfy our yearnings the way God's own provision can... Can there be a "proper" Judaism without a priesthood, an altar, a sacrifice and a place on earth where God meets the individual?⁸¹

Such logic is at variance with the way in which the New Testament speaks of the place of Temple and sacrifice. While Jesus warned of the destruction of the Temple he never promised that it would ever be rebuilt.⁸²

There is in fact not a single verse in the New Testament which promises that a Jewish Temple would be rebuilt, that a 2000 year 'parenthesis' should be placed between references to its desecration and destruction, or indeed that the Temple in Jerusalem would play any part in God's purposes after the cross. Christian Zionists must therefore ignore the way in which the Temple is invested with new meaning in the New Testament and becomes instead an image of the Church.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. (Ephesians 2:19-21)

As we have already seen, Peter quotes directly from Exodus 19 using the promise made about a Jewish priesthood and now applies it to the Church. Whereas the Israelites had the priestly tribe of Levi, the Church becomes the priesthood of all believers.

⁸¹Zhava Glaser, 'Today's Rituals: Reminders or Replacements' Issues., 8, 3.

⁸²John 2:19, Mark 26:61, 27:40; Mark 14:58, 15:29.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)

Furthermore, in Hebrews, the author describes the offering of sacrifices between the death of Christ and the destruction of the Temple as merely an ‘illustration’ of, and ‘copies’ of, heavenly realities, a ‘reminder of sins’ which are unable, unlike the finished work of Christ, to take sin away.⁸³

The movement in the progressive revelation of Scripture is always from the lesser to the greater. It is never reversed. The New Testament repeatedly sees such Old Testament concepts as the Temple, High Priest and sacrifice as ‘types’ pointing to and fulfilled in Jesus Christ.⁸⁴ Typology in Scripture never typifies itself, nor is it ever greater than that which it typifies.⁸⁵

Therefore Christians who advocate the rebuilding of the Temple are regressing into a pre-Christian sacrificial system, superseded, made redundant and annulled by the finished work of Jesus Christ. The Temple was only ever a temporary edifice, a shadow and type anticipating the day when God would dwell with his people drawn from every nation through the atoning work of the true Temple, Jesus Christ.⁸⁶ If Zionists do rebuild their Temple and re-institute sacrifices it will only confirm their rejection of Jesus. For Christians to support them in the belief that future sacrifices may atone for sin is surely apostasy.⁸⁷ It is not surprising perhaps that Christian support for Jewish sovereignty over the Land, Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, inflames tensions between Jews and Arabs.

⁸³Hebrews 9:9, 23, 10:1-3, 11.

⁸⁴John 1:14; 2:19-22; Colossians 2:9.

⁸⁵John Noe, *The Israel Illusion* (Fishers, Indiana, Prophecy Reformation Institute, 2000), p. 16.C

⁸⁶John 1:14.

⁸⁷Hebrews 6:4-6.

This is further exacerbated by the language used to describe Arabs and Palestinians who oppose Zionism.

Antipathy Toward Arabs and Palestinians

Christian Zionists, while lovers of Israel, rarely show the same feelings toward Arabs and Palestinians. Anti-Arab prejudices and Orientalist stereotypes are common in their writings.⁸⁸ Comparisons between Hitler and the Arabs are common.⁸⁹ Hal Lindsey, the most prolific Christian Zionist writer, insists,

Long ago the psalmist predicted the final mad attempt of the confederated Arab armies to destroy the nation of Israel... The Palestinians are determined to trouble the world until they repossess what they feel is their land. The Arab nations consider it a matter of racial honour to destroy the State of Israel.⁹⁰

Rob Richards justifies Israel's apartheid regime on the grounds that Palestinians are the biblical equivalent of the 'alien' residents in Eretz Israel, to be respected but not entitled to the same status or equal rights, as the Jews. "Palestinians and Arabs who have made Israel their home come under that biblical word 'alien'."⁹¹

Richards ignores the fact that most Palestinians did not choose to 'make their home in Israel'. Those over the age of 55 were living in their own land of Palestine long before the State of Israel was unilaterally imposed upon them in 1948. While the United Nations is invariably viewed with mistrust, America and Israel, like Siamese twins, are perceived to be pitted against

⁸⁸Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, Vintage, 1978)

⁸⁹Jan Willem van der Hoeven, *Babylon or Jerusalem?* (Shippensburg, Pasadena, Destiny Image Publishers, 1993), pp. 132-133.

⁹⁰Lindsey, *Israel and the Last Days* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House, 1983), pp. 38-39.

⁹¹Rob Richards, *Has God Finished with Israel?* (Crowborough, Monarch/Olive Press, 1994), p. 159.

an evil world dominated by Islam,⁹² in which people like Yasser Arafat or Saddam Hussein are manifestations of the Anti-Christ.⁹³

Regrettably such instances of racism which demonise Arabs, and denies Palestinians the basic right to self determination is difficult to square with the New Testament ethic. The followers of Jesus Christ are called to be peace makers (Matthew 5:9), to love their enemies (Matthew 5:44) and to no longer regard others from a worldly point of view but instead reach out to the widow and orphan, the poor, the sick and the stranger, through a ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:16-20). Tragically, many Christian Zionists, it seems, are more concerned with heralding Armageddon than building peace.

Anxious for Armageddon

In the history of Christian theology, speculation concerning the interpretation of Revelation 20:1-10 and the meaning of the millennium has led theologians to suggest four alternatives:⁹⁴ Preterism teaches that the prophecies concerning the return of Christ were fulfilled in AD70. (David Chilton and Max King). Amillennialism teaches that the millennium is symbolic, or already ‘realised’⁹⁵ and refers to heaven where departed souls reign with Christ (Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Berkhof). Postmillennialism teaches a literal or symbolic period of a thousand years in which the Church triumphs over evil before Christ returns (George Whitefield,

⁹²Merrill Simon, Jerry Falwell and the Jews (Middle Village, New York, Jonathan David, 1984), pp. 63-64, 71-72.

⁹³Charles Dyer, The Rise of Babylon (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1991)

⁹⁴ Stanley J. Grenz, The Millennial Maze, Sorting out Evangelical Options, (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1992); Robert G. Clouse, ed., The Meaning of the Millennium, (Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 1977); Cornelis P. Venema, The Promise of the Future, (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 2000), pp189-362.

⁹⁵Ibid., p235.

Jonathan Edwards). Premillennialism teaches that Christ will return to save the Church from evil and then reign for a literal thousand years on earth (Darby, Scofield, Chafer, Ryrie).

Puritan eschatology was essentially postmillennial and, based on Romans 9-11, believed the conversion of the Jews would lead to future blessing for the entire world. It was this optimistic postmillennial worldview, which in part provided the motivation for the expansion of European Protestant missionary movements in the 17th and 18th Century.

The late 18th and early 19th Centuries, however, saw a dramatic movement away from the optimism of postmillennialism following a sustained period of turmoil on both sides of the Atlantic.⁹⁶ This was associated with the American War of Independence (1775-1784), the French Revolution (1789-1793) and the Napoleonic Wars (1809-1815). With the fall of several European monarchies between 1804 and 1830, coupled with widespread unrest in England, Napoleon's menacing words, 'I have always followed fortune and the god of war'⁹⁷ seemed an ominous sign of the end of the world.

Napoleon's destruction of the Roman Catholic Church in France; his seizure of church assets; execution of priests; and

⁹⁶ A small number of 19th Century Postmillennial theologians did continue to espouse a form of Jewish Restorationism but only as a consequence of Jewish people coming to faith in Jesus and being incorporated within the Church. These include Charles Simeon (1759-1836) and David Brown (1803-1897), who was Edward Irving's assistant at Regent Square and who wrote *The Second Advent* (1849) and *The Restoration of Israel*, (1861). Erroll Hulse also identifies with this position, *The Restoration of Israel*, (Worthing, Henry Walter, 1968). Since the Restorationist movement became dominated by Covenant premillennialists and dispensationalists from the early 19th Century, this thesis has concentrated on their contribution. The previous chapter has explored the early intimations of proto-Christian Zionism within the Reformation and Puritan period which was dominated by Postmillennialists. See Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology, The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, (Tustin, California, Ariel Ministries, 1989), pp14-122.

⁹⁷ Andrew Drummond, *Edward Irving and His Circle*, (London, James Clarke), p132.

the exile of the Pope from Rome all appeared to corroborate this. These tensions and upheavals fuelled the Second Great Awakening; the Revivals associated with Charles Finney; the Dispensationalism of J.N. Darby, the Adventism of Joseph Miller; and the founding of the Jehovah's Witnesses by Charles Taze Russell. As we have seen they also brought about a renewal of interest in prophecy which eventually led to a revival of Premillennialism within mainstream and sectarian Evangelicalism that has remained the dominant eschatological position for over a century.

In our own generation, the 1967 'Six Day War' marked a significant watershed for Christian interest in Israel and Zionism. Most Christian Zionists, like Lindsey, Robertson and Falwell subscribe to a pessimistic and deterministic premillennial view of the future.

Charles Ryrie first described the Bible as 'history prewritten',⁹⁸ while Charles Dyer views the dispensations as 'providing us with a chronological map to guide us'.⁹⁹ Derek Prince amplifies this further by claiming, 'The central theme of biblical prophecy ... revolves around the land and the people of Israel'.¹⁰⁰ Lindsey has popularised this idea that biblical prophecy is essentially futuristic and predictive revealing God's future plans on earth and specifically concerning the future of Israel. So he claims, 'The center of the entire prophetic forecast is the State of Israel. Certain events in that nation's recent history prove the accuracy of the prophets. They also force us to accept the fact that the "countdown" has begun.'¹⁰¹

For example, without any hesitation or doubt Lindsey insists,

⁹⁸ Charles Ryrie, *The Living End*, (Old Tappan, Revell, 1976), p80.

⁹⁹ Charles Dyer, *The Rise of Babylon, Signs of the End Times*, (Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale House, 1991), p189.

¹⁰⁰ Prince, *Last*, op.cit., p54.

¹⁰¹ Lindsey, 1980's, op.cit., p11.

'And look what's happening in the Middle East - ground zero in the end-times events.... This phoney peace deal in the Middle East thus only ensures that eventually there will be a thermonuclear holocaust in the Middle East... This seems to parallel predictions in Revelation... Mark my words. It will happen.'¹⁰²

Let's talk about World War III... We can almost see the handwriting on the wall... Does this sound like a scenario that could happen in the very near future? Perhaps at almost any minute? You bet it does.¹⁰³

The titles of Lindsey's books are typical of many other Christian Zionist writers in showing an increasingly exaggerated and almost pathological emphasis on the apocalyptic, on death and suffering, especially as the year 2000 approached. Lindsey's last but one book, The Final Battle, includes the following, 'Never before, in one book, has there been such a complete and detailed look at the events leading up to 'The Battle of Armageddon.'¹⁰⁴

At times Lindsey's description of the suffering inherent in this most terrible scenario of a nuclear holocaust is tasteless if not repulsive. 'Man has pretty much exhausted his arsenal. There are few popguns left, but not very much left to pop them. At least four billion people have perished in the first 14 Judgments alone. Now its God's turn.'¹⁰⁵

Lindsey, along with people like Jack Van Impe offer graphic maps showing future military movements of American, Russian, Chinese and African armies and naval

¹⁰²Lindsey, *Planet.*, pp. 243-244.

¹⁰³Lindsey, *Planet.*, p. 255.

¹⁰⁴Hal Lindsey, *The Final Battle* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1995), front cover.

¹⁰⁵Lindsey, *Planet Earth: The Final Chapter*, p. 254.

convoys which they claim will contend with one another in the battle of Armageddon.¹⁰⁶

In viewing prophecy in this way, Lindsey and Van Impe detach predictions concerning the future from the covenantal context within which the prophecies were originally given. Lindsey's view is at variance with the Hebrew prophets themselves who consistently stress that their intention was to call God's people back to the terms of their covenant relationship, not reveal arbitrary and otherwise hidden facts about predestined future events. Authentic biblical prophecy is always conditional rather than fatalistic. The promises and warnings are conditional upon how people respond to God's instructions. Consequently, sometimes the prophecies did not come true. For example, when Micah predicted that Jerusalem would be 'ploughed like a field' and 'become a heap of rubble' his warnings led to repentance and revival under King Hezekiah. 'As a result, the Lord held back his judgement He had in mind' (Mic. 3:12; Jer. 26:17-19).¹⁰⁷ The same principle is seen in the story of Jonah.¹⁰⁸

It is suggested, therefore, that Lindsey has more in common with the false prophets who flattered the people with promises of peace and prosperity without specifying the covenantal preconditions of repentance and faith.¹⁰⁹ By treating prophecy as deterministic and 'prewritten history' Lindsey legitimatises Israel's unilateral territorial claims while ignoring the conditional nature of the covenant relationship.

Such literalist assumptions preclude any possibility of an alternative reading of the Bible, history or a just and lasting outcome to the search for peace in the Middle East.

¹⁰⁶Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (London, Lakeland, 1970), p. 155; Louis Goldberg, *Turbulence Over the Middle East* (Neptune, New Jersey, Loizeaux Brothers, 1982), p. 172.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., pp52, 53.

¹⁰⁸Jonah 4:1-3, 10-11.

¹⁰⁹Van der Waal, op.cit., p51.

Conclusions : A Theology of Christian Zionism

As we saw in the first chapter, Christian Zionism as a movement was born within British evangelicalism in the 19th Century and has become institutionalised through Dispensationalism into mainstream American evangelicalism in the 20th Century. This second chapter has sought to demonstrate that while evangelicalism may have given birth to Christian Zionism, it is time to look again at its parentage and re-evaluate whether they are indeed related.

Satirically, Kenneth Cragg summarises the implications of Christian Zionism's ethnic exclusivity.

It is so; God chose the Jews; the land is theirs by divine gift. These dicta cannot be questioned or resisted. They are final. Such verdicts come infallibly from Christian biblicists for whom Israel can do no wrong—thus fortified. But can such positivism, this unquestioning finality, be compatible with the integrity of the Prophets themselves? It certainly cannot square with the open peoplehood under God which is the crux of New Testament faith. Nor can it well be reconciled with the ethical demands central to law and election alike.¹¹⁰

Christian Zionism only thrives on a futurist and literal hermeneutic when Old Testament promises made to the ancient Jewish people are transposed on to the contemporary State of Israel. To do so it is necessary to ignore, marginalise or bi-pass the New Testament which reinterprets, annuls and fulfils those promises in and through Jesus Christ and his followers. This is no where more evident than in Galatians 4 where we are taught that we should no longer regard unbelieving Jews as descendants of Sarah and Isaac but of Hagar and Ishmael.

¹¹⁰Kenneth Cragg, *The Arab Christians: A History in the Middle East*. (London, Mowbray, 1992) p. 238.

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother... Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. (Galatians 4:21-28)

The promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph are therefore now to be understood as fulfilled only through those who follow Jesus Christ. They alone are designated the true children of Abraham and Sarah. Jews who reject Jesus Christ are outside the covenant of grace and are to be regarded as children of Hagar. Paul takes Sarah's words of Genesis 21:10 and applies them to the Judaizers who were corrupting the faith of the church in Galatia.

Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son. (Galatians 4:30)

This injunction should perhaps also be applied today toward those who demonstrate the same legalizing tendencies within Christian Zionism. With sensitivity and compassion we are mandated to share our faith in Jesus praying that our Jewish friends find their Messiah and complete their faith. However, any suggestion that they continue to have a special status before God, a separate and continuing covenant or

exclusive rights to the lands of the Middle East is, in the words of John Stott, 'biblical anathema.'¹¹¹

The fundamental question Christian Zionists must therefore answer is this: What difference did the coming of Jesus Christ make to the traditional Jewish hopes and expectations about the land? We may not interpret the Old Covenant as if the coming of Jesus made little or no difference to the nationalistic and territorial aspirations of first century Judaism. In the process of redemptive history a dramatic movement has been made from type to reality, from shadow to substance.

As has been shown, Hebrews 8:13 provides us not only with the hermeneutic key to refuting the Christian Zionist case, but also explains Paul's vehemence at the Judaizing tendencies corrupting the church in Galatia.

By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.
(Hebrews 8:13)

The destruction of the temple and sacrificial system in 70 AD fulfilled that prediction. The choice since then has been between two theologies. One based on the shadows of the Old Covenant and one based on the light of the New Covenant. Christian Zionism is an exclusive theology that focuses on the Jews in the land rather than an inclusive theology that centres on Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

As we shall see in the next chapter, Christian Zionism provides a theological endorsement for apartheid and human rights abuses, rather than a theology of justice, peace and reconciliation which lie at the heart of the New Covenant.

¹¹¹John Stott, quoted in Don Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon* (Scottdale, Herald Press, 1995) p. 80.

The Political Agenda of Christian Zionism



"The purpose of this book is to warn about a rapidly expanding new movement in the Church that is subtly introducing the same errors that eventually and inevitably led to centuries of atrocities against the Jews and culminated in the Holocaust of the Third Reich... They are setting up a philosophical system that will result in anti-Semitism."¹

In his controversial book, *Road to Holocaust*, Hal Lindsey equates those who reject dispensationalism with the Nazis because, from his perspective, both deny the Jews any separate identity or future destiny within the purposes of God. In the previous two chapters we have examined the historical roots and theological basis for Christian Zionism. In this final chapter I want to present its political consequences. Christian Zionists are implacably opposed to the present Road Map to peace in the Middle East and may well be contributing to the very holocaust in the Middle East which they predict.

We are going to examine six ways in which Christian Zionist theology has been translated into political action: This outline illustrates the correlation between its distinctive doctrines and political agenda.

¹ The Final Battle (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front, 1995), back page & p. 3.

Doctrine	Practice
Chosen People	Standing with Israel
Restorationism	Facilitating the Aliyah Programme
Eretz Israel	Supporting West Bank Settlements
Jerusalem	Lobbying for International Recognition
Temple	Funding the Rebuilding of the Temple
The Future	Opposing Peace & Hastening Armageddon

The Chosen People : Supporting Israeli Colonialism

The conviction that the Jewish people remain God's 'chosen people' in some way separate from the Church, is deeply rooted in Christian Zionism. A recent Christianity Today survey of evangelical opinion about Israel gives an indication of the strength of Christian Zionism in America. The survey revealed that 24% believe 'the biblical mandate for Christians is to support the State of Israel'.² This is expressed in a variety of ways:

Standing with Israel

Following the Six Day War in 1967, apart from the support given by the United States government, Israel has been largely isolated within the international community. Hal Lindsey laments:

'Up to the time of the 1991 Madrid Conference, the Arabs were "called upon" to "comply", "desist", "refrain" etc. four times. Israel was "demanded", "ordered", etc. to do General Assembly bidding three hundred and five times. The UN voted

² Cited in Prior, op.cit., p143.

six hundred and five resolutions between its inception and the Gulf War. Four hundred and twenty nine of those resolutions, or, sixty-two percent of the total of the UN's resolutions were against Israel or its interests.³

Citing Isaiah 40, Christian Zionists see their role to, 'comfort, comfort my people, says your God.' So for example, in October 2000, just days after Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the Haram Al-Sharif, which was deliberately timed to undermine the government of Barak for negotiating with Arafat over a shared Jerusalem,⁴ and sparked the second intifada, an advertisement appeared in the New York Times entitled 'Open Letter to Evangelical Christians from Jews for Jesus.' In it they called upon evangelicals to show solidarity with the State of Israel at this critical time:

'Now is the time to stand with Israel. Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, our hearts are heavy as we watch the images of violence and bloodshed in the Middle East ... Christian friends, "The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29). So must our support for the survival of Israel in this dark hour be irrevocable. Now is the time for Christians to stand by Israel.'⁵

³ Hal Lindsey, 'The UN & Israel' International Intelligence Briefing, 29th October (1998): <http://www.iib-report.com/pages/transcripts/10.29.98/oct29.htm>. Emphasis in the original.

⁴ In July 2001 the Rabbinical Council of Judea, Samaria and Gaza called on all rabbis to bring their communities to visit the Temple Mount. This was the first time that a group of rabbis representing a significant proportion of the religious Jewish community had ruled that it was permissible for Jews to ascend the Temple Mount. Previously this had been forbidden to orthodox Jews. The rabbis also called upon the Yesha Council of Jewish settlements to organise mass visits to the Temple Mount from the settlements which comprise the more right wing religious Jews. See N. Shragai, 'Rabbis call for mass visits to Temple Mount,' Ha'aretz, 19 July (2001).

⁵ 'Open Letter to Evangelical Christians from Jews for Jesus: Now is the Time to Stand with Israel.' The New York Times, 23 October (2000).

The Israeli Lobby on Capitol Hill

Until the 1980s, US Middle East policy was largely peripheral to the wider global threat posed by Soviet Communism. The protection of Western Europe through NATO was a higher priority. The collapse of Communism, however, created a power vacuum in the Middle East which the US has filled. Following the Gulf War to liberate Kuwait and then more recently, Afghanistan from the Taliban and Iraq from the Baath Party of Saddam Hussein, the US has significantly increased its influence in the Middle East. Many contend that US foreign policy has become skewed through the disproportionate influence of the Zionist lobby. Michael Lind, the political analyst summarises the ways in which the Israeli lobby has distorted US foreign policy:

‘Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, enabled by US weapons and money, inflames anti-American attitudes in Arab and Muslim countries. The expansion of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land makes a mockery of the US commitment to self-determination for Kosovo, East Timor and Tibet. Beyond the region, US policy on nuclear weapons proliferation is undermined by the double standard that has led it to ignore Israel’s nuclear programme while condemning those of India and Pakistan.’⁶

The Christian Right came to shape US foreign policy largely through the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. His victory over Jimmy Carter gave a considerable boost to the Christian Zionist cause. Wagner claims his election, ‘ushered in not only the most pro-Israel administration in history but gave several Christian Zionists prominent political posts.’ He points out that in addition to the US President, those who subscribed to a futurist premillennial theology and endorsed Christian Zionism included Attorney General Ed Meese, Secretary of Defence Casper Weinberger, and Secretary of the

⁶ Michael Lind, ‘The Israel Lobby’, *Prospect*, April (2002).

Interior James Watt.⁷ White House seminars became a regular feature of Reagan's administration bringing leading Christian Zionists like Jerry Falwell, Mike Evans and Hal Lindsey into personal contact with national and congressional leaders.

In the same year, the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, was founded with the purpose of coordinating 'direct political lobbying activities in cooperation with the Israeli government.'⁸ One of its primary goals is to see the removal of PLO offices in Western countries and the transfer of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.⁹

The National Unity Coalition for Israel (NUCFI) is probably the largest and most influential network of Christian Zionists to be formed in the US. Founded by Esther Levens in Kansas in 1994, the NUCFI now comprises a broad coalition of 200 different and autonomous Jewish and Christian organisations representing 40 million members who are 'dedicated to a secure Israel'.¹⁰ Their principal strategy is to lobby the US media and political establishment, to challenge what they term 'disinformation and propaganda' and to express 'the truth about Israel.' The NUCFI includes three of the largest Christian Zionist organisations: Bridges for Peace, the International Christian Embassy and Christians for Israel.

The power of the pro-Israeli lobby, which ensures Israel continues to receive more than 3 billion dollars annually from the US in grants, loans and subsidies, can be gauged by the fact that George Bush Snr. was the last US President to criticise Israel in public. During the Gulf War, he enraged the Israeli lobby by pressurising Israel not to retaliate against Iraqi attacks and promised the Arab coalition partners that he would deal with the Palestinian issue. In September 1991, he complained

⁷ Donald Wagner, 'Beyond Armageddon,' *The Link*, New York: Americans for Middle East Understanding; October-November, (1992), p5.

⁸ Wagner, *Anxious.*, op.cit., p107.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p108.

¹⁰ <http://www.israelunitycoalition.com>

that, 'there are 1,000 lobbyists up on the Hill today lobbying Congress for loan guarantees for Israel and I'm one lonely little guy down here asking Congress to delay its consideration of loan guarantees for 120 days.'¹¹

Lind points out that the pro-Israeli lobby was also responsible for encouraging, 'the greatest abuse of the Presidential pardon power in American history' when Bill Clinton, on his last day in office, controversially pardoned Mark Rich, the fugitive billionaire on the FBI's 'Most Wanted' list. In a *New York Times* article in February 2001, Clinton explained that he had done it for Israel:

'Many present and former high-ranking Israeli officials of both major political parties and leaders of Jewish communities in America and Europe urged the pardon of Mr Rich because of his contributions and services to Israeli charitable causes, to the Mossad's efforts to rescue Jews from hostile countries, and to the peace process through sponsorship of education and health programmes in Gaza and the West Bank.'¹²

The pro-Israeli lobby is also accused of involvement in the selection, appointing and firing of US government officials and appointees.¹³ In 1980, the former US ambassador to Qatar, Andrew Killgore, writing in *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, gave this critique of the Israeli lobby:

'It is wrong and perverse for fanatical elements within the two and a half percent of our population who are Jewish to hold Congress hostage... America must regard the Israeli progression from penetration to direction of US foreign policy as the work of a master criminal.'¹⁴

With the formation of the NUCFI bringing together 200 different Christian and Jewish organisations, it is unlikely that

¹¹ Lind, op.cit.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

the power of the pro-Israeli lobby will in any way be diminished in the foreseeable future. Christian Zionists have also been influential in forging a closer relationship with Israel by facilitating solidarity tours to the Holy Land.

Solidarity Tours to Israel

Since 1967, following the capture of most of the important biblical sites associated with pilgrimages from Jordan and Syria, Israel has systematically exploited what Shirley Eber describes as a lucrative 'touristic gold mine'¹⁵ and made tourism a tool of propaganda.¹⁶ Israel's greatest success, however, has been to enlist American evangelical leaders such as Pat Boone and Jerry Falwell as allies in promoting pro-Israeli solidarity tours. For example, Falwell's 'Friendship Tours' to Israel include not only meetings with top Israeli government and military officials but also,

...On-site tour of modern Israeli battlefields... Official visit to an Israeli defence installation... strategic military positions, plus experience first hand the battle Israel faces as a nation.¹⁷

Christian Zionists are not, however, content to support the State of Israel politically and financially. They are also active in persuading Jews to emigrate to Israel.

Restorationism : Facilitating Aliyah from Russia and Eastern Europe

Christian Zionists are convinced that it is God's will for the Jewish people to return to Israel since it was given in perpetuity to the descendants of Abraham. With the fall of Communism in the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and Eastern

¹⁵ Shirley Eber, 'Getting Stoned on Holiday: Tourism on the Front Line'. In Focus: Tourism Concern. 2, Autumn (1991), pp4-5.

¹⁶ Glen Owen 'Tourists warned to avoid flashpoints.' The Times, 14 August (1997), p2.

¹⁷ Don Wagner, 'Beyond Armageddon'. The Link (Americans for Middle East Understanding) Vol. 25 No. 4 October/November (1992) p. 3.

Europe, Christians Zionists have become increasingly active in facilitating Jewish émigrés to make aliyah.¹⁸

By Land and Sea : From Restoration to Transportation

Since 1980, a coalition of Christian Zionist agencies has taken the initiative in encouraging Jewish people to emigrate to Israel, seeing this as the fulfilment of prophecy. Exobus was probably the first Christian Zionist agency to turn the doctrine of Restorationism into a reality and assist Jews in the former Soviet Union (FSU) to make aliyah. Founded in 1984 by Phil Hunter and based in Hull, England, the first Exobus team was sent to the Ukraine in 1991. They have since then assisted over 56,000 Jewish people to emigrate to Israel in close cooperation with the Jewish Agency. Exobus is also probably the largest Christian agency facilitating aliyah, comprising 80 team members, drawn from 13 countries and operating 40 vehicles transporting approximately 1,200 Jews overland from 16 different bases in the FSU each month.¹⁹

Since 1991, the ICEJ has also paid for the transportation of 40,000 immigrants, 15,000 of whom were taken to Israel on 51 ICEJ sponsored flights.²⁰ ICEJ Russian team members are especially active in the more remote regions of the FSU. They locate Jews, persuade them to emigrate, help them obtain documents to prove their Jewish origins, distribute humanitarian packages and pay for exit permits, passports, debt repayment, transport and accommodation.²¹ Once in

¹⁸ 'Aliyah' means 'going up' and is used to describe going up to Jerusalem on pilgrimage. The Israel government plays down the involvement of Christians in bringing Jews from the FSU. Brearley claims only 2% of the Jewish Agency budget for 'airlifting' Soviet immigrants has been contributed by Christian Zionists. This only includes donations made directly to the Jewish Agency. Margaret Brearley, 'Jerusalem for Christian Zionists' in *Jerusalem, Past and Present in the Purposes of God*, edited by P.W.L. Walker (Croydon, Deo Gloria Trust, 1992), p112; <http://www.christiansforisrael.org>

¹⁹ <http://www.christiansforisrael.org>

²⁰ Patricia Golan, 'On Wings of Faith' *Jerusalem Post*, 20 December 2001.

²¹ Ibid.

Israel, ICEJ as well as BFP assist émigrés with their resettlement costs, providing food, clothing, blankets, kitchen and school supplies as well as medical equipment.²²

Eretz Israel : Sustaining the West Bank Settlements

For religious Zionism, Jewish and Christian, the legitimate borders of Israel are considerably larger than those presently disputed with Syria, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority.

Christian involvement in the realisation of Eretz Israel includes the military justification of these enlarged borders; the political adoption of the settlement programme; and economic support for the settler movement.

Justifying Eretz Israel

David Allen Lewis, President of Christians United for Israel, puts the territorial claims of Israel into the wider context of the Middle East. He observes that, 'The Arabs already have 99.5 per cent of the land ... this cannot be tolerated.'²³ Echoing the experience of the Israelites under Pharaoh, Jan Willem van der Hoeven offers a theological explanation for Israel's victory in 1967 and a justification for its refusal to withdraw from 'biblically Jewish lands.'²⁴

'God wanted to give His people that part of the land which they did not receive in 1948. The result of what became known as the Six Day War was that Judea and Samaria - heartland of biblical Israel - and the ancient city of Jerusalem - King David's capital—were returned to their original owner...God has His own sovereign way to fulfil His Word and promise.'²⁵

²² Wagner, op.cit., p108; Golan, op.cit.

²³ David Allen Lewis, 'Christian Zionist Theses', Christians and Israel, (Jerusalem, International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, 1996), p9.

²⁴ Lindsey, Final, op.cit., p122.

²⁵ Jan Willem van der Hoeven, Babylon or Jerusalem? (Shippensburg, Pasadena, Destiny Image Publishers, 1993), p151.

In response to international calls on Israel to give back the West Bank, Bridges for Peace asks the rhetorical question: 'What is so sacred about the June 4th, 1967 line?' Nothing, they argue since historically this was all part of biblical Israel and 'squarely won in defensive battles in 1967 and 1973.'²⁶ This conviction that the entire West Bank is integral to Israel has led many Christian Zionists to 'adopt' exclusive Jewish settlements to strengthen their claim to the land.

Adopting the Settlements

Since 1967, using various economic and tax incentives as well as appealing to biblical rhetoric, Israel has encouraged over 400,000 Jews to colonize East Jerusalem, The West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights through 190 illegal settlements.²⁷ Several Christian Zionist organisations have given their full support to this judaization of the Occupied Territories. Jews for Jesus, for example, compares Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Territories with the settlement of Texas by the United States. The Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC), founded by Ted Beckett in 1995, works in partnership with Christian Friends of Israel (CFI) and defines a settlement as:

'A piece of land where brave, Jewish pioneers have taken up residence. In most cases it is a barren rocky hilltop set up to establish a Jewish community where none had existed for thousands of years. In some case, such as Shiloh, settlements are established on the original site of an ancient Jewish city. In others such as Hevron and Gush Etzion, a Jewish community

²⁶ Bridges for Peace 'The Golan Heights Déjà vu', Despatch from Jerusalem, September (1999), pp10-11.

²⁷ 'Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories' Foundation for Middle East Peace, March (2002). FMEP list 190 settlements with a total population of 213,672 in the West Bank and Gaza; 170,400 in East Jerusalem; and 17,000 in the Golan Heights, making a total of 401,072 settlers based on 2001 figures.

is established on the site of a community destroyed by Arab armies during or prior to Israel's War of Independence.²⁸

So far, CFOIC claims 39 illegal Israeli settlements have been adopted by 50 churches in the USA, South Africa, Germany, Holland and the Philippines. For example, Ariel has been adopted by Faith Bible Chapel, Arvada, Colorado; Hevron by Greater Harvest, Tallahassee, Florida; Alei Zahav by Calvary Chapel, Nashville; Revava by the United Methodist Church, Green Forest, Arizona; and Psagot by Tarzana Baptist Chapel, Tarzana, California. To strengthen the settlers' claim to the land, CFOIC publish maps on their website showing the few areas of the West Bank given back to the Palestinian Authority. CFOIC lament the 'partition' of the land as 'the reality of the "peace process" for those living in the Land G-d promised the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for ever!'²⁹ Christian Zionists have not only made a clear stand in justifying Israel's illegal settlement of the West Bank. Their 'adoption' programme is also intended to be a means by which financial assistance as well as practical support for the settlers is delivered.

Funding the Settlers

Besides facilitating the emigration of Jews to Israel, several Christian Zionist agencies are active in funding illegal Jewish settlements in the West Bank. During the 1991 ICEJ Feast of Tabernacles celebration, for example, representatives from 12 countries presented cheques to the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitshak Shamir, to help finance the settlements.³⁰ Through their 'Social Assistance Programme' ICEJ also provides financial support for projects in the Jewish settlements, including bullet proof vests to strengthen the resolve of settlers, living among what they describe as '3 million hostile

²⁸ <http://www.cfoic.com>

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Wagner, Anxious, op.cit., p108.

Palestinians.³¹ ICEJ's 'Bulletproof Bus for Efrat' appeal is also raising \$150,000 to purchase an armour plated bus to transport settlers in and out of the West Bank from Efrat settlement.³² Bridges for Peace (BFP) has a similar scheme called 'Operation Ezra' which funds over 50 otherwise unsustainable projects such as the settlement farm, Sde Bar, near Beit Jala and the Herodian.³³ CFOIC call upon Christians to pray for 'The safety of the Jewish settlers and for terrorist incidents to stop (and) the giving away of land to the PLO will be reversed.'³⁴

Integral to this strategy is Jerusalem and the progressive Judaizing, occupation and settlement of Arab East Jerusalem and the Old City. For Zionism there can be no compromise, since controlling Jerusalem has always been a barometer of their existence as a nation.

Jerusalem : Lobbying for International Recognition

At the core of Christian Zionist support for Israel's claim to the Occupied Territories lies the conviction that Jerusalem is, and must remain, the exclusive and undivided Jewish capital. Attempts to reach agreement in the wider Arab-Israeli conflict have so far stalled or stumbled over the final status of Jerusalem. Christian Zionists are strongly opposed to any proposal for joint sovereignty or the creation of a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem.

As early as February 1984, the ICEJ sent a representative, Richard Hellman, to testify before the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in Washington to urge the US to move its

³¹ International Christian Embassy, <http://www.icej.org.il/about.html>; 'Life in the Settlements', Word from Jerusalem, May (2002), p7.

³² International Christian Embassy, 'Bulletproof Bus for Efrat' appeal, Word from Jerusalem, May (2002).

³³ Bridges for Peace, 'New Life on the Farm' Despatch from Jerusalem, January (2000), p5.

³⁴ Ibid.

embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and recognise the city as the capital of Israel.³⁵ Jerry Falwell and the AIPAC lobby also spoke in favour of such a move. Senator Bob Dole later introduced legislation in the American Senate which required the US Embassy to be rebuilt in Jerusalem by 31 May 1999, and authorised \$100 million for 'preliminary' spending.³⁶ In October 1995 he stated, 'Israel's capital is not on the table in the peace process, and moving the United States embassy to Jerusalem does nothing to prejudice the outcome of any future negotiations.'³⁷ Lamenting the failure of the US President to ratify the Senate decision, Dole commented:

'Jerusalem is today as it has been for three millennia the heart and soul of the Jewish people. It is also, and should remain forever, the eternal and undivided capital of the State of Israel ... The time has come ... to move beyond letters, expressions of support, and sense of the Congress resolutions. The time has come to enact legislation that will get the job done.'³⁸

In 1997 the ICEJ also gave support to a full page advert placed in the New York Times entitled, 'Christians Call for a United Jerusalem.' It was signed by 10 evangelical leaders including Pat Robertson, chairman of Christian Broadcasting Network and President of the Christian Coalition; Oral Roberts, founder and chancellor of Oral Roberts University; Jerry Falwell, founder of Moral Majority; Ed McAtee, President of the Religious Roundtable; and David Allen Lewis, President of Christians United for Israel:

'We, the undersigned Christian spiritual leaders, communicating weekly to more than 100 million Christian

³⁵ Donald Wagner, *Anxious*, op.cit., p108.

³⁶ 'Bill to re-locate the United States Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem', <http://www.usdoj.gov/olc/s770.16.htm>

³⁷ Middle East Realities 'Lie of the Week' MiddleEast@aol.com, 01/11/95

³⁸ Donald Neff, 'Congress has been irresponsible on the issue of Jerusalem', Washington Report, January (1998), pp90-91.

Americans, are proud to join together in supporting the continued sovereignty of the State of Israel over the holy city of Jerusalem ... we believe that Jerusalem, or any portion of it, shall not be negotiable in the peace process. Jerusalem must remain undivided as the eternal capital of the Jewish people.³⁹

Readers were invited to 'Join us in our holy mission to ensure that Jerusalem will remain the undivided, eternal capital of Israel.' They claimed, 'The battle for Jerusalem has begun, and it is time for believers in Christ to support our Jewish brethren and the State of Israel. The time for unity with the Jewish people is now.'⁴⁰

In 2002, Falwell controversially linked the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre with Israel's exclusive claim to Jerusalem, calling upon his supporters to petition the US President to 'Keep Jerusalem Free.'⁴¹ Christian Zionists have therefore been resolute in their efforts to get the international community to recognise Jerusalem as the de facto capital of Israel. However, even more critical to a Christian Zionist reading of prophecy is the necessity for the Jewish Temple to be rebuilt.

The Temple : Identifying with Religious Zionism

Dispensational Christian Zionists, are convinced the Jewish Temple must be rebuilt because, based on their futurist eschatology from Daniel, the anti-Christ must desecrate it just prior to the return of Christ. Brickner claims that the preparations for rebuilding the Temple began in 1967 with the capture of the Old City of Jerusalem.⁴² Lindsey is equally sure that, 'right now, as you read this, preparations are being made

³⁹ 'Christians Call for a United Jerusalem' New York Times, 18 April (1997), <http://www.cdn-friends-icej.ca/united.html>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Jerry Falwell Ministries, 'Keep Jerusalem Free Petition,' <http://falwell.com/>

⁴² Brickner, Future, op.cit., p137.

to rebuild the Third Temple.⁴³ Contemporary Christian Zionists are working to achieve this.

Promoting the Temple Mount Movement

Randall Price is the leading dispensational expert on the imminent plans to rebuild the Jewish Temple. In his 735 page *The Coming Last Days Temple*, he provides comprehensive details of all the Jewish organisations involved in attempts to seize the Temple Mount, destroy the Al Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock, rebuild the Jewish Temple and re-institute Temple worship, priesthood and sacrifices. These include the Temple Institute and Temple Mount Faithful.⁴⁴ Gershon Salomon is the controversial figurehead of the movement and founder of The Temple Faithful. Zhava Glaser, of Jews for Jesus, praises Salomon for his courage to talk about 'the most important subject in the Jewish religion.'

Speaking as a guest of the ICEJ, at the Christian Zionist Congress in 1998, Salomon insisted:

'The mission of the present generation is to liberate the Temple Mount and to remove - I repeat, to remove - the defiling abomination there ... the Jewish people will not be stopped at the gates leading to the Temple Mount ... We will fly our Israeli flag over the Temple Mount, which will be minus its Dome of the Rock and its mosques and will have only our Israeli flag and our Temple. This is what our generation must accomplish.'⁴⁵

In a London *Times*, interview Salomon insisted that the Islamic shrine must be destroyed:

'The Israeli Government must do it. We must have a war. There will be many nations against us but God will be our

⁴³ Lindsey, Planet, op.cit., p156; Final, op.cit., p103.

⁴⁴ Rich Robinson, 'Israeli Groups Involved in Third Temple Activities' Jews for Jesus Newsletter 10, (1993), <http://www.jewsforjesus.org>

⁴⁵ Nadav Shragai, 'Dreaming of a Third Temple', Ha'aretz, 17 September (1998), p3, cited in Price, Coming, op.cit., p417.

general. I am sure this is a test, that God is expecting us to move the Dome with no fear from other nations. The Messiah will not come by himself; we should bring Him by fighting.'⁴⁶

Between 1967 and 1990 there have been over 100 armed assaults on the Haram Al-Sharif by Jewish militants, often led by rabbis. Grace Halsell regrets that 'in no instance has any Israeli Prime Minister or the chief Sephardic rabbi or the chief Ashkenazi rabbi criticized these assaults.'⁴⁷

Facilitating the Temple Building Programme

In order to sustain a fully functioning Temple it is also necessary to identify, train and consecrate priests to serve in the Temple. According to the Book of Numbers, the ashes of a pure unblemished red heifer, itself previously offered by a ritually pure priest, must be mixed with water and sprinkled on both them and the Temple furniture. With the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD the ashes used in the ceremony were lost and the Jews of the Diaspora have therefore been ritually unclean ever since.

In 1998, however, Clyde Lott, a Pentecostal Mississippi rancher, formed Canaan Land Restoration of Israel, Inc. for the purpose of raising livestock suitable for Temple sacrifice.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Sam Kiley, 'The righteous will survive and the rest will perish' The Times, 13 December (1999), p39.

⁴⁷ Grace Halsell, 'The Hidden Hand of the Temple Mount Faithful' The Washington Report, January (1991), p8.

⁴⁸ Randall Price incorrectly attributes this story to Time when it actually appeared in Newsweek. He also misspells one of the contributor's names. Price, Coming, op.cit., p375. 'Red Heifers' New York Times, 27 December (1998), cited in Halsell, Forcing, p65.

'Shortly after this Rev. Lott (who is also a cattleman by trade) came to possess a red heifer that met all the biblical qualifications of Numbers chapter 19. Since that historic time in, November 11, 1994 God has miraculously unveiled His divine plan for the restoration of Israel, to the Church. The Holy Ghost has worked during this time to reveal to Apostolic ministers and laymen the need to unify their efforts in order to see this project move forward, both in the Spirit and in the natural. August 11, 1998 Israel is expecting to receive from Canaan Land Restoration, 500 head of registered Red Angus Heifers.' Joe Atkins, 'Biblical mystery of the red heifer affects farmer in Mississippi' The Daily Mississippian, 23 July (1998); Ethan

According to *Newsweek*, in 1997, the first red heifer for 2000 years was born at the Kfar Hassidim kibbutz near Haifa and named 'Melody'.⁴⁹ Unfortunately she eventually grew white hairs on her tail and udder. Undaunted, Chaim Richman, an Orthodox rabbi and Clyde Lott, the Pentecostal cattleman, have teamed up to breed red heifers in the Jordan Valley, in the hope of saving Israel's cattle industry as well as producing a perfect specimen for sacrifice.⁵⁰

The design and construction work, furnishings and utensils, the training of priests and breeding of sacrifices all require funds and in large measure, like the red heifer, these are being provided by Christian Zionists. According to Grace Halsell, Stanley Goldfoot, a former member of the Jewish Stern Gang, raises up to \$100 million a year for the Jerusalem Temple Foundation through American Christian TV and radio stations and evangelical churches.⁵¹

As Lawrence Wright has also observed, 'Jewish longing for the Temple, Christian hopes for the Rapture, and Muslim paranoia about the destruction of the mosques [are being] stirred to an apocalyptic boil.'⁵²

The Future : Opposing Peace and Hastening Armageddon

The US-Israeli Alliance

While Christian Zionists in general are committed to standing with Israel, there is a particularly close relationship between Israel and America. Jerry Falwell offers a simple

Bronner, 'Portent in a Pasture? Appearance of Rare Heifer in Israel Spurs Hopes, Fears', *The Boston Globe*, Sunday, April 6, (1997), pp1, 22.

⁴⁹ Kendall Hamilton, Joseph Contreras & Mark Dennis, 'The Strange Case of Israel's Red Heifer,' *Newsweek*, May 19, (1997).

⁵⁰ Jeremy Shere, 'A Very Holy Cow' *Jerusalem Post*, May 25, (1997).

⁵¹ Halsell, *Prophecy*, op.cit., p106.

⁵² Lawrence Wright, 'Forcing the End', *Frontline*, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/apocalypse/readings/forcing.html>

explanation. God has been kind to America because 'America had been kind to the Jew.'⁵³ Gary Bauer, president of American Values and a republican presidential contender in 2000, put it like this. "Terrorists don't understand why Israel and the United States are joined at the heart."⁵⁴ Mike Evans, founder and President of Lovers of Israel Inc. describes the special relationship between Israel and America:

'Only one nation, Israel, stands between ... terrorist aggression and the complete decline of the United States as a democratic world power ... Surely demonic pressure will endeavour to encourage her to betray Israel ... Israel is the key to America's survival ... As we stand with Israel, I believe we shall see God perform a mighty work in our day. God is going to bless America and Israel as well ... If Israel falls, the United States can no longer remain a democracy.'⁵⁵

For Christian Zionists such as Falwell and Evans, America is seen as the great redeemer, her super-power role in the world predicted in scripture⁵⁶ and providentially ordained.⁵⁷ The two nations of America and Israel are like Siamese twins perceived to be pitted against an evil world dominated by Communism and Islam both antithetical to the Judeo-Christian democratic values of America and Israel.⁵⁸

⁵³ Cited in Halsell, Forcing, op.cit., p100.

⁵⁴ Julia Duin, "Zionists meeting brands 'road map a heresy'" The Washington Times, www.washingtontimes.com/national/20030518-114058-5626r.htm

⁵⁵ Mike Evans, Israel, America's Key to Survival, (Plainfield, New Jersey, Haven Books, 1980), back page, xv.

⁵⁶ Noah Hutchings, U.S. in Prophecy, (Oklahoma City, Hearthstone Publishing, 2000); Arno Froese, Terror in America, Understanding the Tragedy, (West Columbia, Olive Press, 2001); Mark Hitchcock, Is America in Prophecy? (Portland, Oregon, Multnomah, 2002); Hal Lindsey, Where is America in Prophecy? video (Murrieta, California, Hal Lindsey Ministries, 2001).

⁵⁷ Michael Lienesch, Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, University of North Carolina, 1993), p197.

⁵⁸ Simon, op.cit., pp71-72.

Antipathy Toward Arabs

Ramon Bennett illustrates how such prejudices remain common today describing the modern Arab nations as 'barbarous'.⁵⁹ 'The customs of hospitality and generosity have changed little in 4,000 years,' he claims, 'nor have the customs of raiding (thieving, rustling), saving face or savagery.'⁶⁰ Bennett argues that the Arab 'is neither a vicious nor, usually, a calculating liar but a natural one.'⁶¹

Comparisons between Hitler and the Arabs are now frequent in the writings of contemporary Christian Zionists.⁶² Van der Hoeven of the ICEJ is typical. 'Just as there was a definite ideology behind the hatred and atrocities of Hitler and the Nazis, there is one behind the hatred and wars by the Arabs against the Jews and people of Israel.'⁶³

Franklin Graham, President of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, made similar but unguarded remarks in a US newspaper interview in 2000:

'The Arabs will not be happy until every Jew is dead. They hate the State of Israel. They all hate the Jews. God gave the land to the Jews. The Arabs will never accept that.'⁶⁴

Hatred of Arabs is personified in attitudes toward Yasser Arafat. In February 1999, for example, Arafat was invited to attend the 47th annual Congress-sponsored National Prayer Breakfast in Washington. The breakfast is normally attended each year by more than 3,000 political and religious leaders and his invitation generated considerable controversy. The Traditional Values Coalition, founded by Pat Robertson and representing 40,000 churches, urged congressmen to boycott

⁵⁹ Bennett, op.cit., p23.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p21.

⁶¹ Ibid., p23; John Laffin, *The Arab Mind*, (London, Cassell, 1975), p70.

⁶² Jan Willem van der Hoeven, *Babylon or Jerusalem?*, (Shippensburg, Pasadena, Destiny Image Publishers, 1993), pp132-133; Bennett, Philistine, op.cit., p134.

⁶³ van der Hoeven, Ibid., pp132-133.

⁶⁴ Charlotte Observer, 16th October (2000).

the breakfast.⁶⁵ The ICEJ said that attending the breakfast with Arafat would be 'like praying with Satan himself.'⁶⁶ Despite considerable pressure from pro-Israeli groups the invitation was not withdrawn. It was left to the White House press secretary, Joe Lockhart, to defend the invitation. He lamented, 'it's done every year in the spirit of reconciliation. And it's unfortunate that there are some who don't fully understand the spirit of reconciliation and inclusion.'⁶⁷

Justifying the Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine

Frequently, defending Israeli security leads Christian Zionists to deny Palestinians the same basic human rights as Israelis. Some are even reluctant to acknowledge the existence of Palestinians as a distinct people. Dave Hunt is typical of those who equate Palestinians with the ancient Philistines, and use the term Palestinian in an entirely pejorative sense.

Central to the Middle East conflict today is the issue of the so-called Palestinian people... Palestinians? There never was a Palestinian people, nation, language, culture, or religion. The claim of descent from a Palestinian people who lived for thousands of years in a land called Palestine is a hoax!⁶⁸

Based on Hunt's logic presumably the same arguments could be used against the right to self-determination of citizens of the United States or indeed of several dozen nations founded in the 20th Century. The history of the persecution of the Jews illustrates how easily the denigration of an 'inferior' people or a denial of their existence as a distinct people can lead to the rationalizing of their eradication.

In May 2002, Dick Armey, the Republican Senate House Majority leader, made ground breaking news by justifying the

⁶⁵ Christian Daily News, 4 February, (1999) <http://www.christiannews.org/archives/1999/20499/news/full.html>

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Dave Hunt, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem.' TBC, September 2000.

ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories. In an interview with Chris Matthews on CNBC on May 1st 2002, Armey stated that:

'Most of the people who now populate Israel were transported from all over the world to that land and they made it their home. The Palestinians can do the same and we are perfectly content to work with the Palestinians in doing that. We are not willing to sacrifice Israel for the notion of a Palestinian homeland ... I'm content to have Israel grab the entire West Bank ... There are many Arab nations that have many hundreds of thousands of acres of land, soil, and property and opportunity to create a Palestinian State.'⁶⁹

Matthews gave Armey several opportunities to clarify that he was not advocating the ethnic cleansing of all Palestinians from the West Bank, but Armey was unrepentant. When asked, 'Have you ever told George Bush, the President from your home State of Texas, that you think the Palestinians should get up and go and leave Palestine and that's the solution?', Armey replied,

'I'm probably telling him that right now ... I am content to have Israel occupy that land that it now occupies and to have those people who have been aggressors against Israel retired to some other arena.'⁷⁰

Armey's view that Palestinians should be 'retired' is only the latest in a series of calls in the mainstream US and UK

⁶⁹ Dick Armey, 'Hardball with Chris Matthews', CNBC, 1st May (2002), cited in 'Republican Party Leader calls for Ethnic Cleansing of Palestinians on Prime Time Talk Show' The Electronic Intifada, <http://electronicintifada.net/actionitems/020502dickarmey.html>

See also 'Rep. Dick Armey calls for Ethnic Cleansing of Palestinians' Counterpunch edited by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair, <http://www.counterpunch.org/armey0502.html>. Dick Armey and his family are members of Lewisville Bible Church, Lewisville, Texas.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

media for the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories.⁷¹

While such racist attitudes among Christian Zionists toward Arabs are common, as are the stereotypes that Palestinians are terrorists, it is more especially Muslims who are demonised.

Demonising Islam

Anti-Arab and Islamaphobic sentiments have become even more widely tolerated since 11th September 2001. Such views have recently been described as a form of new 'McCarthyism'.⁷² In February 2002, for example, Pat Robertson caused considerable controversy when he too described Islam as a violent religion bent on world domination. He also claimed American Muslims were forming terrorist cells in order to destroy the country. Robertson made the allegations on his Christian Broadcasting Network '700 Club.' After clips showing Muslims in America, the announcer, Lee Webb asked Robertson, 'As for the Muslim immigrants Pat, it makes you wonder, if they have such contempt for our foreign policy why they'd even want to live here?' Robertson replied:

'Well, as missionaries possibly to spread the doctrine of Islam ... I have taken issue with our esteemed President in regard to his stand in saying Islam is a peaceful religion. It's just not. And the Koran makes it very clear, if you see an infidel, you are to kill him ... the fact is our immigration policies are now so skewed to the Middle East and away from

⁷¹ Charles Krauthammer, 'Mideast Violence: The Only Way Out', Washington Post, 15 May (2001); Emmanuel A. Winston writing in USA Today called for the 'resettling the Palestinians in Jordan' USA Today, 22 February (2002); John Derbyshire, 'Why don't I care about the Palestinians?', National Review, 9 May (2002); Clarence Wagner, 'Apples for Apples, Osama Bin Laden and Yasser Arafat', Dispatch from Jerusalem, May (2002), p1, 6, 17.

⁷² A term coined by William Safire, a former Nixon speechwriter and conservative Republican who thought George Bush Snr. was insufficiently pro-Israel. Cited in Lind, op.cit.

Europe that we have introduced these people into our midst and undoubtedly there are terrorist cells all over them.⁷³

At the 2002 Southern Baptist Convention⁷⁴ held in Florida, the former national convention leader, the Rev. Jerry Vines, pastor of the 25,000 member First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, brought applause from several thousand participants of the pastors' conference when he described Muhammad as 'a demon-possessed paedophile'⁷⁵

Such antipathy toward Arabs, denigration of Palestinians and hatred of Islam invariably leads Christian Zionists to also oppose any peaceful resolution of the Arab Israeli conflict which might require or coerce Israel to relinquish territory or compromise its security.

Opposing the Peace Process

While Christian Zionists endorse Israel's unilateral claim to the Occupied Territories, they oppose similar Palestinian aspirations to self-determination since they believe the two are intrinsically incompatible.

Christian Zionists have been most vociferous in opposing the Road Map to Peace initiative of the US government, UN, European Community and Russia. Hal Lindsey, for example lamented "I am heartbroken over the latest stage of the "road map to peace", describing it instead as a "Odyssey to Holocaust"⁷⁶ He went on to rebuke the US president. "I was

⁷³ Alan Cooperman, 'Robertson Calls Islam a Religion of Violence, Mayhem.' Washington Post. 22 February (2002), pAO2.

⁷⁴ The Southern Baptist Convention is a coalition of 42,000 churches with 16 million members. Since the 1980s it has become increasingly fundamentalist. See <http://www.sbcannualmeeting.org/sbc02/>

⁷⁵ Richard Vara, 'Texas secession rumor, attacks on Islam mark Baptist meeting', Houston Chronicle, 10 June (2002); Alan Cooperman, 'Anti-Muslim Remarks Stir Tempest', Washington Post 19 June (2002). According to Cooperman, the newly elected president of the Southern Baptists, the Rev. Jack Graham defended Vine's speech as 'accurate'.

⁷⁶ Hal Lindsey, 'If the blind lead the blind.' WorldNetDaily.com 5 June 2003.

sickened to watch a well-meaning Christian American president talk incessantly about his vision for a Palestinian state and Jewish state living side by side in peace.”⁷⁷

At the Interfaith Zionist Leadership Summit, held in Washington May 2003, Jewish and Christian Zionist leaders met to consider how to turn the “road map” into a road-block. Gary Bauer, called the president’s initiative “a Satanic roadmap”.⁷⁸ Peace talks are not only a waste of time, they demonstrate a rebellious defiance toward God’s plans. Such infallible certitudes lead some Christian Zionists to anathematise those who do not share their presuppositions.

Forcing God’s Hand

Christian Zionists often attempt to silence critics with the threat of divine retribution. For example, Brickner warns evangelicals who do not share a Zionist perspective that they are fighting against God.

‘Peril awaits those who presume to say that God is finished with His chosen people ... Just as God judged the nation of Egypt for her ill treatment of His people, so will He judge nations today. Evangelicals who would understand the Middle East must pay close attention to the teaching of Scripture, and take note of the cosmic forces that now do battle in the heavens but will soon do battle on earth. They must choose carefully which side to uphold.’⁷⁹

Hal Lindsey affirmed the same view when he said this week,

“My great fear is that President Bush is ignorantly leading the United States into God’s judgment. For God warns that He

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Duin, op.cit.

⁷⁹ Brickner, Don’t, op.cit.

will judge all nations that have contributed to keeping Israel from living in the land He sovereignly gave them.”⁸⁰

Christians are left in no doubt which side to ‘uphold.’ On the 1st January 2002 edition of the CBN 700 Club, Pat Robertson warned that if the US

‘wants to interfere with Bible prophecy and wants to move in and wrest East Jerusalem away from the Jews and give it to Yasser Arafat … heaven help this nation of ours … If the United States takes East Jerusalem back and makes it the capital of the Palestinian State, then we are asking for the wrath of God.’⁸¹

Robertson even suggests that Rabin’s assassination was an act of God, a judgement for his betrayal of his own people: ‘This is God’s land and God has strong words about someone who parts and divides His land. The rabbis put a curse on Yitzhak Rabin when he began cutting up the land.’⁸²

Such pronouncements coming from highly influential Christian leaders appear little different from those of Muslim fundamentalists who call for a ‘holy war’ against the West. Dave MacPherson has noted that the danger of such Armageddon theology is not so much that it is fatalistic, but that it is so contagious.⁸³ Karen Armstrong is not alone in tracing within Western Christian Zionism evidence of the legacy of the Crusades. Such fundamentalists have, she claims, ‘returned to a classical and extreme religious crusading.’⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Lindsey “Blind” op.cit.

⁸¹ Howard Mortman, ‘Don’t ignore Pat Robertson’, *The Frontline*, 7 January (2002).

<http://www.hotlinescoop.com/web/content/columns/extrememortman/020107.htm>

⁸² Pat Robertson, ‘Pat answers your questions on Israel,’ 700 Club, Christian Broadcasting Network, <http://cbn.org/700club>

⁸³ Dave MacPherson, cited in Halsell, *Forcing*, op.cit., p10.

⁸⁴ Karen Armstrong, *Holy War, The Crusades and Their Impact on Today’s World*, (London, Macmillan, 1988), p377.

Conclusions

We have seen how Christian Zionism as a movement has profound and lasting political consequences. Christian Zionists have shown varying degrees of enthusiasm for implementing six basic theological convictions that arise from their literal and futurist reading of the Bible:

The belief that the Jews remain God's chosen people leads Christian Zionists to a justification for Israel's military occupation of Palestine.

As God's chosen people, the final restoration of the Jews to Israel is therefore actively encouraged and facilitated through partnerships between Christian organisations and the Jewish Agency.

Eretz Israel, as delineated in scripture, belongs exclusively to the Jewish people, therefore the land must be annexed and the settlements adopted and strengthened.

Jerusalem is regarded as the eternal and exclusive capital of the Jews, and cannot be shared with the Palestinians. Therefore, strategically, Western governments are placed under pressure by Christian Zionists to relocate their embassies to Jerusalem and thereby recognise the fact.

The Third Temple has yet to be built, the priesthood consecrated and sacrifices reinstated. As dispensational Christian Zionists, in particular, believe this is prophesied, they offer varying degrees of support to the Jewish Temple Mount organisations committed to achieving it.

Since Christian Zionists are convinced there will be an apocalyptic war between good and evil in the near future, there is no prospect for lasting peace between Jews and Arabs. Indeed, to advocate Israel compromise with Islam or coexist with Palestinians is to identify with those destined to oppose God and Israel in the imminent battle of Armageddon.

Clearly, not all Christian Zionists embrace each of these six tenets, or with the same degree of conviction or involvement. Nevertheless, as has been argued, the overall consequences of such uncritical support for the State of Israel, especially among American Evangelicals, is inherently and pathologically destructive, not least to the very Jewish people they claim to love.

Like Isaac's children Jacob and Esau, it is time to stop fighting over the birthright and start sharing the blessings.⁸⁵

Garth Hewitt is a friend who has written many songs about the plight of the Christian community in Israel and Palestine. One of them, based on some verses from the Jewish Talmud, is called 'Ten measures of beauty God gave to the world'. I would like to close by using it as a prayer.

May the justice of God fall down like fire
and bring a home for the Palestinian.
May the mercy of God pour down like rain
and protect the Jewish people.
And may the beautiful eyes of a Holy God
who weeps for His children
Bring the healing hope for His wounded ones
For the Jew and the Palestinian.⁸⁶

May this small booklet contribute to the cause of peace through justice for both Jew and Palestinians.

⁸⁵Yehezkel Landau. An illustration given at St George's, Jerusalem, December 1998.

⁸⁶ Garth Hewitt, "Ten measures of beauty", Words & Music used by permission : Garth Hewitt © Chain of Love music /Admin by Daybreak music Ltd, PO Box 2848, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7XP.

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Dr. Sizer is chairman of the International Bible Society UK, well known for sponsoring the translation of the New International Version of the Bible (NIV) and half of all Wycliffe Bible translations.

Dr. Sizer is vice-chairman of Highway Projects, a Christian charity sending teams of young people to serve the indigenous Church in the Holy Land. He is a member of Anglican Mainstream, a Trustee of the Amos Trust and on the executive committee the Friends of Sabeel UK, which supports the Sabeel Ecumenical Theology Centre in Jerusalem. He is also on the UK Board of Reference for the Mar Elias Educational Institutions, Ibillin in Galilee founded by Elias Chacour. He is chairman of governors at St. Ann's Heath School and a governor of Christ Church School.