



Christian Zionism

by **Paul Kivel**

I give you the end of a golden string:
Only wind it into a ball,
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate,
Built in Jerusalem's wall.¹

There are many forces that influence U.S. foreign policy regarding Israel/Palestine. Clearly influential in shaping U.S. policy are the U.S. military, the powerful U.S. arms industry, multinational oil companies, the U.S. government's attempt to control access to regional oil resources, the U.S. government's desire for a proxy military force that can carry out U.S. foreign policy goals in the area, and high levels of anti-Muslim and anti-Arab racism among U.S. government officials and advisors. Other factors, as well, play significant but less dominant roles in the shaping of U.S. policy.

There has been much discussion in the media about the impact of the Jewish pro-Israel, virulently anti-Palestinian lobby on U.S. policy in West Asia (the Middle East)^{2,3}. Although it is a significant influence, there is no evidence to demonstrate that the Jewish pro-Israel lobby overrides the lobbying influences mentioned above. Nor is there convincing evidence that this Jewish lobby is strong enough to bend U.S. policy in directions counter to U.S. strategic interests.

Although generally acknowledged to be influential, the Jewish lobby's power is likely to be seriously overestimated, especially when compared to another powerful pro-Israel lobby—that of Christian Zionists. It is an indication of the invisibility of Christian dominance and the continuing existence of anti-Semitism that media attention has been focused primarily on the Jewish Lobby and much less on the other major factors, including the Christian

¹ Blake, William. "Jerusalem" 1804.

² "Middle East" is a Europe centered term which does not accurately describe the location of the area in terms of world geography.

³ There is also another set of Jewish pro-Israel groups which are critical of Israel's occupation of Palestine, and its military aggression and human rights abuses. Groups such as Jewish Voice for Peace, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom and Americans for Peace Now are part of this alternative pro-Israel lobby.

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Zionists, that lead to U.S. aggression in West Asia and uncritical support for Israeli policies.

Christian Zionism—the movement of Christians who believe that God gave the Jews the divine right to rule over Israel proper, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and Jerusalem including the Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount)--is actually much more than a lobby. It is a widespread, Biblically-based network of individual and institutional support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine that has taken various forms over recent centuries.

The Christian Zionist movement has a significant impact on U.S. foreign policy in Palestine/Israel. This movement is powerful, extensive, well-organized and effective. At times it works with and supports the Jewish pro-Israel lobby but it is completely independent and has its own religious and political agenda.

Christian Zionist organizations and leadership both represent and influence the approximately 70 million evangelicals in the U.S., most of whom are passionately committed to supporting the state of Israel no matter what its policies and have great antipathy towards Muslims and Arabs in general, and Palestinians in particular. Besides lobbying for pro-Israeli expansionist policies, Christian Zionists also provide a tremendous amount of direct financial support to Israel, co-ordinate a large pro-Israel, anti-Palestinian constituency, and direct aid to illegal settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem. In fact, as the rest of this article documents, the history of the creation of the state of Israel was largely determined by ruling class Christian Zionists in Britain and, more recently, in the U.S.

The powerful influence of Christian Zionism continues today. As U.S. foreign policy specialist Walter Russell Mead has written, "...widespread gentile support for Israel is one of the most potent political forces in U.S. foreign policy." He goes on to say that "The American public has few foreign policy preferences that are this marked, this deep, this enduring -- and this much at odds with public opinion in other countries."⁴ A July 2006 poll by the Pew Forum of Religion and Public Life found that 42 percent of all people in the U.S. believe "Israel was given to the Jewish people

⁴ Mead, Walter Russell, "The New Israel and the Old: Why Gentile Americans Back the Jewish State" *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2008. Available at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64446/walter-russell-mead/the-new-israel-and-the-old>.



by God” and that 35 percent believe that Israel is “part of the fulfillment of biblical prophecy about the Second Coming of Jesus.” A slightly later poll by Zogby International found that 31 percent of people in the U.S. believe or strongly believe that Israel must have all the “promised land,” including Jerusalem, to prepare for the Second Coming.⁵ Most of these people support Jewish settlement in the West Bank, oppose an independent Palestinian state, and many are active with their donations and their votes to promote their views. We have to look elsewhere than the pro-Israel Jewish lobby or general U.S. foreign policy objectives to explain this large-scale support for Israeli policy towards Palestine.

The impact of Christian Zionism is not only far-reaching, but of long standing. The history of Christian Zionism predates Jewish Zionism by nearly three centuries and has had many significant supporters. For example, second president of the United States, John Adams, after leaving office said, “I really wish the Jews again in Judea an independent nation.” He went on in the next sentence to explain his reasoning “I believe [that] . . . once restored to an independent government & no longer persecuted they [the Jews] would soon wear away some of the asperities and peculiarities of their character & possibly in time become liberal Unitarian Christians for your Jehovah is our Jehovah & your God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob is our God.”⁶

Dominant Christianity in the U.S. has always carried a strong belief that, although Christians superseded Jews as the chosen people, the Jews remained chosen by god to reside in their original homeland. The Christians that settled in what became the United States believed themselves to be a new chosen people arriving, with god’s providence, to a new promised land. But they never gave up the belief that Jerusalem was also a promised land and was essential to god’s plan and part of the Christian covenant with god. At least since the Crusades, Christendom has believed that the Holy Land belonged not to the Palestinians who lived there, and not even to the Jews who would “need” to return, but to the Christians who would participate in the final coming. The first Crusades were fought explicitly to create a European Christian protectorate (colony) in Palestine.

⁵ Both polls are cited in Clark, *Allies in Armageddon* p 5.

⁶ “*John Adams Embraces A Jewish Homeland*” *American Jewish Historical Society* available at <http://www.ajhs.org/publications/chapters/chapter.cfm?documentID=221>. Viewed on April 28, 2009.



In more recent centuries it has been believed that support for the gathering of Jews to the Holy Land was a necessary strategy in preparation for the apocalypse and the final reclamation of the land for the Christian god. From their interpretations of the New Testament Book of Revelations, many Christians believed that after the Jews returned to Jerusalem the Jews would both accept Jesus as their savior and rebuild the Temple, which would be signs of the end times and would usher in the Second Coming of Christ. According to Pastor John Hubers with the Institute for the Study of Christian Zionism⁷, today Christian Zionism is characterized by a handful of core beliefs including,

1. God's covenant with Israel is eternal, unchanging and unconditional.
2. According to the Bible, Christians are obligated to support Israel or harm will come to them and to the United States. Many Christian Zionists cite Genesis 12:3 as proof of this mandate: "I will bless those who bless you and him who curses you I will curse."
3. The prophetic books of the Bible such as Daniel and Revelations refer to current times, not Biblical ones.
4. The modern state of Israel is a catalyst for the final prophetic countdown to the end of the world.⁸

A substantial number of Christians support Israel as a vehicle for accelerating the end-time prophecies that are so emphasized by fundamentalist Christianity. But there are also many Christians who do not believe in End Time scenarios who uncritically support Israel because of the other Biblical mandates mentioned above. According to Pastor Hubers, "It would not be an exaggeration to say that the majority of American Christians who give uncritical support to Israel today have been influenced in one way or another by the tenets of Christian Zionism whether they buy the package or not."⁹

A more liberal or humanitarian branch of Christian Zionism believes that Jews have been oppressed by Christians for a long time and that Christians have a god-given mandate—a debt and

⁷ See their Challenging Christian Zionism website at <http://www.christianzionism.org/>.

⁸ A 2004 Newsweek poll found that 55 percent of people in the U.S. believed in the Rapture, a process in which righteous Christians will be saved before the destruction of the world. Cited in Clark, p 151.

⁹ Hubers, John. "Christian Zionism: A Historical Analysis and Critique" available at <http://images.rca.org/docs/synod/ChristianZionism.pdf>. Viewed on March 24, 2009.

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obligation--to protect Jews from further attack and to atone for Christian maltreatment by uncritically supporting a Jewish homeland.

Historically, the belief by some Christians that Jews must be gathered to the “Holy Land” dates back to 1585 when Rev. Thomas Brightman advocated Jewish restoration in Palestine. One of his students wrote a treatise in 1621 which popularized this idea.¹⁰ By the 17th century the conversion of the Jews was a major Christian concern, with many theologians predicting that this conversion and subsequent restoration was imminent.¹¹ In addition to Blake in the quote introducing this section, restoration of the Jews to Palestine was promoted by Napoleon Bonaparte, John Locke, Sir Isaac Newton, Lord Byron, Walter Scott, William Wordsworth, Herman Melville, Samuel Coleridge, John Milton, George Elliot, Robert Browning, and many others.

In 1811, Rev. Lewis Way generously funded the recently established London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews.¹² During this period it was believed that Jews had to be converted to Christianity before they returned to Israel, a belief that was later overtaken by the belief that getting them to Palestine was the more important goal and conversion, for those Jews who saw the light, could occur afterwards. Perhaps the most important Christian Zionist during the 19th century was Irish pastor John Darby (1800-1882), a missionary for the idea of Jewish restoration for over 60 years who traveled extensively preaching this cause. His fervor about conversion and restoration of the Jews and the alignment of this policy with British imperial interests gathered many influential supporters, including the extremely well connected Lord Ashley, a very prominent British politician and Christian Zionist. Lord Ashley was the person who popularized the phrase, “A nation without a country for a country without a nation,”¹³ a phrase that was never widely used by Jewish Zionists

¹⁰ *The World's Great Restauration or Calling of the Jews and with them of all Nations and Kingdoms of the Earth to the Faith of Christ*. Pieterse, Jan P. Nederveen. “The History of a Metaphor: Christian Zionism and the Politics of Apocalypse” in *Christianity and Hegemony: Religion and Politics on the Frontiers of Social Change*. Jan Dederveen Pieterse, ed. New York: Berg Publishers, 1992. p 199.

¹¹ Popkin, R.H. “Some Aspects of Jewish-Christian Theological interchanges in Holland and England, 1640-1700” quoted in Pieterse (see footnote 5 above, p 202.

¹² Clark, p 51.

¹³ The phrase originally appeared in clergyman Rev. David Keith's book

As "a people without a country; even as their own land, as subsequently to be shown, is in a great measure a country without a people". *The Land of Israel According to the Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob* (Edinburgh: William Whyte and Co., 1843), p. 43. In the mid-20th century Jewish Zionists transposed this to “A land of



until the mid-twentieth century campaign to sell the world on the concept of a Jewish homeland.¹⁴

The beginnings of a Jewish Zionist movement came together in the mid-nineteenth century fueled by rising nationalism and anti-Semitism throughout Europe. This Jewish movement was strongly supported by Christian Zionists who had three major goals. They wanted to rid England of Jews (anti-Semitism), they wanted to establish a British trade outpost in the Middle East in preparation for future colonization in the area and because they believed that Muslims and Arabs were incapable to governing themselves. (British imperialism, capitalism, Islamophobia, and Anti-Arab racism) and they wanted the Jews to be restored to Palestine so that Biblical prophesy could be fulfilled (Christian Zionism). There was also humanitarian concern on the part of a small number of Christian Zionists, such as well-known author George Eliot, for the plight of the Jews in Russia during the period of pogroms.¹⁵ By supporting “Restoration” as it was called, prominent Britons could be humanitarians on behalf of the Jews while not having to accept them as residents of Britain or its colonies--anti-Semitism under the guise of Christian charity and self-interest.¹⁶

Christian hegemony¹⁷ has always worked to further extend, and then to justify, the imperial ambitions of Christian ruling elites by pitting Arabs and Jews against each other. The British had designs on the declining Ottoman Empire and were in competition with the French for influence in the area. Palestine was a political division of the Ottoman Empire and was seen as a prime area for extending British influence. Historically, Arabs and small numbers of Jews had lived together for long periods of time in generally amicable relationship in Palestine. Christian Zionism created the impression that Palestine could only be ruled by one or another of the two groups and that the Jews had the prior moral claim on the land, even though there were only a few thousand Jews settled in the area.

no people for a people with no land.” See Pieterse, “The History of a Metaphor: Christian Zionism and the Politics of Apocalypse” in *Christianity and Hegemony* for a full historical account of Christian Zionism, pps 191-232.

¹⁴ In the mid-20th century Jewish Zionists transposed this to “A land of no people for a people with no land.” See Pieterse, “The History of a Metaphor: Christian Zionism and the Politics of Apocalypse” in *Christianity and Hegemony* for a full historical account of Christian Zionism, pps 191-232.

¹⁵ Elliot’s novel *Daniel Deronda* is a thinly veiled plea for a Jewish homeland.

¹⁶ Similar sentiments were common among Christian Zionists (and some German Jews) who were concerned about the large number of unwelcome Eastern European Jews into the U.S. in the mid-nineteenth century.

¹⁷ [Christian hegemony refers to the dominant western forms of Christianity that have been aligned with ruling classes in the west since Roman Times.](#)



In the late nineteenth century, Christian Zionists such as William Hechler¹⁸ introduced Theodore Herzl, head of the emerging Jewish Zionist movement, to the Turkish Sultan (who controlled Palestine), to the German Kaiser, and to major British politicians including Benjamin Disraeli and Lord Balfour. The Jewish Zionist movement did not have the clout and connections to swing significant support for a Jewish homeland. But with Christian Zionist support in gaining access to the corridors of British imperial power and Christian Zionists in top government positions, the idea of a Jewish homeland gained tremendous credibility because it also served key British political goals in the Middle East.

After a hundred years of lobbying by Christian Zionists, and more recent work by Jewish Zionists, in 1917 anti-Semitic Christian Zionist Lord Balfour was able to achieve a British Declaration to support the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.¹⁹ This Balfour Declaration also guaranteed protection of the civil and religious rights of the Palestinians. In 1939 the British government went further and, while still supporting a Jewish homeland, also assured the Palestinians that Jewish migration would be limited and committed itself to the establishment of a Palestinian state within the next decade.²⁰

Christian Zionism gathered momentum in the United States when a disciple of Rev. John Darby, William Blackstone, after becoming an apocalyptic preacher, decided to make the gathering of Jews in Palestine in preparation for the second coming a priority of U.S. foreign policy. In 1891 he delivered a petition to President Harrison, signed by over four hundred prominent U.S. Christian politicians and business leaders urging a focus on a Jewish homeland²¹. This was before Herzl composed *The Jewish State* (1896) and before the first Jewish Zionist Congress (1897). Blackstone was recognized as a “Father of Zionism” at a major

¹⁸ For more on Hechler see Clark, pps 98-108.

¹⁹ All this despite the fact that at the eve of World War I only about one in a hundred Jews in the world had signaled their active support for Zionism. Fromkin, David. *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, London: Phoenix Press, 2000, p 294.

²⁰ Meshkinpour, Hooshang. *Faith, Fortitude and Fear: A Rational Approach to the Jewish History*. North Charleston, SC: BookSurge, 2005, p 279.

²¹ The overwhelmingly Christian signers of this document included William McKinley, John D. Rockefeller, J.P. Morgan, Cyrus McCormick, the chief justice of the Supreme Court, mayors of major cities, other important businessmen, and many heads of major universities and seminaries.



Jewish conference in 1918. Like many prominent Christian Zionists before him, he ardently believed that when the Jews did gather "...in the land of Israel [they] were destined to suffer and die during the reign of the Antichrist and to burn in hell for the rest of eternity."²²

The United States, lobbied by both Jewish and Christian Zionists and in conjunction with its own imperial interests and anti-Arab and anti-Islamic biases, eventually came to replace Britain as the main supporter of Israel in the Middle East. In 1948, President Truman, although not a believer in the end times scenario, drew on his Christian beliefs, belief in the manifest destiny of the U.S. to lead the countries of the world to freedom, and his reading of the Bible in deciding to immediately recognize the State of Israel minutes after its independence was declared. At another level, Truman, believing the U.S. was in an international conflict with the evil and godless Soviet Union, wanted to beat them to the punch with this foreign policy coup because of the significance of Israel to the Christian "free" world.

For many Christians in the United States at that time, U.S. support for Israel was not just for the Jews. The special role of the United States in the restoration of the Jews fulfilled their expectations about the unfolding of history and confirmed their beliefs about the United States' unique role and mission—its manifest destiny to fulfill the divine plan. In other words, many Christians believe that the continued existence of the Jewish people and their promised return to Palestine is proof "for the existence of god and for his power in history." It also confirms the truth of the Bible and of Biblical prophesy.²³

Even today, for many Christian Zionists the day that Israeli independence was declared, May 15, 1948, is considered the single most important date in the twentieth century because it was a sign of god's plan being fulfilled. Israel is sometimes referred to as "God's timepiece" by major Christian Zionists like Hal Lindsey.

But despite Truman's support and widespread popular enthusiasm for this newly created state, general U.S. foreign policy did not

²² Information on Blackstone and quote are from Kirsch, Jonathan. *A History of the End of the World*. New York: HarperOne, 2006. pps 198-9.

²³ Mead, Walter Russell, "God's Country?" *Foreign Affairs*, September/October, 2006 Volume 85, Number 5. Available at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/61914/walter-russell-mead/gods-country>.



place much emphasis on support for Israel until the 1967 war which forced U.S. policy makers to reevaluate Israel's usefulness as an ally to the empire. Meanwhile, in the 1950s and '60s Christian Zionist efforts to focus attention on support for Israel began to pick up momentum. In 1970 the publication of Hal Lindsey's book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which has since sold over 30 million copies in 54 languages, launched the rise and consolidation of the current generation of Christian Zionism.

Current U.S.-based Christian Zionist efforts to support the state of Israel are just a new chapter in an old tradition of apocalyptic Christianity which is an influential subset of Christian hegemony²⁴. Not only does it promote an unconditional support for Israeli policies and expansion, but it also promotes a long-standing dominant western Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism that fuels further violence in the Middle East and anti-Arab and anti-Muslim violence in the U.S. In the rhetoric of Christian Zionists, Palestinians have *no* claim to the land, have *no* legitimate grievances, and should simply be driven from the area and dispersed to other Arab countries. Deeply reminiscent of U.S. genocidal policies towards Native Americans,²⁵ the level of racism in Christian Zionist policy promotes an uncompromising, expansionist, no-peace-negotiation stance on the part of Israel and the U.S. towards the Palestinians continues to be a major obstacle to any progress in ending the violence and creating a lasting and just solution to the crisis in this area of the world.

Most of the powerful Christian conservatives in the U.S. are and have been Zionist, including Tim LaHaye, Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell²⁶, Benny Hinn, Ralph Reed, Billy Graham, and Gary Bauer. Their over 200 advocacy groups include the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem²⁷, Christian Friends of Israeli

²⁴ The immensely popular Left Behind books, videos, and other paraphernalia (over 60 million books sold so far) are just one part of a vast effort to promote Christian Zionism, the gathering of the Jews in Israel, and the extension of Israel to include all of Palestine.

²⁵ The description of the Jewish extermination of the Canaanites in the Bible was used to justify the extermination of Native Americans in the U.S. As President Theodore Roosevelt wrote, "What were the abominations because of which the Canaanites were destroyed before Joshua, when compared with the abominations of the red savages whose lands they, another chosen people, should in their turn inherit?" Mead, Walter Russell, "The New Israel and the Old: Why Gentile Americans Back the Jewish State" *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2008. Available at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64446/walter-russell-mead/the-new-israel-and-the-old>.

²⁶ Falwell said in 1981: "To stand against Israel is to stand against God."

²⁷ The ICEJ was founded in 1980 as an international, non-denominational symbol of Christian Zionist support for Israel's incorporation of all of Jerusalem when it declared the city its capital but received no international recognition of its land grab.



Communities, Christian Coalition, Southern Baptist Convention, Bridges for Peace, Jerusalem Friendship Fund, Jerusalem Prayer Team, Stand with Israel²⁸, Christian Broadcasting Network²⁹, International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, Family Research Council, Council for National Policy, and Christians for Israel/USA.³⁰ The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews alone, with a donor base of 500,000, raised around \$250 million for Israel between 1995 and 2005.³¹ This money goes to a wide variety of projects including bringing 250,000 Russian and Ethiopian Jews to Israel. Christian Friends of Israeli Communities works with U.S. churches to “adopt” Jewish settlements in the West Bank.³² They now fund programs in over a third of the Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories.³³ Many of these groups run tours of the “Holy Land,” bringing hundreds of thousands of tourists to Israel.

These Christian groups with a Christian Zionist agenda—all of them tax-exempt and therefore government subsidized non-profit organizations—raise and spend millions of dollars lobbying in Washington on behalf of Israel and its occupation³⁴. They also intervene in the foreign policy debate on the Palestine-Israel issue. For example, after the Al-Aqsa Intifada began in 2000, Christian Zionist groups sent thousands of visitors to Israel on Solidarity Missions.

The “Armageddon” lobby, as it is sometimes referred to, is as militant as the Jewish pro-Israel lobby, urging the Israeli and U.S. governments to support the expansion of Israel to its Biblical boundaries and for the dispersion of Palestinians to other Arab

²⁸ Stand for Israel, a collaborative creation of Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein and Ralph Reed, former head of the Christian coalition, conducts an annual U.S. wide day of prayer for Israel which connects with 100,000 churches. Clark p 233.

²⁹ The Christian Broadcasting Network controls nearly 90% of religious radio and television in the U.S. in dominated by Christian Zionists. “Disturbing the Peace: Christian Zionism Shapes U.S. Policy” by J. Daryl Byler in Peace Office Newsletter, Mennonite Central Committee July-September 2005, Vol. 35 #3 p 12. The CBN broadcasts in 180 countries in 71 languages. (Clark, p 158.

³⁰ Salaita, Steven. *Anti-Arab Racism in the USA: Where it Comes from and What it Means for Politics Today*. London: Pluto Press, 2006. p 170.

³¹ Bill Broadway, “The Evangelical-Israeli Connection,” *Washington Post*, 27 March 2004 Sec. B. (Quoted in Salaita p 181). See also Zev Chafets, “The Rabbi Who Loved Evangelicals (and Vice Versa)”, *New York Times*, July 24, 2005.

³² Cited in Kirsch. *A History of the End of the World* p 237.

³³ Bill Broadway, “The Evangelical-Israeli Connection,” *Washington Post*, 27 March 2004 Sec. B. (Quoted in Salaita p 181).

³⁴ For example, in 1978 Christian Zionists, supporting the efforts of Israel and the U.S. Jewish pro-Israel lobby, got Congress to withdraw the sale of F-15s and other military equipment to the Saudi Arabians. “The Armageddon Lobby: Dispensationalist Christian Zionism and the Shaping of US Policy Towards Israel-Palestine” Rammy M. Haija *Holy Land Studies: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 5.1 (2006) 75-95.



states. In 2002, former State Department Deputy Director of Counter Terrorism Terrell Arnold wrote that “Congressional hardening on the side of Israel is driven in part by anger about the Palestinian suicide bombings, but the main drivers are active lobbies for Israel, including Jewish organizations in the United States and the Christian Right.”³⁵

Recently, Christian Arabs in the Middle East and U.S. Christian denominations have been denouncing Christian Zionists and their war-mongering and imperialist policies, but with little effect. In 2006 Arab leaders of the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, and Lutheran churches in Jerusalem jointly declared that

“Christian Zionism is a modern theological and political movement that embraces the most extreme ideological positions of Zionism, thereby becoming detrimental to a just peace within Palestine and Israel. The Christian Zionist programme provides a worldview where the Gospel is identified with the ideology of empire, colonialism and militarism. ... We call upon Christians in Churches on every continent to pray for the Palestinian and Israeli people, both of whom are suffering as victims of occupation and militarism.”³⁶

Beyond their lobbying, funding, and organizing work, the Christian Zionists have had an even more powerful longer-term impact on mainstream Christian views of the Middle East. Today, tens of millions of Protestant Christians in the United States and more around the world support Israel with an uncritical fervor, often exceeding even Jewish support.³⁷ The majority of U.S. Christians who give unqualified support for Israel today have been influenced in one way or another by the tenets of Christian Zionism disseminated over the last 150 years by conferences, missions, the Moody Bible School, the Scofield bible study guide, sermons, tracts, articles, and best-selling books and movies like the “Left Behind” series. Because of this legacy, mainstream and liberal Christian denominations and organizations have been reluctant to speak out about Israeli policies and often confused

³⁵ “ISRAEL - The Delusion Of Total Support” By Terrell E. Arnold 4-23-02 available at <http://www.rense.com/general24/isre.htm>. Viewed March 16, 2009.

³⁶ “Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism Statement”, *Patriarch and local heads of churches in Jerusalem*, 31 August 2006 Electronic Intifada, available at <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article5643.shtml>. Viewed on March 23, 2009.

³⁷ A survey in 2004 found that 90 per cent of U.S. evangelicals opposed ceding any land at all to a Palestinian state. (Quoted in Clark, p 230).



about how to respond after years of pro-Israeli Christian and Jewish “education.” Some Christian groups such as Churches for Middle East Peace³⁸ have a history of supporting demands for Palestinian liberation, and some have criticized Christian Zionists. However, Christian Zionist propaganda and Jewish pro-Israeli campaigns have made it difficult and challenging for most mainstream Christian groups to take a critical stand against Israeli aggression even while they routinely condemn Palestinian intransigence and suicide bombings. They know that Christian Zionists are no less willing to brand as anti-Semitic criticism of Israel’s policies and actions than is the Jewish pro-Israel lobby.

It is clear that the Christian Zionist lobby has established a pervasive influence in Washington. Decades ago, Jewish pro-Israel leaders recognized the crucial resources that Christian Zionists could bring to their campaign for unqualified support for Israel’s aggression in the Middle East. Christian Zionists had their own agenda and a long history of mobilizing support for first, the creation of a Jewish state and subsequently for the militarization and expansion of that state to include “greater Israel”. U.S. ruling elites had their own imperialist agendas and were only too willing to “respond” to lobbying from Jewish and Christian Zionists when it suited their purposes.

Arab-Jewish conflict continues to be fueled by Christian Zionists, U.S. imperial strategies, as well as the Jewish pro-Israel lobby. Militarism is encouraged, peace negotiations sabotaged, and attacks on Arabs and Muslims promoted by widespread Christian Zionist support of Israel’s internationally condemned policies in occupied Palestine. Each of these groups thrives on a climate of unending war on terror and on portrayals of Muslims and Arabs as irredeemable enemies of western civilization. Together they foster an environment of fear and hatred among a large constituency of people in the United States who support war, dehumanization, and violence towards Palestinians, Iraqis, Afghanis--all those in West Asia who are outside of Christianity and its designated protectorate, Jews in the Holy Land.³⁹ As journalist Victoria Clark notes, “One has to look back as far as the Crusades to find another example of such a large group of outsiders involving themselves in

³⁸ See their website at <http://www.cmep.org/>.

³⁹ As the quote above by Arab Christian leaders indicates, Christian Zionism also leads Christians to attack and undermine the peace efforts and even the very existence of Christians in Palestine and other countries of West Asia.



the Middle East on a religious pretext....”⁴⁰ Policy analyst Walter Russell Mead echoes the significance of the Christian Zionist movement when he writes, “One thing, at least, seems clear. In the future, as in the past, U.S. policy toward the Middle East will, for better or worse, continue to be shaped primarily by the will of the American [Christian] majority, not the machinations of any minority, however wealthy or engaged in the political process some of its members may be.”⁴¹

U.S. foreign policy should be guided by international standards of justice and human rights. Individuals and organizations can express their opinions and support policy positions. But when a U.S.-based international movement spends hundreds of millions of dollars of tax-exempt money lobbying policy makers, directly interfering with stated U.S. policy objectives (such as the encouragement of a negotiated peace and the creation of a Palestinian state), and fosters anti-Arab and anti-Islamic hatred, then this movement subverts our democratic political processes and is a danger to our society.

Resources

Websites

Political Research Associates

http://www.publiceye.org/christian_right/zionism/coalition.html

Challenging Christian Zionism

<http://www.christianzionism.org/>.

Jews on First

<http://www.jewsonfirst.org/>.

Books and Articles

Clark, Victoria. *Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.

⁴⁰ Clark, p 5.

⁴¹ Mead, Walter Russell, “The New Israel and the Old: Why Gentile Americans Back the Jewish State” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2008. Available at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64446/walter-russell-mead/the-new-israel-and-the-old>.



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Films

Constantine's Sword (2007) available through
<http://constantinessword.com/>.

Waiting for Armageddon (2009) available through
<http://www.waitingforarmageddon.com/index.html>.

Please send comments, feedback, resources, and suggestions for distribution to paul@paulkivel.com

Further resources are available at www.christianhegemony.org