



Christian Zionism

Adapted from Living in the Shadow of the Cross

By Paul Kivel

Christian Zionism is an often-overlooked example of the powerful role Christians and Christian institutions play in US foreign policy.

During the Crusades, Christians believed Jerusalem and the surrounding land belonged not to the Arabs who lived there, and not even to the Jews who would need to return, but to them because it was the site of Jesus' birth and of end time scenarios in Revelation.¹ The first crusades were fought explicitly to create a European Christian colony in Palestine. Dominant Christianity never gave up the belief that Jerusalem was a promised land, essential to God's plan. Support for the gathering of Jews to the Holy Land was believed to be a necessary strategy in preparation for the apocalypse.

The beginnings of a Jewish Zionist movement came together in the mid-19th century, fueled by rising nationalism and anti-Semitism throughout Europe. This movement was strongly supported by long-established Christian Zionists, who wanted to rid England of Jews and establish a British outpost in the Middle East. By supporting Restoration (as it was called), prominent Britons could be humanitarians on behalf of Jews suffering from persecution in Russia and elsewhere, while not having to accept them as residents of Britain or its colonies.

The Jewish Zionist movement by itself did not have the clout and connections to swing significant support for a Jewish homeland. However, Christian Zionists introduced Theodore Herzl, a founder of the



movement, to powerful British politicians, including Benjamin Disraeli and Lord Balfour.

In 1917 the anti-Jewish and Christian Zionist, Lord Balfour, was able to achieve a British Declaration supporting the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.²

The United States, lobbied by both Jewish and Christian Zionists and in conjunction with its own imperial interests, eventually came to replace Britain as the main supporter of Israel in the Middle East.

Current Christian Zionist efforts to support Israel are merely a new chapter in an old tradition of apocalyptic Christianity, an influential subset of Christian dominance. Most of the powerful Christian conservatives in the US are Zionist³ and they have established hundreds of advocacy groups.⁴

These organizations play a key role in supporting aggressive Israeli policy in Palestine, continuing billions of dollars of unconditional US military aid to Israel and directly supporting Israeli expansion by channeling tens of millions of dollars from US individuals and churches directly to illegal Jewish settlements in the West Bank. These people and groups have spoken out vociferously against negotiations with the Palestinians and for Israeli expansion to biblical borders that would include Palestine, parts of Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.

1. Armageddon, the site of the final battle, is described as taking place in Israel.
2. At around the same time the British made promises to Arab nations and to Palestinians that they would obtain sovereignty to the same land.



3. Including current or former prominent figures such as Tim LaHaye, Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, Benny Hinn, Ralph Reed, Billy Graham, James Hagee and Gary Bauer.

4. The largest are the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, Christian Coalition, Southern Baptist Convention, Bridges for Peace, Jerusalem Friendship Fund, Jerusalem Prayer Team, Stand with Israel, Christian Broadcasting Network (The Christian Broadcasting Network controls nearly 90% of religious radio and television in the US and is dominated by Christian Zionists: J. Daryl Byler. "Disturbing the Peace: Christian Zionism Shapes U.S. Policy." Mennonite Central Committee. Peace Office Newsletter, Vol. 35#3 (July-September 2005), p. 12), International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, Family Research Council, Council for National Policy and Christians for Israel: Salaita, Anti-Arab Racism, p. 170.

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