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1. Introduction

At its simplest, Christian Zionism is a form of philo-Semitism, defined as '*Christian support for Zionism*.'[1] In *Der Judenstaat*, published in 1896, Theodor Herzl forcefully articulated the aspirations of Jewish Zionists for their own homeland, although the Zionist dream was largely nurtured and shaped by Christian Zionists long before it was able to inspire widespread Jewish support in the 1940's.[2]

At the First Zionist Congress which Herzl convened a year later in Basle, the Zionist aspiration was formulated in a call for a, '*publicly secured and legally assured homeland for the Jews in Palestine.*'[3] At the 27th Zionist Congress held in Jerusalem in 1968, Zionism was defined in terms of five principles:

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[1]Colin Chapman, *Whose Promised Land, Israel or Palestine?* rev. edn. (Oxford, Lion, 1992), p.277.
[2]Regina Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism, Its Roots in Western History* (London, Zed, 1983), back cover. See also next chapter on history of Christian Zionism.
[3]Cited in Sharif, *Non-Jewish*, p. 1.

1) the unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of Israel in Jewish life; 2) the in-gathering of the Jewish people in its historic homeland, Eretz Israel; 3) the strengthening of the State of Israel; 4) the preservation of the identity of the Jewish people; and 5) the protection of Jewish rights.[4]

Sharif understands political Zionism to be *'...the ideological instrument for mobilizing international support for an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine*.' She observes how in 1975, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 3379 (XXX) defining Zionism as, '*a form of racism and racial discrimination*.'[5] It was no longer politically correct to view Zionism as simply another national liberation movement, in this case for Jews. Uri Davis has written probably the most critical book on the realisation of the Zionist goal, entitled, *Israel, an Apartheid State*.[6] Contemporary Christian Zionism is in part a reaction to this world-wide criticism.

So, for example, in 1967, following the passing of U.N. Resolution 242 in protest at Israel's occupation of the West Bank, and Palestinian Jerusalem, when the entire international community closed their embassy's in Jerusalem, the *International Christian Embassy* moved to Jerusalem expressly to show solidarity with Israel.

They and other Christian Zionists believe that the modern State of Israel, and Zionism in general, are divinely mandated, the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham. *"To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates... The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."* (Genesis 15:18; 17:8).[7] So, Hal Lindsey could confidently assert, '*The center of the entire prophetic forecast is the State of Israel*."[8]

Christian Zionists see themselves as defenders of, and apologists for, the Jewish people, and in particular, the State of Israel. This support involves opposing those deemed to be critical of, or hostile toward Israel.[9] It is rare therefore to find Christian Zionists who feel a similar solidarity with the Palestinians. Indeed, many Christian Zionists are reluctant even to acknowledge the existence of Palestinians as a distinct people group. Dave Hunt is an example of those who equate Palestinians with the ancient Philistines and who use the term *Palestinian* in a 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! That

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[4]Cited in Sharif, *Non-Jewish.,* p. 7; see also Uri Davis, *The State of Palestine* (Reading, Ithaca, 1991), p. 28.
[5]Sharif, *Non-Jewish*., p. 1 & 120.
[6]Uri Davis, *Israel, An Apartheid State* (London, Zed, 1987)
[7]Rob Richards, *Has God Finished with Israel?* (Crowborough, Monarch, 1994), p.177.
[8]Cited in 'The Church and Israel' by Michael Horton, *Modern Reformation* (May/June 1994), p. 1.
[9]Hal Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust* (New York, Bantam, 1989). Lindsey accuses those who oppose dispensationalism of anti-Semitism, *'...the same error that founded the legacy of contempt for the Jews and ultimately led to the Holocaust of Nazi Germany.' (*back page).

land was Canaan, inhabited by Canaanites, whom God destroyed because of their wickedness. Canaan became the land of Israel given by God to His people. Those who today call themselves Palestinians are Arabs by birth, language, and culture, and are close relatives to Arabs in surrounding countries from whence most of them came, attracted by Israel's prosperity. The name Palestine comes from the Philistines, who were not Semites, but invaded Canaan from Crete and parts of Asia Minor. Yet Arafat, an Arab, claims that ancestry.[10]

The most well known and influential Christian Zionist organisations include the *International Christian Embassy Jerusalem* (ICEJ); the *Church's Ministry Among Jewish People*, also known as *The Israel Trust of the Anglican Church* within Israel (CMJ or ITAC); *Christian Friends of Israel* (CFI); *Intercessors For Britain* (IFB); *Prayer Friends of Israel* (PFI); *Bridges for Peace* (BFP); *The American Messianic Fellowship* (AMF); *The Messianic Jewish Alliance America* (MJAA); *Jews for Jesus* (JFJ); the *Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary*; and the *Council of Christians and Jews* (CCJ). These organisations, in varying degrees, and for a variety of reasons, some contradictory, are part of a broad coalition, which is shaping the content of the Christian Zionist agenda today.

Whilst not specifying the geographical extent of Zion, the Israel Branch of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism, which draws together many evangelical and charismatic denominations and Messianic and evangelistic agencies, made the following commitment in 1989.

We affirm our belief that, as part of the fulfillment of God's promises in the Bible, the Jewish people have a right to the land of Israel. We further affirm the legitimacy of the jewish national political entity in the land within safe and secure borders.[11]

Contemporary British Christian leaders such as Derek Prince[12], David Pawson[13], Lance Lambert[14], Walter Riggans[15], along with Americans like Jerry Falwell[16], Pat Robertson[17], Hal Lindsey[18], Mike Evans[19], Charles Dyer[20], John Walvoord[21],

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[10]Dave Hunt, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem.' *TBC*, September 2000.
[11]Baruch Maoz, "A Statement on Christian Zionism", *Mishkan*, 1/1990, no. 12. p. 6.
[12]Derek Prince*, The Last Word of the Middle East* (Fort Lauderdale, Derek Prince Ministries International, 1982); *The Destiny of Israel and the Church* (Milton Keynes, Word, 1992).
[13]David Pawson*, Jerusalem-The Next 1,000 Years* (audio tape DP.1115, Ashford, Anchor Recordings).
[14]Lance Lambert*, The Battle for Israel* (Eastbourne, Kingsway, 1975); *The Uniqueness of Israel* (Eastbourne, Kingsway, 1980).
[15]Walter Riggans*, Israel and Zionism* (London, Handsell, 1988); *The Covenant with the Jews: What's So Unique About the Jewish People?* (Tunbridge Wells, Monarch, 1992).
[16]Merrill Simon, *Jerry Falwell and the Jews* (Middle Village, New York, Jonathan David, 1984).
[17]Pat Robertson*, The New Millennium, 10 Trends That Will Impact You and Your Family By The Year 2000* (Dallas, Word, 1990); *The Secret Kingdom: Your Path to Peace, Love and Financial Security,* rev. edn. (Dallas, Word, 1992).

Dave Hunt[22], and the German, Basilea Schlink[23], have had considerable influence in popularising an apocalyptic premillennial dispensational eschatology which fuels a Zionist vision among Western Christians.

That their teachings warrant the description 'Armageddon Theology'[24] is evident from the provocative titles of many of their most recent publications.[25] The beliefs and practices of the most influential of these organisations and individuals will be examined in depth in later chapters. This introduction attempts to map out the main historical and theological facts that have given shape and definition to the term.

Louis Hamada traces what he sees as the correlation between Jewish and Christian Zionism.

> *The term Zionism refers to a political Jewish movement for the establishment of a national homeland in Palestine for the Jews that have been dispersed. On the other hand, a Christian Zionist is a person who is more interested in helping God fulfil His prophetic plan through the physical and political Israel, rather than helping Him fulfil His evangelistic plan through the Body of Christ.*[26]

1.1 Church's Ministry Among Jewish People

While this definition may be true of agencies such as Bridges for Peace (BFP) and the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem (ICEJ); other organisations such

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[18]Hal Lindsey*, The Late Great Planet Earth* (London, Lakeland, 1970); *The 1980's Countdown to Armageddon* (New York, Bantam, 1981); *Israel and the Last Days* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House Publishers, 1983); *The Road to Holocaust* (New York, Bantam 1989); *Planet Earth 2000 A.D. Will Mankind Survive?* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front. 1994); *The Final Battle* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front. 1995).

[19]Mike Evans*, Israel, America's Key to Survival* (Plainfield, New Jersey, Haven, n.d.); *The Return* (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1986).

[20]Charles Dyer*, The Rise of Babylon, Signs of the End Times* (Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale House, 1991); *World News and Biblical Prophecy* (Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale House, 1993)

[21]John Walvoord*, Israel in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1962); *The Nations in Prophecy.* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1967

[22]Dave Hunt, *The Cup of Trembling: Jerusalem and Bible Prophecy* (Eugene, Origen, Harvest House, 1995)

[23]Basilea Schlink*, Israel, My Chosen People,* rev. edn. (Basingstoke, Marshall Pickering, 1987); *Israel at the Heart of World Events* (Darmstadt-Eberstadt, Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary, 1991).

[24]Donald Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, Herald Press, 1995)

[25]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); 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); 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).

[26]Louis Bahjat Hamada, *Understanding the Arab World* (Nashville, Nelson, 1990), p. 189.%

as Jews for Jesus and the Church's Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ) are committed to both evangelistic witness as well as political restoration. CMJ, founded in 1809 under the name 'The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews' (LJS) was the first Christian Zionist organisation in Britain. The less accurate description of 'London Jews' Society' (LJS) eventually proved more popular.[27] At its inception LJS had a fourfold mission agenda.

> *1) declaring the Messiahship of Jesus to the Jew first and also to the non-Jew; 2) endeavouring to teach the Church its Jewish roots; 3) encouraging the physical restoration of the Jewish people to Eretz Israel - the Land of Israel; 4) encouraging the Hebrew Christian/Messianic Jewish movement.*[28]

The Rev. Louis Way, who directed the London Jews Society (LJS) from 1809, forcefully articulated Christian Zionist views some ninety years before the World Zionist Congress.[29] During the last Century, in response to changing attitudes toward the Jews, LJS modified its name several times, first to 'Church Missions to Jews'[30], to 'The Church's Mission to the Jews', then, 'The Church's Ministry Among the Jews'[31], and finally in 1995 to 'The Church's Ministry Among Jewish People.'[32] Their promotional literature now indicates a more subtle and less explicit three-fold strategy,

> *The aims of CMJ are:*
>
> *Evangelism: To be workers with God in his continuing purpose for the Jewish people, both in Israel and world-wide, especially in seeking to lead them to faith in Jesus the Messiah as their only Saviour.*
>
> *Encouragement: Supporting Jewish believers in Jesus in all possible ways.*
>
> *Education: To help Christians to appreciate the biblical, Jewish roots of the Christian faith.*[33]

This third aspect of their ministry was further modified in 1995 to emphasise not merely the Jewish roots of the Christian faith, but its living abiding relevance now, together with their concern, like that of the Council for Christians and Jews (CCJ), to confront anti-Semitism. The third 'aim' therefore now reads, *To help Christians to appreciate the biblical, Jewish roots of the Christian faith and life. The concern to combat anti-Semitism*.[34]

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[27]George H. Stevens, *Go, Tell My Brethren: A Short Popular History of Church Missions to Jews* (London, Olive Press, 1959), 13

[28]Kelvin Crombie, *For the Love of Zion: Christian witness and the restoration of Israel* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), p. 3.

[29]Dean Hugh M'Neile was a colleague of Louise Way. See his *The Collected Works: Volume 2. The Prophecies Relative to the Jewish Nation* (London: Christian Book Society 1878), first published 1830.

[30] Stevens, *Go*., p. 13.

[31]Crombie, *For*., p. 260.

[32]Church's Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ), *Shalom*, 3 (1995), p. 1.

[33]CMJ, *Shalom*, 3 (1994), p. 1.

[34]CMJ, *Shalom*, 3 (1996), p. 1.

Whether this justifies defending the State of Israel from criticism for its continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is a controversial and sensitive point within CMJ. Material obtained in 1990 from Emmanuel House in Jaffa indicates that the commitment of some members of CMJ leadership to 'restorationism', that is, the active encouraging of Jewish people to move to Eretz Israel, including the Occupied Territories, appears to remain an important, if not explicit or well publicised aspect of their ministry. Their leaflet explaining the ministry of Emmanuel House states,

> *ITAC, as the London Jews Society is known today, has always believed, proclaimed and worked towards the return of the Jewish people to Zion. This policy is rooted in a firm belief in the message of biblical prophecy which has accurately foretold these things.*[35]

In the 1996 Annual Report of CMJ, its then General Director, Walter Riggans, explicitly and unequivocally identifies CMJ with restorationism and with support for the State of Israel. [36]

Not to be out done by Christian Zionist organisations preoccupied with the fulfilment of biblical prophecy in Israel during what are regarded as the 'End Times', Riggans, under the section of the Report, outlining 'CMJ Issues', and in the context of the primary tasks of evangelism and encouragement, writes,

> *Within this focus we need to be aware that God's concern is with the Jewish people the world over. In our day there seems to be in some Christian circles a restriction of interest to the State of Israel and to the significance of various events for the unfolding of Biblical prophecies relating to the end times. CMJ has always been at the forefront of teaching about God's restoration of the Jewish people to and in Israel, and we are continually excited by, and watchful of all that is happening. We are humbled by what the Lord is doing among Israeli believers. In other words, our prayerful interest in the State of Israel is as constant and committed as ever.*[37]

Perhaps this is why Riggans defines the term '*Christian Zionist*' in an overtly political sense as '*...any Christian who supports the Zionist aim of the sovereign State of Israel, its army, government, education etc.; but it can describe a Christian who claims to support the State of Israel for any reason.*'[38]

In a 'Resource Pack' produced in 1996 for group study as well as to answer objections to the work of CMJ, material is included under the bold heading, '*The State of Israel: Why should we support it?*'[39]

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[35]Israel Trust of the Anglican Church, *Immanuel House, Tel Aviv 1866-1990* (Tel Aviv, ITAC, 1990)

[36]The Church's Ministry Among Jewish People. *General Director's Annual Report 1996* (CMJ, St Albans, 1996).

[37]*General Director's Annual Report 1996* (CMJ, St Albans, 1996)

[38]Walter Riggans, *Israel and Zionism* (London, Handsell, 1988), p. 19.

[39]The Church's Ministry Among Jewish People, *Always be Prepared to Give an Answer Resource Pack* (CMJ, St Albans, 1996)

1.2 Christian Friends of Israel

Christian Friends of Israel (CFI) likewise insists on the unconditional necessity of '*Standing with Israel'* and bringing blessing to her as a nation, though in their case, primarily through prayer and humanitarian projects rather than by evangelism.

> *We believe the Lord Jesus is both Messiah of Israel and Saviour of the world; however, our stand alongside Israel is not conditional upon her acceptance of our belief. 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.*[40]

1.3 Bridges For Peace

Bridges For Peace (BFP), founded in 1976 by Clarence H. Wagner similarly affirm, *'Through programs both in Israel and world-wide, we are giving Christians the opportunity to actively express our biblical responsibility before God to be faithful to Israel and the Jewish community.*'[41]

Bridges for Peace have also disavowed evangelism among Jews reinterpreting Christian mission in terms of offering practical support and solidarity to the Jewish people, and Israel, in particular.

1.4 Council of Christians and Jews

Following the publication of an earlier version of this chapter,[42] two representatives of the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) have denied that CCJ is a Zionist organisation. However, while prohibiting proselytism of Jews by Christians associated with CCJ, some of its leaders, nevertheless, have demonstrated Zionist sympathies, showing more concern to defend the actions of the Israeli Government than with working for justice and peace between Jews and the indigenous Christians of Palestine. So, for example, when Said Aburish's history of the Palestinian Christian community*, The Forgotten Faithful* was published in 1993, Beryl Norman wrote an intemperate rebuttal in the *Church Times*, criticising him for being,

> *'...part of a major campaign now being waged to win over Christians in the West to the Palestinian cause, and ensure that Israel loses Western Christian support.*'[43]

When invited to elaborate, she did not substantiate these claims, but made further allegations. In response to a request for evidence she claimed that,

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[40]Christian Friends of Israel, *Standing with Israel*, information leaflet, n.d.
[41]Clarence H. Wagner, *'Who are we?'* Bridges for Peace, Jerusalem, September 1996.
[42]Stephen R. Sizer, "Christian Zionism: A British Perspective" in *Holy Land - Hollow Jubilee*, eds. Naim Ateek & Michael Prior (London, Melisende, 1999) from the 3rd International Sabeel Conference, pp. 189-198.
[43]Beryl Norman, 'The Churches in the Middle East' *Church Times*, 18 June 1993.

'*Militant Palestinian groups - PLO, Hamas - are using the churches. It is very easy to identify this - same vocabulary, same phrases, same stories. Our friends in Israel see this at first hand.*'[44]

1.5 AMF International

AMF International, formerly the American Messianic Fellowship (AMFI), was founded as the Chicago Hebrew Mission in 1887 by William E. Blackstone (1841-1935). Blackstone was a colleague of D. L. Moody and was also deeply influenced by J. N. Darby's brand of premillennial dispensationalism.[45] He subsequently wrote '*Jesus is Coming*' in 1908, which by 1916 had already been translated into 25 languages and is apparently still in print.[46]

AMFI is, according to its own literature, a '*conservative evangelical ministry committed to seeing the Lord's purposes fulfilled by building bridges of understanding between Christian and Jewish Communities*'.[47] Their Articles of Belief defines those 'purposes' to include a scenario of the future which is pre-tribulational, premillennial dispensationalism.

We believe that the blessed hope is the Lord Jesus' personal, imminent return to rapture the Church and then introduce the millennial age, when Israel shall be restored to their own land and the earth will then be full of the knowledge of the Lord.[48]

1.6 Messianic Jewish Alliance of America

The Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA) claims to be the largest association of Messianic Jewish believers in the world, founded in 1915, with affiliations in 15 countries, 250 Messianic Synagogues, and 350,000 Messianic Jews world-wide. They insist they are *'the leading representative organisation for American Jews who believe in Messiah Yeshua'* [49] Their simple statement of belief is made up of four short paragraphs. The fourth states,

We believe in G-d's eternal covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We, therefore, stand with and support the Jewish people and the State of Israel and hold fast to the Biblical heritage of our forefathers.[50]

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[44]Beryl Norman in correspondence, following her letter to the Church Times, 1993.
[45]Harold R. Cook, 'William Eugene Blackstone' *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church,* ed. J.D. Douglas (Exeter, Paternoster, 1974), p. 134.
[46]William E. Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming* (Chicago, Fleming Revell, 1916)
[47]American Messianic Fellowship International, '*What is AMF*' Internet: http://www.mjaa.org. obtained, 29 October 1996.
[48]American Messianic Fellowship International, '*Articles of Belief*' Internet: http://www.mjaa.org. obtained, 29 October 1996.
[49]The Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA), '*What is the MJAA?*' Internet: http://www.mjaa.org. obtained, 29 October 1996.
[50]MJAA, '*What does MJAA believe?*' Internet: http://www.mjaa.org. obtained, 29 October 1996.

MJAA provides a wide range of ministries designed to '*service the needs of the Jewish revival*.' These include the MESSIAH Conference, '*The world's largest annual international conference on Messianic Judaism*' held each summer with over 2,000 participants, the Young Messianic Jewish Alliance (YMJA); the International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues (IAMCS); the Russia Committee; the International Relations Committee (IRC) which publishes the '*prestigious*' quarterly, the Messianic World Report; and the Messianic Jewish Israel Fund (MJIF) which helps meet the financial needs of Messianic Jews in Israel and with lobbying for *'the right for Messianic Jews to emigrate to Israel as Jews.*'[51] In 1992 a MJAA position paper was published in the Israeli newspaper HaAretz entitled, *'Messianic Jews Say: "The Land Belongs to Israel"'*[52] In it, MJAA expressed their conviction that Eretz Israel has been given to the Jews by God and that they will '*repossess the regions of Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan Heights.*'[53]

1.7 Jews For Jesus

Jews for Jesus (JFJ) was founded in 1973 by Moishe Rosen[54] to '*proclaim the message of Messiah to all people*.' They claim to be,

> '*...the largest and best-known of the non-denominational Jewish evangelistic agencies with missionaries in ten countries'.*

In addition to their 15 branches and 60 chapters, JFJ sends out evangelistic teams such as the emotively named *'Liberated Wailing Wall.'*[55] Their Doctrinal Statement asserts belief in the continuing existence of two parallel but separate covenants for Israel and the church.

> *We believe 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]

Their statement regarding the Second Advent is somewhat more enigmatic. '*We believe that Jesus the Messiah will return personally in order to consummate the prophesied purposes concerning his Kingdom*.' [57] JFJ does not spell out what those 'prophesied purposes' are. It is true that JFJ have generally been critical of the In-

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[51]MJAA, '*What are the ministries of MJAA?*' Internet: http://www.mjaa.org. obtained, 29 October 1996.
[52]MJAA Position Paper, '*Messianic Jews Say: "The Land Belongs to Israel!'*" published in *HaAretz*, 20 March 1992. MJAA. Internet: http://www.mjaa.org. obtained, 29 October 1996.
[53]MJAA, '*Messianic.,*'
[54]Moishe Rosen, *Overture to Armageddon? Beyond the Gulf War* (San Bernardino, California, Here's Life Publishers, 1991)
[55]Jews for Jesus (JFJ), *Jews for Jesus Briefing Bulletin, '"Billy Graham was Misunderstood" Says Jews for Jesus Leader'*, Internet: http://www.jews-for-jesus.org, obtained 29 October 1996.
[56]JFJ, *Doctrinal Statement*, Internet: http://www.jews-for-jesus.org, obtained 29 October 1996.
[57]JFJ, *Doctrinal*.,

ternational Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, for taking a political position and for refusing to engage in Jewish proslytism. However in a JFJ Publications Page review of a book by David Larsen,[58] Leslie Flynn summarizes and affirms the author's treaties that,

> *"The Jews are God's timepiece," the author says. They are the key to history and prophecy... God's unconditional covenant with Abraham, which includes the promise of the land, a seed to rule over the land and the blessing his offspring will be to all humankind... the regathering of Israel and her central place among the nations, seem to go far beyond anything that Israel has yet experienced historically... that are to be literally fulfilled in the personal reign of Christ on earth.*[59]

1.8 International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

Of all the Christian Zionist organisations, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) is probably the most influential and controversial. ICEJ was founded in 1980, specifically in Jerusalem, as an attempt by Zionist Christians to reverse the effect of the decision by the international community to vacate their embassies in Jerusalem protesting Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank. Ironically ICEJ is housed in the confiscated home once belonging to the family of Dr Edward Said. Their promotional literature states,

> *When the vision of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was first given it was expressed in the following concerns; to care for the Jewish people, especially for the new-born State of Israel which includes standing up for the Jews when they are attacked or discriminated against, and for Israel to live in peace and security....to care that the world wide body of Christ will be rightly related to Israel in comfort, love and prayer for her well-being, to care for the nations whose destinies will be increasingly linked to the way in which they relate to Israel, the care and preparation for the coming of the Lord.*[60]

At the Third International Christian Zionist Congress held in Jerusalem 25-29 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,

> *God the Father, Almighty, chose the ancient nation and people of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to reveal His plan of redemption for the world. They remain elect of God, and without the Jewish nation His redemptive purposes for the world will not be completed...*
> *The modern Ingathering of the Jewish People to Eretz Israel and the rebirth of the nation of Israel are in fulfilment of biblical prophecies, as written in both Old and New Testaments.*

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[58]David L. Larsen, *Jews, Gentiles, and the Church: A New Perspective on History and Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Discovery House Publishers, 1995)
[59]JFJ, *Publications Page*. obtained, 29 October 1996.
[60]MECC, *What*, p. 11.

Christian believers are instructed by Scripture to acknowledge the Hebraic roots of their faith and to actively assist and participate in the plan of God for the ingathering of the Jewish People and the restoration of the nation of Israel in our day.
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.[61]

In an amplification of those resolutions, the religio-political agenda of ICEJ is made quite explicit.

Further, we are persuaded by the clear unction of our God to express the sense of this Congress on the following concerns before us this day,
Because of the sovereign purposes of God for the City, Jerusalem must remain undivided, under Israeli sovereignty, open to all peoples, the capital of Israel only, and all nations should so concur and place their embassies here.
As a faith bound to love and forgiveness we are appreciative of the attempts by the Government of Israel to work tirelessly for peace. However, the truths of God are sovereign and it is written that the Land which He promised to His People is not to be partitioned... It would be further error for the nations to recognise a Palestinian state in any part of Eretz Israel.
To the extent the Palestinian Covenant or any successor instrument calls for the elimination of Israel or denies the right of Israel to exist within secure borders in Eretz Israel, it should be abolished.
The Golan is part of biblical Israel and is a vital strategic asset necessary for the security and defence of the entire country....
The Islamic claim to Jerusalem, including its exclusive claim to the Temple Mount, is in direct contradiction to the clear biblical and historical significance of the city and its holiest site, and this claim is of later religio-political origin rather than arising from any Qur'anic text or early Muslim tradition...
While Gentile believers have been grafted into that household of faith which is of Abraham (the commonwealth of Israel), replacement theology within the Christian faith, which does not recognise the ongoing biblical purposes for Israel and the Jewish People, is doctrinal error...
Regarding Aliyah, we remain concerned for the fate of imperilled Jewish People in diverse places, and seek to encourage and assist in the continuing process of Return of the Exiles to Eretz Israel. To this end we commit to work with Israel and to encourage the Diaspora to fulfil the vision and goal of gathering to Israel the greater majority of all Jewish People from throughout the world.[62]

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[61] *International Christian Zionist Congress Proclamation*, International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem. 25-29 February 1996.
[62] *International Christian Zionist Congress Proclamation*, International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem. 25-29 February 1996.

It is significant that many of the staff working for the International Christian Embassy apparently worship at the Anglican, Christ Church, near the Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem, which, coincidentally, is the headquarters of the Church's Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ) in Israel. Ray Lockhart, the vicar of Christ Church, when invited to comment on the work of ICEJ, refused to express any criticism of it.[63]

Riggans claims Christian Zionists generally agree on three cardinal beliefs, allowing for a wide diversity of views as to their theological significance eschatologically, as well as their implications for Christian practice.

> *The return of Jews to the land in the last 100 years and the establishment of the State of Israel should be (or can be) interpreted as a fulfilment of Old Testament promises and prophecies concerning the land, or at the very least as signs of God's continuing mercy and faithfulness to the Jewish people. 'For many Christians today the greatest visible sign of God's faithfulness is the survival of the Jewish people. God has preserved them, cared for them, directed them, against all the odds. And so, in a sense, the greatest sign of all is the State of Israel, and Jewish sovereignty over Eretz Israel; such is a classic Christian Zionist position....*
>
> *The establishment of the State of Israel has special theological significance because of what it means for the Jews, or because of what it means in the sequence of events leading up to the turning of the Jewish people to their Messiah and the second coming of Christ.*
>
> *Christians should not only support the idea of a Jewish state, but (at least in general terms) support its policies. '...in the most modest of ways I would suggest that Christians as Christians must give support in principle to the State of Israel as a sign of God's mercy and faithfulness, and as a biblical mark that God is very much at work in the world...'* [64]

In qualifying this definition, Colin Chapman, himself not a Christian Zionist, argues that an important distinction needs to be made between '*Christian Zionism*' and '*Biblical Zionism*'. He recognises that Biblical Zionism could accept the existence of the State of Israel, and be willing to work and pray for its security on political or humanitarian grounds without needing to do so on theological grounds.

2. The Theological Origins of Christian Zionism

Christian Zionism, is however, rooted, in varying degrees, in the theological conviction that the Bible mandates a restoration of the Davidic kingdom as the focus of God's rule on earth. In broad terms therefore they see in contemporary events, the hand of God protecting his chosen people, the Jews. The founding of the State of Israel in 1948 is regarded as the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy. Eretz Israel, not always well defined geographically, is nevertheless seen as theirs by unconditional di-

[63]Interview with Ray Lockhart, vicar of Christ Church, Jerusalem, 1994.
[64]cited in Chapman, *Whose*., p. 278.

vine right given under the Abrahamic covenant. Jerusalem is inevitably seen as the eternal and undivided capital of the Jewish State.[65]

Christian Zionism has, in general terms, arisen from within Evangelicalism, and Fundamentalism in particular. Within that narrower circle, Christian Zionism is invariably associated with, although not exclusively, a dispensational reading of Biblical history and a premillennial eschatology. It would be useful therefore to amplify the meaning of these four theological terms.

2.1 Evangelicalism

The term 'Evangelicalism' denotes a broad spectrum of theological opinion arising out of the Reformation, Puritanism and Revivalism. Tertullian was one of the first to use the term around 200 AD. in his defence of biblical truth against Marcion. Martin Luther used the term to describe John Hus, but it was Thomas More who introduced the word to the English language. In a '*vitriolic attack*' on William Tyndale in 1532, More referred to those '*evangelicalles*'.[66] The distinctive doctrines of Evangelicalism include a belief in the supreme authority of scripture over tradition (s*ola Scriptura*); in the literal interpretation of scripture; adherence to the historic creeds; the need for a personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation and holiness; and a belief in the imminent, visible and personal return of Jesus Christ. Differences exist between 'open' and 'conservative' evangelicals as to the relative importance of such doctrines as infallibility and inerrancy. Evangelicalism is represented, and generally accepted, within all the main Protestant denominations and in Britain an increasing number of senior ecclesiastical posts are now held by evangelicals including Archbishop George Carey.[67]

Evangelicalism has become a popular subject for analysis, not least among proponents. *'The overwhelming majority of them present the picture of a Christian movement which is sweeping all before it, triumphing over both liberalism and ritualism.'*[68]

2.2 Fundamentalism

Within Western evangelicalism there are many strands defined by adherents as much as by opponents. These include those of *fundamentalist, conservative, open and liberal*. This spectrum has sometimes been simplified into the three cate-

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[65]Lance Lambert, 'The Eternal Significance of Jerusalem.' *Out of Zion: 2nd Quarter, 1996*. Christian Friends of Israel.

[66]Mark Thompson, 'Saving the Heart of Evangelicalism.' *The Anglican Evangelical Crisis* ed. by Melvin Tinker (Fearn, Ross-shire, Christian Focus, 1995), p. 29.

[67]D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, A History from the 1730's to the 1980's,* (London, Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 1-19; Kenneth S. Kantzer & Carl, F.H. Henry eds, *Evangelical Affirmations* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1990).

[68] Mark Thompson, *'Saving'.,* p.28. For example: Clive Calver, *He Brings us Together: Joining Hands Where Truth and Justice Meet* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1987); Alistair E. McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994); Derek J. Tidball, *Who are the Evangelicals? Tracing the Roots of Today's Movements* (London, Marshall Pickering, 1994)

gories of right, centre and left.[69] The fastest growing and most influential of these is fundamentalism, also known in the United States as the '*Evangelical Right*'. Fundamentalism draws its support primarily from the Baptist, Pentecostal and Independent Bible churches associated with individuals such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Hal Lindsey and Mike Evans.[70]

The term '*fundamentalist*' derives from a series of tracts entitled 'The Fundamentals' published from 1910 onwards in an attempt by American conservative evangelicals to defend the basis of historic Christianity and repudiate what they saw as 'modernism' and theological liberalism. The term 'fundamentalism' was first used by Curtis Lee Laws, the editor of the Baptist Watchman Examiner, in 1918 to describe the movement within Baptist circles dedicated to such a position.[71]

Much valuable research has already been undertaken into the nature of Christian fundamentalism,[72] including the correlation between evangelical fundamentalism and anti-Semitism.[73]

Christian fundamentalism is the most active, exclusive, intolerant, and conservative wing of evangelicalism, both theologically and politically.[74] The popularity of what is also known as the New Christian Right (NCR) is, in part, due to its near

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[69]Richard Quebedeaux, *The Worldly Christians* (New York, Harper & Row, 1978)
[70]Wagner, *Beyond*., p. 3.
[71]Bruce Shelley, 'Fundamentalism', *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. J.D. Douglas (Exeter, Paternoster Press, 1974), p. 397.
[72]Two important international and inter-cultural studies are, Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *Fundamentalists Observed* (Chicago, University of Chicago, 1991), and Bruce B. Lawrence, *Defenders of God, The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age* (San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1989). The most important accounts of American Protestant fundamentalism have been written by George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture, The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism 1870-1925* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1980); and *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1991); Ernest Robert Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism, British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1970); Nancy Ammerman, *Bible Believers, Fundamentalists in the Modern World* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1987);. For a British perspective, see also James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (London, SCM, 1981); *Escaping from Fundamentalism* (London, SCM, 1984); Kathleen C. Boone, *The Bible Tells Them So, The Discourse of Protestant Fundamentalism* (London, SCM, 1989); and Martyn Percy, *Words, Wonders and Power: Understanding Contemporary Christian Fundamentalism and Revivalism* (London, SPCK, 1996).
[73]David A. Rausch, *Communities in Conflict, Evangelicals and Jews ((*Valley Forge, Trinity Press International, 1991); *Fundamentalist Evangelicals and Anti-Semitism* (Valley Forge, Trinity Press International, 1993).
[74]Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety & Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Garry Wills, *Under God: Religion and American Politics* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1990); Steve Bruce, 'The Moral Majority, The Politics of Fundamentalism in Secular Society.' In *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism* ed. Lionel Caplan (London, Macmillan. 1987), pp. 177-194; *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right, Conservative Protestant Politics in America 1978-1988* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1988);

monopoly of Christian satellite, television and radio stations and programmes; the espousal, within its charismatic wing, of a success oriented 'health and wealth' gospel; and its propensity to provide simplistic, infallible, biblical panaceas for the world's problems.[75]

The sympathies of the NCR for Israel and Zionism are compounded by an implacable antagonism toward communism and Islam. Donald Bridge, for instance, in describing the significance of Jerusalem to Jews, Christians and Moslems, claims,

> *Jews world-wide mark their calendars with events that took place here. Muslims world-wide are eager to engage in holy wars here... Arab feeling soon runs high here, and is expressed in anti-Christian and anti-Jewish frenzy. Mullahs shouting over the minarets' loudspeakers can turn a congregation into a rampaging mob within minutes.*[76]

In the words of Gerald Butt, fundamentalism essentially, '*offers an outlet for frustrated ambitions*.'[77] Similarly, Michael Saward has compared some aspects of fundamentalism in its style to the culture of facism.[78] Martin Marty succinctly describes fundamentalists as 'angry evangelicals.'[79]

Fundamentalist Christian Zionists are often outspoken and tend to advocate the annexation of the entire West Bank by Israel; support the lobby for other nations to return their embassies to Jerusalem as the undivided and eternal capital of the Jews; are committed to the building of the Third Jewish Temple and the re-institution of the priesthood and temple sacrifices as a precursor to the return of the Messiah.[80] They have also helped facilitate the return or '*restoration*' of Jews from around the world to Israel, especially those living in Russia and Eastern Europe, and deliberately encouraged their re-settlement in the Occupied Territories.[81]

There is a large and growing number of books written by evangelical and fundamentalist Christian Zionists presenting a largely pro-Israel yet apocalyptic scenario.[82] Within contemporary Christian fundamentalism the most influential theological interpretation of history is known as premillennial dispensationalism.

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[75]Steve Bruce*, Pray TV, Televangelism in America* (London, Routledge, 1990);
[76]Donald Bridge, *Travelling Through the Holy Land* (London, Christian Focus, 1998), pp. 55-56, 70.
[77]Gerald Butt, 'The glory and the dream' *Church Times*, 1 November 1996, p. 8.
[78]cited in the *Independent on Sunday*, 13 January 1991.
[79]Martin E. Marty & R. Scott Appleby, *Fundamentalism Observed* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 1.
[80]Thomas Ice & Randall Price, *Ready to Rebuild, The Imminent Plan to Rebuild the Last Days Temple* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House, 1992); Winkie Pratney & Barry Chant, *The Return* (Chichester, Sovereign World, 1988), p. 180-191.; Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Basingstoke, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1971), p. 55f.
[81]Riggans*, Israel.,* p. 19.
[82]Notably, Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (London, Lakeland, 1970); *The 1980's Countdown to Armageddon* (New York, Bantam, 1981); *Israel and the Last Days* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House Publishers, 1983); *The Road to Holocaust* (New York, Bantam 1989); *Planet Earth 2000 A.D. Will Mankind Survive?* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front. 1994); *The Final Battle*. (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front. 1995); Charles C.

2.3 Premillennialism

Traditionally there have been three mutually exclusive interpretations of the references to a millennial reign of Christ in Revelation 20 depending on whether it is understood literally or figuratively. These are amillennial, postmillennial, and premillennial.[83] Premillennialists hold to the belief that Christ will return prior to the millennium. Premillennialists are themselves divided on the question as to when the so called 'rapture' will occur.[84] Four distinct, mutually exclusive, positions have and continue to be held, the cause of some rather acrimonious disagreement within premillennialist circles.

2.3.1 Pre-Tribulationists

J. N. Darby[85] influenced by Edward Irving[86] and followed by C. I. Scofield[87] and the early dispensationalists such as Lewis S. Chafer[88] and Charles Ryrie[89] held to this position. Ryrie describes pre-tribulationism as '*normative dispensational es-*

Ryrie, *The Final Countdown* (Wheaton, Illinois, 1982); Mike Evans, *Israel, America's Key to Survival* (Plainfield, New Jersey, Haven, n.d.); Walter Riggans, *Israel & Zionism* (London, Handsell, 1988); Lance Lambert, *The Uniqueness of Israel* rev. ed. (Eastbourne, Kingsway, 1995); John F. Walvoord, *Armageddon, Oil and the Middle East Crisis* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1990); Moishe Rosen, *Beyond the Gulf War, Overture to Armageddon* (San Bernardino, Here's Life Publishers, 1991); Kelvin Crombie, *For the Love of Zion, Christian witness and the restoration of Israel* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1991); David Dolan, *Israel, The Struggle to Survive* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1992); Thomas Ice and Randall Price, *Ready to Rebuild, The Imminent Plan to Rebuild the Last Days Temple* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House Publishers, 1992); Rob Richards, *Has God finished with Israel?* (Crowborough, Monarch, 1994); Dave Hunt, *Peace, Prosperity and the Coming Holocaust* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House, 1983).

[83]Robert G. Clouse, (ed) *The Meaning of the Millennium* (Downers Grove, Illinois, IVP, 1977); Stanley J. Grenz, *The Millennial Maze: Sorting Out Evangelical Options* (Downers Grove, Illinois, IVP, 1992)

[84]J.N. Darby, 'The Rapture of the Saints and the Character of the Jewish Remnant,' *Collected Writings* Prophetic. I, Vol. II, pp. 153-155; John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question* rev. edn. (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1979); Hal Lindsey, *The Rapture* (New York, Bantam Books, 1983)

[85]J.N. Darby, 'The Rapture of the Saints and the Character of the Jewish Remnant,' *Collected Writings* Prophetic. I, Vol.II, pp. 153-155.

[86]Unconvincingly denied by John Walvood in *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1975), p. 48, but corroborated by Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1971), p. 200; and F. Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement* (Exeter, Patrernoster, 1968), pp. 128ff.

[87]Joseph M. Canfield, *The Incredible Scofield and his Book* (Vallecito, California, Ross House Books, 1988), pp. 126ff.

[88]Lewis S. Chafer, *Dispensationalism* (Dallas, Seminary Press, 1936)

[89]Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1965); *Dispensationalism* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1995)

chatology' and '*a regular feature of classic dispensational premillennialism*'.[90] Gerstner acknowledges that virtually all Dispensationalists are also Pre-tribulationists.[91]

Pre-tribulationist premillennialists believe that Jesus Christ will return at any moment to secretly 'rapture' the church before the Tribulation begins on earth. After seven years of tribulation, Christ will return with His saints to overcome the Antichrist and his forces and establish God's millennial Jewish kingdom on earth. One popular exponent of this position is Tim LaHaye.

> *Are you ready for Christ's return? Do you believe that at any instant you could find yourself hurtling through the skies to meet your Lord face to face? Are you confident that God will spare you and your loved ones the horrifying judgment of the Tribulation... Are you living your life as if each moment could be your last on earth?*[92]

Lindsey is even more colourful in his depiction of what events on earth will be like for the non-Christian left behind after the supposed rapture of Christians,

> *There I was driving down the freeway and all of a sudden the place went crazy... cars going in all directions... and not one of them had a driver. I mean it was wild. I think we've got an invasion from outer space.*[93]

At the late 19th Century Niagara Prophetic Conferences attended by men like D. L. Moody and C. I. Scofield, alternative views of the chronology of the rapture, already present in the increasingly sectarian Brethren circles, emerged there also and caused considerable internal division within dispensational circles. This came to be known as the 'Rapture-Rupture' [94]

2.3.2 Mid-Tribulationists

Mid-tribulationists assert instead that Christians will experience the first half of the Tribulation, that is three and a half years of persecution, and then at the midpoint of the Tribulation they will be raptured. Those who argue for such a position do so on the basis of Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 12:4 which include the phrase "*time, times*

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[90]Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*., (1995), p. 148.
[91]Gerstner, *Wrongly*., (1991), p. 18.
[92]Tim LaHaye, *No Fear of the Storm, Why Christians Will Escape All the Tribulation* (Sisters, Oregon, Multnomah, 1992), back cover. See also John Walvoord, *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1975)*; The Blessed Hope and the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1976); *The Rapture Question* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1979); John L. Bray, *The Origins of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Teaching* (Lakeland, Florida, J.L. Bray Ministries, 1982)
[93]Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (London, Lakeland, 1970) p. 136.
[94]Joseph M. Canfield, *The Incredible Scofield and his Book* (Vallecito, California, Ross House Books, 1988), p. 127. See further, Richard R. Reiter, *The Decline of the Niagara Bible Conference and Breakup of the United Premillennial Movement* Unpublished paper, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1976, p. 2. See also, Reiter, *The Rapture Controversy in Late Nineteenth Century American Fundamentalism* unpublished paper, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1980.

and half a time." This is taken to mean a period of three and a half years of tribulation, before the rapture.[95]

2.3.3 Post-Tribulationists

Authors such as J. Barton Payne, George Ladd and R. H. Gundry are classical premillennialists and not dispensationalists. They believe the church will experience seven years of tribulation before Christ returns.[96] Unlike Pretribulationists, they regard the references to the suffering of the 'saints' in Revelation as referring to Christians and not Jews who have come to believe in Messiah after the church has been raptured.[97]

2.3.4 Pre-Wrath Tribulationalists

Marvin J. Rosenthal has literally incurred the 'wrath' of some pre-tribulationists[98] because of his controversial book, '*The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church*'[99]. In this Rosenthal insists, based on his ultra-literalist hermeneutic, that the seven year period during which the Antichrist will supposedly arise, also known as the seventieth week of Daniel 9:24-27, must be separated into three not two.

> *The Bible teaches that there are three major sections to the seventieth week: the beginning of sorrows (Matt. 24:8), the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21), and the Day of the Lord (Matt. 24:30-31)*[100]

Rosenthal therefore argues the church will endure the Tribulation, but escape the wrath of the Day of the Lord immediately prior to Christ's return. Like most other premillennial dispensationalists however, he insists,

> *The Bible teaches that at Christ's return, a surviving remnant of Jews will be regathered to Israel and saved. God's covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be literally fulfilled (Matt. 24:31; Rom. 11:25-26).*[101]

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[95]J. O. Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1972), Vol. 2, pp. 393-450; N.B. Harrison, *The End* (Minneapolis, Harrison, 1941). See also M. J. Erickson, *Contemporary Opinions in Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1977, pp. 164-168.

[96]J. Barton Payne, *The Imminent Appearing of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1962); George Eldon Ladd, *The Blessed Hope, A Biblical Study of the Second Advent and the Rapture* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1956); R. H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1973)

[97]See Revelation 14:12; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24.

[98]Tim LaHaye, *No Fear of the Storm, Why Christians Will Escape All the Tribulation* (Sisters, Oregon, Multnomah, 1992), pp. 15, 95ff.

[99]Marvin Rosenthal, *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church* (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1990); and Marvin Rosenthal & Kevin Howard, *Examining the Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church* (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1994)

[100]Rosenthal, *Pre-Wrath*., p. 294.

[101]Rosenthal, *Pre-Wrath*., p. 295.

Rosenthal's views are influential in so far as he has been the executive director of *The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry*, and editor of the journal, *Israel, My Glory*, for sixteen years. He is now the executive director of *Zion's Hope*, an international mission agency and editor of *Zion's Fire*, an evangelical magazine.[102]

2.4 Dispensationalism

John Nelson Darby is regarded as the father of dispensationalism[103], although William Kelly and Edward Irving played no small part in the restoration of premillennial speculations out of which Darby's dispensationalism arose.[104] It was C. I. Scofield, however, that brought Darby's eccentric theology into mainstream evangelicalism.

The publication of the *Scofield Reference Bible* in 1909 by the Oxford University Press was something of a innovative literary coup for the movement, since for the first time, overtly dispensationalist notes were added to the pages of the biblical text. Others before Darby and Scofield had used the term '*dispensation*' to describe the progressive revelation of God's purposes in biblical history. What distinguished Darby's innovative scheme was the conviction that these dispensations were irreversible, sequential and progressive.[105] While such a dispensational chronology of events was largely unknown prior to the teaching of Darby and Scofield[106], the *Scofield Reference Bible* gave legitimacy to Darby's scheme by embedding speculative interpretative notes alongside the text of the Bible for the first time. The Scofield Bible became the leading bible used by American Evangelicals and Fundamentalists for the next sixty years.[107]

The proof text of dispensationalism is the Authorised translation of 2 Timothy 2:15, in which the Apostle Paul calls upon Timothy to, '... *rightly divide the word of truth*.' Scofield took this as the title for his first book which is a defence of this novel way of 'dividing' Scripture into discrete dispensations.[108]

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[102]Rosenthal, *Pre-Wrath*., p. 319.
[103]Clarence 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, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1980). Ryrie attempts, unconvincingly, to find latent dispensationalism in the Early Church Fathers and in the writings of others such as Isaac Watts. See Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago, Moody, 1965), p. 73. This claim is refuted by John Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Brentwood, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991) pp. 7-20.
[104]Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1971), p.191; George E. Ladd, *Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1952), p. 49.
[105]John Nelson Darby, 'The Apostasy of Successive Dispensations.' *Collected Writings*., Eccl. 1, Vol. 1, p. 197.
[106]Ryrie attempts to trace the lineage of dispensationalism back to Irenaeus, Clement and Augustine. See Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1995), p. 63.
[107]Wagner, *Beyond*., p. 4.
[108]C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Philadelphia, Philadelphia School of the Bible, 1928)

Following Darby and Scofield, dispensationalists claim to find in Scripture evidence of seven distinct dispensations[109] during which mankind has been tested in respect of specific revelation as to the will of God. In each, mankind, including in the sixth dispensation, the church, has failed. These dispensations began with Creation and will end, it is claimed, in an exclusive Jewish kingdom on earth. Ryrie offers the clearest outline of dispensationalism.[110]

The Dispensations

Name	Scripture	Responsibilities	Judgment(s)
Innocency	Genesis 1:3-3:6	Keep Garden...	Curses...
Conscience	Genesis 3:7-8:14	Do Good	Flood
Civil Government	Genesis 8:15-11:9	Fill earth...	Forced scattering..
Patriarchal Rule	Genesis 11:10-Exodus 18:27	Stay in Promised Land	Egyptian bondage..
Mosaic Law	Exodus 19:1 - John 14:30	Keep the Law...	Captivities
Grace	Acts 2:1- Revelation 19:21	Believe in Christ...	Death...
Millennium	Revelation 20:1-15	Believe & Obey...	Death...

These dispensations are seen by proponents as '*providing us with a chronological map to guide us*'[111], leading the more fundamentalist to insist that the world is about to end.[112] Gerstner concedes that the church has always understood biblical revelation to be progressive. However,

> *Unlike traditional interpreters, dispensationalists "divide" these sections sharply such that they virtually conflict with one another rather than enfold from one another... sharply divided from one another rather than integrated with one another. They conflict rather than harmonize. Even the word divide is a sharper term than Paul's original requires but the dispensationalists have made it sharper still.*[113]

2.4.1 The Dispensationalist Distinction Between Israel and the Church

Dispensationalism is the source of the most virulent and pervasive form of Christian Zionism today because it is based on an arbitrary division of the Bible into dispensations. 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.[114] Thus there is, and always will remain, a distinction, '*between Israel, the Gentiles and the Church.*'[115]

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

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[109]Ryrie, *Dispensationalism.,* p. 38.
[110]Ryrie, *Dispensationalism.,* p. 54.
[111]Charles Dyer, *The Rise of Babylon, Signs of the End Times* (Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale House, 1991), p. 189.
[112]Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness, Obsession of the Modern Church* (Atlanta, American Vision, 1997)
[113]Gerstner, *Wrongly*., p. 99.
[114]Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1965), p. 48.
[115]Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*., p. 137.

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.[116]

It was, however, Darby who first insisted that, '*The Jewish nation is never to enter the Church*.'[117] 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.[118]

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...
3. A third aspect... concerns the underlying purpose of God in the world... namely, the glory of God... To the normative dispensationalist, the soteriological, or saving, program of God is not the only program but one of the means God is using in the total program of glorifying Himself.[119]

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.[120]

For Chafer, '*Israel is an eternal nation, heir to an eternal land, with an eternal kingdom, on which David rules from an eternal throne*'[121] so that in eternity, '*...never the twain, Israel and church, shall meet*.' [122] Ryrie even concedes the conclusion of his critic Daniel Fuller in stating that the,

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[116]W. 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.
[117]J. N. Darby, *The Hopes of the Church of God* (London: G. Morrish, n.d.), p. 106.
[118]C. I. Scofield, *Scofield Bible Correspondence Course*, 19th edn. (Chicago, Moody Bible Institute), p. 23.
[119]Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*., pp. 39-40.
[120]Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Dispensationalism* (Dallas, Seminary Press, 1936), p. 107.
[121]Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, Dallas Seminary Press, 1975), Vol. 4. pp. 315-323, cited in Gerstner, *Wrongly*., p. 184.
[122]Gerstner, '*Wrongly*., p. 185.

...basic promise of Dispensationalism is two purposes of God expressed in the formation of two peoples who maintain their distinction throughout eternity.[123]

Certain implications follow the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic covenant. For dispensationalists, logically, Israel can do no wrong.

Even though Israel should fall into sin, and should seem no longer to be a recipient of God's blessing, it would still be true that God has promised that those who bring blessing to His earthly people will themselves be blessed, while those who curse His earthly people will themselves suffer the results of God's displeasure. All history is full of examples of this fact... The fate of the nations that have injured Israel is a terrible warning that God never goes back on His promises. From Haman to Hitler, history shows how dangerous it is to hate His chosen people.[124]

Hal Lindsey goes as far as to accuse those who refuse to accept dispensationalism of encouraging anti-Semitism for denying a role for the State of Israel in God's future purposes, *'...the same error that founded the legacy of contempt for the Jews and ultimately led to the Holocaust of Nazi Germany.'* [125]

Not surprisingly, dispensationalists refute the supposition inherent in all other non-dispensational theologies, and especially Reformed covenantalism, that the ethical law of the Pentateuch applies as much now as then. The Reformed churches have traditionally believed that God has one purpose for all people, namely their salvation through Jesus Christ, bringing both Jews and Gentiles into one people, the church, and that in and through Him the earthly will be transformed into the heavenly. Chafer, in particular, criticises non-dispensational theology for giving a spiritual interpretation to what he sees as earthly realities.[126]

This is probably the most basic theological test of whether or not a person is a dispensationalist, and it is undoubtedly the most practical and conclusive. The one who fails to distinguish Israel and the church consistently will inevitably not hold to dispensational distinctions; and one who does will.[127]

2.4.2 Dispensationalism's Literalistic Hermeneutic

Dispensationalism and its prodigy, Christian Zionism, is based on a hermeneutic in which all Scripture, and especially the prophetic, must always be interpreted literally. Darby's hermeneutic might be summed up in this sentence in which he ad-

[123]Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*., pp. 44-45.
[124]Allan A. MacRae, "Hath God Cast Away His People? In *Prophetic Truth Unfolding Today*, ed. Charles L. Feinberg (Westwood, N.J., Revell, 1968), p. 95. Cited in Gerstner, *Wrongly*., p. 183.
[125]Hal Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust* (New York, Bantam, 1989) back page.
[126]Chafer, *Dispensationalism*., p. 107.
[127]Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* rev. edn. (Chicago, Moody Press, 1995), p. 39.

mitted, *'I prefer quoting many passages than enlarging upon them.'*[128] Scofield, who popularised and synthesised Darby's theology, also taught,

> *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.*[129]

Ryrie similarly asserts,

> *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.*[130]

Despite the claim made to 'literal' consistency, dispensationalists do on occasions spiritualise texts when it is convenient. For example, Scofield conceded in the same chapter quoted above,

> *It is then permitted - while holding firmly the historical verity - reverently to spiritualize the historical Scriptures.*[131]

The writings of John Walvoord, a leading dispensationalist and Chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary, provide a good example of this inconsistency.[132] He makes the arbitrary assumption that when an Old Testament prophecy refers to Israel, it means the literal nation of Israel. However when the same Old Testament prophet referts to other nations such as Egypt or Philistia, it refers to the land previously inhabited by these peoples. Walvoord also assumes that who ever is dwelling in those lands today, irrespective of whether there is any genetic link, may nevertheless still fulfill these prophecies, so, for example, the Palestinians are conveniently seen as the successors to the Philistines.

> *The prominence of the Philistines in the history of Israel is demonstrated by approximately 270 references to them in the Old Testament... A few references to the Philistines, however, are found in the context of the future millennial kingdom and imply that the territory of the Philistines and the inhabitants in that future day will have a relationship to the kingdom. According to Isaiah 11:14 Israel will have domination over the Philistines in that day. Again in Obadiah 19 the house of Jacob shall possess the Philistines. In both of these prophecies it may be presumed that the writer of Scripture is referring to the territory known to them at the time as possessed by the Philitines and to*

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[128]Darby, *Collected Writings*., Vol. 11, p. 363
[129]C.I. Scofield, *Scofield Bible Correspondence Course* (Chicago, Moody Bible Institute, 1907), pp. 45-46.
[130]Ryrie, *Dispensationalism.*, p. 40.
[131]C.I. Scofield, *Scofield Bible Correspondence Course* (Chicago, Moody Bible Institute, 1907), pp. 45-46.
[132]Keith A. Mathison, *Dispensationalism, Rightly Dividing the People of God?* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1995), pp. 6-7

the future inhabitants of that area. It means simply that Israel will be victorious over their ancient enemies and possess their territory.[133]

The logical deduction of a literalist dispensational hermeneutic, is summarised by Dwight Pentecost, another former revered member of the Dallas faculty.

Scripture is unintelligible until one can distinguish clearly between God's program for his earthly people Israel and that for the Church.[134]

One is left in no doubt that a literalist interpretation is the only consistent one for evangelicals. Perhaps wondering how the universal church coped before 1830, Gerstner observes,

...that without pretribulational, premillennial Dispensationalism, the Scripture is "unintelligible"... Even if a person were a traditional premillennialist, without this other element by means of which Israel is distinguished from the church, Scripture would remain a mystery and confusion would reign.[135]

James Bear makes this assessment of dispensational hermeneutics.

[They] ...are content to reiterate the catch-phrases which set forth their distinctive principles, supporting them by reference to Bible passages of which they do not stop to show the validity. They usually do not attempt in their books to follow out their principles to their logical conclusions, and one often wonders if many who call themselves 'Dispensationalist' have ever actually faced the conclusion which must flow from the principles which they so confidently teach.[136]

Nevertheless, based on such an interpretative principle, dispensationalists hold that the promises made to Abraham and through him to Israel, although postponed during the church age, were nevertheless eternal and unconditional and therefore await future fulfilment since they have never yet been literally fulfilled in their entirety. So, for example, it is an article of normative dispensational belief that all Israel will be literally saved; that the boundaries of the land promised to Abraham and his descendants will be literally instituted; and that Jesus Christ will return to a literal and theocratic Jewish kingdom centred on Jerusalem. In such a scheme the church on earth is relegated to the status of a parenthesis[137] a '*Plan B for the*

[133]John F. Walvoord, *The Nations, Israel and the Church in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1988), p. 163.
[134]Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Findlay, Ohio, Dunham, 1958), p. 529.
[135]Gerstner, *Wrongly*., p. 66.
[136]James E. Bear, 'Dispensationalism and the Covenant of Grace' *Union Seminary Review* 49 (1938): 307.
[137]John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1979), p. 25.

Church',[138] *'...a sort of footnote or sidetrack in contrast to God's main mission to save ethnic, national Israel*.'[139]

It is for this reason many Christian Zionists are happy to disavow evangelism among Jews believing '*all Israel will be saved*' when or after Christ returns,[140] and why the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, proudly welcomes the Israeli Prime Minister to speak at their annual gatherings. It also explains why dispensationalists such as John Walvoord, Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson have in the past been happy to attend joint worship services with Jewish Rabbi's since both Jews and Christians are seen as '*descendants of Abraham'* and '*chosen under the terms of [God's] covenants.'*[141]

Sandeen observes that dispensationalism has, '*a frozen biblical text in which every word was supported by the same weight of divine authority*.'[142] Bass goes further insisting that,

> *No part of historic Christian doctrine supports this radical distinction between church and kingdom. To be sure they are not identical; but dispensationalism has added the idea that the kingdom was to be a restoration of Israel, not a consummation of the church.*[143]
>
> *In the light of this principle, it is legitimate to ask whether dispensationalism is not orientated more from the Abrahamic Covenant than from the Cross. Is not its focus centred more on the Jewish kingdom than on the Body of Christ? Does it not interpret the New Testament in the light of Old Testament prophecies, instead of interpreting those prophecies in the light of the more complete revelation of the New Testament?*[144]

2.4.3 The Popularity and Diversity within Dispensationalism

Notwithstanding such serious criticisms, dispensationalism increasingly came to replace the simpler form of historic premillennialism.[145] Writing in 1958, Norman Kraus could observe how,

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[138]Keith A. Mathison, *Dispensationalism, Rightly Dividing the People of God?* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1995), back cover.
[139]Michael Horton, 'The Church and Israel' *Modern Reformation* May/June (1994), p. 1.
[140]Derek White, 'Replacement Theology', *Christian Friends of Israel Newsletter,* June 1991. Also Stephen R. Sizer, 'Anti Missionary Law Will Ban Christian Witness in Israel' *Evangelicals Now*, August (1998), p. 19.
[141]Beth Spring, "Some Jews and Evangelicals Edge Close on Israel Issue," *Christianity Today*, December 17, 1982, pp. 33-34. Cited in Gerstner, *Wrongly*., p. 208.
[142]Ernest R. Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism," *Church History* 36 (1967), 70. Cited in Gerstner, *Wrongly*., p. 100.
[143]Bass, *Backgrounds*., p. 31.
[144]Bass, *Backgrounds*., p. 151.
[145]The definitive works are: Charles C. Ryrie, *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith* (Neptune, New Jersey, Loizeaux Brothers, 1953); *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1965)

> *...the dispensationalists had won the day so completely that for the next fifty years friend and foe alike largely identified dispensationalism with premillennialism.*[146]

Today, premillennial dispensationalism still dominates American evangelicalism and fundamentalism. R. C. Sproul concedes that dispensationalism is now '*...a theological system that in all probability is the majority report among current American evangelicals.*'[147] Gerstner adds,

> *Most leading evangelists have been teachers or followers of Dispensationalism. Earlier in this century, the radio broadcasts of dispensationalists such as D. G. Barnhouse, Charles E. Fuller, and M. R. DeHaan attracted a wide audience. Today, most of the noted 'electronic' evangelists, including Rex Humbard, Jerry Falwell, Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, James Robison, and Billy Graham are dispensational.*[148]

Leading dispensationalists who are also overtly Zionist include Charles Ryrie[149], Dwight Pentecost[150], John Walvoord[151], Eric Sauer[152], Charles Dyer[153] and Hal Lindsey.[154] Christian Zionism, although latent within 19th Century dispensationalism, has grown in popularity within evangelical circles, particularly in America and especially since 1967, coinciding with the Arab-Israel Six Day War and a few years later in 1970 with the publication of Hal Lindsey's '*The Late Great Planet Earth.*'[155]

Tracing the development of Christian Zionism from the mid-19th and early 20th Century, the premillennial dispensationalist preoccupation with a distinctly Jewish millennium preceded by a pre-tribulation rapture of the church and an end-time

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[146]C. Norman Kraus, *Dispensationalism in America* (Richmond, John Knox Press, 1958), p. 104.

[147] Foreword to John Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Brentwood, Tennessee, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991), p. ix.

[148]Gerstner, *Wrongly*., p. 54.

[149]Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1965); *Dispensationalism* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1995)

[150]J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1958)

[151]John Walvoord, *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1975)*; The Blessed Hope and the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1976); *The Rapture Question* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1979)

[152]Eric Sauer, *The Dawn of World Redemption, A Survey of Historical Revelation in the Old Testament* (Exeter, Paternoster Press, 1951); *The Triumph of the Crucified, A Survey of Historical Revelation in the New Testament* (Exeter, Paternoster Press, 1951); *From Eternity to Eternity, The Purpose of God in History* (Exeter, Paternoster Press, 1954).

[153]*The Rise of Babylon, Signs of the End Times* (Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale House, 1991); *World News and Biblical Prophecy* (Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale House, 1993)

[154]Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (London, Lakeland, 1970); *The 1980's Countdown to Armageddon* (New York, Bantam, 1981); *Israel and the Last Days* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House Publishers, 1983); *The Road to Holocaust* (New York, Bantam 1989); *Planet Earth 2000 A.D. Will Mankind Survive?* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front. 1994); *The Final Battle* (Palos Verdes, California, Western Front. 1995)

[155]Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Basingstoke, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1971)

gathering of the remnant of Israel, came to replace the simpler form of historic premillennialism.[156]

> *...the dispensationalists had won the day so completely that for the next fifty years friend and foe alike largely identified dispensationalism with premillennialism.*[157]

There has also been some constructive dialogue between contemporary dispensationalists and reformed covenantal theologians on the relationship of the church to Israel, although primarily still as a theoretical and academic, theological question.[158] Furthermore, a new generation of younger dispensationalists among the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary have attempted to redefine their movement as 'progressive dispensationalism'.[159] They distance themselves from what they regard as the 'naïveté' of the founder's vision, [160]distinguishing the traditional dispensationalism of Lewis Sperry Chafer and Charles Ryrie[161] from 'Scofieldism',[162] as well as from 'the popular 'apocalyptism' of Lindseyism'.[163] They regard themselves as 'less land centred' and less 'future centred'.[164]

Ryrie is sceptical, unwilling to concede to such revisionism. He prefers to describe the position of theologians such as Blaising and Bock as 'neo-dispensationalist' or 'covenant dispensationalist', for holding, for instance, to a 'slippery' hermeneutic.[165] Ryrie similarly insists on distinguishing normative dispensationalism from 'Ultradispensationalism'. This is rooted in the teaching of Ethelbert W. Bullinger (1837-1913) and his successor Charles H. Welch, who, according to Ryrie, have merely carried dispensationalism to its 'logical extremes'. Ultradispensationalists hold for instance, that the church did not begin at Pentecost but in Acts 28 when

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[156]The definitive works are: Charles C. Ryrie, *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith* (Neptune, New Jersey, Loizeaux Brothers, 1953); *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1965)

[157]C. Norman Kraus, *Dispensationalism in America* (Richmond, John Knox Press, 1958), p. 104.

[158]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)

[159]Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1995), p. 214; Craig A. Blaising & Darrell L. Bock, ed. *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1992); *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Wheaton, Victor, 1993); Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1993)

[160]Blaising & Bock, *Dispensationalism*., p. 19.

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

[162]Blaising & Bock, *Dispensationalism*., pp. 21-23.

[163]Blaising & Bock, *Dispensationalism*., pp. 14-15.

[164]Darrell Bock, cited in 'For the Love of Zion,' *Christianity Today*, 9 March 1992, p. 50.

[165]Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*., pp. 171, 175, 178.

Israel was set aside; the Great Commission of Matthew and Mark is Jewish and therefore not for the church; the Gospels and Acts describe the dispensation of the Law; only the Pauline prison epistles, that is Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, relate to the church Age; water baptism is not for the church Age; and Israel, not the church, is the Bride of Christ.[166] Their teachings are perpetuated today by the Berean Bible Society, Berean Expositor, Berean Publishing Trust[167] and Grace Mission.

Despite these attempts to redefine and reshape the dispensationalism of Darby and Scofield, many remain unconvinced.[168] As an outsider, James Barr insists in all its variations, *'Dispensationalism is a totally fundamentalist scheme*.'[169]

Following Darby and Scofield's literalistic hermeneutic and rigid distinction between Israel and the church, most contemporary dispensationalists regard the founding of the State of Israel as evidence of divine intervention, that the Jews remain God's *'chosen people'*; having a divine right to the Middle East in perpetuity.

2.4.4 Dispensationalism and Apocalyptic Zionism

Crucial to the dispensationalist reading of biblical prophecy is the conviction that the period of tribulation is imminent along with the secret rapture of the church and the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount. This will signal the return of the Lord to restore the Kingdom to Israel centred on Jerusalem. This pivotal event is also seen as the trigger for the start of the war of Armageddon in which large numbers of Jews will suffer and die.[170]

> *Convinced that a nuclear Armageddon is an inevitable event within the divine scheme of things, many evangelical dispensationalists have committed themselves to a course for Israel that, by their own admission, will lead directly to a holocaust indescribably more savage and widespread than any vision of carnage that could have generated in Adolf Hitler's criminal mind.*[171]

Clearly such views, whether promulgated by academics from Christian theological institutions like Dallas Theological Seminary and the Moody Bible Institute, or by Jewish fanatics such as Baruch Ben-Yosef and the Temple Mount Yeshiva,[172] the consequences could be devastating as these fundamentalists have considerable po-

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[166]Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*., p. 199.
[167]Charles Welch and Stuart Allen, *Perfection or Perdition, An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (London, The Berean Publishing Trust, 1973)
[168]John H. Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Brentwood, Tennessee, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991)
[169]James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (London,SCM, 1977), p. 197.
[170]Hal Lindsey, *Israel and the Last Days* (Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House, 1983), pp. 20-30.4
[171]Gary DeMar & Peter J. Leithart, *The Legacy of Hatred Continues, A Response to Hal Lindsey's The Road to Holocaust,* (Tyler, Texas, Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), p. 26. See also Grace Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelists on the Road to Nuclear War* (Westport, CT, Lawrence Hill, 1986), p. 195.
[172]Lisa Pevtzov, 'Apocalypse Now, Operation Conquest - The Temple Mount Yeshiva', *The Jerusalem Post Magazine*, 18 February 1994, p. 6.

litical influence seeking the endorsement of their divinely ordained and predetermined apocalyptic visions of the future. Karen Armstrong traces the pervading legacy of the Crusades on the contemporary Middle East, claiming Christian Zionists, *'have returned to a classical and extreme religious crusading*.'[173]

Ominously, Charles Colson, the former senior aide to president Richard Nixon, claimed in 1988 that the United States Government had contingency plans for a scenario in which Jewish fanatics would capture the Temple Mount, destroy the Dome of the Rock and rebuild the Jewish Temple, caught live by American Christian television channels based in Jerusalem. Based on State records, Colson speculated that if Israeli military forces refused to intervene to maintain the existing status quo, the United States would be forced to do so.[174]

3. Reasons for this research

Kenneth Leech offers this critical assessment of Christian fundamentalism and also some grounds for its evaluation.

> *Biblical fundamentalism has normally been accompanied by manifestations of bigotry, intolerance and violence... Fundamentalism of this kind is a serious danger to Christian spirituality as well as to the health of any community in which it is present. It is a pathological growth upon the Christian movement and calls for very serious and thoughtful responses.*[175]

The Palestinian Christian community has, especially since 1948, suffered isolation, discrimination and persecution in a way that some describe as a form of apartheid or 'ethnic cleansing'. They are presently caught between three forms of religious fundamentalism, a Moslem fundamentalism which regards them as traitors to the Arab cause; a Jewish fundamentalism which perceives them as a 'fifth column' and impediment to the realisation of a 'Greater Israel'; and a Christian fundamentalism which is infatuated with Zionism and is, in the words of Don Wagner, '*Anxious for Armageddon,*'[176] unable to comprehend why Christian Palestinians do not support the State of Israel against the perceived threat of Islam.
They have experienced as a people, how,

> *"Fundamentalism represents a narrowing of vision, a closing of doors, a diminishing of human beings, and a backward force in human history...*"[177]

The plight of the Palestinian church is made worse by the fact that they are ignored by the majority of Christian pilgrims and tourists, of all traditions, who visit the Holy Land primarily to see the sites associated with the Bible. The author's previous research has shown that their itineraries tend to follow a predictable pattern

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[173]Armstrong, *Holy*., p. 377.
[174]Charles Colson, *Kingdoms in Conflict* (London, Hodder, 1988), preface.
[175]Kenneth Leech, *The Eye of the Storm: Spiritual resources for the pursuit of justice* (London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1992), p. 60.
[176]Donald Wagner, *Anxious.,*
[177]Leech, *The Eye*., p. 205.

determined more by the strategies of the Israeli Government Ministry of Tourism than the needs of the indigenous Christian communities for contact and fellowship.[178]

As a consequence, a significant number of Palestinians continue to leave their homeland out of desperation, fear and intimidation. The very real danger is the creation of what Archbishop George Carey once described as '*an empty Christian Disney World.'* At this critical time there is a newly emerging and distinctive Palestinian theology, distinct from other forms of Liberation Theology, which is offering an alternative, indeed a contrary reading of the Scriptures to that of Christian Zionism. It is reflected in the writings of Naim Ateek, Audeh Rantisi, Riah Abu El-Assal, Elias Chacour and others.[179]

While evangelicalism and Christian fundamentalism, in particular, have attracted a considerable amount of attention in academic circles,[180] their influence upon the rise of Christian Zionism appears to have escaped serious consideration apart from a few notable exceptions.[181] Indeed Marsden concedes that,

> *Even most of those neo-evangelicals who abandoned the details of dispensationalism still retained a firm belief in Israel's God-ordained role. This belief is immensely popular in America, though rarely mentioned in proportion to its influence.*[182]

In the light of an extensive survey of published literature there appears to have been little research so far into the historical origins, theological basis and political ramifications of contemporary Christian Zionism nor an assessment of its impact on the indigenous Christian community of Israel/Palestine. Regina Sharif, for exam-

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[178]Stephen R. Sizer, *Pilgrimages to the Un-Holy Land*. Unpublished MTh dissertation, Oxford University, 1994.

[179]Naim Ateek, *Justice only Justice* (Maryknoll, New York, Orbis, 1990); also, Naim Ateek, Marc Ellis & Rosemary Ruether, *Faith and the Intifada, Palestinian Christian Voices*, eds. (Maryknoll, New York, Orbis, 1992); Audeh Rantisi, *Blessed are the Peacemakers* (Guildford, Eagle, 1990); Elias Chacour, *Blood Brothers* (Eastbourne, Kingsway, 1984); and also, *We Belong to the Land* (San Francisco, Harper Collins, 1990)

[180]George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture, The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism 1870-1925* (New York, Oxford University Press 1980); E*vangelicalism and Modern America* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans 1984); *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1991); Martin E. Marty & R. Scott Appleby, *Fundamentalism Observed* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991)

[181]The main writers to have specifically addressed Christian Fundamentalist Zionism are Donald E. Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, Herald Press, 1995); Hassan Haddad and Donald Wagner, *All in the Name of the Bible, Selected Essays on Israel and American Christian Fundamentalism* (Brattleboro, Vermont, Amana, 1986); David A. Rausch. *Zionism within early American Fundamentalism, 1878-1918; a convergence of two traditions* (New York: Mellen Press, 1979); Grace Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics, Militant Evangelists on the Road to Nuclear War* (Westport, Connecticut, Lawrence Hill, 1986); Middle East Council of Churches, *What is Western Fundamentalist Christian Zionism?* rev. edn. (Limassol, Cyprus, MECC, 1988); and Naim Stifan Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice, A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York, Orbis, 1990)

[182]Marsden, *Understanding*., p. 77.

ple, explores the influence of the Reformation, Puritanism and Millennialism on the rise of Zionism, although she concentrates more on political Zionism and the developments prior to 1945.[183]

> *The traditional terms 'Gentile' or 'Christian' Zionism are misleading since they now suggest a Christian enthusiasm for Zionism motivated essentially by Biblical or theological reasoning. But it is the political motivations of non-Jewish protagonists of Zionism which have above all today come to make up an integral part of the non-Jewish Zionist matrix... It is precisely this unique phenomenon on non-Jewish Zionism that we propose to analyse here.*[184]

It is the conviction of this author that the influence of Christians upon Zionism has been consistently underestimated and is much more pervasive and influential than has previously been thought. It is for this reason that this research was initiated. The aims are threefold:

3.1 To assess the main historical, theological and political factors in the rise of contemporary Christian Zionism.

3.2 To examine and classify discrete types of contemporary Christian Zionism distinguished on the basis of their historical roots, theological perspective, ecclesiastical loyalties and political ramifications, in particular, with regard to the indigenous church of Israel/Palestine.

3.3 Specifically to discover how Christian Zionist organisations justify biblically and theologically their support for the State of Israel, as demonstrated in their views as to Israel's legitimate international borders; justification of Israel's continued illegal occupation of the West Bank; claim to Jerusalem as their eternal undivided city (the status and extent of Jerusalem); aspirations regarding the Temple Mount (hopes for the rebuilding of the Third Temple); and their attitude toward the continued denial of Palestinian aspirations to autonomy, self determination and statehood.

The theological presuppositions upon which this research is based are reflected in the following,

> *I hold to the representative view of Israel's future, neither anti-semitic nor zionist. First, according to this position, Israel maintains a special place in the plan of God. It is greatly loved by God. Because of its unique role in the conversion of the Gentiles, it is to be evangelised, not exterminated. It is to be called back to the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, not excluded from a place in the world. It is to be cherished by the Church, the New Israel, not excoriated as a "Christ-killer"... But second, the representative or covenantal view is not nationalistic. It does not believe there is magic in being a political unit, a nation. Just because Israel has become nationalized has little or nothing to do with its becoming "covenantalized"; in fact, being politicized*

[183]Regina Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism, its Roots in Western History* (London, Zed, 1983)
[184]Sharif, *Non-Jewish*, p. 2.

has always stood in its way of accepting Christ as Savior and more importantly, Lord.[185]

The second chapter will appraise the main historical influences upon the rise of contemporary Christian Zionism.

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[185]Ray R. Sutton, 'Does Israel Have a Future?' *Covenantal Renewal* (December 1988), p. 3. Cited in Gary DeMar & Peter J. Leithart, *The Legacy of Hatred Continues, A Response to Hal Lindsey's The Road to Holocaust* (Fort Worth, Texas, Dominion Press, 1989), p. 54.