

*What is
Western Fundamentalist
Christian Zionism?*



THE MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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Preface

The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) continues to view with concern the programmes of western fundamentalist Christians who call themselves «Christian Zionists». Of particular concern is the 'International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem' (ICEJ), a self-proclaimed Christian Zionist institution which has an international vision for the shaping of this doctrine. The ICEJ's conferences and congresses have allowed Christian faith and biblical interpretation to become subservient to the policies of the modern state of Israel and a revisionist Zionist political ideology.

In August 1985, the ICEJ organized the First Christian Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in the same hall in which Theodor Herzl convened the First Zionist Congress in August, 1897. The Second Christian Zionist Congress held its meetings in Jerusalem, 10-15 April 1988, to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the founding of Israel.

In April 1986 the MECC Executive Committee addressed Christian Zionism and condemned the «misuse of the Bible and the abuse of religious sentiments in an attempt to sacralize the creation of a state and legitimate the policies of a government». The Executive Committee instructed the MECC General Secretary to bring to the attention of the churches and Christian organizations throughout the world the view of the churches in the Middle East and seek their cooperation in dealing with this new misrepresentation of the Christian faith. In his letter to the churches, dated March 7, 1988, the General Secretary stated:

«In the Middle East where religion plays an increasingly significant role in determining the future relationships between peoples and nations, there is no room for ill informed and biased 'Christian Zionist' ideologies that are dangerous distortions of the Christian faith. Christians everywhere must reject all concepts of superiority of particular people over other people within God's creation. Such tendencies do a fundamental disservice also to Jews who may be inspired to liberate themselves from discriminatory attitudes and thereby rediscover equality with the Palestinians with whom they are expected to live God's justice and peace in the Holy Land».

The concern with «Christian Zionism» is not of a political nature. On the basis of the principle of freedom of conscience, that we fully respect, Christians like any other people are free to become engaged in any political cause prescribed by their conscience. However, every attempt to sacralize a political ideology or state and place them beyond the reach of human criticism or ethical standards should be biblically and theologically questioned.

For Christian Zionists the state of Israel and its policies enjoy the privilege of being beyond any form of human sanction. In this regard, Joel Baker writes in a background paper on Christian Zionism, published by the ICEJ, that «humanitarian based support tends to weaken as Israel grows stronger militarily. History is capricious and quickly forgotten, thus support based on historic fact alone weakens as history is rewritten. Politically based support for Israel is subject to expedience of world politics and the 'even handed' approach to the Middle East. This only perpetuates the tragedy of two peoples in conflict with equal claim to individual civil rights. Only that Christian support of Israel's right to exist, based first of all on the Bible, will remain constant regardless of circumstances».

Therefore, the concern with Christian Zionism is biblical and theological in nature. The declarations issued by the first and second Christian Zionist Congresses, which were organized and sponsored by the ICEJ, show important shifts away from the very foundations of Christian faith and biblical interpretation. The declarations affirm that the «Jewish people have a biblical right to live freely in the entire land of Israel, including Judea, Samaria [i.e. the West Bank, *ed. note*], and Gaza as a Jewish state». From this it follows that others – Palestinians, both Christians and Muslims – have lesser right and may even have to be expelled from the land of their ancestors.

In the declarations there is a particularly clear shift away from the Christocentric faith. Examination of recent speeches by the spokesman of the ICEJ, Rev. Jan Willem van der Hoeven, in interpreting Christian Zionism illustrate that shift. There the «Christian Zionist» is placed in a reductionist eschatology by engaging in actions designed to bring «comfort and support» to modern political Israel. Accordingly, Jesus is de-emphasized, as is His death and Resurrection, while salvation and judgement are redefined. Therefore, for v.d.Hoeven Christians will be judged solely according to their actions on behalf of the state of Israel. True Christians are those who leave their Gentile background and become «Israelites of God».

The MECC Executive Committee statement of April 1986, in refuting Christian Zionism, affirms the Middle East churches' commitment to justice and peace in the region and throughout the world. It considered this commitment «as an expression of faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and a genuine concern for those who suffer and are deprived of their human rights».

In pursuing this commitment, Middle Eastern churches, through the MECC, have always rejected all forms of anti-semitism or discrimination, whether against Jews or Arabs.

They have always affirmed with churches all over the world that freedom, justice and peace should be for Jews and Arabs in the Holy Land. At the same time they have also proclaimed that the security of Israel is not an eschatological or supra-historical principle that can be fulfilled at the expense of the historical existence or security of the Palestinian people or any other people. The «divine right» to the land of Palestine – if such is the belief of the Jews – cannot be realized at the cost of the human rights of the Palestinians. They affirm that Christians, whatever their political tendencies, are expected to see how God has reconciled Himself with the human being in Jesus Christ Incarnate. Could this reconciliation of the «divine right» with the «human right» serve in our day as a basis for reconciliation and peace between Jews and Arabs in the Holy Land?

Further, Jews, Christians and Muslims can all draw on their spiritual heritages to discover a common ethical ground that might serve as a basis for societies that could respect particular religious and cultural identities, but at the same time guarantee equality between them and solidarity in the struggles for justice and peace for all peoples and nations. This would be consistent with the ICEJ's call «to care about Jerusalem in all its aspects, and that Jerusalem one day truly become a praise on all the earth and a herald of a new day to all mankind». However, this Jerusalem cannot be a city of exclusivity, discrimination and war, but rather one that translates the inclusivity of God's love for all peoples and the entire creation, and God's justice and peace for all those who relate to him through their common Father Abraham.

This booklet, is a reminder to churches around the world of the danger of the ideology and political objectives of «Christian Zionism» that are an outside imposition on Judaism and Christianity. A consistent process of awareness-building and education within the churches in the West must follow. This booklet addresses more particularly the «western evangelicals» who disassociate themselves from Christian Zionism. The voices of western evangelical leadership will be of major importance in view of the fact that many in the Middle East tend to perceive all «western evangelicals» as promoting the «Christian Zionist» position.

Therefore, we urge all concerned Christians to join us in a categorical rejection of the «Christian Zionist» phenomenon, as representing a heretical interpretation of Holy Scripture which is, in fact, hostile to the presence and witness of the Christian churches in the Middle East. We encourage your serious reflection and study of this issue.

In presenting this revised edition of the background paper, we would especially like to acknowledge the work of the Rev. Dr. Donald Wagner, who served as a consultant with the Working Group during the preparation of this document.

*The Middle East Council of Churches
Working Group on Christian Zionism*

What is Western Fundamentalist Christian Zionism?

The influx of western fundamentalist Christian organizations and missions into the Middle East has become a matter of great concern to the churches of the region. Of particular note are those organizations who uncritically support the policies and political agendas of the modern state of Israel, seeing that state as a fulfilment of Biblical prophecies. Some of these groups call themselves Christian Zionists and believe that God has called them to «comfort and support Israel» unconditionally.

The following paper will focus on the Christian Zionist phenomenon as an offshoot from western Protestant Christianity. While there are different pro-Zionist tendencies and the broader category of «philo-Semitism»,¹ this study will examine only the western fundamentalist type of Christian Zionism, its history, major theological beliefs, and the issues it raises for Christians in the Middle East and Christianity in general. It must be emphasized at the outset that Christian Zionism is viewed by Middle Eastern churches as a new heresy and dangerous intrusion into the life of the people of the region. In fact, it supports political agendas which often thwart efforts of unity, justice, and peace and undermines their witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the region.

After a brief review of several key concepts and the terminology of western fundamentalism, the paper will outline the history of the movement in broad strokes rather than in great detail. The major figures in the movement and their political contributions will be given special attention. The final section will raise various issues emanating from the Christian Zionist's efforts in the region. The presentation should be viewed as a general introduction to the subject and not a thorough theological or historical analysis.

The subject of western fundamentalist Christian Zionism can be introduced by allowing one of its leading advocates to speak for himself. The Rev. Jerry Falwell, pastor of the 10,000 member Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, and founder of the fundamentalist political action group Moral Majority, has stated:

«Anyone who truly believes in the Bible sees Christianity and the new state of Israel as inseparably connected. The re-formation of the state of Israel in 1948 is, for every Bible believing Christian, a fulfillment of Old Testament and New Testament prophecy.»²

Rev. Falwell's comments provide a succinct statement of the fundamentalist Christian Zionist position. One should add that the position is buttressed by a strong program of political action which attempts to mobilize Christians on behalf of the government of Israel.

Fundamentalist Christian support of political Zionism is in no way a new phenomenon in history. Western Christian fundamentalist support of Israel has its roots in an old theological concept called premillennialist dispensationalism. Strictly speaking, this tendency developed in Europe during the nineteenth century, but its roots can be traced to the Protestant Reformation and Jewish Apocalyptic thought. Today, Christian Zionism is a movement within western fundamentalist and Evangelical Christianity which is developing its own leadership, institutions, and a clear political agenda.

Glossary of Terms

First, it is important to review several of the major concepts and terms that are used within Christian fundamentalist circles.

Evangelical: This umbrella category covers a broad spectrum of theological beliefs, churches, and organizations. In much of Europe and the Middle East, the term «Evangelical» refers to the historic churches of the Protestant Reformation, among whom are Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Reformed, and low church Anglican. In North and South America, and to a certain extent in Africa and Asia, the term Evangelical has an entirely different meaning. In the West, Evangelicalism is a movement within Protestant Christianity which emphasizes the «born again» experience, the Bible as the infallible Word of God (which is often interpreted literally), a strong program of personal evangelism, and expectation of the imminent Second Coming of Christ. Most Evangelicals will agree on these essential doctrines but there is a wide diversity of interpretations and the addition of certain nuances by the different Evangelical groups. In addition, it should be added that there are strong Evangelical movements within most mainline Protestant denominations, both in England and the United States.

In America, there are at least three distinct trends within western Evangelicalism. First, the progressive wing is represented by such journals as «Sojourners» and «The Other Side». It is a small but influential group. They hold the above theological positions but add a strong program of social justice. Second, the

«Center» or Evangelical Establishment, is the largest grouping, representing perhaps 65% of all American Evangelicals. Their major representative body is the National Association of Evangelicals which claims over 30 denominations in its fold with its own mission, program, and service agencies. Third, the Fundamentalist wing represents approximately 25% of the whole and is also the most visible. Having a near monopoly in television and radio evangelism, they are also the fastest growing body in western Christendom.

Evangelicals account for approximately sixty million people in the United States. In recent years, they have moved into strategic leadership positions which range from the Presidency and Congress to big business.³ The Fundamentalist branch of the American Evangelical movement is the most conservative in its theology, ethics, and politics. It is also the most active of the three wings. Most fundamentalist Christians, though not all, subscribe to the premillennialist theology, and therefore one finds the Christian Zionist tendency is most active within this grouping.

Dispensationalism: Dispensationalism is an attempt to take the whole of God's history and explain it in specific epochs. According to its leading spokesperson, C.I. Scofield; «a dispensation is a period of time during which humanity is tested according to some specific revelation of God.»⁴ The modern doctrine claims that God has two distinct parallel processes in history: one works through Israel and the second through the Church. Most dispensationalist approaches use seven dispensations which denote a progression in God's relationship to humanity. The present dispensation is number six, or the «Church and Grace Era». It will end when Jesus returns to establish his millennial Kingdom (Age Seven). The Church will be «raptured» from history and Israel will resume its primary role as God's instrument during the last days. According to the two key Biblical passages which are used to justify this belief (Daniel 7-9 and Revelation 16) there will be a Messianic restoration of David's throne for 70 weeks after the rebuilding of Jerusalem. One particular group of dispensationalists, the premillennialists, will be a special focus in this paper as they interpret all of God's history with a focus on the end time.

Millennialism: It is important to note that three fundamentally different positions exist concerning the millennium. «Premillennialism» derives its name from the belief that Jesus Christ will personally return to earth before establishing a Kingdom wherein He will reign for 1000 years and at which time the Gospel will be proclaimed to all creatures. «Postmillennialists» believe that after the Gospel is preached to every creature, Jesus will return to establish His Kingdom. This view has been the traditional approach of most western Evangelicals since the Reformation, but it has lost ground to the premillennialists in recent years. The last view, «Amillennialism», interprets the idea of the millennium as symbolic and does not subscribe to a literal interpretation.

Premillennialists are subdivided into two distinctively different traditions. The «Historic Premillennialists» claim the return of Jesus and establishment of the millennial kingdom is a historic position in Christianity and point to Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, and many others as having adhered to the position. On the other hand, the

«Futurist Premillennialists», or «Dispensationalists» (as we will refer to them in this study), are a recent tradition, emerging primarily in the nineteenth century through the work of John Nelson Darby, C.I. Scofield, and many others. The modern doctrine of fundamentalist Christian Zionism developed in the «Futurist Premillennialist» tradition, although there are many who crossover into the «Historic» camp and other evangelical traditions.

The Anti-Christ: Premillennial dispensationalists believe that history will deteriorate rapidly until the «Anti-Christ» gains control of the world. This concept is taken from Daniel 9, and refers to a new manifestation of Satan who will attempt to rule the world through One World Government, sometimes thought to be the United Nations, NATO, etc. This version of the Anti-Christ doctrine has drawn considerable speculation throughout history. Recent analysts suggest a number of possible identities for the figure, including the Pope, Lenin, Hitler, or Khomeini. According to the premillennialists' interpretation of Revelation 16:16, the Anti-Christ will be destroyed at the Battle of Armageddon.

The Tribulation and the Last Days of History: As life on earth deteriorates, a period of «tribulation», or reign of terror, will be directed by the Anti-Christ against all who do not submit to his control. The timing of the Tribulation again leads to groups of pre-, mid-, and post- tribulationists, depending when the Church is believed to be raptured from history. Premillennialists point to Daniel 7 and 9, I Thessalonians 4-5, and Revelation 6-20 for Biblical sources of this doctrine. Despite the arguments of premillennialist thinkers such as Hal Lindsay and John Walvoord, the majority of Biblical scholars find insufficient basis for these doctrines in the Bible and clearly little support in historic Christianity.⁵

The Roots of Fundamentalist Christian Zionism

Fundamentalist Christian Zionism has its roots in the doctrines of premillennialist dispensationalism. Although there are some indications of an early form of the dispensationalist doctrine in the New Testament, there is insufficient basis to claim the doctrine is Biblical. It is therefore necessary to understand premillennial dispensationalism before analyzing Christian Zionism.

The Development of Premillennialism

The actual roots of premillennial dispensationalist doctrine lie in Jewish apocalyptic thought, particularly that which emerged after the Babylonian Exile. The Book of Daniel includes an apocalyptic eschatology which was filled with images of the end times, and various concepts of the evil powers who are interpreted as the Anti-Christ in premillennialist literature. Jewish apocalyptic thinkers believed they were living in the last days of history and God would intervene to rescue the faithful from the «final battle». These views became popular in Palestine during the Maccabean Era and grew in influence until the Bar Kokba Revolt and Massada Massacre (131 B.C. – 135

A.D.). The Qumran Community, which produced the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Essene Movement of Jesus' time were strongly apocalyptic and held primitive forms of premillennial dispensationalism.⁶ Many scholars believe John the Baptist and some of Jesus's disciples were at one time associated with the Essene movement and the Qumran Community.⁷

Several sayings of Jesus (Matthew 24:1-25; Luke 21:20-24); of St. Paul (I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 5:1-11); and the Book of Revelation are apocalyptic in imagery and style. This is not surprising given the popularity of apocalyptic literature in Palestinian Judaism between 200 B.C.E. and 150 A.D. However, there is no developed doctrine of premillennialist dispensationalism anywhere in the Bible. In fact, this approach to theology virtually disappears in the early second century and with few exceptions returns only during periods of social and political upheaval. Further, there is no explicit support for Christian Zionism in the New Testament. On the contrary, Jesus and Paul opposed the Zealot and Judaizing tendencies. Acts 1:6-9 presents an account of the Disciples asking Jesus to restore the Kingdom to Israel. Jesus' response is instructive: «It is not for you to know the times or seasons God has fixed within His own authority». In Galatians 3-4 Paul argued against the Judaizing tendencies in the Early Church and stated clearly that «in Christ» all people are equal, implying that the promises of the Old Covenant do not supercede the New Covenant.

The Montanist Controversy (170-190 A.D.) challenged the church with a highly developed premillennialist dispensationalism. The early Christian apologist Tertullian became a Montanist and gave the doctrine some credibility in Asia Minor and North Africa. The doctrine was rejected as heresy by several bishops in the early churches by the year 200.⁸

Beginning in the late Middle Ages one can trace the revival of Jewish apocalyptic thought with clear teachings on the revival of Israel as a political entity, dispensationalism, and Jewish millennialism. The mystical Jewish tradition Kabbalism became the vehicle for this type of theology. An early Kabbalist who took this position was Jacob Halevi who lived in Spain and later settled in Jerusalem (1074-1135 A.D.). After the King of Spain dispersed the Jewish community in 1492, small communities of Kabbalists developed throughout Europe and in Palestine. The Kabbalists had a profound influence on Christian humanists, such as Johannes Reuchlin and Hugo Grotius, contemporaries of Martin Luther. Reuchlin encouraged Reformation theologians to emphasize the study of the Old Testament and he introduced many Reformers to the apocalyptic doctrines of Kabbalism.⁹

The Sixteenth Century Protestant Reformation placed a heavy emphasis on the Bible, making it the primary authority in Christian faith and practice («Sola Scriptura»). The second generation of Reformers claimed individual believers had a right to interpret the Scriptures as the Holy Spirit led them. As a result, a plethora of interpretations began to emerge after the Sixteenth Century, and various approaches to ecclesiology developed. Amidst this popularization of Biblical interpretation and decentralization of the church, there was ample room for aberrations to enter as acceptable Christian doctrine. As a corrective measure the second generation of

Lutheran and Calvinist Reformers introduced a rigid style of Bible literalism. Contrary to the early Church and its debate with the Montanists (when the Church ruled the doctrine was heretical), the post-Reformation climate was now ripe for it to enter as an acceptable alternative viewpoint.

Meanwhile, in England, there was an old tradition of viewing the Old Testament stories as prophetic hero passages which were fulfilled by the British people. Some theologians saw Britain as the New Israel and the English people as one of the lost tribes of Israel (British Israelism). Others utilized the Old Testament imagery in literature or as a political platform. This development accelerated during the Puritan Era and Cromwell Experiment, but as early as 1585 one finds a British clergyman, Rev. Thomas Brightman, calling for the restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. In 1615 a British Member of Parliament, Sir Henry Finch, called upon the government to support Jewish restoration in Palestine. Finch's teachings had a profound influence within an elite circle of parliamentarians, lawyers, literary figures, and clergy.¹⁰

Following the Cromwell Era, the teachings of fundamentalist Christian Zionism declined somewhat until the period following the French and American Revolutions. These events shook Europe and created once again a political and spiritual climate in which the doctrines flourished. A partial reason for the attraction of this view was the belief that God would rescue the faithful at the end of history through divine intervention («deus ex machina»).

British Premillennialism and Christian Zionism

The above developments paved the way for premillennialist dispensationalism to become systematized as a theological tradition within Protestant Christianity in the west. At the same time, it forged a direct theological link with the conceptualizing of a modern Jewish state as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. England became the center of this tendency which grew in influence after the year 1800.

The first major figure in this movement was Rev. Louis Way, who became the Director of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews in 1809. Through his efforts, the Society became a major force in articulating Christian Zionist doctrines, including the restoration of the Jews in Palestine. Approximately ninety years before the World Zionist Congress, his teachings and the Society's popular journal, «The Jewish Expositor», had a considerable effect upon several Members of Parliament, clergy, and writers such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge.¹¹

The second figure in the modern development of Christian Zionism in England was the Honorable Henry Drummond, a member of the British House of Commons for more than a decade. Drummond surrendered his political career after a trip to the Holy Land and dedicated his life to fulltime teaching and writing on Christian fundamentalism and its linkage to Jewish restoration in Palestine. He also convened a series of conferences at his Albury Estate during the period 1826-29 which consolidated the essential outline of premillennialist dispensationalism with a clear theology of Christian Zionism.¹²

Perhaps the most important popularizer of the premillennial dispensationalist doctrine was John Nelson Darby (1800-82), who left the Church of Ireland to establish the Plymouth Brethren. He emerged as the systematizer of premillennial dispensationalism and created the doctrine of the «Rapture», based on 1 Thessalonians 4:5-11. Darby also became the missionary of premillennial dispensationalism, making seven visits to the United States and Canada after 1867. His visits combined with his influence in the Bible and Prophecy Conference movement accelerated the popularity of the doctrine and its ready acceptance in American fundamentalist circles. The teachings had a significant Christian Zionist component.¹³

Lord Shaftesbury, a prominent British Evangelical social reformer, who did more than anyone in his day to rid England of slavery and repressive child labor practices, was also an ardent premillennialist and campaigner for Jewish Restoration. He was also somewhat anti-Semitic in his outlook toward Jews, preferring to see them settle in the Holy Land rather than in England.¹⁴

The most political of the British Christian Zionists was the Rev. William H. Hechler (1845-1931). Chaplain to the British Embassy in Vienna and an enthusiastic supporter of the early father of Zionism, Theodore Herzl. Hechler provided important political support and contacts for Herzl during this crucial period and lobbied for Zionist causes for nearly thirty years.¹⁵

The framer of the important Balfour Declaration of 1917, which gave Zionists the opening they needed to create a Jewish state in Palestine, was also a premillennialist and Christian Zionist. Lord Arthur Balfour was predisposed to the Zionist position; his meetings with both Theodore Herzl and Chaim Weitzman found near agreement, in part because Balfour had adopted a fundamentalist Christian Zionist position at a relatively early age. He too favored the settlement of Jews in Palestine rather than in England and was known for his anti-Semitic attitudes.¹⁶

The tradition of British fundamentalist Christian Zionism has waned, yet its influence remains within small circles. Several members of staff at the International Christian Embassy-Jerusalem and authors within the Christian Zionist phenomenon are British.

Premillennialism Blossoms in America

From 1735 to 1775 the dominant view among American Evangelicals and revivalist preachers such as Jonathan Edwards was postmillennialism. All taught the Second Coming and personal conversion. Many saw America as the New Israel which was called to bring the world to belief in Jesus Christ, thus ushering in the New Kingdom.¹⁷

From 1800 to 1850 an emphasis was placed on the holiness doctrine and millennialism. In the 1840's, a teaching called Millerism swept the east coast of the United States with many adherents selling their belongings to meet Jesus in

1843.¹⁸ The broader Great Awakening and emphasis on revivalist preaching and Biblical prophecy prepared the way for Darby and the premillennial dispensationalist doctrine to take hold following the turmoil of the Civil War period (1860-1865).

During the period from 1867 to 1920, the important Bible and Prophecy conference Movement provided a significant forum for Darby and other premillennialists to articulate their views. By the late 1880's premillennial dispensationalism and a form of Christian Zionism were widely adopted by American Evangelicals and many leaders within mainstream Protestantism (Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, etc.)¹⁹

The major American figure to popularize a political form of Christian Zionism was William E. Blackstone, author of the best-selling book «Jesus Is Coming» in 1881. He organized the first American lobby effort on behalf of the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine. Six years before Theodore Herzl convened the World Zionist Congress, Blackstone initiated an intensive campaign, gathering support from U.S. Senators, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and such business figures as John D. Rockefeller, Charles B. Scribner, and J.P. Morgan. The campaign called upon then President Benjamin Harrison to call for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. Blackstone also had contact with Herzl. When the Zionist leader began to discuss with the British government the possibility of establishing a Jewish state in Uganda or Argentina, Blackstone sent him a Bible with all passages referring to Israel and Palestine underlined, with clear instructions to the effect that only Palestine must be the site of the Jewish state.²⁰

The most important instrument of spreading the premillennial dispensationalist doctrine, and as such, Christian Zionism, was the publication of the Scofield Reference Bible in 1909. C.I. Scofield created an edition of the Bible with notes and commentary based upon the premillennial dispensationalist approach. It quickly became the favorite edition read by American Evangelicals and the new fundamentalist movement.

By World War I, premillennial dispensationalism was the approach to Biblical eschatology among American Evangelicals. They took their name and doctrinal program from a series of pamphlets published between 1910-1915 which was titled «The Fundamentals» and distributed free across the United States. Both Evangelicals and fundamentalists supported the doctrine that the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine would fulfill certain Biblical prophecies, but the average believer did not reflect upon the Biblical and political presuppositions and ramifications of such a position. The premillennial dispensationalist approach began to grow in many mainstream Protestant denominations, particularly at the level of the laity and in conservative circles of the clergy.

The Revival of Fundamentalist Christian Zionism in the 1970s-80s

Christian Zionism was neither a movement nor a well developed system of theology in American Evangelical or fundamentalist circles until the mid-1970s although both circles generally accepted the essential premises of Christian Zionism. However, the birth of Israel in 1948 was, for most Evangelicals and fundamentalists, confirmation that their premillennialist doctrine was correct and that Jesus' return was near. Israel's lightning victory in 1967 and its capture of Jerusalem provided further proof that they were in the last days. Billy Graham's father-in-law, L. Nelson Bell, wrote in the major Evangelical journal «Christianity Today»:

«That for the first time in more than 2000 years Jerusalem is now completely in the hands of the Jews gives a student of the Bible a thrill and a renewed faith in the accuracy and validity of the Bible.»²¹

Soon books such as Hal Lindsay's «The Late Great Planet Earth» became best sellers, placing both a premillennialist and Christian Zionist position in the form of a best-selling paperback and motion picture. By the early 1970s there was an explosion of publications and television evangelists who proclaimed a form of Christian Zionism within the premillennialist doctrines, including predictions of events during the last days.²² By 1976 a religious and political marriage was consummated between American Zionist organizations, Israeli leadership, and fundamentalist Christian Zionists.

In 1976-77, four events occurred which accelerated American Christian Zionism as a political phenomenon:

1. — Menachem Begin and his Likud Bloc came to power in Israel in 1977 on a revisionist Zionist platform which utilized Biblical concepts.

2. — In the United States, a triangular political force developed among neo-conservative political theorists, the Israeli lobby, and fundamentalist Christians. They found general agreement existed on many domestic and foreign policy issues, particularly the priority of Israel. The Israeli lobby recognized that the fundamentalists could be a key to develop political support from the 50-60 million American Evangelicals.

3. — In 1976, Jimmy Carter, a «born again» Southern Baptist Sunday School teacher, was elected President, drawing heavily on the Evangelical and fundamentalist vote. Carter, however, upset the Israeli lobby and fundamentalist Christians when he called for the creation of a Palestinian homeland, thus beginning his loss of support from the above voting blocs.

4. — The Israeli lobby and Christian Zionists initiated a national campaign against Carter's support of the Palestinians and began to publish a series of full page advertisements in major American newspapers. This enormously costly campaign, which took a clear premillennialist Christian Zionist approach, was titled «Evangelicals' Concern for Israel». Several major American fundamentalist leaders signed the advertisement, including the entertainer Pat Boone, Dr. Vernon Grounds

(President of the Conservative Baptist Seminary), Dr. Kenneth Kantzer (President of Trinity Divinity School), and others.²³

In the 1980s the election of Ronald Reagan to the Presidency of the United States ushered in a significantly pro-Israel era with several members of the President's Cabinet holding the premillennialist perspective. The President himself subscribes to the premillennial dispensationalist theology, according to statements and interviews he has given over the past two decades.²⁴

In October, 1983, Mr. Reagan told the chief Israeli lobbyist, Tom Dine, the following view which was reported in the press:

*«You know, I turn back to the ancient prophets in the Old Testament and the signs foretelling Armageddon, and I find myself wondering if – if we're the generation that is going to see that come about. I don't know if you've noted any of those prophecies lately, but believe me they certainly describe the times we're going through».*²⁵

The nature of this conversation was instructive as well, for the President had telephoned Dine to thank him for the efforts of the Israeli lobby to secure votes in support of the U.S. military presence in Lebanon. A few days later 279 U.S. Marines died in the tragic attack on their compound near the Beirut Airport.

In another conversation, the President and Senator Howell Hefflin of Alabama struck a similar theme. The Senator reported:

*«We got off into the Bible a bit. We were talking about the fact that the Middle East, according to the Bible, would be the place where Armageddon would start. The President was talking to me about the Scriptures and I was talking a little to him about the Scriptures. He interprets the Bible and Armageddon to mean that Russia is going to get involved in it».*²⁶

Here we see one of the major attractions of the premillennialist-Christian Zionist scheme. The role of Israel in the premillennialist scenario, as by Hal Lindsay and others, is to defeat «Russia» according to their reading of Ezekiel 38-39 (Gog and Magog), Daniel 9, Revelation.²⁷

It is still too early to discern what direction the politicized Christian Zionists will take in the post-Reagan era. The decline of Pat Robertson's Presidential candidacy and recent scandals involving certain televangelists indicated there may be a «pulling back» by the pro-Israeli lobby and a desire to recover the Catholic and mainline Protestant churches. Recent pressures placed upon the Roman Catholic Church during the Pope's U.S. tour (September, 1987) and upon Protestant denominations indicate there may be such a plan. These developments bear further analysis, particularly concerning the fundamentalist Christian Zionists, who still represent a major bloc of votes and political power in the United States.

The International Dimension of Fundamentalist Christian Zionism

Here we will concentrate on one organization, the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, (ICEJ) which is a self-proclaimed Christian Zionist institution and one which has an international vision for the promotion of this doctrine.

The ICEJ opened its doors in West Jerusalem on 30 Sept. 1980, with a ceremony attended by Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek and representatives of the Begin government. Its purpose was to establish an «embassy» in Jerusalem for the Christians of the world who would bring comfort and support to Israel and its policies. The timing of the opening was designed to offset the effect of several embassies withdrawing from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv in protest against Israel declaring Jerusalem as its «eternal capitol».

The ICEJ is based upon a Christian fundamentalist approach to the Bible and utilizes the premillennial dispensationalist approach, which sees Israel as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy and the return of the Promised Land to God's Chosen People.

According to their literature and to spokespersons, the role of the Christian is to offer comfort and support to the Jewish people and the nation of Israel. A promotional brochure 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 newborn 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 for Jerusalem in all its aspects, that Jerusalem one day will truly become a praise in all the earth and a herald of a new day to all mankind: to care that the worldwide body of Christ will be rightly related to Israel in comfort, love and prayer for her wellbeing: 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».*²⁸

The Embassy engages in a number of projects which appear to have close collaboration with Israeli political leadership. Among these are: lobbying (particularly in the United States), promotion of Israeli products, sale of Israeli bonds, annual rallies such as the Feast of Tabernacles, lobbying for Soviet Jews to settle in Israel, blood donations for the Israeli Defense Forces, writing in the secular press to defend Israeli political positions, promoting Christian Zionism in the West.

The ICEJ is particularly active in the following countries: the United States, Canada, England, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. In these countries the Embassy has opened branch offices called «Consulates» from time to time. From these bases the ICEJ mobilizes political and financial support to continue its activities.

In August, 1985, the Embassy organized the First Christian Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in the same hall in which Theodore Herzl convened the First

Zionist Congress in August, 1897. The platform adopted at the 1985 meeting was highly politicized in support of Revisionist Zionist principles and was clearly consistent with the lines of premillennial dispensationalist thought.²⁹

The Second Christian Zionist Congress held its meeting in Jerusalem, 10-15 April, 1988, to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the founding of Israel. The convention speeches, declaration, and political strategy were all designed to advance a highly politicized fundamentalist Christian Zionism which is consistent with the policies of the Israeli government.³⁰

The Churches of the Middle East and «Christian Zionism»

The following section briefly examines a number of theological and practical issues fundamentalist Christian Zionists raise for the churches in the Middle East. As indicated above, these issues can be addressed to Christians in Europe and North America as well. They jeopardize the identity, presence, and witness of Christianity where the Church of Jesus Christ was born and has continued for nearly 2000 years.

The peculiar Zionist tendency in Christian thought represents the most recent outside intrusion into the region. Churches that have been living the Christian faith in an unbroken continuity since the Pentecost consider this tendency as anathema to the Christian faith. The International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, which embodies Christian Zionism in the region, by sanctifying Revisionist Zionism, has allowed little room for Christian principles to become an incentive for justice in the region.

There are over 12 million Christians throughout the Middle East, the vast majority of whom are from the ancient Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches. They, together with the Catholic, Anglican, and National Protestant Churches, are now participants in the search for church unity in response to Christ's prayer that they be «One» (John 17:21). As they give witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a region fraught with violence, economic hardship, and rapid social change they expect that Christian initiatives from outside the region respect their life and particular vocations in mission and service. The International Christian Embassy-Jerusalem (ICEJ) does not recognize this reality and considers that the churches of the region are spiritually dead and can therefore be ignored.

In response to the Christian Zionist Congress in Basel, organized by the ICEJ in April, 1985, the Middle East Council of Churches cited the overt political nature of the meeting as having compromised basic Christian principles. The MECC Executive Committee stated:

«Conscious of responsibilities towards the Christian community and world public opinion, we emphasize that, in spite of many religious references, this meeting had an overt political character: we condemn the misuse of the Bible and the abuse of Christian sentiments in attempt to sacralize the creation of a state and legitimize the policies of a government».³¹

For the above reasons the Christian participants at the Basel, Switzerland meeting have adopted the Zionist principles that are based more on Israeli political and military policies as signs of prophecies in the Arab world than on authentic Christian Biblical faith. This makes them absolutely unable to recognize through any suffering people the sign of the liberating cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. As such, they represent the consistent tendency to force the Zionist model of theocratic and ethnocentric nationalism upon the Middle East. The dislocation of Palestine and disintegration of Lebanon are recent by-products of this trend. Fundamentalist Christian Zionism encourages this trend and at the same time it rejects the movement of Christian unity and inter-religious understanding which is promoted by the churches in the region.

The Christian Zionist program, with its elevation of modern political Zionism, provides the Christian with a world view where the gospel is identified with the ideology of success and militarism. It places its emphasis on events leading up to the end of history rather than living Christ's love and justice today. The Christian Zionist tendency is, therefore a dangerous reduction of the Christian faith and one that would advance the political cause of a state or particular people at the expense of other people within God's creation, even the living church.

The history of millenarian movements, from the Montanist Controversy of the second century to the American televangelists of today, present serious misunderstandings of the Bible and half-truths which must be rejected by the Church. The churches of the Middle East bear the burden of coping with this western intrusion, which undermines their long history of witness and living the faith in a largely Muslim world. However, the churches of the west must recognize Christian Zionism as their responsibility as well, and join the Christians of the Middle East in portraying a correct interpretation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and role of the Christian in these societies.

Appendices

Declaration of the First International Christian Zionist Congress Basel, Switzerland, 27-29 August 1985

Preamble

We delegates, gathered here from many different nations and church backgrounds, in the very same hall where, 88 years ago, Dr. Theodor Herzl and the assembled delegates of the first Zionist Congress, laid the foundation for the re-birth of the State of Israel, have come together to pray and seek the Lord, to acknowledge our tremendous debt to Israel (the People, the Land and the Faith) and to show solidarity with her. We realize that today, after the terrible suffering the Jews have experienced, they still face similar hateful and destructive forces.

As Christians we realize that the Church too often failed the Jews in their long history of suffering and persecution. We unite here in Europe, 40 years after the end of the Holocaust, to show our support and to speak up for the state whose birth was prepared here. We say «Never again» to the forces which would bring a new holocaust upon the Jewish People.

First, we speak to our fellow Christians: Let us divest ourselves of any pride or anti-semitism, hidden or open, toward the Jews. Then let us support the Jewish People with heartfelt love, faith and action, in light of what the Bible teaches of God's eternal covenant with His People and His Land.

Second, we congratulate the State of Israel and her citizens for their many achievements in the short span of less than four decades. We exhort you to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might as you face the many obstacles ahead. We also lovingly implore you: please try to realize more clearly and to acknowledge more openly that it's the hand of God, as prophesied in your Holy Scriptures, which has restored the Land and gathered in the Exiles, not just the strength of your own hands. Finally, we call upon every Jew throughout the world to consider making aliyah to Israel, and upon every Christian to encourage and support their Jewish friends in this freely-taken but God-inspired step.

Third, we speak to the nations which are friends of Israel but whose policies totter between true support and political expediency. We ask you to establish your embassies in Jerusalem, to emphasize the age-old link of the eternal Jewish People with their God-given city, and to recognize Judea and Samaria as part of the Land.

Fourth, we warn the nations hostile to Israel, including the Arab nations (except Egypt) and the Soviet Union, to stop the obstruction of peace in the Middle East.

We also ask the U.S.S.R. to let all Soviet Jews emigrate to Israel, starting with the 400,000 who have requested exit visas, without any further delay, and to grant full religious liberty to all Soviet citizens.

Fifth, we ask nations which have not done so, to recognize Israel diplomatically, to support her internationally, and to oppose any blacklist or boycott against her.

Sixth, most importantly and urgently, we pray for the coming of the day when all peoples in Israel, throughout the Middle East and around the world, truly will live in peace and safety as the Lord has prophesied.

Seventh, we hereby formally adopt the following resolutions of the Congress:

Resolution No. 1: No Concessions to the U.S.S.R. While Soviet Jews Cannot Go to Israel.

The Congress hereby asks that all Bible-believing Christians strongly urge their national and state governments, and the instrumentalities of such governments, not to make or extend any treaties or other international agreements with the U.S.S.R., Ethiopia, Syria, or other such nations until they agree to allow their Jewish citizens freely to emigrate directly to Israel, the only national homeland given specifically to the Jewish people; and to grant to their Jewish, Christian and other minorities full religious, cultural and linguistic rights.

The Biblical privilege, right – and for certain Orthodox Jews the duty – to emigrate to Israel is distinct from, but consistent with other God-given human rights: to be united with one's family, to be free from physical and psychological persecution, and to be able to practice one's religion freely. We invoke all of these in our demand at the Soviet Union, Ethiopia, Syria and other such states, «Let My People Go», and respect religious rights.

We say most forcefully to Chariman Mikhail Gorbachev, and the leaders of these other nations which have blocked Jewish emigration: you must «Let My People Go!» or you will receive no trade or aid in food, high technology or other goods and services you need, and you will not receive the relief from the arms race which is sapping your national productive strength.

We demand that all Soviet Jews who wish to emigrate be allowed to, even if they number over 2.5 million, including all the so-called «disidents», «refuseniks», and «prisoners of Zion», without such barriers as exit fees, military or security hold-ups, or ties to recalcitrant family.

We say to the U.S.S.R.: the Jewish people are not mere pawns in the East-West struggle. They are the Apple of God's eye. You cannot be blessed but will be cursed, as was Pharaoh, until you let them go freely straight to Israel. The question is not whether East or West, communism or capitalism, are more attractive and desirable. We hold forth not the lure of a more affluent Diaspora in the West, but God's heart call to a promised inheritance in Israel.

We beseech President Reagan at the upcoming Summit, and all Western leaders, to insist on this new Exodus as a precondition to any agreement with the Soviets, except, of course, preliminary agreements to ensure free emigration.

We ask Israel to specifically invite all members of the Jewish Family in the U.S.S.R. «to come home» and to make ready for this new Ingathering.

Resolution No. 2: Israel Must Reach Out and be Accepted Internationally.

The Congress respectfully encourages the State of Israel and its citizens to participate fully and proudly in every international organization and undertaking which may benefit it, its citizens, or other nations and their citizenry. Israel, in a profound sense, is a Light to the nations when it brings the wisdom and understanding it has achieved in many realms, founded on the study of the Holy Scriptures, reaching from the exploitation of the Earth's agricultural and other resources to the exploration of outer space, into these deliberations. This should be extended from the U.N. system and its specialized agencies, to every regional body of which Israel by right should be a part – Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Southern European, and to vital bilateral efforts. So, too, in the critical areas of non-governmental organization, artistic, business, cultural, environmental, scientific, and technical, sports, student, labor and others, Israelis have done much, but can participate still more.

We further strongly urge our respective governments and non-governmental organizations, directly and through the U.N. system and through other inter-governmental and non-governmental entities, to insist that Israel and Israeli non-governmental organizations are received as equal partners in all acts and deliberations, and that our national delegations walk out or otherwise show strong displeasure should others try to block Israel's participation.

Resolution No. 3: All Nations Should Recognize Israel.

We urge all of our national governments to accord full diplomatic recognition to the State of Israel, and most specifically request that the Vatican State, Spain, the U.S.S.R., and the Soviet Bloc countries, as well as the Arab Bloc and the Third World countries move expeditiously to do so, as a long overdue right of a nation whose birth was formally recognized by the U.N. General Assembly, and as a matter of common decency on the part of nations which themselves have received recognition.

Resolution No. 4: All Nations Should Recognize Judea and Samaria as Belonging to Israel.

The Congress declares that Judea and Samaria (inaccurately termed «the West Bank») are and by Biblical right, as well as international law and practice, ought to be, a part of Israel; that Israel should so declare them to be; that the nations and peoples of the world should so recognize them to be, de facto and de jure; and that, as with other epochs of Israeli history when the status of other parts of the Land were in doubt, we trust in the Lord and in the God-given wisdom of Israel's citizens, to resolve, justly and peaceably, the means by which Israel will continue to be both a free, democratic state and a Jewish State, with full ethnic, political, racial, religious and cultural rights for all its citizens.

Furthermore, as a tangible expression of support for Israel's efforts to settle Judea and Samaria, we call upon our home communities and congregations to be «twinned» with communities in Judea and Samaria and to contribute to the establishment of parks, forests and recreation areas there.

Resolution No. 5: All Nations Should Move Their Embassies to Jerusalem. The Congress recognizes the unequivocal status of Jerusalem, the city of David, as the eternal and undivided capital of the nascent State of Israel, urges every nation to so recognize it as such; specifically urges each nation to locate its embassy there; applauds Israel's scrupulous protection and respect, by law and in practice, for the rights of each cultural and religious minority within Jerusalem for their institutions and recognized holy sites; and congratulates Mayor Teddy Kollek and all the citizens of Jerusalem for helping make Jerusalem «a praise in all the earth.» (Ps. 62:7) In no other city has the Lord said He would place His name. Having reached the end of Jerusalem being downtrodden under the Gentiles (Luke 21:24), and having seen the fig tree (the figure for Israel) spoken of by Jesus (Luke 21:29-31) blossoming, the nations of the world which see themselves as Christian ought to line up with the Word. It is not too daring to suggest that our national embassies, despite security measures, will suffer assault and terrorism, until we recognize Jerusalem by putting our embassy there; as we give proper respect it shall be given to us.

Resolution No. 6: All Friendly Nations Must Desist from Arming Israel's Foes.

We urgently demand that nations friendly to Israel cease and desist from supplying any arms or weapons to any nation in a state of war with Israel or which refuses to honor legitimate requirements of existing treaty obligations with Israel. We mean by this that the free nations of the world, including the U.S.A. and the nations of Europe, should provide no arms or weapons to the nations in a state of war with Israel, or even to Egypt unless she fully honors her treaty obligations to establish normal relations with Israel, including trade and tourism.

Resolution No. 7: All Governments Must Stop Entertaining Terrorists. We most forcefully deplore the shameful tendency of some of our governments to give aid, comfort and recognition to the PLO (and its related entities), a recognized terrorist organization which has sworn a covenant to destroy Israel and her People;

because the Word says, «I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him that curses thee.» (Gen. 12:3). Surely aid, comfort or recognition to the PLO constitutes a curse to Israel – as well as one which periodically, like the viper that is the PLO symbol, turns its terror on supporters and friends. While we favor discussion by Israel and other nations with all peaceful nations and groups which recognize Israel, we call for the ostracism of the PLO, Israel's sworn enemy.

Resolution No. 8: We Condemn Anti-Semitism in all its Forms.

The Congress condemns anti-semitism in every form and shape and requests all individuals, governments and non-governmental organizations, to refrain from, to condemn, and by every legal means, to expose, censure and punish any incidents of anti-semitism (anti-Jewishness) in any form including anti-Zionism and anti-Israel activity, whether by word or by deed. In this regard Christians should be quick to defend Israel and her leaders against any slander, slurs, misstatements and untruths, in the media and elsewhere.

Resolution No. 9: We Remember Past Anti-Jewish Atrocities and Resolve «Never Again».

This Congress resolutely faces the history of the Crusades, the pogroms, and the Holocaust, recognizes that they contained the vile seeds of hate which led to vicious outbreaks of anti-semitic and anti-Jewish activity, as well as terror to other peoples and groups; recognizes that these were perpetrated by persons, nations and organizations calling themselves by the name «Christian» but clearly not embodying the love of Jesus for all persons and especially for His own People, the Jews; and vows, while counseling love, forgiveness and hence healing, for all whom the Lord gives grace, never to forget what so-called Christians did in these epochs, to the shame of the Gospel and so-called Christian civilization, and never to let such atrocities – or the pernicious lies upon which they were built – to recur unchallenged.

Resolution No. 10: We Encourage Resettlement of Refugees from Israel and Seek Justice for Jewish Refugees.

Recognizing the plight of the Arab refugees from Israel in 1948, and at other periods, most of which we know was the result of Arab leaders' calls to clear the battlefields of friendly civilians and to deprive the Jewish homeland of its Arab population, this Congress calls upon the Arab States, the United Nations (especially U.N.R.W.A.), its member states and private groups, to provide by all means for absorption and permanent resettlement of these refugees in the lands to which they have fled, as has been the historic right of refugees (for example, in Europe in the aftermath of W.W. II, and in the Indian subcontinent, in Africa and in S.E. Asia more recently). We also call for justice for the Jews from the Arab countries who lost their family members, homes and property through persecution, and were forced to seek refuge in Israel and other countries.

Resolution No. 11: Let us Help Israel Economically and Create an International Christian Investment Fund.

Recognizing the great need for economic development in Israel today, we, the assembled delegates, commit to do all we can to encourage the import and purchase of Israeli goods and services in our home countries, and, the investment of private capital in Israel.

In this latter respect, we commit to do all we can in our home countries to create an International Christian Investment Fund, with a goal of one hundred million dollars to be invested in the development of Israel, for example, in high technology industries and in tourism.

Resolution No. 12: All Nations Should Bar Compliance with Anti-Israel Boycotts.

This Congress demands that every nation which has not yet done so, as well as the European Economic Community, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and other such bodies, shall enact the strongest possible legislation barring any compliance by private persons or companies with the Arab trade boycott against Israel and with any boycotts in international sports or other areas. Furthermore, we ask that all Christians and others of good will refuse to comply with any such boycotts.

Resolution No. 13: We Call Upon the W.C.C. to see Biblical Link of the People and the Land.

The Congress respectfully asks the World Council of Churches in Geneva to recognize the Biblical link between the Jewish People and their Promised Land as well as the deep Biblical and prophetic dimension of the State of Israel.

Resolution No. 14: Pray for the Coming Kingdom of the Lord.

We pray and eagerly await the day in which Jerusalem and the mountain of the Lord will become the center of mankind's attention when our Lord's Kingdom will become a reality (Micah 4:1,2).

Declaration of the Second International Christian Zionist Congress, Jerusalem, 10-15 April, 1988

We, the delegates of the Second International Christian Zionist Congress, assembled in Jerusalem, the eternal capital of Israel, April 14, 1988, on the eve of the 40th year of Israel's independence, hereby proclaim the sovereignty of God, the infallibility of His holy word: That His redemptive plan will ultimately bring peace and blessings to the Middle East and all of mankind, according to His eternal covenant promises made to Israel. Christian Zionism is Biblical Zionism, faithful to the holy scriptures, and declares the fulfillment of His prophetic purposes, culminating in the return of the Messiah to Jerusalem.

Therefore, we understand from the scriptures that God loves His people and has vested in them the responsibility and right to possess and build up the promised land, and to govern the inhabitants thereof in accordance with His word.

Therefore we declare:

- Our love for Israel and the Jewish people.
- Our affirmation of the biblical right of the Jewish people to live freely in the entire land of Israel; including Judea, Samaria, and Gaza as a Jewish state.
- Our encouragement of the return of all Jewish people from the diaspora to the land in response to God's persistent and loving call expressed by His prophets.

We call upon all nations to recognize and respect the sanctity of God's promise to the Jewish people in giving them the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession and at the same time His special promises to all the seed of Abraham.

We challenge the church to repent of any past and present anti-semitism, any doctrines which replace or deny the scriptural reality of the existence of Israel, and any sins of commission or omission against the Jewish people. (1 John 1:9&10)

And we call upon the church:

- To fast and pray diligently for the peace of Jerusalem,
- To intercede for Israel, her inhabitants and all Jews everywhere,
- To express love and support for Israel and the Jewish people in thought, word and deed as the Lord gives guidance (Isaiah 58, Isaiah 62:6&7, Joel 2:15).

We recognize:

That the Arab nations have been granted their own great and eternal promises, for example, as found in Genesis 17:20 : «and as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall be beget, and I will make him a great nation.» and Isaiah 19:24 & 25.

We therefore call upon:

The Arab leaders of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, the leaders of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, and those of the other Arab nations, to recognize Israel's right to exist.

We Entreat the Arab leaders of Judea, Samaria and Gaza to meet with Israeli leaders face to face, as requested by Israel, without interference, intermediaries or preconditions, in order to resolve the current conflict in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, and to ensure that the rights and responsibilities of the inhabitants of these territories are maintained.

We Encourage Israel, in accordance with the scripture to grant political, economic and cultural rights to all of Judea, Samaria and Gaza who agree to loyally assume their concomitant rights and responsibilities without violence (Ezek. 47:22, P. 37:7)

We affirm:

That the future of Israel as a free Jewish state is dependent upon the grace of God as evidenced through such revitalizing measures as:

- The settlement of uninhabited portions of the land;
- Concerted economic development;
- The stimulation of a Jewish population growth by:

Encouragement of Aliyah (Isaiah 43, Jeremiah 31);
 Discouragement of emigration;
 Cessation of abortion (Isaiah 49:5, Exodus 20:13) and
 Prayer, fasting, and repentance unto the Lord.

We the congress delegates:

Exhort all nations to recognize Israel diplomatically and to locate their embassies in Jerusalem, to help Israel in all ways and thereby receive the blessings of God for blessing Israel: and to refrain from economic boycotts, denial of Jewish cultural rights, religious repression of Jews and any resistance to the right of Jews to return to the land of Israel (Genesis 12:3). We want them to demand that the USSR, Syria, Ethiopia, Sudan, Iran, and all other countries oppressing Jews immediately release them to return to the land of Israel (Isaiah 43:5, Jeremiah 16:14-16); and likewise that all countries culpable of persecuting Christians for their faith to desist immediately.

As a congress:

We are appalled by and denounce the inordinate use of power by much of the media to influence world opinion negatively in their reporting of recent news events in Judea, Samaria and Gaza and historically in their treatment of Israel's domestic and foreign policy. We require the media to be accountable to a high standard of reporting: accurate, responsible, unbiased, contextualized and equitable.

We implore all Christian Zionists to be aware of and take a stand against media abuses as forms of anti-semitism and anti-zionism. We must repudiate all such inaccuracies at national and local levels. (1 Cor. 2:10-13).

We the congress delegates:

- Are convinced that God's inescapable call upon nations to refresh and comfort Israel includes investment and other forms of economic support (Isaiah 40:1);
- Encourage such support of Israel (Romans 15:27);
- Recommend the establishment of an economic task force, under the auspices of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, to research, develop and report on such possibilities as bank deposits and investment in Israel, encouragement of Israeli entrepreneurship, buying and selling Israeli products worldwide, and donations to charities: In consideration that, at this critical juncture in Israel's history Christians, Arabs and Jews must create an economic partnership to ensure that Israel not only will survive, but thrive economically.

In the firm assurance that:

- «When the Lord shall build up Zion He shall appear in His glory» (Psalms 102:16);
- «The forces (wealth) of the gentiles shall flow unto thee» (Is. 60:9); God is combining the talents of accumulated untold years of wisdom in business to focus on the vision of building up Zion; and Christian investors should be the first to take the risk and point the way for the nations.

Finally we, as a congress and as individuals, resolve:

- To return as ambassadors to our respective countries to proclaim the celebration of Israel's 40th anniversary, recognizing that a new era has begun in the history of God's chosen people.

We resolve:

- To increase our efforts to stand behind the Jewish people in Israel and worldwide, recognizing our debt to them;
- To declare our convictions to leaders of our nations, to media representatives, and to church leaders;
- To combat anti-semitism in all its insidious forms; and
- To pray and intercede without ceasing for Israel and her people, our beloved heritage and future (Jer. 50:2).

Endnotes

1. There are three types of Christian Zionist tendencies: the Christian fundamentalist, Roman Catholic, and mainline Protestant. In addition, the category philo-semitism in an umbrella term referring to all Gentile «lovers of the Jews» (the Greek word «Philo» = love).
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3. Timothy Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1983); pages 5-6.
4. *The New Scofield Reference Bible* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1967): page 5.
5. John Walvoord, *The Rapture Question* (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing Company, 1957): pages 41-50.
6. See John C. Trevor, «New Hope for Planet Earth», (Unpublished paper by The Dead Sea Scrolls Project, Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, California; 1987). Also, D. S. Russell, *The Message and Meaning of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London: S. C. M. Press, 1964); pages 17-18; and Louis Hartman and Alexander DiLella, *Daniel* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, The Anchor Bible Series, 1978); pages 16 ff.; Sibley Towner, *Daniel* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984); page 31 ff.
7. See A. DuPont-Somer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1962); page 371; and H. H. Rowley, *From Moses to Qumran* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963) pages 144 ff.
8. Timothy David Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Survey* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); page 137; and R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm*, (Oxford University Press); page 46.
9. Solomon Rappaport, *Jew and Gentile: The Philo-Semitic Aspect* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1980); pages 106-110.
10. See Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983); and Regina Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism* (London: Zed Press, 1983); page 19.
11. Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970); page 42.
12. *Ibid.*, page 42.
13. George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford Press); page 43.
14. Tuchman, *Ibid.*, pages 115-116.
15. «The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem», Introductory Pamphlet, (ICEJ: P. O. Box 1192, Jerusalem, Israel); page 15.
16. Christopher Sykes, *Two Studies in Virtue* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Press, 1952); page 193.
17. Robert Handy, *A Christian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); pages 5-23.
18. Marsden, *Ibid.*, page 42.
19. Sandeen, *Ibid.*, pages 39-43.
20. *Ibid.*, page 19.

21. L. Nelson Bell, Editorial, *Christianity Today*, (July 21, 1967).
22. Pat Robertson, *Pat Robertson's Perspective*, February-March, 1980 (Virginia Beach, Virginia); page 2.
23. «Evangelicals Concern For Israel», Advertisement, *The Christian Science Monitor*, (November 3, 1977; Also The Chicago Sun-Times, (November 9, 1977).
24. See Hassan Haddad and Donald Wagner, *All in the Name of the Bible* (Brattleboro, Vermont: Amana Press, 1986); pages 29-36.
25. As reported by Wolfe Blitzer, *The Jerusalem Post* (International Edition, 28 October, 1983); page 1.
26. Haddad and Wagner, *Ibid.*, page 31.
27. Hal Lindsay, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1970); pages 59-71.
28. Material taken from three pamphlets: «How Christians Can Help Israel in 1982.» And «The International Christian Embassy-Jerusalem», and «Comforting Israel Today», (Jerusalem: International Christian Embassy, P. O. Box 1192, Jerusalem 91010 Israel).
29. «Declaration: First International Christian Zionist Congress», «Basel, Switzerland, August 1985.
30. «Comforting Israel Today». *Ibid.*, pages 2-6.
31. Executive Committee, The Middle East Council of Churches, 16-18 April, 1986, MECC, P. O. Box 4259, Limassol, Cyprus.
32. *Ibid.*