

American Christian Zionism and U.S. Policy on Settlements in the Palestinian Occupied Territories

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Spring 2009

"If America forces Israel to give up the Golan Heights or the West Bank (Judea and Samaria), it will clearly violate scripture. We are giving the enemies of Israel the high ground in the coming war for Israel's survival. It's time for our national leaders in Washington to stop this madness."

Reverend John Hagee
President, Christians United for Israel
In Defense of Israel, 2007

Foreword

This research is the culmination of spending nearly 2 years living and working in different aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Living with the Mhassan family, who fled from Ramallah to Amman, Jordan during the 1967 war, shaped my passion for the conflict, as I saw several aspects of the Palestinian Diaspora experience in my time abroad from September 2007-June 2008.

The past academic year has been focused on the American political connection to the conflict, experienced through my time interning at the American Task Force on Palestine and the Foundation for Middle East Peace. These experiences have been critical to my development as a student and as a researcher, and I can say certainly that without these experiences, this research would not have happened.

In the course of this research, I have received great help from people on all sides of this issue, and without them, this paper would not be the piece it is today. Sondra Baras and Kim Troup from CFOIC made themselves available for interviews and graciously explained their organization and their work for me. Hussein Ibish of ATFP oversaw preliminary research on the topic, and Ambassador Wilcox and Geoffrey Aronson from FMEP were actively involved in the academic formulation of this paper, as was my academic advisor Boaz Atzili.

That being said, this work is my own. I take responsibility for all content presented herein.

**-E.K. Lauer
April 27th, 2009**

*Dedicated to the memory of Mary Eliza
Graydon, who was a great friend and of
innumerable help to me in the research and
writing of my capstones.*

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Introduction

For millions of political actors in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is not the newspapers that shape their understanding of the conflict. It is not UN resolutions, nor policy papers put out by the dozens of think tanks and NGOs who work to raise awareness on the issue. It is instead something written thousands of years ago with disputed authorship. In the book of Genesis, Chapter 12, God tells Abraham “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” That quote is at the core of the Christian Zionist movement, one that has grown strong over the past 50 years to become a political and cultural force, tying the United States and Israel together.

Christian Zionism has been described by its supporters as a plethora of things, but the most central of these beliefs is that the Bible has absolutely given the land called at various points ‘Mandatory Palestine’, ‘The Holy Land’, ‘Eretz Israel’ and other names to the Jewish people.¹ For those who question Christian Zionism, this means support to Jewish claims to all of modern day Israel, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, rejecting any Palestinian claims to the land.² For this movement, the covenant that Abraham made with God in Genesis is legally binding, and is still valid in the present time. The biblically-based belief has been the most basic tenet of the Christian Zionist movement, although many other theologies and beliefs have worked their way into what most understand to be the modern ideology.

Christian Zionism has a long history dating back to the 17th century and predates the Jewish Zionist movement associated with Theodore Herzl in Europe at the end of the 19th century. Attempts to understand the movement and study its religious justification,

¹ Chavets 10

² Ateek 13

societal support and political influence have been limited; those who do not self identify as Christian Zionists have rarely written about the subject. This has changed in the past five years, marking the rise in importance of the movement. Under the Presidency of George W. Bush, Christian Zionism became an important part of the myriad connections that bind the United States and Israel together, meriting a full study of its supporters, tactics and successes in shaping U.S. policy towards the Middle East.

It is for this reason that I undertake this research nearly three months after the inauguration of President Barack Obama. On the surface, it appears that a dramatic power shift has occurred, as Christian Zionists have lost their biggest advocate in President Bush. The Republican Party has been associated with the Christian Zionist movement, as has the evangelical movement, indicating to many that the fall of the right wing Republicans from power will also indicate the end to Christian Zionism as a political lobby.

I argue that Christian Zionism as a movement has a history much longer and much more varied than many recognize, and that their political model and actions have facilitated a growth in activists far from Washington and traditional centers of political power. The Christian Zionist lobby does not draw its power from K Street, but rather, from Main Street. The grassroots organizing of the movement and the emphasis on individual connections to the land of Israel has been very successful and will continue to be successful. The movement's focus on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories has been the most visible of its outreach efforts and the most important deviation from American foreign policy. I do not mean to argue that Christian Zionism is the only force

shaping U.S. policy in the region, but rather, it is a force that is out of line with past and present views of the U.S. government.

To argue my case, I will first begin with a brief literature review of previous scholarship on Christian Zionism and United States foreign policy. Following the literature review, I will outline and detail the important facets of Christian Zionism through American history, spending time on the Blackstone Memorial in particular. I will then move to a study of the political entities that Christian Zionism has created to further its movement, specifically Christians United for Israel (CUFI) and the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem. This will be followed by a study of Christian Zionist support for Israeli settlers in the West bank and Golan Heights, through organizations like Christian Friends of Israel Communities (CFOIC), that have specifically targeted the final status negotiation topic of settlements as the most critical and most relevant to Christian Zionists. A detailed study of the settlement movement will follow, tracing the history of settlements and external support for them. I will then move to study how American Presidents and their administrations have handled settlements, given their own personal backgrounds in Christian Zionism. This will then lead to my concluding statements on the future of Christian Zionism within the U.S. policy circle in the post Bush era of American politics.

Understanding Christian Zionism as a part of the American political ideologies that have always shaped policy towards the Middle East is a critical step to any peacemaking efforts that the United States might undertake under President Obama. The movement's ability to work outside of governmental structures has made it a force without any oversight, and while it has been included in previous discussions of

American support for Israel, primarily in the 2007 study The Israel Lobby, I argue that its reach and its actions in establishing ‘facts on the ground’ merit an in depth study of the movement and its methods. I do not mean this to be the definitive study of Christian Zionism in U.S. foreign policy, but instead I offer this as a starting point for addressing and understanding the relationship, through the example of settlements.

Literature Review

Over the past 10 years, much has been written about the Christian Zionist movement. It has been addressed on television programs, mainstream magazines, and dozens of books and journal articles. This collection of literature spans from the believer’s manifesto to conspiracy theories on Christian Zionism’s plan to take over the world. The lack of balance or academic neutrality exhibited in the resources on this issue is frustrating, and one of the reasons that I undertook the research: to comb the sources that warn of Armageddon, Christian takeovers of the world and the “weird and wonderful Judeo-Christian alliance,”³ and produce a more cohesive and more inclusive study on the subject at hand. I will first profile the secondary sources of the more prolific Christian Zionist literature, and then move to more modern literature from the movement, before concluding with the literature written about the movement by outside sources

The cornerstone of American Christian Zionism is Jesus is Coming: God’s Hope for a Restless World, by William E. Blackstone, published in 1878. Blackstone’s work focuses on the biblical prophesy from the Old and New Testament, and his work reads as a jagged citation of the many times that the return of Jesus Christ is predicted within the Bible. In the chapter “Israel Is To Be Restored”, Blackstone argues that the scriptures

³ The title of Zev Chafet’s book on this issue

predict a permanent restoration of the Jews to the land of Israel. This was revolutionary at the time, as Muslim empires had maintained power over Jerusalem and the land of Israel for more than 1000 years.

Blackstone's theological basis comes from Psalm 102:16, which he quotes as "When the Lord shall build up Zion, *He shall appear in His glory*" (emphasis Blackstone).⁴ Blackstone argued his case clearly and simply, allowing for his work to be widely distributed in the United States and abroad. He concludes his section on the Restoration by saying "I could fill a book with comments about how Israel will be restored, but all I have desired to do was to show that it is an incontrovertible fact of prophecy, and that it is intimately connected with our Lord's appearing."⁵

Of the two other important secondary text of Christian Zionism, Hal Lindsey's The Late Great Planet Earth stands out as a text whose timing was impeccable. Released after the 1967 war, which many Christian Zionists mark as a clear time of prophecy fulfilled, the book points to Nasser's rise to power among the non-aligned nations and the potential rise of Ancient Babylon (modern Iraq) as signs that the apocalypse and end times are nearing.

A complement to Lindsey's book is the 1999 book Are We living in the End Times?: Current Events Foretold in Scripture...and What They Mean by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, the authors of the hugely popular Left Behind series. Both books use the idea of an Armageddon scheme and overlay it with current political events, marking the restoration of Israel as one of the first critical signs that will lead to the end of days.

⁴ Blackstone pg 174

⁵ Blackstone pg. 175

While LaHaye and Jenkins took a more prophetic and abstract route in their most successful literature, it was Reverend John Hagee's work that changed the face of Christian Zionist literature. In his overtly political In Defense of Israel: The Bible's Mandate for Supporting the Jewish State, Hagee uses both scripture and the political environment to argue his case. It is not just God's command in Genesis 12:3, but the rise of Islamic terrorism that makes Christian and American support for Israel a critical need. Hagee argues against the history of Christian Anti-Semitism, and also devotes time to the "Christian debt to the Jewish people," for passing along the scriptures.

Hagee's other book Jerusalem Countdown lays out a pessimistic view of the future, cloaked in current events and the fear of Iranian nuclear capability. Hagee's more prophetic writings here read as a combination of Lindsey and LaHaye and Jenkin's literal readings of the Book of Revelations and the front page of the *New York Post*, seeing God's hand in the most recent events that have shaken American society.

The complement to Hagee's work comes from David Brog, the Executive Director of Christians United for Israel, Hagee's organization. Brog wrote the 2006 book Standing with Israel: Why Christians Support the Jewish State, detailing the modern history of the movement as well as focusing specifically on the political partnership between the two and the Jewish community's response to Christian Zionist support for Israel. Brog also makes a point of introducing himself as a Jew, giving Reverend Hagee the chance to write in the foreword that "[Brog] encourages his fellow Jews to break free from their fixation on past traumas and embrace their Christian allies who fight anti-Semitism as passionately as [Jews]."⁶ The book's main argument is that the alliance

⁶ Brog pg xi

between Israel and American Christians, while new and slightly uncomfortable for both sides, is a legitimate one that should be further developed, not doubted like in the past.

The rise of Hagee and noticeable shift in rhetoric pushed for more analysis of the movement, leading to the 2004 publication of On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals became Israel's best Friend, by Timothy Weber. His work is very skeptical of Christian Zionists, noting that “they shifted from observers to participants...they ran the risk of turning their predictions into self fulfilling prophecies.”⁷ Weber gives a wide variety of examples of Evangelical-Israeli cooperation, but is very clearly skeptical of Evangelical intentions in this partnership. Weber's work is followed similarly by Victoria Clark's Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism and Stephen Spector's Evangelicals and Israel: The story of American Christian Zionism. All three provide a useful frame of reference, and Clark's book is especially interesting in her ‘undercover’ work traveling with Christian Zionists to Israel

Another reactionary text to Hagee and the rise of the movement was the 2005 compilation Challenging Christian Zionism: Theology, Politics and the Israel-Palestine Conflict, published by the *Sabeel* Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem. It is the result of their fifth annual conference. The authors note in the foreword though, that in 2004, there was enough research to “merit a public exposure of this ‘heresy’.” The book provides a wide range of the opposition to Christian Zionism, including the words of prominent Palestinian Christians and includes a piece on Christian Zionist political power in the United States.

⁷ Weber pg. 15

For historical background on this movement and its importance to the forming of American Christianity and the political process, there are several sources that contextualize the movement and show its roots to be much deeper than many suspect. Gershon Greenberg's The Holy Land in American Religious Thought, 1620-1948 gives an academically sound background to the topic of American perceptions of the Holy Land, in contrast with British dispensationalism as well as in the context of missionary work of the 19th century. He provides a framework for understanding Blackstone's work, and the environment in which it was received. Greenberg also offers insight on the belief of "America-as-Zion" that many Puritan pilgrims brought with them to the colonies, framing American Christian interaction with the idea of a Jewish Zion.

Paul Charles Merkley's book The Politics of Christian Zionism 1891-1948 details the long history of the movement, spending time on important subthemes like the Cyrus complex (something that I explore in greater detail later in the research) and Blackstone's political actions in the 1880s and 1890s. Michael Oren's complete history of the United States in the Middle East, Power Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present traces American interaction with the Holy Land back to the beginning, and it was his insightful work on Blackstone that jumpstarted my own interest in the subject.

Paul Richard Wilkinson's For Zion's Sake: Christian Zionism and the Role of John Nelson Darby serves as a broader study, covering a few important topics for this paper: how Christian Zionism is tied to the idea of the land, and the perception that evangelicals take of authors like Stephen Sizer who question their beliefs. Wilkinson's book has a clear pro-Christian Zionist slant, perhaps best signaled through the endorsement of Tim LaHaye on the back jacket of the book.

In addressing the core issues of settlements, I have turned to several texts that remain the standard for research on the issue: Gershon Gorenberg's The Accidental Empire, Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar's Lords of the Land: The War over Israel's Settlements in the Occupied Territories, 1967-2007, David Newman's collection The Impact of Gush Emunim: Politics and Settlement in the West Bank, and Robert Friedman's book Zealots for Zion: Inside Israel's West Bank Settlement Movement. Some of the more recent analysis can be found in the Report on Israeli Settlements, issued bimonthly by the Foundation for Middle East Peace, written by Geoffrey Aronson.

The issue of settlements and American Christian Zionist support for settlements is an entirely separate set of literature, one that focuses more on publications from the organizations themselves. Few authors have studied this aspect of American Christian Zionism in detail, and as such, I rely heavily on the smaller studies completed in the texts mentioned above.

Colin Schlinder's 2000 piece, entitled "Likud and Christian Dispensationalists: A Symbiotic Relationship" offers an interesting recent historical take on the relationship. Schlinder's piece makes many of the same points that I argue, although with a greater focus on the interactions with the American Jewish community. His piece concludes with some assessments of the future, under either Al Gore or George Bush, providing for an interesting study of what could have been after 2000. Schlinder's focus on Netanyahu's connections with the Christian Zionists specifically rings especially loud now, considering the most recent Israeli election.

The literature reviewed discussed some of the more important points discussed in the research that I conducted on various aspects of this conflict. We now turn to the

historic basis of these movements, appreciating the specific growth of American Christian Zionism.

From One Zion to Another: The History of Christian Zionism in the United States

The history of Christian-Jewish relations is a tense one; the 2,000 years since the time of Jesus Christ has been fraught with intellectual and theological debates attempting to define the relationship between the Jewish descendents of Abraham and the gentiles and Jews who chose to embrace the teachings of Jesus Christ and his disciples. In Paul's epistles to the Romans and other early church documents exploring the new relationship between the Church and the Jewish people, it is clear that the relationship was bound to be one with importance and many different opinions.

The first 1600 years of Christian-Jewish relations were not a golden time. History shows us records of pogroms, persecution and ghettos, and horrifying events like the Spanish Inquisition and other constant mistreatment of the Jewish Diaspora community within Europe. For our purposes though, the most important development was the 19th century development of Zionism, a political belief that there should be the establishment of a Jewish state. It was the time of Theodore Herzl, the leader of the Jewish Zionist movement, and of William Blackstone, the leader of the American Christian Zionist movement.

Christian Zionism is rooted in the writings of John Nelson Darby, a British Anglican Priest who is considered to be the father of Dispensationalism, an Evangelical movement within Protestant Christianity that deals with the eschatological readings of the

Bible.⁸ For American Christian Zionism, it was the religious scholars of Cyrus Scotfield and the Moody Bible Institute that provided the framework for political Christian Zionism. While this paper will not focus on their work, it is important to note them as theological forces that continue to shape the religious core of Christian Zionism. For this research, we start with Blackstone, the man who brought together Scotfield's bible, Moody's framework and Darby's beliefs, and infused it into the American political scheme.

William Eugene Blackstone was born in New York in 1841, into the Methodist Episcopal Church. He worked under General Ulysses S. Grant in the US Civil War, coordinating medical services for the injured. It was in this work that he met Dwight Moody, a leading figure in Chicago's evangelical community, and after establishing a fortune from his real estate business in the 1870s, he was able to focus towards the church and the growing Christian Zionism.⁹ His personal revelation occurred in 1878, after attending the Niagara Conference on the Jews' restoration to Palestine; following the conference, he sought to improve the status of Jewish immigrants in America.¹⁰ Blackstone followed in the dispensationalist view of history and Christ's involvement, and recorded his views and the scriptural support for his beliefs in the 1889 book Jesus is Coming, a manifesto for Christian Zionists in the 19th century. Blackstone wrote that there should be and will be a restoration of the Israelites (Jews) to the land of Palestine, and that they will rebuild Jerusalem. The Chicago Tribune described him at the time as "a gentleman of means and leisure. He has spent much time in the Holy Land, and is

⁸ Wilkinson pg 25

⁹ Sandeen pg 72

¹⁰ Oren pg 278

deeply interested in the ancient prophecies regarding the tribes of Israel, their predicted scattering and return to Jerusalem, and the fulfillment of these prophecies.”¹¹

Following the success of the book (which has gone on to be translated into 32 languages), in November of 1890, Blackstone used his status to organize a conference entitled “The Past, Present and Future of Israel,” which concluded with a petition. This petition was presented to President Benjamin Harrison and Secretary of State on March 5th, 1891, and became known thereafter as the Blackstone Memorial. The memorial called on President Harrison to call an international conference to “consider the condition of the Israelites and their claims to Palestine as their ancient home, and to promote, in all other just and proper ways, the alleviation of their suffering condition.”¹²

The argument was based in scripture, but featured a nationalist argument grounded in the current political feelings of the day. “Why shall not the powers which under the treaty of Berlin, in 1878, gave Bulgaria to the Bulgarians and Serbia to the Serbians now give Palestine back to the Jews?” Blackstone followed up the public petition with a private letter to President Harrison that began the phrase most repeated by modern Christian Zionists. Blackstone wrote that Harrison should take an interest in this subject, and “thereby receive to yourself the promise of Him, who said to Abraham, ‘I will bless them that bless thee,’ Gen. 12:3” The petition was signed by J.P Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, Charles Scribner, Supreme Court Chief Justice Melville W. Fuller and Congressman William McKinley, among the 413 other prominent figures of the time.¹³

The Jewish response to Blackstone’s work set the trend for the future; Blackstone’s conference and Memorial was met with public skepticism, with Rabbi Isaac

¹¹ “William Blackstone’s Proposed Christian-Jewish Conference Severely Criticised”

¹² Brog pg 100

¹³ Wilkinson pg 253

Moses saying “Jews were able and willing to tend to their own affairs, both worldly as well as spiritual...we [are] Americans in America and had no interest whatever in any scheme, plan, or hope of a future Jewish or Israel state.” Rabbi Moses also called for a Jewish boycott of the conference “if Mr. Blackstone feels bound to do something for Israel- past and present- that no self respecting Israelite will be present at the conference.”¹⁴

This reluctance to work with Christian Zionists and concern for what their ulterior motives are for working with Jews has shaped much of the Christian Zionist-Jewish relationship, and continue to frame the discussion to this day. Many Jews fear that Christian Zionists support a Jewish return to Zion as a precursor to the Rapture, an event in Christian eschatology that mandates either conversion or death for all non-Christians in the world. Many Jews argue that this approach makes Christian Zionists not real Zionists: they support a Jewish return to the land, not the Jewish people themselves. Christian Zionists have continued since the time of Blackstone to present themselves as true supporters of the Jewish people and of a Jewish state, but the uneasy relationship has been a serious detriment to any Jewish support for Christian Zionists.

The State Department’s response to the Memorial was equally skeptical; the US Consul in Jerusalem Selah Merrill wrote that “To pour into this impoverished country tens of thousands of Jews would be an unspeakable calamity both for the country and for the Jews themselves. When and where have they learned the art of self government? The quickest way to annihilate them would be to place them in Palestine...” The rise of Arabists in the State Department following the flow of American missionaries to the

¹⁴ “William Blackstone’s Proposed Christian-Jewish Conference Severely Criticised”

Middle East only further contributed to the belief that the return of the Jews to Palestine would be a disaster, for the Jews as well as the local peoples of Palestine.¹⁵

Blackstone's quick ascent to influence within the Christian community was only replicated by his equally quick descent; there was no mention of his death in 1935 in the *New York Times* or other major news sources of the time. When examining the historical record however, it is clear that several of the frameworks he provides for Christian support for Israel are still in use. His influence was such that Justice Brandeis wrote to Blackstone that "you are the Father of Zionism, as your work antedates Herzl."¹⁶ The Blackstone Memorial failed in garnering any public statements of support from the leadership of the time, including when he reissued the Memorial to President Wilson in June of 1917. Blackstone provided the movement, however, with its first political context, as well as a core base of future supporters. His book continues to be an important resource in the arsenal of Christian Zionist supporters, as it contains a listing of the biblical verses that Blackstone understands to predict a Jewish return to the land of Israel. Blackstone was in fact so set on the issue of the land that he highlighted the verses in a bible that indicate Jewish ownership, and sent it to Jewish Zionist leader Theodore Herzl.¹⁷ The Blackstone bible is now displayed in the Herzl Museum in Jerusalem, and in 1954, a forest in Israel was named after Blackstone, in recognition of his efforts towards a Jewish state.¹⁸

The next movement in Christian Zionism as a political force within the United States occurred during the presidency of the son of a Presbyterian minister, a man who

¹⁵ Merkley pg 72

¹⁶ Merkley pg 72

¹⁷ Weber pg 106

¹⁸ Merkley pg 60

grew up reading the Bible and attending chapel daily during his undergraduate time at Princeton. Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the United States, oversaw and tacitly approved the British release of the Balfour Doctrine, which stated British support for a Jewish National Home in the land of Palestine, provided that it not adversely affect the position of non-Jewish residents of the land, nor the civil rights of Jews in other countries around the world. This letter from Lord Balfour to Lord Rothschild is held as the defining document for the modern Jewish state, and also serves as a study of how personal Christian beliefs can shape leaders' decisions regarding the Middle East.

The role of Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour's 'Philo-Semitism', and how it shaped his personal beliefs, as well as Prime Minister Lloyd George's passion for the Jewish people, is an interesting one, as both men stated several times on the record about the biblical basis for much of their passion for the Jewish people. For Louis Brandeis, the Balfour Doctrine's success was due in part to Wilson's acceptance of Zionism, based on Brandeis' 'appeal to Wilson's deep Christian faith.' Wilson himself later celebrated his role, saying "To think that I...should be able to help restore the Holy Land to its people"¹⁹

The build up from the Balfour Doctrine in 1917 to the establishment of the state of Israel in May of 1948 has been the topic of thousands of books, but it was the United States recognition of Israel that sparks the next major case of Christian Zionist influence in the United States' political spectrum. The 1947 partition plan that was voted upon by the United Nations General Assembly was a controversial one; the international community waited anxiously to see if the Soviets would abstain or veto, and if the smaller states in the world had taken sides with the Arab states, who all opposed the

¹⁹ Brog pgs 112-118

partition. The United States took the lead in encouraging countries to support the partition: pressure from Washington changed the votes of Haiti, Liberia and the Philippines to reach the 2/3 majority needed to pass the plan.²⁰ The United States continued its activeness on the issue, and led much of the pro-partition community. When the British announced their intention to withdraw from Palestine in May of 1948, the Jewish Agency, headed by David Ben Gurion, made clear their intention to declare a Jewish state, and on May 14th, they declared the Jewish State of Israel. Within minutes, the United States became the first state to recognize Israel, with President Truman disregarding advice against recognition from the State Department and Secretary of State Marshall to take this action.

The Cyrus framework that Truman embraced in later years speaks much to his background and his approach to the founding of Israel. After his presidency, Truman was introduced to a gathering of American Jews, and was described as the leader who “helped create the state of Israel.” Truman quickly responded “What do you mean ‘helped create’? I am Cyrus, I am Cyrus!”²¹

Cyrus the Great was a Persian King in the mid 6th century BCE who is mentioned by name in the bible 23 times, as a deliverer of the Jews to their promised land. In the book of Ezra, Cyrus is quoted saying “He [God] hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” He ended their second exile in Babylonia, and is considered to be a great gentile friend to the Jews. In a meeting in 1949, the Chief Rabbi of Israel visited the White House, and told President Truman that “God put you in your mother’s womb so that you could be the instrument to bring about the rebirth of Israel

²⁰ Oren pg 430

²¹ Oren pg 501

after two thousand years.” The rabbi also told the President that “like Cyrus, [he] would occupy a place of honor in the annals of the Jewish people.”²²

Truman was well versed in the Bible, and by one account, it was his readings of the Old Testament that he believed the Jews drew their legitimate right to Palestine. He did keep his faith private, and was reluctant to use it as a justification for foreign policy. By embracing the Cyrus story, Truman cast himself as the leader of a new empire who has done the humane thing and returned people to their biblical mandate. He portrayed the United States as a world leader who has the power to dispense people where they see fit, and guarantees that the United States will continue its role within the region.

As the young country of Israel passed its first ten and 15 years, the country’s borders seemed more and more unstable. But one fateful week in June, 1967, that would all change. For Christian Zionism, the 1967 war that lasted but six days stands as a momentous occasion when Israel became the strong nation with defensible borders that many had dreamed of. Jerusalem had been united again under the Jews; for dispensationalists like Hal Lindsey, this stood as confirmation of his predictions as well as a harbinger of future Armageddon scenarios laid out in his book The Late Great Planet Earth.²³ The international community saw in Israel a strong country that was capable of defending itself against its hostile neighbors and actually defeating the neighbors. Israel had regained control of Jerusalem, and had also seized the lands known in the Bible as Judea and Samaria (the West Bank in modern terminology).

Time Magazine declared 1976 to be the “Year of the Evangelical”, recognizing the influence that the growing religious movement was having on American culture. This

²² Brog pg 122

²³ Brog pg 58

culminated with the election of Jimmy Carter, a self proclaimed evangelical who taught Sunday school and was well known to be a religious man. Carter's term in office is best remembered for the most sustaining American peace effort in the Arab-Israeli conflict. His work to negotiate a peace between Egypt and Israel did not concern the Christian Zionists greatly- there was no biblical significance to the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai was not traditionally included in the lands of Israel. Carter himself was not a Christian Zionist, and while he faced little opposition specifically from Christian Zionists, the pro-Israel community, both Christian and other, overwhelmingly supported his opponent in 1980, California Governor Ronald Reagan.²⁴

After a time of turmoil in Israel both in the 1973 Yom Kippur War and domestic politics in the 1977 election of the Likud government led by Menachem Begin, there was a reformulation of American Christian Zionist support for Israel. This movement was co-led by Jerry Falwell, an Evangelical pastor centered in Lynchburg, Virginia. Falwell established the Moral Majority in 1980, which called for a return to Christian values on four principles: opposition to abortion, support of the family, a strong American military and support for Israel. The group grew quickly, to six and a half million members by the 1984 election, managing to mobilize conservative Christians to enter the political scene as a voting block for Republican candidates.²⁵ The religious rhetoric came roaring back, as the US embraced the waning years of the Cold War as proof that God was on their side. Falwell wrote in a political manifesto in 1980 that "I firmly believe that God has blessed American because America has blessed the Jew. If this nation wants her...freedom to remain intact, American must continue to stand with Israel." In a survey

²⁴ Safire

²⁵ Brog pg 136

published in 1987, 35% of American Catholics and 57% of American Protestants agreed that they believed in a “prophetic interpretation of the events of 1948.”²⁶

Falwell and Begin’s personal relationship has been detailed by many, but it merits attention, as Begin awarded Falwell the celebrated Jabotinsky award, an act which the head of Reform Judaism condemned.²⁷ Begin helped shaped political actions by Falwell within the United States, and their personal connection helped unite Christian Zionists and Israeli politicians together for the first time. Due to the unlikely nature of their union, the political benefits of this connection was critical: it allowed for Falwell to have Begin’s ear, without going through governmental contacts.

The future of Israel became the most pressing issue to Falwell, and he celebrated that fact in his writings, saying “You can’t belong to the Moral Majority without being a Zionist” and that “To stand against Israel is to stand against God...I love the Jew because God loves the Jew.”²⁸ The organization faltered at points, but by marking support for Israel as a core value of the Evangelical movement, Falwell set a path of political support of Israel, not outwardly justified by Christian prophecy for the Armageddon. There has been much debate, though, about how much eschatological concerns play in for the average believer, but at the national organizational level, Falwell, Pat Robertson and others are careful to avoid any implications of Jewish conversion. Falwell led the newest generation of Christians, determined to keep God’s chosen people in possession of the land that was biblically promised to them.

Another heir to the work of Blackstone was Pat Robertson, a young televangelist at the time, who went to Israel in the 1970s, found himself tied to the idea of Jewish

²⁶ Smith pg 838

²⁷ Spector pg 148

²⁸ Epstein pg 131

ownership of the land, and made a promise to God that “I personally, and those organizations that I was in charge of, would stand for Israel.”²⁹ Robertson went on to found the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) which positioned him for political power and ample publicity, which he used to state his opinions on all issues related to Israel.

1980 also marked the establishment of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, a Christian Zionist entity that was established in “solidarity with the Jewish People’s 3,000 year claim and connection to Jerusalem.”³⁰ It has been a physical home to the Christian Zionist movement, and continues to work towards its goals to “Comfort Israel, Educate the Church, Celebrate God’s faithfulness, and Confront anti-Semitism.”³¹

The past 30 years have been an interesting time for Christian Zionism- while some organizations and individuals have grown dramatically, particularly Robertson and Falwell, American Presidents have generally stayed out of the frame. President Reagan made a few comments indicating his belief in prophecy in conversations with Tom Dine, then the director of AIPAC, saying “You know, I turn back to your 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.”³²

Its influence on domestic policy decisions decreased through the 1990’s as President George H.W. Bush took the strongest stance on Israel, tying US aid to the end of settlement growth, a policy that will be explored later in the context of settlement policy by the United States. President Clinton was warned in 1993 by his childhood

²⁹ Brog pg 139

³⁰ “About Us”

³¹ Ibid

³² Wagner

pastor that “God will never forgive you if you don’t stand by Israel,” but his policies did not reflect any significant Christian Zionist policies, particularly because it was during his time in office that peace seemed to be within reach for the region.

The greatest breakthrough in peace for the region came in 1993 with the signing of the Oslo Accords. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the PLO signed an agreement stipulating few details, but based on the premise that Israel would eventually withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, with the goal of a Palestinian entity. The PLO recognized Israel, and final status negotiation topics were set: Jerusalem, water issues and the future of the millions of Palestinian refugees across the world.³³ While most heralded this as the start of a true peace process, others saw this as a rejection of the biblical mandate given to the Jewish people, and thus, an affront to God and to Israel, the biblical entity. Christian Zionist organizations like Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC) were formed “in response to the Oslo Process, the devastating series of agreements that ceded land to the Arabs in the heart of Biblical Israel.”³⁴ The prospect of the land being divided horrified these Christian Zionists and Jewish Fundamentalists. God’s covenant was not an earthly gift that could be partitioned. Israel’s growing pains that came from the Oslo process and the struggle to find the future of PLO-Israeli relations dominated the next decade. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated for his role in the Oslo accords, and Israel’s government moved to the right, reacting to public fears of continued Palestinian suicide bombers. It took another seemingly divine event to bring American Christian Zionism back to the action in Israel. The horrific events of September 11th, 2001 drew dozens of prophetic

³³ Oren pg 575

³⁴ “Christian Friends of Israeli Communities”

claims, with people around the world trying to understand how such an awful attack could take place. Terrorism had hit the United States, and it was going to shape how the United States interacted with the rest of the world under President Bush's terms in office.

During this time of steps towards peace politically, there was a rise in Christian Zionism in the United States, but it had taken the form and venue that precluded it from direct government influence. In January of 1996, the book Left Behind was released by a small publisher, and within 10 years, it had spawned two dozen sequels or prequels, the series had sold 65 million copies and had spent time at the top of the *New York Times* Bestsellers list, even though religious bookstores do not report their sales to the *Times*. The book profiles a pre-millennialism and Dispensationalist understanding of the Apocalypse: the Rapture occurs, and those who are left have to fight the rise of the Anti-Christ before Jesus will come to save the people. Those who do not convert to Christianity die, and the final battles play out in Israel, as the predicted place of Armageddon. The book's popularity was only matched by its violent descriptions of the end times, and millions of Americans were then exposed to the messages that had been argued earlier by Hal Lindsey's Late Great Planet Earth. The books are apolitical, but their presentation of the rapture as an event likely to occur now, with the flight attendants suddenly gone from the airplane they were tending to, it had deep cultural influence in the wider Christian community³⁵. For many in this community, September 11th stood out as one possible pre-cursor to the events in the novel, as well as a justification for the militant Christianity that many have claimed finds support in LaHaye and Jenkins' work.

In the post 9/11 world, support for Israel became a much politicized issue- having a regional ally in the war against terror was critical, and Christian Zionist organizations

³⁵ Cloud

responded, with a new dedication to programming and political influence. An April 2002 letter signed by Jerry Falwell, John Hagee, Gary Bauer and other leaders was sent to President Bush, connecting American support for Israel, since “they attempt to defeat the same forces of terrorism that we have been battling since September 11th, 2001.” The letter also requested the end of American pressure on Prime Minister Sharon on the issue of the West Bank, because from their perspective, it was necessary to maintain security forces there. Israel’s West Bank incursion happened after several large suicide attacks in Israel, and Christian Zionists made their opinions heard on the matter. October 2002 also marked the first Stand for Israel event, where 16,000 churches and nearly 5 million Americans prayed for Israel. The fall of 2002 saw the first “Christian Solidarity with Israel” rally in Washington and Jerry Falwell quoted on *60 Minutes* saying “There’s nothing that would bring the wrath of the Christian public in this country down on this government like abandoning or opposing Israel in a critical matter.”³⁶

The Road Map for Peace began in 2002, led by the work of the Quartet: the United States, United Nations, Russia and the European Union. For Christian Zionists, this constituted “the battle for Jerusalem because Israel must withdraw from Gaza, then the West Bank, and finally East Jerusalem. For Christian Zionists, the thought of a divided Jerusalem is an anathema to their biblical belief. John Hagee says that “God has given Jerusalem *only to the Jews*” (original emphasis)³⁷ This opposition to President Bush’s policy came as a surprise to some, who saw President Bush a likely ally of the Christian Right on this and many other issues.

³⁶ Brog pg 145

³⁷ Hagee Jerusalem Countdown pg. 47

The most lightening rod of statements made regarding the Road Map was one made by Pat Robertson after Ariel Sharon, the Prime Minister of Israel, suffered a debilitating stroke. Robertson claimed that God had given Sharon the stroke in punishment for ceding part of the land given by God. There was great outrage after these comments, and Robertson later apologized, but his comments do indicate a very black and white approach to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict in the minds of Christian Zionists. The 2005 withdrawal from Gaza and from select settlements in the West Bank was seen by many in the international community as a serious step towards peace, but for hard line Zionists, both Christian and Jewish, it signified weakness and acceptance that Eretz Israel would never be achieved. Robertson found himself marginalized by this and many other comments, but it was important to see the international fallout from claims that God intervened in the conflict.³⁸

It is now time to turn to identifying the current political groups that are working within Washington and other policy circles to shape American policy towards Israel.

Current Christian Zionist Organizations

Identifying the organizations within Christian Zionism provides for an alphabet soup of sorts, with organizations like IFJC, CUFI, ICEJ, NCLCI, CFI, NUCFI, BFP and many others providing acronyms for all kinds. Some are entirely humanitarian groups, focusing on the plight of Jews in the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia. Other organizations are grassroots organizations that focus on encouraging support among individuals and churches in the United States. Still others are political organizations, organized for the purpose of affecting policy in the United States government. These

³⁸ Spector pg 150

political organizations are the most relevant to the research at hand, and thus, we will begin with identifying and exploring who these actors are. Some are preachers who have entered the political sphere; others are well established politicians who have become the public face and voice for Christian Zionism. I profile first the important political groups and then move to the non partisan groups who perhaps are even more important in the ultimate game of changing the facts on the ground.

International Fellowship of Christians and Jews

After the 1981 bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, Israel found itself with few friends in the International community. President Reagan condemned the action, as did several mainstream Jewish groups in the United States. Christian Zionists, however, defended the action, and Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein saw an opportunity to bring together evangelical Christians and mainstream Jewish groups over their support of Israel. He did this in 1983, starting the IFCJ. The organization floundered for the first few years, but after redirecting his focus to fundraising for Jews in Israel, Eckstein saw his power and his organization's profile grow. He has raised over \$100 million for Jewish immigration to Israel, using late night info-mercials to target the evangelical Christian donors.

Eckstein also began the "On Wings of Eagles" program, which financed the exodus from the former Soviet Union after the fall of Communism. This interesting pairing is reinforced by many evangelical understandings of biblical prophecy, predicting an exodus from the "lands of the north."³⁹ Eckstein's simple connection allowed Christians to support Israel in the best way they could, and also facilitated some connections between Jews and Christians.

³⁹ Brog pg 163

The most important political event for IFCJ has been the annual Stand for Israel conference, a two day convergence of Christian Zionists and other “Israel lovers.” Gary Bauer, a Christian Zionist political guru who worked in the Reagan administration, works as Eckstein’s consultant, helping bring together the right Washington policy makers to meet with the crowd of fervent pro-Israel Americans. In past years, speakers have included Tom DeLay, Rudy Giuliani, Rick Santorum and other Republican celebrities.⁴⁰ The organization has fallen from the height of its influence, but Eckstein’s role in showing Christian Zionists how to support Israel (financially) was a critical step in the American movement.

International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem

The issue of embassy location in Israel is a touchy one. While Israel has declared Jerusalem to be its capital, only two states recognized this: Costa Rica and El Salvador. The new capital contained lands that had been seized in the 1967 war, and while Israel formally annexed East Jerusalem in 1980, the international community boycotted this decision. The United States and all other countries maintain their embassies in Tel Aviv, with a small office in West Jerusalem for convenience. Christian Zionists have entered this political issue by establishing the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, described as “educating the Church about God's promises and purposes concerning the Jewish people and their national rebirth.”⁴¹ Former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir called ICEJ “a true friend of Israel” after its political lobbying on the issue of

⁴⁰ Chafets pg 175

⁴¹ “What We Believe”

moving the American embassy to Jerusalem in 1984, as the group testified in front of the United States House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee to make the case.⁴²

The political undertones of the group are clear in their website, as they detail their various goals for the future. Their position papers explain that they set out to help Christians and others “gain greater appreciation of the Biblical credentials behind the modern-day Jewish restoration to the land of their forefathers and its unique role in world redemption.” That language echoes much of the Christian Zionist literature from the 19th and 20th century, including the element of Jewish ownership and its importance in the end of days scheme (here represented by the phrase ‘world redemption’) as understood by the Dispensationalists. Some of their leadership has also been involved in promoting the restoration of the Jewish Temple, encouraging the destruction of Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem.⁴³

The largest programming event for ICEJ is the Feast of the Tabernacle, started in 1980 as a venue for Christian worship and prayer for Israel. It has grown to an event of 5,000 Christians from over 100 countries, and is organized with the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, creating a 10 day tour of Israel that presents a very right wing view of Israel. The Christian Zionist tourism industry grew out of this partnership, and continues to this day, allowing thousands of Americans to tour and see biblical Israel. The political power that comes from bringing in the amount of tourism dollars has grown, and it is the norm to see Israeli Prime Ministers and Mayors of Jerusalem speaking at the Feast of the Tabernacle conference every year. Ehud Olmert, the former Prime Minister and Mayor of Jerusalem said that the ICEJ marchers were “the most wonderful guests that this city

⁴² New pg 124

⁴³ Halsell pg 98

has” and Ariel Sharon, another former Prime Minister, addressed the economic impact of the visitors, said “Send more people like you to visit Israel” to the conference in 2002.⁴⁴

Much of ICEJ’s support is based in European dispensationalists, embodied in their founder Jan Willem van der Hoeven, a Dutch Christian who rivals Pat Robertson in ability to overstate and offend those who are not part of their cause. Van der Hoeven and his organization have invoked the “Jacob have I loved, but Esau I have hated” verse from the Bible to affirm God’s lack of interest in the Palestinian people, and the primacy of the Jewish people’s claim to the land.⁴⁵ He has also argued that if Israel divides the land, the divine retribution will be great. The current director, Malcolm Hedding has also stated outright that “There is no such thing as a Palestinian.”

The statements and actions of the ICEJ have proved to set the tone for many of the more recent political groups, albeit at a more international level. Its leaders argue for a Biblical Israel, at the expense of Palestinians, who have no claim to the land in the Christian Zionist interpretation. Divine punishment for those who give away God’s land is a very valid threat, and one that Israeli and American politicians are warned of by these organizations.

Christians United For Israel

The largest political organization in Christian Zionism was founded three years ago by Reverend John Hagee, Pastor of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas. The church has over 19,000 members, and Hagee himself is a popular televangelist, with his sermons airing on TBN and available for podcast on iTunes, among other publications and news. Christians United For Israel was chartered to “be a national organization

⁴⁴ Weber pg 217

⁴⁵ “ICEJ Response to Evangelical Letter to President Bush”

through which every pro-Israel organization and ministry in American can speak and act in one voice in support of Israel in matters related to biblical issues.”⁴⁶ Hagee himself has described CUFI as a Christian version of AIPAC, the noted lobbying firm that helps shape the political dialogue on Israel.⁴⁷ The organization’s executive director is David Brog, a former Chief of Staff on Capital Hill and executive at America Online who formally practiced corporate law in Tel Aviv. His connections within the Israeli community and within the Jewish community have given legitimacy to CUFI, which Brog has brought to great successes.

Hagee’s Zionism began in the form of “A Night to Honor Israel” something that he started in 1981 while Israel was under international pressure after the bombing of an Iraqi nuclear reactor. While his work started within the San Antonio area, in February 2006 he called out for a national organization of Christians dedicated to the security and future of Israel. CUFI’s organization has a state director for all 50 states, with nearly 4,500 Christians attending the 2008 Washington-Israel Summit. Former Keynote speakers have included Senator Joe Lieberman, Daniel Pipes, Senator Rick Santorum and William Kristol. CUFI also coordinates “A Night to Honor Israel” events across the country, including more than 80 in 2007. Working within the established network of Evangelical churches, Hagee’s organization has made serious inroads in only a few short years.⁴⁸

CUFI’s website details the Israel that Pastor Hagee sees in the Middle East. In his mind, it is a threatened country with radical enemies surrounding it and threatening its destruction. Iran stands as a serious threat for Israeli security and peace, and President

⁴⁶ Chavets pg 55

⁴⁷ Mearsheimer and Walt pg 134

⁴⁸ Brog pg 14

Ahmadinejad's nuclear intentions are listed as the biggest threat facing Israel, and it is the job of Christians in America to pray for Israel, and to do their best for Israel. The biblical injunction from Genesis 12 shapes much of Hagee's discussion, as well as Isaiah 62:1, which reads on CUFI's logo "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent."⁴⁹

CUFI's two goals, as detailed on its website are to educate Christians and build Support for Israel throughout America and secondly, to "communicate pro-Israel perspectives to our Elected Officials."⁵⁰ This dual goal allows CUFI to occupy the bridge between religion and politics effectively, bridging its members through theology and through political action. Hagee writes "If America forces Israel to give up the Golan Heights or the West Bank (Judea and Samaria), it will clearly violate scripture. We are giving the enemies of Israel the high ground in the coming war for Israel's survival. It's time for our national leaders in Washington to stop this madness."⁵¹

CUFI has also evolved into a loud, if not particularly important voice on the Iranian threat. Much of their rhetoric centers on comparisons to President Ahmadinejad to Adolf Hitler, within the context of Islamic radicalism. Their lobbying efforts center on several key issues: increasing foreign aid to Israel, containing Hezbollah in Lebanon and imposing sanctions on Iran for pursuing nuclear capability. The beliefs that CUFI has advocated have been at times the opposite of the Israeli government, leading some to describe CUFI as "out-likuding Likud", the right wing Israeli political party.⁵²

Christian Friends of Israeli Communities

CFOIC stands as the most important group for our study, because their charter is specifically on the issue of Christian Zionist support for settlements, the final status issue

⁴⁹ Hagee, In Defense of Israel, pg 84

⁵⁰ CUFI.org

⁵¹ Hagee, In Defense of Israel pg. 84

⁵² Spector pg 171

that Christian Zionists are most involved with. Building on the work of these prior Christian Zionist organizations, CFOIC was founded in 1995 by Ted Beckett, an active Christian Zionist who is based in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The organization is focused today on linking US churches with individual settlements (or communities) in the West Bank (termed Judea and Samaria in the eternal battle for word choice) and providing financial and moral support for these people. It has come in the form of refugee care for those expelled from Gaza in 2005, as well as in individualized projects that people can donate to, ranging from security needs like two-way radios to simple projects like playgrounds for children living in the territories. The organization has grown quickly, and has become the most important external organization involved in settlement growth in the Palestinian territories.

For some Christians, the thought of giving away ‘God’s Land’ through the Oslo process was too much. CFOIC was founded in this spirit, designed to address the needs of Israelis living in settlements. In 1998, the Israeli chapter was opened, headed up by Sondra Baras, an American Jew who, before making aliya, had been a lawyer in New York City, but who now lived in an Orthodox settlement in Samaria. Baras has become an advocate for the settlement community, appearing on several TV programs as the well educated representative of a growing margin of Israeli society. She also serves, like Rabbi Eckstein before her, as a Jewish link between orthodox Jewish communities and their Christian supporters.

CFOIC is designed to be a non-partisan group, working at the grassroots level to bring the money to where it is needed. The U.S. Director of CFOIC, Kim Troup, explained CFOIC as an organization who provides opportunities for individuals and

churches to contribute to the “Humanitarian Crisis in Judea and Samaria.” While it describes itself as nonpartisan and apolitical, many of its members are simultaneously active in CUFI and other, more political Christian Zionist organizations. CFOIC has working relationships with most other organizations, although current relations are strained with the ICEJ over battles for donors, a not uncommon occurrence in the non-profit field.⁵³ Relations are also strained with the local Christian community in Israel and Judea and Samaria, which Troup accounts to several factors: the Arab members of the Churches, the Churches’ ties to the Roman Catholic and Orthodox establishment, and their Pro-Arab and Anti-Israel sentiments.

Churches can sponsor individual villages, in the way that Christian Zionists donated to the village of Shiloh, commemorated with a plaque inscribed with the message “May God’s salvation come speedily and in our day.”⁵⁴ The issues of Christian eschatology and the eventual conversion of Jews in the end days are ignored on the most part, particularly by recipients of the aid, but the issue does arise as churches and individuals make overtones that are hard to miss. CFOIC has grown to be the “go-to” organization when Christian Zionists want to work in the Settlements; leaders from ICEJ, Bridges for Peace and CUFI uses Baras as a tour guide for the Occupied Territories. She is also a public face for the settler movement, using her American background to play the role of the approachable foreigner.

Baras has been a favorite point of contact for many evangelicals, because she represents a link to Judaism and to Jews who are comfortable and happy to work with Christian Zionists. The pragmatist in Baras is clear: she acknowledges that the two sides

⁵³ Interview, 9 Apr. 2009

⁵⁴ Clark pg 218

disagree on some issues (namely, the end of days), but their belief in the authenticity of the Bible, and the absolute truth in God's promise of the land of Israel to the Jewish people makes them natural partners on this issue. There are several issues that arise out of CFOIC's work matching up evangelical churches with practicing Orthodox Jews, but for her, the alliance is not impractical, nor dangerous, nor a push for Armageddon. Baras is a very skilled connector, bringing together the Christian funds from the United States, and the Israeli communities in the West Bank, ignoring many of the concerns on both sides regarding evangelizing.

Baras is very sure of her argument, and does not focus on converting those who do not support settlements. She can argue her case politically or religiously, which she does depending on the audience. As the face of the settlement movement, and its cooperation with Christian supporters, Boras presents an important view on the pragmatic nature of settlers. She and the Christian Zionists that she works for feel no need to make a case to non-believers; to them, it is clear that anyone who reads the Bible or the Torah will support their cause. As for the end of days topic, Baras is dismissive. Their future concerns don't need to shape the present reality. For her, it comes down to a simple belief. When God gave the land to Abraham, and confirmed his gift through the prophets "Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, and other prophets...it was all of Eretz Israel"⁵⁵ Christian Zionists and Jewish settlers agree on this, and work to make it a reality.

This has proved to be one of the most important characteristics of the Christian Zionist movement. While the Christianity associated with it is an evangelizing faith, Christian Zionists describe their views as an obvious conclusion for any person of

⁵⁵ Interview 3 Mar. 2009

Christian faith. There is nothing revolutionary about supporting Jews for these people; they blame the history of Christian Anti-Semitism on the Catholic Church, which they view with nearly as much disdain as non-Christians. Protestants have their own history of anti-Semitism, but for Evangelicals and Christian Zionists, many of whom do not identify with a larger religious group, blaming the established Christian churches is quite common.

The Commandment to Settle Israel: The History of Settlements

Negotiations for a just and lasting peace between the Palestinians and Israelis have been going on in some form or another since 1993, under the Oslo Accords. These accords are too often referred to as a peace treaty, when they are more accurately described as a framework for future negotiations. In the Oslo framework, the hardest and most contentious issues are marked for the future, as ‘final status’ topics. The issues of the Israeli Palestinian conflict are many: the fight for Jerusalem, the future of water resources, the future of the Palestinian Refugees scattered across the world and the stability and borders of the state of Israel are all issues that have sparked dozens of plans and approaches for finding peace. While Christian Zionists have opinions and influence on most parts of the conflict, there is one issue in particular that facilitates their passion and their ultimate reason for being involved in the conflict.

The alliance between Christian Zionists and religious Jewish Settlers in the West Bank has been described as many things, but I argue that it is a natural one: both sides draw their inspiration from the text of the Bible, and argue that while politics and political parties will come and go, the Jewish claim to Israel has been steadfast for thousands of years. Palestinians are merely Arabs who moved into the land, but did

nothing with it in the time that they lived there (by most accounts, only a few generations). Christian Zionists and religious Jewish Settlers might disagree on some or most issues, but they do come together in the belief that God's rule supersedes that of mankind. Political borders are temporary; God is forever.

While some books paint settlers as religious fanatics, the political prowess and long term planning going into the settlements is critical to understanding how they will progress in future peace plans. There has been a tendency to focus on the more radical of the settlers, and for this paper, I am guilty of the same thing. The majority of settlers are economic settlers, who moved to the Occupied Territories looking for more land and a better future for their family. These residents are seen to be the most likely to accept a buy-out and re-settlement within Israel in the event of settlement dismantling after a peace has been reached. These citizens may or may not ascribe to the belief that Israel was biblically promised the land; they are much more likely to point to Israel's military victory in 1967 as justification for their presence on the land.

While these Israelis make up the majority of settlers, they are not the most politically active section of Israeli settlers. The religious settlers, mostly Orthodox, draw attention on the news and in the international community for their stunts and sporadic violence against Palestinians, as well as their willingness to fight the Israeli army if necessary. The orthodox in Israel are of two main camps. The ultra orthodox are best defined as anti-Zionist, believing that man can do nothing to speed God's plan and the return of the Messiah. These are the minority, but they have drawn attention in their active protesting of the Israeli state. The larger group is the Zionist Orthodox, who constitute the majority of religious settlers. They embrace a Jewish state, and have come

from around the world to settle in Eretz Israel. The religious settlers merit attention as well for the size of their families (often upwards of 10 children), which ensure a demographic challenge in the future. And it is these religious settlers that pair up with

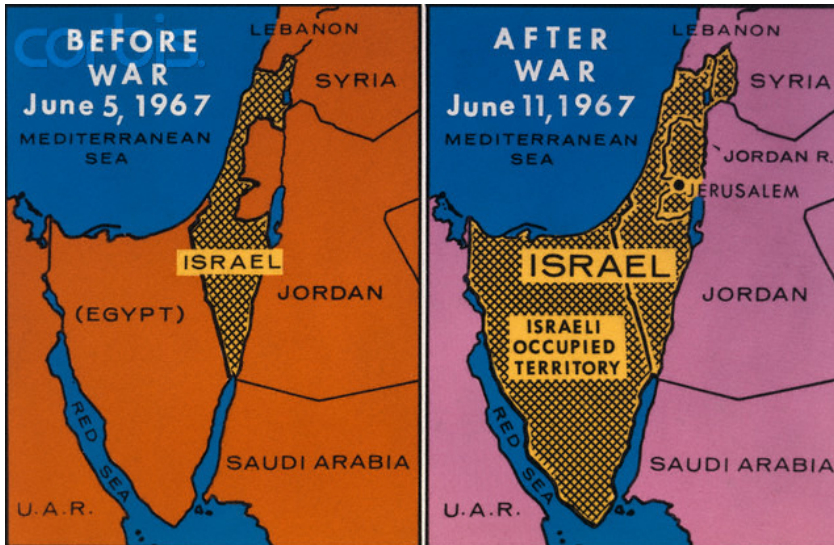


Figure 1: Israel's Border Pre and Post 1967

“illegal and an obstacle to peace and to economic and social development” (by the International Court of Justice). The divergence in opinions has ensured a heated battle, one that has played out since 1967, when the first settlements were built in the days after the 6 day war. The war has been mentioned before as a defining moment in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The armed conflict was essentially over before it began, as Israeli jets crushed and destroyed the Egyptian Air Force on the ground. Without air support, Egypt stood no chance. The three front war of Jordan, Egypt and Syria was suddenly down to two, and neither Syria nor Jordan was strong enough to sustain a real attack without Egypt at full force. Historian Michael Oren wrote a 400 page book entitled The Six Day War, which is generally agreed upon to be the definitive volume on the war, and in doing so, he is able to step back and predict some of the forces at hand. Israel was a small state before 1967, with borders that were tenuous and a lack of resources that would leave most countries in the hurt. Expanding into the West Bank and Gaza and the Golan

Christian Zionists.

Settlements

have been called many things, with opinions ranging from a biblical prophecy fulfilled (by Christian Zionists) to

Heights gave Israel greater access to water, strategic military locations and a more sustainable state with better, more defensible borders. The practical nature of the land siege is easy to understand, and it marked an expansion to the full borders of Mandatory Palestine, and beyond.

It was only a few days after the war ended that the claims to the land grew. The reunification of Jerusalem was a well recorded moment, but the return of Jews to Hebron and other areas of religious significance in the West Bank were equally important in building the national psyche of Israel becoming whole with this military occupation. For many, these lands are “the biblical heartland”; the stories of the bible not in Tel Aviv, but in the inner mountains of Judea. The liberation of the Occupied West Bank was a victory over the Hashemite annexation of the West Bank, which was also not recognized by the international community. There was at this point unity between the state of Israel, the political entity founded in 1948, and Eretz Israel, the biblical homeland of the Jews.⁵⁶ The international community recognized the victory of Israel, but the subsequent occupation was not recognized. UN Resolution 242 indicated that the road to peace would be returning the land seized to the Arab countries. The resolution neglected to mention which of these would come first, and the ambiguity of the bill has been a stumbling block to peace ever since.

Settlements were and continue to be an important part of the Zionist nationalistic frame: for there to be a Jewish state, people must go out and make one. The actions of the first Jewish settlers making aliya in the late 1800s and early 1900s set the tone for the Zionist dream of statehood, and the 1967 settlers saw the chance to further expand Israel, gaining control of the large mountain aquifers in the West Bank, and the strategic

⁵⁶ Eldar XI

military value of places like the hills of Ariel.⁵⁷ The settlers were determined to define the borders of the state of Israel, and through building settlements, they found a way.

Gush Emunim was the political movement that arose in Israel after the 1967 war, uniting the “Block of the Faithful” who sought to settle the newly conquered lands. It was not formalized as a group until after the 1973 war, but its leaders had established themselves as the organizers in the greater movement. The movement drew attention in 1975, when it advertised its intention to establish a settlement at Sebastia, near Nablus. A politically savvy movement, it waited until there had been a public challenge to the validity of Zionism at the Organization of African Unity, which had called Israel a racist regime, and at the Non-Aligned Countries meeting in August of 1975, which called Zionism a ‘threat to world peace and security’. After these attacks on Zionism, there were renewed claims to all of Israel, and Gush Emunim took advantage of this in its push to gather support for a new community in Sebastia. Yitzhak Rabin’s government reacted differently, with Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon, who were in the opposition at the time, working with the settlers and leading a march on the second day of the take over. The fractious nature of the Israeli political system has always created a delicate balance between the opposition and lead parties; the Labor party was in the majority, but was struggling with internal battles that would eventually lead to its fall from power. Power politics in the Knesset shaped the response to this events, and for many historians, Rabin’s decision to not evict them from the march and conference is what gave Gush Emunim the time and ability to fortify the settlement politically and physically.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ “Cry for the Beloved Land” CFOIC 2004

⁵⁸ Eldar 45

The movement gained great traction in 1977, with the election of the Likud government headed by Menachem Begin. The first right-wing government in Israel's history facilitated greater growth and more power for settlers within the political system. For some settlers, the joy felt with the election of a settlement-friendly government was nearly equal with the joy of Israel's independence nearly 30 years earlier. Begin quickly embraced the rhetoric, calling for "young people to come and settle the land," and quickly approving a plan for twelve new settlements in the West Bank. He had to step back though, because President Carter indicated in a meeting in July of 1977 that the United States would continue to view settlements as a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, a violation of Resolution 242, and an obstacle to peace.⁵⁹ Begin tried to encourage the settlers to move without government approval, but they were reluctant to move without the support they had expected from the new Right-wing government.

There was a way, however, for Israel to facilitate more growth, and that was through another quirk of the Israeli political system. A low-level minister from the Shlomzion Party, Ariel Sharon (he was to soon rise to great power), was in charge of the Settlement Committee, and took his habit of disobeying his superiors to the Settlement Committee's work.⁶⁰ Sharon was able to present a plan on September 29th that called for the huge changes to the state of Israel, through three major plans. The first plan was to build settlements focused on industry near the mountain ridge through the center of Samaria, or the Northern West Bank. These settlements would run north to south and help control the coastal plain. The second plan was to defend the eastern border with Jordan by building additional settlements along the Jordan Valley and along the border

⁵⁹ Ibid 56

⁶⁰ Ibid 57

itself. This also meant building east-west roads across the West Bank, which then needed settlements around them to stay safe. The final element was to expand the number of settlements around Jerusalem to ‘strengthen the capital.’ It also had the effect of cutting off the Arab parts of Jerusalem.⁶¹ (See Appendix 2 and 3 for maps)

Not all of those settlements were successful, but it was the clear plan that Sharon added to the Gush Eminent movement that made these settlements a reality for Israel and for the world. Sharon’s plan crossed the West Bank and left many Palestinians cut off from their work or families, and the Israeli military presence in the West Bank continued, giving the settlers a strong backing to continue their growth. Some in Israel were aware of the dangerous path that Israel had embraced. In 1980, Jacob Talmon, an Israeli historian, wrote a public letter to Prime Minister Begin, saying

“The effort to hold the conquered territories proves itself to be not the crowning point in our history but rather a trap, a burden, not to be borne without degradation, corruption, and even collapse....Let us not compel the Arabs to feel that they have been humiliated until they believe that hope is gone and they must die for Palestine.”⁶²

Settlements had been established elsewhere in the aftermath of the 1967 war; the Golan Heights, Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula were all dotted with the start of Israeli expansions. Some were strategic: the Sinai Peninsula’s settlements were designed to prevent the Straits of Tiran from ever being closed off to Israel. The Golan Heights, seized from Syria in the war, had great military value and provided a venue to see deep into Syria. For our purposes, though, it is the West Bank settlements that stand out. The biblical claims to Judea and Samaria drew more attention and more support from

⁶¹ Ibid 59

⁶² Quoted in Wilcox

outsiders, who saw this as the completion of Israel. The other areas, while important for the modern state, were not biblically critical.

One of Israel's fiercest fighters then became one of Israel's fiercest peace-makers. The Camp David Accords, signed in 1978 between Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Begin of Israel, marked the first peace that Israel had with a neighboring Arab state. The Sinai Peninsula was given back to Egypt, and the settlements on the Sinai were removed. The future had been determined for peace agreements: it would indeed be land for peace. Begin's peace with Egypt did not cost him politically; the Sinai had little religious or ethnic importance for the Jewish narrative. It was wandering through the Sinai that led the Jews to the Promised Land: Sinai was not part of that covenant.

Settlements continued to grow during the 1980s, to a total of 200,000 settlers in 1989. (See Appendix 1 for settlement data). The increase in settlements coincided with the unity governments of 1984-1989, which saw the Labor party struggling to find their political stance on settlements. They concluded that it would be up to the future governments to establish future plans, but for now, five to six settlements would be built within a year of the September 13th, 1984 meeting. The only thing that was able to slow down the growth of settlements in the mid to late 1980s was the economic slowdown that occurred in Israel and the large debts that the government had from the Lebanon war of 1982.⁶³

The First Intifada that started in 1987 proved to be a critical moment in the issue of settlements, for many different reasons. The violence showed to the world that the Palestinians were unhappy and willing to fight to end the occupation that had started 20 years earlier. It also marked the decision by King Hussein of Jordan to sever all ties with

⁶³ Eldar pg 104

the West Bank, meaning the effective end of the Jordanian Option of reuniting the West Bank with the Jordanian State. For many, this had been the most desirable option (Shimon Peres was in this camp), and it now seemed that the two options that remained were a single bi national state, and an independent sovereign Palestinian state.

The Oslo Process has been mentioned earlier in this paper, and merits another study here. In regards to the growth of settlements, the Oslo Process did something revolutionary by creating a Palestinian Authority designed to control the parts of the West Bank that were held by Palestinians. The redeployment from certain parts of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank was also designed for more Palestinian control over parts of the West Bank, which it succeeded in doing, to some extent. The Oslo accords said nothing specifically about settlements; it was listed as a final status issue to be put off over the five year interim period. However, between 1993 and July 2000, construction was initiated on 17,190 housing units in the West Bank and Gaza.⁶⁴ The Oslo Peace Process has been declared dead by many actors, but its importance for settlements was the dual handed approach that the Israeli government took: negotiating peace and the transfer of some lands into Palestinian control, while simultaneously settling other parts, building up communities and reinforcing the settlement communities and infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza. The Foreign Minister during the beginning of the Oslo process, Shimon Peres, stated in the Knesset that “we have ensured that in the negotiations there would be no provision entered that would commit Israel to dismantle any settlement.”⁶⁵ The political power of Gush Eminent and the right wing settlers continued, and the

⁶⁴ “Settlement Facts”

⁶⁵ Eldar pg 141

delicate balance of political power in Israel was too tight for any government to risk losing that support.

The rise of Benjamin Netanyahu as Prime Minister in 1996 brought another right wing government to Israel. Settlements continued under his term, with one noticeable shift. There was a great growth in illegal outposts in the West Bank, ones that had not been recognized or approved by the Israeli government. This was an interesting challenge for Netanyahu, as his power was threatened by a group of rogue Israelis who, when removed from one of these outposts, turned to attack the Israeli Defense Forces who were guarding these communities.

The Har Homa incident of 1997 perhaps best embodies Netanyahu's power; in February, the government approved 6,500 new housing units in a neighborhood outside of Jerusalem, northwest of Bethlehem. The Palestinians protested, in part because this would have potentially blocked East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, cutting off the future capital of a Palestinian state from the majority of the territory. Yasser Arafat, the Chairman of the PLO, threatened to declare a Palestinian state in response to Netanyahu's action, and to seek international pressure on Israel. President Clinton tried to intervene in a small way, asking Netanyahu to delay construction, but construction continued and the settlements were built. A UN Security resolution condemning settlements was vetoed by the United States, and Netanyahu oversaw more expansion.

The Camp David II negotiations under Ehud Barak and Bill Clinton seemed to be attempting to answer questions of final status issues, which have been oft delayed. Settlements were not dealt with directly, though, but instead in the context of general borders and land decisions. Settlements did become bargaining chips, as Israel was

prepared to give up some settlements in exchange for a peace treaty. This arrangement is almost established in Oslo, as settlements become something that Israel can control and thus, control some facet of negotiations. As settlements expand, so too does Israel's negotiating power.

One version of the Camp David II plan had the Jerusalem corridor settlements being annexed to Israel, including Efrat, Gush Etzion and Ma'ale Edumim. Ariel and all settlements along the highway in Samaria would also become part of Israel, as would Quiriat Arba.⁶⁶ Settlements that were more geographically isolated would be turned over to the Palestinian authority, and East Jerusalem would become the capital of the Palestinian state. For many, this seemed to be the most likely chance for peace, and while the blame game points fingers at both Arafat and Barak, there was to be no peace in 2000.⁶⁷

Echoing again from the past, it was to be the biggest warrior who made the greatest peace. Begin did it in 1977, and it was Ariel Sharon, the architect for most of Israel's settlement policy in the West Bank, who was to take the step and remove all Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip in 2005. On April 20th, the IDF began removing the military infrastructure, and by August 23rd, all 6,000 of the settlers had been removed.⁶⁸ The decision by Ariel Sharon to complete this withdrawal was controversial, and a risky political move for the long time Israel political figure. Sharon formed a new political party, Kadima, in November of 2005, which facilitated for more political support, and officially ended his ties with Likud. The tragic stroke that befell Sharon in early 2006

⁶⁶ Eldar 178

⁶⁷ See the memoirs of Aaron David Miller, President Bill Clinton or Dennis Ross for different takes on the blame game

⁶⁸ Aronson

ended his political career, and for those radical religious, was held as a sign that those who withdraw from God's lands would be punished.

The oft quoted comment on the Israeli political system is that to get three opinions in a room, you must first have two Israelis. Studying the history of settlements in Israel has shown that there is a range of political support for settlements and that some political leaders have changed opinions in the midst of their careers. The broader Israeli relationship to settlements is one that is continually changing, as Israeli citizens see some of the costs (fiscally, militarily and the human cost) associated with the occupation. The withdrawal from Gaza was controversial, but much of the public opinion polling done at the time indicated that the citizens of Israel supported Sharon's decision.

The Israeli political scene has facilitated several different policies on settlements that have been seen in the past 40 years. These include actively building settlements, facilitating their growth, not preventing settlement growth, and physically dismantling settlements, which are all options that Israeli politicians have taken, depending on their personal beliefs and external pressures.

The settlement movement in Israel has been a volatile one. Appreciating the differences in settlement movements is important, but for our research, we now turn to understanding American policy regarding settlements: the nuances and challenges faced by the various administrations.

US Policy Towards Settlements

The United States has been against settlements since the 1967 war, albeit with very different tactics and ways of expressing that opposition. Some Presidents have outwardly condemned settlements, while others have tried to cut aid to Israel on the issue,

while many others have simply ignored the reality, instead accepting empty promises from Israeli leaders at International Conventions. The most basic U.S. policy, and the one that every President has maintained, is that settlements are a road block to peace.

It is important to note that within this topic, the differences between the State Department position and the White House matter; the stereotype of the ‘pinstriped brigade’ from Foggy Bottom who were all proud Arabists played out in at least some peoples’ understandings of U.S policy, and it merits a quick aside. The stereotype of American foreign policy being shaped by a class of career foreign service officers who grew close to the Arab populations in the Middle East has been around for many years. In his comprehensive study Power, Faith and Fantasy: The United States in the Middle East, 1776-Present, Michael Oren profiles how many men working in the State Department came from the missionary families who lived or travelled extensively within the Middle East in the mid to late 1800s. The families and communities that set up hospitals, universities and other societal and religious structures across modern Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Lebanon and Syria were strongly tied to the Arab nationalist cause, and Oren demonstrates that at points, the American presence in the region was intricately tied to the rise of Arab nationalism. These families and their children were shaped by this experience, and many argue that the State Department’s Arabists came out of this tradition.

President Carter wrote in a 2006 op-ed that “The unwavering U.S. position since Dwight Eisenhower's administration has been that Israel's borders coincide with those established in 1949, and since 1967, the universally adopted UN Resolution 242 has

mandated Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories.”⁶⁹ Carter’s strong words absolutely reflect his own beliefs, but do they reflect those of the other men who have served as President since the 1967 war? We will now examine how Presidents Johnson, Nixon, Carter, Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Clinton, George W. Bush and Obama have addressed the issues of settlements in the West Bank.

I have traced Christian Zionism as a movement throughout the past 120 years of American public and foreign policy, and we have seen that many of the Christian Zionist groups have been outside of the U.S. government. CUFI has been the biggest push in recent years to begin a direct lobbying effort by the Christian Zionist population in the United States, but it is not the first time that has happened. What follows is a study of statements by each US administration since the beginning of settlements in 1967. Here we can specifically study and look for a Christian Zionist influence on U.S. policy. What are the differences in policy, and which Presidents were specifically tough on settlements? Does that reflect their own personal belief on settlements or a continuous American policy, like President Carter suggests?

President Lyndon B. Johnson

President Johnson is best remembered for the failures in Vietnam, and not for his Middle Eastern actions or inactions. The United States was not able to be very involved in the build up and aftermath of the 1967 war, due particularly to the lack of political capital or military force that the United States could threaten. It did take the steps though, to make its opinions felt and heard on the issue of settlement establishment in the West Bank. Johnson’s State Department sent a message to the US Embassy in Tel Aviv with the message that there are to be no permanent adjustments to the occupied areas.

⁶⁹ Carter

Many still believed that there would be a quick peace resolution; Israel was said to have been waiting for the phone call from Cairo, Damascus and Amman. It never came, and the occupation became something that became a reality on the ground.⁷⁰

Johnson's State Department also warned against setting up civilian outposts in the occupied lands, saying that it "adds serious complications to the eventual task of drawing up a peace settlement." Finally, the memo to the Embassy specifically mentioned that the transfer of civilians, and how it is "contrary to Article 49 of the Geneva Convention"⁷¹ The rhetoric embraced by the Johnson White House was stayed a central part of U.S. policy, and reflected a continuing belief in the international system and international norms.

President Richard Nixon

For President Nixon's time in office, Israel's settlements had developed clearly, and the intention of Israeli settlers was becoming clear to many observers. Charles Yost, President Nixon's Representative to the United Nations, said in a July 1st, 1969 speech that "Among the provisions of international law which bind Israel, as they would bind any occupier, are the provisions that the occupier has no right to make changes in laws or in administration other than those which are temporarily necessitated by his security interests, and that an occupier may not confiscate or destroy private property." Identifying Israel as an occupying power was a critical step for the United States, one that was not popular with the pro-Israel community who had only two years before witnessed Israel's great rise to power. In 1971, Nixon's Press Secretary went farther, noting that "As a matter of policy, we do not provide assistance to the Israeli Government for

⁷⁰ "Statements on American Policy towards Settlements by U.S. Government Officials 1968-2006"

⁷¹ Ibid

projects in the occupied territories.”⁷² This concept is one that returns often: how to ensure that US aid to Israel not be used to support the occupation that we oppose. Many argue that by giving money to Israel, we free up parts of their own domestic budget for settlement growth, regardless of US conditions on the aid. Various other advisors during Nixon’s presidency noted the applicability of the Geneva Convention, and continued the pressure to maintain a vigilant study of settlement growth.

President Gerald Ford

In his abbreviated term as President, following President Nixon’s resignation, President Gerald Ford had only a few short years to address the problems of the Middle East, but his UN envoy at the time, William Scranton, began a phrase that is still used today to sum up American policy. In March of 1976, Scranton described settlements, saying “Indeed, the presence of these settlements is seen by my Government as an obstacle to the success of the negotiations for a just and final peace between Israel and its neighbors.” ⁷³The word ‘obstacle’ is a noticeable softening of earlier rhetoric, and places settlements in a new position regarding negotiations. These negotiations can continue, but they are made harder, not impossible by the existence of settlers.

President Carter

Under President Carter, the most significant step was taken in U.S. policy towards the Israeli settlements. Herbert Hansell, the State Department Legal Counselor, wrote in an opinion in 1978 that

“the civilian settlements in the territories occupied by Israel do not appear to be consistent with these limits on Israel's authority as belligerent occupant in that they do not seem intended to be of limited duration or established to provide orderly government of the territories and, though some may serve incidental

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ “Statements on American Policy towards Settlements by U.S. Government Officials 1968-2006”

security purposes, they do not appear to be required to meet military needs during the occupation.”⁷⁴

Carter’s choice to have a legal advisor release the finding was important, because it showed a focus on justifying legally the opinion that settlements are illegal. Hansell makes the point in his short but effective opinion that international law is clear on how the Occupied Peoples should be treated, and delineates between military needs that Israel might have, and the settling of thousands of private citizens on the land seized in the war. President Carter now has the reputation of being the strongest on the issue of Palestine, but at the time, it was merely using the framework of a legal agreement that gave his opinion a stronger base and more support within the community. Later in his term of office, Carter described the settlements as “an impediment to peace” while still noting the difference between Israeli governmental opinion and U.S. policy.

President Reagan

President Reagan was much more taken by the Soviet Union during his time in office, but his involvement in the settler issue was very important and indeed, very different from the administrations described above. While he was not very involved in the settler issue in his time in office, it was his statements during the 1980 election that drew attention and gave hope to many of the Gush Eminent community. In a March 1980 event with Jewish leaders in New York, then Governor Reagan stated “I believe in the right of settlement in the West Bank” and that he would have directed the U.N. ambassador to vote against U.N. Resolution that condemned Israel’s settlement policy. The quick differences drawn between the two candidates was clear, and Reagan had set

⁷⁴ Hansell

out to assure the Israel community in the United States that he would be a more loyal supporter of Israel's actions.⁷⁵

Reagan issued the "Reagan Plan" in 1982, which states that "the United States will not support the use of any additional land for the purpose of settlements during the transition period (5 years after Palestinian election for a self-governing authority). Indeed, the immediate adoption of a settlements freeze by Israel, more than any other action, could create the confidence needed for wider participation in these talks."⁷⁶ The new tactic of a settlement freeze brings Reagan's suggestions to an important distinction—that there have been fundamental changes on the ground that will not be changed anytime soon. By making a settlement freeze the goal of the US, Reagan indicated that there had been an irreversible change to the West Bank, and that the future Palestinian entity would not be fully within the pre-1967 borders. The Deputy Secretary of State Dam said in 1983 that "obviously the peace process... is going to have to involve territorial changes in return for secure, peaceful border,"⁷⁷ confirming that the Green Line was no longer an option.

Reagan's Presidency is important for settlements, as he went out of his way to say that settlements were not illegal, and to also describe them as "an obstacle to the success of the negotiations for a just and final peace between Israel and its neighbors." For President Reagan and his administration, settlements were an issue that would be part of ongoing negotiations, not something that the United States needed to be involved with directly or even currently. His pro-Israel rhetoric brought the United States into

⁷⁵ Safire

⁷⁶ ""Statements on American Policy towards Settlements by U.S. Government Officials 1968-2006"

⁷⁷ Boudreault, Jody

compliance with much of Israel's actions throughout the 1980s, something that President George Herbert Walker Bush challenged in a very meaningful way during his Presidency

President George H.W. Bush

President Bush was one of the most successful American Presidents in the field of Arab-Israeli negotiations, bringing together the two sides at the Madrid Conference and setting the groundwork for the Oslo Process, something that, if nothing else, established a legitimate Palestinian negotiating partner for Israel. President Bush's contributions to US policy towards settlements were many; his administration was more candid about the challenges faced due to the growth of settlements. There was a quick change in the tone of rhetoric, but not in the legality of settlements. Thomas Pickering, the US ambassador to the United Nations stated in 1989 that the U.S. "considers Israel's occupation to be governed by The Hague Regulations of 1907 and the 1949 Geneva Conventions concerning the protection of civilian populations under military occupation."⁷⁸

President Bush, and his constant partner in negotiations, Secretary of State James Baker, tried to negotiate a slowdown of settlements with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in 1989, and Bush believed that they had reached one in April of 1989. Only two days later, he was briefed by his aides that there was going to be a marked increase in settlement construction. Bush was greatly angered by the collapse in negotiations, and his personal anger stewed with Shamir, and continued when he read reports that the collapse of the Soviet Union was being used as a reason to build more settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, preparing places for the thousands of Russian Jews that immigrated to Israel. Shamir was dishonest in presenting the number of settlements being built to accommodate these new immigrants, and Bush's anger grew further,

⁷⁸ Ibid

culminating in the March 1st announcement by Secretary Baker that the administration would not support a \$400 million loan to Israel to build housing without Israel promising to stop building settlements altogether.⁷⁹ Baker said on May 22nd, 1991 that “I don’t think there’s any greater obstacle to peace than settlement activity” and it was clear from his choice of words that he was absolutely serious about ending the U.S. financial support for settlements, which the United States maintained were road blocks to peace.⁸⁰

President Clinton

The eight years of the Clinton administration saw the Oslo Process dominate as the frame of reference for negotiations on the issues at hand. Oslo’s framework made settlements a final status negotiation issue, allowing the United States to avoid tackling the topic. The Department of State spokesman said in 1996 that “I think it's also true that Israel and the Palestinians have decided to resolve this question, if they can, in the context of the final status talks. . . . So it's up to them now to resolve that problem, but it has been a matter of tension and complication in the past, certainly.”⁸¹

For President Clinton, it was critical to stop the expansion of settlements, instead tolerating for the nature growth of already existing settlements in the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights. The ultimate goal was to remove these settlements, as exemplified in the Mitchell Report or the Sharm Al Sheikh Fact Finding Committee. The report released by this committee came out in 2001, seen as the conclusion of the Taba negotiations that started under President Clinton. Mitchell’s report stated that “The GOI should freeze all settlement activity, including the "natural growth" of existing settlements” as a method of rebuilding confidence in negotiations that were scheduled to

⁷⁹ Dowd, Maureen and Thomas Friedman

⁸⁰ “About Israeli Settlements”

⁸¹ “Statements on American Policy towards Settlements by U.S. Government Officials 1968-2006”

continue. A change in leadership for the Israelis ended those negotiations, but the United States had finally taken the hands off approach to settlements that it had seemingly desired under some previous administrations.

President George W. Bush

President Bush's policy towards Israel could not have been more different than those of his father. He fell squarely into the Pro-Israel crowd, and while settlements continued to be described as the 'roadblocks' to peace, they have not been declared illegal. In 2004, President Bush wrote a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, saying

"In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli populations centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949, and all previous efforts to negotiate a two-state solution have reached the same conclusion. It is realistic to expect that any final status agreement will only be achieved on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these realities."⁸²

At the same time, President Bush was also noting that Israel has a responsibility in this conflict, and that "Israel must make sure there is a contiguous territory that the Palestinians can call home."⁸³ Freezing settlement growth was an important standard for the Bush administration, but no progress was really made. As seen in the chart in Appendix 1, the population of settlers increased by nearly 100,000 during President Bush's term in office. The Iraq war consumed most of President Bush's political capital in the Middle East, and thus, the United States seemed to take another 8 years of hands off supervision to the settlement problem.

⁸² Abrams

⁸³ "Statements on American Policy towards Settlements by U.S. Government Officials 1968-2006"

President Obama

President Obama's short time in office has been consumed by the economic crisis that has overtaken the United States. His approaches to the Middle East, however, have stayed the course of his predecessor in regards to identifying settlements as road blocks to peace. It will be interesting to see how his government works with the newly formed Likud-center right government, headed by Prime Minister Netanyahu. Will President Obama be willing to stand up to Netanyahu, or will Obama be forced to save his political capital for the continuing economic problems?

The influence of America on the settler movement is not coming from the executive. As is clear from this study of Presidential action and inaction towards settlements, the United States has taken a stance, however much it might be categorized as "lip service." There has only been one major sustaining policy change for the United States, on the legality of settlements after President Reagan stated his opposition to the Hansell opinion. Even as Christian Zionism has grown within the United States, there has been no noticeable change to the policy actions of the US government. What can be learned from this study of settlements and Christian Zionism, then? We turn to the future of Christian Zionism in the U.S., to appreciate what the accomplishments of Christian Zionism have been, and what they can potentially be in the future.

The Future of Christian Zionism in the United States

When the pilgrims came over from England, in search of religious freedom and a new life, they often used the biblical metaphor of Zion, a promised land for God's chosen people. For the Puritans, this referred to their new found land and society, as God had blessed them with great success. The United States is dotted with towns named Zion and

churches named Mount Zion or other derivatives. There is no shortage of familiarity with the biblical idea of Zion, as President Bush pointed out in an address to the Israel Knesset in 2008

The alliance between our governments is unbreakable, yet the source of our friendship runs deeper than any treaty. It is grounded in the shared spirit of our people, the bonds of the Book, the ties of the soul. When William Bradford stepped off the Mayflower in 1620, he quoted the words of Jeremiah: "Come let us declare in Zion the word of God." The founders of my country saw a new promised land and bestowed upon their towns names like Bethlehem and New Canaan. And in time, many Americans became passionate advocates for a Jewish state.⁸⁴

Christian Zionism has been a political force in the United States for more than 100 years. For many people, it forms a first layer of information on the Arab-Israeli conflict; Sunday school remains the first place that many people learn the names and places of Israel and the West Bank. A re-invigorated American Christian Right made support for Israel a political tenet, as exemplified in the Moral Majority's decision to make support for Israel as important as being anti-abortion. These leaders have effectively bridge people's religious views with their voting choices, and we have seen that in many different forms in the United States. Hundreds of books and articles have been written about the rise of the Christian Right; the Left in American politics is apt to refer to the 'religious nut-jobs' as their main opponent.

Christian Zionism as a political force did not draw much attention until the Bush Administration, when many saw it as one part of the rise of the Christian Right's political power. Biblical terminology shaping the approach to a conflict strikes many as the complete anathema of the American approach to secular politics, and it sparked much of the literature that provides a preliminary basis to the research I have done here.

⁸⁴ Bush

Conclusion

Gershon Gorenberg is one of the most celebrated scholars on the issue of settlements. His book The Accidental Empire was the most recommended text to me when I began my research, and his blog Southjerusalem.com serves as a sounding board for many ideas and other scholars on the issue. He had an article in *Foreign Policy* in the January/February issue titled “The Other Housing Crisis”, with a subtitle that perhaps best articulated the issue of settlements: “Why Can’t the Israelis and Palestinians make peace? There are many complicated reasons, but the facts on the ground point to a simple answer: It’s the settlements, stupid.”⁸⁵

And it is that easy. Settlements are changing the facts on the ground, wrapping Palestinian communities in the West Bank into smaller and smaller spaces, restricted by the checkpoints that Israel has put in to ensure that its settlers are safe. The road blocks and poor condition of Palestinian roads only become worse when considered the Israeli-only roads that have been built to facilitate the settlement-settlement movement within the West Bank. Geoffrey Aronson calls settlements “the most visible, potent, and tangible manifestation of Israel’s ‘staying power’ in its ongoing struggle with Palestinians to prevent the creation of a genuine Palestinian state.”⁸⁶ If there is to be a real peace within this conflict, the majority of settlements, particularly those that are well into the West Bank and removed from the Green Line, will need to come down. After seeing the fighting with the Gush Katif settlers who were evacuated from Gaza in 2005, it is clear that Israel is in for a huge internal battle on its future. Those who argue against settlements point to Israel’s losing demographic battle: if it wants to stay a democracy, a

⁸⁵ Gorenberg

⁸⁶ Aronson, Settlement Monitor

total annexation of the West Bank and Gaza would ensure that very soon, there will not be a Jewish majority in Israel, and the Jewish state will cease to exist. The current occupation is proving to be sustainable in some areas, but many within Israel and abroad argue that the cost of occupation is too high to continue.

I had originally set out to show how Christian Zionist political power was responsible in some way for U.S. policy towards settlements in the West Bank. There is no way to prove causation here. In that sense, I have had my original research question rebuked. What I have shown, however, is that Christian Zionism has been a part of the American approach to the Middle East since the 1800s, and it is a frame that is unlikely to disappear. They are a political actor in the United States, and, in an important shift, are also moving abroad. Their connections with specific Israeli groups like settlers means that Americans are making a difference in a foreign policy issue, but are doing so outside of the structure of the American government. These individuals are actually supporting actions that are clearly opposed by the U.S. government, in the form of settlement growth in the West Bank. US policy is clear: I have shown that it has not changed dramatically, and that settlements are a road block to peace.

The relationship between Christian Zionism and settlements is complex and shaped by so many factors detailed earlier in the paper. The lessons that are learned, however, are much broader, and remind us that sometimes some of the most important political players are not in Washington or Jerusalem (or Tel Aviv, depending on the politics). Governments can be undermined by those who are changing the facts on the ground, like the settlers in the Occupied Territories have done. The Israeli government has worked with settlers in the past, and will continue to do so, for fear of losing much of

their electoral support. The issue of settlements is one that drives a hard discussion in most homes in Israel. Should Israel give up the land for peace? Are these settlers realizing a biblical mandate or hurting a chance for peace?

This debate occurs in Israel, and it occurs internationally as well. The international community has, in general, pressured for the end of settlements and the occupation of the West Bank. The United States government has clearly done this, as shown with countless quotes and statements by US policymakers. Many argue that the United States has not been firm enough in its opposition to settlements; Aaron David Miller and others argue that the United States has developed an exclusive relationship with Israel that is hurting our own national interest, as well as Israel's own national interest. Expanding into the West Bank has not been recognized by any foreign governments, and the United Nations continues to condemn it. The state actors in this political scheme strongly support Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank.

The religious claimed that the 1967 war was "God's gift to the Jewish people," and the seemingly impossible battle against the Arab states proved that God was indeed on the side of the Jews.⁸⁷ Some of the most radical Jewish religious figures leading movements like Gush Eminentum were in agreement, even going as far as to say "All this land is ours, absolutely, belonging to all of us, non-transferable to others even in part...As guaranteed by the Word of God, whose sovereignty extends over each generation...Therefore, once and for all, it is clear and absolute that there are no Arab territories or Arab lands here, but only the Lands of Israel."⁸⁸ Letting go of the settlements, however, means letting go of the Zionist dream, and the ability to work hard

⁸⁷ Schnall pg 11

⁸⁸ Ibid pg 19

and win land. The spoils of the 1967 war seemed to many Zionists as a continuation of the 1948 policy. Ariel Sharon once told Winston Churchill III that “we’ll make a pastrami sandwich of them....we’ll insert a strip of Jewish settlements in between the Palestinians, and then another strip of Jewish settlements right across the West Bank, so that in 25 years’ time, neither the United Nations nor the United States, nobody, will be able to tear it apart.”⁸⁹

Walking around Jerusalem, you will find dozens of shops selling t shirts, celebrating “JerUSAlem” and marking American-Israeli relations. Some shirts say “Don’t worry America- Israel is behind you” and others have picture of President Bush looking like an Orthodox Rabbi. There is no shortage of merchandise or paraphernalia to remind citizens that the bond between the United States and Israel is strong- both at the governmental level and at the citizen to citizen level. Millions of Americans love Israel for millions of reasons, but one of these I have chosen to focus on. Why Christian Zionism? Why not address American Jewish support for Israel or the pro-Democracy lobby that supports Israel because it too has a representative government? I chose this group of Pro-Israel supporters because their support for Israel is not for the state of Israel. It is for Eretz Israel, the biblical land of Israel that some argue stretches from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River, in modern Iraq. They are less interested in political realities, and more interested in God’s blessings that come from this support. By not acting within the established political framework, Christian Zionists endanger the current status of Palestinians, and the future Palestinian state.

The union that has come of Christian Zionists and Jewish settlers in the West Bank is one that should make the pro-two state solution politicians nervous. This alliance

⁸⁹ Hishmeh

has come through to encourage behavior that is more radical than even some parts of the Israeli government. Some have said that the Christian Right is 'out-likuding' the Likud party. With no government mechanism to control this support, Americans who know Israel from the Left Behind Series and from their weekly church sermons are supporting actions that the international community recognizes as illegal.

Many of the books written on the subject of Christian Zionism as a political force in the United States paint the believers as 'crazy' or focused on the end of days, striving to achieve the Armageddon and rapture. This does a disservice to both those inside the movement and to those who oppose Christian Zionism. Most of the Christian Zionists who are active politically support Israel because of their status as God's Chosen People, not because of the rapture. Eschatological concerns are secondary, although still present. To those who oppose Christian Zionism, labeling them as 'Armageddon driven' ignores their highly logical and successful political activity. Dismissing them as religious crazies ignores the influence that they are having, particularly in the settlements.

My research here has indicated that the Christian Zionist lobby has made a good friend in the Israeli settlement communities. Moving below government control, these two groups are able to continue to change the facts on the ground, which is one recognized way of changing the conflict dynamic and the reality of this conflict. Christian Zionist arguments rarely resonate outside of their own circles, which has led to its dismissal as a political force in recent years. The grassroots connections between Israeli settlers and Christian Zionists, however, highlight the importance of recognizing this new political alliance that crosses international borders. Continued contact between settlers and Christian Zionists, through monetary sponsorship, visits to Israeli settlements

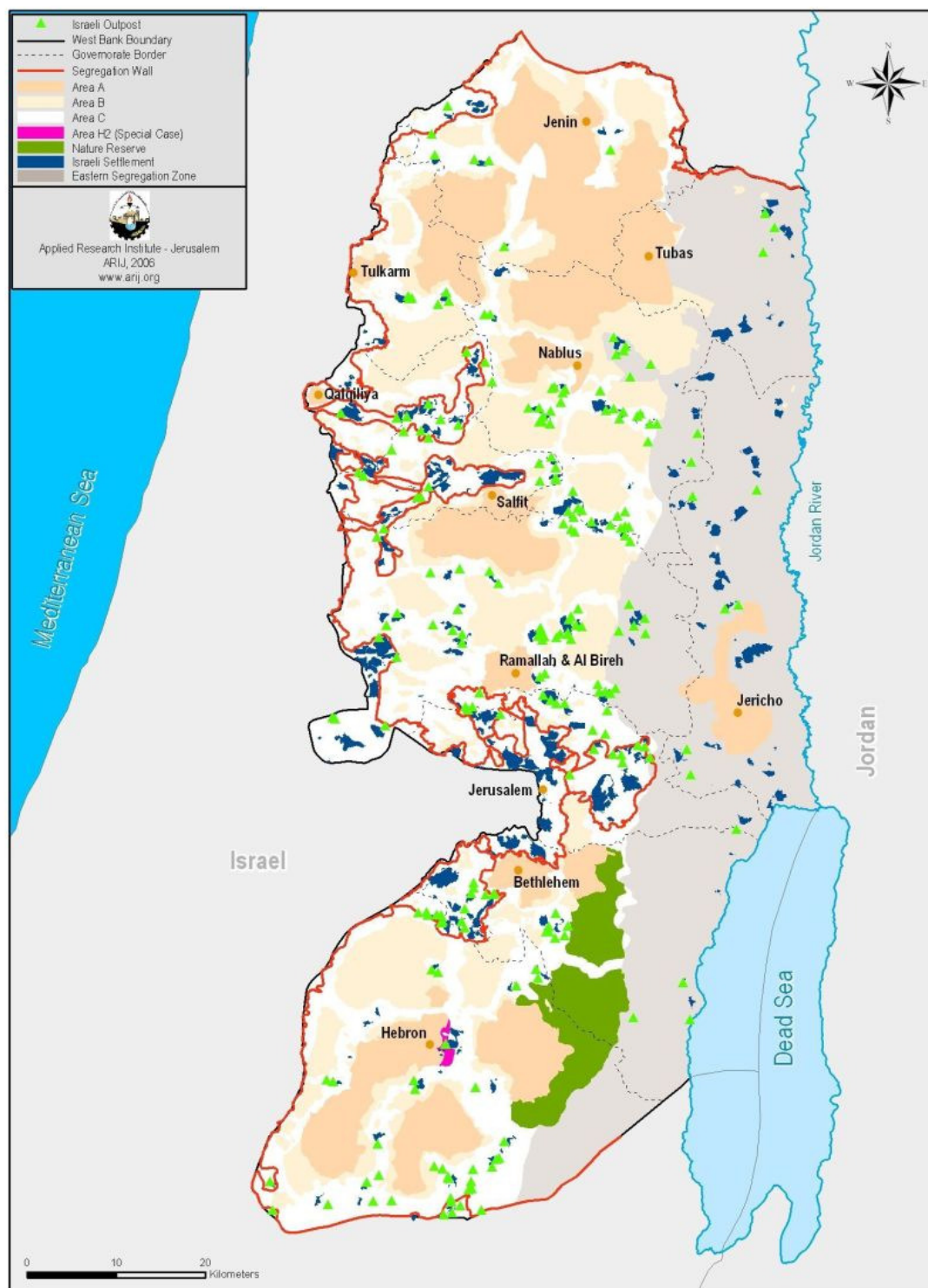
and internet communications are bound to strengthen this bond; the United States government would be smart to take note of this alliance. This alliance has been growing, and if it continues, it will become an even more important part of the Israeli-American relationship. It will be interesting to see how the Christian Zionists work with the new Israeli government, specifically with parties like Israel Beitenu, who have taken up a far right stance on some issues, but who retain a highly secular focus. Is the Christian Zionist-Likud partnership going to shape relations over the next Israeli government? It is worth being aware of, and it is worth understanding. Political actors who are working within non-political frameworks are a serious risk for American foreign policy. This is not the first time, though, nor the last. This is just another example of the American political process at work.

Appendix 1: Number of Israeli Settlers, 1972-2007

Year	West Bank	Gaza	East Jerusalem	Golan Heights	Totals
1972	1,182	700	8,649	77	10,609
1983	22,800	900	70,095	6,800	106,595
1985	44,100	1,900	103,900	8,700	158,700
1989	69,800	3,000	117,100	10,000	199,900
1990	78,600	3,300	135,000	10,600	227,500
1991	90,300	3,800	137,300	11,600	243,000
1992	101,100	4,300	141,000	12,000	258,400
1993	111,600	4,800	152,800	12,600	281,800
1995	133,200	5,300	157,300	13,400	309,200
1996	142,700	5,600	160,400	13,800	322,500
1997	154,400	5,700	161,416	14,300	335,816
1998	163,300	6,100	165,967	14,900	350,267
1999	177,411	6,337	170,123	15,313	369,184
2000	192,976	6,678	172,250	15,955	387,859
2002	214,722	7,277	175,617	16,503	414,119
2003	224,669	7,556	178,601	16,791	427,617
2004	234,487	7,826	181,587	17,265	441,828
2005	258,988	0	184,057	17,793	460,838
2006	268,400	0	186,857	18,105	473,362
2007	282,00	0	N/A	18,692	N/A

Source: Foundation for Middle East Peace

Appendix 2: 2006 Map of Settlements



Source: Applied Research Institute, Jerusalem

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