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**The Racialization of Religion:
Christian Zionism, Islamophobia, and Imperial Peace**

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Bitter hatred and animus are the very heartbeat of Islam. The Muslim approach is to scream 'foul' anytime something negative is said, but I'm here to say Islam is the most horrifying, dangerous thing on the horizon facing America. Islam will dominate America. You can go around the globe, there's not a nation that Islam

has ever started in that it did not ultimately control. Ignorant, anemic, immature Christians don't understand the threat because they haven't studied the Word of God.¹

As Nadine Naber notes in *Arab Americans and Race Before and After 9/11*, Arabs and Arab Americans are often racialized through religious discourse. Against those who would argue that Arab peoples are not racialized because they are categorized as "white" in the United States census, Naber contends that racializing logics take the form of cultural and religious determinacy. First, Islam is typically articulated as a religious/cultural system that is intent on the destruction of Western/Christian civilization (the two are conflated). Then, Arab and Muslim peoples are conflated such that Arabs are marked as inherently threatening regardless of their actual religious affiliation. In addition, because Islam becomes the marker of inherent difference, the geopolitical relationships between the United States and Arab and/or Muslim countries cannot be understood in the terms of western colonialism or imperialism. In fact, this discourse marks the Arab world as imperial where as the West is simply protecting itself from Arab efforts to colonize the world. As the above quote from Reverend Gene Youngblood of Conservative Theological Seminary indicates, Islam is bent on the destruction of America. Consequently, in Foucaultian terms, Muslims must die so that America can live.

The racialization of Islam is particularly pronounced within Christian Zionism, which holds that God has an unconditional covenant with the modern state of Israel and hence Christians are obliged to protect Israel's interests against its perceived enemies. This movement then puts evangelicals, who generally hold that people must be Christian in order to be saved, in

1. Bob Jones, "Truth or Cair," *World* 18 (March 22, 2003), 17.

the position of defending Jewish people in Israel against Palestinian Christians. Thus, it becomes clear that while Islam is racialized, so too is Christianity which becomes synonymous with whiteness. Within these racializing logics, Palestinian Christians simply cannot exist. Christian Zionism promises less of an imperial peace than a permanent war against Arab and Muslim peoples. Through exploring the inherent contradictions within this movement, this chapter will shed further light on the fluid logics of race and racialization as they impact evangelicalism's relationship to other religious movements. At the same time, as I will explore, the specter of the Palestinian Christian also haunts the logics of Christian Zionism, creating spaces for internal critique within Christian evangelicalism.

My methodology includes an extensive survey of conservative articles drawn from the Christian Periodical Index that are pertinent to understanding Islam and Zionism. I have also surveyed all issues of *Christianity Today*, *World*, and *Charisma* (evangelical magazines which provide national surveys of issues particular to neo-evangelicals, the conservative Christian Right, and charismatics, respectively). This survey was supplemented with a survey of periodicals published through the Christian Coalition, Concerned Women of America, and the Promise Keepers.² In addition, this research is supplemented by attendance in a number of evangelical political events from the past twenty years.

2. As Sara Diamond points out, the frequent appearance of a topic in a community's periodical literature does not necessarily reflect that community's priorities. Periodical content depends on many other factors – for example, editors' and writers' particular preferences. Nevertheless, this literature is very widely read by conservative Christians. So, while a prevalence of articles on a particular topic may not always reflect the interests of those at the grassroots, it certainly plays a role in determining the future shape of those interests. See Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion* (New York: Guilford Press, 1995) 409.

The Islamic Threat

Islam as inherent threat to the Christian west predates 9/11. For instance, in 1991, evangelical groups, such as the National Association of Evangelicals and the Institute of Religion and Democracy held a forum to explore the threat Islam poses for Christianity. Participants raised concerns that Muslims often suppress groups that are considered apostates and that “a Muslim may not choose to embrace another faith” (evangelical Christians by contrast are apparently free to embrace many other faiths).³ Even before 9/11, Pat Robertson described Saddam Hussein as “satanic.”⁴ Evangelical “experts” on Islam frequently described Islam as a menace. According to one such expert, Steve Johnson, it is impossible to do interfaith work with Muslims because they will try to convert people (apparently evangelical Christians are not guilty of this practice). In addition, unlike Christians who “love” their enemies, Muslims “hate” their enemies.⁵ Muslims also have an irrational hatred of Jews.⁶

Not surprisingly, after 9/11 the rhetoric around Islamic threat has become particularly fervent among conservative evangelicals.⁷ Articles frequently focus on the persecution of

3. “Does Islam Have Room for Religious Liberty?” *Christianity Today* 35 (August 19, 1991). Similarly, Ravi Zacharias, Christian apologist argues on one that the U.S. is a Christian nation and was “not founded on an Islamic, Hindu or Buddhist worldview,” but then says: “Until those who are not Muslims are free to practice their faith in Muslim countries... Islam will never be free from the fear it can engender.” See Sean Fowlds, “A Watchman on the Wall,” *New Man* 9 (May/June 2002), 18-1.

4. “Leaders Wrestle with Faith and War,” *Christianity Today* 35 (February 11, 1991), 50.

5. *Ibid*, 50.

6. Steve Johnson, “Rushdie Furor Highlights the Nature of Islamic Faith,” *Christianity Today* 33 (April 7, 1989), 38.

7. “Outpaced by Islam?” *Christianity Today* 46 (February 4, 2002).

Christians within Arab and/or Muslim countries or by Arab/Muslim groups.⁸ Alarmists contend that it is the goal of Islam “to conquer America.”⁹ “Radical Islam [is] the biggest threat to Christians” especially since “communism is not a force for the future.”¹⁰ According to *Christianity Today*, the top news story of 2002 was “Martyrs’ Brigade: Militant Muslims murder

8. See the appendix for a list of representative articles. One article mentions that within Kenya there is also “Christian-on-Christian” violence; see Sheryl Henderson Blunt, “Post-Mayhem Woes,” *Christianity Today* 52 (March 2008). One article does focus on Muslims as persecuted (in Chechnya), but also frames the story with Christians saving Muslims from persecution; see Beverly Nickles, “Saving Bodies, Rescuing Souls,” *Christianity Today* 44 (April 24, 2000). A *Christianity Today* article focuses on Baroness Caroline Cox crusading against Muslim persecution of Christians, but does note her organization also works for Muslims who face persecution; see Wendy Murray Zoba, “Through Bombs and Bullets,” *Christianity Today* 41 (September 1, 1997). Another article on Egypt suggests that US intervention may not be an appropriate response to persecution and that persecution comes from individual Muslims rather than from the government; see Kees Hulsman, “Religious Freedom Delegation Gets Cold Shoulder,” *Christianity Today* 45 (May 21 2001). In a *World* article, it is noted that Uzbekistan is persecuting both Muslims and Christians. In fact, it claims that the threat of radical Islam in Uzbekistan is that it targets moderate observant Muslims; see Priya Abraham, “Foley Failure,” *World* 21 (October 14, 2006). *Christianity Today* further states that it is Muslims who headed an investigation that demonstrated that law enforcement was involved in the killing of three Christians in January 2008. Zekai Tenayr, chair of the Association of Protestant Churches in Turkey, stated: “These men and women are not Christians, and yet have voluntarily and tirelessly taken on this cause in the face of what they feel is a great injustice and human right violation...They have carried the injustice, the cover-ups, and the trial into public awareness...much more than we could have dreamed;” see Damaris Kremida, “Martyrs Killed by Conspiracy,” *Christianity Today* 53 (July 2009). For an article that discusses the persecution of Muslims by Christians, see Religious News Service, “2,000 Die in Muslim-Christian Conflict,” *Christianity Today* 44 (February 7, 2000). And a *Christianity Today* article describes Muslims in Nigeria as trying to build peace rather than war with Christians; see “Violence-Weary Muslims, Christians Talk Peace,” *Christianity Today* 46 (November 18, 2002).

9. New York Post, “Islamization Agenda,” *The Jerusalem Connection* (April-May 2003).

10. Debra Fieguth, “Persecuted but Not Defeated,” *Faith Today* 22 (September/October 2004), 20.

Christians in Pakistan, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Sudan, and Nigeria.”¹¹ In an article on Christian persecution activist Maria Sliwa, she argues that the mind-set of radical Muslims is clear. They hate Christians and Jews. “She believes the attack [of 9/11] is a forerunner to a movement bent on world domination. She openly criticizes the Bush administration for ‘schmoozing’ with Arab nations.”¹²

While anti-Arab/Muslim rhetoric is prevalent within conservative evangelical discourse, this rhetoric is not necessarily consistent. As will be discussed later, not all of the critiques of Islam are equally virulent. Among the more extreme critiques of Islam, the critiques themselves are often contradictory. It is these contradictions that have allowed a space for some sectors within evangelicalism to call for a tempering of anti-Arab/Muslim rhetoric. But before I explore these spaces of reform, I will first focus on the logics of evangelicalism’s articulation of the Islamic threat.

Islam/Muslims as Inherently Evil

One tension within anti-Islamic rhetoric is the extent to which the problem is identified as Islam the religious system or with the followers themselves. A prevalent narrative is that Muslims are evil because Islam is an evil system.¹³ It is not “reformable” because the core of

11. “Top Ten News Stories, 2003,” *Christianity Today* 47 (January 2003).

12. Peter Johnson, “How One Woman Challenged Oppression,” *Charisma* 27 (April 2002), 85. See also *For Zion’s Sake*, the newsletter of the Christian Friends of Israeli (First Quarter 2003), which details that radical Islam kills Jews and Christians.

13. David Claydon, “Islam in a Western Context: Australia,” *Transformation* 17 (January-March 2000); Andree Seu, “True Perspectives,” *World* 16 (October 20, 2001).

Islam is violent and oppressive.¹⁴ According to the Concerned Women for America, “Islam cannot be peaceful because conquest is inherent in its nature. Muslims desire to conquer Christians. That is what they believe. The [Muslim] leaders..are trying to push their agenda, which is that Islam is a religion of peace. [The attacks are] a public relations nightmare for them.”¹⁵ Amongst the flaws of Islam outlined in *World Magazine* (1) “Christians and Muslims do not worship the same god; “¹⁶ (2) Islam does not recognize original sin and hence Muslims have a “tendency to revere strong leaders” (unlike evangelical Christians, apparently);¹⁷ (3) Muslims do not believe in the Trinity; as a result, they do not respect diversity and are much less tolerant than evangelicals (who, apparently, greatly respect religious diversity);¹⁸ (4) Muslims like dictators, and hence Islamic societies have much in common with “Marxist countries;”¹⁹ (5) Islam does “not understand compassion” or “suffering with the poor; “²⁰ (6) Muslim “men can beat their wives “ (a proposition that ignores the high rate of domestic violence in evangelical homes);²¹ (7) Penalties for crime under Islam are cruel. “Christianity is the religion of the second

14. Mark Durie, “Beware Progress,” *World* 25 (February 27, 2010). See also Wafa Sultan who argues that there is no such thing as “moderate” Islam. Those following Islam are “brainwashed.” Susan Olasky, “A Woman’s Turn,” *World* 25 (February 27, 2010).

15. Tanya Green, “Mina’s Story,” *Family Voice* (Winter 2002), 17.

16. Marvin Olasky, “A Cold War for the 21st Century,” *World* 16 (October 27 2001), 14.

17. Ibid, 14.

18. Ibid, 19.

19. Ibid, 19.

20. Ibid, 19.

21. Ibid, 20.

chance. With Islam, it's often one strike and you're out;"²² and (8); "Jesus was a man of peace, Muhammad at times a man of war."²³ From the perspective of many evangelicals, Islam is so corrupt that Christians should not even converse with them. Bill Hybels of the famous Willow Creek Church in Illinois came under sharp attack when he invited Faisal Hammouda, a Muslim imam to speak to the church so that parishioners could learn "how a Christian can dialogue with someone who has radically different views." Hybels was accused of promoting Christian persecution and promoting false belief.²⁴ David Claydon in *Transformation* argues that we cannot dialogue with Muslims because they make demands on the basis of a claim to authoritative truth.²⁵ Furthermore, Islam is premised on legalism whereas Christianity is premised on freedom.²⁶ Another *World* article critiqued the Christian Crusades, but then argues that "Today's crusaders are the Muslim extremists," allowing for a Christian disavowal of its own history and targeting Islam as the inheritor not only of its own history of oppression but Christianity's history of it as well.²⁷ "Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith in which God sends his son to die for you."²⁸ As I will discuss later, however, not all evangelicals are this lacking in self-reflection.

22. Ibid, 20.

23. Ibid, 22; Joel Belz, "A Faith of Peace," *World* 16 (October 6, 2001).

24. "Bill Hybels Says Christians Distorted Facts About Visit From Muslim Cleric," *Charisma* 27 (June 2002).

25. Claydon, "Islam in a Western Context: Australia."

26. Gene Edward Veith, "Freedom Versus Legalism," *World* 16 (December 1, 2001).

27. Gene Edward Veith, "Memory Loss," *World* 16 (November 17, 2001).

28. Lynn McAdam, "Lessons from 9-11," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 40 (October 2004), 418.

In another *World* analysis, “Christianity grew by the blood of its martyrs, but Islam grew by killing those who opposed it.” “Christianity looked at slavery critically over the centuries and often fought for its abolition, but Muslims began the practice of enslaving Africans, and some Islamic countries today still allow slavery.” Also beheading is a traditional Islamic practice, a complaint that marks Muslims as inherently savage.²⁹ Because of this savagery, what apparently distinguishes Muslims from Christians is that Muslims riot when their sacred scriptures are desecrated whereas Christians are more civilized and, based on their spiritual evolution, realize that a book cannot be divine.³⁰ For example, Focus on the Family’s Mark Hartwig argues that not all Muslims are terrorists. However, the extent to which they are not terrorists is because they’ve been influenced by Western Christian ideas.³¹

Muslims as Failed Followers of Islam

However, while Islam is often depicted as inherently evil, sometimes critics juxtapose Islam as a more ethical religious system in relation to its barbaric adherents. That is, Muslims are often described as not really knowing the real dictates of the Qu’ran.³² In these narratives, Christian writers frame themselves as people who know the Qu’ran better than do Muslims. *Christianity Today* opines “the most effective way to address the human rights disaster in Saudi

29. Marvin Olasky, “Beyond Wishful Thinking,” *World* 19 (December 11, 2004).

30. Ted Olsen, “Dirty Qur’ans, Dusty Bibles,” *Christianity Today* 49 (July 2005).

31. Mark Hartwig, “Spread by the Sword?” *Focus on the Family Citizen* 16 (February 2002).

32. Courtney Russell, “Marabout Face,” *World Magazine* 19 (August 7, 2004).

Arabia may be to let Muhammed do the talking.”³³ For instance, Martin and Gracia Burnham were kidnapped by a Muslim group in the Philippines known as Abu Sayyaf.³⁴ Martin was killed, but Gracia survived. According to Gracia, her kidnappers engaged in “a lot of double talk and a lot of people who don’t really know what they believe.”³⁵ If Muslims are not following the dictates of Islam, then what makes them so corrupt? Burnham racializes them as peoples who, for some reason, do not understand basic precepts of morality. “In their culture, they grow up paying bribes and ransom and paying off someone,” which predisposes them to kidnapping.³⁶ Similarly, *World* featured an article on an Islamic sect called the Takfirs, which is traced to the Muslim Brotherhood. According to *World*, outwardly members appear to be excommunicated and take up western ways and vices but are inwardly devout. According to *World* “Postmodernists, relativists, and ecumenical types who believe that all the world’s religions are essentially the same and all equally beneficial should consider the Takfirs. Before the Takfirs get hold of them.”³⁷

Islam and Geopolitics

Many evangelical narratives of Islam often disavow or dismiss any role U.S. imperialism may play in exacerbating conflict between Arab/Muslim countries and the United States. Rather,

33. Jeff Sellers, “To Confront a Theocracy,” *Christianity Today* 46 (July 8, 2002), 35

34. Ted Olsen, “Two Hostages Die in Attempted Missionary Rescue in Mindanao,” *Christianity Today* 46 (July 8, 2002).

35. Ted Olsen, “Did Martin Die Needlessly?” *Christianity Today* 47 (June 2003), 36.

36. *Ibid*, 37

37. Gene Edward Veith, “Crime as Redemption,” *World* 19 (June 2004).

Muslims are portrayed as motivated by an irrational hatred of freedom, democracy, and Christian love.³⁸ The Christian Jew Foundation explains that Palestinian complaints are solely about religious differences rather than political concerns. This religious intolerance then contributes to a situation where “Palestinians are fed a steady diet of hatred and religious fanaticism from the cradle to the grave. This is how the cycle of violence and bloodshed is perpetuated from one generation to the next.”³⁹ *Christianity Today* lambasted Saudi papers which stated that “Christian fundamentalism is no less dangerous to international peace and security than extremists in other religions. Rather it is more dangerous, especially if it controls the policy of the United States.”⁴⁰ This assertion was absurd, according to *Christianity Today* because Saudi Arabia funds terrorism. This response, of course, does not really answer to the charge made in Saudi papers - even if Saudi policies are oppressive, that does not mean evangelical support of U.S. imperialism is not oppressive as well. Meanwhile, Stephen Mansfield’s biography of Osama bin Laden published in *New Man* contends that bin Laden’s critiques of the United States is based on misinformation. Bin Laden thought Christian nations had descended into spiritual poverty. While there is truth to this analysis, according to Mansfield, what bin Laden did not realize is that “America was experiencing an astonishing spiritual renewal, a movement if left untainted had potential to heal the very moral maladies bin Laden criticized.”⁴¹ If only Osama bin Laden had known! Similarly,

38. Gary Lane, “Robes of White,” *Voice of the Martyrs* (March 2005).

39. Gary Hedrick, “The Truth About the Palestinian Problem,” *Message of the Christian Jew* (May-June 2001), 11.

40. “Is Christianity a Religion of Peace?” *Christianity Today* 46 (October 7, 2002).

41. Stephen Mansfield, “Men of the Decade,” *New Man* 11 (July/August 2004), 30.

within the U.S. or other Christian-dominated countries, *World* complains that Muslim communities complain about being victimized by anti-terrorism laws when in fact Muslims are supporting terrorism.⁴² Similarly, when critics of Islam do address the complaints Arab/Muslim countries might have about U.S. policies at all, they dismiss the validity of these complaints.⁴³

Evangelical Critiques of Islamophobia

On one hand, the attacks of 9/11 seem to have intensified the virulence of evangelical anti-Islamic rhetoric. At the same time, this virulence seems to have also encouraged some sectors of evangelicalism to become more critical of Islamophobia. One such example was the scandal that erupted when Franklin Graham, son of Billy Graham, preached a sermon at the Pentagon where he said Islam was a “wicked” and “very evil” religion.⁴⁴ His stance was supported by *World Magazine*⁴⁵ and Sandy Rios of Concerned Women for America who said that “a religion that teaches killing the infidels is wicked.”⁴⁶ *New Man* ran an interview with Marvin Yakos, author of *Jesus Versus Jihad* who asserted: “America needs to understand that the Qu’ran is a terribly evil spiritual device. It was concocted by Satan to kill, steal and destroy, not only the body, but also the soul. . . The media declares Islam a religion of peace. In truth, Islam is a

42. Priya Abraham, “Protest Too Much?” *World* 19 (August 21 2004).

43. Mark Hartwig, “Portrait of a Terrorist,” *Focus on the Family Citizen* 15 (November 2001); Mansfield, “Men of the Decade.”

44. “Jesus Freak,” *Christianity Today* 46 (November 18, 2002).

45. Marvin Olasky, “Hurrah for Franklin Graham,” *World* 16 (December 1, 2001).

46. Christian Science Monitor, “A Convenient Scapegoat: The Right’s Demonization of Muslims,” *Christian Science Monitor* (September 14, 2002).

religion of the Antichrist.”⁴⁷ Other prominent evangelists such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and former SBC president Jerry Vines have also made similar derogatory remarks about Islam. As a result the National Association of Evangelicals and Institute of Religion and Democracy convened a meeting to issue guidelines on dialogues between the evangelicals and Muslim communities.⁴⁸ On one hand, it calls on Christian leaders to tone down their language and to acknowledge some of the validity of Muslim complaints about western imperialism. It calls on Christians to become more educated about Islam and to assume that while Christians may have critiques about Islam, Muslims also have valid critiques of western Christianity. On the other hand, it stresses that Christians should not over-emphasize the role of western empire in creating social ills within Muslim and Arab countries. It is also important not to equate Christianity with Islam - we must respect the boundaries of Christianity. The statement concludes with arguing that there are some sectors of Islam that are so violent that there is no place to dialogue with these groups.⁴⁹ At the forum, all participants stated that they disagreed with Franklin Graham’s statement. The Forum was critiqued for not inviting Falwell, Graham, or Robertson.⁵⁰ Response to the statement was mixed. Dudley Woodbery, Professor of Islamic studies at Fuller, supported the statement. Roy Iksnevad, Director of Ministries to Muslims Department of the Billy Graham

47. Marvin Yakos, “Islam: What You Need to Know,” *New Man* 9 (January-February 2002), 19.

48. Alan Wisdom, “Guidelines for Christian-Muslim Dialogue,” May 7, 2003. The full text of the document can be found on www.ird-renew.org/muslimdialogue.

49. Alan Wisdom, “Guidelines for Christian-Muslim Dialogue,” May 7, 2003. The full text of the document can be found on www.ird-renew.org/muslimdialogue.

50. Diane Knippers, coordinator of the event and head of the IRD, responded that the event was organized so quickly that she did not think these people would be able to attend.

Center at Wheaton College, stated by contrast that dialogue is good but limited. “There is a dark side in Islam.”⁵¹

Aside from the discussion around this statement, increasingly more articles have been published questioning the demonization of Muslims and Arabs.⁵² *World*, one of the most consistently anti-Arab evangelical magazines, has argued that there are positive aspects to Islam. They include (1) “Islam moved Arabs and many other people from polytheism;” 2) “Islam is strongly creationist;” 3) “Muslims developed a civilization that made great advances in science, medicine, and mathematics;” 4) “Islam stands with Christianity on many social issues” – including homosexuality and abortion; and 5) Islam welcomes “adherents of every skin color and ethnicity.”⁵³ Bob Jones III (who, while very conservative, seems to be the most sympathetic *World* writer on issues relating to Arab peoples and Islam) criticized the above-mentioned statement of Gene Youngblood: “Simplistic, broad-bush portrayals rarely do justice to a complex faith.”⁵⁴ This critique comes from an article which takes on the Council of Arab Islamic Relations for not taking a sufficiently strong stance on terrorism and disavowing any problems with Islam terrorism at all. Interestingly, however, Jones frames his complaints in a more moderate framework. He states that evangelicals should understand why Muslims might resent

51. Mark Stricherz, “Evangelicals Advise on Muslim Dialogue,” *Christianity Today* 47 (July 2003).

52. When *New Man* featured an article by Marvin Yakos on Islam (January/February 2002), it received many letters from readers stating they were canceling their subscripits because they felt the article was “hate filled.” Writes one reader: “I found Yakos to be a shallow hate-filled, ignorant man who is no better than the Taliban or the Ku Klux Klan (the Christian version of Taliban).” See “In Box,” *New Man* 9 (March/April 2002), 10.

53. Olasky, “A Cold War for the 21st Century,” 12.

54. Jones, “Truth or Cair,” 17

Christians and U.S. foreign policy. Evangelicals should also understand why anti-Arab stereotypes are damaging. He does not suggest that Islam necessarily promotes terrorism, just that it is nonsensical to argue that there is no terrorism that goes on in the name of Islam. Otherwise, that would be like evangelicals arguing that Christians have never believed in transubstantiation. He opines, CAIR should admit the existence of different sectors of Islam and explain how CAIR's approach differs from sects that do support terrorism.⁵⁵

Fides et Historia, published out of Calvin College, ran several articles critiquing Huntington's civilizational thesis which these authors argued is the governing logic of much evangelical anti-Islam rhetoric. This logic stereotypes Islam, fails to consider the impact of Christian imperialism on Islamic countries, and creates a self-fulfilling prophecy.⁵⁶ States one contributor: "Muslims have invoked jihad more in conflict with other Muslims than in conflict with outsiders. For the last two or three centuries, the aggressor in Islam's clashes with the West has been the latter more often than not. Overall Islamic history has not been any bloodier than European history."⁵⁷ He argues this civilizational thesis has an "orientalist bias."⁵⁸ And Philip Yancey states that Christians are guilty of many of things of which they accuse Muslims:

55. Ibid.

56. John Jovan Markovic, "The Huntington Thesis," *Fides et Historia* 36 (Summer/Fall 2004); Erik Benson, "A Bleak Prospect," *Fides et Historia* 36 (Summer/Fall 2004); Scott Waalkes, "Prescience and Paradigms," *Fides et Historia* 36 (Summer/Fall 2004); Gregory Miller, "Toward Armageddon," *Fides et Historia* 36 (Summer/Fall 2004); Stephen Hoffmann, "Civilizations and World Order," *Fides et Historia* 36 (Summer/Fall 2004).

57. Hoffmann, "Civilizations and World Order," 117.

58. Ibid, 117.

The very things we resist in Islam, some Christians find tempting. We, too, seek political power and a legal code that reflects revealed morality. . . We, too, tend to see others (including Muslims) as a stereotyped community, rather than individuals. Will we turn toward our own version of the harsh fundamentalism sweeping Islam today?⁵⁹

New Man featured a special report, “This is a Spiritual War,” on Islam immediately after 9/11. It featured a variety of opinions including Don McCurry, founding president of Ministries to Muslims, who said “Islam has been hiding behind the facade of being a nice religion. . . But at its core, Islam teaches holy war, and it does teach world conquest. . . God loves Muslims, but hates Islam. And the more you know about Islam, the more you hate what it does to people”⁶⁰ At the same time, however, it cites more moderate Tony Campolo who says: “All of us need a devil out there to blame things on – God keep us from making Muslim people the devil. If you believe as I believe that these people must be won to Christ, defining them as the enemy will destroy that possibility.”⁶¹ Reza Safa in this same issue concurs: “There’s a lot of Muslim bashing and a lot of raw emotions going on right now. But we need to show people where the problem is. Our fight is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual powers.”⁶²

Christianity Today ran an interview with Warren Larson of the Zwemer Center for Muslim Studies at Columbia International University, who was a former missionary in Pakistan. He criticizes the demonization of Muhammad: “Saying that Muhammad was a demonized

59. Philip Yancey, “The Lure of Theocracy,” *Christianity Today* 50 (July 2006), 64.

60. “This Is Spiritual War,” *New Man* 8 (November/December 2001)..

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

pedophile doesn't seem accurate or fair. Nor is it wise... I think it's very much waging peace on Islam rather than taking a militant stance as Christians."⁶³ It also ran an op-ed criticizing Muslim "phobia."⁶⁴ The reason for this critique is that the interests of evangelism runs counter to depicting Muslims simply as terrorists: "In short, if we hope to demonstrate the love and saving power of Christ to Muslims, we're going to have to cease the name-calling and reach out in love--yes, especially to those who in some respects now are considered our 'enemies.'"⁶⁵

Christianity Today also published a review of evangelical books that covered Islam, calling them "historically inaccurate, theologically misinformed, and missiologically guided" – particularly criticizing John MacArthur's *Terrorism, Jihad and the Bible* (which says that suicide bombers have pent-up sexual desires and that Muhammad was demonically inspired), Don Richardson's *Secrets of the Koran* (which says that Muhammad is a demonized pedophile), and Ralph Stice's *From 9/11 to 666* (which says a Muslim will be the anti-Christ). Rather than demonize Islam, "we should also recognize similarities, bridges, and common themes... [and] do it with sensitivity, understanding, and careful research."⁶⁶ In *Focus on the Family*, Mark Hartwig also notes that the demonization of Islam can contribute to increased anti-Christian sentiment in the Muslim world. He argues that when Muslims are oppressed, this oppression puts Muslims on the path to extremism. "We can keep it [9/11] from happening again by remembering that loving our neighbors—Muslim or otherwise—isn't just our Christian duty. It also might change the

63. Stan Guthrie, "Waging Peace on Islam," *Christianity Today* 49 (June 2005), 47.

64. "Muslim Phobic No More," *Christianity Today* 46 (December 9, 2002).

65. Ibid.

66. Warren Larson, "Unveiling the Truth About Islam," *Christianity Today* 50 (June 2006), 40.

world.”⁶⁷ He further contends that, while Islam has war-like tendencies, it is important to realize that the concept of jihad does not just signify war, but also internal striving. He then suggests that the acts of 9/11 are not permissible under Islam, properly understood by quoting Sheik Abdul-Azeez Aas ash-Sheik, grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: “This is nothing but a manifestation of injustice, oppression and tyranny... and it is amongst the greatest of sins.”⁶⁸ So, now there is an increased attention to evangelical-Muslim dialogue that is not geared simply toward condemnation but co-existence.⁶⁹

In addition, many Christian missionaries who work more intensively within Muslim countries argue that the more violent forms of Islam popularized by the U.S. media actually reflects more elite forms of Islam. If one looks at how Islam is practiced in its more popular forms, however, one finds that Christians and Muslims co-exist quite peacefully. This analysis was reflected in a theological forum on Muslim-Christian relations which was coordinated by the Theological Resource Network of the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion. The papers from the forum were then published in *Transformation* in 2000. The participants who actually live and were born in Muslim countries generally seemed to agree that the “Muslim versus Christian” framework articulated by many evangelicals did not coincide with their

67. Hartwig, “Portrait of a Terrorist,” 25.

68. Mark Hartwig, “In Search of Islam,” *Focus on the Family Citizen* 16 (June 2002), 21.

69. George Carey, “Islam and the West: The Challenge to the Human Family,” *Transformation* 22 (January 2005); David Thomas, “Changing Attitudes of Arab Christians toward Islam,” *Transformation* 22 (January 2005); Mark Ivor Beaumont, “Early Muslim Interpretations of the Gospel,” *Transformation* 22 (January 2005); Sassan Tivassoli and Toby Howarth, “Shi’i Muslim Encounter with Christian Thought,” *Transformation* 22 (January 2005); David Emmanuel Singh, “Christian Relations with Muslims: Review of Selected Issues and Approaches,” *Transformation* 22 (January 2005).

realities. In some contexts, tensions did not exist. In contexts where they did exist, these tensions were often the result of larger influences, such as class and regional differences or the result of foreign intervention.⁷⁰ In this respect, they echo Tariq Ali's analysis of Muslim fundamentalism in *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*, which suggests that Muslim fundamentalist ideology, far from actually representing a sharp departure from Western capitalist hegemony, actually represents the interests of the elite in Muslim countries who depend on Western patronage. Many strands of popular Islam, by contrast, are not nearly as exclusivist and/or entrenched in patriarchal ideologies as are these more elite forms.⁷¹

Heteronormativity as a "Cure" for Islamophobia

While there are emerging critiques about Islamophobia within evangelicalism, these critiques are often mobilized to support conservative, heteronormative gender regimes within the United States. That is, Arab/Muslim countries are credited with having a valid critique of the West. However, that valid critique is not western imperialism, but the West's immoral acceptance of homosexuality. For instance, *World* magazine engaged in a debate with Dinesh D'Souza in which D'Souza argued against *World's* position that it is impossible for the U.S. to

70. "Beyond the Stereotypes: Consultation Findings Report," *Transformation* 17 (January-March 2000); David Emmanuel Singh, "Abu as-Al Mawdudi's Political Theory: Some Ideas on Muslim-Christian Relations," *Transformation* 17 (January-March 2000); Kaleem John, "Christians and the Blasphemy Laws in Pakistan," *Transformation* 17 (January-March 2000); Solomon Mugyenzi, "Seeking Understanding in Uganda," *Transformation* 17 (January-March 2000); Esther Mombo and Samson Mwaluda, "Relationship and Challenge in Kenya and East Africa," *Transformation* 17 (January-March 2000); Samy Fawzy, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Egypt," *Transformation* 17 (January-March 2000).

71. Jay Smith, "Deconstructing Islam," *Christianity Today* 46 (September 9, 2002).

engage politically with moderate Muslims because they are inherently religiously intolerant and hence will only engage in political alliances as a cover to persecute Christians. D'Souza contended that Muslims have been much more religiously tolerant than Christians have historically. But, further he contends: "Let's say you are right about the extent to which Christians are persecuted today in Muslim countries. What is the solution? To attack Islam and drive the traditional Muslims into the arms of the radical Muslims? To declare a 'clash of civilizations' which will only make Christians more vulnerable as perceived stand-ins for the enemy?"⁷² While critiquing the tendency to caricature Islam within evangelicalism, D'Souza identifies the issue between Muslims and the U.S. as the U.S.'s embrace of homosexuality rather than U.S. imperialism: "Some Muslims complain about U.S. activities in the Middle East or support for Israel, but an even more widespread concern is cultural: What Muslims see is an American descent into homosexual marriage, family breakdown, and a popular culture that is often morally repulsive."⁷³ His solution: support heteronormative family values on a global scale as a bulwark against Islamic terrorism:

We should recognize how our domestic culture war and the war on terror are linked. The restoration of American culture will not only be better for our children, but will help America's image abroad. . . [The] "Bush administration should do more to highlight the presence, and values, of conservative and religious America. Moreover, we should do what we can to export this America, which is good America, to the rest of the world. . . By proclaiming our allegiance to the traditional values of Judeo-Christian society, we can reduce the currents

72. Marvin Olasky, "A Question of Linkage," *World 22* (January 13, 2007).

73. Dinesh D'Souza, "Cross-Culture Wars," *World 22* (January 13, 2007), 26.

of anti-Americanism among the Muslims, and thus undercut the appeal of radical Islam to traditional Muslims around the world.⁷⁴

New Man similarly contends that the reason why Muslims hate America has nothing to do with foreign policy. Rather, this hatred stems Muslims' "desire for domination" and because America "has embraced immoral ways of living such as homosexuality, pornography, drug addiction, alcoholism, divorce and prostitution."⁷⁵

Christian Zionism

Islamophobia is inextricably linked to Christian Zionism, which racializes both Arab and Jewish peoples in complex ways. In this article, however, I will focus primarily on the racialization of Arab peoples. The emergence of Christian Zionism developed through intersecting theological and political fronts. Evangelical scholar Stephen Sizer defines Christian Zionism as:

Christian Zionism is born out of the conviction that God has a continuing special relationship with, and covenantal purpose for, the Jewish people, apart from the church, and that the Jewish people have a divine right to possess the land of Palestine. This is based on a literal and futurist interpretation of the Bible and the conviction that Old Testament prophecies concerning the Jewish people are being fulfilled in the contemporary State of Israel.⁷⁶

74. Ibid, 27.

75. Wesley Penemaker, "How to Win the War on Terror," *New Man* 12 (November/December 2005), 51.

76. Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-Map to Armageddon?* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 20.

He notes that there were a variety of theological movements within Christian Protestantism that helped seed the later development of Christian Zionism. While pro-Zionist impulses existed within the Puritan theology of the 1600-1700s in which Palestine would be restored after the conversion of Jewish peoples to Christianity, a pre-millennial movement developed in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that eventually began to emphasize God's separate covenant with Jews. Premillennialists argued that Christ's kingdom, far from being realized in this age or in the natural development of humanity, lay wholly in the future and was totally supernatural in origin. They stood in contrast to postmillennialists who believed that in the present age, the defeat of the anti-Christ was taking place through a gradual process.⁷⁷

Dispensationalism, a movement founded by John N. Darby of the Plymouth Brethren, arose from premillennialism. Darby divided history into three periods or dispensations. God's rules for one dispensation would not necessarily be applicable to another. C. I. Scofield systematized these dispensations into the scheme followed by most U.S. dispensationalists: innocency (before the fall), conscience (fall to flood), human government, promise (Abraham to Moses), law (Moses to Christ), grace (the church age), and the kingdom (millennium).⁷⁸ Premillennial dispensationalism involved a complex rendering of history in which, after the current church age comes to an end, Christians would be "raptured" into heaven. This rapture would be followed by the Anti-Christ's reign on earth. Then Christ would come to the earth,

77. George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 49.

78. Timothy Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 20.

defeat the Anti-Christ, and rule for 1000 years.⁷⁹ Darby, through a reading of Daniel 7-9, concluded that, in the “times of the Gentiles,” Israel would suffer in the hands of four Gentile powers until Jesus returned. The return would occur 70 weeks after a Gentile ruler allowed exiled Jews to return to Jerusalem. During the first seven weeks after the decree, the city would be rebuilt. Sixty-two weeks later, the Messiah would be repudiated by his people. In the 70th week, an evil ruler would gain power. At the end of the 70th week, the Messiah would return and restore David’s throne. Because the Hebrew word translated “week” actually means “a seven,” dispensationalists concluded that a week actually means seven years. However, since Jesus second coming did not come seven years later, Darby concluded that because Jews rejected Jesus, God has postponed the 70th week and is now turning to the Gentiles.⁸⁰ Eventually, however, the church will be raptured right before the 70th week continues, and the prophetic timetable will continue its relationship to Jewish people. Essentially, the Christian church is a parenthesis between God’s original covenant with Israel and the rapture when Christians will be raptured into heaven.⁸¹ According to Weber: “God would not deal with the two peoples or operate the two plans concurrently. Consequently, God had to remove the church before proceeding with the final plans for Israel.”⁸² Many dispensationalists hold that after the rapture, the church age ends and history will then continue through God’s relationship to Israel.⁸³

79. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 48-50.

80. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel’s Best Friend*, 21-22.

81. Timothy Weber, “How Evangelicals Became Israel’s Best Friend,” *Christianity Today* 42 (October 5, 1998).

82. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 23

83. Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 146-147.

After the rapture, the Antichrist will ascend. He will promise peace and the protection of Israel. This leader will come from the west (some opine that it will be a leader from Europe). For a short time, Jews will resume their sacrificial system in a restored temple and will experience peace and prosperity. However, 3.5 years later, an alliance will be created from the north (generally understood to be Russia) and the south (generally understood to be an Arab/African alliance) to launch an attack on Israel (Daniel 11). However, God will supernaturally destroy five/sixths of the invaders. In the wake of this destruction, the Antichrist's force will then protect Israel from an invasion from the East (often assumed to be China). One-third of the human race will be destroyed, but the anti-Christ and Israel will win. But now that all these nations are eliminated, the Antichrist will reveal his true colors. He will demand that he be worshiped in the temple, and that all people must receive the "mark of the beast" on their hands or foreheads in order to buy and sell. In response, 144,000 Jews will become missionaries and preach the gospel of Jesus. The anti-Christ will then begin killing all Jews, not just those who have converted to Jesus. All 144,000 will die, and the persecution will be much worse than that of Hitler.⁸⁴ Some sectors of dispensationalist thought, such those popularized by Hal Lindsay, hold that two-thirds of Jewish people will die during the Tribulation with the rest converting to Christianity. Those who do not convert are often represented as operating in league with Satan before they are destroyed.⁸⁵ Other Christian Zionist groups, particularly groups that work directly with the State

84. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 150-151.

85. Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 173.

of Israel, eschew the belief that the End Times necessitate the devastation of the world's Jewish population.⁸⁶

Finally, at the end of the 70th week, all forces from the north, south, east and west will converge on Israel to destroy God's people. At this point, Christ and all the raptured saints will destroy everyone at the battle of Armageddon. The Antichrist and his followers will be cast in to the lake of fire, all the world will be judged, and Satan will be thrown into a bottomless pit. Thus begins the Millennium where Jesus restores the throne of David. The millennium will be a Jewish kingdom, with a restored temple, animal sacrifices and King Jesus reigning from Jerusalem. After the Millennium, Satan will be freed for one last rebellion. It will be squelched, and the resurrection of the dead and the last judgement will occur. A new heaven and earth will be created for the redeemed, and time will come to an end.⁸⁷ Many dispensationalists also believe that before the Rapture can occur, the Muslim Dome of the Rock must be destroyed and a third Jewish temple must be built in Jerusalem.

Timothy Weber notes that Christian Zionists were not necessarily in support of the state of Israel. They were ambivalent about the secular basis of Zionism, and many did not assume that Israel was the formation foretold in prophecy, or that the state of Israel should be supported unconditionally. However, after the founding of Israel in 1948, and particularly after the War of 1967 when Israel occupied Jerusalem, Christian Zionist became much more popular. Hal Lindsay's wildly popular books based on Christian dispensationalism that focused on the role of Israel in the end times also fueled evangelical support. After the six day war, evangelicals

86. Ibid, 198.

87. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 25.

organized Christians Concerned for Israel, which later became the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel, and defended Israel's invasion of Lebanon with a pro-Israel rally in the White House. Israel in turn began to actively garner support from Christian evangelicals.

Stephen Spector points to the role of the state of Israel specifically furthering this movement. W. A. Criswell, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, traveled to meet with Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in the early 1950s and became a staunch supporter of Israel. Ben-Gurion also convinced the World Conference of Pentecostal Churches to hold its event in Jerusalem in 1961, and spoke at this conference. In 1960, Israel opened a Department of Christian Affairs to develop evangelical support for Israel. This ministry commissioned a study by Yona Malachy to assess evangelical support in the United States. While doing his study, Malachy convinced Biola College to issue a statement of support for Israel. His study was published as *American Fundamentalism and Israel: The Relationship of Fundamentalist Churches to Zionism and the State of Israel* in 1977 after his death when Menachim Begin came to office. Ben-Gurion also participated in the Jerusalem Conference on Biblical Prophecy on June 15-17, 1971, which became the largest Christian gathering in Israel since 1948. It sparked the beginning of evangelical tourism to Israel.⁸⁸ Begin aggressively solicited Christian Zionist support. On his death, the Evangelical Christian Zionist Congress of America issued a letter stating that Begin's friendship "forged the first visible bonding of the people of the Israel with their Biblical allies."⁸⁹ Begin developed particularly close ties with Jerry Falwell, whose

88. Ibid, 213-214.

89. Stephen Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 144.

organization the Moral Majority, became particularly active in supporting Israel.⁹⁰ Begin gave him the prestigious Jabotinsky award for his continued support, and Falwell received a Windstream jet from the Israeli government to facilitate his travels to Israel.⁹¹ Begin called on his support when he launched a preemptive strike against an Iraqi nuclear reactor. Falwell similarly supported the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.⁹² Falwell later developed close ties with every Israeli leader since Begin.⁹³ When Bill Clinton was pushing Benjamin Netanyahu to fulfill the terms of the Oslo agreement, Netanyahu contacted Falwell to arrange a welcome by 1,500 evangelicals, including Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition and Jane Hanson of Women's Aglow, through Voices United for Israel as an affront to Clinton.⁹⁴ In 2001, Ariel Sharon gave Pat Robertson an award in recognition of his service and the Zionist Organization of America gave him the State of Israel Friendship Award in 2002.⁹⁵ At a birthday party for him in Jerusalem, many Israeli officials attended. In 2004, the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus was formed to enhance relations with Israel and Christian supporters.⁹⁶

Benny Elon, who became a leader of the political far right in Israel, was also instrumental in the development of alliances between evangelicals and Israel. He became Minister of Tourism in 2001 and developed a strategy for courting evangelicals as tourists. An example of the kinds

90. Ibid, 147.

91. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 218.

92. Ibid, 219.

93. Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel*, 148.

94. Ibid, 148

95. Ibid, 148.

96. Christian Allies Caucus, *For Zion's Sake* (Second Quarter 2004).

of relationships he helped form would be Ronn Torossian, a PR firm that represents the Christian Coalition and the Government of Israel. Its clients include John Hagee, Christians United for Israel, Benny Hinn, American Jewish Congress and Zionist Organization of America. Elon forged alliances with many evangelical leaders and helped them develop lobbying infrastructures in Israel. And in 2003, he launched a major campaign to attract evangelical tourists. Today, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism recruits evangelical leaders for free familiarization tours. Tourists can only fly on the Israeli airline El Al, employ only tour guides licensed by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, and use only Israeli ground transportation companies. Tourists are not allowed to meet Palestinian Christians, even when they request to do so.⁹⁷ Chuck Smith, founder of Calvary Church, became a prominent tour leader, whose tours featured mass baptisms of Christians in the Jordan River. His tours are given infrastructural support by the state of Israel.⁹⁸ Israel's Ministry of Tourism puts out 40-100 page ads in conservative evangelical Christian magazines called *The Holy Land* to recruit evangelicals to tour Israel. The slogan of the magazine directed to evangelicals is "No one belongs here more than you."⁹⁹ It also sponsored a four-day solidarity tour for Christian Right organizations, in which the Christian Coalition and other groups participated.¹⁰⁰ Recently, the Israeli government donated 35 acres of land near the Sea of Galilee to a small group of Christian leaders who attended a series of meetings with the Ministry of

97. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 219.

98. Ibid, 215.

99. See <http://www.goisrael.com/missions/>.

100. Christian Coalition, "Christian Coalition Action Alert."

Tourism in early May 2005, in order to promote Christian tourism.¹⁰¹ This delegation included Michael Little of CBN; Jay Sekulou of American Center for Law and Justice; Sunday Adelaga, a Ukraine pastor; Australian pastor Brian Houston; and Luis Cortes, a Hispanic pastor. The tentative plan was to build a \$50-\$60 million Christian Heritage Center in Galilee.¹⁰² This plan was suspended when Pat Robertson suggested that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's stroke in January 2006 was because of his decision to withdraw from the Gaza Strip.

He was dividing God's land. I would say woe unto any prime minister of Israel who takes a similar course to appease the . . . United Nations, or the United States of America. . . God says, "This land belongs to me. You better leave it alone."¹⁰³

In response, the Ministry of Tourism said it would do no more business with Robertson, thus jeopardizing the plan. However, two months later, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism announced it would have Robertson appear in ads on the 700 Club in which he would personally appeal to evangelicals to visit Israel. In 2007, it also resumed negotiations around the Heritage Center. While Robertson was not part of the negotiations, they did include Michael Little who is part of Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network.¹⁰⁴

101. Adrienne Gaines, "Israeli Government Donates Land to Christian Leaders," *Charisma* 30 (July 2005).

102. *Christianity Today* opined that the Galilee Project should exclude Robertson: "He has manipulated too many similar projects to his own personal financial ends...Israel tourism's breaking ties with him is healthy for Israeli politics and for the future of evangelical relations with Israel;" see Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel*, 153.

103. Quoted in John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 135.

104. Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel*, 153.

Today, probably the most prominent Christian Zionist lobbying group is Christians United for Israel, headed by John Hagee. Other groups include: the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel, the Unity Coalition for Israel, Christian Friends of Israeli Communities, Christians' Israel Public Action Committee, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, and many others. In addition, Christian Zionists are active in the International Fellowship of Christian and Jews, an organization headed by Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein (who is not Christian) in order to develop broadbased Christian and Jewish support for Israel. This group worked with former Christian Coalition director, Ralph Reed, to organize Stand for Israel, which holds an annual day of solidarity for Israel.¹⁰⁵ The campaign mobilizes 100,000 churches and 1 million Christians to be in solidarity with Israel. They receive fax alerts on pressing issues.¹⁰⁶ According to John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, Christian Zionists, despite their fervency, are a relatively small part of the overall Israel lobby. The reason is that these groups organize around a number of domestic issues, such as abortion and same-sex marriage, that compete for time and resources. Consequently, they contribute a relatively small amount of financial resources and lobbying power relative to the Jewish Zionist lobbying groups which focus more solely on Israel.¹⁰⁷ However, with the ascendancy of Obama's presidency and the manner in which he is also racialized as a Muslim threat, we may see increased Christian Zionist activism that dovetails with reactionary anti-Black racism.

105. For a more extended discussion of Christian Zionist lobbying groups, see Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*.

106. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 229.

107. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 138-139.

Unconditional Christian Zionism

Some sectors of Christian Zionism espouse unconditional support for Israel. The question of Israel is settled by the Bible, and there can be no other political, social, or justice considerations. As Timothy Weber notes, this thinking has a long history. Many early Christian Zionists showed no concern for Arab peoples, including Arab Christians, during the founding of the state of Israel. James Gray of Moody Bible Institute contended that Israel does not have to “be governed by the principles that maintain in a democracy like the United States.”¹⁰⁸ Keith Brooks opined: “The Arab and Moslem world is not only anti-Semitic, but is out and out anti-Christ.”¹⁰⁹ “Today as Israel is once again making front page headline news, the politically correct are preaching a message of ‘land rights’ and ‘mutual peace.’ And no one (Jew or Gentile) is taking into account God’s covenant promise to Abraham or citing biblical history, because today in the world’s public forums, the Bible is politically incorrect.”¹¹⁰

These strands tend to demonize Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular. This strand was clearly reflected in the Interfaith Zionist Leadership Summit May 17-18 2003, in Washington, D.C. Sponsors included the Christians for Israel, National Unity Coalition for Israel (an interfaith Zionist organization), African American Women’s Clergy Association, Christian Coalition, Jewish Action Alliance, the Episcopal-Jewish Alliance, and the Jewish Political

108. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 169.

109. Ibid, 170.

110. Mark Norris, “A Politically Correct Jerusalem,” *The Jerusalem Connection* (April-May 2003).

Education Foundation. In addition, Hindu Right activists also attended, declaring that “Israel, India, and the U.S. are three pillars against Islam.”

Throughout the conference, there was no pretense to view Arab peoples with any humanity at all. For instance, according to Joseph Pruder, Director of the American Jewish Congress Interfaith Task Force for America and Israel, the Muslim world has not undergone the reformation that Jews and Christians did that would enable them to adopt democracy, human rights, and women’s rights (it is interesting that Islam forces evangelicals to position themselves essentially as feminists in opposition to Islam’s supposed misogyny when they would otherwise critique women’s rights platforms). Thomas Neumann, Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, argued that some people think the problem we face is “radical” Islam, but the problem is in fact Islam. Most Muslims are anti-American and anti-Israel; they are not a fringe who feel this way.

Many speakers, such as Freedman and Michael Leeden of the American Enterprise Institute, contended that U.S. colonialism or economic imperialism is not a factor in why there may be resentment against the U.S. from Arab countries. Rather, the true reason is “hatred, pure hatred.” According to Leeden, what unites all Arab countries is tyranny. They hate the U.S. not because of our policies, but because we are. It’s because we are democratic and believe in liberty. The only thing they want is the defeat of the U.S. - so it does not matter what stance the U.S. takes on any particular issue. They have to come after us because their people see what a “bastion of freedom” we are, and they fear us, because their people would much rather live in our society than in theirs. Roberta Coombs of the Christian Coalition similarly states:

We are praying for the families and the State of Israel and we send our condolences. Having visited Israel a few months ago, I truly understand that Israel's enemies are America's enemies as well. These brutal terrorists want to destroy Democracy and Western society as a whole. During these extremely troubling times we urge Israel to continue the fight against terrorism.¹¹¹

The speakers tended to equate Palestinians with Islam. However, many Palestinians are also Christian and also oppose Israeli occupation of Palestine. This reality presents a point of tension for some evangelicals—if belief in Christ is supposed to be paramount, then why are evangelicals supporting the claims of Judaism over the claims of Palestinian Christians. The staunch Zionist sectors simply erase the existence of Palestinian Christians from their analysis or they hold that Palestinian Christians are not really Christian. After all, “You cannot love Jesus without loving Israel,” says Earl Cox, founder of Front Page Jerusalem, a radio network that offers Christians an Israeli perspective on world events.¹¹² In this regard, they echo the ideology within white evangelicalism that implicitly equates Christianity with whiteness. For instance, at this conference, Joann Magnuson of Bridges for Peace attempted to address the contradiction by arguing that we must encourage Palestinian Christians to support Zionism and recognize that their true oppressors are Palestinian leaders. The reason they do not currently support Zionism is because: 1) Zionists are fearful and intimidated; 2) they are bad Christians who are leading their constituents astray; and 3) they have been seduced by Muslims to support bad political

111. Christian Coalition, “Christian Coalition Action Alert.”

112. Arlene Bridges Samuels, “Messianic Jews, Evangelicals Unite to Help Needy Israelis,” *Charisma* 28 (May 2003).

positions.¹¹³ Meanwhile, Christians for Israel asserts that Palestinian Christians are oppressed only by Muslims, not Israelis. Of course, if that were the case there would not be the number of Palestinian Christians organizing against occupation that there are. This erasure of Palestinian Christians is critical in order to frame the colonization of Palestine as an irreconcilable religious conflict. Otherwise, the existence of Christian Palestinians who still support Palestinian self-determination reveals the fact that Christian Zionism is primarily a political rather than a religious project. Consequently, militant Christian Zionists continue to argue that there is no economic or political basis for Palestinian claims; they are solely the result of irrational Islamic hatred for Jewish and Christian peoples.¹¹⁴ This religious frame is evident in the literature of Eagle Wings ministry in New York, which has started a Day of Prayer which is supposed to pray for Israel on the first Sunday of October every year until the Messiah returns. Its goal is to involve 20,000 US churches and 50 million believers in 70 countries. Supporters include Pat Robertson, Stephen Strang (publisher of *Charisma*), and Ted Haggard. Says Jack Hayford (President of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel) of this effort: “This is a moment that God is at work in our world. It’s manifest first in the recovery of Israel, the challenge to that recovery by hostile forces that are... spiritual forces that are anti-Christ-nourished, anti-Christ in spirit.”¹¹⁵

113. For similar arguments, see “Letters,” *Charisma* 23 (March 1998).

114. Maarit Eronen, “Caught in Israel’s Crossfire,” *Charisma* 28 (September 2002), 66.

115. Peter Johnson, “50 Million Christians Enlisted to Participate in Prayer Day for Israel,” *Charisma* 30 (September 2004).

The political platform proffered at the Zionism conference was the expulsion of all Palestinians into Jordan, or what was termed the “Two-State Solution”—Israel and Jordan. Actually, according to the speakers, there are no such peoples as Palestinians - they are all simply Arabs who have no claim to the land Israel currently occupies.¹¹⁶ There can be no Palestinian State, according to a flyer handed out at the conference by the Zionist Organization of America: “Creating a Palestinian Arab State Means Creating New Terrorist State.” Gary Bauer similarly asserts:

The last thing the world needs now is yet another totalitarian, anti-American terrorist state. Yet that is exactly what a Palestinian state would be. . . The PA is a brutal Muslim dictatorship which tortures dissidents, silences newspapers that deviate from Arafat’s line, and persecute Christians. . . The only way to advance the chance for peace is, first, by defeating the terrorist regime.¹¹⁷

Speakers also advocated that the U.S. topple Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and destroy the Palestinian Authority. This “two state” solution was articulated in a flyer from Americans for a Safe Israel.

Two State Solution - Israel - Jordan

Underlying concepts:

A) All people are entitled to a national land

116. Louis Beres, “Israel, Gaza and the Occupied Territories,” *Inheritance* (Winter 2005).

117. Gary Bauer and Morton Klein, “Palestinian Statehood: A Reward for Terror,” *The Jerusalem Post* (December 13 2002).

B) The Arabs held in refugee camps are the only people who have remained unsettled in the land of their people since WWII.

C) Israel is a Jewish land by religious, historical and security fiat.

D) Jordan, although once comprising part of the Biblical Land of Israel and Balfour's Palestine, now contains an Arab-Palestinian state whose population is over 70% Palestinian, and as there is no Palestinian language, religion or culture, those in Israel will be at home in Jordan or any Arab nation

What is to be done?

A. Refugee camps are to be closed, and those who have endured its horrors are now free to resettle in Jordan or other Arab countries, which will welcome them and where they share a common culture. This course would be shared by all those designated as refugees.

B. Those living within Judea, Samaria, and Gaza will be offered a financial inducement by buying their property, etc. if they choose to resettle.

C. Those remaining within Israel will be declared citizens of Jordan with the appropriate legal steps taken so that they remain within Israel and loyal to Israel law.

Another flyer from the same organization offered:

What we stand for:

Jerusalem is the eternal and exclusive capitol of the sovereign Jewish State.

The entire Land of Israel belongs to the Jewish People, alone.

There is no "Palestine" and there is no "Palestinian People."

The Arabs are not seeking a real peace; their goal is the destruction of Israel.

The nations of the world must not attempt to force Israel into making suicidal territorial concessions.

Israel must always maintain the ability to militarily defend itself and protect its own vital interests.

Israel must return to the Biblical values that guided the Jewish People throughout its history.

Israel must continue to develop as a nation with a vibrant free-market economy.

Terrorist organizations, and the rogue nations that support them, must be destroyed.

Similarly, an advertisement from Facts and Logic about the Middle East (FLAME) contends that there is no Palestinian refugee problem. Palestinians only left Palestine because Arab countries instructed them to, in order to facilitate an Arab invasion of Israel. In addition, “those who fled Israel left little wealth and little history, since most of them had not come to ‘Palestine’ until Jewish settlers opened economic opportunities in what had been a desolate country for centuries.”¹¹⁸ In another ad, FLAME advocates moving Jews from Gaza and the West Bank as long as all Arabs living in “Israel proper” are moved into Gaza. Scarily, FLAME upholds the India/Pakistan partition as an example of a successful population transfer that Israel should emulate.¹¹⁹ This sector represented by the Christian Coalition, Pat Robertson, Jerry

118. Advertisement appeared in *World* 16 (Feb 3, 2004), 20.

119. Advertisement appeared in *World* 19 (July 21, 2004), 34. For an analysis of the devastation resulting from the India/Pakistan partition, see Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms* (London: Verso, 2002).

Falwell, Jack Hayford and a multitude of prominent evangelicals completely opposed George W. Bush's Roadmap to Peace (even threatening to vote against him in the 2004 elections if he continued to support the Roadmap), and oppose any Palestinian state whatsoever.¹²⁰

According to Daniel Pipes of the Middle East Forum, there can be no "quick fix" solution through peace road maps. He argued at the Zionism conference that it is a war; one side will win and one side will lose. Israelis must defeat the Palestinians. Leeden similarly argued that war is the natural state of humankind. The only time there is peace is when the winners (which are the U.S. and Israel) impose the terms of peace on those who have been defeated. We have to topple Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, stated Leeden, so then we can go to the Palestinians and ask what they really want. "If you want peace, we're with you, but if you want to drive Jews into the sea and absorb it into a greater Palestine, then you're next." Even though Palestinian deaths outnumber Israeli deaths by 6-10 times, *Charisma* asserts that violence in the Middle East can be solely attributed to Arabs and Palestinians.

The reality is that it is not Israeli policy to initiate violence. Israel is continually forced into responding to the aggression of other nations. . . Though many nations attack everything Israeli—from its religion to its politics, from its people to its very existence—this outnumbered and assaulted tiny nation endures the venom, courageously and consistently choosing peace over war.¹²¹

There are also critiques of universities unfairly castigating Israel as "imperialist Zionist oppressors." *World* promoted Martin Kramer's book, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies*, which argues that academics are "blinded by their post-Marxist

120. Christian Coalition, "Christian Coalition Action Alert."

121. Robert Stearns, "Why Israel Matters," *Charisma* 31 (May 2006), 46.

ideology” and romanticize Palestinians. The review concludes: “The dirty secret of higher education is that large numbers of professors do not really believe in the ideas they are teaching or promoting in their research.”¹²²

Many of the most prominent evangelical leaders have particularly galvanized support for Israel post 9/11. For instance, as reported at the Zionism conference, the Christian Coalition, until recently, did not take a stand on Israel. Now, it is very active in calling for U.S. military support of Israel and opposing the formation of any Palestinian state.¹²³ In 2006, John Hagee, along with George Morrison, Gary Bauer and Jerry Falwell, formed Christians United for Israel, whose purpose is to “provide a national organization through which every pro-Israel organization and ministry can speak and act with one voice in support of Israel in matters of biblical issues.”¹²⁴ Hagee began his public advocacy of Israel in 1981 and began organizing a Night to Honor Israel events every year since then. At the 2007 event alone, John Hagee raised \$8 million, which he gave to Israel. CUFI was envisioned to be a Christian version of AIPAC. It has a dozen regional directors and a network of evangelical activists who can be reached within 24 hours to lobby. The board includes Benny Hinn and Jack Hayford. It also organizes nights to celebrate Israel in major cities. In July 2006, it brought together 2,400 Christian Zionists for a conference and a lobbying effort that entailed 2,880 meetings with members of Congress. The 2007 meeting drew 4,000 delegates and featured Senator John McCain, a presidential candidate. At this meeting, Senator Joe Lieberman described Hagee as a “man of God” and compared him

122. Gene Edward Veith, “Intellectual Burqas,” *World* 16 (December 22, 2001).

123. Christian Coalition, “Christian Coalition Action Alert.”

124. Matthew Green, “Standing with Israel,” *Charisma* 31 (May 2006).

to Moses.¹²⁵ *Charisma* is also represented within the organization and calls on its readers to join it.¹²⁶ While *Charisma* is probably the magazine that most focuses on issues of racial justice, it is also the magazine that is the most uniformly pro-Zionist. Its critique of racism within evangelicalism does not extend to Arab or Palestinian Christians. The State of Israel regularly funds magazine inserts or even 100 page ads within *Charisma*. *Charisma* regularly features writings by John Hagee and almost never includes any critique of Israeli policies. Especially since the election of Obama, there has been almost no issue that does not have a pro-Israel article in it.¹²⁷

Conditional Zionism

Some sectors of evangelicalism support Israel, but with varying degrees of restraint. Some evangelicals more explicitly engage political considerations in their stances toward Palestine and hence oppose the complete liquidation of Palestine for security concerns. *World* news coverage seems to take the stance that a militant approach is just increasing Palestinian terrorism and devastating Israel's economy.¹²⁸

Others contend that the covenant with Israel is conditional upon its consistency with social justice principles or on its relationship with God.¹²⁹ For instance, Gerald McDermott

125. Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel*, 169-170.

126. Stephen Strang, "Christians, Unite for Israel," *Charisma* 31 (June 2006).

127. Adrienne Gaines, "A Call to Israel," *Charisma* 32 (September 2006).

128. Mindy Belz, "Risking the Roadmap," *World* 19 (February 14, 2004); Mindy Belz, "Bethlehem under Siege," *World* 16 (November 3, 2001).

129. "The Buzz," *World* 19 (May 29, 2004); "How Far Is Too Far?" *World* 17 (March 2, 2002).

expresses general support for Israel, but also argues that there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the modern state of Israel and the Israel of biblical prophecy. While he suggests that God has a covenant relationship with Jewish people, and perhaps Israel by extension, this covenant is valid to the extent that Israel upholds its end of the covenant through just relationship with Palestinians. He also questions the extent to which Israel can lay a religious claim to the land when its state is secular.¹³⁰ Interestingly, an editorial by John Piper in *World* states that while God promised the descendants of Abraham the land of Israel and that Israel was blessed by God, “neither of these facts leads necessarily to the endorsement of present-day Israel as the rightful possessor of all the disputed land. Israel may have such a right. And she may not. But that decision is not based on divine privilege.”¹³¹ She has broken the covenant with God and the divine blessing and habitation of land were conditional on Israel keeping the covenant. Also, Israel rejects the Messiah, which is the “ultimate act of covenant-breaking with God.”¹³² “The rights of nations should be decided by the principles of compassionate and public justice, not claims to national divine right or status.”¹³³

Mark Harlan similarly argues that there is a covenant relationship between God and Israel, but this covenant is both conditional and unconditional. He argues that this covenant is unconditionally open to all generations of Jewish peoples, but if they violate the terms of the covenant, they will be cursed. He holds that the Law of Moses forbids “murder, theft, and

130. Gerald McDermott, “The Land,” *Books and Culture* 9 (March/April 2003).

131. John Piper, “Land Divine?” *World* 17 (May 11, 2002).

132. *Ibid.*

133. *Ibid.*

coveting” (sins he think the State of Israel has).¹³⁴ In addition, “Possession of the land must bring blessing to non-Israelites and ultimately to the world.”¹³⁵ He criticizes the racialized manner in which strict Christian Zionists liken Palestinians to irredeemable biblical Canaanites¹³⁶ who simply need to be exterminated from the face of the earth. Quoting David Stern, a Messianic Jew who otherwise calls for unconditional support of Israel:

It cannot be stated rationally that the Palestinian Arabs today are in the category of the Canaanites. . . Such an ethnic comparison expresses an unbiblical attitude of racism, nationalism, and hate which cannot be disguised by calling it “faithfulness to God’s promise.”¹³⁷

Harlan then intimates that Israel does not have exclusive possession to the land, but says he cannot fully develop that argument.

Christianity Today took a similar position in its official stance on Israel and Palestine: We “strongly support Israel’s right to exist and defend itself. We also support the right of Arabs to fair treatment and to opportunity to live with dignity. It is not anti-Semitic to hold the Jewish state to biblical standards of righteousness. . . and justice is in the best interest of Israel.”¹³⁸

Christianity Today also ran an article distinguishing “biblical” versus “political” Zionists. It quoted Malcolm Hedding of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, a Christian

134. Mark Harlan, “A Middle Way in the Middle East,” *Christianity Today* 47 (April 2003), 85.

135. Ibid.

136. For an example of the Palestinians-as-Canaanites rhetoric, see *For Zion’s Sake* (Fourth Quarter, 2003), in which Palestinians are likened to the Amalekites (Ex 17:14-16).

137. Harlan, “A Middle Way in the Middle East,” 86

138. “The Longest Hatred,” *Christianity Today* 48 (April 2004).

Zionist group as remaining neutral on “political’ issues, particularly the withdrawal of Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip that began in 2005. Its position is that Israel will inherit all the land promised to the Jewish people “when the Messiah comes [again]. Not before. We can’t be more interested in land recovery than in spiritual restoration.”¹³⁹

As mentioned previously, evangelicals must address their theological contradiction of support the claims of a Jewish-only state against the claims of Christian Palestinians. Consequently, an increasing number of articles features Palestinian or Arab Christians. It appears as though evangelical venues have difficulty finding Arab or Palestinian Christians who will offer the unqualified support for the state of Israel that would help them to resolve this contradiction.¹⁴⁰ In fact, “Arab Christian leaders have stated their loyalty to the Palestinian cause.”¹⁴¹ Consequently, by featuring Palestinian Christians at all, they must address at least

139. Deann Alford, “Christian Zionists Split over Gaza Pullout,” *Christianity Today* 49 (July 2005).

140. One exception is the Christian Jew Foundation, which claims that it knows a Palestinian Christian, Anis Shorosh, who is a supporter of the Jewish state; see Hedrick, “The Truth About the Palestinian Problem,” 11. Also, *World* reported on three “Muslim terrorists” from Palestine, who now call themselves the “3 Ex-Terrorists”, who, reports *World*, are now “pro-Israel Christian.” Interestingly, the article did not actually cite anything from these three “terrorists” that was pro-Israel, although they certainly were critical of Islam; see Priya Abraham, “Brothers to the End,” *World* 21 (July 15, 2006).

141. Elaine Ruth Fletcher, “Between the Temple Mount and a Hard Place,” *Christianity Today* 44 (December 4, 2000), 67.

some critiques of the state of Israel.¹⁴² One *Charisma* article (which generally tends to have an extremely pro-Christian Zionist perspective) featured the perspective of Salim Munayer, an Arab Christian in Israel. He argued that U.S. Christians have a superficial understanding of the Middle East, promote anti-Arab sentiment, and should stop expressing love for Israel at expense of other groups. “To love the Jewish people doesn’t mean to hate the Arab people. Jesus died for all.”¹⁴³ He called on Christians to stop supporting right-wing Israeli leaders who do not act according to biblical principles. He concludes: “The land belongs to God at the end of the day. We don’t worship the land; we worship the Lord.”¹⁴⁴ *Charisma* ran another article entitled “Arab Christians Take a Hard Line on Israel.” Interestingly, none of the Arab Christians interviewed actually took a hard line on Israel, suggesting that from the perspective of *Charisma*, any critique

142. Tarek Mitri, “Who Are the Christians of the Arab World?” *International Review of Mission* 59 (January 2000); Deann Alford, “Outreach to Despair,” *Christianity Today* 48 (April 2004); Billy Bruce, “Arab Christians Take Hard Line on Israel,” *Charisma* 27 (April 2002); Elaine Ruth Fletcher, “Holy Land Roadblocks,” *Christianity Today* 45 (April 23, 2001); Mindy Belz, “Unfriendly Fire,” *World* 16 (September 15, 2001); Bishara Awad, “West Bank: Squeezed by Warring Majorities,” *Christianity Today* 42 (November 16, 1998); Gerald Shenk, “Anonymous Are the Peacemakers,” *Christianity Today* 44 (December 4, 2000), 39; Stan Guthrie, “Palestine’s Christians Persist Despite Pressures,” *Christianity Today* 45 (October 1, 2001); Kim Lawton, “An Elusive Peace,” *Christianity Today* 33 (April 21, 1989); Timothy Morgan, “Prepared for Pilgrims?” *Christianity Today* 44 (March 6, 2000); Deann Alford, “Love in the Land of Emnity,” *Christianity Today* 49 (July 2005); Stan Guthrie, “Crackdown Hits Churches,” *Christianity Today* 46 (May 21, 2002); David Neff, “Thugs in Jesus’ Hometown,” *Christianity Today* 47 (December 2003); Andree Seu, “Stepping into the Story,” *World* 20 (September 10, 2005); “Seeking Peace But Finding War in the City of Jesus’ Birth,” *Open Doors Newsbrief* 16 (December 2001); Terry Madison, “September 11: Real Security in Jesus Christ,” *Open Doors Newsbrief* 16 (December 2001).

143. Richard Daigle, “Arab Believer in Israel Calls for Equal Support of Palestinians and Jews,” *Charisma* 28 (October 2002).

144. *Ibid.*

of Israel is a hardline. Rather, their perspectives were similar to those of Ehab El Kharrat, an Egyptian Christian in Cairo, who says: “Nobody has any right to kill civilians, even in occupied land. However, Israel does occupy a land that belongs to Palestinians [referring to Gaza and the West Bank].”¹⁴⁵ Even arch-conservative *World* ran an article critiquing Israel from the perspective of Palestinian Christians.¹⁴⁶ Bob Jones III (the writer most sympathetic to Palestinians), while not necessarily sympathetic to the Palestinian Authority, argued that Israel has turned the West Bank into a prison through check points and other oppressive measures. He asks: “To what extent do the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority allow, protect, and guarantee the religious rights of persons of different faiths?”¹⁴⁷ Another *World* article praised prominent Palestinian Christian activist, Hanan Ashwari, and quoted her saying “I am concerned about creating a pluralistic and democratic government, with a just peace.”¹⁴⁸ *World* has also run articles accusing both Israel and Jewish people of Christian persecution, an exception to its usual trend of only accusing groups non-allied with U.S. interests of engaging in persecution.¹⁴⁹ And in 2006, *World* reported that Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.) sent a letter to President Bush that argued that Israeli policies such as the security wall are oppressing Palestinian Christians.¹⁵⁰

The unconditional support by evangelical Christians in America has encouraged Israeli policy for the past 50 years. In this process, the church has supported

145. Bruce, “Arab Christians Take Hard Line on Israel,” 16.

146. Mindy Belz, “Martyrs by the Millions,” *World* 17 (April 13 2002).

147. Bob Jones, “The War That Never Ends,” *World* 18 (May 31 2003).

148. Jill Nelson, “Reigning in Terrorists,” *World* 21 (February 4 2006), 17.

149. Mindy Belz, “Saving a Drowning Man,” *World* 13 (April 11, 1998).

150. Jill Nelson, “Missing Ingredient,” *World* 21 (June 10, 2006).

oppression, occupation, demolition of houses, strangulation of the Palestinian economy, the denial of basic human rights.¹⁵¹

Christianity Today asserts: “For these [Palestinian] Christians, today’s Palestinian struggle against Israel is the struggle of Jesus against an unjust Rome.”¹⁵² Another article published by a Palestinian Christian, frames Yassir Arafat, not as a terrorist as he is usually described in evangelical magazines, but as “the puppet for the Israeli occupation.” It also featured Palestinians Christians in an article on Bethlehem which criticized a proposed fence around Bethlehem. It asserted that Israeli security checkpoints are oppressive and that “the way Palestinians are being treated there is immoral.”¹⁵³

Timothy Weber, former president of Memphis Theological Seminary, has also extensively critiqued Christian Zionism. He does not directly challenge its theology, but he notes that Christian Zionism and dispensationalist theology contribute to a lack of concern for the well-being of Arab and Palestinian peoples, including Palestinian Christians. He further asserts that Christian Zionism also co-exists with an anti-Judaism/anti-Semitism in which Jews are positioned as those who should eternally suffer in order to fulfill God’s prophecies. In addition, because relatively few numbers of Jews will actually survive the end times, this ideology frequently divides good from bad Jews – the bad Jewish people are then blamed for the rise of the anti-Christ.¹⁵⁴ In addition, he contends that Christian Zionists need to more clearly think

151. Jones, “The War That Never Ends,” 19.

152. Fletcher, “Between the Temple Mount and a Hard Place,” 67.

153. Kevin Begos, “O Jailed Town of Bethlehem,” *Christianity Today* 48 (May 2004), 55.

154. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*.

through the ethical issues of the Israeli occupation and the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. “While Jews have a right to be secure within their own borders, do they have the right to seize other people’s land, occupy their territory, ignore their rights of self-determination and bulldoze or blow up the homes and businesses of Palestinian families?”¹⁵⁵

Evangelical Non/Anti-Zionism

The visibility of evangelical Zionism often obscures the presence of evangelicals who are critical of Zionism for a number of theological and political reasons. Some evangelicals support supercessionist theology that holds that God no longer has a covenant with Jewish people and hence God has no particular relationship with the state of Israel. Supercessionism holds that the church has taken the place of Israel in the covenanted relationship with God. Thus, the state of Israel no longer figures in the eschatological drama. Some dispensationalists, such as David Lewis, have criticized this as “theological anti-Semitism” which “manifests itself in both contempt for the Jewish people and the idea of replacement (the church takes the place of National Israel. God has no further use for Israel as a nation or people.”¹⁵⁶ In response, Richard Mouw contends that dispensationalism rests on a logic of anti-Semitism. That is, dispensationalists often direct their affection toward an idealized Judaism. They support an abstract version of what they believe to be a divine plan for the Jews more than they support

155. Weber, “How Evangelicals Became Israel’s Best Friend,” 49.

156. David Rausch, “Chosen People,” *Christianity Today* 32 (October 7, 1988), 59.

individual Jewish people. At the very least, their theology of Judaism has not regularly manifested itself in active efforts to eradicate anti-Semitism.¹⁵⁷

Certainly, it is the case that some strands of anti-Zionism are based largely on a rejection of Judaism. Other supercessionists, however, center the plight of Palestinians in their rhetoric. Their concern is less with demonizing Judaism than it is with challenging the Zionist theology that justifies the oppression of Palestinian peoples. Strait Gate Ministries, for instance, argues that Christians and Muslims have co-existed peacefully until the growth of Zionism. They argue that evangelical Zionists are contributing to the genocide of Palestinians.

Prominent evangelical leader Richard Mouw uses a combination of supercessionist and conditional covenant logic to make similar critiques. One hand, he contends that Israel's covenant with God is conditional.

I am especially disturbed by what I see as a refusal on the part of many dispensationalists to criticize the policies of Israeli governments... Christians in Arab countries have some good reasons to resent the policies of Israeli governments. Unfortunately, dispensationalists often obscure these issues. They are often so caught up in an enthusiasm for bible prophecy scenarios that they take it as obligatory to support the Israeli cause no matter what... Suppose that the establishment of the modern state of Israel is indeed a fulfillment of prophecy... None of this exempts us from assessing and criticizing when necessary, the details of Israeli policies. The Old Testament prophets make it clear that the nation of Israel will never be truly blessed by God unless she pursues justice.¹⁵⁸

At the same time, he seems influenced to some degree by supercessionism.

157. Richard Mouw, "The Chosen People Puzzle," *Christianity Today* 45 (March 5, 2001), 75.

158. *Ibid*, 74.

This ethnocentric redemptive economy of the old covenant was never viewed—contrary to what I was taught by dispensationalists—as the final arrangement... I must quickly add that this does not rule out the acknowledgment that God still honors a continuing commitment to the specific ethnic people who served as special agent under the old covenant. But this commitment is to a people who, already in ancient times, were encouraged to anticipate a day when God’s Spirit would be poured out on all flesh... There was never a time when the Israel of God has a right to think the covenant blessings were her exclusive property.¹⁵⁹

It should be noted that Mouw makes a similar critique of Christian ideas of a “Christian America” that would hold that the US has a special relationship with God.¹⁶⁰

Other evangelicals, such as Colin Chapman, reject supercessionism but still hold that Christian Zionism is not biblically sound. While making the biblical argument for rejecting Christian Zionism, his stance is based more on a framework of social justice. Chapman’s *Whose Promised Land* uses quite sophisticated rhetoric to challenge Christian Zionism. On one hand, he is trying to appeal to evangelicals who unquestioningly support the state of Israel. He is also careful to avoid rhetoric that could contribute to anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism. But then in the end, he argues that the state of Israel is a colonial project. He says that while there may be some theological justification for *Jewish* people to support Zionism, there is no biblical justification for Christian Zionism. Through use of historical documents by those involved in the Zionist movement, he demonstrates its colonial nature. While anti-Semitism is an issue of great

159. Ibid, 76.

160. Ibid, 72-73.

importance, particularly to Christians who have perpetuated it, he contends that Zionism, rather than representing the cure for anti-Semitism, is the natural corollary to it.

Stephen Sizer critiques Christian Zionism on both theological and political grounds. He articulates covenant theology as an alternative to replacement and dispensationalist theology. While his covenant theology sounds similar to replacement theology, Sizer contends that replacement theology is a dispensationalist caricature of covenant theology. In any case he contends that God has only had one group of people, those who recognize Jesus as their Messiah. He states Jewish people have a unique role in history, and he prays that all Jews will come to follow Jesus. Since God loves all people, then it is the role of Christians to work for peace for both Jewish and Palestinian peoples.¹⁶¹ Politically, he argues that the Christian Zionists belief in Jews as chosen people causes them to unconditionally support Israel despite its “racist and apartheid policies.”¹⁶² He charges that Zionist ideology promotes the demonization of Arabs, including Arab Christians. Because Zionist ideology is funded on the presupposition of apocalypticism, Zionist activists refuse to work for peace and may consequently bring about an apocalypse as a self-fulfilling prophecy.¹⁶³

Donald Wagner, one of the founders of Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding, has been very involved in trying to counter Christian Zionism within evangelical Christianity. He has been involved in encouraging evangelical ministries and magazines to reconsider their justice policies on Israel. He also directed the Center for Middle East Studies at North Park Seminary

161. Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 261-262.

162. Ibid, 252.

163. Ibid, 206-253.

until he was denied tenure (it is not clear if the denial was a result of his anti-Zionist convictions).

Gary Burge of Wheaton College also works with Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding and wrote *Whose Land? Whose Promise?* His work centers on the unjust treatment of Palestinians by Israel's "apartheid state"¹⁶⁴ and the oppression created by Israeli occupation of Palestine. He notes that there is a problem with the very constitution of the Israeli state – that it is fundamentally premised on the expulsion of Palestinians from their lands.¹⁶⁵ He explores the various aspects of occupation, including home demolitions, security check points, arrests and detention, thefts of land and water resources, etc. He questions the idea that anyone, including Jews, have a claim to any lands. Rather, he argues, all land is God's land. People's ability to remain on land must depend on how well they treat the other inhabitants of that land.¹⁶⁶ He similarly argues that the covenant with Israel is conditional:

The Bible is not ambiguous when it describes how God's people must live when they reside in his land. They must pursue justice and integrity at all costs... To abuse the non-Israelites is to neglect God's commitment to the underprivileged and... to mistreat the alien by taking his land places Israel's inheritance in jeopardy. While the covenant promises to Abraham are forever, those who inherit and enjoy these blessings must live righteously in order to keep them.¹⁶⁷

164. Gary Burge, *Whose Land? Whose Promise?* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2003), 263.

165. Ibid, 136.

166. Ibid, 75-79.

167. Ibid, 92

He contends that “unbelieving Israel still holds a place of honor.”¹⁶⁸ However, Israel has no exclusive claim to the land since the promises of God now go to all Christians. “God’s people are called to infiltrate the empires of the world, bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to all, regardless of history, race, or religious persuasion.”¹⁶⁹ Burge further asserts that, ironically, Christians are being driven away from the Holy Land in the interests of Zionism. “The situation among the Palestinian Christians is becoming so critical that a virtual exodus of people is leaving the country.”¹⁷⁰ He notes that Bethlehem was historically 75% Christian, and is now 30 percent or less. Because of Zionism, “we may witness the ‘emptying’ of the Christianity from the Holy Land for the first time in two thousand years.”¹⁷¹

In *Perspectives*, a Reformed journal, John Hubers of the Reformed Church in America provides an extensive critique of Christian Zionism which he says trades on the myth of America as a brave pioneering people defeating “savage” natives. This ideology holds that “any attack on America is an attack on freedom.”¹⁷² He critiques this ideology as “ethnic cleansing.”¹⁷³ He argues that dispensationalism combined with the myth of American exceptionalism is the foundation for Christian Zionism. This framework ignores the oppression of Palestinian Christians to the point that many Christians are unaware they exist. He notes, however, that Dr.

168. Ibid, 188

169. Ibid, 189

170. Ibid, 220

171. Ibid, 221

172. John Hubers, “Christian Zionism and Ecumenical Relations,” *Perspectives* 19 (August/September 2004), 13.

173. Ibid, 13.

Riad Jarjour, General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches, visited the General Synod of the Reformed Church of America in 2002. After this visit, the synod voted to support a resolution calling for Israel to return to its pre-1967 border, which was remarkable since the RCA does not generally pass such political resolutions. He calls for more exchange between evangelical (not just mainline) Christians and Palestinian Christians. He also recommends that people engage in alternative tours to visit with Palestinians in particular.

Christianity Today is increasingly featuring articles critical of Israel. It also named Gary Burge's book, *Whose Land? Whose Promise? What Christians are not being told about Israel and the Palestinians* (a book critical of Christian Zionism), as one of its books of the year.¹⁷⁴

World Vision, one of the most prominent evangelical charities in the world involved in thousands of relief projects globally, has become active in advocating for human rights in Israel through its Jerusalem office. It works with Palestinian and Israeli human rights organization. It previously felt constrained from taking a political stance, but after working within Israel and confronting its record of human rights violations, World Vision concluded it needed to challenge this injustice.

Betty Jane Baily started the Network for Alternative Travel which provides an opportunity for evangelical Christians to view the Holy Land and to connect with Palestinian organizations. John Stott, a leading evangelical, recently asserted that "Zionism and especially Christian Zionism are Biblically untenable."¹⁷⁵ And in 2002, 58 evangelical leaders wrote a letter to then President George W. Bush to challenge his policy regarding Israel and challenge the notion that evangelicals necessarily support Zionism. Some segments from the statement include:

174. Christianity Today, "Books of the Year," *Christianity Today* 48 (June 2004).

175. Burge, *Whose Land? Whose Promise?* 255.

We... encourage you to move boldly forward so that the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for their own state may be realized... We urge you to provide the leadership necessary for peacemaking in the Middle East by vigorously opposing injustice, including the continued unlawful and degrading Israeli settlement movement. The theft of Palestinian land and the destruction of Palestinian homes and fields is surely one of the major causes of the strife that has resulted in terrorism and the loss of so many Israeli and Palestinian lives. The continued Israeli military occupation daily humiliates ordinary Palestinians and is also having disastrous effects on the Israeli soul. Mr. President, the American evangelical community is not a monolithic bloc in full and firm support of present Israeli policy.¹⁷⁶

While Christian Zionist leader John Hagee attempted to frame these leaders as marginal, in fact they included many prominent spokespersons, such as John Perkins, Eugene Rivers, several representatives of National Association of Evangelicals, Richard Mouw and Glen Stassen of Fuller Seminary, Ronald Nikkel, President of Prison Fellowship, John Ortberg of the famous Willow Creek Community Church, and Philip Yancey.

Conclusion

The Christian Zionist movement has provided tremendous political support for the United States' and Israel's projects of "imperial peace." This imperial peace promises a continuing war against Arab peoples in general and Palestinian peoples in particular until these populations are liquidated. This project rests on a racialization of religion whereby Islam becomes biologized as an inherent threat. Thus, the relationship between U.S. foreign policy and Israel cannot be

176. Ibid, 256.

separated from racial dynamics within the United States itself. At the same time, however, despite evangelical claims to support an inerrant and unchanging scripture, it is clear that evangelical relationships with Israel have shifted over time. Haunted by the specter of Palestinian Christians who belie the theological claims of Christian Zionism, many evangelicals are becoming more vocal about critiquing Zionism and unconditional support for the state of Israel and the War on Terror. It is critical that we look for these moments of instability and contradiction as places to engage evangelicals around a new politics for justice for Palestine.

Appendix of Articles in *Charisma*, *Christianity Today*, and *World*

- Priya Abraham, "Beyond Terror," *World* 20 (November 12, 2005).
- Priya Abraham, "Operation Rescue," *World* 21 (July 1/8, 2006).
- Priya Abraham, "Soft on Saudis," *World* 20 (May 14, 2005).
- Priya Abraham, "Teaching a Lesson," *World* 20 (September 24, 2005).
- Stephen Adams, "American Missionary Gunned Down," *Christianity Today* 47 (January 2003).
- Deann Alford, "Entrapment Suspected," *Christianity Today* 46 (February 4, 2002).
- Deann Alford, "Malay Melee," *Christianity Today* 50 (November 2006).
- Deann Alford, "Targeting Christian Youth," *Christianity Today* 50 (January 2006).
- Barbara Baker, "Christian Principal Accused of Blasphemy," *Christianity Today* 45 (May 21, 2001).
- Barbara Baker, "Court Acquits Christian of Blasphemy," *Christianity Today* 47 (August 2003).
- Barbara Baker, "In the Shadow of Islam," *Charisma* 23 (October 1997).
- Barbara Baker, "Taliban Threatens Converts," *Christianity Today* 45 (March 5, 2001).

Barbara Baker, "Two Filipino Christians Beheaded," *Christianity Today* 41 (September 1, 1997).

Barbara Baker, "Unlocking the Heart of Islam," *Charisma* 28 (January 2003).

Barbara Baker, "Whose Law?" *Christianity Today* 50 (May 2006).

Doug Bandow, "Slave Wages," *World* 17 (May 4, 2002).

Mindy Belz, "Beirut All over Again," *World* 13 (January 29, 2000).

Mindy Belz, "Coffins of Freedom," *World* 19 (February 28, 2004).

Mindy Belz, "Sunday-Morning Jihad," *World* 16 (November 10, 2001).

Mindy Belz, "To Execute or Not?" *World* 13 (June 6, 1998).

Mindy Belz, "An Unholy War of Nerves," *World* 16 (September 1, 2001).

Mindy Belz, "We Will Be Here," *World* 17 (March 30, 2002).

Sheryl Henderson Blunt, "Caught in the Crossfire," *Christianity Today* 45 (November 12, 2001).

Frank Brown, "Christians Bullied in Muslim Republics," *Charisma* 27 (March 2002).

Alex Buchan, "Christians Killed, Churches Burn," *Christianity Today* 43 (January 11, 1999).

Ethan Casey, "Five Imprisoned in Wake of Muslim Mob Violence," *Christianity Today* 41 (September 1, 1997).

Compass Direct News, "Ex-Muslims Harassed," *Christianity Today* 48 (January 2004).

Compass Direct News, "Fault Line of Faith," *Christianity Today* 53 (February 2009).

Compass Direct News, "Lay Pastor May Face Martyrdom," *Christianity Today* 49 (June 2005).

Compass Direct News, "Military Leader Backpedals on Human Rights Decision," *Christianity Today* 44 (June 12, 2000).

Compass Direct News, "Protestants Face Police Crackdown," *Christianity Today* 47 (June 2002).

Compass Direct News, "Troops Foil Attack on Christians," *Christianity Today* 46 (January 7, 2002).

Jamie Dean, "Home Invasions," *World* 21 (February 11, 2006).

Jamie Dean, "Islam, or Else," *World* 24 (February 14, 2009).

Herti Dixon, "Christians in West Papua Seek Autonomy," *Charisma* 34 (March 2009).

Julia Duin, "A Gateway for the Gospel in Jordan," *Charisma* 27 (January 2002).

Mike Evans, "Persecution in Iraq," *Charisma* 33 (August 2007).

C. Hope Flinchbaugh, "Arrested Christians Face Deportation," *Christianity Today* 43 (December 6, 1999).

C. Hope Flinchbaugh, "The Muslim Who Heard God's Voice," *Charisma* 32 (August 2006).

C. Hope Flinchbaugh, "Rapes of Christians Put Pakistani Justice on Trial," *Christianity Today* 44 (October 2, 2000).

Mark Gabriel, "Kidnapped!" *New Man* 9 (July/August 2002).

Stan Guthrie, "Christians Fear Muslim Backlash," *Christianity Today* 45 (November 12, 2001).

Stan Guthrie, "Christians Massacred," *Christianity Today* 45 (December 3, 2001).

Stan Guthrie, "Return to Kabul," *Christianity Today* 47 (January 2003).

Stan Guthrie and Wendy Murray Zoba, "Double Jeopardy," *Christianity Today* 46 (July 8, 2002).

Kees Hulsman, "20 Coptic Christians Die as Village Tensions Flare," *Christianity Today* 44 (February 7, 2000).

Kristian Karha, "Death-Row Christian May Hang for 'Blasphemy'," *Christianity Today* 46 (June 10, 2002).

Samuel Karwur, "Post-Election Persecution?" *Charisma* 34 (July 2009).

Larry Keefauver, "Pastor Builds 12,000-Seat 'Holy Stadium' in Muslim Stronghold," *Charisma* 30 (April 2005).

John Kennedy, "Quake Opens Door to Gospel," *Christianity Today* 48 (March 2004).

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