

AUTHOR JONATHAN GREENBERG

TITLE THE PORT & THE STORM: EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN ZIONISM, ISRAEL & AMERICAN JEWS

Master's [] Prize Essay []

1. May circulate []) Not necessary
) for Ph.D.
2. Is restricted [X] for 10 years.) thesis

Note: The Library shall respect restrictions placed on theses or prize essays for a period of no more than ten years.

I understand that the Library may make a photocopy of my thesis for security purposes.

3. The Library may sell photocopies of my thesis. ~~X~~
yes no

3/1/06

Signature of Author

Library
Record

Microfilmed _____
Date _____

Signature of Library Staff Member

The Port & The Storm:

Evangelical Christian Zionism, Israel, and
American Jews

Rabbinic Thesis by
Jonathan L. Greenberg

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

This project would not have been possible without the support of family, friends, beloved teachers, and those whose work has impacted me. Specifically, I am grateful to:

- ▶ My advisor and teacher, Dr. Michael Cook, who believed in the importance of this project, in the significance of the issue of Christian Zionism, and in me as a student.
- ▶ My father-in-law, Samuel Shamir, who suggested this thesis topic. His love of Israel (and of his daughter) is an inspiration to me.
- ▶ My brother, Steven Greenberg, who has always modeled Zionism for me. Having chosen to live, work, and raise his family in Israel, his contribution to the continuity of the State is greater than anything discussed in this study.
- ▶ My teachers at the Hebrew Union College from whom I have learned so much about Torah and about myself.
- ▶ My parents, Norman and Ronnie Greenberg, for raising me to be a proud Jew, a patriotic American, and an honorable person who values education and knowledge.
- ▶ My wife and best friend, Sharone, who must feel as if she wrote half of this project. She was always understanding and supportive and knew when I needed to be pushed or challenged. She put up with the purchase of a shelf full of books about Evangelical Christianity – most of which, I'm sure, she does not think belong in a Jewish home. Her patience and love are the best evidence I have of a God who cares for me. She is, truly, my *besht*.
- ▶ Those who have fought and died for the safety and security of the State of Israel and her people. May their sacrifices soon result in a secure and lasting peace.

The Port & The Storm: Evangelical Christian Zionism, Israel, and American Jews

THESIS DIGEST

In a time of sweeping political change in Israel, remarkable increases in worldwide antisemitism (often directed at the Jewish State), systemic anti-Israelism at the United Nations, and political uncertainty in the Jewish community's most vital pro-Israel lobby, some Israeli and American Jews have been comforted by the political and economic support of Evangelical Christians in the United States. Referred to as Christian Zionists, their power is magnified by their ability to influence the current US administration and their power in the party that controls all branches of the federal government.

While many American Jews accept their support at face value, others are deeply troubled by Evangelicals' perceived theological and political agenda. This divide in the Jewish community over how to respond to Christian Zionism, as well as the potential ramifications for American Jews and Israel, necessitate this study.

Through examination of pre-millennial dispensationalist eschatology and the history of Evangelicalism in the United States, this thesis outlines Christian Zionist beliefs about Israel and the Jews' role in end-times theology.

Using books and websites, this study discusses the most significant and influential leaders and organizations in the Christian Zionist movement. Their activities are described in promoting tourism, fundraising, supporting Jewish immigration to Israel, and political activism.

Though the situation is ever-changing, this project attempts to delineate possible ramifications of Christian Zionism and the Jewish response to it for American Jews, Israel, and Christian-Jewish relations. This necessitates a discussion of Israeli politics, Mainline Protestant divestment schemes, and domestic political differences between most Evangelicals and most American Jews.

Ultimately, I draw the conclusions that Jewish pro-Israel advocacy must remain strong and independent of non-Jewish activism. I also conclude that Jews should engage Evangelicals in dialogue about their political differences as well as maintaining close relations with Mainline Protestants and Catholics.

TABLE of CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	2
Digest	3
Chapter 1: Introduction	5-10
Chapter 2: History, Eschatology, and Dispensationalism	11-29
Defining Evangelicalism	11-14
Evangelicalism as a reaction to liberalism	14-16
Millennialism and Dispensationalism	16-19
Eschatological beliefs	19-23
19 th and 20 th century Dispensationalism	23-27
Chapter 3: Contemporary Christian Zionism	30-43
Hal Lindsey	30-31
John Hagee	32-34
Major Christian Zionist organizations	34-37
Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein and IFCJ	37-39
Evangelical political power	39-41
Chapter 4: Potential Ramifications	44-62
Demographics and Jewish "connectedness"	44-46
Israeli political situation	46-48
AIPAC	48-50
Positive and Negative potential outcomes	50-60
Chapter 5: Conclusions	63-70
Bibliography	71-76

Chapter 1

Introduction

Increasingly, American political support of Israel owes its power and stridency less to the influence of a powerful, Jewish lobby than to fundamentalist Christian organizations and their supporters. Furthermore, much of the economic support of Israel, both in direct monetary support and tourism, comes from these same groups and individuals. While many pro-Israel Jews accept this support from the perspective of "any port in a storm" or, perhaps worse, as necessary lest American Jews offend this important group of Christians, others are unnerved by the prospect of having to rely on the good will (or ulterior motives) of a group of non-Jews in maintaining vital international support for the Jewish State.

This study will consist of four chapters focusing on what the American Jewish community needs to know properly to respond to Christian Zionism and some on responses that are suggested by the facts. Chapter 2 will include an in-depth examination of the history and theology of Evangelical Christianity, including the role assigned Jews in Christian eschatology. Chapter 3 will identify and describe Evangelical leaders and organizations and groups that work with them to promote Christian Zionism. Chapter 4 will outline potential ramifications of this movement for Israel and the American Jewish community. Chapter 5 will draw on the preceding chapters to suggest some possible responses on the part of the Jewish community.

Ultimately, I will show that Evangelical support for Israel comes with theological strings attached and that Evangelicals have an ulterior motive in their support of Israel – even though some are only dimly aware of this. But these motives, alone, are not of particular concern to me especially if American Jews believe Evangelicals' apocalyptic views will never actually come

about. Rather, I fear the ramifications that could flow from them, particularly that the constancy of support from Evangelicals could waver thus jeopardizing Israel and the American Jewish community. Toward the end of Martin Luther's career, e.g., as he came to understand that Jews would never accept Jesus in large numbers, his initial warmth toward Jews evaporated. Several months ago, Pat Robertson told a group of rapt Christians in Jerusalem that he looked forward to the day when Jews will accept Jesus as their Savior. When that day does not come, will Evangelical leaders grow weary of defending the Jewish State? Already, as pointed out in Chapter 5, some Evangelical leaders, angry about liberal Jewish opposition to the culture war being fought by the religious right, have made threatening statements about their continued support for Israel. Of equal concern, will Evangelical leaders attempt to parlay their political power in maintaining U.S. support for Israel into policy requests affecting the Jewish nature of the State? Will they demand an end to Israeli laws against proselytizing, or demand loosened restrictions on non-Jewish immigration? Under these circumstances, will the Israel lobby in the U.S. strive to maintain its power to ensure the continued strength of the Jewish State, or will that strength atrophy as Jewish groups permit Evangelicals to shoulder an ever-increasing share of the burden? Even more immediately, will a change in the U.S. Administration in three years — or even a shift of the Republican Party to the center — throw the balance of power away from Evangelicals? Furthermore, if the pro-Israel lobby and the Israeli government are significantly "in bed" with Evangelicals, how will that relationship be received by an Administration less conservative than the present one? The political crisis that results from any of these possibilities could cause tremendous damage to Israel in both American policy and in the United Nations.

On the other hand, is the theological basis of Evangelical support for Israel so unshakable

that it frankly does not matter what American Jews do or do not do? Or is there some "middle ground" in terms of chronology -- is there some year in the offing beyond which Evangelicals will feel that the Second Coming will not materialize in the foreseeable future, and not only blame the Jews for this delay but also relax Evangelical support for Israel? Is there reason to fear that some Evangelicals, disaffected with the delay in Jesus' Second Coming, will try to precipitate the process by some action in Israel that will (in their minds) "force" time to accelerate — thereby jeopardizing Mideast peace? Indeed, what if Middle East peace itself is in the State of Israel's interests but American Evangelicals determine this is not the case?

Do pro-Israel Jewish groups in America have any choice? Given Israel's precarious position in the world and global concerns about rising antisemitism (an antisemitism that is generally more directed against the Jewish State than against individual Jews), can American Jews afford to refuse assistance from Evangelicals in supporting Israel? While some European powers point to Israel's presumed military superiority over her immediate neighbors, Israel's weakness is political and demographic. Israel has little or no political power among the nations save its relationship with the United States. Whereas this relationship, previously, was based on Cold War politics and a strong Jewish lobby, this is no longer the case. The relationship is now based **on strong lobbying**, "shared values," and a friendly administration. Israel's weakness at the United Nations is unquestionable. As will be shown, the United States frequently uses its Security Council veto to block anti-Israel resolutions from passage. While some UN observers claim that European countries simply allow the US to veto these resolutions in order to save face with growing, domestic Muslim populations, the aforementioned tide of antisemitism gives Israel and world Jewry pause. Adding to Israel's political weakness in the world body is her lack of

membership in one of the all-important regions. These regions are responsible to nominate member-states to the Security Council, Human Rights Commission, and other vital UN groups. While Israel is allowed to attend meetings of the European region, its true place (the Middle East) is denied it by the members of that bloc. Thus, unlike any other member of the UN, Israel can never sit on the Security Council.

Perhaps of more concern to liberal Jewish movements is the recent phenomenon of the "divestment" movement among liberal Christian denominations. If other groups join the Presbyterians, will Jews be forced into a deeper alliance with Evangelicals? Furthermore, a deepening alliance between Palestinian groups and Mainline Protestants evidences a shift by the American political left away from supporting Israel.

Of significant concern, too, is the ascension of a Pope Benedict to preside over a Church whose only growing demographic is in Third World countries which are not predisposed to befriend Israel. While Benedict, himself, seems to be a student of the late John Paul II on issues concerning Catholic relations with Jews, it is not unreasonable to expect that the Church will face another election within the decade.

Given the numerous important questions, this study will examine the phenomenon of Christian Zionism. Arguably, most Jews (both American and Israeli) are completely unaware of Evangelical eschatology; or, if they are aware of it, know precious little about it. Many are equally unaware about the background and development of the contemporary movement in the United States that has come to be known as Evangelicalism. As this segment of American society has come to represent a large and growing percentage of the population and virtually to dominate

primary elections in the American political party currently in power, it behooves us to know something about what motivates the policy decisions that they advocate.

While it is nearly impossible to say with certainty what any given Evangelical Christian believes, chapter 2 will outline the beliefs of *the* figure who came to dominate late-19th and early-20th century Protestantism and whose beliefs are still the basis for the most significant Evangelicals today: John Nelson Darby. Among contemporary Evangelicals, no one has done more to popularize the movement than Tim LaHaye, whose *Left Behind* series of books have sold tens of millions of copies. Chapter 2 will also focus on his understanding of Rapture and Tribulation and the Jewish role in those prophesied events.

Having briefly explained the theology behind Christian Zionism, I will examine the current manifestations of this theology in Christian support for Israel. While an entire book could be written on these individuals and groups, chapter 3 will focus on a few of the most important leaders and organizations. We will explore their methodology in appealing to non-Jews to support Israel, the ideology they espouse as well as that which is hidden to anyone unfamiliar with Evangelical eschatology. This chapter will include a discussion of the programs used to support Israel through monetary contributions, tourism and other economic support, and political advocacy.

Once we have achieved a sufficiently broad understanding of Evangelical beliefs and their contemporary manifestations, chapter 4 will use this information to suggest a wide range of potential ramifications for American Jews, Jewish-Christian relations, and the State of Israel. This study has been written during an interesting time in Israeli politics. When it was begun, there was a relatively stable national unity government with Ariel Sharon and Shimon Peres leading the two

parties, the government was just beginning to the possibility of leaving the Gaza strip, Sharon's age was an issue but his health had never been in question, and Likud was the dominant party. As of this writing, acting Prime Minister Olmert has just appointed a new, caretaker cabinet until this Spring's elections, the Gaza pullout has been widely viewed as a success, Sharon lies in a vegetative state at Hadassah hospital, and Likud is polling at 17 seats in the next Knesset as the new Kadima party polls near 40. All of this uncertainty in Israel, combined with uncertainty over the American war in Iraq and the ever-present possibility of political upheaval in this country — not to mention the possibility of Israeli military action against Iran's nuclear program — makes prognostication difficult. But all of these are issues that could have enormous potential impact on Israel and American Jews, yet there has been precious little discussion about them in the American Jewish community.

With chapter 4 having delineated some potential outcomes of the current situation, chapter 5 makes some modest suggestions about how the Jewish community might best respond to Christian Zionism.

Chapter 2

History, Eschatology, and Dispensationalism

As noted by many scholars who have examined Evangelicalism, it is a movement unlike any other in the panoply of American religion and, as such, presents a series of challenges to those who seek to define or label it. Its uniqueness is found in the sheer mass of adherents it has attracted, the truly grassroots manner in which it has attracted them, and the impact it has had on American religious observance and political life. More importantly, it is a uniquely broad and constantly changing coalition of otherwise disparate factions of Christianity who tend to agree for brief periods of time on a few choice issues. Despite this ideological and practical breadth, there are a few points of theology which can be assumed across the spectrum of Evangelicalism: conversionism, biblicism, activism, and crucicentrism.¹ Each of these terms will be discussed to construct a working definition of Evangelicalism. It will then become necessary to examine the development of the movement in the 20th century and the eschatological and dispensationalist beliefs of Evangelicals that inform and, in some sense, command their support for the modern State of Israel. Evangelical Zionism began its development well before the founding of the modern State of Israel and, even, before the Zionist movement among European and, later, American Jews. In this chapter, we will examine how.

The term "Evangelical" has achieved common usage in the United States to describe a contemporary form of fundamentalist Protestantism though some neo-orthodox theologians have used it to refer to any "gospel believer" and some Lutheran groups use it to refer to any Protestant or, even, Christian. While the movement has, in recent years, successfully asserted itself in the public square, it is not a new movement nor can its ascendancy be considered a recent

phenomenon. *Newsweek* magazine dubbed 1976 "The Year of the Evangelical" due, in no small part, to the election of Southern Baptist Jimmy Carter to the White House but also because of the nearly thirty years of success of the Rev. Billy Graham (who has achieved many more years of success since the 1970s) and a loose alliance of fundamentalists in place since the 1920s. In fact, since "The Year of the Evangelical," the percentage of Americans describing themselves as "born-again" or Evangelical has climbed from 34% to 45% by 2000.² The colloquial, "know-it-when-I-see-it," use of the term leaves us to wonder what an Evangelical actually believes. Some scholars have noted that Evangelicalism is more a style than a set of beliefs.³ However, as noted above, four major beliefs tie the Evangelical movement together.

The first, Conversionism, places an emphasis on the "new birth" of conversion as a life-changing religious experience.⁴ The American Evangelical movement, as will be discussed later, sprang from the revivalist movements of the late 18th and early 19th centuries that featured "simple bible preaching in a fervent style that would elicit dramatic conversion experiences."⁵

Biblicism, the second of the theological points of similarity drawing Evangelicals together, is the belief in the divine authenticity and absolute authority of the Bible. This belief follows from the Five Points published by the Niagara Bible Conference of 1895. Conservative theologians had formed the annual Bible Conferences shortly after the Civil War and, by the 1870s, had opened them to the public and settled on Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, as the permanent site. More than twenty annual conferences were held.⁶ At the conference in 1878, the gathered conferees created a platform called the "Niagara Creed" which "affirmed the inspiration and authority of the Bible, the Trinity, the Fall and sinfulness of humanity, the absolute necessity of personal conversion to Christ, justification by faith alone, the centering of the whole Bible in Christ, the importance of the

work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church and the individual believer, the inclusion of all true believers in the one true church of Christ, and the final separation of all people for eternal life or damnation.”⁷ This creed was followed, nearly twenty years later, by the Five Points of Fundamental Theology which, it can be argued, have been more or less adopted by Evangelicalism: 1) the inerrancy of the scriptures; 2) the deity of Christ; 3) the virgin birth of Jesus; 4) the substitutionary atonement of Christ; 5) Christ’s physical resurrection and bodily return to Earth.⁸ In both 1878 and, again, in 1895, the first principle of the theological forerunners of contemporary Evangelicalism held, as the movement holds today, that the Bible is the literal, authoritative word of God. While many if not most mainline Protestants have come to embrace critical scholarship of the Bible, such examination is anathema to Evangelicals.

Activism, the third point of theological commonality shared by Evangelicals, is the belief that a Christian is bound to share the story of Jesus in such a way as to produce converts and, in so doing, save souls. Here, it is important to note that there is a difference between “evangelism” — the sharing of the “good news” theoretically incumbent upon all Christians — and “Evangelicalism” — the movement within Christianity. While all Christians are subject to the requirement to evangelize, the roots of contemporary Evangelicalism can be reasonably said to include an emphasis on evangelism not found in most mainline Protestant denominations. In fact, Christians who refer to themselves as Evangelicals are far more likely to discuss their religion with family, friends, and complete strangers than average Americans. While only 45% of Americans discuss religion on a regular basis, 65% of self-labeling Evangelicals do so.⁹

Fourth, and perhaps most important for a discussion about Christian Zionism, is crucicentrism. Evangelicals not only strongly believe in the redemptive work of Jesus on the

cross and the power of that work personally to save them from damnation, but they focus heavily on the time in which such salvation or damnation will take place. The centrality of eschatological theology among Evangelicals is one root of their support for the Jewish State and will be discussed later in this chapter. The idea of personal salvation through faith alone is controversial within Protestantism as the New Testament describes Jesus' example of and teachings regarding the care for the poor and sick. In spite of these teachings, Evangelicals generally believe that it is only their personal acceptance of Jesus as Savior that will see them safely into heaven.

These four doctrines form one sense in which the moniker "Evangelical" is used — it is an ideology that includes a host of different beliefs under the few broad categories outlined above. Another sense in which the term might be used is to describe the coalition formed in the aftermath of World War II whose key figures (among them the Rev. Graham) and institutions (among them Wheaton College and Moody Bible College) continue to be driving forces in Evangelical America.

The current iteration of American Evangelicalism is, in reality, a reaction to liberalism. In this case, liberalism should be understood not as a contemporary political ideology but as the Enlightenment philosophy that human beings should promote intellectual and personal development as a way of perfecting the individual. As John Stuart Mill wrote, "It is only the cultivation of individuality which produces, or can produce, well-developed human beings ... what more can be said of any condition of human affairs than that it brings human beings themselves nearer to the best they can be?"¹⁰ Just five years after Mill wrote those words, British naturalist Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection*.

It has been asserted that, within American religion, there were two broad reactions to

these and other ideals of the Enlightenment. Some groups tended toward reform of old doctrines based on the new information provided by science and the accompanying philosophical development. Other groups, appalled by the challenges posed to biblical authority, retrenched and prepared to oppose them vigorously. Robert Wuthnow refers to this as "the great fracture in American religion."¹¹ Religious liberals, to varying degrees, embraced biblical criticism, human development, and the findings of Darwin. Religious conservatives, however, had three major reactions to Enlightenment liberalism: entrenched insistence on biblical authority including biblical accounts of the origins of earth and man; a deep current of anti-intellectualism rooted in the mistrust of the science and philosophy being taught at American universities which, in the late 19th century, were decreasingly parochial; and an increasing willingness to accept more radical theological positions such as dispensationalism.

Before 1865, American religionists may have been too preoccupied with settling the issues of slavery and Civil War to attend to Enlightenment liberalism and Darwinism. However, the introspective period following the war saw the beginning fissures of the "great fracture." As Enlightenment ideals spread in American universities, whose enrollments skyrocketed between 1865—1900,¹² other Americans flocked to religious meetings held in massive tents on the outskirts of towns and in farm fields and prairies: namely, the revival movement.

There have been four great periods of revivalism in America: the "Great Awakening," circa 1720; the "Second Great Awakening" of the post-Revolutionary era; the Holiness Movement in the aftermath of the Civil War; and the era of mass evangelism originally characterized by the Rev. Graham. At its beginning, revivalism featured a preacher's exhortation

that his listeners accept forgiveness of personal sin through faith in Jesus, spiritually discipline themselves, and commit to Bible reading and church support.¹³ In fact, the features of revivalism are readily evident in today's Evangelical services, churches, and ideology with the notable exception that preachers were, until recently, itinerant.

While revivalism began during the Colonial era with Presbyterian-sponsored camp meetings, it was the Methodists and Baptists who continued to use and, in some sense, perfected, the outdoor setting. The camp meetings, usually held in large tents, brought worshipers away from everyday secular and sectarian concerns.¹⁴ It is fair to say that these large gatherings of Evangelicals were the forerunner of today's megachurch phenomenon. After falling into disfavor before and during the Civil War, the camp meeting was, again, used extensively during the Holiness Movement.

Beginning before the war but not achieving wide popularity until after it, the Holiness Movement was an attempt to spread the teachings of John Wesley regarding Christian Perfection. Wesley believed that the road from sin to salvation required one to forgo intentional rebellion against divine and human law and, instead, perfect one's love for God and humanity. Holiness preachers taught that such salvation involved two crises: first, one must be cleansed of one's sins through the acceptance of Jesus; and, second, one must change one's life to eliminate the source of the sin.¹⁵

Christian history has seen many such interpretations of the golden age to follow Jesus' return to earth as foretold in the Book of Revelation chapter 20. Premillennialists interpret the passage literally and believe that the thousand-year rule of Jesus would take place after his return

to earth; thus the Second Coming would *precede* the millennial kingdom. Postmillennialists believe that the return of Jesus will follow the conversion of the world to Christianity and the reign of a Christian world kingdom for a thousand years. Amillennialists interpret the millennium figuratively and believe it began with Jesus'

resurrection. For them, the millennial kingdom is embodied by the church which will continue to expand until the end of time and Jesus' return. Modern scholars read this passage in preterist terms: Revelation, they believe, was written to conform to first- or second-century conditions and should not be taken literally or figuratively but, rather, as human literature.

Premillennialists further divide themselves into two categories: historicists and futurists. Historicists believe that Revelation provides a panoramic view of the entirety of church history while futurists believe that it refers to events which are yet

Revelation 20:1-10 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were ended. After that he must be loosed for a little while. Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom judgment was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be loosed from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, that is, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city; but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

to happen but that are certain to occur at the end of the current era just before Jesus' return.¹⁶

Particularly influential are dispensationalists who, as futurist premillennialists, believe that the prophecies in the Book of Revelation will come to pass in the very near future.

Dispensationalism, created by John Nelson Darby, now warrants our extended attention.

In 1859, a few years before the beginning of the Holiness Movement, John Nelson Darby made his first visit to America and would return for several visits in the 1870s. Darby had been an Anglican priest but had left the Church of England to join the Plymouth Brethren, an English group that believed biblical prophecy pointed to future events. Darby at first received a cool reception from American Christians, in no small part because using the Bible to predict future events had badly backfired on a group called the Millerites (the forerunners of today's Seventh-Day Adventists) who believed they had used the Bible to narrow down the year of Jesus' return to either 1843 or 1844. When the Second Coming failed to materialize (an embarrassment somewhat understatedly termed the "Great Disappointment") such use of the Bible to foretell events fell into disfavor.¹⁷

Darby's beliefs can be summarized in five main points: the division of history into dispensations (hence the nomenclature), the distinction between Israel and the church, the role of divine covenants, the idea of Rapture, and the importance of the Jews in the entire process. Today, this would include the State of Israel which was, of course, non-existent in Darby's time.

The theology that Darby created was called dispensationalism, which was a way of interpreting biblical prophecy regarding the end of the world — the study of which is called eschatology. Darby viewed world history as being divided into distinct epochs or dispensations. While some of his disciples (most notably C.I. Scofield) argued over the numbers and names of the ages, Darby counted them as paradise, Noah, Abraham, Israel, Gentiles, the Spirit (the current dispensation), and the Millennium. By justifying his system with copious biblical proof-texts and refusing to provide a set date for the Rapture, Darby avoided the fate of the Millerites.¹⁸ The

Christian church, according to Darby, exists outside the Bible's timetable and occupies a "great parentheses" in time. Thus alleviated of the need to tell his followers when Jesus' return could be expected, he was free to point to the events of his day as assurance that it would be very soon.¹⁹

For Darby, the Bible provides prophecy and instruction for two distinct sets of people: the earthly people of Israel and the heavenly Church. Passages that actually apply to one ought not be misunderstood as applying to the other.²⁰ These two different divine plans as allegedly contained in the Bible led Darby to the conclusions outlined below.

Among these conclusions is the belief that Israel had abdicated its responsibilities to keep several sequential covenants with God throughout ancient history. The Abrahamic covenant was unconditional. But the Mosaic covenant — in which the Jews promised to abide by Mosaic law — had been violated again and again by the Jews, so much so that, when God made the covenant with David to preserve his throne and send the messiah who would be his descendant, God was not precluded from continuing to punish the errant Jews for violating the Mosaic covenant. Darby found, in Daniel 7-9 (examined later in this chapter), a timetable for the arrival of the Messiah that, he showed through mathematical and interpretive gymnastics, prophesied the coming of Jesus.

The doctrine of Rapture, while not new and found in the writings of earlier interpreters,²¹ was understood differently as an important component of dispensationalism. Previously, Christian theologians had understood Rapture as taking place only at the end of the seven-year period called the Tribulation (a term taken from the Matthew 24 to be further examined later in this chapter) which would weed out the good from the evil of those remaining on the earth. Jesus would not appear personally on earth until after seven years of Tribulation. As a premillennialist,

Darby and his followers believed that Jesus' reappearance would precede the millennial era, but also held that the Rapture would precede the Tribulation and, thereby, take all believers to rendezvous with Jesus halfway up to heaven.

Finally, and most important for our topic, is the role of the Jews and Israel in dispensationalist eschatology. While Evangelical scholars often disagree among themselves as to the specifics of the end of days, the majority of Christian Zionists belong to a pop-culture brand of dispensationalism characterized by Rev. Tim LaHaye and his series of *New York Times* best-selling books, *Left Behind*. While LaHaye has never been prominent in direct pro-Israel advocacy, he has 60 million copies of his books in circulation and three of the twelve (the thirteenth and final installment is due out in 2007) have been made into motion pictures. Thus, his theological impact is unquestionable and, frankly, enormous.

LaHaye numbers the dispensations at seven bookended by God's eternity. The Age of Innocence covers the creation, the fall of man, and the rebellion against God of the angel Lucifer. The Age of Conscience begins with the serpent's questioning of Eve in Genesis 3:1 and lasts, by LaHaye's count, 1656 years until the Great Flood of Genesis 7. The Age of Civil Government lasts 429 years and is highlighted by the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. The fourth dispensation, the 430-year Age of Promise, begins with Abram and lasts until just before the law is given at Sinai in Exodus 20. The Age of Law (Age of Israel) begins at Sinai and lasts until the end of the Christian Old Testament at the conclusion of the Book of Malachi. The sixth dispensation, the Age of Grace (Age of the Church), begins with the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. According to Darby's original concept, the Age of the Church was an aberration in history that would not have been necessary had the Jews accepted Jesus as their messiah as God

intended..

With the "scattering of the Jews" in 70 CE, their ingathering in Israel is necessary in order for events to take place as prophesied in the both the Jewish and Christian Bibles. The apocalyptic vision in Ezekiel chapter 38 tells of a battle between the restored kingdom of Israel and the great emperor, Gog, and his nation, Magog.

Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; and I will turn you about, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you forth, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armor, a great company, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords. Persia, Cush, and Put are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer and all his hordes; Bethtogarmah from the uttermost parts of the north with all his hordes — many peoples are with you. Be ready and keep ready, you and all the hosts that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them.

The names "Gog" and "Magog" have no known counterpart in history, nor do the descriptions of the battle that follow.²² Many dispensationalists have attempted to link the prophecy to an attack on modern Israel by Russia because the term "chief prince" (Hebrew: *rosh*) is similar to the Slavic word for Russia ("Rus"), the word "Meshech" is similar to Moscow, and the word "Tubal" is similar to the strategically insignificant Russian city of Tobolsk. Furthermore, as the prophecy foretells an attack from the "uttermost parts of the north," Russia seems like a reasonable suspect. For a variety of reasons, the allusion to Russia is probably nothing more than a flight of Cold War fancy adopted by American religious nationalists. According to premillennial dispensationalists, this battle will take place as the culmination of the Great Tribulation at a place called Armageddon. Thus, for the battle to take place, there must be a Jewish Israel. Additionally, dispensationalists believe that the Antichrist can only be revealed in a restored third Temple. They cite the following passage from II Thessalonians 2:1-4:²³

Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him, we beg you, brethren, not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

Thus, the Jews not only need to be in control of their Biblical homeland, but they must rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem and reinstate animal sacrifice.

First in the string of events leading to the apocalypse is the Rapture. For premillennial dispensationalists like LaHaye, the Rapture will occur according to I Thessalonians 4:16-17:

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.

LaHaye, in the first book of his series, imagines that this event will literally consist of all true believers vanishing from the face of the earth in an instant (leaving only piles of their clothing).²⁴

The Rapture is the beginning of the Tribulation, a seven-year period of turbulent judgment of the earth. By taking the believers to heaven, God is free to pummel the world with plagues as the rest of humanity chooses sides between a powerful Antichrist and devotion to Jesus. The Scriptural justification for this belief, as mentioned earlier, comes from Matthew 24:4-35:

And Jesus answered them, "Take heed that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth-pangs. "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and put you to death; and you will be hated by all nations for my

name's sake. And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold. But he who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come. "So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle. And alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. Then if any one says to you, 'Lo, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Lo, I have told you beforehand. So, if they say to you, 'Lo, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out; if they say, 'Lo, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man. Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Darby's teachings and those of other premillennialists caught on in the post-Civil War era as American Christians struggled to deal with the theological ramifications of insurgent Enlightenment philosophy, biblical criticism, industrialization, scientific advancement, and Darwinism. As the premillennialist doctrine was preached by hundreds of now-forgotten preachers at thousands of revivals, they began to receive respectful attention from the academics

and elites of American Protestantism, especially at the aforementioned Bible conferences at Niagara-on-the-Lake at the close of the 19th century.²⁵ This is not to say that many seminary professors were on their side; indeed they were not.²⁶ But the most celebrated revivalists and pastors of the largest, most influential congregations were doctrinaire dispensationalists and, more so than the seminary professors, they were the ones reaching the mass audiences — much as is the case today.

Dispensationalists set up Bible institutes beginning in the 1880s to counteract the forces of liberal religion found in university liberal arts programs. The great revivalist, D.L. Moody, in establishing the institution that would go on to bear his name (Moody Bible Institute in Chicago), wanted graduates who could communicate with non-believers and win them over to Jesus. He was more concerned about graduates knowing their Bibles backwards and forwards than whether or not they knew Greek, Hebrew, or exegetical technique. These colleges were not seminaries though their graduates often went on to work in churches as youth workers, foreign missionaries, Sunday School teachers, and lay-leaders.²⁷

By the end of World War I, dispensationalism had grown to very nearly dominate American Protestantism when liberal religionists finally began to fight back. The first to do so were university professors whose conservative bona fides could not overcome their lack of mass appeal with average congregants and whose writings were insufficiently accessible to the broader culture to generate mass interest. It was not until Evangelicalism was put on display in 1925 in a small town in Tennessee, that the American media took interest in the brand of theology that had become normative in American Protestantism.

To many Americans, the Scopes Monkey Trial made a mockery of Christian

Evangelicalism. "The nationally broadcast examination of William Jennings Bryan by Clarence Darrow, in which the Great Commoner fumbled the most basic of the libertarian attorney's village-atheist-like questions, did not help the reputation of God-fearing Protestants."²⁸ The trial broadcast was accompanied by a circus atmosphere of analysis and media attention. Among the many reporters, H.L. Mencken, one of the greatest observers of American culture of his or any era, was dispatched by the *New York Post* to send daily updates. Painting Dayton, Tennessee, as Dogpatch, Mencken savaged the town's religiosity and small-mindedness. On the day of Darrow's showdown with Bryan, he wrote:

One somehow pities him [Bryan], despite his so palpable imbecilities. It is a tragedy, indeed, to begin life as a hero and to end it as a buffoon. But let no one, laughing at him, underestimate the magic that lies in his black, malignant eye, his frayed but still eloquent voice. He can shake and inflame these poor ignoramuses as no other man among us can shake and inflame them, and he is desperately eager to order the charge. In Tennessee he is drilling his army. The big battles, he believes, will be fought elsewhere.²⁹

It should be noted that the role of the Scopes Trial in embarrassing or setting back Evangelical Christianity is, in no sense, *nolo contendere*.³⁰ Many Evangelicals believe the trial was used by media elites to cause the embarrassment that Mencken chronicled as fact. Still, accusations of anti-intellectualism have dogged Evangelicalism since the post-World War I period and, in the aftermath of the Scopes Trial, reached near-universal heights of acceptance in the mass media and universities. Today, however, these accusations are being made from within Evangelical circles by thinkers who, unlike Mencken, are deeply concerned with the continuity of the Christian message.

For example, Mark Noll, professor of Christian Thought at Wheaton College, a flagship of Evangelical education, provocatively begins his book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, "the

scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind." He continues, "American evangelicals are not exemplary for their thinking and they have not been so for several generations."³¹ D.G. Hart goes so far in *Deconstructing Evangelicalism* as to call for Evangelicalism to be relinquished as an identity because it does not really exist. Hart calls it a hollow description of a cobbled-together theology and wonders if it has "any substance beyond vague and warm affirmations about a personal relationship with Jesus."³²

Such anti-intellectualism may stem from the mistrust of university education which began in the late 19th century or from the attitude of D.L. Moody and his followers that immersion in the Bible was the most important learning of all. It may evidence a residual reaction against academic liberalism. Regardless, it is worth noting that even Evangelical leaders have pointed out the problem.

Prior to and in the immediate aftermath of the Scopes Trial, Evangelicalism was experiencing another serious threat from the secular culture of inter-war America. By the early 1920s, there was a "revolution in morals" in which sexuality, Freudianism, and freedom of expression became topics of conversation in the literature and advertising of popular culture. Beginning in 1919, tabloid newspapers screamed sensational and suggestive headlines to an ever-eager mass audience. Women smoked in public and did not always cover their knees (even in church). Dancing, which had always been a taboo to many Protestants, entered the age of the flapper and was now a major part of social behavior. With the not insignificant exception of Prohibition, the conservatives were losing the battle for Victorian mores.³³

Within Protestant circles, two opposing camps had developed in response to these changes in American culture well before the dawn of the roaring '20s. Modernists were more willing to

embrace a new set of values while conservatives — who adopted the moniker “Fundamentalists” from a Baptist newspaper’s description of those “willing to do battle for the fundamentals”³⁴ — reacted strongly in opposition to them. A coalition of Fundamentalists formed quickly with premillennial dispensationalists at its core.

Already, in the 1940s, Fundamentalism had regrouped, changed its image, toned down its insistence on separatism from contemporary society as a test of orthodoxy and, as a result, saw Charles Fuller’s “The Old-Fashioned Revival Hour” become the most popular show on the radio. In 1945, the Youth for Christ movement was organized and hired young Billy Graham as its first evangelist. It was to be the beginning of a new Evangelicalism that would rise as heir to Fundamentalism. Graham was not militant or threatening and quickly developed an enormous following among Christian conservatives.

Whether or not Evangelicalism is an identifiable group with definite boundaries is, ultimately, not significant to this study. While such boundaries would be helpful in applying labels to our areas of focus, we are talking about a group of people who, generally, proudly self-identify. What are significant, or should be, to the American Jewish community — across denominational boundaries — are the definitive categories of eschatological beliefs and the definitive role of dispensationalists. As shown, dispensationalists believe in the divinity of the Bible and that the prophecy of Revelation 20 will happen as it is written. They believe that, in order for this prophecy to be fulfilled, the Jewish State of Israel must be in existence so that the Temple can be rebuilt and the Antichrist can reveal himself within its walls. This view predates the establishment of modern Israel, the Balfour Declaration, and, even, the first Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897.

In other words, *it can be said that dispensationalists were organized Zionists before Jews were.*

1. David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp. 2-19
2. Wheaton College, "Princeton Religion Research Report of 2002," p. 1-3
3. George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, p. 2
4. Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, p. 8
5. George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, p. 2
6. Timothy Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, pp. 32-33
7. Ibid. p. 33
8. Stewart Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism*, pp. 48
9. Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research Inc., "Evangelicals in America," p. 1
10. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, p. 71
11. Robert Wuthnow, *The Struggle for America's Soul*, p. 21.
12. Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, p. 110-111.
13. Walter Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, listing for "Revivalism"
14. W.G. McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism*, pp. 12-19
15. Thomas Jackson, *The Works of John Wesley*, pp. 366-446
16. Ibid., pp. 9-11.
17. Timothy Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, pp. 19-26.
18. Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall be No More*, pp. 86-88.
19. Timothy Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, p. 22.
20. Vern Poytress, *Understanding Dispensationalism*, pp. 16-18
21. Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall be No More*, p. 88.
22. David Haggith, *End-time Prophecies of the Bible*, p. 399

23. Ibid., p. 344.
24. Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, *Left Behind*, pp. 15-19.
25. Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall be No More*, p. 91-94.
26. Timothy Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, p. 34.
27. Ibid. pp. 34-36.
28. D.G. Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism*, p. 133.
29. Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, *The Impossible H.L. Mencken*, pp. 156-173.
30. Paul Waggoner, "The Historiography of the Scopes Trial: A critical re-evaluation," pp. 155-174.
31. Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, p. 3
32. D.G. Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism*, p. 15.
33. George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, pp. 55-56.
34. Ibid. p. 57.

Chapter 3

Contemporary Christian Zionism

When the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) held its 25th annual celebration of Sukkot in October of 2004, it intended to demonstrate solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people. Instead, Pat Robertson declared that he had “met wonderful Jews in Siberia, Brazil, the United States, here in Jerusalem who are all saying ‘Yes, Jesus, you are our messiah.’”¹ Episodes such as this are evidence to many Jews that Evangelical Christian Zionists have ulterior motives in their support for Israel.

Christian Zionist organizations lend political, economic, and/or moral support to Israel in a variety of ways and for a variety of stated reasons. This chapter will examine the demographics of Evangelical Christianity as well as the most influential of the people, organizations, and activities comprising the Christian Zionist movement, and also show that, while they sincerely believe in their objectives, the expected result of their efforts is the Apocalypse.

Among contemporary Christian Zionist leaders, one of the first and most influential has been Hal Lindsey. Born in Houston in 1929, Lindsey attended Dallas Theological Seminary and began his career as the director of Campus Crusade for Christ at UCLA. With an interest in Bible prophecy and a knack for communicating its intricacies to large audiences, Lindsey published his first book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, in 1970. Before the founding of Israel in 1948 and the Six Day War of 1967, dispensationalist theologians had pointed to future events as indicators of the coming end of days. With the return of Jews to Palestine, exactly as predicted in Evangelical eschatology, Lindsey pointed to a prophecy in Matthew 24:32-34:

From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts

forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place.

Lindsey, like other dispensationalists, interpreted the fig tree in this passage to symbolize Israel. He concluded that, upon the founding of modern Israel in 1948, the fig tree had put forth its first leaves. Thus, "this generation" would soon find "him" here. "A generation in the Bible," Lindsey wrote, "is something like forty years. If this is a correct deduction, then within forty years or so of 1948, all these things could take place. Many scholars who have studied Bible prophecy all their lives believe that this is so."² Lindsey's goal was evangelism - leading new disciples to Jesus and encouraging them to live accordingly. Like Darby, Lindsey was careful about his choice of words: the fulfillment of prophecy *could* take place within forty years of 1948.

While Lindsey's theology and evangelism were unquestionably dispensationalist, his appeal crossed over into the realm of popular culture. With the weariness inflicted on Americans by the war in Vietnam, the growing reflection on the counter-culture movement, and a sudden interest in the supernatural and paranormal, the book was a huge success.³ A movie version, narrated by Orson Welles, appeared in commercial theaters in 1978.

Since publication of *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Lindsey has published more than twenty other books, founded his own publication company, and started his own website (www.hallindseyoracle.com) on which he publishes articles under headings such as "Jerusalem Diary" and "Israel War Diary." More important, he opened the floodgates of pop-culture ministry and paved the way for the personalities of the "electronic church" (virtually all of whom are dispensationalists) including Oral Roberts, Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, Jerry Falwell, Kenneth Copeland, and Pat Robertson.⁴

While Lindsey has created a massive organization, there are independent congregations in the United States with similarly international empires. None of these is more involved in the cause of Christian Zionism than Cornerstone Christian Church in San Antonio, Texas. Presided over by John Hagee, the founder and Senior Pastor, Cornerstone boasts a roster of more than 18,000 members. Pastor Hagee's impact is felt well beyond his congregants, however, as his Global Evangelism Television broadcasts his weekly sermons to a an audience on 160 television stations and fifty radio stations nationwide as well as a wide international audience. According to biographical information on his website, though Hagee refers to himself as "Doctor," his earned academic degrees stop with a Masters Degree from North Texas State. He has honorary doctorates from Oral Roberts University and Netanya (Israel) Academic College.⁵ Hagee is also a best-selling author who has published ten books, mainly focusing on his dispensationalist understanding of end-times prophecy. In *Beginning of the End* (1996), Hagee wrote that the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin was a sign of the "accelerating prophetic timetable" and listed ten signs that we might be the "terminal generation." Among these signs: the rebirth of Israel, the return of the Jews home (based on the prophecy of Jeremiah 23:7-8 stating that the Messiah cannot come until the ingathering of the exiled Jews), and Jerusalem returning to Jewish rule (based on the dispensationalist understanding of the prophecy in Luke 21:24 that Jerusalem would be "trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled").⁶ Inspired by another calamitous event, the attacks of September 11, 2001, Hagee returned to these same signs in *Attack on America* (2001).⁷

While Hagee frequently delivers sermons and writes books praising Israel, decrying Arab

terrorism, and urging his listeners to get involved on behalf of the Jewish State, his support for Israel is also demonstrated by an annual "Night to Honor Israel" held at Cornerstone Church since 1981. Hagee has raised so much money for Israel, and the event at Cornerstone has become so well known, that Hagee recounts offering this explanation of how it came about after none other than Yitzhak Rabin asked him about it at an Israel Bonds fundraiser:

It is an event inspired while I was praying at the Western Wall in Jerusalem in the spring of 1978. It was my first time in Israel, and I felt a very special presence in the city of Jerusalem. Somehow, I felt Jerusalem was my spiritual home As I prayed at the Wall, a Jewish man dressed in his prayer shawl and yarmulke was praying next to me, bowing and kissing his prayer book. As I watched him pray, I realized I knew very little about my Jewish roots as a Christian. From that moment, I have felt divinely inspired to bring Christians and Jews together in a public arena to celebrate the things we have in common, to honor the nation of Israel, and to combat anti-Semitism.⁸

John Hagee Ministries also sponsors the Exodus II program which helps Jews in the former Soviet Union immigrate to Israel. While Hagee never directly cites his prophetic beliefs as a reason for the activities of this or any other program of his ministry, it is hard to believe that the relocation of Jews to Israel serves any other purpose. In fact, the pledge card on which donors indicate the amount of their contribution says, "I want to be part of the fulfillment of prophecy and the courageous effort to return Jewish families to their homeland."⁹

Pastor Hagee's website gives seven basic reasons why Christians should support Israel and, despite the apocalyptic tenor of his other writings, none of them focuses on end-times theology. Hagee's reasons fall into three categories: that God blesses those who support and nurture the Jewish people, that Jesus was a Jew and a kinship exists between Jews and Christians, and that God gave the Land of Israel to the Jews as recorded throughout the Book of Genesis. While his support of Israel seems sincerely based on a deeply felt connection to the Jewish people

and State, his writings force us to conclude that this kinship is, in no small part, based on end-times prophecy. His inability or unwillingness to connect the two is suspect.

While Lindsey and Hagee have developed ministries which include support for Israel within a broader agenda, there are many organizations that express their religious doctrine solely by supporting Israel and promoting Christian Zionism. These groups vary in size and impact and an exhaustive list would quickly become outdated. There are a few groups, however, whose influence is unquestionable.

Established in 1980, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) has become a leader in bringing American Evangelicals to tour Israel. Their website claims that they were founded as "an evangelical Christian response to the need to comfort Zion according to the scriptural mandate."¹⁰ The need for such comfort resulted from the decision by eleven countries to move their embassies to Tel Aviv in protest of Israel's decision to annex East Jerusalem in 1980. While the ICEJ has a number of social service programs in Israel - including the Jerusalem Ministry Center which helps new immigrants establish themselves in Israel - their best-known event is the annual Feast of Tabernacles which draws thousands of Christian tourists to Israel and at which Pat Robertson made his comments quoted above. They have also sponsored four International Christian Zionist Congresses (in 1985, 1988, 1996, and 2001), and display on their website an extensive description of Christian Zionism. In fact, the ICEJ lists Christian Zionism among its doctrines and declares that, "in these 'last days' as Peter called them 2000 years ago, the struggle between light and darkness will intensify. Israel will be at the heart of this struggle since it is from her that God will establish His reign of righteousness over the world."¹¹ Despite

this clear reference to eschatological theology, another page claims:

The ICEJ supports the nation of Israel because we love her, are indebted to her, and seek to obey God's word. We are not trying to fulfill an end time agenda, but are standing on Biblical principles. We proclaim a message to Zion that her modern day restoration is not a historical accident, but the fulfillment of God's word (Ezekiel 36:24-26, Luke 21:24). A time of great glory awaits Israel even though dark times may precede the break of day.¹²

This seeming contradiction is, of course, compounded by the citation of the same Lukan passage cited above which is understood by dispensationalists as prophesying the end of the Age of the Church that results in the beginning of the process of the end of days. Despite this, the ICEJ routinely attracts the sitting Prime Minister of Israel and other prominent Jewish leaders as speakers at the Feast of Tabernacles event.

While the ICEJ has mastered the art of bringing Christian pilgrims to visit Israel, Christians for Israel and its monthly editorial mouthpiece, *The Jerusalem Connection International*, have embarked on a plan to sensitize Americans to the horrific terrorism directed against Israelis by bringing an actual artifact of terror to the United States. Rev. James Hutchens, a Vietnam War veteran and retired Brigadier General, is the editor of *The Jerusalem Connection* whose website lists its main projects as: Operation Aliyah, targeting not just former Soviet Union Jews but also American Jews in a "divine calling for the Church to assist the Jewish people in their physical return and restoration of the land"; Operation Life for Israel, which raises funds to provide Israel with assistance for victims of terror attacks; and The Elisha Fund, distributing money for poverty relief in Israel. Hutchens is the former President of Christians for Israel whose main projects focus on the same areas: immigration to Israel and care for Israel's poor. Christians for Israel's mission is unabashedly dispensationalist in that it speaks of "the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel."¹³ Additionally, the group purchased the remains of

Jerusalem Bus 19, destroyed by a suicide bomber on January 29, 2004, from ZAKA (Israel's disaster response group) for \$10.¹⁴ Eleven Israelis were killed and more than 50 wounded in the attack. Christians for Israel has sponsored the "moving tomb" on a tour of the United States since the middle of 2004. Hutchens makes the case that the bus "is the statement of the Islamic Jihadists to the Saturday people, the Jews. The twin towers, the Pentagon—that's the statement of the Islamic Jihadists to the Sunday people. And there's no difference."¹⁵ The bus has also been displayed at the International Court of Justice in the Hague which was considering charging Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon with war crimes and at Duke University (an event co-sponsored by Duke's chapter of Chabad) the week before Duke was to host the national convention of the Palestine Solidarity Movement.¹⁶ Hutchens' brand of confrontation may have reached its peak with the struggle to display the bus at a public event in Berkeley, California. Despite the political opposition of the City of Berkeley and the fear of repercussions of the local Jewish community, Hutchens worked with a few determined Jewish citizens to bring the bus to Berkeley on January 16, 2005.¹⁷

Most groups, however, focus their activities on the tried-and-true methods of political activism (though many stress that they are religious, not political), immigration to Israel, and financial support through direct contribution and tourism. Among these, Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC) is one of the few that directly supports Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. The group claims that, "through CFOIC, churches, ministries, and individuals have visited the communities and biblical sites of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza." The use of the Biblical names of the territories constitutes a political statement in Israeli politics but may be intended as more of a theological statement based on the group's eight reasons why Christians

should support Israel. The list includes the standard citations of Genesis 12:3, Luke 21:24, and Isaiah 40:1-2.¹⁸ Its theology is nearly identical to Pastor Hagee's - Jesus is coming and the Jews' habitation in Israel plays a role in that prophecy.

Describing itself as "a Jerusalem-based, Bible-believing Christian organization," Bridges for Peace engages in similar charitable and educational activities as well as published and tourism-based promotion of support for Israel, all founded on its understanding of Israel's role in Bible prophecy - an understanding summed up on the group's web page under the heading, "standing with Israel is standing with God." Among its goals, Bridges for Peace seeks to "communicate Christian perspectives to the attention of Israeli leaders and the Jewish community-at-large." It publishes several print and electronic newsletters and sponsors numerous conferences, study sessions, and prayer groups.¹⁹

While there are literally hundreds of other groups and congregations with their own programs of support for Israel, the organizations and individuals listed above constitute some of the largest and most influential. Every one of them bases the work done by the group on behalf of Israel in dispensationalist, eschatological theology although some of them deny that they have an end time agenda.

Not all those organizing and galvanizing support among Evangelical Christians are, themselves, true believers. Several Jewish organizations and even the government of Israel, have sensed that it is in Israel's best interests — at least in the short-run — to work with Evangelicals. Arguably the most famous and successful of these is the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews (IFCJ).

While the official biography of Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, the founder and President of the IFCJ, says that he has "devoted the past 25 years to building bridges of understanding between Christians and Jews and broad support for the State of Israel,"²⁰ his critics say that, "though Rabbi Eckstein never directly affirms his supporters' prophetic understandings, he seems willing to allow others to appeal to them to fund his projects."²¹ His official biography also states that he is "recognized as the world's leading Jewish authority on evangelical Christians." While that claim may be open to argument, it is beyond doubt that Rabbi Eckstein is very good at working with them. Rabbi Eckstein began his career working for the Anti Defamation League of B'nai Brith (ADL). According to a recent article in the New York Times:

In 1977, American Nazis threatened to stage a march in Skokie, Ill., a Chicago suburb with a large population of Holocaust survivors. The A.D.L. sent Eckstein from New York to help the local community round up Christian support. What he found surprised him. In his next year in Chicago, he discovered that the evangelicals, more than any other group, were prepared to stand with the Jews.²²

Rabbi Eckstein has learned the language of Evangelicals well and communicates with potential contributors by way of well-produced infomercials broadcast on Christian cable television channels. These infomercials raise funds for the IFCJ's four main programs: "On Wings of Eagles," which helps Jews immigrate to Israel; "Isaiah 58," which provides food and other essentials to needy, mainly former Soviet Union, Jews; "Guardians of Israel," which helps victims of terror attacks; and "Stand for Israel," which "encourages Christian churches, leadership, and individuals to support Israel and the Jewish people through prayer and advocacy."²³ The last program, "Stand for Israel," was launched in 2003 in conjunction with Ralph Reed, the former executive director of the Christian Coalition. The IFCJ infomercials typically show some of the people helped by the group's programs with Rabbi Eckstein on hand to reinforce the dire need for

assistance. This appeal is usually followed by an exhortation by one of the IFCJ's many well-known Evangelical supporters — leaders whose bona fides are well-established among those watching the infomercials. While Rabbi Eckstein himself never makes a connection to the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, he allows the likes of Gary Bauer, Chuck Colson, Pat Boone, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson to do it for him.

Eckstein's big breakthrough came in 1993. The gates of the former Soviet Union were open, and tens of thousands of poor Jews wanted to immigrate to Israel. He [Eckstein] knew that the ingathering of Jewish exiles resonated with evangelicals as biblical prophecy, and with a \$25,000 contribution from a Jewish supporter in Anchorage, he recorded his first TV infomercial. The 30-minute show promoting Eckstein's "On Wings of Eagles" project was narrated, pro bono, by Pat Boone, who delivered a message from Isaiah 49:22: "I will beckon to the Gentiles.... They will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders."²⁴

Because of lingering theological concerns, some municipalities in Israel have refused to accept funds from the IFCJ (though some say this is in reaction to the group's "obsessive demand for exposure" rather than based on theological issues) and former Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu has issued a *halakhic* ruling prohibiting acceptance of such funds.²⁵

While these groups raise a great deal of money and take a large number of tourists to Israel, only recently has the perceived pro-Israel bias of the Bush Administration prompted critics to wonder at the effect this portion of the population is having on American Middle East policy. The debate that began immediately after the 2004 presidential election included the usual Monday morning quarterbacking about campaign strategy, effectiveness of message, and the deficiencies of the losing candidate. The following Sunday, however, the Washington Post claimed that "the 2004 presidential race and its aftermath have brought about a new fusion of religion and politics. For the first time, vast numbers of evangelical Christians showed their clout at the grass-roots

level without being organized by a national group.”²⁶ While this may have been a rather distorted analysis (especially in light of subsequent studies by Pew Research and the Annenberg School showing that, as a percentage of the vote, Evangelical support for Bush did not increase dramatically), anecdotal evidence of surging Evangelical political power — fueled, in no small part, by Evangelicals hoping for adoption of their agenda — was prominent in the mass media for months after the election. While it remains unclear the extent to which Evangelicals wield power in general elections, it is political conventional wisdom that they dominate Republican primaries.

White Evangelical Christians make up just under a quarter of the population of the United States. In much greater numbers than the general population, they overwhelmingly believe that the Bible is the literal word of God, revere Christian leaders like James Dobson and Franklin Graham, regularly pray privately and publicly, and are politically conservative. They are slightly more likely than average Americans to register (82 percent versus 77 percent) and vote (65 percent versus 61 percent report voting in 2000 and 2002).²⁷ Over half of them (55 percent) think it very or extremely important that the United States support Israel compared with 40 percent among the general population.²⁸ It is fair to say, then, that Christian Zionist theology has developed into a cottage industry of newsletters, books, organizations, and multi-million dollar ministries just as the political power and involvement of Evangelicals have been perceived to grow.

The Washington Post noted in late 2001 that, “for the first time since religious conservatives became a modern political movement, the President of the United States has become the movement’s de facto leader.”²⁹ Unlike in past administrations, Evangelicals are

believed to have substantial power in the Bush White House both from without and within. For example, the Rev. Barry Lynn has noted that, on his visits to the Justice Department, he often sees lawyers formerly employed by Pat Robertson working for the government.³⁰

While dispensationalism has always held a Jewish return to Zion as part of its theology, most of the Christian Zionist groups discussed above have been founded only in the past decade and, while some major figures like John Hagee have been leading the charge for many years, the impact of Evangelicals on US Middle East policy has only recently come to be seen as significant. While the Bush administration and its apparent responsiveness to this segment of the population is a significant factor, we should not overlook the cultivation of Christian Zionism by the Israeli government and its agents. Shortly after the Six Day War, a conflict whose resolution was fraught with eschatological meaning to Evangelicals, Israel's leaders began to see potential for at least major tourism income and, even more so, political influence on foreign policy.³¹ Since then, successive Israeli governments have wooed Evangelical leaders and made leaders of the Jewish State available for speaking engagements.

As seen, most Christian Zionist organizations focus their efforts on fundraising for a variety of purposes (most prominent are promoting/paying for Jewish immigration to Israel and social welfare programs for Jews in Israel and other countries) as well as on organizing communities of Evangelicals to support Israel. While none speaks openly of Apocalypse, there is a coded language consistent with dispensationalist theology—especially use of the term “Bible prophecy” which, of course, is fulfilled by the events leading to the millennial age and the end of days. Virtually every Christian organization explicitly mentions these prophecies and even Rabbi

Eckstein's IFCJ indirectly plays to Evangelical eschatological beliefs. Furthermore, it is worth noting the emphasis on "Jewish roots" found within the literature cited above. While most Jews are, at first, touched and honored by the love and support of Christian neighbors (not a common treatment of Jews throughout history), the promotion of "authenticity" that comes from association with the religion of Jesus is disquieting.

That Israel is an issue of increasing importance to Evangelicals is borne out by the fact that most of the organizations discussed above were founded during the last ten to fifteen years. Evangelical Christianity, dispensationalist eschatology, and Christian Zionism all have risen to prominence for a variety of reasons at about the same time. Their adherents all operate under the expectation that each subsequent age might be "terminal" and that the rapture could occur at any moment. In the meantime, Israel and her supporters among the American Jewish community are benefitting from Christian Zionist largess while mostly ignoring the theological issues inherent in the support.

1. Judy Lash Balint, "At Christian Rally for Israel, Robertson Pitches 'Messiah,'" p. 1.
2. Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, 53-58.
3. Timothy Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 190.
4. *Ibid.*, 191.
5. John Hagee Ministries website
6. John Hagee, *Beginning of the End*, 84-100.
7. John Hagee, *Attack on American*, 111-127.
8. John Hagee, *Beginning of the End*, 5.
9. Timothy Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 227.

10. ICEJ website
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Christians for Israel website
14. Kelli Cottrell, "Bombed out Jerusalem bus tours the nation."
15. Lisa Kocian, "Blasted bus speaks on behalf of Israel."
16. Duke University website, "Bombed Israeli Bus on Display at Duke Oct. 12-13."
17. Miller, Abraham, "Jerusalem Bus 19 Comes to Berkeley." p. 4
18. Christian Friends of Israeli Communities website
19. Bridges for Peace website
20. International Fellowship of Christians and Jews website
21. Timothy Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, p. 229.
22. Zev Chafets, "The Rabbi Who Loved Evangelicals (and Vice Versa),"
23. International Fellowship of Christians and Jews website.
24. Zev Chafets, "The Rabbi Who Loved Evangelicals (and Vice Versa)," *The New York Times*, July 24, 2005.
25. Ruth Sinai, "When Money Speaks Louder than The Word."
26. Dana Milbank, "For the President, a vote of full faith and credit."
27. Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research Inc., "Evangelicals in America," p. 14.
28. Ibid., 18
29. Dana Millbank, "Religious Right Finds Its Center in Oval Office."
30. Stephen Zunes, "The Influence of the Christian Right on U.S. Middle East Policy."
31. Timothy Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, p. 221.

Chapter 4

Potential Ramifications

The recent announcement that Ariel Sharon has left the Likud party and that a new Knesset will be elected in March has added uncertainty to an already dynamic situation in Israeli politics. In the coming months, policy-makers and those who work to influence them will spend a great deal of time and energy attempting to foretell the outcome of this important election. No less in flux is the relationship between the Jewish community and its traditional allies among Mainline Protestants. As this relationship grows increasingly tense over the issue of divestment from Israel (discussed below), the relationship between Jews and Evangelicals may grow warmer over the same and other Israel-related issues. While divestment has received a tremendous amount of attention in the organized Jewish community, many other issues have not: the possible impact on the Catholic church of a Pope from a Third-World country with a limited or strained relationship with Israel, the potential damage done by the recent AIPAC scandal to pro-Israel interests on Capitol Hill, etc.

The disquieting fact is that there are many questions and few firm answers. In order to make decisions about what, if anything, American Jews should do about Christian Zionism, we must first examine the current situation in Israeli politics, American Jewish attitudes toward and advocacy for Israel, and the contextualized potential ramifications of Christian Zionism.

The discussion of potential ramifications should begin with an acknowledgment that Israel and the American Jewish pro-Israel lobby would both, probably, prefer to rely solely on support for Israel from within the Jewish community. If we accept this premise, then it is logical

that anything strengthening American Jews' ties to Israel also strengthens American Jewish pro-Israel self-sufficiency and vice-versa.

Since the 1950s, when sociologist Marshall Sklare examined Jewish connections to and opinions regarding Israel, Jewish organizations and leaders have viewed those indications of Jewish "connectedness" as being particularly important. While the 2000 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) announced that "many close observers of American Jewry sense that Jewish engagement with Israel declined in the past twenty to thirty years after a period of high mobilization in the late 1960s and 1970s," the statistics do not necessarily buttress such a claim. According to the NJPS, there has been no significant attitudinal shift away from Jewish support of Israel in the past few decades. The 2000 study reports that 63% of Jews feel an emotional connection to Israel and 72% believe that American and Israeli Jews share a "common destiny."

Nonetheless, prior to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States and the onset of renewed violence in Israel beginning in September, 2000 — and escalating in the winter and spring of 2002 — only 35% of American Jews had visited Israel.¹ By summer of 2002, when the North American Federation of Temple Youth, the "largest and oldest of North America's (Jewish) teenage groups,"² and scores of other organizations were cancelling their summer programs in Israel, tourist shops in Jerusalem posted signs offering discounts for "brave tourists."

While the popular view among American and Israeli Jews was that the only people continuing to visit Israel were Evangelical Christians, undoubtedly the bottom fell out of tourism to Israel. According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, over 2.4 million people visited Israel in 2000. By the end of 2001, the number had dropped by more than half to just under 1.2 million and continued falling in 2002 to just under 862,000. While tourism had increased significantly by

2004 (1.5 million visitors), it has still not returned to pre-intifadah levels.³

Copious anecdotal evidence suggests that Evangelical tourism has surged in the past five years while Jewish tourism has lagged. Since Jerry Falwell began bringing tour groups to Israel in the 1980s under the supportive gaze of the Likud government,⁴ Evangelical organizations, as discussed in the preceding chapter, have sprung up to serve the travel needs of the believers. With Israeli tour guides reporting that their bread-and-butter clients are Evangelicals and with Israeli officials claiming that tourism from the Christian Right has saved the industry,⁵ it is no wonder the Israeli government has intensified efforts at coordination with such groups.

Jewish tourism, then, appears to be relatively elastic whereas evidence (such as the leasing of land in the Galilee) suggests that Israel is banking on Evangelical tourism being inelastic. As demonstrated in 2001-2002 — when the Union of American Hebrew Congregations canceled summer programs in Israel for high school students due to the security situation⁶ — the prognoses for Jewish tourism will improve or worsen depending on political events and repercussions. If there is a new, prolonged calm, there is no reason to doubt that tourism numbers will match or exceed levels before the latest intifadah. On the other hand, with any new outbreak of violence, there can be no guarantee that Jewish groups will not react as before.

For the moment, the political situation in Israel seems relatively stable for the moment (from a security standpoint) in that most political observers believe Prime Minister Sharon and his new party will remain in control of the government. Even so, it could quickly become chaotic.

Sharon, it is important to note, will reach his 78th birthday one month before the coming election. As Likud has now fallen apart over the recent disengagement from Gaza and other issues, the political environment in Israel has grown even more uncertain than if Sharon and his followers had stayed in the party. While Sharon is the clear leader of the new party, Kadima, there is no guarantee that the new party will survive after him (some in the Israeli press are jokingly referring to the new faction as the "One Knesset Party"⁷ connoting its expected tenure in office rather than its appeal for national unity!) With Shaul Mofaz's decision to stay in and vie for the leadership of Likud (along with Silvan Shalom and Binyamin Netanyahu), Ehud Olmert is the most likely successor to Sharon in the new party. Kadima could also confound its skeptics and replace Likud as the center-right force in Israeli politics thus consigning the party of Begin to fight with Moledet for far-right votes. Recent polling by *Yediot Achronot* and *Ma'ariv* indicates that the new Sharon government will win 30-33 seats in Knesset, Labor will win 24-26, and Likud will win 12-15.⁸ Will a stable coalition be formed or will the new faction struggle to find partners?

For our purposes, how will Evangelical supporters of Israel react to a Kadima government or a future Labor government willing to make dramatic territorial concessions? For that matter, American Jews themselves could be split down the middle. Since the general perception, mentioned by the NJPS, is that American Jews feel increasingly disconnected from Israel, several factors could impact those attitudes. Whether or not Sharon remains Prime Minister in the near future, Israel will be under substantial international pressure to follow up on the territorial concessions of the Gaza withdrawal. The United States has already brought such pressure to bear in Israel's negotiated decision to allow the reopening of the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt.⁹ If Israel balks at further concessions, there could be a resulting weakening of Jewish

support. Similarly, the increasing strength and urgency of the anti-Iraq War movement, especially in the ranks of liberal American denominations,¹⁰ and the close association made by groups like ANSWER Coalition between Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, could lead anti-war Jews away from supporting Israel.

Even if Jewish support of Israel actually has deteriorated since the start of the first intifadah in 1987, there had been no perceptible degradation of Jewish lobbying efforts until recently. The main pro-Israel lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has generally been considered one of the most effective special interest groups in Washington - routinely mentioned in the same breath as the National Rifle Association and the American Association of Retired Persons even though, with only roughly 100,000 members, it is tiny by comparison (the NRA claims four million members). In May, 2001, *Fortune* ranked AIPAC fourth on its Power 25 list of the top lobbying groups.¹¹ In fact, AIPAC has consistently placed within the top five in the annual ranking, placing as high as second in the first two such surveys in 1997 and 1998.¹² According to the Center for Responsive Politics, AIPAC was directly or indirectly responsible for twenty million dollars in campaign contributions in the last election cycle.¹³

In August of 2004, CBS News reported that an unnamed Israeli "mole" had infiltrated the Pentagon and passed secrets to two agents of AIPAC. The two "agents" were Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman, AIPAC's foreign policy chief and Iran analyst respectively. The "mole" — unfairly labeled because the Justice Department has leveled no accusation that he worked with or

for the government of Israel or that he was "placed" there by any agency other than the Defense Department — was Lawrence Franklin, the Pentagon's chief Iran desk officer. Franklin, a civilian and relatively junior functionary, viewed Iran as the greatest threat in the world to the United States as well as to Israel. He spent two years trying to change American policy toward Iran to reflect his perception of the threat level. His interactions with Rosen and Weissman, including the mishandling of classified documents, appear to have been related to his interest in changing America's Iran policy.¹⁴

Of concern to the pro-Israel Jewish community is the impact this scandal has had on the juggernaut AIPAC and the effect a weakened AIPAC might have on political reliance on Evangelical groups. The prosecution in the case recently accepted a guilty plea-bargain from Franklin to use against Rosen and Weissman on conspiracy charges. While the government maintains that Franklin's motivation was career advancement, Franklin claims he believed that the AIPAC employees were better connected than he and could relay his concerns to the proper policymakers.¹⁵ The scandal has already had an impact on Israel's ability to push the United States to take quick action against Iran and its developing nuclear program¹⁶ and at least one anti-Israel group is touting a Zogby poll claiming a majority of Americans think that, in view of the investigation, AIPAC should be required to register as an agent of a foreign government.¹⁷

The prognosis for AIPAC's future seems relatively good for the moment. AIPAC has always managed to be a quiet powerhouse in Washington; especially because it does not contribute campaign money directly through a Political Action Committee (PAC) but, rather, by encouraging members and allies to contribute. This strategy has proven highly effective in the electoral defeats of Paul Findley (R-IL), Earl Hilliard (D-AL), and Cynthia McKinney (D-GA). In

all three cases, AIPAC helped find suitable opponents and had pro-Israel allies pour money into their races. Because of this low-profile, media attention has not focused on AIPAC despite its disproportionate power. It is also safe to assume that the Israel lobby's friends in the Republican-controlled Congress have helped ease some of the pressure.

It should not be assumed, however, that AIPAC has safely dodged the bullet. First, the loss of Rosen has left a significant void. He was considered an expert not just on Middle East politics, but on Washington politics. As such, he frequently counseled Members of Congress and administration officials on events in and around Israel. His rolodex and reputation are simply irreplaceable.¹⁸ Furthermore, while indictments against Rosen and Weissman were unsealed in August with little fanfare, a trial or guilty plea could easily return the scandal to the attention of the press.

With these organizational and attitudinal factors at play in the American Jewish community, there are a number of potential positive and negative outcomes should Jewish organizations choose to encourage Christian Zionism. Accordingly, we will examine first positive and then negative potentialities for three different shareholders (and some of their subgroups): the State of Israel; Jewish-Christian relations; and pro-Israel advocacy. It is important to note, at this point, that the concern is not whether or not Evangelicals should support Israel. For the time being, dispensationalist theology calls for support of Israel and most Evangelicals appear interested in compliance simply because they see particular Western values in Israel and not due to any theology. The question, which will be addressed more thoroughly in the next chapter, is

whether or not American Jews should encourage or discourage such support.

For many American Jews, even those generally supportive of Israeli policy, it has been exceedingly easy to answer that we should reject Christian Zionism as have several liberal denominations of Christianity. Such a stance should not be hastily arrived at. There are many potentially positive outcomes to an active Jewish involvement with and encouragement of Christian Zionism.

The State of Israel is the most obvious and immediate beneficiary of Christian Zionist support. Politically, Israel can count on a responsive group of conservative Members of Congress to help with the provision of military and monetary support (usually in the form of loan guarantees). According to AIPAC, Israel will receive \$2.58 billion of the \$19.4 billion foreign aid bill. Of these monies, \$2.22 billion is earmarked for military assistance while the other \$360 million is in economic aid. The bill also grants some unique rights to Israel such as the ability to receive aid money within thirty days of passage of the bill and the ability to spend millions of dollars in military aid outside of US companies.¹⁹ This kind of financial support is not new, however, and has actually gone down since 1996 when then-Prime Minister Netanyahu, in a speech before Congress, pledged to reduce Israeli reliance on US economic aid. Since then, economic aid has dropped to current levels from over \$1.2 billion annually.²⁰ Military assistance, however, has remained a staple of the U.S.-Israel relationship and has consistently come under attack from groups critical of Israeli policy.

In the current administration, the political benefits of Evangelical support for Israel appear to have manifested themselves most obviously in the Security Council and General Assembly of

the United Nations. Since the beginning of the Bush administration, the United States has vetoed seven Security Council resolutions dealing with Israel and the Palestinians that the United States considered anti-Israel.²¹ While this number is not out of step with previous administrations during periods of substantial anti-Israel activity at the United Nations, the rest of the world perceives a shift in American Middle East policy to the general favor of Israel. There is no evidence, however, that the Bush administration is unwilling to push Israel when Washington's interests are at stake.

The factor most often cited for international perception of American bias in favor of Israel is American involvement, or lack of it, in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. The Bush administration pushed the Palestinian Authority to appoint a Prime Minister to take the levers of government out of the hands of Yasser Arafat. When Mahmoud Abbas resigned to protest his lack of control over the PA security apparatus, the United States more or less swore off dealing with Arafat. While much of Europe and the Arab world saw this as bias, Bush was able to fall back on relatively broad, bipartisan support at home. *Nonetheless, every time the administration has tried to rein in Israel, they have met their most significant resistance from their base: Evangelical Christians.* In 2003, when the United States condemned the attempted targeted killing of Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi, the Christian Right mobilized to send thousands of emails to the White House threatening to stay home on Election Day 2004. Within twenty-four hours, the President's tone had changed (although the US never revoked its condemnation) and when Israel killed Sheik Ahmed Yassin and then Rantisi in March and April of 2004, the Bush administration did not repeat the "mistake." When the State Department insisted that Israel stop incursions into the West Bank following the Park Hotel bombing of a Passover

seder in April 2002, the White House received over 100,000 e-mails from organized Christian groups. The result was a statement of support for Israel from the President and resolutions of support for Israel from both houses of Congress.²²

That Israel benefits from Evangelical tourism, fund-raising, and assistance with immigration initiatives has been discussed above and in the preceding chapter. Whatever ulterior motives Christian Zionists might have, their help has allowed several municipalities in Israel to survive the difficult recent economic circumstances without resorting to slashing human services.

In the area of Jewish-Christian relations, consideration should be given to the positive impact on ties to Evangelicals as well as Mainline Protestants. Especially in light of the strain caused by last year's movie "The Passion of the Christ," Evangelical Zionism has the potentiality to provide a noteworthy area of agreement between the normally very liberal Jewish community and the mostly conservative Evangelical community. While areas of disagreement are still far more numerous, Israel gives both communities a small window of commonality (even though some Jews' are uncomfortable with what they perceive as entirely eschatological Evangelical reasons for supporting Israel) and, thus, a starting point for interfaith dialogue. Among Orthodox and other traditionally observant Jews, such commonality is far deeper as it includes attitudes on social issues such as abortion, homosexuality, and the role of faith in public life. At the same time, American Jews' more traditional alliances with Mainline Protestants — challenged of late by divestment campaigns in several liberal churches — are being reconsidered by both groups. While the divestment situation is far more dangerous than positive, *the developing relationship between*

Jews and Evangelicals could be seen as a warning to more liberal Protestant groups that they may be left politically isolated. It could also be seen as a reminder of the spectrum of political positions shared by both groups.

Evangelicals have already been remarkably successful in their lobbying efforts on behalf of Israel. While AIPAC has a track record of success with members of both parties, most Jewish groups have a constituency that is fairly liberal and, as such, enjoy most of their lobbying success with legislators from the left. While there are over twenty Jews in the House and ten in the Senate, all but two (Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania and Rep. Eric Cantor of Virginia) are Democrats. Evangelical Zionism gives pro-Israel advocacy access to conservative Republicans in a way most Jewish groups could not hope to accomplish. Thus, another potential and actual positive ramification of Evangelical support for Israel is the benefit to the cause of advocating for Israel.

Despite the potential positives, American Jews have good reason to be suspicious and cautious when considering how to react to Christian Zionism. In addition to contemporary issues to be discussed below, Jews have a long institutional memory to overcome in trusting Christians. Evangelical groups often profess love of the Jewish people. Doing so, they believe, not only fulfills Biblical prophecy and commandment, but brings them closer to an "authentic" Christianity steeped in recognition of Jesus' Judaism. While there is no reason to think Evangelicals are anything but sincere in their professions of love and support for the Jewish State and people, the same could have been said about Martin Luther — i.e. vis-a-vis the Jews — in mid-16th century.

Originally sympathetic (possibly in the hopes that they would convert to Protestantism), Luther became embittered when Jews did not flock en masse to his cause. In 1543, Luther published an essay, *Concerning the Jews and Their Lies*, still widely used by anti-Semites today.²³ After centuries of mistrust, it seems as though Jews are unlikely easily to entrust their protection to Christians.

Furthermore, a founding principle of political Zionism, as framed by Theodor Herzl, was the need for Jews to determine their own political destiny. Herzl and the founders of the State of Israel believed that the only way to escape the hatred of Jews was to do so via the establishment of a Jewish State.²⁴ This philosophy has been enshrined in Israeli law in the form of the Law of Return allowing any Jew to claim immediate citizenship rights in Israel. Israeli culture, at least until recently, focused on strength and self-reliance. These traits were evidenced in the early period of the State in the kibbutz movement and the pride in the Israel Defense Forces as well as in the official name given to the annual day of Holocaust remembrance, Holocaust Heroes' and Martyrs' Remembrance Day. Israel was forever to remove the stain of victimhood from the Jewish people. Thus, for example, when an Air France jetliner was hijacked in 1976 with 254 passengers aboard (only eighty-three of them Israeli but most of the rest French Jews), Israel launched the raid that freed them.²⁵ These challenges, together with the following potential negative outcomes of Evangelical Zionism, should cause American Jews to consider well the encouragement of such support.

In the aftermath of the 2004 confrontation between the organized Jewish community and

leaders of Evangelical Christianity over the film "The Passion of the Christ," some Jewish leaders believed that the furor needed to be put into context with the great good that the relationship between Jews and Evangelicals does for Israel. While American Jews should be dismayed by Evangelical support of the movie, "there is too much at stake - Israel's security and the well-being of Jewish life in America - to be blinded by narrow ideological approaches." These leaders were content to utilize the assistance of Evangelicals in no small part because Christians have never demanded a *quid pro quo* for their support of Israel.²⁶

Such a *quid pro quo*, however, is not impossible or even unlikely. In October of 2005, the State of Israel announced its decision to lease land on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee for an Evangelical Christian center and, possibly, a theme park. Israeli officials cited the tremendous economic benefit of Christian tourism. While there is no evidence that the Israeli decision was anything but voluntary, the government of Israel is clearly swayed by the financial benefit of promoting specifically Evangelical tourism.²⁷ One wonders to what length Israel might go to keep the spigot of money running.

As noted above, there have been no attempts by Evangelical organizations to demand anything in return for their support of Israel. Although Israel has demonstrated a willingness to give deferential treatment to Christian causes (as in the case of the lease of land in the Galilee noted above), this is easily interpreted as good politics to reward an ardent supporter. What, however, if Christian groups begin asking Israel to make changes that will jeopardize the Jewish nature of the State or, at least, be upsetting to Israelis and diaspora Jews? In fact, the Knesset passed an anti-proselytizing bill on Christmas Day, 1977, establishing a prison term of up to five years for anyone caught offering or receiving any inducements to convert.²⁸ A 1998 proposal to

strengthen the law was scuttled, largely, by Evangelical pressure on Prime Minister Netanyahu.²⁹

While the American State Department reports that there have never been any arrests or prosecutions under the 1977 law, it can be credited with forcing Middle East Television — a subsidiary of Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) founded in 1982 "in a van parked on the Israel-Lebanon border"³⁰ — to establish headquarters in Lebanon instead of inside Israel. It is not unimaginable that Evangelicals could ask Israel to repeal the law altogether. If Israel's political position in the United States is protected in too great a part by those same Evangelicals, could Israel refuse?

Furthermore, Israel currently has immigration laws that make it difficult for non-Jews to become citizens — as opposed to the Law of Return, for Jews. Ostensibly, these regulations exist to ensure the maintenance of the Jewish majority of the State. The website of the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption mentions Jewish immigration but not non-Jewish.³¹ Should Evangelicals decide to target these laws for repeal, under what circumstances might Israel accede?

The example of Martin Luther forces Jews to consider what might happen to Israel in the event that Evangelical support is no longer forthcoming or if those pro-Israel forces suddenly find themselves out of power in the case of a sea-change in American politics. The most obvious and significant change will take place in January 2009, as a new administration will take power. A Democratic White House would not be the only possible change. However unlikely given the power of Evangelicals in Republican primaries (especially early ones), there is a possibility that a new Republican President could be much more moderate than the current executive. Also, Jewish pro-Israel advocacy should not discount the possibility that a substantially weakened Bush administration (at the time of this writing hovering in the mid-30s in approval ratings polls) could

find it longer politically expedient to support Israel. Regardless, a political change of unknown dimensions is on the horizon. The repercussions for Israel could be anything from zero to extraordinary.

In our examining the potential ramifications of Evangelical support for Jewish-Christian relations, the discussion must also include all other Protestants as well as the Catholic Church. For Jewish relations with Evangelicals, no reaction is more prevalent than "the yuck factor." On social issues that are important to a large majority of American Jews, such as legal abortion and gay rights, Evangelicals are diametrically opposed to most Jews.³² Furthermore, their reliance on Scripture to inform their policy views and their willingness to push issues like school prayer and "Intelligent Design" can be a source of great consternation for Jews who vehemently oppose those positions. Furthermore, many American Jews, on learning more about Evangelical theology, may find the eschatological views of Christian Zionists to be sufficiently problematic to warrant a cooling of the new-found alliance.

Meanwhile, relations between Jews and Mainline Protestants appear to be suffering greatly from the recent closeness between the Jewish community and Evangelicals. Nowhere is this more evident than in the movement by some leaders of major American churches to divest from companies headquartered in and doing business with Israel. Theoretically, this movement is an conscientious reaction to liberal Protestant disagreement with Israeli policy. While church groups are, doubtless, motivated in part by principle, it is fair to say that divestment results from strained relations with the Jewish community as much as it is causing the fault lines to show. It is also possible to conclude that Mainline Protestants, aware of the dramatic demographic shift toward

Evangelicalism, are reacting more to their more conservative Christian brethren than to Israel and, in the process, harming their relationships with the Jewish community. In 2004, both the Reformed Church in America and the much larger Presbyterian Church (USA) announced plans to investigate selective economic divest from Israel. The Episcopal Church and the United Church of Christ also considered, but rejected, divestment measures. In February of 2005, the World Council of Churches, the largest umbrella organization of Protestant churches in the world, encouraged its members to consider economic measures against Israeli occupation.³³ The Presbyterians, thus far the only church to vote in favor of divestment, has backed away from the policy recently by claiming that the measure will only be implemented should “progressive engagement” fail.³⁴ At the same time, Evangelicals have not missed the opportunity to capitalize on the distance between Jews and Mainline Christians. Prominent Evangelical leaders have condemned the liberal churches and called on them to be “held accountable.”³⁵ While the potential for harm to the relationships between Jews and Mainline Protestants has been great, groups such as Presbyterians Concerned for Relations between Jews and Christians and leaders in both communities have counseled caution and dialogue.

The last interfaith consideration should be the current situation in the Catholic Church. While Pope Benedict XVI can be expected more or less to continue the policies of his predecessor, he is in his late 70s and will, in all likelihood, be Pope for a far shorter reign than John Paul II. As the greatest populations of Catholics in the world are found in South America and Africa, it is entirely possible that the next Pope will be from one of these areas. If he hails from a developing nation, it is possible that his connection to Israel may be weaker than a European Pope — especially if he is open to Liberation Theology which Pope Benedict and his

predecessor repeatedly denounced — and it is certain that his cultural reference to the Jewish State will be different. Whether Israel can count on support from the Church in coming years will, largely, depend on the next occupant of the throne of St. Peter. Moreover, one may presume that it was European cardinals who were in the main responsible for selecting Benedict. Many of them, too, are elderly and may not be available to vote for Benedict's successor.

With the potential impact of the AIPAC scandal, it is foreseeable that Israel advocacy may go through a period of transition. In this period, the possible resulting deterioration in the Jewish community's ability to politically protect Israel could force Jews to rely more heavily on Evangelicals for support thereby potentially playing into one of the above scenarios. Furthermore, given the growing sense among Jewish leaders that American Jews are apathetic to Israel, the weakness of AIPAC and a weakened pro-Israel lobby could not be happening at a worse time. If there were to be an abandonment of Israel by Evangelicals, who would fill the gaping hole?

1. National Jewish Population Survey 2000.
2. UAHC Press release, "NFTY Suspends Summer Trips to Israel."
3. Central Bureau of Statistics, State of Israel.
4. Timothy Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, 218-219.
5. Molly Moore, "Israel Cultivates a New Breed of Tourist," p. A01.
6. UAHC Press release, "NFTY Suspends Summer Trips to Israel."
7. Yossi Verter, "Ariel Sharon's new faction is a one term party."
8. Yossi Verter, "Polls: Sharon beats Labor, secures 3rd term as PM."

9. Scott Wilson, "Israel Agrees to Gaza-Egypt Reopening." p. A22.
10. "Anti-war Activists Call on Reform." *Forward*.
11. "Power 25: Top Lobbying Groups," *Fortune*.
12. "Fortune Releases Annual Survey of Most Powerful Lobbying Organizations," Time Warner Newsroom.
13. Jeffrey Goldberg, "Real Insiders: A pro-Israel lobby and an F.B.I. sting."
14. Ibid.
15. Ron Kampeas, "Ex-Pentagon figure pleads guilty in AIPAC case."
16. Ori Nir, "Scandal Stymies Israeli Effort to Pressure Tehran."
17. Zogby International poll, September 13, 2004.
18. Matthew Berger and Ron Kampeas, "Rosen will leave void at AIPAC."
19. "Dollars and Sense," AIPAC website
20. "Reduce U.S. Aid to Israel," Netanyahu official website.
21. United Nations General Assembly, "Report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and the Increase in Membership of the Security Council."
22. Stephen Zunes, "The Influence of the Christian Right on U.S. Middle East Policy."
23. Jacob R. Marcus., *The Jew in the Medieval World*, p. 187.
24. Marvin Lowenthal, *The Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, p. 7.
25. Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pp. 829-830.
26. Abraham Foxman, "Though They Liked 'The Passion,' Christian Evangelicals Are Our Friends."
27. Irit Rosenblum, "Israel to lease Kinneret shore land to Evangelicals."
28. U.S. Department of State, 2001, *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom*.
29. Aaron S. Osborne, "Christians Protest Anti-missionary Legislation."
30. Middle East Television website.
31. State of Israel, Ministry of Immigrant Absorption website.

32. Ron Kampeas, "Evangelicals Back Israel at RNC."

33. World Council of Churches news release, "WCC central committee encourages consideration of economic measure for peace in Israel/Palestine."

34. Reuters, "American churches back away from divestment."

35. International Fellowship of Christians and Jews press release, "Noted Rabbi Hits Mainline Protestants for Anti-Israel Policies."

Chapter 5

Conclusions

American Jewish organizations and their members are beginning to address the new reality faced by their pro-Israel advocacy groups; that is, the immense political power held by non-Jews to effect American policy on Israel and the passion with which that power is applied. Recent criticisms of the "religious right" by Rabbi Eric Yoffie of the Union for Reform Judaism and Rabbi Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League have exposed the conflict within American Judaism over how to react to the current religio-social situation in the United States¹ but also betray a fundamental uncertainty as to the most effective way to respond. Jewish groups, largely but not entirely divided along denominational boundaries, disagree as to the threat of Evangelicalism in terms of Israel advocacy and a host of political and church-state issues.

Our final consideration, then, must be how American Jews and Jewish organizations should react to Evangelical Zionism based on the information contained in this study. There are three major findings suggested by our examination of dispensationalist eschatology, the scope and power of the major groups and individuals who dominate the work done on Israel's behalf by Christian Zionists, and the potential consequences in Israel and for American Jews. First, American Jews should willingly accept the support of Evangelicals under specific conditions to be outlined below. Second, there should be a rededication to positive Jewish relationships with Mainline Protestants and Catholics. Finally, every effort must be made to keep pro-Israel advocacy engaged in by Jews independent from that of non-Jews and to keep AIPAC strong.

The first, and most potentially difficult, conclusion that should be drawn by the American

Jewish community is that Evangelical support should be cautiously welcomed so long as particular conditions are met. Because Christian Zionism is based on the eschatological beliefs of dispensationalists outlined in chapter 2, no Jewish response is likely to dissuade Evangelicals from supporting Israel. Thus, there is no benefit to attempting to discourage them as such efforts will not only not work, but may damage interfaith relations and any chance the Jewish community may have to affect the policies of pro-Israel Christian organizations.

American Jews should remember that there is a spectrum of support for Israel even among pro-Israel Evangelicals. Some are friends to Israel only for the moment and only insofar as Israel plays a part in their end times beliefs. They view Israel as a cartoon actor on a universal stage playing out a part written for them by God. In this two-dimensional view, Israelis are not free to do what they want in pursuit of a life lived in peace such as relinquish land to the Palestinians. On the contrary, Israel "dishonors God's covenant" by dividing God's land.² Other Christian Zionists, however, will support Israel no matter what and theological problems arising from Israel's actions will be dealt with creatively. Leaders such as John Hagee and Hal Lindsey are adept at adjusting their prophetic beliefs to fit current events.

Evangelical leaders have enjoyed the reception they have gotten from Jewish pro-Israel groups, individuals, and the Israeli government. In his book *Beginning of the End*, John Hagee recounts his and his wife's experience being "the only Gentiles present" at an Israel Bonds dinner. He gushes about the "kosher dinner" and meeting Yitzhak Rabin. He explains that every attendee at the dinner (all wealthy Jews) publically pledged large sums of money to Israel while he, at the time a poor, young minister, was barely able to give \$1000. Expecting to be embarrassed by such a small contribution, Hagee concludes the story:

I was totally unprepared for what happened next. The captain of our table announced with thunderous delight to the entire banquet hall: "Reverend and Mrs. Hagee will be giving one thousand dollars." The next moment was an eternity. Dead silence filled the banquet hall. I wanted to disappear, not knowing what they were thinking of us, but imagining all sorts of things...all of them negative. At that moment, Yitzhak Rabin's face shifted into a half-smile, and he began to clap, slowly, methodically, rhythmically. Startled, I looked up at him, then the entire room exploded in applause. The other guests rose to their feet, still clapping.³

As discussed in chapter 3, the Israeli government has spent the past few decades cultivating relationships with Evangelical leaders. Jewish approval, in whatever form it may take, clearly matters to these people.

Many Jews will have one of two general reactions to Christian Zionism, both of which can be uncritical and knee-jerk. The first reaction is exemplified by Hagee's story; entirely positive and completely spontaneous. Jews who politically and financially support Israel and her government's policies gush over Evangelicals' support. In the customs line at Ben Gurion Airport, Jews thank the church groups who have come to visit and seem genuinely appreciative of this most unusual ally. The other reaction, equally spontaneous, is thoroughly negative bordering on revulsion. Neither of these reactions is as helpful as a more nuanced approach.

Thus, there are two conditions under which the American Jewish community should accept and even encourage Evangelical support for Israel. First, is that Evangelicals and Jews must come to an understanding about missionizing and targeting Jews for conversion. An ongoing source of tension between the two communities, Jewish organizations have long experienced targeting of Jews as an outrage. While many Evangelical groups whose main agenda is pro-Israel advocacy downplay or abandon missionary goals⁴, organizations such as the Southern Baptist Convention publically announce their intention to seek converts among Jews by

sponsoring “Messianic Jewish” congregations or through direct proselytizing.⁵ On this issue, each side displays a lack of sensitivity to the religious needs of the other. The Jewish community is right to insist that it not be “targeted” any more than other religious minorities. Efforts to single out the Jewish community by the Southern Baptist Convention or even the liberal Presbyterian Church (USA) – which, until recently, sponsored a “Messianic Jewish” congregation in Philadelphia – are liable to taint any interaction between Jews and non-Jews as theologically suspect from the Jewish perspective. On the other hand, the Jewish community must understand that “sharing the good news” of the Gospels is a fundamental tenet of Christianity incumbent on all believing Christians. Thus, Christian groups must agree not to especially pursue Jewish converts and Jewish groups must agree that Christian proselytizing is an article of religious faith and not an insult.

The second condition is that Jews and Evangelical Christians need to honestly discuss their political differences. One of the major concerns expressed by Rabbi Yoffie in his speech at the Houston biennial in 2005 was the substantial disagreements most American Jews have with Evangelicals over privacy and First Amendment issues. Rather than sweep these points of contention under the rug, we should work for a relationship like the one that ties Evangelicals together (as discussed in chapter 2); “a uniquely broad and constantly changing coalition of constantly changing factions who tend to agree for brief periods of time on a few choice issues.” As of this writing, the relationship seems to be at something of a crossroads. While it was noted in chapter 4 that Evangelicals have never asked for a quid pro quo for their support of Israel, recent events at the United States Air Force Academy, which have resulted in a federal lawsuit by the parents of a Jewish cadet who claims religious intolerance and harassment from his

Evangelical classmates, have erupted into public sparring between the cadet's father and Rev. Ted Haggard, the leader of the National Evangelical Association. Meanwhile, Evangelical leaders like Rev. Don Wildmon of the American Family Association (AFA) and Tom Minnery of Focus on the Family have suggested that, if Jews don't like their politics, they may have to rethink their support for Israel.⁶ It is worth noting that AFA lists ten issues of concern on its website, none of which pertain to Israel. Similarly, Focus on the Family is not known as a group that does significant work in the area of pro-Israel advocacy. That said, as the politically liberal majority of the American Jewish community continues to work against the agenda of the religious right, we should expect to see these comments repeated.

As traditional allies in the Mainline Protestant community continue to explore economic divestment from Israel, and as uncertainty about the future of Jewish-Evangelical relationships persists, the Jewish community should rededicate itself to interfaith dialogue. Happily, the reaction in the Jewish community to the perception that liberal Christians side with Israel's enemies has, generally, been one of personal engagement rather than group condemnation. Some rabbis and congregations have responded by engaging in dialogue with clergy and lay-members of denominations considering divestment.⁷ Synagogues and Jewish groups have organized interfaith trips to Israel to show Protestant clergy and lay-leaders, many of whom know only one side of the conflict, another viewpoint.⁸ Some Presbyterians, meanwhile, have formed a group called Presbyterians Concerned for Christian Jewish Relations opposing divestment schemes and favoring open dialogue.

While such examples of positive interaction are heartening, all-too-common initial

reactions by Jewish leaders and groups to liberal Christian political opposition to Israel include shock, outrage, and a sense of betrayal. While these emotional reactions are understandable, the Jewish community cannot afford to act on them. As discussed in chapter 4, the newly strained relationship between Jews and Mainline Protestants is as much a Christian reaction to Jewish involvement with Evangelicals as it is a true political reaction to conflict in the Middle East.

While the friction created between the Jewish and Catholic communities over the Church's perceived abandonment of its own principles (not to mention the Jewish community) in the controversy over last year's movie *The Passion of the Christ* has, largely, dissipated – perhaps due to the strength and sincerity of Jewish grief over the death of Pope John Paul II – the Jewish community may have dodged a bullet with the appointment of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger to the throne of St. Peter. Considering the age of the current Pope, it is not unlikely that the cardinals will gather in Rome for another election within a decade. In such a circumstance, the election of a non-European Pope may cause significant challenges to Catholic-Jewish relations especially on the issue of Israel. A European Pope, such as Benedict or John Paul, can be expected to have internalized sensitivity to the Church's history with the Jewish people. An African or South American Pope, while certainly knowledgeable of Church history, might reasonably be expected to feel less of a connection to Jewish concerns.

Thus, Jews and Catholics must continue to engage in meaningful dialogue. Local rabbis should meet regularly with archbishops and, if possible, travel together to Israel.

Lastly, as indicated in the preceding chapter and in the above referenced comments by leading Evangelicals, there exists a possibility that Christian Zionist support for Israel may

deteriorate. While this is highly unlikely among some of the more ardent leaders discussed in chapter 3, some diminution of support is not out of realm of possibility. Similarly, as discussed in chapter 4, a new administration or sea-change in the Republican party away from the power of the Evangelical base could make Christian support of Israel less important. In any case, the Jewish community must continue to rely on its own advocacy systems in order to ensure that pro-Israel advocacy is not damaged by a sudden deficit of Evangelical support.

Along these lines, AIPAC and other Jewish organizations committed to a strong American-Israeli relationship must remain free of Evangelical influence. Such separation serves the dual purposes of maintaining political and financial independence while attempting to mollify concerns among some segments of the Jewish and Mainline Protestant communities over close political ties with Evangelicals. Somewhat contradictorily, Jewish pro-Israel groups should continue to reach out to Evangelical groups and politicians. In the event of a lapse in Christian support for Israel, Jewish lobbying efforts will not have the luxury of time and resources to rebuild relationships that have lapsed due to "letting the Evangelicals handle it."

Since beginning this project, the political situations in Israel and the United States has changed dramatically. As Americans continue to sour on the war in Iraq, Israelis prepare to go to the polls without the towering presence of Ariel Sharon, the mid-term elections of 2006 approach, Democrats and liberals seem unable to make a dent in the religious right which seems to only suffer political damage when overplaying its hand, and jockeying for the Presidential campaign in 2008 begins in earnest, it appears that both Israel and Evangelical Christianity will be significantly important in American politics and world events for the next several years.

As mentioned in chapter 1, the relationship between Evangelicals and Jews promises to be one of the most complex and vital for the coming decade or more. The leadership of the American Jewish community – of all denominations and ideologies – needs to know more about the beliefs and sub-culture of Evangelicals in order to better understand and work with them on those issues on which there is agreement and to better oppose them on those issues on which there is not.

1. James D. Besser, "Attack on Right Reveals Fault Lines."
2. Chris Mitchell, "Dividing the Land, Dishonoring God's Covenant."
3. John Hagee, *Beginning of the End*, 6-8.
4. Timothy Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, p. 246.
5. Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith press release, *ADL to Southern Baptist Convention: Stop Efforts to Convert Jews*.
6. E.J. Kesser, "Evangelical's spat with Jewish activist goes public."
7. Pauline Dubkin Yearwood, "Presbyterians Against Israel."
8. Rachel Pomerance, "Interfaith trip to Israel seeks to mend ties."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRINTED MATERIAL

Ariel, Yaakov S., *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes toward Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865-1945*, Chicago Studies in the History of American Religion, Brooklyn: Carlson, 1991.

Balint, Judy Lash, "At Christian Rally for Israel, Robertson Pitches 'Messiah,'" *Forward*, October 8, 2004.

Barr, James, *Fundamentalism*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977.

Bebbington, David, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, London: Routledge Press, 1988.

Bercot, David W., *The Kingdom that Turned the World Upside Down*, Tyler, TX: Scroll Publishing, 2003.

Blaising, Craig A. and Darrell L. Bock, eds. *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church: the Search for Definition*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.

Boone, Kathleen C., *The Bible Tells Them So: the Discourse of Protestant Fundamentalism*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989.

Boyer, Paul, *When Time Shall be No More*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Burge, Gary, *Who are God's People in the Middle East?*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993.

———, *Whose Land? Whose Promise?*, Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2003.

Chafets, Zev, "The Rabbi Who Loved Evangelicals (and Vice Versa)," *The New York Times*, July 24, 2005.

Cole, Stewart, *The History of Fundamentalism*, New York: Richard R. Smith, 1931.

Cottrell, Kelli, "Bombed out Jerusalem bus tours the nation," *Christian Examiner*, March 20, 2004.

Elon, Binyamin, *God's Covenant with Israel*, Green Forest, AR: Balfour Books, 2005.

Elwell, Walter, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, New York: Baker Publishing Group, 1996.

Epstein, Lawrence J., *Zion's Call: Christian Contributions to the Origins and Development of Israel*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984.

Erickson, Millard J., *A Basic Guide to Eschatology: Making Sense of the Millennium*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

Foxman, Abraham, "Though They Liked 'The Passion,' Christian Evangelicals Are Our Friends," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, March 8, 2004.

Goldberg, Jeffrey, "Real Insiders: A pro-Israel lobby and an F.B.I. stong," *The New Yorker*, July 4, 2005.

Hagee, John, *Attack on America*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001.

———, *Beginning of the End*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996.

- , *The Battle for Jerusalem*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001.
- Haggith, David, *End-time Prophecies of the Bible*, New York: Berkley Publishing Company, 1999.
- Halsell, Grace, *Forcing God's Hand: Why Millions Pray for a Quick Rapture and Destruction of Planet Earth*, Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 1999.
- , *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelicsts on the Road to Nuclear War*, Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill and Company, 1986.
- Hart, D.G., *Deconstructing Evangelicalism*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic/Baker Book House Company, 2004.
- Jackson, Thomas, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, Franklin, TN: Providence House, 1994.
- Kampeas, Ron, "Ex-Pentagon figure pleads guilty in AIPAC case," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 1, 2005.
- Kessler, E.J. "Evangelical's spat with Jewish activist goes public," *The Forward*, January 6, 2006.
- Kocian, Lisa, "Blasted bus speaks on behalf of Israel," *The Boston Globe*, June 21, 2004.
- LaHaye, Tim and Jenkins, Jerry, *Left Behind*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1995.
- , *Tribulation Force*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996.
- , *Nicolae*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997.
- LaHaye, Tim, *Tim LaHaye Prophecy Study Bible*, Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000.
- Lasley, Jack, *The Threat of Radical Fundamentalism*, Cocoa, FL: NISGO Publications, 1995.
- LaVerdiere, Eugene, *Fundamentalism: A Pastoral Concern*, Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000.
- Lindsey, Hal, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970.
- Lowenthal, Marvin, *The Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, New York: The Dial Press, 1956.
- MacArthur, John., *The Future of Israel: Daniel 9:20-12:13*, Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1991.
- Marcus, Jacob R., *The Jew in the Medieval World*, Revised ed., Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1999.
- Marsden, George, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991.
- McCall, Thomas S. and Zola Levitt, *The Coming Russian Invasion of Israel*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1987.
- McGinn, Bernard, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil*, San Francisco: Harper, 1994.
- McLoughlin, W.G., *Modern Revivalism*, New York: Ronald, 1959.

- Milbank, Dana, "Religious Right Finds Its Center in Oval Office," *Washington Post*, December 24, 2001.
- , "For the President, a vote of full faith and credit," *Washington Post*, November 7, 2004.
- Mill, John Stuart, *On Liberty*, New York: Bartleby, 1999.
- Miller, Abraham, "Jerusalem Bus 19 Comes to Berkeley," *Front Page Magazine*, June 17, 2005.
- Moore, Molly, "Israel Cultivates a New Breed of Tourist," *The Washington Post*, December 11, 2002.
- New, David S., *Holy War: The Rise of Militant Christian, Jewish, and Islamic Fundamentalism*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2002.
- Nir, Ori, "Scandal Stymies Israeli Effort to Pressure Tehran," *Forward*, April 29, 2005.
- Noll, Mark, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994.
- O'Leary, Stephen D., *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric*, New York: Oxford, 1994.
- Poytress, Vern, *Understanding Dispensationalism*, Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1987.
- Rausch, David A., *Zionism within Early American Fundamentalism, 1878-1918: A Convergence of Two Traditions*, New York: Edwin Mellon Press, 1979.
- Rodgers, Marion Elizabeth, ed., *The Impossible H.L. Mencken: A Collection of His Best Newspaper Stories*, New York: Anchor Books, 1991.
- Rosenblum, Irit, "Israel to lease Kinneret shore land to Evangelicals," *Ha'aretz*, October 10, 2005.
- Rudin, James, *The Baptizing of America: The Religious Right's Plan for the Rest of Us*, New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006.
- Sachar, Howard M., *A History of Israel*, 2nd ed., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.
- Scofield, C. I., ed., *The First Scofield Reference Bible*, repr. Westwood, NJ: Barbour, 1986.
- Simon, Merrill, ed., *Jerry Falwell and the Jews*, Middle Village, NY: Jonathan David Publishers, 1988.
- Skolfield, Ellis, *The False Prophet*, Fort Myers, FL: Fish House Publishing, 2001.
- Stackhouse, Reginald, *The End of the World? A New Look at an Old Belief*, New York: Paulist, 1997.
- Stone, J. R., *A Guide to the End of the World*, New York: Garland, 1993.
- Strozier, Charles B., *Apocalypse: On the Psychology of Fundamentalism in America*, Boston: Beacon, 1994.
- Tabor, James D., and Eugene V. Gallagher, *Why Waco?* Berkeley: University of California, 1995.

Thompson, Damian, *The End of Time: Faith and Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium*, Hanover: University Press of New England, 1996.

U.S. Department of State, 2001, *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom, Released by the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor*, Washington, DC, October 26, 2001.

van Impe, Jack, *America, Israel and World War III*, Troy, MI: Jack van Impe Ministries, 1984.

van Kampen, Robert, *The Rapture Question Answered Plain and Simple*, Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell/Baker, 1997.

Verbeke, Werner, Verhelst, Daniel, and Welkenhuysen, Andries, eds., *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, Leuven, the Netherlands: Leuven University Press, 1988.

Wagner, Donald E., *Anxious for Armageddon*, Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1995.

Waggoner, Paul, "The Historiography of the Scopes Trial: A critical re-evaluation," *Trinity Journal*, Vol. 5 (1984), pp. 155-174.

Weber, Timothy, *On the Road to Armageddon*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic/Baker Publishing Group, 2004.

Wilson, Scott, "Israel Agrees to Gaza-Egypt Reopening," *The Washington Post*, October 27, 2005.

Wuthnow, Robert, *The Struggle for America's Soul*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989.

Zunes, Stephen, "The Influence of the Christian Right on U.S. Middle East Policy," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, June 28, 2004.

ELECTRONIC MATERIAL

Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith press release, *ADL to Southern Baptist Convention: Stop Efforts to Convert Jews*, Sept. 21, 2005, http://www.adl.org/PresRele/ChJew_31/4798_31.htm, accessed 9/27/05.

"Anti-war Activists Call on Reform," *Forward*, October 21, 2005, <http://www.forward.com/articles/5164>, accessed on 10/25/05.

Berger, Matthew and Kampeas, Ron, "Rosen will leave void at AIPAC," *Jewish Review*, May, 2005, <http://www.jewishreview.org/Archives/Article.php?Article=2005-05-01-98>, accessed on 10/26/05.

Besser, James D., "Attack on Right Reveals Fault Lines," *The Jewish Week*, December 9, 2005, <http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/newscontent.php3?artid=11774>, accessed on 12/10/05.

Bridges for Peace website, www.bridgesforpeace.com.

Christians for Israel website, www.c4israel.org.

Christian Friends of Israeli Communities website, www.cfoic.com.

"Dollars and Sense," AIPAC website, October 25, 2004, <http://aipac.org/result.cfm?id=1602>, accessed on 10/26/05.

Duke University website, "Bombed Israeli Bus on Display at Duke Oct. 12-13," www.dukenews.duke.edu/2004/10/bus19_1004_print.htm, accessed on 11/01/05.

"Fortune Releases Annual Survey of Most Powerful Lobbying Organizations," *Time Warner Newsroom*, November 15, 1999, <http://www.timewarner.com/corp/newsroom/pr/0,20812,667546,00.html>, accessed on 10/25/05.

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research Inc., "Evangelicals in America," 2004, www.greenbergresearch.com.

International Christian Embassy Jerusalem website, www.icej.org.

International Fellowship of Christians and Jews press release, "Noted Rabbi Hits Mainline Protestants for Anti-Israel Policies," March 7, 2005, IFCJ website, www.ifcj.org/divestment, accessed 3/8/05.

International Fellowship of Christians and Jews website, www.ifcj.org.

John Hagee Ministries website, www.jhm.org.

Kampeas, Ron, "Evangelicals Back Israel at RNC," *The Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles*, September 3, 2004, <http://www.jewishjournal.com/home/preview.php?id=12775>, accessed on 10/30/05.

Mitchell, Chris, "Dividing the Land, Dishonoring God's Covenant," *Christian Broadcasting Network*, March 26, 2005, <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/news/050324a.asp>, accessed on 3/26/05.

National Jewish Population Survey 2000, http://www.ujc.org/content_display.html?ArticleID=83868, accessed 10/23/05.

Osborne, S. Aaron, "Christians Protest Anti-missionary Legislation," *Christianity Today*, April 29, 1997, <http://ctlibrary.com/1209>, accessed on 10/30/05.

Pomerance, Rachel, "Interfaith trip to Israel seeks to mend ties," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 7, 2005, <http://www.jewishaz.com/issues/story.mv?051007+interfaith>, accessed 12/27/05.

"Power 25: Top Lobbying Groups," *Fortune*, May 28, 2001, <http://www.fortune.com/fortune/washingtonpower25>, accessed on 10/25/05.

"Reduce U.S. Aid to Israel," Netanyahu official website, <http://www.netanyahu.org/redusecaidto.html>, accessed on 10/26/05.

Reuters, "American churches back away from divestment," website of Presbyterians Concerned for Jewish and Christian Relations, <http://www.pcjcr.org/reuters.htm>, accessed on 10/30/05.

Sinai, Ruth, "When Money Speaks Louder than The Word," *Haaretz*, www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=524064&contrassID=13, accessed 9/26/05.

State of Israel, Ministry of Immigrant Absorption website, http://www.moia.gov.il/english/index_en.asp, accessed on 10/30/05.

———, Central Bureau of Statistics, http://www.cbs.gov.il/yarhon/el_e.htm, accessed 10/23/05.

UAHC Press release, "NFTY Suspends Summer Trips to Israel," <http://uri.org/pr/2001/010603>, accessed 10/24/05.

United Nations General Assembly, "Report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and the Increase in Membership of the Security Council," New York, 2004, <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/417/02/PDF/N0441702.pdf?OpenElement>, accessed on 10/26/05.

Verter, Yossi, "Ariel Sharon's new faction is a one term party," *Haaretz*, November 21, 2005, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/647763.html>, accessed Nov. 22, 2005.

———, "Polls: Sharon beats Labor, secures 3rd term as PM," *Haaretz*, November 22, 2005, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/648262.html>, accessed Nov. 22, 2005.

Wheaton College, "Princeton Religion Research Report of 2002," www.wheaton.edu/isae/gallup-bar-graph.html

World Council of Churches news release, "WCC central committee encourages consideration of economic measure for peace in Israel/Palestine," WCC website, www2.wcc-coe.org/pressreleasesen.nsf/index/pr-cc-05-08.html, accessed on 2/23/05.

Yearwood, Pauline Dubkin, "Presbyterians Against Israel," *The Chicago Jewish News*, December 16, 2005, http://www.chicagojewishnews.com/archives_articles.jsp?id=191467, accessed 12/30/05.

Zogby International poll, <http://www.cnionline.org/learn/polls/aipac/CNI%20final%20report.doc>, September 13, 2004, accessed 10/25/05.