

Kairos Palestine: 10th Anniversary Conference

Developments within the evangelical movement in relation to Palestine during the last ten years

Introduction

Donald Trump has probably accomplished more for Israel in his short time in office than any other US President since Harry Truman unilaterally recognised the State of Israel in May 1948. President Truman did so, going against the advice of his State Department, US Mission to the United Nations and ambassadors in the Middle East.

President Trump seems to have continued that unilateral, idiosyncratic tradition but with gusto. In December 2017, for example, reversing decades of US foreign policy, President Trump announced the United States recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and ordered the relocation of the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. On 14 May 2018 - the 70th anniversary of Israel's founding - the US officially moved its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Also, in May 2018, President Trump announced that he was unilaterally withdrawing the US from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or Iran nuclear deal.

In August 2018, the Trump administration announced it was going to cut all funding to UNRWA, the UN agency that supports Palestinian refugees, alleging its business model and fiscal practices were of an "irredeemably flawed operation". Then in February 2019, the US Senate passed a bill allowing state governments to refuse to do business with companies that boycott Israel. A month later, in March 2019, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his side, President Trump declared that the US unilaterally recognised Israeli sovereignty over the Syrian Golan Heights.

In July 2019, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a resolution rejecting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. And finally, earlier this month (November 2019), Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo declared that the US government no longer considered Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories illegal under international law, preparing the ground for their inevitable annexation by Israel.

How did Donald Trump come to lead the most pro-Israel administration in the history of the United States? The answer is very simple. In the USA today, white evangelicals are twice as likely as Jewish Americans to believe God gave the land of Israel for the Jewish people (72% of US evangelicals compared with 40% of US Jews). And while American Jews typically vote Democrat, 81% of white evangelicals voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 election.

Increasingly compared with the Assyrian king Cyrus, President Trump is seen as God's anointed one.¹

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2019/08/21/i-am-chosen-one-trump-again-plays-messianic-claims-he-embraces-king-israel-title/>

“Monday, however, an even higher-profile figure linked Trump and Cyrus. During his visit to Washington, DC, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu heavily implied Trump was Cyrus’s spiritual heir. Thanking Trump for moving the American embassy to Jerusalem, Netanyahu said, “We remember the proclamation of the great King Cyrus the Great — Persian King. Twenty-five hundred years ago, he proclaimed that the Jewish exiles in Babylon can come back and rebuild our temple in Jerusalem...And we remember how a few weeks ago, President Donald J. Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. Mr. President, this will be remembered by our people throughout the ages.”²

Pastor Paula White, Trump’s longtime spiritual adviser and now White House official, said recently “To say no to President Trump would be saying no to God,”³

This is why, perhaps, in spite of President Trump’s strong pro-Israel policies, he can accuse 70% of American Jews of being disloyal to Israel for voting Democrat and get away with it. Quite simply he does not need their vote.⁴

“With an evangelical base behind him, Trump has no need to offer plausible arguments before he acts. He can move the US embassy to Jerusalem, or approve the annexation of the West Bank, or attack Iran.”⁵

Morgan Strong, in an article “How Christian Zionists got their man into the White House” observes,

“The Christian Zionists managed, through the positioning of Mike Pence and fellow believers in the White House, an incredible measure of influence over the most powerful nation on earth... Pence is not alone in his efforts to convince Trump to fulfill what the Christian Zionists regard as a biblical prophecy. Mike Huckabee, the former governor of Arkansas, his daughter Sara Huckabee Sanders, now the White House press secretary, and Sara Palin wield great influence in the Trump administration and are ardent Christian Zionists.”⁶

Christian Zionism, in its various forms, evangelistic, political and apocalyptic, is without doubt a theology held by the majority of white evangelicals in the USA.⁷

1. The Growth and Significance of the Evangelical Zionist Movement

² <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/3/5/16796892/trump-cyrus-christian-right-bible-cbn-evangelical-propaganda>

³ <https://www.facebook.com/cnnpolitics/posts/to-say-no-to-president-trump-would-be-saying-no-to-god-pastor-paula-white-trumps/3484440838264391/>

⁴ Tom Gjelten, ‘As U.S. Jews Cool To Israel, Evangelicals Flock There As Tourists’, 25 August 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/08/25/753720351/as-u-s-jews-cool-to-israel-evangelicals-flock-there-as-tourists?t=157452977483>

⁵ Jonathan Cook, “How Evangelical Christians risk setting the Middle East on fire”, 8 July 2019, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/how-evangelical-christians-risk-setting-middle-east-fire>

⁶ Morgan Strong, “How Christian Zionists got their man into the White House” 29 January 2019, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/big-story/how-christian-zionists-got-their-man-white-house>

⁷ Mimi Kirk, ‘Countering Christian Zionism in the Age of Trump’ 8 August 2019, <https://merip.org/2019/08/countering-christian-zionism-in-the-age-of-trump/>

A 2005 Pew Forum survey of [American Evangelicals and Israel](#) (conducted in 2003) found that compared to other Americans, white evangelical Protestants were...

- significantly more sympathetic to Israel than to the Palestinians — 55% sympathized more with Israel, only 6% with the Palestinians (versus 41% and 13%, respectively, of all those surveyed).
- significantly more likely to say that religious beliefs were the single biggest influence in leading them to sympathize more with Israel — 46% versus 26% of all those surveyed.
- significantly more likely to believe that God gave the land of Israel to the Jews — 72% versus 44% of all those surveyed.
- significantly more likely to believe that Israel fulfills the biblical prophecy about Jesus' second coming — 63% versus 36% of all those surveyed.

A later 2004 survey found that that “traditionalist” evangelicals — who are characterized by a high level of orthodox belief and a high level of church attendance, and who are the largest subgroup of evangelicals — are even more likely to agree that U.S. policy should tilt towards Israel: 64% agreed, while 18% disagreed, with 18% expressing no opinion.

Nearly a third of Americans, around 100 million people, lean towards evangelical Christianity and of these perhaps a third embrace the Christian Zionist perspective and deeply passionate in its support for Israel.⁸ As Jerry Falwell once boasted, “The Bible Belt is Israel’s safety net in the United States.”⁹ Ten years on, according to Harriet Sherwood, his son, Jerry Falwell Jr, President of Liberty University, Lynchburg,

“was instrumental in delivering 81% of white Christian evangelical voters for Trump in 2016. Ahead of next month’s midterm elections, that support appears to be holding up, although there has been some erosion among evangelical women. A survey published in early October by the Public Religion Research Institute found that 72% of white evangelical Protestants had a favourable opinion of the president.”¹⁰

Julian Borger observes,

“As Donald Trump finds himself ever more dependent on them for his political survival, the influence of Pence, Pompeo and the ultra-conservative white Evangelicals who stand behind them is likely to grow... While other white voters have flaked away in the first two years of his presidency, white evangelicals have become his last solid bastion. Some leading evangelicals see Trump as a latterday King Cyrus, the sixth-century BC Persian emperor who liberated the Jews from

⁸ Paul Rogers, ‘Trump, Pence, Jerusalem: the Christian Zionism connection The political use of a religious vision spells danger for Israel, America, and the world.’ 14 December 2017. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/trump-pence-jerusalem-christian-zionism-connection/>

⁹ *ibid.*,

¹⁰ Harriet Sherwood, 'Toxic Christianity': the evangelicals creating champions for Trump, 21 October 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/oct/21/evangelical-christians-trump-liberty-university-jerry-falwell>

Babylonian captivity..."¹¹

"Trump's choice of Pence as a running mate was a gesture of his commitment, and four of the six preachers at his inauguration were evangelicals, including White and Franklin Graham, the eldest son of the preacher Billy Graham, who defended Trump through his many sex scandals, pointing out: "We are all sinners." Having lost control of the House of Representatives in November, and under ever closer scrutiny for his campaign's links to the Kremlin, Trump's instinct has been to cleave ever closer to his most loyal supporters."¹²

In 2017, Life Way Research conducted a survey of [Evangelical Attitudes to Israel and the Peace Process](#).¹³

"Research found that 80% believe that "God's promise [of land] to Abraham and his descendants was for all time." By a 46% to 19% margin, the surveyed evangelicals disagreed with the notion that Palestinians have any such "historic right." Notably, LifeWay found that 80% of the surveyed evangelicals believe that the modern rebirth of Israel and the return of millions of Jews to that land are a fulfillment of Bible prophecy and show "we are getting closer to the return of Jesus Christ."¹⁴

The Life Way findings offer some hope, however, for Palestinians in observing a significant generational shift away from unconditional support for Israel among younger evangelicals.

"Only nine percent of older respondents considered the "rebirth" of Israel in 1948 as an injustice to Palestinians, while 62 percent disagreed and 28 percent said they weren't sure. Among younger evangelicals, nineteen percent said that Israel's creation was an injustice to Palestinians, 34 percent disagreed, and almost half weren't sure. Such a trend may hold promise for Palestinians and allies working to shift the Christian Zionist narrative and secure Palestinian human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and beyond."¹⁵

It is sober to realise that Zionism today is primarily a Christian political conviction, rather than a Jewish one, but infused with religious and apocalyptic fervour. It is a simple fact that Christian Zionists outnumber Jewish Zionists by at least ten to one. A fact that Israeli Prime Minister has readily acknowledged. In August 2012, at a gathering in Jerusalem, he said,

¹¹ Julian Borger, 'Brought to Jesus': the evangelical grip on the Trump administration' 11 January 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jan/11/trump-administration-evangelical-influence-support>

¹² Ibid.,

¹³ <http://lifewayresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Evangelical-Attitudes-Toward-Israel-Research-Study-Report.pdf>

¹⁴ Tom Gjelten 'As U.S. Jews Cool To Israel, Evangelicals Flock There As Tourists' 25 August 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/08/25/753720351/as-u-s-jews-cool-to-israel-evangelicals-flock-there-as-tourists?t=1574529777483>

¹⁵ Mimi Kirk, 'Countering Christian Zionism in the Age of Trump' 8 August 2019, <https://merip.org/2019/08/countering-christian-zionism-in-the-age-of-trump/>

"I don't believe that the Jewish State and modern Zionism would have been possible without Christian Zionism... We value our friends, and we never forget them, and we think that you have helped establish here a powerful memorial to our friendship and common ideals."¹⁶

2. Evangelical Zionism: A Powerful Global Movement

Pastor John Hagee is one of the leaders of the Christian Zionist movement. He is the Founder and Senior Pastor of Cornerstone Church, a 19,000-member evangelical church in San Antonio, Texas. His weekly programmes are broadcast on 160 TV stations, 50 radio stations and eight networks into an estimated 100 million homes in 200 countries. In 2006 he founded Christians United for Israel (CUFI) admitting,

"For 25 almost 26 years now, I have been pounding the evangelical community over television. The Bible is a very pro-Israel book. If a Christian admits 'I believe the Bible,' I can make him a pro-Israel supporter or they will have to denounce their faith. So, I have the Christians over a barrel, you might say."

In March 2007, Hagee spoke at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) Policy Conference. He began by saying:

"The sleeping giant of Christian Zionism has awakened. There are 50 million Christians standing up and applauding the State of Israel..."

As the Jerusalem Post pointed out, his speech did not lack clarity. He went on to warn:

"It is 1938. Iran is Germany, and Ahmadinejad is the new Hitler. We must stop Iran's nuclear threat and stand boldly with Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East... Think of our potential future together: 50 million evangelicals joining in common cause with 5 million Jewish people in America on behalf of Israel is a match made in heaven."¹⁷

By 2012, CUFI had gained one million members; two million by 2015; five million by 2018 and claims to have seven million today, making it the largest pro-Zionist organisation in the United States, equivalent in size to the entire Jewish population in America.

Other leading Christian Zionist organisations include the International Christian Embassy (ICEJ); Bridges for Peace; Christian Friends of Israel (CFI); Jerusalem Prayer Team and Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC). There are at least 200 Christian Zionist organisations known to have been founded since 1980.

This growth in Christian Zionism in recent years forms just one part of the wider increase in the conservative evangelical movement, the fastest-growing sector within

¹⁶ <https://praywithisrael.wordpress.com/2012/09/02/israel-heart-for-the-week-of-sept-2nd/>

¹⁷ Shelly Neese, 'Let our unconditional alliance be mutual', 17 July 2007. <https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/Let-our-unconditional-alliance-be-mutual>

Christian churches. Donald Wagner estimates that it now numbers 100-130 million which is at least a third of the entire population of the United States (327 million).¹⁸

The Anglican Communion provides an example of the growth of evangelicalism in the Global South. GAFCON or Global Anglican Futures Conference now dominates the Anglican Communion. GAFCON provinces and branches represent 50 million of the 70 million active Anglicans of the Communion. The first (2008) and third (2018) Global Anglican Future Conferences were held in Jerusalem. In 2008, over 1,100 delegates from the laity, bishops and other clergy attended. At the second conference, in Nairobi in 2013, this number grew to over 1,500 and in 2018 almost 2000 delegates attended. 1,950 representatives from 50 countries, including 316 bishops, 669 other clergy and 965 laity. While critical of the decision to hold the first conference in Jerusalem in 2008, in 2018, the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, Suheil Dawani, gave a welcome message to GAFCON, emphasizing the need for unity and reconciliation.¹⁹

However, both GAFCON conferences in Jerusalem were facilitated by and partnered with the Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC) which is part of CMJ, the Churches Ministry Among Jewish People. At the first conference which I attended in 2008, ITAC leaders spoke at events, led the off-site tours and offered a biblical study tour of Israel to all participants.

It is difficult to estimate the number of Christian Zionists in Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia combined but conservatively, given estimates of 100 million in the USA alone, the number globally must surely be more than double that.

3. The Evangelical Zionist Political Agenda

Evangelical Zionists have been active in implementing six political convictions that arise from their theology:

3.1 Lobbying for and Promoting Israel

The belief that the Jews remain God's chosen people leads Christian Zionists to seek to bless Israel in material ways. However, this also invariably results in the uncritical endorsement of, and justification for, Israel's racist and apartheid policies, in the media, among politicians and through solidarity tours to Israel.

In July 2017, Vice President Pence delivered the keynote address at the annual summit of Christians United for Israel (CUFI) in Washington, Pence was the first sitting vice president or president to speak to the Christian Zionist organization in its 13-year history. His speech marked a fundamental change in the language which the White House has historically employed to articulate the United States' relationship with Israel. Dan Hummel of the Washington Post observes the significance of this speech,

¹⁸ Paul Rogers, 'Christian Zionists and neocons: a heavenly marriage', 3 February 2005. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/article_2329jsp/

¹⁹ <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2018/06/archbishop-in-jerusalem-urges-anglicans-to-work-for-reconciliation.aspx>

“Although Christian Zionism has a long history in American politics, it has never captured the bully pulpit of the White House. Past administrations often used general biblical language in reference to Israel, but never has the evangelical theology of Christian Zionism been so close to the policymaking apparatus of the executive branch. By identifying with Christian Zionism while in office, Pence risks the Trump administration’s ongoing search for an “ultimate deal” to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and erodes the U.S. claim that it can be an “honest broker” in the Middle East.”²⁰

While other congressmen and senators have spoken at Christian Zionist events and talked about the Christian roots of their support for Israel,

“never has the ideology been articulated by the White House. This is a crucial distinction, with the bulk of foreign policymaking power residing in the executive branch. Rarely has the executive branch spoken in overt religious terms about a region in which it wishes to be seen as impartial. But Pence will, if his long public record of Christian Zionism holds true.”²¹

In July this year, Vice-President Pence was once again a guest speaker at the CUFI annual summit in Washington along with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. This time however, Pence encountered some opposition from members of Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA).

“They were confronted by over 100 Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith leaders and community members protesting CUFI’s support for Israeli occupation. Several protesters disrupted Hagee and Pence’s speeches shouting and holding banners. Tarek Abuata, director of Friends of Sabeel North American (FOSNA), stood shouting, “Zionism is racism.” Security handcuffed Abuata and carried him out of the convention center. He continued to shout, “People of God, wake up! Protect the Palestinian people.”

Christian and Jewish faith leaders then interrupted the U.S. vice president, chanting, “Israel kills children. Jews and Christians say no to Zionism.” Security dragged them outside. Rochelle Watson, FOSNA national organizer who disrupted Pence, stated, “We have reached a point where remaining faithful requires us to take bold action by speaking truth to power.”

This Counter CUFI action was inspired by a coalition including Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA), Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), American Muslims for Palestine (AMP), and US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR). Jonathan Brenneman, a Palestinian-American Christian with the Mennonite Church shared, “I’m here in sacred witness for Mohammed, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy, whose leg was amputated after he was shot by Israeli soldiers.” Another protester with Queers Against Israeli Apartheid in New York said, “I’m here today because I have been struggling against the messaging that ‘all

²⁰ Dan Hummel, ‘What you need to know about Mike Pence’s speech to Christians United for Israel, 17 July 2017. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2017/07/17/what-you-need-to-know-about-mike-pences-speech-to-christians-united-for-israel/>

²¹ Ibid.,

Jews support Israel.’ We just need to resist in a holistic way against the forces of empire that are using religion to do this work.” Abuata said of the action: “We are here to bear sacred witness and hold CUFI accountable to a theology of love.”²²

Hummel asks,

“Okay, so what does all this mean for U.S. policy toward Israel? These themes, which CUFI readily identifies with, offer Pence guidance in how he understands the Middle East. The strategic consequences of Christian Zionist language coming from the White House are hard to quantify, but they will undoubtedly call into question historic U.S. claims of neutrality in negotiations with Israel and the Palestinian Authority. This is no small challenge for an administration that is seeking a grand bargain to solve decades-long disputes.”²³

He concludes,

“Moreover, defining Israel and the Middle East in explicitly religious terms presents a holy war framework of clashing religions in a region that is already racked by sectarian violence and extremism. The identification of the United States as a sectarian actor (as opposed to a neutral arbiter, however transparent at times) could strain relations with Muslim-majority nations or drain credibility with key allies in the region and beyond — especially given the already [flagging confidence in U.S. leadership](#) since January. Ultimately, Pence’s appearance before CUFI signals a new era of Christian Zionist influence in the White House with the potential to leave a lasting mark on U.S. policy toward Israel.”²⁴

At the CUFI event in July, Vice president Pence insisted,

“My passion for Israel springs from my Christian faith ... It’s really the greatest privilege of my life to serve as vice president to a president who cares so deeply for our most cherished ally.”²⁵

It goes without saying that if Donald Trump is removed from office as a result of the impeachment proceedings, Mike Pence will succeed him as President and make fellow Evangelical Zionists even more ecstatic than they already are. Mimi Kirk notes,

“Not only do other lobby groups, such as CUFI, wield as much or more influence as AIPAC (financial and otherwise), but AIPAC, as MJ Rosenberg wrote in *The Nation*, “is not synonymous with Jews.” Of its 100,000 members, he explained, “most are Jewish but...many are evangelical (and other) Christians.”²⁶

²² <https://religionnews.com/2019/07/10/faith-leaders-disrupt-u-s-vice-president-mike-pence-during-cufi-summit/>

²³ Hummel, op.cit.,

²⁴ Ibid.,

²⁵ <https://www.cufi.org/mike-pence-to-cufi-i-support-israel-because-i-am-a-christian/>

²⁶ Mimi Kirk, ‘Countering Christian Zionism in the Age of Trump’ 8 August 2019, <https://merip.org/2019/08/countering-christian-zionism-in-the-age-of-trump/>

Support for Israel among evangelicals is growing as a result of increased numbers participating in biblio-political tours of the Holy Land. Drawing on research by Daniel Hummel, Tom Gjelten notes,

"Not only do [US evangelicals] they outpace U.S. Jews in their support for policies that favor the Israeli government, but U.S. evangelicals have also become the fastest-growing sector of the Israeli tourism market. The developments may even be related... Tourist travel to Israel is growing about 10% a year, according to Eyal Carlin, the incoming North America director of the Israeli Tourism Ministry, with evangelical Christians a growing share of U.S. visitors. "More and more companies are entering each year with faith-based or evangelical packages," Carlin says. "The evangelical world is going back to its roots." ...

Evangelical leaders of the Christian Zionism movement, from Jerry Falwell Sr. to John Hagee, have attributed their fervent support for the state of Israel to their own Holy Land travel, according to Daniel Hummel, author of *Covenant Brothers: Evangelicals, Jews, and U.S.-Israeli Relations*. "They say visiting Israel was a key part of their political awakening," Hummel says, "and this goes down to the rank-and-file people in their organizations."

"Most of these tours are very highly controlled and curated to convey a particular sense of Israel," Hummel says, "and that's to emphasize the Jewishness of the land, that this is the homeland of the Jewish people, that the history that matters is the history that's in the Bible."

"There is definitely an understanding on the Israeli government side that tourism is a key way to connect with American evangelicals," says Hummel, "and a lot of the pro-Israel groups in the United States see tourism as a key way to shape evangelical attitudes toward Israel."²⁷

Jonathan Cook, the Nazareth based journalist, reports on a recent visit of TB Joshua, Africa's most popular televangelist preacher, who addressed thousands of international pilgrims, under the heading "How Evangelical Christians risk setting the Middle East on fire".

"The Nigerian pastor, who has millions of followers worldwide and calls himself a prophet, aroused local hostility not only because his brand of Christianity strays far from the more traditional doctrines of Middle Eastern churches. He also represents a trend of foreign Christians, driven by apocalyptic readings of the Bible, interfering ever more explicitly in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories – and in ways that directly aid the policies of Israel's far-right government... Political factions in Nazareth [noted](#) Joshua's "ties to far-right and settlers circles in Israel" ... During his visits to Israel, Joshua has also [enjoyed access](#) to key government figures such as Yariv Levin, a close ally of Netanyahu's, who has been in charge of two portfolios viewed as critical by the evangelical community: tourism, and the absorption into Israel of new Jewish immigrants

²⁷ Tom Gjelten, 'As U.S. Jews Cool To Israel, Evangelicals Flock There As Tourists', 25 August 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/08/25/753720351/as-u-s-jews-cool-to-israel-evangelicals-flock-there-as-tourists?t=157452977483>

from the US and Europe... Most of these evangelicals, such as T B Joshua, are largely indifferent or hostile to the fate of the Palestinians – even Palestinian Christians, such as those in Nazareth.”²⁸

Perhaps this probably why, as Jonathan Cook observes,

“A recent editorial in Haaretz noted that Netanyahu and his officials were now “endeavoring to make evangelicals – who support Israel’s hawkish rejectionism regarding the Palestinians – the sole [foundation](#) of American support for Israel.” The truth is that these Christian Zionists view the region through a single, exclusive prism: whatever aids the imminent arrival of the Messiah is welcomed. The only issue is how soon God’s “chosen people” will congregate in the Promised Land. If the Palestinians stand in Israel’s way, these tens of millions of foreign Christians will be quite happy to see the native population driven out once again – as they were in 1948 and 1967.”²⁹

3.2 Facilitating the Emigration of Jews to Israel

Believing the Jews are God's chosen people, their return or restoration to Israel is actively encouraged, funded and facilitated by Christian agencies working in partnership with the Jewish Agency.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has been at the forefront of facilitating Jews from the former Soviet Union, Ukraine, Ethiopia and other countries to make Aliyah.

“The Jewish Agency has asked the Christian Embassy to assist with funding for the huge influx of French Jews expected to come home to Israel this year. Nearly half of the 550,000 Jews in France escaped there from North Africa several generations ago and many still live in poorer neighbourhoods alongside Muslim immigrants. They are the most vulnerable Jews at present, and the least able to afford the expenses of moving to another country. The ICEJ will be funding aliyah seminars, ground transport, flight tickets, absorption costs and other expenses involved in the immigration process.”³⁰

3.3 Advocating for Greater Israel and Annexation of the Settlements

Christian Zionists believe that Eretz Israel, from the Nile to the Euphrates, belongs exclusively to the Jewish people, therefore the land must be annexed, Palestinians driven from their homes and the illegal Jewish settlements expanded and consolidated.

Mustafa Abu Sneineh, writing in Middle East Eye notes,

²⁸ Jonathan Cook, “How Evangelical Christians risk setting the Middle East on fire”, 8 July 2019, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/how-evangelical-christians-risk-setting-middle-east-fire>

²⁹ Ibid.,

³⁰ <https://int.icej.org/french-aliyah>

“The Trump administration's bombshell announcement that it no longer considers Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank illegal under international law has sent shockwaves through the region... Some 20,000 illegal Israeli settlers also live on the plateau. Trump's decree was a gift to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ahead of the April elections, and was signed in his presence alongside Friedman, Greenblatt and Kushner. Returning the favour, Netanyahu announced that Israel was renaming an illegal settlement in the Golan as Trump Hill. "All Israelis were deeply moved when President Trump made his historic decision," Netanyahu said in a video statement.”³¹

Jack Jenkins report,

“Mike Evans, founder of The Jerusalem Prayer Team and a member of Trump's informal group of evangelical Christian advisers, praised the move. In an interview with Religion News Service, Evans said Pompeo called him shortly after the press conference while en route to meet President Trump. "I told (Pompeo) it was a tremendous answer to prayer from evangelicals," he said, asking the secretary of state to express gratitude to the president... He told RNS it reminded him of a passage from the Biblical book of Genesis in which God refers to Israel by saying, "I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse those who curse you." "In our opinion, it's recognizing the Bible as legal," said Evans, who also plans to expand his Friends of Zion Museum in Jerusalem to include an exhibition dedicated to Trump. "They're saying it's true.”³²

Evangelical Zionists have also been at the forefront of funding and lobbying for the illegal Jewish colonies in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC) was founded in 1995 in response to the Oslo Peace Accords.

“Christians around the world were deeply troubled by Israel’s major territorial concessions and felt compelled to stand with the people of Judea and Samaria. CFOIC Heartland provides a much needed vehicle for Christians to become better informed about the Jewish communities in the heartland of Biblical Israel, to visit these areas and to provide practical support for vital community needs.

CFOIC Heartland enables Christians to connect with the Jewish communities (settlements) in the heart of Biblical Israel. Judea and Samaria (the “West Bank”) are not occupied territory. These communities are the birthplace of the Jewish people... Through CFOIC Heartland, thousands of Christians from around the world have become valuable friends and supporters of the pioneers of Biblical Israel. Churches, ministries and individuals have visited the communities and biblical sites of Judea and Samaria and have connected directly with the people living there. They have provided financial support for community projects and

³¹ Mustafa Abu Sneh, ‘Trump's gifts to Israel: Jerusalem, the Golan and now the settlements’ 19 November 2019, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/trumps-gifts-israels-netanyahu-jerusalem-west-bank-settlements-and-golan-heights>

³² Jack Jenkins, “Trump advisor calls Pompeo’s West Bank decision an answered prayer” Religion News Service, 19 November 2019, <https://www.nronline.org/news/world/trump-advisor-calls-pompeos-west-bank-decision-answered-prayer>

have made a real difference for those living in the communities of Judea and Samaria.”³³

Jonathan Cook reports how Evangelicals are developing ever-closer ties with Israeli Jewish religious extremists, especially in the settlements.

“Recent initiatives have included online and face-to-face Bible studies programmes run by Orthodox Jews, often settlers, targeted specifically at evangelical Christians. The tutorials are designed to bolster the settlers’ narrative, as well as demonising Muslims and, by extension, Palestinians.

The most popular course offered by Root Source, one such venture, is titled “Islam – Insights and Deceptions”. It uses the Old and New Testaments to make the case that Islam “is extremely dangerous”. A few months ago, Haaretz, Israel’s leading liberal newspaper, published an investigation into the growing flow of evangelical volunteers and money into the West Bank’s illegal settlements – the chief obstacle to achieving a two-state solution.

One US organisation alone, Hayovel, has brought more than 1,700 Christian volunteers over the past 10 years to help in a settlement close to Nablus, in the heart of the West Bank. An increasing number of similar initiatives have been aided by new rules introduced last year by the Israeli government to pay Christian Zionist groups such as Hayovel to advocate abroad for the settlements.

It is much harder to know exactly how much evangelical money is pouring into the settlements, because of a lack of transparency regarding US donations made by churches and charities. But the Haaretz investigation estimates that over the past decade, as much as \$65m has flowed in. Ariel, a settler town sitting in the very centre of the West Bank, received \$8 million for a sports centre from John Hagee Ministries a decade ago.”³⁴

3.4 Recognizing Jerusalem as the Exclusive Capital of Israel

Jerusalem is regarded by Christian Zionists as the eternal and exclusive capital of the Jews, and cannot be shared with the Palestinians. Christian Zionists have therefore lobbied the US Administration to relocate its embassy to Jerusalem for decades to ensure Jerusalem is recognised as the exclusive capital of Israel denying any possibility of two state solution. Julian Borger observes,

“Trump’s order to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv– over the objections of his foreign policy and national security team – is a striking example of evangelical clout... the orchestration of the embassy opening ceremony last May, reflected the audience Trump was trying hardest to appease. The two pastors given the prime speaking slots were both ardent Christian Zionists: Robert Jeffress, a

³³ <https://www.cfoic.com/background-information/>

³⁴ Jonathan Cook, “How Evangelical Christians risk setting the Middle East on fire”, 8 July 2019, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/how-evangelical-christians-risk-setting-middle-east-fire>

Dallas pastor on record as saying Jews, like Muslims and Mormons, are bound for hell; and John Hagee, a televangelist and founder of Christians United for Israel (Cufi), who once said that Hitler and the Holocaust were part of God's plan to get Jews back to Israel, to pave the way for the Rapture. For many evangelicals, the move cemented Trump's status as the new Cyrus, who oversaw the Jews return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple."³⁵

Robert Jeffress explains the religious justification for moving the US Embassy to Jerusalem.

"Jerusalem has been the object of affection of both Jews and Christians down through history and the touchstone of prophecy. But most importantly, God gave Jerusalem - and the rest of the Holy Land - to the Jewish people,"³⁶

Mimi Kirk notes,

"...the Trump administration very purposefully chose Jeffress and Hagee for the occasion. The pastors—and their white evangelical followers, who comprise a significant portion of Trump's base with 81 percent having voted for him in 2016—had lobbied the president hard to move the embassy. In an interview with the far-right site Breitbart, Hagee related that he had told Trump: "The moment that you [move the embassy], I believe that you will step into political immortality."³⁷

An editorial in Haaretz entitled "Israel's Unholy and Transient Alliance With U.S. Evangelicals", published in May 2018 warned that the alliance was short-sighted,

U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to relocate the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem was intended first and foremost to reward evangelical Christians for their enthusiastic support for him during and after his election campaign. The participation in Monday's dedication ceremony of two extremist, controversial evangelical leaders, both of whom have made disparaging comments about Jews in the past, highlights this unholy alliance...

U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman recently joined his Israeli counterpart, Ron Dermer, in endeavoring to make evangelicals — who support Israel's hawkish rejectionism regarding the Palestinians — the sole foundation of American support for Israel. This partnership further erodes Israel's standing in its traditional power centers — above all U.S. Jews, who view evangelicals as a concrete threat to their values.

This dangerous wager poses a double hazard: On one hand, Israel is distancing itself from supporters it may need as soon as November, in the event the

³⁵ Julian Borger, 'Brought to Jesus': the evangelical grip on the Trump administration' 11 January 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jan/11/trump-administration-evangelical-influence-support>

³⁶ Barry Kimbrough, Is Trump's Jerusalem Declaration a Prophecy Fulfilled? 14 December 2017, <http://religiousliberty.tv/trumps-jerusalem-declaration-prophecy-fulfilled.html>

³⁷ Mimi Kirk, 'Countering Christian Zionism in the Age of Trump' 8 August 2019, <https://merip.org/2019/08/countering-christian-zionism-in-the-age-of-trump/>

Democrats win control of the U.S. Senate or the House of Representatives. On the other hand, nothing lasts forever: Polls show that younger evangelicals oppose blind support for Israel. A responsible Israeli government would change its policy, extend a hand to forces it has neglected and weaning itself of exclusive dependence on messianic Christians.³⁸

Christian Zionists are now focussing on pressuring other nations to move their embassies to Jerusalem.

3.5 Supporting the Rebuilding of the Jewish Temple

Christian Zionists offer varying degrees of support for organisations such as the Temple Mount Faithful who are committed to destroying the Dome of the Rock and rebuilding the Jewish Temple on the Haram Al-Sharif (Noble sanctuary of Al-Aqsa). In February 2014, the Independent newspaper published a headline, “Mounting tension: Israel’s Knesset debates proposal to enforce its sovereignty at Al-Aqsa Mosque – a move seen as ‘an extreme provocation to Muslims worldwide’”

“The Arab-Israeli conflict took on an increasingly religious hue when the Jordanian parliament voted unanimously to expel Israel’s ambassador in Amman after Israeli legislators held an unprecedented debate on Tuesday evening over a proposal to enforce Israeli sovereignty at one of Jerusalem’s holiest sites, currently administered by Jordan, and to allow Jewish prayer there”³⁹

Gershon Salomon is a controversial figurehead of the movement and founder of *The Temple Faithful*. Speaking as a guest of the ICEJ, at the Christian Zionist Congress in 1998, Salomon insisted:

‘The mission of the present generation is to liberate the Temple Mount and to remove – I repeat, to remove – the defiling abomination there ... the Jewish people will not be stopped at the gates leading to the Temple Mount ... We will fly our Israeli flag over the Temple Mount, which will be minus its Dome of the Rock and its mosques and will have only our Israeli flag and our Temple. This is what our generation must accomplish.’

In a subsequent interview with Sam Kiley in the London Times newspaper, Salomon insisted that the Islamic shrine must be destroyed:

‘The Israeli Government must do it. We must have a war. There will be many nations against us but God will be our general. I am sure this is a test, that God is

³⁸ Haaretz editorial, “Israel’s Unholy and Transient Alliance With U.S. Evangelicals” 18 May 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/editorial/israel-s-unholy-and-transient-alliance-with-u-s-evangelicals-1.6097404>

³⁹ Ben Lynfield, *Independent* Newspaper, 27th February 2014, and <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/violence-will-continue-for-as-long-as-access-to-al-aqsa-mosque-is-curtailed-9844899.html>

expecting us to move the Dome with no fear from other nations. The Messiah will not come by himself; we should bring Him by fighting.’⁴⁰

David Reagan is the founder and director of the Texas-based Lamb and Lion Ministries, whose weekly TV show can be accessed by over 110 million Americans. Barry Kimbrough cites Reagan as saying:

"Evangelical Christians in America generally agree that most likely there will be a war against Israel which the scriptures call the 'war of annihilation' in which all the Muslim nations which have a common border with Israel, who are named in Psalm 83, will attack Israel and Israel will defeat them. Then the Arab world will go into a panic and cry out for Russia to come to their aid. And the Russians will come down with a specified group of Muslim nations, countries like Persia (Iran) and Turkey and they will be destroyed on the mountains of Israel."⁴¹

Many Christians see the move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem in recognition of exclusive Israeli sovereignty as a step toward a new temple being built there. Kade Hawkins is the CEO and founder of *Prophecy News Watch*, which specializes in biblical prophecy associated with current global events and changing political platforms. In an article, 'Trump and The Third Temple', Hawkins speculates,

"If President Trump really has a similar calling to King Cyrus, could it be that God would use this real estate developer turned President to facilitate the greatest property development of modern time – the rebuilding of the Temple?" The President is compared to ancient King Cyrus because the Persian ruler helped re-establish the Jews in their homeland after they were captive 70 years in Babylon."⁴²

Pastor John Hagee and Christians United for Israel appeared so upset by the continued presence of the Islamic Dome of the Rock dominating the view of Jerusalem, they simply airbrushed it out of their website logo. The iconic Western Wall is visible as is the garden on top but there is no Dome of the Rock, no Al Aqsa Mosque, they have vanished.⁴³

3.6 Opposing the Peace Process, Human Rights and the United Nations

Christian Zionists invariably have a pessimistic view of the future. Many are convinced that there will be an apocalyptic war of Armageddon in the imminent future. They are deeply sceptical of a lasting peace between Jews and Arabs, oppose the peace process and are highly critical of the UN.

"The tightening of the evangelical grip on the administration has also been reflected in a growing hostility to the UN, often portrayed as a sinister and godless organisation. Since the US ambassador, Nikki Haley, announced her

⁴⁰ Sam Kiley, 'The righteous will survive and the rest will perish' The Times , 13 December 1999, p.39.

⁴¹ Barry Kimbrough, Is Trump's Jerusalem Declaration a Prophecy Fulfilled? 14 December 2017,

<http://religiousliberty.tv/trumps-jerusalem-declaration-prophecy-fulfilled.html>

⁴² https://www.prophecynewswatch.com/article.cfm?recent_news_id=1015#VQz5cQrsmLae7rAs.99 See also

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-trump-is-playing-with-fire-at-the-al-aqsa-mosque-1.7573662>

⁴³ Christians United for Israel <http://www.cufi.org>

departure in October and Pompeo took more direct control, the US mission has become increasingly combative... the United States locked into a holy war against the forces of evil who they see as embodied by Iran".⁴⁴

Indeed, to advocate an Israeli compromise of "land for peace" with the Palestinians is seen as a rejection of God's promises to Israel and therefore to support her enemies. Within the Christian Zionist worldview, Palestinians are regarded as alien residents in Israel. Many Christian Zionists are reluctant even to acknowledge Palestinians exist as a distinct people, claiming that they emigrated to Israel from surrounding Arab nations for economic reasons after Israel had become prosperous. Mustafa Abu Sneineh observes how in June 2019, Jared Kushner, Donald Trump's son-in-law said that

"Palestinians are not yet capable of governing themselves, though conceded: "I do think they should have self-determination. "When his Bahrain economic summit fell flat as Palestinians boycotted it over the United States' bias towards Israel, Kushner described Palestinian Authority officials as "hysterical and stupid".⁴⁵

A fear and deep-seated hatred of Islam also pervades their apocalyptic theology. In May 2018, as Trump was pulling the US out of the Iran deal, Heather Timmons, writing for Quartz, observed that "Trump's foreign policy looks a lot like Rapture Christians' plan to welcome the apocalypse". Referring to the weekly Bible studies taking place in the White House led by Capitol Ministries, she writes,

"Capitol Ministries supporters include ten members of Trump's cabinet, including in addition to Pompeo, labor secretary Alex Acosta and housing secretary Ben Carson... On May 8, Capitol Ministries put out its latest study, "The Bible on When War Is Justifiable," rebutting pacifism. If Jesus calls us to be "peacemakers," it asks, "then how could a Christian Cabinet Member or Congressman support the idea of going to war?" The answer, Drollinger, explains, is simple: Saint Peter instructs men to submit "to every human institution" and the Book of Revelations discusses the "righteousness" of a God who "judges and wages war."⁴⁶

In an interview with Bill Moyers recorded in 2007, John Hagee insisted,

"We want you to recognize that Iran is a clear and present danger to the United States of America and Israel. And... that it's time for our country to consider a military preemptive strike against Iran if they will not yield to diplomacy."⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Julian Borger, 'Brought to Jesus': the evangelical grip on the Trump administration' 11 January 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jan/11/trump-administration-evangelical-influence-support>

⁴⁵ Mustafa Abu Sneineh, 'Trump's gifts to Israel: Jerusalem, the Golan and now the settlements' 19 November 2019, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/trumps-gifts-israels-netanyahu-jerusalem-west-bank-settlements-and-golan-heights>

⁴⁶ Heather Timmons, "Trump's foreign policy looks a lot like Rapture Christians", 15 May 2018, <https://qz.com/1270516/jerusalem-embassy-trumps-foreign-policy-looks-like-rapture-christians-plan-to-trigger-apocalypse/>

⁴⁷ Bill Moyers Journal

http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/blog/2007/10/an_evangelical_christian_for_p_1.html

In July this year (2109) the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu “spoke via satellite with Pastor John Hagee at the CUFI (Christians United for Israel) conference in Washington DC” about their mutual concerns regarding the Iranian nuclear threat. Netanyahu said,

“So it’s so important that President Trump decided boldly to leave this bad deal, and he decided to restore sanctions. And Israel is deeply grateful for that, because this is vital for Israel’s security, for the security of the region, for the security of the United States, for the security of the world. Now Iran is trying to lash out to reduce the pressure. They attack tankers, they down American drones, they’re firing missiles at their neighbors. It’s important to respond to these actions not by reducing the pressure, but by increasing the pressure. We should stand up to Iran’s aggression now. And Europe should back the sanctions instituted by President Trump. We certainly did.”⁴⁸

In the view of evangelical Zionists, the Bible is God’s Word and his unconditional promises made to the Jewish people supersede international law. Morgan Strong concludes,

“Trump will do all to encourage the blind loyalty of this inherited flock. The Republican Party leans heavily on the Christian Zionists for both cash, and votes. They have a profound effect on the direction of the party, even if the party now seems to be more Theocratic than political. The Christian Zionists are most likely to vote; they number over twenty million, and are generous contributors. They are the base of this new Republican theocracy. They do not want peace with the Palestinians. The Palestinians have no place in Biblical Israel. The Christian Zionists want them gone to purify the nascent Kingdom of Israel and allow their eternity of bliss in paradise.”⁴⁹

These are six distinctive elements that comprise the political agenda of evangelical Zionism: Lobbying political leaders, especially the US Congress and Senate on behalf of Israel; facilitating Jews to make Aliyah to Israel; advocating for greater Israel and expanding the settlements; recognising Jerusalem as the exclusive capital of Israel; Supporting the Temple Movement and rebuilding the Jewish Temple; and opposing the peace process, human rights and the United Nations.

4. Suggested Priorities for Advocacy

4.1 Issue a Kairos Declaration Refuting Christian Zionism

In 2006, I helped draft what became known as the Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism⁵⁰ which was signed by four of the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem: His Beatitude Patriarch Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch, Jerusalem; Archbishop Swerios

⁴⁸ <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2019/Pages/PM-Netanyahu-speaks-with-Pastor-John-Hagee-at-the-CUFI-Conference-in-Washington-8-July-2019.aspx>

⁴⁹ Morgan Strong, “How Christian Zionists got their man into the White House” 29 January 2019, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/big-story/how-christian-zionists-got-their-man-white-house>

⁵⁰ <https://stephensizer.com/2006/08/jerusalem-declaration-on-christian-zionism/>

Malki Mourad, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem; Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal, Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East; and Bishop Munib Younan, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. In it they insisted:

"We categorically reject Christian Zionist doctrines as a false teaching that corrupts the biblical message of love, justice and reconciliation.

We further reject the contemporary alliance of Christian Zionist leaders and organisations with elements in the governments of Israel and the United States that are presently imposing their unilateral pre-emptive borders and domination over Palestine. This inevitably leads to unending cycles of violence that undermine the security of all peoples of the Middle East and the rest of world.

We reject the teachings of Christian Zionism that facilitate and support these policies as they advance racial exclusivity and perpetual war rather than the gospel of universal love, redemption and reconciliation taught by Jesus Christ. Rather than condemn the world to the doom of Armageddon we call upon everyone to liberate themselves from ideologies of militarism and occupation. Instead, let them pursue the healing of the nations!

We call upon Christians in Churches on every continent to pray for the Palestinian and Israeli people, both of whom are suffering as victims of occupation and militarism. These discriminative actions are turning Palestine into impoverished ghettos surrounded by exclusive Israeli settlements. The establishment of the illegal settlements and the construction of the Separation Wall on confiscated Palestinian land undermines the viability of a Palestinian state and peace and security in the entire region."

The patriarchs concluded, "God demands that justice be done. No enduring peace, security or reconciliation is possible without the foundation of justice. The demands of justice will not disappear. The struggle for justice must be pursued diligently and persistently but non-violently." The prophet Micah asks, "What does the Lord require of you, to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8).

Evangelicals need to be exposed to the reality of the Occupation and colonisation of Palestine. Plain speaking is needed. We should not shirk from using plain language, language used by the Israeli government such as the "Judaization of Galilee"⁵¹ or the term "apartheid"⁵² to describe its racist policies. The Hebrew name for the Separation Wall is *Hafrada* which simple means 'separation', synonymous with the Dutch Afrikaans word 'apartheid'⁵³

Again, I try and resist using the word 'occupation' because it suggests a temporary state of affairs. What we have in reality is the inexorable creeping colonisation of Palestine.

⁵¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaization_of_the_Galilee

⁵² <https://waronwant.org/israeli-apartheid-factsheet>

⁵³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_and_the_apartheid_analogy and <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/apartheid>

We must challenge church leaders, especially evangelical leaders to recognise that remaining silent is to be complicit.

4.2 Sponsor theological resources to engage Evangelicals

We must challenge the misuse of the Bible by Christian Zionists. I recommend the resources found at www.christianzionism.org and books by evangelical theologians such as Gary Burge, Colin Chapman, Don Wagner as well as (naturally) my own accessed from: [Christian Zionism: Roadmap to Armageddon](#) and [Zion's Christian Soldiers](#). (both also available in Arabic)⁵⁴ There is also a list of shorter articles [here](#): The most frequently viewed article is a summary of my book *Zion's Christian Soldiers*, called "What is the Relationship between Israel and the Church? Seven Biblical Answers."⁵⁵

4.3 Address attempts to criminalise BDS and redefine antisemitism

I believe we must be pro-active and challenge attempts to criminalise BDS and other forms of non-violent resistance to the occupation of Palestine. Similarly, we must resist attempts to pressure governments, universities, trade unions and churches to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism.⁵⁶

While we must unequivocally oppose antisemitism, islamophobia and all forms of racism, it is essential we engage with the deeply flawed IHRA definition of antisemitism. Leading lawyers have described the new IHRA definition as having a "chilling effect" on free speech. Hugh Tomlinson QC has stressed that the definition is not legally binding and public bodies in the UK at least are under no obligation to adopt it. Indeed, those that do so must take care in applying it or risk, "unlawfully restricting legitimate expressions of political opinion in violation of statutory duties to ensure freedom of expression and assembly..."

"Properly understood in its own terms the IHRA Definition does not mean that activities such as describing Israel as a state enacting a policy of apartheid, as practising settler colonialism or calling for policies of boycott divestment or sanctions against Israel can properly be characterized as antisemitic. A public authority which sought to apply the IHRA Definition to prohibit or sanction such activities would be acting unlawfully."⁵⁷

Tomlinson insists that the new definition could "not be used to judge criticism of Israel to be antisemitic, unless the criticism actually expresses hatred towards Jews." Antony Lerman goes further, arguing that perversely, the new definition actually provokes antisemitism.

⁵⁴ www.stephensizer.com/books

⁵⁵ Stephen Sizer 'Seven Biblical Answers' <https://stephensizer.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/7-Biblical-Answers-Israel-and-the-Church-2019.pdf>

⁵⁶ Stephen Sizer, "The New Antisemitism" <https://www.stephensizer.com/2018/05/the-new-antisemitism/>

⁵⁷ Palestine Solidarity Campaign, 'Legal opinion finds major faults with government antisemitism definition' <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/legal-opinion-finds-major-faults-government-antisemitism-definition>

“The de-coupling of the understanding of antisemitism from traditional antisemitic tropes, which thereby made criticism of Israel in and of itself antisemitic, necessarily made the opposite – support for Israel – into a touchstone for expressing sympathy with Jews. This opened the door to the phenomenon of Jewish support for far right, anti-Islam, anti-immigrant parties keen to whitewash their pasts and sanitise their anti-Muslim prejudice by expressing support for Israel and seeing the country and its Jews as the front line against Islam’s ‘incursion into Europe’.

It is not surprising, therefore, that acceptance of the ‘new antisemitism’ theory has contributed to the exacerbation of tensions between Muslims and Jews in the UK (and elsewhere in Europe). There is, however, mutual pre-existing misunderstanding and mistrust, while negative images of Jews unrelated to the Israel-Palestine conflict are common among some Muslims.”⁵⁸

I believe we must also stand with those who identify with Kairos who are unfairly targeted and accused of being antisemitic because of their commitment to Palestinian rights.

4.4 Explore cooperation with pro-justice Evangelical groups

Beside numerous denominational agencies, international organisations that self-identify as evangelical or have an evangelical constituency, campaigning for, or producing resources on, Palestinian rights include (and my apologies if I have omitted yours)

- [Amos Trust](#)
- [Balfour Project](#)
- [Christ at the Checkpoint](#)
- [Churches for Middle East Peace](#) (CMEP)
- [Christian Peacemaker Teams](#) (CPT)
- [Embrace the Middle East](#)
- [Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding](#) (EMEU)
- [Evangelicals for Social Action](#)
- [Friends of Sabeel North America](#) (FOSNA)
- [Peacemaker Trust](#)
- [Sabeel-Kairos UK](#)
- [Sojourners](#)
- [Willow Creek Association](#)
- [World Vision International](#)

4.5 Promote responsible educational tours and projects

⁵⁸ Antony Lerman, The ‘new antisemitism’, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/mirrorracisms/antony-lerman/new-antisemitism>

Kairos could encourage the development of a network of organisations active in promoting and organising regular/annual educational tours and activities in Palestine among evangelicals working in partnership with Bethlehem Bible College, Holy Land Trust, Alternative Tourism Group, etc.

There is also great potential in encouraging evangelicals to participate in purposeful activities such as olive tree planting or olive picking with the [YMCA Joint Advocacy Initiative](#) (JAI-ATG), home rebuilding with [Holy Land Trust](#), [Christian Peacemaker Teams](#) or the [Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Israel and Palestine](#) (EAPPI), or reconciliation projects such as [Musalaha](#) or [Wi'am](#).