JOHN HAGEE, CHRISTIAN ZIONISM, U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL: AN INTERTWINED RELATIONSHIP

Master’s Thesis

Presented to the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies department
Brandeis University

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts

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May 2009
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May, 2009
ABSTRACT

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Christian Zionism while originating in England over two centuries ago is currently experiencing a reinvigoration, especially in the political world. Christian Zionists are using politics as a way to fulfill Biblical prophecy, by influencing powerful politicians in all levels of government to support Israel. The most vocal, and prominent leader within the Christian Zionist movement is Pastor John Hagee. Through the establishment of his organization Christians United for Israel, Hagee has localized and given a tangible center for Christian Zionist activists. Additionally, the movement has gained membership as it was established in the model of a grassroots organization. Hagee has become a well known figure in the political community, and garners national media attention. While it has become fashionable in recent times to criticize Jewish organizations such as AIPAC, it is the Christian Zionist organizations which yield a large portion of power in Washington. However, it is crucial to realize that while CUFI and groups like it may yield some power in Washington, and account for some of the decision making that goes into U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, it is one of many factors and does not influence every politician, and every decision about the state of Israel. However, it is clear that while the U.S. was founded on the platform of a separation of church and state,
religious ideology does play a factor in shaping foreign policy decision making regarding the state of Israel.
Introduction

There is by now a growing scholarship on both Christian Zionism as well as the impact of lobbying organizations on United States foreign policy in the Middle East.\(^1\) However, the role of Christian Zionist organizations on the way in which the U.S. deals with foreign policy issues relating specifically to Israel is only starting to become an area of study.\(^2\) The reinvigoration of the Christian Zionist movement has recently become a major force in the way in which United States foreign policy has dealt with issues facing the State of Israel. At the forefront of the Christian Zionists political power is the Pastor John Hagee, and his organization, Christians United for Israel (CUFI).\(^3\) Recently, Pastor Hagee and CUFI have effectively advocated their Christian Zionists views to political leaders in Washington D.C. who hold similar theological beliefs, and have consequently helped to shape U.S. policy towards Israel. Christian Zionism, while having a strong lineage in conservative Christian theology, has, in modern times, become a phenomenon in politics. Through his organization, Christians United for Israel, Hagee has been able to successfully exert an influence on the U.S. position towards Israel through the use of a unique lobbying tactic. This tactic is tapping into the conservative Christian backgrounds of many U.S. politicians and encouraging them to take part in Biblical Prophecy. Many

\(^3\) Website for Christians United for Israel, www.cufi.org
members of Congress either belong to, or support the efforts of Hagee and his organization. Moreover, many high ranking officials within Hagee’s organization are tied to Washington.  

The Theological Roots of Christian Zionism: John Nelson Darby and Dispensationalism

In order to fully understand the role of Israel and the Jewish people to current groups in the U.S. such as CUFI and John Hagee, it is important to understand where they derive much of their ideological beliefs. Many of the ideological underpinnings of Christian Zionism come from dispensationalist thought, which is deeply rooted in religious fundamentalist thinking. Dispensationalism is followed by the overwhelming majority of Christian Zionists and grounded in the teachings of John Nelson Darby. Darby was a Plymouth Brethren Minister who interpreted parts of the book of Isaiah to conclude that the Jews were a distinct entity from the Christians, and would have different experiences from the Christians. Darby used Dispensationalist thought to interpret the Bible through a series of prophecies, and it is these interpretations which make up the ideological underpinnings of Christian Zionism. Within the New Testament the word dispensation is used twenty times, Darby interprets dispensation to mean that God will deal with humanity in a sequence of different times or “dispensations.” There will be seven different dispensations with the millennium constituting the last of these.

6 Ibid, 25.
In chronological order they are, the Garden of Eden, period of Adam to the period of Noah, the period of Noah to the period of Abraham, period of Abraham to the period of Moses, the period of Moses to the period of Jesus, the period of Jesus’ first revelation to the second coming, and finally the millennium.\(^8\)

The theological basis for this ideology is found through a strict interpretation in Mark 13, Matthew 24, and Luke 21, as well as from the books of Daniel and Revelation.\(^9\) Dispensationalist ideology articulates that the Jewish people will be reconstituted in the land of Israel, as a precursor to the end of days.\(^10\) However, just prior to the end times, a small percentage of the Jewish people will come to see the light of Christ and will be converted to Christianity.\(^11\) An important aspect of dispensationalist theology is the idea of the Rapture. The Righteous Christians who deserve to be saved will literally be swept into heaven. The Rapture is to take place just prior to the Great Tribulation, which is a period of unprecedented terror.\(^12\) During this era of shock and horror, the figure of the Antichrist will rule the world from Jerusalem. There will be a league of forces headed by nations from the North, South, and East and they will join forced in Israel, with the objective of destroying the Antichrist and the Jews.\(^13\) The two sides meet at Mount Megiddo where the battle of Armageddon takes place. During this battle, Jesus descends from heaven and wipes out the enemies. The remaining Jews are collected and receive their Messiah, at which time the Jews along with all the nations of the world are judged.\(^14\)

\(^{8}\) Anderson, 18.
\(^{9}\) Ibid.
\(^{10}\) Ibid.
\(^{11}\) Ibid.
\(^{12}\) Haija, 83.
\(^{13}\) Anderson, 83.
\(^{14}\) Ibid.
Following judgment, there is a period of peace lasting 1,000 years, as Satan is locked up. At the end of the millennium, Satan frees himself and leads a short and unsuccessful war of rebellion. According to this tradition, all of the dead are then brought back to life and judged, with the unrighteous condemned to hell and the just to live in a heavenly New Jerusalem for the rest of time.15

According to Darby, the Jews represented a unique phenomenon in that they survived constant threats from anti-Semitism. This survival was due to the fact that they were, and always would be God’s chosen people.16 According to Darby’s interpretation of the Bible, the Jewish people’s rejection of Jesus placed the Jews on the periphery of history, placing the burden of spreading the message of Christ to the Christian followers. Upon the return of Jesus, the Jews would once again be thrust into the spotlight, as they were needed to live within the land of Israel prior to the second coming of Christ, and the End of Times scenario.17 Ultimately, while the Jewish people were looked down upon by many Christians because of their refusal to accept the message of Jesus, they were still recognized as a chosen people from the Old Testament. Consequently, they would play a role in the second coming, and have one final chance to accept Jesus as a savior. It is the first part of dispensationalist ideology which Christian Zionists feel they can make a long lasting impact in the modern world. Additionally, when events occur within Israel which resemble any support for Biblical prophecy, Christian Zionists see it as an act coming from the Divine source. The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 was seen as proof by evangelical Christians that Biblical prophecy was indeed being fulfilled in front

15 Haija, 84.
17 Ibid.
of their eyes. Additionally, events such as the Jewish re-conquest of Jerusalem in the Six-Day war in 1967 only strengthened these convictions.

Religious Fundamentalism

Christian Zionists represent a form of religious fundamentalism among Christians. The word “fundamentalism” was first used to describe a religious form of expression in the early part of the twentieth century by American Protestants in order to distinguish themselves from the liberal Protestants. Fundamentalism can best be defined as a religious way of being that is marked by an approach through which discontent believers endeavor to maintain their unique identity as a group in the midst of secularization and modernization. Since first being introduced as a means of describing the puritanical conservative Protestants of the early Twentieth Century, the term “fundamentalism” has taken on added and somewhat different meanings. Today, fundamentalists are generally looked upon with disdain by the modern secular world. However, it is modernity which has triggered the rise of fundamentalist groups throughout the world, and across the religious spectrum. The state of Israel was founded on secular and political doctrines, and this secularism often times conflicts with fundamentalist Christian Zionist thought. It is fundamentalist ideology which constitutes the alternative way of thinking to the

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19 Hal Lindsay, The Late Great Planet Earth, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998).  
modern secular Israeli state. These Christians use Messianic beliefs in order to respond to the challenges posed by modernity. Messianism is the belief in the pending arrival of a savior or redeemer, and appears among both Jews and Christians, albeit in different forms. Many messianic beliefs within Jewish and Christian groups are centered around the land of Israel. For Christian Zionists who are made up mostly of conservative Protestants, Messianic beliefs center around the Second Coming of Jesus.

Christian Zionists seek any means necessary to fulfill Biblical prophecy. Consequently, Christian Zionists have become entrenched in political affairs in order to hasten the eventual return of Christ. Christian Zionists ideology within the political world has only recently come to the attention of the public eye within the U.S. However, many of their ideologies and strategies originated in England, as early as 1621 with the publication of “The World’s Great Restoration” written by the British Member of Parliament, Sir Henry Finch. Further, one of the most transparent instances of the power of Christian Zionist ideology in the shaping of political discourse took place in England, as dispensationalist thought contributed to the issuance of the Balfour Declaration. The underlying belief amongst the evangelical and conservative Protestant supporters of Israel is that Jews must be settled in the land of Israel as a prerequisite for the return of Jesus, and the salvation of the Christian people. It is their conviction that the return of Jesus will be hastened by their actions, and that they are carrying out God’s will. In order to complete the work of God, Christian Zionists have infiltrated the political world and use politics as a way to hasten the return of Jesus and redemption.

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24 www.cufi.com
25 Clark, 33.
Early Christian Zionism

The seeds of Christian Zionism were sown in England, and by the nineteenth century, Christian Zionist rhetoric entered into public discussions in England. In 1838 with the influence of Lord Shaftesbury, a consulate in Jerusalem was founded by the British. Lord Shaftesbury, also known as Anthony Ashley Cooper, was the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury. He was a politician and philanthropist, and believed strongly in the restoration of the Jewish people to the land of Israel. Shaftesbury was an early Christian Zionist who wanted to return the Jews to their homeland in order to hasten redemption. Shaftesbury is one of the first to use the phrase “a land without a people for a people without a land.” One of the earliest public Christian Zionist leaders was William Hechler, an English Clergyman who in the 1890’s met numerous times with Theodore Herzl, the founder of the modern Zionist movement. Hechler was a strong believer in dispensationalist thought, and saw Herzl’s work as a means to hasten the return of Jesus.

Herzl and other Zionists welcomed the support of the Christian Zionists, even as Christian supporters openly expressed their rapture theology, as Jews were willing to accept all the support they could for the Zionist enterprise. Further, they did not believe

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27 Ariel, 78.
30 Ariel, 78.
in the ideologies held by their Christian supporters, and had no reason to take the theological ideologies of these figures as anything more than mere propaganda. Hechler had grand visions for the Zionist movement. In private meetings with Herzl he displayed detailed maps of a future land of Israel, including where the third Temple would be rebuilt and housed, in addition to a model of what the new Temple would look like.  

While Herzl was a secular Jew, Hechler approached him due to the large public backing for Herzl. Hechler correctly identified Herzl as the leading Zionist figure and the most likely to achieve the ultimate goal of Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel. It was through political Zionism which the state of Israel was to be established.

One of the most notable and long lasting examples of Christian Zionist thought influencing political decisions occurred in 1917. Christian Zionist ideology played a crucial role in the Balfour Declaration. David Lloyd George, a Christian Protestant and British Prime Minister met numerous times with Chaim Weizmann, and was an ardent supporter of the Zionist idea. Additionally, it was Lloyd George who introduced Weizmann to Lord Balfour. Further, George was enamored with the notion of restoring Israel to the Jews, and publicly expressed his knowledge of Biblical narratives of Israel. Lloyd George writes in his memoir, “Palestine, if recaptured, must be one and indivisible to renew its greatness as a living entity.” Through Jewish sovereignty in Israel, the land would regain its significance, which was to prepare for the second coming of Christ. Without Jews inhabiting the land, Israel was of little value to Lloyd George and other

32 Ibid, 118-122.
Protestants. Lloyd George also told a crowd of supporters in 1925 that he was more versed in Hebrew history than in the history of England.\textsuperscript{34} This religious education no doubt had an impact in his political decisions. The impact of Lloyd George on the Balfour Declaration is an example of conservative Christian ideology impacting historical events. Clearly the Balfour Declaration was motivated by more than mere political purposes.

Christian Zionism, while born in England, gradually began making its way across the Atlantic and into the minds and practices of U.S. citizens, after Darby made missionary journey’s to major cities in North America. One of the earliest American Christian Zionists to publicly, and actively lobby for the restoration of a Jewish homeland in Israel was William Eugene Blackstone.\textsuperscript{35} Blackstone was an American born Protestant who at the age of eleven began attending evangelical Protestant church gatherings. After early successes in business, Blackstone turned his attention towards preaching his evangelical message. At the root of his teachings was the Biblical prophecy of the return of Jesus.\textsuperscript{36} Blackstone believed in rapture theology, which asserts the second coming of Christ, and an apocalyptic end of days. However, prior to this event Jews must live in the land of Israel that is mentioned in the Bible. For this reason, Blackstone would publicly argue for a return of Jewish sovereignty to the land of Israel. With Jewish control over Israel, the first step towards redemption would be in place.

\textsuperscript{34} Bar-Yosef, 18.
\textsuperscript{35} Merkley, 59-61.
\textsuperscript{36} William E. Currie, “God’s Little Errand Boy,” in the AMF Anniversary Booklet \textit{100 Years of Blessing}, (AMFI, 1987).
In 1891, Blackstone authored and delivered the Blackstone Memorial to U.S. President Benjamin Harrison, advocating a return of Palestine to the Jewish people.\footnote{William E. Blackstone, “The Blackstone Memorial, 1891” on http://www.amfi.org/blackmem.htm} While the document makes the assertion that the Jews should be granted sovereignty in Palestine on practical and secular grounds, that being anti-Semitism and \textit{pogroms} in European countries, Blackstone underscores this with fundamentalist religious ideology. Blackstone asserts that Israel was given to the Jewish people by God, as outlined in Biblical sources, as evidence Jews should return to Israel. While there is little doubt amongst secular scholars in the fields of archeology, and anthropology that Jews resided in the land of Israel in ancient times, contending that God allocated it for a specific group of people crosses the secular line, and plunges into religious teachings. Blackstone quotes passages from the book of Isaiah throughout his paper to support his claim that the Jews should be returned to Palestine.\footnote{Ibid.} While Blackstone holds fast to his religious beliefs, it is the use of his ideology to influence the political sphere which separates him from traditional, or religious but not fundamentalist Christians. Blackstone used the secular political arena in order to achieve a religiously oriented goal. This is done as it is the most feasible way of bringing Jews back together with the land of Israel.

Blackstone’s motivation is religious; however he uses the secular world as a tool in order to achieve his religiously inspired goal. Blackstone believes that he is partaking in God’s will, as he would often refer to himself as “God’s Little Errand Boy”\footnote{Currie 4.}. Like many other fundamentalists, Blackstone believes that he is fulfilling the work of God. This belief
was not unique to Blackstone and will be seen time and again by different leaders of fundamentalist organizations, and is still seen today in Christian Zionist circles.

   The U.S. president during the issuance of the Balfour Declaration was Woodrow Wilson. Wilson was the son of Thomas Ruggles Wilson, who was an ordained Minister, and would go on to become a pastoral professor at the Presbyterian seminary.\textsuperscript{40} Clearly, Wilson grew up in a religious Christian household, and publicly acknowledged his religious beliefs.\textsuperscript{41} One of President Wilson’s close advisors was Louis D. Brandeis, the well known Zionist figure. Brandeis helped encourage Wilson to support the Balfour Declaration, although Wilson needed little encouragement. Wilson said of his support of the Balfour Declaration, “To think that I, son of the manse, should be able to help restore the Holy Land to its people.”\textsuperscript{42} Wilson saw his support of the Balfour Declaration as a means to support not only the Jewish people, but also conservative Christian theology. While Wilson did not have Christian Zionists publicly advocating for a Jewish homeland, as in the case of President Harris and the Blackstone memorial, it was Wilson’s own internal religious beliefs which played a factor in his decision to support the Balfour Declaration. While the Balfour Declaration was created in a political atmosphere, the religious convictions of leaders in both London, and Washington clearly played a role in its development, and implementation.

   Since the issuance of the Balfour Declaration, Christian Zionism had remained on a relatively stable and uneventful course. However, with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, and the re-conquest of Jerusalem by the Jews in 1967 as a result of the

\textsuperscript{40} Merkley, 79.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
Six-Day war, Christian Zionists around the world felt as though Biblical Prophecy was nearing.\textsuperscript{43} The Six-Day war in 1967 was the most momentous world event in the world of Messianic groups, including evangelical Christians, and was responsible for the rapid increase in the Christian Zionist movement.\textsuperscript{44} Christian Zionists saw the land gains, and most notably Jewish sovereignty once again in Jerusalem as a sign from God that the prophecies foretold in the Bible were close to fulfillment.\textsuperscript{45} Consequently, Christian Zionism grew at an astonishing pace. In addition to an increase in Christian Zionist work within the U.S. following the events of the Six-Day War, Christian Zionist activity increased substantially in Israel following this monumental event, as evangelicals took steps to increase their physical presence in the land of Israel.\textsuperscript{46}

\textit{Christian Zionism Today}

Within the United States today, Christian Zionists are currently witnessing a period of unprecedented growth. The Reverend Malcolm Hedding, of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, asserts that Christian Zionism is founded upon the desire of God, and the Jewish people belong in the land of Israel due to God’s promise with Abraham.\textsuperscript{47} This is similar to the viewpoint resonated by William Blackstone in the Blackstone Memorial. Christian Zionism has maintained a relatively stable position due

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{43} Ariel, 74.
\textsuperscript{45} Ariel, 81.
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to the fundamentalist nature in which it seeks inspiration. As a fundamentalist organization, they interpret the words of the Bible literally, consequently the basis of their Messianic aspirations have not changed, as neither the text nor the interpretation of it have shifted over the years. The main area of focus for Christian Zionists is the role of the Jewish people to the land of Israel. In an increasingly secular world, Christian Zionists such as Hagee and his followers within CUFI are beginning to look towards Washington as a means to fulfill the work of God.

Today, Christian Zionists continue to exert their influence in the political realm. The republican Presidential candidate for the election of 2008, John McCain received endorsements from many evangelical Christian Zionists. The most notable endorser of McCain was the Pastor John Hagee.48 Pastor Hagee has passionately supported Israel for more than a quarter of a century, and is the founder of Christians United for Israel. Additionally, Hagee has been able to raise and distribute close to twenty million dollars in support of Israel, throughout his time as a Pastor.49 Hagee also has a strong group of loyal followers who are heavily influenced by his teachings. Senator McCain was initially pleased with the support from Pastor Hagee as he believed it would sway additional votes towards him during the election. McCain recognized that his continued support of Israel was a factor in winning over conservative voters, especially since many within the Republican Party questioned his seemingly moderate stance on many issues. McCain campaigned diligently to win the support of the Christian Zionists, and voiced

his opinion on Israel by saying, “today I stand as I believe so many of you do: a Christian, proudly pro-American and proudly pro-Israel.”\textsuperscript{50} This comes in recognition of McCain’s past public expression of his eagerness to support, and defend Israel. McCain would later recant on his association with Pastor Hagee after it was discovered the Pastor had made numerous controversial remarks on issue such as Hitler and the Holocaust, Hurricane Katrina, Catholicism and Homosexuality.\textsuperscript{51} However, Hagee continued to support McCain, and urged his followers to vote for McCain over Obama. While McCain ultimately came to distance himself from Hagee publicly, he was no doubt privately delighted when numerous Christian Zionists gathered at the polls to vote for him.

\textit{John Hagee and Christians United for Israel}

The Pastor John Hagee, while preaching for over twenty five years, has only recently become an active participant in the political world. Hagee is the Pastor of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas which has a membership of over 19,000 followers.\textsuperscript{52} Additionally, Hagee reaches audiences of up to 99 million people throughout the country through the use of television and radio. Hagee is the president and CEO of Global Evangelism Television, which broadcasts evangelical Christian

\textsuperscript{50} On www.JohnMcCain.com
\textsuperscript{52} John Hagee, “About Pastor Hagee,” www.jhm.org
media throughout the country. In addition to the founding of CUFI and Cornerstone Church, Hagee is also the founder of John Hagee Ministries (JHM), which operates as an evangelical crusade throughout the U.S. and has formed the Exodus II project, which seeks to aid Jews around the world to immigrate to Israel. Of his followers, many are U.S. politicians such as Tom Delay and Newt Gingrich. Additionally, his organization Christians United for Israel which was founded in 2006 has a large grassroots following throughout the country. This grassroots following includes Pastor Hagee’s regular Church followers, in addition to other Christians who may not always see eye to eye with him in all religious matters, but still want to express their support for Israel. Pastor Hagee has come into the spotlight in recent times due to many of his controversial viewpoints as well as for his fervent support for the state of Israel. CUFI was founded in order for any pro-Israel Church in the U.S. to voice their opinion in support of the state of Israel, as related to Biblical matters.

CUFI, in effect centralizes all of the support for Israel from a significant segment of the Christian world into one organization under the leadership of Hagee. Additionally, there are many former politicians on the Executive Board who have close ties with current political members in Washington.

According to many current Evangelical’s, the current generation of humanity is presently living in the period of the End Times. However, this has been a popular notion

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54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Christians United for Israel “Statement of Purpose,” www.cufi.org
for many years amongst evangelical Christians.\footnote{Lindsey.} John Hagee while appearing on the Glenn Beck program on CNN news echoed this belief and declared, “I believe that the Bible is very specific to the fact that we do live in the End of Days.”\footnote{John Hagee, on CNN with Glenn Beck, aired October 12, 2007.} According to Hagee, one of his pieces of evidence to this statement is the rebirth of the state of Israel.\footnote{Ibid.} He continues to say that if Israel was not reborn, it would have been a sign that the Bible was a fraudulent work.\footnote{Ibid.} This portrays the extremism which Hagee and other Christian Zionists display in their dispensationalist beliefs. Hagee and other evangelical Christians view the Bible as more than just a written history of prophets, and early Jews and Christians, but as a living entity which can foretell future events. Therefore, Hagee and other Christian Zionists seek to engage in actions which will keep their interpretations of Biblical events in place. The most important of these is the land of Israel. Through support of Israel, Hagee and his followers are fulfilling the prophetic visions of the End of Days as laid out in Biblical sources.

Within the U.S. political sphere, there are numerous members who hold the belief that Jews must settle in the land of Israel prior to the Second Coming of Christ. While the American ideal is to separate religion from politics, the reality is that the two are often woven together. Prior to the establishment of CUFI, these politicians still held firm to their religious beliefs, as well as their political aspirations. Today however, CUFI gives these individuals a centralized forum and meeting place. Members of both Congress and CUFI have relations with one another. Gary Bauer, President, and Executive board member of CUFI, served as the undersecretary of Education under Ronald Reagan from
1982 to 1987 and was an advisor on issues of domestic policy from 1987 to 1988.  

Another Executive board member of CUFI is David Brog, who worked in the U.S. senate for a period of seven years, and became a chief of staff of a prominent U.S. senator.

CUFI has established itself as a force in Washington, and is gradually trying to permeate into the lives of the decision makers in Washington.

Just as CUFI has members and former members of political stature within its organization, many politicians within Washington have ties to CUFI, and many others while not officially associating themselves with CUFI, publicly express their Christian Zionist ideology. Such prominent members include figures such as James Inhofe, Tom Delay, and Alan Keyes. Senator James Inhofe, a Republican from Oklahoma is a staunch conservative in the political and religious world. Inhofe was a keynote speaker at the CUFI third annual Washington-Israel summit, in 2008.

Inhofe’s religious leanings have spilled into his political actions, and he is a fervent supporter of Israel and devout Christian. Nowhere is this more evident than in a speech given by Inhofe on March 4, 2002 on the Senate floor where he articulated the following, “I believe very strongly that we ought to support Israel; that it has a right to the land. This is the most important reason: Because God said so. As I said a minute ago, look it up in the book of Genesis.”

Inhofe is using religious conviction in order to persuade other politicians to side with Israel. While there certainly are advantageous reasons for the U.S. to support Israel for

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62 Ibid.
reasons such as promoting democracy and peace in the region, doing so based on religious belief goes against the very fabric which the U.S. has been built.

Tom Delay, former U.S. Republican Representative and House Majority Leader is also a fervent supporter of Pastor Hagee and his organization. Delay is also a firm supporter of Israel, and practicing Christian. During his time in Congress, the issue of support for Israel became a crucial matter. Delay led the Republican advance for support of Israel even during times of dissent within Congress, as he says, “The Republican leadership, especially that leadership in the House, has made pro-Israel policy a fundamental component of our foreign policy agenda and it drives the Democrat leadership crazy — because they just can’t figure out why we do it!” While Delay claims that the Democrats are unable to quantify why Republican leadership is such a strong supporter of Israel, it could be due to Christian Zionist beliefs. Tom Delay, a conservative Christian believes in the Second Coming of Jesus, and actively yearns for the return of Christ. In an interview conducted by Max Blumenthal, an investigative journalist and documentary filmmaker just prior to the 2007 CUFI Washington-Israel Summit, Tom Delay responded to the question of the influence of the second coming on his support for Israel, and responded by saying, “Obviously it’s [Second Coming] what I live for, and I hope it comes tomorrow...we have to be connected to Israel in order to enjoy the Second Coming of Christ.”

Clearly, Tom Delay feels very strongly about the role of Israel and the return of Jesus. Delay’s religious views about Israel’s role in the

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66 Interview of Tom Delay by Max Blumenthal, on video entitled “Rapture Ready: The Unauthorized Christians United for Israel Tour,” on http://www.huffingtonpost.com/max-blumenthal/rapture-ready-the-unauth_b_57826.html
return of Christ undoubtedly had some effect on his strong support for the state of Israel. Again, there are many purely political reasons to support Israel; however bringing conservative Christian theology into the political sphere crosses a boundary of core American ideological principles.

Not all politicians who hold Christian Zionist beliefs are affiliated with CUFI, or Hagee. However, CUFI is a central locus which breeds and disseminates Christian Zionist ideology, and therefore attractive grounds for any politician who holds any semblance of Christian Zionist thought. One such political figure who is not yet associated with Hagee or CUFI but is a conservative Christian who supports Israel is Alan Keyes. Keyes served as the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, and as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs under President Reagan. Additionally, Keyes ran for President in 1996, 2000 and 2008. Keyes was also a Republican nominee for the Senate in 1988, 1992, and 2004. Keyes is a prominent figure within the Republican Party, and might hold office again in the future. Additionally, Keyes has held his own political television show on MSNBC. Keyes has visited Israel numerous times, and in 2002 met with then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. While in Israel Keyes received an award from the Israeli government for integrity in reporting. While Keyes may not currently associate himself with CUFI, the door is most certainly open for him to explore the organization, and give his insight on ways to best spread their message as he has extensive experience and connections within

67 www.alankeyes.com
68 Alan Keyes Reports from Israel, on www.Mesor.org/keyes/29.
Washington. This is one of the successes of CUFI, as it gives anyone with Christian Zionists ideology a place to gather and figure out ways to best promote their platform.

The notion of an Israel Lobby forming the underlying engine of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East has recently gained widespread attention in the world of academia with the publication of “The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy” by Mearsheimer and Walt in 2007. However, CUFI does not fit the mold of a typical lobbying organization and represents a unique phenomenon in the political world. CUFI is a completely separate entity from AIPAC and all other pro-Israel lobbying organizations. CUFI is distinct in that, it is not a lobbying group in the traditional sense as it does not influence politicians with monetary incentives as do most lobby groups. Rather, the primary method through which it influences the political world is by tapping into the deeply rooted religious rhetoric held by many of the politicians in Washington. CUFI aligns itself with powerful politicians in Washington, and seeks to lure in members of Congress, and others who hold to conservative religious ideals. Hagee has said that one of the goals of his organization is “to go to Washington and go face to face with senators and congressmen, representing Israel. We've never done that before.” Through the use of direct contact with politicians, Hagee can better influence how such politicians view the state of Israel, by tapping into their religious beliefs and subsequently introduce political methods favorable to the state of Israel.

While Hagee is not the first, or most original member of the Christian Zionist movement, one of his greatest achievements is the founding a central organization where

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69 Mearsheimer & Walt.
those with similar beliefs can gather. It is the establishment of the premiere destination for Christians from around North America to hold sway over the Second Coming which makes Hagee such a powerful figure. While CUFI seeks to influence the political world, one of its greatest attributes is its all inclusive nature. Anyone with Christian Zionist beliefs are able to join and feel that they are directly contributing to the work of God, and the hastening of the Second Coming. This is what makes CUFI such a powerful tool.

CUFI has been able to attract members at a steady rate and have introduced new technologies at recruiting members. In this vein, many members within CUFI are urged to contact their representatives in government on issues relating to Israel, Iran and the Middle East. Members of CUFI are given the option of receiving weekly e-mail updates, and Rapid Response Action Alerts from CUFI. Rapid Response Action Alerts are e-mails sent to members who subscribe for such alerts on issues which will affect Israel. When members receive an alert, they are encouraged to communicate in any means possible with their local as well as more senior politicians, on issues CUFI deems important. Additionally, there are internet links to the White House, Senate, and House of Representatives on the CUFI website, in order to facilitate members of CUFI to contact representatives on behalf of Israel. In addition to this, one can enter their zip code to find their nearest representative. One of the key strengths of CUFI is their grassroots structure, as well as updates, and innovative uses of technology to spread their message.

Christian Zionism and Jewish Zionism: Right vs. Left

Clearly Hagee is more than just an average Minister, as he has become a rock star type figure within the world of Christendom. Additionally, he and his organization have found a distinct niche within Washington. While Hagee certainly would like to exert his influence on as many politicians as possible, it is amongst the Conservative politicians, specifically members of the religious right which make up a substantial part of the Conservative base which Hagee has the ability to influence the most. It is interesting to note that John Hagee and CUFI ally themselves almost entirely with Republican politicians, and their executive board consists of many former Republican politicians. 73 Not coincidentally, Republican values align on many of the same issues as conservative Christian ideals. 74 These include issues on gun rights, marriage issues, and abortion rights to name only a few. 75 However, groups such as AIPAC, and other predominantly Jewish organizations generally do not follow one particular party, and lend support to Democrats and Republicans alike. Ultimately, it is within the world of the Religious Right which Hagee has had the most success forming allegiances and gaining support.

Outside of issues relating to the state of Israel, other pro-Israel groups such as AIPAC tend to parallel more with liberal politicians on other topics in the political world. This would seem to be a natural progression, as many Republican politicians come from a Christian background, predominantly from the Protestant sects of Christianity. Jews meanwhile are a historically liberal minded people. This is one of the major differences

73 www.cufi.org
74 Clark, 247-248.
75 Ibid.
between the Jewish and Christian lobbying efforts on behalf of Israel. Consequently, the ideological underpinnings both religiously and politically are altered in the progression of support for Israel by CUFI, which translates into the type of support Israel receives. As a generalization, Jewish lobbying groups, which are more liberal in scope, are more apt to support policies of peaceful negotiations with land concessions at the forefront of these policies. Peace and democracy are the most important goals in the secular support for Israel. On the other dimension is CUFI, which opposes many of the peace negotiations in Israel, due to the conflict it would create with Biblical prophecy. While one of the major values of Christianity is the spread of freedom and democracy, Christian Zionists are much less concerned with democracy in the region, and more are more concerned with completing the work of God. This is due to the fact that fundamentalist groups are reacting to the secular world.

According to a 2005 survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, sixty three percent of evangelical Christians believed that supporting Israel fulfills the Biblical prophecy of the Second Coming. This is in contrast to mainline Protestant groups, in addition to Catholics of whom approximately only a quarter support Israel based on the belief that they are supporting Biblical prophecy. While Hagee may publicly deny any link between his organizations support for Israel, and fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, it is clear from the responses given by the Evangelical to the Pew Forum study, that the overwhelming majority of Evangelical Christians support the State of Israel based on the belief that the Second Coming will be hastened by their actions.

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77 Ibid.
There undoubtedly are many followers of Hagee and members within CUFI who support Israel precisely for reasons related to hastening redemption.

The statistical figures from the Pew Forum illustrate the potential impact which Christian Zionists can exert in the political world. One example of the significance these figures may play in the political sphere comes from the results of the 2004 presidential election. In the 2004 election, evangelical Christians constituted roughly forty percent of the votes counted for George W. Bush.78 Throughout the course of his second term, it would have been difficult for Bush or any politician to ignore such a strong backing from one particular group. Consequently, Bush no doubt felt a debt of gratitude towards this segment of voters, and carried out policies which they would find favor with, this includes his policies towards Israel. Additionally, one must remember that Bush follows a religion of evangelical Protestantism, and possibly shares many of the same beliefs as those who voted him into office. When recounting the Bush years in the White House, one must take into account the role of evangelical Christianity when remembering his foreign policy. This is true not just on issues which directly affected Israel, but the entire Middle East, as dispensationalist ideology holds that great wars will take place prior to the Second Coming. Therefore, it is possible that one of Bush’s underlying motives, in addition to political, economic and safety reasons for invading Iraq, was tied to Biblical prophecy. This is just one possibility in a long line of reasons.

*The Christian Right in the Political World*

78 Ibid.
CUFI wields considerable power in Washington as it has established itself as the central base for Christian Zionism, and has a strong following in the U.S. capital. With the growth of the Christian right, and the increasing scrutiny placed on Israel by many liberal Jews, some of the strongest supporters of Israel in the U.S. are currently evangelical Protestants. Additionally, since evangelicals make up a large percentage of the voting base within the U.S. they are able to wield considerable influence in the political world. Throughout U.S. history, politicians have catered to special interest groups and have taken a stand on their side of the issues for political purposes. One of the greatest historical examples of this is the 1980 electoral victory of Ronald Reagan over Jimmy Carter as a result of the evangelical Reverend Jerry Falwell and his organization the Moral Majority Coalition. Regan received an overwhelming majority of the white evangelical vote thanks in part to the work of the Moral Majority Coalition. The Moral Majority Coalition campaigned and lobbied on issues such as outlawing abortion, were against sex education and evolution being taught in schools, believed prayer had a place in schools, and opposed the Equal Rights Amendment. Regan battled for this crucial group of voters, and bent on some political issues in order to win over this crucial set of voters. While Reagan by no means caved in to every set of convictions held by the Moral Majority Coalition, he did cater to some of their beliefs. Today, the Christian right has begun focusing on Israel, and consequently so have politicians, especially those aligned with the Christian Right which are traditionally

members in the Republican Party. Additionally, in recent times those Christians who have focused mainly on the State of Israel are also supporters of the Conservative agenda.

As has been shown, the Christian Right makes up a large percentage of the voters within the Republican Party. Consequently, many within the Republican leadership are willing to cater to the wants and desires of this group, and one of the most pressing of these issues in recent times has become the State of Israel.\(^{82}\) While many within the Christian right sincerely support the State of Israel, those who do so based on dispensationalist theology are many times acting detrimentally to the best interest of Israel, and her citizens. From a secular point of view, the most important thing for Israel is to live in peace and security. However, many dispensationalists are against a full fledged peace process with the Palestinians, as the most widely agreed upon peace plans run contrary to dispensationalist theology. By rejecting efforts at a sincere peace processes, the dispensationalists hurt the very core of Israel, as the safety and security of the Jewish people are put in jeopardy without effective and long lasting peace treaties in effect. However, they are less concerned with the safety and well being of Israel and her citizens, than with the prophecies issued in the Bible. In addition to evangelical Christians opposing many of the proposed peace processes, the hard line right within Israel, as well as many ultra religious Jews would side with the Christian Zionists in the political world on how Israel should deal with her neighbors. This is a direct result of sharing similar sets of beliefs as ultra religious groups such as the Gush Emunim believe Jews must settle the land constituting Biblical Israel prior to the coming of the Jewish

\(^{82}\) Haija, 75-95.
Consequently, both do not want to cede land for peace. This shared link between the two groups stems from the fact that both are fundamentalist religious groups seeing religious texts as superseding secular ideologies.

The Relationship Between Christian Zionism and the Haredim

The Gush Emunim or Block of the Faithful are grounded on the teachings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, and the interpretation and dissemination of his teachings through his son Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook. The elder Rabbi Kook believed that the Jewry of his generation was witnessing the footsteps of the Messiah. This line of reasoning parallels the beliefs of Pastor Hagee and other Christian Zionists who believe that the present generation is currently witnessing the beginning of the End of Days. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook took the position that the whole of Biblical Israel contained spiritual significance for the Jewish people, and a return of the Jewish nation to the land was the means to hasten redemption. According to the younger Kook, Jews needed to settle within all of Biblical Israel as a prerequisite to the coming of the Jewish Messiah.

The elder Rabbi Kook’s writings of Messianic redemption are an alternative view to the secular and political Zionism which dominated the world of Zionist thought during his lifetime. Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook believed that the Jewish people had a spiritual bond with all of Israel including the disputed territories, and were forbidden to give up

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any part of the land which was given to them by God.\textsuperscript{87} Rabbi Kook taught that if Jews did not settle in certain areas of Israel it was as though they were not grateful to God and this would delay the coming of the Messiah.\textsuperscript{88} This would explain Kook’s insistence on settlement in the disputed territories as his main purpose was to hasten the Messiah. Additionally, with settlement in the disputed area, Jewish life would be increasingly difficult. However, according to Rabbi Kook, suffering was part of the Divine plan and served a purpose. Through suffering in the land of Israel, God would bring about the Messiah faster, as the arrival of the Messiah was an event of enormous proportions and required suffering before arriving.\textsuperscript{89} Suffering was seen as part of the birth pangs of the Messiah. In fact, Kook understood the atrocities of the Holocaust as coming from a divine source, and cleansing the Jewish soul from impurities. This was a necessary step in the process of redemption.\textsuperscript{90} In similar terminology, Hagee publicly expressed the Holocaust in terms of a divine act from God, and as a means to bring the Jewish people back into the land of Israel.\textsuperscript{91} For the public expression of his beliefs, he was publicly criticized; however this view is shared by some sects of Hasidim.

\textit{The Conflict Between Theology and Supporting the Best Interests of Israel}

Hagee aims to exert his influence on U.S. politics, and refuses to back away from his theological principles. Hagee displays this characteristic even in instances when his

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{88} Waxman, 187.
  \item \textsuperscript{89} Kook, 192-193.
  \item \textsuperscript{90} Ravitzky, 127.
\end{itemize}
prophetic beliefs conflict with U.S. policies. During the Clinton administration in the early 1990’s, the Christian right were unable to exert as a strong an influence in the political world as in the two previous administrations, occupied by Reagan and the senior Bush. Clinton sided with much of the labor party representatives within Israel, which seek amongst other things to make peace with the Palestinians, through the secession of portions of land. During this period of time, Hagee was often times critical of Clinton, and delivered speeches which among other things alluded to the belief that the world would be better off if the Clintons were to experience a tragic accident. Hagee and his followers tend to support the Likud party within Israel, and have a particularly close relationship with Benjamin Netanyahu.

The strong ties between Netanyahu and Likud, and Hagee and CUFI are a result of a shared system of beliefs concerning the spiritual importance of the physical land of Israel. Both the Christians Zionists, as well as the Likud party members form a large percentage of the political right in each respective country. While Hagee found it more difficult to extend himself in politics under the Clinton administration, his persistence paid off with the victory of George W. Bush in 2000. The Bush administration was much more receptive of Hagee and the Christian right as a whole. However, there were still instances when Hagee was dissatisfied with Bush’s policies. For example, Hagee disagreed with the Bush White House on Bush’s proposed road map for peace.

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92 Don Wagner, “For Zion’s Sake,” *Middle East Report* No. 223 (2002), 56.
94 Wagner, 56.
95 “President Bush’s Road Map to a Palestinian State,” as printed in *New York Times*, Thursday, November 14, 2002.
According to Bush’s road map for peace, a Palestinian state would be established in areas which constituted parts of greater Israel, in exchange for the halting of terrorist activities by the Palestinians. In exchange, Israel would bring to a close the settlements in the disputed territories of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. This plan angered Hagee as the settlements in the disputed territories are crucial for Jewish sovereignty, as they represent portions of Israel mentioned within the Bible. Hagee does not back down from his ideological beliefs, even when they conflict with an administration that is much more receptive of his ideas. Hagee asserts, “I am a Bible scholar and a theologian, and from my perspective the law of God transcends the laws of the United States government and the US State Department.” Clearly when Biblical prophecy and secular politics collide, Hagee sides with former. Hagee only supports the U.S. government’s foreign policy in order to achieve his dispensationalist goals. In essence, the secular political world is Hagee’s toolbox for fulfilling the work of God.

While Hagee supports many members within the Republican Party, he does not always support all of their decisions as is evidenced by his reaction to Bush’s proposed Road Map to Peace. While Hagee may claim to have Israel’s best interests in mind when publicly advocating for the state, he is actually advocating on behalf of dispensationalist ideology. Hagee uses the political arena as a means to an end. Hagee refuses to back down from his position on the state of Israel, even when leading scholars from the secular world indicate that it is in Israel’s best interest to go in a direction which opposes Hagee’s ideologies.

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96 Ibid.
97 Wagner, 56.
The Other Christian Supporters of Israel

While most Christian Zionists consist of conservative evangelical Protestants, this does not make all conservative Protestants or evangelicals Christian Zionists. In fact many evangelical Christians denounce Hagee, and see him as leader of a fringe movement. There are those Protestants who support Israel based solely on the fact that Israel has a rich culture and history within the religion of Christianity, as Israel was the birthplace of Jesus, and many believe the Jewish people should have a right to live in a free and democratic state. Additionally, many Christians are sympathetic to Jews and subsequently support the state of Israel due the horrific events they endured during the Holocaust. Additionally, these Christian supporters of Israel believe that by supporting Israel they are advancing democracy in the Middle East and promoting peace efforts. Additionally, in more extreme cases some Protestants are not supportive of Israel viewing the State as restricting the rights of the Palestinian people. The most notable Protestant who holds this view is former President Jimmy Carter.

Many of these Christian’s support Israel, but do so in a much more moderate and secular fashion, with the prospects of advancing democratic values to the region. It is this group of Christian supporters which truly have Israel’s best interest at hand are not

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using Israel as a tool to advance Biblical visions. It is this group of Christian supporter, the more moderate sects of Christianity which rely on more secular grounds for support which many Israeli’s have a difficult time separating from fundamentalist Christians such as Hagee.\textsuperscript{102} This could be one reason why some Israeli’s do not reject the support for Israel from groups such as CUFI, as they do not fully comprehend the theological nature of some Christian Zionist organizations.

In 2007, these more moderate Christian groups, consisting of over thirty evangelical leaders, sent a letter to President Bush urging him for a two-state solution.\textsuperscript{103} Hagee quickly denounced these leaders, arguing that only the Jews have a right to the land of Israel based on Biblical scripture.\textsuperscript{104} However, the underlying root of Hagee’s disagreement with his fellow evangelical leaders is the disparity between Hagee’s dispensationalist beliefs, and the more liberal beliefs of the other leaders. These opposing evangelical leaders represent a threat to Hagee as they highlight the disparity between his dispensationalist beliefs, and the beliefs of more mainstream Protestant groups. Hagee is in a difficult position as he is unable to publicly express his millenarian thought, but privately must articulate this thinking to his followers. The more moderate evangelical Christians differ from Hagee in that they are not trying to intercede in history. Hagee is attempting to fulfill Biblical prophecy by carrying out the work of God. The evangelical Christians, who are opposed to Hagee while they may believe in dispensationalist thought, are not attempting to interfere with God’s plan for humanity.

\textsuperscript{102} Ariel, 90.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
One of the key values held by Christian Zionists is Jewish sovereignty throughout the land of Israel. This is due to the fact that it is their belief that Jews must be settled throughout the land that constituted Biblical Israel. Pastor Hagee feverishly rejects the call for Israel to cede land for peace, and believes that Jerusalem should be in complete control of the Jewish people, without an Arab presence.\footnote{John Hagee, “Transcript of pastor Hagee’s Speech at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) Policy Conference,” on http://www.cufi.org/site/PageServer?pagename=learn_teachings#AIPAC} Hagee’s stance on giving up parcels of land in exchange for peace is based more on religious conviction than on political or historical bases. There are numerous instances of ceding land in peace negotiations as a model for peace. The 1979 peace treaty with Egypt involved Israel giving over the Sinai to Egypt.\footnote{Peace Treaty between Israel and Egypt March 26, 1979, from Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Israel-Egypt%20Peace%20Treaty} Consequently, Egypt and Israel have maintained a relatively peaceful relationship since this time. Further, a two-state solution is seen by many of the leading scholars to be the best solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.\footnote{Leon Wieseltier, “Israel, Palestine, and the Return of the Bi-National Fantasy. What is not to be done,” (2003).} The most feasible way this can be accomplished is by relinquishing some pieces of Israel to the Palestinians. Hagee stands with many of the hard line Israeli’s, who believe Israel must not make land concessions to achieve peace. Like Hagee, many of Israel’s religious right hold ultra fundamentalist Messianic beliefs, and are convinced that settlement in all of Biblical Israel will hasten the coming of a savior. Through his political stance on

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Israel and land concessions Hagee while most likely unintentionally, is revealing the underlying reason he supports Israel.

_Hagee's Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy_

Like many fundamentalist leaders, Hagee is a master orator and provides a spark and source of inspiration for many of his followers. Additionally, like other fundamentalist organizations, Hagee believes that the actions of CUFI and its followers will have a direct impact on future events, and that this is the fulfillment of the work of God on Earth. Within this line of thinking is the belief in the traditional scheme of reward and punishment. The notion of one’s actions being rewarded or punished based on their deeds is not unique to evangelical Christianity, and has been a motivation for people of many different denominations for centuries. This line of thought holds that by acting in a manner consistent with the laws set down in the Bible one will be rewarded for such actions. However, if one strays from these laws they will face the consequences from God. By partaking in God’s work Hagee holds the conviction that he and his followers will be rewarded either now or after the End of Days. By encouraging his followers to support Israel, Hagee believes that God will look favorably upon their work. Conversely, Hagee believes those who oppose his actions, and stray from God will suffer the consequences from the Divine.
Christian Zionists understanding of key historical events are seen as evidence that the end of days is rapidly approaching.\(^\text{108}\) Evangelical Christians look at worldwide events, and not just events occurring within Israel as evidence to the close proximity of the End of Days. Recent cataclysmic events in the world such as the events of September 11, 2001, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have lent to an understanding amongst Christian Zionist that the end of days is around the corner.\(^\text{109}\) By looking at current events as a sign of an impending Messianic arrival, Christian Zionists not only gain additionally followers, but strengthen the resolve of the current members, as it is evidence that their work is being accepted by God. Followers are able to take comfort knowing that they are actively participating in fulfilling prophecy.

One of Hagee’s most important attributes is his ability to appear as a larger than life figure, and foretell future events, which are seen as acts from God. Hagee claims that after the reader completes his book *Jerusalem Countdown*, which has eschatological undertones, and predicts an eventual battle of Armageddon, the reader will believe it was written “the day before,” and not years earlier.\(^\text{110}\) Hagee is able to increase his legitimacy and subsequently his following by taking chance events and framing them as to appear to be coming from God. This is a common tactic amongst many religious fundamentalist groups. The previously mentioned Gush Emunim leader Rabbi Kook followed this tactic as well. One of Hagee’s goals is to constantly increase his following, as CUFI is modeled as a grassroots organization. The more members he has the more influence he will be able to exert in the political arena. Hagee founded CUFI only one month after the

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\(^{108}\) Clark, 146.  
\(^{109}\) Ibid.  
release of Jerusalem Countdown, which as mentioned earlier prophesizes the end of days. Hagee seems to have systematically planned his actions in order to hasten support for the Second Coming.

Hagee believes that he is carrying out God’s mission, and that his actions as well as the actions of his followers have far reaching consequences. In September of 2005, Hagee delivered a speech echoing his concern over the actions of U.S. policy in Israel, and the religious consequences of such actions. Hagee says,

I want to ask Washington a question. Is there a connection between the 9,000 Jewish refugees being forcibly removed from their homes in the Gaza Strip now living in tents and the thousands of Americans who have been expelled from their homes by this tremendous work of nature? Is there a connection there? If you've got a better answer, I'd like to hear it.112

Hagee connects the catastrophic events of Hurricane Katrina to U.S. foreign policy towards Israel. Hagee argues that Hurricane Katrina was a punishment from God, based on the actions of the U.S. government concerning the withdrawal of Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2005. Hagee is grasping to the traditional reward and punishment scheme, held by conservative members of many religions worldwide. However, Hagee is seeking to pressure the U.S. government into changing its stance on its policy towards Israel, through the use of religiously oriented rhetoric. Hagee is issuing a warning to those in Washington, using religious scare tactics. This message is also meant for his followers, as it is meant to show the causality between their work on supporting Israel, and God’s response to such work. By supporting the right in Israeli

111 Ibid.
politics, one can prevent catastrophe from affecting their daily lives, even though they live thousands of miles away from Israel.

As mentioned previously, Hagee and CUFI support the state of Israel, but they do not always support the political policies that Israel undertakes. The source of conflict arises when the secular State of Israel makes decisions which conflict with dispensationalist thought. This conflict is usually created by the leftist political parties in Israel, which in general are more secular, and are critical of Israeli expansions, and are willing to concede land for peace. Evangelicals support Israeli expansion and side with Israeli politicians on the right side of the political spectrum in Israel. Additionally, it is Christian Zionists as a whole and not just Hagee who hold to this view.\textsuperscript{113} Since Christian Zionists believe that they are partaking in the work of God, they view their actions as well as the actions of others around them as having great significance. Each action will either be rewarded or punished. This is one explanation for the fervent support seen by evangelical Christians. In 2005, when Israel made the decision to withdraw from the Gaza Strip many Christian Zionists were outraged, as this goes against Biblical prophecy. Pat Robertson, a colleague of John Hagee, and ardent Christian Zionist holds the conviction that former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon suffered a major stroke as a result of Sharon’s policy of withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005.\textsuperscript{114} Robertson attempted to make a correlation between Biblical prophecy and political events, showing that one’s actions in respect to Israel can be rewarded or punished by God.


\textsuperscript{114} Sonja Barisic, “Robertson Links Sharon’s Stroke to Wrath,” San Francisco Chronicle, January 5, 2006.
While Hagee and CUFI undoubtedly represent an example of a fundamentalist organization, they seem to be inherently peaceful and well intentioned. Therefore, it should seem as though Jews around the world as well as the state of Israel should welcome, and accept Hagee with outstretched arms. In a period when Israel is attacked both physically, and verbally on a regular basis, the Christian right seem on the surface to be a welcome addition. However, intrinsically strewn throughout Christian Zionist thought are underlying motives which have the ability to lend themselves to negative consequences. Therefore, the support from evangelical Christians should be taken cautiously. In fact, some of Hagee’s actions can be construed as bearing attributes of anti-Semitism.

While CUFI aims to promote the state of Israel, and their outward rhetoric is pro Jewish, many outsiders claim that Hagee and his organization are anti-Semitic. This claim is due in part to one of the key concepts put forth by many who hold to rapture theology. According to rapture theology, following the return of Christ the Jewish people must convert to Christianity and accept Jesus’ message, or risk being deemed unrighteous on the Day of Judgment. While Hagee publicly denies that Jews will need to convert following the return of Jesus, his Ministry says, “We believe that evangelism is the obligation of every follower of Jesus Christ.”

Clearly, conversion to Christianity is a core principle of Hagee, even as he publicly denies it. Additionally, while Jews are

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115 Anderson, 18.
needed as a piece to the second coming of Christ, this does not prevent Hagee from spewing anti-Semitic remarks. Hagee alleges that the economic turmoil of the early part of the twenty first century was a result of the control of the economy by certain prominent figures, whom also happen to be Jewish, as Hagee says, “Our economic destiny is controlled by the Federal Reserve system that is now headed by Alan Greenspan [and] … a group of class A stockholders, including the Rothschilds.”¹¹⁷ This leads to the question of whether or not Hagee and the CUFI represent a new form of anti-Semitism.

According to rapture theology, the function of the Jewish people is to settle in the land of Israel. Following the return of Jesus, the Jews hold very little value to the Christians and many die. Therefore, the Jews would seem to only be a means to an end. While there is no doubt many of Hagee’s followers, are pro Israel, and pro Jewish, the issue of philo-Semitism and its effects on Israel and the Jewish community is pulled into question. Looking at the Jewish people through a strictly eschatological point of view sets up a situation of failure. At a certain point, Hagee’s followers may get impatient and blame those Jews not living in Israel, as their prophecy fails to take shape. Further, Jews may be come to be seen in a light which puts an unfair amount of pressure, and obligations on them.

Additional concerns with regards to Christian Zionism are the effects it has on the political climate within the Middle East. Understanding Israel thought the lens of the narrowly defined doctrines of evangelical Christian ideology; Christian Zionism seeks to

define the land of Israel based upon the historical boundaries established in the Bible. Consequently, peaceful negotiations are often rejected by Christian Zionists, and their supporters as these negotiations often involve land secessions. Additionally, the stance of Christian Zionists towards Muslims is often times troubling.

_Hagee, Christian Zionism, and Islam_

In addition to Hagee’s controversial view on God’s plan for the Jews and the Holocaust, Hagee harbors anti-Islamic sentiment, and actively expresses this to his followers. This is another dangerous subsection of CUFI, as it breeds hatred towards Muslims around the world. Strewn within Hagee’s stance on Israel, is his denouncement of Islam, and in particular Iran.¹¹⁸ This anti-Islamic sentiment originates from Hagee’s understanding of dispensationalist thought. One of the precursors to the Second Coming is that the Jewish people must rebuild the third Temple before the second coming of Christ can take place.¹¹⁹ However, the Muslim holy site of the Dome of the Rock, and the Al-Aqsa Mosque are currently sitting atop the Temple Mount, which is traditionally believed to be the location of where a future Temple will be built.¹²⁰ Therefore, Islamic shrines represent a major hurdle to Christ’s return. Consequently, Islam is looked down upon and seen with disdain in the eyes of Christians who subscribe to rapture theology.¹²¹

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Today, there are Jewish organizations which are making plans to reconstruct the Third Temple.\textsuperscript{122} Obviously this is welcome news to evangelical Christians.

For the aforementioned reasons, Hagee and his followers unwaveringly support Israel, and the Jewish people, they hold the completely opposite view of Islam, and the Muslim people. This has additional consequences, as Hagee and his followers see the Palestinians in a negative light for two reasons. Muslim Palestinians are seen not only as a barrier to Jewish sovereignty in Israel, but also a roadblock religiously, as Islam blocks the rebuilding of the Third Temple. Palestinians are not only living in parts of Biblical Israel, which is an obstacle to Jewish sovereignty in the land, but their influence in Jerusalem is an added barrier. Prior to 2007, the main banner on the website for CUFI, which every visitor to the site would see was a doctored picture of Jerusalem, with the Western Wall and Temple Mount, but without the Dome of The Rock.\textsuperscript{123} While Hagee, and board members of CUFI claim that the doctored photo was unintentional, and an oversight, it is difficult to lend full credibility to this claim, after the anti-Islamic rhetoric the group portrays. Clearly, this is an attempt on the part of CUFI to diminish the Islamic religion, and portray a Jerusalem which is ready for the rebuilding of the third Temple.

In similar fashion to CUFI and other Christian Zionist organization, there are factions of ultra religious Jews who seek to hasten the redemption through their actions. Many Christian Zionists work closely with, and support such groups. The area of the Temple Mount is one of the holiest sites for both Jews and Muslims. Some Jewish Hardim share many of the same political ideologies as the Christian Zionists, and

\textsuperscript{122} Organizations include, The Temple Institute, \url{http://www.templeinstitute.org/}, Temple Mount Faithful, \url{http://www.templemountfaithful.org/}, Revava, \url{http://www.revava.org/}

understand themselves to be agents of God. Some have gone so far as having planned on multiple occasions to blow up the Temple Mount in order to hasten the coming of their Messianic figure. These individuals plan on rebuilding the Third Temple where the Dome of the Rock currently sits. While this action is not only rejected by mainstream society, as it is a deplorable terrorist act, it is also rejected by members within the Chief Rabbinate in Israel. This is due to the belief that Jews should not enter the area of the Temple Mount prior to the arrival of the Messiah. Clearly these Jewish Messianists intertwine sacred places within Israel with the coming of the Messiah. They actively attempt to bring about redemption. Christian Zionists also support the building of the third Temple on the site of the Dome of the Rock, as many view this as the event which will trigger the apocalypse. Both groups favor Jewish rights and traditions over Muslim tradition. This is due to the impediment which the Muslims represent to the Messianic actions of the Christian and Jewish fundamentalists.

While radical Islamist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah are definitely a threat to Israel, and the western world, Hagee fails to differentiate between radical Islam and the Islam practiced by the overwhelming majority of Muslims around the world. The percentage of Muslims who practice and take part in radical Islam is relatively low when compared to the overall Muslim population. Additionally, Hagee fails to understand that an overwhelmingly large portion of the world’s Muslim population resides in places outside of the Middle East such as Indonesia. It is close minded views on Islam which give the West a negative perception around the world. Hagee asserts on National Public

125 Ibid.
126 Lindsey, 46.
Radio that, “those who live by the Qur’an have a scriptural mandate to kill Christians and Jews.”127 By making such a claim, Hagee spreads the message of hate, and ignorance to his followers. Hagee is attempting to strike fear into the hearts of his followers in order to garner support for an attack on Iran, and Islam, which he views as key steps to the return of Christ.

Continuing with Hagee’s views on Islam and the return of Christ is his views on the role Iran, as Hagee is a vocal supporter of a military attack on Iran. Hagee understands Iran to be a key player within the apocalyptic end of days. Hagee makes the interpretation from Biblical sources that if Israel and the U.S. were to preemptively struck Iran, Russia, and Iran would respond triggering the war of Ezekiel.128 Following this war, the battle of Armageddon will be ushered in.129 Hagee understands from his dispensationalist ideology to view the nations of Russia, and Iran as the Kingdoms from the North which seek to defeat the Jews. However, outside of the writings he produced prior to his rise to notoriety, Hagee publicly denies the notion that he supports an invasion of Iran based on Biblical prophecy. Instead Hagee asserts that his support for war with Iran is based on his belief that it represents an immediate threat to Israel in a secular, political, and security driven way.130

Hagee uses fear tactics in order to convince his followers as well as the general public and members of Washington D.C. in order to hasten the battle of Armageddon. While Iran undoubtedly is a nation which must be monitored in the future, Hagee portrays Iran as an immediate threat to both the U.S. and Israel in his book Jerusalem.

128 Hagee, Jerusalem Countdown, 148-149.
129 Ibid.
130 John Hagee, Speech to American Israel Public Affairs Committee.
Countdown; however he fails to adequately cite sources for much of his information regarding Iran. Much of Hagee’s rhetoric concerning Iran is comparing President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Hitler. This has two effective consequences. One is that it evokes the memory of Hitler to Israel, and the Jewish people who forever remember the horrors of the holocaust. This is an attempt to garner support from Israel and the Jews to attack Iran. The second motive to comparing Ahmadinejad to Hitler is to try and force the U.S. to taking action against a dictatorial leader abroad, much the same way the U.S. brought down the Nazi regime in Germany decades earlier. Hagee is attempting to hasten the battle of Armageddon at any means possible. Hagee’s stance on Islam and the Middle East is detrimental to all parties involved. While the Islamic religion certainly has its share of religious fundamentalist groups, they represent an aberration and not the norm within the Islamic world. Hagee’s ideological stance breeds hatred, and creates a collision course for his followers with the Middle East. This collision course however, is exactly what Hagee is aiming for as he hopes to set off the beginning of the end.

Sarah Palin, the Vice Presidential nominee running on the McCain ticket in the 2008 election is an evangelical Christian. According to Tucker Eskew, the counselor to Palin, Palin “would describe herself as a strong supporter of Israel's, with an understanding of Israel's fear of an Iran in possession of nuclear weapons.” Palin’s beliefs mirror those of Hagee, as she views Iran’s nuclear potential as an immediate threat which must be dealt with. She also has voiced her opinion that war in Iraq is a

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131 Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown.*
132 Ibid.
“task that is from God.” Palin echoes the teachings of Hagee’s end time prophecy, and Armageddon scenario. It is no surprise then, that Hagee would be quick to endorse the McCain ticket as he would have needed to do little to influence their foreign policy decisions, as both share similar views. While Hillary Clinton, another presidential candidate in 2008 was a harsh critic of Iran and strong supporter of Israel, CUFI and other Christian Zionists were not supportive of her. Many of the other important political positions taken by Clinton did not coincide with the positions of Christian Zionists. Christian Zionism is one of many platforms which the Christian Right adhere to and support of Clinton would have been too large of a leap to take, as her policies differ from those of the Christian Right in almost every respect. Clinton’s support of Israel was based much more on secular democratic principles than with Messianic grounds.

The Koshering of Christian Zionism

Hagee seeks to combat the image of harboring anti-Semitic sentiment by introducing prominent Jewish figures into the spotlight of CUFI events. One of the most notable of these figures is Senator Joseph Lieberman. Lieberman was a key speaker at the 2007 Washington-Israel summit. However, many Jews throughout the world were shocked and outraged by Lieberman’s decision to speak at this event and vehemently

135 A night to Honor Israel, Christians United for Israel on http://www.cufi.org/site/PageServer?pagename=event_Night_to_Honor_Israel_DC_2008
tried to persuade him not to attend. If Hagee is perceived as an anti-Semitic figure, why would a prominent Jewish leader such as Lieberman attend such a conference? While Hagee would benefit from Lieberman’s presence, Lieberman on the surface does not appear to have a motive which would enhance his image throughout the Jewish or political realm. However, it must be remembered that Lieberman was the Democratic Vice Presidential candidate in 2000, with Al Gore at the front of the ticket. John McCain, had yet to pick a Vice Presidential candidate at the time of Lieberman’s first endorsements of Hagee, and McCain was at the time seeking the backing of Hagee. There was much speculation that Joe Lieberman would be Senator McCain’s running mate in the November, 2008 election. Lieberman’s ties to Hagee may have been an attempt to better position himself for running on McCain’s ticket. Hagee benefits as Lieberman is a step in the process towards legitimizing CUFI amongst the Jewish world, as well as moderate and left in the political sphere.

While Lieberman is the most highly visible Jewish figure to support Hagee and CUFI, there are other Jewish leaders who associate themselves, and support Hagee and his followers. However, the support from these Jewish figures most likely is a result of an entirely different set of reasons. In a world in which the state of Israel is routinely criticized, and attacked, some Jewish leaders are willing to accept the support from anyone willing to extend a friendly hand. The underlying motive of the Christian Zionists does not bother these Jewish leaders, as they are more concerned that they have a strong ally in the world for which they can rely on. Past Prime Ministers of Israel such as

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Menachem Begin and Benjamin Netanyahu have praised the works of Christian Zionist leaders, and publicly applauded their efforts. Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has associated himself with John Hagee, and CUFI. Hagee supports many of the same political positions as Netanyahu and the Likud party; however they have different underlying motives. However, Netanyahu is not concerned with Hagee’s motivation for support, and will accept whatever form of support he can gather.

While some Jewish leaders may accept the support of Christian Zionists, it is possible that they are unaware of the underlying motives behind these organizations. Michael J. Pragai, a former member of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the head of the department for liaison with Christian churches and organizations writes naively on Christian support for Israel. He does not mention anything about dispensationalist ideology or end times scenarios in Christian support for Israel. He portrays a picture of Christian support for Israel based on the historical significance of the land with the attachment to Jesus. Some Israeli’s are unable to differentiate between Christians who support Israel based on secular and democratic principles, and those who hold eschatological views with Israel at the center. One of the biggest allies of Christian Zionists within Israel was Menachem Begin. Begin met numerous times with evangelical Christian leaders such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson and reached out for support.

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140 Ariel, 87.
from the segment of Christians who supported Israel. These Christian Zionist leaders did not actively endorse their eschatological views and it is possible that Begin was naïve enough not to fully comprehend the severity or depth of dispensationalist ideology. Further, the Christian right and Begin’s Likud party shared many of the same beliefs on political issues outside the world of Israeli politics. Begin’s Likud party has become the biggest ally of Christian Zionism, as both sides are influenced by conservative religious ideology, which also coincides with conservative political thought. While the Likud party may be well versed in Jewish beliefs, it is quite possible that they are unaware of the dangers presented by the eschatological beliefs of their Christian Zionist counterparts.

Another possible explanation for the acceptance of Christian Zionist support is due to the fact that Jews do not believe in the second coming and therefore do not fear any repercussions of accepting support from such groups. Additionally, Christian Zionist organizations are very adept and skilled at fundraising. As of 2004 the total revenue for John Hagee Ministries was over Ten Million Dollars, with Net Assets close to Eight Million Dollars. By accepting support from these organizations, some Israeli politicians may be looking to secure financial contributions to their political parties in order to win political seats. While Evangelical Christians use the Jews as a means to an end with respect to their role in Dispensationalist ideology, the roles are reversed when the Jews accept the support of Christian Zionists. The Jews are simply using these Christians for their support.

The Public Hagee vs. The Private Hagee

One of the interesting features of Hagee is his ability to express different pieces of information, and ideas to different audiences. Hagee is forced to simultaneously appease numerous segments of public opinion. While the underlying goal of CUFI is to ensure Jewish sovereignty is in place in Israel, in order for the Second Coming to take place, Hagee is unable to publicly voice this, for fear of retribution. Hagee, when asked by members of the media about his support of Israel, claims that his support for Israel is not based on the second coming, or an end time’s scenario.\textsuperscript{143} However, in many of the writing intended for his followers, there are clear references to the Second Coming, as well as prophetic predictions.\textsuperscript{144} In order to better control the dissemination of information to his followers, Hagee would not allow reporters into his Washington-Israel summit.\textsuperscript{145} However, some of the material from those conferences has been distributed to the public, as some weary of Hagee attended such conferences portraying themselves as supporters of CUFI. The simple banning of reporters from these gatherings is evidence that Hagee wants to speak to his supporters in a different setting and with a different tone than if the media were present. Hagee should welcome media attention as one of his goals is to attract increasing numbers of supporters. However, speaking freely about his true beliefs on the End of Times and Israel is obviously more important to him than media attention.

\textsuperscript{145} Jews on First, “John Hagee’s Christians United for Israel Conference Mixes End-Times Prophecies With Lobbying,” \url{http://www.jewsonfirst.org/08a/cufi_de08.html}
Pastor Hagee has come into the spotlight in recent times due to many of his controversial viewpoints as well as for his fervent support for the state of Israel. CUFI was founded in order for any pro-Israel Church in the U.S. to voice their opinion in support of the state of Israel, as related to Biblical matters. CUFI, in effect centralizes all of the support for Israel from the Christian world into one organization under the leadership of Hagee. While Hagee publicly denies that his support for the state of Israel is based on eschatological prophecy, his writings show a vastly different perspective. In his book entitled, Jerusalem Countdown: A Warning to the World, Hagee writes, “No one could see the horror of the Holocaust coming, but the force and fear of Hitler's Nazis drove the Jewish people back to the only home that God ever intended for the Jews to have—Israel.” Hagee argues that Hitler was sent by God as an agent of change, in order to bring the Jewish people back to the land of Israel, and fulfill Biblical prophecy. Interestingly, this viewpoint is shared by some ultra-religious members within the Jewish world, mostly from Hasidic backgrounds. Publicly, Hagee deviates from this position, as He is unable to fully, and publicly express his dispensationalist ideology for fear of losing public support. Hagee is forced to straddle two worlds simultaneously, the evangelical Christian world, and the secular political world.

If Hagee publicly comes off as leading a religiously charged fringe movement, he will lose the support of the political leaders he desperately needs. This is due to the fact that politicians do not want to be associated with people who are displayed in a negative light. This was seen in the past Presidential election, as President Barack Obama tried to

146 Christians United for Israel “Statement of Purpose,” www.cufi.org
distance himself from his former Pastor, Jeremiah Wright, and John McCain eventually tried to distance himself from Hagee. However, neither candidate sought to distance themselves from either controversial figure until negative publicity was generated. In fact, McCain was seeking the endorsement of Hagee, and was grateful when it arrived. While McCain may have tried to distance himself from Hagee, CUFI was able to generate enough damage control in order to keep Hagee and CUFI alive in the political world.

Nowhere are Hagee’s underlying intentions more lucient than his Exodus II campaign through JHM. Exodus II seeks to aid in Jewish restoration to Israel by giving Jews the financial support to immigrate, and live in Israel. Hagee fundraises in and asks for donations from his Christian followers in order to bring destitute Jews into the land of Israel. Hagee created the slogan for Exodus II to evoke feelings of taking part in God’s will. The slogan reads, “Become Part of Biblical Prophecy.” Hagee craftily introduces Biblical Prophecy in order to encourage his followers to return the Jewish people to their homeland. By introducing a prophetical aspect of returning Jews to Israel, Hagee is demonstrating his desire, and ambition of Jews residing in Israel based upon prophetic Biblical teachings which call for Jewish sovereignty in Israel prior to the Second Coming. One of the central beliefs of JHM is the return of Jesus as it is visibly written in their code of beliefs that, “We believe in His [Jesus] substitutionary death for

151 John Hagee Ministries, “Exodus II” https://www.jhm.org/ME2/Sites/dirmod.asp?sid=&type=forms&mod=Smart+Forms&sfid=1D57124D58B1463B8A2130A7BE58182C&tier=1&SiteID=973F95B9970A4625AB045F5C8E33EF1C
all men, His resurrection, and His eventual return to judge the world.”152 Clearly, Hagee sends two different messages to his audiences. Privately, he admits to his followers to holding dispensationalist ideologies, but when publicly questioned about his beliefs he denies it. Hagee fears that if he publicly expresses his dispensationalist views, he will lose his credibility, and consequently, his ability to exert power in the political world.

Interestingly, Hagee has introduced within JHM recurring donation plan known as the salt covenant. According the JHM website, a salt covenant was a Biblical tradition where two people would make an agreement by mixing together grains of salt from one another’s pouches.153 This is done in order to once again evoke images of Biblical times. However, the most interesting aspect of becoming a salt covenant member within the JHM is that staff members pray daily for such members. This seems to be a variation on the indulgences which were sold by the Catholic Church. This is interesting to note because Hagee has been at odds with many Catholics, however this is a practice which was once used by the Catholic Church. This is important to note because it demonstrates Hagee’s ability to be at odds with a particular group yet still borrow from their past. This can translate to Hagee’s anti-Semitic remarks yet support for the Jewish people in Israel.

Conclusions

While U.S. support for Israel is undeniably linked to such secular factors as promoting peace, building a democracy in the Middle East, and supporting the rights of

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153 Website for John Hagee Ministries, www.jhm.org
the Jewish people to live in freedom and security, dispensationalist Christian ideology also plays a role in the U.S. support of Israel. The recent invigoration of the Christian Zionist movement has increased within Washington in recent years, and support for Israel has subsequently increased. This increased support from the Christian Zionists is directly linked with the outcome of the Six-Day War in 1967. This was a watershed event for Christian Zionists, as Jewish sovereignty over Jerusalem was seen as Divinely inspired and guided, and fulfilling Biblical Prophecy. While these events were important in the world of Christian Zionism, the roots of Christian Zionists theology took root in England in the 19th century.

The most vocal, and prominent leader within the Christian Zionist movement is Pastor John Hagee. Through the establishment of his organization CUFI, Hagee has localized and given a tangible center for Christian Zionist activists. Additionally, the movement has gained membership as it was established in the model of a grassroots organization. Hagee has become a well known figure in the political community, and garners national media attention. While it has become fashionable in recent times to criticize Jewish organizations such as AIPAC, it is the Christian Zionist organizations which yield a large portion of power in Washington. However, it is crucial to realize that while CUFI and groups like it may yield some power in Washington, and account for some of the decision making that goes into U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, it is one of many factors and does not influence every politician, and every decision about the state of Israel. However, it is clear that while the U.S. was founded on the platform of a separation of church and state, religious ideology does play a factor in shaping foreign policy decision making regarding the state of Israel.
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