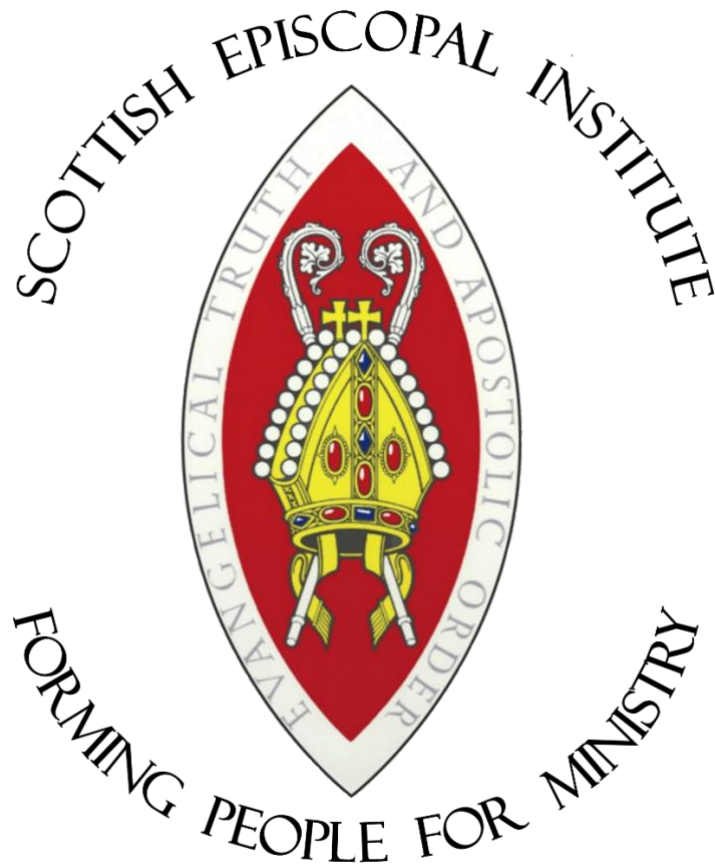


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## Editorial: Christianity and Zionism

Nicholas Taylor

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Few contemporary issues of justice and human rights pose such direct challenges to Christian theology as the Zionist settler-colonial project in Palestine, and the centuries of Western Christian persecution of European Jewry, complemented by the evangelical tradition of Christian Zionism that preceded it, and which continues to shape the Middle Eastern policy of the UK and the USA, and of other countries.

This collection of essays is by no means comprehensive, and it is particularly unfortunate that it has not proved possible to include the work of Palestinian theologians. Nor must it be forgotten that Jewish and Muslim voices also need to be heard, not least in countries that have thus far been part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Notwithstanding these limitations, it is hoped that these contributions will inform and stimulate theological reflection on issues for which the UK has a historical responsibility, and to which Scots have made quite distinct contributions.

The fraught issues surrounding anti-Semitism in relation to lived reality in Palestine are sensitively addressed by David Neuhaus. A South African Jew and the son of refugees from Nazi Germany, he converted to Christianity while living in Israel. A former vicar of the Hebrew-speaking congregations under the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, he is well qualified to address the reality of anti-Semitism, the imperative of justice for the Palestinian people, and the need to confront both issues vigorously.

Many of the formative influences on Christian Zionism emerged from Scottish Protestantism. These are explored by Alasdair Black, Senior Pastor of Stirling Baptist Church and Lecturer in the University of the West of Scotland.

Paul Wilson, Lecturer at Tilsey Bible College in Motherwell, who has extensive experience of working with refugees and asylum seekers, focuses on a distinct biblical text, namely Stephen's speech in Acts 7. Its reflection on the history of Israel, with motifs of migration, exile and the hope of restoration and of divine judgement, resonates powerfully with the lived experience of both Jews and Palestinians.

The Dutch theologian Steven Paas explores ways in which Christian Zionism does a profound injustice to Israelis and Palestinians alike, challenging Christians to consider those most affected by their ideological commitments, and most vulnerable to the social, economic and political consequences of these.

Turning to the Anglican Communion, Nicholas Taylor offers a review of and response to the report entitled *Land of Promise?*, which was published by the Anglican Communion Network for Inter Faith Concerns in 2012, and remains the uncontested statement of global Anglicanism on the subject of Christian Zionism.

## Antisemitism and Palestine

David M. Neuhaus SJ<sup>1</sup>

Two words are much debated in the circles that try to formulate a vision for the political future of the Holy Land: antisemitism and Palestine. Too often the word antisemitism is used to silence those who use the word Palestine. Too often, those who raise the issue of Palestine adopt tropes that resonate with antisemitism. Here, we will examine the reality of antisemitism and the necessity of justice for the Palestinian people.

### ***Antisemitism: A reality***

Anti-Judaism, as distinct from antisemitism, was transmitted for centuries within wide-spread traditional Christian discourse. Jews were defined as those who had killed Jesus of Nazareth, believed by Christians to be the Son of God, when they had him crucified and those who are blind as long as they continue to deny that he is the Messiah and Saviour. Jews were too often discriminated against and marginalized, victimized and expelled, over the centuries because of a teaching of contempt that promoted hostility to Jews and Judaism.

Anti-Judaism mutated into antisemitism at the dawn of modernity and gathered impetus in the second half of the nineteenth century. Exclusion, discrimination, outbursts of violence and finally genocide directed against Jews in various places in Europe and beyond was no longer based upon theological tropes but rather on ethnocentric rhetoric that framed Jews as the perpetual outsiders, essentially treasonous, unable and unwilling to integrate and ominously hostile. Whereas Jews could escape from anti-Judaism by converting to Christianity, there was no escape from antisemitism.

From the end of the nineteenth century and through the first half of the twentieth century millions of Jews were murdered and millions more

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<sup>1</sup> Dr David M. Neuhaus is a South African Jew of German descent, converted to Christianity as a young adult living in Israel. He subsequently joined the Society of Jesus and was ordained in the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, serving for many years as Patriarchal Vicar of its Hebrew speaking Congregations, and subsequently as Superior of the Society of Jesus in the Holy Land. He holds a doctorate in Political Science from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and degrees in Scripture and Theology from Jesuit institutions in Paris and Rome. He has taught at Bethlehem University, the Latin Patriarchate Seminary at Beit Jala, and other Roman Catholic institutions in Palestine and Israel.

uprooted as antisemitism materialized into state policies, bureaucratized brutality and precision-planned genocide. The pathological impulses of ethnocentric nationalism and racist populism brought a cataclysmic end to much of the variegated Jewish societies and cultures that had enriched the European continent for two millennia. Jews who had clung to their multiple European homelands over centuries and had hoped to integrate in them as equal citizens in the wake of the emancipation heralded by the French Revolution, too often found themselves forced to choose between death and exile. This reached its peak during the course of the Second World War, when during the Shoah millions of Jews were murdered, entire communities were obliterated and the centre of the remnant Jewish world transferred from Europe to Israel/Palestine and the United States of America.

### ***Defining antisemitism today***

Whereas the ongoing fight against antisemitism wherever it raises its ugly head is undoubtedly a necessary part of the wider struggle against all forms of racism and xenophobia, some have developed definitions of antisemitism that delegitimize the struggle for justice and peace in Palestine. Cynical political use of antisemitism has been made in order to silence Palestinians and their supporters, accusing critics of Zionism and the State of Israel of engaging in anti-Jewish discourse and action. Criticism of Zionism and Israel are presented as indistinguishable from rejection of Jews and Judaism.

Needless to say, some fighters for justice in Palestine might indeed be prone to antisemitic discourse or action in the course of defending the rights of Palestinians and promoting justice in Palestine. However, criticizing Zionist ideology, the politics and practices of the State of Israel, its military or state organisms and acting against them do not constitute antisemitism per se. It is true that there is a fine line to be drawn here to prevent legitimate criticism from becoming racist diatribe but the line must be drawn. A number of recent definitions try to do this with greater or lesser finesse. However, ultimately this can only be done coherently and with moral integrity when the struggle against all forms of racism, injustice and human rights abuses includes an awareness of both the pernicious traces of continuing antisemitism and the myriad forms of anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab sentiment, Islamophobia and the brutal whitewashing of occupation and discrimination in Israel-Palestine today. Ultimately, those fighting antisemitism, those defending the rights of Palestinians and those promoting a vision of a society in Israel/Palestine based upon justice, peace and equality are allies in building a better world and not foes.

### ***Antisemitism: A catastrophe for Jews and for Palestinians***

Modern antisemitism has been a catastrophe for both Jews and Palestinians. Directly destroying the lives of Jews, it has also inflicted devastating



collateral damage on Palestinians who are expected to diminish their presence in their homeland or even disappear altogether in order to make place for Jews who have survived.

The catastrophe for the Jews of Europe in the twentieth century became a Palestinian catastrophe too. Survivors from the Jewish European communities, decimated by antisemitic violence, opted for laying an increasingly exclusive claim to Palestine from the 1880s onwards. Modern Jewish migration to Palestine began in the aftermath of the antisemitic pogroms in the Russian Empire. The trickle, then flow and finally mass migration of Jews to Palestine after the Second World War was aided and abetted by some Europeans who sympathized with Jews in their suffering.

Christian and Jewish Zionists, who promoted this migration and cultivated Jewish political aspirations in Palestine, acted on their convictions within the context of the European colonialist enterprise, the building of empires in Asia and Africa. British 19<sup>th</sup> century politician Lord Shaftesbury phrased the agenda for Palestine, one future Western Asian piece of the British Empire, as "*a land without a people for a people without a land*". Nobly troubled by Jewish suffering in Eastern Europe, he was remarkably uninterested in the fate of the people that lived in Palestine, an indigenous people in a soon to be colonized territory, just one more non-European people woefully overlooked as if it did not exist. Lord Arthur Balfour shared his sympathies and his ignorance and the declaration that bore his name changed the course of history in Palestine.

The Shoah, the term used to speak of the destruction of European Jewry during the Second World War, is an indelible historical stain on the history of humanity. However, the Shoah and the Nakbah, the term used to speak of the destruction of Palestinian society in 1948, are undeniably linked together in history. During the Shoah, antisemitism reached a satanic apotheosis. The industry of genocide attained heights of efficiency that can only terrify the human imagination. Many insist that this event is incomparable to other events and no comparison is intended here. The horrific events of the Shoah convinced many that the Jews needed a homeland and perhaps even a state. In engineering the realization of those goals, the Nakbah was set in motion. Was this necessarily so? The speculative academic debate that seeks to answer this query does not however change the reality that devolved from those events – the establishment of a state defined as Jewish led to the relegation of Palestinians to the margins of history and the loss of their homeland went almost unnoticed.

Whereas the Shoah was brought to an end by the victory of the Allies and the destruction of Nazi rule, the Nakbah has had no resolution as of yet and the life of Palestinians persists in its shadow: life in exile in a far-flung

Diaspora, under occupation in the territories conquered by Israel in the 1967 War and facing discrimination within the borders of the state of Israel. A highly recommended recent collection of articles courageously proposes a language that has Shoah and Nakbah sharing a syntax and grammar in order to promote deeper understanding of the shared world out of which both Jews and Palestinians emerged profoundly scarred. Its editors suggest: The aim of this book is to mitigate or challenge the dichotomy between these two mainstream narratives. It seeks to transcend the binary, dichotomous confines that these national narratives impose on history, memory, and identity in order to consider the two narratives together. We propose another register of history and memory - one that honors the uniqueness of each event, its circumstances and consequences, as well as their differences, but also offers a common historical and conceptual framework within which both narratives may be addressed. We are suggesting a wholly different syntax and grammar of history and memory, in which the combination "Holocaust and Nakba" or "Nakba and Holocaust" makes historical, cultural, and political sense.<sup>2</sup>

***Commitment to end antisemitism and end the occupation of Palestine***

Sadly, antisemitism remains a reality today. Indeed, there are Jews who still face slurs against their identity, discrimination, injustice and even violence because they are Jews. This cannot be denied. Furthermore, it needs to be said loud and clear that the just struggle for an end to occupation and discrimination in Israel/Palestine is not in competition with or opposed to the struggle to root out antisemitism wherever it manifests its hatred and aggression. In fact, the struggle against antisemitism and the struggle for the rights and dignity of Palestinians are parts of one and the same struggle for a world free of injustice, racism and violence of any kind.

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<sup>2</sup> Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg (editors), *The Holocaust and the Nakba; A New Grammar of Trauma and History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 5.

# The Zionist Ideals of Scottish Presbyterianism and the Balfour Declaration

Alasdair Black

Senior Pastor, Stirling Baptist Church

In 1919, Nahum Sokolow published his monumental *History of Zionism 1600-1918* in two volumes. Sokolow was a Polish Jewish journalist who helped to facilitate the first World Zionist Congress, convened by Theodore Herzl in 1897, and he served as its president from 1931 to 1935. In 1914, after the outbreak of the First World War, he moved to London where he became involved in the intricate worldwide negotiations to secure the Balfour Declaration, often crisscrossing Europe to lobby the international power brokers.<sup>1</sup> This standing is testified to by the wording that Arthur James Balfour, the then British Foreign Secretary, uses in his introduction to the first volume of Sokolow's work (Stephen Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, renders the same service to the second volume). In these volumes, Sokolow argues that the key English-speaking decision makers who fashioned the Declaration were driven by an idea, not simply a political expediency. He maintains that behind Balfour's edict is a religious philosophy derived from the Christian and Jewish scriptures which had found expression in the changing socio-political realities of his day. These socio-political realities were not insignificant, but without the influence — and especially English interpretations — of the Christian scriptures the future of Zionism in Palestine would not have been secured by these political realities alone. Events 'influenced – in a favourable or unfavourable manner – the evolution of the Zionist idea', which stood independent of those

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Israeli historian Martin Kramer, Sokolow's role in securing the assent of Britain's French Allies and of the Vatican, which controlled many Christian holy sites in Palestine, was a necessary precondition for the Balfour Declaration. Sokolow won support for the Declaration on 4 May 1917 from Pope Benedict XV, who described the return of the Jews to Palestine as 'providential; God has willed it'. He then played an important part in winning over France and gaining the Cambon Letter of 4 June 1917, which was signed by Jules Cambon, the head of the political section of the French Foreign Ministry. Martin Kramer, 'The Forgotten Truth About the Balfour Declaration', *Mosaic*, 5 June 2017 [accessed 15 May 2023].

events.<sup>2</sup> Zionism was primarily the outworking of a particular biblical view of history and eschatology in the political arena. Sadly, the significance of this work has often been overlooked by historians of the period, although it provides us with contemporaneous commentary during the critical period of the lead-up to the Balfour Declaration.

It is claimed that this Declaration on 2 November 1917 changed the course of twentieth-century history with three short sentences. Writing to Lord Rothschild, the effective leader of the Anglo-Jewish community, Balfour informed him that the British Cabinet ‘viewed with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people’. The statement went much further than any had done previously in promising that the British government would ‘use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object’. This document was the single most important political development in the history of Zionism (or Jewish nationalism), from their lowly beginnings to the United Nations vote in 1948 which created the modern state of Israel.<sup>3</sup> In this short, typewritten letter, the most powerful and expansive empire known in human history committed itself to the Jewish people in a unique way. (The Declaration itself was issued when Britain was on the brink of defeating the Ottoman Empire in war and thereby acquiring Palestine. In fact this was at the very time that Allied troops under Sir Edmund Allenby were approaching Jerusalem, which eventually fell on 9 December 1917.) In July 1922, the Council of the League of Nations enshrined the commitment made in the Declaration in its Palestine Mandate, which formally assigned Britain the governing of Palestine and acknowledged an explicit responsibility to enable the Jews to establish a national home in the country. Yet as the Jewish intellectual Arthur Koestler has observed, the Declaration is ‘one of the most improbable political documents of all time’, in which ‘one nation solemnly promised to a second nation the country of a third’.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Nahum Sokolow, *History of Zionism, 1600–1918* (with a new introduction by Arthur Hertzberg) (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1969), p. xi.

<sup>3</sup> See David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1989); Isaiah Friedman, *The Question of Palestine: British-Jewish-Arab Relations: 1914–1918*, 2nd edn (New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Cited by Kramer, 2017. See also William Matthew, ‘War-time Contingency and the Balfour Declaration of 1917. An Improbable Regression’, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 40 (2011), 26–42.

Historians have long debated why the British Government made such an improbable declaration of support for the Zionist cause. The problem is that the Declaration came *ex cathedra*, as it were — from on high. The coalition cabinet represented all of the parties except for the Asquith Liberals, and had a much greater degree of autonomy than any peacetime cabinet. It operated enshrouded in secrecy, gave no reasons for the Declaration, outlined no conditions (other than those in the Declaration itself) and expected no accountability. The Declaration was not debated in either of the Houses of Parliament and, like most foreign policy issues, it was never approved by the British legislature. Balfour merely minuted in Cabinet ‘I have asked Ld Rothschild and Professor Weizmann to submit a formula’.<sup>5</sup>

Recent studies such as Jonathan Schneer’s richly documented *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab Israeli Conflict* have argued that there is nothing inevitable about the way in which the Declaration came about.<sup>6</sup> Schneer, a professor at Georgia Tech’s School of History, Technology and Society, believes that the Declaration is largely attributable to the political genius of Chaim Weizmann, a Russian-born biochemist who went on to become Israel’s first president. Weizmann moved to London in 1904 and began to influence the political establishment as the principal advocate of British Zionism. Schneer maintains that he used the inherent anti-Semitism of this establishment, which assumed it is ‘impossible to exaggerate the international power of the Jews’, to secure important concessions. ‘The British government believed, like so many through history, that Jews were more powerful than was the case, more united than was the case, and more pro-Zionist than was the case’.<sup>7</sup> The suggested narrative is that, through exceptional statecraft and a degree of duplicity, Weizmann convinced a gullible British imperial power that its interests were best served by supporting a Jewish homeland in the Middle East. Yet even allowing for a certain inevitable ineptitude of the British government and its foreign policy, is it possible that the British really thought a tiny minority of Jews represented a better political and military prospect than their existing relationships with their Arab partners? As late as 1914, there were only around 8000 Zionists in a British Jewish community of over 300,000.<sup>8</sup> The British cabinet surely knew that the majority of existing European Jewry did

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<sup>5</sup> Doreen Ingrams, *Palestine Papers. 1917–1922: Seeds of Conflict* (London: Eland, 1972), p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> London: Bloomsbury, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Walter Mead, ‘The American Zionist Dream’, *The Tablet*, 30 June 2022a.

<sup>8</sup> Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), p. 78.

not support Zionism.<sup>9</sup> It cannot have escaped their notice that the only practising Jewish member of the British cabinet at the time was one of the Declaration's fiercest critics. Edward Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, was adamant that the concept of a Jewish return to Palestine was deeply flawed, and in a letter dated 16 March 1915 he asserts:

I cannot see any Jews I know tending olive trees or herding sheep [...] if only our peoples would [...] take their place [in our societies], then Zionism would obviously die and Jews might find their way to esteem.<sup>10</sup>

To many Jews the Balfour Declaration represented Balfour and Lloyd-George imposing on an English Jewry a policy that most of them did not want, and which they suspected was deeply anti-Semitic.

However, earlier explanations of the Declaration fare little better. In 1961, in a seminal book entitled *The Balfour Declaration*, Leonard Stein tries to interpret the events of 1917 through the prism of imperial strategic interests. He maintains that the establishing of a Jewish homeland in Palestine was an attempt by Britain to secure the Suez Canal, and with it the prized trade routes to India and supplies of oil from the Persian Gulf (which were already essential, as the British Grand Fleet of battleships had recently converted from coal to oil). British forces had occupied Egypt since 1882, and the control of the Levant was the next logical step in British colonial

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<sup>9</sup> In January 1915, Sir Herbert Samuel, the first practising Jew to serve in a British government, had circulated around the cabinet a memorandum claiming that there was 'already a stirring among the twelve million scattered, and widespread sympathy with the idea of restoring the Hebrew people to their land'. Yet this claim was treated with incredulity. The Liberal Prime Minister at the time, Herbert Asquith, whose sympathy did not lie with the Jews, was completely derisory about the proposition in a letter he wrote to his friend Venetia Stanley. He mockingly commented that the scattered Jews would 'in time swarm back from all quarters of the globe (to Palestine) and in due course obtain Home Rule (what an attractive community!). Curiously enough, the only other partisan of this proposal is Lloyd George [the Chancellor of the Exchequer], who, I need not say, does not give a damn for the Jews, but thinks it will be an outrage to let the Holy Places pass into the hands of "agnostic and atheistic" France'. Cited in Geoffrey Lewis, *Balfour and Weizmann: The Zionist, the Zealot and the Emergence of Israel* (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 84–5.

<sup>10</sup> Cited in Schneer, 2011, p. 146.

aspirations.<sup>11</sup> Yet this analysis, like so many others, fails to recognise the Arab presence in Palestine. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Jews constituted less than five percent of the total population. Surely working with the overwhelming Arab majority, and not alienating them, represented the best way to achieve any imperial aspiration in the region. Again Montagu, who as Secretary of State for India was responsible for the wider interests of the British Empire, writes: 'Palestine in itself offers little or no attraction to Great Britain from a strategical or material point of view [...] [Palestine would be] incomparably a poorer possession than, let us say, Mesopotamia'.<sup>12</sup> Such views must raise questions about the extent to which British interests in the region necessitated the Declaration. Yet if there is no straightforward explanation for the Declaration in imperial or socio-political terms, we should look again at Sokolow's original thesis. Is it possible that religious and Christian conviction, while maybe not representing the whole story, was an important factor in the way that Palestine and the Jews were perceived in 1917, and the subsequent outworking of political events?

The strength of Sokolow's thesis is that it is supported by most of the first-hand testimony from the period. Not only do we have Sokolow's own witness, but also Weizmann in a lecture delivered in 1929 largely confirmed the thesis. In the lecture he claimed that the reason for the declaration was not some perceived pressing political or strategic advantage, or even his own political genius, but the fact that 'British statesmen, British artists, British financiers, writers, explorers [...] believed with the Jews that the day would come when the return of the Jews to Palestine would take place'.<sup>13</sup> He further observed that statesmen such as Balfour 'understood as a reality the concept of the Return. It appealed to their tradition and their faith'. He then added that the driver for the Declaration was 'purely ideal [...] There was a deep-rooted belief that the Jews would return to Palestine, also a deep-rooted belief among the British that they might have a hand in bringing about this return'.<sup>14</sup> This religious heritage was strongly confirmed by Lloyd George in 1925 in a talk that he gave to the Jewish Historical Society of England. In speaking of the motives behind the Declaration, he explained how as the son of a Welsh Baptist schoolmaster, Sunday school had

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<sup>11</sup> See William Matthew, 'The Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate, 1917–1923: British Imperialist Imperatives', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 40 (2013), 231–50.

<sup>12</sup> Cited in Schneer, 2011, p. 146.

<sup>13</sup> Cited by Paul Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism 1891–1948* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 50.

<sup>14</sup> Cited by Merkley, 1998, p. 51.

inculcated in him a 'natural sympathy' toward the Jews and Zionism. He clarified this for his audience:

you must remember, we had been trained even more in Hebrew history than in the history of our own country [...] my schooling in Wales taught me far more about the history of the Jews than about the history of my own land. I could tell you all the kings of Israel. But I doubt whether I could have named half a dozen of the kings of England, and not more of the kings of Wales. We used to recite great passages from the prophets and the Psalms. We were thoroughly imbued with the history of your race in the days of its greatest glory, when it founded that great literature which will echo to the last days of the old world, influencing, moulding, fashioning human character, inspiring and sustaining human motive, for not only Jews, but Gentiles as well.<sup>15</sup>

This biblical influence was also very much part of Balfour's upbringing. Although he was always careful to use the vocabulary of modern statesmanship, occasional glimpses of this religious heritage can be found in his writings. For instance, the Declaration itself affirms that 'Palestine should be reconstituted as the National home of the Jewish people'. The word 'reconstituted' here is very telling, and is indicative of a particular biblical frame of reference. Balfour is envisaging a continuity between the Israel of the Bible and the modern nation state or home of the Jewish people he is involved in establishing. This continuity is a fundamental assumption of what is called 'Christian Zionism'.

There are also other witnesses who claim Balfour himself overtly affirmed that he acted out of Zionist convictions. One such report can be found in the diaries of Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen, a well-connected pro-Zionist who worked in the Colonial Office's Middle East Department from 1917 to 1924.<sup>16</sup> In an entry written on 7 February 1918, Meinertzhagen records:

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<sup>15</sup> Cited by Eitan Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799–1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), p. 182.

<sup>16</sup> Meinertzhagen, who has been described as 'the hinge between Britain and the Palestine administration', in explaining his own Zionist beliefs records how 'what I saw in Odessa on my thirty-second birthday still remains for me one of the most terrible scenes I have ever witnessed [...] I was also much influenced by the Divine Promise that the Holy Land will forever remain Israel's inheritance. Also that the Holy land is inseparably



I put a straight question to Balfour: 'Is this a reward or bribe to the Jews for past services and given in the hope of full support during the war?' Both he, Walter Rothschild and Lady Crewe were indignant. Balfour at once said, 'Certainly not: both the prime minister and myself have been influenced by a desire to give the Jews their rightful place in the world; a great nation without a home is not right'.<sup>17</sup>

To Balfour it was not simply a matter of expediency, but a matter of principle, of justice, that the Jewish nation should not be deprived of a homeland. Such a conviction, alongside what historians call the 'New Imperialism' which shaped British foreign policy at the end of the nineteenth century, might plausibly explain the existence of the Declaration. This 'New Imperialism' saw those parts of the world under the informal control of Britain formally incorporated into the British Empire, without any form of guarantee to the local populations or appeals to international opinion of whatever shade. Outside of the three great powers of the USA, France and Russia, Britain took little notice of the interests of indigenous populations. Politicians such as Balfour acted because they thought it was the right thing to do. This conviction-driven foreign policy is epitomised in a letter, dated 11 August 1918, written by Balfour to Lord Curzon:

In Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country [...] The Four Great Powers are committed to Zionism. And Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.<sup>18</sup>

Although Balfour does not elucidate what those future hopes were, he makes it clear that the Jews must be restored to Palestine for the good of the world, and that all other agendas, including those of the indigenous population, must be subordinated to this end. Such statements are consistent with Balfour supporting Zionism not because of political or military expediency, but from a deep sense of conviction that potentially resonates with a Scottish Presbyterian past.

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intertwined in the Jewish faith and the Jewish people'. Cited in Blake Alcott, *The Rape of Palestine: A Mandate Chronology*, 1 (Berlin: Tredition, 2023), p. 1942.

<sup>17</sup> Alcott, 2023, p. 1943.

<sup>18</sup> Cited in Ingrams, 1972, p. 73.

Yet it must also be recognised that the multifaceted nature of political realities and governmental foreign policy makes any analysis of motive far from straightforward.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the reactions to the British government's so-called 'Uganda proposal' in 1903 show how what I am going to call Christian 'proto-Zionism' (sometimes referred to as Christian 'Restorationism') did have a certain formative influence on events. The background to this proposal is a historically well-worn path. The assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 unleashed a wave of anti-Jewish riots (pogroms) and nationalistic feeling throughout Russia. To escape persecution, many Russian Jews migrated to the West, primarily to the USA. Such was the scale of this migration that the Jewish refugee problem became a matter of governmental concern on both sides of the Atlantic, and saw the rise of political anti-Semitism in Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The degree of European anti-Semitism, epitomised in such show trials as the Dreyfus Affair in France, led men such as the Austro-Hungarian journalist Theodor Herzl to reject the idea of Jewish assimilation into European society. In his short book *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*), Herzl insisted that the essence of the Jewish problem was their lack of a national homeland. Although this proposal shocked and was resisted by most existing European and American Jews (who feared being deported to some far-flung part of the world), it resonated with many of the Jewish refugees from Russia, and with the Western governments that were struggling to absorb them. In 1897, Herzl organised the first Zionist Congress in Basel, which was attended by nearly 200 delegates. In the following years the influence of this annual conference grew, and in 1903, Balfour, who at that time was serving as Prime Minister, offered this fledgling Zionist movement the prospect of a Jewish colonisation of East Africa — the so-called Uganda proposal (although today it would be designated as Kenya). Herzl was eventually reluctantly persuaded of the merits of the scheme, but others resolutely resisted it. This resistance is epitomised by the gift to Herzl of a Hebrew Bible, now kept in the Israeli national archive, in which every Old Testament prophecy about the restoration of the Jews to Palestine is underlined. The gift came from a highly successful Chicago businessman called William Eugene Blackstone. Yet Blackstone was not a Jew — he was a self-ordained evangelical minister, a well-known Christian apologist, a best-selling writer and a close associate of Dwight Moody, the most famous evangelist of the day.

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<sup>19</sup> One historian claims that the Declaration was a very 'British' decision, 'born out of a mingling of self-interest and a moral attitude informed by powerful sentimentality'. Patrick O'Donovan, 'The Balfour Declaration', *Rehovoth*, 31 (winter 1967–1968).

Why was an evangelical American Christian businessman so concerned with the Uganda proposal? Blackstone was part of a movement, headed up by Moody, which rejected both the increasingly liberal theology of the American Protestant establishment and the reforming optimism of what would soon become the Social Gospel movement. Although Moody was a supporter of charitable organisations and movements for individual reform such as the temperance movement, men such as him held out little hope for political action aimed at producing deep social change. He famously summed up this view by stating ‘I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said, “Moody, save all you can”’. Moody’s tireless preaching and impressive demeanour sparked major religious revivals in both Britain and the USA, appealing especially to those who felt disenfranchised and dispossessed as a result of the economic and social changes of the period. This evangelical movement also very much popularised a way of thinking about the Jews and Palestine. Moody and Blackstone believed that the present-day Jews were simply Old Testament Israel in exile. They assumed that there was a continuity between the nation state found in the Bible and what they described as a Jewish diaspora. They then went on to teach that the restoration of the Jews to Palestine was a necessary precondition for the inauguration of a new messianic age: ‘The Lord Jesus will come in person to introduce the millennial age, when Israel shall be restored to their own land’.<sup>20</sup>

To many English-speaking people, Moody and Blackstone represented their first engagement with the question of the Jews and Palestine. Before his death in 1899 at the age of sixty-two, Moody is said to have preached to 100 million people in the USA and abroad.<sup>21</sup> Even if this is an exaggeration, it shows the way that his teaching reached an audience on an unprecedented scale. Yet it was Blackstone who took many of the proto-Zionist ideas of their brand of evangelicalism and harnessed them as a political force.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The 1878 Niagara Bible Conference Creed, which states: ‘We believe that the world will not be converted during the present dispensation, but is fast ripening for judgment, while there will be a fearful apostasy in the professing Christian body; and hence that the Lord Jesus will come in person to introduce the millennial age, when Israel shall be restored to their own land, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord; and that this personal and premillennial advent is the blessed hope set before us in the Gospel for which we should be constantly looking’.

<sup>21</sup> John Pollock, *Moody: A Biography* (Grand Rapids MI: Revell, 1997).

<sup>22</sup> See John Moorhead, ‘Jesus is Coming: The Life and Work of William E. Blackstone (1841–1935)’ (PhD Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2008).

Blackstone had been converted in 1870, and, like Moody, he was a biblical literalist:

He countered the critical insights of German biblical scholarship, by affirming the Bible as the literal Word of God and asserting it was an infallible guide to past, present, and future events. Like Moody, Blackstone was a premillennialist, believing that the transition from the realm of human history to a post-historical utopia under God would only happen after terrible wars and vast upheavals had overturned the existing order and demonstrated the futility of human reforms apart from God.<sup>23</sup>

Blackstone gave expression to these views in 1878 when he published one of the most widely read and influential books on Christian eschatology of the time, entitled *Jesus is Coming*.<sup>24</sup> The book, which ran to over 840,000 copies, insisted that the restoration of Israel was ‘an incontrovertible fact of prophecy’ and ‘intimately connected with our Lord’s appearing’.<sup>25</sup> The Jews would return to Palestine in a darkening world, against a background of crisis and conflict which would force humanity to call out to God for salvation. The influence of this book, which went on to be published in 48 other languages, including Hebrew, was such that it indelibly shaped American popular perceptions of Palestine and the question of a Jewish state well beyond 1948.

However, Blackstone was also an activist. In the 1880s, in the wake of the Russian pogroms, he became one of the pioneers of Jewish resettlement in Palestine. He understood that the Jewish refugee problem, which was particularly acute in America, moved the question of a Jewish return to the Holy Land out of the sphere of Christian eschatology and into the realms of politics and foreign policy. The Russian refugees created an ideal opportunity to widen the appeal of and support for a biblical prophetic agenda.<sup>26</sup> Yet Blackstone also recognised that the contemporary fulfilment of biblical prophecy in relation to ‘Israel’ would confirm the power and authority of the Bible to an increasingly sceptical world. If texts that were more than 2000 years old could predict contemporary events more accurately than conventional experts and practical politicians, this would

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<sup>23</sup> Mead, 2022a.

<sup>24</sup> New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1878.

<sup>25</sup> John Moorhead, ‘The Father of Zionism: William E. Blackstone’, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 53 (2010), p. 789.

<sup>26</sup> In June 1918 a survey of the American government showed that 61 senators and 239 congressmen were unquestioningly positive about Zionism, largely due to Blackstone’s influence. See Mead, 2022a.

clearly demonstrate the divine inspiration of the Bible to its critics. This desire to see the vindication of Christian scriptures became one of the most potent drivers of the Zionist agenda, as Blackstone maintained that a Jewish homeland in Palestine was the most obvious and effective solution to the wave of immigration that was 'threatening' to overwhelm America.<sup>27</sup>

In November 1890, having just returned from Palestine, Blackstone inaugurated a conference in Chicago to take forward this agenda. It was called 'The Conference on the Past, Present and Future of Israel', and drew its 3000 delegates from every walk of American life. The upshot of this conference was the following resolution:

The President of the United States is to be petitioned to confer with the Queen of England, the Emperor of Germany, the Sultan of Turkey, the President of the French Republic, and many other rulers of Europe, on the propriety of calling an International Conference to consider the condition of the Jews in modern nations and the possibility of opening a way for their restoration to Palestine.<sup>28</sup>

Realising that the conference and its resolution were not enough, Blackstone also began to lobby for the support of political, business and media outlets through a petition entitled 'Palestine for the Jews', which later became known as 'The Blackstone Memorial'. The petition, which was signed by J. Pierpont Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, Cyrus McCormick, the editors of most of the leading American newspapers, the chief justice of the Supreme Court and the speaker of the House of Representatives, was submitted to the Secretary of State, James G. Blaine, in February 1891. Despite Blackstone's religious intent, the Memorial was expressed in largely secular terms. It asserted that, in view of the misery of the Jews in Russia, and the mass

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<sup>27</sup> President Harrison in his third annual message to Congress (delivered in December 1891) discussed the problem of Jewish migration in the following terms: 'The immigration of these people to the United States – many other countries being closed to them – is largely increasing and is likely to assume proportions which may make it difficult to find homes and employment for them here and to seriously affect the labour market. It is estimated that over 1,000,000 will be forced from Russia within a few years [...] the sudden transfer of such a multitude under conditions that tend to strip them of their small accumulations and to depress their energies and courage is neither good for them nor for us'. Cited in James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, 11 vols (Washington DC: Government Printing House, 1817–1898, 1898), 9:188.

<sup>28</sup> Cited in Moorhead, 2010, p. 789.

migration from Russia that already dated back 10 years, something needed to be done. 'But where', the Memorial asked, 'shall 2,000,000 of such poor people go? Europe is crowded and has no room for more peasant population. Shall they come to America? This will be a tremendous expense and require years'.<sup>29</sup> The answer seemed obvious. The world powers needed to facilitate the return of the Jews to their ancient homeland.

On the strength of the petition on 5 March 1891, President Benjamin Harrison granted Blackstone an audience to discuss how to facilitate the Jews' return to 'their ancient homeland, where they would be at peace'. Although little came of this discussion, it is remarkable that six years before the birth of a secular Zionist movement a Christian leader was at the Whitehouse setting out the future of the Zionist agenda. Yet in 1903, with the Uganda proposal, a schism was threatened between this proto-Zionist Christian movement and the Zionism of Herzl. If Herzl accepted the Uganda proposal the Jews would have a homeland and a sanctuary free from persecution, but Zionism would be divorced from a prophetic intent and a biblical realisation. Blackstone understood that what was at stake in the proposal was not a Jewish homeland or a counter to anti-Semitism. It was biblical prophecy itself. With the decision made by the Seventh Jewish World Congress in 1905, just after Herzl's death, to reject the Uganda proposal, Blackstone ensured that the Zionist movement continued to be defined by and identified with a Christian prophetic vision. This is why many of the early Jewish Zionist leaders referred to Blackstone as 'the Father of Zionism'.<sup>30</sup> Yet this is a misnomer, as he was only an incidental representative of a Protestant tradition with much deeper roots, especially in Scotland.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Scottish Presbyterians such as David Bogue were publishing works with titles such as 'The Duty of the Christian to Seek the Salvation of the Jews'. In 1809, Scottish people were

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<sup>29</sup> Cited in Mead, 2022a.

<sup>30</sup> The historian David Brodeur observes that 'Zionist historians Barbara Tuchman and Howard Morley Sachar, Walter Laqueur, and a host of others, are quite wrong when they insist that Theodor Herzl was the founder of the Zionist Movement. It was William Blackstone. The Chicago petitioner could not even be likened to John the Baptist preparing the way for the Christ. He was not an intermediary, but made frontal assaults on four U.S. administrations with the insistence that America support a Jewish state in Palestine. Theodor Herzl arrived just in time to collect part of the debt! And he died, unfortunately, before he could savour [*sic*] any of the glory'. See David Brodeur, *Christians and Zionism: A Judeo-Christian History of Zionism* (Baltimore MD: [name of publisher], 1980), p. 148.

also instrumental in establishing the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews (LSJ). (As Nancy Stevenson observes, Scots 'feature as pioneer preachers, as planners, as polemicists, and as befrienders' in this new epoch of Jewish mission). This Judeo-centric emphasis in Presbyterian mission was derived from a widely held expectation among many evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic that:

The Jews in all their dispersions shall cast away their old infidelity, and shall wonderfully have their hearts changed, and abhor themselves for their past un-belief and obstinacy; and shall flow together to the blessed Jesus, penitently, humbly, and joyfully owning him as their glorious king and only saviour, and shall with all their hearts as with one heart and voice declare his praises unto other nations [Isa. 66.20; Jer. 50.4]. Nothing is more certainly foretold than this national conversion of the Jews in the eleventh chapter of Romans.<sup>31</sup>

Such sentiments reflect the way some Christians believed that the extensive parenthetical section of Paul's letter to the Romans found in chapters 9 to 11 speaks of the future of the Jews. The assertion that 'all Israel will be saved' (Rom. 11.26) had become a defining term in a Christian eschatology. Yet the question 'Who are Israel?' remains. At the beginning of the parenthesis Paul asserts 'for they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel' (Rom. 9.6). Therefore the accepted teaching of the Church up to the time of the Protestant Reformation, and even among the early Protestant reformers, was that Paul uses the term 'Israel' as a referent for 'all the people of God'.<sup>32</sup> As John Calvin explains in his seminal commentary on Romans:

Paul intended here to set forth the completion of the kingdom of Christ, which is by no means to be confined to the Jews, but is to include the whole world. The same manner of speaking we find

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<sup>31</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *History of Redemption* (New York: American Tract Society, 1816), p. 386. This text was of considerable influence in shaping eschatological expectations around the Jews both in America and in Britain.

<sup>32</sup> 'Prior to the Reformation', as the Jewish historian Regina Sharif observes, 'traditional Catholic thought had no place for the possibility of a Jewish return to Palestine nor any such concept as the existence of a Jewish nation'. Regina Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism: Its Roots in Western History* (London: Zed Books, 1984), p. 10.

in Galatians vi. 16. The Israel of God is what he calls the Church, gathered alike from Jews and Gentiles (1849, p. 473).

However, this interpretation was challenged with the publication of the Geneva Bible in 1560. Produced by English-speaking churchmen in exile in Geneva, including John Knox, the significance of this Bible cannot be overstated. It pre-dated the King James Version by fifty years, is the Bible of Shakespeare and the Scottish Reformation, was carried on the *Mayflower*, and was read by Oliver Cromwell and his army during the English Civil War. The Church of Scotland ordered that a copy be acquired by every parish church in the land, while the Scottish Government decreed that not only parishes but also every person above a certain income threshold must purchase it. What made this Bible so exceptional was not only that for the first time a mechanically printed, mass-produced English translation was available directly to the ordinary person, but also it provided an English commentary on the text (called an 'apparatus'). It is this commentary which gave rise to what was to become a Christian proto-Zionism.

The notes on Romans 11 which came from Theodore Beza, John Calvin's successor at Geneva, maintain:

The blindness of the Jews is neither so universal that the Lord has no elect in that nation, neither will it be continual: for there will be a time in which they also (as the prophets have foretold) will effectually embrace that which they now so stubbornly for the most part reject and refuse (Geneva 1599).

These notes suggest that Paul in Romans is predicting a future time when all Jews will turn to Christ. In the seventeenth century this idea was picked up by several Puritans and by an Oxford University churchman and lecturer, John Owen.<sup>33</sup> Owen asserted:

It is granted that there shall be a time and season, during the continuance of the kingdom of the Messiah in this world, wherein the generality of the nation of the Jews, all the world over, shall be called and effectually brought unto the knowledge of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ; with which mercy they shall also receive deliverance from their captivity, restoration

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<sup>33</sup> See Thomas Ice, 'Lovers of Zion: A History of Christian Zionism', *Article Archives*, 29 (2009).



unto their own land, with a blessed, flourishing, and happy condition therein.<sup>34</sup>

Yet other Puritans, such as the non-conformist preacher Richard Baxter, were very sceptical about this reading of Romans. Baxter described the idea of the restoration of the Jews as ‘a fiction full of contradictions’ and ‘dishonourable to Christ and his Kingdom’.<sup>35</sup>

In Scotland, with the influence of the Geneva Bible and figures such as Samuel Rutherford, most Presbyterians identified more with the views of Owen than with those of Baxter. Throughout the eighteenth century this was of little consequence for theological discourse, but at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the rise of evangelicalism and the age of mission, it came to be a pervasive influence on Scottish theology and eschatology. Theologians and educators such as Thomas Chalmers, ‘Scotland’s greatest nineteenth-century churchman’, were deeply influenced by a Judeo-centric view of mission. Chalmers maintained that God’s redemptive purposes were inextricably linked to the fate of the Jews. He believed that the conversion of the Jews would inaugurate not only an unprecedented spread of Christianity throughout the rest of the world, but also a type of golden age prior to Christ’s return. Therefore he stressed in his teaching and preaching that the sharing of the gospel with the Jewish people was ‘the first and foremost object of Christian policy’.<sup>36</sup> Through Chalmers this Judeo-centric emphasis was imparted to the emerging generation of Scottish churchmen, and especially to Edward Irving, his associate at St John’s in Glasgow.

Irving was a brilliant, charismatic and maverick churchman. In 1822 he was appointed as the minister of one of the most prestigious Presbyterian churches in London (‘The National Scotch Church’). In this pastorate he upheld Chalmers’ emphasis on the Jews and continued to assert that they were central to God’s redemptive purposes, while also proposing a radical reassessment of the existing eschatology. Irving maintained that the Jews were not going to be converted and assimilated into the existing Christian

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<sup>34</sup> Cited in Carl F. Ehle, Jr, ‘Prolegomena to Christian Zionism in America: The Views of Increase Mather and William E. Blackstone Concerning the Doctrine of the Restoration of Israel’ (PhD Dissertation, New York University, 1977), p. 31.

<sup>35</sup> Cited in Reiner Smolinski, ‘Caveat Emptor: Pre- and Post-Millennialism in the Late Reformation Period’, in *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture*, 3, ed. by James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (Leiden: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), p. 146.

<sup>36</sup> *The Select Works of Thomas Chalmers*, 2 (New York: R. Carter, 1848), p. 436.

Church as Chalmers and other Scottish Presbyterians believed. Rather the Old Testament prophetic vision of the people of God required the end of the earthly witness of the Gentile Church, which would be displaced by a messianic form of Judaism.<sup>37</sup> There was to be 'a dramatic discontinuity between this age and the age to come', as the Gentile Church was taken from the earth (through an event called 'the rapture') and God restored the Jews to the centre of his salvific purposes.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, Irving claimed the sign that this new 'dispensation' was about to occur would not only be a deteriorating situation in the Church and the world, but would also involve the restoration of the Jews to 'the land of Israel'.<sup>39</sup> Therefore salvation history was to be 'both centring in on and radiating out from the Jewish people'.<sup>40</sup>

Such a Judeo-centric emphasis was very different from the views of Chalmers and earlier thinkers. Chalmers believed in the evangelisation of the Jews, and insisted that their acceptance of Christ and admission within the Church would be the catalyst for global revival. He did not adhere to the notion of two equally valid and parallel covenants, one with the Jews and the other with the Gentiles. However, Irving insisted that God's covenant with the Jews had not been suspended or subsumed in the new covenant with the church. It was still in force and equally valid. There were two parallel covenants in existence.<sup>41</sup> Therefore the Old Testament was not to be read as a foreshadowing and model which found its fulfilment in Christ and the Church, but rather it was a paradigm by which future events and realities could be interpreted.<sup>42</sup> Despite the innovation in this view, Irving's thinking proved highly influential, especially after it was adopted and developed by John Nelson Darby, a former Church of Ireland Anglican curate who became one of the founders of the Plymouth Brethren.

Darby emphasised what he called a 'literal' interpretation of Scripture. By this he meant 'an interpretation of the Old Testament which avoided the

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<sup>37</sup> See Oscar Need, *Death of the Church Victorious* (Shallotte NC: Sovereign Grace Publications, 2002); David Bennett, *Edward Irving Reconsidered* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014).

<sup>38</sup> See Sheridan Gilley, 'Edward Irving: Prophet of the Millennium', in *Revival and Religion since 1700: Essays for John Walsh*, ed. by Jane Garnett and Colin Matthew (Milton Keynes: Hambledon Press, 1993), pp. 95–110.

<sup>39</sup> Edward Irving, *The Rev. Edward Irving's Preliminary Discourse to the Work of Ben Ezra* (London: Bosworth & Harrison, 1859), p. ix.

<sup>40</sup> Irving, 1859, p. x.

<sup>41</sup> See Ron Henzel, *Darby, Dualism, and the Decline of Dispensationalism* (Tucson AZ: Fenestra Books, 2003).

<sup>42</sup> See Need, 2002, pp. 81–91.

common tendency to see the promise to Israel as fulfilled in the Church'.<sup>43</sup> This interpretation reflected the implicit hermeneutical dualism of Irving and his prophetic school, which emphasised the distinction between the two covenants of the Old and New Testaments. Old Testament prophecies were pertinent to the things of the earth and the future, whereas the New Testament spoke of a 'spiritual' ethereal realm and invited a symbolic and allegorical reading. As Darby explained:

In prophecy, when the Jewish church or nation is concerned, i.e., when the address is directly to the Jews, there we may look for a plain and direct testimony, because earthly things were the Jews' proper portion. And on the contrary, where the address is to the Gentiles [...] there we may look for symbol, because earthly things were not their portion and the system of revelation to them must be symbolical [...] When therefore facts are addressed to the Jewish church as a subsisting body [...] I look for a plain, common-sense, literal statement [...] On the other hand, as the church was a system of grace and heavenly hopes [...] it is symbolized by analogous agencies.<sup>44</sup>

The Bible promised a heavenly inheritance to the Christians and an earthly kingdom to the Jews. This hermeneutic encouraged a premillennial 'other-worldliness' in terms of faith which allowed the Christian to withdraw from the supposed political and religious corruption and awfulness of the age. At the same time, it supported a socio-political engagement on behalf of the Jews, and the facilitation of a Jewish nationalism.<sup>45</sup> Through this dynamic, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries various evangelical Christian groups who would otherwise be apolitical became some of the greatest advocates of Jewish nationalism and Restorationism, especially in the USA.<sup>46</sup>

However, it is again in Scotland that we see the most distinctive outworking of this Christian proto-Zionism. After Irving published in 1826 his first treatise which set out his distinctive Christian eschatology, entitled 'Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed of God: A Discourse on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse, Which Relate to These Latter Times, and until

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<sup>43</sup> Cited in Martin Spence, *Heaven on Earth: Reimagining Time and Eternity in Nineteenth-Century British Evangelicalism* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), p. 118.

<sup>44</sup> Cited in Spence, 2014, p. 119.

<sup>45</sup> See Henzel, 2003.

<sup>46</sup> See Clifford A. Kiracofe Jr, *Dark Crusade: Christian Zionism and US Foreign Policy* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2009).

the Second Advent', his thought gained little traction in Scottish Presbyterian circles. Yet this situation changed in 1831, with the advent of the first Egyptian–Ottoman War (1831–1833). During this conflict, control of Palestine was arrested from the Ottoman Empire, leaving a political vacuum in the Middle East. For many Christians this decline of Ottoman power represented a fulfilment of biblical prophecy, with Daniel 11 apparently predicting the king of the north's defeat at the hands of the king of the south just prior to the coming of the Messiah. Contemporary political events were now being increasingly interpreted through the eyes of the Old Testament, and there was an imminent sense of Christ's return. Within the Church of Scotland this prophetic framework and eschatological anticipation further fuelled the Judeo-centric need of mission, and in 1838 the Church established the 'Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for the Conversion of the Jews'. This committee was largely a consequence of the traditional Chalmers's view of the importance of the conversion of the Jews in facilitating a global Christian revival. Yet it was also to become a conduit that allowed the land-centric and proto-Zionist views of Irving to become increasingly mainstream in Scottish Presbyterian thinking.

One of the first acts of the committee was to commission an exploratory mission to the now liberated Palestine 'to collect information respecting the Jews, their numbers, condition and character' and whether 'there are any openings for a Mission to their nation'.<sup>47</sup> The reference to 'their nation' in relation to Palestine is indicative of the way the thinking of the Church of Scotland was increasingly associating the Jews with the Holy Land, although there was not an explicit proto-Zionism at this stage. This was to change with what came to be called 'The Mission of Inquiry' to Palestine in 1839. The mission involved four ministers: Alexander Keith, an older Church of Scotland minister from St Cyrus who was known for his writings on biblical prophecy and the Jews; Alexander Black, who was a Hebrew scholar and linguist from Aberdeen; twenty-nine-year-old Andrew Bonar from Perthshire, who had just been ordained in 1835 after having been taught by Chalmers at Edinburgh University; and the similarly educated Robert Murray M'Cheyne, the youngest of the group at just twenty-five years of age, who had been ordained in 1836 to one of the largest Presbyterian churches in the country at St Peter's in Dundee. En route to Palestine the delegation was tasked with seeking out Jewish communities throughout Europe and the Near East and ascertaining their readiness to accept Christ. The outward

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<sup>47</sup> Andrew Bonar and Murray M'Cheyne, *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839* (Philadelphia PA: Presbyterian Board of Publications, 1843), p. vi.

journey took them through France, Italy, Malta and Greece, before they crossed over to Alexandria in Egypt and traversed the desert into Palestine. They returned home via Turkey, the Balkans, Austria and Poland, before crossing over into Prussia and sailing from Hamburg to London.

Ironically, despite the focus on Palestine, the immediate outcome of the trip was the decision of the Church of Scotland to create an outreach to the Jews in Budapest in 1841 (possibly due to the lack of Jews in Palestine to convert), and in the following year the founding in London of the Presbyterian 'British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Jews'. Nevertheless, the most lasting impact of the mission was the way it shaped Presbyterian thinking about Palestine and popularised a Christian proto-Zionist agenda. The most overt expression of this proto-Zionism is found in Alexander Keith's account of the journey, published in 1843 and entitled 'The Land of Israel According to the Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob'. In this book, Keith maintained that the wandering of the Jews throughout the earth shows how they had been cursed by God. Yet God was not finished with them yet, as Romans affirmed, and he would re-establish his covenant with them. This re-establishing would be marked by a 'return' to the land. He cried 'Let that curse be taken away — let the Lord remember the people and remember the land, and there shall be no more scattering nor wandering, no more desolation, no more separation between Zion and her children'.<sup>48</sup> He went on to assert that once the Jews had returned, humanity would enter a period of unrivalled blessing, but for the earth to be blessed the Jews must return. Moreover, he concluded by insisting that there is a Christian obligation to help to facilitate this return.

The notion of a Jewish return to the land was further supported by the meticulously detailed travel log published by M'Cheyne and Bonar under the title 'Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839', which by 1843 was in its third edition. This work, with its extensive descriptions of Palestine, alongside a constant stream of calls to visit parishes 'to tell orally the things we had seen and heard', laid the foundations in Scotland for a vibrant and widely accepted proto-Zionism. Yet it was the tragic death of M'Cheyne shortly after his return from Palestine in 1843, at just twenty-nine years of age, that led to global exposure to these ideas. The best-selling biography, *The Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne*, written by his close friend Andrew Bonar, became one of the most widely read and influential books in the Protestant evangelical world for the next fifty years. Of the six chapters which comprised the

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<sup>48</sup> Alexander Keith, *The Land of Israel: According to the Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1843), p. 43.

memoir, the one entitled 'His Mission to Palestine and the Jews' was by far the most striking and important. Apart from granting M'Cheyne an almost saint-like status, it perpetuated the notion of Palestine as a 'Jewish nation' among the Protestant mainstream as hundreds of thousands of copies were distributed throughout the English-speaking world.

Therefore the 'Mission of Inquiry' can be seen to have shaped the English-speaking proto-Zionist agenda in at least three ways. To most Jews, Judaism was a religion, not a nationality, and it had been so for almost 2000 years. In 1806 the Grand Sanhedrin, under the presidency of Rabbi David Seinzheim of Strasbourg, had unequivocally announced that the Jews had ceased to have any form of 'national' expression or identity.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, drawing on biblical language and concepts, the 'Mission of Inquiry' encouraged Scottish Presbyterians to see the Jews as 'a Jewish nation' and 'a Jewish people'. Through this description, a new sense of 'national' Jewish identity was cultivated in the minds of evangelical Christians and others, although it did not reflect a Jewish self-understanding. The imposition of this biblical paradigm is epitomised in the introduction to the report of the Mission of Inquiry, which claimed that its purpose was to get the reader 'to care for the peculiar people who once possessed Palestine, and who still claim it as their own'.<sup>50</sup> Such an assertion was a fiction, as the American rabbi Emil G. Hirsch showed at the time of the Balfour Declaration, insisting that 'We, the modern Jews, say that we do not wish to be restored to Palestine [...] The country wherein we live is our Palestine'. Jews did not claim Palestine as their own at this time, and most perceived the idea of doing so as an anti-Semitic ploy. As one author has commented, Rabbi Hirsch's observation was more than a casual aside:

For Jews, steeped in the atmosphere of the European Enlightenment and its approach to Jewish emancipation, any talk of a Jewish state was an attack on the ideas that allowed Jews to participate in the life of the countries in which they lived. They not only dismissed the idea of a return to Palestine as a naive fantasy with no hope of realization; they deplored it as an assault on the values that, as they saw things, offered the only possible security for a Jewish minority in a non-Jewish state.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Simon Schwarzfuchs, *Napoleon, the Jews and the Sanhedrin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 42–3.

<sup>50</sup> Bonnar and M'Cheyne, 1843, p. vii.

<sup>51</sup> Mead, 2022a.

Yet because of the Mission of Inquiry, by the end of the nineteenth century the Jews were invariably perceived as ‘a national entity’ by most people in Britain and America.

This influence also extended to the popular perception of Palestine. Again, most of the description of the Holy Land by Bonar and M’Cheyne reflects a Christian theological and biblical paradigm being imposed on the narrative. The land was seen by the delegation through the eyes of Jeremiah the prophet, who wept over the desolation of the people and Jerusalem in the book of Lamentations. By drawing on this ancient biblical frame of reference and using the language of desolation, the Mission of Inquiry created the contours of the way that subsequent generations within Protestant Scotland and beyond would perceive Palestine. It was Keith who first claimed that the Jews were ‘a people without a country’ and Palestine was ‘a country without a people’.<sup>52</sup> Even though this claim did not reflect the actual socio-political realities, it served the theological agenda of the mission. This is seen in the way that, just after the return of the mission, the ‘Committee for the Conversion of the Jews’ released a series of lectures which claimed that the land of Palestine indisputably ‘has been, and still is, a land which may emphatically be termed desolate: being stripped of its ancient and proper occupants; and by this word of prophecy [...] (we see the Jews) shall be restored to possess it, and shall have their future fortunes so closely and permanently linked to it, that it shall be in a manner wedded to them, and wedded so not again to be divorced’.<sup>53</sup>

However, perhaps the most potent aspect of the mission was the way it popularised the idea that the restoration of the Jews to Palestine would signal a new phase in salvation history — a phase in which the whole earth would be blessed. The introduction to the report very tellingly states that ‘if the Church of Scotland in these perilous times “takes hold of the skirt of the Jew”, God may remember her for Zion’s sake’. Adopting the paradigm of Genesis 12.3, in which God declares to Abraham ‘I will bless those who bless you, but the one who treats you lightly I will curse’, the report assumes that those who bless the Jews and aid their return to the land will in turn be blessed. For this reason, thereafter, the Church of Scotland encouraged ‘Ministers, in their preaching and public prayers, more frequently to avail themselves of opportunities of noticing the claims of the Jews’, not least in relation to the Holy Land.<sup>54</sup> Yet this almost superstitious reading of the

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<sup>52</sup> Keith, 1844, p. 43.

<sup>53</sup> Patrick Fairbairn, ‘Future Prospect of the Jews’ Restoration to their Own Land’, in *A Course of Lectures on the Jews*, ed. by S. McGill (Philadelphia PA: Presbyterian Publication Board, 1840), p. 416.

<sup>54</sup> McGill, 1840, p. 5.

Scriptures, which assumes that if one supports the Jews and their claim on Palestine one will be blessed, was not limited to the ecclesiastical realm in its impact. It enabled proto-Zionism to make its first inroads into the political arena through the work of Anthony Ashley Cooper, later known as Lord Shaftesbury.

Shaftesbury has been described as ‘the greatest influence for social legislation in the nineteenth century’ within an English context.<sup>55</sup> Yet he was also a devout evangelical Anglican, who ‘is said to have based his life upon a literal acceptance of the Bible and was known as the “Evangelical of Evangelicals”’.<sup>56</sup> Shaftesbury ‘never had a shadow of a doubt that the Jews were to return to their own land’, and used his influence as a parliamentarian to this end.<sup>57</sup> He was a key sponsor and enthusiast for the Mission of Inquiry in 1839. After the widely publicised report by Bonar and M'Cheyne, Shaftesbury published a ‘Memorandum to Protestant Monarchs of Europe for the restoration of the Jews to Palestine’. This memorandum was printed verbatim in the *Colonial Times* on 4 November 1841, and it ignited an enthusiastic campaign by that publication, calling on the heads of Europe to actively support a Jewish return to Palestine. This call was simply an extension of the ideas that Shaftesbury had developed in an article in the *London Quarterly Review* the previous year, after his debrief of M'Cheyne and Bonar, making him the first major British politician to publicly advocate a resettlement of the Jews within Palestine. However, such a resettlement was resolutely resisted by the Jews of Europe. Nevertheless, Shaftesbury persisted, and the influence of the Church of Scotland ‘Mission of Inquiry’ was very apparent when in July 1853 he wrote to the then British Prime Minister, Lord Aberdeen. Using the words of Keith in the letter, he insisted that the Jews were ‘the ancient and rightful lords of the soil’ and that the Holy Land is ‘a country without a nation’ in need of ‘a nation without a country’.<sup>58</sup> Through Shaftesbury the proto-Zionism of the Mission of Inquiry gained a number of high-profile supporters, including the British Prime Minister, Henry John Temple Palmerston, and Charles Henry Churchill (an ancestor of Winston Churchill, and a key military figure in Damascus), as well as the governor of Australia, Colonel George Gawler.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Thomas Ice, ‘Lovers of Zion: A History of Christian Zionism’, *Article Archives*, 29 (2009), p. 9.

<sup>56</sup> Ice, 2009, p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> Barbara W. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (New York: Ballantine Press, 1956), p. 178.

<sup>58</sup> David Muir, ‘A Land Without a People for a People Without a Land’, *Middle Eastern Quarterly*, 15 (2008), p. 57.

<sup>59</sup> Ice, 2009, p. 10.



Despite such high-profile supporters, the political shifts in the Middle East made the prospect of any resettlement less likely in the years that followed. Nevertheless, the proto-Zionist zeal persisted in Scotland even after the Disruption of 1843, which split the Church of Scotland in two. With men like Keith, Bonar, Alexander and Chalmers all being founding members of this new church, the newly formed Free Church of Scotland continued to strongly champion the proto-Zionist cause. This lasting enthusiasm was again seen in 1861 when David Brown, the Principal of the Free Church College in Aberdeen, published a book entitled *The Restoration of the Jews*, in which he reiterated the prophetic hope of a future restoration of the Jews to Palestine. The three defining themes of Scotland's proto-Zionism were again present — Palestine is a desolate place awaiting a people, the Jews are a nation in exile away from their ancient land and birth right, and anyone who helps to facilitate this Jewish resettlement will be blessed by God. We see the definitive expression of these themes in the writings of two other Free Church ministers, Horatius and Andrew Bonar.<sup>60</sup> Horatius was the older brother of Andrew and was the minister of Chalmers Memorial Church in Edinburgh. In July 1870, in an edition of *The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*, he published an article simply entitled 'The Jews'. In it he asserted:

I believe in Israel's restoration to their land and their conversion to their Messiah. I accept as a future certainty that the Jewish people will be gathered to their ancient homeland and that ultimately 'all Israel shall be saved' (Romans 11:26). As I believe in Israel's present disgrace, so I believe in the nation's coming glory and pre-eminence. I believe that God's purpose regarding our world can only be understood when we understand God's purpose for Israel. I believe that all human calculations as to the earth's future—political or scientific, philosophical or religious—must fail if they do not take into account God's great purpose regarding the standing of Israel at the Last Day. I believe it is impossible to enter into God's mind regarding the destiny of mankind, without taking as our key or our guide His mind regarding that ancient nation whose history, so far from being ended, or nearly ended, is only about to begin [...] If He has

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<sup>60</sup> See Andrew Bonar, *Redemption Drawing Nigh: A Defence of the Premillennial Advent* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1847); Horatius Bonar, *Prophetical Landmarks* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1847).

set Israel as the great nation of the future, who are we to set aside God's arrangements?<sup>61</sup>

As a hymn writer, Horatius also used song lyrics to highlight these truths (songs such as 'Everlasting Remembrance', 'Tidings for Israel' and 'Israel's Return'), but his most important contribution to the proto-Zionist cause occurred when in 1873 he invited D. L. Moody (along with his own brother Andrew) to Scotland. Moody stayed with the two brothers for more than six weeks, and given the subsequent eschatology of both Moody and Blackstone there are good grounds to believe that Scotland's Christian proto-Zionism was one of its most successful theological exports. Moody and Blackstone took the proto-Zionism which had crystallised in the Mission of Inquiry and again gave it a global audience.

However, this reinvented Scottish Presbyterian eschatology could have been merely a political irrelevance, if it had not been for Louis Brandeis, the Jewish Supreme Court Justice who led the Zionist Movement in America. At the beginning of the First World War he recognised that without Christian endorsement the Zionist project would fail. His instincts on this matter were probably not wrong. In America, Jewish opposition to the Balfour Declaration was significant. In 1919, Henry Morgenthau, one of the most influential Jews in America, presented a petition to Woodrow Wilson as he left for the Paris Peace Conference, demanding that he oppose the Balfour Declaration: 'We do not wish to see Palestine, either now or at any time in the future, organized as a Jewish State', the petition declared.<sup>62</sup> A later edition of it, presented to the American Peace Commission, was signed by almost 300 prominent Jews. Therefore, in 1916, with fewer than 15,000 Jews in the whole of America supporting his cause, Brandeis turned to Blackstone, now 74 years of age, and convinced him to resurrect his former petition for a Jewish homeland in Palestine and resubmit it to the then President Wilson. In the letter that accompanied the petition, Blackstone claimed that there was now 'general approval' for the idea of a Jewish return to Palestine 'from our entire population'.<sup>63</sup> Although this was something of an exaggeration, it is indicative of the way in which the Christian proto-Zionism which had

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<sup>61</sup> Horatius Bonar, 'The Jew', *The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*, 1870, p. 411.

<sup>62</sup> Cited in Walter Russell Mead, *The Arc of a Covenant: The United States, Israel, and the Fate of the Jewish People* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2022b), p. 184.

<sup>63</sup> 1916 Blackstone Memorial. November 17, 1916. Letter from Blackstone to Woodrow Wilson. Billy Graham Center Archives [accessed 20 May 2023].

evolved in Scotland and been imparted by the preaching and writing of Moody and Blackstone was shaping American consciousness. This consciousness is epitomised in the comments of President Wilson himself.<sup>64</sup> He was the son of an American Presbyterian minister, and had been brought up in a home very much influenced by the reading of the Bible. It is recorded that when granting his support for the Balfour Declaration, Wilson expressed his sense of wonder to a rabbi: 'To think that I, the son of the manse, should be able to help restore the Holy Land to its people'.<sup>65</sup> Such a statement is full of the assumptions of a Christian proto-Zionism, and reflects the way senior statesmen were thinking about the political realities of American foreign policy.<sup>66</sup> A similar statement was made by the former President Theodore Roosevelt, who in support of Blackstone insisted that 'there can be no peace worth having' until 'the Jews [are] given control of Palestine.'<sup>67</sup> Therefore in America we can clearly see foreign policy being filtered and interpreted through a providential religious matrix. In such a context it is hardly surprising that President Wilson was thinking of himself as a divine agent who was called to bless the Jews and bring about the fulfilment of biblical prophecy. Yet could such a religious matrix account for the Balfour Declaration itself?

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<sup>64</sup> Wilson's support for the Declaration, even in the face of opposition from his own advisors and State Department, is one of the anomalies of American foreign policy at this time. See Selig Adler, 'The Palestine Question in the Wilson Era', *Jewish Social Studies*, 10 (1948), 303–34.

<sup>65</sup> Cited in Stephen S. Wise, *Challenging Years: The Autobiography of Stephen Wise* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1949), pp. 186–7. Blackstone strongly appealed to this sense when he wrote to Wilson: '[T]here seem to be many evidences to show that we have reached the period in the great roll of centuries when the everlasting God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is lifting up His hand to the Gentiles (Isa 49:22) to bring His sons and His daughters from afar, that he may plant them again in their own land, Ezekiel 34, etc. Not for twenty-four centuries, since the days of Cyrus, King of Persia, has there been offered to any mortal such a privileged opportunity to further the purposes of God concerning His ancient people' (cited in Moorhead, 2010, p. 793).

<sup>66</sup> In relation to this religious influence, see Richard Ned Lebow, 'Woodrow Wilson and the Balfour Declaration', *The Journal of Modern History*, 40 (1968), 501–23. See also Mead, 2022b.

<sup>67</sup> Cited in Mead, 2022a. One newspaper editorial published after this statement carried the heading 'Christianity Has Captured Its Capitol [*sic*], and Jerusalem Is Henceforth for the Jews'.

Balfour's churchmanship was neither evangelical nor Presbyterian, yet he was brought up in a tradition that constantly exposed him to the proto-Zionist aspirations of the Scottish Presbyterians. His mother, née Lady Blanche Gascoyne-Cecil, was the sister of Lord Salisbury, who served three times as British Prime Minister before being succeeded by his nephew, Arthur Balfour (the origin of the phrase 'Bob's your uncle!'). Despite being a wealthy Scottish aristocrat, Lady Blanche was an earnest Presbyterian evangelical who taught her children in daily Bible classes, instilling in her son a remarkable knowledge of the geography of Palestine and familiarising him with the stories of the Old Testament. She was also known for her personal evangelistic efforts, undoubtedly scandalising those of her own social rank and astounding those of humbler birth by distributing Gospel tracts at the railway station in East Linton near the sprawling Balfour family estate in East Lothian. The family's proto-Zionist credentials are epitomised by Balfour's niece, Blanche Dugdale, who was described by Weizmann as 'an ardent, lifelong friend of Zionism'. She advised him in his dealings with the British, while also lobbying for Jewish settlers, attending Zionist conferences, and even speaking at the World Zionist Congress itself. Therefore we can be certain that Balfour was raised in an evangelical Presbyterian household in which men like Chalmers and M'Cheyne were revered and esteemed as examples of faith.

Yet it is not easy to determine what impact this religious heritage had on Balfour himself. We know that, when he met Brandeis on his visit to Washington in 1917, he said to him 'I am a Zionist'.<sup>68</sup> By making such a claim, Balfour was probably affirming much more than the persuasiveness of the arguments of the World Zionist Congress. Again, we see this in one of his speeches to the English Zionist Federation at the Albert Hall, London in 1920, when he asserted 'For a long time I have been a convinced Zionist and it is in that character I come before you today, though in my most sanguine moments I never foresaw, I never even conceived that great work of Palestinian reconstruction would happen so soon, or indeed it was likely to happen in my lifetime'.<sup>69</sup> Balfour, like most Scottish Presbyterians,

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<sup>68</sup> Louis Brandeis, *Letters of Louis D. Brandeis: Volume IV, 1916-1921* (New York: State University Press of New York Press, 1975), p. 289. Blanche Dugdale maintains that Balfour implied Weizmann 'made me into a Zionist' after a conversation in 1906. See Meyer W. Weisgal, *Chaim Weizmann: Statesman and Scientist, Builder of the Jewish Commonwealth*. New York: Dial Press, 1944, p. 131.

<sup>69</sup> Arthur Balfour, 'On Great Britain and Zionism', in *Opinions and Argument from Speeches and Addresses of the Earl of Balfour, K.G., O.M., F.R.S. 1910-1927* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927), pp. 234-5.

maintained that the Christian world owed a debt to the Jew, and he resisted anti-Semitism. Yet he also believed, according to his biography written by his niece, in 'the historic right of the Jews to a special position in Palestine' which was rooted in 'the past and the future'.<sup>70</sup> Although this conviction may not have been founded in the same Christian evangelical fervour of Blackstone or an overt eschatology, it is entirely plausible that he was drawing on the biblical prophetic framework of the Old and New Testaments that characterised the Scottish Presbyterianism of his youth. He was acting as the architect of the Balfour Declaration not primarily because of a military, political or economic rationale, but because, like so many politicians before and after him, he wanted to be 'on the right side of history'. In an act of political vanity, he saw himself enacting a providential 'divine' agenda which would bring a new golden age and benefit to the entire world. Therefore, just as Sokolow and Weizmann contend, it is entirely plausible that the Balfour Declaration might never have come about if it was not for the religious convictions of many of the key players. Although Balfour's precise relationship to his Scottish proto-Zionist Presbyterian heritage is rather opaque, many of its key themes and perceptions are present in his understanding of the Jews and Palestine, which gave the Declaration its context. Today the complexities of Christian eschatology, especially in America, and the socio-political realities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict persist. Yet, just as the origins of this conflict probably had a religious and theological dimension, the same may be true of its solution.

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<sup>70</sup> Blanche E. C. Dugdale, *Arthur James Balfour, First Earl of Balfour: Volume 2, 1906-1930* (London: Macmillan, 1936), p. 159. Again, in his speech to the English Zionist Federation, Balfour asserts that 'looking back upon the history of the world, upon the history more particularly of all the most civilized portions of the world, I say that the case of Jewry in all countries is absolutely exceptional, falls outside all the ordinary rules and maxims, cannot be contained in a formula or explained in a sentence. The deep, underlying principle of self-determination points to a Zionist policy, however little in its strict technical interpretation it may seem to favour it'.



# Reframing the Present through ‘Vocabulary from the Past’:<sup>1</sup> Stephen’s Speech and the Reshaping of Christian Perspectives on Israel and Palestine

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At face value, Stephen’s remarkable speech in Acts 7 is a failure. He is accused of challenging that which stood at the centre of Judean religion — the Law and the Temple. His opponents allege that this is tantamount to blasphemy. In his defence, Stephen offers a retelling of Israel’s history that highlights God’s presence through their many migrations. Controversially, he makes Jesus the culmination of that history. He does not disparage the Temple, but attempts to place it in a different perspective. In Stephen’s speech, God’s presence is spatially unbound and extends to ‘the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1.8b).<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately for Stephen, his critics remained unconvinced. Rather than softening their indignation, his accusers ‘became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen’ (Acts 7.54) and ‘they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him’ (Acts 7.58).

Although contemporary readers might initially view such a response as extreme, this ancient narrative bears witness to the strength of identity that can become associated with geographical spaces. Of course, conflicts over geography and identity are not uncommon in the modern world. In reality, the violence has only increased as humanity has developed weapons far more lethal than stones. The ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine is indicative of these dynamics and their destructive potential.

In relation to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, religion is often cited as a driver rather than an alleviator of oppression. Naim S. Ateek, himself a Christian theologian, recognises this troubled legacy of the Bible’s use in the crisis: ‘When religion is invoked and involved in violent conflict, the problems and difficulties increase exponentially [...] Tragically, religious sentiments have a greater potency to perpetuate and inflame conflicts than most secular ideologies. In the Israel-Palestine Conflict, the abuse of the

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<sup>1</sup> This phrase was coined by Marc H. Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation: The Challenge of the 21st Century*, 3rd edn (Waco TX: Baylor University Press, 2004), p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from the Bible are from the *New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)* (Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989).

Bible has had severe implications'.<sup>3</sup> In this context, of what relevance or help is Stephen's speech — a story that ends in deadly violence?

For Christians, Stephen's speech can offer an essential shift of perspective on the conflict — one that not only narrates exile, but also speaks from the perspective of displacement. The speech attempts to reconfigure perspectives on the land,<sup>4</sup> hailing the geographically unbound presence of the Holy Spirit. The collective memory of both Israelis and Palestinians is one that includes the heritage or current experience of exile and dislocation. Stephen's speech (and its aftermath) addresses both of these experiences — exile as memory, and the experience of forced dislocation. Responding from the perspective of his Jewish faith, Marc Ellis describes the irony of the way that the Bible has been utilised in the conflict: 'As people in perpetual exile from Jerusalem, a status that formed the heart of our prayerful lamentations, we return today to form our prayers for a new generation of exiles that we have created'.<sup>5</sup> Rather than perpetuating the situation, a text like Stephen's speech can offer a transformative shift of perspective.

As a migrant character, Stephen speaks from and into this experience in a prophetic key. This is not the 'prophetic' of popular American apocalypticism that turns a blind eye to oppression for the sake of fulfilment that heralds the end times,<sup>6</sup> but rather it will, in the words of Walter Brueggemann, 'nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us'.<sup>7</sup>

To recover this prophetic perspective, I hope to make the case that Stephen's speech can be understood as a 'migration history' that provides theological legitimisation for the earliest Church's experience of dislocation.

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<sup>3</sup> Naim S. Ateek, 'Foreword,' *Zionism Through Christian Lenses: Ecumenical Perspectives on the Promised Land*, ed. by Carole Monica Burnett (Eugene OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), p. xiii.

<sup>4</sup> On the reconfiguration of spatial categories in the speech, see Nicholas J. Moore, "'He Saw Heaven Opened": Heavenly Temple and Universal Mission in Luke-Acts', *New Testament Studies*, 68 (2022), 38–51.

<sup>5</sup> Ellis, 2004, p. 236.

<sup>6</sup> For a survey of this popular apocalypticism and how it contributes to (in some cases) uncritical American evangelical support for the state of Israel, see David M. Crump, *Like Birds in a Cage: Christian Zionism's Collusion in Israel's Oppression of the Palestinian People* (Eugene OR: Cascade Books, 2021), pp. 13–23.

<sup>7</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd edn (Philadelphia PA: Fortress Press, 2001), p. 3.



Understanding the speech in this way should encourage Christian readers to have hermeneutical empathy with displaced people. Acts describes the Church as gathered around the ascended Jesus and bound by the Holy Spirit, despite their geographically scattered existence. Attentiveness to the experiences of Palestinians can allow a perspective shift that brings the Western Church closer to the viewpoint and social context of the text itself. Rather than perpetuating conflict, Stephen's speech uses the past to put contemporary beliefs about the land in perspective. Here the rhetorical questions posed by the Jewish theologian Marc Ellis are relevant: 'what if it is precisely this *vocabulary from the past* that can open [...] to a future beyond isolation and war, and, thus, beyond policies and understandings that are difficult, if not impossible, to defend?'<sup>8</sup>

### ***Stephen's speech as migration history***

Although Acts records the speeches of central Christian figures such as Peter, Paul and James, the longest speech is attributed to Stephen, a Greek-speaking migrant from the Diaspora originally tasked with administering relief to widows (Acts 6.5). The speech comes as a response to accusations from other Hellenists, a group to which Stephen belongs.<sup>9</sup> He is charged with attempting to overturn that which is held most central to Judean religion. His accusers allege 'we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us' (Acts 6.14). The accusers' objective in this criticism of Stephen is obvious. Moses, the Law and the Temple derive their legitimacy and authority from God, and therefore opposition to these central tenets can be construed as blasphemous. These are serious charges, so it is curious that Stephen does not directly respond to them. Instead, he offers a retelling of Israel's history and places the Christian movement in continuity with what God has been doing since Abraham was called out of Mesopotamia (Acts 7.2). In the closing words of the speech, 'You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it' (Acts 7.53), Stephen makes the audacious claim that it is the followers of Jesus who are in continuity with the story of Israel — they are the true keepers of the law who understood what the prophets had prophesied from the beginning.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ellis, 2004, p. 92; emphasis added.

<sup>9</sup> On the historical figure of Stephen and the development of the speech, see Nicholas H. Taylor, 'Stephen, the Temple, and Early Christian Eschatology', *Revue Biblique*, 110 (2003), 62–85.

<sup>10</sup> Whether the speech is intended to express a break with Judean tradition or articulate continuity is the subject of much debate. For a review of scholarship on the topic, see Joseph B. Tyson, *Luke, Judaism, and the*

The violent response of Stephen's accusers (Acts 7.54–81a) and their charge of blasphemy (Acts 6.14) can cause the reader to assume that the speech is highly critical of the Temple tradition. However, upon closer inspection it is clear that the speech is positive about the tradition. For example, the Tabernacle is described as being made according to God's design (Acts 7.44), and the Temple is built in a time of God's favour (Acts 7.46). The culmination of the speech (in Acts 7.53) berates the people for *not* following the law. Scholars who emphasise continuity are correct to point out that none of this constitutes radical anti-Temple or anti-Law rhetoric. This all appears to be in keeping with the seemingly esteemed view of the Temple elsewhere in Luke and Acts (e.g., Lk. 19.47, 21.37–38, 25.53; Acts 2.46, 5.20–21, 21.26, 25.28).

Of course the speech is not without critical elements. Both the Temple and the Tabernacle are described as 'made by human hands' (χειροποιήτοις; Acts 7.48).<sup>11</sup> This designation would have been somewhat shocking to Stephen's audience because the Septuagint (LXX) applies the term to idols (e.g., Lev. 26.1, 30; Isa. 2.18, 31.7; Dan. 5.4). The Temple itself is not denigrated, but the notion that God can be contained by a structure means, in Stephen's speech, that it is *treated* like a χειροποιήτοις by the Sanhedrin and their followers. The issue in Acts is that the presence of God cannot be spatially bound by the Law, the Land or the Temple. Stephen does not argue

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*Scholars: Critical Approaches to Luke-Acts* (Columbia SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999). Classically, the speech was described as radically Temple-critical (e.g., Martin H. Scharlemann, *Stephen: A Singular Saint* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968). In recent decades, the consensus has shifted towards the speech as an expression of continuity. An early example can be found in Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis MN: Augsburg, 1972). It has been argued more recently in Simon Buttica, *L'Identité de l'Église dans les Actes des Apôtres de la Restauration d'Israël à la Conquête Universelle* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010); David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2002); Jens Schröter, 'Salvation for the Gentiles and Israel: On the Relationship between Christology and the People of God in Luke', in *From Jesus to the New Testament: Early Christian Theology and the Origin of the New Testament Canon*, trans. by Wayne Coppins (Waco TX: Baylor University Press, 2013). This view is by no means unanimous, and an argument for Lukan hostility to Judaism can be found in Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> This echoes Jesus' words in Mark 14.58, but is curiously absent from Luke's gospel.

that God is not present in these places.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the ascended Jesus is portrayed as the culmination of that history. It should be noted that the expansion of the vision of Israel's history in this way still threatens the particularity of what Stephen's accusers hold dear. While Luke expresses what he views as continuity with Judaism, the stoning of Stephen shows that this is a high-stakes confession.

Stephen's speech can be read as an abridged history of the movement of God's people. The speech to the Sanhedrin opens with Abraham residing in Mesopotamia. The first word placed in the mouth of God is the imperative, 'leave' (ἔξελεθε). God is depicted as directly involved in the movement of his people. This sets the agenda for Stephen's speech. Viewed through the lens of migration studies, this speech can be described as 'migration history', which communicates, according to Christiane Harzig, Dirk Hoerder and Donna R. Gabaccia, the 'agency of men and women who, within their capabilities, negotiate societal options and constraints [...] Migration history looks at both ends of mobility: What does it mean for families [...] or whole societies to lose members? What does it mean for societies of destination to receive "human capital"?'<sup>13</sup>

The description of migration in Stephen's speech is not idealised, but it does make the claim that God's presence follows the migration of his people. Stephen's migration history sets the pattern for the expansion of the Church. This is described by Simon David Buttica as 'construisant une mémoire légitimante [...] dont la perpétuation fidèle est à identifier dans le déploiement universel d'un *christianisme nomade*'.<sup>14</sup> The next question concerns the significance of the language used by Luke to describe that movement.

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<sup>12</sup> Dennis D. Sylva, 'The Meaning and Function of Acts 7:46-50', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 106 (1987), 261-75.

<sup>13</sup> Christiane Harzig, Dirk Hoerder and Donna R. Gabaccia, *What Is Migration History?* (Oxford: Wiley, 2009), p. 3; see the overlapping criterion of Historische Migrationsforschung in Jochen Oltmer, 'Einführung: Europäische Migrationsverhältnisse und Migrationsregime in der Neuzeit', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 35 (2009), 5-27.

<sup>14</sup> My translation: 'constructing a legitimising memory [...] whose faithful continuation is to be identified in the universal spreading of a *nomadic Christianity*'. See Simon David Buttica, *L'Identité de l'Église Dans les Actes des Apôtres: De la Restauration d'Israël à la Conquête Universelle* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), p. 189.

### ***Acts and the language of dispersion***

Acts 8.1b–4 represents a crucial moment in the narrative when the plotline moves its focus from Jerusalem to the wider world. This harkens back to Jesus' words in Acts 1.8b: 'and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth' (καὶ ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες ἐν τε Ἰερουσαλήμ καὶ ἐν πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρείᾳ καὶ ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς). In Acts 8.1b, Luke conveys the effects of persecution by describing the action as 'all [...] were scattered' (πάντες δὲ διεσπάρησαν). In Acts 8.4, he continues to use the verb, but now through a substantival participle;<sup>15</sup> the Christian community is now described as a mobile people. This is reinforced by Luke's unusual use of διέρχομαι (meaning 'to pass through') without a destination as an object (as in Mk 4.35, Lk. 2.15, Jn 4.4 and Acts 8.40). A literal translation would be 'the scattered ones went about proclaiming the word'.<sup>16</sup> Luke's use of language lacks clear precedents in both past and contemporaneous literature. To highlight what is unique about how the dispersal of Christians is described in this short, but a narratively decisive transition.

Despite his familiarity with the LXX,<sup>17</sup> Luke does not use the established Diaspora language of Scripture. Unlike 1 Pet. 1.1, Judean Diaspora terminology is not applied to Christians, or even superseded, in Acts. This is in keeping with the rhetorical strategy of Stephen's speech. Luke, via Stephen, describes what happens to the Christians following the pattern of God's mobile people. The importance of the Temple and the land is not diminished, but they are decentralised, or placed in a fresh perspective. Stephen's speech traces the movement of God's people and argues that God is active, even present, in movement and that it is part of his original plan. The speech then, according to Christoph Stenschke, 'anticipates and legitimises'<sup>18</sup> the scattering in Acts 8.1b–4.

Although Luke is indebted to both Hellenic Judean and Graeco-Roman literature, he departs from their linguistic norms related to migration. In

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<sup>15</sup> Cleon L. Rogers Jr, Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1998), p. 245; Mikeal C. Parsons, Martin M. Culy, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco TX: Baylor University Press, 2003), p. 150.

<sup>16</sup> My own translation.

<sup>17</sup> See the examples in Gregory E Sterling, "'Opening the Scriptures": The Legitimation of the Jewish Diaspora and the Early Christian Mission', in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's Narrative Claim upon Israel's Legacy*, ed. by David P. Moessner (Harrisburg PA: T&T Clark, 1999), pp. 199–226.

<sup>18</sup> Christoph Stenschke, 'Migration and Mission: According to the Book of Acts', *Missionalia*, 44 (2016), p. 134.

Acts 8.4, Luke avoids using established language, such as φυγάδες ('refugees') or διασπορά ('Diaspora'), to describe dispersed people. An argument cannot be constructed here on the basis of what Luke does not say, but his unusual use of language appears to steer a course between his literary contemporaries. This does not mean that 'the scattered ones' (οἱ [...] διασπαρέντες) referred to in Acts 8.4 should be imbued with undue theological significance. Carl R. Holladay is correct when he states that the verb 'is not used here in the technical sense of diaspora or dispersion for those living outside the land of Israel'.<sup>19</sup> However, Luke's departure from established ways of describing human dispersion suggests that there is an attempt to designate the Christian scattering as something unique and requiring distinctive language. He uses language that neither overrides nor fits previous moulds. The closest parallel to Luke's language is found in Isaiah, although the context is different. Isaiah describes scattering within the hope for return. In contrast, in Acts there is no hope of gathering. Instead, Luke depicts the scattering as the multidirectional movement necessary to facilitate the announcement of 'the word' (τὸν λόγον) in Acts 8.4b.

### ***The scattering viewed from a migration-informed perspective***

One of the enduring conundrums of Acts 8.1b is the phrase 'except the apostles' (πλὴν τῶν ἀποστόλων). The use of the phrase 'all were scattered' (πάντες δὲ διεσπάρησαν) in the earlier clause appears to be a blatant contradiction. The most obvious way to understand πάντες is to attribute it to Lukan hyperbole,<sup>20</sup> as in Acts 11.28. Yet even when hyperbolic language is taken into account, this does not solve the tensions in Acts 8.1b. The question remains that if Luke wants to depict the persecution as severe enough to create refugees, surely the fact that some are allowed to remain cuts across that claim.

An understanding of migration dynamics can possibly help to make sense of the seemingly contradictory statements in Acts 8.1b, in particular the effects of the aspirations-capabilities framework and the dynamics of (im)mobility and (non-)migration on the whole community. Before turning to migration studies, a brief comment on and criticism of the major theories will help to show how a migration-informed perspective can offer a way forward in this discussion.

In Acts 6.1, Luke describes the Church as divided between Hellenists and Hebrews. The word for Hellenists (Ἑλληνιστής) is not attested prior to

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<sup>19</sup> Carl R. Holladay, *Acts: A Commentary* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), p. 177.

<sup>20</sup> As in Rudolf Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1986), p. 265, and Keener, *Acts*, p. 1468.

Luke's use, so there are few external reference points, and the meaning must be derived from the context. Unfortunately, the context is vague. In the discussion of Acts 8.1b–4, defining the Hellenists then becomes critical. Ferdinand Christian Baur proposed that the Hellenists were a distinct faction within the early Church that could be singled out for persecution.<sup>21</sup> This theory has been developed by Marcel Simon<sup>22</sup> and more recently by Martin Hengel.<sup>23</sup> In this understanding, the persecution was levelled at the Hellenistic Jews by other Hellenists, and 'except the apostles' (πλὴν τῶν ἀποστόλων) can be understood as the Hebrews who were in the apostles' Hebraic community in Jerusalem. This view assumes the existence of a theological as well as linguistic rift between the two factions. It is proposed that the Hellenists, who had lived outside the land, upon returning to Jerusalem were more fervent in their devotion to the Temple, having known its absence. The great persecution, then, can be understood as an intra-diasporic conflict. Christopher M. Hays places this in parallel with modern migration studies: 'these Hellenistic Jews were as ardently invested in the Holy Land and the Holy City as any native-born Jew – not unlike some second-generation migrants in the United States, who become hostile to new migrants'.<sup>24</sup>

The problem with this view is that aside from the description of an argument between Hellenists and Hebrews, there is no explanation of a theological dispute between the groups in the text. The disagreement in Acts 6.1 arises from the unequal distribution of food to needy widows. Moreover, the depiction of the Hellenists as fervent Temple devotees is questionable. Stephen's criticism that some treated the Temple as hand-made (χειροποιήτοις) has a precedent in the Hellenic Jewish tradition: 1 Kgs (LXX

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<sup>21</sup> Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Works, His Epistles and Teachings*, trans by A. Menzies (1873–1875, from the 1845 German original) (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1.39.

<sup>22</sup> Marcel Simon, *St. Stephen and the Hellenists in the Primitive Church* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1958).

<sup>23</sup> Martin Hengel, 'Early Christianity as a Jewish-Messianic, Universalistic Movement', in *Conflicts and Challenges in Early Christianity*, ed. by Donald A. Hagner (Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), pp. 1–41.

<sup>24</sup> As in Christopher M. Hays, 'What Is the Place of My Rest? Being Migrant People(s) of the God of All the Earth', *Open Theology*, 7 (2021), 150–68.

3 Kgdms) 8.2 and Philo (*Cher.* 99–100).<sup>25</sup> In the context of Acts, Peter would have been considered a Hebrew, but his speeches in Acts 2.14–39 and Acts 3.11–26 share similar characteristics to Stephen’s speech. They both attempt to argue that Jesus was the culmination of Judean religion, by way of the Scriptures. Acts 3.22 and Acts 7.37 present almost the same argument, and both cite Deut. 18.15 (LXX). If the Hellenists and Hebrews made different theological arguments, this is not evident in the way that Luke records the speeches of Peter and Stephen. The phrase ‘except the apostles’ (Acts 8.1) is written as an exception to the scattering; Luke does not suggest that the apostles were spared from the great persecution, despite remaining. Both Hellenists and Hebrews experience persecution in Acts at this juncture.

There are also linguistic issues that are problematic for the interpretation of a Hellenist-only persecution. It would be peculiar for Luke to use the word ‘all’ (πάντες) to describe what would be a minority group in the Church, if he intended to describe the scattering only of Hellenists. In Acts 22.4–5, Paul, a Hellenist, describes his persecution as sanctioned by the high priest and the elders — all of them Hebrews. Here the persecution of Christians comes from both groups in Jerusalem. Acts 15 does show some theological division between Hellenists and Hebrews, but this is an intra-Christian dispute rather than an argument among Hellenists. In the description of mourning after Stephen’s death in Acts 8.2, the term ‘devout men’ (ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς) is vague. The mourners could be Judeans (Hellenists or Hebrews), Christians or a mixed group.<sup>26</sup> All of this, taken together, makes a stark Hellenist–Hebrew divide appear unlikely.<sup>27</sup> However, the Hellenists

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<sup>25</sup> For further examples of similarities with Stephen’s speech and Diaspora theology, see Gregory E. Sterling, “Opening the Scriptures”: The Legitimation of the Jewish Diaspora and the Early Christian Mission’, in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke’s Narrative Claim upon Israel’s Legacy*, ed. by David P. Moessner (Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), pp. 199–226; Sterling finds the connections so convincing that he goes on to argue that Luke was a Diaspora Jew. Even if one does not follow his argument on this point, the author’s knowledge of the Diaspora tradition is well established.

<sup>26</sup> Witherington III argues for the latter, suggesting that Luke displays a multifaceted perspective on Jews and their response to early Christians, in *The Acts*, pp. 277–8.

<sup>27</sup> For a more detailed argument, see Craig C. Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division Within the Earliest Church* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress, 1992); Allan Chapple, “Except the Apostles” (Acts 8:1b), *Reformed Theological Review*, 70 (2011), 107–34. Cf. the critical review by Philip F.

are singled out in Acts 6.9–11 and Acts 9.29, so the divide cannot be discarded altogether. Rather than a hypothetical reconstruction of theological views of the Hellenists, a simple understanding of the Hellenists as Greek-speaking Judeans from the Diaspora is perhaps the most natural reading of Ἑλληνιστής.<sup>28</sup> They are a distinct group, but the contrast between them and the Hebrews should be approached with restraint.

The phrase ‘except the apostles’ (πλὴν τῶν ἀποστόλων) could have been added later for the sake of narrative unity, given the importance of the apostles’ presence in Jerusalem (Acts 11.22). Craig Keener’s rather straightforward proposal, which allows for a multifaceted scattering, makes sense of the distinction between Hellenists and Hebrews without overemphasising the division: ‘the situation has simply changed since [Acts] 5:9, and those wishing to persecute the Church have gained the upper hand; large numbers of Christians fled, but the apostles remained and went “underground”’.<sup>29</sup> Literarily, this also sets the stage for the conversion and role of Paul, who is so important to the narrative of Acts.

Craig Keener’s cautious proposal of a multi-directional dispersion that accounts for both mobility and immobility makes sense within the aspirations–capabilities framework of migration. In this model, ‘all forms of migration [are] a function of aspirations and capabilities to migrate with given sets of perceived geographical opportunity structures’.<sup>30</sup> In other words, the linguistic and diasporic connections of the Hellenists would be different to those of the Hebrews. The pressures of persecution will affect the capabilities of each group differently. Due to their Greek enculturation, the Hellenists will have more places in which to seek refuge or settle (e.g., Acts 11.19). The need of the Jerusalem Church to pool resources (Acts 2.44, 4.32) and the distribution of food to widows (Acts 6.1) could suggest that the Church was poor, and that therefore some would lack the resources to leave Jerusalem.

Theologically, Stephen’s speech could signal an adjustment to the aspirations of other Hellenists in the Church — the new understanding of Jesus as the culmination of Israel’s history decentralises the Temple and the land. It follows that once the destabilising pressure of violence has begun to affect everyday life, there is then theological license to follow God faithfully in new geographical locations. Acts 8.1b is a somewhat messy statement

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Esler. See also Craig C Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division Within the Earliest Church* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress, 1992). *Biblical Interpretation* 3 (1995), 119–23.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas W. Martin, ‘Hellenists’, *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 135–136.

<sup>29</sup> Keener, *Acts*.

<sup>30</sup> de Haas, ‘A Theory’, p. 17.



with inherent contradictions; in many ways this is a befitting description of the multifaceted effects of migration-driving events and (im)mobility.

If Acts can be (in part) understood as ancient literature of migration, the phrase ‘all were scattered’ (Acts 8.1) is more than Lukan hyperbole. Instead, it reflects the impact of migration upon those who have experienced it — either by leaving or by remaining. As Uma Kothari’s analysis of migration and poverty has highlighted, ‘Those who stay behind are as enmeshed in migratory processes as migrants themselves’.<sup>31</sup> Here Acts presents a story of where migration begins, and offers a decentralising insight from the perspective of traditional receiving societies. In his analysis of Algerian emigration to France, Abdelmalek Sayad argued that ‘one country’s immigration is another country’s emigration’.<sup>32</sup> Analysing the impact of Sayad’s individual migrant-focused theory in broader migration studies, Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant observe that the study of migration is enriched ‘not from the concerns and cleavages of the receiving society, but from the sending communities, their history, structure, and contradictions’.<sup>33</sup> The presentation of migration in Acts as scattering all, despite some remaining, is an example of that aforementioned history, structure and contradictions. As Luke narrates the migration of Christians, Stephen’s speech operates as an anticipation and legitimisation of the experience of migration.<sup>34</sup>

### ***Conclusion: hearing Stephen’s speech means hearing Palestinian perspectives***

I have attempted to argue that Stephen’s speech, and the scattering of the Church in its wake, can be better understood with attentiveness not only to themes of migration, but also to the experience of migration; in the case of Acts 8.1–4, the text describes a religiously and politically motivated persecution that results in what is akin to a modern refugee movement. Without this scattering, the text of Acts would not exist. The text not only describes migration, but is a product of that migration. The text compels readers to view the narrative through the pain of dislocation. In this act of

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<sup>31</sup> Uma Kothari, ‘Staying Put and Staying Poor?’ *Journal of International Development*, 15 (2003), p. 652; Kothari quotes Christopher McDowell, Arjan de Haan, ‘Migration and Sustainable Livelihoods: A Critical Review of the Literature’, *Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Working Paper*, 65 (1997).

<sup>32</sup> Abdelmalek Sayad, *The Suffering of the Immigrant*, trans. by Pierre Bourdieu and David Macey (Oxford: Polity Press, 2004), p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, ‘The Organic Ethnologist of Algerian Migration’, *Ethnography*, 1 (2000), p. 174.

<sup>34</sup> To borrow from the terminology of Stenschke, 2016, p. 134.

interpretive empathy, hermeneutics can be transformed. When considering forced displacement, it is impossible to ignore one of the oldest and also current catalysts of displacement in the world — the conflict in Israel and Palestine. According to Nathan Citino, Ana Martin Gil and Kelsey P. Norman, ‘Palestinians comprise the largest stateless community worldwide [...] they constitute the world’s longest protracted refugee situation’.<sup>35</sup>

The Palestinian theologian Mitri Raheb has proposed that ‘Hermeneutics is one of the most hazardous and repressive elements in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Our problem would be much easier to deal with if it were solely a case of massive injustice, a problem between Israelis and Palestinians. Unfortunately, the Western world is part of the intractability rather than part of the solution’.<sup>36</sup> Part of this problem is that Western hermeneutics are often formulated without empathy for the perspective from which the text was written — that is, a perspective that emerges from the experience of persecution and geographical dislocation. Raheb continues, ‘the Palestinians of today are living an experience similar to that of the Israelites of the Bible. This experience is of utmost hermeneutical importance to understanding the scriptures’.<sup>37</sup> Articulated in Stephen’s speech, Acts describes the Church’s identity as not geographically centred, but spatially reconfigured around the unbound and ascended Jesus through the Holy Spirit. For the early Church, this was not conceptual. The geographical spread of the Church comes through the trauma of persecution and displacement. For many (especially Western) Christians who approach the text from a settled social location, this ‘scattered-but-gathered’ perspective can be lost; in some cases, the (sometimes deliberate) disregard of this witness can lead to the resurgence of ideologies that co-opt biblical narratives for nationalistic ends. As Iain Wallace has observed, ‘Naively literalistic interpretations of their imagery, allied with uncritical translations of the interpreter’s contemporary geopolitical context into their texts, have been a continuous feature of Christian history’.<sup>38</sup> One way to challenge this hermeneutical impulse can be attentiveness to the witness of

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<sup>35</sup> Nathan Citino, Ana Martin Gil, Kelsey P. Norman, ‘Generations of Palestinian Refugees Face Protracted Displacement and Dispossession’, Migration Policy Institute, 3 May 2023 [accessed 28 May 2023]

<sup>36</sup> Mitri Raheb, ‘Towards a Postcolonial Hermeneutics for the Palestinian Context’, in *Colonialism and the Bible: Contemporary Reflections from the Global South*, ed. by Tat-siong Benny Liew and Fernando F. Segovia (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2018), p. 103.

<sup>37</sup> Raheb, 2018, p. 182.

<sup>38</sup> Iain Wallace, ‘Territory, Typology, Theology: Geopolitics and the Christian Scriptures’, *Geopolitics*, 11 (2006), p. 220.

Palestinian Christians, who suffer as a direct result of theologically justified nationalism.<sup>39</sup>

As it is described in Acts, when the Hellenist Christians were scattered it was as if the whole Church had been scattered. Similarly, if the Church is to engage in faithful hermeneutics, it must hear and heed the voices of those who are in situations similar to what was experienced by the early Church. In particular, this also requires greater self-awareness, humility and even repentance with regard to biblical theologies that have buttressed the continued exile and oppression of Palestinians. Although post-colonial approaches to Scripture have garnered more attention in recent decades, the dynamics are not new, but take us afresh to the earliest and generative contexts of our foundational texts

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<sup>39</sup> Muther Isaac has made this appeal through his book, *The Other Side of the Wall: A Palestinian Christian Narrative of Lament and Hope* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020). Similarly, Gary Burge has attempted to highlight the contributions of Palestinian theologians and church leaders (whom he calls 'Living Stones in the Land') in his book *Whose Land? Whose Promise? What Christians Are Not Being Told About Israel and the Palestinians* (Cleveland OH: Pilgrim Press, 2003), pp. 205–332.



# The Idolisation of Israel is Harmful to Jews and Christians

Steven Paas<sup>1</sup>

Bitter memories of complicity in crimes against the Jews have strained the consciences of many Christians in the Western world. Feelings of collective guilt and shame have paved the way for strong reactions, culminating in recent statements in which churches have confessed guilt in relation to the Jewish people. These feelings and reactions are perfectly understandable in the context of the stain of anti-Semitism that clings to the history of the ('Christian') West.<sup>2</sup>

There is also another side. Those feelings of shame and guilt have coupled with a Judaising undercurrent in Christianity. This tendency was already considered unacceptable by the apostles in the early Church of the New Testament (e.g., Gal. 3.1–15).<sup>3</sup> At the same time, it must be said that from the early Church Fathers onwards, resistance to that undercurrent has been dominant and, unfortunately, has often shown extremely anti-Jewish attitudes. These attitudes have resulted in egregious sin against God, flouting his commandment of love and righteousness. However, this is not to deny the right to criticise Judaising influences in the Church, particularly with regard to propagating the idea that even after the period of biblical revelation, Israel or the Jewish people would have a lasting special religious position in God's plan of salvation, and would therefore be entitled to an exceptional relationship with the Church.

Mainly due to the influence of English Puritans, this idea of an extraordinary status and future for natural Israel gained more sympathy and support in pietistic circles — and also in, for example, the Netherlands and Germany — from the last days of the sixteenth-century Reformation.<sup>4</sup> It

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Steven Paas has published on European and African church history, mission, the phenomenon of Israelism in the interpretation of biblical prophecy, and the lexicography of Chichewa, a widely spoken language in Central Africa.

<sup>2</sup> Another edition of this essay was published in Dutch, by *Cvandaag*, on 10 November 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander E. Stewart, 'The Future of Israel, Early Christian Hermeneutics, and the Apocalypse of John', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 61.3 (2018), 563–75.

<sup>4</sup> For an overview of the development of these ideas in the Anglo-Saxon world and in Germany, see chapters 4–8 in Steven Paas, *Christian*

should be noted that this emerging view among Western Pietists goes beyond conviction of the relationship between the Church and God's history of revelation through ancient biblical Israel, which has been undisputed in the Christian tradition. According to the newer view, today's post-biblical Israel, defined as the 'people of God', has retained a unique place and a special future in God's plan of salvation, and therefore exists in an extraordinary 'inseparable' relationship with the Church. Many have embraced this idea as if it were a biblical dogma, often being unaware of its far-reaching theological and political consequences. The Jewish author Abraham van Kempen, with a certain irony, compares this concept with the idolisation of a 'golden calf', as the Israelites did during their journey through the desert, at Mount Sinai (Exod. 32).<sup>5</sup>

In this essay, the political impact is not dealt with except in passing. As to the theological impact, we question whether such an alleged exceptional position for one ethnic group can be reconciled with the consequences of what the apostle Paul says about the very *removal* of ethnic walls of separation (Eph. 2.14), about the *equality* in Christ between Jew and Greek (Gal. 3.28), and about the non-ethnic and *universal meaning* of the qualification of being a Jew (Mt. 3.9; Lk. 3.8; Rom. 2.25–29).

Moreover, Paul says about us, people in general, 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3.23). We have missed the purpose of our lives. Therefore we have no peace with God and we have been surrendered to fatal vulnerability and death. This unpopular truth concerns Jews and non-Jews of all times and places. However, the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished the work of reconciliation, which is perfect and fully sufficient for the salvation of all people, even for 'the whole world' (1 Jn 2.2). Consequently, all who surrender to him in faith are saved (Rom. 3.24–31). With the perspective of peace with God and eternal life, Christians look forward to the new heaven and the new earth, which Christ will fully realise at his Second Coming. Jesus Christ and this good news are at the heart of the Bible. The climax of this is fully revealed in the New Testament, but the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Christ are also the ultimate perspective of Old Testament prose and poetry, especially the prophecies in it, the

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*Zionism Examined: A Review of Ideas on Israel, the Church, and the Kingdom*, 2nd edn (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020), and for an overview of their development in the Netherlands, see chapters 9, 10, 11 and 13 in Steven Paas, *Israëlviesies in beweging: Gevolgen voor Kerk, geloof en theologie* (Kampen: Brevier, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Abraham A. van Kempen, *Christian Zionism, Enraptured around a Golden Calf* (FastPencil Publishing, 2018).

descriptions of which also function as foreshadowing metaphors.<sup>6</sup> Only through the person and work of Christ, who works in us through his Spirit, can we access and understand the Bible. In Christ, the universal meaning of the whole of Scripture has been contracted.

In this essay, I use the terms 'Christian Zionism' and 'Israelism' to indicate the wide movement within Christianity that — in whatever way — claims an extraordinary religious position and status for ethnic Israel. The term 'Christian Zionism' refers to organisations, especially in the Western world, comprised of extreme advocates of this opinion and its far-reaching theological and political consequences.<sup>7</sup> The term 'Israelism' refers to the much more general and less sharply defined view that the Church or Christians have a specific and lasting connection with post-biblical Israel or the Jewish people and the Jewish religion, more so than with other peoples and religions.<sup>8</sup> This view assumes that being a Jew and living in the context

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<sup>6</sup> Examples of the metaphoric character of the Old Testament have been beautifully described by Tom Wright in *The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus's Crucifixion* (San Francisco CA: HarperOne, 2016). Cf. Bert van Veluw, *Jezus' kruisdood in beeld: hedendaagse en bijbelse metaforen van verzoening en verlossing* (Kampen: Van Warven, 2022).

<sup>7</sup> Examples of these organisations, mainly in the Anglo-Saxon world, include Christians United for Israel (CUFI), International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ), which has branches in various countries, and the Church's Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ). Other examples include the Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC), Christian Friends of Israel (CFI), Intercessors for Britain (IFB), Prayer Friends of Israel (PFI), Bridges for Peace (BFP), the American Messianic Fellowship (AMF), the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA), Jews for Jesus (JFJ), the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary, the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ), Christians for Israel (CFI), which has branches in, for example, Germany and the Netherlands, and the Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel. Examples of individuals who represent the movement include Willem Glashouwer, John Hagee, Jerry Jenkins, Lance Lambert, Tim Lahaye, David Pawson, Derek Prince, Pat Robertson, Walter Riggans and Dumisani Washington.

<sup>8</sup> Apart from its extreme consequence in Christian Zionism, forms of the wider phenomenon of Israelism have been adopted by many evangelical Christians in America and Europe. For example, in the Netherlands the majority of Protestant churches and congregations adhere to ideas of some extraordinary position of Israel or the Jewish people, and have established specific 'Church and Israel' agencies. For an overview of positions that Israel

of a Hebrew culture is a relative guarantee of being closer to the understanding of God's intention in the Old Testament. Therefore listening to the scriptures of the rabbis of Judaism should be normative for the Church.<sup>9</sup> Such an arrant order to listen to the Rabbis first is fundamentally different from recognising the interpretive value of knowing the Hebrew language and culture, or recognising that Jewish interpreters may also provide useful insights into Old Testament texts, possibly leading to a better understanding of New Testament issues.

One practice connected to this assumption is the tendency, in prayer during worship, for pastors to distinguish between prayer for mission to 'the ends of the earth' and prayer that is focused on Israel or the Jewish people, which they then refer to as 'God's people'.<sup>10</sup>

I defend the following statements. The movement of Christian Zionism or, more widely, of Israelism, has wrongly assigned a special religious status to the Jewish people and post-biblical Israel, and they have placed that status at the centre of personal faith, theology and Church. This is harmful because it challenges the unique central position of Christ as the 'Saviour of the world' (1 Jn 2.2, 4.14), and puts that position under pressure.

### ***Christ is the heart of the Bible***

This is the overarching message of the book *Israelism and the Place of Christ*, a collection of Bible studies by 14 theological experts, including Gregory K. Beale, Colin Chapman and Owen Palmer Robertson, edited by me, and

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takes in Dutch Church Orders, see [www.kerkenisrael.nl/vrede-over-israel/voi56-1c.php](http://www.kerkenisrael.nl/vrede-over-israel/voi56-1c.php). Also note the Church Order of the Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (PKN), which states in article I, section 7 that the Church is called to propagate its unconditional connection ('onopgeefbare verbondenheid') with the people of Israel, and the [Centre of Israel Studies](#) (Centrum voor Israël Studies, CIS), in which churches and agencies cooperate. The authors of a recent publication defend the wider idea of Israelism: J. H. Bonhof, M. C. van Campen, J. Hoek, R. van de Kamp, C. J. Overeem, M. J. Paul, C. Sonneveld, *Met het oog op Israël: Bezinning en Bijbelstudies* (Apeldoorn: Labarum Academic, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> 'Sitting at the feet of the rabbis' ('Zitten aan de voeten van de rabbijnen') is what the Dutch '[Parasja-project](#)' wants Christians to do. The project has been organised by CIS. J. Blom critically commented on it by emphasising that the interpretation of the Bible by rabbis is confusing ('Bijbeluitleg rabbijnen verwarrend voor christen').

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Steven Paas, '[Bidden voor Israël en bidden voor de zending](#)'.



published in English and in Dutch.<sup>11</sup> That message is also prevalent in my other publications on this subject, both in English<sup>12</sup> and in Dutch.<sup>13</sup> The incompatibility of our defence of a Christocentric interpretation of Scripture and of the claim of an extraordinary status for post-biblical Israel is also demonstrated in the works of renowned scholars such as Graeme Goldsworthy,<sup>14</sup> John Stott<sup>15</sup> and Tom Wright.<sup>16</sup> In view of the importance of interpreting the core text in Paul's letter to the Romans (Rom. 11.26a: 'And

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<sup>11</sup> Steven Paas (ed.), *Israelism and the Place of Christ: Christocentric Interpretation of Biblical Prophecy* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2018). Summary and review by Alexander Stewart, *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 50 (2020), 101–2.

<sup>12</sup> See my study of Israel theories, including the ideologies of anti-Semitism and philo-Semitism, in Steven Paas, *Christian Zionism Examined: A Review of Ideas on Israel, the Church, and the Kingdom*, 2nd edn (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020). In this article I introduced the book and added a list of other relevant literature: 'Character and consequences of Israelism/Christian Zionism' ([www.linkedin.com/pulse/christian-zionism-examined-steven-paas](http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/christian-zionism-examined-steven-paas)). For a review, see Bob Wielenga, 'Is Christian Zionism a Heresy?', *Die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi*, 56 (2022).

<sup>13</sup> For example, see Steven Paas, *Israëlvizies in beweging: Gevolgen voor Kerk, Geloof en Theologie* (Kampen: Brevier, 2014); Steven Paas, *Liefde voor Israël nader bekeken: Voor het Evangelie zijn alle volken gelijk* (Kampen: Brevier, 2015).

<sup>14</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'What is the Structure of Biblical Revelation?', in *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2009), pp. 97–114. Cf. Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> John Stott, 'The Place of Israel', published as an appendix in Stephen Sizer, *Zion's Christian Soldiers: The Bible, Israel and the Church* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Tom Wright's most comprehensive work is *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, 4 vols, (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1992–2013).

so all Israel will be saved'), it is also useful to point to the thorough studies (in Dutch) of Bram Maljaars,<sup>17</sup> and the essay on Romans by Piet Guijt.<sup>18</sup>

In short, the Bible is God's love letter to all humankind (Deut. 33.3; Ps. 33.13), which reaches its climax in Christ (Jn 3.16–18). The Bible can only be interpreted from the perspective of Christ as its centre, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In the opinion of virtually all Christian Bible scholars, the Old Testament is heading towards its fulfilment in the New Testament, and especially towards its culmination in Christ. From that vantage point of fulfilment the Old Testament becomes essentially explicable for us. Perhaps the most powerful example is that of the Ten Commandments at the centre of the Torah (Exod. 20; Deut. 5), the enormous depth and scope of which only come into focus when Jesus gives his double commandment of love (Mt. 22.37–40; Mk 12.28–31), not merely as a summary of Old Testament commandments, but as the essence and foundation of the whole Word of God.<sup>19</sup> It is not difficult to complement this striking example with many others.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Bram Maljaars, 'And so all Israel will be saved', in Steven Paas, *Christian Zionism Examined*, 2020, pp. 148–60. The article is a summary of his in-depth study (in Dutch) of the key verse Rom. 11.26: *Heel Israël zal behouden worden: Een kritisch onderzoek van de gangbare exegese van Romeinen 11, speciaal vs. 26* (Soesterberg: Aspekt, 2015).

<sup>18</sup> Piet Guijt, 'Israël en de Gemeente: De bedoeling van Paulus met Israël in Romeinen 9-11, in het licht van de hele Schrift', CIP, 6-1-21, [Wat Paulus duidelijk wil maken via Romeinen 9-11 - CIP.nl](http://WatPaulusduidelijkwilmakenviaRomeinen9-11-CIP.nl).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Steven Paas, 'Dubbelgebod van de liefde is fundament, geen samenvatting', in: CIP 16-12-20.

<sup>20</sup> Just a few extra examples are given here. How could you know who, in Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 7.13–14), is meant by the enigmatic Son of Man who will reign eternally as King over all nations, if Jesus had not said that he is that 'Son of Man'? (Mt. 17.22; Lk. 9.22). The eternal character of Davidic kingship (2 Sam. 7.13–16; 1 Chron. 17.12–14) would have no meaning for today if it had not been fulfilled in the kingship of Jesus (Lk. 1.32–33). It is revealing to observe in the prophecy of the 'Servant of the LORD' in Isaiah 53 a foreshadowing of the suffering Christ in the New Testament (passim). The prophecy about the elder who will serve the younger, as with Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25.22–23; Mal. 1.2–3), would have no meaning for today if it had not been made clear in, for example, Rom. 9.6–18, 9.24–26 and 10.9–13. How would we know about the many nations for whom God's name is great and about the people who desecrate him, of which the prophet Malachi (Mal. 1.11–14) speaks, if the double vision of the 12 tribes and the innumerable multitude in Revelation 7 was not in the Bible?

### ***The Jewishness of Jesus and the New Testament***

I am convinced that this Christocentric perspective also applies to the prophetic statements about the restoration of Israel in the Old Testament. God's plan for the salvation of the world in Christ has increasingly been unfolded in the Old Testament. For all nations, and in a special sense for the Church, the Old Testament promises have attained their highest fulfilment and deepest meaning in the Christ or the Messiah, as the New Testament has revealed to us. This fulfilling connection to God's Old Testament promises is precisely why the Son of God was born of a Jewish mother in his humanity, and was adopted as the 'Son of David'.<sup>21</sup> Jesus fulfilled all Old Testament promises (2 Cor. 1.20). He did so not because he wanted to realise Jewish particularism and nationalism, but because these promises of salvation relate to his own kingdom, which is announced among all nations, 'to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1.8; Ps. 67.8). It is not the rabbinical-Talmudic interpretation of the Torah and the rest of Tanakh that is normative. Instead, Jesus, the evangelists and the apostles have revealed to us the deep mysteries of the Old Testament as they unlock the divine eloquence originally shared through the Scriptures within the Hebrew culture. This refutes the theory that over the centuries the Church would have (deliberately) ignored or disregarded the true meaning of the Jewish identity of Jesus and the 'Jewishness' of the New Testament, and that we still have to look for it now. God's revelation in the Hebrew language, his history with the 12 tribes of Israel, the Jewish people, and the Jewishness of Jesus do not serve a limited purpose, but are focused on the salvation of the universe.<sup>22</sup>

### ***The universal impact and destination***

Christ leads the history of salvation to its universal impact and final destination. Neither he nor his apostles ever claimed an extraordinary future or a special religious significance for ethnic Israel as a special people or state in the way that Christian Zionists and Israelists do. Such an ethnic and nationalistic notion would have contradicted the spiritual and universal character of Christ's kingdom, earlier announced by John the Baptist (Mt. 3.2), and which in principle has already been realised in the hearts of believers of all ethnicities, although we are still looking forward to its completeness or comprehensiveness.

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<sup>21</sup> Steven Paas, 'The Sent Lord has become Sender', in *Challenging Western Christians and Their Neighbours: Be Participants in the Mission of Jesus, At Home and Abroad* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020), pp. 16–26. Cf. the Dutch edition).

<sup>22</sup> Idem, pp. 35–49, 'The Universal Goal'.

The Lord Jesus Christ was sent by God the Father, as his eternal divine Son *and* as a human being, to save the world. As a human being, he originated from the people of Israel, and both in his humanity and in his divinity he came to fulfill the Hebrew Scriptures for all nations. From the beginning of history, according to Genesis, God has focused on the redemption of the world. In a concrete way, he related himself to the world by showing his identity through his actions in a unique relationship with biblical Israel. He did not uphold that unique relationship 'for the sake' of Israel, but by means of that instrumental relationship he wanted all the nations to know that he is the LORD (Ezek. 36.22–32). Looking back, we can say that in the Old Testament, although still in shadows and images, God is already referring to who he is in Christ for the whole world.

Earlier on we pointed out the metaphorical nature of the Old Testament. Using examples and images, God painted his intention. That is why we say that basically the Old Testament metaphorically points to the core of the New Testament, namely the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus the Old Testament, like the New Testament, is the 'Book of Christ'.<sup>23</sup> Jesus Christ has completed, fulfilled and widened the Old Testament covenant relationship with Israel in a new form (Heb. 8.13), demonstrating its universal scope and Christocentric meaning.<sup>24</sup> He is the light of the world (Jn 1.9, 3.19, 8.12, 9.5 and 12.46), for all peoples, and of course also for the Jewish people. Out of all the nations of the earth he gathers his one and only people, the community of all believers, the body of Christ. This saving work has been fulfilled and will be completed at his Second Coming. Then he will reward 'all who have longed for his appearing' with the 'crown of righteousness' (2 Tim. 4.8).

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. Steven Paas, *Luther on Jews and Judaism: A Review of his 'Judenschriften'* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2017), pp. 15–25, on how Luther interpreted the Old Testament not only as the 'Book of Israel' but also as the 'Book of Christ'; Raymond F. Surburg, 'Luther and the Christology of the Old Testament', *Reformation Lectures*, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1982.

<sup>24</sup> I was grateful to be able to use the following studies to emphasise the Christocentric meaning and universal scope of the Bible: Rob Dalrymple, *These Brothers of Mine: A Biblical Theology of Land and Family and a Response to Christian Zionism* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015) (see my [introduction](#)); A. Blake White, *God's Chosen People: Promised to Israel, Fulfilled in the Church* (Colorado Springs CO: Cross to Crown Ministries, 2017).

### ***Theories about Israel and the Church***

Many Christians hold specific kinds of Israelism theories, sometimes even going so far as to embrace Christian Zionism. This implies their belief in certain religious thought systems regarding the future, the past and the present. They expect an extraordinary involvement of post-biblical Israel in the future of the world. More specifically, they connect today's Jewish people, including the post-biblical culture and the Talmudic Jewish religion, with the roots of the Church and with their ideal vision for the Church. These ideas are adhered to in both fairly moderate and extreme ways, but often in a mixture of both.

There is a mild, largely undefined sentiment among many serious Christians, who — before the Second Coming of Christ — expect a national restoration of Israel and a mass conversion of Jews to Jesus Christ, which is supposed to be a great blessing to the Church worldwide. This branch of Israelism is often referred to as *postchiliasm* or *postmillennialism*. Other Christians expect — only after the Second Coming of Christ — a special age of 1000 years (Greek χίλια, chilia = thousand) of Christ's rule on earth from Jerusalem as the capital of the world. Many adherents of this theory, referred to as *prechiliasm* or *premillennialism* (and especially its particular form of *dispensationalism*), believe that the Church will experience a 'rapture' (i.e., it will be taken up to heaven before the Second Coming), which will then be followed by a resumption of God's history with Israel.

Both visions of the future depend on disputed interpretations of the Old Testament. For example, Israelistic chiliasts mistakenly use the term 'the credit of the Old Testament' (first used by the Dutch theologian Kornelis H. Miskotte) to express their view that the Old Testament promises a 'credit' for Israel that has not yet been fulfilled in the New Testament.<sup>25</sup> Both visions of the future also depend on the interpretation of New Testament pericopes — for example, Romans 11 and Revelation 20, respectively. Strikingly, Jesus and the apostles do not speak of a special future for Israel. Not surprisingly, therefore, many theologians have shown that these 'credit' theories cannot be reconciled with a consistent Christocentric hermeneutical approach to the Scriptures.<sup>26</sup>

Following the post-war resurgence of chiliastic expectations of a glorious future for Israel (and the Church) before or after the Second Coming

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<sup>25</sup> Kornelis H. Miskotte (1894–1976), *When the Gods are Silent* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967) [translated from: *Als de goden zwijgen: Over de zin van het Oude Testament*, Amsterdam, 1956]. See also Steven Paas, *Israëlvizies in beweging*, pp. 65, 183, 185, 207.

<sup>26</sup> For example, the authors mentioned in footnotes 4, 5, 8, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 23 and 27 of this article.

of Christ, a desire has arisen to reinterpret the past — that is, the origin of our Christian faith in Israel — and to propagate the consequences of this reinterpretation for today. As such, there is nothing wrong with rethinking the relationship between our faith and the faith of ancient Israel. In addition, it is necessary for the Church to have means and people who know the languages of the Bible and the culture of ancient Israel, so that their work enables others to understand and interpret the Bible. Furthermore, it is important to develop a sensitive and respectful missionary awareness with regard to today's Jewish people within and outside the state of Israel. Discovering 'points of contact' is important in any missionary situation.<sup>27</sup> In this case it can give us more insight into the problem of why, regrettably, most religious Jews are still hostile to Jesus.

Unfortunately, however, the new desire to (re)discover 'Jewish roots' is more often inspired by the 'romantic' but not biblical idea that the religion of Judaism is in some way theologically related to Christianity. Alternatively, it is inspired by the even more radical belief that Messianic Jews have their own way *to* Jesus, or by the even further-reaching opinions that Messianic Jews have their own way *with* Jesus, or that Jews have their own separate way of salvation *without* Christ. Then the question arises as to which faith is being referred to. Is it the faith of Abraham and Moses, who *knew Christ* (Heb. 11), and the faith of Simeon and Anna, who *welcomed* Jesus (Lk. 2.22–40), or is it the faith of the rabbis of Judaism, who — emulating the Jewish leaders in the time of the New Testament — reject Christ. If sharing the recognition of Jesus Christ has been refused, the call for love of neighbour continues, but then every basic relationship of faith ceases.<sup>28</sup> Children of God do not need to rediscover the faith of Abraham and the other true Israelite and Jewish believers of old Israel, for they already have it in Christ. This means that this new search for Jewish roots within the movement of Israelism runs the serious risk of facilitating a shift in faith and theology which puts under pressure the central position and universal scope of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>27</sup> I discussed the 'denial', the 'overvaluing' and the 'two-sidedness of points of contact' in chapter 4, 'The Universal Goal', in *Challenging Western Christians and Their Neighbours* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020), pp. 36–53.

<sup>28</sup> Jewish rabbis such as Lody B. van de Kamp agree. In response to Jesus' statement that he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (In 14.6, cf. 20, 21), van de Kamp states honestly and challengingly: 'But for me there is another truth, of which the Christian Messiah was not a part long before the church came into being and has not been a part of it for two thousand years now. My truth tells me that it will remain that way (in 'De Jood heeft niets bij Jezus, maar mag er wel bij horen').

Finally, the theoretical assumptions of Israelism have political consequences. Many Christians think that the modern state of Israel, located on the geographical territory of the Bible, has the right to forcibly occupy and own the entire 'Holy Land', including the regions where non-Jewish Palestinians have lived for centuries. In his book *The Land of Christ*, the evangelical Palestinian theologian Yohanna Katanacho shows that such claims are not sustained by Scripture. Therefore Katanacho rejects the absolute Israeli land claims, but at the same time — as a Christian — he distances himself from hostile attitudes towards modern Israel and Jews in general.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Seemingly opposed extremes***

The good news of salvation for a lost humanity has been revealed by our triune God. In it, Jesus Christ holds the central and all-encompassing position. What does this mean for the relationship between Jews and Christians? First, it must be emphasised that the current state of Israel and the Jewish people have the right to be respected. We reject and abhor all forms of anti-Semitism and of a 'replacement theology' that tends towards anti-Semitism. *Anti-Semites* clash with the Gospel. But is this not also the case for *philo-Semites* — that is, the admirers of post-biblical Israel, and its feasts, settings and Talmudic biblical interpretations? After all, in personal faith, theology and the Church, confessing the love of God through the grace of Jesus Christ cannot go hand in hand with a positive appreciation of a religious nationalism that excludes others and a Jewish religion that rejects Jesus as Messiah. Do not the authors of the *Heidelberg Catechism*, appealing to the Word of God, regard such a mixture as 'idolatry'?<sup>30</sup> Therefore the Christian view of salvation history cannot include exceptional religious expectations, which would apply only to the people and land of post-biblical Israel.

In my opinion, such a perspective is necessarily adopted at the expense of the expectations that in Christ apply to all peoples. In essence, the biblical meaning of our Lord Jesus Christ revealing his central position is incompatible with a salvation theology that allows for special salvific expectations for specific ethnic groups, geographical areas and religions. Jesus is not glorified by Israel as such, but by all — Jews and Gentiles in all countries of all times — who in faith belong to him and have become new creatures.

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<sup>29</sup> Yohanna Katanacho, *The Land of Christ: A Palestinian Cry* (Eugene OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013). See my review article, '[Katanacho and the Protestant Struggle against "Israelism"](#)'.

<sup>30</sup> *Heidelberg Catechism*, question/answer 95.

Christian Zionism or, in a wider sense, *Israelism* at least obscures the view of the Christocentric meaning and universal scope of Scripture. The construction of a 'nationalist-ethnic' meaning of biblical prophecy can evoke the very feelings of anti-Semitism that one wants to oppose. The interpretation that construes in God's plan for post-biblical Israel and the Jewish people a higher or more exceptional status than for all other nations leads to undervaluing, misunderstanding or even abuse of the unique and all-encompassing meaning of Christ for all peoples. **Such an interpretation** of Scripture may be the cause of two seemingly opposing views — the one exalting Israel, and the other degrading or humiliating it. However, in principle these two consequences are not really opposed to each other, for they stem from the same literal reading and interpretation of unilaterally selected parts of Scripture. History has shown that either of these positions can shift to the other.<sup>31</sup> The ideologies of anti-Semitism and philo-Semitism have often been related to the still lagging imperial pride of the 'corpus Christianum', and the colonialist abuse of power, white pride and racism, which have often characterised Western culture from antiquity onwards. Yet whoever, as a Christian, wants to face their multicultural world with the redemptive message of Jesus Christ must be healed by him of every form of racial pride and preference.<sup>32</sup> Anti-Semitism and philo-Semitism both go against the essence of personal faith, theology and the Church.

### ***Consequences for faith, theology and the Church***

Do racial or ethnic preferences have a place in the way that God in his love has condescended to fallen humanity? In my opinion, the sincere and unequivocal biblical answer to this question is that they do not! This persistent idea, which keeps popping up over and over again, has definitely proved to be unfounded. The dividing wall has been destroyed (Eph. 2.11–22). The Gospel does not confer any special status on races, peoples or nations. The spiritual status of Israel is not different from the spiritual significance of the other nations.

Therefore the insistence by Christian Zionists or, more generally, by Israelists on an exceptional and privileged position of Israel in the doctrine of salvation is misleading to both Jews and non-Jews. The ideology of Christian Zionism wrongly suggests a kinship of the Christian faith with the image of God and of humankind upheld in Judaism, and it also wrongly suggests that faith in Jesus Christ is somehow part of a set of exceptional religious and political expectations for the Jewish nation. This feeds the error

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<sup>31</sup> For the basic relationship between anti-Semitism and philo-Semitism, see Steven Paas, *Israëlvisies in beweging*, p. 10, 132v, 247vv.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Steven Paas, 'Racisme penetreerde het Westers Christendom'.



that Christ can only truly be our Saviour if we accept him in the context of special expectations for or from earthly Israel.

### **Conclusion**

The ideas of Christian Zionism or, more widely, of Israelism are disputable, because they put pressure on the central place of Christ as the Saviour of the world. Consequently, they undermine the Christocentric and catholic (universal) nature of the Church, theology and personal faith. Therefore this ideology can only be harmful to the unequivocal participation in Christ's universal mission to all peoples,<sup>33</sup> both to rebellious 'Babel' (Rev. 16.17) and to unbelieving 'Jerusalem' (Gal. 4.25). However, in this mission of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, despite the multitude of human errors and misunderstandings, God continues to extend his hands to sinful humankind in compassionate love and grace (cf. Rom. 10.20–21).

That blissful situation exists because in Christ the demonstrative love and grace of God for biblical Israel have been fulfilled. Therefore they have become full reality in his love for the whole world (Jn 3.16–18). In God's revealed plan of salvation, the status of post-biblical Israel — as co-recipient of that atoning love — is not different from the status of any other people. Every human being of every nation may surrender in faith to God, embrace that love and be saved. Every Christian, as a participant in the mission of Jesus, is called to pass on that good news of salvation to Jews and non-Jews. If Israel theories shift the Christ-centred scope of this universal mission to idolisation of Israel, this will be harmful to both Jews and Christians.

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<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of the universal scope of mission, see Steven Paas, 'Beginning at Jerusalem', in *Challenging Western Christians and Their Neighbours* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020), pp. 54–60.



# *Land of Promise? Some Observations and Reflections on the Report from the Anglican Communion Network for Inter Faith Concerns*

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In 2012, the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) published the Report of the Anglican Communion Network for Inter Faith Concerns (NIFCON), subtitled 'An Anglican exploration of Christian attitudes to the Holy Land, with special reference to "Christian Zionism"'.<sup>1</sup> A second edition was published in 2014, incorporating amendments made at the 2012 ACC meeting,<sup>2</sup> and a third edition was published in 2016, with a 'Travellers' Guide' appended.<sup>3</sup> The main text has remained fundamentally unaltered over a decade, despite developments in the Middle East and changing attitudes in many parts of the Communion.<sup>4</sup> That it has been issued three times without substantial

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<sup>1</sup> *Land of Promise?* [accessed 18 February 2021].

<sup>2</sup> *Land of Promise?* (London: ACC, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> The 'Travellers' Guide' is a set of notes for study groups [accessed 18 February 2021].

<sup>4</sup> The 2019 session of the Provincial Synod of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa adopted a resolution which responded very directly to the Kairos Palestine appeal, calls for non-violent action to bring justice, and calls upon the bishops of that Province to bring a similar motion to the agenda of the (then scheduled) 2020 Lambeth Conference: [www.kairospalestine.ps/index.php/about-kairos/kairos-palestine-document](http://www.kairospalestine.ps/index.php/about-kairos/kairos-palestine-document) [accessed 18 February 2021]; <https://anglicanchurchsa.org/provincial-synod-votes-on-israel-sanctions-anti-semitism-islamophobia/> [accessed 18 February 2021]. The Synod of Bishops at their February 2021 meeting stated: 'Synod of Bishops discussed the issues around the motion from Provincial Synod giving the ACSA's support for Palestine. A group appointed by the Archbishop has endeavoured to listen to both sides of the debate and has agreed to continue offering support to the people of Palestine in the light of the oppression and restrictions imposed upon them. The similarities with Apartheid cannot be

revision suggests that the document is intended to be the permanent and definitive statement of the Anglican Communion on complex and inextricably connected issues; these issues cannot be dealt with in isolation from one another, but neither can they be governed by one another. Issues of inter-faith relations and theological pedantry of any kind should in no circumstances be permitted to distract Anglicans from commitment to the fourth mark of mission, adopted by the ACC in 1984, 'to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation'.<sup>5</sup>

Archbishop William Temple (1881–1944) had observed many decades previously that the appropriate Christian response to injustice is the establishment of justice, not platitudes or charity to ameliorate or conceal it. He further noted that this principle is neither new nor even particularly radical, even if it is anathema to vested interests who profess to be Christian; he cites, inter alia, the campaigns for the abolition of slavery

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ignored. Neither can we ignore that Scripture is used to condone this oppression. The use of Scripture challenges both the gospel and the church to address this issue in the light of Christ. In this we note the motion did not support the use of violence on either side of this conflict. Synod takes this matter seriously and has asked the Archbishop to bring it before Lambeth 2022': <https://anglicanchurchsa.org/communique-from-the-synod-of-bishops/> [accessed 27 February 2021]. The 2021 session of Provincial Synod called for the issues to be addressed at the next Lambeth Conference, and condemned both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: <https://anglicanchurchsa.org/synod-calls-for-lambeth-conference-to-act-on-palestine/> [accessed 28 September 2021; <https://anglicanchurchsa.org/provincial-synod-condemns-anti-semitism-and-islamophobia/> [accessed 28 September 2021; <https://anglicanchurchsa.org/9371-2/> [accessed 28 September 2021. The 'Statement of Support' issued by the 2022 Lambeth Conference was sponsored by the current Archbishop in Jerusalem, the Most Rev. Dr Hosam Naoum. [www.lambethconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Statements-of-Support-from-the-Lambeth-Conference-2022.pdf](http://www.lambethconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Statements-of-Support-from-the-Lambeth-Conference-2022.pdf) [accessed 23 August 2022]. However, it reflects little development from Resolution 24 of the 1988 Conference: [www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1988/resolution-24-palestineisrael?author=lambeth+conference&subject=International+relations&tag=Palestine](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1988/resolution-24-palestineisrael?author=lambeth+conference&subject=International+relations&tag=Palestine) [accessed 23 August 2022].

<sup>5</sup> [www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/marks-of-mission.aspx](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/marks-of-mission.aspx) [accessed 29 September 2021].

and the slave trade in the British Empire, and of child labour in British industry, and the strenuous resistance to ending these abuses from within the political and ecclesiastical establishment, in relatively recent history.<sup>6</sup> More recently, Dr Gulnar Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Chelmsford, in addressing the 2022 Lambeth Conference from a position of not inconsiderable moral authority, said:

[P]artnerships across faith communities [...] are valuable and should be pursued wherever possible. To those who are fortunate enough, in relative safety, to be able to engage in such fruitful relationships [...] always remember your brothers and sisters around the world who are suffering persecution. Do not forget them, and do not be silent in the face of their reality.<sup>7</sup>

Given the recent histrionic reactions by UK government ministers to the somewhat insipid criticism by bishops and other Church figures of their threats to sink vessels conveying refugees across the English Channel, their plans to intern asylum seekers in Rwanda, culminating in the Illegal Migration Bill 2023, which is widely believed to violate international law, and their domestic social and economic policies, which have generated poverty, hunger, unemployment and homelessness, and placed the National Health Service under critical strain, it is clear that not a great deal has changed in the ruling cadres of British society during the last eighty years or more. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that the fourth mark of mission has thus far had little if any impact on Christian responses to Zionism, and to the policies of successive UK governments in support of their Israeli counterparts who have flagrantly violated international law and consistently defied resolutions of United Nations bodies in their systematic, incremental and increasingly violent oppression and dispossession of the Palestinians. What is true of the UK is of course also true of the USA<sup>8</sup> (not only during the Trump years), and of many reactionary governments around the world, but in none of these countries does Anglicanism enjoy the status or wield the influence that it does in the UK, and in England in particular. Critical engagement with the NIFCON Report is long overdue. Numerous problematic aspects of the document need to be identified and addressed, and any claim to be the definitive statement of the Anglican Communion on Christian Zionism, on Jewish-Christian relations, or on justice in the Middle

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<sup>6</sup> W. Temple, *Christianity and Social Order* (London: Penguin, 1942).

<sup>7</sup> G. Francis-Dehqani, 'Hospitality and Generosity'. Keynote address on Inter-faith Relations, *Bible Lands*, winter issue (2022), 12–14.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. J. W. Mulhall, *America and the Founding of Israel* (San Francisco CA: Deshon Press, 1995).

East needs to be challenged. The breadth and complexity of the issues may exceed the remit of NIFCON, but nonetheless require rigorous and informed theological scrutiny.

The Israeli settler-colonial occupation of Palestine and annexation of Jerusalem, illegal under international law,<sup>9</sup> and the means by which social, economic and military control is sustained, cannot be reduced to a matter of Jewish-Christian relations — a context in which Christian participants tend to be either blackmailed or self-censored into collusive silence on issues to do with Palestine, on account of the long history of anti-Semitism<sup>10</sup> in Europe

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<sup>9</sup> A. Abu Khalaf, *Palestinian Refugees and International Law* (Downers Grove IL: TellerBooks, 2016); *International Law and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, ed. by S. M. Akram et al. (London: Routledge, 2011); F. P. Albanese, L. Takkenberg, *Palestinian Refugees and International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); F. A. Boyle, *Palestine, Palestinians, and International Law* (Atlanta GA: Clarity, 2003); R. Brynen, H. Cattan, *Palestine and International Law* (London: Longman, 1976); N. Erakat, *Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2019); V. Kattan, *From Coexistence to Conquest* (London: Pluto Press, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Defining anti-Semitism is inherently problematic, given the complex and overlapping criteria of Jewish identity. Ethnic, cultural, religious and geographical indicators may be posited, but all are contested among self-identifying Jewish groups, and none would be true of all who identify as Jewish; furthermore, all the defining criteria are shared with others who do not identify as Jewish. The ‘working definition’ propounded by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in 2016 is particularly contentious: ‘Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities’. Not only is it politically biased (probably intentionally), failing to distinguish between Judaism and Zionism, but also it requires examples to clarify its meaning — for which reason alone it is not fit for purpose. The ‘working definition’ was drafted by US Attorney Kenneth Stern, himself Jewish and Zionist in his sympathies, but who has subsequently condemned as ‘egregious’ the use of a working definition, drafted for data collection and categorisation purposes, as a legal device to suppress freedom of expression, in testimony to the US House of Representatives Judiciary Committee in 2017. Cf. J. Deckers, J. Coulter, ‘What Is Wrong with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s Definition of Antisemitism?’, *Res Publica* (May 2022): <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11158-022->

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[09553-4?fbclid=IwAR0li83uBxE-11XM1Y83Hh-ikgxQCjUScdnq9VbzQUjIBwa6jLLFKxPOw\\_o](https://richardfalk.org/category/ihra-definition-of-new-anti-semitism/) [accessed 11 July 2022]; R. A. Falk, 'What Drives Anti-Semitism? The Authentic and the Spurious', *Trans Media Service* (December 2019): <https://richardfalk.org/category/ihra-definition-of-new-anti-semitism/> [accessed 26 August 2022]; B. Klug, 'Tackling the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism', *Free Speech on Israel*, 5 October 2020: <https://freespeechonisrael.org.uk/klug-ihra/#sthash.nuQRV91z.dpbs> [accessed 23 August 2022]. Cf. also B. Klug, 'Interrogating "New Anti-Semitism"', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36 (2013), 468–82; 'What Do We Mean When We Say "Antisemitism"?', lecture at Jüdisches Museum Berlin, 2013: [www.jmberlin.de/en/what-do-we-mean-when-we-say-antisemitism](http://www.jmberlin.de/en/what-do-we-mean-when-we-say-antisemitism) [accessed 23 August 2022]; A. Lerman, *Whatever Happened to Anti-Semitism?* (London: Pluto Press, 2022).

More recently, 128 scholars in Jewish and Holocaust studies have signed a statement urging the United Nations not to accede to pressure from Israeli diplomats to adopt the IHRA definition: 'Vague and incoherent, the IHRA WDA does not satisfy the basic requirements of a good definition. Rather than ensuring greater clarity, the IHRA WDA has been generating confusion about what constitutes antisemitism. *Don't trap the United Nations in a vague and weaponized definition of antisemitism*': <https://media.euobserver.com/9e86df02ddf67c6046d190b65e4380df.pdf> [accessed 5 November 2022]. The simpler and clearer Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, published in 2020, and signed initially by over 200 specialists (a high proportion of whom are Jewish) in relevant academic disciplines, has proved to be very much more satisfactory. This defines anti-Semitism as 'discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish)', and the accompanying guidelines explicitly distinguish between use of anti-Semitic tropes and associating all Jews with Israeli government policies and the conduct of armed forces, on the one hand, and principles and evidence-based criticism of Israel and of Zionism, and campaigning for Palestinian rights (including boycott, divestment and sanctions), on the other: <https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/> [accessed 13 April 2023].

Jewish Voice for Peace has published *On Anti-Semitism* (Chicago IL: Haymarket, 2017). This carefully balanced treatment of the issue eschews any simplistic definition, but recognises the reality of the dangers faced by some Jews at some times and in some places, and repudiates any equation of anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism.

More recently, the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem has published *This is Where we Stand: A Sabeel Reflection on*

which preceded the Holocaust or *Sho'ah*.<sup>11</sup> This moral failure all too easily gives way to 'weaponisation' of the Holocaust and of allegations of anti-Semitism, with two consequences — that issues of racial and religious hatred in Western societies are not adequately analysed and addressed, and that fundamental issues of justice and human rights in the Middle East are wilfully ignored. This is a profound insult not only to the Jews and other persecuted minorities who perished in the concentration camps, but also to the intellectual integrity and moral courage of survivors who have condemned Israeli state terrorism.<sup>12</sup> As Daniel Boyarin, the renowned

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*Antisemitism* (Jerusalem: Sabeel, 2022). This account is well informed and well balanced, and was critically welcomed by a panel of Jewish commentators: <https://youtu.be/5EfhVA1xr5I> [accessed 22 April 2023].

This Report precedes publication of these definitions of anti-Semitism, and offers none of its own. However, all three authors were involved in drafting *God's Unfailing Word* (London: Church House Publishing, 2019) on behalf of the Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England, which 'affirms [the IHRA definition]'s value for identifying antisemitism in the contemporary context' (p. 11).

<sup>11</sup> *Sho'ah*, the Hebrew word for destruction, is the term preferred by many Jews for the events commonly referred to in English as the Holocaust. The sacrificial connotations of the latter term are regarded as inappropriate to the godless and gratuitous violence perpetrated by the Nazis, and to what can be known of the experience of both those who perished in and those who survived the concentration camps. The force of these concerns is fully recognised, but the more familiar term will for convenience be used, not least because it occurs in the titles of many of the works cited, including important studies by Jewish authors.

<sup>12</sup> C. Delbo, *Auschwitz and After* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1995); cf. B. Beit-Hallahmi, *Original Sins* (London: Pluto Press, 1992); A. Burg, *The Holocaust is Over; We Must Rise From its Ashes* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); J. P. Butler, *Parting Ways* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); N. G. Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah* (London: Verso, 2008); *The Holocaust Industry* (London: Verso, 2015); P. Levi, *The Voice of Memory* (London: Verso, 2018); Z. Sternhell, 'The Holocaust as a Pretext for Annexation', *Haaretz*, 31 January 2020: [www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-the-holocaust-as-a-pretext-for-annexation-1.8472451](http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-the-holocaust-as-a-pretext-for-annexation-1.8472451) [accessed 20 May 2022]; I. Zertal, *From Catastrophe to Power* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1998); I. Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).



contemporary Talmudic scholar, culture critic, and historian of Judaism and Christianity, has written:

On the stairs of my synagogue, in Berkeley, on Rosh Hashanah this year, I was told that I should be praying in a mosque, and versions of this, less crude perhaps, are being hurled at Jews daily by other Jews [...] More piercing to me is the pain of watching a tradition, my Judaism, to which I have dedicated my life, disintegrating before my eyes. It has been said by many Christians that Christianity died at Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Sobibor. I fear, G-d forbid, that my Judaism may be dying at Nablus, Deheishe, Betein (Bethel), and El-Khalil (Hebron).<sup>13</sup>

Christian interlocutors in inter-faith relations have been culpably and wilfully oblivious to this perspective for far too long.

Nor can ‘an Anglican response to the phenomenon of Christian Zionism’ (1.1)<sup>14</sup> disregard the reality of the Zionist project in Palestine,<sup>15</sup> and the multiple issues of international law raised by the illegal occupation of territory, expulsion of civilians from their homes and agricultural land, detention of adults and children without trial, the use of a foreign language in military trials, and admissibility in military courts of secret evidence to which defendants and their lawyers are not given access and which they are not permitted to interrogate, home demolitions and other forms of collective punishment of whole families and villages, and use of ‘human shields’ during military operations.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, although inter-faith relations may be the specific brief of NIFCON, these cannot legitimately be reduced to Jewish-Christian relations — the Muslims who were the majority of the population of Palestine until the *nakbah*<sup>17</sup> of 1948, and the sanctity of Islamic traditions

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<sup>13</sup> D. Boyarin, *Border Lines* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. xiv.

<sup>14</sup> References are to paragraph numbers in the Report.

<sup>15</sup> E. T. Zureik, *Israel's Colonial Project in Palestine* (London: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> L. Allen, *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2013); M. Sfar, *The Wall and the Gate* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2017); R. Shehadeh, J. Kuttub, *The West Bank and the Rule of Law* (Geneva: International Commission of Jurists, 1980; 1988).

<sup>17</sup> The Arabic word meaning ‘catastrophe’, referring to the violent expulsion of at least 700,000 Palestinians from their homes and land in what became Israel in 1948. This was accompanied by massacres, revealed by Israeli military records to have been premeditated. See B. Morris, *The Birth*

and places of worship, cannot be ignored. The fundamental issue is one of justice and human rights, which no theology or piety should be allowed to obfuscate. Christian Zionism is not an innocent or romantic fantasy on the part of fundamentalists with a simple faith, but the religious veneer behind which Western capitalism and militarism hide in the Middle East. It needs to be addressed as such.

A second quite fundamental issue with the report is that, although published as the work of NIFCON, an Anglican Communion-wide body, it was essentially drafted by three members of the Church of England, at least two of whom hold or have held office in the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ).<sup>18</sup> Notwithstanding their undoubted competence and experience in inter-faith relations, the breadth of the Anglican Communion is not represented, and the Church of England, of all religious organisations, is that most compromised by its long association with British imperialism on five continents, including its relatively brief but highly destructive rule over

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*of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948); *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Morris is a Zionist who regards the expulsions as justified, but criticises accompanying atrocities. Others have been more outspoken, and will be cited later in this review, but the reality of the violent expulsions cannot be denied.

<sup>18</sup> Dr Clare Amos (at the time Programme Coordinator for Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation at the World Council of Churches, and previously Director for Theological Education and Coordinator of NIFCON at the Anglican Communion Office), Dr Jane Clements (at the time Director of the Council of Christians and Jews, and Founder and former Director of the Forum for Discussion on Israel and Palestine (FODIP) at Manchester University, of which she is now Co-Chair of Trustees) and Dr Michael Ipgrave (at the time Archdeacon of Southwark, formerly Inter Faith Relations Adviser to the Archbishops' Council and Secretary to the Churches' Commission on Inter-Faith Relations, subsequently Bishop of Woolwich, and now Bishop of Lichfield and, since 2015, Chairperson of the Council of Christians and Jews). The authors are not identified in the Report, but were explicitly named by Dr Amos in a paper, 'Anglican Insights from 'Land of Promise'', delivered at a consultation on Christian Zionism organised by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland in Edinburgh in September 2019, at which Dr Clements was also present. All three participated in drafting the more recent Church of England Faith and Order Commission report, *God's Unfailing Word* (London: Church House Publishing, 2019), reviewed in the *Scottish Episcopal Institute Journal*, 5 (2021), 124–9.

Palestine.<sup>19</sup> Not only is this document Anglocentric, but also it is preoccupied with the relationship between the Church of England and the (Orthodox) Chief Rabbinate of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth and the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Although rightly acknowledging the collective responsibility of Western Christendom for the history of anti-Semitism in Europe, this is emphasised at the expense of the global perspectives required of a report produced by an organ of the Anglican Communion. The endemic disregard in British society for the scale of atrocities perpetrated by and on behalf of the British and other European empires in Africa, North and South America, Asia, and Australia over centuries, including genocidal massacres — no less heinous than the Holocaust because of the darker complexions of the victims<sup>20</sup> — is but one aspect of the culpable blindness to the enduring impact of European imperialism on the victims and their descendants. Another aspect is the smug claim that British rule was more benign than that of other European imperial powers and of the indigenous rulers whom they subjugated or dispossessed. It would seem extraordinary that the Episcopal Diocese in Jerusalem and the Middle East, as that most directly affected by the Zionist project, was not directly involved in writing this report. That an English former President Bishop of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East oversaw the project is no alternative to involving Palestinian Anglican

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. L. Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 2011); M. Småberg, *Ambivalent Friendship* (Lund: Lund University, 2005); A. L. F. Tabawi, *British Interests in Palestine, 1800-1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

<sup>20</sup> A contemporary (1542) account: B. de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, ed. by A. Pagden (London: Penguin, 1992). Cf. A. Alvarez, *Native America and the Question of Genocide* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017); A. Koch, C. Brierley, M. Maslin, S. Lewis, 'European colonisation of the Americas killed 10% of world population and caused global cooling', *The Conversation*, 31 January 2019: <https://theconversation.com/european-colonisation-of-the-americas-killed-10-of-world-population-and-caused-global-cooling-110549> [accessed 18 February 2021]; D. E. Stannard, *American Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). On the complexities of the involvement of the Church in the various colonial projects, see H. M. Goodpasture, *Cross and Sword* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2019); E. F. Lupieri, *In the Name of God* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2011).

Christians in its composition,<sup>21</sup> particularly given the decades of friction between Palestinian Anglican clergy and laity on the one hand, and the succession of English bishops, cathedral dignitaries, and representatives of missionary organisations on the other, and their association with the Mandate administration and its objectives, particularly the implementation of the Balfour Declaration.<sup>22</sup>

A more representative process would have had to take account of the Islamophobia that is latent if not overt in many Anglican Provinces, and the resultant hostility to the Palestinians, especially in Muslim-majority countries, and elsewhere in the majority world where Christians tend to be susceptible to the influence of right-wing North American religious broadcasters. It would also have needed to address the somewhat naive self-identification of some African Christians with Israel in the Old Testament, and their not unconnected tendency towards sympathy with the modern state of Israel, especially when the latter supplies equipment and training to their state security apparatus.<sup>23</sup> African Christians have not been alone in this,<sup>24</sup> but Anglicans are more numerous there than in other settings where this phenomenon is attested.<sup>25</sup> These considerations might have made a unanimous report impossible, but the exercise would have identified

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<sup>21</sup> Rt Revd Clive Handford, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, 1996–2007; President Bishop, 2002–2007. Bishop Handford had been Dean of St George’s Cathedral, Jerusalem (1974–1978), and had previously served in Lebanon.

<sup>22</sup> See especially Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity*.

<sup>23</sup> See *Christian Zionism in Africa*, ed. by C. Holder-Rich (Lanham MD: Lexington, 2020); cf. D. Washington, *Zionism and the Black Church* (Charlotte NC: Umndeni Press, 2021), on the ‘black’ church in North America.

<sup>24</sup> It should be noted that the Zionist Christian Church (ZCC) and other similarly named bodies derive their name from Zion City, Illinois, whence missionaries of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church began the missionary work in southern Africa which led to the formation of independent churches, of which the ZCC has become the most prominent. Cf. G. C. Oosthuizen, *The Birth of Christian Zionism in South Africa* (KwaDlangezwa: University of Zululand Press, 1987).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. D. H. Akenson, *God’s Peoples* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1992). This book compares the rise of Jewish Zionism and the formation of the state of Israel with apartheid South Africa and Northern Ireland, in both of which contexts Christians of the Reformed tradition predominated. Those churches played a significant role in the formation of the covenant ideologies, based on the Hebrew model, which claimed irrevocable title to the land and demonised people of other races.

outstanding issues that need to be addressed across the Communion, and the nature of the study materials and processes required for this purpose. It would also have been much more difficult to dismiss views with which the authors disagree.

For ease of comparison, the structure of the original report is followed, with its chapter numbers and headings, and reference to section numbers is provided where relevant.

### ***Chapter 1. An encounter in the darkness***

The aim of the report is stated to be ‘to set out an Anglican response to the phenomenon of Christian Zionism, and to do so within a wider account of Christian thinking about Israel’ (1.1). The need for a robust Christian theological response to Christian Zionism is beyond question. That a wider Christian understanding of ‘Israel’ is a prerequisite for this is equally clear. The report quite correctly recognises the ambiguity of the term ‘Israel’, but instead of clarifying the different usages and locating each in its appropriate context, it states that ‘Israel is for us first of all the subject of a story’.

The story referred to is that of Jacob’s nocturnal fight with a mysterious figure, who gives him the name ‘Israel’. This incident is set east of the River Jordan, on the banks of a tributary of the latter known today as the Zarqa River, in what is now the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket, and Jacob’s hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, ‘Let me go, for the day is breaking.’ But Jacob said, ‘I will not let you go, unless you bless me.’ So he said to him, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Jacob.’ Then the man said, ‘You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.’ Then Jacob asked him, ‘Please tell me your name.’ But he said, ‘Why is it that you ask my name?’ And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, ‘For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.’ The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip (Gen. 32.22–31, NRSV).

Although it is certainly the case that this is the first occurrence of the term in the Canon of Jewish and Christian Scriptures, it remains unclear what ‘first of all’ is supposed to mean. Scholars who uphold the four-source hypothesis

of the origins of the Pentateuch have attributed this story to the 'J' tradition, but also recognised that however ancient the underlying animistic legend, it was associated with Jacob only at a late stage in its transmission.<sup>26</sup> It cannot therefore be understood as in any way formative of the Jacob traditions reflected elsewhere in the Pentateuch, or in other parts of Jewish or Christian Scripture. The story serves to identify Jacob with the eponymous mythical ancestor of Israel, and to distinguish his mythical descendants from those of Esau, Ishmael and Lot, and from the 'Canaanite' inhabitants of the land. It also serves to account for the prohibition on eating the sciatic tendon in Israelite dietary laws.<sup>27</sup> Both in explaining the origins of a dietary observance, and in identifying Jacob with Israel, a myth with ancient Near Eastern antecedents is appropriated to consolidate traditions already established. A whimsical reflection on this pericope, devoid of critical engagement both with the development of the tradition and with how it has been understood in Judaism and Islam<sup>28</sup> as well as in Christianity, does nothing to address the issue identified at the outset. The evolving identity of 'Israel', and the deeply problematic claim of the modern state to represent continuity with any demographic, geographical or political entity of the past, and to the exclusive (quasi-) legal inheritance to that entity, need to be recognised and addressed rigorously and impartially.<sup>29</sup> Unless all competing claims are subjected to the same degree of critical scrutiny, justice cannot be served or peace attained.

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<sup>26</sup> N. K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible* (Philadelphia PA: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 327–8; E. T. Mullen, *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations* (Atlanta GA: Scholars Press, 1997), p. 153; M. Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Atlanta GA: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 99–101.

<sup>27</sup> Apart from this reference in Gen. 32.32, this prohibition is not mentioned in the Pentateuch, but is nonetheless observed.

<sup>28</sup> The change in Jacob's name is reflected in the *Qur'an*, Sura 19, *Maryam*, 58, and his abstinence from an unidentified food in Sura 3, *Āl 'Imrān*, 93.

<sup>29</sup> I. Pappé, *The Idea of Israel* (London: Verso, 2014); Y. M. Rabkin, *What is Modern Israel?* (London: Pluto Press, 2016); S. Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (London: Verso, 2009); S. Sand, *The Invention of the Land of Israel* (London: Verso, 2012). These authors are all Jewish, and Pappé and Sand are Israeli. For historical works emanating from a Western (post-)Christian milieu, see K. W. Whitelam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel* (London: Routledge, 1996); R. L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy* (New Haven CT: Yale, 1992). See also A. Marchadour, D. M. Neuhaus, *The Land, the Bible, and History* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), an unambiguously Christian and Roman Catholic work (Neuhaus is a convert from Judaism).

### ***Chapter 2. Zionisms, anti-Zionisms and the Holy Land***

This chapter addresses the problems in defining Zionism(s) and varieties of opposition thereto. It recognises that (Jewish) Zionism — by which it means the European movement that was to prove the catalyst for Jewish migration to Palestine, and that aspired to a national homeland there — was an essentially secular movement. It also recognises that observant and secular ‘assimilationist’ European Jews alike initially repudiated this movement (2.5). For the former, the longstanding liturgical and spiritual tradition of yearning for the messianic restoration of Jerusalem and the temple did not constitute a geopolitical programme, but rather an attitude of awaiting God’s gracious eschatological intervention. Similarly, the periodic waves of migration from various diaspora communities to Palestine during the Ayubbid, Mamluk and Ottoman periods did not envisage conquest and the dispossession of the indigenous population, even if they hoped to provoke the awaited divine intervention to establish a messianic kingdom.<sup>30</sup> These movements cannot properly be described as Zionist in the sense that the term has come to acquire in contemporary discourse. This refers specifically to the programme to occupy territory for the establishment of an ethnic Jewish polity, which would either be inhabited exclusively by Jews or, at the very least, political and economic power would be controlled by the Jewish residents of any such polity. This novelty was fiercely resisted, both by observant Jews who regarded the Zionist agenda as presuming upon God’s favour or anticipating God’s intervention, and by assimilated Jews who were committed to the integration of their communities in European societies, in which they were enjoying greater security and prosperity than in previous centuries, and who could increasingly aspire to political enfranchisement as well. Furthermore, any scheme to rebuild the temple and reinstate the sacrificial cult would have been incompatible with the Jewish cultures that had evolved in western and central Europe in particular.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, it was among assimilated Jewish elites that Zionism emerged, with Palestine or another land outside Europe becoming a convenient destination for unassimilated Jews who were fleeing the pogroms in Russia, not altogether dissimilar to the way that Australia had been the involuntary destination for criminalised outcasts from British society — a place that others might be sent to colonise, but where they had no intention of settling themselves. This was the position represented by Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), against the mainstream of European Jewish thought. Greater justice would have been done to European Judaism if the report had recognised just how eminent

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. Cohn-Sherbok, *Israel*.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. P. Tobias, *Liberal Judaism* (London: Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues, 2013), pp. 170–77.

were such opponents of Zionism as Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786),<sup>32</sup> Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888),<sup>33</sup> Hermann Cohen (1842–1918),<sup>34</sup> Micha Josef Berdyczewsky (1865–1921),<sup>35</sup> Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929),<sup>36</sup> Claude Montefiore (1858–1938)<sup>37</sup> and Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919).<sup>38</sup> Albert Einstein (1879–1955),<sup>39</sup> Martin Buber (1878–1965)<sup>40</sup> and Hannah Arendt (1906–75),<sup>41</sup> who were all Jewish public intellectuals of enduring eminence, later supported Jewish immigration to Palestine but not

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<sup>32</sup> ‘Remarks Concerning Michaelis’ Response to Dohm’, *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, ed. by P. Mendes-Flohr and J. Reinharz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 48–9.

<sup>33</sup> ‘The Eighth Letter: The Founding of the Jewish People’, in *The Nineteen Letters* (New York: Feldheim, 1995), pp. 115–16.

<sup>34</sup> *Deutschtum und Judentum* (Gießen: Töpelmann, 1915); *Religion und Zionismus* (Crefeld: Blätter, 1916).

<sup>35</sup> ‘From the Land of Israel to Just a Land ...’, in S. Sand, *The Invention of the Land of Israel*, p. 203.

<sup>36</sup> *The Star of Redemption* (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), p. 319.

<sup>37</sup> C. J. G. Montefiore, *Race, Nation, Religion and the Jews* (Keighley PA: The Rydal Press, 1918).

<sup>38</sup> *In Defence of Nationality* (1900) and *The National Question* (1909) were written in Polish and concerned the right of the Polish people to self-determination. Cf. R. C. Jones, ‘Actually, Rosa Luxemburg was not a Self-Hating Jew’, *Tablet*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>39</sup> *About Zionism* (London: Macmillan, 1931); Einstein joined Arendt and other prominent Jews in writing to the *New York Times* in 1948, comparing the emergent *Tnuat HaHerut*, the forerunner of *Likud* and its leader, the future Prime Minister of Israel, Menachem Begin, with the recently defeated Nazis and Fascists: <https://web.archive.org/web/20071217113044/http://phys4.harvard.edu/~wilson/NYTimes1948.html> [accessed 18 February 2021].

<sup>40</sup> *A Land of Two Peoples*, ed. by P. Mendes-Flohr (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). Buber’s mature position, informed by experience and observation after the independence of Israel, represents some departure from his earlier work, as will be considered below. Cf. M. Buber, *Israel and Palestine* (London: East and West Library, 1952); republished as *On Zion*, ed. by N. N. Glatzer (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1985; New York: Syracuse University Press, 1997).

<sup>41</sup> *The Jew as Pariah* (New York: Grove Press, 1978); *The Jewish Writings*, ed. by J. Kohn and R. H. Feldman (New York: Schocken, 2008).



the creation of an exclusive Jewish state.<sup>42</sup> Maxime Rodinson (1915–2004),<sup>43</sup> Eric Hobsbawm (1917–2012),<sup>44</sup> Shimon Tzabar (1926–2007),<sup>45</sup> George Steiner (1929–2020),<sup>46</sup> Noam Chomsky (1928– ),<sup>47</sup> Geoffrey Bindman (1933– ), Moshé Machover (1936– ),<sup>48</sup> Avishai Margalit (1939– ),<sup>49</sup> Daniel Barenboim (1942– ),<sup>50</sup> Michael Lerner (1943– ),<sup>51</sup> Dan Cohn-Sherbok

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<sup>42</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel is a more ambiguous figure; see *Israel* (New York: Noonday Press, 1969). Cf. L. J. Kaplan, 'Time, history, space, and place', *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 17 (2018), 496–504; D. J. Moore, 'Heschel on Israel', *Shofar*, 26 (2007), 112–29.

<sup>43</sup> *Israel and the Arabs* (London: Penguin, 1973); *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* (Atlanta GA: Pathfinder, 1973).

<sup>44</sup> *Nations and Nationalism since 1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); *On Nationalism*, ed. by D. Sassoon (London: Little, Brown and Company, 2021).

<sup>45</sup> *Much Better Than the Official Michelin Guide to Israeli Prisons, Jails, Concentration Camps and Torture Chambers: The Grand Tour of the Palestinian Holocaust* (2004): [www.israelimperialnews.org/mxxxelin-web.pdf](http://www.israelimperialnews.org/mxxxelin-web.pdf) [accessed 27 April 2023].

<sup>46</sup> 'Our Homeland, the Text,' in *No Passion Spent* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996).

<sup>47</sup> *Peace in the Middle East* (New York: Harper Collins, 1974); *Fateful Triangle* (London: Pluto Press, 1983, 2016); *Middle East Illusions* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); with I. Pappé, *Gaza in Crisis* (Chicago IL: Haymarket, 2010); *On Palestine* (London: Penguin, 2015). Chomsky's views have mutated, however reluctantly, in response to evolving circumstances, but have always been perfectly clear.

<sup>48</sup> *Israelis and Palestinians* (Chicago IL: Haymarket, 2012).

<sup>49</sup> *The Decent Society* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

<sup>50</sup> D. Barenboim, E. W. Said, *Parallels and Paradoxes* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004).

<sup>51</sup> *Healing Israel/Palestine* (Berkeley CA: Tikkun, 2003); *Embracing Israel/Palestine* (Berkeley CA: Tikkun, 2012).

(1945– ),<sup>52</sup> Daniel Boyarin (1946– ),<sup>53</sup> Jeff Halper (1946– ),<sup>54</sup> Anthony Lerman (1946– ),<sup>55</sup> Michael Neumann (1946– ),<sup>56</sup> Haim Bresheeth-Žabner (1946– ),<sup>57</sup> Brian Klug (1949– ),<sup>58</sup> Lynn Gottlieb (1949– ),<sup>59</sup> Marc Ellis (1952– ),<sup>60</sup> Ian Black (1953–2023),<sup>61</sup> Gebriel Piterberg (1955– ),<sup>62</sup> Judith Butler (1956– ),<sup>63</sup> Ruth Behar (1956– ),<sup>64</sup> Hagit Borer (1957– )<sup>65</sup> and Brant Rosen (1963– ),<sup>66</sup> all similarly public intellectuals of considerable stature and known to be Jewish, represent some measure of continuity with their position until the present day.<sup>67</sup> The international lawyer Richard Falk (1930– ), United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories at the time when the report was compiled,

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<sup>52</sup> *Israel* (London: SPCK, 1992); *The Palestinian State* (Exeter: Impress, 2012). Cohn-Sherbok's historical reconstruction is at best tendentious, and unsupported by any evidence on contentious points, but he nonetheless argues a strong case for a Palestinian state on principles of justice, founded upon the prophetic and rabbinic traditions of Judaism.

<sup>53</sup> *Border Lines*.

<sup>54</sup> *An Israeli in Palestine* (London: Pluto Press, 2008); *War Against the People* (London: Pluto Press, 2015); *Decolonizing Israel, Liberating Palestine* (London: Pluto Press, 2021).

<sup>55</sup> *The Making and Unmaking of a Zionist* (London: Pluto Press, 2012).

<sup>56</sup> *The Case against Israel* (Chico CA: A. K. Press, 2006).

<sup>57</sup> *An Army Like No Other* (London: Verso, 2020).

<sup>58</sup> *Being Jewish and Doing Justice* (London: Vallentine-Mitchell, 2011).

<sup>59</sup> *She Who Dwells Within* (San Francisco CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995).

<sup>60</sup> *Beyond Innocence and Redemption* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 1990); *Israel and Palestine: Out of the Ashes* (London: Pluto Press, 2002); *Judaism Does Not Equal Israel* (New York: New Press, 2009).

<sup>61</sup> *Zionism and the Arabs* (London: Routledge, 1986); *Enemies and Neighbours* (London: Penguin, 2018).

<sup>62</sup> *The Returns of Zionism* (London: Verso, 2008).

<sup>63</sup> *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

<sup>64</sup> 'Sarah and Hagar', in *Beginning Anew*, ed. by G. T. Reimer and J. A. Kates (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1997), pp. 35–43.

<sup>65</sup> A professor of linguistics, and former student of Chomsky, Borer participated in Freedom Flotilla expeditions. See 'Getting on board with peace in Israel', *Los Angeles Times*, 26 June 2011 [accessed 10 January 2023].

<sup>66</sup> *Wrestling in the Daylight* (Charlottesville VA: Just World Books, 2017).

<sup>67</sup> Cf. A. Karpf et al., *A Time to Speak Out* (London: Verso, 2008).

is known to be Jewish and was unequivocal on justice and human rights issues, in Palestine and in other parts of the world, before, during and after his tenure in that post.<sup>68</sup> It is misleading, therefore, to claim that Jewish intellectual, religious and moral opposition to Zionism has been entirely eroded, and to imply that Zionism is now the essence of Judaism.<sup>69</sup> In its deference to the militantly Zionist British Orthodox Chief Rabbinate and the Board of Deputies, the report ignores other strands of Judaism, in Britain and elsewhere. The authors cannot have been unaware of the moderate critique — if not of Zionism, then certainly of the abuses perpetrated in its cause — by the Reformed Chief Rabbi, Tony Bayfield (1946– ), whose term more or less coincided with that of Jonathan (later Lord) Sacks (1948–2020) as Orthodox Chief Rabbi.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> ‘Ending the Death Dance’, *The Nation*, 23 (2002), 299–306; ‘Slouching Toward a Palestinian Holocaust’, *The Transnational Institute* (2007): [www.tni.org/en/article/slouching-toward-a-palestinian-holocaust](http://www.tni.org/en/article/slouching-toward-a-palestinian-holocaust) [accessed 26 August 2022]; *Palestine* (Charlottesville VA: Just World Books, 2014); *Palestine’s Horizon* (London: Pluto Press, 2017); numerous entries on <https://richardfalk.org/2012/07/20/for-what/>, including ‘Is Israel an Apartheid State?’: <https://richardfalk.org/2017/03/> [accessed 26 August 2022]. See also R. A. Falk, C. J. R. Dugard, S. M. Lynk, *Protecting Human Rights in Occupied Palestine* (Atlanta GA: Clarity, 2022).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. *Beyond Tribal Loyalties*, ed. by A. Abarbanel (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012; Seattle WA: Amazon, 2018); E. Berger, *Memoirs of an Anti-Zionist Jew* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1978); *The Other Israel*, ed. by A. Bober (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1972); Butler, *Parting Ways*; S. Cypel, *The State of Israel vs. the Jews* (New York: Other Press, 2021); M. Ghilan, *How Israel Lost Its Soul* (London: Penguin, 1974); I. Halevi, *Israël, de la Terreur au Massacre d’Etat* (Paris: Papyrus, 1984); T. Honig-Parnass, *False Prophets of Peace* (Chicago IL: Haymarket, 2011); *Reclaiming Judaism from Zionism*, ed. by C. L. Karcher (Northampton MA: Olive Branch, 2019); D. Levit, *Wrestling with Zionism* (Northampton MA: Olive Branch, 2020); M. Menuhin, *The Decadence of Judaism in Our Time* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1969); A. Orr, *The Un-Jewish State* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1984); *Israel* (London: Pluto Press, 1994); A. Orr and M. Machover, *Peace, Peace, When There Is No Peace*: [www.akiorrbooks.com/files/PEACE.pdf](http://www.akiorrbooks.com/files/PEACE.pdf) [accessed 18 December 2021]; A. Shatz, *Prophets Outcast* (Boston MA: Da Capo, 2004); *Deconstructing Zionism*, ed. by G. Vattimo and M. Marder (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

<sup>70</sup> Cf. A. M. Bayfield, *Being Jewish Today* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019). Either Bayfield is not a very good historian, or he employs skills learned in

Not only does the report not do justice to the breadth of European Judaism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the significant contributions of Jewish intellectuals to the advancement of knowledge and culture in many countries, but also it fails to recognise that Judaism was by no means an exclusively European phenomenon. It cannot be claimed that movements within European Jewry were representative of or normative for Jews in north Africa, or in different parts of Asia, where communities had flourished for a millennium or more (in many places for a lot longer than communities had been established in parts of central, western and eastern Europe), and where they continued to flourish, with no interest in Zionism, until Israeli actions rendered the position of many such communities precarious after 1948.

Although Eurocentrism is a recurring shortcoming of the report, (Jewish) Zionism does need to be located very specifically among the competing nationalisms that arose in the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the nineteenth century.<sup>71</sup> The Jewish variety may have been that which was least likely to realise a national state in Europe, and which accordingly aspired to establish a colony elsewhere in the world, although not necessarily in Palestine.<sup>72</sup> The Dreyfus affair in France provided a broader impetus for the movement, and pogroms in Russia precipitated the flight of substantial numbers of Jews from the Pale of Settlement into central Europe.

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his legal training to exploit selected evidence to best advantage and discount the rest. Whatever the inadequacies and ‘blind spots’ in his treatment of Zionism, he is entirely correct in his condemnation of persistent anti-Semitism in Europe, and in noting the limited options faced by European Jews at the end of the 1939–1945 war. Whatever his shortcomings as an historian, unlike Sacks he at least recognises that Scripture cannot be exempted from rigorous historical critical scrutiny. Bayfield’s perpetuating the discredited mantra of anti-Semitism on the part of Labour Party members critical of Israel, which has seen mainly Jewish members expelled or suspended from the Party, demeans his own record on issues of justice.

<sup>71</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1870; On Nationalism*.

<sup>72</sup> L. Almagor, *Beyond Zion* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022); D. Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1997); M. Brenner, *A Brief History of Zionism* (Princeton NJ: Wiener, 2011); A. Hart, *Zionism: The Real Enemy of the Jews. I. The False Messiah* (Atlanta GA: Clarity, 2009); W. Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York: Schocken, 2003); Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism*; J. Rose, *The Myths of Zionism* (London: Pluto Press, 2004); A. Rover, *In the Shadow of Zion* (New York: New York University Press, 2014); A. R. Taylor, *The Zionist Mind* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1974).

Their presence, culture and piety was not welcomed by the assimilated Jewish elites, who wished to see them migrate further; the mythical land of their ancestors made a destination outside Europe potentially attractive. It was among refugees from the pogroms in the Russian Empire that Zionism combined with observant Judaism, and religious Zionism was born.<sup>73</sup> This does not mean that Zionism did not remain contentious among observant and non-observant Jews in Europe and elsewhere. On the contrary, there remain to the present day devout Jewish movements that regard Zionism and the state of Israel as profoundly evil and idolatrous, of which Satmar Hasidism and the various Haredi groups are perhaps the most conspicuous,<sup>74</sup> and secular Jewish movements and individuals who view it as a racist and oppressive entity, abhorrent to their heritage and to all humane values.<sup>75</sup> These cannot be dismissed in a single sentence; the claim that Judaism has ‘a profoundly Zionist orientation’ (2.7) is not merely an illegitimate generalisation, but seems to be a cynical attempt to exclude critical discussion of Zionism, and of the human rights issues that it has generated for the Palestinians, from Jewish–Christian dialogue.

Although it is dismissive of non-Zionist Judaism, the report recognises the continuing divisions between those Zionist Jews who regard the modern state of Israel as a fulfilment of longstanding religious hopes, and the result of divine intervention, and those who see it as the fruit of human effort (2.8). The latter are essentially secular, and many have been avowedly atheist, but these disagreements may complicate inter-faith dialogue, as they reflect something of the complex and contested nature of Jewish identity — that is, whether it is essentially religious, cultural or ethnic, none of which terms are at all clear or simple. Secularised Jews, like secularised Christians, may seek or demand the services of religious functionaries and the use of dedicated buildings for rites of passage without subscribing to the beliefs, or even necessarily to the moral values, articulated in those liturgies, while nonetheless claiming the identity conferred through the rituals. The question of whether Jews may be a distinct ethnic group is answered by Rabbi Pete Tobias:

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<sup>73</sup> R. Eisen, *Religious Zionism, Jewish Law, and the Morality of Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). Cf. Beit-Halloumi, *Original Sins*.

<sup>74</sup> J. Teitelbaum, *vyy'l mšh* [Hebrew] (1961); a partial English translation is available at [www.truetorahjews.org/translation-vayoele-moshe](http://www.truetorahjews.org/translation-vayoele-moshe) [accessed 18 February 2021].

<sup>75</sup> Abarbanel, *Beyond Tribal Loyalties*; Arendt, *Jewish Writings*; Chomsky, *Middle East Illusions*; Chomsky and Pappé, *On Palestine*; Butler, *Parting Ways*; M. Peled, *The General's Son* (Charlottesville VA: Just World Books, 2012); Steiner, ‘Our Homeland, the Text’.

The fact that there have been Jews ‘in all lands and ages’ [...] gives the lie to a misguided and now out-dated theory, propounded as scientific fact by some whose motives may be somewhat suspect, that the Jewish people are a ‘race’. The geographical and cultural diversity among Jews around the world means that there are, in addition to the English-speaking Jews of the United Kingdom, the USA and other countries with which we are most familiar, Indian Jews and Chinese Jews, South American Jews and black African Jews - each with their own histories and cultural traditions that owe as much to their geographical location as they do to their Jewish roots.<sup>76</sup>

Irrespective of whether these ‘Jewish roots’ include a claim to biological descent from a common ancestor, namely Jacob, the notion of a pure race is irredeemably discredited, and there are no exceptions — the diversity of physical features associated with different races and places among the Jewish people demonstrates this quite clearly. Furthermore, patterns of migration and intra-marriage, whether enforced or voluntary, may have contributed more to any common physiognomy associated with Ashkenazi Jews than common ancestry as such, still less common ancestry derived from the Middle East rather than from Central Asia.<sup>77</sup> Distinctive religious and cultural observances, language and segregated living in *shtetls*, whether enforced or not, would have perpetuated a distinctive identity, as it would in any immigrant community that valued consanguinity and found security in living and working together. Nevertheless, the myth of common ancestry remains a powerful factor in Jewish identity, perhaps more so than cultural observances and even rites of passage, whether liturgically solemnised or not.

These divisions and disputes about Jewish identity are a question for Christian theology only in that the place of the Jewish people in eschatology is an issue in the Christian Scriptures, disregard for which has been at least one contributing factor in the rise and persistence of anti-Semitism in Europe. Nevertheless, it is not for Christian theology to prescribe how the Hebrew Bible is to be interpreted within Judaism, or to adjudicate who is or is not an authentic Jew. However vexing this question may be, who may be included in the category πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ (Rom. 11.26), and be heir to the promises attested in such passages of Christian Scripture as Romans 9–11,

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<sup>76</sup> *Liberal Judaism*, p. 30.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. K. A. Brook, *The Jews of Khazaria* (Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018); M. B. Qumsiyeh, *Sharing the Land of Canaan* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), pp. 5–30; Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*.

is a theological mystery beyond adjudication by any ecclesiastical or other authority.<sup>78</sup> Extreme circumspection is required in the exegesis of such passages, and, whatever position is taken on the authority of Scripture, it is not the function of Christian theology to pass judgement on people, but rather, so far as is possible, to discern and to articulate God's purposes for the world and for human life in the world. To the extent that the Hebrew Scriptures form part of the Christian Bible, and that this and the New Testament include passages which some Christians understand as speaking of the establishment of a Jewish polity in the Levant at some point in the future — an event to which they attach some eschatological significance — this is an issue for biblical scholarship and for Christian theology. Christian theology needs to consider very carefully *how* it understands that God's promises to Israel will be fulfilled, and whether or not passages which may refer to a future restoration of Israel are to be understood literally, as having been fulfilled in the past, as being fulfilled in the present, or as still awaiting fulfilment in the future; it also needs to consider whether these promises are to be understood in political and territorial terms, or in a spiritual sense, and whether or not they may be fulfilled through proactive human activity or are to await divine intervention at the culmination of human history. Christian theology, as distinct from Jewish theology, needs to relate all of this to the saving work of Christ, identified by the apostle Paul as the ultimate heir to God's promises to Abraham (esp. Gal. 3.16). Adjudication of intra-Jewish theological debates, and how Jews should interpret their Scriptures, is not within the competence of Christian theologians or of the Church. Nevertheless, Christian theologians and Church leaders do have a responsibility to 'speak truth to power' where there is injustice and oppression in the world, especially when religious claims are being exploited to justify political, military and economic programmes that would otherwise be regarded as profoundly evil.

Whether or not some or most Israeli and non-Israeli Jews are able to justify to themselves, on their own theological or other premises (2.9), their particular interpretation of the Zionist agenda, and similarly whether Christian Zionist interpretation of Scripture is at all plausible, is irrelevant. Such arguments might well be made on the basis of Jewish and Christian exegesis of their respective canonical texts, but the issue for Christian

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<sup>78</sup> For discussion of this text, see D. Boyarin, *A Radical Jew* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1994); A. F. Segal, *Paul the Convert* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1990). Cf. J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans* (Waco TX: Word, 1988); R. Jewett, *Romans* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2008); H. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987); E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (London: SCM, 1983).

theology is whether the establishment and expansion of a state through invasion and occupation of territory by one self-defined 'ethnic' group, with the deliberate and concomitant dispossession of the indigenous population of that land, and the establishment of a political dispensation in which that self-defined immigrant 'ethnic' group continues to enjoy exclusive power and privilege at the expense of any remaining indigenous population, are compatible with universal human values and any possible Christian interpretation thereof. Whether or not it fits anyone's eschatological expectations is at most a secondary consideration. Other systems of institutionalised racism, including apartheid South Africa, developed their own 'Christian' theological rationales<sup>79</sup> without thereby gaining theological respectability or exemption from moral scrutiny, or from economic and other sanctions, by the international community (both secular and religious). Similarly, slave-owning societies have been able to rationalise their institutions on the basis of their own principles (Christian or otherwise)<sup>80</sup> without thereby becoming immune to action by others to suppress the trade

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<sup>79</sup> *Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge in die Lig van die Skrif* [Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture] (Pretoria: NGK, 1976). Cf. Akenson, *God's Peoples*; D. S. Bax, *A Different Gospel* (Johannesburg: Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1979); B. J. Brown, *Apartheid South Africa! Apartheid Israel? Ticking the Boxes of Occupation and Dispossession* (London: Church in the Marketplace, 2021); R. Elphick, *The Equality of Believers* (Charlottesville VA: University of Virginia Press, 2012); J. W. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa* (London: SCM, 2004); *1948 + 50 Years: Theology, Apartheid and Church*, ed. by J. W. Hofmeyr et al. (Pretoria: IMER, 2001); L. Jonker, 'The Biblical Legitimization of Ethnic Diversity in Apartheid Theology', *Scriptura*, 77 (2001), 165–83; *Die NG Kerk en Apartheid*, ed. by J. A. Kinghorn (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1983); J. A. Loubser, *The Apartheid Bible* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1987); 'Apartheid Theology: A "Contextual" Theology Gone Wrong?', *Journal of Church and State*, 38 (1996), 321–37; W. Munro, 'Romans 13:1-7: Apartheid's Last Biblical Refuge', *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 20 (1990), 161–8.

<sup>80</sup> D. M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); S. R. Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); F. Laub, *Die Begegnung des frühen Christentums mit der antiken Sklaverei* (Stuttgart: VKB, 1982); D. M. Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).



in human beings and to emancipate those who had been enslaved.<sup>81</sup> Cannibalistic cults may be ideologically coherent, and adherents convinced of the truths of the myths that direct their killing and consumption of the flesh of other human beings,<sup>82</sup> and devout in their observance thereof, but this would hardly mean that Christian theology or secular authority is obliged to condone the practice, or that it has ever done so.<sup>83</sup> Any attempt to revive thuggee<sup>84</sup> or sati<sup>85</sup> practices on the grounds that they are sacred custom and authentic expressions of cultural heritage, with or without accompanying religious devotion, would hardly be countenanced. In no circumstances would there be collusive affirmation of such practices by Christian participants in inter-faith dialogue. Therefore, whatever beliefs

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<sup>81</sup> S. Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Anti-Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); R. S. Reddie, *Abolition! The Struggle to Abolish Slavery in the British Colonies* (London: Lion, 2007); M. Sherwood, *After Abolition* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007); W. M. Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women* ((Scottsdale PA: Herald, 1983); M. Taylor, *The Interest: How the British Establishment Resisted the Abolition of Slavery* (London: Bodley Head, 2020); I. Whyte, *Scotland and the Abolition of Slavery* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

<sup>82</sup> C. Avramescu, *An Intellectual History of Cannibalism* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); N. Constantine, *A History of Cannibalism* (London: Arcturus, 2006); B. Schutt, *Cannibalism* (Chapel Hill NC: Algonquin, 2017).

<sup>83</sup> *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, ed. by F. Barker et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); G. Huggan, H. Tiffin, 'Christianity, Cannibalism and Carnivory', in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 180–201.

<sup>84</sup> M. Dash, *Thug* (London: Granta, 2005); K. A. Wagner, *Thuggee* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). Cf. the literary depiction which introduced the word 'thug' to the English language, in P. M. Taylor, *Confessions of a Thug* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1839). Some recent historians argue that *thuggee* was an orientalist construct rather than a form of banditry with (disputed) cultic aspect; see M. van Woerkens, *The Strangled Traveler: Colonial Imaginings and the Thugs of India* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Cf. S. Bhattacharya, 'Monsters in the Dark: the Discovery of Thuggee and Demographic Knowledge in Colonial India', *Palgrave Communications*, 6 (2020): <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-0458-8> [accessed 9 March 2021].

<sup>85</sup> *Sati, the Blessing and the Curse*, ed. by J. S. Hawley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); A. Sharma et al., *Sati: Historical and Phenomenological Essays* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1988).

Israeli or other Jews may profess about the legitimacy of their Zionist ideologies, and the violent imposition thereof on Palestine and its people, they are not entitled to unquestioning acquiescence therein on the part of Christians or of anyone else.

Jewish and Christian Scripture alike attests that all human beings are made in God's image (Gen. 1.26),<sup>86</sup> and accordingly share the same fundamental rights, and the same obligation to respect and protect those of others. Therefore the question 'Does Israel have a particular vocation, among the nations of the world or within the Middle East, to which it should be held to special account, or should it be judged on the same basis as any other nation?' (2.9) is not only irrelevant, but also obfuscates the real and urgent questions of justice and fundamental human rights. It is precisely Israel's claim to a unique status, if not vocation, and the attribution by some Christians of a somewhat different unique vocation to the modern state of Israel, that have been used to justify policies and actions which, if espoused and perpetrated by the forces of any other country, would be regarded as discrimination, oppression and terrorism.

It is not unreasonable to suggest that the more [Christian Zionists] appeal to scripture to explain the creation of the State of Israel as the work of God, the more they are asking for this state to be judged by the moral law contained in these same scriptures.<sup>87</sup>

That this is far from being the case among religious Zionists (Jewish and Christian alike) is quite evident, even among those who make platitudinous references to justice and equivocate about, excuse or even sanctify atrocities perpetrated by Israeli forces against the Palestinian people, including unarmed and defenceless children.<sup>88</sup> A more egregious aspect of Christian Zionism is the expectation that Jews who do not convert to Christ will be obliterated in fulfilment of their (Christian Zionist) eschatological

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<sup>86</sup> N. H. Taylor, 'Being Human in the Biblical Tradition', in *Made in the Image of God*, ed. by M. J. Fuller and D. Jasper (Durham: Sacristy Press, 2021), pp. 1–30.

<sup>87</sup> C. G. Chapman, *Christian Zionism and the Restoration of Israel* (Eugene OR: Cascade, 2021), p. 102.

<sup>88</sup> See, for example, M. S. Kinzer, *Jerusalem Crucified, Jerusalem Risen* (Eugene OR: Cascade, 2018); contributions to *The New Christian Zionism*, ed. by G. R. McDermott (Downers Grove IL: IVP Academic, 2016); see also frequent pronouncements by successive Chief Rabbis of the United Synagogue.

expectations — a form of anti-Semitism that biblical exegesis and Christian theology need to take far more seriously than has hitherto been the case.<sup>89</sup> The report distinguishes between a narrowly defined Christian Zionism as a movement of nineteenth-century evangelicalism, with antecedents in proto-Puritanism in the late-sixteenth-century Church of England<sup>90</sup> and in seventeenth-century Puritanism<sup>91</sup> on the one hand, and a broader sense of Christian sympathy towards the state of Israel (2.14), by implication as an ethnically defined political entity with the military force to suppress dissent within and to act aggressively towards neighbouring states, on the other. The report may be correct in assuming that the broader sense of Christian Zionism has become mainstream in (Western) Christianity (2.15), which is all the more reason to interrogate how it relates to these Christians and their secular neighbours' identification with the geopolitical agenda of the 'Western' powers, their economic interests related to the supply and price of Middle Eastern oil, and the widespread Islamophobia and racism in Western societies, in terms of which European Jews are conveniently classified as 'white' and anti-Semitic sentiments are at least temporarily suppressed or concealed.<sup>92</sup> Where Christians of any persuasion are attached

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. I. Abraham, R. Boer, "'God Doesn't Care": The Contradictions of Christian Zionism', *Religion and Theology*, 16 (2009), 90–110.

<sup>90</sup> T. Brightman, *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos, idest Apocalypsis D. Joannis analysi et scholiis illustrata; ubi ex Scriptura sensus, rerumque predictarum ex historiis eventus discutiuntur. Huic Synopsis praefigitur universalis, et Refutatio Rob, Bellormini de anti-christo libro tertio de Romano Pontifice ad finem capitis decimi septimi inseritur* (Frankfurt, 1609); A. Crome, *The Restoration of the Jews* (Berlin: Springer, 2014).

<sup>91</sup> For treatment, see A. Crome, *Christian Zionism and English National Identity, 1600-1850* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); D. M. Lewis, *The Origins of Christian Zionism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); *A Short History of Christian Zionism* (Downers Grove IL: IVP Academic, 2021); P. C. Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism, 1891-1948* (London: Routledge, 1998); R. O. Smith, *More Desired Than Our Own Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Tabawi, *British Interests in Palestine*.

<sup>92</sup> V. Clark, *Allies for Armageddon* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2007); D. Cohn-Sherbok, *The Politics of Apocalypse* (London: OneWorld, 2006); E. King, *The Pro-Israel Lobby in Europe* (London: Tauris, 2016); C. A. Kiracofe, *Dark Crusade* (London: Tauris, 2009). A recording of Billy Graham's anti-Semitism, expressed to the then US president Richard Nixon, is available at [www.nixonlibrary.gov/white-house-tapes/662/conversation-662-004](http://www.nixonlibrary.gov/white-house-tapes/662/conversation-662-004) [accessed 12 September 2022].

to this variety of Zionism (2.18–2.20), questions need to be asked, and vigorously, as to how much is ill-informed sentiment, how much is a religious veneer to economic and political self-interest, and how much is conscious assent to selected aspects of the more narrowly defined forms of Christian Zionism.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, serious questions need to be asked about the extent to which these forms of Christian Zionism are rooted in a desire to remove Jewish neighbours, their business interests and their social and cultural influence from ‘Christian’ societies. In other words, how much Christian Zionism is fundamentally anti-Semitic? <sup>94</sup> That this toxic combination of racial and religious hatred with unequivocal commitment to the Israeli state and the Zionist agenda is both widespread and deeply entrenched is well illustrated by the example of the evangelist Billy Graham (1918–2018). Recordings of his conversation in 1972 with then US President Richard Nixon (1913–1994) leave no room for doubt. <sup>95</sup> Notwithstanding Graham’s moderate but public support for the civil rights movement, he was an equally public proponent of unequivocal American support for Israel, but shared with Nixon anti-Semitic tropes about Jewish financial power and control of the media, lamented that Hitler ‘went about it wrong’, and suggested that Nixon needed to break the same Jewish ‘stranglehold’ in the USA. <sup>96</sup> Whatever Graham may have meant by the expression ‘synagogue of Satan’, the only outstanding question of any relevance is how representative his blend of Christian Zionism and anti-Semitism is of North American fundamentalists and other Christian Zionists, both at the time and today.

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<sup>93</sup> Cf. D. M. Cohn-Sherbok, *The Politics of Apocalypse* (London: OneWorld, 2006).

<sup>94</sup> Cf. J. Renton, *The Zionist Masquerade* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); A. Shapira, ‘Anti-Semitism and Zionism’, *Modern Judaism*, 15 (1995), 215–32; R. S. Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism: Its Roots in Western History* (London: Zed Books, 1983); S. Ury, ‘Strange Bedfellows? Anti-Semitism, Zionism, and the Fate of “the Jews”’, *American Historical Review*, 123 (2018), 1151–71; S. Zunes, ‘Zionism, Anti-Zionism and Imperialism’, *Peace Review*, 6 (1994), 41–9.

<sup>95</sup> The recording is available on the website of the [Nixon Library](#) [accessed 12 September 2022].

<sup>96</sup> S. P. Miller, *Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009): <https://currentpub.com/2022/09/11/billy-graham-to-richard-nixon-satan-was-working-through-the-jews-but-hitler-handled-it-all-wrong/?fbclid=IwAR1V0NGUq47pEUdmmHKdOiwU4cdZQziQp0XY39ct5FNGtk180jMD6NNHt-8> [accessed 12 September 2022].

In addressing Christian anti-Zionism, the report recognises that this is a diverse phenomenon that embraces a variety of theological positions, including but not necessarily implying supersessionism, as well a prophetic concern for justice (2.22–2.25). No specific mention is made of Messianic Judaism, which tends to be Zionist and peripheral to both Christian and Jewish communities, and marginal in Israeli society.<sup>97</sup> Although numerically small, the theological issues raised by these communities are important, and they are central to the subject of this report.<sup>98</sup> As with the preceding sections, the implicit Eurocentrism of the report is more than problematic. The attitudes and opinions described are Western, and the majority world is ignored. This is not to deny that important issues have been identified, which need to be addressed rigorously, but it remains the case that the report fails to take adequate cognisance of the global Anglicanism on whose behalf it purports to have been written.

The description of the current situation (2.26–2.40) is inevitably dated. Although it may have been factually accurate at the time of composition, and aspires to impartiality in describing events and conditions, this supposed neutrality overlooks the fact that Israel is an occupying military power, which has persistently violated international law<sup>99</sup> and the fundamental human rights of those living under occupation. Neutrality is not the appropriate Christian response. When Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth, and proclaimed its fulfilment, he understood what this meant:

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<sup>97</sup> Y. S. Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People* (Chapel Hill NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); D. Cohn-Sherbok, *Messianic Judaism* (London: Continuum, 2000); D. Juster, *Jewish Roots* (Shippensburg PA: Destiny Image, 2013); *Voices of Messianic Judaism*, ed. by D. J. Rudolf and D. Cohn-Sherbok (Clarksville MD: Messianic Jewish Communications, 2012); D. H. Stern, *Messianic Judaism* (Clarksville MD: Messianic Jewish Publishers & Resources, 2007).

<sup>98</sup> One of the few (Gentile) Christian authors to take seriously Messianic Judaism and its Zionist tendencies is Chapman, *Christian Zionism and the Restoration of Israel*.

<sup>99</sup> A concise list of violations is available at [http://itisapartheid.org/Documents\\_pdf\\_etc/IsraelViolationsInternationalLaw.pdf#:~:text=The%20state%20of%20Israel%20has%20violated%20many%20international,taken%20from%20the%20Israeli%20Law%20Resource%20Center%20\(ILRC\)](http://itisapartheid.org/Documents_pdf_etc/IsraelViolationsInternationalLaw.pdf#:~:text=The%20state%20of%20Israel%20has%20violated%20many%20international,taken%20from%20the%20Israeli%20Law%20Resource%20Center%20(ILRC)) [accessed 23 February 2021]. Cf. Erekat, *Justice for Some*.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Lk. 4.18–19, citing Isa. 61.1–2).

It was not an invitation to neutrality, but a call to costly decision making and sacrificial discipleship.<sup>100</sup> As Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1931–2021) observed:

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.<sup>101</sup>

His fellow Nobel Peace Laureate, the author Elie Wiesel (1928–2016), similarly asserted, when accepting the Prize:

We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must - at that moment - become the center of the universe.<sup>102</sup>

In the same speech Wiesel proceeded to articulate the classic case for Israeli exceptionalism, using the Holocaust to reinforce the notion of a unique existential threat that justifies the destruction of another people, namely the Palestinians. He subsequently declared the brazen falsehood that '[F]or the first time in history Jews, Christians, and Muslims all may freely worship at

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<sup>100</sup> M. Prior, *Jesus the Liberator* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995). Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I-IX* (New York: Doubleday, 1970); L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1991); B. W. Longenecker, *Hearing the Silence* (Eugene OR: Cascade, 2012).

<sup>101</sup>

[www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191843730.001.0001/q-oro-ed5-00016497](http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191843730.001.0001/q-oro-ed5-00016497) [accessed 5 March 2021].

<sup>102</sup> <https://eliewieselfoundation.org/elie-wiesel/nobelprizespeech/> [accessed 5 March 2021].

their shrines. And, contrary to certain media reports, Jews, Christians, and Muslims ARE allowed to build their homes anywhere in the city'.<sup>103</sup>

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that a person of immense moral authority deliberately lied in order to defend the Israeli government at a time (2010) when it seemed that the hitherto unqualified support of the US government for dispossession of the Palestinians and restrictions on their liberties might be in jeopardy.<sup>104</sup> It may be understandable that a concentration camp survivor could manifest such a moral blind spot, even if others have not. Hedy Epstein (1924–2016) escaped Nazi Germany through the 'Kindertransport', while nearly all of her family perished in Auschwitz;<sup>105</sup> Irena Klepfisz (1941– ) was smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto as an infant, shortly before her father perished there;<sup>106</sup> Israel Shahak (1933–2001) was, as a child, twice confined to the Warsaw ghetto, and was interred in Poniatowa and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps;<sup>107</sup> Hajo Meyer (1924–2014) was interred in Auschwitz-Gleiwitz;<sup>108</sup> Primo Levi (1919–1987) was a survivor of Auschwitz;<sup>109</sup> Zeev Sternhell (1935–2020) survived the Przemysl ghetto;<sup>110</sup> Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) was arrested by the Gestapo in 1933, and interned by Vichy officials in 1940;<sup>111</sup> Marika

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<sup>103</sup> 'For Jerusalem', *International Herald Tribune*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, all on 16 April 2010; *New York Times*, 18 April 2010: <https://web.archive.org/web/20150815025625/http://www.eliewieselfoundation.org/statementsandappeals.aspx> [accessed 28 August 2022].

<sup>104</sup> See also M. Chmiel, *Elie Wiesel and the Politics of Moral Leadership* (Philadelphia PA: Temple University Press, 2001).

<sup>105</sup> As well as spending decades involved in activism in the USA on behalf of the Palestinians, she participated in Freedom Flotilla expeditions when in her mid-eighties, and was arrested at the age of 90 for participation in a Black Lives Matter protest.

<sup>106</sup> *Dreams of an Insomniac* (Portland OR: Eighth Mountain Press, 1990).

<sup>107</sup> *Jewish History, Jewish Religion* (London: Pluto Press, 1994); interview in *Middle East Policy Journal* 29 (1989).

<sup>108</sup> *The End of Judaism* (G. Meyer Books, 2007); 'An Ethical Vision Betrayed', *Huffington Post*, 25 May 2011: [www.huffpost.com/entry/an-ethical-tradition-betr-b-438660](http://www.huffpost.com/entry/an-ethical-tradition-betr-b-438660) [accessed 20 May 2022].

<sup>109</sup> *The Voice of Memory* (New York: New Press, 2002), pp. 285–6.

<sup>110</sup> 'In Israel, Growing Fascism and a Racism akin to Early Nazism', *Haaretz*, 19 January 2018: [www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-in-israel-growing-fascism-and-a-racism-akin-to-early-nazism-1.5746488](http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-in-israel-growing-fascism-and-a-racism-akin-to-early-nazism-1.5746488) [accessed 20 May 2022].

<sup>111</sup> *The Jew as Pariah*.

Sherwood (1937– ) and some of her family survived the Nazi pogrom in Budapest by undergoing baptism and assuming a Christian identity;<sup>112</sup> Gabor Maté (1944– ) likewise survived the Nazi pogrom in Budapest;<sup>113</sup> both of Sara Roy’s parents were survivors of concentration camps, while many of their families perished in the camps or in Polish ghettos;<sup>114</sup> Amira Hass is similarly the daughter of Holocaust survivors;<sup>115</sup> both of Norman Finkelstein’s parents were the only member of their family to survive the Holocaust;<sup>116</sup> Haim Bresheeth-Žabner’s parents were incarcerated at Auschwitz, where his grandparents perished;<sup>117</sup> similarly, the father of Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch 1993–2022, was a refugee from Nazi Germany. These are outstanding — but not isolated — examples of courageous Jewish intellectuals whose reflections on the horrors of the Holocaust led them not to the exceptionalism and militarism of the Zionist establishments in Israel, North America, Britain, and elsewhere, but to outspoken dedication to the cause of justice for the Palestinians. Furthermore, it was concentration camp survivors who observed the premeditated massacres and other atrocities perpetrated by the Irgun and the other Zionist paramilitaries in 1948, and who were the first to compare these terrorists to the Nazis.<sup>118</sup>

Whatever allowances may be made for defensiveness on the part of Jews who have suffered immeasurably at the hands of the Nazis and other European anti-Semites, it is inexcusable that the authors of *Land of Promise?* should pander to partisan Zionist apologetics and obfuscation. The problem is not simply a quintessential British patrician desire to be seen to be fair

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<sup>112</sup> ‘I am not anti-Semitic, but I am anti-Zionism’, *Middle East Monitor*, 2 November 2017: [www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171102-i-am-not-anti-semitic-but-i-am-anti-zionism/](http://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171102-i-am-not-anti-semitic-but-i-am-anti-zionism/) [accessed 20 May 2022]. See also ‘How I became an anti-Israel Jew’, *Middle East Monitor*, 7 March 2018: [www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180307-how-i-became-an-anti-israel-jew/](http://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180307-how-i-became-an-anti-israel-jew/) [accessed 20 May 2022].

<sup>113</sup> ‘Beautiful dream of Israel has become a nightmare’, *Toronto Star*, 22 July 2014: [www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2014/07/22/beautiful\\_dream\\_of\\_israel\\_has\\_become\\_a\\_nightmare.html](http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2014/07/22/beautiful_dream_of_israel_has_become_a_nightmare.html) [accessed 20 May 2022].

<sup>114</sup> *Failing Peace* (London: Pluto Press, 2006).

<sup>115</sup> *Drinking the Sea at Gaza* (London: Owl, 2000); *Diary of Bergen-Belsen* (Chicago IL: Haymarket, 2009) [her mother’s memoir].

<sup>116</sup> *Beyond Chutzpah; The Holocaust Industry*.

<sup>117</sup> *An Army Like No Other*.

<sup>118</sup> Records collated by Morris in *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, and *Righteous Victims* (New York: Vintage, 2001).



without making any difference, but the preoccupation of a deeply Anglocentric report with relations between the Church of England and overtly Zionist British Jewish institutions, at the cost of justice and fidelity to the Gospel of Christ.

### ***Chapter 3. Some statements and reflections***

This chapter contains extensive quotations from historical and contemporary documents, reflecting divergent positions. Although the report understandably admits the impossibility of reflecting all possible positions (3.1), the selection is nonetheless questionable. There is no citation of Theodor (Benjamin Ze'ev) Herzl (1860–1904),<sup>119</sup> or of any of the other classic Zionist authors,<sup>120</sup> which cannot be explained on account of these being readily available in libraries everywhere in the Anglican Communion — they are not. Nor can they be discounted as irrelevant; rather, they are embarrassing to the report because they explicitly state the Zionist intention of dispossessing the Palestinians, or the indigenous population of whichever location was chosen for their colony, by whatever means:

We shall have to spirit the penniless [*sic*] population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own [*sic*] country. Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor [*sic*] must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.<sup>121</sup>

Similarly, none of the classic texts of Christian Zionism is quoted, nor indeed any of its contemporary representatives, which is astonishing in a report whose aim is to articulate ‘an Anglican response to the phenomenon of Christian Zionism’ (1.1). As John Nelson Darby (1800–1882) was ordained

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<sup>119</sup> *Der Judenstaat* (Leipzig: Breitensstein, 1896); *A Jewish State* (New York: Maccabaeon Publishing Company, 1904), recently re-issued as *The Jewish State* (London: Penguin, 2010).

<sup>120</sup> See, for example, Moses Hess (1812–1875), *Rom und Jerusalem, die letzte Nationalitätsfrage* (Leipzig: Mengler, 1862); Leon Pinsker (1821–1891), *Autoemancipation!* (Berlin: Iasleib, 1882); Aharon David Gordon (1856–1922), *Selected Essays by Aaron David Gordon* (New York: Arno, 1973); Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg (also known as Ahad Ha'am) (1856–1927), *Nationalism and the Jewish Ethic* (New York: Schocken, 1962). Ginsberg/Ha'am stands out as the one Zionist intellectual before Buber who was concerned to form collaborative relationships with the indigenous population of Palestine, and critical of those who sought their dispossession.

<sup>121</sup> T. Herzl, *Complete Diaries. I. ET H. Zohn*, ed. by R. Patai (New York: Herzl, 1960), p. 88.

in the (Anglican and established) Church of Ireland before his involvement in the foundation of the Plymouth Brethren and Exclusive Brethren, and has continued to influence the politically connected Christian Zionists of the North American ‘religious right’, this is an egregious oversight.<sup>122</sup>

The two Jewish authors cited, Martin Buber (1878–1965) and David Rosen (1951– ), are far from representative of Jewish Zionism. The chosen text from Buber is an extract from a letter addressed to Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) in 1939 (3.2). This was shortly after Buber’s migration to Palestine as a refugee from Nazi Germany, but several years before the declaration of the state of Israel — an event that conflicted with his vision of a binational state. Buber’s intellectual eminence, in Western philosophy as much as in orthodox Judaism, is beyond dispute, and his correspondence with another figure of enduring global eminence and moral influence should be of interest. However, the context of this letter is presented very inadequately, without any consideration of the development in Buber’s thought, and without any reference to attempts in the wider Zionist movement to enlist the support of Gandhi, as the most prominent opponent of British imperialism of the day. There is no mention of Buber’s earlier and decisive break with Herzl and his repudiation of the nationalist and exclusivist aspects of Zionism in favour of spiritual and cultural presence in a binational state, in which he became more closely associated with Rosenzweig, and later with Judah Leon Magnes (1877–1948), first Chancellor of the Hebrew University, and their younger colleague Ernst Simon (1900–1988).<sup>123</sup> Nor is there any reference to Buber’s subsequent outspoken condemnation of the *nakbah*, or his repeated appeals to successive Israeli governments to deal justly with the Arab population, which led to his marginalisation in Israeli intellectual and political life.<sup>124</sup> This is not to suggest that Buber is not a complex or unproblematic figure, from whatever perspective one approaches his writings. He was

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<sup>122</sup> The writings of Darby are available at [www.stempublishing.com/authors/darby/](http://www.stempublishing.com/authors/darby/) [accessed 9 November 2021]. For his enduring influence, see D. H. Akenson, *Exploring the Rapture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>123</sup> J. L. Magnes et al., *Towards Union in Palestine* (Jerusalem: Ihud, 1947); *Palestine – Divided or United?* (Jerusalem: Ihud, 1947); A. A. Goren, *Dissenter in Zion* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1982). Cf. N. Bentwich, *For Zion’s Sake* (Philadelphia PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1954); D. Barak-Gorodetsky, *Judah Magnes* (Philadelphia PA: Jewish Publication Society, 2021).

<sup>124</sup> For relevant documents, in English, see Buber, *A Land of Two Peoples*.

undoubtedly capable of articulating a position of Jewish exceptionalism on the basis of reading Scripture as history, and claiming an exclusive relationship with God, in terms of which, 'Where a command and faith are present, in certain historical situations conquest need not be robbery'.<sup>125</sup> Yet this sentence is followed immediately by these less frequently quoted words: 'conquest is not by any means a historical necessity, for God is the Lord of history, not history the lord of God.' In the same context of articulating Israel's unique status and purity in arms on the basis of Scripture and rabbinic tradition, Buber also stated, 'Only in the realm of perfect faith is it the land of this people'<sup>126</sup> — a principle that is irreconcilable with the Zionism of Herzl, Weizmann, Ben Gurion and their successors. The development, contradictions and perhaps even repentance in Buber's thought need to be acknowledged. The anguished attempts to reconcile, within faithfulness to his Jewish heritage, loyalty to the nation and its connection with Palestine, with demands for justice for all people mandated by the same God with whom Israel claimed a unique relationship, might be compared with the intellectual, moral and spiritual struggle of the apostle Paul, quintessentially reflected in Romans 9–11.<sup>127</sup> The same principle applies to the life and works of Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972), and to many others for whom Zionism had represented hope in times of peril, but who saw also the godless brutality of a betrayed and corrupted vision in the state of Israel.<sup>128</sup> Not only is Buber grossly misrepresented, therefore, but it would seem that his intellectual and moral authority are appropriated to give respectability to the Zionist agenda as articulated in secular terms by Herzl and, after his death, increasingly in strident religious

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<sup>125</sup> *Israel and Palestine*, p. 50.

<sup>126</sup> *Israel and Palestine*, p. 49.

<sup>127</sup> The theory of cognitive dissonance, pioneered by L. Festinger, who described it in *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), can usefully illuminate human attempts to resolve conflicting beliefs and convictions, or at least to manage the tension between them. These insights have been applied to Paul's attempts to reconcile his Pharisaic Jewish heritage with his Christian convictions in Romans 9–11. See Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*; N. H. Taylor, 'Paul, Pharisee and Christian: Israel, the Gentiles, and the Law of Moses in Light of Cognitive Dissonance Theory', *Theologia Viatorum*, 24 (1997), 45–65; 'Cognitive Dissonance and Early Christianity: A Theory and its Application Reconsidered', *Religion and Theology*, 5 (1998), 138–53.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. M. M. Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization* (New York: Macmillan, 1934); *A New Zionism* (New York: Theodor Herzl Foundation, 1955); *The Religion of Ethical Nationhood* (New York: Macmillan 1970).

and even messianic terms, with increasingly hegemonic aspirations and accompanying willingness to resort to violence.<sup>129</sup>

Similarly, David Rosen (3.8) is a prominent and contemporary Orthodox rabbi, justly respected for his contributions to environmentalism and inter-faith relations. However, although a graduate of the right-wing Yeshivat Har Etzion at Allon Shvut, part of the illegal Gush Etzion settlement bloc in the occupied West Bank, and an apologist for Zionism whose account of history is at best tendentious, Rosen cannot be considered at all representative of the diversity of contemporary religious Zionism, not least in that he also defends the rights, however circumscribed, of the Palestinians, and was a founder of Rabbis for Human Rights. Having served as rabbi of the Green Point and Sea Point Synagogue in Cape Town at the height of South African apartheid, he is very familiar with the ideology and its modes of implementation. Although it is entirely understandable that the report should wish to support someone who has contributed greatly to Jewish-Christian relations, it has to be recognised that Rosen's position is not that of those who wield power in Israel and influence in North America and Europe. His position is rightly acknowledged and represented in the report, but it is not representative of religious Zionism.

The report quotes with approval *Dabru 'Emet* (Word of Truth), a document subtitled *A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity* (2.15), published in the *New York Times* in 2000 with the signatures of over 200 rabbis of all persuasions (including Rosen) appended. It includes the following statement:

Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel. The most important event for Jews since the Holocaust has been the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the Promised Land. As members of a biblically based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised — and given — to Jews as the physical center of the covenant between them and God. Many Christians support the State of Israel for reasons far more profound than mere politics. As Jews, we applaud this support. We also recognize that Jewish tradition mandates justice for all non-Jews who reside in a Jewish state.<sup>130</sup>

Reactions to this document among Jews have been mixed, and few of the signatories are of Orthodox affiliation. It is unclear what the word 'claim' in

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<sup>129</sup> A. Ravitsky, *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Z. Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press).

<sup>130</sup> <https://icjs.org/dabru-emet-text/> [accessed 14 November 2021].

the first line of the quotation means, in particular whether it implies a right to emulate the myths of Joshua and slaughter Palestinian men, women and children indiscriminately, to destroy their homes and crops and drive any surviving people into exile, or to reduce them to servitude or to social and economic marginalisation in an apartheid state.<sup>131</sup> There is no acknowledgement that such acts have taken place, and there is no acknowledgement that the means whereby this 'claim' has been realised in 'the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the Promised Land' might in any way have violated the principle of 'justice for all non-Jews who reside in a Jewish state'. The requirement of justice for the non-Jewish population has never been acknowledged in principle or implemented in practice anywhere under Israeli occupation since 1948, and a great deal more than lip-service to 'tradition' is required to address this. Quite what is meant, or expected, by the words 'Christians can respect the claim', is not explained. That significant events in the evolution of the tradition from which Judaism and Christianity emerged took place in the land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean is a historical fact, which Christians recognise. That religious Judaism

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<sup>131</sup> As confirmed by the Amnesty International report, *Israel's Apartheid Against the Palestinians* (London: Amnesty International, 2022), available in six languages, including Hebrew and Arabic as well as English, and [www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/) [accessed 10 February 2022]; the Human Rights Watch report, *A Threshold Crossed*, [www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution](https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution) [accessed 14 February 2022]; the B'Tselem. Israeli Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories report, *This is Apartheid*, [www.btselem.org/apartheid](https://www.btselem.org/apartheid) [accessed 14 February 2022]; and the Yesh Din legal opinion, *The Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and the Crime of Apartheid*, <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/files.yesh-din.org/Apartheid+2020/Apartheid+ENG.pdf> [accessed 14 February 2022]. Cf. Z. Sternhell, 'Apartheid under the Law', *Haaretz*, 23 November 2017, [www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-apartheid-under-the-law-1.5626781](https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-apartheid-under-the-law-1.5626781) [accessed 20 May 2022]; Brown, *Apartheid South Africa! Apartheid Israel?*; U. Davis, *Israel: An Apartheid State* (London: Zed Books, 1987); *Apartheid Israel* (London: Zed Books, 2003); Halper, *Israeli in Palestine*; C. J. R. Dugard, *Confronting Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2018). Dugard is a South African academic lawyer of considerable distinction, sometime Chancellor of the Anglican Diocese of Johannesburg, and from 2001 to 2008 served as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

continues to regard that land as sacred, and to feel a profound connection which is expressed in its prayers and worship, Christians can certainly respect. However, to conclude that this connection constitutes a 'claim' to that territory as an exclusive geopolitical possession is quite another matter. Clearly, many Christians in North America and in Europe in particular do subscribe to the position attributed to them, and the authors and signatories of this document clearly expect that all Christians should do so, including by implication Palestinian Christians. This is the true face of religious Zionism — behind the supposedly benign veneer, which Rosen represents very effectively, is an aspiration to hegemony, a will to domination and exclusion through violence, and a demand for Christian acquiescence therein. Jewish scholars and theologians of integrity, such as Marc Ellis, have condemned the statement<sup>132</sup> but are ignored in the report. Not least because it identifies common purpose with Christian Zionists, *Dabru 'Emet* requires a robust response. There can be no justification for the failure of this report to engage with it.

Contemporary religious Zionism is, and has for the past century increasingly been, dominated by extremist, jingoistic and at times genocidal individuals and organisations that are either wilfully ignored in this report, or equally wilfully concealed behind the veneer of the reasonableness and respectability ascribed to Rosen, and to Buber before him. The first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine, Abraham Yitzhak Kook (1865–1935),<sup>133</sup> father of Zvi Yehuda Kook (1891–1982), founder of the militant settler movement Gush Emunim, played a prominent role in reconciling observant Jews with the secular Zionist project. Secular Zionists were regarded as the 'messiah's donkey', preparing the way for the fulfilment of the aspirations of religious Zionists.<sup>134</sup> The Chief Rabbinate of Israel, effectively an arm of government with wide-ranging jurisdiction in matters of marriage and inheritance, kosher certification, conversion and identity, represents only those Ashkenazi and Sephardic strands of Orthodox Judaism that identify with the Zionist agenda and sacralise the state of Israel and its pretensions on behalf of global Jewry. The current Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel, David Lau, was held by the invigilator to have cheated in his rabbinic examination,<sup>135</sup> and is quoted as having used derogatory and racist language

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<sup>132</sup> *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 86–93.

<sup>133</sup> A. I. Kook, 'Zionism', in *The Spiritual Revolution of Rav Kook*, ed. by A. Z. Schwartz (Jerusalem: Gefen, 2017); P. Polonsky, *Religious Zionism of Rav Kook* (Scotts Valley CA: CreateSpace, 2012).

<sup>134</sup> Ravitsky, *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism*; Sternhell, *Founding Myths of Israel*.

<sup>135</sup> *Times of Israel*, 4 August 2013.

about people of African ancestry.<sup>136</sup> He has been embroiled in a number of nepotism and other corruption scandals, not least of which was seeking the appointment of his brother-in-law as judge in a rabbinic court.<sup>137</sup> Lau's predecessor, Yona Metzger, openly advocated expelling Palestinians from Israel, Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza,<sup>138</sup> and has subsequently been jailed for fraud and other financial offences, including issuing rabbinic rulings for financial gain.<sup>139</sup> The Sephardi Chief Rabbi, Yitzhak Yosef, has referred to people of African descent as 'monkeys',<sup>140</sup> and stated that non-Jews should not be permitted to live in 'the land of Israel' unless they observe the Noahide laws<sup>141</sup> and are serving the needs of Jews. He has also incited Israeli armed forces to kill Palestinians, whom he termed 'Amalekites',<sup>142</sup> when they are not posing a threat, in contravention of international law and of their own rules of engagement.<sup>143</sup> His father, also a predecessor as Sephardi Chief Rabbi, Ovadia Yosef (1920–2013), spiritual leader of the Shas party, advocated extermination of the Palestinians, and on other occasions

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<sup>136</sup> *Jerusalem Post*, 30 July 2013.

<sup>137</sup> *Haaretz*, 26 December 2018.

<sup>138</sup> *Jewish News*, January 2008; *Haaretz*, 18 February 2008.

<sup>139</sup> *Haaretz*, 10 February 2015; *Mosaic*, 3 February 2017.

<sup>140</sup> *Times of Israel*, 21 March 2018.

<sup>141</sup> The Noahide Laws are the proscriptions issued to Noah and his family at the conclusion of the flood narrative (Gen. 9.1–7), and are understood to be incumbent on all humanity.

<sup>142</sup> According to Gen. 36.12 (cf. 1 Chron. 1.36), Amalek was a grandson of Esau, son of Isaac and brother of Jacob. Amalekites would therefore be descendants of Abraham, according to the biblical narrative, which conflicts with their first mention, within the Abraham narrative, at Gen. 14.7. They are listed among the occupants of Canaan (Num. 13–14), and as recurrent enemies of ancient Israel (Exod. 17.8–16; Deut. 25.17–19; Judg. 6, 7, 10; 1 Sam. 14, 15, 27, 30; 2 Sam. 1). There is no archaeological or other independent evidence of such a nation, but not all occupants of archaeological sites can be clearly identified. It is therefore not known whether such a nation existed, or whether it was and remains a mythical archetype of an eternal enemy of Israel. Cf. A. G. Hunter, 'Denominating Amalek: Racist Stereotyping in the Bible and the Justification of Discrimination', in *Sanctified Aggression: Legacies of Biblical and Post-Biblical Vocabularies*, ed. by J. Bekkenkamp and Y. Sherwood (London: Continuum, 2003), pp. 99–105. See also N. Masalha, *Imperial Israel and the Palestinians* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), pp. 129–31.

<sup>143</sup> *Haaretz*, 28 March 2016; *Jerusalem Post*, 28 March 2016; *Times of Israel*, 28 March 2016.

claimed that they and all Gentiles exist only to serve Jews; he was not isolated among extremist rabbis, even if secular politicians with similar views found his outspokenness an embarrassment.<sup>144</sup> The Chief Rabbi of the Israeli Defence Force, Eyal Karim, has publicly opined that soldiers are permitted to ‘satisfy the evil inclination by lying with attractive Gentile women against their will’ — in other words, to rape foreign women during the course of war. He subsequently claimed that his remarks were theoretical and referred to historical circumstances rather than the present day, but this was not an isolated example of misogyny and racism on his part.<sup>145</sup> The political parties<sup>146</sup> and settler organisations<sup>147</sup> that represent the religious Zionist movement are equally racist and militant, and wield considerable political power in Israel, to the point of dominating the present government.<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, those Orthodox Jewish movements that oppose Zionism and violence against the Palestinians before the arrival of the Messiah, are no less hostile to Muslims and especially to Christians, whom they regard as idolators, and they aspire to a messianic dispensation in which Muslims would be tolerated as resident aliens, but Christians would not be permitted to reside or to practise their religion.<sup>149</sup>

To use moderate, isolated and unrepresentative voices to present a temperate and acceptable face of the reality of religious Zionism is to wilfully distort the truth. It ignores and further ostracises the courageous Jewish opponents of Zionism and of the human rights violations perpetrated in its

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<sup>144</sup> E. Sprinzak, *Brother against Brother* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999).

<sup>145</sup> *Times of Israel*, 12 July 2016; *Reuters*, 12 July 2016, [www.reuters.com/article/cnews-us-israel-rabbi-idCAKCN0ZS1Q3](http://www.reuters.com/article/cnews-us-israel-rabbi-idCAKCN0ZS1Q3) [accessed 10 May 2023]; *Middle East Eye*, 15 July 2016, [www.middleeasteye.net/news/womens-groups-condemn-israels-new-chief-army-rabbi-over-rape-comments](http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/womens-groups-condemn-israels-new-chief-army-rabbi-over-rape-comments) [accessed 10 May 2023].

<sup>146</sup> National Union; Jewish Home (both members of *Yamina*); *Shas* (Sephardic).

<sup>147</sup> *Gush Emunim*; *HaKibbutz Hadati*. Cf. E. Sprinzak, ‘Fundamentalism, Terrorism, and Democracy’, Wilson Center Colloquium, Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC, 1986.

<sup>148</sup> The plan of Bezalel Smotrich, leader of the far-right National Union-*Tkuma* Party and current Minister of Finance, to eliminate the Palestinian people has been translated into English by Haim Bresheeth-Žabner, and is available on the Jewish Network for Palestine website at <https://jewishnetworkforpalestine.uk/Activities/styled-2/Tipping%20of%20the%20Scales/> [accessed 10 May 2023].

<sup>149</sup> Rachlevsky, *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism*.



cause, and conceals the viciousness and violence with which the incremental dispossession of the Palestinian people is pursued and given theological justification.<sup>150</sup>

The United Synagogue — the association of around 60 Ashkenazi Orthodox synagogues in England — describes itself as ‘Zionist’ on its website.<sup>151</sup> Its spiritual leader is known as the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth. The Chief Rabbi at the time of writing, Jonathan (later Lord) Sacks, pledged ‘unequivocal commitment to Israel’ as a guiding principle at the beginning of his tenure,<sup>152</sup> and exploited in this cause his intellectual and moral stature in British society, filling the vacuum left by Cardinal Basil Hume’s untimely death, when George Carey was Archbishop of Canterbury. Sacks claimed for the Hebrew Scriptures, and for the rabbinic literature, an exemption from the historical critical scrutiny to which any other ancient texts are subjected, whether or not they are revered as Scripture by any extant religious group, on the grounds that:

From Spinoza onwards, the Torah came to be seen by biblical scholars as a text to be analysed like any other, a human document, indeed a series of documents composed at different times and embodying different traditions, pieced together by a redactor [...] no element of traditional Judaism could survive this order of biblical criticism. For if the Torah were indeed the work of human beings, its laws could not be divine commands, nor could its covenant carry certainty or authority. This was more than the shaking of the foundations. It was their destruction.<sup>153</sup>

Notwithstanding the erudition and urbanity of the author, this is classic fundamentalism. Sacks retold the patriarchal narratives of the Pentateuch as though recorded history, without any acknowledgement of the critical issues surrounding these traditions.<sup>154</sup> In claiming the promises of the land of Canaan to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as historical events, and as constituting

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<sup>150</sup> Cf. Beit-Hallahmi, *Original Sins*.

<sup>151</sup> [www.theus.org.uk/article/us-israel](http://www.theus.org.uk/article/us-israel) [accessed 12 November 2021].

<sup>152</sup> *Jewish Tract Association Daily News Bulletin*, 3 September 1999, [http://pdfs.jta.org/1991/1991-09-03\\_168.pdf?\\_ga=2.6644982.570643005.1577889308-1866631786.1528643250](http://pdfs.jta.org/1991/1991-09-03_168.pdf?_ga=2.6644982.570643005.1577889308-1866631786.1528643250) [accessed 6 March 2021].

<sup>153</sup> J. H. Sacks, *Crisis and Covenant* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 178.

<sup>154</sup> J. H. Sacks, *Future Tense* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2010), pp. 132–3.

a right on the part of those who claim to be their only legitimate descendants and heirs (i.e., Jews) to dispossess its current inhabitants, Sacks elevates myth, albeit myth preserved in Scripture, not merely to history but to a quasi-legal title deed, in a way that would not be admissible for any other entity. Furthermore, genocidal passages (e.g. Deut. 7.1–5; 9.1–3) can be received as direct divine injunctions, a notion that most reasonable minds would repudiate. Conveniently ignored are the repeated warnings in the same chapters of Deuteronomy against idolatry and the evils associated therewith, and the reminders of Israel’s past transgressions, and above all that God’s election was entirely unmerited.<sup>155</sup> This requires some explanation as to why ancient and modern Israel should enjoy the privilege of exterminating other nations in the name of God, but expect the world to join in condemning such action on the part of Nazi Germany, while at the same time overlooking that of Ottoman Turkey against the Armenians,<sup>156</sup> or

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<sup>155</sup> Cf. B. T. Arnold, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2022); W. Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (Nashville TN: Abingdon, 2001); D. L. Christiansen, *Deuteronomy 1–21* (Waco TX: Word, 2001); A. D. H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1981); P. D. Miller, *Deuteronomy* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1990); J. E. Owens, *Deuteronomy* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2011); M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11* (New York: Doubleday, 1991).

<sup>156</sup> Cf. T. Akçam, *A Shameful Act* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006); *Remembrance and Denial*, ed. by R. G. Hovannisian (Detroit MI: Wayne State University Press, 1999); R. H. Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011); B. Morris and D. Ze’evi, *The Thirty-Year Genocide* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2021); G. Robertson, *An Inconvenient Genocide* (London: Biteback, 2015); *Is the Holocaust Unique?*, ed. by A. S. Rosenbaum (London: Routledge, 2019); R. G. Suny, *“They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else”: A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015); *A Question of Genocide*, ed. by R. G. Suny, F. M. Göçek and N. M. Naimark (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

the more recent genocides in Cambodia,<sup>157</sup> Rwanda<sup>158</sup> and Bosnia<sup>159</sup> — unwelcome evidence against the myth of unique Jewish victimhood. Ironically, the same Chief Rabbi Sacks stated in the House of Lords that ‘When ancient theologies are used for modern political ends, they speak a very dangerous language indeed’.<sup>160</sup> Indeed they do, and this is a troubling and pernicious strand that recurs in his numerous writings and speeches. This might pass as an idiosyncrasy to which he and his right-wing Christian followers are excusably oblivious, were it not entirely clear that this is disingenuous. Sacks openly supported Israeli expansionism, and unscrupulously equated opposition to Zionism, and criticism of atrocities perpetrated in its cause, with anti-Semitism. His less suave successor, Sir Ephraim Mirvis (1956– ), is like David Rosen a graduate of the right-wing Yeshivat Har Etzion, and was also his successor as Chief Rabbi of Ireland. In his inaugural address, Mirvis stated:

As a passionate supporter of Israel and as the first Chief Rabbi to be a product of the Israeli [i.e. Occupied West Bank] Yeshiva academies, and the first to have been ordained in Israel, I am delighted that in our country, as is the case in our community, we have strong, close and warm ties with the state of Israel.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> A. Alvarez, *Governments, Citizens, and Genocide* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2001); P. Heuveline, ‘The Demographic Analysis of Mortality Crises: The Case of Cambodia, 1970–1979’, in *Forced Migration and Mortality* (Washington DC: National Academies Press, 2001), pp. 102–5; B. Keirnan, ‘The Demography of Genocide in South-East Asia’, *Critical Asian Studies*, 35 (2003), 585–97; *Is the Holocaust Unique?*, ed. by A. S. Rosenbaum.

<sup>158</sup> A. Guichaoua, *From War to Genocide* (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015); T. Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); G. Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis, 1959–1994* (London: Hurst, 1998); *Is the Holocaust Unique?*, ed. by A. S. Rosenbaum.

<sup>159</sup> E. Bećirević, *Genocide on the Drina River* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2014); P. Mozjes, *Balkan Genocides* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011); *Is the Holocaust Unique?* ed. by A. S. Rosenbaum; M. A. Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1998); H. Walasek, *Bosnia and the Destruction of Cultural Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>160</sup> Hansard, 30 October 2014.

<sup>161</sup> ‘Come with Me’, *Jewish Year Book 2014 (5774-5775)*, pp. 1–14; citation p. 3.

Mirvis grew up in apartheid-ridden South Africa, and claims to have been actively opposed to its brutal system of institutionalised racism. Although his father, Dr Lionel Mirvis (1926–2019), himself a prominent rabbi of considerable erudition, espoused similar liberal political views to those of most English-speaking white middle-class Christian clergy, the record of the Chief Rabbi does not bear comparison with the impressive catalogue of Jewish opponents of apartheid, refugees from pogroms in Europe and their children who recognised the evil that they saw in South Africa, and many of whom paid a heavy price for their dedication to justice. They included Helen Suzman (1917–2009),<sup>162</sup> Lionel Bernstein (1920–2002),<sup>163</sup> Baruch Hirson (1921–1999),<sup>164</sup> Nadine Gordimer (1923–2014),<sup>165</sup> Ruth First (1925–1982),<sup>166</sup> Joe Slovo (1926–1995),<sup>167</sup> Ben Turok (1927–2019),<sup>168</sup> Arthur Chaskalson (1931–2012),<sup>169</sup> Denis Goldberg (1933–2020),<sup>170</sup> Cyril Harris

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<sup>162</sup> Daughter of Lithuanian refugees, Member of Parliament.

<sup>163</sup> Communist activist, political detainee, banned person, Rivonia trialist and exile.

<sup>164</sup> Son of Russian refugees, Communist activist and political prisoner.

<sup>165</sup> Daughter of Lithuanian refugee, activist in the African National Congress, novelist and winner of Nobel Prize for Literature.

<sup>166</sup> Daughter of Latvian refugees, Communist activist, journalist and academic, treason trialist, political detainee and subsequently exile, assassinated by agents of the apartheid regime.

<sup>167</sup> Lithuanian child refugee, Communist activist, political detainee and subsequently exile, Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe, member of the African National Congress Executive Committee, Minister of Housing under Nelson Mandela.

<sup>168</sup> Byelorussian refugee, economist and political activist, organiser of Congress of the People, and political prisoner.

<sup>169</sup> Human Rights Lawyer, defended Nelson Mandela during the Rivonia Trial, Director of Legal Resources Centre, first President of post-apartheid Constitutional Court, subsequently Chief Justice.

<sup>170</sup> Communist activist, Rivonia trialist and long-term political prisoner.

(1935–2004),<sup>171</sup> Albie Sachs (1935– ),<sup>172</sup> Ronnie Kasrils (1938– ),<sup>173</sup> and many others. Chief Rabbi Mirvis refuses to recognise the ideological similarities between apartheid and Zionism, or the practical implementation thereof in the systemic dispossession and expulsion of Palestinians from their homes and land, the discriminatory laws, and the frequent, excessive and gratuitous violence of the security services.<sup>174</sup> Nor has he ever repudiated the theology and political-demographic agenda of Gush-Etzion and its founder, Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook, which aspires to the annexation of all of Palestine, and the expulsion of any of its population who do not submit to humiliating and servile status.<sup>175</sup> This is more than inexplicable in a supposed opponent of apartheid. Not only has Mirvis claimed that racial discrimination in Israel is unlike apartheid,<sup>176</sup> but he has accused anyone who suggests otherwise of anti-Semitism.<sup>177</sup> Those familiar with both societies are in no doubt on this score,<sup>178</sup> and the military and economic

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<sup>171</sup> Chief Rabbi of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues, 1987–2004.

<sup>172</sup> Son of Lithuanian refugees, human rights lawyer, political detainee and victim of torture, exile, maimed in car bomb explosion by agents of apartheid regime, member of the African National Congress Executive Committee, member of post-apartheid Constitutional Court.

<sup>173</sup> Grandson of Latvian and Lithuanian refugees, Communist Party and African National Congress activist, banned person, Umkhonto we Sizwe officer, Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, and Minister of Intelligence Services in post-apartheid governments.

<sup>174</sup> 'I grew up in South Africa, so believe me when I say: Israel is not an apartheid state', *New Statesman*, 24 February 2016, [www.newstatesman.com/politics/2016/02/i-grew-south-africa-so-believe-me-when-i-say-israel-not-apartheid-state](http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2016/02/i-grew-south-africa-so-believe-me-when-i-say-israel-not-apartheid-state) [accessed 29 August 2022].

<sup>175</sup> I. S. Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1988); I. Shahak and N. Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (London: Pluto Press, 1999); E. Sprinzak, *The Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

<sup>176</sup> *New Statesman*, 24 February 2016.

<sup>177</sup> *Haaretz*, 24 August 2014.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. A. D. Badran, *Zionist Israel and Apartheid South Africa* (London: Routledge, 2013); Brown, *Apartheid South Africa! Apartheid Israel?* Cf. U. Davis, *Apartheid Israel* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003); *Israel and South Africa*, ed. by I. Pappé (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); P. Hellyer, 'Israel and South Africa', in *Zionism, Imperialism and Racism*, ed. by A. W. Kayyali (London:

alliance between the two racist regimes was far from secret, even if its full extent was less widely known.<sup>179</sup> As Bishop Kenneth Cragg (1913–2012) observed:

[T]o see the reproach or rejection of Zionism as *ipso facto* anti-Semitic, or anti-Judaic, is dishonestly to ignore two evident facts. The one is the vigorous anti-Zionism within Judaism itself; the other is the deep, legitimate claim on justice which the Palestinian tragedy holds against Israel, for displacement, suffering, homelessness, and death.<sup>180</sup>

By no means all synagogues in Britain, including those who would identify as Ashkenazi and Orthodox, are affiliated with the United Synagogue. Furthermore, statistics published by the Board of Deputies of British Jews estimate that no more than half of all Jewish households include a single member of any synagogue.<sup>181</sup> Serious questions therefore need to be asked as to whom the United Synagogue and Chief Rabbi represent. The Board of Deputies claims to represent a more comprehensive range of Jewish communities and organisations, and claims to be ‘the voice of the British Jewish community, the first port of call for the Government, the media and others seeking to understand Jewish community interests and concerns’.<sup>182</sup>

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Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 286–99; R. P. Stevens, ‘Israel and South Africa’, in *Zionism, Imperialism, and Racism*, ed. by A. W. Kayyali, pp. 265–85; R. Kasrils, ‘David and Goliath: Who Is Who in the Middle East’, *Umrabulo*, 27 (2006); 28 (2007); J. Pillay, ‘Apartheid in the Holy Land’, *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*, 72 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i4.3434> [accessed 22 June 2022]; Amnesty International, *Israel’s Apartheid against the Palestinians*. Cf. Akenson, *God’s Favorites*; R. Lentin, *Traces of Racial Exceptionalism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); A. W. al Massir, ‘The Racial Myths of Zionism’, in *Zionism, Imperialism, and Racism*, ed. by A. W. Kayyali, pp. 27–50.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. S. Polakow-Suransky, *The Unspoken Alliance* (New York: Random House, 2010).

<sup>180</sup> A. K. Cragg, *The Christ and the Faiths* (London: SPCK, 1986), p. 158.

<sup>181</sup> The Board of Deputies lists over 450 synagogues on its website, of which about 60 are affiliated with the United Synagogue. It is nevertheless claimed that communities affiliated to the United Synagogue represent about half of the Jewish population of the UK, [www.bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Synagogue-membership-in-the-United-Kingdom-in-2016.pdf](http://www.bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Synagogue-membership-in-the-United-Kingdom-in-2016.pdf) [accessed 15 July 2023].

<sup>182</sup> [www.bod.org.uk/who-we-are/](http://www.bod.org.uk/who-we-are/) [accessed 12 November 2021].

It states that ‘The British Jewish community has a very strong attachment to the State of Israel’.<sup>183</sup> Its President, Marie van der Zyl, sought office with a pledge to ‘defend Israel’s legitimacy and its centrality to Jewish identity’.<sup>184</sup> Nevertheless, the Board published *Zionism: A Jewish Communal Response from the UK*,<sup>185</sup> which included contributions by rabbis prominent in inter-faith relations, the then President of the Movement for Reformed Judaism, Tony Bayfield, and the Senior Masorti Rabbi, Jonathan Wittenberg. Although it is a reaction to the publication of the ‘Kairos Palestine’ document *A Moment of Truth*,<sup>186</sup> and at the very least is defensive of the Zionist agenda, this collection includes theological and ethical arguments with which this report could and should have constructively engaged.

In citing the works of Buber and Rosen, therefore, it would seem that the report quite deliberately exploits their reputations to obfuscate the nature of contemporary Zionism and the breadth of contemporary Judaism. Judaism is global, multiracial and multicultural, and is neither a European nation with an enclave in the Levant nor a Middle Eastern ethnoreligious group with a diaspora in Europe and North America. Zionism, in any of its forms, is not of the essence of Judaism, and many Jewish individuals and movements have outspokenly, courageously and often at great cost repudiated it unequivocally on both theological and secular moral grounds. In reducing contemporary Judaism to the positions represented by Buber and Rosen, this report fails to acknowledge or to address the virulent forms of Zionism that are dominant in Orthodox Judaism both in Israel and in Britain, and indeed in other countries in which member churches of the Anglican Communion operate. This reflects the preoccupation of the authors with maintaining cordial relations with the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the (Orthodox) Chief Rabbinate. In so doing, the report distorts and denigrates not only the Jewish religion, but also the rich and diverse contributions that Jewish people have made to human civilisation and culture globally, and their courageous and often costly role in the struggle for justice *for all* in many countries.

In allowing Palestinian Christian voices to be heard, the Report selects two paragraphs from the writings of the Anglican cleric and theologian,

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<sup>183</sup> [www.bod.org.uk/issue-areas/israel-the-middle-east/](http://www.bod.org.uk/issue-areas/israel-the-middle-east/) [accessed 12 November 2021].

<sup>184</sup> *Jewish News*, 13 March 2018.

<sup>185</sup> London: Board of Deputies of British Jews, 2010.

<sup>186</sup> [www.kairospalestine.ps/sites/default/documents/english.pdf](http://www.kairospalestine.ps/sites/default/documents/english.pdf) [accessed 6 March 2021].

Canon Naim Ateek (1937– ) (3.3),<sup>187</sup> an extract from *A Moment of Truth*, commonly known as the Kairos Palestine document, issued in 2009 (3.7),<sup>188</sup> and the full text of the ‘Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism’, issued in 2006 by the then Latin Patriarch, Archbishop Michel Sabbah (1933– ), and his counterparts in the Syrian Orthodox, Anglican<sup>189</sup> and Lutheran churches in Palestine (3.4). Given that these are the Christians most directly affected by the Zionist programme, Jewish and Christian, it is concerning that so little attention is given to the small but robust and articulate Palestinian Christian community and its theologians.<sup>190</sup> Their existence may constitute an inconvenience for Christians who are seeking comfortable and congenial Jewish–Christian relations in Britain, and for Christians and Jews alike who resort to Islamophobic tropes to depict the Palestinians. Nevertheless, the Palestinian Christians represent a valid and authentic expression of Christian faith and identity, and their claim to solidarity with their fellow Christians, and for the Anglicans among them with their fellow Anglicans, is inalienable.

Juxtaposed with the Palestinian Christian texts is one issued by the Church’s Mission Among the Jewish People (CMJ) - UK, which addresses the question of whether CMJ is Zionist (3.5).<sup>191</sup> Leaving aside the Anglocentrism implicit in citing the British organ of this much wider movement, the answer to this question is scarcely in doubt. Although the statement purports to impartiality, it attributes ‘terrorism’ to ‘the Palestinians’, which it condemns,

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<sup>187</sup> Naim Ateek, ‘Biblical Perspectives on the Land’, in *Faith and the Intifada*, ed. by N. Ateek, M. H. Ellis and R. Radford Ruether (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1992). His other works include the following: *Justice, and Only Justice* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1989); *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2008); *A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2017).

<sup>188</sup> [www.kairospalestine.ps/sites/default/documents/english.pdf](http://www.kairospalestine.ps/sites/default/documents/english.pdf) [accessed 6 March 2021].

<sup>189</sup> The Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem at the time was the Right Reverend Riah Abu El-Assal.

<sup>190</sup> A significant book, entirely ignored in this report, written by a Palestinian scholar in the (majority) Eastern Orthodox tradition, is P. N. Tarazi, *Land and Covenant* (St Paul MN: OCABS Press, 2009). Whatever critical questions may be raised about some of the readings of the biblical texts, the same (and more) is true of Zionist readings which this report accords respectability. The overwhelming majority of Palestinian Christians are members of the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches, whose theological tradition needs to be taken into account.

<sup>191</sup> [www.cmj.org.uk/about/cmjzionist](http://www.cmj.org.uk/about/cmjzionist) [accessed 6 March 2021].



but not to Israel, which is merely ‘not above criticism’. It suggests, further, that criticism of Israeli violations of human rights is liable to be anti-Semitic and unjust, while making no mention of Islamophobia. The implied equivalence between resistance to oppression and dispossession and the violence of oppression and dispossession, and even tacit justification of the latter, is a symptom of the moral bankruptcy and theological myopia of Christian Zionism.<sup>192</sup> Although CMJ-UK is not an exclusively Anglican organisation, it is nonetheless significant that its website obfuscates its relationship with CMJ-Israel, whose website lists its affiliations as being with the Global Anglican Futures Conference (GAFCON) and the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA), rather than with the Anglican Communion.<sup>193</sup>

Also cited are extracts from the ‘Twelve Points of Berlin’, a statement issued in 2009 by the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ) (3.6).<sup>194</sup> This endorses the notion of Israel as a Jewish state, and calls upon Christians to ‘pray for the peace of Jerusalem’ by ‘understanding more fully’ that Zionism is integral to Judaism, and encouraging condemnation of any criticism of the Zionist project as anti-Semitic, without calling upon Jews or anyone else to recognise the legitimacy of Palestinian aspirations or the reality of Israeli state terror.

There is no recognition in the report of just how distorted is the moral judgement reflected in the ICCJ and CMJ documents. Given that at least two of the authors hold or have held office in the UK CCJ, this is perhaps hardly surprising. Furthermore, the report is not merely tendentious, but perpetuates demonstrable falsehoods, not least in claiming that Zionism is of the essence of Judaism, and in suggesting that opposition to the Zionist programme is inherently anti-Semitic.

The chapter concludes with the series of superficially reasonable questions, the first of which refers to ‘Israel’s right to exist within internationally agreed boundaries’, a notion which had not hitherto been raised or analysed, beyond passing references to the ‘Green Line’ in the second chapter (2.28).<sup>195</sup> Serious moral and legal questions need to be raised

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<sup>192</sup> This is powerfully articulated in the Kairos Palestine document; cf. also R. S. Heaney, *Post-Colonial Theology* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2019), pp. 68–88.

<sup>193</sup> [www.cmj-israel.org/cmj-general/cmj-partners](http://www.cmj-israel.org/cmj-general/cmj-partners) [accessed 6 March 2021].

<sup>194</sup> [http://iccj.org/fileadmin/ICCJ/pdf-Dateien/A\\_Time\\_for\\_Recommitment\\_engl.pdf](http://iccj.org/fileadmin/ICCJ/pdf-Dateien/A_Time_for_Recommitment_engl.pdf) [accessed 6 March 2021].

<sup>195</sup> Cf. *International Law and the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict*, ed. by S. M. Akram et al.; Cattan, *Palestine and International Law*; J. R. Hammond, ‘Why Israel Has No “Right to Exist”’, *Foreign Policy Journal*, 15 March 2019.

about the status of supposed international agreements, to which the Palestinians were not party. Furthermore, there are legal and moral issues to be clarified regarding resolutions by United Nations bodies, and what they actually say, whether addressing immediate exigencies or more general principles, before these documents can be used as retrospective justification of the incremental and often violent expulsion of the Palestinian people from their homes and land.<sup>196</sup>

It is somewhat surprising, given that almost half the population of Palestine-Israel is Muslim, and that until the *nakbah* the proportion was considerably higher, no account is taken of Islamic or of secular Palestinian voices.<sup>197</sup> This suggests that, for the authors of the report, those whose homeland has been between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean for centuries either do not exist, in keeping with Zionist rhetoric, can be dismissed as recent immigrants of miscellaneous origin, or can be regarded as expendable in the cause of not being reminded of the Holocaust or of the centuries of anti-Semitism in Europe that preceded it. Compared with cosy and comfortable inter-faith relations in Britain, the Palestinian people are regarded as at best an irrelevance, or a subhuman species whose land may be disposed at the whim of Western politicians, from Balfour to Trump and beyond.

Also ignored are Messianic Jewish groups, and other Jews who have come to Christian faith, within the Vicariate of St James, which serves

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<sup>196</sup> J. R. Hammond, 'The Myth of the U.N. Creation of Israel', *Foreign Policy Journal*, 26 October 2010; W. Khalidi, 'Revisiting the UNGA Partition Resolution', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 27 (1997), 5–21. On undue influence on the part of the USA and particular American politicians, K. R. Bain, *The March to Zion* (College Station TX: Texas A & M University Press, 1980); Cattan, *Palestine and International Law*; M. J. Cohen, *Truman and Israel* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1992); W. R. Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); *The End of the Palestine Mandate*, ed. by W. R. Louis and R. W. Stookey (Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 1986); *Between the Lines*, ed. by T. Haddad and T. Honig-Parnass (Chicago IL: Haymarket Books, 2017).

<sup>197</sup> Cf. M. A. H. Al-Khateeb, *Al-Quds* (London: Ta-Ha, 1998); *Jerusalem in History*, ed. by K. J. Asali (New York: Olive Branch, 1990); A. L. Tibawi, *Jerusalem: Its Place in Islam and Arab History* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1969). Although Al-Khateeb in particular represents a form of Muslim supersessionism, depicting Judaism and to a lesser extent Christianity as corruptions of Islam, and it makes a number of claims that are untenable on historical grounds, there is a serious intent to understand and engage with the other traditions.

Hebrew Christians under the auspices of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, or through the agency of CMJ and other Protestant organisations.<sup>198</sup> Irrespective of one's views of the intentional proselytisation of Jews, these are marginalised and vulnerable people who merit attention and understanding, and some attempt to appreciate their theology.

#### ***Chapter 4. Some stories for Anglicans***

This chapter is largely anecdotal, but does at least reflect something of the ways in which the complex issues surrounding Israel and Palestine are perceived and addressed in different parts of the world, and especially in different parts of the Anglican Communion. Although there is nothing new or surprising in the stories told or the attitudes reflected, one might nonetheless ask what further issues might have been raised in the course of wider engagement with the Anglican Communion. The use in Christian worship of passages from Scripture — not only those which are widely understood to glorify violent conquest and promise more of the same, but any text in which the nuances of 'Israel' are a potential cause of confusion — would have merited extensive treatment. It would also have been helpful to have documented more clearly in which parts of the Communion particular attitudes are attested, and what influences have introduced these to Christian communities around the world. If this report had begun with a survey of the Anglican Communion, identifying issues on which education and collaborative study across the Communion are needed, then a significant contribution could have been made, not only to addressing the presenting issue, but also to discerning ways in which theological reflection in a global cross-cultural movement might be pursued, respecting and including the concerns and experiences of all, but also challenging Christians everywhere to discover new insights into God's truth. It is deeply to be regretted that quite fundamental issues, each requiring substantial treatment, are identified in passing towards the middle of the report, but are not explored any further.

#### ***Chapter 5. Some theological resources for Anglicans***

This is one of the shortest chapters in the report. The three pages are heavily dependent on the 2008 NIFCON report *Generous Love: The Truth of the Gospel and the Call to Dialogue: An Anglican Theology of Inter Faith*

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<sup>198</sup> The former nuclear scientist Mordecai Vanunu is perhaps the most prominent Israeli Jew to have been baptised in the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem. He has suffered several decades of imprisonment, and further restrictions on his freedom. Although his Christian faith may not be the presenting issue in his persecution, it is nonetheless relevant that Jews of conscience have found refuge in Christian fellowship.

*Relations*.<sup>199</sup> Whatever the merits of this thin document, the issues of Christian Zionism and of justice and human rights in Palestine–Israel cannot be reduced to matters of inter-faith relations, and certainly not to relations between the Church of England on the one hand, and the (Orthodox) Chief Rabbinate of the Commonwealth and the United Hebrew Congregation on the other. Although supposedly identifying the classical foundations of Anglican theology, platitudes about Scripture, Reason and Tradition will accomplish nothing so long as the controversies and divisions in the Anglican Communion demonstrate very clearly that Anglicans do not agree as to what these terms mean, how they relate to each other, and how they function in the life of the Church.<sup>200</sup> Resolving these quite fundamental issues would clearly be beyond the remit of NIFCON or of any particular report it might issue, but some awareness that the terms are not unproblematic would have been a prerequisite to offering any useful ‘Anglican’ contribution to the questions raised.

It would be stating the obvious to note that how Christians read and interpret Scripture has a very direct impact on how they are likely to respond to issues related to Zionism (Christian or otherwise), and this applies to Anglicans as much as to adherents of any other denomination. Reason is integral to any and every culture, and the British appropriation and development of Hellenistic–Roman models mediated through the European Renaissance and Enlightenment is neither monolithic nor definitive, for Anglicanism any more than for any other global or multicultural religious movement. Tradition is similarly not monolithic, and is all too easily cited to justify recalcitrance, and to exclude any reading of

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<sup>199</sup> London: Anglican Consultative Council, 2008 [accessed 14 March 2021].

<sup>200</sup> Cf. P. D. L. Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism* (London: T & T Clark, 2008); *In Search of Authority* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); T. Bradshaw, *The Olive Branch* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1992); M. D. Chapman, *Anglican Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2012); C. J. Cocksworth, *Holding Together* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008); J. E. Griffiss, *The Anglican Vision* (Cambridge MA: Cowley Publications, 1997); R. A. K. Runcie, *Authority in Crisis?* (London: SCM, 1988); N. H. Taylor, ‘Some Observations on Theological Method, Biblical Interpretation, and Ecclesiastical Politics in Current Disputes in the Anglican Communion’, *Theology*, 111 (2008), 51–8; ‘The Anglican Heritage in a Global Communion’, in *Faithful Disciple and Servant Scholar*, ed. by M. T. Speckman and G. O. West (Johannesburg: Anglican Church of Southern Africa, 2022), pp. 124–31; ‘Biblical Studies, Theology and Ministry in the Anglican Tradition’, *Scottish Episcopal Institute Journal*, 7 (2023), 44–53.

Scripture or exercise of reason that might challenge vested interests. There is clearly a need to explore further, on a pan-Anglican basis, just what we mean by Scripture, Reason and Tradition, and to understand how they work, in relation to each other, in the life of the Church.<sup>201</sup> Although consensus on key issues may not be achievable, or indeed always desirable, there might at least emerge some comprehension of how the conflicts in the Anglican Communion, and within many of its member churches, have come about and escalated to the point that communion is fractured. Until this is done, it will be impossible to discover ways in which trust can be rebuilt and the presenting issues addressed with any prospect of mutual understanding, still less convergence between parties with hitherto irreconcilably conflicting positions. The history of intra-Anglican conflicts over sexuality and the ordination of women in recent decades does not suggest that a distinctive 'Anglican' approach to these or any other issues would be inherently productive. However necessary it might be for the internal dynamics of the Anglican Communion, such an exercise would contribute little to resolving issues of ecumenical, inter-faith and global human significance.

Urgent issues of justice and human rights will not await the outcome of a protracted theological debate, however much conflicting theological trajectories within more than one religious tradition have been brought to bear upon the issues. Perhaps the most immediate and fundamental question would be whether Christian theology can in any circumstances provide legitimation for the violent dispossession of people from homes that they and their forebears have inhabited, and land that they have tended, for centuries, even as a necessary stage in the fulfilment of agreed eschatological expectations. An answer would be both clear and immediate, at least in this supposedly post-colonial era, were it not that the victims of dispossession are the Palestinians, and the invaders are those Jews who have become

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<sup>201</sup> *Deep Engagement, Fresh Discovery: Report of the Anglican Communion 'Bible in the Life of the Church' Project* (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 2012). This work represents a necessary start, but is far from resolving, or even identifying and clarifying, the numerous outstanding issues. Cf. P. D. L. Avis, *Seeking the Truth of Change in the Church* (London: Continuum, 2003); A. A. Bartlett, *A Passionate Balance* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007); *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism*, ed. by I. T. Douglas and P.-L. Kwok (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 2001); R. A. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2006); Taylor, 'Some Observations'; 'Anglican Heritage'; 'Biblical Studies, Theology and Ministry in the Anglican Tradition'; S. R. White, *Authority and Anglicanism* (London: SCM, 1996).

Israelis, overtly or clandestinely supported by successive British and other governments for over 100 years. What makes one group a uniquely legitimate victim, and the other a uniquely legitimate perpetrator, has never been articulated coherently, still less theologically. Attempted justification has never got beyond the discredited myth of the 'empty land', and equally discredited, glib and superficial connections drawn between Israel of the Old Testament and modern (Ashkenazi) Jewry,<sup>202</sup> and the supposed existential threat to the Jewish people anywhere other than in the highly militarised apartheid state created in 1948. Although there are undoubtedly theological issues to do with the reading of Scripture and eschatology that need to be explored, to regard resolving these as a prerequisite to addressing fundamental questions of social, economic and political justice would be to acquiesce in the incremental but brutal expansion of the Zionist programme and the systematic destruction of Palestinian society and culture.

The report recognises that the issues raised by Christian Zionism are not simply a matter of Anglican belief and practice, but concern relations between Christians, Jews and Muslims (5.7). It is abundantly clear that few, if any, Israeli Jews could be considered Anglican;<sup>203</sup> the overwhelming majority of the Palestinians are Sunni Muslims, and Anglicans constitute a small minority within the Christian minority. What is at issue, however, is not whether Anglicans can expect to play a major role in reaching a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. The issue is whether Anglicans and other Christians can justifiably prioritise their relations with Zionist Jews living in Israel, Britain or elsewhere in the world, including illegal settlements in Palestine, over those with Palestinian Christians and Muslims, and against those with non-Zionist and anti-Zionist Jews, while disregarding issues of justice and human rights as a matter of expediency, as the report assumes. There is no acknowledgement of the significance of Haram al-Sharif, routinely referred to as 'the Temple Mount',<sup>204</sup> in Muslim

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<sup>202</sup> Cf. Masalha, *Palestine Nakbah*; Pappé, *Idea of Israel*; Rabkin, *What is Modern Israel?*; Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*; *Un Race Imaginaire* (Paris: Seuil, 2020); Taylor, 'Christianity, Scripture, and the State of Israel', *Scottish Episcopal Institute Journal*, 2 (2018), 7–34.

<sup>203</sup> As noted above, Mordecai Vanunu would be the most noted example of an Israeli Jew baptised in the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem.

<sup>204</sup> This usage not only assumes the priority of Jewish claims to contested sacred space, but also ignores the long history of Muslim worship in a complex of shrines assumed by all parties to be located on the site of the former Jewish temple(s). Cf. R. Khalidi and S. Tamari, *The Other Jerusalem* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2020).

devotion,<sup>205</sup> or of the demographic reality of a Muslim majority in the Palestinian population, or indeed of the escalating Islamophobia in Western societies. On the contrary, the report presumes that these considerations, if they are relevant at all, are to be subordinated to the sensitivities ascribed to Jewish-Christian relations in Western societies.

Citing *Generous Love*, the report identifies the ‘motifs of presence, engagement and hospitality’ (5.8) of the Christian presence in the ‘Holy Land’, relevant both to the coexistence of Christians with other communities and to ‘God’s “gift of the land” to his [*sic*] people’. It is not entirely clear on what basis three members of the Church of England are competent to prescribe how the Palestinian Christians should relate to their increasingly violent and predatory neighbours, even if they presume to do so in the name of the Anglican Communion. It would have been pragmatic, at the very least, to have acknowledged that ‘God’s “gift of the land” to his [*sic*] people’ is not likely to be understood by Palestinian Christians in the Zionist terms to which this report implicitly subscribes.<sup>206</sup> Some critical interrogation of this expression, including exegesis of the biblical texts on which it is tenuously premised, and study of the ways in which the gift of the land has been understood in Judaism, Christianity and Islam over the centuries,<sup>207</sup> would have been a prerequisite to making any contribution towards discerning ways in which Anglican bodies might contribute not only to addressing the issues raised by Christian Zionism, but also to facilitating processes that might lead to justice and peace in Palestine-Israel. If the Palestinian Christians are to be present and hospitable, as the report patronisingly and presumptuously expects them to be, then some consideration of their living conditions is a moral imperative as well as a practical necessity. To expect hospitality from people whose homes and land have been stolen, often violently, by Israeli settlers, and who have been deprived of their livelihood not only by land seizures, but by an iniquitous and discriminatory permit system, frequent closure of checkpoints, and obstruction of access to

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<sup>205</sup> Al-Khateeb, *Al-Quds; Asali, Jerusalem; Sacred Space in Israel and Palestine*, ed. by M. J. Breger, Y. Reiter and L. Hammer (London: Routledge, 2012); Khalidi and Tamari, *The Other Jerusalem*; Tibawi, *Jerusalem*.

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Ateek, *Justice, and Only Justice*; Isaac, *From Land to Lands*.

<sup>207</sup> Al-Khateeb, *Al-Quds*; Khalidi and Tamari, *The Other Jerusalem*; *The Land of Israel in Bible, History, and Theology*, ed. by J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten and J. C. de Vos (Leiden: Brill, 2009); J. Svartvik, ‘The Theology of the Land in Jewish-Christian Relations and its Role in Misunderstandings Between Jews and Christians’, in *The Medieval Roots of Anti-Semitism*, ed. by J. Adams and C. Hess (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 363–76; Tarazi, *Land and Covenant*; Tibawi, *Jerusalem*.

markets, is more than unreasonable. Notwithstanding the immense generosity that many visitors have experienced, presence and hospitality become impossible for people who have been intentionally reduced to destitution and vagrancy, even if they survive the attendant violence without severe injury.

The report states that ‘The fact that the Incarnation took place in the Holy Land gives to the geography and history of this country an importance which no other land can have’ (5.9). This statement is problematic in several respects. That Jesus was conceived and born within the territory of Herod, and installed by the Romans as ‘king of the Jews’, may be an historical fact, whether or not credence is given to the Gospel nativity narratives locating his birth in Bethlehem.<sup>208</sup> The Incarnation, however, is a doctrine of Christian faith,<sup>209</sup> concerning the action of a transcendent God, and is historically unfalsifiable, far from being an undisputed universal truth. The Incarnation is quite contrary to Jewish belief, and the virginal conception of Jesus is not understood as the incarnation of God in Islam.<sup>210</sup> Even if it were demonstrable by the methods of historiography, the Incarnation is part of a larger and wider creative, redemptive and salvific process of cosmic and eternal significance, which cannot be limited to the place and time of the associated historical events. This is not to deny that Jerusalem and the land between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean have acquired a particular consequence in the piety of some traditions within Judaism,<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> For discussion, see R. E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah* (New York: Doubleday, 1977); H. Hendrickx, *The Infancy Narratives* (London: Chapman, 1984); cf. J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012); N. H. Taylor, *What Can We Know About Jesus?* (Glasgow: Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway, 2013).

<sup>209</sup> Cf. *The Incarnation*, ed. by S. T. Davis (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); T. F. Torrance, *Incarnation* (Downers Grove IL: IVP Academic, 2015); T. G. Weinandy, *Does God Change?* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002).

<sup>210</sup> *Qur’an* 3, *Āl ‘Imrān* 45–47; 19, *Maryam* 17–34; 21, *Al-Anbiyā* 91; 66, *Al-Tahrīm* 12. For discussion, see G. Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur’an* (London: Faber & Faber, 1965); C. A. Segovia, *The Quranic Jesus* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019); A. Thomson and M. Ata’ur-Rahim, *Jesus in the Qur’an* (London: Ta-Ha, 2012).

<sup>211</sup> *Jerusalem*, ed. by L. I. Levine (London: Continuum, 1999); Van Ruiten and De Vos, *Land of Israel*; S. S. Montefiore, *Jerusalem* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2011); cf. B. Wasserstein, *Divided Jerusalem* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2002).



Christianity<sup>212</sup> and Islam,<sup>213</sup> or that historical events and founding myths of defining significance to particular faith communities are located there. Nevertheless, even if the historicity of the events in question could be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt, there is no theological, legal or moral basis for translating this into a right of eternal or exclusive geopolitical possession of such places for anyone.

The ‘complicated’ links between ‘the post-Reformation Anglican settlement’, British imperialism and the expansion of the Anglican Communion are acknowledged (5.10), if somewhat understated: <sup>214</sup> ‘Anglicans cannot speak with credibility about the situation in Israel/Palestine unless they recognise how deep, how contested, and how ambiguous is the history of involvement which implicates us here’ (5.10). This statement would be refreshingly honest, were it not that the ‘us’ who are implicated would presumably include members of Anglican congregations drawn from the indigenous population of every land that Britain has seen fit to occupy at any time during the last half millennium, including Palestine, and the descendants of people trafficked across the Atlantic and sold into slavery in the Caribbean and North America. If the voices of these members of the Anglican Communion had been given expression in this report, the message might have been very different, and very much more apposite. It is members of the Church of England, such as those who wrote the report, who are compromised by the legacy of British imperialism — in which it has to be acknowledged that the Church in Wales, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of Ireland are not innocent either.<sup>215</sup> The presumption that three members of the Church of England are

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<sup>212</sup> J. G. Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003); P. Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); P. W. L. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2001); Wasserstein, *Divided Jerusalem*.

<sup>213</sup> Al-Khateeb, *Al-Quds*; Asali, *Jerusalem*; Tibawi, *Jerusalem*; Wasserstein, *Divided Jerusalem*.

<sup>214</sup> Cf. I. M. Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living, of High Endeavour and Adventure* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity*; T. Segev, *One Palestine, Complete* (London: Abacus, 2000); Småberg, *Ambivalent Friendship*; N. L. Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters between English and Palestinian Women, 1800-1948* (Gainesville FL: University Press of Florida, 2007); Tabawi, *British Interests in Palestine*.

<sup>215</sup> Cf. Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity*; Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters between English and Palestinian Women*; R. G. W. Strong, *Anglicanism and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

competent to speak for global Anglicanism, and to implicate the victims of British imperialism in their guilt while simultaneously excluding them from participation in a project that purports to represent the Anglican Communion, is a fairly accurate reflection of the attitude that pervades this report.<sup>216</sup>

The chapter concludes with two paragraphs that deal with the significance of place, and of holy places in particular, in Anglicanism (5.11–5.12). The Benedictine principle of *stabilitas* may well be influential among some Anglicans, particularly those with Anglo-Catholic tendencies, but this applies wherever communities are formed and God is worshipped. The emphasis on the sanctity accorded the ‘Holy Land’ by virtue of theologically significant events located there by Christian tradition, and the identification of places of ‘primary theological significance’ in Palestine, namely Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem, is problematic, and contrary to the principle of *stabilitas*. The ‘Holy Land’ and particular cities within it contain places of worship of some variety of Christian, as well as Muslim and Jewish, traditions, which serve both as gathering places for local communities (where they have not been dispossessed and exiled) and as pilgrimage destinations. The right of local communities to gather for worship, irrespective of their tradition, is not contingent upon a particular sanctity being attached to their places of worship on account of historic events having been located there by tradition. This principle applies as much in Palestine as it does anywhere else, and the emphasis on sanctity ascribed to particular places on account of historic associations reduces the ‘Holy Land’ to a religious theme park for visitors, disregarding the people who live there, and those who have been expelled from their homes and land there.

Notwithstanding the frequent reference to the Palestinian Christians as ‘living stones’ — by themselves as well as by others — pilgrims and tourists are likely to have little contact with Palestinian people, Christian or otherwise, except perhaps as objects on display in a cultural exhibition. The attachment of Christians around the world to places of pilgrimage all too frequently disregards precisely these ‘living stones’, their plight, and their persistent calls for solidarity from their fellow Christians, including economic action to bring about meaningful political change. This is articulated most clearly in *A Moment of Truth*, also known as *Kairos Palestine*,

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On the role of the Church of Scotland, and its XIX antecedents, see M. A. Marten, *Attempting to Bring the Gospel Home* (London: Tauris, 2006).

<sup>216</sup> Cf. Heaney, *Post-Colonial Theology*; A. Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); B. Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag* (Trowbridge: Apollos, 1990).

cited previously in the report (3.7).<sup>217</sup> Whatever ‘sacramental’ value may be attached to the land, and to specific places there, ‘the Holy Land and the Holy City’ that is attributed the status of ‘mysterious yet real site of divine-human exchange’ (5.12) is also the place where, since centuries before Christ, prophets have repeatedly demanded justice and denounced those who abuse their political and economic power, and conceal oppression and violence behind a veneer of piety.<sup>218</sup> Their message has not ceased to be relevant, and for Christians to indulge in sentimentality about the places without heeding the divine revelation spoken there through the Prophets, often at considerable peril to themselves, is also to ignore the teaching of Jesus.<sup>219</sup>

### **Chapter 6. Some history**

This chapter is perhaps inevitably selective, but when selectivity becomes a function of tendentiousness, it becomes misleading. A comprehensive and detailed history covering all of the relevant issues would not have been possible, but it is nonetheless necessary that the overview be accurate and impartial, and that generalisations not be used to obfuscate complex and contested issues or to mislead. The Anglican Communion is not without scholars who would have been competent to explain the complexities and uncertainties of centuries of contested history, if they had been consulted. The Anglocentrism and narrow range of competence among the authors have severely compromised the quality and reliability of this part of the report.

The treatment of Jewish history following the destruction of the Judaeen polity by the Romans focuses exclusively on the northern European Jews who became Ashkenazi, and who now dominate Jewry in both Britain and Israel. Given that the treatment begins with the account of Pentecost in Acts 2, which provides a graphic if not comprehensive description of the scope of the diaspora, it seems extraordinarily Eurocentric that no consideration at all is given to the descendants of the Jews of Parthia, Media,

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<sup>217</sup> Further and more recent statements can be found at <https://kairospalestine.ps/> [accessed 21 May 2021]. See also *Cry for Hope: A Call to Decisive Action*, [www.cryforhope.org/](http://www.cryforhope.org/) [accessed 21 May 2021]; *A Response to Cry for Hope: A Call to the Churches and the WCC Assembly 2022*, [www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/statement-from-the-sabeel-kairos-theology-group/](http://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/statement-from-the-sabeel-kairos-theology-group/) [accessed 28 May 2022].

<sup>218</sup> 2 Kgs 21.10–15; Isa. 3.14; 5.8; 29.20–21; Jer. 22.16; 26.1–9; Joel 2.12; Amos 2.6–7; 5.24; Mic. 3.1–12; 6.8; Hab. 2.3; Zeph. 1.14.

<sup>219</sup> Mt. 23.28; Lk. 13.34.

Elam,<sup>220</sup> Mesopotamia,<sup>221</sup> Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia,<sup>222</sup> Cyrene,<sup>223</sup> Rome,<sup>224</sup> Crete and Arabia<sup>225</sup> (Acts 2.8–11).

In common with many misperceptions, the report claims that Acts 2 speaks of ‘pilgrims’ in Jerusalem for Pentecost who witnessed the pneumatic manifestation in Jesus’ disciples (6.2). What the narrative states is that there were Jews (Ἰουδαῖοι)<sup>226</sup> from a variety of diaspora nations (ἐθνους) living

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<sup>220</sup> Parthia, Media and Elam are all parts of what is now Iran. Cf. L. L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period* (London: T & T Clark, 2004); M. J. W. Leith, ‘Israel among the Nations: The Persian Period’, in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. by M. D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 276–316.

<sup>221</sup> Now Iraq. Cf. T. Alstola, *Judeans in Babylonia* (Leiden: Brill, 2020); Grabbe, *History of the Jews*; B. Isaac and Y. Shahar, *Judaea-Palestina, Babylon and Rome* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); N. Rejwan, *The Jews of Iraq* (London: Routledge, 2020).

<sup>222</sup> All parts of what is now Turkey, Asia being the western part thereof. Cf. J. M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora* (London: T & T Clark, 1998); M. D. Goodman, *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999); P. R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>223</sup> Now Libya and part of Tunisia. Cf. S. Appelbaum, *Jews and Greeks in Ancient Cyrene* (Leiden: Brill, 1979); S. Taieb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa* (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 2010).

<sup>224</sup> Cf. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*; H. J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Peabody PA: Hendrickson, 1995); L. V. Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

<sup>225</sup> Parts of what is now Jordan and the Arabian Peninsula. Cf. G. W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); M. Sartre, *The Middle East under Rome* (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 2005); M. A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands* (Philadelphia PA: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979).

<sup>226</sup> The textual tradition for this verse is very uncertain, with some important manuscripts omitting Ἰουδαῖοι. However, v.11 refers to Ἰουδαῖοι τε καὶ προσήλυτοι — that is, Jews and proselytes. Any reading of this passage to suggest that a mixed crowd of Jews and Gentiles heard Peter’s Pentecost speech would be contrary both to the lack of evidence of non-Jewish residents of Jerusalem at the time, and to the structure and theme of Acts. Cf. H. G. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia PA: Fortress Press, 1987), p. 12; J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), pp. 231–43; E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*

(κατοικούντες) in Jerusalem who witnessed this event (Acts 2.5). Whether or not there were pilgrims from the diaspora visiting Jerusalem for the festivals, Acts refers to members of established diaspora Jewish communities who had migrated to Jerusalem. The centripetal force of the temple, particularly for eschatologically minded Jews, is contrasted with the centrifugal power of the Holy Spirit, by which the apostles and others were to carry the Gospel from Jerusalem, via Judaea and Samaria, to the ends of the earth (i.e., to all nations).<sup>227</sup> There is substantial evidence of diaspora Jewish communities in Jerusalem at this time,<sup>228</sup> and every reason to believe that the early Church made its first Greek-speaking converts among these, and particularly among those who, having settled in Jerusalem, found themselves alienated and marginalised from the temple. According to the Acts narrative, the first Christian martyr, Stephen (Acts 6–7), and the apostle Paul (Acts 9.13–28), were Hellenistic Jews of the diaspora who had settled in Jerusalem. After having undertaken a migration akin to *aliyah* 2000 years ago, Paul and others reversed this process, returned to the diaspora, and exercised the vocation of Israel to be ‘a light to the nations’ (Isaiah 42.6; 49.6),<sup>229</sup> as indeed Stephen might have done had he lived.<sup>230</sup> Although the report is entirely correct in emphasising the origins of Christianity in Palestine, and among Torah-observant Jews, it is important to note that very early in Christian history these included Jews whose origins were not in Palestine but in the diaspora, and that their heritage of biblical literacy and traditions of Torah observance would have been quite varied.<sup>231</sup>

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(Philadelphia PA: Westminster Press, 1971), pp. 157–71; L. T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), pp. 41–7.

<sup>227</sup> Cf. N. H. Taylor, ‘Luke-Acts and the Temple’, in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, ed. by J. Verheyden (Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1999), pp. 709–21.

<sup>228</sup> C. C. Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1992); R. Riesner, ‘Synagogues in Jerusalem’, in *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting. Volume 4: Palestinian Setting*, ed. by R. J. Bauckham (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 179–210.

<sup>229</sup> Cf. Isa. 60.3; Lk. 2.32; Acts 13.47; 26.23. See J. D. G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2009); A. F. Segal, *Paul the Convert* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1990); N. H. Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).

<sup>230</sup> E. Richard, *Acts 6:1–8:4* (Missoula MO: Scholars Press, 1978); M. H. Scharlemann, *Stephen* (Rome: PBI, 1968); N. H. Taylor, ‘Stephen, the Temple, and early Christian Eschatology’, *Revue Biblique*, 110 (2003), 62–85.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*; Goodman, *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World*; Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*.

In relating the history of the early Christian period (6.3), the report mentions the affront to Jewish sensibilities in the emperor Hadrian's foundation of Aelia Capitolina, with its cultic institutions dedicated to Roman deities, on the ruins of Jerusalem. However, it incorrectly states that this followed the suppression of the uprising in Judaea commonly known as the Bar Kokba revolt. The historian Dio Cassius relates the foundation of Aelia Capitolina with its shrine to Jupiter on the site of the temple, and states that this provocation precipitated a well-planned and drawn out insurrection after Hadrian's departure.<sup>232</sup> This is confirmed by numismatic evidence.<sup>233</sup> The repressive measures taken in the aftermath of the uprising, including the prohibition of Jewish residence in the city, and indeed their entry except for the annual *Tisha b'ab*<sup>234</sup> commemoration, are overlooked entirely.<sup>235</sup> Although these inaccuracies may be regarded as incidental to this report, it is important that imperial measures against the Jewish people and their religious observances, whether local or general, are clearly understood, if continuities and discontinuities in imperial policy and practice after the conversion of Constantine (272–337 CE), and their implications for the development of Christian anti-Semitism, are to be appreciated. An anonymous pilgrim from Bordeaux, who visited Jerusalem in 333 CE, mentions Jews entering the site of the former temple, and anointing the rock identified with the altar of sacrifice as an act of mourning.<sup>236</sup> This is presumably a *Tisha b'ab* ritual permitted by Constantine, which would not have been allowed under the regime that Hadrian imposed; when and by

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<sup>232</sup> *Historia Romana* 69.12–14.

<sup>233</sup> M. D. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem* (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 484.

<sup>234</sup> An annual fast in the Jewish calendar, held on 9 Av, commemorating disasters in Jewish history, beginning with the account in the Pentateuch of the rebellion of Israel against Moses in the wilderness, with the consequence that a generation died in the desert without having entered Canaan (Numbers 13–14). The destruction of the first temple by the Babylonians in 587 BCE, and of the second temple by the Romans in 70 CE, were included by this date, cf. *m. Taanith* 4.8.

<sup>235</sup> Dio, *Historia Romana* 69.13–14; M. Mor, *The Second Jewish Revolt* (Leiden: Brill, 2016); *The Bar Kokhba War Reconsidered*, ed. by P. Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003). The claim in the *Historia Augusta* that Hadrian had proscribed circumcision, thereby provoking the uprising of Palestinian Jews that is commonly known as the Bar Kokhba Revolt (c. 132–135 CE), is doubtful; cf. P. Schäfer, *Judaeophobia* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 103–5.

<sup>236</sup> *Itinerarium Burdigalense* 591.

whom this concession was authorised is not known, but it is not insignificant. The Anglican Communion is not without scholars competent to treat this period competently — and they do not all live in Britain.<sup>237</sup>

In dealing with the Constantinian programme in Palestine (6.4), the report makes no mention of the continued prohibition of Jewish residence in Jerusalem, or of Constantine's other anti-Jewish legislation,<sup>238</sup> or of his role in the separation of the date of Easter from that of Passover at the Council of Nicaea.<sup>239</sup> At the same time, Constantine and his successors took measures to entrench the power of the Patriarchate, culminating in official recognition in the *Codex Theodosianus*, promulgated by Theodosius II (401–450 CE) in 438 CE. These measures served to define a clear boundary between 'orthodox' Christianity, as patronised by the imperial authorities, and 'orthodox' Judaism as recognised by the same authorities, thereby marginalising other varieties both of Christianity and of Judaism, including surviving Jewish Christian movements.<sup>240</sup>

The report mentions that Jerome learned Hebrew and engaged with local Jews in order to develop his study of Scripture (6.5),<sup>241</sup> but could fruitfully have also referred to Origen's prolonged sojourn in Palestine during the second quarter of the third century. Although it pre-dated the Constantinian settlement by a century, Origen's journey to Palestine was largely motivated by a desire to encounter Jews and learn Hebrew in order

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<sup>237</sup> A cursory visit to the website of the Anglican Association of Biblical Scholars would have furnished contacts, at least in North America and the Antipodes. Searching beyond the dominant white anglophone bourgeois cadre might have required more effort, but such networks as Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion and Theological Education in the Anglican Communion, to which the authors of the report presumably had access, would have been able to provide some leads. There used to be a directory of theologians on the Anglican Communion Office website, but this appears to have been removed.

<sup>238</sup> P. Schäfer, *The History of the Jews in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2003); G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land* (London: A & C Black, 1999).

<sup>239</sup> Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 3.18; Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.9.

<sup>240</sup> Cf. Boyarin, *Border Lines*; Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*.

<sup>241</sup> S. Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1992); Jerome (London: Routledge, 2002); M. H. Williams, *The Monk and the Book* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

to further his biblical scholarship.<sup>242</sup> Notwithstanding his virulent hostility to Origenism, and his other motives for living in Palestine, Jerome represents a much older tradition in Gentile Christian learning which recognised the importance of preserving knowledge of the Hebrew language, and the benefits of engaging with Jewish scholarship, if the Christian Scriptures were to be adequately understood — and if anti-Jewish polemics were to be at all effective. The report also fails to mention the continuing existence of Jewish Christian movements in the region, generally rejected as heretical by other Christians and other Jews<sup>243</sup> — an experience perhaps not altogether dissimilar to that of messianic Jews today — but which nonetheless persisted at least until the Arab conquests of the Levant and Mesopotamia.

The paragraph on the early period of Muslim rule over Jerusalem (6.6) is essentially accurate, but somewhat simplistic. The identification of *al-Masjid-al-Aqsa*, the ‘furthest mosque’, the first terrestrial destination of Muhammed’s two-leg journey, and the place of departure for the second (celestial) leg of that journey is not explicit in the *Qur’an*,<sup>244</sup> but a matter of subsequent interpretation. Jerusalem is identified as this place in *hadith* of some antiquity, and it is also the case, as the report correctly mentions, that Jerusalem was the original *qibla*, the direction of Muslim prayer. Even if the *sura* is to be understood as identifying *al-Masjid-al-Aqsa* with Jerusalem,<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> P. M. Blowers, ‘Origen, the Rabbis, and the Bible’, in *Christianity in Relation to Jews, Greeks, and Romans*, ed. by E. Ferguson (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. 2–22; R. E. Heine, *Origen* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2019); N. R. M. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); J. A. McGuckin, ‘Origen on the Jews’, in *Christianity in Relation to Jews, Greeks, and Romans*, ed. by E. Ferguson (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. 23–36.

<sup>243</sup> M. Jackson-McCabe, *Jewish Christianity* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2020); R. A. Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 1988); A. Y. Reed, *Jewish-Christianity and the History of Judaism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018); *Jewish Believers in Jesus*, ed. by O. Skarsaune and R. Hvalvik (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007).

<sup>244</sup> Sura 17, *Al-Isra’* (the Night Journey). Cf. Al-Khateeb, *Al-Quds*, pp. 101–28.

<sup>245</sup> Both of the following argue for a destination in Palestine, if not specifically in Jerusalem, on the basis of other references to Palestine as ‘blessed land’ in the *Qur’an*: A. Neuwirth, ‘From the Sacred Mosque to the Remote Temple: *Sūrat al-Isrā’* (Q. 17): between Text and Commentary’, in *Scripture, Poetry, and the Making of a Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 216–52; G. S. Reynolds, *The Qur’an and the Bible* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2018), pp. 432–3.



substantial questions remain. The itinerary of the night journey, and the narrative within which it is recounted, do not reflect an ordinary human journey, but one initiated and facilitated by supernatural powers, the veracity of which is beyond empirical verification or falsification. Notwithstanding the fact that the majority of Muslim interpreters and believers have understood the night journey to be a historical event, in the sense of a conscious experience of the historical Muhammed, if not necessarily a physical journey,<sup>246</sup> it remains a matter of religious belief rather than of verifiable historical fact. Neither the terrestrial journey nor the subsequent heavenly ascent take place within the limitations of human mobility. The dependence on supernatural power, and the emphasis in the narrative on revelations received during the journey rather than on the journey itself, indicate a spiritual experience (visual and auditory) comparable to those related in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature.<sup>247</sup> Historical critical interpretation of the *sura* and subsequent tradition would need to understand the night journey in these terms, and interpret the text and its tradition history and reconstruct the historical experience of Muhammed accordingly. It is essential that Muslim beliefs and the religious and geopolitical claims founded upon them are subject to the same degree of rigorous critical scrutiny as are Jewish and Christian beliefs, notwithstanding the sensitivities associated with the beliefs themselves and with the increasingly frequent abuse of the military power of the illegal occupier to desecrate the Haram al-Sharif and to deny Muslims access thereto. Although complex and irresolvable historical questions remain, it is clear that Jerusalem became, at an early date in Muslim history, and before the Caliph Umar conquered the city in 636 CE, a place of significance in Muslim devotion.

The reference to Celtic and Saxon British authors (6.7)<sup>248</sup> is of passing historical interest, but is not relevant to the issues with which the report is

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<sup>246</sup> Cf. Al-Khateeb, *Al-Quds*, pp. 107–24.

<sup>247</sup> F. S. Colby, *Narrating Muhammad's Night Journey* (Albany NY: SUNY Press, 2008); I. R. Edgar, *The Dream in Islam* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011); B. O. Vuckovic, *Heavenly Journeys, Earthly Concerns* (London: Routledge, 2005). Cf. J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1984).

<sup>248</sup> Bede, monk of Jarrow, *De Locis Sanctis* (702–703 CE), is concerned with questions of biblical interpretation and Christian doctrine rather than with topography. The work is dependent on Adamnán, abbot of Iona, *De Locis Sanctis* (c. 690 CE). Neither of these British monks visited Palestine, but they derived their information from Adamnán's acquaintance with the

concerned. It might have been worth mentioning that the first recorded British visitor to Palestine was the eighth-century Anglo-Saxon monk Willibald, who was subsequently consecrated by Boniface as Bishop of Eichstätt.<sup>249</sup> The *Disputatio Iudei et Christiani* of Gilbert Crispin, Dean of Westminster from 1085 to 1117 (6.8),<sup>250</sup> may be of potential significance as early evidence of a constructive Jewish–Christian dialogue in England, but the report makes no mention of the likelihood that this work is substantially dependent on an earlier work of the Carolingian Renaissance.<sup>251</sup>

The paragraph on the Crusader Period (6.9) is perhaps inevitably simplistic, and reflects a stereotypical and caricatured portrayal both of the

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Frankish bishop Arculf, who was allegedly shipwrecked on Iona during his return journey from Palestine (Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.15). Adamnan, and possibly Bede, had access to Arculf's *De Locis Sanctis* (c. 670 CE), with its account of his pilgrimage and accompanying illustrations. For translations of the texts: J. R. Macpherson, *The Pilgrimage of Arculfus to the Holy Land* (London: Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, 1895); J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster: Aris & Philip, 2002); W. T. Foley and A. G. Holder, *Bede: A Biblical Miscellany* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999).

<sup>249</sup> R. G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It* (Princeton NJ: Darwin, 1997); Huneberc of Heidenheim, 'The *Hodoeporicon* of St Willibald'; *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany, Being the Lives of SS. Willibrord, Boniface, Leoba and Lebuin together with the Hodoeporicon of St. Willibald and a Selection from the Correspondence of St. Boniface*, ed. by C. H. Talbot (London: Sheed & Ward, 1954).

<sup>250</sup> For a translation, see *The Works of Gilbert Crispin*, ed. by A. S. Abulafia and G. R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>251</sup> Perhaps the most comprehensive treatment of British, and particularly English (though she and other authors at times use the terms interchangeably), interest in Palestine is B. W. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword* (New York: Ballantine, 1984). Although widely acclaimed, the author was an amateur historian whose work shows some lack of rigour, with numerous factual errors or perhaps wilful distortions of the truth, and it manifests unconcealed Islamophobia and a particularly virulent hostility towards Arabs and Turks, which can only be regarded as racism. Her speculative if not fanciful construction of a Zionist grand narrative, within which historical characters are subject to similarly fictive depiction, borders on novelistic. Depicting the Zionist agenda as 'bringing the Holy Land back to life out of the desolation of Moslem rule' (316) is wilful misrepresentation of the Palestinian reality, notwithstanding the depredations of the last century of Ottoman rule.

Crusaders and of their successive Muslim opponents.<sup>252</sup> The conflicts between some diversity of Christian and Muslim forces over a period of centuries, and their equally violent internal feuds, were rather more complex than is suggested, and motivated by a variety of economic, demographic, political and religious factors in areas from north-west Europe to central Asia. Most if not all parties were capable of the utmost barbarity as well as occasional acts of self-interested magnanimity, and the extravagant use of hyperbole in the primary sources — whether hostile, sympathetic or even eulogistic towards the perpetrators — means that it is impossible to quantify the scale of the atrocities reported. What is clear is that few if any of the ruling powers ever considered the wellbeing of the people of Palestine. It is worth noting, however, that the Crusader kingdoms are remembered by Arab historians as having been considerably less oppressive and extortionate in their rule over the local population, and less given to ostentatious and extravagant displays of wealth and status, than were many of the Muslim rulers.<sup>253</sup> That the militant religious fervour which inspired the Crusades also incited increasingly vicious anti-Semitic violence in Europe, including massacres perpetrated by crusaders en route for Palestine,<sup>254</sup> is quite inexplicably not mentioned.

The treatment of the Jewish communities in Europe (6.10) is inevitably simplistic, but also lacking in methodological rigour. Discrimination, victimisation and violence undoubtedly occurred, with varying degrees of frequency and intensity, in particular places, known and unknown, over a wide and socially, culturally and politically diverse geographical area, at particular times over a period of several centuries. The Church was undoubtedly often complicit, and certainly culpable in that its teaching provided some measure of justification and even incitement,

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<sup>252</sup> For a rather more nuanced perspective, see the following: C. Hillenbrand, *The Crusades* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); N. Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006); *Fighting for the Cross* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2008); B. Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); A. Maalouf, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes* (New York: Schocken, 1984); H. J. Nicholson, *The Crusades* (Greenwood CT: Greenwood, 2004); J. Riley-Smith, *The Oxford History of the Crusades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); cf. R. Stark, *God's Battalions* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009).

<sup>253</sup> Cf. Maalouf, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes*.

<sup>254</sup> Cf. J. Carroll, *Constantine's Sword* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001); M. Parry and F. M. Schweitzer, *Antisemitism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); J. R. Marcus and M. Saperstein, *The Jews in Christian Europe* (Pittsburgh PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015).

through accusations of inherited guilt for the death of Jesus and persistent rejection of the Gospel.<sup>255</sup> The vulnerability of minority communities, and the discrimination and marginalisation that are a function of the inextricable connection between religious and political identity in pre-secular societies, undoubtedly generated a climate that was hostile to the flourishing of Jewish communities in Christian Europe, and rendered them liable to scapegoating in times of crisis.<sup>256</sup> Nevertheless, the use of terms such as ‘regularly’ and ‘often’ in relation to reported incidents, as if a single anecdote attests a widespread and frequent phenomenon across an entire continent over a period of centuries, does not take into account population migrations or social, economic or intellectual movements that may have impinged upon communities. Nor does it take into account epidemics and climate change, with changing weather patterns having impacts on food security, and the vulnerability of marginalised and minority groups in such circumstances<sup>257</sup> — these catalysts of catastrophe also being directly relevant to circumstances unfolding in the world today. Sweeping statements reflect a vehemence of denunciation long after the events, but make no contribution to identifying factors that affect relations between Christian majorities and Jewish and other minorities in mediaeval Europe, and therefore make no contribution to understanding the causes of anti-Semitism and recognising the issues that precipitated pogroms in the past and could potentially do so again, if these are not identified and addressed. Similar stories located in different places or at different dates, unless independently corroborated,

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<sup>255</sup> Cf. Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword*; A. Dundas, *The Blood Libel Legend* (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); I. J. Yuval, *Two Nations in your Womb* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2006). On the complexity of distinguishing between ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’, and between ecclesiastical and political realms, see W. T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>256</sup> The same would be true of the *djinni* status to which Jews and Christians were subjected in the various Muslim empires — that is, tolerance with institutionalised inferiority and intermittent, arbitrary and sometimes gratuitously violent repression. Cf. C. C. Sahner, *Christian Martyrs under Islam* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).

<sup>257</sup> A. Alvarez, *Unstable Ground* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017); M. D. Bailey, *Battling Demons* (University Park PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003); O. J. Benedictow, *The Black Death* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006); S. J. Borsch, *The Black Death in Egypt and England* (Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 2005); R. S. Gottfried, *The Black Death* (New York: Free Press, 1983); A. S. Issar and M. Zohar, *Climate Change* (Berlin: Springer, 2007).

may reflect multiple mutations in the account of a single incident — or they could indicate a more widespread phenomenon. Incidents recounted in oral history and folklore in many contexts, and committed to writing at a much later date, are extremely difficult to verify. Where details of place, date and the names of people involved vary while the plot remains essentially uniform, it is impossible to be certain how many or which versions are historically reliable.<sup>258</sup> Equally, an absence of written records or artefactual evidence of atrocities does not in itself imply that peaceful coexistence and community harmony prevailed over centuries in places for which no anti-Semitic incidents are attested, especially when it is known that entire communities were liable to expulsion from particular places from time to time. An absence of overt or subliminal hostility to Jewish communities, or towards other minorities, during any period of human history cannot be assumed; records are so incomplete that no conclusions can be drawn as to how frequent or how widespread acts of violence were, and pervasive discrimination or subliminal attitudes cannot be quantified. It is therefore perilously difficult to evaluate just how endemic or how violent anti-Semitism was in different parts of Europe during different periods. The evidence of anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic violence, and the role of the Church in inciting, justifying or mitigating such attitudes and actions, require scrupulous historical analysis and an appreciation of the nature and limitations of the records, not sweeping generalisations on a sensitive topic.<sup>259</sup> This is not in any way to deny the history or the memories, still less to say that the legacy of the preceding centuries at the very least assisted the Nazi programme to gain traction among the populace of Germany, and of

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<sup>258</sup> The same questions arise, for example, in the Gospel accounts of the ministry of Jesus, which reflect significant differences in detail with regard to location, people involved, and details which may be incidental or quite crucial. There is a fairly fundamental difference in ethos between the Beatitudes in Mt. 5.1–12 and Lk. 6.20–23. The daughter of Jairos is seriously ill in Mk 5.21–43 and Lk. 8.40–56, but is already dead in Mt. 9.18–26.

<sup>259</sup> Cf. H. Haumann, *Geschichte der Ostjuden* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1999); R. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985); W. Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); H. Levine, *Economic Origins of Antisemitism* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1991); D. Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013); *Communities of Violence* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); L. Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); A. Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia* (Liverpool: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2009–2011).

other European countries; the Enlightenment and political and economic emancipation of the preceding centuries proved no impediment to this. What is relevant to the issue of Christian Zionism, with which this report is concerned, is that this concerns the history of Europe, not of the Middle East. Even if every anecdote in the catalogue of anti-Semitic incidents across Europe over a millennium or longer could be demonstrably verified, this would not be in any way relevant to issues of justice, human rights, land tenure and political geography in the Levant. The fundamental issue is the correlation between anti-Semitism and the rise of Christian Zionism in Europe, which the report ignores entirely.

The report correctly identifies England as the first European country, since the fall of the Roman Empire, to expel its Jewish population (6.11). The 'blood libel' myths of William of Norwich (1132–1144) and (little) Hugh of Lincoln (1246–1255) were sufficiently established in popular culture for the motif to recur more than a century after the expulsion, and become immortalised in English literature in the Prioress's Tale in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.<sup>260</sup> That this story could continue to be told when no Jews had lived in England for 100 years in itself demonstrates the depths of hatred that had become entrenched, if not in popular culture then certainly in the literary culture that flourished in educated sectors of society, not least the Church and also the royal courts in which Chaucer served.<sup>261</sup>

Other European countries followed England in expelling their Jewish populations. Most conspicuously, Spain and Portugal did so two centuries later, and both countries also expelled their Muslim populations.<sup>262</sup> Poland was the only European country that never expelled its Jewish population, but this does not in any way imply that there was no anti-Semitism there, as subsequent history testifies. That England became a relative safe haven for Jews during the Commonwealth period (6.12) had nothing to do with

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<sup>260</sup> Chaucer lived c. 1343–1400. *The Canterbury Tales* was incomplete and unpublished at his death, and the history of its distribution before William Caxton's printed edition was produced (c. 1476) is uncertain. Cf. J. M. Manly and E. Rickert, *The Text of the Canterbury Tales* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1940).

<sup>261</sup> Cf. H. Blurton and H. Johnson, *The Critics and the Prioress* (Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 2017); L. O. Fradenburg, 'Criticism, Anti-Semitism, and the Prioress's Tale', *Exemplaria*, 1 (1989), 69–115; M. Turner, *Chaucer* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019); E. S. Zitter, 'Anti-Semitism in Chaucer's "Prioress's Tale"', *Chaucer Review*, 25 (1991), 277–84.

<sup>262</sup> Cf. H. Beinart, *The Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Oxford: Litton Library of Jewish Civilization, 2005).

humanity, and everything to do with the selective pedantry of Puritan eschatology and mercantile self-interest. The petition, submitted in 1649 by Joanna and Ebenezer Cartwright (mother and son), was premised upon completing the dispersion of the Jews by making England another centre of diaspora, enabling their conversion and repatriation to Palestine, which was essential to the fulfilment of their interpretation of biblical prophecy. Piety was not unmixed with the attempts of Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) to rebuild the British economy after the Civil War, which involved competition with other European powers, particularly the Netherlands, in trade with India.<sup>263</sup> The Sephardic community in Amsterdam, which had produced Baruch de Spinoza (1632–1677), and was to expel him in 1656,<sup>264</sup> was the centre of Jewish trading connections across Europe and the Middle East, and the relocation of at least some prominent and prosperous merchants to London would serve Britain's economic interests.<sup>265</sup>

The availability of the Bible in vernacular English, and access to printed copies outside the liturgical worship of the Church of England, had brought the book of Revelation to popular attention, without benefit of sound exegetical or other critical skills. This was the same context as that in which Christian Zionism, or 'restorationism' as the report prefers to call it at this point, had originated (6.13).<sup>266</sup> Both the extension of diaspora Judaism into European countries such as England and Ireland and to the 'new world' of the Americas and also to other continents, and their supposed repatriation to Palestine, were means to an end, namely the realisation of popular Christian eschatological expectations, and had nothing to do with providing a safe haven for persecuted people. Whatever the cumulative impact of anti-Semitism in different parts of Europe on the later development of Zionism, the welfare of the Jewish people has never been part of the agenda of Christian Zionism.

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<sup>263</sup> Cf. R. Sharif, 'Non-Jewish Zionism', in *Zionism, Imperialism and Racism*, ed. by A. Y. Kayyali (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 56–70.

<sup>264</sup> Spinoza, born Bento de Espinosa, was no more accepted by contemporary Christians, Catholic or Protestant. His works were banned by the States of Holland and West Frisia in 1678, and were added to the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* some time thereafter.

<sup>265</sup> *The Petition of the Jews for the Repealing of the Act of Parliament for their Banishment out of England* (1649), reproduced in D. Patinkin, 'Mercantilism and the Readmission of the Jews to England', *Jewish Social Studies*, 8 (1946), 161–78. Cf. also Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*.

<sup>266</sup> Cf. Lewis, *Origins of Christian Zionism*; Smith, *More to be Desired than our Own Salvation*.

The reference to Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881), the Jewish convert to Christianity who became Prime Minister of the UK (6.14), may be as much an example of assimilation as of its limitations. It is worth noting that Disraeli's father had his children baptised into the Church of England in a conscious act of renouncing his Jewish identity and seeking to secure his children's future in British society. Although Jewish ethnicity had been no legal impediment to election to the House of Commons since at least the latter part of the eighteenth century, until the Jewish Relief Act 1858 all Members of Parliament were required to declare at least nominal assent to Christianity. Disraeli's political career would therefore not have been possible had he not been prepared to make such a declaration. His involvement, as Prime Minister, with the Rothschild family in his efforts to secure a British stake in the Suez Canal<sup>267</sup> would merit further examination, whether or not the report is justified in describing that family as 'philanthropic'.

The account of the origins of the Anglican presence in Palestine (6.15–6.20) is somewhat confused, even if perhaps not without reason on account of the convergence of theological, political and ecclesiastical developments that preceded it, and the disagreements among scholars attempting to analyse these.<sup>268</sup> Given the influence of Darby and the versions of dispensationalism inspired by his writings, a more thorough treatment would have been merited, in the chapter on theological issues rather than at this point (6.17–6.18). The establishment of the Anglo-Prussian Bishopric in Jerusalem in 1841 was the outcome of an agreement between the UK and Prussian governments, initiated by King Wilhelm IV of Prussia (1795–1861). Whatever the religious enthusiasms of some of the politicians and diplomats

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<sup>267</sup> The Rothschild Archive states that Disraeli obtained from Lionel de Rothschild, without the consent of Parliament, a loan to the UK government of £4,000,000, to acquire shares in the Suez Canal, <https://guide-to-the-archive.rothschildarchive.org/the-london-banking-house/depts/loans-business/suez-canal-purchase-loan>, [accessed 9 December 2022]. Cf. G. Hicks, 'Disraeli, Derby and the Suez Canal, 1875', *History*, 97 (2012), 182–203.

<sup>268</sup> S. M. Jack, 'No Heavenly Jerusalem: The Anglican Bishopric, 1841–83', *Journal of Religious History*, 19 (1995), 181–201; S. B. Keeley, *Spirit of Power: Bunsen and the Anglo-Prussian Axis of Protestantism, 1815–1860*. UCLA Ph.D. thesis, 2019, available online at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/27m5f04c> [accessed 30 August 2022]; Y. Perry, *British Mission to the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Palestine* (London: Routledge, 2003); N. Railton, *The Anglo-German Evangelical Network in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).



involved, and of those in both countries who encouraged them,<sup>269</sup> the contest among European powers for influence in the eastern Mediterranean as the Ottoman Empire declined and receded, and as the Russian Empire expanded, must be acknowledged. In particular, the success of Greek and Serbian nationalist movements had provided Russia with the opportunity to expand its influence, as supposed patron of Orthodox Christians, and Britain and Prussia (both Protestant powers) were as ready to use religious patronage as a pretext for countering this as were France and Austria-Hungary, and later Italy and Spain (all Catholic powers). This phase in the contest between the European powers and the Ottoman Empire began in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, before the Suez Canal was built or petroleum became a significant factor in the global economy. The security and well-being of Levantine Christians were of little concern to either Eastern or Western powers at any stage in the sordid history of European intervention in the eastern Mediterranean.

Notwithstanding geopolitical factors, the agenda of the group known as the 'Clapham Sect' remains relevant. A group of evangelical Christians within the Church of England, it coalesced initially through the decades-long campaign to abolish slavery and the slave trade in the British Empire — a movement in which Quakers, Unitarians and other Dissenters were rather more prominent than were vested interests in the Church of England. Its commitments to social reform in Britain, however paternalistic, and to overseas missions<sup>270</sup> are aspects of the same transformation in evangelical Christianity in Britain, which remained rather more progressive than establishment latitudinarianism or resurgent and reactionary Tractarianism and Anglo-Catholicism through most of the nineteenth century. Figures associated with the Clapham Sect, including William Wilberforce (1759–1833), were active in the formation of both the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1812 and the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the

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<sup>269</sup> Cf. H. Glenk, *From Desert Sands to Golden Oranges* (Toronto: Trafford, 2005).

<sup>270</sup> While Roman Catholic missionary initiatives began with Portuguese and Spanish imperialism in the Americas and mercantile and colonial exploits in Asia during the sixteenth century, Calvin and European Protestants who followed him regarded attempts to convert the people of other continents to Christianity as violating their predestination to damnation. The earliest Protestant missionaries were accordingly from German pietistic traditions, and only from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were Protestant missionaries from the 'mainstream' [*sic*] Lutheran, Reformed and Anglican traditions. Cf. Lupieri, *In the Name of God*.

Jews (later CMJ) in 1809. It was the former that first entered Palestine, but the latter that participated in the formation of the bishopric, and secured the appointment of Michael Alexander (1799–1845), a converted rabbi and professor of Hebrew at King’s College, London, as the first bishop. That the objective of converting local Arabic-speaking Jews was almost entirely unsuccessful, and that most Anglicans in Palestine were drawn from the older-established Christian denominations, is briefly acknowledged (6.22), but the implications of this for ecumenical relations — not a major consideration at the time — are not considered.

The report is entirely correct in recognising the increased interest in Palestine, and in both visiting and migrating permanently, among European Jews during the nineteenth century, but might have been more candid in acknowledging that the encouragement received from politicians in Britain and elsewhere was motivated mainly by economic and geopolitical interests, and not entirely by religious or philanthropic concerns (6.20–6.21).<sup>271</sup> It would have been salutary also to acknowledge the anti-Semitism implicit in the desire to see Jews removed from European societies, and from Britain in particular, in the furtherance of the immediate economic as well as eschatological interests of Christian Zionists. Most conspicuous among these was Anthony Ashley-Cooper (1801–1885), Earl of Shaftesbury, commemorated in Anglican calendars for pioneering reform to labour (especially child labour), laws and care of the mentally ill. As well as being an ardent evangelical, strict Sabbatarian and Christian Zionist, he was virulently antagonistic towards the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, and aspired to undermine their standing among the Palestinian Christians, promoting British interests at the expense of the Orthodox powers (Russia) and Roman Catholic European powers (Austria-Hungary, Spain and France). Shaftesbury might also be considered an anti-Semite. He is alleged to have described Jews as ‘a stiff-necked, dark hearted people, and sunk in moral degradation, obduracy, and ignorance of the Gospel’, whose settlement in Palestine was essential both to Britain’s economic and geopolitical interests, and to Christians’ ‘hope of salvation’. Although similar sentiments are clearly expressed in his writings and public statements, locating these particular words is another matter.<sup>272</sup> It would seem that both scholarly and not so

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<sup>271</sup> Cf. N. Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders* (New York: HarperCollins, 1987); Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine*.

<sup>272</sup> S. R. Sizer cites ‘State and Prospects of the Jews’, *Quarterly Review*, 63 (1839), 166–92, in *Christian Zionism* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2021), p. 57. He cites the same article, including the same quotation, with both this title and ‘State and Restoration of the Jews’, in ‘The Road to Balfour: The

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History of Christian Zionism' 2012), <https://balfourproject.org/the-road-to-balfour-the-history-of-christian-zionism-by-stephen-sizer-2/> [accessed 10 September 2022]. These pages of the *Quarterly Review* are available at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.b000808233&view=1up&seq=16&skin=2021> [accessed 9 September 2022], and [www.proquest.com/docview/2477337/B77CC5E320894557PQ/7?accountid=9735&imgSeq=1](http://www.proquest.com/docview/2477337/B77CC5E320894557PQ/7?accountid=9735&imgSeq=1), [accessed 23 September 2022] contains an anonymous review (sometimes attributed to Lord Ashley, later to become Lord Shaftesbury) of *Letters on Egypt, Edom, and the Holy Land*, by Lord Lindsay, in *Quarterly Review*, 63 (1839), 166–92. The header on the verso (left) page is 'Lord Lindsay's Travels', and that on the recto (right) page is 'State and Prospects of the Jews'. The latter expression is nonetheless not the title of the article. A. M. Garfinkle's suggestion that the article 'State and Prospects of the Jews' took the form of a review of Lindsay's book, in 'On the Origin, Meaning, Use and Abuse of a Phrase', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27 (1991), 539–50, 549 n. 35, is not satisfactory; the title 'State and Prospects of the Jews' does not appear in the table of contents either. The phrase does have some currency, however, appearing also in the subtitle of W. B. Hurnard, *Jerusalem and the Jewish Cause: A Letter to the Right Hon. and Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of London, Respecting the State and Prospects of the Jews and the Jewish Mission in Syria* (London: Hayward & Moore, 1840). Moreover, a few years later, J. Anderson published *Lays and Laments for Israel: Poems on the Present State and Future Prospects of the Jews* (Glasgow: Blackie, 1845). The article that does appear on the relevant pages of *Quarterly Review*, 63 (1839), 166–92, namely the review, is not lacking in anti-Semitic tropes: Jews are described as 'a people now blinded by ignorance' (p. 178); 'That the Jews should be thus degraded and despised is a part of their chastisement, and the fulfilment of prophecy' (p. 180); Reformed Judaism, influenced by the Enlightenment, is described as 'leprosy' (p. 181); 'the blindness of Israel is still caused, as it was in the days of our Saviour, by their ignorance of the word of God' (p. 186); 'It is well known that for centuries the Greek, the Romanist, the Armenian, and the Turk, have had their places of worship in the city of Jerusalem, and the latitudinarianism of Ibrahim Pasha had lately accorded the privilege to the Jews. The pure doctrines of the Reformation, as embodied and professed by the Church of England, have alone been unrepresented amidst all these corruptions' (p. 187); 'The idolatry of the Greek and Latin Churches, under which the Hebrews have almost universally lived, the mummeries of their ritual, and the hypocrisy of their precepts, have shocked and averted the Jewish mind' (p. 191). It also includes the comment that "There are "and ohs" in sufficient number to

scholarly writers, Zionists and anti-Zionists alike, have been too dependent on secondary citations, which they have not checked, so that errors have become disseminated in ways which do little credit to the cause that these authors espouse. Whether or not Shaftesbury penned these words, or they have been mistakenly attributed to him, a recurring issue in Christian Zionism of this period, in Britain in particular, was that ‘Christian Zionism,

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supply a six months’ correspondence to a whole boarding school of young ladies’ (p. 169). The words quoted above, however, do not appear in this text. I. Pappe, in *Ten Myths about Israel* (London: Verso, 2017), p. 14, attributes these words to an article by Shaftesbury in the same journal, entitled ‘On the Restauration of the Jews’, 64 (1839), locating the quotation on pp. 104–5. On these pages may be found part of an anonymous review of *The Silurian System, Founded on Geological Researches in the Counties of Salop, Hereford, Radnor, Montgomery, Caermarthen, Brecon, Pembroke, Monmouth, Gloucester, Worcester, and Stafford, &c.*, by R. I. Murchison (London: John Murray, 1839), available at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112057313220&view=1up&seq=6&skin=2021> [accessed 9 September 2022]. R. S. Sharif, in ‘Christians for Zion, 1600-1919’, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 5 (1976), 123–41 (p. 128 n. 22), and in ‘Non-Jewish Zionism’, p. 59, quotes W. T. Gedney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews* (London: Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, 1908), without citing a page number. In *Non-Jewish Zionism* (London: Zed Books, 1983), p. 42, n. 30, she cites ‘State and Prospects of the Jews’, *Quarterly Review*, Jan/Mar 1839, but provides no page number. A digital search at <https://archive.org/details/historylondonso00gidngoog/mode/2up?q=quarterly+review> failed to locate the quote, despite several attempts. G. Halsell, *Forcing God’s Hand* (Beltsville MD: Amana, 2003), p. 80, cites no primary source. A. L. Anderson, ‘Improbable Alliances in Uncertain Times – Christian Zionism and the Israeli Right’, in *How Long, O Lord?*, ed. by M. Tobin and R. Tobin (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp. 77–104, cites Halsell as her source (p. 82), and incorrectly claims that Shaftesbury coined the phrase ‘a land without a people for a people without a land’ (p. 103 n. 3). G. Thompson, in *Legacy of Empire* (London: Saqi, 2019), cites Sizer. Tuchman, in *Bible and Sword*, p. 188, quotes the words verbatim, without quotation marks or attribution of any source; she subsequently refers to the review of Lindsay, without any indication that it included the statement (p. 192). Repeated internet searches, using a variety of search engines, have failed to locate the origins of this much quoted statement.

for all its philo-Semitic dimensions, carried also an anti-Semitic perspective'.<sup>273</sup>

The inextricable link between evangelical Christianity, Christian Zionism and the furtherance of British economic and strategic interests in the eastern Mediterranean and the Ottoman Empire, particularly against rival French, Russian and (later) German interests, is illustrated particularly clearly in the *Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem*,<sup>274</sup> and in the establishment, under royal patronage and archiepiscopal presidency, of the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1865 — to provide cover for gathering military intelligence, under the pretext of facilitating improvement of the water supply to Jerusalem and undertaking 'biblical archaeology' — a process that involved little more than identifying the sites of biblical places on the basis of surmise and evidence at best inconclusive, and interpreting any artefacts discovered or excavated there so as to corroborate the biblical narratives.<sup>275</sup>

The report mentions, among influential 'philanthropic Jewish figures' who encouraged the immigration of Jews to Ottoman Palestine, Sir Moses Montefiore (1784–1885), President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews for nearly 40 years (6.21). Montefiore was committed to the welfare of world Jewry, was financially supportive of those who migrated to Palestine, and held views that were at the very least consistent with the development of political Zionism.<sup>276</sup> Montefiore was accompanied on one of his visits to Palestine by George Gawler (1795–1869), a retired army officer and colonial administrator, who was the author of such works as *The Tranquilization of Syria and the East. Observations and Practical Suggestions, in Furtherance of the Establishment of Jewish Colonies in Palestine, the Most Sober and Sensible Remedy for the Miseries of Asiatic Turkey*.<sup>277</sup> Montefiore was nevertheless

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<sup>273</sup> Thompson, *Legacy of Empire*, p. 61.

<sup>274</sup> *Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem: Made with the Sanction of the Right Hon. Earl de Grey and Ripon, Secretary of State for War, by Captain Charles W. Wilson, R. E., under the direction of Colonel Sir Henry James, R.E., F.R.S., &c, Director of the Ordnance Survey. Pub. by authority of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury* (London: HMSO, 1865).

<sup>275</sup> C. R. Conder and H. H. Kitchener, *The Survey of Western Palestine* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1881); C. R. Conder and C. Warren, *The Survey of Western Palestine - Jerusalem* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1884). See also J. J. Moscrop, *Measuring Jerusalem* (London: A & C Black, 2000); N. A. Silberman, *Digging for God and Country* (New York: Doubleday, 1990).

<sup>276</sup> A. Green, *Moses Montefiore: Jewish Liberator, Imperial Hero* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

<sup>277</sup> London: Boone, 1845.

scrupulous in respecting the sensitivities of the longstanding Muslim and Christian populations of Palestine, not least when refurbishing Rachel's Tomb [*sic*] on the outskirts of Bethlehem.<sup>278</sup>

The account of the origins of Zionism in central and eastern Europe (6.24–6.26) is brief and, inevitably, superficial and prone to generalisation.<sup>279</sup> Where it is misleading and self-contradictory, however, is in attributing Jewish opposition to Zionism only or 'primarily' to 'ultra-Orthodox quarters' (6.27). Not only is the designation 'ultra-Orthodox' loaded and pejorative, but also it suggests that the only Jews who objected on religious grounds to the secular Zionist programme were fundamentalist fanatics, rather than the broad range of thoughtful, well-informed and even scholarly, observant Jewish individuals and groups who considered the issues rationally and coherently, and articulated their objections theologically.<sup>280</sup> Even those who might be labelled 'ultra-Orthodox' were theologically consistent, and at least some of their spiritual descendants

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<sup>278</sup> Cf. F. Strickert, *Rachel Weeping* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2007). The historical basis for identifying the site with the burial place of the biblical Rachel (Gen. 35.16–18) is extremely weak, and a site north of Jerusalem is indicated in 1 Sam. 10.2 (cf. Jer. 31.5). At the time of Montefiore's refurbishment (1841), and for centuries previously, this site had been a place of Muslim and to a lesser extent Christian devotion, but had been of little interest to the Jewish population of Palestine. This changed after 1948, when the site and its biblical associations became a pretext for dispossession of the local population. Since 1967, the incremental Israeli encroachment into Bethlehem and Beit Jala has been partly justified on the basis of an exclusive 'Jewish' claim to the tomb of the matriarch Rachel. Israeli expansion beyond the internationally recognised border saw the occupation of Palestinian land and destruction of homes, and also resulted in the termination of public transport routes between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, Hebron and the southern West Bank at the notorious Checkpoint 300. Rachel's Tomb is now surrounded by fortifications, dominating adjacent properties in Bethlehem and Beit Jala, and also the Aida refugee camp.

<sup>279</sup> Cf. S. Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism* (New York: Basic Books, 2017); Laqueur, *History of Zionism*; Pappe, *Idea of Israel*; Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*; Sand, *The Invention of the Land of Israel*.

<sup>280</sup> The submissions of the Haredi Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem 1932–1948, Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky, to the United Nations Commission, against partition and the creation of a secular Jewish state, are available at [https://web.archive.org/web/20070712154147/http://www.jewsagainstzionism.com/rabbi\\_quotes/dushinsky.cfm](https://web.archive.org/web/20070712154147/http://www.jewsagainstzionism.com/rabbi_quotes/dushinsky.cfm) [accessed 15 July 2023].

continue to condemn the existence of the secular Zionist state and its violation of Jewish ethics in its systematic dispossession and oppression of the Palestinians. Furthermore, if the opposition to Zionism was almost entirely 'from ultra-Orthodox quarters', this would hardly account for 'most well-established Western Jews' regarding the notion as 'a retrograde step'.<sup>281</sup> The majority of European Jews, until well into the twentieth century, identified with the societies in which they lived and in which their civil rights, and opportunities for economic prosperity, were expanding quite rapidly.

The discussion of Christian support for Jewish Zionism (6.28) focuses almost entirely on William Hechler (1845–1931), a rather more complex figure than is presented.<sup>282</sup> His restorationist Zionism was matched in zeal by his aspirations to become bishop in the Anglo-Prussian, and subsequently Anglican, See of Jerusalem, and his eschatological obsessions coincided conveniently with his genuine concern for the welfare of eastern European Jews.<sup>283</sup> After work with the Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS), Hechler secured appointments as a diplomatic Chaplain, first in Stockholm and then in Vienna. It was in Vienna that he met Herzl, and used his previous connections, formed while a household tutor to German nobility, to facilitate contacts at the Prussian and other German courts, including ultimately that of Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859–1941) — a monarch with messianic pretences who, notwithstanding his anti-Semitism, saw advantage to himself in furthering the cause espoused by Hechler and Herzl.<sup>284</sup> While Hechler came to the view that the conversion of Jews to Christianity was not an eschatological prerequisite, his Zionism, however fanatical, was an aspect of his millennialist convictions.<sup>285</sup>

The treatment of increasing sympathy in British society and government towards Zionism during the latter part of the nineteenth century (6.30) mentions important political and cultural developments,

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<sup>281</sup> Cf. S. Schama, *Belonging* (London: Vintage, 2018); D. Vital, *A People Apart* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

<sup>282</sup> Clark, *Allies for Armageddon*; S. Golman, *Zeal for Zion* (Chapel Hill NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); E. Maass, 'Forgotten Prophet: William Henry Hechler and the Rise of Political Zionism', *Nordisk Judaistik/Scandinavian Jewish Studies*, 23 (2002), 157–93.

<sup>283</sup> *The Jerusalem Bishopric Documents* (London: Trübner, 1883).

<sup>284</sup> Cf. L. Cecil, *Wilhelm II* (Chapel Hill NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

<sup>285</sup> W. H. Hechler, *The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine* (London, 1882 et passim); *Die bevorstehende Rückkehr der Juden nach Palästina* (Vienna, 1896).

including the influx of Jewish refugees from the pogroms in the Russian Empire. However, it makes no mention of the considerable influence of British Israelism, and its toxic blend of ‘philo-Semitic and anti-Semitic ideas which lie intertwined in the heart’ thereof, in some elite circles.<sup>286</sup> Given the attitude of the present British government, and several of its predecessors, to refugees, and the sometimes violent xenophobic reactions by elements in the populace that are encouraged if not intentionally incited by this, it is somewhat surprising that no mention is made of it here. The rising tide of anti-Semitism in British society ultimately led to legislation to curb Jewish immigration through the Aliens Act 1905<sup>287</sup> — sponsored by the then Prime Minister Arthur James Balfour (1848–1930), who 12 years later was to sign the ‘Declaration’ for which he is justly notorious. Balfour, speaking in the House of Commons, decried ‘the undoubted evils that had fallen upon the country from an immigration which was largely Jewish’, simultaneously denying that this statement was in any way anti-Semitic.<sup>288</sup> At an earlier stage in the debate he had denied that the Bill concerned ‘the Jewish question’, and claimed that, on account of the activities of ‘Jewish emigration societies’ assisting onward migration to what are now known as ‘third countries’, Britain was becoming ‘the sieve in which the useless dregs remain’.<sup>289</sup> These are words which have been matched in attitude and intention, if not in eloquence, by more recent Conservative Prime Ministers and their acolytes, not least Home Secretaries whose rhetoric and policies belie their origins and the circumstances that brought their families to Britain, most conspicuously in the violence of their pronouncements and the brutality of the actions that they order against the refugees and asylum seekers of today. The desire of ministers, generally not unsympathetic to British Israelism, to encourage onward migration to a Jewish homeland on another continent, to be created from the territory of people whom successive British governments considered themselves entitled to

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<sup>286</sup> A. Cottrell-Boyce, *Israelism in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 2022).

<sup>287</sup> D. Cesarini, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry 1841-1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); B. Gainer, *The Alien Invasion* (London: Heinemann, 1972).

<sup>288</sup> <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1905/jul/10/aliens-bill> [accessed 7 January 2022].

<sup>289</sup> <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1905/may/02/aliens-bill-1> [accessed 7 January 2022].



dispossess, was motivated by anti-Semitism rather than by philanthropy.<sup>290</sup> Furthermore, this is symptomatic of attitudes that have persisted, if not intensified, to the present day, and which need to be taken more fully into account in a report dealing with contemporary issues that have been partly shaped by these events.

The discussion of developments in Britain and the Ottoman Empire before and during the First World War (6.32) understates the Christian Zionist sympathies of the Prime Minister David Lloyd George (1863–1945), which allowed scope for ministers and officials with the toxic blend of Zionism and anti-Semitism, not without British Israelite overtones, to formulate and implement policy. The former Prime Minister, Balfour, now Foreign Secretary, is a conspicuous but not isolated example of this development in British imperialist presumptions. The scale of duplicity in the ‘diplomacy’ conducted by British and French officials, with each other and with various Arab groups, before and during the war, is also grossly understated.<sup>291</sup>

The treatment of the Balfour Declaration and its aftermath in the British occupation of Palestine (6.33) correctly notes warnings from prominent Jewish figures to the British government about the foolhardiness of their policy. However, it ignores the continuity between previous anti-Jewish immigration legislation and the conception and implementation of the Balfour Declaration. It is, in this regard, worth quoting the letter written jointly by Claude Goldsmid Montefiore (1858–1938), President of the Anglo-Jewish Association, and David Lindo Alexander (1842–1922), President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, to *The Times* on 24 May 1917:

Emancipated Jews in this country regard themselves primarily as a religious community [...] They hold Judaism to be a religious system, with which their political status has no concern, and they maintain that, as citizens of the countries in which they live,

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<sup>290</sup> Cf. Cottrell-Boyce, *Israelism in Modern Britain*; H. Defries, *Conservative Party Attitudes to Jews, 1900-1950* (London: Routledge, 2001); Klug, ‘The Other Arthur Balfour’, in *Being Jewish and Doing Justice*, pp. 199–210; Segev, *One Palestine, Complete*.

<sup>291</sup> J. Barr, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France, and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2012); C. Davidson, *Shadow Wars: The Secret Struggle for the Middle East* (London: Oneworld, 2016); D. Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Holt, 2009); R. Hardy, *The Poisoned Well: Empire and its Legacy in the Middle East* (London: Hurst, 2016); S. McMeekin, *The Ottoman Endgame* (London: Penguin, 2016).

they are fully and sincerely identified with the national spirit and interests of those countries. It follows that the establishment of a Jewish nationality in Palestine, founded on this theory of Jewish homelessness, must have the effect throughout the world of stamping the Jews as strangers in their native lands.<sup>292</sup>

The British administration of Palestine may have been ‘fraught with tremendous difficulties from the start’ (6.33), but these difficulties were caused very directly by the duplicity of British governments and their representatives in the region over the preceding decades, and their unquestioned sense of entitlement to rule other parts of the world in their own interests, without any consideration for the rights and interests of the native inhabitants.<sup>293</sup> Furthermore, the Mandate Administration allowed the Jewish Agency to form what was in effect a provisional government, while denying the Palestinian majority any meaningful participation or representation either in the administration of the territory or in determining its future dispensation.<sup>294</sup> Nevertheless, this paragraph (6.33) implies that the inter-communal violence that erupted in Mandate Palestine was the fault of the Arab population who were resisting dispossession, not necessarily in ‘peaceful’ [*sic*] ways. No mention is made of organised Zionist terrorist movements such as *Haganah*, founded in 1920, which later collaborated with Orde Wingate (1903–1944) and the Special Night Squads he commanded in operations to terrorise Palestinian communities under the

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<sup>292</sup> Alexander was subsequently ousted, by a narrow margin (56–51 votes), from the Presidency of the Board of Deputies, and thereafter joined other prominent figures in founding the anti-Zionist League of British Jews.

<sup>293</sup> J. M. N. Jeffries, *Palestine* (Northampton MA: Olive Branch, 2016); M. R. Kelly, *The Crime of Nationalism: Britain, Palestine, and Nation-Building on the Fringe of Empire* (Oakland CA: University of California Press, 2017); G. Lewis, *Balfour and Weizmann* (London: Continuum, 2009); McMeekin, *Ottoman Endgame*; J. Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010); Tabawi, *British Interests in Palestine*; E. F. Thompson, *How the West Stole Democracy from the Arabs* (London: Grove Press UK, 2020); B. Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991).

<sup>294</sup> This was entirely representative of British and French rule in the post-Ottoman Middle East: Thompson, *How the West Stole Democracy from the Arabs*; cf. A. Essaid, *Zionism and Land Tenure in Mandate Palestine* (London: Routledge, 2019); Segev, *One Palestine, Complete*; Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine*; Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*.

pretext of pursuing ‘terrorists’, and which later enjoyed a cooperative relationship with the Nazi *Schutzstaffel* (SS).<sup>295</sup> At least some of the Zionist militias were armed, trained, and financed by British officials — a well-documented fact conveniently ignored. Nor is it acknowledged that the British administration was consistently partisan, or that successive British governments never had any intention of honouring their commitment to upholding the rights of the indigenous population, notwithstanding the vague platitudes of the Balfour Declaration in this regard.<sup>296</sup>

The account of the aftermath of the Second World War (6.35) is misleading in suggesting that the USA was the only country that saw the settlement of European Jews, including concentration camp survivors, in Palestine as preferable to receiving them as immigrants. This attitude was widespread, and had been British government policy for decades. Furthermore, the latent if not overt anti-Semitism in Britain and other countries was a contributory factor to European Jews seeking to migrate to Palestine, whether or not they espoused Zionism and wished to live in an exclusive ethnic enclave. The widespread contempt for refugees, including survivors of the concentration camps, among Zionists already established in Palestine, might appropriately have been acknowledged.<sup>297</sup> Furthermore, it is deceptive to suggest that Zionist terrorism was a reaction to post-war British attempts to limit Jewish immigration to Palestine. Not only does it overlook growing and well-founded concerns about the incremental dispossession of the Palestinians, but also it disregards the fact that Zionist terrorist organisations had already been active in Palestine for decades.<sup>298</sup> *Haganah* was formed in 1920, *Irgun* (*Irgun Zvai Leumi*, a national military

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<sup>295</sup> S. Anglim, *Orde Wingate and the British Army, 1922–1944* (London: Routledge, 2015); E. Black, *The Transfer Agreement* (New York: Macmillan, 1984); F. R. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestinian Question* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1985); *Zionism and Anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>296</sup> Cf. Black, *Enemies and Neighbours*; Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity*; Segev, *One Palestine, Complete*; Tabawi, *British Interests in Palestine*; Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*.

<sup>297</sup> Beit-Hallahmi, *Original Sins*. This attitude predominated, both in Palestine-Israel and in the USA, until after the 1967 war, when cynical manipulation of memories of the Holocaust was employed, both in internal propaganda and to blackmail European and North American countries to collude in the continued occupation of Palestinian land. Cf. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry*.

<sup>298</sup> J. B. Bell, *Terror out of Zion* (Dublin: Academy Press, 1977); Black, *Enemies and Neighbours*; Segev, *One Palestine, Complete*.

organisation) in 1931, and *Lehi* (*Lohamei Herut Yisrael*, 'fighters for the freedom of Israel', also known as the Stern Gang) in 1940. However these organisations may have intensified their operations from 1945, and made use of firearms and training acquired during the war, these activities were in continuity with well-established practices in which large numbers of British officials and even larger numbers of Palestinian civilians, not to mention United Nations envoys,<sup>299</sup> were killed and maimed.

The account of Christian theological reflections on the 'Holocaust', and on the preceding centuries of ecclesiastically sanctioned anti-Semitism (6.36), is brief if essentially accurate, but is Eurocentric. The history of anti-Semitism in Europe was not replicated in those parts of Africa and Asia in which a diversity of Jewish communities flourished for centuries, if not millennia.<sup>300</sup> Some, but by no means all, of these communities were small,

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<sup>299</sup> The Swedish diplomat and United Nations Mediator Count Folke Bernadotte (1895–1948) was assassinated by Lehi, in an operation in which the future Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was implicated, despite his wartime record of rescuing prisoners from Nazi concentration camps. Those responsible were known, but were never charged with murder; two were charged and convicted of membership of a terrorist organisation, but were then immediately released and pardoned. See United Nations Security Council Resolution 57 (1948), <https://web.archive.org/web/20090118072030/http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/d744b47860e5c97e85256c40005d01d6/48c06a0c497863f1852560c2005beb32%21OpenDocument> [accessed 1 January 2023].

<sup>300</sup> Cf. O. Bashkin, *New Babylonians* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2012); E. Benbassa and A. Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2000); E. Bruder, *The Black Jews of Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); E. Fernandes, *The Last Jews of Kerala* (London: Portobello Books, 2008); D. Fernández-Morera, *The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise* (Wilmington DE: ICI Books, 2016); R. Hull, *Jews and Judaism in African History* (Princeton NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2009); N. Katz and E. N. Goldberg, *The Last Jews of Cochín* (Columbia SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1993); M. M. Laskier, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); E. S. Malka, *Jacob's Children in the Land of the Mahdi* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1997); S. Mendelssohn, *The Jews of Africa* (London: Kegan Paul, 1920; London: Wentworth, 2019); *The Jews of Asia* (London: Kegan Paul, 1920; London: Routledge, 2019); G. D. Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia* (Columbia SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2009); T. Parfitt, *Black Jews in Africa and the Americas* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press,

some had been gradually absorbed into Muslim societies, and some did experience intermittent tension and occasional violence in their relations with the rulers and dominant communities in their host societies, but not on the scale of the European pogroms. It is undoubtedly essential that Christian theology recognises and addresses the legacy of European anti-Semitism, and the continuity of the genocidal post-Christian Nazi agenda with motifs in Christian teaching and the popular attitudes that these had incited in many places and over several centuries.<sup>301</sup> However, this needs to take into account the experience of Jews and Christians in other parts of the world, and serious questions need to be asked about why it was specifically European Christianity that generated this level of hostility and violence towards Jews and Judaism.

Whether or not 'Britain found the cost and stress of administering the region overwhelming' (6.37), the victims of British imperialism are unlikely to be moved by such sanctimonious self-pity. Britain's record in Palestine after 1945 was no better than it had been previously, and the 1945 Emergency Regulations introduced by the Mandatory administration have until the present day formed a fundamental legal framework for repressive Israeli military rule over the Palestinians, in Israel and in the illegally occupied territories. Despite increasing acts of violence by *Haganah*, *Irgun* and *Lehi*, which would have been described unequivocally as terrorism if perpetrated by anyone else, the British administration remained partisan and racist. The so-called United Nations partition plan of 1947,<sup>302</sup> imposed by what was then a body dominated by the European and North American powers which had triumphed in the recent war, did not reflect any attempt

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2013); J. Quirin, *The Evolution of the Ethiopian Jews* (Los Angeles CA: TSEHAI Publishers, 2010); Rejwan, *The Jews of Iraq*; A. Shiblak, *Iraqi Jews* (London: Saqi, 2005); R. S. Simon, *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa* (London: Routledge, 2019); *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times*, ed. by R. S. Simon, M. M. Laskier and S. Reguer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); S. Taieb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa* (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 2010).

<sup>301</sup> H. Küng, *Judaism* (London: SCM, 1991); cf. P. M. van Buren, *A Theology of the Jewish-Christian Reality* (New York: Seabury, 1980–1988); J. H. Wallis, *Post-Holocaust Christianity* (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1997); M. B. McGarry, *Christology after Auschwitz* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977); F. Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews* (Philadelphia PA: Fortress Press, 1984); U. E. Simon, *A Theology of Auschwitz* (London: SPCK, 1978).

<sup>302</sup> An archive of relevant United Nations documentation can be found at [www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/](http://www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/) [accessed 7 January 2022].

or intention to consult the wishes of the people affected. Nor did it reflect the perspective of colonised nations of Africa and Asia yet to become independent states and be admitted to the United Nations; representatives of such states as had already come into being in what later became known as the 'Third World' were subject to undue coercion to vote in favour of the partition plan.<sup>303</sup> The presumption that predominantly European powers had the right to dispose of land inhabited and worked by the Palestinian people for centuries was not questioned, nor is it questioned by this report. Nor is any mention made of the fact that this, and previous, partition plans proposed allocating a vastly disproportionate amount of land, including the most fertile parts of the country, to the Zionists. Insofar as representatives of the Jewish population of Palestine were willing to accept partition, this was never intended as more than a stage in a process of incremental occupation of all of Palestine, and for some their aspirations extended to the territory of neighbouring states, too. Far from being a generous concession in forgoing Jerusalem, Ben Gurion was concerned to restrict expansion of the nascent Jewish state to territory that could be securely occupied and defended by the existing population and the armed forces at its disposal; hence his willingness also to withdraw from untenable occupation of Arab land after the ensuing wars.<sup>304</sup>

It is not entirely clear what the report means by the statement that 'Protestant and Anglican missionaries [...] worked with creditable success among the Arab populations of the Middle East for over a century' (6.39), other than the self-congratulation implied.<sup>305</sup> The attempts to convert Jews and Muslims during the first decades of the Anglican missions were conspicuously unsuccessful. The 'success' in converting Orthodox Christians to Anglicanism, Lutheranism and various forms of Protestantism may or

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<sup>303</sup> Bain, *March to Zion*; Cohen, *Truman and Israel*; Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East*.

<sup>304</sup> Z. Shalom, *David Ben-Gurion, the State of Israel and the Arab World* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2002); A. Shapira, *Ben-Gurion* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2014); S. Teveth, *Ben Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

<sup>305</sup> Cf. M. A. Marten, 'Re-Imagining "Metropole" and "Periphery" in Mission History', in *Protestant Missions and Local Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. by H. Nielszen, I. M. Okkenhaug and K. Hestad-Skeie (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 293–315; *Christian Missions and Humanitarianism in the Middle East, 1850–1950*, ed. by I. M. Okkenhaug and K. S. Summerer (Leiden: Brill, 2020); Småberg, *Ambivalent Friendship*; Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters between English and Palestinian Women*; Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine*.

may not have been 'creditable', but reflected more a rising disaffection with the clericalism, ethnic exclusivity and corruption in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in particular, issues that also generated friction between the British hierarchy and associated mission agencies and the indigenous clergy and laity of the Anglican diocese.<sup>306</sup> Notwithstanding the undoubted commitment of teachers and health workers, particularly women, over decades, Anglican educational and healthcare institutions were neither more numerous nor better than those established under the auspices of the Latin (Roman Catholic) and various Orthodox churches — institutions founded by the supposedly backward Russian Orthodox Church were widely regarded as outstanding.<sup>307</sup> Where Anglican schools may have been distinctive was in their elitism, which enabled the integration of children from affluent families with different ethnic and religious backgrounds into single learning communities; however commendable an achievement this may have been, the pupils were drawn exclusively from elite families that were able to afford the fees.<sup>308</sup> It was, moreover, an Anglican institution in which the earliest recorded instance of serial child abuse was recorded.<sup>309</sup> Such missionaries — presumably with the exception of those working under CMJ auspices who went to Palestine with that purpose in mind — did not necessarily share the restorationist sympathies that were gaining traction among European and North American Christians, and many identified very strongly with the Palestinians, but had no influence upon local Church leadership or colonial administrators and their political superiors. Although some of the latter may have believed that Scripture was being fulfilled in the immigration of European Jews, Palestine continued to be a convenient settlement destination for displaced European Jews whom the same Christians did not want as neighbours. Ostentatious quotation of biblical proof-texts was, and continues to be, a useful means of concealing anti-Semitism.

The scale of dispossession that was orchestrated and implemented, with unrestrained violence, by *Haganah*, *Irgun*, *Lehi* and other groups during the closing months of the British Mandate is grossly understated (6.40); reliable data indicate that over 750,000 Palestinian people — Christians and Muslims — were driven from their homes, while others were massacred, in

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<sup>306</sup> Muslih, *Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*; Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity*; Småberg, *Ambivalent Friendship*.

<sup>307</sup> For a discussion, including substantial translations of primary sources, see N. Masalha, *Palestine* (London: Zed Books, 2018).

<sup>308</sup> Småberg, *Ambivalent Friendship*.

<sup>309</sup> Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters among English and Palestinian Women*, pp. 126–58.

premeditated and closely coordinated terrorist operations.<sup>310</sup> The implied moral equivalence between resistance by Palestinian groups who did not meekly abandon their homes and lands, and the orchestrated terror and dispossession perpetrated by Zionist militias<sup>311</sup> is yet another grotesque example of the consistent bias in this report; it may not be entirely untypical of the inter-faith industry, but nonetheless exposes an egregious deficiency in theological insight and moral perception.

The account of the *Nakbah* (6.41) is classic 'whitewash'.<sup>312</sup> 'These were violent times' is a feeble excuse for premeditated massacres and expulsions by armed and militarily trained units against defenceless civilians whose only violence was to inhabit and tend their ancestral lands. Quite apart from arguments about who did what, and first, and who was more violent than whom, the number of Palestinians driven from their homes is grotesquely under-represented as 'thousands'. The actual figure was over 750,000, and increasing quantities of incontrovertible evidence of premeditated expulsions and massacres on the part of Zionist cadres have come to light, not least from declassified documents in Israeli military archives, and had

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<sup>310</sup> Cf. S. Abu Sitta, *The Palestinian Nakba 1948* (London: Palestinian Return Centre, 2000); Black, *Enemies and Neighbours*; M. J. Cohen, *The Origin and Evolution of the Arab-Zionist Conflict* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1989); R. I. Khalidi, *The Hundred Years War on Palestine* (London: Profile Books, 2020); Masalha, *Palestine Nakbah*; I. Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006); Segev, *One Palestine, Complete*; E. T. Zureik, *The Palestinians in Israel* (London: Routledge, 2023).

<sup>311</sup> That this was premeditated, with the intention of precipitating mass flight of the Palestinians from their homes and lands, is beyond dispute. The evidence, deriving from previously classified Israeli military archives, was first published by the Zionist historian Benny Morris in *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, and was confirmed by other Israeli scholars less committed to the Zionist agenda: Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*; Shlaim, *The Iron Wall* (London: Penguin, 2015). Cf. also Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah*.

<sup>312</sup> Khalidi, *Hundred Years War*; N. Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians* (Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1992); *The Palestine Nakba* (London: Zed Books, 2012); *Imperial Israel and the Palestinians* (London: Pluto Press, 2000); Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*; *The War for Palestine*, ed. by E. L. Rogan and A. Shlaim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); A. H. Sa'di and L. Abu-Lughod, *Nakba* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); *All That Remains*, ed. by W. Khalidi (Washington DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).



come to light many years before this report was written.<sup>313</sup> It was in the context of the *Nakbah* that atrocities perpetrated by *Irgun* militias were first compared to acts of the Nazis — not by Palestinians, but by members of *Mapam* and by other Zionist militias.<sup>314</sup> Not only was Ben Gurion one of the instigators of the premeditated and systematic destruction of human life and habitat, and of cultural heritage, using chemical warfare as well as physical brutality,<sup>315</sup> but also at least three future Prime Ministers of Israel — Menachem Begin (1913–1992), Yitzhak Shamir (1915–2012) and Yitzhak Rabin (1922–1995) — were directly involved in the orchestration and implementation of the premeditated murder, dispossession and expulsion of unarmed, non-combatant civilians, including women, children and the elderly. Others rose to high political office, including Yigal Allon (1918–1980), Yigael Yadin (1917–1984) and Moshe Dayan (1915–1981).<sup>316</sup> The role of Israeli agents conducting ‘false flag’ operations in Arab countries of Africa and Asia, perpetrating atrocities against their Jewish populations to induce their abandonment of their own heritage to become cheap labour in Israel, has been ‘airbrushed’ out of the record.<sup>317</sup> It is also not mentioned that

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<sup>313</sup> Abu Sitta, *Palestinian Nakba*; M. Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2002); Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*; Morris, *Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*; Morris, *Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*; Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*.

<sup>314</sup> As noted by the Zionist historian Benny Morris, on the basis of contemporary accounts from named witnesses: *Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*; *Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*.

<sup>315</sup> B. Morris and B. Z. Kedar, ‘Cast They Bread’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 58 (2022), 1–25, available online at [www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00263206.2022.2122448?journalCode=fmes20](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00263206.2022.2122448?journalCode=fmes20) [accessed 11 October 2022].

<sup>316</sup> Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*; A. Shapira, *Land and Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>317</sup> A. Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); U. Avnery, *My Friend, the Enemy* (London: Zed Books, 1986); N. Giladi, *Ben Gurion’s Scandals* (New York: Glilit, 1995); D. Hirst, *The Gun and the Olive Branch* (Berkeley CA: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2003); Y. Melman and D. Raviv, *The Imperfect Spies* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1989); E. L. Rogan and A. Shlaim, *The War for Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Segev, *1949*; R. Shapiro, ‘Zionism and Its Oriental Subjects’, in *Forbidden Agendas*, ed. by J. Rothschild (London: Saqi Books, 1984), pp. 23–48.

these Maghrebi,<sup>318</sup> Teimani,<sup>319</sup> Mashriqi,<sup>320</sup> Baghdadi,<sup>321</sup> Mizrahi<sup>322</sup> and Cochini<sup>323</sup> Jews formed, and continue to constitute, an underclass to the dominant Ashkenazi in Israeli society, a position in which they were more recently joined by the Beita and Falasha migrants from Ethiopia.<sup>324</sup> The racial hierarchy within Israeli Jewish society not only gives the lie to the myth of a distinctive ethnic group, but also testifies to the failure to create one in the so-called state of the Jewish people.

The treatment of the successive wars between Israel and its neighbours (6.44) mentions ‘incursions into Israel’, while making no

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<sup>318</sup> Jewish communities who had lived in North Africa (present-day Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Mauretania) since at least the Roman period, and possibly as early as the Punic/Carthaginian Empire.

<sup>319</sup> Yemenite Jews, the origins of whose communities are not reliably recorded, but are subject to a variety of legends relating migration or conversion (following the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon) during the first and second temple periods, and attested from the Roman period.

<sup>320</sup> Jewish communities of the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Egypt and Sudan, attested from the end of the first temple period.

<sup>321</sup> Mesopotamian Jews, traditionally originating from the Babylonian exile, and a substantial minority in the region until well after the foundation of the modern state of Iraq. These are sometimes divided into two categories, Babylonian and Kurdistani. Cf. O. Bashkin, *New Babylonians* (Stanford CA: University of California Press, 2012); *Impossible Exodus* (Stanford CA: University of California Press, 2017); Rejwan, *Jews of Iraq*; Shiblaq, *Iraqi Jews*.

<sup>322</sup> A variously defined category of Asian Jewish communities, most narrowly those of Babylonia (Iraq) and Persia (Iran), attested from the end of the first temple period, and most broadly to include those of Central Asia, the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa.

<sup>323</sup> Jews of Kerala/Malabar in India, of very diverse ethnic origins reflecting various waves of migration from Europe and the Middle East, and intermarriage with the local population, but with traditional roots in the Babylonian exile and its aftermath. *Bene Israel* in the Concan region claim origins in the destruction of the northern kingdom, and subsequent migrations further east. They enjoy rather less recognition by other Jews, but assimilated their customs under Ashkenazi and Sephardic influence in more recent times. Those who migrated to Israel have continued to suffer discrimination, with Orthodox rabbis denying their Jewish identity.

<sup>324</sup> M. G. Jaradat, *The Unchosen: The Lives of Israel's New Others* (London: Pluto Press, 2017); E. Shohat, *On the Arab-Jew, Palestine, and Other Displacements* (London: Pluto Press, 2017).

mention of Israeli invasions and bombardments of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.<sup>325</sup> It quotes the (British) CCJ bemoaning ‘the failure of the Arab states to make peace with Israel’, as though Israel were entirely blameless, the Arab states had no principled grounds for refusing to accept as a fait accompli the violent dispossession of the Palestinians, and they were the aggressors who repeatedly attacked Israel without provocation — all of which assumptions are fundamentally untrue.<sup>326</sup> It was Israel that had forces armed and trained, largely by Britain, whereas the Arab countries had scarcely enough resources to defend their own borders, and those of Jordan were commanded by British officers serving British imperial interests.<sup>327</sup> To these founding myths of peaceful Israel, ‘David’ overcoming ‘Goliath’, the only democracy in the Middle East, are added the fabricated accounts of refugees having voluntarily emigrated, and the manipulation of the Israeli legal system to prohibit their return to ‘abandoned’ property.<sup>328</sup>

The paragraph on the 1967 ‘Six-Day War’ and the events leading to it (6.45)<sup>329</sup> is classic Zionist propaganda. Events are over-simplified and Israel’s neighbours are treated as if politically and militarily, not to mention culturally and economically, they were a single entity. Whatever justification there may have been for Israel’s ‘pre-emptive strike’ in response to Egyptian violation of the terms of the 1956 armistice, Israel’s attack on Jordan was unprovoked, and, according to at least some informed sources, it was instigated by the military high command without instruction or authorisation from their political superiors.<sup>330</sup> No mention is made of the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes and lands, or of the deliberate destruction of the Moroccan Quarter in the old city

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<sup>325</sup> A. Ilan, *The Origin of the Arab-Israeli Arms Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Shlaim, *Iron Wall*.

<sup>326</sup> Shlaim, *Iron Wall*; cf. Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah*; M. A. Khalidi, *Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2001).

<sup>327</sup> T. Bradshaw, *The Glubb Reports* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); G. Jevon, *Glubb Pasha and the Arab Legion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Shlaim, *Iron Wall*.

<sup>328</sup> Black, *Enemies and Neighbours*; Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*; Khalidi, *Palestinian Refugees*.

<sup>329</sup> N. Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict* (London: Verso, 2003); A. Gluska, *The Israeli Military and the Origins of the 1967 War* (London: Routledge, 2007); W. R. Louis and A. Shlaim, *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); T. Segev, *1967* (New York: Holt, 2008).

<sup>330</sup> Peled, *The General’s Son*, pp. 61–2.

of Jerusalem, including its mosques. Rather the ‘free access of Jews to their holiest site’ [*sic*] is celebrated, and the concerns of Jews who were opposed to the occupation of east Jerusalem and the West Bank, not to mention the Golan Heights (conveniently overlooked), Gaza and Sinai, are ignored, despite their prescience. That Resolution 242 of the United Nations Security Council has formed the basis of subsequent ‘negotiations’ is blithely mentioned, with no acknowledgement of the fact that Israel has for over half a century never negotiated in good faith, and that, apart from returning Sinai to Egypt, it has persisted in occupying and exploiting all of the territory taken in 1967, settled its own population in occupied territory in violation of international law, and annexed the Golan Heights, east Jerusalem, and a considerable portion of the West Bank ‘annexed to Jerusalem’, incrementally expelling the Palestinian population and littering the land with Zionist ‘settlements’ and their attendant infrastructure.

The paragraph summarising events during the decades following the 1967 war (6.46) continues the partisan trajectory of those that precede it. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation is referred to as ‘terrorists’, while it is apparently unfortunate that ‘it was not feasible for Israel to portray its invasions into Lebanon, and the concomitant considerable loss of civilian life, as primarily defensive actions’. Let it not be forgotten that ‘the concomitant considerable loss of civilian life’ included cold-blooded massacres of civilian Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut, by Israeli and Christian fascist Phalange forces, on 16 September 1982.<sup>331</sup> Even within Israel, the public outcry was such that a commission of enquiry was held.<sup>332</sup> Following this, and a grenade attack on Israeli peace activists, the Defence Minister Ariel Sharon (1928–2014) was forced to resign on account of his ‘personal responsibility’ for the massacre, although without forfeiting his seat in the Cabinet. This proved no impediment to his becoming Prime Minister within 20 years, after he had

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<sup>331</sup> B. N. al-Hout, *Sabra and Shatila* (London: Pluto Press, 2004); Khalidi, *Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon; Israel in Lebanon: Report of the International Commission to Enquire into Reported Violations of International Law by Israel during its Invasion of the Lebanon*, ed. by S. MacBride et al. (London: Ithaca Press, 1983).

<sup>332</sup> The text of the report is available online at [www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/mfadocuments/yearbook6/pages/104\\_%20report%20of%20the%20commission%20of%20inquiry%20into%20the%20e.aspx](http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/mfadocuments/yearbook6/pages/104_%20report%20of%20the%20commission%20of%20inquiry%20into%20the%20e.aspx) [accessed 6 August 2021]. See also L. A. Malone, ‘The Kahan Report, Ariel Sharon and the SabraShatilla Massacres in Lebanon: Responsibility Under International Law for Massacres of Civilian Populations’, *Utah Law Review*, (1985), 373–433.

instigated what has subsequently become a Zionist fashion, leading an invasion of Haram al-Sharif in defiance of rabbinic law, with the intention of sabotaging the ‘peace talks’ then under way, and thereby provoking the second *Intifada*.

The passing reference to the Israeli Law of Return of 1950 (6.48) fatuously employs the precedent of ‘Nazi categorisation’<sup>333</sup> to justify a measure that has been used to encourage and facilitate immigration by Jews into Israel, who in turn have been used to justify further expulsion of Palestinians from their homes and land in order to make room for them.<sup>334</sup> Although ethnicity is a complex issue, and largely socially constructed on criteria such as language, culture, descent, religion and locality,<sup>335</sup> its biological basis is utterly discredited in the case of Judaism.

[A]mong Jewish physicians, anthropologists, and other ‘men of science’ in Central Europe, proponents of the idea that the Jews were a race were found mainly in the ranks of Zionists, as the idea implied a common biological nature of the otherwise geographically, linguistically, and culturally divided Jewish people, and offered scientific ‘proof’ of the ethno-nationalist myth of common descent.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> The interest of Western European and North American Jews in genetics precedes ‘Nazi categorization’ by several decades — like Zionism itself, it derives from the quest for (secular) Jewish identity when religious observance and culture no longer distinguished assimilated Jews from their neighbours. See M. B. Hart, *Social Science and the Politics of Modern Jewish Identity* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

<sup>334</sup> See Albanese and Takkenberg, *Palestinian Refugees in International Law*; G. J. Boling, ‘Palestinian Refugees and the Right of Return’, *BODIL* 8 (2001), [www.badil.org/phocadownload/Badil\\_docs/bulletins-and-briefs/Brief-No.8.pdf](http://www.badil.org/phocadownload/Badil_docs/bulletins-and-briefs/Brief-No.8.pdf) [accessed 17 December 2021].

<sup>335</sup> *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, ed. by F. Barth (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969); *Understanding ‘Race’ and Ethnicity*, ed. by S. Chattoo, K. Atkin, G. Craig and R. Flynn (Bristol: Policy Press, 2012); T. H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1993); J. L. Graves, *The Emperor’s New Clothes* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003); J. F. Healey and E. O’Brien, *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class* (London: Sage, 2014); Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Invention of Tradition*; R. W. Sussman, *The Myth of Race* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

<sup>336</sup> D. Hirsch, ‘Zionist Eugenics, Mixed Marriage, and the Creation of a “New Jewish Type”’, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 15 (2009),

The cultural and linguistic aspects are similarly devoid of commonality, and the secular atheism of the non-observant central European Judaism from which Zionism emerged cannot bestow any common identity. Furthermore, the Law of Return has been amended so as to extend its scope beyond the parameters of Jewish identity as defined by rabbinic principles or by biology, to become virtually a charter for Zionists of any background. The cynical manipulation of ethnic constructs in order to precipitate and justify large-scale and often violent displacement of people into Israel and out of Palestine is an orchestrated crime against humanity, and does not reflect the spontaneous expression of national aspirations.

While acknowledging that Israeli ‘settlements’ in the West Bank contravene international law (6.50),<sup>337</sup> the report notes that some residents thereof are opportunistic<sup>338</sup> rather than ideologically motivated — as though their presence is thereby any less illegal. Other settlers ‘believe fervently that it is their religious duty to live in and control the land which God promised to Abraham’s Hebrew [*sic*] descendants’ — as though this monstrous perversion of the biblical narrative renders such activity legitimate. That Christian adherents to such views have wielded, and continue to wield, disproportionate influence on European and North American governments, on Latin American military dictatorships and, increasingly, on African governments and on the ideologically analogous religious-nationalist regime in India,<sup>339</sup> and that secularisation has done little to diminish this influence, is precisely the problem with which this report was supposedly concerned, but which it does little to address.

In claiming that dialogues between successive Israeli governments and a motley succession of increasingly discredited Palestinian leaders, largely brokered by the unabashedly partisan USA and its European

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592–609, [www.jstor.org/stable/40541701?read-now=1&seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40541701?read-now=1&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents) [accessed 20 May 2023]. Cf. D. B. Goldstein, *Jacob’s Legacy* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2008); B. Kimmerling, *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness* (Los Angeles CA: University of California Press, 2001); Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*; cf. Sternhell, *Founding Myths of Israel*.

<sup>337</sup> See also Sfar, *Wall and the Gate*, pp. 123–96, pp. 335–78.

<sup>338</sup> Settlements and their residents receive substantial financial subsidies from the Israeli government, as an incentive to inhabit illegally occupied land.

<sup>339</sup> Cf. Holder-Rich, *Christian Zionism in Africa*.

surrogates,<sup>340</sup> have constituted ‘causes for hope’ (6.51), the report raises serious questions about what it understands by ‘hope’, and what that ‘hope’ is for. Furthermore, it overlooks the history of liquidation of credible Palestinian leadership by Ottoman (especially after the 1908 revolution introduced ‘Turkification’), British Mandate and Israeli rulers, leaving the Palestinians little to choose between puppets of the regime, such as the ‘Grand Mufti’ Amin al-Husseini (1895–1974),<sup>341</sup> who subsequently defected, and the range of secular and Islamist militants who emerged to prominence in the vacuum created.<sup>342</sup> In describing these processes as ‘serious international attempts to broker peace’, it raises even more fundamental questions as to what it means by ‘peace’. At the very least, the authors’ conception of ‘hope’ and ‘peace’ is egregiously uninformed by Christian theological understandings of these terms, and fails to interrogate the ways in which the terms are used by politicians and media pursuing their own self-interest. Either the authors are theologically illiterate to the point of being unfit for the task assigned to them, or they are complicit in the grotesque manipulation of language by secular agents in support of the Zionist agenda.

The concluding section of this chapter deals with ‘inter faith relations and the Anglican Communion’ (6.52). While mentioning initiatives in both Jewish-Christian and Christian-Muslim relations, the report cites Church of

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<sup>340</sup> K. Bergen, *Justice and the Intifada* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991); J. R. Hammond, *Obstacle to Peace* (Cross Village MI: Worldview, 2015); R. Khalidi, *Brokers of Deceit* (Boston MA: Beacon, 2013); S. Roy, *Failing Peace* (London: Pluto Press, 2007); E. W. Said, *Peace and its Discontents* (New York: Vintage, 1996); *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage, 1992); E. T. Zureik, *Palestinian Refugees and the Peace Process* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1996); cf. Falk, *Palestine’s Horizon*; S. Salaita, *The Holy Land in Transit* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006).

<sup>341</sup> A particularly controversial figure, with a contested legacy; cf. P. Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). Husseini was appointed by the British Mandate administration, despite having polled fewer votes in the election than more competent and experienced candidates from the rival Jerusalemite Nashashibi family. See also I. Pappé, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty* (London: Saqi Books, 2010).

<sup>342</sup> Black, *Enemies and Neighbours*. Not all militant leaders were Muslim; George Habash (1926–2008) and Wadie Haddad (1927–1978) of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine were both Greek Orthodox Christians.

England bodies and documents interchangeably with those of the Anglican Communion — another example of its endemic Anglocentrism. Although they are a particular interest of the authors of the report, inter-faith relations in ‘Western’ countries are ultimately irrelevant. The issue of justice and fundamental human rights for the Palestinian people is absolute, and not subject to expediency and conviviality in inter-faith relations. The prevailing subordination of fundamental and ultimately unavoidable issues of justice and human rights to what is conducive to inter-faith relations effectively means that subjects which Western Christians believe would be uncomfortable for their Jewish interlocutors are swept under the proverbial carpet, and Europeans and North Americans conveniently throw the Palestinians, as faceless, dark-skinned, ‘Third World’ people, under the proverbial bus. Using inter-faith relations to obfuscate issues of justice and human rights is not merely devious but also theologically perverted. Jewish institutions, and organisations that purport to represent people of Jewish identity and heritage, in Britain and around the world, can and must be expected to take an unequivocal stand on justice for the Palestinians. Successive Israeli governments have claimed to act for all Jews throughout the world, and to be the sole guarantor of their security, and thereby identify them with their actions. Jews in Europe and North America have the option of endorsing the Israeli position, which would logically require that they act also on the frequent appeals of successive Israeli governments for diaspora Jews to migrate to Israel. Alternatively, inter-faith relations would be a safe forum in which the Jews of Europe and North America could unequivocally repudiate the Zionist agenda and the atrocities routinely perpetrated in its name, affirm their place in the multicultural societies in which they live, and uphold for all people the values that make such societies possible — justice, human rights, and the freedom to express faith and culture in ways which do not curb the rights and liberties of others. The Holocaust and the preceding history of anti-Semitism in Europe, and any continuing manifestations thereof, are all the more reason to identify fully with the values that make coexistence of people of diverse cultures possible, not an excuse for refusing to do so. Still less should the real or implicit threat of embarrassment about being reminded of events that no Christian leader or representative in inter-faith dialogue denies, silence or pervert Christian commitment to justice and the liberties that make for peace.

***Chapter 7. Some key theological issues: gift, return, city***

This chapter begins with the following statement: ‘We believe that any Christian understanding of the Holy Land must attend with the utmost seriousness to the presence of the Christian community in that land’ (7.1). Quite apart from the question of who ‘We’ are in this context, the existence



of Palestinian Christians — and their and other Palestinians' human rights — might appropriately have been acknowledged more consistently through the earlier chapters of the report. Nevertheless, what is at stake is not the spiritual significance attached by adherents of different faiths to the same land, and indeed to the same sites in that land. Such religious ties do not constitute a geopolitical claim, still less one to exclusive possession of any land, and it is precisely the Zionist agenda founded upon translating historical and religious associations into a presumed right of permanent and exclusive ownership that is the source of the conflict — the motivation and justification of the occupation of Palestine and intentional dispossession of the indigenous population. The principle that historical and religious attachments, however well founded, do not constitute a geopolitical claim of any kind was deemed clear enough when, following the fragmentation of Yugoslavia, Serbian forces perpetrated 'ethnic cleansing' in Bosnia and Kosovo with a view to gaining possession of historical and religious sites.<sup>343</sup> Whether or not the military operations by American and European forces under NATO auspices were justified, neither the historical associations of such sites as Gračanica, nor the mythology associated therewith, nor who had lived where in past centuries had any bearing on the response of the international community to the conflicts in the Balkans during the 1990s. It is perhaps telling that the most prominent opponent of NATO intervention was the then Prime Minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon, and one might well ask why. It is beyond time that the deployment of ethnic and religious myths in the service of aggressive geopolitical objectives is repudiated unequivocally. The report instead obfuscates the issues by acquiescing in such notions rather than recognising the rights of those who had lived in Palestine for centuries before the Zionist programme was launched, and who have been progressively and intentionally driven from their homes and land to eke out

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<sup>343</sup> S. L. Burg and P. S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1990-93* (New York: J. M. Sharpe, 1999); *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1991-1995*, ed. by B. Magas and I. Zanic (London: Routledge, 2013); G. Ognjenović and J. Jozelić, *Politicization of Religion, the Power of Symbolism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). M. A. Sells, in *The Bridge Betrayed* (Stanford CA: University of California Press, 1996), argues strongly for religious 'chrisoslavic' motivation in the Bosnian genocide. V. P. Gagnon, in *The Myth of Ethnic War* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), cites high levels of intermarriage and other evidence of longstanding peaceful coexistence, disputes claims to long-standing blood feuds and ethnic hatreds, and argues that the conflict(s) were essentially about elite economic interests.

an existence in squalid refugee camps, and are expected to resign themselves and their progeny to perpetual exile.

The report identifies ‘three key biblical motifs which are unavoidable in shaping a theologically informed understanding’ that is relevant to ‘sustain[ing] Christian presence in the Holy Land’ (7.3). These are (1) the relationship between Israel as land and Israel as people, (2) the themes of exile and return, and (3) Jerusalem and the temple. It is something of a coincidence that these ‘motifs’ are also prominent themes in Zionist ideology. The authors of the report were presumably fully aware of this, even if they did not consider it expedient to mention it. Still less is it acknowledged that Zionism tends to claim a monopoly over these ‘motifs’, over all rights associated with them, and over the land itself. That these ‘motifs’ have mutated over centuries, in the consciousness of Jews and Christians alike, is not acknowledged, nor is it explained why a distinctive Anglican approach to interpreting them is either relevant or helpful, or why these ‘motifs’, or at least the Zionist version thereof, should negate the fundamental human rights of others.

In dealing with the first, the report provides an essentially accurate, if not necessarily representative or typical, description of dispensationalist Christian Zionism (7.4). In characterising Christian exegesis that re-interprets or ‘spiritualises’ the promises of God to Abraham and their fulfilment in Christ (7.5) as ‘displacement theology’ (7.6), the authors caricature or calumniate scholars and church leaders who have very carefully and quite unequivocally repudiated any supersessionism while nonetheless arguing, with thorough exegesis, that Scripture requires that God’s promises to Abraham be understood as becoming, in Christ, inclusive of all humanity.<sup>344</sup> Whether or not Anglicans are or should be committed to a ‘scandal of particularity’ (*sic*), the legitimacy of the ‘Christian presence in the Holy Land’ rests not upon abstruse theological principles, but upon the fact that a small but significant proportion of the Palestinian people happen to be Christian, and have the same fundamental human rights as do other Palestinians. They therefore do not need to justify their presence in the land in which they and their forebears have lived for centuries or longer on the basis of a certain method of exegesis of particular biblical texts. This right to live unmolested in their ancestral land, and not to be dispossessed of their homes on the basis of selective, literalist and fundamentalist, and ultimately spurious exegesis of the same biblical texts by Zionists, whether Jewish or

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<sup>344</sup> An outstanding example of this is Isaac, *From Land to Lands*. The author is a Palestinian theologian, a Lutheran pastor, Academic Dean of Bethlehem Bible College, and Coordinator of the biennial Christ at the Checkpoint Conference.

Christian, transcends any manipulation of religious heritage to deny the human worth of others and deprive them of their basic rights. Whatever value such arguments may have in response to the claims of Christian Zionists who profess that any truly Christian Palestinian would willingly vacate home and land in favour of those to whom God had promised them (4.1), there is no justification in giving theological respectability to people who are unable or unwilling to comprehend either historical and biological facts or the logic of exegesis.

In referring to 'a holiness in the soil and stones marked by Jesus' earthly life' (7.7), the report elevates the piety and sentimentality of foreigners above the fundamental needs and human rights of the Palestinian people. However valid the sanctity attributed to particular places, in any religious tradition,<sup>345</sup> and irrespective of the historical plausibility of the traditional location of significant events, and even of the events themselves, the right to live unmolested in one's home and to use the land and its produce, and one's skills and knowledge for sustenance and for other benign and legitimate economic activities, is universal. The emphasis on traditions valued by pilgrims and tourists is a distraction from real people, their basic needs and their fundamental rights. The area commonly known as the Holy Land is not a tourist resort or theme park, but a place in which flesh and blood human beings live, as their forebears have done before them for many centuries, tending the land and working in the towns for their subsistence. It is no more or less a part of God's creation than anywhere else on this earth, and the fundamental rights of its indigenous population are neither subordinate to those of visitors nor dependent on peculiar theological justification according to any religious tradition.

The long history of constraints on pilgrims' access to 'holy sites' (7.8) has been the experience of Jewish and Muslim pilgrims to Palestine, as well as Christian pilgrims. Furthermore, it continues to be the perennial experience of Palestinian Christians and Muslims even more than of foreign visitors. Those who live in the West Bank and Gaza are routinely obstructed from entering Jerusalem, for purposes of work, of seeking healthcare (including emergency procedures) or of piety, by the 'Separation Wall', a corrupt and discriminatory permit system, and aggressively but inefficiently managed checkpoints. This matters rather more than the convenience of tourists.

In finally recognising that Palestinian Christians do not exist merely to serve the pilgrim and tourist trade, but are part of 'the living reality of the

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<sup>345</sup> Cf. M. R. T. Dumper, *Power, Piety, and People* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020); Inge, *Christian Theology of Place*; Sheldrake, *Spaces of the Sacred*.

universal Church in this unique locality' (7.9), the report regards the 'political issues involved' as 'contentious'. Whether or not the land of Palestine is more or less unique than any other place on this earth, the human rights of the population are identical — irrespective of their religion — to those of any other people anywhere. No attributed uniqueness of the land mitigates this, and citation of the term 'contentious' and the phrase 'political issues involved' to suggest that the presence of Christians in their ancestral land should be the subject of theological special pleading is disingenuous. Furthermore, it invites and confers legitimacy upon contrary 'theological' arguments to justify the continued harassment, oppression and dispossession of the Palestinian people until they have all been expelled from their homes and dispersed to other parts of the world. This has been the undisguised objective of successive Israeli governments, in continuity with the objectives stated perfectly clearly by Herzl, which have also been articulated unequivocally by numerous Israeli politicians, diplomats and rabbis during the intervening century and longer. In offering weak theological arguments on a matter of fundamental human rights, the report panders to Zionist claims to exceptionalism. Far from defending the unambiguously legitimate rights of Palestinian Christians, which are no different to those of Palestinian Muslims, or indeed of Jews, the report betrays them.

The attachment and longing of Jews for *eretz Israel* over the centuries may be unparalleled in its intensity and depth, and the contemporary imperative for the security of their presence cannot be questioned; but the Jewish presence can only be affirmed by churches around the world in ways that also give space for others to be present, their fellow Christians included (7.10).

The superficially worthy sentiments expressed in this statement are disingenuous. In bestowing a religious aura upon the 'security' apparatus of the Zionist state, the report disregards the militarisation of Israeli society, the dispossession of Palestinians in favour of 'settlers' for reasons of 'security', and the repeated failure to prosecute identified perpetrators of atrocities on the grounds that this would compromise 'intelligence'. It was with good reason that the Jewish theologian Marc Ellis stated that 'the essence of the Jewish witness is carried by helicopter gunships' which have replaced the Ark of the Covenant as the defining covenantal symbol of Judaism.<sup>346</sup> Rabbi Michael Lerner speaks of 'the rape of Judaism' by those who have perverted the heritage of the Law and the Prophets into an ideology and agenda of brutality in dispossessing the Palestinians.<sup>347</sup> The

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<sup>346</sup> *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 41–50, p. 174.

<sup>347</sup> 'Settler Violence and the Rape of Judaism', *Tikkun*, 9 (1994), 27–8.

'contemporary imperative' to pursue a chimera of security through investment in weaponry and the conscription, military training, and indoctrination and brutalisation of young people is not only entirely self-inflicted, but also directly generates the reactive hostility that is used to justify it, and is ultimately futile. The presence of Jews in Palestine is not in question; what is to be resisted is a repressive and militaristic political order, in which dubious notions of race and religion are employed to justify the creation and expansion of an apartheid state, and the incremental liquidation of the indigenous population, both within Israel and in occupied Jerusalem and the West Bank, systematically destroying cultural heritage while violently dispossessing people of their homes and lands. In any other context this would be regarded as genocide.

In claiming an eternal geopolitical validity for mythical promises of a vaguely and inconsistently defined area of land to people who may never have existed (7.11), the report is not merely selective in its reading of the biblical narrative, but also attributes extraordinary rights and qualities to human beings who claim biological descent from mythical figures. If territorial claims were to be proffered on the basis of descent from characters in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or for that matter the legends of Brutus of Troy in the *Historia Brittonum*, these would hardly be countenanced, and the status of the Pentateuch as Jewish and Christian Scripture does not constitute it being a historically reliable document, still less a title deed to any of the territory mentioned therein. Furthermore, the role of genealogies in creating relationships, not recording them, has been recognised in biblical scholarship for well over a century; the formation of ancient Israel is reflected, however obliquely, in the integration of diverse clan traditions into a common genealogy.<sup>348</sup> However intense the attachment to the land of Palestine in people formed by the biblical traditions, neither the attachment nor the traditions constitute a valid claim to possess that territory today, or at any other time, and still less do they constitute a right to dispossess its indigenous population of their homes and land.

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<sup>348</sup> F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); *From Epic to Canon* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); I. Finkelstein and N. A. Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001); Mullen, *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations*.

In recognising the diversity of land theologies discernible in Scripture,<sup>349</sup> and the tension between them (7.12), which might more accurately be described as incompatibility, the report finally recognises that Christian Zionist premises are untenable. A more thorough exposition of this, by competent scholars and exegetes, would on its own have been sufficient to discredit Christian Zionism entirely, and there would have been no need for the largely irrelevant arguments in this and the preceding chapters.

That non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine, and others who share a spiritual attachment to the land, also reflect on Scripture and understand their heritage in continuity with biblical motifs (7.13) is relevant and might have merited further exploration. The key difference, which is not mentioned, is that Palestinian Christian readings of Scripture are not used to claim the land as an eternal and exclusive geopolitical possession.<sup>350</sup> It is precisely on this point that Zionist readings are distinct, and the violence with which Zionist aspirations have been implemented cannot be compared with the connection with the land that is experienced and defended by Palestinian Christians, or by Palestinian Muslims, or by Jews in the Hasidic tradition and others who have sought physical sanctuary and spiritual sustenance through inhabiting, living righteously and piously, and working the land in which their heritage was forged.

The report claims that 'the gift [of the land] carries with it the imperative to those who receive it of engagement with others in the cause of spreading God's message of justice, truth and righteousness' (7.14). Irrespective of whether this statement is justifiable on exegetical grounds, and no examples or evidence are provided in the report, this 'imperative' is fundamentally incompatible with the forms of Zionism that have previously been defended as being of the essence of Judaism. While citing one example of the threat of dispossession as a consequence of disobedience to God (Lev. 18.28), the report immediately proceeds to question whether it is ever possible to speak of the fulfilment of God's promises in the present. While challenging the premises of Christian Zionist eschatology, this also implicitly

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<sup>349</sup> In dependence on N. C. Habel, *The Land is Mine* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1995). Cf. also W. Brueggemann, *The Land* (Minneapolis MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2002).

<sup>350</sup> This is abundantly clear in the writings of such Palestinian theologians as Naim Ateek in *Justice, and Only Justice*, Mitri Raheb in *Faith in the Face of Empire* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2014), Munther Isaac in *From Land to Lands*, and Yohanna Katanacho in *The Land of Christ* (Eugene OR: Pickwick, 2013). It is also clear from the more popular writings published by the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem.

questions the validity of the experience of the land as God's gift attributed to historical Israel in the biblical narrative. Whatever the discrepancies discernible within this narrative, and between the narrative accounts and such history as can be reconstructed from archaeological and other independent sources,<sup>351</sup> the fact remains that the myth of the promised land has been, if not formative for ancient Israel so much as of ideologies of restoration from the Persian period onwards, and therefore of many forms of Judaism through subsequent history. The issue is not whether this myth is rooted in history or is of the essence of Judaism, but whether it constitutes a legitimate basis for the Zionist settler-colonial project and the dispossession of the Palestinians.<sup>352</sup> Zionism, and the violence and repression with which its agenda has been and continues to be prosecuted, is incompatible with 'basic principles of human rights, which have their roots in teachings which have spread from this land' (7.15), namely Palestine.

The repeated injunctions in the Torah to deal justly and kindly with aliens,<sup>353</sup> and the observation that Abraham entered Canaan as a migrant, would have merited fuller exposition than they receive in the report (7.16–7.17). Nevertheless, the implicit identification of the Palestinians as aliens, when they are in fact the indigenous population of the land, is a distortion of the truth that panders to Zionist propaganda. Migration along the Fertile Crescent, driven by economic, social, political and climatic conditions, as well as for the purposes of trade, and nomadic patterns of life which coexisted alongside more settled agrarian and pastoral communities, ensured a population that was constantly in flux: there was no single biologically defined nation that occupied all or any part of the land, at any time, or with the exclusivity to which Israel aspires today.<sup>354</sup> On the contrary, there was a constant mingling of people of diverse backgrounds and cultures forming more or less coherent polities in response to internal and external factors. These processes have continued throughout history until the present day. The claim that Palestine during the nineteenth century was 'a

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<sup>351</sup> Cf. Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*; N. K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1979); B. Halpern, *The Emergence of Israel in Canaan* (Chico CA: Scholars Press, 1984).

<sup>352</sup> Cf. N. Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Y. Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

<sup>353</sup> Exod. 22.21; 23.9; Lev. 17.8–13; 19.34; Deut. 10.19.

<sup>354</sup> Cf. Masalha, *Palestine*; Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*; *Invention of the Land of Israel*.

land without a people'<sup>355</sup> is rightly recognised as entirely untrue, and it is acknowledged that, within their diversity, the population of Palestine was conscious of a common identity defined by the land. However, the demand that this be recognised, and that United Nations resolutions concerning Palestine be complied with, comes far too late in this report, and is incompatible with the concessions to Zionist claims that are offered in preceding chapters.

The report recognises issues surrounding migration today, including the Law of Return,<sup>356</sup> which enables people from anywhere in the world who are able to demonstrate certain criteria of Jewish identity to immigrate to Israel and immediately claim Israeli citizenship, while Palestinian refugees who have been violently expelled from their homes and land are denied any possibility of return (7.18). The manifest injustice of this is not mitigated by demanding a 'universal welcome' for anyone who wishes to live in Palestine. Not only does this fail to recognise the prior right of Palestinian refugees, but also it disregards the obligation of all states — including the UK — to receive refugees humanely, notwithstanding their right to regulate immigration in

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<sup>355</sup> The earliest recorded use of this phrase for Palestine was by Alexander Keith, a Free Church of Scotland Minister, in *The Land of Israel According to the Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob* (Edinburgh: Whyte, 1844). It subsequently entered the vocabulary of Christian Zionism, not least with Lord Shaftesbury, for whom 'people without a land' meant not only that the Jews had no nation-state — a novel concept at the time, and one never realised for many identifiable cultural groups — but also that they should have no political rights in Britain: D. M. Lewis, *The Origins of Christian Zionism: Lord Shaftesbury and Evangelical Support for a Jewish Homeland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>356</sup> This legislation, passed by the Knesset in 1950, was amended in 1970 to clarify the criteria for identification as of Jewish ancestry, and to include certain converts to Judaism while excluding Jewish converts to other faiths. This law has been used to facilitate immigration by people claiming to be Jews, without necessarily producing verifiable evidence, and without any implication of religious belief or observance, enabling them to enter and reside in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, and the Golan Heights, which are Syrian territory under occupation, and to claim Israeli citizenship immediately. The 'needs' of these immigrants are used to justify the dispossession of Palestinian communities to make way for Jewish settlements. For a defence of the law, see Y. Savir, 'The Definition of a Jew under Israel's Law of Return', *Southern Methodist University Law Journal*, 17 (1963), 123–33.



accordance with their circumstances. The land between the Mediterranean and the River Jordan is of limited size, its limited water supply can support a limited number of people, and the attempts of Israel to defy these constraints are generating an escalating environmental catastrophe. Depletion of aquifers to satisfy profligate consumption of water for recreational as well as domestic, industrial and agricultural purposes, while denying even basic supplies of potable water to the Palestinians, compounded by afforestation with alien species to conceal 'evacuated' Palestinian villages, agricultural and building practices unsuited to the climate and topography causing soil erosion, and the contamination of land, water and air caused by industrial pollution and the discharge of toxic chemicals by the Israeli armed forces, are making human life unsustainable not only in Gaza but also in other parts of Palestine.<sup>357</sup> Even a writer generally sympathetic to Zionism was able to observe, as long ago as 2003:

A hundred years of rapid development have indeed transformed the landscape of Palestine. Huge population growth, intensive agriculture, intensive urban planning, road-building on a vast scale, and the development of an industrial economy have all wreaked havoc on the ecology of Palestine. Many species of mammals, reptiles, and migrating birds have disappeared altogether from the country. Others are on the endangered list.

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<sup>357</sup> Cf. S. S. Elmusa, *Water Conflict* (Washington DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1998); J. Halper, *War Against the People* (London: Pluto Press, 2015); S. C. Lonergan and D. B. Brooks, *Watershed* (Oslo: Unipub, 1995); Qumsiyeh, *Sharing the Land of Canaan*; T. R. Stauffer, *Water and War in the Middle East* (Washington DC: Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine, 1999); A. Tal, *Pollution in a Promised Land* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2002); I. Fares and Y. Mansour, 'Water Issues and Climate Change in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict', *Jurist*, 16 July 2020, [www.jurist.org/commentary/2020/07/ibrahim-fares-climate-change-israel-palestine/#](http://www.jurist.org/commentary/2020/07/ibrahim-fares-climate-change-israel-palestine/#) [accessed 28 August 2021]; J. Isaac and M. Ghanyem, *Environmental Degradation and the Israeli – Palestinian Conflict* (Bethlehem: Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem, 2003), [www.arij.org/files/admin/2003/2003%20environmental%20degradation%20and%20the%20israeli-palestinian%20conflict.pdf](http://www.arij.org/files/admin/2003/2003%20environmental%20degradation%20and%20the%20israeli-palestinian%20conflict.pdf) [accessed 28 August 2021]; United Nations Environment Programme, *State of Environment and Outlook Report for the Occupied Palestinian Territory 2020*, [www.unep.org/resources/report/state-environment-and-outlook-report-occupied-palestinian-territory-2020](http://www.unep.org/resources/report/state-environment-and-outlook-report-occupied-palestinian-territory-2020) [accessed 28 August 2021].

Most of Israel's few rivers are so polluted that fish cannot survive in them. Nor can humans.<sup>358</sup>

The precarious state of the natural environment and its capacity to sustain life, and the fragility of world heritage sites, require that both permanent immigration and pilgrimage and tourism be managed in ways that are just and sustainable. This requires that due priority be given to the rights and needs of the Palestinian people, and not to the presumptions of Zionists or of entitled Christian tourists from other continents.<sup>359</sup>

The section on Exile and return (7.19–7.29) quite rightly recognises many of the scriptural motifs of exile and hope for return, and their continued resonance for many Jews (7.19). It notes also the spiritualised notion of exile within the Christian tradition (7.20), and the present and very real experience of exile for several generations of Palestinians today, whether of Christian or of Muslim heritage (7.20). Important as these acknowledgements are, it is important not to overlook the significant differences in the conceptualisations and experiences of exile. Whatever the truth behind the disputed historical accounts and reconstructions of expulsion of the Jewish population of all or part of Palestine during the early Christian centuries, the motif of exile had become one of many theological symbols in the worship and spirituality of diaspora synagogues over the centuries. For very few of them were its resonances either prominent or urgent, except perhaps when given particular emphasis at certain seasons of the liturgical year, or when communities were feeling vulnerable during times of social tension or discrimination and persecution. These liturgical motifs seldom implied any wish or intention to realise the mythical anticipation of a return to Zion. Furthermore, the growth of Jewish communities through conversion meant that, for an increasing proportion of Ashkenazi Jews in particular, their connection with the land of Palestine was spiritual — that is, mythical and not genetic, and acquired through proselytisation rather than descent from actual exiles.<sup>360</sup> Either way, the liturgical motif of exile does not constitute any geopolitical right to possess

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<sup>358</sup> B. Wasserstein, *Israelis and Palestinians* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 73–97.

<sup>359</sup> Cf. M. R. T. Dumper, *The Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict* (Boulder CO: Rienner, 2002).

<sup>360</sup> Cf. especially Goldstein, *Jacob's Legacy*; N. Abu El-Haj, *The Genealogical Science* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*; A. W. al-Massiri, 'The Racial Myths of Zionism', in *Zionism, Imperialism and Racism*, ed. by A. Y. Kayyali (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 27–50.

the land in question, and was not understood as such except as an eschatological hope. Until the onset of secular Zionism, such attempts to anticipate the eschatological return of Jews to Palestine (e.g., that of Sabbatai Zvi) invariably ended in disaster.<sup>361</sup> For Christians, the experience of persecution in hostile societies stimulated a sense of alienation, compensated by the apocalyptic vision of an eschatological kingdom or city which was to be their true home.<sup>362</sup> The Christianised Neo-Platonism exemplified by Augustine in *De Civitate Dei* ensured that post-Constantinian, cultically Christian societies were not identified entirely with the kingdom of God, and Christians have been able to endure persecution by Zoroastrian, Muslim, Hindu and Jewish rulers, not to mention rulers of a different Christian persuasion, fortified by the expectation of a transcendent and congenial home beyond the confines of the present world. This in no way mitigates the constant experience of displacement and exile on the part of Palestinian Christians and Muslims, violently driven from their homes to make way for an ever-expanding Zionist polity; to suggest that some form of future, otherworldly compensation justifies their present experience of violence and suffering is a theological abomination.

The section concludes with a series of fatuous attempts to employ supposedly Anglican theological principles to give credence to Zionism while being evasive about its consequences (7.25–7.29). It is an entirely accurate reflection of the content that the word ‘justice’ does not occur before the final paragraph, except in the hand-wringing and stomach-churning suggestion that ‘unwarranted eisegesis [...] does not do justice to the notes of agnosticism about the end times in the Bible’ (7.27). Compared with this, ‘Cognitive humility as an Anglican characteristic is rooted in scripture’, and we are assured that ‘The modesty of the *sola scriptura* principle is further shown in the insistence that the only history which can be read unambiguously as the record of God’s direct dealings is that limited to the biblical canon’.

Leaving aside that ‘modesty’ is seldom if ever a characteristic of proponents of *sola scriptura*, the smug presumption that the biblical canon can be read ‘unambiguously as the record of God’s direct dealings’ is precisely the foundation of the fundamentalist Christian Zionist eisegesis that is so condescendingly dismissed, and is contrary to the supposed Anglican principle of reading Scripture in ways that are informed by tradition and reason — which is incompatible with *sola scriptura*.

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<sup>361</sup> D. J. Halperin, *Sabbatai Zevi* (Liverpool: Littman Library, 2007); G. Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi* (London: Routledge, 1973).

<sup>362</sup> Cf. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*; E. F. Lupieri, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2006).

Although it correctly identifies the implicit supersessionism in dispensationalist biblical interpretation (7.28), the report makes the fatuous claim that ‘Anglicans appeal to the consensus of tradition’. This may be a widely cited mantra, but the truth is that there simply is no consensus to which to appeal, in terms either of method or of interpretation, and Anglicans are at least as diverse as any other multicultural global Christian movement in this respect. The claim would not be true even of the Church of England, which this Eurocentric and Anglocentric document seems to regard as definitive for global Anglicanism. Where Anglicanism has been clear, in a consensus that includes the full diversity of Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christianity, is that the Old Testament is integral to Christian Scripture, but is interpreted in the light of Christ. In other words, the books of Hebrew Scripture that constitute the Christian Old Testament, the parameters of which are by no means agreed ecumenically,<sup>363</sup> are not superseded, still less discarded, but their significance for Christians is to be discerned and attained in the light of Christ. This does not exclude the insights of critical exegesis, at least for some Anglicans. However, it does preclude any interpretation of the culmination of human history on the basis of the Old Testament alone, or without regard for the universality of God’s saving work in Christ as expounded in the books of the New Testament — within which the fruit of the intellectual and spiritual struggle of the apostle Paul in Romans 9–11 is of particular significance.<sup>364</sup>

The concluding paragraph of this section finally pays lip service to justice (7.29). It quite correctly repudiates the notions both that a single nation, namely Israel, is the exclusive beneficiary of divine providence, and also that that same nation is merely an instrument in bringing divine judgement upon others. The problem with this paragraph, other than its vagueness, is that the principles it espouses have had absolutely no impact on the preceding chapters of the report. The human rights of all, and justice without respect of race, religion or culture, which ought to have been the fundamental premises of the report, and of Anglican approaches to any and all analogous issues, are reduced to a platitudinous afterthought. Theology has been used to obfuscate rather than illuminate, so that any opportunity for this report to make a distinctive contribution to addressing emotive and contentious issues has been wasted.

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<sup>363</sup> As well as the difference between Western Catholic and Protestant churches with regard to the status of those books that the latter deem to be ‘Apocrypha’, the Oriental Orthodox churches diverge considerably in their canons of both Testaments of Scripture.

<sup>364</sup> See earlier discussion of Section 2.8 of the report, and references to scholarship on this passage there.

The final section of this chapter, Holy City and Temple (7.30–7.39), begins with a somewhat over-simplified statement on the position that Jerusalem has occupied in Christianity: '[T]he holy city is, in virtually every tradition of Christianity, a symbol of hope and holiness' (7.30). This may be news to many.<sup>365</sup> Perhaps the quotidian experience of Christians living in Jerusalem today is somewhat different, with the social and economic consequences of constant attempts since 1967 to force people from their homes and places of work, increasing harassment at checkpoints, and the omnipresence of heavily armed and trigger-happy police acting with impunity, perverting rather than upholding 'law and order', justice, peace and liberty. Even if Jerusalem is 'a symbol of hope and holiness' for many Christians, this is entirely irrelevant to questions of justice, and the right of Palestinians — Christian and Muslim alike — to live in peace and security in their homes and to pursue their lawful and benign economic activities without discrimination, obstruction and harassment.

Similarly, that in Judaism 'Jerusalem is uniquely selected by the eternal God, the place which he [*sic*] has chosen for his [*sic*] name to dwell' (7.31), whatever the origins of the notion, does not translate into an entitlement to expel Palestinians from their property there, or to desecrate and destroy places that are sacred to other religious traditions. Insofar as the second commandment of the Decalogue is at all relevant, Islam is in every respect as aniconic as Judaism, and the varieties of Christian iconography displayed in Jerusalem and elsewhere do not constitute idolatry in the traditions that use them. Even if Jerusalem having been 'uniquely selected' is more than a theological veneer to David's military conquest of the city, and the ideology propagated by his successors as an instrument of centralisation and entrenchment of power in their dynasty, in Christian theology the heir to God's promises to David is Jesus Christ, not a secular and racist political entity for whom the ideology was manipulable into an agenda of conquest and occupation. Whether or not God's presence in the temple was 'almost tangible' (7.32), and by whom, that some strands of Judaism have cherished hopes of future restoration does not constitute any legal or moral right to realise that hope in the present, or indeed in the future. Notwithstanding that the Muslim traditions associated with the site may be considered ahistorical, and that the Islamic building programme there was intended to demonstrate the 'supersession of both Judaism and Christianity', these shrines have stood for a millennium longer than any previous Jewish temple. The site occupied by the Haram al-Sharif is irrelevant to Christian devotion, and equally to the observance of Judaism as it has evolved since the rabbinic

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<sup>365</sup> Cf. Tarazi, *Land and Covenant*.

period — other than in the prohibition upon entry,<sup>366</sup> to avoid violating the sanctity of the site of the former temple. This prohibition has been flouted with increasing regularity and increasing violence both by those who claim continuity with that same rabbinic tradition, and by secularists for whom the site may be of historical interest but is not a place of any sanctity. However ‘heartfelt’ the ‘longing’ (7.33), the traditional site of the temple was irrelevant to the secular Zionist agenda, and rose to prominence as a supposedly inalienable possession only after the opportunistic and highly destructive occupation of east Jerusalem by Israel in 1967. Since that time, this notion has been emphasised and exploited as a rationale for retaining illegally and violently acquired territory.<sup>367</sup>

The obsession of Christian Zionism with the so-called ‘temple mount’ is quite correctly recognised as nothing to do with affirmation of Jewish piety and eschatological hopes, and everything to do with the realisation of a particular perversion of Christian eschatology (7.34).<sup>368</sup> However, this was already perfectly obvious a century before the report was written, and is far from being a valuable and original insight, dependent on the mediocre scholarship and theology reflected throughout its pages. The notion that a Jewish temple needs to be constructed on the traditional but unproven site of the former temples is without any basis in sound or responsible biblical exegesis. In distancing ‘Anglicans’ from such ignorant and irresponsible beliefs (7.35), the report points to the ‘comprehensiveness’ of Anglican congregations in Jerusalem, overlooking the fact that Christ Church is closely associated with CMJ, and has continued to be a haven for Christian Zionists of varying degrees of militancy, and, in an attempt to negotiate the ambiguities of its attitude to Judaism, seeks on its website to dispel ‘seven myths’ concerning its history and the motives and methods of its engagement with the Jewish community over the two centuries of mission, during the course of which the church was built in 1849.<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> The longstanding practice of avoiding unintentionally violating the former Holy of Holies (which only the high priest might enter) was formalised by the Chief Rabbinate following Israel’s occupation of East Jerusalem, including the old city, in 1967. Although the halakhah is disputed, Israeli police have permitted and participated in violation by militant Zionists of the Haram al-Sharif, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque, with increasing frequency in recent years.

<sup>367</sup> G. Gorenberg, *The End of Days* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

<sup>368</sup> Gorenberg, *The End of Days*.

<sup>369</sup> [www.christchurchjerusalem.org/about-us/our-history/seven-myths/](http://www.christchurchjerusalem.org/about-us/our-history/seven-myths/) [accessed 4 September 2021].

The claim that ‘space must be provided for all communities to live together in harmony and to work together to accommodate their differences peacefully and respectfully’ (7.35) begs the question of who should provide that space. The concerted attempts by various Zionist organisations to force Christians and Muslims from their homes, places of work and places of worship so that space might be provided for Jewish settlers are well documented.<sup>370</sup> While some of the transactions have been facilitated by corrupt officials of long-established Christian communities, there have since 1967 been frequent instances of violent coercion and harassment of Palestinian owners and long-term tenants in Jerusalem, as in other parts of Palestine, with the collusion and encouragement of both central government organs and the Jerusalem municipality. If the authors of the report do not regard this as legitimate implementation of the imperative that ‘space must be provided [...]’, then they should have explained with a great deal more care how they envisaged this might be possible in a city that has seen continuous occupation for centuries, whose original parameters were confined by walls, and whose expansion has become a means of dispossessing Palestinians of their homes and agricultural land in adjacent villages, and has by no means provided space for all communities.

The emphasis on the distinctive place of Jerusalem in Christian history (7.36) is irrelevant to the universal demands of justice for all, irrespective of (real or ascribed) ethnicity and religion. No Anglican or other principle should be permitted to obfuscate this issue, and it needs to be recognised how myth and history alike are abused to justify violent encroachment on the homes, livelihood and cultural heritage of others. Universal values apply universally, irrespective of the historical associations of any particular place. There is no possibility that Jerusalem will be a place where diverse communities can live in harmony (7.37) while special privileges for some, at the expense of others, are allowed on the basis of real or imagined historical and religious pretexts.

That ‘there is no continuing place in Christian theology for a physical temple’ (7.37) ought not to be contentious. On the contrary, this has been the consensus of Christian thought — Jewish and ‘Gentile’ alike — since the first century.<sup>371</sup> That Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed the end of the temple, and that

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<sup>370</sup> Dumper, *Old City of Jerusalem*; Masalha, *Palestine*.

<sup>371</sup> J. E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); N. H. Taylor, ‘Jerusalem and the Temple in early Christian Life and Teaching’, *Neotestamentica*, 33 (1999), 445–61; P. W. L. Walker, *Holy City, Holy Places* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); *Jesus and the Holy City* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2001); *Jerusalem: Past and Present in the Purposes of*

this was at the very least a major catalyst for his arrest and crucifixion, is clearly stated in the gospels, quite apart from the very substantial volume of scholarship that has explored the relevant pericopae further.<sup>372</sup> Irrespective of how relevant a new temple may be to the aspirations of some contemporary Jewish groups, Christian Zionist propagation thereof is intended to be incendiary, and should be unequivocally repudiated.

In arguing for a 'sacramental' connection between the terrestrial city of Jerusalem and the eschatological city of Revelation 21–22 (7.38), the report is suggestive, but fails to develop the idea adequately. While recognising the ambiguities of the present city, and the best and the worst of human nature reflected in the aspirations and conflicts that have focused on that place, the need for caution in building a theological principle on apocalyptic literature is ignored. Given the recklessness of Christian Zionism — whether the naivety of the ignorant or the cynical manipulation of Scripture by the opportunistic — in reading Revelation in the interests not merely of describing but also of precipitating an eschatological and genocidal conflagration, any such theological speculation by responsible Christians requires extreme care, thorough exegesis, and explicit acknowledgement that the interpretation offered involves rather more eisegesis than exegesis. It also needs to be acknowledged categorically that such interpretations have no bearing upon the human rights of the indigenous population of the city and its hinterland today, or at any time in the future.

Any Christian interpretation of Jerusalem in such sacramental terms (7.39) may surely expound a Christian interpretation of the city as the locus of particular moments in God's revelation and saving work in the world — past, present and future — while at the same time affirming that the same place evokes significantly different memories and hopes in others, most particularly among Jews and Muslims. Nevertheless, a Christian theological

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*God*, ed. by P. W. L. Walker (Cambridge: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992); R. L. Wilken, *The Land called Holy* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

<sup>372</sup> Mk 13.1–3; 14.58; 15.29; Acts 6.14. Cf. M. J. Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teaching of Jesus* (New York: Edward Mellen Press, 1984); B. D. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus* (University Park PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992); J. D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus* (San Francisco CA: Harper San Francisco, 1991); E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985); N. H. Taylor, 'Jerusalem and the Temple in Early Christian Life and Teaching'; 'Luke-Acts and the Temple'; 'Palestinian Christianity and the Caligula Crisis', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 61 (1996), 101–24; 62 (1996), 13–41; 'Stephen, the Temple, and early Christian Eschatology'.



motif can be meaningful and authoritative only within the community of the Church, and within such Christian traditions as attach value to holy places and to the modes of interpretation through which such notions are developed and expounded. Such a theological motif cannot prescribe how others might interpret the same symbols, even if it invites them to find a commonality that builds peace upon a foundation of justice. A report that gives, at the very least, tacit endorsement to Zionism in all its forms, distancing itself only from the more bizarre manifestations of the Christian version thereof, is not committed to justice, and does not seek peace. Therefore this report fails as a work of Christian theology, and is wholly inadequate, if not perversely misleading, as a resource for further reflection across the Anglican Communion. Christian Zionism is a heresy, and a menace to world peace — and it is more than a contributory factor to the absence of peace in the Middle East. It cannot be defended theologically, and it needs to be repudiated unequivocally.

### **Conclusion**

There is no ‘other side to the story’ in settler-colonialism just like there is no ‘other side’ to the story in slavery, racism, discrimination, or child abuse. A long time ago we stopped debating with those who oppose women’s equality or women’s right to vote. It would be preposterous and possibly even criminal in some countries to suggest that child molesters have a valid point of view, that slavery is useful to our economy, or that Hitler’s genocidal racial ideology had merit. But settler-colonialism in Palestine is still exempt.

[...] Settler-colonialism is a crime against humanity and it needs to be recognised and named as such. When we deal with a crime the focus must be on the crime not on identities. Jewish Israelis, the perpetrators of settler-colonialism, do not deserve special treatment or consideration for any reason. Neither do the Palestinian people, the victims of Israeli settler-colonialism, deserve to be seen as lesser victims. A crime is a crime.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> Abarbanel, *Beyond Tribal Loyalties*, p. 27. Ms Abarbanel was born and raised in Israel. She emigrated to Australia as an adult, was baptised there in an Anglican church, and qualified as a psychotherapist. She now practises in Scotland, where she is a sought-after trainer and supervisor. and has written a series of books integrating physiological, evolutionary and psychological approaches to human wellbeing. She has been an outspoken advocate for Palestinian rights, and forthright in her analysis of Zionism and Israeli society: [www.fullyhuman.co.uk/](http://www.fullyhuman.co.uk/) [accessed 15 October 2022].

*Land of Promise?* fails at every level. Poor history, bad theology and justice for the Palestinians are subordinated to feel-good relations between the Church of England and the Orthodox Chief Rabbinate and the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The breadth, depth and richness of the Jewish tradition are caricatured, and Jews of conscience who have taken a courageous, principled and costly stand against Zionism are contemptuously ignored. The anti-Semitism at the heart of Christian Zionism is ignored, and the dangers to human life posed by its alliance with global capitalism and militarism are either not sufficiently appreciated, or conveniently overlooked. The report has failed to move beyond the narrow and elitist parameters of inter-faith relations in the supposedly liberal democratic societies of western Europe and North America. Moreover, it has presumed to address issues of justice and human rights in the Levant from the perspective and for the convenience of the prevailing and former military and colonial superpowers that have for centuries presumed to apportion sovereignty over the world and its resources for their own benefit.

The Anglican Communion, and its member Churches, need to face urgently and unequivocally the prevailing tyranny of Israel and the longstanding Zionist agenda of incremental dispossession of the Palestinians, and to acknowledge the historical and continuing culpability of successive UK and other European and North American governments in nurturing and entrenching the Israeli regime; in this the Church of England has a particular responsibility. Anglicans also need to recognise, and repent of, the continuing complicity of the Church of England and its hierarchy not only in conferring a veneer of religious respectability upon British imperialism, but also in fostering the toxic theological and populist milieu in which anti-Semitism and British Israelism, and other varieties of racism, have flourished, and which encouraged the development of Christian Zionism among unlettered and disenfranchised Christians in Britain and Ireland. That these attitudes which have been exported to other parts of the world, not least North America, have their counterpart in other European countries, and have been overtaken by capitalist self-interest in driving complicity in crimes against humanity, in no way diminishes either the historical responsibility of the Church of England or the continuing responsibility of Anglicans to take an unequivocal prophetic stand for justice and human rights in Palestine, and to work for peace founded upon justice in the Middle East and throughout the world.

## REVIEWS

Paul Anthony Dominiak, *Richard Hooker: The Architecture of Participation*.  
T&T Clark Studies in English Theology (London: T & T Clark, 2020).  
viii, 226 pp. Hardback ISBN 978-0-567-68507-0.

Richard Hooker is generally regarded as one of the most seminal theologians of Anglicanism, and is accordingly one whose heritage has been vigorously contested. Anglo-Catholics and conservative evangelicals, other than those who identify with his Puritan adversaries, and also most parties in between, have sought to claim Hooker as their icon. Much of the debate has focused on such issues as episcopacy and church order, or the alleged mantra of Scripture, Tradition and Reason. This book digs deeper, exploring the fundamental premises of Hooker's theology, and locating his arguments in their intellectual context.

Dominiak explores Hooker's metaphysics, particularly in relation to God and humanity, and the role of the Church and the 'Commonwealth' therein, with the notion of participation in God providing the 'architectural' foundation upon which Hooker addresses the theological, political and ecclesiological issues of his day. Dominiak also explores how Hooker draws upon medieval scholasticism, Eastern Orthodox theological traditions and the Graeco-Roman classics for the language and logic of his arguments, in dialogue with the European reformers and Puritan interlocutors, and justifies doing so against the insistence of the latter upon 'sola Scriptura'. This is not a book for the casual reader. It is dense and demanding, requiring some familiarity with Hooker's works and the context in which they were written, and with the intellectual traditions upon which he drew. Dominiak's argument for intellectual and theological coherence in Hooker's works, written in successive books over a period of several years, with the final volumes published posthumously, is persuasive, and lays the ground for very much more nuanced recourse to the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* in addressing the issues of our own day.

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