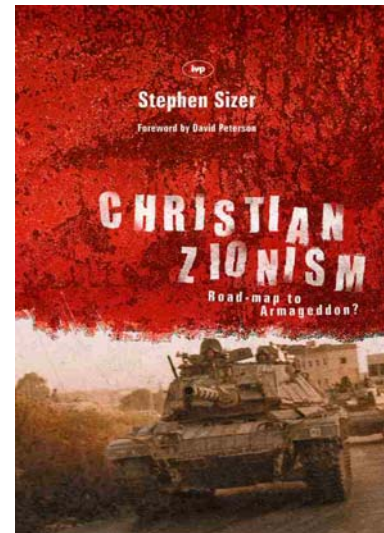


Christian Zionism: Road Map to Armageddon?

Reviews

"I wanted to congratulate you on your book ... Like yourself in one regard, I have a long history of what I call "prediction addiction" -- and its obvious flaws and failures. Your book seems to be a careful and much needed analysis of the destructive wake left by pre-millennial dispensationalism. Thank you! My particular version of dispensationalism was informed by a potent and lethal mixture of sabbatarianism and British Israelism as championed by Herbert W. Armstrong... God rescued me (and many others, thank God) from these heretical notions... What Dr. Sizer addresses is absolutely critical for Christians in North America to understand. **Greg Albrecht**, President of Plain Truth Ministries, and Editor-in-Chief, The Plain Truth magazine (author of *Revelation Revolution & Bad News Religion*).



"Nearly a thousand years ago, European Crusaders tried to colonise Palestine, fuelling religious hatred and bringing the indigenous Christian community close to extinction. It is tragic, if ironic, that misguided Western Christian Zionists, by their one-sided political support for Israel, are today succeeding where the Crusaders failed. Stephen Sizer's ground-breaking new book on Christian Zionism exposes how this heretical theology is having devastating political consequences in the Middle East. It is heartbreaking to see misguided Christians identifying more with Ahab and Jezebel than with Naboth. On a daily basis we are seeing our land confiscated, our vineyards destroyed, our homes demolished, our children traumatised and our future negated for the sake of an earthly kingdom which the Lord Jesus has plainly repudiated. I commend Stephen's important and prophetic book in calling Evangelical Christians, in particular, to break the spiral of violence and hatred. Instead we must obey the teachings of the Prince of Peace who has called us to a ministry of reconciliation rather than listen to the false prophets of Armageddon whose apocalyptic message is in danger of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy." **The Right Revd Riah Abu El Assal**, Retired Episcopal Bishop of Jerusalem (author of *Caught in Between*).

"I believe Stephen Sizer is one of the most authoritative scholars in the world on the vital issue of Christian Zionism. He is a very important voice speaking out against this destructive movement that is killing us [Palestinians] through its theology." **Canon Naim Ateek**, Founder & Director of Sabeel, Jerusalem (author of *Justice and Only Justice*).

"I hope it will spread widely in evangelical circles and I am particularly glad that IVP have published it, thereby endorsing our judgment. [Christian Zionism] is an ultimately totally unbiblical menace." **Right Revd Simon Barrington-Ward**, retired Bishop of Coventry and former Principal of Crowther Hall, Selly Oak Colleges and General Secretary of the Church Mission Society. Presently Chaplain to the staff of Ridley Hall, Cambridge. (author of *Love Will Out, Why God?, The Jesus Prayer* and co-author of *Praying the Jesus Prayer*)

"Having heard Stephen Sizer at the Sabeel International Conference in Jerusalem a year and a half ago, I can vouch for him as an articulate and vigorous speaker, and an expert on Christian Zionism." **Right Revd Allen Bartlett**, Assisting Bishop of the Diocese of Washington.

"I think your book is fantastic... I'm grateful for your advocacy of the Church as the Bride... This is a large book, as well it should be, since it addresses a large issue. At stake in the argument is the very definition of the identity of the Church. Some theologies, that make Israel central to the purposes of God and to the processes of history, reduce the Church to the status of concubine while Israel becomes the Bride. Sizer's work provides a timely reminder that, according to the New Testament, God's people is to be identified on the basis of grace, not of race." **Professor Gilbert Bilezikian**, Professor Emeritus, Wheaton College and founding leader of Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, Illinois, (author of *The Liberated Gospel, Beyond Sex Roles, Christianity 101* and *Community 101*)

"Sizer's well-researched study is of considerable value... Christian Zionism unearths the taproot of a belief system that exerts enormous influence in contemporary America. Based on supposedly infallible sacred texts, these beliefs help determine how millions of Americans, and millions more worldwide, view the bloody and seemingly insoluble conflicts that torment the Middle East, bringing such suffering and heartache to its peoples." **Professor Paul Boyer**, Merle Curti Professor of History Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Madison (editor-in-chief of the *Oxford Companion to American History*, author of *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft, Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920*, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*, *Fallout: A Historian Reflects on America's Half-Century Encounter With Nuclear Weapons*)

"Stephen Sizer has written a masterly book on a controversial subject. Some of us have soaked up teaching about Christian Zionism from the footnotes of a Schofield Reference Bible or from Hal Lindsey's bestseller *The Late Great Planet Earth*, or from the leaders of certain Christian tours to Israel. Probably we have read very little that critically examines its basic assumptions. Sizer sets out to evaluate Christian Zionism critically from a biblical and historical perspective... Sizer's clear thinking, scholarly and reverent critique of Christian Zionism certainly needs to be read alongside the Scriptures, with the utmost seriousness." **Canon Gordon Bridger**, former Principal of Oak Hill College, 1987-96, (author of *The Man from Outside, A Day that Changed the World, Bible Study Commentary 1 Corinthians-Galatians*).

"Stephen Sizer's *Christian Zionism : Road Map to Armageddon?* is essential reading for any western evangelical trying to understand the religious dimensions of American support for Israel. Sizer writes as an insider within the church, not as a critic watching from afar. And he shows with exacting clarity how evangelical eschatology has now embedded itself in a modern political ideology. One quick read of this book will change anyone's perspective on the Middle East permanently." **Professor Gary M. Burge**, Professor of New Testament, Wheaton College & Graduate School, Wheaton (author of *Whose Land, Whose Promise? What Christians Are Not Being Told About Israel and the Palestinians*).

"Stephen Sizer exposes the inconsistencies of much alleged 'literal interpretation' of much Christian Zionism and demonstrates its pernicious and widespread political consequences." **Canon Dr Michael Butterworth**, Principal of the St Albans and Oxford Ministry Course, Oxford.

"A comprehensive survey describing how Christians have embraced a theological perspective that has encouraged justice for Jews but has also led to the oppression of Palestinian people and extreme hostility between Christians and Muslims worldwide." **Professor Tony Campolo**, Professor of Sociology, Eastern University (My Top 5 Books on Social Justice, *Christianity Today*, January 2008 and author *Speaking My Mind, The God of Intimacy and Action, Adventures in Missing the Point, Letters to a Young Evangelical, Twenty Hot Potatoes Christians Are Afraid to Touch, Following Jesus Without Embarrassing God, Let me Tell You a Story, Carpe Diem, How Movies Helped Save My Soul, Its Friday But Sunday's Comin, Fifty Ways You Can Help Save the Planet, The Gospel With Extra Salt*)

"It is very timely and ... a serious work on what is such a very troubling and troublesome issue for the Christians of the Holy Land as well as world wide." **Right Revd Elias Chacour**, Greek Melkite Bishop of Israel and founder of the Mar Elias Educational Institutions, Ibillin, Galilee (author of *Blood Brothers & We Belong to the Land*).

"This is a masterly and highly readable analysis of the history, the world-view and the political implications of Christian Zionism. Sizer has thrown down the gauntlet in a way that demands a response from those who support the state of Israel for theological reasons." **Colin Chapman**, Lecturer in Islamic Studies at the Near East School of Theology, Lebanon. (author of *Whose Promised Land?, Whose Promised City? & Cross and Crescent*).

"The invaluable contribution of Stephen Sizer's book, *Christian Zionism*, is that he discusses in detail a lesser-acknowledged kind of Zionism, one that, he claims, predated political Zionism by 60

years (p. 254). Sizer, chairman of the International Bible Society in England, reveals a Christian Zionism that, for its own distinctly theological reasons, supports Israel's occupation of Palestinian land. **Mark Chmiel**, Adjunct professor of Theological Studies at St. Louis University and of Religious Studies at Webster University. (author of *Elie Wiesel and the Politics of Moral Leadership*)

"I recommend the book wholeheartedly. It is timely, and really vital, in view of the present attitude of both U.S. and British governments to the Israel-Palestine conflict. It demonstrates how a firm principle of Christian hope has been distorted and misapplied in a cruel and destructive manner. Until the Christian attitude to Zionism is changed, I fear that the situation will continue to deteriorate and that those evangelicals who have embraced Zionism will continue to do immense damage to the Christian Church. I think it is a "must read" book for every serious evangelical today."

Professor Ron Clements, Emeritus Professor of Old Testament Studies, King's College, London, (author of *Wisdom for a Changing World: Wisdom in Old Testament Theology: Berkeley Tanner Lectures; Old Testament Theology: A Fresh Approach, Isaiah 1-13: The New Century Bible Commentary, Wisdom in Theology, Ezekiel: Westminster Bible Companion, Prophecy and Tradition, One Hundred Years of Old Testament Interpretation*).

"My Serena and I simply adored your CD, which we listened to on a journey to Norfolk and back. The miles flew by! I thought it was superb, crystal clear and challenging and both of us wished it could have been twice as long. Unpacking the mess is going to be incredibly difficult and, sadly, the Church seems to be absolutely divided and rather viciously so on the issues." **Charlie Colchester**, International Director, CARE.

"This study of Christian Zionism, based on Stephen Sizer's doctoral thesis, is of seminal significance. It provides a fascinating survey of the history of Christian Zionism and an in-depth analysis of the theology of this highly important and influential movement." **Rabbi Professor Dan Cohn-Sherbok**, Professor of Judaism and Director of the Centre for the Study of the World's Religions, University of Wales, Lampeter. (author of *Israel: The History of an Idea, Messianic Judaism & Antisemitism*).

"There is admirable depth and careful perspective in Stephen Sizer's comprehensive survey of the political, exegetical and moral implications of Christian Zionism. If the apocalyptic ones, darkly suggested by the cover design, remain the hidden future, the logic for them is well clarified... Readers who can match the author's capacity for incisive documentation and his rigorous way with complexity are rewarded with a masterly presentation with which to wrestle... His commendable labours will well equip his readers to address them. Meanwhile, perhaps we have to say that Armageddon also is sub judice." **The Right Revd Kenneth Cragg**, retired Assistant Bishop in Jerusalem (author of *The Call of the Minaret; The Arab Christian; Mohammed and the Christian; Readings in the Qur'an; The House of Islam; Islam among the Spires; Troubled by Truth; The Dome and the Rock*).

"Stephen Sizer's, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* is a book every Christian should read. Christian Zionism is one of the most serious issues of our time. Despite being seriously flawed, it has significantly shaped the beliefs of many sincere Christian people as well as foreign policy of governments concerning the Middle East. Sizer, with exacting and extensive research, has exposed Christian Zionism as not only erroneous, but dangerous. This is without doubt the most thorough critique I have read and I urge Christians everywhere to read it also." **Alistair Donaldson**, Ministry Internship and Field Education Coordinator, Bible College of New Zealand, Christchurch, New Zealand.

"Well, that was absolutely fantastic! A thousand thanks for two of the best hours that I have had at Oak Hill and that the students will have throughout CD 6.12. These have not only given us a much clearer grasp of the various dimensions of dispensationalism but have also provoked further thought about the implications for our own personal commitments and teaching ministry." **Revd Dr David Field**, Lecturer in Christian Doctrine and Ethics & Postgraduate Course Leader, Oak Hill Theological College, London.

"Drawing on history, politics and theology, Stephen Sizer raises the level of strategic conversation regarding the Middle East crisis. His book will help leaders in both America and Europe generate "gamechanging" scenarios for faith to diffuse the doomsday plan created by a century of Zionism." **Jay Gary**, Founder of Christian Futures Network (author of *The Star of 2000*).

"You are a brave man as ever and I am sure I am not alone in being grateful to you for the stand you have taken which is hugely needed both in the Christian community and the wider world." **Right Revd John Gladwin**, Bishop of Chelmsford. (author of *God's People in God's World*).

"Sizer has done a magnificent job in this book, presenting us with a comprehensive overview of Christian Zionism's variant streams, historical developments and theologies which allows anyone willing to approach the subject with an open mind to make their own assessment... This is a book that deserves the widest possible readership. No one who has a concern for the Middle East should ignore the issues raised; to do so is - returning to Sizer's introduction - 'nothing less than to perpetuate the evil of the Levite in the Parable of the Good Samaritan who walked by on the other side.' (p.13). The time for silence is over: those who are Israel's true friends must speak out against Israel's behaviour before this nation pushes itself over the brink and into Armageddon." **Phil Groom**, Reviews Editor of Christian Book Reviews and manager of London School of Theology Books & Resources. Published by Evangelical Quarterly.

"I can't thank you enough for helping me dig to the essence of Christian Zionism as a theology. It's a satirist's dream. I feel like I'm having all the fun while you do the heavy lifting. I write comedy and spike it with embed links to your on-line scholarship." **Irving Wesley Hall** (author of *We're not in Kansas Anymore* and co-author of *In Search of Truth*) www.notinkansas.us

"Stephen Sizer's Christian Zionism dramatically demonstrates how a politicized religious movement with a dubious pedigree is a prescription for disaster. From caricaturing Arabs to catalyzing Armageddon, Christian Zionist beliefs and behaviors are the antithesis of biblical Christianity." **Hank Hanegraaff**, President of the Christian Research Institute and host of the Bible Answer Man broadcast (author of *Christianity in Crisis, Counterfeit Revival & The Apocalypse Code*) www.equip.org

"A well written book on a vital subject. All Christians should read this book which documents one of the most important subjects to face us in the 21st century." **Father Michael Harper**, Dean of the British Antiochian Orthodox Deanery and a director of The Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Wesley House, Cambridge. (author of *A Faith Fulfilled & Let My People Grow*).

"The Christian world has needed an alternative theology towards Israel for over 50 years, as a polemic to the messianic Zionism which continues to fan the flames of conflict in the Middle East. Evangelical Christians have contributed over \$65 billion in the last 5 decades to help Jews immigrate to Israel on the basis of an eschatological vision which extends the wait for a solution to the problems in Israel. With Dr. Sizer's examination of a covenant based theology towards Israel offers a basis for liberation from its role in this conflict." **Douglas Heming**, King's College Institute for Faith and Foreign Policy, University of London.

"Once again a Semitic group of people are suffering, particularly through the racism of Christians - this time it's the Palestinians. Stephen Sizer's masterly overview on Christian Zionism shows us how this appalling fact becomes a reality. Hopefully it will help Christians to expunge all racism and anti-Semitism (whether against Palestinian or Jew) from our theology and become the peacemakers Jesus called us to be. As Stephen traces the history of Christian Zionism, our eyes are opened to a theology that manipulates and oppresses and shows no dignity or justice to Jew or Palestinian. It is time for a theology that values all equally instead of a theology that sees God as biased." **Canon Garth Hewitt**, Founder and International Director of the Amos Trust and Canon of St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem (author of *Pilgrims and Peacemakers, Journey to Jerusalem & Towards the Dawn*).

"I believe the Christian Churches must remain indebted to Stephen Sizer for his serious and scholarly analysis of Christian Zionism and the origins of uncritical support for the policies of the present day Israeli state." **Right Revd Christopher Hill**, Bishop of Guildford.

"When the lines are not clearly drawn and Premillennialism is confused with Christian Zionism, the book *Christian Zionism. Road-map to Armageddon?* is an essential reading. Stephen Sizer goes into the historical roots, the theological arguments and the political implications of Christian Zionism." **Dr Nabeel T. Jabbour**, Visiting Professor of Columbia Biblical Seminary, Tyndale Seminary, Western Seminary and Whitworth College and on the staff of the Navigators, Colorado Springs (author of *The Rumbling Volcano*, *The Unseen Reality*, *The Many Faces of Islam*, *Fi Khuta Sayyid*, and *Unshackled & Growing*).

"Stephen Sizer's *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* provides a detailed and thoughtful critique of the framework Hagee and many others enthusiastically embrace. Sizer is vicar of Christ Church in Surrey, England, and chair of the International Bible Society in the United Kingdom. His book explores the historical development, theological underpinnings, and political implications of Christian Zionism, a movement that began in Britain in the 19th century... Americans have been inundated with images and information on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for decades. Numerous and often conflicting images and impressions leave many with a kind of "detailed ignorance." Far too few have a coherent framework for understanding and interpreting events in ways that can lead to constructive advocacy, either as concerned citizens or people of faith. The books by Carter and Sizer offer helpful guidance for those who seek to understand the multiple and often convoluted political and religious dynamics that often thwart hopes for a more peaceful future in the Middle East." **Dr. Charles Kimball**, Professor of Comparative Religion, Wake Forest University Department of Religion and Divinity School (author of *When Religion Becomes Evil*)

"Stephen Sizer is impressive in his ability to address one of the most complex issues of our day with an air of ease and simplicity... his presentations were seminal and exactly what leaders of international ministries such as ours needed to receive." **Timothy R. King**, President, Presence Ministries International, Colorado Springs (author of *The Spirit of Prophecy*).

"The best analysis of Christian Zionism and Darbyite Ideology is by Stephen Sizer" **Dr Clifford A Kiracofe**, adjunct professor in the department of political studies at the Virginia Military Institute, in "*The New American Imperialism: Some Historical Light*", *Executive Intelligence Review*, 2005.

"Stephen Sizer's book is a definitive treatment of a highly significant phenomenon in the contemporary Christian world. It is incisive, analytic, and very well informed. This is the key book you need to understand a disturbing trend in the Christian scene." **Dr Peter Lineham**, Associate Professor of History & Head of School of Social and Cultural Studies, Albany Campus, Massey University, New Zealand. (author of *Bible and Society*, *There we found Brethren: a history of Brethren Assemblies in New Zealand*, *No Ordinary Union*, *Transplanted Christianity*, *New Zealand Religious History: A Bibliography*).

"I am pleased to commend Stephen Sizer's masterly book for exposing the sectarian roots, dubious theology and destructive consequences of Christian Zionism. It shifts the focus of God's redemptive purposes away from the Church and onto a contemporary secular State. God's continuing love for the Jewish people must not be confused with aspirations for an earthly kingdom which Jesus has already repudiated." **Prebendary Dick Lucas**, Chairman of the Proclamation Trust and Rector Emeritus of St Helen's, Bishopsgate, London (author of *Teaching John Unlocking the Gospel of John for the Expositor*, *The Unashamed Workman: Tools for Biblical Preaching*; *Read Mark Learn Romans*; *The Message of Colossians & the Message of 2 Peter & Jude in the 'Bible Speaks Today' series* published by IVP).

"I just finished reading your excellent book *Christian Zionism*, which I found to be excellent. It slices through some of the terribly muddy thinking regarding modern-day Israel and the last times which seems to characterize the majority of American evangelicalism. You are to be congratulated on the clarity of your presentation as well as the courage it takes to present it! I think you are right on

target." **Dr Bruce A. McDonald**, Visiting Professor of Religion, Texas Wesleyan University, Fort Worth, Texas.

"If any book deserves the accolade of being the definitive critique of 'Christian Zionism', it is this. Popular, lucid and readable, this is a dispassionate and scholarly yet critical evaluation of the phenomenon. His theological critique of Dispensationalist Zionism, is masterly - notably of the way modern advocates such as Hal Lindsey manage to find America in the Bible!" **Dr Anthony McRoy**, Lecturer in Islamics, Evangelical Theological College, Wales.

"Congratulations on Christian Zionism. The index alone makes my mouth water, since this is the scholarly treatment to counteract the rabid prophecy pack for which I had been searching. I couldn't be happier that this is published. You and I see eye to eye on this issue... Yours is a true prophetic voice so badly needed in the current prophecy frenzy. And when this mania also affects national and international policy, the danger takes on larger proportions." **Professor Paul Maier**, Russell H. Seibert Professor of Ancient History in the Department of History, College of Arts and Sciences, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo. (author *Josephus - The Essential Works; Eusebius - The Church History; A Skeleton in God's Closet; More Than a Skeleton; (with H. Hanegraaff), The Da Vinci Code - Fact or Fiction?*).

"This is one of the best-researched pieces of work I have read. The author takes immense trouble to substantiate his ideas with evidence, and makes his case convincingly and in a scholarly yet accessible fashion. It makes thought-provoking reading and challenges many too-often unthinkingly held opinions". **Enid Mellor**, Retired Lecturer in Religious Education, King's College, London (author of *The Making of the Old Testament*).

"In the past quarter century, evangelical fundamentalist Christian Zionism has developed into a major theological movement and has made a significant political impact in the United States. Its effect upon the Arab-Israeli conflict continues to increase yearly. Unfortunately, many Christians and non-Christians possess little knowledge of this phenomenon. Stephen Sizer's book is without doubt the best and most comprehensive analysis to date about Christian Zionism; it deserves to be read seriously." **Professor Norton Mezvinsky**, University Professor of History, Central Connecticut State University, (author of *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel, Jewish History, Jewish Religion & Open Secrets: Israeli Nuclear and Foreign Policies*).

"Dr. Sizer exemplifies the researcher and spokesman of truth... His book: *Christian Zionism: Road - Map to Armageddon* is a unique and comprehensive work about the truth of Christian Zionism... I urge every Christian and Muslim to read this book in order to discover the reality of one of the most dangerous and heretical movements in the world which fuels the Arab-Israeli conflict and contradicts the teaching of Jesus by supporting oppression, justifying occupation and perpetuating unjust solutions for the conflict." **Othman Moqbel**, Department of Theology, University of Nottingham, the Former President of The Federation for Students Islamic Societies (FOSIS) (2001-2004) & The Treasurer of the Association of Muslim Chaplains (AMC).

"As I expected, your book was amazing to read, it confirmed much of what I have written in my two books (*The End Times Passover and Why Christians Will Suffer Great Tribulation*). Your book obviously provided the reader much more than I do the detailed information as to who actually is involved behind the birth and evolution of Zionism, and much, much more. Thank you, and God bless your great work." **Joe Ortiz** (author of *The End Times Passover and Why Christians Will Suffer Great Tribulation*)

"Stephen's careful study of this movement demonstrates that theology really matters and, if the theology is wrong, the consequences are disastrous. I hope that Christian Zionists who read this book will recognize that it is written by someone who believes in the inspiration and authority of Scripture as they do, and will consider carefully the challenge he brings to their particular line of interpretation." **Revd Professor David Peterson**, Former Principal of Oak Hill College, London (author of *Engaging with God, Hebrews and Perfection & Possessed by God*).

"Stephen is the foremost authority on the phenomenon of Christian Zionism in Britain today. He communicates with conviction and insight his critique of this profound misreading of the Bible. He challenged me to consider how I read Scripture; what I believe about the relationship of Jewish people to God and how the Christian churches in this country should be supporting the people of Israeli and Palestinian people." **Revd John Rackley**, President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, Minister of Manvers Street Baptist Church, Bath and a Chaplain to the University of Bath.

"Here is a book to help anyone wanting to grapple with the complicated interweaving of history, politics and theology that makes up the fabric of modern Israel. Not all will agree with every detail of Stephen's analysis, but the arguments are compelling and the book is a corrective to the sloppy theology found in some evangelical circles today. This should be essential reading for all who pray and work for the peace of Jerusalem and it will help us to be truly supportive of both Jew and Palestinian." **Canon John Salter**, Vice-chairman of the Garden Tomb Association & member of the Oak Hill College Council.

"I am finding 'Christian Zionism' so very, very helpful - giving clarity to years of holding the views you support, but much more so, in the current political climate... For sometime now I've felt that there will need to be an ideological shift in the USA on a par with that which saw apartheid end in RSA - and much of that had to come from the churches." **The Venerable Eddie Shirras**, retired Vicar of Christ Church, Winchester and Archdeacon of Northolt.

"Let's be clear about this right from the start: Stephen Sizer's tour-de-force, *Christian Zionism – Road-map to Armageddon*, requires an historical, theological, and moral honesty rarely required of readers in this present climate where governments and churches play on fears of terror and being "left behind," where both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures and America's founding documents have been hijacked by fundamentalist and sectarian hermeneutics, and where witch hunts – cultural, political, ecclesiastical, and religious – are being renewed. Sizer's book takes its rightful place as the most comprehensive treatment of this very dangerous Christian heresy, destructive at the very heart of the American church and public square. To say this is a "must-read" for politicians and anyone interested in the Middle East, professors and students, pastors and laypeople, is to understate the need for this book to get into as many hands as possible. The tragedy is that without the role of Christian Zionists in the West, particularly in America – in both the religious and political realms – Israel long ago would have had to deal more honestly with their moral culpability and responsibility in their occupation of Palestinian land and, in the present world of *Realpolitik*, along with their Palestinian partners, move toward a just solution of the present conflict." **Professor L. Michael Spath**, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne, Director, Middle East Peace Education Project, Founding Member, The Institute for the Study of Christian Zionism www.iscz.org

"I knew something about Balfour's 'declaration' but nothing of the Christian Zionism that was behind his support of a homeland for the Jews. Stephen Sizer's excellent book shows the role of Christian fundamentalist thinking in moulding the politics of the UK in the 1800's and which provided the political groundwork that enabled Zionism to flourish. He goes on to show how this same fundamentalism plays a major role in shaping US policy today. In attempting to understand and counter the terrorist attacks that we are seeing today, we need to look not just at Muslim fundamentalism. We must also look at Christian Zionism that had such part in the carve up of the Middle East after the Ottoman Empire, that underpins US support for Israel today and plays a major part in stimulating that Muslim fundamentalism. Misinterpretation of the bible gave rise to Apartheid and was rightly exposed as a heresy. Christian Zionism needs similar treatment. Sizer provides a very well written and researched book giving not only the problems but also ideas for a solution." **Dr Roger Spooner**, retired Honorary Professor, Edinburgh University.

"I am glad to commend Stephen Sizer's ground-breaking critique of Christian Zionism. His comprehensive overview of its roots, its theological basis and its political consequences is very timely. I myself believe that Zionism, both political and Christian, is incompatible with biblical faith. Stephen's book has helped to reinforce this conviction." **Revd Dr John Stott**, Rector Emeritus, All Soul's, Langham Place, London, the principal framer of the Lausanne Covenant (1974) and founder of the Langham Partnership International (author of more than 40 books including *Basic*

Christianity, The Cross of Christ, The Contemporary Christian, Evangelical Truth and New Issues Facing Christians Today, and eight New Testament expositions (Acts, Romans etc.) in the 'Bible Speaks Today' series published by IVP).

"I've read some remarkable books, but this may top the list - a masterpiece. This book is for honest people. The graphic detail beginning with the 18th century, to the present time, includes incredible detail and many quotes from well known prominent people; it compels the reader to see cause and effect in the way the Zionist movement developed, It then is obvious that the inhuman and un-Christian thrust of Zionism becomes the responsibility of all citizens of democratic governments. The remarkable clarity of detail of this book shows the origins of Christian Zionism and how it developed into a powerful force that encourages the destruction of millions of people and also destruction of most of the world. It shows that much of that interest is at cross-purposes with Christian values. The book is amazingly enlightening. If one is sincerely interested in learning how Christian Zionism originated, grew and developed into one of the world's most powerful forces, this is a book to read. It gives frightening detail about the values that lead directly to some of the most cruel activities of our time. It also suggests solutions to this inhuman movement. This masterful, well researched study of Christian Zionism gives an overview of it that exposes the perpetrators with remarkable clarity. If one wishes to know what this phenomenon is and how it now plays out in unbelievably cruel ways, this book can reveal it. A sub-title might well be; But where is Christianity?" **Jake Terpstra**, retired elder of the Christian Reformed Church and Specialist in Child Welfare, Foster Care, Residential Care and Licensing for the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) & member of the Christian Reformed Church of America.

"Sizer carefully exposes the historical roots of Christian Zionism, critiques in the light of the New Testament its literal and futurist interpretation of prophecy, and exposes its almost inevitable political implications...This is a brave, careful and passionate book whose argument deserves to be weighed carefully." **Dr Stephen Travis**, former Vice-Principal, St John's College, Nottingham (author of *Exploring the New Testament; The Doctrine of the Atonement: a Question and an Affirmation; Christ and the Judgment of God; Getting to Know the New Testament; I Believe in the Second Coming of Jesus; Starting with the Bible; Christian Hope and the Future of Man; Editor, All Things to All People - Mission Beyond 2000; Assistant Consultant Editor, The NIV Thematic Study Bible; Consulting Editor, The Macmillan Dictionary of the Bible; Consultant to The New Lion Handbook to the Bible).*

"My Middle East Politics course at Malone College regularly enrolls a number of students who are well-versed in a Christian Zionist worldview-better versed than I am... Stephen Sizer does a wonderful job tracing how these readings of Scripture emerged to create a pro-Israeli political lobby. He helped me better understand where many of my students are coming from... It is the virtue of this book that it puts such remarks into a context that makes them intelligible as part of a theological tradition-albeit, a tradition that seems to ignore Christ's command to love all of our neighbors, including the enemy Samaritans in our lives (Luke 10:25-37)." **Dr Scott Waalkes**, Associate Professor of International Politics, Malone College, Canton, Ohio.
www.barclaypress.com

"Stephen Sizer's work on Christian Zionism is the most important and comprehensive on the subject to date, and should be read by all students of the Middle East and by Christians concerned about a just resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Christian Zionism raises vital theological and political challenges that must be addressed head-on by Christians in the West, particularly evangelicals. The impact of this terribly misguided movement is increasingly putting Christians in the Middle East at risk, and it seems a far cry from the witness and message of Jesus Christ." **Professor Don Wagner**, North Park University, Chicago and Founding Member of the Institute for the Study of Christian Zionism (author of *Anxious for Armageddon & Dying in the Land of Promise*).

"Sizer's book is a strong and powerful corrective to many popular books that too easily catch the Christian imagination (for example Tim LaHaye's Left Behind series and Hal Lindsey's Late Great Planet Earth). He shows convincingly how these dispensational speculations may well be untrue to

the Bible as a whole and certainly undermine genuine peace efforts in the Middle East. It is time for Christians in the West to grow up in their thinking and to wake up to their responsibilities in the land where Jesus once walked with his message of Good News for all... Stephen Sizer has established quite a reputation in recent years through public advocacy and Internet resources for his critical stance towards certain aspects of Dispensationalism and, in particular, Christian Zionism. Now, in this popularised version of his doctoral thesis, we can see the careful fruit of his labour and researches ... Conservative readers of Scriptures need to know and have confidence that there is another, equally, faithful, way of reading the Bible, which is focused resolutely on Jesus as the (surprising but true) fulfilment of the biblical story. ... if you are becoming increasingly aware of how critical are the modern issues in the Middle East, or if you are wanting a faithful, reliable guide to see how Christians have played their part in getting us to where we are today, then there can be few better books than this one of Sizer's-it's a book that could dramatically open your eyes and change your mind and then your actions." **Revd Dr Peter Walker**, Lecturer in New Testament Studies, Biblical Theology and Preaching, Wycliffe Hall, University of Oxford and Fellow of the Anglican Communion Institute (author of *Holy City? Holy Places?*, *Jesus and the Holy City*, *Jesus and His World* & *The Weekend that changed the World*).

"Thank you very much for ... your important book *Christian Zionism*... I am learning from it much that I find deeply illuminating." **Most Revd Timothy Ware**, Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, and retired Spalding Lecturer of Eastern Orthodox Studies, Oxford University (author of *The Orthodox Church*, *The Orthodox Way*, *The Inner Kingdom*, *The Image of the Trinity*, *Praying with Orthodox Tradition*)

"It's been fantastically helpful, and enabled me to get my Hal Lindsay influenced teenage years into complete rather than approximate context." **Dr John Wilks**, Director of Open Learning, The London School of Theology.

"No Christian leader or layperson who is interested in biblical, theological or political matters related to the Middle East or to Israel's part in its future can afford not to read this volume." **Professor Ronald Youngblood**, retired professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Bethel Theological Seminary, San Diego, California, translator of Today's New International Version and Chairman of the Board of Directors of International Bible Society, (author of *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, *the Zondervan NASB Study Bible*, *The Heart of the Old Testament*, & *The Challenge of Bible Translation*).

"...the linking of this [Romans 9-11] to the land, to the founding of the state of Israel, regarding the latter as a sign of the ingathering of Jews at the end of human history, has no real basis in a balanced reading of the scriptures... The kind of massive theological foundation that Christian Zionists give to the state of Israel is both unfounded and very unhelpful in the present context... A thorough analysis of Christian Zionism, together with a critique of it is provided by Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism, Road Map to Armageddon?*" Cited in "Countering Terrorism: Power, Violence and Democracy Post 9/11" **A Report by the Working Group of the Church of England's House of Bishops, chaired by the Rt Revd Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford**, (September 2005); p.46.

A Review by Gordon Bridger for *Evangelicals Now*, July 2005

"Stephen Sizer has written a masterly book on a controversial subject. Some of us have soaked up teaching about Christian Zionism from the footnotes of a Schofield Reference Bible or from Hal Lindsey's bestseller *The Late Great Planet Earth*, or from the leaders of certain Christian tours to Israel. Probably we have read very little that critically examines its basic assumptions. Sizer sets out to evaluate Christian Zionism critically from a biblical and historical perspective.

First, he describes the historical roots of Christian Zionism. He defines 'Zionism' as 'the national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel'. Christian Zionism can be defined simply as 'Christian support for Zionism'. Sizer traces the emergence of Christian Zionism as a movement from early 19th-century

rural England to 21st-century America, and its transition from British sectarianism to mainstream American evangelicalism.

In his second chapter he evaluates the theological emphases of Christian Zionism. These include a literal futurist interpretation of the Bible which inevitably becomes arbitrary. So, according to Mel de Haan (1946), the horsemen of Revelation 9 stand for 'a supernatural army of horrible beings, probably demons', while Hal Lindsey (1973) believes the reference is to Chinese soldiers, and their horses symbolic for 'mobilised ballistic-missile launchers'. Both claim they are offering a 'literal' interpretation of the text.

Sizer also challenges the view that 'the Jews remain God's chosen people, enjoying a unique relationship status and eternal purpose within their own land, separate from any promises made to the church.' He points us to Romans 9 as the key passage to study.

The return of the Jews to Zion (Restorationism); reclaiming Judaea, Samaria and beyond (Eretz Israel); making Jerusalem exclusively Jewish; rebuilding the Temple; and the detailed road map to Armageddon are all aspects of Christian Zionism which are critically examined.

There follows a further fascinating chapter on the 'Political implications of Christian Zionism'. Sizer describes several ways in which Christian Zionism has been translated into political action such as facilitating Jewish emigration, supporting the settlement programme and funding the proposed rebuilding of the Temple.

A final chapter discusses the constructive and destructive aspects of Christian Zionism. It is good that dialogue between Jews and Christians has been encouraged; that humanitarian work has been carried out among Jewish refugees, and that anti-Semitism has been discouraged. But there are some worrying signs too. Sizer argues that Christian Zionism has tended to justify a kind of apartheid within an exclusive Jewish state; that it has undermined some Christian witness in the Middle East by its partisan support for Israel; and that it has incited some religious fanaticism by supporting the building of the Temple on the Temple Mount and disputed Jewish settlements.

Sizer explains that the purpose of his book has been to 'make a case for a covenantalist approach to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by focusing on and critiquing its antithesis, namely dispensational Christian Zionism. He defines covenantalism as that understanding of the Bible that teaches 'that God has only ever had one people throughout history . . . those who share the faith of Abraham, whether Jews or Gentiles . . . and one means of atonement, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ in our place. . . '.

Romans 9-11 and the rest of the New Testament surely support this covenantalist interpretation. Sizer's clear thinking, scholarly and reverent critique of Christian Zionism certainly needs to be read alongside the Scriptures, with the utmost seriousness." **Canon Gordon Bridger**, former Principal of Oak Hill College, 1987-96, (author of *The Man from Outside, A Day that Changed the World, Bible Study Commentary 1 Corinthians-Galatians*), presently serving at Cromer Parish Church. Reviewed in *Evangelicals Now* www.e-n.org.uk/2005-07/3080-Christian-Zionism.htm

A Review by Professor Donald Wagner
Holy Land Studies, Volume 4, 1, May 2005, Edinburgh University Press

Until recently, most Middle Eastern scholars and activists viewed Christian Zionism and the impact of the Christian 'Right' on US Middle East policy as a marginal issue. Despite the fact that Christian Zionists had been instrumental in advancing the cause of Zionism with British politicians prior to the emergence of political Jewish Zionism, few if any of the highly regarded political and historical writings on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have dealt with this topic in a serious manner. Perhaps now there will be a long needed corrective given the undeniable influence of this movement both inside and outside the Bush Administration.

This important new study by the Rev. Dr Stephen Sizer, Vicar of Christ Church, Virginia Water in Surrey and Chair of the International Bible Society (UK) offers the most comprehensive treatment of the phenomenon of Christian Zionism to date. His careful and thorough survey of the historical development, theological beliefs, and political implications of Christian Zionism fills a void that will hopefully encourage the inclusion of these Christian fundamentalists in the political and historical discourse while at the same time alert not only academics, but Christian leaders to take action.

Sizer's volume, *Christian Zionism: Road-Map to Armageddon*, is based on his PhD dissertation and represents a profound and critical analysis of the historical background and theological belief system that gave rise to the movement. Moreover, the author presents his case in a highly readable style that is readily accessible for the non-specialist, which is not always the case with converted academic dissertations. Sizer's strongest skills are demonstrated in his comprehensive grasp of the historical and biblical material utilised by Christian Zionists and their contemporary leaders, theologies, and organisations. His critical analysis of the distorted theology and sometimes frightening political consequences rightly claims that the modern theological movement called 'premillennial dispensationalism'¹ is a rather novel theological system that emerged in rural England during the early 19th century and produced the political step-child we now call Christian Zionism. Here he delineates the various beliefs of the theological movement that were quickly translated into various political expressions beginning with Rev. Louis Way (1770-1840) and the London Jews' Society, which was originally designed to evangelise Jews and 'restore' them to Palestine. This movement made political overtures to the British government and European heads of state, thereby embracing an embryonic political form as early as the 1820s. It was followed by the great evangelical social reformer Lord Shaftesbury (1801-1885), who may have formulated the Zionist mantra 'a land of no people for a people with no land'² some sixty years before the Jewish Zionists utilised it. In England, the political aspects of Christian Zionism culminated in the political efforts of Lord Arthur Balfour, whom Sizer rightly calls 'the most important British politician in relation to Zionism'. Not to be forgotten is the British prime minister David Lloyd George, who worked with Balfour during the critical World War I period to facilitate the Zionists' aspiration. Both Balfour and Lloyd-George were committed Christian Zionists, and while their imperial vision for the Middle East may have been their primary motivation in supporting Zionism, one cannot discount the fact that they were predisposed to Zionist arguments due to their Christian Zionist orientation. Readers will also note the significant role played by the Anglican chaplain to the British embassy in Vienna, the Rev. William Hechler (1845-1931), who assisted Theodor Herzl with high-level political contacts. Herzl acknowledged the importance of Christian Zionists in his Diaries, where he claims Hechler told him: 'We have prepared the ground for you!' Indeed, as readers follow Sizer's narrative, they will sense the importance of Christian Zionism in 'preparing the way' for Jewish Zionism's acceptance by the British and American political elite.³

Sizer is also well versed in the development of the movement in the United States, where it now plays such an important political and religious role. He traces the emergence of John Nelson Darby (1800-82), the renegade Irish Anglican, who became the most influential apostle of Christian Zionism not only in England, but on the European Continent and throughout North America. Darby's theology represents a radical departure from the 'Restorationists' and

¹ 'Premillennialism' is the Christian belief that Jesus will return to establish a literal 1000-year reign on earth.

'Dispensationalism' is a nineteenth century approach to biblical interpretation (hermeneutics) that teaches there are historical epochs (dispensations) in which God will judge humanity according to certain standards, such as the Law (Torah) and Grace (Jesus Christ's atoning death and resurrection).

² Shaftesbury's phrase was 'A country without a people' or 'a people without a country', see my *Anxious for Armageddon* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1995), pp.91-3. See also Albert M Hyamson, *Palestine Under the Mandate* (London: Muthen and Company Ltd., 195(1), pp. 10 and 12.

³ Herzl records his meeting with Rev. Hechler in his Diary entry of 10 March 1896, where he notes that Hechler considered 'Herzl's movement' (Zionism) to be a 'prophetic turning-point'. He went on to describe Hechler's belief that 'at the end of 42 prophetic months' (total 1260 years) the Jews would get Palestine back. The figure he arrived at was 1897-8. Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, vol.2, edited by Raphael Patai (New York: Herzl Press and Thomas Yoseloff, 1960), p.71.

`Covenantal Premillennialism'⁴ of his immediate predecessors like Way and the enormously influential Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, whose goals were to evangelise Jews and `restore' the Jewish state in Palestine' to fulfill biblical prophecy and prepare for the return of Jesus. Darby developed novel doctrines such as the `Rapture' and God's separate and eternal covenant with Israel, the latter of which elevates Israel's role in the latter days as fore-ordained by God and is thus deserving of our unconditional political, economic, and theological support. These radical doctrines are novel in church history and depart from not only mainstream Christian evangelicalism, but all Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, and Catholic theologies. Nevertheless, Darby's influence on the newly emerging American Evangelical movement cannot be overstated, as he single-handedly advanced his novel doctrines during the 1850s-80s, and found ready acceptance. One of his early American disciples, William E. Blackstone (1841-1935) would go on to organise in 1891 the first lobby effort in the United States that called for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, a full six years before Herzl convened the initial World Zionist Congress.

In the political section I thought Sizer understated the impact of Israel's creation in 1948, which Christian Zionists took as confirmation that the `latter days' had begun and the world was in the countdown phase in which would occur various signs, such as Israel's control over the West Bank, all of Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip (even the Golan Heights and South Lebanon), plus the rebuilding of the Third Temple, and the imminent return of Jesus. I also raise a concern over his treatment of the Carter era (1976-80) when the emerging Moral Majority (Rev. Jerry Falwell) and Pat Robertson's political initiatives began to align themselves seriously with the pro-Israel lobby and Israel's Likud Party, in many ways triggered by their opposition to Jimmy Carter⁵, an Evangelical Christian who did not take the Christian Zionist position on Israel. On the other hand, his analysis of the Reagan Administration is superb as he demonstrates why Ronald Reagan was `the Christian Zionist President', believing the state of Israel fulfilled bible prophecy and that we were in the last days, awaiting the Battle of Armageddon and Jesus' imminent return.

Sizer's theological section is utterly remarkable in its grasp of the various nuances within millennial and dispensational theology, both in the UK and US. His `insider's view' is of significance here, since he grew up in conservative evangelicalism and remains an evangelical, he is able to interpret the various forms of millennial theology and assist the reader in recognising both the theological and political consequences. The volume is especially important in this regard as it is addressed specifically to Christian Evangelicals, the fastest growing sector of Christianity worldwide. While the extreme Christian Zionist doctrines and practices are reaching their zenith during the present Bush Administration in the United States, it is important to recognise that perhaps less than a third of all Evangelicals have adopted dispensational doctrines and Christian Zionist ideology. The fact that his volume has been published by one of the most respected Evangelical Christian publishers (InterVarsity Press-UK), gives Sizer's work a valid sense of legitimacy and hence the book will be more acceptable to evangelicals.

My only significant criticism of this otherwise remarkable volume is the final political section, where important developments are described but are often underdeveloped, and not presented with sufficient context and nuance. One readily sees the dire consequences of Christian Zionist alliances with the extreme right-wing in Israel such as the Temple Mount faithful and the settler movement, and much more, but I had the sense that perhaps for space reasons, Sizer was forced to cut significant political material that he has published in other monographs. Nevertheless, he does present a useful outline of the political consequences of Christian Zionist manifestations

⁴ Covenant premillennialism, like the 'e dispensational' form, believes Jesus will establish a thousand year reign on earth but unlike `Premillennial dispensationalism', it does not believe the Jewish people will be elevated above the Church in a separate covenant, but rather, that the Jews will find fulfillment in their belief in Jesus Christ.

⁵ Four factors influenced the convergence of the new politically engaged Christian `right' with the pro-Israel lobby: a) the election of the Likud Party in Israel and its overtures to the Christian `right' in the US; b) the formation of new Christian `right' political organisations such as The Moral Majority; c) the decline of mainline Protestant denominations and the rapid growth of evangelical and fundamentalist churches and movements; d) Carter's speech in March 1977 in which he declared support of a `Palestinian Homeland' and the campaign waged by pro-Israel lobbyists and the Christian right in opposition to Carter and his Middle East policies. See Donald Wagner (with Hassan Haddad (eds.)), *All in the Name of the Bible* (Brattleboro, Vermont: Amana Press, 1986), pp.21-3.

today in such categories as supporting Israeli colonialism, facilitating *aliyah* from Russia, sustaining the illegal Israeli settlements, opposing the peace process, and calling for the construction of a Jewish Temple (on the *al-Haram al-Sharif*). While the historical and theological chapters provide the deep analysis and various nuances of these aspects of Christian Zionism, the political section seems somewhat rushed and in need of context and deeper analysis. Perhaps this material is already planned for his next volume. As it is, I fear that he may be set up for the usual nit-picking and discrediting one might anticipate from both Christian and Jewish Zionist organisations that may undermine the importance of this otherwise brilliant volume.

Despite this criticism, I strongly urge those concerned about Israel and Palestine to read and digest this book. Those unfamiliar with the historical development and theological foundations of Christian Zionism will understand why this movement has emerged as a major political factor in the United States, particularly as it is aligned with the powerful pro-Israel lobby and the neo-conservative ideologues that are currently driving US policy in the Middle East. Despite its shortcomings, the political chapter does point out the organisations and belief systems that provide the belief system, world-view, and inspiration for such troublesome projects as the rebuilding of the Third Temple over a destroyed Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque and the hastening of the Battle of Armageddon. While we await Sizer's next volume, may those who advocate more just and peaceful solutions redouble their efforts and may Stephen Sizer's volume *Christian Zionism* receive the broadest possible distribution and readership.

Donald E. Wagner, Professor and Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies North Park University, Chicago, Illinois (author of *Anxious for Armageddon & Dying in the Land of Promise*).

Secular Diaspora or Reasserted Zion? A Review of Christian Zionism by Bishop Kenneth Cragg for *Living Stones Journal*

There is admirable depth and careful perspective in Stephen Sizer's comprehensive survey of the political, exegetical and moral implications of *Christian Zionism*. If the apocalyptic ones, darkly suggested by the cover design, remain the hidden future, the logic for them is well clarified. Basic terms are clearly defined and the 18th-century origins of 'premillennial Restorationism' in Britain, taken as further in the 19th by speculative dispensationalism, caught up as these were in their idiosyncratic perceptions of the nature of mission and the place of Jewry in its sights. This shape of biblical handling coincided with broader evangelical sympathies in the political realm, symbolised by the eminent Lord Shaftsbury. The tangled negotiations behind the issue of the Balfour Declaration, in the form of a letter to Lord Rothschild, a prominent British Jew, late in 1917, are assessed against this background.

The analysis then shifts to the emergence of Christian Zionism in the USA and the confluence of sundry factors as to 'restoration', covenantal faith and—Arno Gaebelein—an inverted suspicion of 'anti-Semitism' in the strictures he had for 'secular Jews' whose reprehensible behaviour queried his predilection for 'worthy Zionist' Jews.

If the British factors, all the way from Irving and Darby to Shaftsbury and Spurgeon, facilitated the Balfour Declaration in its Zionist intent, the American narrative paved the way for still more defining consequence in the Partition Vote of thirty years later (1917-1947). The Biblicists are all diligently reviewed with references textual, and graphs, before Sizer moves to examine the organisational activity by which, in and away from Israel, objectives were pursued.

Those hundred or so pages are followed by another equally meticulous hundred on the theologies at stake, in respect of futurism, covenant, chosen-ness and its bearing on non-Jewish relation, and the concept of 'return'. How these concepts were translated on the ground in Eretz Israel leads to the vexed issues of borders, of the status of Jerusalem, the Temple and anticipations of the future as the bias in eschatology might discern or distort it. It remains for the author to assess the current political situation, the elusiveness of peace and the immediate crisis to which the long narrative has led. Readers who can match the author's capacity for incisive documentation and his rigorous way with complexity are rewarded with a masterly presentation with which to wrestle.

Doing so suggests to any reviewer two responsive reflections which belong together. The one is the tragic misnomer that talks of 'Christian Zionism'. The other is the triple irony that hangs over it—over its story and its cast of mind. Doubtless the term is now so far current that there is no avoiding it. Yet it remains a contradiction in terms and so obscures how 'a Christian Zionism' could be of a very different order. Review might well conclude in pondering what it might be—and why.

Meanwhile, anticipating that, there is the triple irony in the conventional sense of 'Christian Zionism'. It has better be thought 'the Zionism of some Christians', or 'Christians and Zionist—issues between', or, with that ever elusive conjunction: 'Christians and Zionism'.

The three ironies will show why the phrasing matters. They are inter-related as (1) the primacy of 'God in Christ' in Biblical exegesis, (2) the integrity at stake, and (3) neglect of the supreme moralism of the great Hebrew prophets.

The duties of Biblical exegesis are taxing and easy literalism eludes them. It fails to set all under the priority of 'the Word made flesh' and the 'redemptive work of Christ' in its inclusive meaning in 'whosoever will may come', and its 'authority' to make *all* 'the children of God' on the sole, sufficient ground of faith. This does not cancel the historical precedence of 'the chosen people', or mean 'supersession', inasmuch as their inclusion perpetuates their standing inside the New Testament denominator of 'whosoever will' and the consequent vocation of all human ethnic and cultural identities to learn themselves 'chosen' instruments of the divine employ, of which original Israel had been a 'pilot scheme', a world exemplar in its given destiny—a destiny splendidly realised in the universalling of that 'people-of-God'-calling accessible, by personal faith, to the acceptance of all and sundry. Hence that ringing Ephesians word of '... no more Gentiles', and the insistent tautology of 'all peoples, tongues, kindred and nations' in the mind of John of Patmos.

This New Testament event, the mutual emergence of 'things historical believed' and the Church ensuing from believing them, deserves to control and discipline all Biblical exegesis lest its priority be forfeit. The 'two covenant theory', often adopted by 'Christian Zionists, does violence to the entire New Testament, ignores the initiatives of a wholly Jewish apostolate in opening 'a door of faith to Gentiles', and implies, or insists, that the Christian Church is where Jews are neither expected nor wanted—a most heinous form of anti-Semitism, as if to argue a faith-world without Jews. Inter-testamental relations now plead to be on far more solid theology than this facile one which 'heals all hurts slightly' and does justice to neither faith.

There was a healthy reproof in the teaching of Jesus himself for over-much subtlety about 'times and seasons'. It is well to have them stay in the keeping of the Lord we can trust on the 'event-told' trustworthiness of 'God in Christ'. 'Why stand ye gazing?' is a call we need to heed when trapped in over-much 'intuiting'.

Meanwhile vast moral issues wait for us here and now. One is our own integrity. There has often been a wry humour for the Menahem Begin of the Golda Meirs who have welcomed American 'Christian Zionists' to the Holy Land, accepted their ample dollars and taken them to visit the shrine of Yad-va-Shem. The wry-ness belongs with the vision, via help to Zion, of a duly mass entry of Jews into Christian faith. The one 'ingathering' will be prelude to the other. Was it well—the mixed motive apart—to read Paul's yearning for his people in quite those literal terms, terms that override his own constant insistence that the faith 'saved' was the faith of the private heart? Was it not truly 'evangelical' *both* to love and give disinterestedly and to have 'the kingdom of heaven' increase by gentle persuasion of its invitation, all other motives out?

But that integrity issue deepens far in the third irony we noted, namely the way in which 'Christian Zionism' ignores the ethicism of an Amos, a Hosea, an Isaiah or a Micah. It has been well said that these are the surest, deepest mentors of Eretz Israel today, its most rigorous monitors of its destiny. What of steady settlement creation, at great Palestinian cost, in the light of Isaiah's cry: 'Woe to them that join house to house and field to field, until there is no room, that they may dwell alone in the midst of the earth' (5.8)? How would Micah's 'do justly ...' square with bulldozed dwellings and uprooted olive groves and demolished houses under the exigencies of military sequestration or illegal confiscation?

Or how might Jeremiah's famous sermon at the Temple gate (7.1-7) ring in the ears of would-be invasive Israeli elements bent on enflaming highly inflammable emotions of religious enmity (here grimly analysed by Stephen Sizer, pp. 234-39)? Or could these bitter 'lamentations' attributed to Jeremiah not somehow echo in the souls of Palestinians, grieving at the forfeiture of their patrimony in the slow, sometimes cunning, always sinister, process of Israeli self-creation? To be sure, there was the compassionate reminder (Exodus 23.9) about 'loving the stranger' in recollection of the like Jewish experience in the land of Egypt. But what when 'the stranger' had been made such, where they believed that they authentically belonged, where they had never been fugitive guests as Israel had been, thanks to the Pharaonic reception of a Jewish Joseph?

One nationalism, the Zionist, had contrived to threaten another, the Palestinian, and could even hint that the other had only discovered itself thanks to the Israeli presence, as though it were a pseudo thing. That implied negation of another's legitimacy came to be symbolised in the construction of 'the wall', ironically truncating a single land allegedly loved above all by those who built it. Could it be that Zionism could assert itself and make itself good territorially only at the price of the effective de-legitimising of another people no less married to the same territory and with no less lengthy emotional tenancy and a more continuous practical one?

It is not difficult on moral ground to realise how a Hosea or an Isaiah would now passionately interrogate and accuse the patterns of Israeli story since Balfour. 'On moral grounds' we must say. For the contexts do not correspond. Those great accusatory figures addressed the courts of political power but never occupied the thrones. They were within the Judaic power equation (hence their moral relevance now) but that power focus was itself under Assyrian or Chaldean threat—the threat from which some Amos drew his judgement as to guilt. How would he or his kindred spirit address the ruling, power-girt Jewish reality now?

At least Hosea leaves us in doubt. Things ethical are prior to things political, whatever the fashion of the latter. In Hosea 1.9 he is bold to cancel—by direct quotation the first 'God peopling' mandate in Exodus 3.14. 'I am not the "I am" you think I am' and (in those terms) 'you are not my people.' Surely in his anguish of heart he is using the utmost negation only in order to tell the supreme condition of its ever being positive.

'Chosen' status is not a perquisite but a vocation, not a prize but a privilege. It is here surely that any ministry of a truly 'Christian Zionism' to Zion in Israel should find its ministry of heart and hand. Only so would it be in obedience to the perspective of the New Testament and the divine intent of grace that, thanks to the first mentor in the 'the Old', all peoples should have individual access to 'the people of God' and then aspire to read their own nationhood as servant as newly and essentially also 'His people'.

That perception has one final pointer to reflection which readers of Sizer's excellent study may ponder with his help. It has to do with any Christian relation to the current crisis in the meaning of Judaism itself, as between a 'secular' diaspora and a re-asserted Zion. All religion today is caught in something of the same issue—as Islam certainly is. 'How—and who—is the Jew?' Initially Zionism was always a minority answer. During its course it has oddly—at times—used anti-Semitic rhetoric, castigating what it saw as supine, anonymous Jews, languishing among incorrigibly hostile 'Gentiles'. But were not these, or some of them, nobly striving to be 'enlanded' anywhere, finding a morally Jewish destiny in working out in moral contribution their happy compatibility with the tensions and the challenge of a shared, if ever bewildering, modernity? Marc Chagall was glad to salute the generous welcome he had found in the USA and to make his abiding in his beloved Saint-Paul-de-Vence (France) while ever cherishing the memory of his Vitebsk (Russia). Such will to be diligently cosmopolitan in today's exacting world-scene has better Jewish realism than David Ben Gurion's notion that all Jewry should repair to Israel, or that—by the sixties—we should be talking of 'post-Zionism', all things being now *de facto* done. Both diaspora and Israel have to know that all things are still indeterminate, whether the honest, viable, justly defined size of Israel, or the shape and spirit of a dispersed Jewry among the nations in translation of their 'chosen-ness'. Stephen Sizer's thoughts on these ultimate themes are summarised on pp. 261-64. His commendable labours will well equip his readers to address them. Meanwhile, perhaps we have to say that Armageddon also is *sub judice*. **The Right Revd Kenneth Cragg**, retired Assistant Bishop in Jerusalem (*author of The Call of the Minaret; The Arab Christian; Mohammed and the Christian;*

Readings in the Qur'an; The House of Islam; Islam among the Spires; Troubled by Truth; The Dome and the Rock.)

Road Map to Peace - or Destruction? Three evangelicals on the challenges of Israel-Palestine. A Review by Charles Kimball for *Sojourners Journal*, April 2007

Stephen Sizer's *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* provides a detailed and thoughtful critique of the framework Hagee and many others enthusiastically embrace. Sizer is vicar of Christ Church in Surrey, England, and chair of the International Bible Society in the United Kingdom. His book explores the historical development, theological underpinnings, and political implications of Christian Zionism, a movement that began in Britain in the 19th century.

Sizer divides his study into three parts. He first traces the 200-year history of dispensational theology, culminating in the sensational books and movies in the *Left Behind* series. Part two focuses on the theological emphases of Christian Zionism with particular attention to the literal futurist mode of interpretation readily evident in Hagee, Robertson, Falwell, Lindsey, and LaHaye. In the process, Sizer reveals how this mode of biblical interpretation is often inconsistent, contradictory, and arbitrary. He concludes that this interpretive framework essentially ignores the interpretation of scripture reflected in the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.

Finally, Sizer turns to the political implications of Christian Zionism. Zealous advocates such as Hagee, Jack Van Impe, and various other regulars with TV ministries consistently reject peacemaking initiatives since they anticipate and delight in an impending cataclysmic battle between the forces of good and evil. Politically, this easily translates into advocacy for policies—in the United States and Israel—that may help make Armageddon a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Sizer presents a covenantal alternative to Christian Zionism. He articulates an approach to the Middle East centered in the teachings and sacrifice of Jesus. "[Christians who follow a] biblical approach to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict will work and pray for the peace and security of Jewish and Palestinian people because they are created in the image and likeness of God with intrinsic meaning, value, and dignity," he writes. "It will support international peace efforts based on biblical principles of justice and peace, on mutual recognition and reconciliation."

Americans have been inundated with images and information on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for decades. Numerous and often conflicting images and impressions leave many with a kind of "detailed ignorance." Far too few have a coherent framework for understanding and interpreting events in ways that can lead to constructive advocacy, either as concerned citizens or people of faith. The books by Carter and Sizer offer helpful guidance for those who seek to understand the multiple and often convoluted political and religious dynamics that often thwart hopes for a more peaceful future in the Middle East.

Dr. Charles Kimball, Professor of Comparative Religion, Wake Forest University Department of Religion and Divinity School, (*author of When Religion Becomes Evil*)

<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0704&article=070438>

The Christian Contribution to Ethnic Cleansing : by Mark Chmiel in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Summer 2006 <http://www.jstor.org>

Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?, by Stephen Sizer. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004. 264 pages. Glossary to p. 269. Appendix to p. 272. Bibliography to p. 283. Index to p. 295. n.p.

In her study entitled *The Question of Zion*, Jacqueline Rose stated that "it has become commonplace for critics of Israel responding to the charge of anti-Semitism to reply that it is

Zionism, not Jewishness, which is the object of their critique. This simply displaces the problem, leads to silence. As if that were the end of the matter and nothing else remains to be said. Bizarrely, the result is that while Israel barely leaves the front page of the daily papers, Zionism itself is hardly ever talked about.” [italics in original, p. xii]

And when Zionism is typically talked about, it is Jewish Zionism that is the focus. The invaluable contribution of Stephen Sizer’s book, *Christian Zionism*, is that he discusses in detail a lesser-acknowledged kind of Zionism, one that, he claims, predated political Zionism by 60 years (p. 254). Sizer, chairman of the International Bible Society in England, reveals a Christian Zionism that, for its own distinctly theological reasons, supports Israel’s occupation of Palestinian land. One got a glimpse of such confident convictions when, in February 2006, American televangelist Pat Robertson attributed Ariel Sharon’s stroke as a punishment from God for giving up the Gaza Strip. In Robertson’s worldview, God’s wishes cannot be trumped by mere political expediency.

Sizer’s first chapter is a detailed survey of Christian Zionism’s roots, focusing on its sect-like origins in Britain in the early 19th century and then considering the Christian Zionism increasing influential role in the United States mainstream. What is significant is that some influential British government figures were raised in this kind of Christianity committed to the restoration of Jews to their former land. Thus, Christian sentiment joined the interests of the British empire, as evidenced in Arthur Balfour’s 1919 letter to Lord Curzon: “...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 or prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land...” (quoted on 64-65). Christian Zionism moved to the United States in the second half of the 19th century where its adherents made bold applications of biblical prophecies to the future of Jewry. Eventually, American Christian Zionism produced distinct varieties of support for the Jews to return to their God-given land, from apocalyptic Zionism (the best-selling and sensationalist writings of Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye) to the Messianic camp (most notably in the Jews for Jesus movement).

Sizer’s second chapter analyzes seven distinct doctrines of Christian Zionism. Among the examined that pertain directly to contemporary struggles in Israel’s domination of Palestine are the beliefs that Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel, that the ancient temple must be re-established (complete with animal sacrifices), and that an imminent, devastating Armageddon will commence before Jesus intervenes to save a select few.

Sizer’s third chapter explores the practical contribution of Christian Zionism to the pro-Israel lobby in the United States. He examines six different ways in which doctrines of Christian Zionism are translated into specific political actions on behalf of Israel. Since all of the land (with unspecified borders) was given by God to the Jews, then it is incumbent upon Christian churches, ministers, and political action groups to back the annexation of Palestinian land and support the Jewish settlements built thereon. Other Christian Zionists see any kind of diplomacy as an affront to God, as Sizer quotes one Christian Zionist activist: “We need to encourage others to understand God’s plans, not the man-inspired plans of the UN, the US, the EEC, Oslo, Wye, etc. God is not in any plan that would wrestle the Old City of Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount area and the Mount of Olives, and give it to the Moslem world. Messiah is not coming back to a Moslem city called Al-Quds, but to the regathered, restored Jewish city of Jerusalem” (p. 250).

Sizer helpfully summarizes his work in chapter four, identifying four specific kinds of Christian Zionism today—covenantal premillennialism, Messianic dispensationalism, apocalyptic dispensationalism, and political dispensationalism—and how they vary on issues like Jerusalem, the temple, and Armageddon. A glossary dealing with such terms is provided, which the non-specialist reader will find useful in seeing that, like its Jewish counterpart, it is more accurate to speak of Christian Zionisms. And while Christian Zionists may have some theological disagreements with each other, they stand united on supporting an expansionist Israel with its corresponding ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people.

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Christian Zionism: A Review for *Anvil* by The Revd Dr Peter Walker.

Stephen Sizer has established quite a reputation in recent years through public advocacy and Internet resources for his critical stance towards certain aspects of Dispensationalism and, in particular, Christian Zionism. Now, in this popularised version of his doctoral thesis, we can see the careful fruit of his labour and researches.

Visiting Israel as a young Anglican rector, firmly within the evangelical tradition, he had an unexpected but mind-changing encounter with Palestinian Christians; this led him to re-evaluate his whole way of thinking about Israel—influenced, as it had been, by the writings of such popular authors as Hal Lindsey in *the Late Great Planet Earth* (1970?). His first researches focused on what Christian visitors were shown and told during their visits to Israel. Then he moved on to look at the history and theology of Christian Zionism.

One of the remarkable features of evangelical life in UK is the comparatively small amount of interest in Christian Zionism, at least when compared with what is found in evangelical churches in the USA, where (according to various accounts) there may be up to 100 million Christians who hold views that are broadly sympathetic with Christian Zionism, for example:

- The modern state of Israel is a fulfilment of biblical prophecy.
- Jewish people (not Christian believers) are God's true people in the Middle East and have an inalienable 'divine right' to the land of Israel (such that compromise with the Palestinians in the pursuit of 'peace' is deemed to be wrong not for merely strategic reasons but on the grounds of theology—it is working *against* God's promises, e.g. in Gen. 12:XX).
- Evangelism amongst Jewish people is not appropriate since the Christian's chief role is to 'comfort' God's people (Isa. 40:1), supporting Israel in its return to the Land even in unbelief; for some this is because of a two-covenant theology' whereby God has a separate provision for Israel, which does not require faith in Jesus as Messiah.
- The Temple in Jerusalem should be rebuilt on its original site (even though the site has been occupied for 1300 years by two Muslim shrines).
- The land of Israel will be the focus of many events associated with Christ's *parousia* (for some, after the 'rapture'), including battles at Armageddon and in Jerusalem.

Sizer does an excellent job identifying these and other beliefs within the Christian Zionist thinking. He is at his best when taking the unfamiliar reader back into the origins of such thinking, especially within the 19th century. We see how the sympathetic concern for Christian outreach amongst Jewish people (seen in such evangelicals as Charles Simeon) gradually metamorphosed into something quite different, eschewing evangelism in favour of political support for Israel, and reading prophecies in a strictly literal and futuristic sense which ignored the New Testament's focus on Christ.

It becomes plain, paradoxically, that Christian Zionism was really a British invention (associated with JN Darby and Edward Irving in the 1830's), which was then exported wholesale to the United States where it became enshrined in Dispensational Bible colleges and, for example, the *Schofield Bible* (1909). One can then speculate on why these views have waned in UK, but prospered in USA, with one major factor surely being the way Britain has lost its 'superpower' status and got its fingers 'badly burnt' through the period of the 'British Mandate' in Palestine (1917 to 1948).

Where Sizer is arguably a little weaker is in his theological critique of these dispensational views. Quite often a view is only questioned by a brief ironic comment showing some particular inconsistencies between Dispensational thinkers. Partly this is because he is wanting to describe the Dispensational views as fully and fairly as possible, but it does mean that his own alternative theological stance is more implicit than explicit, with different facets of it being called upon at different points but no full statement of it appearing in the book. Such a statement could, for example, have made an excellent end to the book, helping the reader (now so much better informed) to see a clear articulation of a genuinely evangelical, 'covenantal' theology.

Yet this deficiency (if such it is) is really one that can be levelled against all of us who have written in this area. Few are the books which clearly articulate a counter-view to such popular books as the *Left Behind* series. IVP are to be congratulated for publishing this book, given its unpopular viewpoint in many Christian quarters, but also perhaps to be encouraged to promote further works which really help those with a high doctrine of Scripture to develop a pattern of thinking that does not lead to the unfortunate results that, too often, flow out from Christian Zionism (as Sizer highlights so well in his final main chapter on this movement's 'political implications').

Conservative readers of Scriptures need to know and have confidence that there is another, equally, faithful, way of reading the Bible, which is focused resolutely on Jesus as the (surprising but true) fulfilment of the biblical story. Some may find helpful the collection of essays in *The Land of Promise* (IVP, 2000) or my *Jesus and the Holy City* (Eerdmans, 1996); or Colin Chapman's writing in *Whose Promised Land?* (34d edition, Lion, 2002) and *Whose Holy City?* (Lion, 2004). But, if you are becoming increasingly aware of how critical are the modern issues in the Middle East, or if you are wanting a faithful, reliable guide to see how Christians have played their part in getting us to where we are today, then there can be few better books than this one of Sizer's—it's a book that could dramatically open your eyes and change your mind and then your actions." **Revd Dr Peter Walker**, Lecturer in New Testament Studies, Biblical Theology and Preaching, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford and Fellow of the Anglican Communion Institute (*author of Holy City? Holy Places?, Jesus and the Holy City, Jesus and His World and The Weekend that changed the World*).

Review by Dr Stephen Travis for *Headway*, 2005 (*Headline Evangelical Methodists*)

Stephen Sizer has seen the question of God's purpose for the land of Israel from more than one side. With his faith nurtured on Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth* and excited by the seemingly miraculous victory of Israel in the 1967 war, he made his first pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1990. His thinking about the Land and its people was shaped by the conviction that God has a continuing special relationship with the Jewish people which entails their right to possess the Holy Land: Old Testament prophecies about the Jewish people are being fulfilled in the contemporary State of Israel. His perspective began to change when he met real Palestinian Christians and learn how they were devalued as people by the working of the Israeli state.

Serious investigation of the whole issue of interpretation of prophecy and its political implications followed. This book is a detailed but thoroughly readable fruit of Sizer's PhD research on Christian Zionism, which he defines as Christian support for the State of Israel on the basis of a literal and futurist interpretation of Old Testament prophecies. Although many evangelical Christians assume that Christian Zionism represents 'normal evangelicalism', it in fact only became prominent through the rise of 'Dispensational Premillennialism' in the nineteenth century, later popularized by the Scofield Reference Bible, then by Hal Lindsey in the 1970s and the *Left Behind* books more recently. Evangelicalism embraces other approaches to biblical interpretation which, arguably, are closer to the intentions of Jesus and offer an approach to the Old Testament prophecy which is more in tune with the way New Testament writers handle the Old Testament.

Sizer carefully exposes the historical roots of Christian Zionism, critiques in the light of the New Testament its literal and futurist interpretation of prophecy, and exposes its almost inevitable political implications. In contrast with this exclusive approach and its focus on the Jews in the Land he advocates an inclusive theology which is focused on Jesus the Saviour of the world and makes possible a constructive approach to Israeli-Palestinian peace-making.

This is a brave, careful and passionate book whose argument deserves to be weighed carefully. But its purpose will be achieved only if it helps different 'sides' in this argument to listen to each other more carefully. A friend of mine who lives in Israel says: 'People come to Israel for a week and they write a book about it. People come for a month and they write an article about it. They come for a year and they realize that it's too difficult to write about.' What we need in these debates about Israel and Palestine is a large measure of humility and a willingness to listen for a long time before speaking.

Dr Stephen Travis, former Vice-Principal, St John's College, Nottingham (author of *Exploring the New Testament*; *The Doctrine of the Atonement: a Question and an Affirmation*; *Christ and the Judgment of God*; *Getting to Know the New Testament*; *I Believe in the Second Coming of Jesus*; *Starting with the Bible*; *Christian Hope and the Future of Man*; Editor, *All Things to All People – Mission Beyond 2000*; Assistant Consultant Editor, *The NIV Thematic Study Bible*; Consulting Editor, *The Macmillan Dictionary of the Bible*; Consultant to *The New Lion Handbook to the Bible*).

A Review by Professor Paul Boyer, in *Shofar, An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, Case Western University

No one who follows events in the Middle East can fail to be aware of the involvement of so-called Christian Zionists in the politics of the region. These are evangelical Protestants whose reading of Bible prophecy convinces them that God has a distinct end-time plan for the Jews—a plan whose fulfillment is integral to Christ's second coming and thousand-year Millennial reign. According to this interpretive system, known as premillennial dispensationalism, as the End approaches, Israel will expand to incorporate the lands God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed, from the Euphrates to "the river of Egypt." The Jews will also take over Jerusalem's Temple Mount and rebuild the Temple on the site now occupied by two sacred Islamic shrines.

Stephen Sizer, an evangelical Anglican clergyman, offers a history and critique of this version of Christian Zionism. His book may seem heavy going in places for readers not immersed in this belief system, but it does illuminate prophetic beliefs that shape the attitudes of millions of evangelical Protestants worldwide, and especially in the United States, toward Israel, the Palestinians, and Islam. (These End-Time beliefs also influence believers' view of the United Nations, the global economy, and U.S. mass culture—but that is another story.) Sizer begins by tracing the British origins of dispensationalism and its Zionist component. This belief system is usually credited to John Darby, a founder of the Plymouth Brethren, an English dissenting sect. Sizer, however, stresses the role of such now-obscure figures as Edward Irving, a Scottish preacher popular in London in the 1820s, and Henry Drummond, a banker and politician with an interest in Bible prophecy. He traces the influence of these beliefs on later British leaders, including David Lloyd George, the prime minister who oversaw the issuance of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, calling for "a National Home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.

Readers interested in the evolution of American attitudes toward Israel will welcome Sizer's discussion of dispensationalism's migration to the United States through John Darby's evangelistic tours and the preaching and writings of James H. Brookes, Arno C. Gaebelin, Cyrus Scofield, and other late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century figures. Sizer notes the importance of the wealthy Chicago real-estate developer William Blackstone, a committed dispensationalist and early Zionist. Visiting Jewish agricultural colonies in Palestine in 1888–89, Blackstone saw them as exciting portents of Christ's soon return. In 1891, five years before Theodor Herzl's Zionist manifesto *Der Judenstaat*, Blackstone drafted a "Memorial" calling for a Jewish state in Palestine, "according to God's distribution of nations," as a response to Czarist pogroms. He secured signatures from J. P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, the Chief Justice of the United States, and some 400 other government and business leaders. With reason, Louis D. Brandeis later praised Blackstone as "the Father of Zionism."

Sizer's chapter on dispensationalism's political implications is particularly timely. Popular writers and televangelists like Hal Lindsey, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, James Dobson, Tim LaHaye, and James Hagee, together with politicians who share their beliefs (or seek the votes of those who do), have been outspoken supporters of Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza, as a step toward the prophesied expansion to the biblical boundaries, and of all Jerusalem and Temple Mount—essential to the rebuilding of the Temple. These Christian Zionists reject Palestinian political or territorial claims; denigrate the Palestinian people in language that Sizer finds disturbingly analogous to Nazi stereotypes of the Jews; and, in their prophecy-fueled worldview, demonize Islam as vile and sinister. Such figures, reinforced by a network of like-minded organizations, writes Sizer, constitute "probably the most powerful lobby in the United

States today, influencing not only American foreign policy but also the chances of a peaceful resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict” (p. 105).

Sizer only passingly mentions the darker side of the dispensationalist version of Zionism: the belief that the long history of antisemitic persecution, including the Holocaust, represents God’s “chastisement” of his chosen but wayward people. Dispensationalists also teach that in the End Times a demonic figure, the Antichrist, will rule the earth for seven years—the so-called Great Tribulation—before Christ returns to defeat him at Armageddon. During this interlude, they believe, Antichrist will persecute and slaughter Jews with unprecedented ferocity.

An evangelical Christian himself, Sizer directs his book to evangelical readers. (InterVarsity Press is the publishing arm of an Anglo-American evangelical organization that targets college and university students.) While criticizing the dispensationalist version of Zionism, he champions an alternative view, Covenantal Premillennialism. According to this view, God does not have a separate end-time plan involving national Israel, its future expansion, or a rebuilt Temple. “Access to heaven no longer has anything to do with the earthly Jerusalem,” Sizer assures us (p. 168). Rather, *all* people, Jews and non-Jews alike, will be judged according to whether they accept Jesus Christ as a divine savior whose crucifixion, as an atonement for mankind’s sins, represents the only means of salvation.

However one feels about such matters, Sizer’s well-researched study is of considerable value. Supplemented by other works such as Timothy P. Weber’s *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel’s Best Friend* (2004); Yaakov Ariel’s *On Behalf of the Jews: American Fundamentalist Attitudes toward Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865–1945* (1991); Bernard Wasserstein’s *Divided Jerusalem: The Struggle for the Holy City* (2001); Grace Halsell’s *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelists on the Road to Nuclear War* (1986); and my own *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (1992), *Christian Zionism* unearths the taproot of a belief system that exerts enormous influence in contemporary America. Based on supposedly infallible sacred texts, these beliefs help determine how millions of Americans, and millions more worldwide, view the bloody and seemingly insoluble conflicts that torment the Middle East, bringing such suffering and heartache to its peoples.

Professor Paul Boyer, Merle Curti Professor of History Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Madison (*editor-in-chief of the Oxford Companion to American History, author of Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft, Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920, By the Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age, When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture, Fallout: A Historian Reflects on America’s Half-Century Encounter With Nuclear Weapons*)

A Review by Dr Scott Waalkes, for Barclay Press, April 2006

Several years ago, I chaperoned a field trip for my son’s Christian school class. Another dad on the trip asked me what I did, and when I mentioned that I taught courses on the Middle East, he said, “So, do you know a lot about Bible prophecy?” His question sounded strange to me. He didn’t ask me if I knew Hebrew, Arabic, or another Middle Eastern language; he asked about prophecy. Yet his question wasn’t strange for an evangelical. As a glance at the shelves of a Christian bookstore will confirm, evangelical views of the Middle East maintain a peculiar fascination with a literal and imminent Armageddon in the region.

My Middle East Politics course at Malone College regularly enrolls a number of students who are well-versed in a Christian Zionist worldview—better versed than I am. I grew up in a Dutch Calvinist subculture that was either amillennial or panmillennial—that is, we either had no view about the end times, or we believed that the end times would all “pan out in the end,” as the old joke has it. Covenant theology was another hallmark of the tradition. But many evangelicals have a very different view rooted in premillennial and dispensational readings of the Bible: readings that insist Christ’s imminent return will usher in the millennium and that God speaks in different dispensations

to Jews and Gentile Christians, rather than one covenant. Stephen Sizer does a wonderful job tracing how these readings of Scripture emerged to create a pro-Israeli political lobby. He helped me better understand where many of my students are coming from.

Like many other evangelicals of his generation, Sizer confesses at the outset that he remembers “devouring” Hal Lindsey’s *Late Great Planet Earth* and “hearing in person his lectures on eschatology and the book of Revelation.” Sizer writes, “It seemed as if the Bible was literally coming true in our generation” (p. 9). But Sizer, an Anglican vicar and chairman of the International Bible Society in the United Kingdom, describes a “radical change of perspective” during his first trip to Israel in 1990 that came after meeting a “real-life Christian Palestinian” (p. 10). The present book emerges from his efforts to understand why evangelicals have tended to support Zionist Jews rather than fellow Christians who happen to be Palestinian. Along the way, Sizer wrote a doctoral thesis on Christian involvement in Israeli-Palestinian issues, and he says that the book distills the fruits of his research.

Traces of a dissertation remain, but the result is nonetheless engaging and enlightening for those unfamiliar with the worlds of Christian Zionism. After a short introduction, Sizer devotes a chapter each to historical roots, theological emphases, and political implications. There are many long quotations and hundreds of footnotes in each chapter, but these are part of Sizer’s attempt to document, dissect, and criticize a theology that buttresses strong support for the modern state of Israel. He is especially helpful in documenting the historical and theological tendencies and charting their outgrowths into contemporary Christian groups. Sizer is an excellent critic, quoting Christian Zionist writings extensively and registering his concerns quietly.

In an interesting historical account, Sizer credits the real birth of dispensational Bible readings to Scottish pastor Edward Irving (1792-1834), rather than John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), the progenitor usually identified by historians. From these innovative forebears, today’s Christian Zionists derive six main political stances from their “literal and futurist reading of the Bible,” according to Sizer (p. 252):

- Because the Jews are still God’s chosen people in this view, Christian Zionists believe that they must support Israel financially;
- they believe that they must encourage the resettlement of Jews, in the words of one proponent, “even if it takes anti-Semitism in America...to get [God’s] millions back to Israel” (p. 223);
- they believe that the entire land of biblical Israel must be annexed to the modern state of Israel and that settlements in the West Bank should be expanded;
- they believe that Jerusalem should be recognized as the capital of Israel;
- they believe that the Dome of the Rock should be destroyed and the Jewish Temple rebuilt in its place on the Temple Mount; and
- they believe that “to advocate that Israel compromise with Islam or coexist with Palestinians is to identify with those destined to oppose God and Israel in the imminent battle of Armageddon” (252).

It is hard to imagine an agenda more at odds with U.S. foreign policy and more alarming to those who seek peace, and perhaps that helps to explain its persistence. Precisely because its proponents view themselves as embattled, unpopular modern-day prophets, they maintain their charts and predictions of doomsday scenarios. Doubtters beware! They have proof that they are right.

I started reading *Christian Zionism* soon after Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister, suffered a massive stroke, which led Pat Robertson to say on his 700 Club television show that “He was dividing God’s land, and I would say woe unto any prime minister of Israel who takes a similar course to appease the EU, the United Nations or United States of America.” Interestingly, Sizer quotes Robertson saying the same thing about Yitzhak Rabin, the prime minister assassinated in 1995 after signing the Oslo peace accords (p. 251). It is the virtue of this book that it puts such remarks into a context that makes them intelligible as part of a theological tradition—albeit, a

tradition that seems to ignore Christ's command to love all of our neighbors, including the enemy Samaritans in our lives (Luke 10:25-37).

I have only one quibble. I would have liked Sizer to present a more robust alternative reading of biblical texts, rather than referring the reader to other sources on the alternative "covenantal" interpretation. At the end, we are left with a critique of Christian Zionism, but what do we put in its place? Gary Burge's book, reviewed elsewhere in these pages, helps Christians address this question. But to answer it fully would require a book yet unwritten. I hope Sizer will consider writing it. **Dr Scott Waalkes**, Associate Professor of International Politics, Malone College, Canton, Ohio. www.barclaypress.com

Christian Zionism: Review in *Evangelical Quarterly* by Phil Groom

Israel's crimes against humanity must always be seen against the backdrop of the equally terrible crimes of humanity against Israel. But does this make those crimes — its ongoing abuse of the Palestinians and, as I write this review in August 2006, its war of vengeance against Hezbollah in Lebanon — any less offensive? Personally, I think not. James warns us (James 3:1) that those who teach will be judged all the more harshly; and similarly, those who represent God to the world will surely be held to even greater account than those who do not know him.

No: Hezbollah's crimes notwithstanding, the State of Israel's ongoing abuse of the Palestinian people and its neighbours in Lebanon is without a shadow of doubt both a crime against humanity and an offence against God. And the tendency of many Christians to give uncritical support — or even open endorsement — to Israel's apartheid and wholly disproportionate policies is an aberration that compounds that offence.

If you're a Christian Zionist you'll find those opening paragraphs extremely troubling. Are we not, as Christians, required to support the State of Israel? Are not the Jews God's chosen people? Surely those who bless Israel will be blessed and those who curse Israel will be cursed (Genesis 12:3) — and aren't statements like these anti-semitic anyway?

Yet as I read this book and observe the current situation it's difficult to draw any other conclusion. I was brought up in a Brethren assembly, taught to read the Bible from within a dispensationalist framework, and although (as far as I remember) the term "Christian Zionist" was never used, its essence informed my thinking. It took a trip to Israel and time spent with Palestinian Christians, seeing the oppression first-hand, to bring home to me how distorted my thinking was.

Sizer's experience, it seems, has been similar, describing himself in his introduction as a young Christian 'devouring Hal Lindsey's best-selling book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, and hearing in person his lectures on eschatology', then, after a pilgrimage to the Holy Land — ironically, organised by some 'Christian Zionist friends' — experiencing a 'radical change in perspective.' (p.9-10).

Many Christians will never have an opportunity to visit Israel in person, but Sizer has done a magnificent job in this book, presenting us with a comprehensive overview of Christian Zionism's variant streams, historical developments and theologies which allows anyone willing to approach the subject with an open mind to make their own assessment. This is supported by a number of helpful charts comparing, for example, the historical development of Christian Zionism since 1800 (p.105) and the different types of Christian Zionism (p.256-257). His analysis is careful, detailed and meticulous, a distillation of his doctoral thesis, which takes his readers through the movement's history (chapter 1), examining its theological emphases (chapter 2) and exposing its political implications (chapter 3) to finally emerge (chapter 4) with "Biblical Zionism: a covenantal alternative", an approach that does justice to both the old covenant under Abraham and the new covenant under Christ and offers hope to Jew and Palestinian alike, eschewing violence and leaving no room for anti-semitism.

Each chapter is broken down into manageable subsections and ends with a concise summary of the arguments presented therein, allowing even an impatient reader to benefit and a more patient reader time to pause and take stock.

Sizer's final conclusions are — for this reader at least — inescapable:

...the choice is between two theologies: one based primarily on the shadows of the old covenant; the other on the reality of the new covenant. In identifying with the former, Christian Zionism is an exclusive theology that focuses on the Jews in the land rather than an inclusive theology that centres on Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. It consequently provides a theological endorsement for racial segregation, apartheid and war. This is diametrically opposed to the inclusive theology of justice, peace and reconciliation which lie at the heart of the new covenant.' (p.260).

A glossary of terms, appendix ('Challenging Christian Zionism', a statement from Sabeel, the Palestinian Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem), eleven pages of bibliography and three indices (people, subjects and biblical references) round the book off, whilst footnotes throughout, rather than endnotes, help to keep the entire volume as reader-friendly as possible. This is a book that deserves the widest possible readership. No one who has a concern for the Middle East should ignore the issues raised; to do so is — returning to Sizer's introduction — 'nothing less than to perpetuate the evil of the Levite in the Parable of the Good Samaritan who walked by on the other side.' (p.13).

The time for silence is over: those who are Israel's true friends must speak out against Israel's behaviour before this nation pushes itself over the brink and into Armageddon.

Phil Groom, Reviews Editor of Christian Book Reviews and manager of [London School of Theology Books & Resources](#). Published by [Evangelical Quarterly](#).

Review by Dr Anthony McRoy for the Church of England Newspaper

If any book deserves the accolade of being the definitive critique of 'Christian Zionism', it is this. Popular, lucid and readable, this is a dispassionate and scholarly yet critical evaluation of the phenomenon. Sizer deconstructs the origins and character of the concept. Sizer notes that opponents of the concept such as the Middle East Council of Churches see the idea as 'heretical and cultic', whilst John Stott describes 'Christian Zionism' as 'biblically anathema', p. 22. The movement has diverse expressions – some are overtly political, such as 'Bridges for Peace' and the so-called 'International Christian Embassy Jerusalem', with more evangelistic organisations such as 'Jews for Jesus' and the 'Church's Ministry among Jewish People', p. 22f. Among its advocates is Pat Robertson, infamous for allegedly suggesting the assassination of the Venezuelan President.

Sizer traces the origins of the concept to Puritan post-millennial ideas of a general conversion of Jews to Christ, to which some added a belief in a Jewish State in Palestine, p. 28ff. It might have been helpful here to add the views of other Puritans such as Richard Baxter who opposed the concept. However, the main source of modern Christian Zionism was John Nelson Darby's Pre-millennial Dispensationalism, p. 50ff. Sizer traces the historical development of the idea, notably in America, p. 66ff, for example in the theology of Moody and Scofield. Interestingly, he shows how it neatly dovetailed with anti-Semitism, especially in the theology of Gaebelien, p. 77ff, which rather undermines smears by Christian Zionists that opponents of the concept are motivated by Judeophobia. His theological critique of Dispensationalist Zionism, p. 106ff, is masterly – notably of the way modern advocates such as Hal Lindsey manage to find America in the Bible!

Sizer is especially good in examining the political implications of Christian Zionism, quoting the US State Department human rights reports that regularly observe that Israeli Arabs are denied

equal rights, p. 208, and Sizer goes on to draw parallels with the pillars of South African Apartheid – the Population Registration, Land and Group Areas Acts, and corresponding Israeli legislation. This is where two points could have been made. Why do Christian Zionists, in the face of the evidence, insist that Israeli Arabs *do* have equal rights? Secondly, Sizer could have examined the phenomenon of Theological Racism in history – the abuse of Matthew 27:25 against Jews, of Genesis 9:27 against Blacks, and corresponding abuse of Scripture against Arabs. The first two forms of Theological Racism only declined when they were no longer socially palatable. Unfortunately, the third form is in good health, and one can only hope that Sizer’s book will lead to the redress of the situation. [Dr Anthony McRoy](#) Lecturer in Islamics, Evangelical Theological College, Wales

Review by Professor L. Michael Spath

Let’s be clear about this right from the start: Stephen Sizer’s tour-de-force, *Christian Zionism – Road-map to Armageddon*, requires an historical, theological, and moral honesty rarely required of readers in this present climate where governments and churches play on fears of terror and being “left behind,” where both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures and America’s founding documents have been hijacked by fundamentalist and sectarian hermeneutics, and where witch hunts – cultural, political, ecclesiastical, and religious – are being renewed.

The historical, theological, and political origins and implications of Christian Zionism are discussed then critiqued in the author’s very thorough, comprehensive, and eminently readable style. His summaries at the end of each chapter are particularly helpful. His charts and the glossary prove to be invaluable in deciphering for the non-initiate the various terms and relationships within the evangelical world – pre- and post-millennial, restorationist, and dispensationalist diversity, as well as the two hundred year evolution of their eschatological understanding within the world of the dispensationalists themselves. And his index of Bible references used by proponents as prophecy to support all things Israel might just be the single most useful tool for those who want to further study the issue from a biblical perspective.

While evangelicals will readily understand the arguments and issues as “family matters,” this is an especially critical read for those of us not part of the evangelical community. Why? Because it helps to explain how the 19th century sectarian eschatological views of one John Nelson Darby came to be the most religiously, culturally, and politically powerful force in 21st century America. This is one of Sizer’s great strengths, his unraveling of the complex strands that characterize the many forms of Christian Zionism within the evangelical community and their historical and theological development. Add to this how Christian Zionism has found its way into post-Holocaust mainline Protestant and Catholic churches (as well as into American civil religion, for that matter), and you begin to see how entrenched theologically and politically this heresy has morphed into contemporary American foreign policy and made manifest in our so-called “culture wars” (if anything, I wish Sizer would have treated this mainline embracing of Christian Zionism even more).

With clear sense of the tragic, Sizer tackles head-on the *Christian* nature of Christian Zionism’s ironies – among others, that it predates Jewish Zionism, that it is predominantly a Christian ideology, that it strikes at the very theological and moral heart of both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, that it is essentially antisemitic even as it embraces Israel, and that it is anti-Christian as it undermines and betrays the indigenous Living Stones Christian community in Palestine and Israel, not to mention the very heart of Jesus’ message.

Sizer’s book takes its rightful place as the most comprehensive treatment of this very dangerous Christian heresy, destructive at the very heart of the American church and public square. To say this is a “must-read” for politicians and anyone interested in the Middle East, professors and students, pastors and laypeople, is to understate the need for this book to get into as many hands as possible. The tragedy is that without the role of Christian Zionists in the West, particularly in America – in both the religious and political realms – Israel long ago would have had to deal more honestly with their moral culpability and responsibility in their occupation of Palestinian land and, in the present world of *Realpolitik*, along with their Palestinian partners, move toward a just solution

of the present conflict. **Professor L. Michael Spath**, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne, Director, Middle East Peace Education Project, Founding Member, The Institute for the Study of Christian Zionism www.iscz.org

Review by Graham Beynon, for *The Biblical Theology Briefings*

"This book is an excellent overview of three aspects of Christian Zionism: its history, its theology and its politics. The book's material derives from the author's doctoral thesis on the subject, but unlike many theses which are turned into books, this one actually reads like a book rather than a lightly edited thesis. In fact it is written with both clarity and warmth.

Despite its British origins Christian Zionism's power base is now very much in America. However there is still a significant and growing influence in the UK. Books by Hal Lindsey, Tim La Haye (especially the Left Behind series), as well as various magazines and web sites, mean that Christian Zionism is often well represented in the average congregation. More than that there is commonly a simple assumption made by many evangelical Christians that Israel remains 'special' and that political events in the Middle East have at least some relevance to Biblical prophecy. All this means that there is a need for clarity on this vexed issue and Sizer's book is the first place to turn.

The book divides into three sections - historical, theological and political. There is some overlap between these, and consequently by the end there is a slight feeling of repetition, but given the complexity of the area this is probably necessary.

The historical roots of Christian Zionism begins with the eschatology of the Reformers and Puritans but fairly quickly moves to the explosion of Zionist thinking in the nineteenth century. The differences between, and the developments of, each stream of thought are helpfully outlined.

We are introduced to the main developers of Christian Zionist thought, its current protagonists and some of the key events in 'Zionist' history. This historical overview is interesting in its own right but especially so in observing the way a novel theological position can come to be so influential.

There are some salutary lessons such as the 'canonising' of dispensational premillennialism by the Scofield Reference Bible. This gives an example of the damaging effects when such a work becomes so dominant. The current situation of Christian Zionism with the proliferation of organisations and publications devoted to Zionism, and sheer quantity of time and money given to it is staggering. In addition, though, the influence on political issues through history such as British foreign policy is clearly demonstrated, as is the influence on American foreign policy in the later half of the twentieth century. This lays the ground work for the second two sections of the book.

The theological examination of Christian Zionism is the heart of the book. The particular approaches and emphases of different Zionist groupings are explored and discussed. This links with the different streams of thought identified in the previous historical section. Sizer identifies three main streams within dispensationalism: "Apocalyptic dispensationalism is preoccupied with the 'signs of the times'; Messianic dispensationalism with evangelising Jews for Jesus; and political dispensationalism with defending and 'blessing' Israel" (p107).

To a greater or lesser extent there are seven common theological emphases standing behind these different positions:

A literal and futurist approach to Scripture which reads current events as fulfilment of prophecy. That Israel and the church remain separate groups with distinct covenants, such that many even disavow evangelisation of Jews. That the restoration of Jews to Zion is in fulfilment of Biblical prophecy. That the true land of Israel extends further than the current borders of the State of Israel and must be possessed again. That Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Zion and cannot be shared

or divided. That the temple must be rebuilt in Jerusalem. That there will be the future battle of Armageddon and judgement of the world on the basis of how they have treated the Jewish people.

Within each of these areas the development and variations of thought are discussed. In addition the veracity of each tenant is examined. The critique is along the lines of a promise-fulfilment biblical theology where OT predictions are shadows which are fulfilled in Christ. This critique results in the dismantling of the Christian Zionist position piece by piece.

The last section on the political implications of Christian Zionism gives us an amazing example of why correct hermeneutics and the resulting correct theology matters so much. Here we have a particular theological position resulting in decisions made about peoples' financial giving, churches' mission policies and even countries' foreign policy.

Sizer relates the doctrinal emphases previously outlined with their logical resulting practice. This means Christian Zionism sees the church as needing to stand with Israel; facilitate the restoration programme; support the expansionist policies of some Israelite settlers; lobby for international recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital; fund the rebuilding of the temple; and oppose peace deals with Palestinian groups. Again there is divergence between the different streams of Zionism on these topics and the differences are outlined.

The weaknesses of the book are twofold. Firstly the balance between a description of Christian Zionism and a critique of it is heavily weighted to the former. At times it feels as if the critique is rather tacked on the end. For anyone already convinced of a promise-fulfilment biblical theological approach to Scripture this won't matter, but I would have liked a fuller response at times. To my mind the critique remains devastating to the Christian Zionist approach. However for a dispensationalist many potential counter arguments are not discussed nor are some key passages examined (for example I was surprised not to find an extended discussion of Romans 11).

The second weakness is that the different strands of Christian Zionism can become rather entangled at times, and one can wish for a clearer holistic understanding of one of the positions. This is mainly because of the approach taken which cycles through these different strands numerous times from different angles rather than giving them each a separate treatment. It isn't therefore a criticism of the book - more a consequence of its approach.

These weaknesses though are minor. This is an excellent book on an important subject, thoroughly researched and well written. If you want to read something on Christian Zionism, this is it.

Graham Beynon, reviewed for The Biblical Theology Briefings.

<http://www.beginningwithmoses.org/library/reviewchristianzionism.htm>