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Faculty of Humanities.
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**TOPIC: EXAMINATION OF THE BIBLICAL TEXTS THAT
FORM THE BASIS OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN SUPPORT
FOR ISRAEL, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
RESPONSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY
JERUSALEM.**

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JULY, 2008.

DECLARATION.

TOPIC: EXAMINATION OF THE BIBLICAL TEXTS THAT FORM THE BASIS OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE RESPONSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM.

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Dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts, Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town.

This work has not been previously submitted in whole or in part for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to and quotation in this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, cited and referenced.

Signed by candidate

Signed. Signature removed **Date**..... 31 July 2008

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ABSTRACT.

The thesis is set against a background of growing support for Israel and the Jewish people from the Evangelical Christian world. This phenomena is attracting attention from many quarters, including secular as well as religious parties. This support is all the more pronounced because it is happening despite a barrage of antagonism directed against Israel by the world press, international human rights groups and by a groundswell of hatred from the Muslim world. In the eyes of their detractors, Israel is an occupying force that is dehumanizing the Palestinians who are the victims of Zionist colonialism.

Evangelical Christians, on the other hand, recognize Israel's right of existence in her Biblical homeland. They support Israel's right to live free of intimidation in a sovereign country where she can protect her citizens from the onslaughts of anti-Semitism and never be again be reliant again on host countries for protection.

The thesis identifies the driving force for the support coming from millions of Evangelical Christians as God's everlasting covenant promises found in the book of Genesis that promise to make Israel a nation, to place her in her own land, and to be their God. In the same way that God is expected to keep the promises He appropriated to the Christians in the New Testament, they believe He can be relied upon to keep His covenants with Israel.

Flowing from God's covenant with Abraham, there are several other Biblical texts that spur Christians on to comfort and support Israel. These texts are explored and, in each case, the response of one of the leading Christian organizations that lend support to Israel and the Jewish people, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ), is recorded to show how the text motivates Evangelicals to respond positively to Israel. In this regard, information has been drawn from the founding statements of the ICEJ, as well as extracts from the minutes of the ICEJ Board meetings dating from the organisation's inception in 1980. These documents explain what gave rise to the establishment of the ICEJ and what they are currently doing in response to these Biblical texts.

The thesis goes further to examine why all Christian denominations do not interpret the relevant texts in the same way. Biblical hermeneutics is used to reveal why the message of the Bible is greatly influenced by whether the text is read in a literal or allegoric way. It indicates that those that read the text in a literal sense, where such an exegesis is called for, see Israel as maintaining her destiny as God's covenant people all the way to the last days. Alternatively, if the text is interpreted

in an allegorical way, the Church is deemed to replace Israel as God's vehicle of world redemption.

The manner on which the various denominations interpret eschatology is examined to determine the way it influences their support for Israel. The denominations that have a millennial view, tend to concur that Israel has a future and a destiny within God's end-time plans. If the Church's view is a-millennium or post-millennium, it was found that there is a different view of how eschatological matters will develop as far as Israel's role in the last days are concerned. Similar differences were identified within Churches with Pre-, Mid- and Post- tribulation points of view. According to each denominations particular approach to these eschatological doctrines, their notion towards Israel varies and tends to influence how they view Israel today.

Furthermore, as the Holocaust has played such a significant role on the psyche of the Jewish people, the thesis reflects on the role of the Church in promoting anti-Semitism, directly or indirectly. This review concludes with what the ICEJ is currently doing to remind the Christian world of the emotional trauma this genocide caused amongst the Jewish people and how the ICEJ is assisting to ensure that it does not happen again.

In order to be as transparent as possible, this research introduces opposing views from both inside the Evangelical Church as well as from the Main Line Churches, who label the pro-Israel group as "Fundamentalists" and "Christian Zionists." Instead, they postulate that the Church has replaced Israel and that the body of Christ has now become the true "Israel of God." According to these critics, Israel is being doted upon by the Evangelicals at the expense of the Palestinians. The thesis enters into the debate on Replacement Theology and the Liberal Evangelical view on Israel, and rebuffs these views in the light of covenant theology.

Finally, the research ends with a commentary on the modern day situation where Evangelical Christians are being praised by certain sectors of Israel society, while others are suspicious, regarding the Evangelical motives as slanted towards missionary activity. A response is also furnished to those who are critical of the Evangelicals who promote emigration to Israel while they have a prophetic expectation that the battle of Armageddon will destroy two thirds of the Jewish population.

Finally, the question is posed whether the warm relationships between the Evangelicals and Israel are sustainable or conditional upon the way Israel reacts to the overtures of this section of the Church.

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I thank the Almighty for instilling in me a keen interest in the Bible. He is and remains worthy of our praise. I thank God that He is a covenant keeping God that neither slumbers nor sleeps and keeps his promises to all who love Him for a thousand generations.

Jack Carstens.

1. Introduction.

It was Luther's reformation efforts that led to the Bible being translated into the local vernacular which resulted in a better understanding of the oracles of God in the mid 1500's. In England, the translation of the Bible into English was the forerunner of a renewed confidence in the authority of Scripture and its relevance to the Jewish people. The first Christian to expound the theory of the regathering of the Jewish people to Israel, Francis Kett, a fellow of Corpus Christi College at Oxford, was burned at the stake in 1589 as a heretic. (Prince, Derek. *The Last Word on the Middle East*. Pg.30. 1982).

Kett's exegesis of the Bible text concerning Israel was followed up by many scholars who interpreted the Scriptures in the same way. As unlikely as it may have seemed, the text seemed to indicate a physical regathering of the Jewish people to their historic homeland. This research will show that by the mid nineteenth-century, the Bible narrative had spurred on many Protestant Christians to a better understanding of the role of the Jewish people in the Bible and their future destiny as God's chosen people. Many eminent thinkers, ministers and politicians joined the call for the Jewish people to be re-established in their Biblical homeland and became members of what was called the Restoration Movement. Jewish people became encouraged and gained new interest in returning to Israel.

We shall see that Theodor Herzl, the father of modern Zionism, was greatly assisted by an Evangelical Christian pastor who encouraged his vision of a Jewish State by introducing him to the royal courts of Europe. Herzl organized the World Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897 which became the rallying call for the Jewish homeland that finally came into being 50 years later when the United Nations voted to create a Jewish State in Israel in 1947.

It was the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 that sparked a renewed interest by Bible believing Christians around the world in the Jewish people and Israel. They realised something special had happened causing them to sit up and take note. The major Prophets of the Bible, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, all spoke about the Jewish people returning to their land from the four corners of the earth. Suddenly these prophecies were falling into place. From the ashes of the Holocaust rose the new State of Israel. From the lowest point in their history came the sudden

attainment of the Zionist dream. The Jewish people would be reestablished in their historical, Biblical homeland.

The fact that such a critical prophetic word was being fulfilled in front of their eyes spurred Bible believing Christians on to re-examining the Biblical texts that spoke about this return. It confirmed to them that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is true to His Word and a keeper of His covenant promises to His people. These covenant promises of God to the Jewish people through the father of the nation, Abraham, will be examined in depth. The investigation encompasses the land promises and whether the covenant was a conditional or unconditional and irrevocable agreement with Abraham and the nation.

This explains the fact that during the past six decades there has been a noticeable growth in the number of Christians around the world that support Israel. This support stands in stark contrast to the way various church leaders treated the Jewish people throughout history. The research will show that not all Christian denominations display the same sentiment towards the Jewish people and the State of Israel. It is mainly the Evangelical Christian movement that has come to other insights and spearheads a major change in attitude towards the Jewish people.

Historically, the Christian Church does not have a good record concerning its relationship with the Jewish people. Various Church councils went out of their way to distance the Church from Judaism while many atrocities such as the inquisition, pogroms, expulsions and the Holocaust are a stark testimony of the Church's tainted association with the Jewish people since the rise of the Church some 2000 years ago. (Shane, Milton. The roots of anti-Semitism. University of Virginia Press. 1994).

From a modern day political perspective, Israel is regarded by a substantial portion of the international community and press as a pariah nation. They see Israel as a country that gained independence in 1948 based on claims to a historic homeland, displacing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the process. The establishment of the State of Israel and the five major wars that followed appear to indicate that the Israeli nation has not been welcomed back into the region.

A Jewish State in a sea of Islam appears to be particularly offensive to the surrounding Muslim countries, resulting in bitter hatred between Arabs and Jews. Christians taking sides in this conflict find that they invariably antagonize one party or the other. The situation is further complicated by

the fact that the Arab nations have huge oil reserves that are desperately needed by the Western nations to drive their economies. This is hardly a climate conducive for anyone, including Christians, to prevail in favour of Israel. Despite this daunting situation, it appears that millions of Christians around the world openly support Israel, pray for her protection, help Jewish people to immigrate to Israel giving them material and moral support in the process.

This research establishes why these sentiments have come about amongst Christians in general and Evangelical Christians in particular. The support of Israel from this source will be examined to find out if these actions are based on emotions or some other ideological foundation. In particular, this dissertation examines the major Biblical texts that are used to motivate Christians into comforting and blessing the Jewish people.

A further question that will be addressed is why it is mostly Evangelical Christians that are inclined to be supportive of Israel? The research briefly investigates the origins of the Evangelical Christian community as a movement within Christianity. The investigation looks at their underlying reliance on the written Word (the Scriptures), and their attempts to follow the injunctions of the Bible in a literal sense. The research delves into the importance of Biblical hermeneutics, with special reference to the Hebrew mindset versus the Greek mindset. We will also investigate the differences brought about by a literal versus allegorical interpretation of the text. The Evangelical position vis a vis these methods of interpretation will be used to shed light on their perspective on Israel.

As part of the research into why other Christian denominations do not have a similar perspective on Israel, the major texts used by supporters of Replacement Theology will be examined to determine why the followers of this doctrine have come to the conclusion that Israel has lost her special calling. The counter arguments to the views expressed by the followers of Replacement Theology will be explored to validate the Evangelical Christian standpoint that the Church has not replaced Israel as God's chosen people and that the blessings destined for her are still in good standing.

Since the rapid growth of evangelical Christian support for Israel, many dissenting voices have arisen from the Church at large expressing concern at what has been termed "Christian Zionism". The major accusations leveled against evangelical Christian Zionists by dissenting Evangelical churches, liberal Protestant clergy and other denominations will be explored to note their point of view.

This thesis will also determine why Evangelical Christians believe Israel has a significant, God-given prophetic destiny appropriate for the “Last Days”. At the same time, particular Christian denominational interpretations of eschatological events related to the Last Days will be investigated to determine how these interpretations influence the Church’s viewpoint about Israel. Of interest will be how the impact of eschatological theories concerning the millennium, dispensationalism and tribulation doctrines, including a reference to what the Hebrew Scriptures call “the time of Jacob’s trouble”, correlate with Christian and Evangelical attitudes towards Israel.

Furthermore, the Holocaust had a profound impact on the Jewish people. No study of evangelical Christian support for Israel can be complete without reference to the way Christians reacted to the Nazi attempt to liquidate the Jews during the war and the role of evangelical Christians in trying to heal the physiological and emotional scars caused by this monumental travesty against the Jewish people.

Some of the support from the evangelical movement is isolated and sporadic while other support has become formalized. The latter is expressed through a number of evangelical Christian organizations that support Israel in one way or another. One of the leading proponents of Evangelical support for Israel is the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, also known as the ICEJ. It is an inter-denominational organization formed in 1980 that presently has over 50 branches worldwide with an estimated support base of several million. Research into the work of the ICEJ is incorporated into this dissertation because it is a leading voice amongst Evangelicals concerning Israel. Its support is backed up by a physical presence in Israel where close to 50 volunteers are actively engaged in channeling international Christian support for Israel to the nation.

This organization is at the forefront of the Evangelical Christian support for Israel from many countries around the world which has reached significant proportions and is growing. The following article, from one of the leading newspapers in Israel, gives palpable recognition to the role of evangelical Christian support for Israel:

“They number in the millions and wield increasing power and influence across the United States. From year to year their voice grows stronger and more resolute, as their role in shaping policy, and the future of American society continues to expand. Guided by faith, they love Israel passionately and pray for her well-being, rejoicing in her

successes and grieving over her setbacks. They are America's Bible-believing Christians, and it is time for Israel to reach out to them in a far more sophisticated and comprehensive manner.” (Jerusalem Post. Dec.21, 2006).

The only modification that one must make to this observation is that Christian support is a much wider phenomenon than that which emanates from the USA. It is common to evangelical Christian community throughout the world.

The writer is a long standing member of this organization and therefore has been able to glean information from a visit to its Head Office in Jerusalem to record the organizations response to the Biblical texts that motivate its volunteer staff in Israel and its supporters in the branches around the world to deliver practical support and comfort to the nation.

Finally, the dissertation will explore modern day dynamics between Evangelical Christians and the State of Israel, especially as it relates to the evangelical Church's role of disseminating comfort to the people and how this is viewed by various segments of the Jewish community.

We now turn to a brief investigation into how the Evangelical movement was started with a brief history of their emergence, what doctrines they follow and how this impacted on Israel in modern times.

2. Evangelical Christianity- A brief history of the emergence of the movement, the main doctrines followed and how this impacts on Israel.

Evangelical Christianity is a relatively modern phenomena. For more than 1500 years the Church era was dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. During that time the Church was shaped by leaders that saw themselves as the vicars of God that needed to control every thought and action of its followers to ensure that the Church stayed on the straight and narrow path, as they saw it. Their views on all aspects of the Christian religion lay in a top down, autocratic style of managing the Church and its followers. Challenges to the way the Pope, his Cardinals and the Church Councils viewed the oracles of God were not tolerated. Dissent was met with excommunication, even death.

It was the brave actions of some priests like Martin Luther that enabled the message of the Bible to fall into the hands of the laity who in turn were then able to challenge its meaning and motive. This slight opening of the door gave rise to questioning that in turn spurred the Protestant and Evangelical movements of the sixteenth century and allowed scholars to take a fresh look at God's plan and destiny for Israel and the Jewish people.

2.1 A brief history of the emergence of the Evangelical Christian movement.

The emergence of Christians characterised as "Evangelical" is a relatively modern occurrence. It took on form after the birth of the Protestant movement, initiated in the sixteenth-century by the Roman Catholic monk, Dr. Martin Luther, whose reformist views broke up the monolithic influence and unbending theological dogmas of the Church in Rome.

Papal rule had dominated all political, cultural, scientific and religious thought for almost 13 centuries in the Western world. Luther studied the Bible and challenged the Church in Rome on various theological matters, including the core message of salvation. He nailed a set of ninety-five edicts to the church doors in Wittenburg in 1563, defying the Church and the Pope on matters of theology. Included was his condemnation of the practice of collecting indulgences from the ordinary people to swell the coffers in Rome. This set him on a collision course with the Church that changed the face of the Christian religion forever. (see Bainton, Roland H. Here I stand. A life of Martin Luther. 1950).

In defiance of Rome, Luther translated the Bible into German, allowing the ordinary people for the first time in centuries to read the Scriptures in their colloquial language. This allowed the laity to understand the Scriptures and to debate its interpretation. This was in contrast to having the Bible available only in Latin and interpreted solely by a Priest from the Church.

The shackles and the rigidity of the Church in Rome were broken at the cost of many lives. The Papal armies tried to enforce the status quo, killing thousands of protesters. Priests that read and preached from the Luther's German translation of the Bible were burnt at the stake.

Despite the resistance to Luther's work, the Protestant movement grew in numbers and in stature, as more and more scholars and clerics agreed with Luther's interpretation of the Bible and joined the movement. It was from the action of these fearless Protestant thinkers that the Evangelical Church was born.

Evangelical theology goes back to the creeds of the first centuries of the Christian era but has distinctive ties with the Protestant Reformation:

“It is deeply committed to the centrality of the Bible, to its power by the Holy Spirit with special reference to preaching, to its final authority in all matters of doctrine and life, and to the necessity of interpreting it as naturally as possible and disseminating it widely in the vernacular. It is equally committed to justification by faith in which acceptance with God is received by trusting his loving self-disclosure and not by any human accomplishment. It also readily confesses that the Church is composed of all believers who have thus been incorporated by the Holy Spirit, and who have a direct, personal and constant access to their heavenly Father.” (Fergusson and Wright, eds. *New Dictionary of Theology*. Pg 239. 1988).

Luther's reformist treatises added the concept of the universal priesthood of believers in contrast to the Roman Catholic claims of an exclusive priesthood of the ordained clergy. For this reason “Roman Catholic theologians such as Erasmus, Thomas More, and Johannes Eck labeled the reformers “Evangelicals”, a term not accepted by Luther, for he saw the evangel as the essential core of Christian truth and not restricted to any sectarian meaning. Nonetheless, the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, and the *Corpus Evangelicorum* of 1653 recognised the Reformers as “Evangelicals”. This usage was further entrenched in 1817 when the

union of Lutheran and Reformed churches in Germany referred to both groups as “evangelical”. (Ibid. Pg.281. 1988).

From that time forward, the word was freely applied to all Protestants in general, with no understanding that it defined any particular tradition within Protestantism. It was in the foregoing sense that Calvin and his followers in the Reformed tradition were also called “Evangelicals.” Calvin’s Institutes, promoting the predestination theory for which he became famous, agreed with Luther’s basic contentions concerning justification by faith, the primacy of Scripture and the priesthood of all believers. Added to these principles was the necessity of a conscious conversion experience to settle the question of election for the individual.

“Nowhere was this more evident than among the Puritan reformers in England and America. The necessity of an evangelical conversion experience was an article of faith among the American Puritan settlers of New England. They were the first major group of evangelical settlers in North America. They created many of America’s first colleges, including Yale and Harvard, as ministerial training centers for preparing evangelical pastors and leaders.” (Ibid. Pg. 281.1988).

The emphasis on a conversion experience became part of the American religious folklore and an essential element in the various awakenings and revivals that have swept over the nation through its history. Vivid and often emotional conversion experiences were seen as necessary to salvation, despite the various understandings of the churches regarding water baptism and the other sacraments and ordinances of the churches.

“The story of John Wesley before and after his Aldersgate experience in 1738 clearly demonstrated the difference between the sacramental approach he followed before Aldersgate and the evangelical approach he followed the rest of his life. Most historians speak of the eighteenth-century Wesleyan movement in England as the “evangelical revival”. (Ibid. Pg.282.1988).

Wesley clearly identified himself as an Evangelical although he never severed his relationship with the Anglican Church. Since Wesley, Anglicans have been classified as high church Anglo-Catholic or low-church Evangelicals in the tradition of Wesley and the Puritan Reformers. In Britain, therefore, the term “Evangelical” took on a new meaning, i.e., that of a particular party within an existing church tradition.

The term also became synonymous with any Protestant who refused to conform to the liberalising influences that continually arose within Protestant churches. In Europe during the same century, there were forces and events that further helped to define the meaning of the word Evangelical as it applied to Protestants. In the light of a perceived new threat from Roman Catholicism and the gradual loss of a clear Evangelical witness in the major Protestant bodies, a call was issued for Evangelicals to meet in London in 1846. This meeting formed the Evangelical Alliance, which was to carry the Evangelical cause into the twentieth century.

The Evangelical Alliance formulated a doctrinal statement whose nine affirmations placed the evangelical movement squarely in the mainstream of traditional Protestant orthodoxy. These statements “affirmed: 1) the inspiration of the Bible, 2) the trinity, 3) the depravity of man, 4) the mediation of Christ, 5) justification by faith, 6) conversion and sanctification by the Holy Spirit, 7) the return of Christ and the Final Judgment, 8) the ministry of the word, and 9) the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper.” (Ibid.Pg.282, 1999.)

The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements

A substantial part of Evangelical Christian support for Israel emanates from the Pentecostal and charismatic movements within the broader Evangelical movement. The Pentecostal movement spread dramatically after the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles in 1901. The Spirit of God fell on the congregation while worshipping and the congregants started speaking in tongues, similar to that described in early church history in the book of Acts.(Acts 2:1-4). This was the beginning of what became known as the great Pentecostal revival. The Charismatic movement started several years later.

These movements have impacted greatly on Christianity and ushered in a new era of Christian spirituality. In view of this, these movements merit special mention as they form a large part of the Evangelical movement and have strong bonds with Israel.

The terms “Pentecostal” and “charismatic” are often used interchangeably and do have many features in common. However, there are salient differences:

“There are two approaches to differentiating between “Pentecostal” and “charismatic.” One is theological, the other ecclesiastical. A theological differentiation might be along doctrinal lines, in

particular Spirit baptism (also called the baptism in or of the Holy Spirit). It is oversimplified, but perhaps useful, to say that "Pentecostals" subscribe to a work of grace subsequent to conversion in which Spirit baptism is evidenced by glossolalia (i.e., speaking in tongues); for some, this baptism must also follow another act of grace, sanctification. "Charismatics," however, do not always advocate either the necessity of a second work of grace or the evidence of glossolalia as an affirmation of Spirit baptism. Yet both emphasize the present work of the Spirit through gifts in the life of the individual and the church." (Burgess and McGee, Ed. Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements. Zondervan, Michigan, USA.1988. Pg.1)

An ecclesiastical differentiation especially concerns denominational affiliation. Thus "Pentecostal" describes those participating in classical Pentecostal denominations such as the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, the Church of God in Christ, and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. Those persons outside these classical Pentecostal denominations would be characterised as "charismatics", whether they are within mainline denominations or are part of an independent group.

While early Pentecostalism was often associated with the lower socio-economic classes and relegated to the fringe of Evangelical Christianity, the desire for spiritual renewal in the historic and affluent mainline churches unexpectedly resulted in an increased interest in spiritual gifts, including glossolalia and physical healing. As the movement grew, it spread to other Protestant churches, the Roman Catholic Church, and finally to the Orthodox churches. Part of the groundwork for charismatic renewal, reflecting its deep roots in the Pentecostal movement, had been laid by the ministries of Oral Roberts, David J. du Plessis, and Demos Shakarian and the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. It quickly became apparent that this renewal, which also sought for the dynamic power of the Spirit, flowed out of what many believed to be a vacuum in American religious life as well as a longing to return to the essence of New Testament Christianity within one's particular church tradition.

The renewal in the Roman Catholic Church, which can in part be traced to the monumental changes ushered in by the Second Vatican Council, spread around the world and was experienced by both prelates and laity. The Roman Catholic theologian, Peter D. Hocken, had this to say about the charismatic occurrences within his church:

“The charismatic movement is a grace of God touching every aspect of the Christian life and is found across all the Christian churches... The reappearance of the spiritual gifts thus represents something dramatically new in church history. Once you admit they are authentic and are the work of the Holy Spirit, you have to recognize that something of possibly unparalleled importance is happening.” (Burgess, Stanley, and McGee, Gary. Ed. Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements. Pg.5.1988).

The charismatic renewal, therefore, represents a trans-denominational movement of Christians (both independent and denominational) who emphasize a “life in the Spirit” and the importance of exercising extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, including but not limited to glossolalia, in private prayer and in public worship.

While initially Charismatics adopted the distinctives of classical Pentecostalism, in recent years they have explored their newfound experiences within their own traditions. Without roots in some of the extremes of the Holiness movement, they have typically been more overtly supernaturalistic and culture-affirming in their perspective on the Christian life than classical Pentecostals. As time passed, most of the renewal movements found a degree of recognition and approval within their parent denominational structures.

With the outbreak of the charismatic renewal in the early 1960s, it became apparent to the church world that Pentecostalism in its various forms would have to be taken seriously, not only because of its growth, but also because of its successful penetration into virtually every corner of the Christian community. According to Burgess and McGee:

“The world Pentecostal-charismatic successes in evangelism may well constitute the most dramatic increase of believers in the history of the Christian church. Clearly what was initially a small, fledgling, and poorly regarded group of the sometimes disinherited was in 1958 labelled by Henry Pitney Van Dusen (then president of Union Theological Seminary in New York) as part of Christendom’s “Third Force” alongside conventional Protestantism and Catholicism.” (Ibid.Pg.5.1988).

The Pentecostal and charismatic movements grew rapidly, especially after WWII, especially in North and South America, Africa and Scandinavia. “By 1980 the Pentecostal movement had grown to 51 million and a further 11 million were included in the charismatic

movements in the traditional mainline denominations.” (New Dictionary of Theology. Pg.503. 1988).

The Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches form significant branches of the Evangelical Christian movement. They are an offshoot of the Protestant churches and share many important theological tenants, even if all the Evangelical churches do not agree on all doctrinal issues. However, their stand on the Word of God and the literal interpretation of the text, lead many of these churches to similar views regarding Israel and the need to support the Jewish people. These unifying factors will be discussed in more depth hereunder.

2.2. The main doctrines of the Evangelical Christian community.

There are a few doctrinal affirmations unique to the Evangelical movement that sets it apart from other main- stream Christian denominations. Firstly, we reassert the essence of the matter by quoting the importance of sola-Scriptura as the overriding doctrine. The following related truths are also important and will be discussed below:

“If anything guided the evangelical religion, it was its firm grasp of the related truths of sola fide (faith alone), sola gratia (grace alone) and solus Christus (Christ alone).Here the heart of the movement was laid open in its fullest sense.” (John Armstrong Ed. The Coming Evangelical Crisis. Moody press, Chicago. Pg. 17. 1966).

2.2.1. Sola Scriptura: The inspired Word, no other basis.

In the first place there is the firm belief in “sola- Scriptura” i.e., that the Bible, Old and New Testament, is the inspired Word of God. This implies a respect for the Bible and a belief that the 66 books canonized in the Bible are “God given” and should, therefore, be closely observed.

It should be noted that the cannon of the Bible used by the Roman Catholic Church, called the Vulgate, was translated into Latin by Jerome. Although a good scholar of Latin, the same could not be said of his Hebrew and Greek from which he translated the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures. There is also a difference in canon from that of the Protestant Bible, underlying the rift between these two main streams of Christian doctrine and thought:

“Although the Vulgate translation is acknowledged as flawed by the Church itself, the Roman Catholic Church uses the Latin translation as the standard. The Vulgate edition of the Bible also includes the Apocrypha which was not translated from the Hebrew but from the Septuagint Greek. Jerome’s own list of the canonical books of the Old Testament does not include the apocryphal books, whose divine inspiration he refused to accept. He was not responsible for their Latin translation, but notwithstanding, they were included as an integral part of the Vulgate Bible. The Apocrypha, in Tobit 12:9, and II Mac. 12:46, countenances the two Romanish doctrines of salvation by works and prayers for the dead, neither of which are found in the canonical Scriptures.” (Dreyer, F.C.H and Weller, E. Roman Catholicism in the light of Scripture. Moody Press, Chicago.1960).

Here we see the emphasis on the close reading of the Scriptures arising from the pre-Christian era. Unfortunately, it seems that this virtue was not transferred to the canon of the Bible by the ecclesiastical leadership of the Church in its formative years.

The canon of the Old Testament portion of the Bible published by the Protestant/Evangelical Church is similar to the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures, except that the books are not arranged in the same order. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the church in Rome, reminds his readers of the tradition and authoritativeness of the oracles of God that were entrusted to the Jewish people via the Hebrew Scriptures (Rom.3:2).

With regard to the New Testament, the canon is made up of the gospels and letters used by the early church fathers for the teaching of the followers of Jesus. These were gathered to make up the books of the New Testament:

“The canonical books of the New Testament were all written over a period of some forty years... and were quoted in the writings of the early church fathers like Clement of Rome (95C.E); Polycarp (110 C.E); Ignatius (110C.E.); Tertullia (160-200); and Origen (185-254)” (Dreyer and Weller, Roman Catholicism in the light of Scripture. Pg.27. 1960).

The Hebrew and Greek translations of the Protestant canon are, therefore, not the work of a particular denomination, but of the faithful Scribes in the case of the Old Testament, and the general usage of the gospels and epistles by the early Church before the Roman Catholic Church translated the books it regarded as canon into Latin and produced the Vulgate edition of the Bible. Apart from the Apocrypha that

it included in the canon, the Roman Catholic Church also added Church tradition and the decisions of Church councils to the requirements for salvation. According to the Council of Trent, these traditions are to be received with “equal piety and reverence” as the Vulgate Scriptures. (Ibid. Pg.32.1960).

It was against these dictates that the early Protestants protested. The Protestant Reformation may have begun as a movement to purge the Church of corrupt practices but, within a short time, it directly addressed some of the most basic and foundational doctrines of the Christian faith. The changes that resulted have forever altered the visible Christian community and from it evolved the Pentecostal and charismatic movements that today form a part of the Evangelical Church.

There are concerns being raised within Evangelical circles over the sustainability of the early, essential truths of the Protestant church. Questions are being asked as to whether Evangelicalism will continue to look anything like historic Evangelical Protestantism. These concerns centre on the definition of the inerrancy of the Scriptures and the consequent recovery of the authoritative role of Scripture in the life of the movement. According to some Evangelical theologians, the theology and practice of the Evangelical church has to be built upon the bedrock principle, namely that the written Scriptures are to be the guide for message and method. They state that Scripture alone has meant at least four things for Evangelicals who remained faithful to these principles:

“First, it meant that Scripture is fundamentally necessary. This is necessary because, without the self–attesting, objective, final, written revelation, sinful people would pervert the Word of God time and again. Second, Scripture is authoritative. Sinful people would set up their own authority in the church. How does Christ rule? Through the Word alone. The Word and the Spirit are inseparably joined. Third, Scripture is sufficient. This point challenged the supplements medieval theologians sought to bring to the Word. Finally, the reformers believed that the Scripture is perspicuous. By this they meant that the Word was essentially clear and plain. This is in contrast to the Church of the Middle Ages that ecclesiastical experts were needed to know God and to read His Word.” (Armstrong. *The Compromised Church*. Pg.22. 1966).

While the heart of the message of Scripture was the gospel as it is revealed in Scripture, concerns were coming to the fore that the Evangelical movement was falling into a mould of “modern moralism” that exclude Christ and the Cross while it was being “..drowned in a sea

of subjectivism, relativism and pragmatism and was no longer, fundamentally, evangelical.” (Ibid. Pg. 23.1966).

2.2.5 Fundamentalism

If the doctrine of sola-Scriptura would no longer be the central theme of the movement, concerns would arise about the authoritativeness of Scripture. It requires a fundamentalist approach to reading the text in a close, literal sense, for the authoritativeness of the Bible to flourish. This conservative approach to the Scriptures has earned the Evangelicals the term “Fundamentalists”:

“Fundamentalism refers to a movement among theologically conservative Protestant churches that reached its height in America during the 1920s and survives in resurgent post- World War II fundamentalist and evangelical churches and movements”. (Burgess, Stanley and McGee, Gary. Eds. Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements.Pg.324.1988).

Fundamentalism arose as a reaction to the liberal teachings of the nineteenth-century higher critics and the subsequent movement known as “Modernism” mentioned above. The twentieth century brought about a crisis in Evangelical thought as churches attempted to accommodate the faith to the realities of the modern world. Fundamentalists saw themselves as defenders of orthodox Christianity that stressed the inerrant inspiration of the Bible, which was seen as the final and complete authority for faith and practice.

In today’s terms, fundamentalism has developed a bad connotation because it stirs up images of narrow-mindedness. However, in the case of Evangelicals, it really means that its adherents are inspired by the fundamental truths of the Bible. This overlaps with the important Evangelical doctrine of sola-Scriptura. Evangelicalism and fundamentalism may have become interchangeable. According to the abovementioned authors, despite its conservative perception, fundamentalism, in its more respectable form, has “become known as Evangelicalism and flourished since the latter half of the twentieth century.”(Ibid. Pg.324. 1988).

These tenants are of great importance when arriving at the rationale for the Evangelical Christen stand in support of Israel. Their reliance on the principle of sola-Scriptura assigns the greatest authority to the Word of God. Church traditions and council decisions do not carry the same weight in the Evangelical world, because these writings are outside of the

inerrant Word of God. They are considered tainted by man and, therefore, unreliable. By reviewing the case history of some persons on whom sainthood was conferred and the deeds of others who led the Church during the Dark Ages, one can only come to the conclusion that the decisions of man are often riddled with relativity and subjectivity that cannot always weigh up to Biblical standards.

The common denominator amongst Evangelical Christians throughout their many denominations, is the close reading of the Word of God. So, it is not to tradition or church council proclamations, but it is the Biblical text that is the prime motivator for Evangelical support for Israel.

2.3 Evangelical Christian Support for Israel- Modern developments.

As we have discussed above, one of the primary reasons for Christian support for Israel is that Christians and Jews share a common belief in Torah and the TaNak (Hebrew Scriptures), or the Old Testament. Christians share the belief that God created the heavens and the earth and that the creator God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The God of the Jews is, therefore, also the God of the Christians.

Along with an literal interpretation of the Bible, Christians recognize the Hebrew Scriptures along with the Christian Scriptures as the inerrant, God-inspired word of God (2 Tim.3:16). Many texts in the Christian Scriptures (New Testament) also refer to the purposes of Israel inter alia, as the carrier of the oracles of God, the nation through whom Jesus was born and the role of Israel in the Second Advent of Jesus as the Messiah. It is, therefore, easy to see why Christians who have a deep respect for the Word of God, draw their inspiration for their support of Israel and the Jewish people from the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.

The translation of the Bible into local languages brought a new understanding of the Jewish roots of the Christian faith to millions of Christians. This did not happen overnight. The Bible was translated into German and English in the sixteenth-century, but the insights into the special calling of the Jewish people and their future destiny flowing from the Biblical text only took root in the 17th century with the advent of the Restoration movement. During this time hopes flurried among mainly Protestant Christians and Jews for a restored Israel.

Some prominent scholars embraced the concept and gave the movement greater momentum. These included such eminent personalities such Sir Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, the Earl of Shaftsbury, Lord Palmerstone,

Benjamin Disraeli, Robert Browning, George Eliot and John Adams. In particular, Sir Lawrence Oliphant, a nineteenth century member of the British parliament, became convinced of the need for the land of Israel to be restored to the Jewish people and set off to convince the Sultan to allow Jews to emigrate to Palestine, then a province of the Ottoman empire. He himself settled in Haifa and assisted Jews that came to settle in Israel until he died in 1888.

Another Evangelical Christian that was inspired by the Biblical text was a chaplain at the British Embassy in Vienna, called William Hechler. His study of Biblical prophecy convinced him that the Jewish people would one day return to their historical homeland. He read Herzl's book, *Der Judenstaat*, and decided to throw his weight behind Herzl to help him realise the dream of a Jewish state. "With William Hechler and the British Restorationists on one side, and Theodor Herzl and the World Zionist Congress on the other, the confluence of the two Zionist streams began." (Prince, Derek. *Last word on the Middle East*. Pg 34-36.1982).

The Turks joined Germany in WWI and lost their hold over Palestine when they were defeated by the allied forces under General Allenby in 1917. General Allenby was also an Evangelical Christian and it is told that he dismounted from his horse and entered Jerusalem on foot, because "no one except the Messiah should enter this city mounted". (Ibid. pg 37. 1982). This was an important year for the Jewish people because on November 2, 1917, Lord Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, issued a declaration stating that "His Majesty's government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people..", in this way preparing the way for the State that was declared in 1948.

In the lead up to the formation of the state of Israel and its boundaries, Winston Churchill, then British Secretary to the colonies, recognized Abdullah, head of a band of guerrillas in eastern Palestine, as Emir on the bases of political expediency. He presented Abdullah, the King apparent, with four-fifths of Palestine to form a new state called Transjordan. U.S. President Wilson immediately protested this arbitrary act of partition. President Woodrow Wilson was a Bible believing Evangelical Christian who was well aware of the boundaries promised by God for the homeland of the Jewish people. In his protest to Churchill concerning his partition of Palestine into a Jewish and Arab homeland, he made it clear that he supported a boundary dictated by the Biblical promises:

"The Zionist cause is tied to the security of Biblical boundaries and has in view the economic development of the country. This means that in the north, Palestine should reach to the River Litani and the

source of the streams of Mount Hermon; in the east it should include the plains of Jaulon and Haran. Otherwise we would have a case of mutilation. I would like to remind you that neither Washington nor Paris have manifested opposition to the Zionist plan nor to securing indispensable Biblical boundaries.” (Prince, Derek. Last word on the Middle East. Pg. 39. 1982).

The Restorationists and the eminent leaders and scholars mentioned above all had one thing in common regarding their view of the Jewish people. They read the Bible, and believed the promises of God regarding the Jewish people because they understood the text in a literal sense. This close, literal interpretation is a trait of Evangelical Christians who have a fundamentalist approach to the Bible. The word fundamental is used here in the sense that Bible text is understood in its literal sense unless otherwise indicated by the script. This is in distinct contrast to the allegorical method of interpretation used by some denominations that spiritualise the text to fit their doctrine that the Church has replaced Israel. By spiritualizing certain content, in particular the reference to Israel, in a way whereby the Church replaces Israel, Israel and the Jewish people lose their significance and are viewed in the same light as any other people group in the world. It is this method of interpretation that leads to a doctrine called Replacement Theology and will be investigated in greater depth later in the dissertation.

It would be misleading to contend that all Evangelicals see eye to eye on this matter. There is a minority view within the movement that regards the mainstream Evangelical support for Israel as heretical. They consist, inter alia, of the Replacement Theologists and the liberal wing of the Evangelical movement who are moved by the plight of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel and on the West bank. Reference will be made to their arguments hereunder, but the thesis will not be referring in great detail to all their arguments.

Since the motivation for Evangelical support for Israel is almost entirely Biblical text based, it is vitally important to single out those texts that are relied upon for this outpouring of concern and support for the Jewish people from this important segment of Christianity.

3. The Biblical texts on which Evangelical Christians base their support for Israel.

Since the Evangelical Christian world puts much store on sola-Scriptura, the written Word, to guide its understanding and actions regarding Israel, this section investigates which Biblical texts on which they rely to validate their support for Israel. The texts that are identified will be discussed in the light of their significance vis a vis Israel and will be followed by the response it solicits from one of the leading proponents of Evangelical support for Israel, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ).

As alluded to earlier, this organization is at the forefront of gathering support and assistance from the Evangelical world in its efforts to respond to the Biblical injunction to comfort Israel. At the end of each of the major texts listed below that encourage Christians to stand with and support Israel, examples of how the ICEJ and its members have responded to the text will be highlighted. Although the ICEJ responses will not be exhaustive, it will give the reader an idea of the way in which the text has elicited a reaction from members of this constituency.

The Prophetic Word.

There are extraordinary prophetic pronouncements by the major as well as the minor prophets of the Old Testament that remind the modern reader that it was foretold thousands of years ago that Israel would be scattered throughout all the nations and one day return to her own land. There they would face days of great trial, even war, and then a Messiah would come, ushering in world peace during his millennium reign from the city of Jerusalem.(Zech.8:22).

After the destruction of the second Temple by the Roman forces in 70 C.E, the Jewish people were scattered throughout the nations for almost 2000 years. In modern times they are miraculously returning to their historic homeland. The fulfillment of these prophecies is an indication that God has not forgotten His people Israel and confirm that they do have a place in Biblical eschatology.

However, there is a school of thought that says these prophecies have been fulfilled when the Jewish people returned from exile in Babylon. Their argument is that the northern tribes, who were exiled to Assyria in 722 BCE and the southern tribes who followed them into exile in 586 BCE to Babylon, fulfilled these prophecies when they returned to Israel

70 years later. The return of the exiles was made possible by King Darius who allowed the Israelites to return to build a temple, these events being recorded in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Israel's return from Babylon is seen by some as the fulfillment of the promises of the prophets referred to above.

However, according to Bible prophecies the Lord would re-gather Israel a second time. When they returned from the Babylonian exile they came from the north country only, but during the future regathering of Israel, they would come from the four corners of the earth, even from the islands:

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isaiah 11:11-12).

This prophecy does not fit with a return of the Jewish people from Babylon. It refers to a regathering for the “second time” and from the “four corners of the earth”. This return is followed by the Last of Days for Isaiah sees in his prophecy the reign of Messiah when the nations will “beat their swords into plowshares and they shall make war no more”. (Isaiah 2: 4). These are things yet to come.

In the meantime the return of Israel to their homeland is continuing unabated. Those who contend that the regathering of Israel at this point in history is merely a political accident, see no significance in Israel's return to her homeland. This is the basis of the rhetoric used by Replacement Theologians to draw the conclusion that God is finished with Israel and that Israel has now been replaced by the church. (The tenants of Replacement Theology will be dealt with in a later chapter).

Even though it is reasonable to believe that the return of the Jewish people to their land from the four corners of the earth is the fulfillment of the explicit prophecies to this effect, they are still the subject of debate. It is for this reason –not to get entangled in this eschatological debate- that the Evangelical Christian world does not base its argument for the support of Israel on prophetic utterances, but rather on God's covenants with Israel.

3.1 Gen.12:1-3. The Abrahamic Covenant.

Whereas the Bible teaches us that God interacted with man firstly through the pinnacle of his creation, Adam and Eve, and then later with Noah, God then transformed the way in which he related with mankind by progressively revealing himself to a nation that He set aside for this purpose. This nation is Israel and the revelation to her came through a covenant that God made with Abraham.

“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”
(Gen.12:1-3).

It is this unconditional covenant with Abraham that forms the foundational principle on which Evangelical Christians base their support for Israel. The book of Genesis describes God's calling of Abram, a man from Ur of the Chaldees, for the express purpose of entering into a covenant relationship with him. The covenant had a fourfold promise: a) Abram would be blessed; b) a nation would be called into being out of Abram for God's purposes; c) through Abram all the nations of the earth would be blessed; and d) the covenant ends with a promise of blessings or curses for those who bless or curse the nation of Israel.

This call to Abram was a radical departure in the way God interacted with mankind. As indicated above, God no longer relied on the relationship with individuals to reflect His righteousness on earth, from that point on He would work through a nation and their future generations to reveal Himself to mankind. The nation formed for his purpose would be His light unto the world:

“I will also give thee for a light to the gentiles, that thou may be my salvation unto the end of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6).

The covenant with Abram, and his descendants Isaac and Jacob, placed him in a unique relationship with God. God would progressively reveal Himself to Abram, and later through Israel, to the rest of the world. One nation would carry God's banner. The descendants of Abraham knew

they were set apart for this purpose by the covenant entered into between God and Abram. The Bible teaches us that Abram did not have to do anything from his side to validate the covenant. God cut the covenant by Himself. (Gen. 15:17-18)

In other words the Abrahamic Covenant is a one-sided covenant. There were no conditions attached. Nowhere in the cutting of the covenant with Abram and through him the nation of Israel, is there a condition attached – “if you do this then..” Instead we read that God undertook to do everything required to enact this covenant. All the promises begin with “I will... I will... I will... I will...” Four times in Gen. 12: 1-3 God engages Abram and tells him what He will do as the covenant maker. Abraham is merely the covenant acceptor.

It is interesting to note that Abram was a gentile living in Ur of the Chaldees at the time that God revealed Himself to Abram. The Midrash reveals that his father was an idol maker, a wealthy craftsman of this time. (Midrash raba, Parasha 38:13) Such was his encounter with this living God that he left everything and followed after God. Abram, or Abraham as he was later known, had no special spirituality or strength or attributes. Likewise Israel does not need to display special gifts, spirituality, strength or wisdom to take on the task of being the recipient of God’s oracles. It would always be God’s covenant, His strength, wisdom and righteousness that would enable Israel to fulfill her task as a covenant people.

This unique relationship is confirmed by the Torah when it states:

“For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt” (Deut.7:6-8).

The apostle Paul, himself a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin, has this to say about Israel’s unique calling in his letter to the Gentile church in Rome: “What advantage then has the Jew? Much in every way because to them were committed the oracles of God”(Rom. 3: 1-2). Malcolm Hedding has this to say about the reason for Israel’s existence:

“So herein lies the chief reason why the nation of Israel came into existence. They came into existence to be the custodians of world

redemption, the vehicle by which God would bring His message of eternal salvation to the world.” (Hedding, M. The Basis of Christian support for Israel. Pg 9.)'

The covenant promises of God to Abram were expanded to include an area of land wherein this new nation would reside:

“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Gen.17: 7-8).

The important point to note about this Scripture is that the covenant would be everlasting. The covenant was made between Abram and his seed after him for their generations. It is also an unconditional covenant. The Bible says God will not forget His people, nor will He ever discard them. He will keep his covenant with them for the sake of his name (Isaiah 15:48:9; Isaiah 55:3; Jer. 32:40). The Abrahamic covenant is, therefore, the foundation on which God bases His everlasting grace and mercy towards his people Israel. To imply that God has abandoned His people would be to accuse Him of breaking His word- something irreconcilable with the character of God.

Footnote: ' Malcolm Hedding is the Executive Director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, one of the leading Evangelical organizations that play a pivotal role in encapsulating the response of its members to Israel. The role of the ICEJ is more fully discussed below.

3.1.2. Jer.31:35-37. The Irrevocable Nature of the Abrahamic Covenant.

The irrevocable nature of the Abrahamic covenant hinges upon whether there were conditions attached to the covenant or not. If the covenant was conditional, what did Abraham have to do? If it was unconditional, then God would be the one to keep the covenant in place. This is crucial to the argument as to whether Israel has lost favour with God and has, therefore, been replaced by the Church.

The Bible recounts that God spoke to Abram and told him to leave his country and kindred and his father’s house and to travel to the land that

God would show him.(Gen.12:1) As soon as Abram moved to Canaan in obedience to God, the covenant promises came into effect.

“Whether God would institute a covenant program with Abraham or not depended upon Abraham’s act of obedience in leaving the land. When once this act was accomplished, and Abraham did obey God, God instituted an irrevocable, unconditional program” (Pentacost, Dwight. Pg. 74. 1964.).

To underline the seriousness and irrevocability of God’s covenant promise to Israel, the prophet Jeremiah has the following to say concerning this relationship:

“Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD. (Jer.31:35-37)

This rhetorical question only emphasises the improbable abandonment of Israel by God. The moon and the stars are a testimony to God’s continued care and love for His people. Despite Israel’s record of sin and rebellion against God, we can see the empirical evidence that He continues to keep them together as a nation.

The Psalmist rejoices over God’s faithfulness and His everlasting covenant with Abraham:

“He is the Lord our God; His judgments are in all the earth. He remembers His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham... (Psalm 105:7-9).

As Malcolm Hedding points out:

“If a generation is 40 years, we are talking about 40 000 years; if it is 70 years, it is 70 000. We have only lived 4000 years since Abraham. So for him, forever are just an incredible number of years” (Hedding, Malcolm. The Covenants of the Bible. Pg.30).

3.1.3. Gen.15:18-21. The Abrahamic Covenant and the Land.

A nation usually needs land in order to establish itself as a nation. In this regard, Israel is no different from other nations in requiring to settle on

their own land. According to the book of Genesis, God gave Abraham a specific area of land. The covenant land was that of Canaan- from the Mediterranean in the west to the Euphrates in the East and from the River of Egypt in the south to Lebanon in the north:

“In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites” (Gen.15:18-20).
“And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God” (Gen.17:8).

Commenting on the language of the Bible concerning God’s land promises to Israel, Derek Prince, renowned Christian Zionist and author, has this to say:

“What a powerful list of words denoting God’s unchanging commitment: *covenant, word, command, oath, decree, and, finally, everlasting covenant!* I know of no other passage where Scripture speaks with greater or more sustained emphasis than this. And all emphasis centre around one issue: The ownership of the land of Canaan” (Prince, Derek. *The Last Word on the Middle East*. Chosen Books, Virginia, USA. Pg.102.1982).

One wonders why God would have led Abraham to this little piece of land in the Middle East? Why was Abraham not directed to any other land? One gets the sense of the geographic centrality of Israel from maps of the ancient world. A well known ancient map depicts the world in the shape of a 3 leaf clover. One leaf represents Europe, another represents the East and the third leaf represents Africa. From this map it is clear that in order to traverse from any one of the continents to the other, one had to pass through the center point-Israel! Israel was at the cross-roads of the ancient world. If God’s light was to shine forth from a particular nation, Israel was strategically placed to communicate the oracles of God to all who passed through. One can imagine the splendor of the Temple of Solomon and later the even greater structure built on the Temple Mount by Herod the Great, rivaling the pyramids in Egypt for size. All who passed through Israel must have marveled at these structures and enquired after the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

It is a hotly debated subject across the world today whether Israel should concede land to the Palestinian Arabs in a “land for peace” exchange.

Politicians across the globe, including the secular Knesset members in Israel, do not formulate policy with a Biblical world-view in mind. Most often, the Bible is ridiculed and the argument is used that no-one can take it seriously, let alone base the policies of a nation on ancient “myths”. The land is, consequently, not seen as sacred and Israel’s modern day politicians feel they can trade with the land in order to achieve their objectives.

For the Bible believing Evangelical community it is a clear Biblical injunction that the land should not be divided or given away, especially not by the nations, as the prophets clearly state:

“For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there, On account of my people, my heritage, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up my land, They have cast lots for my people, Have given a boy as payment for a harlot,

And sold a girl for wine, which they may drink” (Amos 3: 1-3).

This Scripture makes particular reference to the fact that the land bequeathed to Israel is God’s land: “They have divided up **my** land.” (Emphasis mine).

God calls the land of Israel “my land” again in Ezekiel’s prophecy about Gog and Magog: “..thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the last days, and I will bring thee against **my** land..”(Ezek.38:16).(Emphasis mine).

Israel’s previous loss of Land.

We have seen that land of Canaan was bequeathed by God to Israel as an everlasting possession. Why then were the Jewish people exiled from this land if it is their covenant possession? This can be explained at the hand of the terms domicile and residency.

“Although Israel was granted title or right of possession to the land, the Bible is clear that God put conditions on their right to actually reside in the land in order to enjoy its benefits. These conditions are set forth in Deuteronomy 30 and elsewhere. While Israel’s domicile was guaranteed, her residency in the land was determined by her faithfulness to God. “Faithfulness would “enlarge” Israel’s borders and ensure peace in the land (Ex.34:24; Lev. 26:6; Deut.12:20), while disobedience would bring divine judgment in her borders (Ezek.5:7-17) and total rebellion would ultimately bring exile (e.g.

Deut.28:63-68; Ezek.5:7-17). If punishment was called for then the land will “spew you out”, says Lev.18:24-30, and then lie barren and unfruitful in their absence. (Parsons, David. Swords into Ploughshares. ICEJ Position paper. Pg.22. Undated).

When Israel was obedient to her God, the land that she occupied increased in size in accordance with the land promises. For instance, the Bible tells us that when the worship of God was at its zenith during the reign of King Solomon, Israel occupied all the land of Canaan and had vassal states paying tribute to it all the way to the Euphrates River. (Deut. 11:24; 1 Kings 5:1-5) However, when the northern tribes and subsequently the southern tribes turned their back on God, the temple was destroyed and the people taken into exile and the land lay barren.

Hence when Israel rebelled against God, she found herself exiled from the land for a time, and she could only return once her penance had been paid. She would be exiled twice, but after God gathers her from all the nations she would never again be dislodged from her land. Prophesying about Israel’s future restoration, Amos says:

“And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I gave them, saith the Lord thy God” (Amos 9: 15).

Israel has been reestablished and her people are being restored to the land. Evangelical Christians therefore fully expect God to keep His promise that Israel shall no more be pulled up out of her land. Their expectation is clear, no matter what forces are mustered against her, Israel is there to stay!

God has always used other nations to punish Israel for her iniquities, but these nations were, in turn, punished for their excesses against Israel (Is. 49:25-26). The abovementioned Scripture in Amos 3 makes it clear that those nations that have scattered Israel (Assyria/Babylon and the Romans) will be judged by God. As we know, these empires have disappeared. Israel has remained. However, now that Israel has returned to her land, nations are again trying to divide her land, putting pressure on Israel to swap portions of her land for peace with the Palestinians.

At the height of her prowess as a world empire, Great Britain decided at the hand of the Balfour Declaration signed on 2 November, 1917, that the entire Palestine, from the Mediterranean Sea to the borders of Iraq, should be returned to the Jewish people. As noted earlier, at that point in history, Palestine was a British Mandate territory. The Balfour Declaration was watered down when Churchill handed over four fifths of

Palestine to the newly appointed Emir, creating a new state called Jordan. The remainder of the land was given to the Jewish people by a decision of the United Nations, to form the State of Israel. Ironically, Great Britain has since lost its Empire and is today a small island nation.

More recently, the United States of America, although an ally of Israel, agreed to a plan to partition Israel and the West Bank into two states. In the process the traditional lands of the Bible, Judea and Samaria, will be handed over to the Palestinian Arabs. More recently, in 2006, Israel handed over the Gaza strip to the Palestinian Authority in return for peace. The USA was one of the countries that brought pressure to bear on Israel to proceed with this land for peace swap. Thousands of Israelis were displaced, lost their homes and livelihood, while very little came of the promises of peace as Israel was fired upon from Gaza with Kassam rockets almost on a daily basis.

With the Amos Scripture in mind, some Evangelicals connected hurricane Katrina, the worst tropical storm in the history of the USA that hit New Orleans just after the Gaza evacuation, with God's displeasure against the USA for its part in dividing His land. Evangelical church leaders like John Hagee, author of the book "Jerusalem Countdown", are connecting these events to God's sovereign power over nature and His judgment "on account of My people and My heritage, Israel". (Joel 3:2). This is also the theme of Ramon Bennett's book "Saga, Israel and the demise of nations" that highlights the disasters that have befallen nations that have turned against Israel (Bennett, Ramon. Saga, the demise of nations. 1993).

A predominance of members of the Evangelical Christian world accept God's covenant promise that the land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people. Evangelicals support Israel's right of existence in the land and will even go as far as to say that she has the right, in accordance with international law, to retain land won in wars that were acts of self defense. Because of Biblical injunctions to this effect, Evangelicals are also in principle against giving away portions of the land bequeathed to Israel such as was the case in Gaza in 2006 or, for that matter, the transfer of Sinai to Egypt as part of the Begin peace process in the 1970's.

ICEJ Response.

The ICEJ, the Evangelical support organization referred to more fully above, has been at the forefront of reminding the nations about the covenant promises that God has made with Israel and encouraging them to bless Israel whenever and wherever they can. They regard Israel as the

“apple of God’s eye”(Zech.2:8). The ICEJ finds that the message of Israel is often neglected or misunderstood by the church at large. They spend a great deal of their efforts in reminding the Church that the Bible teaches that God has an unconditional covenant with the Jewish people. Because of God’s love for the Jewish people, Christians should stand with and support them.

This task is performed by engaging in speaking tours to churches, addressing Israel prayer groups and spreading media in the form of DVD’s, Cd’s, books and regular newsletters about the subject. Every year the ICEJ stages the Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem, attended by upwards of 5000 Christians from around the world. During the ten day feast, the visitors are exposed to a number of international speakers who teach the pilgrims about the Jewish roots of their faith and instill in them a new appreciation of God’s word concerning Israel.

In all of the ICEJ’s efforts on behalf of Israel, particular reference is made of the covenant promises of God. Malcolm Hedding, an ordained Minister of the Assemblies of God church which is part of the Evangelical family, continually emphasises the need for the Christian world to base their support of Israel on the Biblical evidence and not on emotional responses to the land and its people. In this respect, he has done much to lift the debate concerning Israel in the Church and to place it on a firm footing. The response to the message of the ICEJ has been the most encouraging from the Evangelical churches because of their strong adherence to the Word of God. (see various books and media material by Malcolm Hedding in the table of references hereunder.)

Regarding the land covenant and the recent attempts by other nations to put pressure on Israel to concede some of its land for peace, Malcolm Hedding wrote the following comments in an ICEJ newsletter at the time of the Gaza disengagement:

“The Bible is clear about the fact that those nations that divide the land of Israel will incur the disfavor of God. So, the conflict now unfolding in Gaza has serious implications for the whole world. The land of Canaan belongs to God! He has bequeathed it to the Jewish people as an everlasting possession as part of His plan for world redemption. To meddle with that which God has given is a grave oversight. The nations must be warned and even though they happily discount the reality of the God of Heaven, they will soon hear from Him and are!” (Word from Jerusalem. March/April edition. 2006).

The ICEJ understands the covenant promises in a literal sense and is encouraging the Christian world to see it in the same light.

3.2. Rom. 3:1-2. Israel: The vehicle of God's redemption.

Paul's letter to the church in Rome underscores the important role of the Jewish people in disseminating the written Word. He reminds the reader that God committed his plan of salvation to the Jewish people. In that sense they have a unique role to fulfill as His chosen nation. They are to be the vehicle of God's redemption for the world, for they were entrusted with the word of God. As Paul says:

“What advantage then has the Jew? Or what profit is there in circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because to them were committed the oracles of God” (Rom.3: 1-2).

The support and comfort given by the Evangelical Church to the Jewish people is not just an act of love flowing from the Scriptures, but also because they form part of God's plan for world redemption. The Evangelical world sees in Paul's letter the great lengths to which he went to explain the role and destiny of the Jewish people to the Church. He begs this question: “What advantage then has the Jew?” In other words, do the Jewish people fulfill a special role that other nations do not fulfill? The question is posed to the Gentiles and Paul is really asking what advantage does the Jew have over the Gentile? He answers his own question with these words: “Much in every way, because to them were committed the oracles of God.” Paul is referring to the fact that the written word of God was given to the Jews. The Torah and the other books that make up the TaNak (Old Testament), were inspired writings that were received by the Jewish people, carefully transcribed and preserved through the ages, and then made available to the rest of the world.

Hand written scrolls that are thought to have been copied by a Jewish sect called the Essenes, who lived at Qumran at the beginning of the Common Era, were discovered in 1948. Amongst the scrolls that were unearthed fully intact was the Isaiah scroll. This scroll that was carefully reproduced by the Essenes and differs very little from the book we read in the Bible today, despite its 2000 year old history. The scroll is now housed in the Shrine of the Book Museum in Jerusalem.

Malcolm Hedding makes the following contention about the unique calling of the Jews:

“So herein lies the chief reason why the nation of Israel came into existence. They came into existence to be the custodians of world

redemption, the vehicle by which God would bring his message of eternal salvation to the world..... No other nation has this role” (Hedding. M. Basis for Christian Support for Israel. Pg. 9. 2004.).

Need for Special Care.

If Israel is the vehicle of God’s redemptive plan for mankind, does that make the Jewish people more loved than any other? The Bible is clear that God does not respect one person above the other. (Ps.40:4; Acts 10:34) “For there is no partiality with God” (Rom. 2: 11).

The Hebrew Scriptures have always made provision for the stranger (Gentile) to participate in the redemption offered by the word of God. (Deut. 10:18-19), while the Christian Scripture’s have a strong emphasis on God’s love for all mankind. (John 3:16)

While the Bible emphasises God’s love for all mankind and some may be offended to think that Israel is regarded in higher esteem than other nations. Malcolm Hedding describes God’s relationship with Israel as being more akin to the special care given to a pregnant woman.

“Just like a pregnant woman is afforded special care by her family members, they look after her a bit more. They care for her, they open the door for her, and they make sure she is comfortable, because she has a peculiar role to play out within the family context. Nevertheless, all the family members are loved exactly the same... Israel is the apple of His eye but she is not loved more than other people. She lives out and plays out a peculiar role in history, and therefore she has to be cared for.” (Hedding. M. Bases of Christian support for Israel. Ibid.Pg.10. 2004.).

List of Redemptive Gifts received from the Jews.

Israel’s special role is fully understood by the Evangelical world because of the list of redemptive gifts that the Jewish people uniquely received and passed on to the world. These gifts to the Church are highlighted in Paul’s letter to the church in Rome:

“ ..to them (the Israelites) belong God’s adoption, and the glorious Presence. With them were the special covenants made, to them was the Law given. To them worship was revealed and God’s promises announced. To them belong the patriarchs, and as far as his natural descent was concerned, from them is the Christ..” (Rom.9:4-5).

These redemptive “products” as Malcolm Hedding calls them, were passed on to all man-kind, including Israel’s provision of Jesus in the context of His birth as a Jew from the lineage of David. As the Messiahship of Jesus is central to the Christian faith, Israel’s role in birthing the Messiah is regarded as an important theme:

“Why did Israel come into existence? Israel came into existence for one reason: for the Messiah. She prepared the world for His coming, she brought Him into the world, and she will bring Him back at the consummation of the age” (Hedding, M. Basis for Christian Support of Israel. Pg.10. 2004.).

Preparation for the Coming of Messiah.

References to Israel birthing the Messiah is are to be found in the Messianic prophecies in the Jewish Scriptures of which there are several according to the exegesis thereof by Christian scholars. These include: Micah 5:2; Gen. 49:10; Numb. 24:17; Ps. 22; and Isaiah. 53:2-12.

The Gospel writers accentuate this theme in the New Testament, where there are two tables reflecting Jesus’ genealogy, the one begins with Adam and finishes with Jesus (Luke 3: 23-38) while the other starts with Abraham and finishes with Jesus. (Matt: 1:1-16).

These verses clarify the point that Jesus was not born in a vacuum. His genealogy connects him to the Jewish expectation that the Messiah would be the “son of David”, while the miracles he performed, the healings that were ascribed to him, and the authority by which he preached, attest to his credentials as being the “Son of God” to Bible believing Christians.

The Jewish role in the death of Jesus.

The Jewish role in the death of Jesus is seen by Evangelical Christians as being part of the Divine plan. It is recognised that the Jewish leadership at the time of Jesus was not at all convinced of Jesus’ Messianic calling because they expected a Messiah who would overthrow the Romans and restore the kingdom of God on earth. Jesus’ talk of a spiritual kingdom and a rebirth of one’s spirit as a precursor to the physical establishment of the kingdom of God on earth was neither expected nor understood. In their expectation, Jesus would have to usher in the Messianic age if he was to be regarded as the Messiah. If not, he would have to be put to death for blasphemy, especially since his claim of Kingship would bring the wrath of the Roman Empire down on the people of Israel. So death it was.

Evangelical supporters of Israel have come to understand that the death of Jesus at the hands of his fellow Jews as an act predestined by God. The Christian Scriptures portray Jesus as the sacrificial lamb slain during Passover for the redemption of mankind. If Jesus had not been killed, there would have been no sacrifice, and hence no salvation. Also, his sacrifice had to be done at the hands of God's priestly nation- Israel.

The death of Jesus at the hands of the Jewish people led in later years to the Jews bearing the stigma of being "Christ killers". Apart from fulfilling the Priestly role regarding Jesus' sacrificial death, the Christian Scriptures clearly state that the Jewish people killed Jesus out of ignorance.(Acts 3:17). It also teaches that Jesus unequivocally forgave them for what they did (Luke 23:34). Christian ignorance in this regard sparked great animosity towards the Jews and led to the awful misappropriation of hatred towards them, resulting in, amongst others, inquisitions, deportations, pogroms, confiscation of wealth, and the Holocaust.

For a while, even the disciples misunderstood Jesus' calling as Ben Yosef, the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 who would only return at the end of the age as Messiah. They too, expected Ben David, the Messianic conqueror who would immediately institute the Messianic age. So great was there disappointment that after his death they went back to work as fishermen in Galilee. According to the Rabbinic interpretation of Messianic expectations, Jesus could not be the promised Messiah if he failed to regain the kingdom.

The Biblical narrative recounts how Jesus dispelled all the doubts among his disciples by appearing to them after his resurrection. This cast aside all fear and clearly revealed God's plan of salvation leading to eternal life. Only after his resurrection and appearance to them, did the disciples understand his message. The epistles recount the exploits of the disciples as they spread the Good News of the gospel to the rest of the known world. Indeed all the disciples, except John, are purported to have died a martyr's death as they authenticated Jesus' resurrection and purpose as Saviour. (Foxe, John. Foxe's Book of Martyrs. Whitaker house, PA.,USA. Pgs.6-14. 1981).¹

¹ Footnote: The Apostle James was beheaded in Jerusalem; Thomas slain with a dart in India; Simon was crucified in Egypt; Mark was burned to death in Egypt; Bartholomew was crucified and beheaded in Armenia; Andrew was crucified in Ethiopia; Matthew was run through with a spear in Egypt; Phillip was stoned to death in Phrygia; James was thrown from the battlements and stoned to death in Jerusalem; Peter was crucified in Rome; Paul was beheaded in Rome

Evangelicals bemoan the fact that so many Christians throughout the history of the Church misunderstood the role that the Jewish people played in the death of Jesus. Incorrect perceptions have allowed malice to rule over the divine purposes of God for His people. Evangelical believers have taken note of the fact that Israel's rejection of Jesus as the Messiah has been used by God to further His plan for world redemption. The Apostle Paul once again has a clear understanding of the unique role of the Jews in this regard:

"I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy" (Rom. 11:1). Jesus himself said: "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22).

The Jews and the second advent of Jesus.

The Evangelicals also believe that there is a third dimension to Israel's unique role. Israel will also bring the Messiah back at the consummation of the age. It was the prophet Ezekiel that prophesied that Israel would return to their land in unbelief, but that the Lord would pour water over her, cleanse her and that the nation would then turn back to God:

"For I will take you from among the nations and gather you out of all the countries and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness: and from all your idols will I cleanse you.and you shall be My people and I shall be your God.(Ezekiel 36: 24-28).

This text speaks of a future day when Israel will be spiritually restored and they will once again be His people and He will be their God.

These sentiments are echoed by the great Evangelical speaker and author, Derek prince: "The welfare of all nations is bound up with the fulfillment of God's plan to restore and renew Israel." (Prince, Derek. Last word on the Middle East. Pg.107. 1982). Such will be the spiritual awakening of Israel that:

"Ten men from all languages of the nations, shall take hold of the skirt (hem of his garment) of him that is a Jew, saying we will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." (Zech.8:23).

Malcolm Hedding reminds his readers of the words of Jesus to the Jewish people of his day when he said; "you will not see me again until you say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23:39). He sees Israel as creating the platform for the return of Messiah: "Without her He will not come. She must welcome Him." (Hedding, Malcolm. Why Christians support Israel. Pg 34. 2002).

Evangelicals see the text in the book of Zechariah as pointing to this same day:

“And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourned for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one who is in bitterness for his firstborn.”(Zech.12: 10).

According to the Apostle Paul, when the time of the Gentiles has come to an end, “all Israel will be saved.”(Rom. 11:26). Most Evangelicals believe that the Gentile believers will soon take the backstage while Israel will come to the fore and usher in the millennium reign of Messiah. (The concept of millennium will be further discussed hereunder).

For the Evangelical Christians there can, therefore, be little doubt about Israel’s unique role as the vehicle of God’s redemption. To them were entrusted the oracles of God and through them the birth and death of Jesus brought salvation to the world. The return of the Jewish people to Israel will lead to their restoration and renewal, as they finally usher in the Messiah at the End of the Age.

ICEJ Response.

The ICEJ is vocal in reminding the Church of the unique role of the Jewish people as the vehicle of God’s redemption and their future destiny regarding the return of Messiah. Malcolm Hedding and the ICEJ’s International Director, Jurgen Beuler, as well as other speakers from the ICEJ have speaking engagements throughout the year at churches on every continent of the world. Their speaking tours take them to Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America, Australia and New Zealand, as well as the islands at the uttermost ends of the earth. Their message at these engagements is that Israel is a unique nation with a national destiny to fulfill. They call upon the Church to support Israel and give her the special care that is appropriate to the nation that is the apple of God’s eye.

The ICEJ’s message is not always popular as a number of denominations accept Replacement Theology as the foundation of their credo towards Israel, while the Evangelical church stresses the point that Israel is in a unique relationship with God and still has a prophetic destiny.

In the process of supporting Israel, the ICEJ is also making the Jewish people aware of their destiny and reminding a mostly secular Israel about its covenant relationship with the Almighty God. It is hoped that Israel

will renew its hope and trust in their God and hasten the day of the coming of Messiah'.

The ICEJ encourages the Evangelical community to show its indebtedness towards the Jewish people for what has often been an arduous and unwanted task of being the custodians of the Word of God. The ICEJ sees it as part of its role to engage the Church world-wide concerning these Biblical truths and to help foster a better understanding of the Jewish people and their unique role in the past and their destiny in the future.(ICEJ Articles of Association. Annexure 2).

Footnote': The ICEJ staged a musical production called "The Covenant" that depicted God's call to Abraham, God's faithfulness to Israel throughout the ages and the modern day establishment of the State of Israel as a fulfillment of His covenant promises. The production was shown in several towns throughout Israel.

3.3 Isaiah 40:1. Comfort ye, comfort ye My people says your God.

One of the overriding aims of the Evangelical community is to comfort Israel by helping to care for their needs and reminding them of their special status in God's eyes. The text that stands out as the main motivator for this action is the text in Isaiah:

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people says your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (Isaiah 40:1-2).

Isaiah was born in Jerusalem in the second half of the eighth century BCE. The dominant power in Isaiah's time was Assyria, who carried away the ten northern tribes in 722BCE and threatened to destroy Jerusalem. It was the armies of Babylon that over a hundred years later destroyed Jerusalem and took Judah into exile. Isaiah warns Judah of the approaching Day of Judgment.

Chapter forty marks a turning point in the book as it seems to shift to the consolation of the remnant of Israel that returned to their land after the Babylonian exile. It is for this reason that scholars believe that chapters 40-55 refer to a second Isaiah:

"The language is gentler and more comforting, seemingly preaching to a community uprooted from its homeland and flung down on to the alien soil of the Babylonian Diaspora"(Comay, Joan. Who's who

in the Old Testament. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. London. Pg.171. 1971).

The prophet speaks words of comfort to Israel, probably alluding to the fact that Judah and the remnant of Israel were going through huge travail in their Babylonian exile. But, there was hope and comfort in the fact that God cared about them and would pardon their iniquity.

In modern times there are still many threats facing Israel. If Israel is to fulfill its God-given role, it has to survive the threats of destruction and annihilation and should be comforted in times of need. Evangelicals, therefore, see this text as a call to future generations to comfort God's people, Israel, and to speak tenderly to them.

Today the Jewish people are returning to their historic homeland, but their survival is not secure. They also face economic suffering with a significant percentage of the population living under the bread line. It is for a time such as this that this Biblical passage echoes from the past. In their hour of need, God is once again calling on those who care to comfort His people, Israel.

ICEJ response.

The ICEJ was established in Jerusalem on Tuesday, 30 September, 1980. Its primary goal, according to the minutes of the second ICEJ meeting held on 16 October, 1980, is:

“To care for the Jewish people by being a focus of comfort according to Isaiah 40: 1: “Comfort, O comfort My people, says your God”. (Minutes of 2nd ICEJ meeting dated 16 Oct. 1980. Annexure 1).

The ICEJ has as its task to encourage the Christian world to take up this clarion call to comfort Israel.¹ (Articles of Association. Annexure 2).

Christians have rallied to this call and are actively engaged in comforting the Jewish people. Millions of U.S. Dollars worth of charitable donations

¹ Footnote: The Articles of Association of the ICEJ uses this text as one of the main reasons for its incorporation. Objectives: 2.1 states: “To show concern for the Jewish people, and especially the reborn State of Israel, by being a focus of comfort according to Isaiah 40:1 “Comfort, O comfort My people, says your God.”

has been directed to Israel to help with food, clothes and other material assistance to new immigrants, the poor and the sick in Israel.

The aid has been coming from organisations like the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ), Bridges for Peace, Christian Friends of Israel and other mostly Evangelical Christian organisations. The ICEJ, in particular, uses Isaiah chapter 40 as their call to action. It also forms part of their logo and can be found as the slogan on all their publications.

The ICEJ is arranged into various departments to comfort and serve Israel. The Social Assistance Department channels monies received from people around the world who wish to comfort Israel with material support to the poor and needy. They also arrange opportunities for groups to visit Israel to serve Israelis in distress. Groups help paint and repair houses/apartments for the aged and destitute. They also offer assistance in cleaning, maintenance, looking after children, gardening, music and dance presentations (see ICEJ Social Services information sheet for volunteers. Annexure 3). The Social assistance department reminds its supporters of the scripture where Jesus speaks about helping the needy: "Verily I say unto you, insomuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my bretheren, ye have done it unto me." (Mat.25:40).

In the early days of the ICEJ, the Social Assistance department was called the Relief Programme. A document highlighting the institutions visited by the staff, including hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged clinics, community centres and veteran soldier establishments is detailed in an extract from an ICEJ document attached. (Annexure 4).

The Isaiah text also galvanises ICEJ members into action when Israel is in dire straits. Examples include the ICEJ's assistance to many of the more than 1 million Russian Jews who immigrated to Israel within a short space of a few years following the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Many Russian Jews needed help and transport to immigrate to Israel. The ICEJ family of supporters has to date paid for 56 international flights so that Soviet Jews could be airlifted to Israel.

The ICEJ was on hand in 1983 during Operation Solomon when over 80 000 Ethiopian Jews were airlifted to Israel. They arrived in Israel from a war-torn country with very little possessions and needed large amounts of humanitarian aid. The ICEJ played a significant role in helping to ease some of their needs.

Visits and assistance to victims of terror was also one of the ways in which the ICEJ comforted Israel during the spate of suicide bomb attacks that caused untold death and injuries to hundreds of people during the Palestinian Intifada (uprising) from the year 2000 onwards.

The pullback from Gaza in 2006 also caused hardships amongst many families. The ICEJ supplied food, clothing and assisted families in their difficult transition to a new life in their new settings. When Kassam rockets started raining down on Sederot soon after the Gaza withdrawal, the ICEJ supplied rocket proof bus-shelters to Sederot to help protect the children on their way to and from school. (Word from Jerusalem. March issue, 2008).

The first and second Lebanese war led to untold hardships. The ICEJ gave assistance to Israeli children living near the Lebanese border who were confined to living in bunkers during the hostilities. The children were taken on outings to parks and playgrounds away from the battle zone. The ICEJ also helped to upgrade some bomb-shelters so as to make to arduous task of seeking refuge in these cramped quarters more bearable in the event of rocket attacks.

These and many other stories of comfort to Zion are fully covered in articles printed in the ICEJ bi-monthly news magazine "Word from Jerusalem", published by the ICEJ and distributed to its members in over 40 countries around the world.

In 2004 the Executive Director of the ICEJ received the medal of Jerusalem on behalf of the ICEJ from the Knesset for the work the organization has done in Israel. Similar medals have been awarded to ICEJ branches in other nations for their assistance to local Jewry and the needy in Israel. In South Africa, the ICEJ local branch was awarded the Jerusalem Prize in 2006 for its work on behalf of the Jewish community.

3.4 Ps.122:6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

The Psalmist reminds the reader that there is something that every believer can do in their quest to support Israel- that is to pray. David calls on the reader to

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem"... and adds the following promise.... "they shall prosper that love thee." (Ps.122:6)

This Psalm reflects David's love for God and the awesomeness associated with going up to pray at the Temple in Jerusalem. The Bible is full of stories about the splendour of Jerusalem. David purchased the site where Jerusalem and the Temple would later be built from Ornan, the Jebusite. (1 Chron.21:22-23). According to tradition, the threshing floor of Ornan was the rock on Mount Moriah where Abraham was called to sacrifice his only son Isaac. David made this site into a holy place on which he built an altar for the Lord. This same location became the site around which the city of Jerusalem was built. The Tabernacle was brought here and later replaced by the magnificent Temple which Solomon built on Mount Moriah. Jerusalem became known as the city of God because we read in the Bible that this is the city where God would place His name (2 Kings 21:7). "But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there." (2 Chron. 6:6a; 7:16). Subsequently, the beauty and magnitude of the Temple was enlarged by Herod the Great.

The Temple stood in the heart of Jerusalem and was regarded as the meeting place between God and man. Jerusalem was not only important from a historical point of view. The Bible proclaims that towards the end of days all the nations will gather against Jerusalem:

"Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about....and in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it." (Zech. 12:2-3).

The prophet Zechariah concludes by saying that the victory will be the Lord's. He will fight for Israel and deliver Jerusalem:

"And this will be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh will consume away while they stand upon their feet..." (Zech. 14: 12).

Jerusalem is also the city where Messiah will reign when he sets up His rule on earth:

"At that time they shall call Jerusalem the Throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem" (Jer.3:17).

It is to Jerusalem that Jesus will return in glory (Acts 1:11). The prophet Zechariah also foresees a great future for Jerusalem in the Messianic age:

"..many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord" (Zech.8:22).

The status of Jerusalem was further enhanced by the vision of the Apostle John who saw the New Jerusalem descending from heaven.(Rev.21:2).

Undoubtedly, Jerusalem is an important city and it appears that it will still play a significant role in the count- down to the end of days.

Today, there is no longer a Temple nor is there much peace in Jerusalem. Yet, the Evangelical believers around the world respond to David's call to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Their hopes and prayers are for a Jerusalem free of attacks and bombings, but they realise that this peace can at best be fragile because real peace will only be achieved by Messiah, the Prince of Peace. According to the prophet Isaiah, the peace that the world longs for will accompany Messiah when he reigns on earth for there will be no more war:

“... they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isa.2:1-4).

The prayer for the peace of Jerusalem includes the knowledge that peace in Jerusalem means peace for Israel and her inhabitants, as well as for the world. The prayer includes an appeal to God that the time of testing for the inhabitants of the city be replaced with tears of joy that will come with the establishment of peace through Messiah. (Rev.7:17; 21:4)

ICEJ Response.

The ICEJ is associated with the call to support the International Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem initiated by church leaders from the U.S.A. It encourages Christians world-wide to pray for the peace of Jerusalem on the first Sunday in October each year. This call was first put into practice on Sunday, 7 October, 2004, during the Christian Feast of Tabernacle celebrations arranged by the ICEJ in Jerusalem.

Thousands of pilgrims to the Feast celebrations came together on the lawns of Sachar Park, the municipal gardens overlooking Jerusalem, and prayed for several hours for Israel and Jerusalem in particular. The prayer vigil was arranged by Robert Stearns and led by Pat Robinson, President of Christian Broadcast Network and tele-evangelist from the USA, together with Rabbi Rishkin from Israel. The call to prayer has since been instituted as a world-wide annual event for all Evangelical Christians.

In most counties where Evangelical Christians are active, there are prayer groups that meet weekly or monthly with the express purpose of praying for Israel. The ICEJ posts a weekly news digest on the internet to all branches and members around the world. They report on the latest news and developments in Israel which act as prayer points for those engaged

in prayer for Israel. (Refer to the following internet address: www.icej.org).

The most noted Evangelical Christian with a prayer burden for Israel is Tom Hess. Tom Hess is the founder of Jerusalem House of Prayer for All Nations (JHOPFAN), President of Progressive Vision International (PVI) and All Nations Convocation Jerusalem (ANCJ). Tom is a resident of Israel and has lived on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem since October 1987.

Jerusalem House of Prayer for All Nations maintains a 24-hour Prayer Watch where increasing numbers of church and prayer leaders are bringing groups of “watchmen” from their nations to pray in Jerusalem. The House of Prayer also encourages the development of 24-hour Watches around the world to pray for Jerusalem, Israel and the Jewish people. Presently, JHOPFAN is in contact with hundreds of 24-hour Watches on every continent of the world and on many islands. Jerusalem House of Prayer for All Nations–All Nations Convocations Jerusalem also prints the monthly International Prophetic Prayer Alert and publishes the Watchmen’s Journal, which reflects the activities and events of the ministry and imparts basic prayer pointers for those connected with the ministry.

It is the general mandate of the Church to pray for the salvation of all people in all countries. However, the call to pray for the peace of Jerusalem is recognized as a specific prayer need because of the injunction in Ps.122. There is no other similar prayer convocation amongst evangelical Christians anywhere near the size of this initiative on behalf of any other nation than Israel.

The International Day of Prayer mentioned above was instituted with the endorsement of hundreds of Christian leaders from around the world, representing tens of millions of Christians, to pray for Israel annually on the first Sunday of every October, until the coming of Messiah. The call is for sustained, fervent, informed global intercession for the plans and purposes of God for Jerusalem and all the inhabitants of the land. This global grassroots prayer initiative coincides with the season of Yom Kippur, and for the first time in Church history, makes an effort at linking the Christian liturgical calendar with the Jewish calendar.

According to their internet site, the organisers had the following goal for 2007: “ That by God’s grace, we will have:

- 100 participating nations

- 100 million believers participating
 - 100,000 churches committed to pray
 - over 1400 minutes of additional prayer via global teleconferencing".
- (www.daytopray.com).

One of the main organizers is Pastor Robert Stern, a regular speaker at the ICEJ's annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem. Stern formulated the following prayer resolution for all those participating in the day of prayer. It is listed hereunder because it reflects the attitude of Evangelicals worldwide towards Israel and incorporates useful insights into their Israel "theology":

UNDERSTANDING...that we are children of Abraham by faith, the "wild olive branch" grafted in to the root of God's covenant (Romans 11:17-26), and,

RECOGNIZING....that God has kept his word to Abraham and His descendants and settled them in their homeland again, according to the word of the prophets (Amos 9:14-15),(Ezekiel 36: esp. v.24), and,

RECOGNIZING...that we have a biblical mandate according to Psalm 122, and many other Scriptures to seek the good and prosperity of Jerusalem, until the Lord makes her a praise in all the earth, and

AFFIRMING...that God's love and intended blessing is for all nations and peoples, and that we have goodwill and love for all mankind, including all inhabitants of the Holy Land, and desire the peace of this entire region;

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED call upon all men and women of prayer to yearly set aside the First Sunday in October, near the season of Yom Kippur, as the Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem".

(www.daytopray.com).

The call to pray for the peace of Jerusalem is taken as a serious Biblical injunction by the Evangelical Christian world, and is helping to focus the attention of the world on Israel's struggle for survival in her Biblical homeland.

3.5 Isaiah 62:6-7. Watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem, never hold your peace.

The text hereunder is a call not only to pray for Israel, but also to act as watchmen:

“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Isaiah 62:6-7).

This injunction from the book of Isaiah, to be watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem, may well be viewed in a spiritual or allegorical sense. The text calls for prayer warriors to set themselves up as watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem and to never hold their peace until Jerusalem becomes “a praise in the earth.” Because the Bible makes it clear that Jerusalem is the city where God has placed his name and is still important to God, the text is used as a rallying call for Christian supporters of Israel to act as spiritual “watchmen on the walls”, given the grave dangers that face the nation.

The call to set up watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem is seen by Evangelicals as a call for prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem so that the city will become “a praise in the earth”. The reference here is to Jerusalem being the “praise in the earth” is directed towards the future, when Messiah reigns from the city. Along with many other believers,

Evangelical Christians long for the return of their Messiah, Jesus, to Jerusalem.

The call to be watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem is a call for all Christians to be prayer warriors that remind the Almighty day and night of his promise to restore the fortunes of Jerusalem, culminating in Messiah’s reign from that city.

ICEJ Response.

The ICEJ response to this text is to use this passage as a rallying call to all Christian prayer warriors and intercessors around the world to act as watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem in a spiritual sense. Watchmen are those that warn the people of impending danger. They blow the trumpet to signal the approach of the enemy. In a similar vane, prayer warriors and intercessors have to be on the lookout for dangers facing Israel and pray that God will protect the city and its people from dangers.

¹ Footnote: While Evangelical’s read the Bible in a literal sense whenever the text permits, there are also texts that call for interpretation in an allegorical way. In this instance, the text calls for the reader to be a watchman on the wall. The reader does not necessarily have to be a guard that is posted to do guard duty on a walls of Jerusalem. The text, therefore, calls upon the reader to act like a watchman on the walls of Jerusalem so that he or she can do the work of a watchman, namely, to be on the lookout for danger so that they can spiritually pray into the situation.

Evangelicals are aware that there is a physical as well as a spiritual battle taking place against Israel. The Christian Scriptures declare: “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”(Eph. 6:12). These payer warrior “watchmen” take it upon themselves to pray against the physical as well as the spiritual forces that have set their designs on destroying Israel.

Secondly, the ICEJ encourages intercessors to lift Jerusalem up in prayer until it becomes a “praise in all the earth”, that is, until all men may know God and His Messiah that will rule from this city of God.

ICEJ and other evangelical Christian websites update subscribers daily about developments in Israel and the dangers that are facing the country so that these spiritual watchmen¹ can intercede for the nation.

3.6 Isaiah 49:22. Gentiles to carry Israel on their shoulders.

There are a number of prophetic verses in the Hebrew Scriptures that point to the return of Israel to their historic homeland. These texts speak of Israel being scattered among the nations of the world and then returning to their historic homeland as if by an unseen hand. An example of these prophecies are to be found in Ezek 36, Isaiah 24 and 43 and Jeremiah 16. According to one of Isaiah’s prophecies, the Gentiles will carry the Jewish people on their shoulders as they return to Israel from the Diaspora:

“This is what the sovereign Lord says: I’ll lift up my banner to the peoples (Gentiles), they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders.” (Isaiah. 49:22)

While such a return looked impossible for many centuries, the actual fulfillment of these prophecies became a reality after the United Nations voted in favour of the creation of the State of Israel in 1947. What started as a trickle of Jewish people returning to Palestine in the late nineteenth century suddenly became a flood after the Jewish people were granted their own state. The collapse of the Berlin wall in 1989 led to the opening of the borders of the Soviet Union and the ability of Russian Jews to

¹ Footnote: Semetic language words have roots of three letters. In Hebrew, the root of the word “Watchmen” is Netzer (N.Z.R) and Christians are known as Netzeret or Notzrim (N.Z.R) since Jesus hailed from Nazereth. It is, therefore, interesting to note that the Notsrim (Christians) are from the same root word as that of watchmen (Netser), and that many Netzeret have taken to heart the challenge of being Netzer (watchmen).

immigrate to Israel after 70 years of Communism had restricted their movement. More than a million Soviet Jews entered Israel placing a huge strain on the country as it tried to absorb so many people into its society in a very short period of time.

This passage in Isaiah states that people from the nations (Gentiles) will carry the sons and the daughters of Israel on their shoulders in the context of their return to their historic homeland. This implies that Gentiles would become involved in the return. This is exactly what has happened.

ICEJ Response.

The ICEJ and its many branches responded to this need by assisting Soviet Jewry to make Aliyah (going up to Israel). The assistance given by the ICEJ to those wishing to immigrate to Israel consisted, amongst other things, of arranging buses to collect Jews in the remote areas of Russia in order to take them to airports and collection points in the big cities. The organization also collected money for flights so that Jewish people could be flown to Israel. Some 56 flights have reportedly been sponsored through the ICEJ network. In the Caspian Sea, a ship was chartered by the Ebenezer Foundation, a sister Evangelical Christian organisation, that ferried thousands of Jews from Odessa to Haifa between 1995 and 2004.

The remarkable thing that happened at all these points of assistance was that Jewish people, mainly the old and fragile and small children, were literally carried on the shoulders of Gentiles on and off the buses, planes and ships that brought them to Israel. In other words, the prophetic words of Isaiah came to fruition in the present generation, more than 2000 years after his prophecy!

Aliyah- ICEJ Finnish Branch.

Studying the records of the various ICEJ branches around the world, some of the tireless efforts of the Finnish branch, which shares a border with Russia, is quoted below as an example of the branch's response to the Biblical prediction of the Jewish people's return to their land:

“The Finnish branch of the ICEJ has been working tirelessly for years helping Russian Jews to immigrate to Israel. They recently chartered their 14th planeload of Jewish immigrants, bringing the total to 53 of special Aliyah flights sponsored by ICEJ national

branches since the Russian exodus began in 1989.”(Word from Jerusalem. May/June issue. 2006).¹

According to the ICEJ, The Finnish branch has been working in cooperation with the Jewish Agency for many years in this regard. They have been scouring the vast expanse of the former Soviet Union for Jewish families and communities that are interested in immigrating to Israel. When they are found, the prospective immigrants are assisted with their paperwork and then brought over the border to Finland:

“Finnish Christians then open their homes to Russian Jews in transit from St. Petersburg to Israel via Helsinki. It is a route traversed by some 16 000 Jewish immigrants so far under the sponsorship of ICEJ- Finland and the Finnish Exodus Committee”. (Word from Jerusalem. May/June 2006).

Over the years, Jewish families have expressed their sincere gratitude for the special treatment they received during their brief stay in Finland where members of the Evangelical Churches warmly opened up their homes for 3 to 4 days of respite to these weary travelers en route to Israel.

In an interview in Jerusalem with Michael Utterback, past International Director of the ICEJ, he recounted how the abovementioned Scripture had literally been fulfilled. He traveled with the Exobus to collect Jewish people in a small village for transport to St. Petersburg before being taken to Helsinki. When they arrived at the village they found a number of elderly people who were incapacitated in wheel chairs.

Utterback described how he had to pick these people up and carry them on his shoulders into the bus. While he was carrying one of the disabled, he suddenly remembered the verse in Isaiah and marveled at its fulfillment. (Interview with Michael Utterback, Jerusalem, March, 2008).

Of Fisherman and Hunters.

The abovementioned support from the ICEJ goes far beyond normal charity work. These Christians were prepared to endure the hardships of locating and retrieving Jews from remote areas because they are mindful of the sense of urgency involved. A Scripture in Jeremiah warns that those Jewish people, who are not “fished out” in time may well be “hunted down” by their adversaries:

¹ Footnote: At the time of writing (March, 2008) the ICEJ and its branches had increased the number of flights it had sponsored to 56.

“Therefore, behold, the days come, says the Lord, that it will no more be said, the Lord lives, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, the Lord lives that brought out the children from the land of the north, and from all the lands from where he had driven them; and I will bring them again unto the land of their fathers. Behold I will send forth many fishers, says the Lord, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of rocks.” (Jer.16: 14-16).

Evangelicals see the collapse of the Iron curtain as an opportunity for Jewish people to leave the former Soviet Union and are doing everything in their power to assist while this door is still open. Here is another account of how Jewish people were recovered from Uzbekistan by Christian volunteers from the Finnish branch:

“For several years the ICEJ bus bumped and pitched its way over dilapidated Soviet-era roads, picking up Jews from deep within the predominantly Muslim country of Uzbekistan and bringing them to the border on their way to immigrate to Israel. The ICEJ bus travels from Tashkent into the heart of Uzbekistan to assist Jewish immigrants in their journey to Israel. The bus was bought by the Finnish branch of the ICEJ with money left from a lady who loved Israel and Aliyah work. Between 1989 and 2005, 83 000 Jews left impoverished Uzbekistan for Israel...” (Word from Jerusalem. May/ June Issue, 2005).

These acts are a monumental testimony of how people who read the Word of God in a literal sense were motivated by the text to carry out its directives in a practical manner.

3.7 For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent. Isaiah 62:1

At a time of international condemnation, the Evangelical Christian supporters of Israel are standing up and being counted, even when, in some instances, it is not always a popular thing to do. However, Evangelicals feel encouraged by this verse in Isaiah which calls upon the lovers of Zion to speak out in her favour:

“For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: ...” (Isaiah 62:1-2)

The theme of this passage is again the restoration and redemption of Zion, or Jerusalem, as it is more commonly known. The prophet reflects the Lord's deep empathy for his people and this city. The text displays God's desire to let His righteousness once again shine as a lamp from the city so that the "...Gentiles will see his righteousness and the kings of the earth his glory."(vs. 2). "Thou shall no longer be called Forsaken neither shall thy land be termed Desolate... for the Lord delights in thee, and thy land shall be married."(vs.4).

These were strong words of prophetic encouragement to a people that were in desperate need of comfort. The chapter continues with the theme of comfort started in Isaiah 40:

"Say to the daughter of Zion, behold your salvation cometh; behold his reward is with him" ... "and they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord."(vs.11). Jerusalem shall be called "sought out, a city not forsaken."(vs. 12).

The compassion and empathy poured out from the heart of God for his people and their city Jerusalem, makes it difficult for believers in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob not to respond by speaking out for His people, Israel. It was the Church's silence during the horrific atrocities of the Holocaust in WWII that mystified many after the war. Never again may the Church remain silent when they know that Israel and the Jewish people are being threatened. Their voices should ring out until righteousness is fully restored when Messiah reigns.

ICEJ Response.

The ICEJ has responded in a multifaceted way by using its influence on several platforms to speak out in favour of the Jewish people. The following are some of the activities in which they are engaged:

Christian Allied Caucus.

The Christian Allied Caucus is made up of a number of Evangelical organizations based in Israel that have been invited by the Knesset to form a committee to discuss Christian-Jewish relations. This is a Knesset initiative that came about as a result of the broad based Evangelical Christian support for Israel. After years of sustained support for Israel, the Knesset acknowledged that the Israeli nation had the unsolicited favour of millions of Evangelicals from across the world and created this forum to keep abreast of developments in this regard.

This is a new development and one in which the ICEJ is taking a leading role. The caucus discusses issues where Christians can assist in disseminating a more balanced view of Israel in the light of the often one-sided reporting that appears in the world press. Several initiatives have been launched under the auspices of the caucus, including conferences in foreign countries where developments in Israel have been discussed.

The European Coalition for Israel.

The ICEJ is also at the forefront of lobbying for Israel at the European Union Headquarters in Brussels. The coalition consists of the major Christian Zionist organizations, including ICEJ, Bridges for Peace, Christian Friends of Israel and the Dutch Based Christen Voor Israel.

The coalition has an Executive Director, Mr. Rijk van Dam, who is a former European Parliamentarian, as well as a liaison officer that connects with all the Churches in Europe. Both are full-time employees of the coalition in Brussels and are engaged in disseminating information rallying support for Israel.

Jurgen Buhler, International Director of the ICEJ, is on record as saying that he regards the European Union as one of the most anti-Semitic entities outside of the Islamic world. He is concerned that the EU, which is comprised of the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the European Council, takes most of its decisions in the European Commission and the European Council, and not in the elected branch. According to him, "ordinary citizens have no influence on the European Commission." (Word from Jerusalem Nov/Dec 2004). The foothold that the Evangelical Church groups have obtained in the EU structures gives them a significant voice on behalf of Israel.

As a lobby group, the European Coalition for Israel made significant inroads on behalf of Israel. In particular, Dr. Buhler laid bare some information concerning EU funding for the Palestinians. He put together a very well researched document on EU funding of the Palestinian Authority in which he identified some serious problems with money that was being channeled to the Palestinian Authority Chairman, Yasser Arafat, in cash. The problem that Dr. Buhler identified was that there was no way of knowing if this cash reached the Palestinian people or whether it was used to purchase weapons for their conflict with Israel. He called on the EU to institute a "moral funding solution." The submission led to significant changes being made to the way funding is now being administered by the EU to outside parties. Since then calls have been made to make his paper more widely available to other NGO's and

political organizations in Europe. (Word from Jerusalem Jan/Feb 2006. Pg. 8).

In the same article Malcolm Hedding, Executive Director of the ICEJ, said “The urgent issue for the pro- Israel European Coalition is to defend the Jews in Europe where anti-Semitism is rising at a fast pace.” (Word from Jerusalem. Jan/Feb.2006).

The abovementioned are some of the many issues that the ICEJ and its sister organizations are taking up with the EU Commission.

Jerusalem Post Christian Edition.

The Jerusalem Post is one of the most recognised newspaper brands in the world. It is therefore of no little consequence that the ICEJ and the Jerusalem Post have teamed up in a joint venture project to publish a Christian Edition of the Jerusalem Post. This is a fortnightly publication that is published as a supplement to the Jerusalem Post, in print and on-line, and is distributed to all its channels abroad.

The purpose of the Christian Edition is to give Christians world- wide a more balanced perspective on developments in Israel. It acts as a counter to the often one-sided, pro-Palestinian international press that is forming widespread misperceptions about the situation in Israel. The joint venture project was announced in the Word from Jerusalem Jan/Feb 2006 issue, with a photo of Malcolm Hedding of the ICEJ and Moshe Bar-Zvi of the Jerusalem Post holding up the first edition.

Front Page Jerusalem.

During 2006, the ICEJ formed a new venture to start international radio broadcasts from Jerusalem. The venture is called “Front Page Jerusalem” and is heard on hundreds of stations in the US and worldwide as well as on the respected Salem Radio Network.

According to a report in the “Word from Jerusalem”, Earl Cox, a Washington insider for 20 years, launched Front Page Jerusalem in 2002 and quickly found favour with some of Israel’s most senior leaders. It has since grown “beyond belief” into the most listened to Christian radio talk-show emanating from Israel. The weekly one hour news magazine focuses on current affairs in Israel and the Middle East, with exclusive interviews with top Israeli leaders and panel discussions with regional experts, among other regular features. It is broadcast on hundreds of Christian radio stations coast-to-coast in the U.S. and around the world through short wave and Internet web-casts.

(www.frontpagejerusalem.com).

Salem, a leading Christian radio network in North America with over 1500 member stations, introduced the fast paced, cutting edge programs from Front Page Jerusalem into its line up in December 2005, giving the ICEJ an unprecedented opportunity to reach millions of new Christians with its positive Biblical message on Israel. ICEJ Media Director David Parsons stated in an article that:

“We know we have a one-of-a-kind product that is resonating well with our widening Christian audience, which is so eager to learn all they can about events in Israel and the Middle East. We bring our listeners a first –rate program dedicated to uplifting the nation of Israel and giving its leaders an uncensored channel to speak to the rest of the world about their struggles and aspirations.” (Word from Jerusalem. May/June issue 2006.Pg 6-7).

In summary, we can see that the ICEJ is being true to the directive of the Isaiah text. It is not keeping silent about the destiny of Israel and the favour that Zion enjoys in the eyes of the Lord, as developments unfold in the Middle East.

1.3.8. Amos 9:11-12 Acts 15: 15-17. Rebuilding the Tabernacle of David.

As both Christians and Jews await the coming of Messiah, there is a clear need to engage in dialogue and share each others religious views on the messiah and on the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David. The prophet Amos speaks of a day in the future when the Lord will again raise up the tabernacle of David and restore it. The tabernacle of David refers to the house of David that had “fallen down”:

“In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, the fallen booth, and close up its breaches; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the day of old. That they may possess the remnant of Edom and of all the nations that are called by My name, says the Lord who does this.” (Amos 9:11-12)

The Bible declares that David’s kingdom was divided between Israel and Judah after King Solomon’s reign. Not long thereafter, both kingdoms were taken into exile and no king ever sat on David’s throne again. The promise of God, according to the prophet Amos, is that the son of David would again sit on the throne of a restored Israel.

The Christian Scriptures relates how Jesus discussed the mystery surrounding the son of David and his relationship to the Messiah in his discourse with the Pharisees, asking them: "What think you of Christ (the Anointed one/Messiah)? Whose son is he? They said to him, the son of David. He (Jesus) said to them, How then does David in spirit call him Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? (Ps.110:1) If David then calls him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matt.22:42). Jesus was alluding to the fact that the Messiah would be the son of David, but that this "son" would also be Lord.

The Christian church sees the Messiah as the Son of God (Dan.3:25) and the Son of man (Dan.7:13), but often fail to recognize Messiah as the Jewish son of David. The Jewish people, on the other hand see Messiah as the son of David but not as the Son of God, a divine being. The Christian Scriptures call upon both parties to adjust there point of view. The Apostle Paul calls upon Jew and Gentile to combine these seemingly irreconcilable views with each other so that they can become "one new man.":

"...that you were Gentiles in the flesh...without Messiahaliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now, in Christ (Messiah), you who were far off are made near...for to make in himself of two, one new man...."(Eph. 2:11-16).

The Evangelical community is discovering more and more the dual nature of the messiah. He is not only the Son of God but also the son of David. As the son of David he is the Jewish Messiah who will be the King of Israel. His kingdom will be established on earth. The Church sees Christ as the Son of God who will come and establish a kingdom in heaven. These views must be reconciled for Paul's "one new man" to come to the fore. As one of the speakers at the ICEJ's feast celebrations put it:

"The Church has to humble itself so that they can go to the Jews to find out more about the kingdom of God on earth. Jews have to humble themselves to go to the Church to find out more about the spiritual side of the kingdom." (Transcript from a lecture by Asher Intrator at ICEJ Feast of Tabernacle celebrations, Jerusalem, 2006).

Many Evangelicals see the advent of the State of Israel in 1948 and the accompanying restoration of Israel as the most recent evidence that God is "raising up the tabernacle of David." As quoted above, the prophet Amos declared that that the tabernacle of David would be restored so that the Gentiles that are also called by the Lord's name could seek him. (Also

quoted in Acts 15:15-17). The disciples would have been well aware of the Biblical injunction that all the nations could look to the Lord and be saved (Isa.45:22) and that the Gentiles could be enjoined with God's people (Jer.12:16).

The recognition that God is raising up the fallen tabernacle of David and that the son of David will one day sit on the throne as Messiah is something of which the Evangelical world will have to take closer cognisance. If Messiah is expected to establish a physical kingdom and reign from Jerusalem, it is all the more reason for Christians to positively engage with the Jewish people as they each await the advent of Messiah.

ICEJ Response.

One of the messages emanating from the ICEJ to the Church is that the Lord is re-establishing the tabernacle of David. In a newsletter of the ICEJ dating back to 1993, one of the articles recounts how the then Executive Director, Johan Luckhoff, pioneered a new way of taking the message of Israel to the nations. A group of singers, worship leaders and dancers traveled to Australia to present a series of events throughout the nation, under the theme "The feast comes to Australia- a Taste of Tabernacles". He is quoted as saying:

"The emphasis was on Davidic praise and worship in the spirit of Acts 15 where the Scripture speaks of the raising up of the Tabernacle of David, that those called from among the Gentiles may seek the Lord". (Word from Jerusalem. May/June 1993).

In the same newsletter, the Director reports of several Feast of Tabernacle type of events in the US cities of Dallas/Fort Worth, Orlando, Heritage (South Carolina), with smaller reception events in Boston, Charleston, Melbourne(Florida) and Nashville. Other events took place in Fiji and New Zealand while similar tours were planned for South Africa, Singapore, Indonesia, and Europe- west and east. The message that was being sent to the Gentile nations was that the tabernacle of David is in the process of being restored and that both Jew and Gentile believers are eagerly awaiting a Jewish messiah. This strengthens the case for closer interaction with and support of the Jewish people from amongst the Evangelical Christian community.

1.3.9. Lev.23. Restoring the Feasts of the Lord.

As the Christian world takes on a greater role in comforting the Jewish people, they are discovering the deeper meaning of the "feasts of the

Lord” that were established according to the following Scripture in Leviticus:

“And the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, concerning the feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts....” (Lev.23:1 fr).

The feasts of the Lord play an important part in the Jewish calendar. They consist of the Sabbath, Passover, Shavuot (Pentecost) and Tabernacles. They consist of a series of reminders:

The **Sabbath** is a weekly reminder. It reminds Israel that God is the creator of the Universe, the maker of all things, and that He worked for six days and rested on the seventh or Sabbath day.

Passover is a reminder that Israel was once enslaved in Egypt and that God lead them out of bondage through His servant Moses. The miracle that transpired to finally soften Pharaoh’s heart was that all the first-born of the animals and people in Egypt died, except the firstborn of the Israelites. The Israelites were told to put the blood of a lamb on the doorposts of their homes and, as a consequence, the Angel of Death “passed over” their houses.

Shavuot is a reminder of the Law, the Ten Commandments, that was given to Moses by God on Mt. Sinai. This happened fifty days after Israel fled from Egypt, hence the reference to “fifty” in the Greek, Penta-cost.

The feast of Tabernacles is a more complicated feast because it consists of a cycle of seven separate feasts that make up the whole. The feast starts the blowing of the shofar (ram’s horn) for the start of Rosh Hashanah (New Year). This leads into the ten “Days of Awe” which is a time of introspection before Yom Kippur - the Day of Atonement. Once the nation has atoned for its sins, they begin the joyous celebration of the feast of Tabernacles where they commemorate God’s provision for Israel when they wondered through the dessert for forty years. During this time families build booths with branches for a roof so that they can sit and eat their meals in the succa (booth) and watch the stars, reminding them of their dessert existence when God supplied all their needs.

The cycle of feasts ends with Simchat Torah, the “Joy of the Law”, commemorating the rediscovery of the Torah scroll by King Hezekiah in the Temple after Israel’s return from exile in Babylon. It is also the day that the annual cycle of readings from the Hebrew Scriptures by the

Jewish community comes to an end, and the new cycle starts again in Genesis.

There is increasing interest from Evangelical Christian quarters in the feasts of the Lord. Many believe that these feasts, or reminders, should also play an important part in the Church calendar. Christians keep a day of rest to commemorate the day of rest after the creation. They are also reminded that they are to rest in Jesus, their Lord and Saviour, who said "Come unto me all who are heavy laden and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28)

The Passover is of great significance as Jesus was crucified and died during Passover, becoming the "Passover Lamb" that was sacrificed for the salvation of the world. The resurrection of Jesus on the first day of the week following the Passover, coincided with the celebration of First Fruits, as he was the first-fruits out of death. It was also during the Passover supper that Jesus invoked the New Covenant, making it possible for all who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus to enter into the kingdom of God. (Luke 22:20).

Shavuot, or Pentecost, is the annual reminder of the receiving of the Law at Sinai. It also commemorates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit during the feast of Shavuot. The Christian scriptures record that the Apostle Peter was speaking to a crowd in Jerusalem during the feast of Shavuot when the Holy Spirit came upon them. (Acts 2:1). The purpose of the Holy Spirit, according to the New Covenant, is to place the Law in the believer's heart. (Jer.31:31; Ezek.36:26-27). Pentacost can, therefore, have a much deeper meaning for Christians than just the outpouring of the Spirit.

The feast of Tabernacles starts with the blowing of the shofar at the start of Rosh Hashanah. It reminds Christians that they should be listening for the sound of the trumpet (shofar) that will herald the return of Messiah. (Mat.24:31). When Messiah comes, it will be to tabernacle with His people. Christians, therefore, keep this feast with an expectation of the second advent of Christ (the Anointed one/Messiah), as he will come to set up his kingdom on earth.

Simchat Torah, the feast held on the last day of Tabernacles, commemorates the joy of rediscovering the Torah. The Torah is the Word of God. The Apostle John starts his gospel with these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was

God". (John 1:1). Christians can rejoice in Jesus, the Word of God and that He is with us and will soon return to rule over us.

More and more Christians are discovering the Hebrew roots of their faith and turning to embrace the feasts of the Lord. In this way they are deepening their own understanding of the significance of the feasts and at the same time identifying with the Jewish people while sharing the joy of these feasts with them.

ICEJ Response.

The ICEJ holds an annual Christian Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem each year. What started as a small gathering of a few hundred believers in 1980, just after the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was formed, has now turned into a gathering of over 7000 pilgrims from over 100 countries that come up to Jerusalem each year to keep the feast. This development is a foreshadowing of what the prophet Zechariah foretold when he said that all the Gentile nations will travel up to Jerusalem to keep the feast when Messiah comes:

"And everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of Tabernacles."
(Zech.14:16)

The first evening of the feast is usually held in the dessert near the Dead Sea to remind the feast-goers of the sojourn of the Israelites in the Wilderness. The gathering then continues in the convention center in Jerusalem. The meetings consist of several lectures in the morning featuring some of the leading Evangelical speakers from all over the world. Each evening of the feast the pilgrims enter into a plenary session with praise and worship performed by top musicians and dancers from many of the countries represented. One afternoon during the feast is dedicated to participation in the Jerusalem March. Pilgrims walk in solidarity with Israel, waving flags and blessing the people of Jerusalem who come out to witness the march. Most feast goers leave the feast with a sense of having been part of the feasts of the Lord and having learnt a lot more about their host nation, Israel.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has sponsored the annual Christian celebration of the feast of Tabernacles every year since 1980. Many thousands of pilgrims have visited Israel to participate in the celebrations. The ICEJ's dedication and persistence in keeping the feast in Jerusalem has also led to thousands of church goers around the world

learning about the significance of the feasts of the Lord and identifying with the Jewish people as they too begin to celebrate the feasts.

1.3.10. Romans 15:27; Acts 20: 35. Spiritual blessing requires a material blessing.

Paul's teaching requires Christians through the ages to emulate his example of giving material blessings to Israel in their time of need. These material blessings are in response to all the spiritual gifts received from the Jewish people:

“For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their (the Jews) spiritual things, their (the Christian's) duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.” Rom.15:27.

Paul's call for the believers in the nations to bless Israel materially comes about as a result of the spiritual blessing Israel has been to the nations. Paul details the rich spiritual heritage received from the Jewish people in Rom.9: 4. This is an appeal to both individual believers and congregations to give generously to the Jewish people who are in need. In Paul's day he was collecting money to take to Jerusalem because of the hardships that had befallen the country as a result of a severe drought. People in Israel are still in need today. Many have returned to the land with just a suitcase full of personal belongings and have had to start a new life. This is especially traumatic for older people and for children. Paul's appeal is just as relevant today as it was then. It reminds Christians that they have a debt to pay for the salvation they have received through the custodians of the Word.

By and large, the Evangelicals Christians have responded well to the Biblical injunction to support Israel materially. The following extract from a leading Israeli newspaper, Ha'aretz, displays the monetary assistance given to Israel during the recent Israel/Lebanese crisis:

Christians Wartime Donations of \$20m Went Largely Unheralded

11/3/2006

Evangelical Christians dug deep into their pockets to provide humanitarian relief to Israel during the war in Lebanon this summer, donating nearly \$20 million dollars to help rebuild the north, according to estimates. Though largely overshadowed by the massive generosity of their American Jewish counterparts, the pro-Israel Christian community also rallied significantly in support of the north - though giving, perhaps, at lower levels and certainly, with less fanfare.

The evangelical community does not have one umbrella group that keeps track of the donations, so it is difficult to calculate an exact total. A survey of the major Christian

groups, however, showed that the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews (IFCJ), the largest of the fund-raising bodies, collected \$17 million from July 10 to September 10, a 100 percent increase over the same period last year.

Other groups like the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem and Bridges for Peace, another pro-Israel Christian organization based in the capital, each raised half a million dollars for the north as part of their emergency campaigns. Christian Friends of Israel raised an estimated \$150,000 as part of their war relief fund.

"The passion of the evangelical community was about the same as that of the Jewish community," said Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, founder and president of the IFCJ. "They gave smaller amounts, but it was more of a sacrifice. These aren't people who are giving \$1 million or \$2 million. These are average people who sometimes are giving 10 percent of their Social Security checks."

Throughout the war, Christian-funded organizations provided food packages, medical supplies, arts and crafts kits, as well as day trips for children stuck in the bomb shelters. The organizations say they didn't encounter any resistance, even though some municipalities and nonprofit organizations have rejected Christian funding in the past.

One week into the war, Rabbi Eckstein appeared in a paid 60-second advertisement on Fox, the cable news station affiliated with the center-right. "The response was so overwhelming that our call centers couldn't handle it all," he said.

Still, public acknowledgment of the Christian support has been relatively minimal, leaders say. "Christians don't get the same recognition [as Jews]," noted Rabbi Eckstein. "The prime minister or a representative of the government has'nt thanked the Christian community for their help. There is some appreciation of the contributions of Bible-believing Christians, but its not like the government has thanked them the way they will [the Jewish community] at the GA."

(Daphna Berman, Ha'aretz. 11March, 2006).

Evangelical Christians feel a real sense of indebtedness towards the Jewish people. This stems from the pivotal role Israel played from the inception of God's interaction with Abraham the birth of Jesus and beyond, in nurturing and distributing the Word of God to the nations. In this way they became the blessing to the nations that God promised Abraham his seed would be. (Gen.12:1-4).

ICEJ Response.

As seen above, the ICEJ has been active not only in its vocal but also its practical support for Israel. Since its inception in 1980, the ICEJ has given millions of Dollars in cash and kind to Jewish people in need. This includes the chartered flights that brought several thousand immigrants home to Israel. Millions of Dollars have also been spent in Israel by the more than 100 000 pilgrims that have taken part in the ICEJ's feast of Tabernacle celebrations in Jerusalem. The ICEJ's Social Assistance Department is also credited with giving away several tons of food and

clothing to the needy and medical help to those who applied for assistance.

The ICEJ has been recognised for this outstanding work by receiving several citations from the Ministry of Tourism and honoured by the Knesset when they bestowed the prestigious Jerusalem Medal on the Executive Director for the work done by the ICEJ over the years.

Many ICEJ members have given their support in kind. The following is an extract from a report from a group of young volunteers from Grafted who traveled to Israel to assist with service projects. Grafted is the ICEJ's ministry for young adults under thirty years of age:

“Part of the initial vision of Grafted was to create opportunities for individuals to come to Israel, not simply to tour, but to actively express love and comfort to the nation through service projects. This vision became a reality on July 22, 2005, as young men and woman from 8 different counties flew into Israel to begin a 12 day program. Grafted teamed up with ICEJ's Social Assistance program to organize hands on projects including a day camp for Jewish children ages 5 to 12, gardening at Hansen Hospital, visiting survivors of terrorist attacks, cleaning and painting homes of the elderly, and cleaning a municipal park. A favourite for several participants was the outreach to a struggling Russian Israeli family. Grafted supplied them with food, household products and baby products for their tenth child. They also took the family on a special picnic outing and a trip to the mall for 12 pairs of shoes to outfit the entire family! (Word from Jerusalem, Sept/Oct 2005).

In a personal interview, Liesl Hedding, co-ordinator of Grafted, said that it comes down to one-to-one contact: “Your ability to love and pray for Israel is strengthened when you actually meet the nation of Israel.” According to Liesl, the grafted volunteers show their comfort to all of Israel through whatever circumstances. “The love and service of our volunteers were tangible, unconditional and received by the Israelis with incredulous gratitude and respect.” (Interview with Liesl Hedding, Co-ordinator of Grafted, the ICEJ's young adults action group in Jerusalem. March, 2008).

3.11. Isaiah 60:5-11 Treasures will flow to Israel.

There is a prophetic text that states that the Gentile nations shall bring their treasures to Israel, because of God's favour over His people:

**“...unto you shall the nations come with their treasures”
(Isaiah 60:5).**

Some may argue that this prophetic verse in the book of Isaiah may well have been fulfilled with the return of the exiles to Israel after their captivity in Assyria and Babylon. However, Isaiah’s reference to “the nations” (plural) may well reflect a future time when many nations will “come with their treasures”. According to the text “Gold and silver” will be brought to Jerusalem, “...foreigners will build up your walls”, the gates of Jerusalem will be open so that “men may bring you the wealth of the nations” (vs.9,11). It appears that this flow of treasures will reach its peak in the Messianic age for “the nations come because of the name of the Lord your God, for the Holy One of Israel..”(vs. 9).

Part of these prophecies may already have started being fulfilled following the re-establishment of the State of Israel. Most of the worlds diamonds are flowing to Israel as the Israel Diamond Centre is the second largest diamond cutter and polisher in the world. Several countries, including the U.S.A, have invested millions of Dollars in Israel in order to establish huge research and development facilities in Israel. Large multi-nationals, like Intel and Microsoft, have substantial investments in Israel to tap into the creative power of the people. Many new inventions from Israel have attracted large private venture capital funds while millions of Dollars of shareholder funds have been obtained for Israeli companies from the Nasdaq Stock Exchange in New York.

Israel has no raw materials to speak of. All her requirements are imported, beneficiated and then sold to the rest of the world. In that respect, Israel is a good example to other countries in a similar position. Presently, huge infrastructure developments are taking place in Israel. The growth in the economy is such that one can tangibly see the wealth of the nations flowing into the country.

ICEJ Response.

During the huge inflows of Russian immigrants into Israel in the 1990’s, the ICEJ felt that it should assist in the creation of employment in a small way by starting a fund for start-up companies in Israel. The International Christian Investment Corporation was formed in 1996 and funds collected from Christian supporters were invested by the founders, Jack Carstens, a Board member of the ICEJ in South Africa and Tim King, the Treasurer of the ICEJ in Jerusalem. Investments were made in the tourism, building construction and computer industries in Israel. These

ventures continued for a number of years and employed several people, including several handicapped persons from the outlying areas. These businesses made a meaningful contribution for a number of years before closing down because of internal economic considerations.

Since then, the ICEJ has entered into a working relationship with the International Christian Chamber of Commerce, who, like the above-mentioned corporation, has as its aim to attract investments to Israel and stimulate growth through trade. They have started a program whereby businesses can source products from Israel. This has led to orders being received for Israeli goods valued at several million Dollars. (see www.iccc.net). The ICEJ is, therefore, contributing in a small way to bringing the Isaiah text to life.

3.12 Jer. 31:10-11. Voice to the Nations.

Evangelical feel the Bible calls for the nations to hear what the Lord is doing in Israel. They regard the return of the Jewish people to their land as being nothing short of a miracle. The witness of this modern day phenomenon of the return of a people dispersed for thousands of years must be spread to the ends of the earth:

“hear the voice of the Lord, O you nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, he that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a Shepherd keeps his flock”. (Jer. 31:10).

Jeremiah prophecy predicts that God who scattered Israel for her iniquities would gather her again to her land. The prophet Isaiah had a similar vision. Looking far into the future, he asked the question: “Can a country be born in a day?” (Isaiah 66:8) Centuries later, on the 14th of may 1948, the State of Israel was formed after the Jewish people started returning from the four corners of the earth following their exile after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E.

Jeremiah foresaw the return of Israel to her land and calls for the faithfulness of God announced to the whole world when this happens, even to the outermost ends of the earth. Now that the Jewish people are returning to their land, the nations must be told that the God who scattered His people is bringing them back. According to the text, God will bring them back to their land with love and comfort, as a Shepherd who cares for his flock.

The restoration of Israel is a very significant event. It is the fulfillment of prophecies uttered over two thousand years ago. It shows that the Biblical

text can be interpreted in a literal way and that God is a covenant keeping God whose promises are yes and amen.

ICEJ Response.

The ICEJ, through its office bearers and branches throughout the world, is spreading the message of the return of God's people to Israel as the realisation of age old covenant promises and prophecies. They are spreading the message that this event is not random or by chance, it is the fulfillment of God's promises. The ICEJ is a witness to these developments and challenges the Church to take note and help comfort Israel.

ICEJ has a footprint in over 100 countries worldwide and branches in 59 countries. The witness of what God is doing is being reported to the outlying areas, like Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and the islands of Central America. Its office bearers are spreading the message to every continent including South and North America, Europe, Russia, the former Soviet countries, Asia and Africa.

Where possible the ICEJ is speaking to influential people concerning the need to support Israel, and in this regard several top politicians, Senators as well as Presidents, have been visited and informed that the establishment of Israel is not a political coincidence or accident, but is the fulfillment of Biblical promises.

3.13. Gen 12:3. I will bless those that bless you and curse those that curse you.

Evangelical Christians believe that God has placed a hedge around His people and rewards those who bless them but rebukes those that turn against Israel:

“..and I will bless them that bless you, and curse them that curse you, and in you all the families of the earth be blessed”. Gen. 12: 3.

This promise of blessings and curses for those who act for or against the nation of Israel refers to unconditional love for His people and has nothing to do with the internal politics of the country. Critics of the Evangelical supporters of Israel have been quick to point out that their support condones all the political decisions taken in the country. Israeli politicians are as susceptible to making dubious decisions as do many other politicians around the world. The Evangelical community has

underlined the fact that support based on Biblical injunctions does not mean a blanket approval of all the political decisions made in the country.

Evangelical Christians believe that Israel will always be under attack in the spiritual realm. Prayer for their protection and blessing is a counter to forces that seek her annihilation that would mean the end of God's plans for His people. Had the plans of conspirators such as Hamman and Hitler been carried out, it would have meant the end of God's destiny for the Jewish nation.

As a nation, many Jewish people have been endowed with great talents. Jewish people have won Nobel prizes and won accolades from science to the performing arts, far out of proportion to their numbers in the world. This, together with the wealth of some Jewish people, has led to jealousy and conspiracy theories about how the Jewish people manage to gain all their achievements. Through the ages, there have always been rumors that they control the finances of the world. The fictitious work, "The Protocol of the Elders of Zion" have spurred on these notions and have given rise to further conspiracy theories. These and other forms of anti-Semitism have been circulating for centuries in an attempt to vilify the Jews and to cast suspicion on them as a people.

The text seems to suggest that God knew that by electing this nation as His vehicle of world redemption, the forces of evil and the worst side of mankind would come to the fore to try to destroy them. Evangelical Christians see this text as a form of protection for the Jewish people, as its promises are a two edged sword blessing those that bless Israel and placing a curse on those that seek her destruction.

ICEJ Response.

Individuals who have served in the work of the ICEJ and that I interviewed, said they felt privileged to be part of an organization that blesses Israel and encourages others to do the same. These volunteers say they have received many blessings in return. One volunteer reported selling all his possessions and taking his family to Israel to volunteer there for four years. On his return, the family was blessed with a new house and car and a key appointment to a post that paid an excellent salary that more than made up for any loss suffered.

Mention has already been made of nations that have turned against Israel in Biblical and in modern times. Many have fallen by the way-side while Israel still exists. Empires have fallen, nations have disappeared yet Israel

has been kept as a nation according to the promises of God. It seems those nations that have sought Israel's demise are the very nations that have experienced their own collapse.

The ICEJ recognizes God's protective hand over His people and encourages its constituency to bless the country and its people as best they can. For those who curse Israel, the converse is true. They will reap the very curses they have apportioned to Israel.

Though difficult to quantify, the ICEJ feels that there is validity in the Biblical text and encourages others to experience the blessings that flow from blessing Israel.

4. Anti-Semitism, the Holocaust and its impact on Evangelical Christian support for Israel.

The need to guard against anti-Semitism and threats against the Jewish people has as much urgency now as it did in the Biblical period. While anti-Semitism has reared its head over centuries, the inconceivable culmination of Jewish hatred personified by the Holocaust caught most people by surprise. However, plans to wipe out Israel are not new. Here is what the Psalmist had to say about the nations plotting to destroy Israel almost three thousand years ago:

“Keep not silence, O God; hold not your peace or be still, O God. For behold, your enemies are in tumult, and those who hate You have raised their heads. They lay crafty schemes against your people and consult together against Your hidden and precious ones. They have said, Come, let us wipe them out as a nation: let the name of Israel be in remembrance no more. (Ps.81:2-8).

Part of that threat at one time came from the Church. Any commentary on Christian –Jewish relations cannot ignore the history of these two religions. It started with the Jewish religious leadership persecuting the Christians in an attempt to eradicate the new “sect” of the followers of Jesus in the early days of the church. The Sanhedrin forbade the converts to “speak in the name of Jesus.”(Acts 5:27). When their ruling was not obeyed, the persecution turned to harsher measures including imprisonment and the public execution of some of Jesus’ followers. Many believers were forced to flee their homes in Jerusalem and were scattered throughout the country and beyond. (Acts 7:54; 8:1-3).

However, as soon as Christianity became established, the Christians turned against the Jews. Early Church councils called for a severing of relations between the Church and the Synagogue. Symbols of Jewish tradition were removed from the liturgy and feast holidays were changed to rather incorporate pagan traditions of the day. Later Jewish people were openly discriminated against. They were, amongst others, banned from cities, subjected to inquisitions, forced to live in ghettos, subjected to pogroms, disallowed from attending places of learning and barred from professions. A mere sixty-five years ago, anti-Semitism reached its zenith with the onslaught of the Holocaust when Nazi Germany conceived the “final solution” to eradicate all the Jews from Europe.(Shane, Milton. Roots of anti-Semitism.1999).

It is no wonder that with this background, the relatively recent interest of Christians in general and the Evangelical community in particular, in the

well being of the Jews has been met by Jewish people and the State of Israel with suspicion and circumspection. A study of this nature must, therefore, address this reality and refer to the way in which it impacts on the dynamic between these two groups.

Christianity has by and large recognised its anti-Semitic past and has gone out of its way to publically repent of its earlier actions. Protestant, Evangelical and Catholic leaders have all apologised for past conduct and asked for forgiveness for acts perpetrated against the Jewish people.

There is still a strong sense of embarrassment at the fact that a Christian country such as Germany, aided by the populations of the surrounding Christian countries, could have been the soil from which the Holocaust took place. In contrast to the passivity of the general population, everyone is aware of the wonderful instances of bravery amongst individuals who risked their own lives to save Jewish people from certain death at the hands of the Nazi's. A number of clergy from the Lutheran Church also opposed Hitler's actions and paid for their principled stand with their lives. In my opinion, there is sometimes too little appreciation for the millions of young soldiers of the Allied forces that died while fighting to liberate the world from the tyranny of Nazi Germany and their supporters. They were the ones to liberate the death camps and rescue the remaining Jewish survivors from certain death.

Despite well documented proof of the atrocities that formed part of the Holocaust, there is an undercurrent of people that deny the death of millions of Jews and other minorities at the hands of the Nazis. If Christians do not respond to the phenomena of Holocaust denial, then, in the eyes of the Jewish community, they would be acquiescing to one of the worst genocides in history.

The Evangelical churches have, therefore, been at the forefront of denouncing the Nazi atrocities and defending the truth of the Holocaust. In this respect, the ICEJ, as one of the chief spokespersons for the Evangelical community, has gone out of its way to display its abhorrence to this crime and is actively involved in helping to ensure the reality of the Holocaust is not lost to the world.

ICEJ Response.

In an article by David Parsons, Media Director of the ICEJ, concerning recent calls by some world leaders to regard the Holocaust as a hoax and to discredit Israel in the process, attention was drawn to one of the worst

offenders in this regard. In June 2005, Iran's President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, threatened to "wipe Israel off the map." The Iranian President also made repeated denials that the Holocaust ever happened. At the start of a Holocaust denial conference organized by Iran, the Iranian Foreign Minister stated:

"If the official version of the Holocaust is thrown into doubt, then the identity and nature of Israel will be thrown into doubt." The Minister also added: "And if, during this review, it is proved that the Holocaust was a historical reality, then what is the reason for the Muslim people of the region and the Palestinians having to pay the cost of the Nazi's crimes?" (Parsons, David. A State of Denial, article in Word from Jerusalem, March/April 2007 edition, Pg. 18).

In the article, Parsons quotes Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld, an expert on anti-Semitism in the post-Holocaust era, in which he stated that President Ahmadinejad believes the Shoah (holocaust) is the sole moral justification for Israel's existence, despite the fact that the Zionist movement pre-dates the Nazi genocide by decades. "Ahmadinejad thinks that if he can undermine the veracity of the Holocaust, he can create a popular mindset that would acquiesce in the elimination of the Jewish state." He dissects the denial of the Holocaust as an anti-Semitic conspiracy theory which holds that, for self-serving reasons, the Jewish people have deceived the entire world into believing a colossal tale about their own destruction. He states that scholars have broken down the phenomenon of Holocaust denial into several categories:

1. "Holocaust denial- outright assertions that there were no gas chambers and no mass killings of Jews;
2. Holocaust minimization- claims, for instance, that less than one million Jews died, or that other recent genocides have been just as bad;
3. Holocaust distortion- allegations, for example, that the Jews brought the Shoah down on themselves;
4. Holocaust manipulation- charges that Zionist leaders actually conspired with the Nazi's to begin exterminating European Jewry in order to draw sympathy for establishing a Jewish state in Palestine, and finally,
5. Holocaust inversion- accusations that Israeli's are today's Nazis and the Palestinians are victims of a new and even worse genocide." (Parsons, David. Ibid. Pgs. 18-20).

Despite proof through meticulous records kept by the German authorities, eye witness accounts from survivors and death camp liberators such as General Dwight Eisenhower, as well as reams of documentation

suppressed by the Russians which has now come to light, Holocaust denial still persists. According to Parsons, the present Palestinian Authority President, Mahoud Abbas, completed his doctoral dissertation at a Soviet university in 1982 on "The secrets ties between the Nazis and the Zionist Movement leadership." Such "findings", he says,

"reflect the inability of the Arab world to come to terms with its repeated defeats on the battlefield against tiny Israel. It is inconceivable that the inferior Jews went from near annihilation in Europe to conquering sacred Muslim lands just three short years later. It simply became easier to chalk it up to the Jewish people's mystic ability to deceive the whole world with the Holocaust "hoax." (Ibid. Pg 20).

Clearly, if a consensus could be built up around the world that the Holocaust is a hoax, then one of the main reasons for Israel being granted its historical land as a Jewish state, where she can protect her people from future atrocities, falls away. The ICEJ is, therefore, vocal in its call for Christians to acquaint themselves with the facts and to visit the various Holocaust museums to see the overwhelming evidence of a genocide committed against a people entirely because of their Jewish ethnicity.

Yad Vashem

Most visitors to Jerusalem visit Yad Vashem, the Jewish Holocaust memorial museum, set up to maintain the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. It stands as a reminder to the world that such genocides should never happen again.

At the end of 2006, the ICEJ entered into a partnership agreement with the authorities at Yah Vashem that "essentially sets up a Christian desk at Yad Vashem that will reach out to the Christian world, educate it and enable it to learn the eternal lessons that will ensure that nothing like this will ever happen again." (ICEJ Word from Jerusalem. Pg. 8. March /April 2007 edition.).

The Rev. Sam Clarke from the USA was appointed by the ICEJ as the first director of the Christian Desk at Yad Vashem. According to an ICEJ newsletter,

"Sam will not only seek to involve Christians in the lessons to be gleaned from the Holocaust, but he will also raise money for Yad Vashem. By under-girding the future of Yad Vashem, we can protect generations to come from the scourge of anti-Semitism and thereby create a safer world." (Word from Jerusalem. March/April issue. Pg. 8. 2007)

The ICEJ stands firm and resolute with the Jewish people in verifying the authenticity of the Holocaust. The Holocaust is a sacred Jewish phenomenon that the ICEJ feels should be dealt with the greatest of respect. To this end, the ICEJ has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Holocaust Museum, ratified by the Knesset, regarding the establishment of a Christian desk at the museum to give Christians a better understanding of what the Holocaust means to the Jewish people.

5. Why do other Christian denominations not interpret the Text in the same way?

The Biblical texts mentioned above represent some of the main Scriptures that carry a convincingly strong message of support for Israel as far as the Evangelical Christians are concerned. However, various other denominations do not always support the Evangelical view on the subject. It is clear that there are differences in interpretation that separate some of the denominations from each other. We therefore have to look at the subject of Hermeneutics, the study of interpretation, in order to understand how these verses are unlocked by the various parties.

5.1 Hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics may be defined as the theory of interpretation. It concerns itself not only with the interpretation of texts, but the interpretation of any act of communication, whether written or oral, verbal or non-verbal (such as symbols or symbolic acts).

We are more concerned with Biblical hermeneutics in this instance as it concerns itself with the interpretation of the Bible. Traditionally, and until recently, it has been taken to mean the study of rules or principles for the interpretation of particular texts. But it is much wider than that. It has now become accepted that one can no longer be content to speak of rules for the interpretation of texts, as if to imply that understanding can be generated merely by the mechanical application of purely scientific principles. Hermeneutics raises prior and more fundamental questions about the very nature of language, meaning, communication and understanding:

“The subject involves the whole interpretive process. This raises issues in the philosophy of language, theories of meaning, literary theory and semiotics (theory of signs), as well as in Biblical hermeneutics, those which also arise in Biblical studies and in Christian theology”. (New Dictionary of Theology. pg 293. 1988).

Biblical hermeneutics is, therefore, a specific area which explores the interpretation, understanding, and appropriation of Biblical texts.

Hermeneutics is critical to the debate about understanding the texts used and the method of interpretation employed by Evangelicals to arrive at their support for Israel. As a general rule, as indicated above, the Evangelical Christian world tends to interpret the Biblical text in a literal

as apposed to an allegorical way, unless the context of the text demands a spiritual interpretation.

Literal vs. Allegorical Interpretation.

Allegorical interpretation predates Christianity and was already evident in the Greek worldview, especially amongst writers such as Plato. From there it spread to Jewish thought through people like Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE- 50 CE) who used allegorical interpretations of the Hebrew Scriptures to make the Jewish faith more palatable to the Greek and Roman readers of the time. He was followed more than a century later by other Christian intellectuals from the school of Alexandria, such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Augustine, who argued that

“the interpreter should expect to find hidden meanings in the biblical writings, because the mystery of the gospel transcended the meanings of any particular passage” (Ibid. Pg.294. 1988).

Augustine is also renowned for his use of “dual hermeneutics” having suggested that

“while all Scripture should be interpreted normally- that is literarily - prophecy or eschatology was to be understood in a figurative or non-literal way.” (Walvoord, John. The Nations, Israel and the Church in Prophecy. Pg.30. 1967).

The allegorical influence on interpretation of the Scriptures did not go unchecked, especially by leaders of the Church in Antioch. Theodore Mopsuestia (350-428) and John Chrysostom (344/354-407) opposed the allegorical excesses of Alexandria and insisted on the priority of linguistic considerations. More modern theologians also have grave doubts about allegorical interpretation:

“It would seem that the purpose of the allegorical method is not to interpret Scripture, but to pervert the true meaning of Scripture, albeit under the guise of seeking a deeper or more spiritual meaning.” (New Dictionary of Theology. Pg. 295.1988).

Others went on to elude to the dangers inherent in this method of interpretation, namely that it takes away the authority of Scripture, leaves one without any basis on which interpretations may be tested, reduces Scripture to what seems reasonable to the interpreter, and, as a result, makes true interpretation of Scripture impossible. (Pentacost, Dwight. Things to Come. Pgs. 5- 6. 1958).

With regard to the texts relating to Israel, the evidence of thought concerning the interpretation of the Bible in modern day Evangelical

circles seems to point to a selective use of hermeneutics. Those that interpret the text in its most literal, normative way agree that when the text refers to Israel, it means Israel, while others interpret Israel to mean the Church. The latter group falls into what is referred to as those who pursue Replacement Theology.

5.2 Replacement Theology.

Replacement Theology essentially teaches that the Church has replaced Israel in so far as God's promises and blessings are concerned. Adherents of Replacement Theology believe the Jews are no longer God's chosen people, and God does not have specific future plans for the nation of Israel. Replacement Theology, therefore, teaches that the Church replaces Israel and that the many promises made to Israel in the Bible are fulfilled in the Christian Church, not in Israel.

Scriptures concerning the blessing and restoration of Israel to their Promised Land are "spiritualized" or "allegorized" into promises of God's blessing for the Church. Proponents of this theory argue that Jesus came to restore and renew Israel, but that he was rejected as Messiah. The Replacement Theologists therefore declare that Israel forfeited her place as the people of God. This led to God raising up new, spiritual children for Abraham from the nations.

The Case for Replacement Theology.

The following are some of the texts referred to by Replacement Theologists to make the case that the Church has replaced Israel. In each case the relevant text is furnished together with a rebuttal which emphasises the Evangelical view that relies on God's irrevocable covenant with Israel and a literal interpretation of the text as alluded to earlier in this dissertation.

Texts in support of Replacement Theology.

5.2.1 "Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Mat.21: 43). The parable of the wicked tenants (Mt.21:33-44) is interpreted to mean that Jesus warned the religious leaders of the day, the chief Priests and the Pharisees, that their rejection of him would lead to "the kingdom of God" being taken away from them and given to "a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof". The inference is that the people to whom the kingdom would be transferred are the Gentiles at the expense of the Jews.

Rebuttal.

One of the key concepts in understanding the promises to Israel and to the Church, is to distinguish between the physical seed and the spiritual seed of Abraham. Israel is the physical seed of Abraham, and cannot be replaced by any other entity in this regard. Paul affirms that Gentiles can be “grafted in” to the olive tree of faith and become spiritual children of Abraham. The apostle Paul specifically refers to Christians as the “wild olive branches” as compared to Israel, the “natural branches” (Rom. 11: 17-21). The same applies to Jewish people of faith. They can become both natural and spiritual seed, but Israel can never be replaced as the natural, physical seed of Abraham. It should be noted that the Old Testament covenants were made with the natural seed, not the spiritual seed.

The Evangelicals maintain that this parable, where Jesus warns the spiritual leaders of Israel that the spiritual ‘kingdom of God’ will be taken away from Israel and given to a people that will bring forth the fruits thereof, does not cancel God’s promises to physical Israel. Even though the kingdom of God would be taken away from Israel and given to the Church, God’s plan and destiny for the Jewish people did not come to an end.

The Evangelicals see the chief priests and elders rejection of Jesus as the Messiah was foreknown by God and He turned their partial blindness into an opportunity to spread the message of salvation to the Gentile nations. The message of salvation would be entrusted to the Church, but one cannot conceive of God going back on His promises to Israel – that would be inconsistent with the character of God.

5.2.2 In his letter to the Phillipians, Paul writes this of the Church: “...we are the circumcision” (Phil 3:2-3), implying that the Gentile believers have become the true believers in the new dispensation and have left most of Israel behind in unbelief. This can be read together with the following verse concerning circumcision: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:15-16).

Rebuttal.

Here again those who do not follow the tenants of Replacement Theology stress the principle of the natural seed (Israel) versus the spiritual seed (the Church) to offset this argument. Gentiles may well be “circumcised of the heart” in a spiritual sense but they do not replace those who have been physically circumcised in terms of the Abrahamic covenant because only they are the natural seed of Abraham. The Abrahamic covenant is irrevocable and continues to apply to the natural seed even though believing Gentiles have become the spiritual children of Abraham. God’s plan for His physical and His spiritual children may not always be in sync, but He does have a plan for both, without the one necessarily replacing the other.

The reference in the Galatian passage to “and upon the Israel of God” does not imply that the Church is the Israel of God, but it is simply Paul’s heartfelt prayer that God’s peace and mercy also be bestowed upon the “Israel of God”, i.e. God’s chosen people Israel.

5.2.3 Another text that appears to imply that the Church has replaced Israel is to be found in the following verses: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show the praises of him who has called you out of the darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Rebuttal.

Evangelicals agree that Gentile believers have obtained the mercy of God and have, as a result, become included in His kingdom as a chosen generation with all the abovementioned attributes, and are now “the people of God.” However, the words of the apostle Paul to the Church immediately come to mind: “boast not against the branches.” (Rom. 11:18). Arrogance comes to the fore when Christians who have obtained God’s mercy, believe that Israel is now excluded from the promises and the mercy of God. In the same letter to the Church in Rome, Paul asks this rhetorical question: “Has God cast away His people? Paul answers by saying: “Certainly not!”(Rom. 11:1). Here the rule once again applies: the spiritual seed does not replace the physical seed and the

blessings directed at the spiritual seed do not negate the blessings promised to the natural seed.

5.2.4 The Apostle Paul explains that the Gentiles would become righteous by faith, children of Abraham and heirs to the promises: "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles in consequence of faith, proclaimed the Gospel to Abraham in the promise, saying, in you all the nations would be blessed." (Gal 3: 8; 14). Paul goes on to state that those who belong to Christ are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to promise (Gal.3:29). This is taken to imply that the Church has now become the children of Abraham and have replaced this position held previously by Israel.

Rebuttal.

Those who do not endorse the Replacement view regarding Israel, see the meaning of the text as an inclusive promise made to individuals who become believers in the faith of Abraham. Gentile believers are added without excluding Israel, the physical seed.

It should be noted that in the Hebrew Scriptures God's promises and dealings with Israel are always on a national scale. The promises are to Abraham's "seed" (plural) not to the individual "seeds" of Abraham. One of the covenant promises is that Abraham's seed will become a great nation. It was this nation that was taken out of bondage in Egypt, it was this nation that was led into the Promised Land, it was this nation that went into exile because of their collective sin, and it was this nation that returned to the land of their forefathers with the restoration of Israel in 1948.

The Gentiles, on the other hand, are dealt with as individuals. It is the individual that obtains mercy and salvation through the blood of Christ. It is an individual who can become the spiritual seed of Abraham. It is the individual who can be included in the promises. Clearly, the individual can not replace the promises that were made to Israel as a nation.

5.2.5. Followers of Replacement Theology contend that the return of Israel to her land is meaningless. To them, Israel's return to her historic homeland is problematic because, if God is finished with Israel, why are the Jewish people being restored to their land? The text used to draw this conclusion is to be found in Paul's letter to the Romans: "For the promise that he should be the heir *of the*

world (italics mine), was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Rom.4:13). The Replacement supporters argue that the Church is promised the whole earth, not just the land of Israel. Israel's return to her historic homeland is, therefore, not an important event to those in Replacement Theology.

Rebuttal.

As alluded to above, God entered into a land covenant with Israel and promised that she would return to her historic homeland. Evangelicals have no difficulty in accepting Paul's statement that the righteous, through faith, will inherit the earth. This does not distract from the fact that Israel will be restored to her land. The one truth is not at the exclusion of the other. The Church does not replace Israel in this respect.

5.2.6 The nation of Israel was only the seed of the future Church, which would arise and incorporate people of all nations: "For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great *among the nations* (italics mine), and in every place, incense shall be offered to My Name, and a pure offering for My Name shall be great among the nations, says the Lord of Hosts." (Mal.1:11).

Rebuttal.

This prophetic word has come into fulfillment as the gospel has spread. Not only the Jewish people, but people in all the nations now call on the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Even so, why would this exclude God's promises to Israel? Israel is to be lauded for the fact that she succeeded in her calling to be a "light to the nations" and that through the Jewish people, the gospel was preached around the world. This torch has now been taken up by the Church. In this context the Church has switched roles with Israel but it has not replaced her with regard to God's promises that are specific to Israel.

5.2.7. There is an argument that being "Jewish" has become irrelevant because a true Jew is anyone born of the Spirit, whether he is racially Gentile or Jewish: "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (Rom.2: 28-29).

Rebuttal.

Evangelical supporters of Israel accept the importance of the spiritual condition of mankind and agree wholeheartedly with Paul in this regard. However, there is also a place for physical Israel, the seed of Abraham, with whom God has cut an irrevocable covenant.

Most people accept the fact that Jewish people belong to an ethnic group.¹ While Paul is referring to the spiritual state of man, he is not for a moment negating the existence of the Jewish people. Though they may not be believers in the Christian sense of the word, God's promises and destiny still apply to them.

5.2.8 Paul's analogy of Gentile believers being grafted into the natural olive has been misconstrued and distorted to fit several theories, including that of Replacement Theology. The Replacement theory suggests that the "olive tree" is the Church and not Israel, in fact they contend that it is the Jewish people that need to be grafted back into the Church. (Rom.11: 17-23).

Rebuttal.

Such a claim would be against New Testament Scripture. Paul clearly states in the same text that the Gentile believers are the "wild olive branches". They obtain their nourishment from the tree which is seen by many as representing Jesus, the Messiah. The tree is rooted, in turn, in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is from this tree that those in the faith, both Jew and Gentile, receive life through the Spirit, which is regarded as the sap that flows to the branches.

Paul reminds the Gentile believers that they are grafted in to "partake of the root and the fatness of the tree". They are not the "tree". He also warns the Gentile believers not to boast because "thou bearest not the root, but the root thee". Paul emphasizes that the olive tree is not the Church.

5.2.9 Replacement Theology also teaches that all the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament, unless they were historically fulfilled before the birth of Jesus, are now the property of the Christian Church. These promises should not be interpreted literally or carnally, but spiritually and symbolically, so that references to

¹ Advances in DNA testing have isolated the Jewish Y-chromosome and a physical lineage can be verified. The chromosomes for the tribe of Levi have also been isolated and have been verified in certain groups. (Carstens, Jack. *Is the Church Ephraim?* Victory Printers, Cape Town. Pgs.72-76. 2007).

Israel, Jerusalem, Zion and the Temple, when they are prophetic, really refer to the Church: "For all the promises of God in Him (Jesus) are Yea, and Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Cor. 1:20).

Rebuttal.

One cannot replace the concept of Israel with the term "Church" when it suits one's set of beliefs. One must ignore this kind of selective reading. If one tries to replace the word "Israel" in the Christian Scriptures with the word "Church", the text makes no sense at all. For example, "you also shall sit upon the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt.19:8). Substituting the "Church" for "Israel" distorts the entire meaning of the text. It seems rational that references in the Christian Scriptures to Israel mean Israel. These references cannot be allegorised to mean the Church. Evangelicals agree that the Scriptures do imply that Christians can partake in the blessings and promises of God to Israel, but then not to the exclusion of the promises that are meant for Israel.

In conclusion, Evangelicals concur that the Bible states that the Church has been grafted into the olive tree of faith; that the believers are no longer strangers to the commonwealth of Israel but fellow heirs; that they are partakers of the promises; and that they have become spiritual children of Abraham. However, this does not imply that the Church has replaced Israel as God's covenant people. The natural seed of Abraham is still the natural descendants of Abraham and God will keep His covenant promises that he made with them.

As we have indicated above, God's covenant with Israel is unconditional. Israel does not have to do or believe anything in order to qualify to keep their covenant status. That is why we can see God's plan and destiny for Israel continuing to unfold as the recent restoration of the Jewish people to their land testifies.

The Evangelical Christian Zionist response to Replacement Theology is, therefore, that in the context of the covenants and the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as the epistles of Paul, Israel has not been replaced by the Church in as far as her God-ordained purposes and destiny is concerned.

6 . Eschatological views and impact on support for Israel.

So far we have discussed the Evangelical view of Israel pertaining to the past and present. In this chapter we need to examine how the Evangelical expectations of the last days influence their support for Israel.

Eschatology refers to the doctrine of the last things or last days. It is an important element of Jewish and Christian faith because it has to do with the developments on earth at the “End of the Age” and determines the hope for an after-life. As referred to earlier, the Jewish and Christian position according to the Scriptures is that there is a final judgment of mankind at the end of days as against other religions that hold a cyclical view:

“In contrast with a cyclical view of history which holds that the universe is locked into a cycle of endless repetition, special divine revelation led the Hebrews to see history as moving towards a future goal” (New Dictionary of Theology. Pg 228, 1988).

However, in the Christian world, there are several end-time scenarios for the last days. These vary according to the interpretation of the various eschatological verses in the Bible and may or may not include Israel in its understanding of these future events. The many variances in eschatological expectations and schools of thought are the result of hermeneutics and the fact that the Scriptures are not very clear about the chronological sequence of events leading to the last days. This includes several variations amongst Christians concerning the Second Advent of Jesus as Messiah. The exact time of the last days is also subject to much debate. What is clear is that the Bible warns its readers that events on earth are heading towards a final day.

Jesus endorsed the view of an end time when Messiah would reign, by stating that after the tribulation, the Son of man would return “..in the clouds with great power and glory.”(Mark 13:26). However, Jesus did not say when, other than that there would be signs that would indicate that his return was near, just as when one saw the fig tree blossoming, one knew that the summer was at hand. The early Church thought Jesus’ return was immanent. They sold their homes and lived a communal life, sharing their money and food with each other with an air of expectancy.(Acts 2:44-46) The years gave way to a more sober approach in the realisation that the event may be certain but that the timing was unknown.

The uncertainty of the sequence of events leading to the return of Christ and the undeterminable date of his return has opened the door to

numerous interpretations of how events will unfold and how Israel and the rest of mankind will be affected during the last days. Israel's role in eschatology is of prime importance because it influences the Church's attitude to the Jewish people leading up to these future developments.

One aspect that influences Israel's role in future eschatological events is the Church's view on the millennium. Some of the main stream approaches to the doctrine of a millennium rule by Messiah will be discussed with a view to its relevance to Israel.

6.1 Millennium Interpretation.

The millennium refers to a 1000 year reign of Messiah/ Christ with his saints at the end of the age. The Hebrew Scriptures have a strong apocalyptic tradition in that it records revelations about the future of the world and of Israel. The Hebrew Scriptures abound with historical eschatological apocalypses, the book of Daniel being a notable example. The last days are typically thought to be at hand, especially when the afflicted are going through difficult times, as it contains the hope of a better future. The expectation is that God will overcome the evil powers that oppress His people, eliminate all evil and suffering, and establish a universal kingdom forever. (New Dictionary of Theology. Pg.34. 1988).

Christian Scriptures draw on this theme, including what many believe to a strong emphasis on a time period of 1000 years (millennium) which constitutes the reign of Messiah on earth (Rev. 20:2-7). This would be followed by the establishment of the new heaven and earth that would last for eternity. There are three main views on the millennium in Christian circles that have come about as a result of various interpretations of this often confusing subject. These views are identified as pre-millennialism, post-millennialism and a-millennialism.

Pre-millennialism is of the view whereby it is expected that there will be a personal coming of Christ in glory to inaugurate a millennium reign on earth before the last judgment. This belief was held by the early fathers: "...including Papias (60-130), Justin (100-165, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Vivtorinus of Pettau and Lactantius (240-320)." (New Dictionary of Theology. Pg. 428. 1988). Pre-millennialism is based on an interpretation of John's revelation of the devil being bound for 1000 years and Christ reigning supreme for a 1000 years on earth together with the saints that had been martyred for their witness.(Rev.20:1-5).

"This belief was not only an interpretation of Rev.20, but also a continuation of Jewish apocalyptic expectation of an interim

messianic kingdom...with the result that the millennium was understood primarily as a restoration of paradise...where the resurrected saints would enjoy 1000 years of paradisaal life on earth before being translated to eternal life in heaven.” (Ibid. Pg. 428. 1988).

Amelliennnialism: This view derives from an interpretation of Rev. 20 that held the field for most of the medieval period and remains influential down to the present. It was pioneered by Tyconiu in the 4th century, whose ideas were taken up by Augustine. According to this view, the millennium reign of Christ is the age of the Church, from the resurrection of Christ until parousia. Augustine took the figure 1000 to be symbolic, not the actual length of time. It is termed a-millenniumism because it rejects belief in a future millennium. Christ is already ruling while the hope for an everlasting kingdom will arrive with the physical return of Christ in the future to transfer his followers to an other-worldly experience. (Ibid. Pg. 428. 1988).

Post-millennialism: The ideas of the 12th century abbot by the name of Joachim inspired a new form of eschatological expectation which in the latter Middle Ages and the 16th century was the major alternative to the Augustine view. According to his interpretation of the Scriptures, there would be an age of the Spirit in the last days. This would usher in a period of spiritual prosperity and peace for the Church on earth, which was identified with the millennium of Rev.20, though not primarily derived from the text. This interpretation and the expectation it evokes is called post-millennialist, since it held “that the millennium would be inaugurated by a spiritual intervention of Christ in the power of his Spirit, not by his bodily advent, which would follow the millennium.” (Ibid. Pg. 429. 1988).

Of importance to our subject is the overlap between the Jewish apocalyptic view and pre-millennium Evangelical Christian view that the millennium reign of Messiah is still to come. Both Jew and Gentile believers who hold to this view hope to be part of those who will reign over the nations with Messiah (Rev.20:6). According to the prophet Zechariah, all nations will come up to Jerusalem annually to keep the Feast of Tabernacles during the reign of Messiah. (Zech.14:16).

“It is only in the pre-Millennialist view that the Palestinian land covenant and the Davidic covenant, in which the son of David will reign as king, can be fulfilled.” (Pentacost, Dwight. Things to Come. Pg 476-477. 1964).

Also the New Covenant, of which we have spoken above (Jer.31:31, Ezek. 36:27-28), requires a pre-millennium interpretation to ensure that the new heart, forgiveness of sin and the outpouring of the Spirit of God over Israel can be put into practice, for only then will Messiah reign.

Most Evangelical Christian denominations hold to the pre-millennialist interpretation. It includes Israel in the sense that it is a shared destiny, one in which Israel has a role to play. Jesus' words "you will not see me again until you say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (Mat. 23:39) and Isaiah's prophetic insight that they (the Jews) would see "the one whom they have pierced" (Zec.12:10), infers that the Jewish people are actively engaged in the coming of Messiah. The Evangelical world therefore waits with the Jewish people for this event to unfold.

As indicated above, those denominations that hold the a-millennialist view do not expect a future 1000 years of millennial rule. According to them, Satan is already bound and Christ rules presently. There is, therefore, no special role or destiny for the Jewish people. They are regarded as any other nation waiting for the last judgment and the new heaven and earth. This interpretation of the millennium holds no room for the fulfillment of the Palestinian land covenant, the Davidic covenant or the New Covenant in relation to Israel. This interpretation is favoured by Replacement Theologists who see no role for Israel in the future and hold to the view that the Church has replaced Israel, also as far as the end-time prophecies are concerned.

The post-millennium view is similar to the amillennium interpretation with regard to Israel. As there will be no bodily advent of Messiah and hence no reign from Jerusalem for 1000 years, the Jewish people are excluded while the Church is once again paramount.

It is clear that the hermeneutical interpretation of certain eschatological texts are important from the point of view of Christian support for Israel. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the mainly Evangelical Christian denominations that hold to the pre-millennialist view are normally the ones who respond positively to the call to comfort Israel.

6.2 Dispensational Interpretation.

Within the pre-millennialist interpretation of the Rev.20 text is a school of thought that God is dealing with the world in fixed time periods:

"God's dealings with men have proceeded through well defined time-periods or dispensations, in each of which God reveals a

particular purpose to be accomplished in that period, to which men respond in faith or unbelief.”(New Dictionary of Theology. Ibid. Pg. 200. 1988).

The dispensationalists believe in a sharp distinction being drawn between the Church and Israel. They concur with the Evangelicals that the promises of an earthly kingdom given to Israel as a nation must be fulfilled literally in a future, millennial kingdom. However, dispensationalists believe that Jews-as individuals- find their place in the Church during the dispensation of grace, but the promises made to the natural seed of Abraham await a pre-millennial return of Christ with his Church for fulfillment. Only then will be initiated the dispensation during which the material and spiritual blessings promised to Israel come into effect.

Dispensational theology owes much to J.N.Darby and the Scofield Reference Bible published by Cyrus Scofield in 1909. Dispensationalists see a separate dispensation for Israel than for the Church. This is of particular importance to the way the dispensationalists view the tribulation period, the rapture of the Church and Israel. Without going into too much detail about the various interpretations of the tribulation period and the rapture of the Church, these doctrines will briefly be discussed as they also influence the way the Church in general views Israel.

6.3 The Rapture.

The rapture is the event whereby the Church believes it will be taken up into the Lord's presence at the end of the age:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the cloud, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord” (1 Thes.4:16-18).

The debate that is prevalent in Christian circles today concerns the timing of the rapture. Will it take place before the tribulation, during the tribulation or after the tribulation?

6.4 Tribulation.

The tribulation refers to “the time of Jacobs trouble” (Jer.30:7) It is also described in the book of Revelation, amongst others, as a period of God's

wrath and judgment. This time of Jacob's trouble or tribulation, also coincides with the seventieth week described in Daniel 9 during which time God's wrath is poured out upon the earth.

The pre-tribulation rapture theory rests on the premise that the Church will be raptured (taken out of harm's way) from the earth before any part of the tribulation experience begins. There are those Evangelicals that hold to the pre-tribulation view that they will be raptured before the trouble starts. However, if they hold to a dispensationalist view as well, they would summarily be raptured away but Israel, not being part of the Church dispensation, would have to stay to endure the tribulation. Generally speaking those who believe in the pre-tribulation rapture also believe in the dispensational approach to history:

“...the pre-tribulationist believes in a dispensational interpretation of the word of God. The Church and Israel are two distinct groups with whom God has a divine plan. The Church is a mystery unrevealed in the Old Testament. This present mystery age intervenes within the program of God for Israel because of the rejection of the Messiah at his first advent. This mystery program must be completed before God can resume his program with Israel and bring it to completion.” (Pentacost, Dwight. Things to Come. Pg 193.1964).

In other words, they believe Israel must wait for the Church dispensation to end before God will pay attention to her again.

Apposed to this theory is the post-tribulation rapturists who believe that:

“The church will not be removed from the earth until the Advent of Christ at the very end of the present age: the rapture and the appearing take place at the same crisis; hence Christians of that generation will be exposed to the final affliction under Antichrist” (Ibid. Pg.164. 1964).

In this view of the tribulation, both the Church and Israel will be on hand to face these days of awe together.

Between these two views is the mid-tribulation theory that states that the Church will be raptured in the middle of the tribulation period which is generally reckoned at seven years according to the seven weeks prophesied by Daniel (Dan. 9: f).

“According to this interpretation the Church will be raptured at the end of the first three and a half years of the seventieth week of Daniel. The Church will endure the events of the first half of the tribulation, which, according to the mid-tribulation rapturists, are not manifestations of divine wrath, but will be translated before the

last half of the week begins, which, contains the outpouring of the wrath of God” (Ibid. Pg 179. 1964).

The Church’s attitude to the tribulation, and the rapture theories that go hand in hand with it, reflects what its expectations regarding Israel are. If the belief is that the Church will be raptured before the tribulation, it implies that Israel will remain to face the wrath of God on her own. Alternatively, the Church and Israel may face the tribulation period together, in whole or in part. The later expectation reinforces support and comfort for Israel while the other leads to abandonment and non-committal to the plight of the Jewish people.

6.5 Influence of Eschatological views.

Regarding Israel, it is clear that the pre-tribulation rapturists who believe in a dispensational approach see a separate program for Israel and the Church. The mystery of the Church unfolds up to the day of the rapture after which it becomes Israel’s turn to be subjected to testing in order to be purified and receive national salvation. However, there are those in the Evangelical movement who believe, contrary to this theory of separate dispensations for the Church and Israel, that God is not working with the church and Israel in isolation. There is a distinctive overlap between what God is doing with Israel and his program for the Church.

In support of this theory of an overlap, Evangelicals see God’s hand in the present day return of Israel to their historic homeland after centuries of dispersion in the Diaspora. This event derails the pure dispensationalist view because it is happening while it is currently supposed to be the Church dispensation. The compartmentalized view of the dispensationalists, therefore, does not fully explain the present situation.

According to the Evangelicals, the prophecies contained in Dan 9:26-27 regarding the great climax of the nations, together with the words of Jesus concerning the last days (Matt.24:15-26) requires Israel to be in the land. Israel’s return to the land is a very significant event and proves that God is working with the Church and Israel at the same time:

“Of the many peculiar phenomena which characterize the present generation, few events can claim equal significance as far as Bible prophecy is concerned with the return of Israel to its land. It constitutes a preparation for the end of the age, the setting for the coming of the Lord for His church, and the fulfillment of Israel’s prophetic destiny.” (Walvoord, John. F. The Nations, Israel and the Church in prophecy. Pg. 26. 1967).

In summary, the Church's interpretation of eschatology is vitally important as it determines the denominational position regarding Israel in end-time matters. Churches with an a-millennial or post-millennial view of the last days do not consider Israel as being of any importance to God's end-time purposes. In their view, Israel is just another country and a nation like all others with no special purpose or destiny in the last days.

On the other hand, Evangelicals are of the view that there will be a physical millennial reign of Messiah from Jerusalem for 1000 years before the advent of the New Jerusalem and the New Earth in which all God's children will live forever. This view, though clouded by the pre-mid- and post- tribulation arguments, include the nation of Israel and uphold God's promises and destiny for her as the covenant people of God. They are required to be in their historic homeland when Messiah inaugurates his kingdom on earth.

Having discussed at length the background of the Evangelical movement and the texts that motivate them to support of Israel and the Jewish people, we now turn to the discussions within the Evangelical movement who term the faithful supporters of Israel "Christian Zionists" and who disagree vehemently with the special attention being afforded to Israel and the Jewish people.

7. Christian Zionism.

Evangelical support for Israel is not without its critics from within the movement. There is a small body of Evangelicals that do not subscribe to Israel's covenant status and who are set against the view of the greater part of the movement which they term "Christian Zionists." If a label must be given to the supporters of Israel within the Evangelical movement, then they would rather see themselves called "Biblical Zionists." The reason for this is that they believe that the injunctions to support Israel are Biblically driven.

Zionism, by definition, simply means a movement to establish a Jewish state in Zion. The term Zion is interchangeably used to denote Israel or Jerusalem. The term has political implications because it refers to the setting up of a government that has jurisdiction over the land of Israel or Zion. As nations and the land in which they live are associated with the politics of a particular land, it always engenders an emotive response. In this case the land in question is the historic, Biblical land of Israel that was renamed Palestine by the Romans following their conquest of the country at the turn of the Common Era. It has been mentioned above that Palestine was a province of the Ottoman Empire that was dissolved when it was defeated by Britain during WW I. Palestine then became a British Protectorate until the United Nations, by special resolution, divided Palestine into Jordan and Israel, leading to the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Zion is, therefore, also a political entity.

Christian Zionists support Israel because of God's irrevocable, covenantal relationship with Israel, and not because they support the politics of the country. In fact, politics in Israel is driven by secular humanist political parties in the main. They care very little about Biblical injunctions or prophecy. Their main aim is to build a secure nation for the Jewish people in what used to be a portion of their historic homeland. Critics that argue that Christian Zionism is politically based are confusing the support for the people and their land with support for the government of the land. In fact, Christian Zionists do not always find themselves in agreement with Israel government policies. Some issues that have caused differences include human rights violations, land for peace swaps, abortion policies, and others.

The Christian Zionist Movement has grown in numbers and in impact in recent years. Today, hundreds of thousands of Christians from all over the world are, more than ever, ready to declare their love and support for

the nation of Israel. This is how some Evangelical supporters have defined their connection:

“Christian Zionism seeks to declare the truth of God's word that bequeaths to the people of Israel the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. This promise was made by God to Abraham some four thousand years ago (Genesis 13:14-18). Moreover, the promise was reiterated time and time again and stressed that loss of domicile, because of rebellion and disobedience, would not mean loss of possession (Deuteronomy 30:1- 6). The God who exiled the Jewish People on two occasions - 586 B.C. and 70 A.D. - has always promised to bring them back and restore their fortunes (Jeremiah 31:10 and Isaiah 11:11). All this because of His promise to Abraham.”
(www.christianzionism.org)

From time to time Christian Zionists have been reproached for leaning to heavily upon the Old Testament for verification of their stand and belief. However, the Biblical foundation of Christian Zionism is also found in the New Testament. Jesus Himself spoke of the scattering and latter-day regathering of the Jewish people (Luke 21:23-24). Indeed, He placed their return from exile in an eschatological setting (Luke 21:28). Thus Christian Zionists simply seek to give voice to that which Jesus Himself has already said; namely, that the modern-day restoration of the State of Israel is not a political accident, or merely the result of a secular, political, Zionist movement, but rather the fulfillment of God's promises. Moreover, it heralds the dawn of a soon-coming Messianic age: “For Christian Zionists then the restoration of the State of Israel to its ancient soil is evidence that there is hope and redemption for this world. To support Israel (Genesis 12:3), comfort Israel (Isaiah 40:1-2) and pray for her peace (Psalm 122:6; Isaiah 62:6-7) is to work in harmony with God.” (www.christian-zionism.org).

7.1 The Jerusalem Declaration.

Not all Evangelical agree with this point of view. As evidence of the criticism experienced from some quarters, we now quote from an open letter addressed to the Evangelical community by Church leaders in Jerusalem in what has become known as the Jerusalem Declaration. This is what they had to say about Christian Zionist activities and doctrines:

“Christian Zionism is a modern theological and political movement that embraces the most extreme ideological positions of Zionism, thereby becoming detrimental to a just peace within Palestine and Israel. The Christian Zionist programme provides a worldview where the Gospel is

identified with the ideology of empire, colonialism and militarism. In its extreme form, it places an emphasis on apocalyptic events leading to the end of history rather than living Christ's love and justice today.

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

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

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

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

We call upon all Churches that remain silent, to break their silence and speak for reconciliation with justice in the Holy Land.

Therefore, we commit ourselves to the following principles as an alternative way:

- We affirm that all people are created in the image of God. In turn they are called to honor the dignity of every human being and to respect their inalienable rights.
- We affirm that Israelis and Palestinians are capable of living together within peace, justice and security.

- We affirm that Palestinians are one people, both Muslim and Christian. We reject all attempts to subvert and fragment their unity.
- We call upon all people to reject the narrow world view of Christian Zionism and other ideologies that privilege one people at the expense of others.
- We are committed to non-violent resistance as the most effective means to end the illegal occupation in order to attain a just and lasting peace.
- With urgency we warn that Christian Zionism and its alliances are justifying colonization, apartheid and empire-building.

God demands that justice be done. No enduring peace, security or reconciliation is possible without the foundation of justice. The demands of justice will not disappear. The struggle for justice must be pursued diligently and persistently but non-violently.

"What does the Lord require of you, to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

This is where we take our stand. We stand for justice. We can do no other. Justice alone guarantees a peace that will lead to reconciliation with a life of security and prosperity for all the peoples of our Land. By standing on the side of justice, we open ourselves to the work of peace - and working for peace makes us children of God.

"God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." (2 Cor 5:19).

Signed by:

**His Beatitude Patriarch Michel Sabbah
Latin Patriarchate, Jerusalem**

**Archbishop Swerios Malki Mourad,
Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem**

**Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal,
Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East**

**Bishop Munib Younan,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land**

According to the ICEJ, the Jerusalem Declaration was issued by the abovementioned clerics without prior dialogue or discussion with their Christian Zionist counterparts. The accusations require a rebuttal and I believe the following counterarguments can be used to defend the majority Evangelical position:

Rebuttal.

At first glance one can see that these Church leaders are mostly of Arab Palestinian origin and therefore seem to hold a very one sided view of the situation. They use extremely politicised terms such as “colonialist”, “militarist”, “apartheid” and “empire building” when referring to Israel, while trying to use the Bible to defend their point of view.

Christian Zionism does not embrace the most extreme ideological positions of Zionism (Jewish secular Zionism), rather it holds to a literal interpretation of the Bible. The Gospel is not identified with the ideology of empire, colonialism and militarism. The Bible is clear that the earth was created by God and that he apportions the land as He sees fit. The Bible declares that God gave the land of Canaan to Israel. this Biblical injunction is respected and taken at face value by Christian Zionists. They see no sinister motive in this revelation, just as they accept that God promised to bless Ishmael and his descendants (Gen.21:17) and has done so with land that is bountiful in oil.

It may well be true that Christian Zionists place an emphasis on apocalyptic events leading to the end of history, but it is not at the expense of living Christ's love and justice today, as these clerics contend. The establishment of the State of Israel and the return of the Jewish people from the four corners of the earth to their homeland are Biblically associated with the last days. It ties up with the prediction that all nations will turn against Jerusalem and come up to attack Israel. Armageddon and the battle against Jerusalem is Biblically inspired. It does not mean that those who point to these predictions do not extend God's love and justice to all people. Evangelical Christian Zionists are known for their material assistance to not only the Jews but also to Israeli and Palestinian Arabs, Christian and Muslim. They are also actively involved with reconciliation efforts between Arabs and Jews.

The notion that Christian Zionists are involved in politics by supporting Israel's occupation of Palestinian land is misconstrued. It was a majority decision of the United Nations that led to the creation of the State of Israel on a portion of the land known as Palestine. Israel was, therefore, legally constituted. Evangelical's are consequently not involved in

politics by supporting Israel's right to exist. As stated earlier, the United Nations awarded approximately one quarter of Palestine to the Jewish people while the remainder of the land was given to a new state called (Trans)Jordan. When Palestine was divided by the world body in 1947, both Jews and Arabs lived in Palestine. Those Arab Palestinians that fled to Jordan when the Arabs declared war on Israel as independence was granted, are now calling for a Palestinian state in an area that was inhabited by both Arabs and Jews. Furthermore, the land that Israel now occupies on the West Bank was captured when the Arab nations later declared war on Israel and tried to wipe her off the map. Christian Zionists query the "justice" in the Arab attempts to annihilate an entire people group because of their ethnicity and religion. They draw attention to the fact is that both moderate and radical Arabs to this day refuse to recognize Israel's right to exist.

The Jerusalem Declaration seeks to remind Christian Zionists that "Palestinians are both Christians and Muslims." They seem to have forgotten that Jews are Palestinians too. There has been a remnant of Jewish people living in Palestine for hundreds of years, especially from the nineteenth century onwards as the Zionist ideals came to the fore. One must remember that the Muslim inhabitants conquered Palestine in the seventh century. The question is, therefore, how far does one go back in history to make claims against ownership of the land, remembering that King David was ruled over Israel from Jerusalem some 3 000 years ago. There are a few Christians among the Palestinian Arab population, but these make up a minuscule number. The international press has been alert to the discrimination and religious intolerance suffered by Palestinian Christians at the hand of their Muslim countrymen. Many of them have had to flee to other countries for safety. The cleric's declaration that the Jewish population does not form part of the Palestinian demography is, therefore, a slight of hand that is devoid of historical truth.

Furthermore, since there are over one million Arab Palestinians already living in Israel with full citizenship, Israel can hardly be blamed for being "racially exclusive". It is a well known fact that Palestinians living in Israel vote during national elections and have their own representatives in the Israeli Knesset (Parliament).

The "principles" as set out in the declaration are also questionable. Sixty years after Israel's independence, including 5 wars and two Intifada's

(uprisings), do not point to the fact that “Israelis and Palestinians are capable of living together within peace, justice and security”.

The Christian Zionists feel that the attempt to smear them and Israel with the brush of Apartheid is exceedingly insensitive. Apartheid is the policy of separation and that is exactly what the Arab Palestinians are fighting for. They want a separate Palestinian state with no Jewish participation. This is a recurring theme as can be seen in Gaza since the area has been taken over by the Palestinians. All Jews had to be forcibly removed from their homes and livelihood and only Arab Palestinians were allowed to live in the enclave. The ethnic cleansing that took place there is more reminiscent of Apartheid than the multi-ethnic composition of the various religions, colours and creeds that live side by side in Israel.

Thus the Christian Zionists take the position that the Biblical position as far as the Jewish people are concerned, is to respect God’s covenant promises regarding His people, to support their return to the land because of God’s promises in this regard, and to love them with the love of the Lord. With regard to the Arab Palestinians, Christian Zionists side with Israel because they endorse the Biblical view concerning God’s covenant position with the Jewish people. At the same time, the Christian Zionists are obliged to love the Palestinians with the love of the Lord, as the Bible requires.

Christian Zionists feel the Palestinians should move forward just as all the Jews had to do after they lost their land and belongings when they were deported from the Arab countries. They should use the millions that have been given to them to rebuild their lives. There is no other choice but for both Christians and Muslims to respect God’s covenants and promises regarding Israel. As mentioned earlier, the Arab people have received, through Ishmael, special blessings and promises of their own, and are just as loved by God.(Gen.21:18).

7.2 Armageddon and the Evangelical Agenda.

There is criticism from other Christian groups who accuse Christian Zionists of a deceptive agenda with regard to the destiny of the Jewish people in the last days. They are not comfortable with what they call the “easy literalism” employed by Evangelical supporters of Israel in their exegesis of the Bible. Stephen Sizer’s acclaimed critique on Christian Zionism, refers to what he calls the three ironies found within Christian Zionism:

- 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.”

According to him, these Christian virtues are absent from the stand taken by Christian Zionists. It appears that he underwent a "radical change of perspective" during his first trip to Israel in 1990 that came after meeting a "real-life Christian Palestinian." (Sizer, Stephen, R. Christian Zionism: Road-Map to Armageddon. IVP. Pg.10 2005).

Invariably, even if these groups read the same Biblical texts mentioned above and even interpret them in a similar way, they have certain political issues which they emphasise. These issues come to the fore when the Palestinian side of the story is told in a way that depicts them as the victim while the Evangelical supporters of Israel are accused of siding with an immoral government. This presupposes that the rights of the Arab Palestinians to the land of Israel is both legal and legitimate, notwithstanding the rights conferred on Israel by the United Nations concerning their sovereignty over a portion of Palestine. The ethical and moral critique of the liberal school within the Evangelical movement miss the point made earlier, namely, that Christian Zionists do not support the day to day politics of Israel and do criticise their morally indefensible actions. In this regard, Christian Zionists should more closely be termed "Biblical" Zionists, as they adhere to the literal, Biblical promises that Israel will inherit the land, irrespective of what the politicians do or say.

Some Christian Zionists are also accused of holding to a 'dual covenant theory' of salvation. Christian Zionists agree with the mainstream Evangelical denominations that all people need salvation through Christ. The notion that Christian Zionists devalue the gospels or that they close the door of faith to the Jewish people because they come to salvation by a different dispensation, is not representative of the movement.

According to Sizer, today's Christian Zionists derive the following main political stances from their literal and futurist reading of the Bible:

- “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;
- 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." (Ibid. 2005.Pg. 252)

This is probably a fair reflection of the Evangelical view, except for two points: 1. It has been mentioned above that the land that Israel resides upon is related to her obedience to God. Thus it is not imperative that Israel occupies all the land promised in the land covenant at the present time. This may only be realized at the end of the age when Messiah reigns. As indicated before, her right to domicile is beyond doubt, but her residency is limited to her obedience.

2. The statement that the Dome of the Rock "should be destroyed" is a misnomer. The Bible speaks of the anti-Christ revealing himself as "God" in the temple, which suggests to many readers of the Bible that the Dome of the Rock may be destroyed at some time in the future to make way for a third temple. While many Christian Zionists interpret the text in this way, this is a far cry from suggesting that the Dome of the Rock should be destroyed.

The more important issue is the so called "deceptive agenda" of the Evangelicals concerning Israel and the battle of Armageddon, as the following quotation purports:

"It is inconceivable that Evangelical Christians can look the Jewish people in the eye and tell them they are their friends, yet have such a deceptive diabolical agenda for them". (Pastor Kenneth Rawson, New Brunswick, N.J. www.idolphin.org/antimashiach.html).

The Biblical text that is being referred to is the great battle between the kings of the earth and Israel. This will take place at Megido or Armageddon. The passage suggests that Israel would be annihilated were it not for God's intervention and His defeat of the enemy. (Rev.16:14-21). Other passages are tied to this event of the last days, suggesting that Jerusalem will be sacked and partially destroyed (Zech. 12:2-11; 14:2). These events are tied to the Second Advent of Jesus. (Walvoord, John. *The Nations, Israel and the Church in Prophecy*. 1967. Pgs.148-149).

Why this is so distasteful to the critics of Christian Zionism is their argument that the Evangelical supporters of Israel are encouraging Jews to make Aliyah to Israel and to defend their land and their capital Jerusalem in the knowledge that the country and the City will be ravished

and destroyed by the forces of the anti-Christ. This is the “deceptive, diabolical agenda” mentioned above that Christian Zionists supposedly have in mind for Israel. Critics like Sizer even go as far as saying the reason why Christian Zionists consistently reject peacemaking initiatives is because they anticipate and delight in the impending cataclysmic battle between the forces of good and evil.

These are future events that call for careful interpretation. No-one can piece this puzzle together with 100% accuracy, hence the various theories on the matter. If one interprets the Biblical texts mentioned above literally, it seems to indicate that these events will take place and that Israel will face enormous odds and suffer heavy casualties. But then, so will the Gentile nations that come up against Jerusalem and Israel. According to these same passages, God will destroy the armies of the nations by their millions. The end result is that Israel will be victorious. (Zech. 12:8-9).

There is also no certainty that Jewish people that remain in the Gentile nations will not suffer persecution and even death. Anti-Semitism is on the rise all over the world and it is not clear where the safest place will be for the Jewish people. The last days are a time of God’s judgment. Jesus said that if the days would not be shortened, “there should no flesh be saved.”(Mat.24:22). It sounds as if the plight of the Gentiles may well be worse than that of the Jewish people. It is, therefore, highly unjustified for the critics of Christian Zionism to contend that there is a diabolical plan for Israel’s destruction.

According to the Evangelical interpretation of the biblical texts, there is a plan and destiny for the Jewish people. Despite their possible ordeals, God is there to protect and save those whom he has elected to protect and save. There is, therefore, no hidden agenda or diabolical plan by the evangelical supporters of Israel to deceive the Jewish people with a hidden agenda. These texts are in the Bible and open for anyone to interpret as they see fit.

The critics of the Christian Zionist view in the Evangelical movement are by far in the minority, especially in the USA, where the Evangelical supporters of Israel are thought to number in their millions. It is important for these opposing views to be aired and debated, as a united stand is preferable given the dark clouds looming over Israel.

8. Present Day Dynamics between the Evangelical Church and Israel.

This section attempts to look into the dynamics of the relationship between Christian Zionists/Evangelicals and Israel over the last number of years. It touches on the sensitive areas of expectation from the Evangelical side and the suspicion of missionary activity from the Jewish side.

8.1 Is the Evangelical support for Israel sustainable or even conditional on what Israel does or believes?

Martin Luther was known for his Biblical insight into the Abrahamic covenant and the promise of God's blessings for the Jewish people. However, Luther was of the opinion that the Jews would embrace Christ as the Messiah because the Protestant movement had abandoned some of the offence practices of the Catholic Church that were a stumbling block to the Jews. When his rapprochement did not translate into acceptance of the faith, he turned is back on the Jewish people. In a display of the misunderstanding of the purpose and calling of the Jewish people, his tirades against them in the last years of his life became a black mark against his testimony as a Christian. (Bainton, Roland H. A life of Martin Luther. 1950).

One could argue that the pro Israel Evangelical movement that started as an offshoot of the Protestant movement could run into similar difficulties. This begs the question if the Evangelical community expects a warming towards them and their belief system by the Jewish people? What would happen if this rapprochement does not take place? Could it lead to the withdrawal of support for the Jewish people?

According to the research discussed above, it would seem that the present day Evangelicals have reached a much more mature view of God's plan for the Jewish people. Their support does not point to an expectation that the Jewish people have to embrace Christianity as a prerequisite for the comfort and support afforded the Jewish people.

Malcolm Hedding, Executive Director of the ICEJ, and speakers at the Feast of Tabernacle celebrations in Israel, have repeatedly reminded the audiences that their calling to love and support the Jewish people is unconditional. This practice of unconditional support has already been put to the test as there are many decisions made by the secular government of Israel that did not carry the approval of the Evangelical

movement. These include the Israeli government's position on abortion, land for peace swaps, human rights issues, etc. On a practical level, the Interior Ministry has taken a tough stance on the renewal of visas for Christian volunteers and several long standing volunteers were requested to leave the country. Despite these differences of opinion, there still exists very cordial relations between the parties. For instance, the Prime Minister of Israel has always spoken a word of welcome to the thousands of Christians that come to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem each year.

In an interview with Malcolm Hedding of the ICEJ, mention was made of some of the matters that have clouded the mostly excellent relationships with the authorities, but he repeated that the Evangelical community in Jerusalem would not allow a few isolated incidents to curb their enthusiasm. According to Hedding:

“Christians are here to remind Israel of God's irrevocable love for them and to comfort them as best they can. This is what the Scriptures tell us. These Scriptures reflect the nature of God's love for His people. It is this same enduring love that we have to display towards His people.” (Hedding, Malcolm. Personal interview, Jerusalem. March, 2008).

8.2 Are there Missionary Overtones?

This brings us to the question if the work of the ICEJ and other Evangelical organizations operating in Israel is aimed at missionising the Jewish people? This is especially pertinent in the light of the Evangelical Church's inherent calling to evangelise the world and make disciples of all nations. (Mat. 28: 19).

In general terms, the facts are that both Jews and Christians are converting each other's followers. Many Christians convert to Judaism each year for marriage as well as religious reasons. The same can be said for Jewish converts to Christianity. From an Evangelical Christian point of view, freedom of religion and conscience is an important principle. They respect the personal decisions of those who convert to either religion. By their very nature, Evangelicals are open and ready to share their faith if asked.

The Evangelical organizations in Israel are sensitive to this issue and have an understanding with their followers that no missionary activity is permissible in Israel according to the laws of the land. According to the

leadership, this is the official stance of the ICEJ and is strictly upheld as a mark of respect for their hosts.

It seems clear that Evangelical support for Israel is not conditional upon Jewish people being led into a conversion experience, however appealing such a condition may be. On the contrary, the Bible declares that Israel has an important role to play as a nation in the eschatology of the last days. If this is to be the case, the conversion of all the Jewish people to Christianity would not be compatible to the way the Bible describes their occurrence in Israel during the last days. Evangelical support for Israel is not, therefore, in any way dependant upon the acceptance by the Jewish people of Jesus' Messianic credentials. There is by now a long track record of enthusiastic support for Israel with no strings attached. This points to a healthy, sustainable relationship for the future.

8.3 Messianic Congregations in Israel.

There are several Messianic congregations in Israel. These are made up of Jewish people that believe that Jesus is the Messiah. Despite the fact that their theology is similar to Christianity as practiced by Gentile believers, these Jewish believers are protective of their Jewish identity and follow all the traditions of their forefathers. According to them, their acceptance of Jesus as Messiah has not diminished the fact that they are Jews who are following a Jewish Messiah.

According to the Evangelical movement, the Messianic community in Israel and in the Diaspora, is seen as fellow believers even though they do not necessarily follow the same traditions as the Church. Over the years the Evangelical organizations in Israel have always tried to keep good relations with the local Messianic movement and have often stepped up to support them when they have come under persecution. The earliest example of help to a Messianic congregation was recorded in the ICEJ minutes of 1983:

“The Board of the ICEJ reports that the Tiberius Fellowship was attacked by Orthodox community who threw stones through the windows of the house where a meeting was taking place and threatened to burn down the building with those inside. Police came to the rescue. The incident was discussed at the meeting by the spokesman for the Embassy, Jan-Willem, and a Board member, David Biden. It was decided that they should arrange a meeting with the Mayor of Tiberius to register the ICEJ's formal concern about the situation.” (Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the ICEJ. Dec 9-11, 1983).

On March 20, 2008, bomb hidden in a Purim gift parcel was left at the door of a Messianic church leader in Ariel, Israel. The parcel exploded when it was opened by his son, seriously wounding the boy to within an inch of death. The police expect a group of Orthodox Jews in the town of Ariel executed the attack. The ICEJ has called upon the authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice.

One of the leading bridge builders between the Evangelical Christian Church and Israel wrote this about his relationship with the Jewish community at large, and the Messianic Jewish believers in particular:

“My love for Israel and the Jewish people grew as I studied Scripture and the Lord revealed more and more of His love for His covenant people. But this love was also greatly influenced by the early messianic movement and by some of my flock who were Jewish. Having once entered the door of love, and in recognition of my status as a grafted in son of Israel, I now embrace the entire family of Israel as part of myself”. (Finto, Don. *God’s Promise and the Future of Israel*. Regal Books, California.2006.)

Because of their recognition of the Messianic congregations in Israel, the Evangelical community realises that this increases the air of suspicion and mistrust between them and the Jewish community. Press reports and the cautious reaction of the Orthodox community in Israel towards Christians bear witness to the fact that they are ever mindful of missionary motives and have not accepted the Christian outreach to the people of Israel at large at face value. Given the history of persecution of the Jewish people by the Church through the years, Evangelicals expect that trust will continue to take many years to develop.

9. Conclusion.

The thesis set out to investigate the Biblical texts used by Evangelical Christians as a basis for their support of Israel and the Jewish people. The investigation revealed that the Evangelical movement is an off-shoot of the Protestant reform that took place in the 16th century. These reforms included the translation of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, into the colloquial language of the lay people. This in turn, led to greater debate on the content of the Bible, including the God's special interaction with the Jewish people and the land of Israel.

The thesis shows that while the restoration of Israel as a Biblical homeland was still a very remote possibility, Evangelical Christians realised from the Biblical text that God had entered into a unique covenant with the Jewish people through His servant Abraham. Evangelicals see the Abrahamic covenant as an irrevocable, unconditional promise from God that the Jewish people would be restored to their land.

The thesis shows that the covenant promises were backed up by many prophecies that predicted the restoration of Israel at some future date when the Jewish people would return from the four corners of the earth. Although these prophecies appear conclusive, it was pointed out that various denominations in the Church are not in total agreement with these eschatological interpretations. A large section of the work was, therefore, devoted to underlining the importance of the Abrahamic covenant as the foundation on which the Evangelical Christians base their doctrine of support for Israel. The Biblical text states that the covenant is "everlasting" and no proof could be found to show that God cancelled His covenant promises to Israel. The prophecies, therefore, serve to corroborate the covenant promises and the present day restoration of Israel confirms the trustworthiness of the Bible texts in this respect.

Turning to the biblical text that Evangelicals use as motivation for their support of Israel, the most commonly employed texts that are used as a rallying call to comfort Israel were discussed. These texts are to be found in most of the literature distributed by Evangelical organizations that are

engaged in actively supporting Israel and bringing comfort to the Jewish people in several countries around the world.

Together with the text, the reader was given an insight into the work of one of the leading Evangelical organizations in Israel, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ). This organisation was used as a model of what several Evangelical organizations are doing to comfort Israel. Through archival material and interviews we sought to uncover what the ICEJ's aims are and how they are responding to the Biblical injunctions to comfort Israel.

It became clear that the Evangelical Christians that support Israel read the Biblical text in a literal sense where the text demands. The result is that where the text calls for action in support of Israel, such as prayer, bringing comfort, giving material gifts, speaking out in favour of Israel and so on, the Evangelical community is responding in a practical way to fulfill these texts. Herewith is a summary of some of the results of the actions undertaken in response to these texts by the ICEJ:

- 2.1 Economic: Through the Christian Allied Caucus, sub-committee of the Knesset, to which the International Christian Embassy is affiliated.
- 2.2 Social Assistance: Social support in the form of money, food and clothing donated by Christian groups to the needy in Israel.
- 2.3 Aliya. Assistance in helping Jewish people make Aliya, especially from the Former Soviet Countries and from Russia, with infrastructure provided in the form of planes, buses and ships.
- 2.4 Tourism. Significant Evangelical Christian travel to Israel for the Feast of Tabernacles celebration as well the influence of other Christian support organisations in bringing tourists to the Israel.
- 2.5 Volunteer Work in Israel. The phenomena of volunteer work undertaken by Evangelical Christians in Israel, assisting the old, sick and children.
- 2.6 International influence: The influence of the Christian Embassy's branches throughout the world and the inroads into the large network of Evangelical Churches, especially in the USA.

The investigation revealed that not all Evangelical Christians share the same enthusiasm for this work or interpret the text in the same way. The research brought to light that the hermeneutical approach to the Biblical text made a substantial difference to the way the text is interpreted. It found that those that read the texts in an allegorical way react negatively towards Israel. They see the New Testament Scriptures as suggesting that the Church has taken the place of Israel. They are of the opinion that

Israel lost its special covenant position when it rejected the Messianic credentials of Jesus and the Jewish people can, therefore, no longer be regarded as God's "chosen" people. Israel is viewed by this group as being just like any other nation. This doctrine is referred to as Replacement Theology and was discussed in some depth by tendering rebuttals to the text used by them to indicate that the Church has now become the "Israel of God".

The thesis pointed out the fact that there are several Christian denominations that oppose the Christian Zionist viewpoint of many of the Evangelicals. One of the reasons identified is that these denominations have differing views on eschatology that, in turn, determines how they react to Israel. We learnt that those Churches with a millennium view and an end-time tribulation expectancy saw Israel as being included in God's eschatological plans. These churches are therefore inclined to support Israel. Those who have an a-millinium view and discard the tribulation exegesis, have no regard for Israel in their eschatological view.

The research concludes that not all Evangelicals agree on Israel's covenant status and need to be restored to their land. Those that oppose the main body of Evangelicals in this regard do so not only because of their Replacement Theology, but also for political reasons, many of them feeling aggrieved at the way Israel is dealing with the Palestinian situation. They later accuse the pro- Israel Evangelicals of having no regard for the Arab community, seeing them only as enemies of Israel and not as people that are having their rights infringed. We discovered that the matter is further complicated because of the sympathy these churches evoke for the small Christian Arab component amongst the Palestinian people that are being persecuted by both sides in the conflict. They criticise the Evangelicals for what they see as blind support for Israel, romanticising the nation for its exploits recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures that have no relevance to Israel's situation in the Christian Scriptures. Such Evangelicals are called Christian Zionists as a derogatory term and are viewed by some of their peers as heretical.

We found others critics of the Evangelicals who supporter Israel stating that the Christian Zionists are wishing a blood bath on the Israeli people because of the apocalyptic fate awaiting them at in the last days. They argued that the Evangelicals believe that the Jewish people's refusal to accept Jesus' Messiahship will lead to the battle of Armageddon and the annihilation of two thirds of the Jews in Israel before Jesus' Second Advent.

This criticism was refuted by the Christian Zionists on the basis that the text suggesting that two thirds of the Jewish population will be destroyed, may already have happened during the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. If another such crisis does loom, it was also shown that the Biblical reference to the battle of Armageddon as the final battle between the nations and Israel will end with God's intervention as He saves Israel and destroys the armies that come up against her.

We also looked at the present day dynamics between the Evangelical community and Israel. We found that a large pool of goodwill exists between the Jewish people and the Evangelicals. However, there is still a latent distrust of the Evangelical motive for their support of Israel. The Orthodox Jewish community in particular is skeptical of the love and support given to the Jewish people, suggesting that it is a disguise for proselysing the Jewish people. The Evangelical community, on the other hand, has shown that they have matured in their relationship with the Jewish people. They believe that God has an end time destiny and plan for Israel and that He will reveal Himself to them in the fullness of time.

The overall conclusion is that the Evangelical churches feel themselves bound by the various Biblical texts discussed above to offer their unconditional love and support to Israel and the Jewish people. Because the Bible says that Israel is the apple of God's eye, Evangelicals feel obliged to respect and comfort Israel. They feel indebted to the Jewish people for being the custodians of the oracles of God. Even their rejection of Jesus, though unfortunate in their eyes, is seen by the Evangelicals as an opportunity for the Gentile world to enter into the kingdom of God. They wish Israel's eyes will be opened to recognition of Jesus as Messiah, but this is not seen as a condition for receiving support and comfort. The Evangelicals realise that God has a plan and destiny for His people that may not coincide with their view on the matter.

6. Primary Sources and References.

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Minutes of the Board of the ICEJ from 1980 to the present.

Annexures:

Minutes of the second ICEJ meeting held on the 16th of October, 1980, including written goals of the organization. (Annexure 1).

ICEJ: Articles of Association. (Annexure 2)

International Christian Embassy –Social Assistance Department. 2007. (Annexure 3)

International Christian Embassy: Relief Programme. 1980. (Annexure 4)

Position Papers.

Position paper of the ICEJ's Department of Social Assistance (previously Relief Programme).

Position Paper entitled "Swords into Ploughshares" by David Parsons, Head of Public Relations and Media, ICEJ, Jerusalem. Issued by the ICEJ. Undated.

Websites consulted.

International Christian Embassy Jerusalem: www.icej.org.

Radio station: www.frontpagejerusalem.com

Day of prayer: www.daytopray.com

International Christian Chamber of Commerce: www.iccc.net

Christian Zionism: www.christianzionism.org

Christian Zionism: www.christian-zionism.org

Pastor Kenneth Rawson. New Brunswick, N.J. Christian Zionist Critic: www.ldolphin.org/antimashiach.html.

Interviews with key figures in the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. March, 2008.

Malcolm Hedding, Executive Director;

Jeurgem Beuler, International Director;

David Parsons, Media Director;

Liezl Hedding, co-ordinator, Grafted young adults group, and

Chuck King, Music Director.

Newspapers and Newsletters:

“The Word from Jerusalem” bi-monthly magazine issued by the ICEJ. Various articles by several authors as specified and dated in the body of the dissertation.

Parsons, David. A State of Denial, article in “Word from Jerusalem”, March/April edition, pgs 18-20.

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Replacement Theology, where do you stand? By Malcolm Hedding and Jack Carstens. DVD;

Highways to Zion. A four part series on the basis for Christian support for Israel. By Malcolm Hedding and Michael Utterback. DVD.

Various topics on Christian support for Israel by Malcolm Hedding, Jurgen Beuller and speakers at the annual ICEJ Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem.

Transcript from a lecture by Asher Intrator, speaker at ICEJ Feast of Tabernacle celebrations, Jerusalem, 2006.

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THE MINUTES FOR THE SECOND EMBASSY MEETING HELD ON THE 16TH OF OCTOBER 1980
at the EMBASSY OFFICE

ATTENDANCE: Dr. George Giacomakis (Chairman); Susan Miller (secretary); Dr. Larry and Lucia Samuels; Jan-Willem and Widat van der Hoeven; Elisabeth van Heemstra, Greet Breunese; Merv and Merla Watson; Lance Lambert; David Bivin; Jack and Yoma Munting; Ludwig Schneider; Sandi Rentz; Gillman Hill and representative.

Opened in prayer at 7:45 pm. Meeting starts at 8:15pm.

- 1) Minutes must be sent to committee members before the next meeting.
- 2) Rev. Gardiner Scott will let us know if he will be the Embassy Chaplain.
- 3) No decision has yet been made on the permanent Ambassador. Dr. Backhouse is open but is not an administrator. David Bivin wants to know why don't we give Jan-Willem the position of Ambassador - seeing that he had the vision.
- 4) Dr. George feels that we need one steering committee to cover all the activities. The Almond Branch is a fellowship which can grow without a bureaucratic structure. However an overall Steering Committee is needed. Dr. George laid out a suggested organizational chart (enclosed)
- 5) Goals set up as follows: (enclosed)
- 6) Mr. Jacques Fisher want us to open up a Haapolim account so that he can transfer money to it. We will not request certain amounts, but will leave it to him to give what he chooses - or what the Lord lays upon his heart.
- 7) Jack Munting is resigning as Treasurer but not resigning from the Almond Branch. His work at the School is his first priority and he wants to be faithful to it.
- 8) It is decided that a float will be given to the office for office use only.
- 9) Jesse's typewriter will be bought for \$500
- 10) Gillman Hill spoke to the Committee about his vision for an Embassy and suggested some of its objectives. He distributed a 5 page typed proposal to each member and congratulated us for taking the step of faith that we did.
- 11) Jan-Willem will have a TV interview with Marcelle Tagif for the Arabic hour on Sun.
- 12) All cash sales done in the office for books or booklets must be done at retail price. The money must be sent to the publisher and if he wants to give anything to the Embassy he must remit it.
- 13) The apartment opposite the road will be used during office hours for John Matlock and Joe Christian to work in. It is already paid for 3 months.
- 14) Larry has given the logo to Mr. Fisher for the printing of the letterheads.
- 15) The office will be closed on Saturdays and Sundays. Merv will see if he can get his answering service machine from home to use whenever we leave the office.
- 16) The Feast of Tabernacles Committee is: Merv and Merla Watson; Lance Lambert; Jan-Willem van der Hoeven; Johann Luckhoff and Elgonda Brunkhorst.
- 17) They will wait for Johann and Elgonda to return before they will meet.

MEETING CLOSED AT 10:30 pm.

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION1. Article 1: Name of the Association

In English: The International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem

In Hebrew:

2. Article 2: Objectives of the Association

- 2.1 To show concern for the Jewish people, and especially for the reborn State of Israel, by being a focus of comfort according to Isaiah 40:1, "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God."
- 2.2 To remind and encourage Christians to pray for Jerusalem and the land of Israel.
- 2.3 To be a center where Christians from all over the world can learn what is taking place in this land and be rightly related to the nation.
- 2.4 To stimulate Christian leaders, churches and organizations to become an effective influence in their countries on behalf of the Jewish people.
- 2.5 To begin or assist projects in Israel, including economic ventures, for the well-being of all who live here, irrespective of race, background or religion.
- 2.6 To be a reconciling influence between Arabs and Jews.
- 2.7 The Association does not represent any government; any denomination or church organization; any particular Christian businessmen, group, or any political party. It represents the concern of millions of Bible-believing Christians who love and honor the Jewish people and who wish to obey the will of God concerning them.
- 2.8 The Association is established and shall conduct its activities exclusively for charitable purposes and it shall not be conducted for profit and no part of its net earnings shall inure to the benefit of any member, trustee, director or officer or any private individual (except that reasonable compensation may be paid for services rendered to or for the Association pursuant to one or more of its purposes); nor shall any net earnings, property or assets of the Association be used other than for charitable purposes.
- 2.9 The Association, as a public institution, will appoint an accountant who will provide its authoritative bodies with an annual certified balance sheet.

3. Article 3: Powers of the Association

In order to fulfill its purposes, the Association is authorized to perform any act which its authoritative bodies will deem appropriate, and in particular, the following:

- 3.1 To seek and receive subsidies, grants, contributions, gifts, and legacies from individuals, funds, foundations, institutions, companies, public bodies and committees, and government agencies.
- 3.2 To purchase, lease, acquire in any way, and to maintain as property all kinds of real estate, buildings, rights, funds, concessions, discounts, licenses, machines, work tools and equipment, and any kind of property needed or suited for implementing its purposes and programs.

- 3.3 To contract through agreement or contract with any government agency, local authority, public institution, organization or society, legal or physical personality, subject to the provisions cited herein.
- 3.4 To join organizations, national and international societies and groups, and cooperate with them, with respect to implementing mutually accepted purposes and programs.
- 3.5 To encourage and organize among the communities in Israel and abroad "Committees of Friends" of the Association, whose purposes, inter-alia include financial support for the development and maintenance for the Association's projects, programs and activities.
- 3.6 The funds provided to the Association by the "Committee of Friends" will be collected and controlled by these communities in keeping with the tax laws of the countries in which they operate.

4. Article 4: The Association's Organization

4.1 The Association's Board of Trustees

- 4.1.1 The Board of Trustees will be composed of not fewer than six and not more than nine members of the Association.
- 4.1.2 The Board of Trustees may fill vacancies by a vote of two thirds of the members.
- 4.1.3 All members of the Board of Trustees will be elected by the members of the Association at General Meetings of the Association, for two years, with a possibility of reelection for additional terms.
- 4.1.4 The Board of Trustees will choose from among its members a Chairman, a Director, a Secretary and a Treasurer; the offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by the same person.
- 4.1.5 The Chairman of the Board of Trustees will serve as chief administrator and will run the affairs of the Association.
- 4.1.6 The Board of Trustees will be responsible for all matters pertaining to the Association as its true representative, and will not require special permission to act on its behalf.
- 4.1.7 The Board of Trustees will meet periodically and will determine the procedures of its work.
- 4.1.8 The quorum at meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be legal when a majority of its members participate at the meeting. If no quorum is present, the meeting shall be adjourned for 24 hours and shall then be legal if three members of the Board of Trustees including the Chairman are present.
- 4.1.9 The Board of Trustees can contract on behalf of the Association, decide on policy and plans, and in general be responsible as its principal legal representative, for the Association's projects, programs and activities.
- 4.1.10 The Board of Trustees may authorize the Executive Committee or any person or number of persons to manage on its behalf the affairs of the Association, and to legally commit it with respect to all matters affecting the Association. The signature of the persons so authorized along with the official seal of the Association shall commit the Association for the contents of signed letters and documents.

4.1.11 The first Board of Trustees shall be composed of the following founders of the Association whose names appear immediately hereunder, each of whom shall hold the office appearing opposite his name, i.e.:

Name	Office
George Giacomakis	Chairman
Johann Lückhoff	Director
Timothy E. King	Secretary and Treasurer
David Bivin	Member
Mervin James Watson	Member
Jan Willem van der Hoeven	Member
Baroness Van Heemstra	Member

4.2 The Association's Executive

- 4.2.1 The Executive Committee of the Association will consist of the Director and Secretary/Treasurer and any other additional members which the Board of Trustees may elect.
- 4.2.2 The Executive Committee shall determine its working procedures, as well as the quorum required for its meetings.

4.3 General Meetings

- 4.3.1 The General Meeting of the Association will take place once within a calendar year, and not later than 15 months after the last General Meeting at a place and date to be fixed by the Board of Trustees. These Meetings shall be deemed as Ordinary General Meetings, all other meetings to be called Extraordinary General Meetings.
- 4.3.2 The Board of Trustees shall have the right at any time to convene an Extraordinary General Meeting, and shall be obliged to convene such a meeting upon the request of one-tenth of the members of the Association having the right to participate and vote at a General Meeting, or upon the request in writing of the auditor.
- 4.3.3 The Board of Trustees shall notify the members of the Association about the date and the agenda of the General Meeting at least 30 days before such a meeting. However, non-receipt of such notice by any of the members shall not nullify actions taken or resolutions passed at the General Meeting.
- 4.3.4 The quorum at any General Meeting shall be the attendance at the meeting of the majority of members of the Association. Should a quorum not be present 30 minutes after the time set for the meeting, the General Meeting will be adjourned, and will be held seven days later at the same place and hour and the members participating therein shall constitute the quorum.
- 4.3.5 Resolutions at General Meetings are adopted by a majority of votes, except in matters in which the present Articles require a greater majority.

Resolutions in writing signed by all the members of the Association are to be considered as Resolutions duly adopted at a General Meeting of the Association.
- 4.3.6 Voting at General Meetings shall take place by a show of hands, unless a secret ballot is required by any one of the members. A person can only vote in person.

- 4.3.7 The Chairman of the Board of Trustees shall act as Chairman at General Meetings, and in his absence the Director shall act as Chairman and in their absence the senior of the Founders present shall act as Chairman. In the event of the absence at a Meeting of the Chairman, the Director and/or any of the Founders, the members present at the meeting shall elect a chairman for the meeting.
- 4.3.8 The General Meeting shall have the ultimate control of the affairs of the Association and shall have the following specific functions: to review and approve the activities of the Board of Trustees and the financial statements of the Association, to elect members to the Board of Trustees, and to sanction the amendments to the Articles of Association of the Association.

5. Article 5: Membership

5.1 The members of the Association are the subscribers of these Articles (hereinafter - "The Founders") and such persons who will be admitted as members of the Association in accordance with the present Articles.

5.2 Admission of Members

5.2.1 Any person, whether male or female, is eligible to become a member of the Association provided:-

- a. He is over 21 years of age
- b. He is a Christian
- c. ~~He is a member in good standing of the spiritual parent organization "The Almond Branch Association".~~

5.2.2 Any person, except the Founders, desiring to become a member of the Association shall submit to the Board of Trustees an application in writing for admission as a member of the Association.

5.2.3 No person shall be admitted as a member of the Association except with the approval of a General Meeting of the Association, which has the exclusive discretion whether to accept or to reject the admission of a person as a member of the Association.

5.3 Membership Rights

A member of the Association has the right to participate and vote at all General Meetings.

5.4 Cessation of Membership

The membership in the Association terminates with the death of a member or his expulsion in accordance with Article 5.5 hereof or on his leaving the Association, provided he has given a written notice to the Board of Trustees at least 30 days in advance.

The leaving of a member does not relieve him of his responsibility to comply with the obligations imposed on his membership in the Association prior to his leaving.

5.5 Expulsion of a Member from the Association

5.5.1 The General Meeting has the right to expel a member provided a resolution to this effect was adopted by an extraordinary meeting at which 3/4 of its members voted for the adoption of such a resolution. This Article does not apply to a member who is one of the Founders.

5.5.2 The General Meeting may expel a member from the Association on one of the following grounds:-

- a. the member has not complied with the provisions of the Articles of Association or with the decisions of the General Meetings.
- b. the member acts in a manner contrary to the objects of the Association.
- c. the member has been convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude.

5.5.3 A member shall not be expelled save for reasons set out in the Articles of Association and after being given an opportunity to state his case.

6. Article 6: Finance and Budget

6.1 Income of the Association will be derived from the following sources:

- 6.6.1 Contributions, gifts and legacies from Israel and abroad.
- 6.6.2 Interest and dividends from endowment funds.
- 6.1.3 Allotments, grants, subsidies and salaries of public bodies.
- 6.1.4 Loans in accordance with explicit approval of the Board of Trustees.
- 6.1.5 Entrance fees, participation and hospitality fees with respect to projects, programs and activities of the Association.

6.2 Budget

- 6.2.1 The Association's annual budget must be approved by the Board of Trustees and General Meeting.
- 6.2.2 Expenses will be limited to the approved budgets, but the Board of Trustees is authorized to make changes within the total sum of each approved budget.

7. Article 7: Amendment of the Articles

Amendments of the Articles of Association may be made by a majority vote of all voting members at a General Meeting, providing that amendment shall not be inconsistent with manifested objectives of the Association.

8. Article 8: Dissolution of the Association

- 8.1 The Association may resolve at its General Meeting upon its winding up and the appointment of a liquidator or liquidators. The resolution shall require a two-thirds majority of those voting at the Meeting of which all the members of the Association have been given notice twenty-one days in advance, indicating that winding up resolution will be proposed thereat.
- 8.2 In case of dissolution, a three-quarter vote of both the General Meeting and all the Founders then being members, will determine the distribution of the Association's assets to another Association, provided that (i) such Association shall be organized and operated on a non-profit basis and exclusively for charitable purposes, and shall be completely independent of any government; (ii) such distribution shall be in furtherance of the purposes for which the Association was established, and (iii) that none of the property or assets of the Association shall be made available in any way to any member, trustee, director or officer of the Association or to any private individual.

9. Article 9: Miscellaneous

- 9.1 The Association will keep minutes of the meetings as well as financial ledgers and all members shall have the right to inspect them.
- 9.2 The General Meeting may decide that an Auditor shall be appointed instead of a Control Committee.
- 9.3 The Control Committee or the Auditor shall examine the financial and economic affairs and the account books of the Association and shall lay before the General Meeting their recommendations as to the approval of the financial report.
- 9.4 The Control Committee or the Auditor shall be elected by an ordinary General Meeting.
- 9.5 A member of the Control Committee or the Auditor shall not at one and the same time serve as a member of the Executive Committee or the Board of Trustees.

10. Article 10: The Association's Founders

The following are the Founders of the Association; IN WITNESS WHEREOF they have hereunder set their hands.

Name	Identification	Occupation	Signature
David Bivin	Israel I.D. #1338556	Ulpan Director	signature removed
Margaret Breunese	Passport No. S346157 (Holland)	Nurse	signature removed
George Giacumakis	Passport No. J406461 (U.S.)	INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN Educator, Director - American Institute of Holy Land Studies	signature removed
Timothy E. King	Passport No. 22952376 (U.S.)	Marketing/ Management/ Bible Student	signature removed
Johann Lückhoff	Passport No. PE1389903 (S. Africa)	Christian Minister	signature removed
Alexandria Rentz	Passport No. Z3847738 (U.S.)	Travel Consultant	signature removed
Ludwig Schneider	Passport No. 6191526 (Germany)	Journalist	signature removed
Jan Willem van der Hoeven	Israel I.D. 1643503	Christian Minister	signature removed
Widad van der Hoeven	Israel I.D. 1643504	Housewife	signature removed
Baronesse Van Heemstra Catherine E. Louise	Passport No. T682264 (Holland)	Nurse	signature removed
Merla Hope Watson	Passport No. BG390851 (Canada)	Musician	signature removed
Mervin James Watson	Passport No. BG389885 (Canada)	Musician/ Teacher	signature removed

Witness to the above signatures:

- ? Clothing should be considered according to the location or context of your participation. Working with religious people could require certain ways of dressing. It is important to note that as committed Christians you are representing a Godly people. Godly people in Israel, ie, those who observe the Jewish traditions, dress modestly. Except for some levels of orthodoxy, pants and casual dress for women are quite acceptable. However, modesty is always observed.

Representing the Embassy

- ? The Social Assistance Program will organize your places of interaction. It is because of the relationships and reputation that we have built up over many years that people will trust us enough to accept a group of Christians within their community. It is important that you honour our mandate as outlined under Aims of Commitment.

- ? Expenses.

The Embassy cannot provide accommodation or cost of your living expenses.

The cost of materials used for areas of service should be covered by you. Examples: paint, cleaning materials etc

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE:

Painting
Cleaning
Maintenance

Children
Gardening
Music and dance presentations

(Details of practical and cultural service will need to be discussed according to your plans.)

PRAY - "except the LORD build the house they labour in vain that build it." Psalm 127: 1

PREPARE - learn as much as you can about the people you will be serving.

PRACTISE - be the best you can be with the skills you are offering. It is important to have someone in charge of work groups who is knowledgeable about the practical work being offered.



INTERNATIONAL
CHRISTIAN EMBASSY
JERUSALEM

"If a brother is poorly clad and lacks nourishment but you say, 'Go away in peace,' what is the use? Faith without works is dead."

James 2:15-17

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM
RELIEF PROGRAMME

(ICEJ Relief Programme)

To help meet the growing social and welfare needs of the Israeli people, the ICEJ Relief Programme was established this year by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem Association. The Programme is administered by experienced Embassy staff members who work in close cooperation with social service agencies and institutions throughout Israel.

Those in Need

Potential recipients are researched by the ICEJ staff who visit facilities and meet with key individuals to become personally acquainted with their operations and specific needs. Types of recipients include:

- o general hospitals
- o children's hospitals
- o homes for the handicapped
- o homes for the aged
- o orphanages
- o psychiatric facilities
- o health clinics
- o veteran soldiers' programmes
- o families in distress
- o local Christians
- o neighborhood rehabilitation projects
- o community centres
- o day care/nursery facilities
- o other groups

Currently, two areas of exceptional need call for special attention and generous Christian support:

- o Community Centres - About 100 community centres scattered throughout Israel are designed to provide a wide range of services to local residents of all ages in health care, welfare, education and numerous social and cultural activities. These centres are vital models of social cooperation for all people as they meet both individual and group needs at the community level. Today, however, serious cutbacks are being made to much-needed programmes due to lack of funds and paraprofessional talent.
- o Day-Care Centres/Nursurries - There are acute shortages in facilities and trained attendants to care for infants and pre-school aged children. This is a growing necessity in Israeli society: Pressed to keep pace with the skyrocketing cost of living and faced with obligations such as periodic military service, Israeli parents are confronted with the added hardship of finding affordable day-care services while they are at work.

How the Programme Works

Contributions to the ICEJ Relief Programme are disbursed to areas of greatest need, as determined by the relief staff and approved by the Embassy's Board of Trustees. Disbursements of ICEJ contributions are made in two major areas (A,B) and special stewardship services are also provided (C):

- A) General Pool - General contributions are disbursed to various types of recipients; a percentage of incoming donations are held in an emergency reserve for sudden crises (such as recent rioting in the Arab village of Kfar Yasif).
- B) Special Projects - Contributions are disbursed to special categories requested by donors (community centres or day care facilities, for example); the Embassy researches needs and chooses the specific recipients.
- C) Stewardship Service - ICEJ will deliver any amount of money on behalf of donors to specifically named organizations or causes chosen by them. There is no charge for this service and great care is taken to ensure that monies are delivered and documented properly.

How to Give

All cheques or money orders should be made payable to the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. ICEJ, in turn, will issue receipts and letters of acknowledgement.

All contributions will be registered in separate accounts of the Embassy which are audited annually.