

The New Apostolic Reformation and Christian Zionism¹

Irvin G. Chetty
ichetty@ufh.ac.za

Abstract

One of the new religious movements is that of the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR). Within the NAR, the primacy of the apostle should be noted, who also functions in the role of a teacher, by ‘accurately’ decoding God’s divine blueprint for this season. The NAR of the South often align themselves in vintage ‘Berean’ style as people who ‘searched the scriptures daily’ (Acts 17: 11). Their actual practice reveals the important role of the charismatic founder / leader in determining the interpretation. This role is evident in the perpetuation of the Pentecostal / Charismatic support of Christian Zionism.

Christian Zionism grounds itself on the interpretation that God has an on-going special relationship with the Jewish people apart from the Church. Jews have a divine right to possess the land of Palestine. According to Christian Zionists, however, this divine right extends beyond the promise to Abraham and becomes a command to every Christian believer to unreservedly support the modern nation-state of Israel.

A pilot study was conducted in 2012 to explore, inter alia, NAR views on the Kairos Palestine document. This study attempts to build on that research. A qualitative methodology was chosen with the use of a focus group of key leaders of a NAR formation. While this study did not receive a

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decisive response from these NAR adherents, they had begun to study the Bible on this issue, in earnest. This, in itself, is a promising starting point. As one of its stated NAR mandates, is to influence the governmental/political mountain, perhaps the NAR of the South may yet make a more biblical grounded response to Christian Zionism.

Keywords: New Religious Movements, New Apostolic Reformation, Christian Zionism, Zionism, Revitalization Movements, Messianic Movements.

1.0 New Apostolic Reformation²

Almost fifteen years ago C. Peter Wagner, in his book, *Churchquake* (1999: 5) contended that ‘The greatest change in the way of doing church since the Protestant Reformation is taking place before our very eyes’. As also cited in Chetty (2013: 191), he was referring to what has come to be known as the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR). According to Wagner,

The New Apostolic Reformation is an extraordinary work of God at the close of the twentieth century, which is, to a significant extent, changing the shape of Protestant Christianity around the world...new forms and operational procedures began to emerge in areas such as local church government, interchurch relationship, financing, evangelism, missions, prayer, leadership selection and training, the role of supernatural power, worship and other important aspects of church life ... for the most part they are taking the form of loosely structured apostolic networks. In virtually every region of the world, these new apostolic churches constitute the fastest growing segment of Christianity (1999: 5).

²While the NAR has been introduced elsewhere (see *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, Volume 143, 2012: 23-47 and *Alternation* Special Edition 11, 2013: 190 – 206), the special focus of this paper is on NAR and Christian Zionism.

2.0 The New Apostolic Reformation in the North

There is a recurrent call for ‘for new wineskins’ (1991: 15-17). It is put forward that the new wine of the NAR cannot function within existing denominational structures and processes. Also for all the proponents of the NAR, both in the North and the South, a reading of Ephesians chapter 4 verse 11 compels them to call for the reinstatement of the fivefold ministry (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) within the church as the agency of the kingdom. As cited in Chetty (2013: 192), this call has been made before, but the *modus operandi* of these ‘governmental gifts’ is paradigmatically different.

2.1 The Focus of the North

A distinctive of the NAR is its perennial reference to the seven mountain mandate. Wagner agrees that ‘the society to be transformed is not just one big conglomerate, but a unified whole that is made up of several vital pieces, each one of which must take its own path toward transformation. These segments of society should be seen as apostolic spheres’ (2006: 112).

These seven mountains are also referred to as the seven apostolic spheres or the seven gates of society. Wagner’s list of spheres embraces the home; church; schools; government and politics; media; arts, entertainment, and sports; commerce, science, and technology (2006: 113). While Lance Wallnau promoted the idea of ‘seven mountains’ through his DVDs, it was Johnny Enlow who authored the book called *The Seven Mountain Prophecy* (2008).

3.0 The New Apostolic Reformation in the South

Within South African Pentecostal and Charismatic spheres, a new formation of churches, aligning themselves to the New Apostolic Reformation, has appeared. They include, *inter alia*, as cited in Chetty (2013: 194), the following groupings: Judah Kingdom Alliance (JKA), New Covenant Ministries International (NCMI), Grace International (GI), Congress World Breakthrough Network (C-WBN), and International Strategic Alliance of Apostolic Churches (ISAAC). The latter two (C-WBN and ISAAC) are respectively local expressions of a Caribbean and Malaysian initiative.

4.0 Theories to Explain the Emergence of the New Apostolic Reformation

Revitalisation theories have proved to be useful in understanding new religious movements. This could also be beneficial when applied to the NAR, but special focus has to be given to the Messianic approach. As cited in Chetty (2013: 203), Messianic movements ‘crystallize around a single figure who is regarded as a new messiah’ (Jules-Rosette 1987: 84). Those figures around whom these groups centre are leading personalities who claim to be a new Christ, or who claim to be his or her direct messenger and last prophet. The founders of the NAR are individuals who have a charismatic personality that enables them to create new religious answers or, at least, to restore the earlier discarded ones. In the case of the NAR of the South, claims emerge from being an apostle or a prophet, a type of ‘set man’ from God who accurately discerns this present *kairos* (season). This charismatic emissary, upon receipt of ‘microns of grace’ disseminates the divine strategy to its adherents. This is a very interesting development within NAR circles that has been referred to in Chetty (2013: 203), which ushers in the perennial risk of this movement leaning towards cultic tendencies.

5.0 Southern Reflections

A similar growing concern, like their NAR Northern counterparts, of the lack of efficacy of the church, especially in the post-*Apartheid* South Africa has been evident in the South. The Northern influences on the South are inevitable given the fact of our global village. Apart from easy access to information, the existence of satellite Christian television platforms allow for viewing in ‘real time’ rendering the influence simultaneous. In stark contrast, according to Chetty *some*,

Proponents of the NAR do not feel obligated to perpetuate ecclesiastical colonialism within their communities. Their postmodern context has sparked a re-examination of the scriptures through ‘postcolonial and post-denominational eyes,’ with very little being sacrosanct (2013: 204.)

A necessary qualification to the numbers of those adopting this critical posture is that there is, at this stage, only an emerging tendency scattered in

pockets throughout NAR formations.

Some proponents of the NAR of the South have ventured into a study of the Palestinian crisis and have come up with postures that have resulted in them being labeled as anti-Semitic. Given their ‘theological diet’ Pentecostal / Charismatic Christians are traditionally expected to support the Christian Zionist cause. Zionism may be a little easier to understand but what is this hybrid Christian Zionism?

6.0 Christian Zionism

Christian Zionism according to Brown and Penner (2008: 11) is a belief that the return of the to the Holy Land, and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, is in accordance with biblical prophecy. The term Christian Zionism was popularized in the mid-twentieth century, following the coining of the term ‘Zionism’ in 1890. Prior to that time, the common term was Restorationism.

Some Christian Zionists contend that the ‘ingathering’ of Jews in Israel is a precondition for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. This belief is linked with dispensationalism. Christians should actively support a Jewish return to the land of Israel and Jews should be encouraged to become Christians. This is a means to fulfilling biblical prophecy. Many Christian Zionists aver that the people of Israel stay as the chosen people of God, along with the ‘engrafted’ Gentile Christians (Brown & Penner 2008: 15).

Promotion of the restoration of the Jews first arose after the Protestant reformation, especially in the English-speaking world among the Puritans. It was common practice among the Puritans to expect and regularly pray for a Jewish return to their homeland (Murray 1971: 326). As the end of the Ottoman Empire seemed to be imminent, the activism of restorationism increased. At the same time, the visit of John Nelson Darby, the founder of dispensationalism, to the United States, catalysed a dispensationalist movement and an evangelical revival.

The dispensationalist theology of John Nelson Darby is often viewed as the greatest impetus for American Christian Zionism. He separated the expectations of the Jews, the church and Gentiles and made his greatest impact through the Scofield Bible. Many prominent Christian Zionists and Christian Zionist organizations such as the International Christian Embassy

Jerusalem do not subscribe to dispensationalism (Murray1971: 328).

Evangelist Cyrus Scofield made dispensationalist Christian Zionism popular in the United States. He upheld the doctrine that Jesus could not return to reign on earth until certain events occurred. Before these last days events, Scofield taught that the Christian church was primarily for the salvation of the Gentiles. According to God's plan the Jewish people are under a different dispensation of God's grace, until the last days, when the Christian church will be removed from the earth by a miracle called the Rapture (Brown & Penner2008: 21).

Scofield foretold the return of the Jews to the Holy Land and particularly to Jerusalem. Scofield further adduced f that Islamic holy places would be destroyed. The Temple in Jerusalem would be rebuilt, signalling the end of the Church Age when the Antichrist would arise. All who seek to keep the covenant with God will acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah in defiance of the Antichrist (Murray1971: 330).

According to Hubers (2004: 3-4) the emergence of the Christian Zionism has been shaped by, *inter alia*, three major impulses. The first commences in Great Britain with the union of premillennial eschatology, a way of interpreting the Bible which advances a thousand year, millennial, reign of Christ on earth preceding the final day of Judgment, with 19th/early 20th century British imperialism. Then, the location shifts to America where dispensationalist teaching becomes widely spread and embraced. This was accomplished primarily through conferences on prophecy; the ministry of Moody Bible Institute and other institutions moulded on it. The extensive distribution of the Scofield Reference Bible, which would become the study Bible of choice among a whole generation of conservative American Christians, gave an added impetus to this drive. The third motif picks up the earlier political orientation of Christian Zionism, shifting to America as its primary base of operation. This corresponds to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the expansion of its borders after the1967 War, the two historical touch points for the Christian Zionism.

All the players in these impulses were not automatically in full agreement on all points. However, dispensational premillennialism delivers the initial theological grounding. Not all who consider themselves Christian Zionists consent or even know the common dispensationalist doctrines. Gary Burge notes that today's Christian Zionists '... have shed much of Dispensationalism's theological program ... even though, they have largely

... kept its eschatology' (2003:1). Burge outlines those committed to Christian Zionism as sharing the same five core beliefs of the covenant, the church, blessing modern Israel, prophesy and modern Israel and eschatology (2003: 3).

God's covenant with Israel is eternal and unconditional. Therefore, the promises of land given to Abraham will never be overturned. This means that the church has not replaced Israel and that Israel's privileges have never been revoked despite unfaithfulness. God's plan has always been for the redemption of Israel. Yet when Israel failed to follow Jesus, the church was born as an after thought or 'parenthesis'. Thus at the rapture the church will be removed, and Israel will once again become God's primary agent in the world. We now live in 'the times of the Gentiles' which will conclude soon. This means that there are two covenants now at work, that given through Moses and the covenant of Christ. But the new covenant in no way makes the older covenant obsolete.

We must take Genesis 12:3 literally and apply it to modern Israel: 'I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you'. Therefore, Christians have a spiritual obligation to bless Israel and 'pray for the peace of Jerusalem'. To fail to bless Israel, to fail to support Israel's political survival today, will incur divine judgment.

The prophetic books of the Bible are describing events of today and do not principally refer to events in biblical times. Therefore, when we look at, say, Daniel 7, if we possess the right interpretative skills, we can see how modern history is unfolding. This quest for prophesy has spawned countless books interpreting Middle East history through the Bible.

The modern state of Israel is a catalyst for the prophetic countdown. If these are the last days, then we should expect an unravelling of civilization, the rise of evil, the loss of international peace and equilibrium, a coming antichrist, and tests of faithfulness to Israel. Above all, political alignments today will determine our position on the fateful day of Armageddon. Since the crisis of 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, it has been easy to persuade the public that history is unravelling precisely as dispensationalism predicted.

Sizer (2004: 20) contends that Christian Zionism grounds itself in a theology of the land. God has an on-going special relationship with the Jewish people apart from the Church. Jews have a divine right to possess the land of Palestine. So God's promise to Abraham remains an eternal covenant.

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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... (Genesis 15:18 KJV)

That territory includes something like modern-day Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, half of Iraq, half of Egypt, parts of Turkey and Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the occupied Palestinian territories. This Old Testament reference, if taken literally, must mean all that land belongs only to Israel. Then the population of Israel would be 90 per cent Arab, and Israel would be an Arab country (Chetty 2012: 42).

And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God (Genesis 17:8, KJV)

This particular Old Testament reference names the various peoples to whom the land belonged. Genesis 15:4-5 and 17:4 promise Abraham that his descendants will be a multitude of nations, as numerous as the stars of the heavens. The land belongs to many nations-Arabs as well as Israelis. Both Israel and Palestine have the human right to a state of their own, without occupation, and without violent attacks (Chetty 2012: 42).

According to Christian Zionists, however, this divine right extends beyond the promise to Abraham and becomes a command to every Christian to unreservedly support the modern nation-state of Israel. In fact, because the Christian Zionist makes no distinction between nation-state and Jew, the following promise of God to Abraham is a litmus test for Christian belief:

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curses thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (Gen 12:13, KJV).

A key feature for Christian Zionists, therefore, is one's position on the secular nation-state of Israel. To hold Israel answerable to any international law other than that 'squeezed out' of the Bible, in the form of evidence for a 'land claim' in the form of dispensationalism.

Out of this 'subculture' has emerged evangelist John Hagee, a pastor of the Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas, with 20,000 members.

Hagee is the author of a number of best-selling books and reaches millions weekly through Christian Television. G. Richard Fisher views Hagee as a false Christian teacher with a ‘defective view of a basic and essential issue regarding salvation and the Gospel’. He calls that view the ‘Two Covenant’ or ‘Dual Covenant’ theory, whereby Jews and Christians are travelling parallel and distinct paths to salvation (Fisher 1999:1).

Hagee has launched the Christians United for Israel (CUFI). His annual CUFI Washington Summits have attracted high profile figures as former Sen. Rick Santorum, former Speaker Newt Gingrich, Sen. Sam Brownback, former GOP chair Ken Mehlman, former Rep. Tom Delay and Sen. Joseph Lieberman, as well as a video greeting from President George W. Bush (Posner 2008: 107). John Hagee believes God’s plan for Israel includes a nuclear war with Iran and pushing the Palestinian people into Saudi Arabia and Egypt. This is a prelude to the Battle of Armageddon and the physical return of Jesus to clean up the mess. Hagee predicts Israel having no choice but to strike Iran’s nuclear facilities, with or without America as an ally. This will entice Russia, who need the Persian Gulf oil, to launch an army of Arab nations against Israel. Hagee predicts God wiping out all, but one-sixth of the Russian-led army, as the world watches ‘with shock and awe’ (Posner 2008:106).

Micah 6:8 could provide Hagee with a challenge to his selective perspective, as to what the Lord requires of His people - ‘to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with their God’. His unbridled support for Israel against injustice and human rights violations juxtapose any humble walk. In gross violation of both international law and the mandate of Jesus that ‘As much as you did not do it (feed, clothe or give drink) to the least of these my brothers, you did not do it unto me’ (Mat. 25:45), Hagee has raised over millions of USA dollars to help Soviet Jews resettle in Israel and Palestine in what he believes to be a fulfilment of Biblical prophecy (Fisher 1999: 3). These illegal settlements, in Palestinian Territory, warrant the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) to be stationed there to protect the settlers.

As the Christian Zionist campaign gains impetus, Hagee is seen to repudiate basic tenets of the Christian faith. Because he believes that Jews are under a separate and distinct covenant with God, Jesus’ words, ‘No man comes to the Father but through me’ (John 14:6) apply to everyone but Jews. To even the cynical press, this is a strange belief. The *Houston Chronicle* had this to say:

John Hagee, the fundamentalist pastor from San Antonio and friend of Israel, is truly a strange fish The man has a mission. He is out to attack anti-Semitism. He also believes that Jews can come to God without going through Jesus Christ (Fisher 1991:4).

Christianity's hope is in a Messiah whom Judaism refutes as its promised Messiah. From a Christian standpoint, Hagee is disloyal to the New Testament in that his is a subtle form of anti-Semitism by putting a gag on evangelism and robbing the Jews of the Good News (Fisher 1999: 10-11). Humankind stands before God not as Jews and Gentiles but as sinners who are in need of grace. Hagee offers the Jews a gospel of salvation by race rather than grace (Chetty 2012: 43).

7.0 NAR and Christian Zionism

This expectation that Pentecostal / Charismatic Christians are expected to support the Christian Zionist cause, in particular, has prompted the researcher to solicit views on the Christian Zionism from NAR adherents. The profile of the participants of the focus group was, very interestingly, all postgraduates with one participant being a doctoral student in economics. Initially, most of the participants lent their support for Israel with no concern for the plight of the Palestinians. It was ascertained that this position was not informed from any insight into the current situation in Israel. After a debriefing of the situation, inclusive of focusing on the descendants of Abraham through the Ishmaelite strand, the range of responses widened. The majority of the participants were surprised at the severity of the hardships of Christians in Palestine. Some of them who knew of others who had recently travelled to the Holy Land spoke candidly about the conditions for Palestinians being harsher than that of *Apartheid*. Upon hearing about the *Apartheid Wall*, most of the participants flagged its 'absurdity'. The majority who were reared within the Pentecostal / Charismatic fold and had been fed with a steady diet of Christian Zionism admitted the challenges in engaging in any rigorous study of the land claim issue of the Holy Land. Their earlier fundamentalist interpretation of scripture had led to a naïve support of the Jewish cause. Through this focus group, 'the scales had gradually begun to drop from their eyes' according to the majority of the focus group members.

The stark similarities of Israeli *Apartheid* to the South African *Apartheid* were explicitly noted. The group was unanimous that this was an unjust situation that warrants an impartial response. Would these southern proponents of the NAR be prepared to take a public stand on this issue? Also, being aligned with Palestine, which was viewed as an ‘Islamic’ cause, and the possibility of accusations of supporting Islamic fundamentalism, made many participants uneasy. This hesitancy was reminiscent of Pentecostals / Charismatics during the *Apartheid* era who knew that the anti-*Apartheid* struggle was a just cause but fell short of actively supporting it in any overt manner.

8.0 The Use of Scripture in Christian Zionism: A Critical Examination

A major work on Christian Zionism from a critical perspective is Stephen Sizer’s *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* (2004). The following two endorsements to his book are noteworthy.

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

This is a very fine and important book. All Christians who believe that Jesus favoured peace-makers, should read it and realise what terrible harm is being done in the name of Christianity. And all who are concerned about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict should read it to understand how Christian Zionism disables the US as fair minded mediator. European foreign policy thinkers should read it because this distortion of US political space, puts a greater responsibility on European governments to stand up for justice and international law.

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Clare Short, former British Secretary of State for International Development.

Sizer suggests the most basic of frames: ‘At its simplest, Christian Zionism is a political form of philo-Semitism, and can be defined as ‘Christian support for Zionism’ (2004: 19). If flesh is hung on this frame, in practice this invariably means ‘Christian Zionists are therefore also defenders of, and apologists for, the state of Israel. This support consistently involves opposing those deemed to be critical of, or hostile towards Israel, but also leads to the justification of Israel’s occupation and settlement of the West Bank, Golan and Gaza on biblical grounds’ (2004: 20-21).

Seven basic theological tenets are accepted in varying degrees by evangelical Christian Zionists. The foundation upon which the other tenets are based is a literalist hermeneutic and a consistently futurist reading of prophecy. Quite apart from the political outcome of this way of reading the Bible, there are serious implications for the church and the gospel. At heart of the problem, Sizer claims, there is a devaluing of the significance of the Lord Jesus Christ and his atoning work for Israel and the nations.

The third chapter of Sizer’s book shows how the belief that the Jews remain God’s chosen people (apart from Christ and his church) leads Christian Zionists to endorse and justify many of the current policies of the Israeli government, including the annexation and settlement of Palestinian-owned land. The return of Jews to Israel is actively encouraged and facilitated. Western governments are pressured to relocate their embassies to Jerusalem and to recognize this as the eternal and exclusive capital of the Jews. Those who believe that Scripture predicts the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and a reinstatement of the priesthood and sacrificial system offer varying degrees of support to Jewish Temple Mount organizations committed to achieving this end. Moreover, as Stephen concludes, since Christian Zionists are convinced there will be an apocalyptic war between good and evil in the near future, there is no prospect for lasting peace between Jews and Arabs. Indeed, 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 (2004: 252).

Stephen Sizer shows that the New Testament must be our guide in understanding how the Old Testament has been fulfilled for us in Christ and in judging what remains to be worked out in history. Every Christian needs to

be clear about the way the Bible fits together, observing the way the inspired writers of the New Testament reveal this. But especially those who presume to tell us how the future will unfold need to be sure that they are not misusing the Bible. Christian Zionists who read this book will recognize that it is written by someone who believes in the inspiration and authority of Scripture as they do, and will consider carefully the challenge Sizer brings to their particular line of interpretation.

Another issue that does not make sense is Christian Zionists supporting Israeli hostilities toward the Palestinians. Yes, God blesses those who bless Israel. But not everything Israel currently does blesses God. Israel as a nation is hardly seeking the blessing of the Palestinians. According to God's first promise to Abraham, all peoples will be blessed through Isaac's seed, not cursed. Moreover, Arabs are descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom God also blesses. Furthermore, many Palestinians are Christians, a point often lost on many Christian Zionists (Don Belt, 'The Forgotten Faithful: Arab Christians', in *National Geographic*, vol. 215, no. 6, June 2009). Those who believe in Jesus are sons and daughters of God, irrespective of their people group. In Galatians 3:28, we are told that in Christ there is no division between Jews and Gentiles as a result of Christ's atoning work. As a result, all who believe in Jesus are children of the free woman of whom Paul speaks (Galatians 4:21-31), not just the descendants of Isaac, who believe. As much as we should be concerned for all people and all Arabs, for all are blessed by God, our concern should be heightened for those who are fellow brothers and sisters in Jesus.

Jesus often challenged his own Jewish people. Their national identity or ancestral connection to Abraham is not sufficient (John the Baptist makes a similar point in Matthew 3:9). He exhorts them to have the faith of Abraham (John 8:31-58). The Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28) and Centurion (Matthew 8:5-13) are sterling examples of those who have the faith of Abraham. Those of Abraham's faith are Abraham's spiritual children, according to Paul (Galatians 3:7). We must also account for Jesus' exhortation to the Jewish religious teacher who sought to test Jesus about what is required to inherit eternal life. Jesus tells him to love his neighbor as himself and shares with him the parable of a lowly Samaritan who exemplifies righteousness-caring for a man (likely a Jewish man) who was beaten and robbed and left for dead (Luke 10:25-37).

The point of referencing these biblical accounts is to point out that

God loves all people and that God is no respecter of persons. While Israel is the people of promise, God blesses all people and calls everyone to account to believe like Abraham in the promised Messiah and to live like the unnamed Samaritan as people of the promise. To believe like Abraham entails living like the Samaritan. As Jesus the Messiah makes clear, my neighbor is not the person likeme or the person I like, but the person in need—even my enemy. I am responsible to care for him or her. Thus, as Christians, we are to promote concern for the well-being of all peoples and pray that the Jews and Palestinians will care deeply for one another.

Scripture specifies that Israel is to care for the foreigners in the land, granting them an inheritance and treating them as native-born (Ezekiel 47:21-22). How much more noteworthy is this text when the people in question - the Palestinians - have lived on the land for generations prior to the Jewish people's return? Mark Bailey (2002: 4-5) maintains that 'when Israel is restored to the land, they are to treat the aliens and strangers as if they were Israelites'. In this light, he challenges the modern state of Israel, as well as the Palestinian authority: 'Do you know what is lacking in Israel? Just a minor, little plank in God's program: treating others as you would like to be treated The bottom-line principle is so powerful, so biblical: Israel needs to treat others as they would like to be treated. The Palestinian authority needs to treat Israel as they would like to be treated. This applies to all peoples'.

While Israel has a fundamental right to live in peace and security in the land, it must not take those rights from others, such as the confiscation of property and increase of settlements in violation of international law. Of course, the Jews are not the only ones to blame. The Palestinians have themselves also been guilty of a multitude of injustices against the Jewish people and Israel. No party is innocent. However, a very large segment of Evangelicalism tends to be one-sided in its criticism of the Palestinians and looks past the injustices committed against the Palestinians by Israel.

Many Pentecostals / Charismatics Christians have a strange view of what it means to bless and not curse Israel. To do what Egypt did to Jacob's descendants in enslaving them is 'cursing' Israel. Cursing in the biblical sense is not refusing to be in favor of all that Israel does. In this sense, the prophets could have been accused of cursing Israel. Related to this point, many Christians fail to place 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem' in its biblical context (Psalm 122). Praying for the peace of Jerusalem is never separated

from biblical justice (See Psalm 122:5), including concern for those who reside in Israel's midst (Ezekiel 47:21-22). The best way, that we can bless Israel, is to pray and call for Israel and the Palestinians to live together peacefully as equals in the land. In that way, whether Christian Zionist or not, all of us who claim to be Christians can be biblical.

9.0 Concluding Remarks

While this analysis of Christian Zionism did not receive a decisive response from these NAR Southerners, they had begun the journey to study the biblical texts on this issue. This, in itself, is a promising starting point and also grounds for future optimism. The Seven Mountain Mandate has potential, as one of its stated NAR mandates, is to influence the governmental/ political mountain. Perhaps the NAR of the South may yet make a significant response to the issue of Christian Zionism.

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Irvin Chetty
University of Fort Hare
ichetty@ufh.ac.za