

injustice through more schooling, health care, and gender equality. The solution of the population problem calls for more responsibility and freedom—not less” (p.13).

Sen’s Convergence with Catholic Social Thinking

From this review, which touches on the principal development and orientation of his thought, it emerges that there are striking convergences between his thought and that of Catholic social teaching, not only in the details mentioned in the last group of his writings, but also with the humanism of his general orientation, which goes into details far outside the range of formal Catholic teachings, yet seems to correspond with them in spirit. The explanation does not lie in his quoting works which belong to the cluster of disciplines which he has brought together, because his full intellectual formation included quite other academic settings. It comes from the remarkable humanistic cast of his mind, in relation to which he is consistent, and which he expresses in a limpid English: a sure sign of exceptional mastery of the material in his wide overlapping domains.

The ‘Holy Land’, Zionism, and the Challenge to the Church

Michael Prior C.M.

The ‘Holy Land’ is of particular interest to Christians everywhere, an interest intensified whenever they read their Bibles. There God intervened in human history through his dealings with the Israelites, and in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus was crucified and raised in, and ascended from Jerusalem, and it was there also that the Holy Spirit descended on the Church.

There has been, of course, an unbroken Christian community in the land from the beginning, and it was those residing there who were the architects of a Christian ‘Holy Land’.¹ But Christians outside also have their interests. Well before Constantine, Palestine was a place of pilgrimage. In the middle of the second century, Melito of Sardis went

to establish accurately the books of the Old Testament', and to examine the relevant places. Others went 'for the sake of the holy places', and 'to trace the footsteps of Jesus', and pray. Some stayed, living piously near the sites.² Nevertheless, however important, the Holy Land never attracted more than a handful of (affluent) pilgrims from abroad, and the practice of pilgrimage was virtually moribund by the end of the eighteenth century. As we shall see, Western interests from then went beyond the religious.

Conflict in the Holy Land

The ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict brings an altogether different dimension to the question. In addition to being one of the most explosive issues in international affairs it constitutes for the Church one of the most significant moral problems of our age. It raises all sorts of questions, concerning not only issues of biblical interpretation, but of the very authority of some biblical traditions. Relationships between religious affiliation and 'nationalism', as well as between the relevant religions also surface. The level of horror in recent months has reached a height unsurpassed since the events of 1948, the date marking the establishment of the State of Israel and the concomitant Palestinian *Nakba* (Catastrophe). The attacks of 11 September 2001 have brought an additional dimension to the explosive atmosphere which erupted with the second *intifada* (September 2000).

The USA's world-wide 'War on Terrorism' and appetite for 'Regime Change' in Iraq confirms that we are living in fearful times. While acknowledging the USA's underlying oil interests one cannot ignore the extent to which the 'Christian Right' influences the administration's world-view. The Christian Right's distinctive interpretation of the Bible accords cosmic significance to 'the return of the Jews', providing Israel with a critical role in ushering in the Second Coming of Christ, and the End of Days. Moreover, in Israel itself, establishing the state and expelling the indigenous population derives its alleged legitimacy primarily from the Bible, even for secular nationalists uninterested in it as the repository of a theological claim to Palestine. Religion and biblical interpretation, then, are central to the conflict, whose origins lay in the plight of Jews in Europe towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the proposal to address it through establishing a state for Jews in a non-European country inhabited for centuries by another people.

The advent of Political Zionism in 1896 stimulated a renewed Christian interest in Palestine, particularly on the part of the indigenous Christians who feared for their future. As it transpired, such fears were not unfounded. In establishing the State for Jews in 1948 some 80 per

cent of the Arab population were driven out, and some 418 of their villages were destroyed to ensure they would not return. To add to the moral problematic, we now know from the Zionist archives themselves that the intention to expel the indigenous Arabs was a core element of the Zionist enterprise from the beginning. It was foreseen as necessary, was systematically planned for, and was executed at the first opportunity, in 1948. We read of the establishment and comportsment of the two 'Population Transfer Committees' (1937 through 1944) and the third Population Transfer Committee established by the Israeli cabinet in August 1948, etc.³

The Church Within

In any discussion of Christian estimates of the Holy Land the perspective of the indigenous Christians, those remaining and those either expelled or 'in exile' since 1948 and 1967, must be accorded due significance. Before the current *intifada* the Christian community numbered about 165,000 (114,000 in Israel, and 50,352, in the Occupied Territories), constituting some 41.3 per cent of the Palestinian Christians world-wide (400,000). Living as unequal citizens in the State of Israel since 1948, or as victims of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza since 1967, the community has experienced high levels of emigration, which surveys demonstrate to be one of the consequences of the ethnocratic nature of Israel.⁴ Although small, the 'Church of Jerusalem' lays claim to being the 'Mother Church'. Within that Church, tradition has established a hierarchy, with the three patriarchal Churches (Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox and Latin Catholic) enjoying special authority, but there is also a mosaic of other Churches (Greek-Catholic, Coptic, Syriac Orthodox, Syriac Catholic, Ethiopian, Anglican, Lutheran, Maronite, Quaker, *et al.*). While pilgrims and Christians from outside might be content with free access to the Holy Sites, the Arab Christians have human rights and legitimate political aspirations which also must be respected.

The Churches in the Holy Land, though distinctive in their traditions, liturgies and organisation, manifest virtual unanimity with respect to the developing situation in Palestine. The first *intifada* which erupted in 1987 stimulated a new sense of unity, marked by ongoing ecumenical co-operation, and issuing in a number of significant joint statements relating to various developments in the changing political circumstances, not least in criticism of the excesses of the Israeli occupation.⁵ While such views are mirrored in the mainstream Churches outside, Evangelical Christian Zionists have radically different ones which are important if only because of their influence on the foreign policy of the USA.

Evangelical Christian Zionism

Whereas none of the mainstream Churches showed any enthusiasm for Zionism, 'Christian Zionists' were enthusiastic in viewing Political Zionism as the instrument of God promoting the ingathering of Jews. Indeed, enthusiasm among such Christians for a Jewish 'return' to Palestine preceded that of the founder of Political Zionism, Theodor Herzl (1860-1904). Now that the State of Israel is established Christian Zionists see it as having even redemptive significance.

'Christian Zionists' number some sixty million world-wide, but their influence is greatest in the USA, especially since the 1970s. When he came to power in 1977, Prime Minister Menachem Begin, realising that the mainstream USA Churches were growing more sympathetic to the Palestinians and were effectively becoming a 'lost cause', directed Israeli lobbyists in the USA to work on the evangelical constituency. His Likud Party began to use religious language, and determined efforts were made to forge bonds between evangelical Christians and pro-Israel lobbies. Such a coalition had enough advantage for each party to co-operate on the single issue of Israel. Recognising that courting the evangelical right was as important as lobbying the White House, Begin's example has been followed by every Prime Minister since.

The effects on USA domestic politics have been significant. The evangelical Christian constituency was a major factor in the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976. However, his call for a 'Palestinian homeland' in March 1977 precipitated his downfall, and the Evangelical Right's switch to Ronald Reagan in 1980 was a major factor in Carter's defeat. The combined efforts of the Israeli lobbies and the Christian Right have continued since, and reached their climax so far in the present incumbent in the White House, whose theological world-view, and that of much of his administration, is very close to the that of the 'Christian Right'.

The evangelicals' emphasis on a literalist fulfilment of biblical prophecy and on its millenarianist eschatology—holding that the Second Coming of Christ will be followed by a thousand-year reign of blessedness after the cataclysmic Battle of Armageddon—leads its proponents to embrace a polity that would otherwise be considered morally repulsive. In translating their theology into modern politics Christian Zionists claim that biblical prophecy finds its fulfilment in Israel, thereby according the state an integral part in the events of the End Time. In their distinctive hermeneutic, when the Bible refers to the past, it does so virtually exclusively as history, ignoring such other literary forms as legend, saga, or myth. At the other end of the time-scale, when they refer to a future, the prophetic oracles are interpreted as

finding their fulfilment in a selection of (modern) political developments. Thus, both exclusively 'Jewish' claims to Palestine, and the claims linking modern Israel with God's plans for the End Time are 'validated' by no less an authority than the Bible.

Such views can be traced to excesses developing from the Reformation's new interest in the Old Testament. Its stress on Yahweh's covenant with the Chosen People promoted both the essential separateness of Jews, and their biblically-based link with the Promised Land. Moreover, in such circles the Second Coming of Christ had associated with it the eventual return of Jews. Through these a matrix of belief patterns favourable to subsequent Political Zionism infused Western Protestant thought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and have continued to find expression in millenarian circles ever since. The category of biblical hermeneutics that views prophetic texts as having a literal fulfilment in events as they unfold, can, in its modern form, be traced back to two Englishmen, Rev. Thomas Brightman and Sir Henry Finch, M.P., with Finch urging the British people and Parliament to support Jewish settlement in Palestine in order to fulfil Biblical prophecy.⁶

But it was John Nelson Darby (1800-82) who, more than anyone else, laid the foundations for the development of Evangelical Christian Zionism, by stressing the correspondence between biblical prophecy and historical developments. A former minister of the Church of Ireland, Darby renounced the visible Church, and organised a group of 'Brethren' ('Plymouth Brethren'), whose distinctive theology was devised for the final days of history.⁷ Darby divided the totality of history into seven epochs ('Dispensations'), beginning with Creation, and ending with the millennial Kingdom of Jesus, following the Battle of Armageddon, views he claims to have derived from Scripture and the proddings of the Holy Spirit.⁸

Israel, for Darby, would replace the Church, which was a mere parenthesis to God's continuing covenant with Israel. Those portions of biblical prophecy and apocalyptic which had not been fulfilled already would be completed in the future. Invoking the apocalyptic language of Col. 3.4 and 1 Thess. 4.15 he postulated a two-stage Second Coming of Christ. The first 'invisible appearing' would involve the 'rapture of the saints': the faithful remnant of the Church, especially his own followers, would go up to meet Christ in the air, before his appearance on earth.⁹ The raptured saints would return to earth with the Lord after seven years, as prescribed in 1 Thessalonians.¹⁰ The seven-year long rapture in the air would be marked on earth by the 'Great Tribulation' of natural disasters, wars and civil unrest. After the rapture, a faithful Jewish remnant would

observe the Law, and rule on earth for a millennium.¹¹

With his authority waning in Britain, Darby concentrated on North America, where he influenced such evangelical leaders as Dwight L. Moody, William E. Blackstone and C.I. Schofield and the emerging Bible and Prophecy Conference movement which set the tone for the evangelical and fundamentalist movements in North America between 1875 and 1920.¹² Typically, Dispensationalism today predicates that the present age, in which the establishment of the State of Israel fulfils biblical prophecy, is the penultimate one, after which Christ will come in glory soon to bring matters to a cataclysmic triumph over the forces of evil at Armageddon.

When Political Zionism appeared in 1896, the prophetic and apocalyptic biblical oracles, interpreted along millenarianist lines, were available to provide theological legitimisation for those of such inclination, despite the fact that Political Zionism was a conscious repudiation of Judaism. The reawakened interest in a 'literalist', as opposed to a more sophisticated literary reading of the Scriptures, contributed to the renewal of interest in a collective 'national' identity of the Jewish 'people', who were desirous of a return to the homeland, producing, virtually for the first time in Western Christianity, a certain Judaeophilia.

The British clergyman, William Hechler, played a significant role in assisting Herzl's plans.¹³ Already in 1882 Hechler in his *Die bevorstehende Rückkehr der Juden nach Palästina* had argued for the restoration of Jews to their ancestral land, in fulfilment of the Hebrew prophets. Soon after the publication of *Der Judenstaat* (1896) he presented himself in Herzl's study in Vienna, promising help. Relying on his good standing with the Grand Duke of Baden—he had been a tutor to his children—Hechler arranged Herzl's meeting with him, and later in Jerusalem with the Grand Duke's uncle, Kaiser Wilhelm II. As he explained in a letter to the Grand Duke (26 March 1896), in which he also promised to send three copies of Herzl's pamphlet, Hechler saw a clear correspondence between *Der Judenstaat* and the Hebrew prophetic tradition of Jewish restoration. Indeed, in a letter to a colleague in Jerusalem in 1898, Hechler identified the Zionist Movement with entering Israel's Messianic age, and all Zionist activity (e.g., clearing and irrigating the land) with 'messianic work'.¹⁴ And all of this, despite the fact that the majority of Jews had no interest in Herzl's Political Zionism, and that the religious establishment thoroughly repudiated his programme as contrary to Holy Scripture and to Judaism.¹⁵

Darby's legacy, mediated by key supporters, ensured that there would be strong support for the establishment of a Jewish

commonwealth among American evangelicals ever since. For William E. Blackstone, as for Hechler, Zionism was 'the fulfilment of prophecy'. He was impressed by the Jewish agricultural settlements in Palestine in 1889, which he saw as 'signs of the times', indicating that the End Time would come very soon.¹⁶ In 1891, Blackstone organised a national campaign urging President Harrison to support the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, with the morally-superior USA playing the role of a modern Cyrus speeding the return of the Jews. Hearing that Theodor Herzl was considering Uganda or Argentina for his state, Blackstone sent him a Bible, marking every passage which referred to Palestine, with instructions that it alone was to be the site of the Jewish state. In 1916 Blackstone presented a second petition to the President, this time co-ordinating with American Zionist leaders. The Zionist leaders, of course, passed over the characteristic evangelical disparagement of the Jewish Law as an agent of salvation, and its real hopes for the Jews (their conversion to Christianity), as the price for his support for the Zionist venture.

When it was established in 1948 the evangelical world viewed the state of Israel as the first clear sign of the fulfilment of biblical prophecy and the final countdown to Armageddon. Later, Israel's 'amazing', even 'miraculous' victory over Arab armies in June 1967 confirmed the prophetic scenario. Hal Lindsey's *The Late, Great Planet Earth* (1970) reflects a mixture of biblical literalism and political analysis, which is typical, with biblical predictions fulfilled in modern events almost to the letter:

- the establishment of Israel (Ezek 30-40);
- the 'fig tree' put forth its first leaves on 14 May 1948 (Matt 24.32);
- Jews' control of all Jerusalem (Zech 12-14);
- the alignment of Arab and Black African states against Israel (Ezek 30.4-5);
- the conversion of Africa to Communism (Dan 11.35-45);
- the Soviet threat in the north (Ezek 38-39), and the Chinese one in the east (Rev 9);
- the rise of the Common Market as the new Roman Empire (Dan 7.17), etc.

The October War of 1973 gave further fuel to Armageddon theology. Jerry Falwell's 'Friendship Tour to Israel' in 1983 included meetings with Israeli government and military officials, a tour of Israeli battlefields and defence installations. His 'Prophecy Trips' to Jerusalem heralded the immigration of Jews into Israel as *the* sign of the imminent

Second Coming of Christ. Jesus would rapture true Christians into the air, while the rest of humankind would be slaughtered below. Then 144,000 Jews would bow down before Jesus and be saved, but the remainder would perish in the mother of all *Shoahs*. This could happen even while the evangelical pilgrims were in Jerusalem, giving them a ringside seat at the Battle of Armageddon. Biblical prophecy, then, was striving towards its fulfilment in the Middle East today. Thus, Saddam Hussein was reconstructing Babylon to the same specifications of splendour as in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and the city would ignite the events of the End Times.¹⁷ Against such a divinely-authored and inerrant biblical background it is little wonder that, forgetting momentarily his interests in oil, George W. Bush's vulgar rhetoric advocating 'regime-change' gains much unquestioned support in the USA.

Despite the bizarre nature of such views, broadly shared by Evangelical Christian Zionists in the USA (Hal Lindsay, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, *et alii*), they exert far more influence on USA foreign policies, than do, for example, Jesus' exhortations to 'feed the hungry, etc.' with respect to its attitudes to famine in Africa. But, leaving aside morality concerns and confining one's critique to questions of hermeneutics, one notes that in their determination to insist on the divine provenance of the Bible and its 'inerrancy' Evangelical Christian Zionists neglect the human dimension of the authorship of the books, and ignore altogether the hermeneutical implications of the variety of literary forms within the Bible. Such Christians distort the sophistication of eschatological hope by reducing its expression in symbolic and metaphorical language to precise predictions of future events. Christian eschatology is open-ended, and human language is inadequate to outline the flowering of Christian hope. Humans are no better equipped to define the disposition of the End Time than children in the womb are to describe the world outside. When it comes to the question of hope and the future Christians would do better to enquire into the ramifications of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus, than to search for a one-for-one conformity between the metaphorical language of an earlier age and contemporary political events, which in our context reduces Christian eschatology to despicable modern barbarisms.

Christian Zionist groups, in general—but one welcomes recent signs of changes of heart—show little concern for issues of human rights and international law when these conflict with their unique understanding of the biblical narrative, and its application to modern Israel. This tendency leads to deviations from any acceptable morality, and certainly one consonant with widely-accepted Christian principles. Thus we had, for

example, televangelist Pat Robertson charting the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, with daily reports on CBN interpreting it according to the end-time fulfilment of biblical prophecy. Israel's attack was a modern Joshua event—by biblical definition, of course, above reproach—and Robertson urged American viewers to phone President Reagan offering encouragement to Israel's war.¹⁸ That the Israeli invasion resulted in some 17,500 casualties, mostly civilian, was of no moral concern.¹⁹

Europe's Scramble for Palestine

The attitudes of the external mainstream Christian Church to the Holy Land reflect changing political circumstances. Prior to the nineteenth century, the real Palestine was virtually *terra incognita* for Europeans, due to the paucity of Western visitors. In the first thirty years of that century a new appetite for European exploration was developing, which in the succeeding decades reflected religious as well as antiquarian interests. Temporary Egyptian rule in Palestine (1831-1840) under Ibrahim Pasha, was the catalyst for change. In the interests of obtaining Western support for Egyptian control of Syria he opened up Palestine to European exploration and to missionary and cultural activities. Religious explorers confined their interests to relics of antiquity, with the indigenous people and modern settlements being little more than a distraction. The early photography also projected 'a Palestine of stones and relics, mosques, sanctuaries, Crusader remains: a romantic shell, a necropolis, without a single sign of contemporary life,' a deserted landscape, with no sense of a place where people lived, worked, or worshipped.²⁰

The 'biblical geography' of Professor Edward E. Robinson of Union Theological Seminary, New York, who journeyed to the land in 1837-38, reflected typical Western attitudes to the exotic East, including a general contempt for the locals.²¹ He disdained the traditional pilgrimage sites and their 'superstitious practices', supported only by the legendary pieties of the exotic Eastern, and the highly-suspect practices of the Latin Church. His scientific method would refute 'medieval legends', and rescue Palestine for Protestantism, giving a privileged place, of course, to the biblical past.

In that period also, several of the European nations were flexing their colonial muscles around the globe, and with the Ottoman Empire showing signs of disintegration the Middle East was an attractive target for economic, cultural, and political penetration. England, Russia, France, Germany, Austria, and others engaged in a scramble for national presence and influence in Palestine. The open policy of the Egyptians

permitted the establishment of consulates in Jerusalem, and, soon after, national societies for the exploration of Palestine were established by Britain (1865), the USA (1870), Germany (1877), and France (1890). There was, of course, an integral relationship between scientific investigation and its imperial supporters, with the charting of the 'new' territory functioning as an aspect of Europe's determination to control other cultures.

Coinciding with the wider European territorial ambitions Western scholars began to investigate the Holy Land from the perspective of the biblical narrative, the cornerstone of Europe's civilisation. Interest was fuelled also by the challenge to the authority of the Bible made by discoveries in the science of fossils, and by Higher Criticism. Science was revealing that the earth was millions, rather than, as the Bible presents it, thousands of years old. Moreover, Higher Criticism was arguing that the first five books of the Bible (the *Torah*, the Pentateuch), previously attributed to Moses, were a much later collection of texts from different periods, containing, in addition, many inconsistencies and chronological impossibilities. However, rather than rejecting outright the discoveries of scholars, it was considered that the assault on the Bible could best be withstood by providing no less rigorous scientific evidence of its accuracy, and no location was more suitable for such a task than the biblical land itself. Inevitably the social and political context of its engagement influenced profoundly Europe's estimation of ancient Palestine: rather than being a region with its own intrinsic value, it was esteemed primarily as the location of events and stories related in the biblical narrative. Concentration on the past was marked by a decided detachment from the contemporary lives of the people. The lifeless mounds enveiling earlier civilisations were much more significant than the throbbing Arab cities and villages scattered throughout the country.²²

Invariably foreign interest also took the form of establishing Christian institutions, uniting Christian missionary endeavour with national influence. What most distinguished the Dominican foundation, the *École Biblique*, from biblical schools elsewhere was its location. It was the land in terms of its witness to antiquity, rather than the changing demographic circumstances of its contemporary inhabitants, of course, which preoccupied its founder, Père Marie-Joseph Lagrange, O.P. Although it was very much a religious and scholastic enterprise, the French government in 1921 effectively constituted it as *École Biblique et Archéologique Française à Jérusalem*, after the fashion of the celebrated French schools in Rome and Athens, and Lagrange considered himself to be entrusted with the charge of assuring for

France the prestige in Palestinian antiquities enjoyed by the English and American schools.

In Britain, some circles had advocated that the empire's foreign interests could be advanced by supporting the restoration of Jews to Palestine, aspired to in British (and American) Protestant millenarianist and restorationist circles. As early as 2 August 1840, Viscount Palmerston wrote to Viscount Ponsonby: 'The Jewish *people*, if *returning* under the sanction and protection and at the invitation of the Sultan, would be a check upon any future evil designs of Mohammed Ali or his successor'.²³

Coinciding with the West's cultural and religious colonialism, political Zionism also was beginning to take root in Palestine. Although the European Zionist settlers, for the most part, saw themselves as repudiating the Jewish religion, their enterprise was capable of being viewed in the biblical terms of the promise and conquest of 'the land of Canaan', and restoration to it in accordance with biblical prophecy. There could be, then, a coalescence of goals between secular Zionists and some Christians in the West, for whom the Zionist 'fulfilment of biblical prophecy' coincided with their national foreign interests. The interests of Europeans can be seen also in the growth in popular Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land towards the end of the nineteenth century. Protestant pilgrims, in particular, avoided contact with 'the natives', were disdainful of their customs and pious practices, and were unchanged by the encounter with the region.²⁴ It was enough that the Holy Land had brought the Bible 'alive' in their imagination, and confirmed them in the assurance of the religious, social, and moral superiority of their Western, Reformed Christianity. That it had modern inhabitants was of no interest.

'Go from your Country': An Arab-free State for Jews

Theodor Herzl outlined his programme to establish a state exclusively for Jews in his pamphlet, *Der Judenstaat* (1896).²⁵ His Political Zionism was a recourse of desperation. The renewed rise of antisemitism was altogether frustrating the promise held out by European liberalism that Jews would be fully integrated into the mainstream of European humanity, rather than enjoy a pariah-like, second-class status as had been their wont. What mattered for the indigenes of Palestine, of course, were Zionism's demographic consequences for the non-Jewish population, Muslim, Christian and Druze, who at the time accounted for some 95 per cent of the population. Herzl was in no doubt that his utopian vision would be a nightmare for the indigenous peoples. An item in his diary entry for 12 June 1895 signals his plans. Having

occupied the land and expropriated the private property, 'We shall endeavour to expel the poor population across the border unnoticed, procuring employment for it in the transit countries, but denying it any employment in our own country.'²⁶ He added that both 'the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.' Nevertheless, the modern, secular Jewish commonwealth of Herzl's novel *Altneuland* ('Old New Land'), completed in April 1902 but set in 1923 and for European consumption, was a haven of the liberal spirit and a blessing for the natives.²⁷

Mirroring typical nineteenth-century European colonial attitudes, Herzl presented the proposed state as 'a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilisation [*Kultur*] opposed to barbarism'.²⁸ He reflected elsewhere also typical European colonialist superiority. He assured the Grand Duke of Baden that Jews returning to their 'historic fatherland' would do so as representatives of Western civilisation, bringing 'cleanliness, order and the well-established customs of the Occident to this plague-ridden, blighted corner of the Orient'.²⁹ To adapt the language of Joseph Conrad, Herzl's state for Jews would be an 'outpost of progress' in 'the heart of darkness'.

The Catholic Church and Herzl's Zionism

Despite the significance of Herzl's plans the voluminous Vatican files dealing with Palestine during the last years of Pope Leo XIII's pontificate (1896-1903) do not mention Zionism, nor the growing, but still miniscule immigration of Jews there.³⁰ Yet as early as May 1896 Herzl had discussed his plans with the Papal Nuncio in Vienna, suggesting to him that Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth be excluded from his proposed Jewish state, be internationalised, and possibly placed under the protectorate of the Holy See.³¹ He attempted in 1901 to secure an audience with the Pope,³² and two years later tried again,³³ having written already to the President of the Italian Zionist Federation: 'We want only the profane earth in Palestine...The Holy Places shall be ex-territorialised for ever. *Res sacrae extra commercium*, as a right of nations'.³⁴

Herzl met Pope Pius X (Rome, 23 January 1904), who refused to support Zionist intentions: 'We cannot prevent the Jews from going to Jerusalem—but we could never sanction it. The soil of Jerusalem, if it was not always sacred, has been sanctified by the life of Jesus Christ'. According to Herzl's account, the Pope also said: 'It is not pleasant to see the Turks in possession of the Holy Places but we have to put up with it; but we could not possibly support the Jews in the acquisition of the Holy Places. If you come to Palestine and settle with your people

Parallel with this was the growing sense of the essential link between the Gospel and issues of justice and peace. Translated to the Middle East, there were, then, two, competing tendencies developing, a greater respect for the Jews, and a growing sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians.

The victory of Israel in the war of June 1967 imposed a new sense of the reality and power of the Jewish state. Pope Paul VI expressed his concern at the decrease in the numbers of Christians in the Holy Land, with the fear that 'the shrines would be without the warmth of the living witness of the Holy Places of Jerusalem, and the Holy Land would become like a museum'.⁴⁰ In addressing Israeli Jews on 22 December 1975, he appealed for recognition of the rights and legitimate aspirations of the long-suffering Palestinian people, now that Jews after the very recent tragedies had secured safe protection in a state of its own.⁴¹ This was the first time that a Pope had recognised the rights and legitimate aspirations of Jews to a sovereign and independent state, but its establishment brought moral responsibilities.

By 1983 the Holy See recognised the factual existence of Israel, its right to exist within secure borders. After Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres' visit to the Vatican (19 February 1985), the Holy See's spokesman referred to differences on essential problems, which included the status of Jerusalem, the sovereignty of Lebanon over all its territory, and the lot of the Palestinian people.⁴² The appeal for recognition of the rights of both Jews and Palestinians has been a constant call of Pope John Paul II. The Palestinians' natural rights in justice to a 'homeland' were repeated.⁴³ During his visit to Austria in June 1988, the Pope called again for equality for Israeli Jews and Palestinians, pointing out that full diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Israel are 'dependent on a solution to the Palestinian Question and the international status of Jerusalem.' The Palestinians had a right to a homeland, 'like every other nation, according to international law.' In his Easter Message of 1991 John Paul II appealed for the rights of oppressed peoples (the Palestinians, the Lebanese, the Kurds) to exist with dignity, justice and freedom.

In the heady atmosphere of the Oslo Accords, the Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel (30 December 1993) was followed by full recognition of Israel. Finally, in February-March 2000 the Pope made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, fulfilling a desire since the beginning of his pontificate in 1978. In each country he alluded to different challenges. In Egypt he appealed for the unity of Christians and friendly relations with Muslims. In Jordan he referred to 'peace' thirteen times, and appealed also for unity among Muslims and

Christians, as well as for unity among the Christian community. In Israel-Palestine, he referred to 'peace' more than fifty times, and to 'justice' twelve times. Reconciliation between Jews and Christians was a recurring theme in the Israel part of the pilgrimage, and mutual respect between Christians and Muslims in the Palestinian areas. Could the Pope in his declining years promote peace? The signs are not promising. Even the inter-faith meeting in Jerusalem's Notre Dame Hotel brought to the surface the depth of the religious and nationalist disharmony, with the Pope looking acutely embarrassed as Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, Yisrael Lau, proclaimed that the meeting in Jerusalem was tantamount to the Pope's recognition of Israel's exclusive claims to Jerusalem, which was followed by a stinging criticism of Israel's policies in the city by Taysir Tammami, the Head of the Shari'a courts in the West Bank. And shortly after the Pope left Dheisheh Refugee Camp a riot broke out. Soon we had the second *intifada*, and the multiplicity of barbarisms since.

Conclusion

It is one of the anomalies of recent Church history that while Christians, embarrassed by past association with colonial enterprises, have supported oppressed peoples virtually everywhere else, there has been little protest against the historic injustice perpetrated on the indigenous population of Palestine by Political Zionism, a movement thoroughly at home in the colonial spirit of nineteenth-century Europe. The Evangelical Zionist wing in the main, locked into a naïve and fundamentally immoral interpretation of biblical prophetic and apocalyptic texts, shows few signs of moral perturbation. The god of such revelation, of course, is a militaristic and xenophobic genocidist, who is not sufficiently moral even to conform to the requirements of the Fourth Geneva Convention, or any of the Human Rights Protocols which attempt to set limits to barbarism. The grotesque views of Christian Zionists, embracing an essentially ethnic-cleansing enterprise as a fulfilment of biblical prophecy, and clothing Zionism in the garment of piety, would not warrant attention were it not for the influence they have on the domestic and foreign politics of the USA.

Neither has the performance of the mainstream Churches been a model of ethical engagement.⁴⁴ Rather than giving a lead in moral debate, they fall into line with ongoing political manoeuvres, which in conforming with the demands of the powerful, reflect little contact with recognisable moral principles. The most they appear able to bring themselves to is to subscribe to the 'fallacy of balance'. They offer no critique of the ideology of Political Zionism commensurate with that of *apartheid*, for example, an ideology of far less deleterious consequences

than Zionism. To add to the Church's neglect, the evidence is abundant that the damage done to the indigenous population was neither accidental nor due to the unique pressures of war, but was at the heart of the Zionist enterprise from the beginning. Yet, the Churches reflect little appetite to pursue these issues of justice and respect for historical truth.

An individual Catholic has a right to expect better of her/his representative political wing. The absence in the Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel of any reference to Palestinian Arabs, or to the injustice done them on the establishment of the State of Israel and since, is quite scandalous. The only reference to acknowledged political matters is in Article 11. Both parties commit themselves to the promotion of peaceful resolution of conflicts (par. 1). How exactly, is not spelt out. Instead, we are assured that the prophetic voice of the Church will be silenced: the Holy See solemnly commits itself 'to remaining a stranger to all merely temporal conflicts, which principle applies specifically to disputed territories and unsettled borders' (par. 2).

For religious bodies to 'air-brush' from history, and accord legitimacy to the expulsion of an indigenous population, and the appropriation of their lands is highly problematic, even in consideration of good relations between two religious traditions and their allegedly representative political wings. Invariably, sympathy for the Zionist enterprise, whatever its failures with respect to justice and international legality, is a compulsory requirement for participants in the conventional Jewish-Christian dialogue. Typically, the dialogue is characterised by an uncritical acceptance of the 'canonical' Zionist reading of history, however contradictory that is to historical intentions and realities.⁴⁵

It appears that no Church authority is prepared to insist that Israel apologise for its seminal injustice to the Palestinian Arabs, undo the damage it has perpetrated, honour its obligations with respect to the Palestinian right of return, make appropriate compensation for the damage done, and, on the basis of confession and restitution, move towards a less ethnocentric polity. Such exhortations would flow effortlessly from principles of Christian morality, and would be in conformity with elementary justice. What we get instead is the embrace of whatever proposal, however jaded and however lacking in principles of justice, the asymmetric parties to the dispute contrive, as if the Church were content to act on the novel moral principle that the rights of the perpetrators of injustice and its victims are finely balanced.

1 See Robert L. Wilken, *The Land called Holy. Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New York and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 119.

- 2 See further my 'Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Yesterday and Today,' in Michael Prior and William Taylor (eds), *Christians in the Holy Land* (London: WIFT/Scorpion Press, 1994), pp. 169-75; 'A Perspective on Pilgrimage to the Holy Land', in Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Marla Schrader, *Jerusalem: What makes for Peace?* (London: Melisende, 1997), pp. 114-31, and 'Christian Pilgrimage to the Holy Land', in Duncan Macpherson (ed.), *A Millennium Guide to Christian Pilgrimage to the Holy Land* (London: Melisende, 2000), pp. 25-39.
- 3 See Nur Masalha's *Expulsion of the Palestinians: the Concept of 'Transfer' in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), his *A Land without a People. Israel, Transfer and the Palestinians 1949-96* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), and his *Imperial Israel and the Palestinians: The Politics of Expansion, 1967-2000* (London: Pluto, 2000).
- 4 See Bernard Sabella, 'Socio-Economic Characteristics and the Challenges to Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land', and Sami Geraisy, 'Socio-Demographic Characteristics: Reality, Problems and Aspirations within Israel', in Michael Prior and William Taylor (eds), *Christians in the Holy Land*, pp. 31-44, 45-55.
- 5 E.g., the Joint Memorandum of the Heads of Christian Communities in Jerusalem on 'The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians' (14 November 1994). The text is reproduced in the appendix to my "'You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth". Christian Perspectives on Jerusalem', in Anthony O'Mahony (ed.) *Palestinian Christians: Religion, Politics and Society in the Holy Land* ((London: Melisende, 1999), 96-140, pp. 136-40.
- 6 Brightman's *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos* was published in London in 1585. Finch's *The World's Great Restauration or Calling of the Jewes* was published in London in 1621.
- 7 John Nelson Darby, *The Collected Writings* (edited by William Kelly, Kingston on Thames: Stow Hill Bible and Trust Depot, 1962), Vol. XX, p. 456.
- 8 *The Collected Writings*, Vol. II, pp. 6-7, 108.
- 9 *The Collected Writings*, Vol. II, pp. 153-55.
- 10 Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible* (London: G. Morrish, n.d.), Vol. V, p. 91.
- 11 *The Collected Writings*, Vol. I, p. 94.
- 12 Don Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon: A Call to Partnership for Middle Eastern and Western Christians* (Scottsdale & Waterloo, Penn: Herald Press, 1995), p. 89.
- 13 See Paul C. Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism 1891-1948* (London/Portland OR: Frank Cass, 1998), pp. 3-34.
- 14 In Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism*, pp. 15-16.
- 15 Herzl and his Zionism were anathema to the most influential eastern European rabbis (see David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe 1789-1939*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 625). In the West, his own Chief Rabbi in Vienna, Moritz Güdemann, objected that the Jews

were not a nation, and that Zionism was incompatible with Judaism (*Nationaljudentum*, Leipzig and Vienna: M. Breitenstein's Verlags-Buchhandlung, 1897, p. 42). Similarly France's Grand Rabbin, Zadok Kahn, protested (Herzl, *Diaries*, 18 November 1895). The German Rabbinical Council publicly condemned the efforts of 'the so-called Zionists' to create a Jewish national state in Palestine as contrary to Holy Writ. Belgium's Grand Rabbin, M.A. Bloch, also protested, describing Zionist aspirations as far from those of Judaism. The Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth, Hermann Adler, who had received Herzl in London, viewed his programme as an 'egregious blunder' and an 'absolutely mischievous project.' He considered the Zionist movement to be opposed to the teaching of Judaism (see Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits, *The Attitude to Zionism of Britain's Chief Rabbis as Reflected in their Writings*, London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1982, pp. 4-5).

- 16 William E. Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, (New York: Fleming Revel, 1908, third ed.; first ed. 1878), pp. 210-13, 236-41.
- 17 Thus, Charles H. Dyer, *World News and Biblical Prophecy* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1993), pp. 128-29.
- 18 Dan O'Neill, and Don Wagner, *Peace or Armageddon? The Unfolding Drama of the Middle East Peace Accord* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), p. 84.
- 19 For a fuller treatment, see my *Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry* (London and New York: Routledge 1999), pp. 137-47. For a perspective on Christian Zionism in the USA, Britain, and Scandinavia, see the articles by Don Wagner ('Reagan and Begin, Bibi and Jerry: The Theopolitical Alliance of the Likud Party with the American Christian "Right"'), Stephen Sizer ('Christian Zionism: A British Perspective') and Göran Gunner ('Christian Zionism in Scandinavia') in Michael Prior and Naim S. Ateek, *Holy Land - Hollow Jubilee: God, Justice and the Palestinians* (London, Melisende, 1999), pp. 199-215, 189-98, and 180-88, respectively.
- 20 See Naomi Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders: The Western Rediscovery of Palestine* (London: Collins, 1987), pp. 186-89.
- 21 *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabian Petraea. A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1842).
- 22 See Neal A. Silberman, *Digging for God and Country* (New York: Knopf, 1982), and 'Structuring the Past: Israelis, Palestinians, and the Symbolic Authority of Archaeological Monuments', in Neil Asher Silberman and David Small, *The Archaeology of Israel. Constructing the Past, Interpreting the Present* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997, pp. 62-81), p. 66.
- 23 Foreign Office 79/390 [No. 134] Public Record Office (italics added).
- 24 See Ruth Hummel and Thomas Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred. English Protestant and Russian Orthodox Pilgrims of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), pp. 3, 13.
- 25 *The Jewish State. An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, a revised translation, with a foreword by Israel Cohen, was published in London (Henry Pordes) in 1993, and page references in the text refer to this

edition.

- 26 'Die arme Bevölkerung trachten wir unbemerkt über die Grenze zu schaffen, indem wir in den Durchzugsländern Arbeit verschaffen aber in unserem eigenen Lande jederlei Arbeit verweigern' (Theodor Herzl, *Briefe und Autobiographische Notizen. 1886-1895*. Vol. II, ed. by Johannes Wachten *et al.*, Berlin: Propylaen Verlag, 1983, pp. 117-18).
- 27 *Old New Land*, translated from the German by Lotta Levensohn, is republished by Markus Wiener Publishers, Princeton (third printing, 2000).
- 28 *The Jewish State*, p. 30.
- 29 *The Complete Diaries of Theodore Herzl*, translated by Harry Zohn, and edited by Raphael Patai (New York: Herzl Press, 1960), Vol. I, p. 343. In 1996 the final, seventh volume of all Herzl's writings in the original languages, begun in 1983, was completed (Berlin: Propylaen Verlag).
- 30 Andrej Kreutz, *Vatican Policy on the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict. The Struggle for the Holy Land*. Contributions in Political Science, No. 246 (New York, Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 1990), p. 51 n. 20.
- 31 *The Complete Diaries*, 1: 352-54.
- 32 *The Complete Diaries*, 3: 1096-97.
- 33 19 October 1903, *The Complete Diaries*, 4: 1566-67.
- 34 September 1903, in Kreutz, *Vatican Policy...*, p. 32. Similarly, in *The Jewish State* (p. 30).
- 35 *The Complete Diaries*, 4: 1601-603.
- 36 Daniela Fabrizio examines the interplay between religious, cultural and political interests on the question of the Holy Places (*La Questione dei Luoghi Santi e l'Assetto della Palestina 1914-1922*, Milano: Franco Angeli, 2000).
- 37 Sergio I. Minerbi, *The Vatican and Zionism: Conflict in the Holy Land, 1895-1925* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. xiii.
- 38 In Andrej Kreutz, 'The Vatican and the Palestinians: A Historical Overview', in *Islamochristiana* 18 (1992): 109-25, p. 115.
- 39 Perowne to Burrows, 19 January 1948—FO 371/68500, in Kreutz, 'The Vatican and the Palestinians', p. 116.
- 40 Apostolic Exhortation, 'Concerning the increased needs of the Church in the Holy Land', 1974.
- 41 *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, January-March 1976, p. 134.
- 42 See 'La Santa Sede e lo Stato d'Israele', in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 16 February 1991, pp. 357-58.
- 43 See the communiqué after Yasser Arafat's visit to the Pope (15 September 1982) in *La Documentation Catholique* 73 (1982), 17 October, pp. 921 and 947, and the Apostolic Letter, *Redemptionis Anno* (April 1984), in Secretariatus pro non-Christianis, Bulletin 57 (1984), XIX(3), p. 254.
- 44 There is virtually no difference between the perspectives of the World Council of Churches and the Holy See. With respect to the national churches one detects sympathy for Israel growing the closer they are to Germany. See my *Zionism and the State of Israel*, pp. 103-33.
- 45 For a fuller discussion of the proclivities of the Jewish-Christian dialogue see my *Zionism and the State of Israel*, pp. 123-31.