

## EDITORIAL

### *Support for the Tour Guide Diploma Programme at Bethlehem University*

The committee of Living Stones has decided upon a major project to raise money to help Bethlehem University to train Palestinian tour guides. This project fits perfectly with our stated objectives: 'to advance education about Christianity in the Holy Land and about other matters; and to relieve persons who are in conditions of need in the Holy Land.'

Under normal circumstances, thousands of British Christians visit the Holy Land every year to see places associated with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and, during the past decade, the demand for educated and qualified Palestinian tour guides has grown. In the early seventies, there were approximately 50 licensed tour guides but during the early years of Israeli occupation very few Palestinian Guides were given licences as guides. In the early nineties this number was reduced further as the majority either emigrated or reached retirement age. As a response to this shortage Bethlehem University began offering a Diploma Programme for the education and training of local tour guides. Using this programme the University has so far been able to train approximately 60 tour guides, competent in several languages.

The programme constitutes a response to the shortage of Palestinian tour guides and the increasing difficulties that the programme and its students have experienced as a result of the political and economic situation. Moreover, unlike some other courses, the Bethlehem University tour guide programme does not offer the kind of qualification that might encourage those who possess it to take up work outside the country. In this way the programme contributes directly to providing work that will help Christians, together with other Palestinians, to remain.

Evidently the current circumstances of violence and crisis have resulted in the suspension of most pilgrimages and tours to the Holy Land and Bethlehem University, in common with other Palestinian universities and colleges, has been subject to closures and other interference in its normal academic life. However it is expected that this will situation not be permanent and it is important that, when pilgrims and tourists return, trained Palestinian tour guides should be available.

#### *Practical Steps*

Living Stones hopes to raise funding to provide for the following elements in support of the programme:

- Financing of video materials to supplement and—under present restrictions on free movement around the Holy Land— sometimes to replace, field visits to religious and archaeological sites. These videos, each costing \$350, will also be a reference for other students, scholars and interested audiences. The total cost of the first ten videos will be \$3,500.
- Guest lectures are another integral part of the programme and Living Stones hopes to assist in raising the cost of \$250 per day for each of 12 lecturers, amounting to a total of \$3,000 per year.
- Resource books needed for the tourism library, expected to cost a further \$2,000.
- Student tuition fees to fund the tuition costs of students who would not be able to undertake the course because of financial difficulties. The programme takes three semesters to complete. The cost of educating one student is around US\$2,500 including site entrance and transportation fees. Living Stones is initially seeking to support the costs of two students, totalling \$5,000.

We are asking all our members and readers to support this project. This can be done:

- By direct personal gifts, taking advantage of the tax concessions available for gifts to registered charities
- By using good offices with corporate donors
- By direct appeals to congregations and lecture audiences. Within our limited resources we will try to provide preachers or speakers to help in such appeals if requested to do so.
- By holding fund-raising events.

Apart from the necessary costs and expenses involved in the administration of this project all donations will be applied to the assistance of students at Bethlehem University. Please contact the Treasurer of Living Stones if you feel that you can help in any of these ways.

*Duncan Macpherson*

#### *In this issue*

This issue of the Magazine reproduces the Easter message of the Latin Patriarch. This is followed by an interview with Michael Prior on the subject of Christian Zionism, first published in *The Witness*. Jamil Bullata interviews Fuad Haddad for 'From the Diaspora', and the editor interviews Lucy Winkett, a priest of St Paul's Cathedral, on her recent pilgrimage with Christian Aid. An in-depth political analysis by Don Wagner presents the sinister forces shaping current

American policies in the Middle East. Don's paper was originally given at a conference on 'Crisis in the Holy Land,' jointly sponsored by Living Stones and Friends of Sabeel on 11 March of this year. The final article, on the humanitarian dimension of the crisis by Linda Ramsden was also first given at the conference and ends with a rallying call for British Christians to embark on a journey of solidarity with their oppressed sisters and brothers.

## EASTER MESSAGE FROM THE LATIN PATRIARCH

*Michel Sabbah*

*Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Let's rejoice and renew our hope.*

Yes, brothers and sisters, we invite you to rejoice in spite of the hardships we are suffering. We invite you to live in spite of the death that surrounds us. We invite you to love in spite of the hatred that demolishes the hearts in these days. Christ is risen. He defeated death and death has no more power on him. This is our Easter wish for all: to see that death is overcome and has no more power in this Holy Land on the hearts of Palestinians and Israelis. We, Christians, believe in the Resurrection, therefore we keep hoping that one day, the Holy Land will be for all its inhabitants, a land of Resurrection and no more a land of death and hatred.

The Gospel says that Jesus, on one of his last days, 'as he drew near and came in sight of the city he shed tears over it, and said: if you too had only recognised on this day the way to peace' (Lc 19,41-42). All people of good will today shed tears on the holy city and wish to its inhabitants and to its governors to see the ways of peace. Because the ways followed so far are not those that can lead to peace: the military actions, the siege imposed upon all Palestinian cities and villages, making them big jails, where human dignity is violated, where killing is going on together with demolitions of possessions and houses. All these actions are not a way that leads to peace. On the contrary, all this gives rise to more death and more destruction of the human dignity that leads to more war and more killing and insecurity. Since the liberation of the Basilica of the Nativity, one year ago, nothing has changed for us. The Basilica is liberated, but not the human being, the Palestinians remain under siege, exposed to humiliations, to hunger and to anarchy and the Israelis remain in their insecurity and fear.

And what we live here, in this Holy Land, we begin to see it also in Iraq.

One said that the war of Iraq was a step toward peace. Pope Jean Paul II clearly says that only the means of peace can lead to peace. The international community needs to renew itself in order to find the ways of putting a limit to the use of power by the

strong and to save humanity from the threat of new world wars. It is necessary to fight against terrorism, wherever it may be, but the struggle against terrorism starts with a revision of criteria and values. The first step to put an end to terrorism is to start with a self-examination in order to find the possible roots of evil and death in oneself, roots that allow the strong to attack the weak and to impose injustices and deprivations upon peoples. 'So now, you kings, come to your senses; you, earthly rulers, learn your lesson. In fear, be submissive to God' (Ps 2, 10-11). To be submissive to God means to make peace with justice. Dealing with other people and nations according to the requirements of peace and justice is the only way to avoid all sorts of terrorism.

Our message to our leaders in this holy land is the following: you are elected to bring peace and security, and therefore to follow the ways that bring peace and security. The ways followed so far did not achieve peace and security, neither to the Israeli nor to the Palestinian people. You, too, listen to what God says. He says peace and justice go together. Change your ways. Take away the fear from your people's hearts. Believe that the peace is possible and that the Palestinians are capable of living in peace once their freedom and their rights are given back to them.

We celebrate Easter. It means the passage from death to life, from slavery to freedom. I wish to all Christians and to all Palestinians to pass from the present death to a new life, based on a reacquired freedom, on justice, forgiveness, love and reconciliation. I wish to the Jewish people celebrating Passover to pass from the present situation of fear to security, based also on justice, forgiveness, love and reconciliation. A new world order should have the same bases: justice, forgiveness, love and reconciliation. Without forgiveness and without God's presence among men, death will lead only to death, and war will only produce war and terrorism. One cannot; under any pretext, build a new world order while starting with the demolition of the human person in it.

Christ is risen. Yes, He is risen indeed. To all of you I wish an Easter of peace, justice, forgiveness, love and reconciliation.

+ Michel Sabbah, Patriarch  
Easter, April 2003

## CHRISTIANS AND ZIONISM

*An interview with Michael Prior by Marianne Arbogast of The Witness\**

*On the platform, an Israeli student is telling thousands of supporters how the horrors of the year have only reinforced his people's determination. 'Despite the terror attacks, they'll never drive us away out of our God-given land,' he says. This is greeted with whoops and hollers and waving of Israeli flags and the blowing of the shofar, the Jewish ceremonial ram's horn. Then comes the mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert, who is received even more rapturously. ... The placards round the hall insist that every inch of the Holy Land should belong to Israel and that there should never be a Palestinian state. These assertions are backed up by biblical quotations. It could be a rally in Jerusalem for those Israelis who think Ariel Sharon is a dangerous softie. But something very strange is going on here. There are thousands of people cheering for Israel in the huge Washington Convention Centre. But not one of them appears to be Jewish, at least not in the conventional sense. For this is the annual gathering of a very non-Jewish organization indeed: the Christian Coalition of America. —Matthew Engel, The Guardian, 28 October 2002.*

The influence of Christian Zionists on American foreign policy is cause for concern among many who see their worldview—with its unqualified support of Israeli land rights—as potentially contributing to the outbreak of the world-engulfing apocalyptic battle they predict. Michael Prior, a Roman Catholic priest and biblical scholar at St. Mary's College, University of Surrey, England, describes and critiques the development of political Zionism and the 'dispensationalist' Christian theology which has embraced it. Prior, who is the author of *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Sheffield, 1997) and *Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry* (Routledge, 1999) and editor of *Holy Land Studies: A Multidisciplinary Journal* (Continuum, 2002), visited the US in November 2002 on a speaking tour sponsored by Friends of Sabeel and other Palestinian advocacy organizations.

*How did you become involved with the issue of Zionism and justice for Palestinians?*

Probably the first time I became conscious of the situation in any kind of gripping way was during the 1967 war when I was a theology student. I remember gobbling my supper each evening in the seminary to watch the replay of what had happened that day or the night before. And at that time I was delighted by the victory of Israel—a little country which I understood to be under siege from a whole bunch of predatory and rapacious Arab neighbouring states.

Then in 1972 as part of my post-graduate biblical studies I visited the land, and even though the concentration was entirely on examining artifacts from the past, I did absorb that I was witnessing some kind of apartheid system. And in 1981, I went with a group of students from my university in England to the University of Bir Zeit, which is about 18

miles north of Jerusalem, and the university was occupied by the Israeli military the day before we arrived. We couldn't gain legal access to the campus, although we did get in surreptitiously. The university put a bus at our disposal, so we drove up and down the West Bank and into Israel proper. And being in the company of Bir Zeit students I began to appreciate much more readily the nature of the Israeli occupation and how it was impinging upon the indigenous Arab population.

In 1983 and 1984, I was living in Jerusalem for a year. It was very tense all the time, and I was shocked one morning in the spring of 1984 when I turned on the radio to hear that Jewish settlers had climbed over the wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock compound, and they had guns and bomb equipment and hand grenades, and they were attempting to blow up the site of the third-holiest shrine in Islam. That was happening just down the road from me. And then, while they were in court, some of them were reading from the Psalms. So I was beginning to say to myself, good heavens, the oppression that I had begun to perceive in 1972 and that I was getting a better knowledge of from the inside—is it possible that this is being driven by religious zealotry of some kind?

I began the task of reading the biblical narrative from the point of view of the land—to do so adequately would have taken me altogether away from the subject of my study (the 'Pastoral Epistles')—but in the early 1990s, again in Jerusalem, I returned to that subject much more systematically. I started typing out those texts in the biblical narrative that were about land in any sense—the promise of it, how it was related to the covenant, etc. What really shocked me was that the people entering the land—which was already inhabited by Canaanites, Hivites, Hittites and so on—were to exterminate the indigenous population. That came through in a number of texts, especially in the Book of Deuteronomy. It was bad enough to find that the business of genocide or ethnic cleansing was legitimate, but I was actually reading that it was a requirement of fidelity to the commands of God. And for some crazy reason I hadn't noticed that in my previous reading of the biblical narrative—perhaps I became more sensitive by the recognition that, in fact, some of these texts formed part of the background for the maltreatment of the indigenous population.

And then, over the years I was becoming much more sensitive to what happened in 1948. I don't think that I had known in any significant way that people had been kicked out of their homes in 1948 and 1949. I certainly didn't know that 418 villages were destroyed to make sure that those who were kicked out would not be able to resume occupancy in their home villages.

*Where did the ideology of Zionism come from?*

Political Zionism is a 19th-century European export, carrying

\* This article is reproduced by the kind permission of the Editor of *The Witness*.

all of the arrogance that one associates with the European nation-states in their colonial zeal. The founder of political Zionism, Theodor Herzl, a non-religious Jew, and his supporters—the vast majority of whom were not only utterly secular but anti-religious—saw it as being necessary to escape the manacled life that was imposed upon Jews in Europe in the ghettos. At the time, the whole enterprise of political Zionism was regarded by the chief rabbi of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, whom Herzl visited around 1896 or 1897, as an egregious blunder. Several of the chief rabbis in Europe were of the same mind—that this enterprise was contrary to Judaism and contrary to the sacred scriptures. Today, you would not get a chief rabbi anywhere who would hold that position. There are other Jews, mostly secular, who take a much more moral stance, in my opinion, but the majority of the leadership of the Orthodox communities throughout the world support Zionism now in an overtly enthusiastic way. So Zionism has gone from being a secular, anti-religious enterprise despised by the religious establishment to becoming virtually an integral part of the self-definition of Jews.

I have recently been examining the place of the state of Israel in the Jewish-Christian dialogue. One of the principles of Jewish-Christian dialogue—or indeed, dialogue between any two faiths—is that each faith acknowledges and respects the self-definition of the other. The Jewish partners in the dialogue are invariably religious Jews, and the dialogue has been tainted by the philosophy of political Zionism. You find the most extraordinary claims being made for Jewish rights in the land, and you find regularly a fundamental distortion of historical reality concerning the circumstances under which the state of Israel was brought into being—particularly the propaganda view that it was never the intention of the Zionists to expel the indigenous Arab population, and that this only happened in the context of the trying circumstances of war.

Not only is it absolutely established that hundreds of thousands were expelled at gunpoint with threats after massacres, but all kinds of horror tactics were used to expel the people from their villages and homes. It's now emerged in the last 10 years from the study of the Zionist and Israeli archives that there is a clear line of development of the notion of what they called 'population transfer.' From the beginning, the prevailing and majority view was that, in order to establish a state, Israel must get rid of the non-Jews from the area.

*How did that process of transformation of a political philosophy into a religious idea come about?*

In the beginning of the 20th century there was a small group of religious Jews who identified themselves very quickly with the Zionist secular project. But probably most significantly was the coming to Palestine of a rabbi called Avraham Yitzhak Kook, who became chief rabbi in Palestine from 1921 until he died in 1935. He reinterpreted Jewish history and Jewish eschatology. He was moving away from the strictly Orthodox position that the restoration of the Jews to the land is the work of the Messiah, so any 'scaling the wall' before the Messiah comes is blasphemous. He was saying that what these Zionists are doing, even though they don't know it, is actually in conformity with God's will. He established a centre for

the training of rabbis and, under the direction of his son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, virtually all the major religious ideologues in the West Bank or in the settlements have come through that particular rabbinical school. And of course they were using the biblical narrative, 'Wherever you put your foot is land that belongs to us,' and also claiming that the biblical narrative determined the dimensions of the land.

*How did a version of Christianity that holds Zionist ideas come to develop?*

There were several strands within some of the wings of the Reformed churches that saw the restoration of Jews to the land as being a preliminary to the Second Coming of Christ. Much of it is due to the theological speculation of a man called John Nelson Darby, who was a minister in the Church of Ireland, but he left the church and joined forces with other people in establishing the Plymouth Brethren. He said that all of human history is divisible into seven dispensations, from the period of creation to the final period, which will be the reign of the Messiah. And the final stage requires the return of the Jews to the land. Darby fell out of favour with some of his co-Plymouth Brethren and came over to the States and began to have a strong influence on a number of critical evangelical preachers here—Dwight L Moody, William E Blackstone, C I Schofield and several other people. And that strand of dispensationalism and Armageddon theology has run down all the years. It's represented nowadays by Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell and other people in that Christian Right evangelical constituency.

That wing of the evangelical world viewed the establishment of the state of Israel as the first clear sign of the fulfilment of biblical prophecy and the final countdown to Armageddon. Later, Israel's 'miraculous' victory over Arab armies in 1967 confirmed the prophetic scenario. 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. This could even happen while the evangelical pilgrims were in Jerusalem, giving them a ringside seat at the Battle of Armageddon. Biblical prophecy was striving toward its fulfillment in the Middle East today. Thus, Saddam Hussein was reconstructing Babylon, and the city would ignite the events of the end times.

*Is contemporary Christian Zionism primarily an American phenomenon?*

Well, it's particularly prominent here. Christian Zionists number perhaps some 25 million worldwide, but their influence is greatest in the US, where they number some 20 million. I understand that includes several members of the cabinet of George W Bush.

The state of Israel is prepared to work with these people—even though it's part of their theology that Judaism will disappear, that only those Jews who recognize Jesus as

the Messiah will be saved. When he came to power in 1977, Prime Minister Menachem Begin, realizing that the mainstream US churches were growing more sympathetic to the Palestinians, directed Israeli lobbyists in the US 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. Begin's example has been followed by every Prime Minister since.

*How much influence do you think this has had on US policy?*

The evangelical Christian constituency was a major factor in the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976. However, his call for a Palestinian homeland in 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 in the present incumbent in the White House. While acknowledging the underlying oil interests, one cannot ignore the extent to which the Christian Right influences the administration's worldview regarding the 'war on terrorism' and appetite for 'regime change' in Iraq.

*How do you see the involvement or complicity of the mainstream churches?*

I think 'complicity' would be too strong a word, because by and large the mainstream Christian churches have never been sympathetic to the Zionist project. But whatever desire the Christian churches might have had to criticize the project of Zionism and its determination to expel the indigenous population, they weren't going to voice that criticism, for fear of appearing to be supporters of the Nazi determination to rid Europe of its Jews. And it's only as years have gone on, I think, that the extent of the disaster done to the Palestinian people has become more apparent, and Christians have begun to have a bit more sympathy for the Palestinian plight.

The Churches in the Holy Land manifest virtual unanimity with respect to the situation in Palestine. The first *intifada* which erupted in 1987 stimulated a new sense of unity, marked by ongoing ecumenical cooperation, and issuing in a number of significant joint statements, not least in criticism of the excesses of the Israeli occupation. And such views are mirrored in the mainstream churches outside.

But most of the mainstream Christian churches have settled—I think in a rather unprincipled way—for an accommodation between the oppressor—in this case the Zionists—and the oppressed. They talk about 'balance.' But there has been no systematic or moral critique of the ideology of Zionism, which I think is what the situation demands. Christian morality has some very clearly expressed fundamental positions—like, for example, if you do damage to somebody else, you must apologize for the damage you have done, you must make good the damage you have done insofar as that is possible, you must compensate the person who is disadvantaged insofar as that is possible, and you must commit yourself to working toward non-exploitation in the future. But, in the case of Zionism and the state of Israel, those principles are left aside. Instead we have church leaders advocating accommodations between the victim and the

oppressor without demands for any of those kinds of things—like, for example, in practical terms, the return of refugees, which is a right under international law.

And if that is the situation in the churches, I am afraid that the situation in the educational academies is even worse. There is presently a serious programmatic attempt to mute any criticism of the state of Israel or of the Zionist project. The World Zionist Organization, at its Congress this summer, called on its members to challenge anti-semitism, anti-Zionism and Holocaust denial. Anti-Zionism, in that view, is put into the same category as the other two—whereas, in fact, Zionism is a 19th-century political project that has wreaked enormous havoc on the indigenous population of Palestine. Not only do I think it is legitimate to protest against this project, but I think it is a moral imperative to do so—as I would think it a moral imperative to protest against the policy of apartheid. And incidentally, I consider Zionism to be an evil of far greater profundity than apartheid.

*Why do you say that?*

Well, first of all, even though the apartheid regime did all kinds of injustices to the indigenous population of South Africa, it didn't expel 80 percent of them. The Zionist project is much more severe—the Zionists wanted, simply, ethnic cleansing. I'm sure there are many people in Israel today who regard the Zionist project as having made their first major blunder in not getting rid of all of the Arabs in 1948. They got rid of 750,000, leaving behind approximately 150,000. That 150,000 has grown to a million. And there are very strong voices in Israel now that say the only way forward is to expel all the Arabs.

And, of course, we're now in a situation where we could have a very, very serious war. We've had a whole pile of wars in the region, many of them related to the existence of the state of Israel, its policies of expansion and its militarism. I think it's very easy to demonstrate that a lot of the militancy and the expenditure of the resources of the surrounding countries on arms has got to do with the fact that Israel is so well-armed. So it has brought a great sense of belligerence to the whole culture and it has seriously undermined the credibility of the United States' foreign policy. Something like one-third of all American foreign aid goes to the state of Israel.

*Insofar as Christian religious ideas or interpretations of the Bible are used to justify this, how do you think we can confront them?*

This is a profoundly difficult task, since we are not dealing merely with the interpretation of texts, but, rather, with a whole worldview, and also, of course, with a personal philosophy and value system. There are obviously technical questions to pose about the nature of the biblical narrative. Crudely, not everything in the Bible in the 'past tense' is necessarily history, and not everything in the 'future tense' is necessarily calling out for fulfilment in political terms in each generation. But I consider the moral question to be even more fundamental. To begin with, I would wish to inquire into what picture of God is behind their particular interpretation of things—a God who rejoices in the slaughter of people in the Armageddon disaster? The God they portray looks to me to be a militaristic and xenophobic genocidist

who would not be even sufficiently moral to conform to the Fourth Geneva Convention. How, I constantly ask myself, are such people so unconcerned about others being kicked out of their homes, children being shot, people struggling for survival against very oppressive forces of occupation? Instead of trying to give food to the hungry and sight to the blind, as Jesus exhorted, these people support institutions that make seeing people blind, put free people in prison, and make the poor poorer. But it is extremely difficult to make progress in the face of worldviews which are held tenaciously, and considered to be in conformity with the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures. I go back to the fundamental question: Is God moral? Is God just? Is God a

God of love, compassion, tenderness and justice? Or, rather, is God the great ethnic cleanser? Those are fundamental questions that I would like the evangelical Zionist constituency to consider.

I think that this particular question about the Holy Land—the cohabitation of people of three faiths and two nationalisms in the land—is presenting a massive challenge to the integrity of religion. If Christians don't contribute to getting that right, I think they do a serious disservice to the whole religious project.

*Marianne Arbogast is associate editor of The Witness*

## FROM THE DIASPORA

*Dr Fuad Haddad, an interview with Jamil Bullata*

*Can you tell us something about your experience of being a Christian living in the Holy land?*

I was born in Tiberias on Lake Galilee. At all times, we used to feel there as if Jesus was living next door to us. Since childhood, I was aware that Jesus calmed the waves in the lake where I used to swim, and fed the thousands where we used to go for picnics, and preached the Sermon on the Mount at the other side of the town. In other words the narrative of the Gospels was vivid and alive. We were acquainted with such narratives in the same way as we were local events and every day happenings.

Strange as that may seem, Palestine suffered a very strong earthquake on the very day that I was born. I was told that the earthquake gave my mother a fright that showed itself through her milk on me as rash and lesions all over my body. I was told that when I was taken to the local church in Nazareth, my uncle who was the vicar prayed, 'Oh Lord, if you want to take this little boy to your kingdom, please don't let his mother suffer any more and take him quickly'. At that point my mother screamed out, 'Oh no, God don't take him.' So the vicar added, '... but we ask you Lord to have pity on his parents and grant him life.' The good Lord did grant me life and a long one too ... and I am still going on and very grateful for that.

*What were the particular privileges and problems of the Church to which you belonged in Palestine, and were there any problems in which they may have been different from those of other churches in Palestine?*

My family in Palestine belonged to the Anglican Church which hardly exceeded a thousand in the whole of Palestine. Our church had a monthly publication called *Al-Akhbar Al-Kanasiyyah* ('Ecclesiastical News') which kept us informed of all the events in our small community.

Anglicans in Palestine were well organised. Most towns had a elementary school run by the Christian Missionary

Society (CMS) with mainly British staff. My sister went to the one in Jaffa. At the level of secondary education, there used to be two very good Anglican schools in Jerusalem — Bishop Gobat School (BGS) on Mount Zion and which I attended and St Georges' School affiliated to the Anglican Cathedral in Jerusalem. My headmaster at BGS was Mr Angus McInnes who appeared on Sunday mornings in his kilt. He used to line us up on the terrace and divide us into two groups: one goes to the English Cathedral for the service and the other to the local Arabic church where our vicar there was Revd Marmoura.

Both the Anglican Boarding Schools were run like public schools in England and each school had a cricket team. Once the two schools played against each other, there would be nobody else to play against in the country! Before the Second World War, the Germans living in Palestine had two excellent Protestant Boarding Schools in Jerusalem. One was for boys teaching mainly vocational skills and trades called (Schneller). My uncle trained there. The girls' school, attended by my mother, was called (Talita qumi). The name refers to one of Jesus' miracle calling on the dead girl called 'Talita' to arise (*qumi*). As an orphan Christian girl my mother did not have to pay any school fees. My mother kept the name and address of the family in Berlin that had paid for her education. She wanted so much for me to take her one day to Berlin to thank them personally for that. But Berlin was divided after the war and that address happened to be in the Eastern part of Berlin. My mother passed away before the Berlin wall was removed. So unfortunately I could not fulfil her wish.

*What were the circumstances of your leaving Palestine and starting a new life abroad?*

I came to England to work in the Arabic section at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as an Arabic newscaster/announcer. That was in September 1947. The

Arabic section was and still is the largest foreign section at the BBC. In those days, the Arabic programmes used to be broadcast from studios at Aldenham near Edgware. I stayed at that time at the BBC hostel for nearly two years because I was then under 21 and wanted to mix with English boys and girls in my age group. My contract with the BBC lasted for 5 years. My original plan was to get the experience in London and then go home to my original work in broadcasting in Jerusalem. But after 1948, all members of my family became refugees—my father and mother went to Jordan, my sister and her husband to Lebanon and my brother to Kuwait. I ended up with no place to go back to since my Palestinian passport became invalid with the end the British Mandate in 1948. Luckily I had with me my Palestine matriculation certificate and I was accepted at the University of Edinburgh to study dentistry.

I did not have enough funds to follow the university course. However, I was accepted at the university as an assistant lecturer in the Department of Arabic. My income from that was quite enough for me to carry on and eventually qualify as a dental surgeon. When I qualified, I worked first as a dental assistant for a period of two years after which I started a dental surgery where I stayed for nearly 33 years until I retired a few years ago.

*How do you maintain your sense of Palestinian identity living in Britain?*

I owe a great deal for that to Jean, my English wife. She was an extremely good cook and even Palestinian women used to marvel at her perfect Palestinian cooking. She enjoyed inviting Palestinian friends to our home, saying that a good wife is the one who keeps her husband happy. Even the choice of the neighbourhood where we bought our first house was because it was near some of my own Palestinian friends.

Alas, Jean passed away four years ago.

I keep a large Arabic library at home and additionally I have a satellite dish enabling me to watch many Arabic TV stations. I also have a special love and passion for the Arabic language. As I mentioned, I taught Arabic at the University of Edinburgh during my dental studies and kept up with it afterwards doing translations and writing articles to magazines and newspapers. I learnt the love of books from my uncle, Canon Assad Mansour who was the vicar of Nazareth for over 40 years. He wrote an authoritative book on the history of Nazareth still considered as the classic publication on that subject. He also wrote a book on the geography of the Holy Land and another one on his visit to Britain from 13 June to 12 September 1930. I made arrangements to have his books sent to me from Nazareth.

*How do you see the situation for the Christian communities in the Holy Land?*

Christians in Palestine used to be about 10 percent of the whole population during the British Mandate over Palestine. Now they form less than 2 percent. The reason for this decline in their number is not only that Christians find it easy to live in Europe, but also, I think, because the Israeli authorities prefer to get rid of them because their presence in Palestine may make the Christians in Europe and elsewhere more sympathetic to the Arab cause.

I remember going on a visit to Palestine and visiting Jaffa, the town where I grew up. I was appalled to see my Church, St Peter's, neglected and in such a very poor state. The Christians of Europe and elsewhere must really do something to save the Christians in the Holy Land from extinction. Although the United States of America and, to a lesser degree, Britain regard the Muslims as potential enemies, in my opinion the majority of them were—and are—extremely friendly to the Christians.

*What are the prospects for peace in the Middle East?*

I take it that you mean peace with some justice to the Palestinians. I really cannot see any possibility for that while Sharon is prime minister of Israel and while Christian Zionists are directing the policy of the United States of America. Palestinians are willing to accept an independent entity on the West Bank and Gaza and, in return, to recognise Israel in the rest of historic Palestine. The Palestinians are really asking for only one-fifth only of their own country whereas the Israelis want all Palestine for themselves. So you see that peace cannot take place especially when the Christian Zionists in America want the physical transfer of the Palestinians to the neighbouring countries and it is they who support, in the name of the Old Testament, the complete Judaisation of the whole of Palestine. With such powerful adversaries, the Palestinians cannot hope for justice. Hope remains that real Christians in Europe and elsewhere may be prepared to impose a just solution in Palestine with some justice for the Palestinian but even that seems a long way away.

*Tell us something about any work you do for the Palestinian cause and for the cause of the Palestinian community there?*

My family came from a village near Nazareth called Shafa-Amr. I still have relatives there. I love visiting them there and enjoy their wonderful hospitality. I reciprocate by inviting them to my home especially now, after the passing away of my wife and our grown-up children left home when the house became far too large for me on my own. As a member of the Board of Directors of the Medical College of the University of Jerusalem, I enjoy hosting Palestinian students visiting London. I make monthly donations to various Palestinian charities. I also edit the magazine of the Arab Club of Britain, which is published monthly in London.

*Erratum:* On page 11 of Living Stone 21, in the interview with Mr Salim Khamis, the reference to his occupation should have read 'economist' not 'mathmatician'.

## PALESTINIAN PILGRIMAGE

*Duncan Macpherson interviews the Revd Lucy Winkett of St Paul's Cathedral who recently led a pilgrimage of women clergy organised by Christian Aid*

*Can you tell please tell me about the circumstances of the pilgrimage and what persuaded you to join it?*

The invitation came originally from Christian Aid. Garth Hewitt asked me if I wanted to go out on a fact-finding trip for Christian Aid to one of the countries where Christian Aid works. I have preached regularly for Christian Aid and I think that that was why he approached me. Originally it was not going to be the Holy Land but some other country, possibly the Philippines. Then he asked me how I felt about going as part of a women's group to the Middle East. I liked the fact that we were going as a group of women ministers because I thought it might be interesting to see how we reacted, as a group of women, to the context, as well as how the context reacted to us as a group of women priests. I had never been on a classic pilgrimage to the Holy Land and hadn't really wanted to go on one but this seemed to be a great opportunity to go and to see—to coin a phrase—the Living Stones rather than just the buildings. That is how it came about. So we advertised that for a group of six or seven women ministers to fit in one minibus!

*Where did you stay?*

We stayed in St George's in Jerusalem for three days, in a hotel in Gaza City for three days and at then at the St Margaret's in Nazareth.

*You have already said something about this on the Christian Aid video but can you think of ways in which your visit might have affected—or might in the future—affect the content of your preaching?*

Quite a lot! The way that I have described it is that the words—the names of the towns—like Bethlehem and Nazareth—now mean something different for me. Bethlehem means water tanks with bullet holes in them as much as it means 'While shepherds watched their flocks by night.' It has changed the meaning of the places for me—very much so—and I think that that is particularly so around Christmas and Easter. I preached quite soon afterwards on the visit of Nicodemus to Jesus and I was much more aware of the context of military occupation as experienced by Palestinians today. So I found myself preaching about Nicodemus visiting Jesus by night as a meeting of two people under occupation. Nicodemus was talking to a radical and controversial figure and there was always the threat of violence by the authorities. I had not really thought much about that before.

The visit directly affected my preaching. When I was studying to be ordained I did a course on the Holocaust. I was interested in the Middle East anyway and the visit to the Holy Land helped me to understand the Palestinian perspective. I had studied the Holocaust and Jewish studies and, with Christianity's roots being very much in Judaism, I suppose I suppose I had automatically concentrated on the Jewish narrative.

*Did you go to YadVaShem?*

Yes. We went to YadVaShem. It was a very, very moving experience, particularly because a Jewish guide who worked in Christian-Jewish education took us round. He was very effective and somehow the stories were etched on his face.

*Who took you round the country most of the time?*

Caroline Jay from Christian Aid was our facilitator. She speaks Arabic very well and she was the person who set up the itinerary and organised visits to particular places where Christian Aid partners would then show us around the area.

*Did you go to any refugee camps?*

Yes. We went to Daheisha refugee camp near Bethlehem and our guide there was from the Alternative Tourism Group. It was good to have a Palestinian guide for that. It was vital for us that we had a Jewish guide for some of the sites in West Jerusalem and Palestinian guides for most of the rest.

*Did the visit modify or in any way affect your views on the political situation?*

I knew some of the history. Before I was ordained I taught a GCSE course on the 'Arab-Israeli Conflict'. So I had the dates in my head—and the wars. And I had the Holocaust as the testing paradigm for the whole situation. I think that that changed while I was there and I came back much more aware of the current inequality and the current injustice which I think I hadn't been aware of before. I knew the history—bearing a time line in my mind—but it hadn't occurred to me what the current living situation was for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. And having seen that, and experienced it, and enjoyed the hospitality of Palestinian families—that was a very helpful corrective to my understanding, which had previously only been based on a Jewish narrative.

*Has it strengthened the Liberation Theology dimension to your preaching?*

I think it has. It has also strengthened the way I might describe the media in preaching as well. I do often mention the media in my preaching because I think that it is very potent force in society today. I am often rather critical of the media's role. But I have become more critical since I went to the Middle East because it became apparent to me quite soon that the information we were getting here was based upon a different agenda—all about balance. When something on the Palestinian side is mentioned this is immediately followed by something on the Israeli side but in fact it was all weighted towards the Israeli perspective.

In the current conflict I try to separate out in my mind criticisms of what is current Israeli policy—which is all I'm criticising—current and recent policy—rather than widening the criticisms to embrace wider issues.

*You are not thinking about 1948 then?*

I am looking more at the present. Of course, I understand that 1948 was either a triumph or a catastrophe. When I have heard Israelis—liberal Israelis—speaking, they have understood that too—that the State of Israel was bought at a huge cost to the Palestinians. I do understand that, but right now I would favour the two-state solution on the 1967 borders, that seems to me to be where we are now, practically speaking.

*Some other questions... You obviously met the different Christian groups in the Holy Land did this experience in any way strengthen your ecumenical vision?*

What I like about the group was that it was a Methodist and Anglican mix. I am quite strongly ecumenical and I was encouraged that we met different kinds of Christians active in Sabeel. It also encouraged me re-remembering that dialogue between faiths is really vital.

*I was going to ask you about the interfaith dimension—whether your thinking and preaching had been affected in that area also.*

Yes. I am impressed that the Palestinian people contain within them a magnificent inter-faith story in as much as they ask each other where they are from, rather than what religion they are. So the Muslim majority and the Christian minority, by and large, get on fine.

I suppose the historical feature of Jerusalem that really saddened me, though—at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—was the way different Christian churches had their own places—that really made me very angry. I am probably being unfair here, but I thought, 'All men!'

*Historically, of course, it was a policy of divide and rule by the Muslim rulers that contributed to that situation.*

Yes, of course. I accept that. But in today's world—what is happening now? And women are marginal to that world—particularly in the Orthodox Church where women are not allowed into the sanctuary.

*It is a different culture there, though. I told an Arab Orthodox friend of mine in Jordan about the ordination of women in the Church of England and he would not accept that I was not joking. He thought I was 'having him on.'*

*How did you find that people reacted to female clergy? What reception did you, as women clergy, get from Palestinian Christians?*

Absolutely fine! And we wore our clerical collars all the time as we were going around. So we were very visibly ordained. At the checkpoints we found that it actually helped. We had one very funny evening with a group of women

rabbis. Our Israeli guide was very funny. He was the only man there with a group of Christian women priests and Jewish women rabbis and he said, 'I am not going to say a thing all evening!' And we had a hilarious evening talking about what it was like to be public religious women in our different religious worlds.

*Do you think that there might be a danger of mentioning the Holy Land too much in your preaching? Do you think that there is a danger of talking about the political issues too much? People might think, 'O, here she goes again!' Most ordinary people, after all, haven't a clue.*

Yes. Particularly if you are in a parish and you are preaching week in, week out; there is a job of education to be done there, that you can do without constantly referring to the conflict. It's a question of language. It's a question of naming occupation. You can even do it just by saying, 'Jesus lived under military occupation just as people do today under Israeli occupation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.' You can continue the process of education without constantly referring to, 'When I was in Palestine.' That really can just switch people off. I have preached twice specifically about the Holy Land since I came back, and once a whole sermon. And I got some very angry letters afterwards—particularly from Americans in the congregation. I went back and read the sermon and I think it really was balanced. I could argue that. But they were very angry to hear a Palestinian perspective.

*It is interesting that they were Americans. I think that perhaps their media is even more partial than ours.*

Yes, very much so. But they thought that it was an abuse of the pulpit to be talking about the issue at all. I was interested in that reaction and in a sense it politicised me going there and seeing the situation. But I am very definite that any criticisms that I want to make are about the policies of a democratic Israeli government in the occupied territories. I do not want to be open to the charge of anti-Semitism because that is such a deeply rooted thing in the history of Christian thought—for example the prayers for 'Jews and infidels' in the 1662 Prayer Book prayers on Good Friday—all that kind of nonsense. I am not going to buy into that. As I soon as I see it going in that direction I want to back off. For me it is a much wider issue about human rights. It is about the dignity of all people, whatever their ethnicity or religion. And as a Christian I am not neutral. I can't speak neutrally about it. I am already politicised—by being a Christian, by being British—but now I can speak with more knowledge.

THE LIVING STONES OF THE HOLY LAND TRUST  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 28 June 2003, 2-3 p.m. Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1 (Small Hall, First Floor)

The AGM will be held during the course of a DAY CONFERENCE on

The Holy Land and the Challenge to the Churches

Saturday 28 June 2003, 10.30 a.m.-4.30 p.m., in Friends House (Small Hall, First Floor).

The Day Conference is co-sponsored by Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust, Friends of Sabeel UK and Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

## SHAPING THE BUSH DOCTRINE: NEO-CONSERVATIVES AND CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALISTS IN CONTEXT

*Donald E Wagner*

Much has been made of late concerning Jewish ideologues running the foreign policy in the United States, particularly in the Middle East. Some of these critics have raised the possibility that the war in Iraq was inspired by Israeli interests and have pointed to several pro-Israel advocates such as Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, and Douglas Feith who have reached the highest echelons of the Bush Administration. For most Jews, these allegations trigger fears the frightening history of anti-Semitism in the west and where Jews were singled out as the scapegoats in various societies, such as Germany following World War I. Generally I agree that these generalized accusations are a form of anti-Semitism and must be avoided at all costs. A case involved US Congressman Jim Moran (Democrat from Virginia) who advanced this argument at a peace rally a few weeks before the US and Britain launched the war on Iraq. Moran was rightly subjected to severe scrutiny for these careless and simplistic assertions and as a result he could be in danger of losing his seat in the US Congress following the next election. Allegations such as his should be challenged and examined in context, assessing the complexity of each situation. It would be a tragic mistake to again 'blame the Jews' or simply point to 'pro-Israel interests,' as the forces at work are multiple and quite complex.

A more careful analysis would suggest at least six influences or forces have converged at this point in history to shape the Bush Doctrines since the September 11, 2001, tragedy. Clearly, Iraq is the first test for this 'new' approach to foreign policy (some may rightly argue these are not new tactics as the US used similar strategies of regime change and pre-emptive strikes on Panama, Somalia, and Kosovo). It is of utmost importance that we analyze these forces and organizations that have converged to shape the new and more aggressive and unilateral strategies emanating from the Bush White House and the Pentagon as they will inevitably lead to new military adventures and targeted countries, such as Syria, Iran, and even Saudi Arabia.

The following essay will examine *six pillars* that shape and under-gird the Bush doctrine, resulting in a new alignment of power for the new American empire.

1. *The Right Wing of the Republican Party*: to simplify matters, there have been two polarities that have shaped foreign policy within the Republican Party—those close to George Bush Sr. and his Secretary of State James Baker, and those called the Neo-Reaganites or the Neo-conservatives. Baker dominated the foreign policy of the first Bush Administration through the State Department, the Pentagon, CIA, and foreign service officers who were closely attuned to the Arab world, Israel, petroleum interests, and the US intelligence community.

The first Gulf War (1991) was the product of these influences, followed immediately by the Madrid Peace process, which commenced in November 1991. Many readers will recall that when the Madrid process was bogged down by Israeli Prime Minister Itzhak Shamir's various obstructions to negotiations (which he publicly admitted were strategies to subvert the process), the Bush Sr. Administration froze Israel's request for \$10 billion in loan guarantees. This rare challenge to Israel by a US administration occurred during a Presidential election year and resulted in significant pressure being placed upon the Bush re-election campaign. When Bush Sr. and James Baker realized they were losing in the polls late in the campaign they granted the \$10 billion to Israel, but it was too late to win a close election against William Jefferson Clinton. One close observer of the pivotal role of the pro-Israel lobby in the politics of the Presidential election was George W. Bush, who was assigned by his father to consolidate support from two major constituencies: the conservative evangelical and fundamentalist Christians and the Jewish community. Neither community supported his father in the election, a lesson the younger Bush never forgot.

The other polarity in the Republican Party might be called the neo-Reagan conservatives, now simply called Neo-Conservatives. They tend to be super-patriots who see the world more in terms of unilateralism rather than the multi-multilateralism and role of the United Nations. The neo-Reaganites believe that the Soviet Union fell because they took a strong stand against it, particularly during the Reagan Era, preparing the way for its collapse by the end of the 1980s. They generally despise the United Nations and the use of international law or the international court of justice, unless these instruments would be used to serve the interests of the United States. International treaties and the United Nations itself are viewed in an adversarial manner and accused of placing limits on US power which may need to be employed in the future against any perceived or potential threats to the US. In terms of Middle East policy, the neo-Reaganites tend to be more sympathetic to the Likud Party in Israel and less attuned to the interests of the Arab world, or interestingly, the perspectives advanced by the Foreign Service and US Embassy staffs in the Arab and Islamic world, or even from the CIA. Those who shape Middle East policy tend to be a smaller group of conservative intellectuals who realigned with conservative think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute, the Jewish Institute of National Security Affairs (JINSA), the Project for the New American Century, and the Near East Policy Institute.

2. *The Petroleum Industry and Multinational Construction Corporations*: Significant discussion of the George W. Bush Presidential campaign and the Texas and Oklahoma based oil

and energy giants came to light during his run for the presidency, but most analysts overlooked the role of the multinational construction firms. For more than two decades, the San Francisco based Bechtel corporation has been the recipient of multi-million dollar projects such as salvaging the Kuwait oil wells following the previous Gulf War, and rebuilding Kuwait and Kosovo. Bechtel has been a close ally and major contributor to the Republican Party with its former CEO George Schultz (Reagan's Secretary of State) and Reagan's Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger serving on its Board of Directors. Another major player at Bechtel is Jack Sheehan, a retired Marine Corps general and a senior vice president of the company. He is also a member of the Defense Policy Board, a group that is intimately involved with the Pentagon and has helped shape the strategy for the war in Iraq. Joining Sheehan on the Defense Policy Board are Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, and Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense. Bechtel was recently awarded with a \$680 million contract for the rebuilding of Iraq.

In addition to Bechtel, there is Dallas-based Halliburton Co., whose CEO from 1995-2000 is the Vice President of the United States, Dick Cheney. Much has been contested is the fact that Cheney is still receiving a consulting fee from Halliburton estimated to be worth \$180 million per year while he is in office. Halliburton was surrounded by controversy in 2001 when it was accused of unduly influencing the Bush Administration's energy policy (a Cheney-led task force wrote the Administration's position paper on energy that year according to William Nelkirk in the Chicago Tribune, 13 April, 2003). Last year the GAO (Government Accounting Office) forced Halliburton to pay \$2 million to settle fraudulent claims concerning work at a US military base. In 1997 it was caught by the GAO in an over-billing scheme. Nevertheless, Halliburton has already been awarded a contract of up to \$7 billion for rebuilding Iraq, with its subsidiary Kellogg, Brown and Root, in line to receive additional contracts. Halliburton, Bechtel, and the Fleur Corporation (whose former CEO is likely to be selected to run the new Iraqi oil industry), and their subsidiaries, will be given the lion's share of the contracts awarded for the reconstruction of Iraq, estimated to range from \$25-100 billion over the next three to five years. Several construction firms in the United States and Europe are furious over the limited number of corporations that received contracts and that those chosen may have been selected due to their proximity to the Republican Party and the Defense Policy Group.

The Center for Public Integrity, a private agency in Washington that monitors US contracts, reports that of the 30 members of the Defense Policy Group, at least 9 are linked to corporations that have received \$76 billion in defence contracts during 2001-2, according to Bob Herbert in the *New York Times* (10 April 2003). Currently a Congressional subcommittee has called for an investigation into conflict of interest charge against the corporations and individuals who have brokered the lucrative deals.

3. *The Pro Israel Lobby*: America-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Council of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, the World Zionist Organization, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and others American Jewish

organizations are generally viewed as the first or second strongest lobby in Washington, D.C. They are clearly the strongest lobby coalition representing the interests of a foreign government and certainly a significant force in shaping US policy in the Middle East. Moreover, they are capable of making and breaking Senators and members of the House of Representatives through their donations to candidates who are 'friends of Israel,' and punishing those who are critics of Israel. They are closely aligned to the Likud Party in Israel, now dominated by ultra-nationalist hawks such as Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Often called 'the lobby', AIPAC's reach goes deep into each Senate and House office on the Hill through its policy papers, sympathetic 'aides' in each office, campaign contributions, and a variety of pressure tactics. Those who oppose AIPAC's pro-Likud policy will need to combat major intimidation, as was the case with representatives Cynthia McKinney and Earl Hilliard, African American Members of Congress from what were judged to be 'safe districts,' but who were defeated by pro-Israel opponents in 2002. Today, AIPAC and other pro-Israel lobby organizations are often joined by the fundamentalist Christian organizations, the arms industry, and the multinational construction firms, to mount imposing pressure on House and Senate votes that relate not only to Israel, but a number of foreign policy issues.

It is my personal conviction that critics of the lobby should always employ the term 'pro-Israel lobby,' both because the lobby is sufficiently complex that it is not limited to the Jewish lobby agencies, but they work in tandem with various Christian fundamentalist organizations, the military establishment, and various defence contractors and the multinational construction agencies. Further, it is frankly racist and a form of anti-Semitism to discuss the 'Jewish' lobby as if it holds all the power, without considering the broad political and economic ties that shape Middle East policy.

4. *The Fundamentalist Christian Right*: During the late 1970s, the newly empowered Moral Majority under Revd Jerry Falwell, Ed McAteer's Religious Roundtable, and Pat Robertson's '700 Club' joined several pro-Israel organizations to oppose what they perceived as pro-Arab influences in the United States. A turning point occurred when President Jimmy Carter stated in a March, 1977 speech in New England, that 'the Palestinian people deserve a homeland.' The statement by the newly elected Evangelical Christian Sunday school teacher and President of the United States stirred the Christian right and the pro-Israel lobby simultaneously. Various fundamentalist Christian agencies began to work closely with the pro-Israel lobby and forged an intimate relationship that opposed the Carter Administration's policies in the Middle East. By the next Presidential election the alliance demonstrated that it was capable of exercising considerable political influence, which it did, by shifting the Jewish and fundamentalist Christian vote in favour of Ronald Reagan who became President of the United States in 1980. Whereas Carter had received the majority of the Evangelical and fundamentalist Christian votes in 1976, Ronald Reagan secured over 75 percent in the 1980 election, enough to declare victory.

An additional factor was the election of the first Likud

Government and Prime Minister Menachem Begin to power in Israel in 1977. Both Likud and the pro-Israel lobby in the United States noted that the policies of the mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches were more closely aligned to the United Nations formulas for a peaceful settlement, and were at times critical of Israeli policies. Israel and its lobbies in the US shifted their focus to the conservative Christians in the late 1970s, and continued in this vein throughout the Reagan Era. By 1982, the Christian-Israel Political Affairs Committee (CIPAC) was established and followed the model of the successful AIPAC. CIPAC attempted to coordinate a significant portion of the political lobbying for Israel increasingly for fundamentalist Christians. During the two Reagan administrations, the fundamentalist Christian right had direct access to the President and those shaping foreign policy. Moreover, on seven separate public occasions, Reagan stated his conviction that history was rapidly moving toward the Battle of Armageddon, the imminent return of Jesus, and the central role a restored Israel would play at the end of history.

The political role of the Christian right, particularly in supporting Likud and the pro-Israeli lobby's pressure on Congress and the Administration, began to decline thanks to a series of moral and political miscalculations in the late 1980s. Among these problems were the failed Presidential campaign of Christian television personality Pat Robertson, and the sex and financial scandals that brought down televangelists Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker and Jimmy Swaggert. Moreover, the Bush Sr. administration had less interest in the Christian 'right,' and after the Gulf War of 1991, it embarked on the Madrid Peace process, which was opposed by Israel's Likud Party and the Christian right. During the 1990s, the Christian right was active but less influential in the United States, and the Clinton Democrats worked more closely with the secular Labour Party in Israel.

Still, the Christian 'right' or more accurately, the American Christian Zionist alliance with the pro-Israel lobby, remained in place throughout the 1990s, but with less visibility. One need only recall the occasion in January 1998 when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu chose to meet with Jerry Falwell and 1000 Christian Zionists before he met with President Bill Clinton on the day the Monica Lewinski scandal was revealed. Netanyahu entered the Christian convention to a thunderous ovation and a chant saluting him as 'the Ronald Reagan of Israel'. Falwell and the Christian Zionist organizations joined AIPAC, the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, the Zionist Organization of America, and the Americans for a Safe Israel to issue a statement in support of Netanyahu, who was refusing to support the Oslo Peace Accords. The Christian right and the pro-Israel lobby were joined by Republican Party leader Newt Gingrich in calling upon the Clinton administration to 'stop putting pressure on Israel'. Falwell pledged that he would launch a campaign to contact over 200,000 Evangelical pastors to support the statement, and contact their legislators on behalf of Israel.

Another development in the late 1990s was the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, a project led by former Anti-Defamation League activist Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein. The Fellowship became a major coordinator of

evangelical and fundamentalist churches to provide financial and political support for Israel. It was able to raise \$10-20 million per year for the United Jewish Appeal and selected Likud Party projects, including settlements. One church alone, the Cornerstone Church of San Antonio, Texas, contributed \$1 million to settle Jews from the former Soviet Union in settlements on the West Bank. When a reporter challenged the pastor of the church, Revd John Hagee, concerning the legality of such contributions when they violated US policy on the settlements, the pastor replied: 'We feel like the coming of the Soviet Jews to Israel is a fulfilment of Biblical prophecy ... I am a Bible scholar and a theologian, and from my perspective, the law of God transcends the law of the United States government and the US State Department.' According to Rabbi Eckstein, Christian fundamentalists and evangelicals contributed over \$20 million to Israel in 2002 (Chicago Tribune, 7 February 2003).

However, the central role of the Christian Zionists such as Falwell, Robertson, Hagee, and others became more potent after the highly contested election of George W Bush in November 2000. Initially, the new administration seemed to delay a clear announcement of its policy on Israel and Palestine, but the 11 September 2001 tragedy changed everything. Within a month of 11 September, the Administration seemed to be drawing closer to the Sharon doctrine, claiming the US war on terrorism was one and the same with Israel's war on terrorism. By the winter of 2002, a variety of Christian Zionist initiatives culminated in the '2002 Washington Rally for Israel'. According to some accounts, well over 100,000 people made their way to the Washington Mall on 15 April 2002, to hear from former Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Holocaust writer Elie Weisel, New York Governor George Pataki, several US Senators and House Majority Leader Dick Armey, a Christian Zionist from Texas.

In June 2002, Rabbi Eckstein and former Director of the Christian Coalition Ralph Reed, formed 'Stand with Israel', a new coalition of fundamentalist churches and clergy. Its goal is to mobilize over 100,000 churches and 1 million Christians in the United States to 'stand in solidarity with Israel'. The orientation of the churches and leadership was clearly that of premillennial dispensationalism, or the end-time theology that focused on the Battle of Armageddon, Jesus' second coming, and the role of Israel in the God's special instrument in the 'end of days'. Curiously, most US Jewish leaders have welcomed the alliance with the Christian fundamentalists, including the secular Abe Foxman, National Director of The Anti-Defamation League, who notes: 'we will continue to disagree on various issues, but we can disagree agreeably.'

'Stand for Israel' held its first national convention in April 2003, one day after AIPAC's major policy conference. The signs of coordination between the two pro-Israel lobby organizations were evident. The 'Stand with Israel' conference convened a day after AIPAC activists completed their lobby day on Capitol Hill, and they were joined with the Christian Zionist advocates who proclaimed a similar political message bathed in Christian end-time theology. Gary Bauer, former Presidential candidate and president of American Values, addressed the AIPAC convention, receiving several standing

ovations during his militant pro-Israel address. Bauer called for a continuation of Israel's illegal settlement policy, its opposition to negotiating land for peace, and his opposition to the US participating in any international forum in negotiating an Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Bauer added: 'Whoever sits in the confines of Washington, and suggests to the people of Israel that they have to give up more land in exchange for peace, that is an obscenity.'

It seems clear that President George W Bush learned from his father's mistake during the 1992 election campaign and has solidified support from the Christian right and the pro-Israel lobby. Groups like 'Stand for Israel,' Pat Robertson's '700 Club,' the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Christian Coalition have found a home in the right wing of the Republican Party. The Christian and Jewish Zionist alliance appears to be solidly in line with the Likud Party in Israel and the Republican Party in the United States for the immediate future. They will bring considerable pressure on the Bush Administration once negotiations begin on the 'Road Map' for an Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

5: *The Arms Industry*: The Middle East has long been the region that purchases the majority of the weapons on the planet, whether it be Israel, its many Arab enemies, or the wealthy oil sheikhdoms in need of security from its neighbours to protect their petroleum reserves. For many years there has been a strong connection between the Arms industry in the United States, the pro-Israel lobby, and the multinational construction firms as they strive to coordinate their self-interests in relation to Middle East policy formation. During the 1990s a new player entered the turf, the neo-conservative ideologues. There is growing evidence of the coordination among these various agencies and ideologues, as evident in a remarkable piece of investigative journalism by Seymour Hersh that appeared in the 17 March 2003 edition of the *New Yorker Magazine*. In the article, Hersh gave significant evidence of the close connection between neo-conservative ideologue Richard Perle, close advisor to Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and himself, Chair of the major Pentagon advisory body, the Defense Policy Group. Perle and Wolfowitz have teamed up repeatedly in recent years as architects of the war on Iraq doctrines, including pre-emptive war on undesirable regimes.

According to Hersh, Perle set up the Trireme Management Group in November 2001, a company that benefited from the arms trade with the Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, and many other countries. Perle was able to broker major security and defence arrangements between US military contractors and nations in need of the latest US military and security technology. Hersh demonstrates in the article that Perle derived significant personal financial benefit from Trireme, but used his position as a consultant to the Pentagon to broker multi-million dollar contracts, possibly drawing upon classified intelligence information gleaned through his high level contacts with the Pentagon and CIA. Perle was eventually forced to resign his position as Chair of the Defense Policy Board, but remains an independent consultant to the group and retains his access to US intelligence data. The Perle case is but one illustration of the in-workings of the arms industry with the pro-Israel lobby and the military in shaping policy

and the financial arrangements that follow.

6. *The Neoconservative Movement*. Following the last Gulf War in 1991, a group of Reagan conservatives who believed the first Bush Administration should have finished the job in Iraq, submitted a memorandum to the first Bush administration calling for the US to remove Saddam Hussein and adopt a more aggressive military approach to deal with Iraq. James Baker and leadership in the Pentagon and CIA found the views extreme and the policy suggestions were rejected. The Reaganites did not go away and chose to fight the Clinton administration at every level, organizing themselves in 1995 with a modest but influential journal, the *Weekly Standard*. Led by archconservative William Kristol, son of conservative ideologue Irving Kristol, editor of *Commentary Magazine*, the *Standard* outflanked the *New Republic* and other arch conservative oracles. The views of Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, anti-Islamic author Daniel Pipes, Francis Fukuyama of 'the end of history' fame, 'Clash of Civilizations' author Samuel Huntington and many others called for a new US policy in the age of the new American empire. Their doctrines quickly became clear, including the use of regime changes in countries like Iraq and Syria, a break with the United Nations (which potentially limited US policy), and the need for 'pre-emptive strikes' on real or perceived enemies. Gradually, the group added other former Reagan hawks like Elliot Abrams (convicted in the Iran-Contra arms scandal but pardoned by Reagan as he left office), James Woolsey, David Feith, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and others. In 1997, Kristol and friends organized the think-tank 'Project for the New American Century', drawing from the above mentioned neo-conservatives and other conservative academics (see [www.newamericancentury.org](http://www.newamericancentury.org)).

One of their primary concerns was a war on Iraq, hinted at much earlier but clearly evident in neo-conservative projects by 1998, when the group drafted a policy letter for Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott. They claimed the Clinton Administration was 'capitulating to Saddam Hussein,' and the US should force a regime change in Iraq. Few paid attention to the policy letter, which within five years would become the dominant US strategy in the Middle East. Also in 1998, three of these leaders, Richard Perle (Chair of the team, then with the American Enterprise Institute), David and Meyrav Wurmser (then with the Israeli-based Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies), James Colbert (JINSA), Jonathan Torop (with the AIPAC think tank the Washington Institute for Near East Policy), and Douglas Feith, wrote the position paper 'A Clean Break', for Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, advising him to 'break' with diplomacy and seek a military solution to the Palestinian issue, claiming that Israel's superior military power should force Arafat and the Palestinian Authority to submit.

When George W Bush was campaigning for the Presidency in 1999, a group of policy advisors were invited to Texas for a weekend briefing. Included in the group were Henry Kissinger, Colin Powell, Paul Wolfowitz, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and several of the neo-conservative ideologues. Among the others were advisors from the Bush Sr. administration, including James Baker and Brent Scowcroft.

Thus there were two major streams of influence in the shaping of Middle East policy: the Bush Sr. stream, which advised nuance, patience, yet strong patriotism and a strong military, pitted against the more hawkish and more Zionist of the Likud orientation, called the neo-conservatives.

The tension between the two camps continued through the early months of the Bush Administration, with Colin Powell and, to a degree, Condolisa Rice calling for the nuanced and patient approach, with Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, and Paul Wolfowitz leading the charge for a more aggressive position. These were the dividing lines on 10 September 2001. Then everything changed.

Most of the neo-conservatives mentioned above were now in high leadership positions in the new Bush Administration. Dick Cheney was Vice President and held significant defence and intelligence portfolios. Donald Rumsfeld was Secretary of Defense, and his chief advisors were Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, and Richard Perle, Chair of the Defense Policy Group. Their neo-conservative doctrines were matched by those of Cheney and Rumsfeld. They moved another of their advocates of neo-conservative ideology, John Bolton, to head the State Department post as Undersecretary for International Security, a major policy formation agency in the State Department. Douglas Feith, close associate of Wolfowitz, became Under Secretary of Defense, as the third most powerful defence in government. Edward Luttwak, an Israeli citizen and long term hawk, became a member of the Defense Policy Group, advising the Pentagon under Perle. I Lewis Libby, long term operative in the pro-Israel lobby, was appointed as Chief of Staff for the Vice President, and is chief advisor to the VP on Israel affairs. Robert Satlof, former executive director of the pro-Israel think tank the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, became a National Security Council Advisor. Elliot Abrams, convicted during the Reagan Administration for his role in the Iran-Contra arms trade, (pardoned by Reagan as he left office), was appointed as Middle East Director of the National Security Council, a top position on the formation of Middle East policy. The highly visible official White House Spokesman for the Bush Administration, Ari Fleisher, comes directly from the Israeli lobby and has a long history with hawkish pro-Israeli lobby organizations.

*Conclusion:* This remarkable convergence of ideology, religious interests, military, the arms industry, and multinational construction firms, was in place and quickly mobilized after the 11 September tragedy. This shift in Middle East policy had been 'in the pipeline' during the election campaign for George W Bush, but it took the 11 September crisis and the crisis-ridden environment that followed to serve as the lynchpin to put these policies and leadership in motion. As had long been suggested by the neo-conservatives, Iraq would be the initial test case for the new policies of pre-emptive war, regime change, and unilateralism. The 'clean-break' doctrine that many of the neo-conservative ideologues had recommended to the Likud Party in Israel, would gradually be phased in to become the Bush Doctrine. Now a 'clean break' would entail the US pulling out of various international treaties and commitments, including the Kyoto Treaty on the environment, the ban on land mines, and the international criminal court. Yet these doctrines and interests were now taking on a new form of American patriotism, honed and refined by the New American Century, the American Enterprise Institute, the *Weekly Standard*, the Christian right, and the military establishment. Far from being a Jewish inspired plot, the new American patriotism cut across religious lines and combined secular doctrines of imperial rule with the pietism of President George W Bush and the Christian right. As the British author and long term Arab analyst Patrick Seale wrote recently for the *Daily Star* (Beirut): 'Washington is intoxicated by the vision of imposing a Pax Americana on the Arab world on the model of the imperial "order" which Britain imposed on the entire region in an earlier age.' The results of British imperial strategies in the Middle East, from Iraq to Palestine, have been disastrous. The unfinished business of the Kurds, Sunnis, and Shi'ites in Iraq could turn that territory into another Lebanon of the mid-1970s-late 1980s. The unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict still lingers in all of its violence and injustice, another legacy of British imperial neglect. These unresolved conflicts leaves one to wonder if we are condemned to repeat the lessons still not learned from the previous 100 years of history in the Middle East.

**CRISIS IN THE HOLY LAND**  
**11 MARCH 2003**  
**THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS**  
*Linda Ramsden*

Last year I attended a day conference on Christian Zionism. During it, Michael Prior made a throw-away comment that he could not understand how anyone with any intelligence could possibly believe in the doctrine of Christian Zionism. Although I found his remark rather intimidating, I felt that I had to respond—because for a few years I actually had been a Christian Zionist!

I had gone from the security of a wonderful life on a small mixed farm miles from anywhere to the shock of the

big city when I left to attend the University of Minnesota. I felt like a rug had been pulled from underneath me and despite growing up in a Lutheran Church, I wanted more reality in my spiritual life. Through Christian Outreach on Campus I had found a friend in Jesus that I had not known before and with that the Bible came to life for me. But along with some good Christian teaching came an interpretation of scriptures relating to the importance of the Jews as the chosen people and the establishment of the state of Israel.

For someone surrounded by materialism and naive towards the world at large, the focus on Israel and the end times gave me a religious purpose. All my energy was poured into evangelism and carrying the message of Jesus' return to those around me as I dropped out of college at the end of year three to dedicate my life to see the world saved in the few years remaining.

Thankfully, as a result of marrying an Englishman and coming to live here, I was taken away from the community that held that Christian Zionist focus. Then when 1981 came and went, the year ear-marked for the 'rapture', I realized that there was an error somewhere in the teaching I had received. In 1988, I met a man visiting the UK while he attended the Lambeth Conference—he was an Anglican vicar who also happened to be a Palestinian. What a shock, I never knew Palestinian Christians even existed! As he told the story of his family all my Christian Zionist views disintegrated.

In 1998, I finally visited the Holy Land for the first time on a Christian pilgrimage. However it was slightly different from the conventional pilgrimage because we were based in Bethlehem, rather than Jerusalem, and we had a Muslim Palestinian as a guide. When I returned home, I read everything on Israel/Palestine that I could get my hands on and started attending talks in London and meeting people. I was so convinced about the lack of understanding of the Middle East that in 1999, I had three visits there and started a company to take people to Israel, Palestine and Jordan to see the history, meet the locals and experience the culture. These tours were just getting established when I happened to be travelling out there, again leading another tour group. We landed on September 28, 2000, the very day that Sharon went on to Haram al-Sharif, Temple Mount, igniting the start of the second *intifada*. From our hotel across from Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem we saw young Palestinians throwing stones and the Israeli gun-fire retaliation. Obviously, our itinerary and the whole dynamics of the tour changed as we the participants began asking questions about what was happening and why.

Then I returned a year later with a group of people on a fact-finding tour. I realized that many people from the West want to see the situation for themselves and demonstrate solidarity with the Palestinians. Not everyone is in a position to participate in initiatives like the International Solidarity Movement where they might be asked to provide protection for a family by living with them, escorting people across check-points, dismantling roadblocks or helping with the olive harvest.

For whatever reason, some people prefer the security of travelling with a group, following a programme. Indeed, last week, on Monday the 3rd, I returned from another such study tour. This group was small compared to previous ones. With the threat of war on Iraq, not many people were brave enough to travel there however we were perfectly safe and able to travel without fear.

We always stay in Palestinian hotels to give them business and usually are the only other occupants. How strange to be the only guests as we rattle around in an empty dining room. Hungry for contact with the outside world, hotel staff often spend their evenings sitting in the lounge talking and sharing their life-stories. We when we stop for lunch or visit

souvenir shops we are a lifeline to them. Indeed, I will never forget the day the tour group shopped at the Media store near New Gate in Jerusalem. It is an outlet store for embroidery projects in various Palestine areas organised by the Orthodox Church. Mary commented that that very morning she had been praying that God would send some customers for their goods so that she would get money in to pay the ladies involved in the project and she knew the poverty her ladies were living in. However, it also has to be said that because of the lack of tourists, we have also been 'fought' over by hoteliers, shop-keepers and street-traders as they are desperate for our business.

On one of our first days, we went to St George's Cathedral to see Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal. He had just returned from the enthronement of Archbishop Rowan Williams. While in the UK, he had met with Tony Blair and pleaded with him saying that the UK was the last hope in standing up against Bush's desire to go to war and that the shorter road to Baghdad is through Jerusalem. Bishop Riah also described the targeting of St Philip's Church in Gaza a few weeks ago and that it was direct message from Israel to him to shut up and to stop travelling abroad telling the truth of the situation.

The tours also go to Ramallah and participants have the opportunity to experience a little bit of what it is like to wait at checkpoints. Last November it took us one hour and twenty minutes to get through Qalandia checkpoint and more than two hours to get out again. The only reason we approached the soldiers to jump the queue was because our guide needed to get home before his travel permit for the day expired. The West Bank is divided into eight sections. In order to pass from one area to another, travel permits are required. These are issued monthly basis but are only valid between 5 a.m. and 7 p.m., provided there are not any curfews. Because permits can be difficult to obtain, 80 percent of people just remain in their immediate locality, cut off from family, friends and even work, and Palestinians risk imprisonment if caught outside of their designated areas!

On our last trip we were able to have an hour with Yasser Arafat. It was six in the evening and dark. Heavy snowfall had begun that afternoon and by then there was a thick covering on the ground, which also covered the rubble of the many building of the compound bulldozed and bombed last April. Just two structures remain standing. Single exposed light bulbs dimly lit the sandbag-lined passages armed soldiers led us along as we were ushered into the room where we met President Arafat, the room where he eats, sleeps and holds meetings. Having been confined there for the last 15 months, he looked terrible—white and frail. Nevertheless he was glad to see us and presented us with a video of *Jenin*, *Jenin*, the film of the April incursions.

Because of the heavy snowfall, roads were closed and we were unable to get to Hebron to meet with the Christian Peacemakers Team but we were able to travel to Gaza. The snow turned out to be something of a blessing because there were not long queues at checkpoints as soldiers did not like standing out in the cold. We were dropped at Erez Crossing and after explaining that we had a meeting with the Near East Council of Churches, we were allowed to pass. After walking the 350 metres through the crossing we were

collected by our driver and guide for the day, a 19 year-old from the Palestinian Progressive Youth Union. We were all staggered by his command of English as well as his involvement in the struggle for freedom. When he was 17 he had helped to organise a demonstration of 5,000 young people as they took to the streets near Erez protesting against the occupation and its effect on education. Jayyab was shot and nearly killed that day. Despite that close call and several months in hospital, he is back campaigning. Indeed, he is due to visit the UK soon on a speaking tour as guest of Sussex University Student Union.

On our way out of Gaza, we walked again down the wide deserted street of Erez Crossing and suddenly we heard the sound of voices from a covered area to our right. Later we discovered it was coming from the men (now all over 35 years in age as they are considered safer than young men) who are allowed out of Gaza to work in Israel. They returned by bus at the end of day and then are herded like animals down the long corridors. It reminded us of images of Jews herded along by Nazi soldiers. During the tour we had the privilege to meet with Raji Sourani at the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Dr Mustafa Barghouti at the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees, Juliana Johann representing the Palestine Monitor, Father O'Neil at Bethlehem University, Revd Bishara Awad at Bethlehem Bible College, Fuad Kokaly, mayor of Beit Sahour, Naim Ateek from Sabeel and George N Rishmawi of the Rapprochement Centre who told us about the work of the International Solidarity Movement. We also toured the Spafford Children's Home at Damascus Gate and met with Dan Simmonds from World Vision.

Later in Daheisha Refugee Camp near Bethlehem our guide proved to be on the Israeli wanted as an active member of Fatah. In his home he told of us his attempts to keep the Palestinian culture alive in the camp. Up until last year they did things like run a dance group and put on plays in the camp. Now their centre has been closed down, partly for lack of money, and they attempt smaller meetings in homes.

We were also showered with hospitality when we spent half a day in the Muslim village of Wadi Foquin, 12 kilometres southwest of Bethlehem. This is the only village of the 431 that were totally destroyed when the state of Israel was established that has been allowed to be re-built. However, their future is uncertain as most of their land has been stolen for the illegal settlement of Beitar Elit. The wall will also trap them between the West Bank and Israel—it is likely that they will lose everything once more and will return to refugee status! On a beautiful day we walked through Wadi Foquin and also visited their clinic, with its limited opening hours and basic necessities and the school where the children recited poetry and sang to us. Even as we walked through the village, people greeted us as gave us cups of tea and others homemade cookies. We climbed a hill to the home where we had lunch sitting outside on the veranda and where everything was homemade—*zatar* bread, marinated olives from their trees, goats cheese balls in herbs and olive oil. As we ate one of the village elders described life to us when he was in

the army during the time of British mandate and his donkey, grazing on the hill next to us, bellowed his responses from time to time. The only Palestinian structure that is functioning properly is the family unit. Later, in an Israeli town overlooking Wadi Foquin, we heard the story of two families who went to Israel after the Holocaust but we also heard a lot of propaganda from these moderate and kind people who, like so many Israelis, simply do not know what is really happening in the occupied territories. We all left there feeling something of the frustration that the Palestinians feel. A very important aspect of the tours are our meetings with the Israeli peace movement—people like Jeff Halper from the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, Ruth El-Raz from Bat Shalom and other from Rabbis for Human Rights and Ta'aysh. Hearing their stories makes you realize how marginalized they are by their own people. The Israeli Committee Against House Demolition organise tours of Greater Jerusalem so that you can see how the demographics of that area are changing as Israelis are invading East Jerusalem, taking over more and more of the city. With ICAHD we drove through settlements like Ma'ale Adumin and when seeing the road systems and growing settlements, you began to understand something of the 'matrix of control' that is carving the West Bank into cantons. Sharon's stated desire is to create a Palestinian state on 42 percent of the occupied territories, a state which has no control over its borders, airspace or water resources.

Most of the people who come on these study tours have some knowledge of the history of Palestine and the establishment of the state of Israel. However, none of them are prepared for what they encounter. As Jean Zaru, a Quaker woman in Ramallah, told us while visiting her home, 'You learn more where your feet take you.' After seeing man's inhumanity to man, all return home changed—determined to tell stories from the trip and to further their advocacy work. Some have come with me again on subsequent study tours or have gone back doing volunteer work in hospitals or with ISM.

Something that I have learned is that generally, the Christianity practised by those in Palestine is different from how it is lived out in the West. In the West, Christians, including me, have focussed on a triumphant faith and the prosperity gospel. The road that the Christians in the Middle East have to journey is very different. They know the suffering Christ, brokenness and what it is to carry their cross daily. It is humbling and challenging to be in their presence (as well as that of the many Muslims who also have a deep faith based on utter dependence upon God). Their suffering makes them shine—they have learned things that we never will have the privilege to do.

I challenge every one of us to ask what we can do at this critical time in history. Do you want to be a history maker? Remember what Trevor Huddleston said: 'we are here—naught for comfort. Get your hands dirty and do what Jesus would do—stand with the poor and oppressed.' You will enter a journey full of pain but also experience moments of love and joy beyond anything you imagined.