

Editor's Note: This is the first article in a multi-part series of articles we are republishing that were originally issued within our paper in 2016.

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Introduction

There is something about the American historical experience that breeds heresy. While Protestant Europe has been largely content to retain its sixteenth century religious creations such as Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anglicanism, the United States - "the great melting pot" - has always been fertile ground for new and frequently bizarre offshoots of Christianity. Groups loosely known as Shakers, Mormons, Millerites, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, and Christian Scientists are only a few of the more curious sects that have emerged from nineteenth century American roots, many of which have attained an international following today. Other groups, such as the Quakers and Methodists, may trace their origins to Protestant England but have found great appeal and large followings in the United States. By the mid-twentieth century, with the increasing secularization of society, the emergence of new sects - at least on a large scale - began to dwindle in favor of fractures within existing denominations. Today the hallmark issues that distinguish various "Christian" sects tend to be more "social" and less theological in nature. Age-old intellectual arguments about purgatory or infant baptism, for example, have long ago taken a back seat to concerns about abortion, homosexuality, and the environment (perish the thought that America would experience a *filioque* controversy!).

However, over the last half-century, another peculiar issue has come to the fore among American Christians - what about the Jews? *Have they been abandoned by God as the descendants of those who committed deicide in Jerusalem some twenty centuries ago? Or does God still embrace them and favor their salvation? Does God's plan of salvation involve only individual Jews or does it include the modern state of Israel? Do the Jews in modern Israel have a divine right to the land granted to the Hebrews of the Exodus some three thousand years ago? Does the state of Israel function today as an agent of the divine will, knowingly or not? What policy should the U.S. Government adopt toward Israel? Are we living in the "end times" and what role might God have in mind for the Jews? What clues does the Bible provide?*

These are the questions that are continuously discussed and debated, pondered and analyzed throughout much of American Christianity today. The interest - even obsession - with the fate of the Jews dates back at least four hundred years to Tudor and Stuart England. It spread to the American colonies primarily through the Puritans of New England. With the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, concern for the Jews from a religious and humanitarian viewpoint took on new dimensions for America - those of politics, diplomacy, and strategy. Thus, the twin issues of the Jews (seen from a religious and Biblical standpoint) and Israel (as an element of American foreign policy and national security) are more prominent in American national discourse than ever before.

Those who claim a special interest in this issue are sometimes referred to as Christian Zionists. Of course, they might not identify themselves by this term; such persons may genuinely label themselves as conservatives, evangelicals, fundamentalists, neo-conservatives, Tea Party adherents, or Bible-believing Christians, among other names. Indeed, Christian Zionism is maddeningly hard to pin down. Its adherents are not of one mind on either religious or political specifics. Christian Zionism has no governing body, no constitution, no declaration of principles, no creed, and no catechism. The contemporary literature on the subject is overwhelming and written from a wide variety of perspectives. However, a few descriptive remarks here will serve as a basis for our further discussion.

- Christian Zionism is an outgrowth of Protestant theology and interpretation of scripture in both England and the United States.
- It contains strains of anti-Catholicism that are largely muted today, perhaps because of the Church's subdued stance since Vatican II on its status as the one, true church of Christ.
- It has fabricated an artificial linkage between humanitarian concern for the Jewish people, as well as their conversion to Christianity, with American national security and foreign policy toward Israel.
- It has crafted a high-visibility if informal alliance with right-wing politicians in Israel and Jewish activists in the United States.
- It has created or embraced novel and heretical doctrines such as dispensationalism, the "Rapture," and a belief that God has a special plan for the Jewish people distinct from that for His Church.
- It claims a literal interpretation of the Bible, but is highly selective and often quotes without context (favorite sources are Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation).
- It has a fixation on the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy and "the end times," which it eagerly tries to catalyze through the agency of the state of Israel and the Jews.
- It became "mainstream" in the United States in the 1970s and was largely responsible for the election of two Republican presidents - Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush.

- It has been popularly proclaimed by dozens of media-savvy evangelists, from Jerry Falwell to John Hagee (more about both later).
- It has a sizeable cadre of followers, numbering in the millions, who devour the steady stream of books, pamphlets, videos, and other materials churned out by the various purveyors. Christian Zionists are typically politically active and constitute a significant voting bloc, leaning almost exclusively Republican.

This article is written as a companion piece to the three-part article entitled “Why is There a Gaza Strip?” published last year in *Catholic Family News*.^[i] That article focused on the issue of the “Promised Land” in Jewish history, from the occupation of the ancient land of Canaan to contemporary Israel and its occupied territories. It concluded that, because of modern Israel’s systemic abuse of the land and its inhabitants, it has seriously violated both the old covenant and the words of Christ. This article will examine the character of Christian Zionism, particularly in the United States. We will see that it is a phenomenon with twin components - religious and political - with unfortunate and even dangerous results in both realms.

This article will be published in five parts. Here in Part One, we will examine the roots of Christian Zionism in England and America and trace its evolution into the nineteenth century, as well as its impact on British foreign policy. Next month, in Part Two, we will look at the curious Anglo-Irishman John Nelson Darby, who is widely regarded as the father of “dispensationalism,” and his key American disciples - James Brookes, Dwight Moody, William Blackstone, and Cyrus Scofield (publisher of the Scofield Reference Bible). Collectively, these men laid the theological groundwork for Christian Zionism as it exists today, including the canard of a “rapture” of faithful Christians before the second coming of Christ. In Parts Three through Five, we will address America’s “Dance with the Devil,” as Christian Zionism came to prominence after the so-called Six Day War of 1967, undermining traditional Christian doctrine, subverting American foreign policy, and portending disastrous consequences for Jews, Christians, and the world as a whole.

A final note on terminology. The term *Zionism* was not coined until 1890 by the Austrian Jew Nathan Birnbaum, who participated in Theodore Herzl’s First Zionist Congress in 1897. Ironically, Birnbaum abandoned political Zionism toward the end of his life, which he had earlier done so much to promote.^[ii] Our use of the terms *Zionism* and *Christian Zionism* before that date are strictly for convenience.



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English Heritage

Early America gained its worldview largely from its English roots. As such, Zionism, albeit in a primitive form, was part of the legacy brought to America's shores in the 1600s by the Puritans and other English sects. Just a few decades after King Henry VIII's break with Rome, English interest in the Jews slowly, inexorably became a topic of attention. By the 1580's, an Anglican clergyman named Francis Kett was proclaiming that Jesus was then "gatheringe his people together at Jerusalem in his owne person" and Kett was advising his followers to go to Palestine, where they would be "fed with Angelles foode."^[iii] Kett also considered the Pope to "bee the beast in [the book] of the Reuelations, and to be the man exalted in the temple of God, as God." (Kett's radical anti-Catholicism would become one of the enduring hallmarks of Christian Zionism, still seen today in some Protestant evangelists). Henry VIII's daughter Queen Elizabeth was not one to tolerate dissent from the new Anglican orthodoxy; she had Kett burned at the stake in 1589.^[iv]

As the English crown passed to James I (first of the Stuart dynasty) in 1603, interest in the

Jews grew among both Anglicans and the increasingly prominent sect of Puritans. One disaffected Anglican clergyman, Thomas Brightman, developed a fascination with prophecy and wrote what he considered to be his own divinely inspired commentary on the Book of Revelation. Brightman, searching eagerly for evidence of the Book of Revelation in his own time, found it in English affairs. In his work *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos*, he speculated that “the seven vials began with Elizabeth’s accession to the throne in 1558 and that the seventh trumpet of Revelation 10 had been sounded in 1588 with the destruction of the Spanish Armada.”[\[v\]](#) Brightman also continued the by now popular theme that the pope was the Antichrist. His book *Shall They Return to Jerusalem Again?* was published posthumously in 1615 and advocated the return of the Jews to Palestine. In answering the question posed in the title, Brightman stated, “there is nothing more certain: the prophets do everywhere confirm it and beat upon it.”[\[vi\]](#)

A contemporary of Brightman, a lawyer by the name of Henry Finch, gained more publicity for Zionism with the publication in 1621 of *The World’s Great Restauration, or Calling of the Jews, and with them of all Nations and Kingdoms of the Earth to the Faith of Christ*. According to Finch, the Jews would “come to Ierusalem againe, be kings and chiefe Monarches of the world, sway and governe all.” The book, which was brought to the attention of King James, was apparently the first work in English to cite the famous quote from Genesis, “I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse those who curse you,”[\[vii\]](#) as a rationale for a Jewish return to the Holy Land. James was at first amused by the absurdity of Finch’s proposition but came to view it as a danger to his divine right as king and a national threat which envisioned a Jewish empire. Finch, who had written the work anonymously, was arrested, jailed, and gained his freedom only by apologizing for the offending portions of the text.[\[viii\]](#)

The writings of both Brightman and Finch highlight what would become another characteristic of Christian Zionism - a preoccupation with dates. Both had calculated that the year 1650 (then just a few decades in the future) would mark a crucial point in divine revelation - the conversion of the Jews, their return to their ancient homeland, and other apocalyptic events. They arrived at this date by first treating the 1290 days mentioned in the book of Daniel (Dan 12:11) as years, and then counting forward from the year 360 A.D. The earlier date marked the dramatically failed attempt by the Emperor Julian the Apostate to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. In the opinion of author Victoria Clark, the writings of Brightman and Finch suggest that they may have been familiar with the esoteric Jewish kabbala, associated with Isaac Luria who died in Palestine in 1572.[\[ix\]](#) Some writers believe that Kabbala lives on today in the New Age movement.

As the seventeenth century progressed, the power of the radical Puritans increased and

with it the worldview that God wanted England to imitate the theocratic state which He had given to ancient Israel. By 1649, the year of the execution of Charles I for treason, the "Zionist" strain in Puritan thought was well known. Shortly before the regicide, "...a speaker at Whitehall was heard to lament the banefully disruptive influence of the Jewish Old Testament on English politics: 'Kings and Armies and Parliament might have been quiet at this day if they would have let Israel alone.'" [\[x\]](#)

In the same month that Charles I lost his head at the stake, another action stoked interest in the Jews. It was in the form of a petition to Puritan leader Oliver Cromwell by Joanna and Ebenezer Cartwright, mother and son Puritan exiles living in the Netherlands. The so-called Cartwright Petition requested that England "transport Izraell's sons and daughters in their [English] ships to the Land promised to their forefathers." Although there were Jews on the continent, there had been none in England itself since their expulsion by King Edward I in 1290. The Cartwright Petition did not get a formal hearing, but it paved the way for informal permission by Oliver Cromwell for a Jewish return seven years later. [\[xi\]](#)

A final point is in order about the origin of Zionism in England. The Puritans had developed their faith largely on the basis of John Calvin's theology, which was far more radical than that of the Anglicans and Lutherans. Calvin's Geneva Bible, when was eventually translated into English, included marginal notes and commentary by his colleague and eventual successor, Theodore Beza. In his remarks, Beza insisted that "the words 'Israel' and 'Zion' always and everywhere in the Bible referred to the Jewish people or their physical homeland." His commentary refers to the "debt the Gentiles owe to the Jews" (see Romans 15:27) which would become a Christian Zionist axiom today, taken out of Biblical context. Elsewhere, Beza states that God's Old Testament promises to the Jews about ownership of their land were not "frustrate and vain." [\[xii\]](#) Thus, a verse such as, "*I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendor to Israel*" (*Isaiah 46:13 NIV*) takes on an entirely revolutionary meaning for the seventeenth century Puritan and the Christian Zionist of today. Indeed, we will see that the Protestant reformers anguished over many texts related to the Jews. No passages were more intriguing and contentious than those in Romans 11. And Paul's brief statement in Romans 11:26 that "all Israel will be saved" was perhaps the most intriguing of all.

Colonial New England

The Puritans' fascination with the Jews was subsumed within their conflict with the ruling Anglican hierarchy. At the risk of their lives, many fled to Holland and then the New World. In 1630 John Winthrop led a group of one thousand of the persecuted faithful on a fleet of eleven ships to the new Massachusetts Bay Colony. As author Victoria Clark notes, "Puritan identification with the sufferings of the Israelites during their Babylonian and Egyptian captivities was at its height." They regarded themselves as fleeing a second pharaoh, King

Charles I, in a second Exodus across another Red Sea, the Atlantic Ocean.[\[xiii\]](#) Near the end of the voyage, Winthrop preached his famous sermon "A Model of Christian Charity," which has endured in American history. Its centerpiece was Winthrop's call to his brethren to become "a City on a Hill" as the eyes of the world upon them. Although "City on a Hill" is a reference to Christ's Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:14), Winthrop also declared that "the God of Israel is among us..." and warned of dire consequences if the Puritans should "deal falsely with our god..."[\[xiv\]](#) Again in the words of Clark, "Winthrop's powerful rhetoric has not only provided Americans with their finest self-image, but also planted deep in the American psyche the fearful Old Testament notion that national, rather than merely personal, sinfulness merits divine punishment. It's not so hard now to see how the Christian Zionists' insurance policy - divine protection for America in exchange for America's 'blessing' of the state of Israel - has come to occupy such a central position in the ideology."[\[xv\]](#) It is also noteworthy that, more than a century and a half after Winthrop, both Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, when tasked by the Second Continental Congress to develop a design for the Great Seal of the United States, proposed a motif reflecting the ancient Jews fleeing the Egyptian pharaoh.[\[xvi\]](#)

In spite of the enormous challenges of establishing a civilization in the harsh, virgin wilderness of New England, the Puritans did not neglect either their Bible or their emphasis on the Hebrew language. The Puritan historian Cotton Mather records how his grandfather, upon arrival in Massachusetts, had "preached a rousing sermon exhorting the settlers to feel as confidently invincible as the Old Testament's Zerubbabel and Joshua because the Lord of Hosts was with them." He also reminded them that they were building "a theocracy, as near as might be to that which was the glory of Israel."[\[xvii\]](#) The Puritans in New England did more sermonize about ancient Israel; they adopted customs and manners reminiscent of the Old Testament. A visitor to Boston would remark that the Puritans were "like the Jews - as like as like can be."[\[xviii\]](#)

Consistent with their self-identification with the ancient Jews, the Puritans were alert to the fate of the ten lost tribes of Israel. John Eliot, known as the Puritans' "apostle to the Indians," believed he may have found the descendants of the lost tribes among nearby Indians. He based this conjecture on a motley variety of indicators, such as circumcision among the men, supposed traces of Hebrew words, a devotion to dancing, and an aversion to the Puritans' pigs.[\[xix\]](#) The infatuation with the lost tribes was not unique to the Puritans; it would surface again with the Mormons two hundred years later and remains a topic of interest today among Christian Zionists and others. To the Puritans, the presence of lost Jews in the New World was surely proof of the truth of the Bible. Did not Deuteronomy (28:64) state that "The Lord will scatter you among all the nations, from one end of the earth to the other..."?

Like their evangelical brethren back in England, such as Thomas Brightman, the Puritans believed they were living on the cusp of the millennium. Some, such as Cotton Mather's grandfather John Cotton, speculated that the year 1655 would be the crucial date in Biblical prophecy. In that year, *"an alliance of ten Protestant nations would triumph over the combined forces of Catholicism under the Antichrist Pope, a victory that would be either followed or preceded by the conversion of the Jews to reformed Christianity. That happy event would, in turn, draw Europe's Protestant powers into allying themselves with the Jews for another war aimed at liberating Palestine from Ottoman rule. And the happy outcome of that conflict would inevitably be the reinstatement of the Jews in their ancient home."*[\[xx\]](#) Of course, if some of the nearby Indians were in fact descendants of the lost Jewish tribes, these momentous happenings in Europe would also impact the Puritans' relationships with their neighbors. Today, the mania of American Christian Zionists with distant, earthshaking events that are predetermined by some divine plan clearly evokes that of the Puritans four hundred years ago.

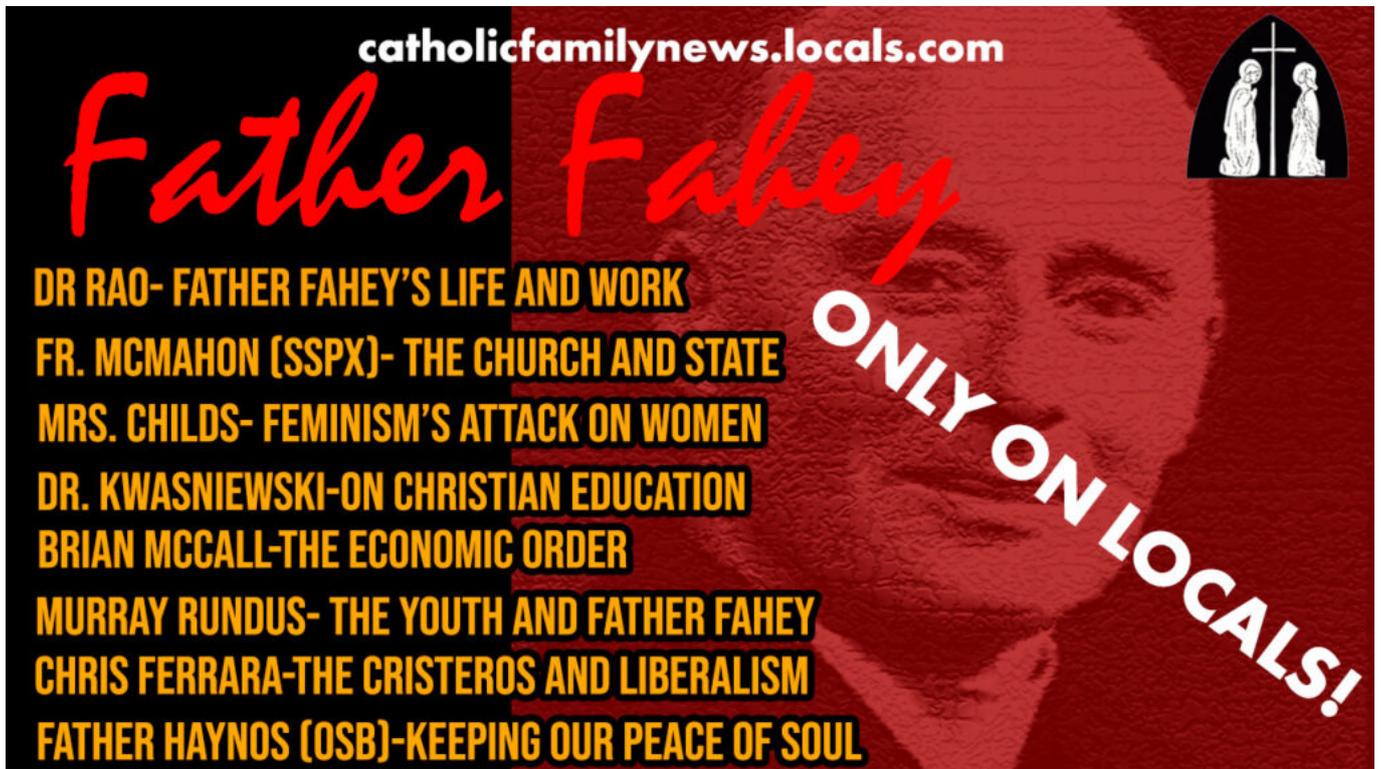
One of those far-away developments which so infatuated the Puritans occurred in the 1660s. A charismatic Sephardic rabbi named Sabbatai Zevi arrived in Constantinople claiming to be the Messiah of the Jews. In a matter of months, Sabbatai's fame spread like wildfire throughout all Europe and beyond. After rousing the interest of European Jews to a fever pitch, Sabbatai disillusioned his new-found followers by succumbing to threats and converting to Islam in the presence of the Ottoman sultan himself. In New England, the meteoric rise of Sabbatai had spurred the minister Increase Mather (father of Cotton) to research and write his book *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation*. However, Sabbatai's inconvenient apostasy later caused Mather to temper his expectations for the imminent return of the Jews to the Promised Land.[\[xxi\]](#)

Increase Mather's rash conclusions about the unfolding of prophecy in his day were a foreshadowing of the expectations of many Christian Zionists today, as we will see. As for his famous son, Cotton Mather had believed with his father that a "brief and dazzling" appearance by Jesus Christ would effect the conversion of the Jews, perhaps in the year 1697. Disappointed that this failed to occur, Mather concluded that good old-fashioned Christian evangelism would be necessary to convert the Jews. To this end, he penned a catechism for the Jews in 1699, drawing on proofs from only the Old Testament, that Jesus Christ was their Messiah. However, it was only at the end of his life that Cotton Mather jettisoned his long-held view (and that of his father) that God had a special plan for the Jews outside of His church which would result in a mass conversion. In his work *Trip paradisus*, published after his death in 1728, Mather concludes that God's plans for the Jews as a nation were fulfilled long ago and that (in his words) God has no "special regard for one nation over another."[\[xxii\]](#) Mather's conclusion merely reflects what Peter said to Cornelius

in Acts 10:34 (“Now I understand that God shows no partiality”). The world of Christian Zionism today is badly in need of another Cotton Mather.

Eccentricities

As the seventeenth century moved to closure, the monarchy had returned to England and the Puritans' mania for the Old Testament and all things Jewish began to dissipate. Society in both England and its American colonies took on a decidedly more secular tone in the eighteenth century. The First Great Awakening (c. 1730 to 1755), associated with preachers Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, swept through England and the American colonies but did not explicitly concern itself with the fate of the Jews. The Second Great Awakening (c. 1790 to 1840), however, spawned a number of eccentric developments in England. In 1793, a former Royal Navy officer named Richard Brothers proclaimed himself “Prince of the Hebrews” and a true descendant of the lineage of David. Brothers proposed to identify Jews hidden within the population of England and lead them to Palestine. An eccentric and possibly insane individual, he spent the last 30 years of his life dabbling in the design of flags, uniforms, and palaces for his “New Jerusalem.”[\[xxiii\]](#) About the same time, Joanna Southcott, a 64-year old “prophetess,” declared that she was the woman of Chapter 12 of Revelation. In 1814, at the age of 64, Southcott announced to her followers that she was pregnant with the new Messiah, but died without issue just weeks after the date of the expected birth.[\[xxiv\]](#) In 1823, another English woman, Mary Seddon, assembled some Jewish followers, procured a white donkey, and began an abortive journey to Jerusalem.[\[xxv\]](#)



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Father Fahey

DR RAO- FATHER FAHEY'S LIFE AND WORK

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The Convergence of Prophecy and Empire

Of more importance, the early nineteenth century marked the beginning of England's strategic interest in the Middle East. The catalyst for this development was the relationship between Ashley Cooper, the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, and his stepfather-in-law, Lord Palmerston, who served as both Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister in British governments under Queen Victoria. Shaftesbury had a well-earned reputation as a philanthropist and social reformer. He was also the first significant advocate of the restoration of the Jews to the land of Palestine; to this end, he was president of the London Jews' Society for 37 years until his death in 1885. Shaftesbury was influential in convincing Palmerston to establish a British consulate in Jerusalem in 1838. In an 1853 letter to then Prime Minister Aberdeen, Shaftesbury observed that Greater Syria was "a country without a nation" in need of "a nation without a country... Is there such a thing? To be sure there is, the ancient and rightful lords of the soil, the Jews!"^[xxvi] Such a statement was demonstrably false at several levels, but it had a facile tone which guaranteed a sympathetic reception with many audiences. To this day, Shaftesbury's statement (which originated with a Scottish clergyman ten years earlier) is a favorite slogan of Christian Zionists.

As the nineteenth century proceeded, the completion of the Suez Canal by a French concern in 1869 piqued British interest in a strategy - and a Mediterranean base - to protect India,

the crown jewel of its colonies. Palestine and Egypt, although both formally Ottoman territories, were considered ideal candidates for British expansion (in fact, the British did begin a military occupation of Egypt in 1882). About this time, travel entrepreneur Thomas Cook began organized tours to Jerusalem and Palestine. Author Stephen Sizer notes that, "...Cook probably did more than any other person to facilitate and shape evangelical contact with the Holy Land."[\[xxvii\]](#) Meanwhile, the widely expected demise of the Ottoman Empire (the "sick man" of Europe) prompted much speculation about the future of the many peoples and lands under Ottoman authority, including Palestine. The Ottomans managed to survive much longer than anticipated, expiring with barely a whimper at the end of World War I. With pro-Zionists such as Arthur Balfour and David Lloyd George in key positions of the British government at the end of World War I, Britain had both religious and strategic incentives to take the reins in Palestine, which it did through the Treaty of Versailles. Indeed, as historian Barbara Tuchman has noted, Britain's interest in Palestine, spanning ten generations from Oliver Cromwell to Lloyd George, had "depended on the twin presence of the profit motive, whether commercial, military, or imperial, and the religious motive inherited from the Bible."[\[xxviii\]](#) (For a more detailed discussion of this era, including Theodore Herzl's Zionist movement, the Balfour Declaration, the key role of Chaim Weizmann, and the British Mandate for Palestine, see "Why is There a Gaza Strip?" published last year in *Catholic Family News*.)[\[xxix\]](#) Britain's actions at the end of World War I mark the convergence of prophecy and empire and made possible a key goal of Christian Zionism for the Jews - a "homeland" in the land of their ancestors. The fate of the native Palestinian peoples, then as now, was largely minimized or ignored.

As we will see, the United States, with its own Christian Zionist influence, followed suit behind Britain several decades later. After World War II, Britain found herself too exhausted to continue spending the necessary resources to govern Palestine - and its many other overseas territories. Indeed, it was British arrogance and bias in favor of the Jews that had been largely responsible for Britain's predicament in Palestine in the first place. With the unilateral establishment of Israel in 1948, the United States - just in time - picked up the torch of Christian Zionism from Great Britain and has become Israel's indispensable apologist and champion ever since. Most importantly, we should note that Christian Zionism, with its rise in nineteenth century England, *preceded* Jewish Zionism (i.e., the 1890s movement of Theodore Herzl) by at least a half century and enabled its fulfillment in Palestine after World War I. Thus, the so-called Middle East conflict of today is due in no small measure to a heretical Christian doctrine, which originated in England and has found its full flower in the United States.

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Who Will Be in Pope Leo XIV's Curia?

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Pope Leo's New Hermeneutic of Continuity

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Gem of the Month: Amethyst

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"He said to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?" (John 21:17)

Habemus Papam Pope Leo XIV

By Murray Rundus

On May 8, 2025, around 6 p.m. in Rome, crowds began gradually leaving St. Peter's Square. We had been expecting white smoke from the Sistine Chapel, if there was to be any, around 30 minutes earlier, as that is when the Vatican Press Office had told us was the latest approximate time for smoke to appear. It would seem that the Conclave was to move into a fifth round of voting, the same number of votes that it took for Pope Francis to be elected. After filming a short video explaining the number of votes it took, and how this could mean we would see a long conclave that everyone was anticipating, there was a roar from the crowd. As I looked behind me, there was white smoke; a new Pope had been elected. Later in the day than anticipated, but after only four rounds of voting, the number it took to swiftly elect Pope Benedict XVI, the Cardinals managed to elect Pope Leo XIV. There was an initial optimism in the air as it was announced that Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost would be Pope. Some saw him as a complete unknown, but we had reported just that week that he was a likely top-three contender. The Pope came out onto the loggia in the red mozzetta, a tradition neglected by Pope Francis, and immediately he proclaimed the words of the Risen Christ, emphasizing the true and historical nature of the Resurrection but also imploring the crowd to take up a more fervent dedication

to Our Lady, all accompanied by his blessing and a plenary indulgence.

What worried me then, and what still worries me, is that the traditional media would fall into what I called at the time a "vibes-based analysis," one based more on emotion than reality itself. This reality showed that the result of this conclave proved that this kind of emotional or instinctual analysis was extremely faulty. Already moving into the Conclave, there were many who were saying they predicted Cardinal Parolin would become Pope because of a feeling of impending doom. Many respectable journalists in Rome only had that much to offer! Those who had been studying the Conclave, in this period of history where we know practically everything about each of the Cardinal electors, knew that Parolin had fallen into disfavor due to the scandals of the China deal, property agreements, and general discontent with his job as Secretary of State. We also knew that the College was relatively more conservative than was being reported, with many of the Cardinals selected by Pope Francis being selected for their identity as being located on the peripheries rather than for their ideological position.¹ This, combined with a number of reports from those who knew the Cardinals well, allowed Vatican analysts, including those of us at *Catholic Family News*, to accurately assess that Cardinal Prevost was indeed a likely contender.



*Leo PP. XIV
8 maggio 2025*

Reading Pope Leo XIV

I believe it to be very important, especially for lay people involved in the traditional movement, to be precise in their reading of the Pontificate of Pope Leo XIV, to avoid emotional responses, and most importantly, to insist on judging our times by clear principles applied with prudence.

The election of Pope Leo XIV has drawn a mix of cautious optimism and vehement criticism from the traditionalist world. While to me it seems the consensus is developing towards optimism, the confusion is somewhat understandable. How is one to react when the predecessor of Pope Leo destroyed many communities and actively

concerned himself with disrupting the spiritual lives of so many? There is also a more practical and principled problem as there is now a mix of perspectives under the umbrella term "traditionalist" of those who recognized Pope Francis as a valid Pope and those who did not in various forms, whether saying Benedict

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[i] See *Catholic Family News*, Vol. 22, Issues 2-4 (February-April 2015). [Why is There a Gaza Strip? Israel, the Land, and the Covenant — Part I - Catholic Family News](#)

[ii] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathan_Birnbaum

[iii] As quoted in Victoria Clark, *Allies for Armageddon* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 32.

[iv] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Kett

[v] Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), p. 28.

[vi] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Brightman

[vii] God's word to Abraham in Genesis 12:3

[viii] Clark, op. cit., pp. 27-29. See also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Finch

[ix] Ibid., p. 36. The date of the ill-fated construction is considered to be 363 A.D.

[x] Ibid., p. 29.

[xi] Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1956), pp. 121-123.

Also see

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resettlement_of_the_Jews_in_England#Menasseh_Ben_Israel.27s_petition

[xii] Clark, op. cit., p. 30.

[xiii] Ibid., p. 39.

[xiv] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_upon_a_Hill

[xv] Clark, op. cit., p.40.

[xvi] <https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/seal-united-states>

[xvii] Ibid., p.42.

[xviii] Ibid.

[xix] Ibid., pp. 45-46.

[xx] Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[xxi] Ibid., pp. 46-47.

[xxii] Ibid., pp. 48-50.

[xxiii] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Brothers

[xxiv] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joanna_Southcott

[xxv] https://www.academia.edu/1425096/Christian_Zionism_and_Victorian_Culture, p.20.

[xxvi] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_land_without_a_people_for_a_people_without_a_land

[xxvii] Sizer, op. cit., p. 34.

[xxviii] Tuchman, op. cit., p. 146.

[xxix] See *Catholic Family News*, Vol. 22, Issues 2-4 (February-April 2015).