

CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

Christian Zionism is a powerful tendency within Evangelical Christianity that draws on a particular reading of the last book of the Christian Bible, the Revelation. Their interpretation is called “**dispensationalism**.”

Dispensationalism proclaims we are approaching the end of times. The battle of Armageddon will soon be fought on the plains of Israel and Christ will return to set up his kingdom. “True” Christians will avoid the tribulations because they will be sucked up to heaven in the Rapture. For all this to occur, Jews must first return to Israel, rebuild the Temple and be attacked by their enemies. Christian Zionists therefore want Israel to consolidate its occupation and the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. They support the most right-wing and bellicose forces within Israel. According to them, anything that brings the region closer to war brings us all closer to Jesus’ return.

A leading Canadian propagandist for this “theology” is **Charles McVety**, President of Canada Christian College. McVety isn’t just interested in provoking Armageddon. He is also a leading homophobe, He led the 2005 Defend Marriage campaign, the major **opposition to gay marriage** legislation. He spearheaded the charge against the \$400,000 Federal stimulus package grant to **Pride Toronto** in 2009. He is credited with intimidating the Ontario Liberals into **withdrawing their progressive sex education curriculum** for provincial schools in 2010. A leading spokesperson for the Israel lobby, B’Nai Brith’s Frank Diamant, teaches at McVety’s college.

McVety has been tireless in working to build a new “theo-con” movement around social conservative issues like opposition to homosexuality and abortion. His goal is to bring Canada back under **Biblical law** so that it can play its ordained role as a Christian nation in hastening Christ’s return. It is a movement that wields increasing influence in Ottawa as detailed in

Marci McDonald’s book, *The Armageddon Factor*.¹

The influence of the Christian lobby in Ottawa has increased under the Harper government. Christian lobby groups have received personal recognition from the Prime Minister and unparalleled access to parliamentarians. Harper himself attends an evangelical church, and other party luminaries such as Preston Manning and Stockwell Day are well known for their promotion of fundamentalist beliefs. Harper is the most pro-Israel Prime Minister in Canadian history.

Christian Zionists, who want Jews to return to Israel so that they can be destroyed in the battle of Armageddon and the survivors converted to Christianity, may seem odd bedfellows for pro-Israel Jews. The logic of this alliance for the Jewish part of the Israel Lobby was pointed out clearly by a former Harper aid and former Ottawa spokesperson for B’Nai Brith, Joseph Ben-Ami: “The Jewish community in Canada is 380,000 strong. The evangelical community is three and a half million. The real support base for Israel is Christians.”²

So if for the Christian Zionists, Jews are sacrificial lambs in their Jesus return fantasies, for pro-Israel Jews, the Christian Zionists are useful idiots. For queers, Christian Zionists are a dangerous and homophobic political force.

¹McDonald, Marci. *The Armageddon Factor: The Rise of Christian Nationalism in Canada*. Toronto: Random House, 2010.

²McDonald, Marci. *The Armageddon Factor*. P 323