

CUFI

About CUFI

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of Christians United For Israel (CUFI) is to provide a national association through which every pro-Israel church, parachurch organization, ministry or individual in America can speak and act with one voice in support of Israel in matters related to Biblical issues.

"The Lord answered me and said: 'Write the vision, And make it plain on tablets. That he may run who reads it.'" - Habakkuk 2:2

History

Israel is in peril. The President of Iran has threatened to wipe Israel off the map and he's rapidly acquiring the nuclear technology with which to make good on this threat. In the meantime, Iran's proxies in Hezbollah and Hamas are arming themselves at an alarming rate, and Hamas has been firing hundreds of missiles into Southern Israel. Millions of Christians across America have a deep love for Israel and the Jewish people and want to stand with them during these difficult days. Yet, until recently, pro-Israel Christians were divided and often silent. They limited their support of Israel to prayers and charitable donations. In February 2006, Pastor John Hagee decided the time had come to create a national grassroots movement focused on the support of Israel. He called upon Christian leaders from across America to join him in launching this new initiative. Over 400 Christian leaders answered the call and Christians United for Israel was born. Since that date, CUFI has quickly grown to be the largest Christian grassroots movement in America. We now have state directors in every state in the union, and we have city directors in over 90 of America's leading cities. Since our founding, we've held over 75 Nights to Honor Israel in cities across America. This past July, 4,500 Christians from all 50 states came to Washington, D.C. to participate in the second annual CUFI Washington-Israel Summit. And CUFI has only just begun.

"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." - Genesis 12:3

Bill Moyer's Journal October 5, 2007

VOICE: The lord utters his voice before his army...The lord utters his voice before his army...

BILL MOYERS: Washington. July 17. A Night to Honor Israel.

VOICES: Blow the trumpet in Zion, Zion!

BILL MOYERS: Over 4,500 people from every state in the union and ten countries celebrate their solidarity with Israel. They call their organization Christians United for Israel. Most are evangelical Christians. CUFI, as it's known, is not even two years old, and it's already a force to be reckoned with. The man behind it is Pastor John Hagee.

JOHN HAGEE: When 50 million evangelical bible-believing Christians unite with five million American Jews standing together on behalf of Israel, it is a match made in heaven.

BILL MOYERS: Pastor Hagee is one of the Christian right's most powerful preachers. Israel is his passion.

JOHN HAGEE: Let us shout it from the housetops that a new day has been born in America. The sleeping giant of Christian Zionism has awakened. If a line has to be drawn, draw the line around Christians and Jews. We are united. We are indivisible. And together we can reshape history.

BILL MOYERS: Christian Zionists believe Jews are God's chosen people...that God promised the land of Israel to their patriarchs and their descendants.

They say that the Bible requires Christians to give unconditional support to the Jewish people, to be a "good friend" to Christianity's "big brother."

CHRISCHELLE BRUCE: The new Christian of today that is truly walking in the spirit of God will have to acknowledge Israel. There is no way around that. You have to.

GREG STEPHENS: Israel is the only country that God ever established. Every other country has been established by a king, a queen, a congress, or a

parliament. It's the only country that God ever established.

BILL MOYERS: John Hagee says you need look no further than the scriptures...

JOHN HAGEE: The biblical mandates for supporting Israel began with Genesis 12:3. I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you. Secondly, David said in Psalms 122:6, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love you."

Because of the fact that in history, if Jerusalem is at war, the world is at war. If there's peace in Jerusalem there's peace in the world.

When Israel became a state, in 1948 I remember well sitting at the table in our home and we heard that announcement come over the radio. And my father said, "This is the most important biblical day in the 20th Century. For all the prophets of the Old Testament have now been vindicated and Israel has been born."

JOHN HAGEE PREACHING: Free is free indeed! Give me praise and glory in the house of God!

BILL MOYERS: From the 18,000 people who belong to his church in San Antonio, Texas to the 99 million homes he says tune into his weekly radio and television broadcasts John Hagee has built an empire sharing the gospel of Israel with evangelicals around the world

And as the leader of CUFI his power extends from the pulpit to politics.

JOHN HAGEE: I would like to read you the greeting from the President of the United States.

"I appreciate CUFI members and all event participants for your passion and dedication to enhancing the relationship between the United States and Israel. Your efforts set a shining example for others and help lay the foundation of peace for generations to come. Laura and I send our best wishes for a memorable event. May God bless you. George W. Bush, President of the United States."

BILL MOYERS: At their July gathering in Washington, CUFI delegates focused on Israel's security and the threat of radical Islam.

CLIFFORD MAY: Islamic imperialists and supremacists

BILL MOYERS: And on their agenda – lobbying in Congress for their pro-Israel platform.

DAVID BROG: Ladies and gentlemen, we're in Washington, DC. We're going to talk to our congressmen so it's extremely important that we take our faith and our values and we marry it with knowledge and understanding of current events. And be able to speak in the language of Washington when we go and speak to our congressmen and senators.

BILL MOYERS: Many of Washington's political elites came to them. Presidential contender Senator John McCain.

JOHN MCCAIN: It's very hard trying to do the Lords work in the city of Satan and I'm very grateful to have all of you here.

BILL MOYERS: Senator McCain was joined by House Minority Whip Roy Blunt.

ROY BLUNT: This is a mission; this is a vision that I believe is a vision for God's time.

BILL MOYERS: Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich...

NEWT GINGRICH: Because this group is made up of people who believe, they understand the passion that comes from belief.

BILL MOYERS: And Senator Joe Lieberman

JOSEPH LIEBERMAN: Of describing Pastor Hagee in the words that the Torah uses to describe Moses, he is an "*Ish Elokim*," a man of God and those words really do fit him; and, I'd add something else, like Moses he's become the leader of a mighty multitude, even greater than the multitude that Moses led from Egypt to the promised land.

BILL MOYERS: With Hagee leading the way, CUFI delegates walked the halls of Congress. Armed with talking points, they divided into small groups to call on individual senators and representatives.

VOICE: Cheer, cheer, and cheer!

BILL MOYERS: In the basement of the Capitol, Georgia's delegates talked strategy before meeting their elected leaders.

SCOTT ALLEN: Also during the meeting, as Pastor Haun~ Dr. Haun or I make a point, feel free to clap. You know, we want it a little bit lively, but we don't want to be crazy. Right? So, feel free to clap. And they know we're Christians United for Israel. You can say, "Amen," if you want to.

BILL MOYERS: Republican Representative Phil Gingrey paid the delegation a visit. He's considered one of the most conservative members of the House.

PHIL GINGREY: I think what you'll find in the Congress is a very, very strong bipartisan support for the country of Israel. And that's something that we all seem to agree upon. It's a democracy in a bad neighborhood.

BILL MOYERS: The delegates wasted no time getting to one of their top concerns - the disputed territories and the Israeli peace process.

FEMALE VOICE: The land for peace obviously didn't work in the Gaza Strip. And we're proponents that we don't give up any more land.

It didn't work. And anything else was just gonna cause further loss of land in the state of Israel.

PHIL GINGREY: Yeah. I mean, I think it's a good point. And but on the other hand, I would urge Israel not to put a stick in the eye of the Palestinians if they don't have to.

VICKI LEEMAN: I think you need to hear clearly, sir, that this group is totally against giving any of Israel's land for peace.

BILL MOYERS: There is no room for compromise here.

Christians United for Israel opposes the Bush administration's roadmap for peace and urges American leaders to abandon it.

The plan calls for a two-state solution in the region – if Palestinians lay down their arms and recognize Israel's right to exist, Israel will withdraw from certain disputed territories and move to help create an independent Palestine.

For these believers the roadmap is inherently flawed because it is not biblically

sound – as Hagee often preaches to his congregation.

JOHN HAGEE, SEPTEMBER 18, 2005: But the Palestinians have never owned the land. I want you to hear this very clearly. The land of Israel was given to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their seed in an eternal covenant. It is recorded in the book of Genesis. The boundaries are there in the Bible. And that land belongs to the Jewish people today, tomorrow and forever because it is their covenant by the word of God.

BILL MOYERS: According to John Hagee, devastating consequences await those who violate God's word. God, he says, may already have sent Hurricane Katrina to punish the U.S. for its role in helping Israel remove Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip.

JOHN HAGEE, SEPTEMBER 18, 2005: I want to ask Washington a question. Is there a connection between the 9,000 Jewish refugees being forcibly removed from their homes in the Gaza Strip now living in tents and the thousands of Americans who have been expelled from their homes by this tremendous work of nature? Is there a connection there? If you've got a better answer, I'd like to hear it.

BILL MOYERS: Back in Washington, CUFI delegates were briefed on what the organizers now consider the defining issue – the challenge of radical Islam.

GARY BAUER: At this very moment there are evil men who worship death – it is a sick philosophy that goes by many names. But I haven't found a better name than Islamo-

FRANK GAFFNEY: The Islamo-fascists have Israel in mind as an appetizer. We are the main course.

BRIGITTE GABRIEL: The difference, my friends, between Israel and the Arabic world is a difference between civilization and barbarism. It's a difference between goodness and evil. And this is what we're witnessing in the Arabic world. They have no soul. They are dead set on killing and destruction.

BILL MOYERS: Brigitte Gabriel was one of the most popular speakers here. Her "American Congress for Truth" is devoted to fighting "the spread of

militant Islam" in America.

BRIGITTE GABRIEL: Here's what we're doing. We're taking cities and state and organizing them into chapters. We are appointing people to monitor the media in your local community. Your local newspaper that is anti-Israel, anti-America.

BILL MOYERS: Gabriel is a Maronite Christian from Lebanon. She called on the CUFI delegates to keep their eyes open for the enemy within.

BRIGITTE GABRIEL: Another thing you can do is monitor universities.

Monitor what the professor is saying about the Middle East policy and our foreign policy. The students cannot challenge their professors because they get bad grades. But you can. It's your job and your civic duty to do so.

Another thing you can do – another thing you can do – if you know there is a suspicious mosque in your community or suspicious Islamic organization, find out who owns the deed to that mosque.

Is it some Saudi sheiks or Islamic sheiks outside of America? Write their names down. Come home. Call your local FBI office. Turn the names to them. This is how they can start monitoring them.

Israel's enemies are our enemies.

BILL MOYERS: In New York last week, CUFI members took to the street to protest the visit of Iranian President Ahmadinejad. They see him as the number one threat to Israel and the world.

JOHN HAGEE: The head of the beast of radical Islam in the Middle East is Iran and its fanatical president Ahmadinejad. Ladies and gentlemen, we are reliving history. It is 1938 all over again. Iran is Germany. Ahmadinejad is Hitler. And Ahmadinejad, just like Hitler, is talking about killing the Jews.

BILL MOYERS: Ahmadinejad has said that Islam would soon reign supreme in a world without the United States and Zionism and that quote 'Israel should be wiped off the map.'

AHMADENIJAD: The Iran of today is a nuclear Iran

BILL MOYERS: As Iran has been actively enriching uranium, the world has been scrambling to determine how it will be used – as an energy supply or as a weapon to make good on Ahmadinejad's threats to Israel.

CUFI DELEGATE: Congressman, we love you. You're a fellow Georgian.

BILL MOYERS: At the Capitol building the CUFI delegation from Georgia urged Representative Lynn Westmoreland to recognize the danger Iran poses.

CUFI DELEGATE: But the greatest threat that's facing us is Iran.

WESTMORELAND: That's right.

CUFI DELEGATE: And the nuclear capability that they are soon reaching. And hopefully we, as Americans, will not allow that to happen.

JOHN HAGEE: What we are trying to say to them is that a) we want you to continue your support for the State of Israel. Secondly, we want you to recognize that Iran is a clear and present danger to the United States of America and Israel. And we support Senator Joseph Lieberman, that it's time for our country to consider a military preemptive strike against Iran if they will not yield to diplomacy. And if they continue the pursuit of nuclear weapons we must not allow them to manipulate the economy of the world because they have a nuclear weapon.

JOHN HAGEE, SEPTEMBER 11, 2005: As we speak Iran is building nuclear weapons...

BILL MOYERS: For John Hagee, what happens in Iran is not just a matter of politics – it's also a matter of theology. His study of biblical prophecy has led him to believe that Iran will figure prominently in the end times - the apocalypse and the return of Jesus.

JOHN HAGEE, SEPTEMBER 11, 2005: Iran will use those weapons on Israel. Anyone who is smart enough to wave bye-bye knows that.

BILL MOYERS: In his book JERUSALEM COUNTDOWN, he writes, "Iran with nuclear weapons will transform the Bush administration's roadmap for peace program into a racetrack to Armageddon."

BILL MOYERS: From his reading of the Bible he lays out a scenario predicting that if Israel and America attack Iran, Russia and its allies – including Iran – will attack Israel, triggering Ezekiel's War. God will crush the invading forces as - quote - "he crushed Pharaoh, Haman, and Hitler so that Israel and the world 'shall know that I am the Lord.'" says John Hagee, the battle of Armageddon will follow.

JOHN HAGEE, SEPTEMBER 11, 2005: They intend to bring that bomb online and if they use it, you think gas is high now. Life as we know it is going to change instantly and forever and I'm telling you, you need to get your life ready to meet the son of God in all his glory. It's going to happen, it's going to happen, it's going to happen.

CONGREGATION: Clap, clap, clap!

JOHN HAGEE: There are going to be people in this tribulation period who do not take

BILL MOYERS: There will be plenty of bloodshed.

JOHN HAGEE: They will have their heads cut off.

BILL MOYERS: But get ready – it's coming.

JOHN HAGEE: We are this close to the rapture of the church of Jesus Christ.

BILL MOYERS: For true believers like Hagee and his followers, it will be a day of deliverance. They will have been raptured – literally lifted into the air – to join the Lord in the heavens.

End Times theology has blossomed from a cottage industry into a dynamic market for books, video games and movies.

BILL MOYERS: THE LEFT BEHIND movie series is so popular it shows up in sermons around the country. John Hagee even had a cameo appearance in it.

But because End Times theology strikes a lot of people as threatening – especially as it relates to the fate of Jews – Hagee plays it down at political gatherings of CUFI.

REPORTER: You write a lot about bible prophecy and the relation, relationship to

BILL MOYERS: He brushed aside questions about it at this press conference in Washington.

JOHN HAGEE: I can make it very clear for you. Our support of Israel has absolutely nothing to do with End Times prophecy. It has absolutely nothing to do with eschatology. We support Israel because we feel Israel is in greater danger right now than in any time in statehood.

BILL MOYERS: So as the head of CUFI, with prominent politicians present, Hagee continues to insist that the peace and security of Israel is an end in itself but as a pre-eminent preacher of end times theology, he holds that the apocalypse is coming no matter what – events in the Middle East anticipate it – even require it.

JOHN HAGEE: Listen to me. Just as I wrote in JERUSALEM COUNTDOWN, Ahmadinejad will not respond to diplomacy. He has no intention of yielding to sanctions. He's stalling for time to make nuclear weapons to attack Israel and to attack the United States.

He will do it. Iran is a clear and present danger to the survival of Israel, to the United States of America and the western the world- western world. Therefore it is time for America to embrace the words of Senator Joseph Lieberman and consider a military preemptive strike against Iran to prevent a nuclear holocaust in Israel and a nuclear attack in America.

BILL MOYERS: On that, participants at the CUFI summit seem to agree: the times call for urgent action – even military action. Some of them believe war – and rumors of war – are part of God's plan.

SCOTT FARHART: You know, the Bible says to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, pray for the peace of Israel. I don't know if it's actually possible- the whole Armageddon, end of the world is all going to happen there. So there's always going to be people striving for peace. I think it's our duty to pray for peace. I don't know that peace will ever happen until Jesus comes back and reigns in that city and is the ruler of that city, that's when we'll have peace.

TYRONE MORGAN: We're living in times of fulfillment of what the Bible said will come in the last days. And we're living in those times. We're seeing that fulfilled before our eyes literally. And the things that are happening in Israel, around Israel are just part of what the Bible said would happen.

DONNA MORGAN: The Bible says that there has to be wars. And it says in the end times there will be wars, and for us not to get- not to worry, because there has to be – there has to be a stand. And God is drawing a line in the sand. He's saying, "You better want to get Christian. You must support Israel." Okay. It's time- it's time to take a stand. And the rest of world needs to know that. If you really call yourself a Christian- if you really love Israel, it's time to take a stand now before it's too late.

Interview: Journalist Gershom Gorenberg discusses the Christian Zionist movement from a Jewish perspective

May 16, 2008 from Fresh Air

DAVID BIANCULLI, host: This is FRESH AIR. I'm David Bianculli, of Broadcasting & Cable magazine and tworthwatching.com, in for Terry Gross.

Ever since John McCain sought and won the endorsement of Pastor John Hagee, a quote from Hagee's 2006 interview with Terry has appeared in many places, including CNN, Newsweek, The New York Times and "The Daily Show." As you've read or heard that sound bite, you may have wondered what else John Hagee had to say in that interview; so we're going to play it back for you, and Terry will explain the story behind it.

But first, here's part of that sound bite that's been used so frequently since the endorsement. This is Pastor John Hagee on how Hurricane Katrina was, as Hagee described, God's retribution for a homosexual parade that was about to take place in New Orleans.

Pastor JOHN HAGEE: All hurricanes are acts of God because God controls the heavens. I believe that New Orleans had a level of sin that was offensive to God, and they were recipients of the judgment of God for that.

GROSS: Hurricane Katrina was not the focus of my 2006 interview with Pastor John Hagee. The main subject was a lobby group Hagee had formed earlier that year called Christians United for Israel, also known by its acronym CUFI. CUFI follows what its Web site describes as a biblical obligation to defend Israel and supports Israel's right to the land by biblical mandate. Hagee also believes that the second coming of Jesus is imminent. There are 10 prophetic signs of the end time, he says, and Israel figures into at least four of them: plague in the Middle East, the rebirth of Israel, the Jews returning home and Jerusalem no longer being under gentile control. Here's an excerpt of a sermon from Pastor John Hagee's collection "Jerusalem: Countdown to Crisis."

(Soundbite from "Jerusalem: Countdown to Crisis")

Pastor HAGEE: In May 1948 Israel was reborn. How many of you were alive on May 15th, 1948? It was the most important prophetic day of the 20th century. Why? Because Jesus said in Matthew 24:32, "When you see the fig tree"-national Israel- begin to bloom again, know that my coming is nigh at the door. Behold, one generation will not pass away until all things are fulfilled." We are racing toward the end of time. We are not living in the last days. We're not living in the last hours. We're living in the last minutes of the dispensation of grace.

In 1967 the six-day war united Jerusalem under Jewish control. Why is that important? Because the Gospel of Luke says when Jerusalem is no longer trodden down by the gentiles, then shall the end come. The Bible says when the Lord builds up Jerusalem, when he builds up Zion, he will appear in all of his glory. So the Bible is screaming, 'When you see Jerusalem united, when you see it beautified, when you see it built up, the Messiah is coming.' And when you see these signs in the heavens and the sun, the moon and the stars and the waves of the oceans that are roaring, what did God say? He said, 'Lift up your heads and rejoice! Your redemption draws nigh!' I want you to do it, Cornerstone. Rejoice! The King of Glory is on the way!

(Soundbite of cheering and clapping)

(End of soundbite)

GROSS: Pastor John Hagee organized a Washington summit in July 2006 to introduce his group Christians United for Israel to senators and congressmen. Speakers included Ken Mehlman, who was then chair of the Republican National Committee, and Senators Sam Brownback and Rick Santorum. President Bush sent a recorded greeting. Senator Joe Lieberman spoke at CUFI's second annual summit last July.

Before I spoke with John Hagee in September 2006, I spoke with Israeli journalist Gershom **Gorenberg** about why **CUFI** is controversial among many Jews. **Gorenberg** wrote about the Christian Zionist movement in his book "The End of Days." Here's a short excerpt of that interview with **Gorenberg**.

What is your understanding of Christian Zionism?

Mr. **GERSHOM GORENBERG**: Well, I would say that, in the first place, it's something of a contradiction in terms because the people who promote the idea of Christian Zionism are looking at Israel in mythological terms. They're seeing the Jews as actors in a Christian drama leading toward the end of days. Real Zionism, as a Jewish movement, is a movement aimed at taking Jews out of the mythological realm and making them into normal actors in history, controlling their fate and acting for pragmatic reasons connected to the here and now. So what's called Christian Zionism is actually very distant from Zionism.

GROSS: What are the specific political and territorial goals that you think Christian Zionists have for Israel?

Mr. **GORENBERG**: Well, they take a position on Israel and on the Middle East that would put them at the far age of the radical right within Israeli politics. They're opposed to any concession whatsoever of land for peace. They tend to treat any process leading toward peace as an illusion, if not a conspiracy. Some of their leaders, at various times, have spoken explicitly of the idea of expelling the Palestinians from the West Bank. These are all positions that, as I said, would put them on the radical right within Israel. They're deeply opposed to the idea of a Palestinian state. They tend to support military action over diplomacy. It's worth stressing that this puts them far from the mainstream of Israeli politics.

GROSS: I've spoken to some Jewish Americans who consider themselves, you know, aligned with Christian Zionists and I asked, 'Well, do you think it's in your ultimate best interests to be aligned with groups whose ultimate goal is the second coming of Jesus?' To which they've responded, 'Well, we as Jews know that that's not the real truth, that's not going to happen. So why not have an alliance with people who support the same goals for Israel that we do? You know, the same kind of political goals. And why not support people who just are going to back Israel and back the protection of Israel?' What would you say to that?

Mr. **GORENBERG**: I think that, first of all, there's a tremendous disrespect implied here, strange as it may seem, for the beliefs of the Christian Zionists. These are people who live very much by their theology, and this attitude says, 'Their theology is irrelevant to me. I'm not relating to them as believing people.' So I find that ironic.

The second thing is I think that there's a misunderstanding here of what an apocalyptic vision is. When somebody says that they're hoping for the end of history, for God to come and fix the world, they're saying that they see something broken in the world as it is today. Part of the end-of-days vision of the Christian Zionists is that the Jews will die or convert to Christianity. So what they're saying about the world today is they don't see Judaism as a legitimate religion, and I think it's strange for Jewish groups to align themselves with people who show, shall I say, a theological hostility for Judaism.

GROSS: When you say that, you know, in this scenario of the rapture, Jews will either convert or die, my interpretation of that-my understanding of that is that, in this version of the rapture, that all Christian believers immediately ascend to heaven and everybody else is-they can either convert and ascend to heaven, too, or they remain on earth for the tribulations, which is a series of plagues and famines and wars and other catastrophes.

Mr. **GORENBERG**: Yes, that is true. This is a view of all so-called nonbelievers, but normally in the documents of this religious stream there's a particular focus on the Jews because, for this form of theologically ultra-conservative Christianity, one of the great scandals remains that the Jews have not accepted Christianity. They believe that a literal reading of the Bible necessarily, in their eyes, leads to an acceptance of Christianity. The Jews are the keepers of the Hebrew Bible, and it's stunning that the Jews continue to refuse to read the Bible in what they consider to be its simple meaning that would lead to Christianity. This is the cognitive dissonance which is at the core of their beliefs, and they expect the end of days to resolve this dissonance.

I would add one more thing about these kind of scenarios. If you read their literature, they inevitably end up with the battle of Armageddon on Israeli

soil. All events are expected to lead to this immense conflict which will take place in Israel. The verse that's cited over and over again is, 'The blood will flow as high as the horse's bridle.' So they're expecting war and conflict, and they're seeing this as something positive. Everything that would lead toward Middle East peace, they see as an illusion. For Israelis looking toward their country's security and future in this world, in history as it continues, the most necessary step for us is finding a way to peace. So the people who are proclaiming their support for Israel are actually working at cross-purposes to Israeli interests and needs.

GROSS: Gershom **Gorenberg**, thank you very much for talking with us.

Mr. **GOENBERG**: It's been my pleasure.

GROSS: That was Israeli journalist Gershom **Gorenberg**, originally broadcast on September 18th, 2006.

