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Article

US Missionaries, Christian Zionism in Abya Yala, and Latin American Liberation Theology

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Abstract: Christian Zionism has been one of the most influential theological currents within global evangelicalism, with a significant impact in Abya Yala [the Americas] through evangelical missions[1] and the growth of Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism. Its close relationship with dispensationalist premillennialism has consolidated an interpretation of biblical history that places Israel at the center of eschatological events, promoting unconditional support for the Israeli state. However, this vision has been strongly questioned by other Christian currents in the region, especially by Latin American Liberation Theology (TLL) and the ecumenical movement, which have denounced the strategic use of the Bible to legitimize the Israeli occupation in Palestine; moreover, it is relevant given that “in our region, economic, political and military apparatuses violently deploy discourses of religious content, in the manner of crusades to reach power and dispose of territories, goods, and peoples.”[2] Despite these tensions, sustained dialogues on the subject have been absent, which calls for an in-depth analysis of its theological, political, and social implications. On the systematic approach to Christian Zionism, it is essential to note the two premises that Elizabeth Philipps, in 2008, pointed out in her research entitled *Apocalyptic Theopolitics: Dispensationalism, Israel/Palestine, and Ecclesial Enactments of Eschatology*: “(1) exposé pieces written journalistically for audiences unfamiliar with Christian Zionism, and (2) awareness-raising pieces written by evangelical leaders and scholars to dissuade evangelical audiences from adherence to Christian Zionism. Of the few recent works on Christian Zionism written for scholarly readers, none is written by a theologian” (p. 4).[3] Likewise, for authors such as Gerald R. McDermott, Zionism is a phenomenon before the appearance of dispensationalist premillennialism and evangelical Zionism. This author assures that Zionism traces its roots some eighteen centuries earlier with antecedents in the Hebrew Bible –the covenant of Yahweh with Israel and the promised land– and in the Jewish authors who wrote part of the Christian Bible maintaining that vision in the figure of the return of the Jewish Diaspora to establish a new Israel.[4] On the other hand, some authors argue that it is not necessarily possible to equate premillennialism and fundamentalism, since although there are notable coincidences, there are also many divergences.[5] This chapter addresses the relationship between evangelical Zionism and the evangelical churches in Abya Yala, exploring both their expansion and the critical responses from liberationist and ecumenical perspectives. To this end, it is divided into four main sections. The first section analyzes the theological framework that has shaped Christian Zionism. It will explore dispensationalist premillennialism, its influence on the literalist interpretation of biblical prophecy, and its impact on global politics, especially concerning Israel. It will examine how this view has influenced Latin American evangelical churches, shaping their perspective on the Jewish people's role and the world's eschatological destiny. The second section addresses how evangelical missions have promoted Christian Zionism in the region. It studies the role of missionary organizations and evangelical leaders in disseminating narratives that reinforce support for Israel and how these positions have influenced the foreign policy of Latin American countries. In addition, we analyze the evangelization strategies used and their impact on the construction of religious identities in Abya Yala. The third section explores the response of progressive theological movements to Christian Zionism. It examines how the TLL has denounced the instrumentalization of the Bible to justify oppression and how ecumenical churches have promoted a critical view of the Israeli occupation. The lack of an open debate between these sectors

and Christian Zionism is also discussed, as are the reasons behind this absence of dialogue. Finally, the fourth section proposes the importance of opening a space for debate among the different Christian currents in Abya Yala. It reflects the need for a theology that prioritizes peace and justice, instead of apocalyptic narratives that reinforce geopolitical conflicts. The possibility of building bridges between evangelical, liberationist, and ecumenical sectors to promote a more ethical vision committed to the social reality of the region is raised. This chapter, therefore, offers a comprehensive analysis of Christian Zionism's impact in Abya Yala, its theological roots, its expansion through evangelical missions, and the responses it has generated in progressive Christianity. In doing so, it seeks to contribute to a deeper debate on the role of religion in international politics and its influence on faith communities in the region. [1] It is important to recall that, since the Missionary Council of Panama in 1916, the historic Protestant churches in Latin America –direct heirs of the sixteenth-century Reformation– began to adopt the name *evangélicas* instead of *protestantes*. This shift, however, should not be confused with the use of the term “evangelical” in the U.S. context, which typically refers to conservative evangelical churches that emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this chapter, this distinction is crucial for Latin American religious studies: *iglesias evangélicas históricas* (mainline Protestant churches) are differentiated from *iglesias evangelicales*, often aligned with U.S.-style evangelicalism in theology, practice, and political positioning. For more information, see: Córdova Quero, Hugo (2014). *El desafío del diálogo. Historia, definiciones y problemáticas del ecumenismo y la pluralidad religiosa* (Buenos Aires: GEMRIP Ediciones). [2] Cardoso Pereira, Nancy, Sandra Nancy Mansilla, and Larry Madrigal Rajo. “Introducción.” *Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana* 93 (2024): 7. [3] Philipps, Elizabeth. *Apocalyptic Theopolitics: Dispensationalism, Israel/Palestine, and Ecclesial Enactments of Eschatology* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2008). [4] McDermott, Gerald R. “A New Christian Zionism.” *Providence Magazine* (April 2016): pp. 57-62. [5] Martins Campos, Breno, and Aretha Beatriz Brito Da Rocha. “Aproximações e distanciamentos entre fundamentalismo e pré-milenarismo: por uma tipologia do protestantismo a incluir John Gresham Machen.” *Revista Caminhando* 24, no. 1 (2019): pp. 193-213.

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Introduction

Christian Zionism has been one of the most influential theological currents within global evangelicalism, with a significant impact in Abya Yala [the Americas] through evangelical missions¹ and the growth of Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism. Its close relationship with dispensationalist premillennialism has consolidated an interpretation of biblical history that places Israel at the center of eschatological events, promoting unconditional support for the Israeli state. However, this vision has been strongly questioned by other Christian currents in the region, especially by Latin American Liberation Theology (TLL) and the ecumenical movement, which have denounced the strategic use of the Bible to legitimize the Israeli occupation in Palestine; moreover, it

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is relevant given that “in our region, economic, political and military apparatuses violently deploy discourses of religious content, in the manner of crusades to reach power and dispose of territories, goods, and peoples.”² Despite these tensions, sustained dialogues on the subject have been absent, which calls for an in-depth analysis of its theological, political, and social implications.

On the systematic approach to Christian Zionism, it is essential to note the two premises that Elizabeth Philipps, in 2008, pointed out in her research entitled *Apocalyptic Theopolitics: Dispensationalism, Israel/Palestine, and Ecclesial Enactments of Eschatology*: “(1) exposé pieces written journalistically for audiences unfamiliar with Christian Zionism, and (2) awareness-raising pieces written by evangelical leaders and scholars to dissuade evangelical audiences from adherence to Christian Zionism. Of the few recent works on Christian Zionism written for scholarly readers, none is written by a theologian” (p. 4).³

Likewise, for authors such as Gerald R. McDermott, Zionism is a phenomenon before the appearance of dispensationalist premillennialism and evangelical Zionism. This author assures that Zionism traces its roots some eighteen centuries earlier with antecedents in the Hebrew Bible — the covenant of Yahweh with Israel and the promised land— and in the Jewish authors who wrote part of the Christian Bible maintaining that vision in the figure of the return of the Jewish Diaspora to establish a new Israel.⁴ On the other hand, some authors argue that it is not necessarily possible to equate premillennialism and fundamentalism, since although there are notable coincidences, there are also many divergences.⁵ This chapter addresses the relationship between evangelical Zionism and the evangelical churches in Abya Yala, exploring both their expansion and the critical responses from liberationist and ecumenical perspectives. To this end, it is divided into four main sections.

The first section analyzes the theological framework that has shaped Christian Zionism. It will explore dispensationalist premillennialism, its influence on the literalist interpretation of biblical prophecy, and its impact on global politics, especially concerning Israel. It will examine how this view has influenced Latin American evangelical churches, shaping their perspective on the Jewish people's role and the world's eschatological destiny.

The second section addresses how evangelical missions have promoted Christian Zionism in the region. It studies the role of missionary organizations and evangelical leaders in disseminating narratives that reinforce support for Israel and how these positions have influenced the foreign policy of Latin American countries. In addition, we analyze the evangelization strategies used and their impact on the construction of religious identities in Abya Yala.

The third section explores the response of progressive theological movements to Christian Zionism. It examines how the TLL has denounced the instrumentalization of the Bible to justify oppression and how ecumenical churches have promoted a critical view of the Israeli occupation. The lack of an open debate between these sectors and Christian Zionism is also discussed, as are the reasons behind this absence of dialogue.

Finally, the fourth section proposes the importance of opening a space for debate among the different Christian currents in Abya Yala. It reflects the need for a theology that prioritizes peace and justice, instead of apocalyptic narratives that reinforce geopolitical conflicts. The possibility of building bridges between evangelical, liberationist, and ecumenical sectors to promote a more ethical vision committed to the social reality of the region is raised.

² Cardoso Pereira, Nancy, Sandra Nancy Mansilla, and Larry Madrigal Rajo. “Introducción.” *Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana* 93 (2024): 7.

³ Philipps, Elizabeth. *Apocalyptic Theopolitics: Dispensationalism, Israel/Palestine, and Ecclesial Enactments of Eschatology* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2008).

⁴ McDermott, Gerald R. “A New Christian Zionism.” *Providence Magazine* (April 2016): pp. 57-62.

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This chapter, therefore, offers a comprehensive analysis of Christian Zionism's impact in Abya Yala, its theological roots, its expansion through evangelical missions, and the responses it has generated in progressive Christianity. In doing so, it seeks to contribute to a deeper debate on the role of religion in international politics and its influence on faith communities in the region.

I. Dispensationalist Premillennialism and Christian Zionism

Premillennialism—especially in its dispensationalist variant—has had a profound impact on contemporary Christian theology and the relationship of specific Christian sectors with the State of Israel. It is now considered the most popular option among Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Neo-Pentecostal churches.⁶ To understand its relevance, it is necessary to explore its theological foundations, its eschatological interpretation, and its influence on current geopolitics.

1. Fundamentals of Dispensationalist Premillennialism

John Nelson Darby developed dispensationalism in the nineteenth century, which was then popularized through Scofield's Reference Bible. Darby greatly influenced the North American evangelical movement and the development of Christian Zionism.⁷ Central to this theology is the distinction between Israel and the Christian Church, which implies that many of the promises of the Hebrew Bible to Israel are not fulfilled in the Christian Church, but have a future, literal fulfillment in the nation of Israel, especially in the territory of Jerusalem.⁸

Premillennialism is an eschatological doctrine that holds that Jesus Christ will physically return to Earth before a literal period of a thousand years, known as "the Millennium," during which he will reign with righteousness and peace over all nations. A literal interpretation of passages such as Revelation 20:1-6 supports this view.⁹ Some scholars point out, however, that certain apostolic fathers already spoke of a "millennium" from a symbolic or spiritual perspective, without necessarily linking it to later millennialist interpretations.¹⁰ There are several antecedents in the history of Christianity. Roberto Rusconi traces, for example, antecedents in *The City of God* XVIII, LIII by Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.¹¹

Within premillennialism, dispensationalism introduces a particular theological structure that divides biblical history into seven "dispensations" or periods. God relates to humanity in specific ways in each stage, establishing different responsibilities, covenants, and tests. On the other hand,

⁶ Flores Borda, Guillermo. "¿Jehová en campaña? Algunas coincidencias en torno al uso de la religión evangélica durante las campañas políticas de los Estados Unidos y Latinoamérica." *Discursos del Sur* 9 (2022): pp. 61-85.

⁷ Wilkinson, Paul Richard. *For Zion's Sake: Christian Zionism and the Role of John Nelson Darby* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007).

⁸ Bass, Clarence. *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism: The Historical Genesis and Ecclesiastical Implications* (Grand Rapids, MI: Willim B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960).

⁹ Simonetti, Manlio. "L'Apocalissi e l'origine del millennio." *Vetera Christianorum* 24 (1989): pp. 337-350; Kurschner, Alan E. *A Linguistic Approach to Revelation 19:11-20:6 and the Millennium Binding of Satan* (Linguistic Biblical Studies 23) (Leiden: Brill, 2022); Bates, Steven R. *The Sequence: Unveiling the Six Sequences in the New Testament That Prove the Post-Armageddon, Premillennial Resurrection* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2024).

¹⁰ Stefano Abbate. "Continuidad de la esperanza del milenio en los primeros siglos de la Iglesia." *Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia* 13, no. 3 (2020): pp. 237-261; Mazzucco, Clementina, Pietrella, Egdio. "Il rapporto tra la concezione del millennio dei primi autori cristiani e l'Apocalisse di Giovanni." *Augustinianum* 18 (1978): pp. 29-45.

¹¹ Rusconi, Roberto. "La historia del fin: cristianismo y milenarismo". *Teología y Vida* 44, no. 3 (2003), pp. 209-220. Also, see: Lössl, Josef. "Apocalypse? No."—The Power of Millennialism and its Transformation in Late Antique Christianity," in *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, edited by Andrew Cain and Noel Lenski. (New York: Routledge, 1991).

the return of Jesus, according to this perspective, will occur at two distinct moments.¹² First, the rapture or secret “rapture” will take place, in which Christ will gather his faithful and take them to heaven, thus freeing them from the influence and persecution of the Antichrist.¹³ Then, after a seven-year period known as the “Great Tribulation” — which will begin immediately after the “rapture” — Jesus will return visibly and gloriously at his Second Coming. In this second episode, he will come to defeat the Antichrist, establish his millennial kingdom and receive those who — during the Great Tribulation— have repented and converted.¹⁴ This sequence of events is characteristic of dispensationalist premillennialism. It underlines the distinction between the Christian Church — raptured before the judgment— and the later converts who will be welcomed into the millennial kingdom.

Dispensational premillennialism is distinguished from other eschatological currents by its emphasis on a literal, fundamentalist, and futuristic reading of Revelation and biblical prophecy. Unlike historical premillennialism, which also expects the visible return of Christ before a literal millennium, but within a more continuous framework of Christian Church history, dispensationalism upholds a radical separation between Israel and the Christian Church, envisioning a secret rapture prior to the “Great Tribulation.”¹⁵ A-millennialism interprets the “millennium” of Revelation 20 symbolically, considering it the current period between Christ’s resurrection and his final return, without expecting a literal thousand-year reign.¹⁶ On the other hand, postmillennialism holds that the world will experience an era of prosperity and righteousness under the influence of the Gospel before Christ’s return, denying a universal future tribulation.¹⁷

2. Israel in Premillennialist Eschatology

As can be seen, within the framework of dispensationalism, Israel occupies a central and strategic place. It is held that only these people have been chosen by God for a specific prophetic purpose, a conviction that is based on particular readings of texts such as Genesis 12:1-3 —where Abraham is promised a land and descendants— and Romans 11:25-27, which is interpreted as announcing a future restoration of Israel.

From this perspective, the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 cannot be seen solely as a geopolitical event, but as the fulfillment of a divine promise and an eschatological sign. It is assumed, in turn, that the people of the Hebrew Bible are the same as the State of Israel, although this is a (re)construction of Zionism or, rather, a Zionist fiction.¹⁸ This event, moreover, is considered to mark the beginning of the final phase of history, setting the stage for the “Great Tribulation” and the return of Christ. This interpretation has generated strong evangelical support for Israel, particularly from conservative, fundamentalist, and anti-rights sectors in the United States. Various Christian Zionist organizations promote the idea that believers should unconditionally support the State of Israel, understanding its existence and strengthening as part of the “divine plan.” Moreover, this international support is linked to the progressive secularization of many countries in the world,

¹² Ivanaudo B. Oliveira. “A volta de Jesus no contexto do dispensacionalismo futurista em conexão com o arrebatamento secreto.” *Teologia em Revista* 2, no. 1 (First semestre 2022), pp. 106-114.

¹³ Ladd, George Eldon. *The Blessed Hope: A Biblical Study of the Second Advent and the Rapture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956).

¹⁴ Bacchiocchi, Samuele. *The Advent Hope for Human Hopelessness: A Theological Study of the Meaning of the Second Advent for Today* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1986).

¹⁵ Roldán, Alberto. “Sobre lo que vendrá. Parte 1: El premilenarismo histórico.” *Apuntes Pastorales* 6, no. 1: pp. 30-31; Roldán, Alberto. “Sobre lo que vendrá. Part 2: El premilenarismo dispensacionalista.” *Apuntes Pastorales* 6, no. 2: pp. 30-31.

¹⁶ Schaly, Harald. *O pré-milenismo dispensacionalista à luz do amilenismo* (Rio de Janeiro: JUERP, 1984).

¹⁷ Roldán, Alberto. “Sobre lo que vendrá. Parte 4: El posmilenarismo.” *Apuntes Pastorales* 6, no. 4: p. 30.

¹⁸ Hofman, Barbara. “De hebreos a israelíes: la memoria impuesta.” *Claroscuro* 18, No 18 (Vol. 1) (July 2019): pp. 1-25.

which has promoted the decantation of the theocratic-Zionist dream of a chosen nation.¹⁹ However, this position has been criticized for its tendency to instrumentalize international politics in terms of this specific theological narrative or, in other words, for intoxicating theological discursivity with a fascist political ideology; in this regard, this consideration is timely: “Growing religious fundamentalism, with its rigid and exclusivist interpretations, not only legitimizes oppression and violence against the Palestinian people, but also poisons theological discourse.”²⁰

According to dispensationalist eschatology, before the establishment of the Millennium, the world will experience a period of judgment known as the “Great Tribulation,” characterized by particular suffering for Israel. Paradoxically, this time of affliction is conceived as the prelude to their “national conversion” to Christianity. This key often interprets passages such as Zechariah 12:10 as a prophecy that the Jewish people will finally recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Such readings have been widely challenged for their lack of sensitivity to the history of Christian anti-Semitism and the imposition of a supersessionist theology cloaked in apparent support for Israel.²¹

The concept of Armageddon occupies a central place in the eschatological imaginary of evangelical Zionism, particularly in its dispensationalist aspect.²² This prophetic interpretation grants the final conflict a literal and geographical character, locating it in the valley of Megiddo, in Israel, as it is referred to in Revelation 16:16. From this perspective, Armageddon is not simply a metaphor for the struggle between good and evil, but a concrete battle that will mark the end of time and the return of Christ. In this framework, establishing the State of Israel in 1948 and its territorial expansion are signs of fulfilling biblical prophecies.²³

Christian Zionism considers that the Jewish people must be back in “their” land for Armageddon, the final battle, to be unleashed, which turns political and religious support for Israel into a theological-spiritual mandate. Thus, theology becomes an engine of political and geostrategic action.²⁴ This approach contrasts profoundly with the TLLs and with the ecumenical churches in Latin America, which criticize the use of these interpretations to justify wars, occupations, and unequal alliances. Analyzing Armageddon from a solid exegesis allows us to make visible theological differences and the ethical and political projects in dispute within Latin American and world Christianity.²⁵

This theological approach has led numerous evangelical sectors in Abya Yala to give unconditional support to the State of Israel, not motivated by political, diplomatic, or humanitarian reasons, but by the conviction that such support is part of the fulfillment of the “divine plan.”²⁶ In

¹⁹ Marsden, George. *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

²⁰ Santos Meza, Anderson Fabián. “‘En nombre de Dios, del amor y la inclusión’. Fundamentalismo religioso y homonormatividad como dispositivos del genocidio en Palestina.” *Vida y Pensamiento* 44, no. 2 (2024): p. 161.

²¹ Magid, Shaul. “Christian Supersessionism, Zionism, and the Contemporary Scene.” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 45/1 (2017): 104-141; Omer, Atalia, and Ernesto Verdeja. “Genocide,” 1366-1376, in *Encyclopedia of Religious Ethics*, edited by William Schweiker. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2022).

²² In this sense, the theoretical approach that some authors have made from the category “The Armageddon Lobby” is lucid. For more information, see: Haija, Rammy M., “The Armageddon Lobby: Dispensationalist Christian Zionism and the Shaping of US Policy Towards Israel-Palestine,” *Holy Land Studies* 5, no. 1 (2006): pp. 75-95.

²³ Sizer, Stephen. *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

²⁴ Weber, Timothy P. *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel’s Best Friend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005).

²⁵ Yobely Mogollón Hernández, José Alexander Pineda Zelaya, Jesús Antonio Bermúdez Maraño, Santiago Clavijo Ramírez, Germán Plata Rojas. “Armagedón: Análisis exegético AP 16:12-16.” *TEOREL: Revista de Estudios e Investigaciones* 1 (2023): pp. 85-102.

²⁶ Kuruvilla, Samuel J. “Theologies of Liberation in Latin America and Palestine-Israel in Comparative Perspective: Contextual Differences and Practical Similarities.” *Holy Land Studies* 9, no. 1 (2010): pp. 51-69; Quer,

this logic, Israel is not simply a modern nation-state, but a central player in the Judeo-Christian eschatology that ultimately uses Israel as a vehicle in accelerating the Christian benefit of the establishment of the divine monarchy. Various influential evangelical leaders in the region have promoted this vision, articulating it with a prophetic-fascist agenda that justifies the occupation of Palestinian territories and the increasing militarization of the conflict. According to this interpretation, after the “Great Tribulation,” Christ will return and establish his millennial kingdom in Jerusalem, where he will rule the entire world. During that period, the promises made to ancient Israel in the Hebrew Bible will be fulfilled literally and linearly, placing the Israeli nation at the center of messianic rule.²⁷ This narrative reinforces a necropolitical and religious reading highly charged with fundamentalism, where theological discourse underpins concrete geopolitical positions in the service of imperialism, neocolonization, and the occupation of territories, among other things.

3. Geopolitical and Theological Influences

In 1840, Lord Ashley Cooper —the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury and a leading figure in the British evangelical party— petitioned the Foreign Secretary for Britain to promote the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. In 1891, in the United States, the evangelist William Blackstone promoted a petition addressed to the American president, proposing the organization of an international conference to grant Palestine to the Jewish people. This document was signed by numerous influential personalities, including religious leaders, business people, and North American politicians. It was an early and significant moment in the history of Christian Zionism in the United States, anticipating the organized political Zionism that Theodor Herzl would promote a few years later. Shaftesbury and Blackstone - whose efforts preceded the birth of political Zionism - are among the most recognized proto-Zionists in English-speaking contexts.²⁸

The impact of Christian Zionism —and Zionist Christianity—²⁹ has transcended the strictly theological realm, significantly influencing international relations, especially U.S. foreign policy.³⁰ This current, deeply marked by dispensationalist eschatology, promotes unconditional support for the State of Israel based on the belief that the reestablishment of Israel is a prophetic fulfillment and a sign of the imminent “return of Christ.” From this perspective, supporting Israel is not only a political choice but a theological and spiritual obligation.³¹ Many evangelical sectors consider that

Giovanni Matteo. “Israel and Zionism in the Eyes of Palestinian Christian Theologians.” *Religions* 10, no. 8 (2019): p. 487.

²⁷ It is necessary to recognize the importance of critiques such as those of Dana Luciano, *Arranging Grief: Sacred Time and the Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2007) on “chrononormativity,” or José Esteban Muñoz’s pointing out of the problems of historical hegemony and the colonial predominance of *straight time* in his book *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2009) and J. Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place. Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005). For more, see: Santos Meza, Anderson. “Quaerite et Invenietis: Tras el Rastro «Queer» en la Edad Media.” *Conexión Queer: Revista Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Teologías Queer* 5 (2022): pp. 173-216.

²⁸ Ariel, Yaakov. “An Unexpected Alliance: Christian Zionism and Its Historical Significance.” *Modern Judaism: A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience* 26, Issue 1 (February 2006): pp. 74-100.

²⁹ Although this chapter makes special reference to “Christian Zionism,” it is vital to maintain a broader perspective. Distinctions are drawn between “Christian Zionism” and “Zionist Christianity” to highlight specific differences. However, in most cases, it is difficult to clearly separate these concepts, as they form a complex and often indistinguishable amalgam.

³⁰ Hummal, Daniel. *Covenant Brothers: Evangelicals, Jews, and US-Israeli Relations* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

³¹ Motti Inbari; Bumin, Kirill; Byrd, M. Gordon. “Why Do Evangelicals Support Israel?” *Religion and Politics* 14, no. 1 (2020): pp.1-36.

any opposition to the Israeli state is tantamount to resisting the “divine plan” revealed in Scripture, particularly in passages such as Genesis 12:3 and Revelation.³²

This theological framework has had concrete effects on political decisions —such as the one adopted by Donald Trump’s administration in 2017— by recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, defying international consensus and favoring the positions of Christian Zionism.³³ Evangelical sectors with strong political influence have actively lobbied for U.S. administrations to maintain a pro-Israel line, aligning their foreign policy with religious interests. However, this approach has come under increasing criticism within and outside Christianity. We can identify at least two main objections: on the one hand, the instrumentalized use of faith to justify occupations and violence; on the other, the reductionist view of Middle East history and politics.

Likewise, the close connection between politics and religion reinforces the geopolitical pretensions of the United States in Abya Yala, particularly through the theo(ideo)logical affinity shared with Latin American evangelical conservatism.³⁴ In constant expansion, this sector operates through influential religious lobbies in national congresses, conditioning legislative agendas on issues such as sexual rights, education, family, and religious freedom.³⁵ In addition, their influence extends to the foreign policies and international relations of several countries in the region, aligning them with global conservative positions promoted from Washington, which right-wing Latin American governments echo.³⁶ This strategic alliance has been key in processes of progressive destabilization and expansion of neoliberal religious values,³⁷ in what Rodrigo Karmy Bolton has called the “Israelization” of politics in Abya Yala.³⁸

It is significant to note that it was U.S. President Donald Trump who moved the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem to fulfill an election promise made to his evangelical voters. However, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush also wanted to do so.³⁹ This argument has also been used in Abya Yala for political purposes. Thus, Guatemala —headed by President Jimmy Morales, who is of evangelical extraction— moved its embassy to Jerusalem.⁴⁰ Then President Jair Bolsonaro also promised to move the Brazilian embassy, but then desisted.⁴¹ Ivan Duque, the former president of Colombia, also offered to do so, but backed out during his campaign.⁴² Evangelical congressman

³² Ice, Thomas D. “Lovers of Zion: A History of Christian Zionism.” *Article Archives* 29. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/pretrib_arch/29>.

³³ Ramirez, Carlos. “Sionismo cristiano.” *Razón Pública* (November 26, 2023).

³⁴ Ortega, Bibiana. “Political Participation of Evangelicals in Colombia 1990-2017.” *Politics and Religion* 12, no. 1 (2018): pp. 17-54

³⁵ Vaggione, Juan Marco and Maria das Dores Campos Machado. “Religious Patterns of Neoconservatism in Latin America.” *Politics and Gender* 16, no. 1 (2020): pp. 6-10.

³⁶ Campos Machado, Maria das Dores, Mariz, Cecília Loreto and Carranza, Brenda. “Articulações político-religiosas entre Brasil-USA: direita e sionismo cristãos.” *Social Sciences and Religion / Ciências Sociais e Religião* 23 (2021): pp. 1-34.

³⁷ Córdoba Villazón, Julio. “Viejas y nuevas derechas religiosas en América Latina: los evangélicos como factor político.” *Nueva Sociedad* 254 (2014): pp. 112-123.

³⁸ Bolton, Rodrigo Karmy. “¿Una Operación Cóndor 2.0? O sobre la ‘israelización’ de la política latinoamericana”. *Bordes: Revista de Política, Derecho y Sociedad* 15 (November 2019-January 2020): pp. 101-107.

³⁹ The White House. “President Donald J. Trump Keeps His Promise to Open U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, Israel.” *The White House. Foreign Policy* (May 14, 2018); Baker, P. “An Embassy in Jerusalem? Trump Promises, but so Did Predecessors.” *The New York Times* (November 18, 2016).

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State. “Guatemala 2017 International Religious Freedom Report. U. S. Department of State.” (January 2017).

⁴¹ Landau, Noa. “Bolsonaro Backtracks on Jerusalem Embassy Move, Says He May Open ‘Business Office’ Instead.” *Haaretz* (March 19, 2019).

⁴² Caracol Radio. “Iván Duque echa para atrás propuesta de embajada de Colombia a Jerusalén.” *Caracol Radio* (May 21, 2018).

Julio Rosas urged the Peruvian government to recognize Jerusalem as the capital and move the Peruvian embassy.⁴³

Now, from a Jewish perspective, specific sectors maintain that the instrumentalization of Israel by evangelical support responds not to sincere interests, but to a pre-established eschatological agenda.⁴⁴ According to this view, Jews become mere actors in a prophetic drama that seeks to culminate in their conversion to Christianity. This approach questions the authenticity of relationships and alliances, suggesting that religious and strategic motives lie behind the political and social backing.⁴⁵ Thus, the existence of a project that uses Israel as a tool to achieve eschatological objectives defined in the present context is posited.

On the other hand, the influence of a belief based on biblical interpretation has decisively shaped Middle East politics, especially concerning the control of certain lands.⁴⁶ According to this perspective, Israel has the right to rule over territories considered part of a sacred promise, which has generated positions that dismiss and minimize the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.⁴⁷ This view contributes to regional polarization, fueling conflicts and hindering dialogue between parties. Moreover, such an approach has served to justify controversial political and territorial actions in the framework of historical disputes today.

Undoubtedly, dispensationalist premillennialism has shaped both theology and politics surrounding Israel, promoting a vision that sees its national restoration as key to "God's plan." However, this approach has also generated debates about its ethical and political implications, especially regarding the instrumentalization of Israel and its impact on the region. From critical perspectives, such as queer theologies and post/de-colonial studies, alternative readings can be proposed that challenge hegemonic narratives and seek more inclusive and just interpretations of the biblical tradition.

II. *Evangelical Missions in Abya Yala and Christian Zionism*

Evangelical missions in Abya Yala have played a key role in the region's expansion and exponential growth of evangelical Christianity, profoundly influencing many communities' religious culture, politics, and identity. In recent decades, one of the most influential theological currents within evangelicalism has been premillennial dispensationalism, which often carries with it a strong endorsement of Christian Zionism and the State of Israel.⁴⁸ This phenomenon has shaped the relationship of many Latin American evangelical churches to global geopolitics and has significantly impacted the perception of the Middle East conflict. Today, there is no doubt that "the sleeping giant of Zionist Christianity has risen,"⁴⁹ as stated in 2007 by Pastor John Hagee, founder of Christians United for Israel. Moreover, there is no doubt about the imperialist and colonial connotation of this giant and global monster.

⁴³ El Comercio. "Rosas pide que el Perú reconozca a Jerusalén como capital de Israel." *El Comercio* (December 9, 2017).

⁴⁴ Ariel, Yaakov. "The American Christian Love Affair with Israel," in *Zeal for Zion: Christians, Jews, and the Idea of the Promised Land*, ed. Shalom Goldman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), pp. 105-130.

⁴⁵ Ariel, Yaakov. *An Unusual Relationship Evangelical Christians and Jews* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2013).

⁴⁶ López Alonso, Carmen. "¿Caminando sobre un volcán? Religión y política en Israel: la utilización del texto bíblico como argumento". *Ilu: Revista de Ciencias de las Religiones* 27 (2022): e81648.

⁴⁷ Chenoll Alfaro, Rafael R. "Palestina versus Israel: razones de una intransigencia". *Baetica: Estudios de Arte, Geografía e Historia* 32 (2010): pp. 147-155.

⁴⁸ Chapman, Colin. "Premillennial Theology, Christian Zionism, and Christian Mission." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 33, no. 3 (July 2009): pp. 137-144.

⁴⁹ Smith, Robert O. *More Desired than Our Own Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 23.

1. Evangelical Missions in Abya Yala: Context and Expansion

Evangelical missions began to arrive in Abya Yala on a large scale in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, driven mainly by Protestant and Pentecostal denominations from the United States and Europe.⁵⁰ Along with their preaching of the message of Jesus, the pre-millennialist vision brought by the missionaries arriving in these territories of the global South also spread.⁵¹ Over time, the evangelical influence grew exponentially, becoming one of the most dynamic religious forces in the region and influencing not only theologically but also socially and politically the countries in which they developed.⁵²

Several factors have marked the growth of these churches. Adaptability has been a key factor in the success of the evangelical movement in Abya Yala. The evangelical sectors have been able to incorporate local cultural practices, adapting elements such as music and leadership structure to the particularities of each community, which has allowed for rapid expansion and theo(ideo)logical assimilation. They have also focused on an approach that integrates the personal and the communal, offering immediate responses to their faithful's spiritual and material needs, which is essential in contexts of economic and social crisis. In addition, the strategic use of various means of communication, including radio, television, and the Internet, has been essential for disseminating the evangelical message, consolidating its presence and influence in the region.⁵³

Within this panorama, dispensationalism and support for Israel have found fertile ground for expansion, especially among the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches of Abya Yala. These churches have integrated Christian Zionism as an essential part of their theological identity, linking the fulfillment of biblical prophecies to the destiny of the Jewish people, becoming Christian-Zionist communities.⁵⁴ Academic research indicates that this phenomenon intensified from the 1980s, driven by various socio-political and cultural factors.⁵⁵ Moreover, university studies have shown that this stance reinforces solidarity with Israel, translating into political and social support that transcends the merely spiritual, becoming a decisive element in contemporary religious dynamics. Nevertheless, this raises significant questions for the missionary imprint of North American evangelicalism.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Prien, Hans-Jürgen. "Der Protestantismus in Lateinamerika (18.-20. Jh.)." *Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia* 9 (2000): pp. 171-196.

⁵¹ Pocock, Michael. "The Influence of Premillennial Schatology on Evangelical Missionary Theory and Praxis from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 33, no. 3 (July 2009): pp. 137-144.

⁵² Tec-Lopez, René. "Neo-Pentecostalism and Its Characterizations in Latin America." *Politics and Culture* 54 (2020): pp. 105-132.

⁵³ Quebedeaux, Richard. *The New Charismatics. The origins, development and significance of Neo-pentecostalism*, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1976; Willems, Emilio. *Followers of the New Faith. Culture Change and Rise of Protestantism in Brazil and Chile*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967; Algranti, Joaquín (coord.), *La industria del creer: sociología de las mercancías religiosas* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2013).

⁵⁴ Carpenedo, Manoela. "Christian Zionist Religiouscapes in Brazil: Understanding Judaizing Practices and Zionist Inclinations in Brazilian Charismatic Evangelicalism." *Social Compass* 68, no.2 (2021): pp. 204-217.

⁵⁵ Lindsey, Hal. *Os anos 80: contagem regressiva para o juízo final*. Rio de Janeiro: Record Editora, 1982. For more information, see Durbin, Sean. "'I Will Bless Those Who Bless You': Christian Zionism, Fetishism, and Unleashing the Blessings of God." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 28, no. 3 (2013): 507-521; Saif, Mashal. "Apocalyptic Movements in Contemporary Politics: Christian and Jewish Zionism." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 30, no. 2 (2015): 351-353; Lundberg, Anders P., and Kristian Steiner. "The Remaining Few: Christian Zionists Making Sense of a Changed Ecclesiastic Landscape." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 33, no. 1 (2018): 71-86; Shapiro, Faydra L. "To the Apple of God's Eye: Christian Zionist Travel to Israel." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 23, no. 3 (2008): 307-320.

⁵⁶ Bush, Andrew F. "The Implications of Christian Zionism for Mission." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 33, n. 3 (July 2009): pp. 144-150.

2. Dispensationalism and Christian Zionism in Latin America

Since one of the fundamental characteristics of dispensationalism is the marked differentiation between the Christian Church and the people of Israel, this implies that numerous theological interpretations hold that some of the promises contained in the Hebrew Bible must be fulfilled literally in the state of Israel, which has little to do with the Hebrew people described in the Bible as analyzed by the post-Zionist movement.⁵⁷ This theological framework has prompted numerous evangelical churches in Abya Yala to adopt a strongly pro-Israel stance, evidencing a political and spiritual commitment to this nation. Within this wide range of positions, three common beliefs can be identified that permeate both the theology and the reading of the Holy Scriptures, consolidating a distinctive doctrinal identity oriented towards the prophetic fulfillment announced in these texts.

On the one hand, the restoration of Israel is considered a fundamental prophetic fulfillment in various theological currents. The partition of Palestine in 1947 and the subsequent founding of the State of Israel in 1948 are seen by many as the beginning of a series of events marked in the Bible, announcing the nearness of the end times.⁵⁸ According to this perspective, the return and consolidation of the Jewish people in their ancestral land represent the materialization of ancient prophecies, giving an inescapable sense of urgency and transcendence to contemporary events. This phenomenon has generated intense debates in academic and religious circles, marking a dividing line in the interpretation of the final destiny of humanity.

On the other hand, many conservative evangelical sectors maintain that protecting Israel is a divine mandate, based on specific interpretations of biblical passages such as Genesis 12:3. According to this reading, God promises blessings to those who support the Jewish people and warns of curses to those who oppose them. This view drives an unwavering commitment to the Israeli nation, seeing it as key to the “divine plan” for the end times. Adopting this belief reinforces political and spiritual ties, influencing decisions and policies that seek to preserve Israel's integrity and prosperity. The presence of evangelical deputies and senators in the congresses of different countries —such as Brazil, El Salvador, Colombia, and Chile— influences political decisions and geopolitical positions of the States.⁵⁹ Increasingly, the speeches and public interventions of congress members in many Abya Yala countries show their adherence to theological and political Zionism.⁶⁰ Precisely, Nicolás Panotto assures that,

Zionist discourses, especially in their Christian varieties, permeate Latin American society. Understanding this framework helps us deepen our analysis of the complex relationship between politics and religion across the globe, but particularly in Latin America. It also illuminates the colonial role conservative Christianity has historically played in the region.⁶¹

Finally, in the eschatological framework, Israel plays a central role in the “Great Tribulation” narrative, considered the epicenter of suffering before the second coming of Christ. According to this doctrine, the nation will undergo intense trials and adversities that will serve as a prelude to the

⁵⁷ Basallote Marín, Antonio. “El postsionismo y la cuestión palestina-israelí. Fisuras, reacciones y continuidad.” *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 33 (2022): pp. 143-174.

⁵⁸ Garduño, Moisés, Marlene Hernández Morán, Brenda Carranza, Nicolás Panotto, Damián Setton and Arely Medina. “Palestina visto desde América Latina.” *Encartes* 8, no. 15 (2025): pp. 317-336.

⁵⁹ Wilhelm Wachholz and André Daniel Reinke. “‘Pela paz de Jerusalém’. A origem do sionismo cristão, sua influência na igreja protestante brasileira e sua atuação no Congresso Nacional.” *Revista Brasileira de História das Religiões - ANPUH* 13, no. 37 (May-August 2020): pp. 253-273.

⁶⁰ Barrucho, Luís. “‘Falei para chamar atenção’, diz deputado ao justificar voto pela ‘paz em Jerusalém’.” *BBC News Brazil*, April 20, 2016. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/noticias/2016/04/160420_entrevista_ronaldo_fonseca_paz_jerusalem_lgb>.

⁶¹ Panotto, Nicolás. “Christian Zionism as Geopolitics and Public Theology: A Latin American Perspective.” *Contending Modernities* (September 26, 2024). <https://contendingmodernities.nd.edu/global-currents/christian-zionism-latin-america/>.

imminent return of the Savior. Nevertheless, it is prophesied that Israel will undergo a spiritual transformation after this period of affliction, culminating in a turn towards Christianity. This process is interpreted as a necessary purification that prepares the way for the final redemption and the establishment of the divine Kingdom. These ideas have been promoted by American and European missionaries who have worked in Latin America for decades and today are part of the teaching of many evangelical churches in Brazil,⁶² Chile,⁶³ Venezuela,⁶⁴ Colombia,⁶⁵ and Guatemala,⁶⁶ among others.

3. Political and Economic Support from Abya Yala and its critics to Israel.

Support for Israel by evangelical churches has not been limited to the theological realm, but has had political and economic repercussions. Evangelical leaders have influenced governmental decisions regarding Israel in many Latin American countries. As mentioned above, the transfer of embassies to Jerusalem is a diplomatic milestone that reflects a significant change in the foreign policy of several Latin American countries. Following the example of the United States, nations such as Brazil, Guatemala, and Honduras have decided to relocate their diplomatic missions to the Israeli capital, a decision strongly influenced by evangelical leaders with considerable political clout.⁶⁷ This move not only reinforces the alliance with Israel, but also signals a growing trend of religious and strategic support in the region, evidencing the convergence of political and doctrinal interests in international affairs: "Christian Zionism operates as a theological framework that pursues public advocacy in support of Israel and legitimizes Israel's imperialist actions against Palestinians."⁶⁸ This phenomenon marks a new chapter in regional international relations.⁶⁹

The strengthening of bilateral relations between Israel and Latin American countries has been driven by carefully designed diplomatic and economic strategies, but also by well-defined theological beliefs, which allow the imperialist projects of Israel and the United States — among other countries — to be guided by national agendas that are conceived, mobilized and disseminated at the altars of the churches. Israel has managed to establish strategic links that include trade, technology, and security, taking advantage of the support of evangelical churches in the region. Speeches by leaders such as President Javier Milei in Argentina have highlighted the importance of these alliances, underlining

⁶² Maria das Dores Campos Machado, Cecília Loreto Mariz and Brenda Carranza. "Genealogia do sionismo evangélico no Brasil." *Religião e Sociedade* 42, no. 2 (2022): pp. 225-248.

⁶³ Luis Aránguiz Kahn. "El despertar transnacional del 'gigante dormido' cristiano sionista?: actores del apoyo público evangélico al Estado de Israel a partir del caso chileno." *Política y Sociedad* 59, no. 3 (2022): e77697.

⁶⁴ Fernando Adolfo Mora Ciangherotti. "Sionismo Evangélico-Pentecostal a la venezolana: El caso de las cartas del Pastor Banks Puertas al Presidente Hugo Chávez". *Ciencias Sociales y Religión/Ciências Sociais e Religião* 25 (October-December, 2023): e023026.

⁶⁵ Santos Meza. "'En nombre de Dios, del amor y la inclusión'."

⁶⁶ Fuentes, Claudia Dary. "Aproximación al Sionismo Cristiano en Guatemala." *Ciencias Sociales y Religión/Ciências Sociais e Religião* 25 (October-December, 2023): e023028.

⁶⁷ Kawakami Gonçalves Costa, Simone. "Breves apontamentos sobre a escatologia cristã dispensacionalista e as transferências de embaixadas a Jerusalém." *Diálogos Internacionais* 6, No. 57 (February, 2019). Available t: <<http://www.dialogosinternacionais.com.br/2019/02/breves-apontamentos-sobre-escatologia.html>>; Caio Quero. "Bolsonaro em Israel: Presidente brasileiro recua sobre embaixada e anuncia escritório comercial em Jerusalém." *BBC News Brazil*, March 31, 2019. Available at: <<https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-47766575>>.

⁶⁸ Panotto, Nicolás. "Christian Zionism as Geopolitics and Public Theology."

⁶⁹ Brenda Carranza, Maria das Dores Campos Machado, and Cecília Loreto Mariz. "Sionismo Cristão na América Latina e suas Múltiplas Dimensões." *Ciencias Sociales y Religión/Ciências Sociais e Religião* 25 (October-December, 2023): e023023.

that close cooperation with Israel benefits the integral development of the nations involved.⁷⁰ The same has happened in El Salvador, where President Nayib Bukele has centralized and delimited many of the country's businesses with exclusivity agreements with the United States.⁷¹

In several countries of Abya Yala, pro-Israel events and demonstrations have been organized to demonstrate the commitment of the evangelical communities. For example, churches and congregations in Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia have held marches and rallies to express their strong support for the Jewish state. These public events promote the idea that Christians must defend Israel, making visible the connection between faith and politics that orchestrates decisions on human rights, neoliberal economies, extractivist agreements, and the financing of wars and genocides in the name of God. Active participation in these activities has exposed the region's evangelical influence and its religious and theological influence.

In addition, it should be noted that very few pro-Palestinian demonstrations have emerged in Latin American countries at present. Students, LGBTIQ+ populations, environmental groups, indigenous peoples' movements, human rights activists and defenders, some academics and professors, and very few politicians have mobilized to reject the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, and the terrible genocide that continues to be televised and shared by all social networks without any world entity managing to do anything to stop it. In Abya Yala, moreover, there have been very few religious leaders and church communities that have been forceful in rejecting the occupation of the Palestinian territories; and those who have done so, in fact, are not part of the fundamentalist and Zionist evangelical mega-churches that have colonized the continent.

It is necessary to point out that the traditional evangelical churches of the region, as well as the Roman Catholic Church, which has an essential presence in Abya Yala, have not pronounced themselves significantly against the genocidal practices that are being carried out in the Palestinian territories. This indifferent silence is also part of the main achievements of Zionist Christianity, since, having at its base a sort of Christianocentrism, it spreads an apathy towards what happens in places categorized as "Arab," "non-Christian," "non-Judeo-Christian."

The following overview presents the most relevant features of the region, providing essential background for the topic at hand:

Latin America has not been excluded from the diversity of actions and pronouncements. While some Latin American countries —Cuba with Miguel Díaz Canel, Brazil with Lula da Silva, Bolivia with Luis Arce, Chile with Gabriel Boric, Colombia with Gustavo Petro and Venezuela with Nicolás Maduro— have spoken out strongly against it and some have taken diplomatic actions such as disapproving the occupation of Palestine, the rest of the countries have only called for a ceasefire, inclined at first to condemn the initial actions of Hamas and some have even supported Israel. It has been the civilian population: students, teachers, religious groups such as Muslims, who have organized to take to the streets, universities, and social networks to call for humanitarian law, to speak out against Israel's genocidal actions, and to encourage universities to break relations with this State. To this has been added a decrease in the indifference of Latin American states with a series of

⁷⁰ Niebieskikwiat, Natasha. "Alianza de Javier Milei con Israel: Argentina votó en contra de la entrada de Palestina a las Naciones Unidas." *Clarín* (May 10, 2024); Pérez, Larisa. "Primer discurso. Milei en la ONU: reclamó más "libertad" mientras apoyó el genocidio de Israel al pueblo palestino." *La Izquierda Diario* (September 24, 2024); Galligani, Federico. "Milei volverá a viajar a Israel y firmará un Memorandum de cooperación en la lucha contra el terrorismo." *Infobae* (March 3, 2025).

⁷¹ Ridders, Isabel, and Noelle Brigden. "El sionismo cristiano en El Salvador bajo Bukele." *Nacla* (October 9, 2024); Gamba, Laura. "Where do Latin American Leaders Stand on the Israel-Palestine Conflict?" *Anadolu Ajansi* (October 10, 2024); Alexander, Inigo. "El Salvador: A Pro-Israel President of Palestinian Descent Deepens Divide Among Diaspora." *Middle East Eye* (June 16, 2021);

statements in social networks against the military escalation, the displacement of families, and the violation of international law.⁷²

Despite evangelical enthusiasm for Christian Zionism, this position has been the subject of numerous criticisms from various theological, political, and academic perspectives. Multiple leaders and scholars have pointed out that evangelical support is founded on an eschatological agenda that, rather than promoting a genuine recognition of Judaism, hopes to bring about the conversion of Jews to Christianity at the end of time. This approach is problematic, as it reduces the complexity and historical richness of the Jewish people to a mere instrument within a prophetic narrative. Likewise, the instrumentalization of faith generates tensions and mistrust, creating barriers in interreligious dialogue and hindering the building of relationships based on mutual respect between evangelicals and Jewish communities.

Strong evangelical support for Israel often ignores or minimizes Palestinian rights, which contributes to a one-sided and biased view of the conflict in the region, legitimizing Zionist colonialism and the genocide of the Palestinian people. Thus, critics of this approach argue that dispensationalist theology, by justifying the occupation of territories as the fulfillment of biblical promises, legitimately disregards the claims and aspirations of Palestinians, including Christians who also suffer the consequences of this protracted conflict. Due to the evangelical conversionist bias, the presence of Orthodox, Anglican, and evangelical churches in Israel is dismissed or minimized in pursuit of the dispensationalist agenda.⁷³ This doctrinal bias perpetuates political polarization and impedes the development of inclusive, just, and balanced peace solutions. The lack of recognition of the complex socio-political realities hinders progress towards genuine dialogue and respect for human rights.

III. Liberation Theologies, Ecumenical Churches, and Christian Zionism in Abya Yala

The TLL and the ecumenical churches in Abya Yala have played a crucial role in defending human rights, social justice, and resistance against political and economic oppression. In contrast, Christian Zionism, which has gained strength in the region thanks to the expansion of evangelicalism—especially in the fundamentalist and dispensationalist neo-Pentecostal churches—has promoted an interpretation of Christianity that reinforces unconditional support for the State of Israel and for particular eschatological and apocalyptic visions that are used as prophecy or ratification of events occurring on a global scale. However, the dialogue between these two theological approaches has been limited, which has generated an absence of structured debates on the relationship between theology, politics, and geopolitics in Latin America.

1. The TLLs and Their Perspective on the Current Situation Between Israel and Palestine.

The origin of the TLL emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a response to poverty, oppression, and injustice in Abya Yala.⁷⁴ Inspired by the prophetic tradition of the Bible and the preferential option for the poor, liberationist theological thought has emphasized the need for Christian praxis

⁷² Garduño et al. "Palestina visto desde América Latina," 318.

⁷³ Duncan, Philip Travis. *Commemorating Israel, Forgetting Palestine: Representation and Remembering in Dispensational Discourses* (Kansas City, KS: University of Kansas, 2011); Phillips, Elizabeth. *Apocalyptic Theopolitics: Dispensationalism, Israel/Palestine, and Ecclesial Enactments of Eschatology* (Apollo: University of Cambridge Repository, 2009); Bock, Darrell L. "Dispensationalism." *St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*, edited by Brendan N. Wolfe et al (Fife: University of St Andrews, 2023); Irwin, Brian P. *After Dispensationalism: Reading the Bible for the End of the World* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2023).

⁷⁴ Solorio Virrueta, Raúl and Lorena Patricia Pulido Ríos María (2022). "La teología de la liberación: un devenir abierto a la realidad." *Revista Internacional de Psicología y Pedagogía Crítica* 1 (2022): pp. 64-74.

committed to community transformation and social justice.⁷⁵ In this context, its position vis-à-vis Israel and Palestine has generally aligned itself with resistance movements against colonialism and occupation.

Since its inception, the TLL has sympathized with national liberation movements worldwide, including the Palestinian cause. Many liberation theologians have denounced the Israeli occupation as a form of colonialism and have defended the right of Palestinians to self-determination. Authors such as Gustavo Gutiérrez, Leonardo Boff, Jon Sobrino (Roman Catholic), José Míguez Bonino (Protestant) and Andrés Kirk (Anglican) have pointed out that Christianity cannot be an accomplice of structures of oppression,⁷⁶ which has led some sectors of the TLLs to question the Christian Zionism promoted by the evangelical churches and the consequent indifference, apathy and silence in the face of the sufferings endured by the Palestinian people.⁷⁷

One of the main objections of the TLLs against Christian Zionism is its literalist and fundamentalist interpretation of Scripture to justify Israel's colonial occupation of Palestinian territories.⁷⁸ Whereas dispensationalism sees the restoration of Israel as a prophetic fulfillment, the TLLs emphasize a contextual and liberating reading of the Bible, rejecting interpretations that legitimize violence and injustice. Rather than aligning itself with colonialist, nationalist, or expansionist political projects, the TLL has advocated for building ecclesial communities committed to peace and global justice by prioritizing counter-hegemonic resistance.⁷⁹ This has led it to seek alliances with Palestinian Christians who also struggle for their rights in a context of conflict and displacement.

2. Ecumenical Churches and Their Relationship to Christian Zionism

Ecumenical churches in Abya Yala —many of them members of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) and the World Council of Churches (WCC), for example— have adopted a more critical stance towards Christian Zionism and unconditional support for Israel. These churches have promoted interfaith dialogue and have sought a balance between recognizing Israel's right to exist and denouncing human rights violations in the Palestinian territories. The WCC has on many occasions expressed its concern about the situation in Palestine, supporting initiatives such as the *Programa Ecueménico de Acompañamiento en Palestina e Israel* [Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel] (EAPPI), which seeks to document human rights violations and foster dialogue for peace.⁸⁰ In Abya Yala, some ecumenical churches and theologians have followed this line, promoting awareness campaigns and support for the Palestinian cause.

⁷⁵ Córdova Quero, Hugo, Miguel H. Díaz, Anderson Fabián Santos Meza and Cristian Mor (eds.). *Mysterium Liberationis Queer: Ensayos sobre teologías queer de la liberación en las Américas* (Saint Louis, MO: Institute Sophia Press, 2024).

⁷⁶ Córdova Quero, Hugo and Anderson Fabián Santos Meza. "Travesías teológicas queer/cuir en América Latina," 9-62, in *Transformaciones queer/cuir en Abya Yala: Teologías indecentes y disruptivas*, edited by Hugo Córdova Quero and Anderson Fabián Santos Meza (Saint Louis, MO/Ciudad de Mexico: Institute Sophia Press/CETELA, 2025).

⁷⁷ Santos Meza, "En nombre de Dios, del amor y la inclusión".

⁷⁸ Basallote Marín, A. *Paraíso usurpado: el sionismo y el pueblo palestino. Historia de la expansión territorial israelí* (Málaga: Editorial Cedma, 2011).

⁷⁹ Soto, Oscar. "Teologías de la liberación y movimientos sociales: Matrices de pensamiento crítico y articulaciones contrahegemónicas en la América Latina reciente, a partir del proceso social brasilero." *Memorias: Revista Digital de Historia y Arqueología desde el Caribe Colombiano* 9, no. 17 (July-December, 2012): pp. 258-271.

⁸⁰ Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel, Available at: <<https://argentina.peapi.org/>>; Iglesia Evangélica del Río de la Plata, "EAPPI Training in Argentina: An Ecumenical Commitment for Peace and Justice," May 31, 2024, Available at: <<https://ierp.org.ar/capacitacion-del-peapi-en-argentina-un-compromiso-ecumenico-por-la-paz-y-la-justicia/>>.

Ecumenical churches have found it challenging to engage in dialogue with evangelical sectors that advocate Christian Zionism. This is due, in part, to differences in their understanding of the mission of the churches. While ecumenical churches emphasize social justice and reconciliation, Christian Zionism focuses on an eschatological interpretation of history that minimizes current concerns for justice.⁸¹ Unlike Christian Zionism, which sees Israel as the center of biblical prophecy, ecumenical churches have promoted theologies of reconciliation that seek to overcome geopolitical and religious divisions.⁸² This is reflected in work with human rights organizations and the call for a just and peaceful resolution of Israel's colonial occupation of Palestinian territories.

While the TLLs and ecumenical churches have shown a critical stance towards Christian Zionism, the debate has been limited and often absent from theological discussions in Abya Yala. Indeed, many liberation theologians have remained silent on the situation of the ongoing Palestinian genocide, as if a “preferential option for Palestinians” were not urgent, as noted by theologian Sarojini Nadar in the keynote address she gave at the DARE 2025 Conference, entitled “‘Beyond Neutrality:’ An Epistemological Preference for Palestine.”⁸³ Since 2009, Nadar has insisted on something fundamental: “The bodies of Palestinian children on the Gaza Strip do not lie, she reminded us. They tell a story of real suffering. Bodies do not lie, and bodies are imbued with names, identities, and characteristics.”⁸⁴

The growing influence of Christian Zionism poses a challenge for those who defend a post-colonial, anti-fascist, liberating and ecumenical theology, as it implies: (i) confronting biblical interpretations that legitimize oppression and exclusion; (ii) fracturing patronizing and complacent narratives that refuse to address differences; and, (iii) breaking ties with Zionist and fascist religious organizations that refuse to maintain apathetic positions in the face of the occupation of Palestinian territories. In the case of Gaza, the simplistic narrative that deals with the heartbreaking situation in these Palestinian territories as if it were “a conflict between two sides” cannot continue to prevail. In this sense, as Nicolás Panotto states, one cannot speak of “collateral damage”:

In Gaza, the murder of innocents ceased to be an accidental consequence. It became part of an intentional mechanism (ethnic cleansing), motivated by a theological-religious-political intersection that mixes ancestry and modernity, based on a vernacular purity, as claimed by Zionism, which became the point of origin of what we understand today as the founding principles of modern politics and culture.⁸⁵

Other implications can be added to the three mentioned here. It is also clear that, to advance in this dialogue, it is necessary to build bridges, as far as possible, between different theological and religious traditions, to promote a more critical and equitable understanding of the relationship between faith and politics in the Latin American context.

3). How do the TLL and the Ecumenical Churches Respond to the Warlike Vision of Armageddon?

From the TLL and ecumenism, the view of Armageddon as a literal battle is strongly questioned. Other theological interpretations are proposed that reject the use of the Bible to legitimize geopolitical conflicts and violence in the present.

⁸¹ Córdova Quero, Hugo. *Intersecciones ecuménicas: Perspectivas para comprender el diálogo interreligioso en una era plural* (Saint Louis, MO: Institute Sophia Press, 2022).

⁸² Córdova Quero, Hugo. *El desafío del diálogo. Historia, definiciones y problemáticas del ecumenismo y la pluralidad religiosa* (Buenos Aires: GEMRIP Ediciones, 2014).

⁸³ Prof. Sarojini Nadar’s keynote lecture can be heard on the official Youtube account of the Council for World Mission (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2KznePwPV0>).

⁸⁴ Nadar, Sarojini. “Beyond the ‘Ordinary Reader’ and the ‘Invisible Intellectual’: Shifting Contextual Bible Study From Liberation Discourse to Liberation Pedagogy.” *Old Testament Essays* 22, no. 2 (2009): p. 385.

⁸⁵ Garduño, Moisés, Marlene Hernández Morán, Brenda Carranza, Nicolás Panotto, Damián Setton and Arely Medina. “Palestina visto desde América Latina,” 321. Panotto follows Santiago Slavodsky’s reflection, in *Decolonial Judaism: Triumphal Failures of Barbaric Thinking* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

Rather than conceiving Armageddon as an inevitable military event, the TLLs and ecumenism offer broader, symbolic, and ethical interpretations, centered on the popular values of social justice and communal solidarity. For these currents, Armageddon embodies the constant struggle between oppression and justice, evidencing the confrontation between empires seeking to dominate and peoples actively resisting such tyrannical, colonial, and imperial actions.⁸⁶ Likewise, this vision is configured as an urgent call to Christian responsibility, inviting the faith community to commit itself to eradicating violence, poverty, exploitation, and ecological problems. Rather than anticipating a future conflict, these interpretations are presented as a warning about the risks inherent in militarism, idolatries of power, religious nationalism, and the decline of liberal democracy, prompting a profound reflection that will lead to the transformation of social structures towards more just, supportive, and integral models.⁸⁷ This horizon, undoubtedly, proposes other paths towards a hopeful future.

The TLLs have strongly criticized the use of the Armageddon prophecy to justify wars and oppressions.⁸⁸ From this perspective, it is not legitimate to use the Bible to support the occupation of land or to legitimize the suffering of people. Consequently, it advocates narratives and theological practices focusing on defending life and human dignity instead of fatalistic visions inciting violence and promoting war.⁸⁹ According to this vision, Christianity must engage in active peace and reconciliation, rather than waiting for a destructive apocalypse. Ecumenical churches have promoted peace initiatives and interfaith dialogue, offering a significant contrast to the narrative of evangelical Zionism. In Abya Yala, various communities have advocated for justice in Palestine, rejecting theologies that encourage violence and occupation and instead promoting an ethical commitment to peace, something they share with processes initiated in other parts of the Global South, such as Africa and Asia.⁹⁰

The concept of Armageddon transcends the theological to acquire political and ethical dimensions.⁹¹ While Christian Zionism uses this image to justify unconditional support for Israel, interpreting it as a sign of the end times and a divine mandate, the TLLs and ecumenism strive to dismantle these polarizing narratives. These currents argue that faith must be committed to peace, justice, and social transformation, rejecting the fatalism that legitimizes violence and war.⁹² The fundamental question is whether theologies should foster attitudes that perpetuate conflict or act as a tool for building a more equitable and caring world. From liberationist and ecumenical perspectives, the answer is clear: Christianity must become an active agent of peace, promoting dialogue, reconciliation, and social engagement, and not a mere spectator in the face of an impending violent apocalypse.⁹³ However, this does not exempt radicalism from taking a stand against certain political, ethical, religious, and theological positions that tend towards fascism, negationism of

⁸⁶ Richard, Pablo, *Apocalipsis: Reconstrucción de la esperanza* (San José, Costa Rica: Departamento Ecuménico de Investigaciones, 1994).

⁸⁷ Lander, Edgardo. "Tendencias dominantes de nuestra época: ¿se nos agota el tiempo?" *Compendium* 12, no. 22, July (2009): pp. 85-106.

⁸⁸ Lochhead, David. *The Dialogical Imperative: A Christian Reflection on Interfaith Encounter* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2021).

⁸⁹ Sharpe, Matthew. "On Eschatology and the 'Return to Religion'." *Arena Journal* 39/40 (2013): pp. 203-228.

⁹⁰ Love, Roy. "Religion, Ideology & Conflict in Africa." *Review of African Political Economy* 33, no. 110 (2006): pp. 619-634.

⁹¹ Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. "The History of a Metaphor: Christian Zionism and the Politics of Apocalypse." *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 36, No. 75 (July-September, 1991): pp. 75-103.

⁹² Richard, Pablo. "Futuro de la Teología de la Liberación: una visión desde América Latina". *Carthaginensia: Revista de Estudios e Investigación* 15, no. 28 (1999): pp. 325-345.

⁹³ Ruiz Ortiz, Carlos Antonio. "Teología y cultura de paz." *Cultura de Paz* 20, no. 62 (January-April 2014): pp. 16-24.

violence, gender discrimination, neoliberal enterprises, among other positions that call for a theoretical and practical radicalization.

IV. Towards Necessary Dialogues

1. Absence of Debates and Pending Challenges

Despite the marked differences between the TLLs, the ecumenical churches, and Christian Zionism in Abya Yala, there has been a notable absence of open discussions between these sectors. This lack of dialogue is due to several factors. On the one hand, the fragmentation of Christianity in the region, with profound theological and ecclesial differences, has made it challenging to build common spaces for the respectful exchange of ideas. This polarity, marked by the creation of the World Council of Churches in 1948 (ecumenism) and the Lausanne Pact in 1974 (evangelicalism), has privileged denominational passions and beliefs over reasonable arguments.⁹⁴

On the other hand, global political polarization has significantly influenced the discussion on Israel and Palestine, aligning religious positions with ideological agendas, which has hindered rigorous and honest theological debate.⁹⁵ In addition, the rapid growth of Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal evangelicalism has strengthened evangelical Zionism in many contexts. At the same time, critical voices, especially those committed to social justice, socio-cultural transformation, and peace, have been displaced or rendered invisible in the public and political space and the theological and religious space.⁹⁶ This limits the theological pluralism necessary for a reasonable and critical dialogue. Against this background, perhaps one of the main challenges is related to paying attention to, listening to, and reading Palestinian theologians who are proposing liberationist and critical horizons as resistance to the Zionist occupation.⁹⁷

To generate theological debates on Christian Zionism in Abya Yala, it is essential to assume a series of concrete commitments. First, it is necessary to foster spaces for dialogue between theologians and leaders of different Christian traditions. The TLLs and ecumenical churches must open channels of conversation with evangelical sectors willing to question the use of Scripture to justify occupation, violence, and injustice. Second, there is an urgent need to critically review the impact of Christian Zionism on regional, national, and international policies. As we have already mentioned, support for Israel has influenced strategic decisions in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Colombia, or Guatemala; a thorough analysis of how these positions affect national sovereignty and Latin American foreign relations is required. Finally, it is vital to promote theologies centered on peace, human dignity, and reconciliation as ethical and spiritual alternatives to apocalyptic, excessively fatalistic, and pessimistic visions of the future.

2. Towards Situated and Contextual Theologies

Returning, once again, to the colonial wound that opened in Abya Yala with the arrival of the European conquerors, the evangelical missions have played a central role in the expansion of dispensationalism and Christian Zionism, profoundly influencing the theological, spiritual, and political formation-or deformation-of the region. Through theological education —if it can be called that—, the distribution of religious literature and the intensive use of mass media, these missions introduced —and continue to do so— a worldview centered on a literal, fundamentalist and futuristic

⁹⁴ Córdova Quero, *Intersecciones ecuménicas*.

⁹⁵ Munayer, John, and Samuel S. Munayer. "Decolonising Palestinian Liberation Theology: New Methods, Sources and Voices." *Studies in World Christianity* 28, no. 3 (2022): pp. 287-310.

⁹⁶ Masalha, Nur, and Lisa Isherwood (eds.), *Theologies of Liberation in Palestine-Israel: Indigenous, Contextual, and Postcolonial Perspectives* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2014).

⁹⁷ Ateek, Naim Stifan. *A Palestinian Theology of Liberation: The Bible, Justice, and the Palestine-Israel Conflict* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2017); Christison, Kathleen. *Justice on the Cross: Palestinian Liberation Theology, the Struggle against Israeli Oppression, and the Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2023).

interpretation of the Scriptures while combating Marxism and ecumenism as “anti-Christian” elements.⁹⁸ This perspective has shaped the eschatological understanding of millions of believers and guided their geopolitical outlook, especially concerning Israel and the Middle East.⁹⁹ However, it is essential to investigate the consequences of this influence critically. By privileging an imported theological narrative, many churches have neglected local socio-political realities, displacing theologies that could better respond to the needs for justice, equity, and peace in their Latin American contexts.¹⁰⁰

In an increasingly globalized world, Latin American Christians have the possibility —and the responsibility— to construct theologies that dialogue with the global, without losing sight of the local.¹⁰¹ This requires rereading the Scriptures from Latin America’s historical and cultural experiences, attending to the voices of marginalized peoples, social movements, and communities in resistance.¹⁰² In the face of the hegemony of dispensationalist narratives that reinforce structures of power and exclusion, there is an opportunity to recover contextual theologies that affirm life, dignity, and justice. Such theologies must question the politico-religious covenants that legitimize violence in the name of the sacred and open themselves to new ways of imagining integral liberation projects.¹⁰³ In this sense, theological commitment is not only doctrinal, nor exegetical and theological, but profoundly ethical and political.

3. Decolonial and Queer Readings

From decolonial perspectives, it can be recognized that dispensationalist interpretations of Christian Zionism reinforce imperialist narratives that justify territorial expansion under a particular religious discourse, replicating colonial logics in a theological key.¹⁰⁴ Instead of promoting contextualized theologies rooted in Latin American realities, many evangelical churches adopt, without critically questioning, a political-religious agenda aligned with the imperialist interests of the United States and Israel, among other countries. This theological appropriation acts as a form of religious colonialism, imposing an interpretative framework alien to the struggles and needs of Latin American peoples. Such a posture contributes to depoliticize the liberating Christianity that has historically accompanied processes of social justice in the region, replacing it with individualistic and egocentric spiritualities. These subordinate and neoliberal international policies are anchored in capitalist theologies of prosperity. Christian Zionism, in this sense, is not only a religious expression, but a geopolitical instrument that channels the support of evangelical churches towards a worldview centered on Western supremacy —cis-heterosexual and white— while dismissing the claims of oppressed peoples, especially the Palestinian people. In the face of this, a decolonial gaze proposes resisting these schemes and recovering theologies built from the South, emphasizing historical justice, international solidarity, and the affirmation of marginalized peoples.

In the face of this traditional reading, a decolonial gaze arises that prioritizes the perspective of the margins, of those located outside hegemonic power. This position proposes reading history from

⁹⁸ Fediakova, Evguenia, “Protestantismo misionero norteamericano en América Latina en el siglo XX.” *Persona y Sociedad* 21, no. 1 (2007): pp. 9-37.

⁹⁹ Ramírez Suárez, Luis Eduardo. “La multiforme identidad protestante en Latinoamérica en el siglo XX.” *Historia Caribe* 18, no. 42 (2023): pp. 171-199.

¹⁰⁰ Méndez Yáñez, Raúl. “La teología misional evangélica ante realidades espaciales locales.” *Revista Cultura y Religión* 11, no. 1 (January-June 2017): pp. 91-109.

¹⁰¹ Tavares Mantovani Zabatiero, Júlio Paulo. “Contextualização e Decolonialidade: Repensando a Epistemologia Teológica.” *Reflexão* 45 (2020): e204900.

¹⁰² Bingemer, Maria Clara. “Desafíos y tareas de la teología en América Latina hoy.” *Theologica Xaveriana* 62 (2012): pp. 399-432.

¹⁰³ Gutiérrez, Gustavo. “Situación y tareas de la teología de la liberación.” *Revista Latinoamericana de Teología* 50 (2000): pp. 101-118.

¹⁰⁴ Raheb, Mitri. *Decolonizing Palestine: The Land, the People, the Bible* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2023).

below, from the excluded and silenced bodies. For the theologian Carlos Mendoza-Álvarez, this implies an experience of redemption that not only dignifies abject bodies but also anticipates an inclusive and liberating eschatology.¹⁰⁵ In this sense, the divine movement towards liberation cannot and should not be legitimized from theories constructed from privilege or necro-theological readings, but from a faith incarnated in wounded bodies and living resistances.¹⁰⁶

From queer theologies, a profound critique is made of the rigid binarisms that structure the dispensationalist narrative, such as “Israel versus the world,” “believers versus unbelievers,” and “salvation versus damnation.” These dichotomies simplify the world’s complexity and exclude identities and experiences that do not fit into the fictitious logic that reigns as the norm. Christian Zionism reproduces a hierarchical worldview where nations and people are predestined to fulfill a fixed role in an unchanging eschatological drama, thus denying the possibility of agency, transformation, and diversity. This vision is in tune with the homophobic theologies prevalent in many Latin American evangelical sectors, which use these narratives to condemn diverse gender identities.¹⁰⁷ Added to this is the astute strategy of *pinkwashing*, homonormativity and homonationalism promoted by the Israeli government, which has instrumentalized LGBTIQ+ rights to hide colonial, hegemonic and stigmatizing practices while denying sex-gender diversity in Palestine based on Islamophobic stereotypes promoted by Western discourses,¹⁰⁸ according to which “it would seem that Zionist homophobia, rooted in religious fundamentalism and biblical literalism, is attenuated and all systematic and widespread discrimination is camouflaged behind the rainbow”.¹⁰⁹ Queer theologies propose to resist these narratives through critical and inclusive biblical readings, fluid and liberating, that dismantle systems of spiritual, sexual, ethno-racial and political oppression, proposing spiritualities embodied in dissent, radical tenderness and social justice.

Conclusion

The growing presence of Christian Zionism in Latin America, driven by evangelical missions and the rise of dispensationalist premillennialism, has profoundly transformed many churches’ theological, political, and ethical horizons. While these interpretations have offered a cohesive narrative for millions of believers, they have also reproduced colonial, exclusionary, and binary structures that ignore both the historical reality of Palestine and the struggles of Latin American communities. Faced with this scenario, it is urgent to open a plural theological debate that recovers the critical capacity of Christianity and returns it to its commitment to life, justice, and peace.

From a decolonial perspective, Christian Zionism must be understood as an extension of religious colonialism, which subordinates the spirituality of churches in the Global South to political agendas of the Global North. From a queer perspective, this theological framework reproduces violent binarisms and normative hierarchies that deny diversity and reinforce exclusionary discourses both within and outside the Christian Church. In both cases, the critique points to the need to construct alternative theologies that emerge from below, from the margins, and that respond to the lived realities of oppressed peoples.

The TLLs –in their liberationist, ecumenical and dissident strands– offer valuable resources for imagining other Christianities that resist the use of Scripture to justify occupation, war and

¹⁰⁵ Mendoza-Álvarez, Carlos. “La teología descolonial y el tiempo mesiánico.” *Reflexão* 45 (2020): e205019.

¹⁰⁶ Aguilar Contreras, Mercy and Cruz Edgardo Torres. “Lo prefiero muerto! Necropolítica, teología y narrativas conservadoras en el destierro y muerte de personas LGBTIQ+.” In: *Mysterium Liberationis Queer: Ensayos sobre teologías queer de la liberación en las Américas* (Mysterium Queer Series Volume 1), edited by Hugo Córdova Quero, Miguel H. Díaz, Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, and Cristian Mor (Saint Louis, MO: Institute Sophia Press), pp. 81-108.

¹⁰⁷ Córdova Quero, Hugo (2018). *Sin tabú: Diversidad sexual y religiosa en América Latina* (Bogotá/Santiago de Chile: RedLAC / GEMRIP Ediciones).

¹⁰⁸ Santos Meza, “‘En nombre de Dios, del amor y la inclusión’,” 153-204.

¹⁰⁹ Santos Meza, “‘En nombre de Dios, del amor y la inclusión’,” 184.

homophobia, among other forms of violence, and instead affirm an incarnational faith committed to justice, dialogue and reconciliation. Reconstructing this vision demands theological courage, openness to dialogue, and fidelity to the concrete struggles of peoples. Only in this way will it be possible to overcome imported and colonial theological frameworks, and build inclusive and liberating spiritualities, critical and combative in the face of the many "terrorists in the name of God"¹¹⁰ that make Abya Yala and the whole world an increasingly less habitable place.

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¹¹⁰ Juergensmeyer, Mark. *Terrorismo religioso: El auge de la violencia religiosa* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2001), p. 254.

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