

## Contexts

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## Welcome

Since there is no other space in this issue for answers to last issue's quiz, here they are: 1. **Abdul Rahman**, Afghan Christian (Issue 62). 2. **Tariq Aziz**, Iraqi Catholic, FM under Saddam (#49). 3. **Rafik Hariri**, assassinated in February, 2005 (#36,52). 4. **Amir Peretz**, Israeli PM, born in Morocco (#54). 5. **Ariel Sharon**, Israeli PM, still in a coma (#57). 6. **John Garang**, leader of South Sudan liberation movement, killed in crash after peace treaty signed (#46). 7. **Akila Al Hashemi**, member of Iraqi Governing Council, assassinated in 2003 (#2). 8. Saudi **King Abdullah**, succeeded his older brother in 2004, has recently proposed reviving Palestinian peace talks (#7).

Email your responses to [pkclark@pmbx.net](mailto:pkclark@pmbx.net) & check the web for back issues.

## Report on Palestinians in Iraq

In 2003, at the time of the US-led invasion of Iraq, a camp was set up on the Jordanian border to house displaced refugees. This camp, Ruweishid, was intended to be temporary, and, in



Refugees at Ruweishid Camp in 2003

fact, so it has been for Sudanese, Iraqis and other nationalities who have passed through it. Many of them were given permits to enter Jordan, at least in transit. One group of refugees, however, has been unable to obtain permission to leave Iraq, and has remained stranded on the border.

Iraq, like Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt, has played host to a significant Palestinian refugee population since the 1948-49 Arab-Israeli war that caused large-scale displacement of Palestinians from Israel. Unlike those states, Iraq did not sign an agreement with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), established in 1949, preferring instead to address the assistance needs of the Palestinian refugees itself. There are no accurate statistics for the Palestinian refugee community in Iraq, but most policy makers, including UNHCR and the Iraqi authorities, estimate the pre-2003 war Palestinian refugee population of Iraq at 34,000.

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## Christian Zionism - Entity d) Expectations

It was mentioned - in *Entity, part b*) "Not Which, But When" (see *e-NEWS* 71) - that perhaps the direction of the questions was not necessarily the only alternative. It may have been more appropriate to ask the question, "Now that Israel *is* in the land, what follows?" The answer should address not only the chronology, which we did in issue 72 to a certain extent, but also the expectations. These expectations, Israel's role in the world, its unique position (or not), and the relationship of other countries to the state of Israel, are the theme of future articles in this series.

This particular topic, *Entity*, is significant in our consideration of Christian Zionism. Prior to the fall of the Ottoman Empire Christian Zionists were able to assist in the settling of Jewish refugees in then *Palestine*, and to direct government policy in a direction sympathetic to this hope. An independent state, though, was no more than a hope for them, something to work towards and perhaps have some influence towards. With the establishment of the state, however, there was a rapid increase in the number and visibility of those from a Christian background who were sympathetic to the newly-established state.

This circumstance introduced a new group of adherents to the tradition of Christian Zionism: those who were persuaded by the presence of the new state that God may perhaps be intending something new for his people. Previously, in the older tradition, there may have been differences of allegiance, differing circumstances or doctrines, and different reasons why they pursued the settlement of Jews in the Levant. (Some of these differences were evident in the Jews themselves; the distinction between the *politicals* and the *religious Zionists* is well documented.)

Beyond this, the inspiration of this new tradition of Christian Zionism was not that of the pioneers, who had acted upon their beliefs without having the actual presence of a state to encourage them. In 1948 the establishment of the state meant that Christians who read their Bible saw new meaning in passages such as Ezekiel 36, etc. As we have suggested before, the fact of the new state gave them a new lens through which to view Biblical passages – the lens of contemporary events.

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### Entity d) Expectations (cont.)

Because Israel now existed as an independent state, passages that for many previously had had only a *figurative* meaning could now be given a literal interpretation more easily than before.

*In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, ... (Isaiah 11:10, 11)*

*Because you (the shepherds) have scattered my flock..., "I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number." (Jeremiah 23:2, 3)*

*This is what the Sovereign Lord says: "On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt. The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. (Ezekiel 36:33, 34)*

For those who say, as many do, that 'the purpose of prophecy is for us to recognize that God is in control, to see His hand in history, rather than for us to interpret and act upon in the effort to bring it about,' the years succeeding 1948 were exciting. (And this is notwithstanding the involvement of Israel in the 1956 Suez incident). The 6 Day War of 1967 brought all of Sinai and the heartland of Biblical Israel (well, Judea and Samaria) under the control of the Jews. Now that Israel controlled the Temple Mount, the issue of whether a Third (and final) temple would ever be built also came into the equation. Increasingly Christian Zionists found among their number those who were attracted by the prospect of Biblical prophecy being fulfilled literally, in front of the eyes, on their TV screen.

Not only did this add to the number of Christians who were ready to take prophecy literally. It also increased the number of those who, as spectators, began to acquire a specific interest in the progress of the prophecies, and the establishment of the state. Not to lessen its importance, but as an illustration, this view of the affair may be compared to the situation in football. (I may have used cricket as an illustration, where strategy is more important, except that fewer would have got the point.) When a decision is made by the team, those at home may differ strongly in their opinion of the decision, whilst still being interested in a particular outcome. Discussion of the qualities of the manager, the captain,

individual players, as well as specific events of a game, is as vocal and as emotional as, and persists longer than, the interest in the game itself.

Similarly, Israel has many interested observers who have their own opinion on how the situation should be managed, on *land for peace, right of return, a two state solution*, etc.

Opinions can and do vary:

on the level of support that should be given to a manager (Prime minister?) who has lost his players' trust, on the minute by minute reactions (military, political) to the opponents' moves, and on the longer-term decisions to sideline (jail?) offenders. These areas attract much speculation, that at times the debate (which is pursued more by actions than words) is more over which principles should be applied to the situation. Two principles suggested by Old Testament examples are available, to which we might add a New Testament amendment: the Israelite conquest of the Canaanite tribes, the ordinance that the kingdom that should demonstrate justice towards its aliens, and Christ's instruction to do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

These will continue to guide discussion in future issues of e-NEWS.



The Zion Gate still shows signs of damage from the battle for control of Jerusalem in 1948.



Al Arish, Sinai, 1956. Yugoslav troops, part of the UNEF monitoring force after the Suez Crisis.

#### Update from Aceh, Indonesia

In the past few weeks there has been an upsurge in the persecution of Christians. In a village near Banda Aceh seven houses built by a Christian organisation for Christian victims of the 2004 tsunami cannot be occupied by the Christian families they were intended for.

Local Muslims organised public demonstrations outside the houses, protesting at the imminent arrival of the Christian families, who dared not then move in. Signs were erected outside the houses to say that Christians were not allowed. The same Christian organisation had built over 200 houses for Muslim victims, but only Christians were prevented from occupying their houses.



"This type of 'cross' is not allowed in our village. Remember this is village not a city. Respect sharia"

## Report on Palestinians in Iraq (cont.)

Since 1950, the government provided Palestinians in Iraq with refugee travel documents, but not Iraqi passports. Those who came in the aftermath of 1948-49 and their Iraqi-born descendants remained registered as refugees, and did not become citizens. (This was the standard practice throughout the Middle East, with the exception of Jordan, which granted Palestinian refugees Jordanian citizenship.) The travel documents made travel outside Iraq very difficult, and the Iraqi Palestinians were also subjected to the same foreign travel restrictions the Iraqi government imposed on Iraqis generally in the 1990s, such as the requirement to pay 400,000 Iraqi dinars (approximately U.S.\$200) to obtain an exit visa.

For refugees to be given permits they must either be accepted by the country concerned - in this case, Jordan - or receive refugee status and be accepted by another country. This is what has happened for others, but no country has been willing to accept some hundreds of Palestinian refugees who have been fleeing harassment and threats in their home towns in Iraq. Some have lived there for more than half a century, but since the fall of Saddam have lost their protection - as have other minorities - and been forced to leave their homes and livelihoods.

The attacks in 2003 on Palestinian refugees led to the internal displacement of thousands of Palestinian refugees, and the flight of hundreds to neighboring Jordan. Jordan initially blocked the border for Iraqi Palestinians, then allowed a few hundred into the barren, isolated al-Ruwaishid refugee camp eighty-five kilometers inside Jordan from the Iraqi border. Other Iraqi Palestinians remained at the equally barren Karama camp located inside the no-man's land (NML) at the Iraqi-Jordanian border for more than two years, until the Jordanian authorities closed the camp in 2005 and relocated them to al-Ruwaishid camp. For the past three years, several hundred Palestinian refugees have remained virtual prisoners in al-Ruwaishid camp. Some 250 of them elected to return to the dangerous conditions in Iraq rather than remain in the camp with no solution to their plight in prospect.

A recent Human Rights Watch report considers their case, and some selected paragraphs from this report may serve to illustrate their situation, and the complexity of the problem:

Amidst the widespread politically motivated and criminal violence in Iraq, Palestinians have been targeted more than other minorities because of resentment of the privileges Palestinians received during Saddam Hussein's rule, and suspicions that they are supporting the insurgency.

A particular point of contention had been the government's provision to Palestinians of subsidized housing, often at the expense of mostly Shi'a landlords who were paid a pittance in rent by the Iraqi government. Immediately after the fall of the Saddam government, Shi'a landlords forcibly evicted their Palestinian tenants.

...a militant group calling itself the "Judgment Day Brigades" distributed leaflets in Palestinian neighborhoods, accusing the Palestinians of collaborating with the insurgents, and stating, "We warn that we will eliminate you all if you do not leave this area for good within ten days."

...some elements within government have actively contributed to this community's insecurity. Notably, in October 2005 the minister of displacement and migration called on the government to expel all Palestinian refugees to Gaza, accusing Palestinians of involvement in terrorism.

A Syrian agreement to accept one group was reported by e-NEWS a month or two ago (and see 8/22 this issue), but... From March to May 2006, a group of nearly 200 Iraqi Palestinians was stuck on the Iraqi side of the Jordanian border, after Jordan refused them entry and armed Iraqi border guards forcibly pushed them back into Iraq. Following a request from the Palestinian Authority's foreign minister, Syria allowed these Palestinians into Syria, but again closed its borders to Palestinian refugees immediately afterwards.

The HRW report (available online from <http://hrw.org/reports/2006/iraq0706/>) puts human faces on the treatment and difficulties that these refugees have faced in Iraq by recounting specific stories from the refugees themselves.

(Lighter color text indicates quotations from the HRW report.)



A 2003 UNHCR picture of Ruwaishid Camp

This Month

Aug	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Sep	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	
<b>Africa</b>	Islamist militia take control of Somali town, Hobyo				2 AU peacekeepers killed in Darfur				Islamists open militant training camp at Hillweyne				Mogadishu port reopens to traffic				Islamists meet for peace talks with Interim Govt.				Newspaper editor killed, protests grow				Al Qaeda allies with Algerian Salafist Group						
<b>Darfur gets rapidly worse</b>					6 flogged for selling drugs in Somalia								5 killed in Baidoa clash with Somali Islamists				Darfur fighting keeps food aid from refugees														
<b>Pakistan</b>	Independence Day celebrations				Karachi floods kill 15				Mall collapse kills 2				Baluch rebel leader killed, riots ensue				Kyrgyz forces raid Islamists, militant killed				Baluchistan bomb kills 6										
<b>Afghan.</b>	Claims that coalition bombed police truck, 12 killed				UK soldier killed				Suicide bomber hits NATO convoy				3 UK soldiers die as result of Helmand action																		
<b>Opium harvest increases of 60% stimulated by poverty, unrest</b>	15 in medical team kidnapped				Air strike kills 7 in tribal meeting				Suicide bomb:17 die in Helmand bazaar				Dutch F-16 crashes				Musharraf visits Karzai in Kabul				Assault on Taliban kills 180+ in 2 days										
<b>Arabia</b>													Saudi FM proposes peace plan																		
<b>Iraq</b>	2 Baghdad car bombs kill 13				3 police killed at Balad checkpoint				Baghdad market bomb-50 die				Bomb kills 2 police in Baghdad				Baghdad car bomb kills 9														
<b>US Deaths:</b> 3/30: 2,317 5/31: 2,459 7/31: 2,578 8/31: 2,626 9/15: 2,670	Roadside bomb kills 8 in Baghdad				US troops shell mosque after being attacked				Ex-Saddam intelligence office killed				Clash with Iran, Iraqi troops captured				Al Qaeda's Al Liby killed in raid, 1 tonne of explosives seized														
	Sadr City market bomb kills 7				Iraq woman MP released after 2 months				Car bomb kills 3 in Mahaweel				8 Shia killed at Karbala festival				Baghdad:20 more bodies found														
	Raid on Sadr office nets weapons, bombs				Many sheikhs support Maliki reconciliation plan				Barzani replaces Iraqi flag with Kurdish				Attacks on police kill 4				Baghdad:20 more bodies found														
	Iran fires mortars at Kurd base, 2 die				Shia family shot while fleeing Sunni Baquba, 2 killed				Khalis market bomb kills 4				30 bodies found in Baghdad, Mahmudiya				50 bodies in Baghdad														
	Shiite festival-2 day Baghdad vehicle ban				Turkish worker taken hostage				Bomb attack on UK diplomats in Basra				Baghdad market bomb kills 3				Sunni politician killed														
	Sunni gunmen shoot pilgrims from mosque				Translator killed at Basra UK base				2 US marines killed in Anbar prov.				Suicide bomber on bus, 11 recruits killed				Saddam back in court on genocide charges														
<b>Frequent killings of Shia pilgrims</b>	Shia death squad leaders held				Govt. reshuffle planned				Ex-Saddam general killed in Ramadi				2 UK soldiers killed in Basra				Kurd family killed in E. Mosul														
<b>Health ministry estimated 3,438 Iraqis killed in July. 28% Iraqis fewer killed in August, by some estimates. (Others inc. UN say 2,000 &amp; 1,536 in July &amp; August)</b>	Saddam genocide trial begins				8 fruit traders abducted, executed				Suicide bomb at Kurd PUK office, another caught				14 insurgents killed, attack on pilgrims thwarted				Shia mosque attacked nr Baquba, 7 killed														
<b>Some displaced people returning home with improved security, estimated 40,000 this month, out of 170,000+ total.</b>	3 Marines killed in Anbar, 1 in Baghdad				Suicide bomber kills 10 in Basra market				Sunni preacher killed in Baghdad				Gunmen kill Saddam police chief while in police custody				Trench considered around Baghdad														
	103 insurgents arrested over weekend				Roadside bombs kill 5 US				3 US (2 marines & sailor) killed in Anbar				6 bodies found in Mosul				47 dead in various incidents														
	Ransom demanded for priest				Diwaniya battle -20 troops, 50 militia killed				6 bodies found in Mosul				47 dead in various incidents				60 bodies found in Baghdad														
	UK troops attacked during Amara arrest				10 bodies found in schoolyard				Gas station suicide bomb kills 10				US soldier killed in Anbar				2 Baghdad car bombs kill 22														
	Turkey bombs PKK rebels on border				5 held in UK raid in Basra				27 executed for terrorism offences																						
	3 US killed in Baghdad incidents				Army recruits bombed, 12 killed																										
<b>Iran</b>	Iran begins large military exercises				Test launch of long-range missile from sub. in Gulf				UN declares Iran failure to comply with nuclear suspension																						
<b>Turkey</b>	Iranian missile cargo forced to land at Diyarbakir				PKK kill 5 Turkish soldiers																										
<b>Syria</b>	Assad will not accept UN troops on border																Car bomb attack on Damascus US embassy fails, 4 attackers killed by guards														
<b>Lebanon</b>	Unexploded cluster bombs kill & maim after ceasefire, hindering aid teams.								Israel lifts blockade of Lebanon																						
<b>Jordan</b>	Ruweishid camp holds about 337, closure to be postponed until 2007				AI Qaeda suspects go on 2-day hunger strike				Tourist killed in Amman amphitheater, 5 wounded				8 jailed for plots against Westerners																		
<b>Israel</b>	Air strike on Gaza kills 2				Govt calls for, then rules out, talks with Syria				Fighting in Chebaa Farms area				Kofi Annan arrives in Tel Aviv				2 arrested in Tulkarm-attempt to fire rockets from West Bank				Tony Blair visits PM Olmert, Israel				Arab MKs condemned for visiting Syria						
	Olmert postpones disengagement plans				I-J militant shot in Jenin IDF raid				Gaza,raids on Abassan, Shijaiya, 3 killed				Israeli missile fired at house in Gaza				Israeli raid on Beit Hanoun, 2 killed in crossfire				Olmert tells Blair he is ready to meet with Abbas										
	Government minister resigns after misconduct accusations				Gunmen resist IDF arrest raid in Gaza, 1 killed				Air strike on Reuters car in Gaza				>100,000 strike against lack of wages & Hamas				Minister claims militants have acquired anti-aircraft missiles														
<b>Israel incursion into Gaza continues (since 6/25). Ceasefire comes into effect on 8/14 but some troops remain in S Lebanon</b>	Both Palestinian dep. PMs held by Israel				Air strike destroys house in Gaza				IDF air strike in Jabalyah camp				Court orders 18 Hamas MPs to be freed																		
	Arrest operation in Nablus, 5 wounded				4 arrested nr Rafah, inc 2 Hamas members				Olmert announces WB pullout postponed				Arab States propose to revive peace talks				Military holds MPs until appeal hearing														
	Arab politician Mahmud Musleh arrested in Ramallah				Annan to mediate on soldier return																										
<b>WB &amp; Gaza</b>	Hamas celebrate Hezbollah 'victory' in Gaza				Fox TV journalists released				UN meeting pledges \$500m for reconstruction				EU begins payments to Palestinians				Abbas to form Government of national unity				Gaza church office bombed after pope's speech										

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