

Evangelical Leaders Break with Christian Zionism

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In an open letter to President Bush published in *The New York Times* this past Sunday, nearly three dozen influential evangelical leaders countered the fairly conventional viewpoint in the U.S. that most of the nation's Christians favor pro-Israeli foreign policy over pro-Palestinian policy. The leaders stated they sought "to correct a serious misperception" held by the public and some U.S. policymakers that "all American evangelicals are opposed to a two-state solution and creation of a new Palestinian state." The letter asserted: "Nothing could be further from the truth." It was signed by 34 evangelical leaders, including Richard Stearns, president of World Vision; Gary Benedict, president of the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination; Richard Mouw, president Fuller Theological Seminary; and Berten A. Waggoner, president of the Vineyard USA denomination. In response to the letter, John Hagee, founder of Christians United for Israel (CUFI), told *The New York Times* "Bible-believing evangelicals will scoff at that message." Thousands of evangelicals who strongly support Israel joined Hagee in Washington D.C. just two weeks ago for his annual Washington-Israel CUFI Summit, an organization that he told the *Times* is "opposed to America pressuring Israel to give up more land to anyone for any reason." Alluding to Israel's disengagement from Gaza two years ago, Hagee asked: "What has the policy of appeasement ever produced for Israel that was beneficial?"