



UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

Call for Papers

Christian Zionism (Pro-Israel Sentiment): A Decolonial Challenge to Liberation and Biblical Hermeneutics

This call for papers engages the enduring and contested phenomenon of Christian Zionism—particularly its pro-Israel orientation within political and ecclesial spaces—through a decolonial and liberationist lens. It seeks to critically interrogate and deconstruct the theological, epistemological, and ideological assumptions that sustain this movement and its global influence.

Christian Zionism continues to command significant influence, especially among American evangelical Christians, many of whom interpret the Bible as mandating unwavering support for the contemporary state of Israel. This ideological position often persists despite widely documented concerns regarding human rights violations in Gaza and Lebanon. At the heart of this theology lies a problematic conflation of the modern nation-state of Israel with biblical Israel, thereby legitimizing territorial expansion and political domination as fulfillments of divine prophecy.

From a decolonial perspective, Christian Zionism can be understood as part of a broader colonial matrix of power, where biblical interpretation is mobilized to sacralize domination, dispossession, and geopolitical control. It reproduces imperial logics that collapse ancient sacred narratives into modern political projects, while marginalizing alternative voices, particularly those of Palestinian Christians and other subaltern communities. In doing so, it reinforces epistemic injustice by privileging Euro-American evangelical readings of scripture as normative and universal.

Central to Christian Zionism is a powerful eschatological imagination in which Zionist expansion is framed as integral to the anticipated return of the Christian Messiah. This eschatological framework not only sacralizes political violence but also displaces ethical accountability by subordinating present human suffering to future salvific expectations. Consequently, Christian Zionism represents a complex entanglement of political ideology, theological conviction, and moral reasoning that demands urgent critical engagement.

Critics—including liberation theologians, postcolonial scholars, and Palestinian Christian communities—have argued that Christian Zionism perpetuates systems of oppression, undermines peace-building efforts, and contradicts the ethical imperatives of justice, dignity, and human flourishing. Yet, despite these critical voices, the movement continues to gain traction in many parts of the Global South, including Africa, where strands of Christianity—often shaped by missionary legacies and colonial epistemologies—echo and amplify Zionist theological narratives. In these contexts, Christian Zionism raises important questions about the persistence of coloniality in African Christianity and the need for decolonized hermeneutical approaches.



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This conference seeks to provide a platform for critical, interdisciplinary, and decolonial engagement with Christian Zionism. It aims to explore ways of delinking Zionist ideology from biblical interpretation, while re-centering liberative, contextually grounded, and justice-oriented theological frameworks that affirm the dignity and agency of oppressed communities.

Suggested Themes

Papers addressing, but not limited to, the following themes are welcome:

- Biblical interpretation and Christian Zionism: towards a decolonized hermeneutics
- The political ideology of Zionism and the colonial matrix of power
- Zionism and liberation theology: resistance, justice, and solidarity
- Zionism, race, and white supremacy in global Christian discourses
- Decolonial readings of scripture in African and Global South contexts
- Palestinian Christian theology and counter-narratives to Zionism
- Eschatology, empire, and the ethics of hope

Important Dates

- Abstract submission deadline: 28 May 2026
- Conference date: 7 August 2026

Venue

- Hybrid format (face-to-face and online)
- HMS10, Bloemfontein Campus

Submission of Abstracts

Please send your abstract proposals to:

- Prof. Zoro Dube – dubez@ufs.ac.za
- Dr. Juliet Sigauke – sigaukejc@gmail.com
- Dr. Bernard Humbe – humbepenpin78@gmail.com

RSVP: Mrs Ronel Ellis: EllisPJ@ufs.ac.za