

Beyond Fundamentalist Dispensationalism

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In January 1842 an amazing event occurred with the arrival of a Jewish Anglican Priest (and follower of Yeshua), who was appointed to serve as the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem. He established Christ Church near the Jaffa gate in Jerusalem. The Church was to receive Jews who, it was believed, would soon return to the Land, and accept Jesus, leading to the eventual conversion of the Jewish nation to faith in Yeshua/Jesus and His return. Christ Church, Jaffa Gate, still exists to this day.

In 1841, both the British and Prussian Governments as well as the Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Prussia entered into a unique agreement to - establishment of a Protestant Bishopric within Jerusalem. Michael Solomon Alexander was proposed as the first Protestant Bishop. He was appointed Bishop of the United Church of England and Ireland in Jerusalem and was likewise ordained as a Bishop on the 7th of December 1841 at Lambeth Palace. He thereafter arrived in Jerusalem in January of 1842.





Movement under Ludwig Von Zinzendorf.

This pre-Darbyite Dispensational theology looked for the completion of four tasks, which had to occur before the return of Yeshua,

- The pursuit of the unity of the Church according to John 17:21,
- The Revival of true Christianity,
- The completion of the command to preach the Gospel (Good News) through world missions (Matt. 24:14, 15),
- And finally in making Israel jealous according to Romans 11:11-12, thus leading to the Second Coming of Jesus.

Kaiser (Emperor) Frederick William IV of Prussia was a devout Lutheran and was influenced by Lutheran Pietism. Prior to the appointment of the Jerusalem Anglican bishopric, Frederick asked his spiritual advisor if there was anything they could do to hasten the day of the return of Jesus. He was told of the above four tasks of unity, revival, world missions, and the call to make Israel jealous. Frederick thus embraced a program to accomplish this. He sent emissaries to England with a plan for unity and for the Jewish people to come to faith in Jesus in growing numbers, thus leading to the fulfillment of Romans 11:15, the life from that dead that Israel's full acceptance would bring. This calling to the aforementioned four tasks was also based on Matthew 23:39 where we read that the Jewish leadership in Israel and Jerusalem would call upon Yeshua with the words,

How did this happen? What was the theology behind this event? Why would Lutherans and Anglicans come together for this? Scandinavians were also involved.

The theology behind this event was the product of a long history. There was a growing consensus at the time of Michael Solomon Alexander's appointment. This was a "pre-Darbyite Dispensational" theology. The theological history goes back to some of the Puritans, then was fostered by Lutheran Pietists in Germany and Scandinavia and then the Moravian



“Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.”

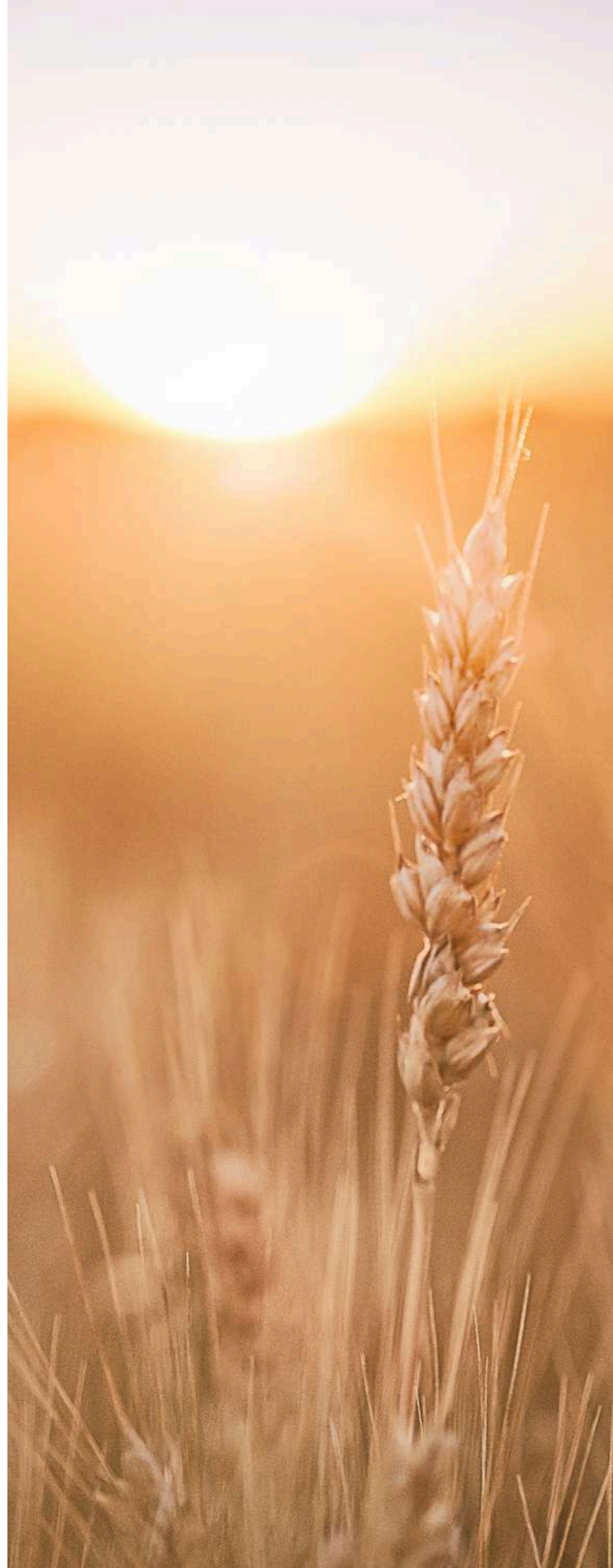
To pursue the unity of the prayer of Jesus in John 17:21, Frederick’s emissaries presented a plan whereby the Lutherans would take a secondary position to the Anglicans. This humility would be a key to unity. Unity and the salvation of Israel would be their pursuit together. The plan was approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Queen, and the Parliament.

This theology was known as Restorationism, believing in the restoration of Israel but also a restoration for the Church to unity and revival. This was a climax of 250 years of theological development.

A new theology grew up after this, Dispensationalism, that saw the pursuit of the unity of the Church as a danger. It also taught that God’s primary working with and through Israel would only take place after the Church was raptured or taken off the earth. Then there would be a seven-year tribulation at the end of this age after which Israel would call upon Jesus and He would return. Dispensational Jewish missions were established to see Jews saved, but those Jews would be part of the Church and would not be part of the corporate salvation of Israel at the end. There were two peoples of God, two salvations, a heavenly destiny for the one people, the Church and an earthly one for the Jews. The destinies were different and not intertwined.

So, the Church would not be on earth to affect the salvation of Israel. Indeed, Jews who came to Jesus were said to be part of the 3rd race and no longer part of Israel's destiny nor would they affect Israel's corporate salvation at all. As part of the Church, they would be taken out as well, so a Jewish believers movement before the rapture would not be a key to Israel's salvation. New Jewish missions that followed this theology sought to see Jews saved and part of the Church, but it would be wrong for them to live and identify as Jews (or to go back and observe the Torah as Jews). Jewish missions were for the sake of saving Jews just as missions to any nation were for the purpose of seeing individuals saved from that nation.

The Church's Mission to the Jews, CMJ, in England, represented the theology that led to the appointment of Bishop Alexander. This theology had become an amazing consensus of British theology including many in several denominations. It taught that Israel would return to the Land, the Church would affect her salvation and Jesus would return. What an amazing time this was, however, the new Dispensational theology gained more and more adherents. The old view of Bishop Alexander and his supporters was supported side by side with more and more who were supporting the Dispensational view. Jewish missions more and more embraced the dispensational view in the 20th century.



However, it was not until after World War I that Dispensationalism swept churches and Bible schools in America. From there it came to dominate world missions. Why that happened, including the keys in the psychology and social psychology of the time is an amazing story for another time. Dallas Theological Seminary was established as its theological center (1924). American Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism became mostly Dispensational. The Pentecostal denominations mostly embraced it. The older view largely died out with some exceptions.

Yet, in my view, the older view was true. The points where the new Dispensationalism replaced it, it was largely in error and was even a deception. We were very close to great breakthroughs in 1842, but the classical Restoration view was derailed. Then in the mid-20th century, the older view was believed again in growing numbers.

This return to the older view has grown and grown until now as it now vies with Dispensationalism for attention and prominence. I, for one, am committed fully to this endeavor, in this battle and hope we win this battle, and yes, I believe we are winning! This derailment was a ploy of Satan to divert the Church from its destiny. Sadly, the wrong view is very rooted in Israel today but not in most of the Messianic Jewish world outside of the State of Israel.



In summary, classical Jewish missions envisioned seeing more and more Jewish people saved leading to Israel's confession of Yeshua, thus leading to the second coming. Dispensational Jewish missions however sought to see individual Jews saved, so they could leave Jewish expression and practice and be part of the church, go to heaven if they died, or be raptured out before the time of the tribulation. Jewish missions were disconnected from corporate Israel turning to Yeshua and his Second Coming. This was a huge change, and in fact, a sad derailment.

This is the first chapter from Dr. Daniel C. Juster's new book, "Beyond Fundamental Dispensationalism: Understanding the Challenges of a Dominant, but Wrong 20th-Century Theology." This book can be obtained at tikkunamerica.org or at amazon.com. 

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