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# Article

## ***The Battle for Jerusalem: Marcel Dubois' Challenge to Roman Catholics, Israeli Jews, and Christian Zionists***

Curtis Hutt\*

*For several decades, the face of Christian Zionism in Jerusalem was not the International Christian Embassy or John Hagee's Christians United for Israel but a French/Israeli Professor of Philosophy at the Hebrew University—the Dominican priest, Fr. Marcel-Jacques Dubois. In this paper, Dubois' once influential form of Christian Zionism is discussed. While few today outside of Israel and Rome are familiar with his brand of non-premillennial dispensationalist Christian Zionism, I will lay out the persuasive relevance and challenge of his work for those making claims on Jerusalem today.*

### INTRODUCTION

In the recent volume *Comprehending Christian Zionism: Perspectives in Comparison* edited by Göran Gunner and Robert O. Smith, a series of excellent wide-ranging articles on Christian Zionism based upon a multi-year seminar conducted at the American Academy of Religion is published. Notably absent from this collection, garnering not even a single footnote, is reference to the most famous spokesman for “Christian” Zionism in the history of the State of Israel. While the activities of groups linked to John Hagee, Messianic Jews, and the International Christian Embassy are described, no mention is made in this text or several others recently published on Christian Zionism to the life work of Father Marcel-Jacques Dubois—French Dominican priest and Israeli citizen. Dubois influenced a generation of Roman Catholics and Israeli Jews, not only in

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the Curia and the classrooms of Hebrew University, but in public forums in Jerusalem with figures like Mayor Teddy Kollek, Prof. Yeshayahu Leibowitz, and Rabbi Prof. David Hartman. Dubois received the Israel Prize in 1996.<sup>1</sup>

Marcel Dubois came to Jerusalem in 1962 where he joined Isaiah House, a Jewish-Catholic ecumenical center established by Bruno Hussar—the founder of the Arab-Jewish village Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam. Soon thereafter, he learned Hebrew and began teaching Greco-Roman philosophy, Patristic literature, and Thomism to Israeli students at Hebrew University where he eventually became chair of the philosophy department and the primary introducer of Christian history, philosophy, and theology to a couple of generations of undergraduate and graduate students in Jerusalem. His students include influential Israeli academics now occupying positions in the philosophy departments of several universities in Israel like Professors Avital Wohlman and Yossef Schwartz, as well as other prominent Israeli public figures like Ari Shavit. Dubois' arguments and advice, while relatively unknown to most non-Roman Catholics and in English-speaking countries, did have an impact on Church officials in Rome responsible for shaping the new post-Vatican II relationship between Roman Catholics and Jews, as well as the State of Israel. Dubois was part of the 1974 *Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews*. Once again, however, it was in Jerusalem that he arguably made his greatest impression—and not necessarily on his fellow Roman Catholics but Israeli Jews.

Critical for this paper, which is by no means a biographical piece, is an understanding that Dubois' Zionism did evolve over time. Early on, born of profound personal encounters with the suffering of Jews in the Holocaust and the influence of French Roman Catholic philosophers like Jacques Maritain who wrestled with Christian responsibility for this catastrophe, Dubois was drawn to Israel where he arrived in 1962. At Isaiah House and in numerous other Jerusalem venues—with other Dominican priests including Bruno Hussar, Jacques Fontaine, and Gabriel Grossman, as well as Abraham Schmuelef—Dubois attempted through dialogue and prayer to foster reconciliation and understanding between Jews and Roman Catholics. During this early period, the end of which was marked by the 1967 war and subsequent Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, Dubois was adamantly pro-Zionist and pro-Israel supporting Jewish claims to their Biblical homeland. For the next twenty years after 1967, Dubois' unequivocal and uncompromising support of the State of Israel began to fade under the influence of

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interactions with his students at Hebrew University, as well as local and international clergy, pilgrims, and scholars. This was accompanied by his growing awareness of and sensitivity towards Palestinian hardship. It was in 1987—as a result of a transformative engagement with the first Latin Patriarch in centuries to have origins in the Holy Land, Michel Sabbah—that Dubois’ explicit opposition to ethno-nationalist Israeli policies crystallized. Whereas in the beginning of his ministry amongst the Jewish people Dubois confronted with others at Isaiah House alienation from other Roman Catholics within his own Dominican order for their support of Zionism, at the end of his life he was isolated even from members of the Hebrew-speaking St. James Vicariate that he served with so long as a result of his emergent disapproval of Israeli government policies.

From the start, I do want to address one potential criticism that might undermine this entire paper—namely, that the “Christian Zionism” of Marcel Dubois was not really Christian Zionism but something else like a form of Jewish Zionism which has altogether different origins, associations, and central premises. I am in thorough agreement with the Rev. Dr. David Neuhaus, S. J., the head of the Hebrew-speaking communities of the Latin Patriarchate in Israel today, who argues in “What is Christian Zionism?” (Neuhaus 2004)<sup>2</sup> that what is most commonly known as Christian Zionism today is the descendant of Protestant pre-millennial dispensationalist thought focused on the return of the Jewish people to Jerusalem, the rebirth of the State of Israel, and the imminent return of the Messiah at the end of the world. The Christian Zionism of Dubois clearly does not share the same origins instead finding its roots in French Roman Catholic responses to the *Shoah* during the twentieth century. Dubois rather, was heavily influenced by Jacques Maritain, a Roman Catholic liberal humanist who helped to draft the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Critically, Dubois’ Christian Zionism never “instrumentalizes” the Jewish people, making their conversion to Christianity a stepping stone for the enactment of a distinctly evangelical eschatological game-plan. Dubois’ Christian Zionism is rather, more accurately, a religiously inspired adoption by a Roman Catholic of the Jewish Zionism of the early twentieth century which in addition to affirming historical Jewish connections to the Holy Land advocates for the creation of a State where Jews can flourish protected from longstanding persecution by Christian dominated societies in Europe. The fact that this distinctly post-Holocaust Zionism advocated by a Roman Catholic is derived from sources removed and largely unconcerned with the pre-millennial dispensationist teachings of figures like John Nelson

Darby and Cyrus Scofield, does not make it any less Christian. That is, unless you don't consider Dubois' main theological influences like Roman Catholic natural law theory to be Christian. If we were to accept such an argument, consistency would dictate that we deny as well the Christian character of the Zionism promoted by others like the nineteenth-century Eastern European Judaizing Subbotniks, non-dispensationalist British Reformed Baptists like C. H. Spurgeon, liberal American Protestants (pre-1967) who lobbied for the creation of the State of Israel, and the late Church of Sweden Bishop Krister Stendahl.<sup>3</sup> Whether we are addressing the early or late theological-political views of Marcel Dubois, there is no denying that he was Christian and a Zionist.

I think that by excluding the work of Dubois and others like him—especially, French Roman Catholics like Maritain<sup>4</sup>—from discussions of Christian Zionism, while accurate in a narrow stipulative sense, prevents scholars from seeing the greater forest through the trees and excludes a special unique voice from discussions of Christian support (widely construed) for Israel. Even representatives of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem like Johan Lückhoff, Jan Willem van der Hoeven, and Malcolm Hedding, whose religious and political agenda I largely disagree with, understand the importance of co-opting the views of Christians from wide-ranging backgrounds in support of Christian Zionism like the Dutch Roman Catholic diplomat and scholar of international law Frans Alphons Maria Alting von Gesau.<sup>5</sup> While the International Christian Embassy de-emphasizes the objections that a Spurgeon or—most importantly for this paper—Marcel Dubois may have made of their agenda, I believe that it is critical that we not do the same. Dubois' work, in my view, offers an alternative “Christian Zionist” vision that might afford us a path away from impending disaster resulting from the present-day battle for Jerusalem.

### **MESSAGE TO ROMAN CATHOLICS**

It was not so long ago, that Roman Catholic leaders and scholars were unified in their hostility towards Jewish Zionism—specifically, the return of Jews to Jerusalem and elsewhere in British Mandate Palestine. Prior to the dark years of the 1930s and 1940s in Europe, age-old Roman Catholic thought and practice held Jews collectively responsible for not recognizing the coming of their own messiah, the Son of God, and in countless cases for the crime of deicide. Roman Catholics like the vast majority of other historical Christianities promoted a kind of “supersessionism” that was often punitive in nature.

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God's "old covenant" with the Jews was annulled not simply with the coming of Jesus but because of their role in his death. Exile from their homeland was divine punishment, enacted and enforced by not only pagan emperors but by Christian rulers over Jerusalem from Constantine the Great to the victorious Crusaders. At best, banished Jews living outside of their Biblical homeland were viewed as a witness to the power and truth of triumphant Christianity.

The initial response of Roman Catholics to the Jewish Zionism of Theodor Herzl and others, detailed recently in the work of scholars like Bialer (2005) and Goldman (2009), was quite inimical especially when compared to diverse Protestant views on the topic. Amongst Dubois' own order, the Dominicans, whose historical job included a mandate to convert Jews and others to Roman Catholicism in addition to stamping out their heresies, what Jules Isaac famously referred to as "teachings of contempt" against Jews and Judaism were the norm.<sup>6</sup> The shock, anguish, and guilt experienced by Roman Catholics particularly in France in the face and aftermath of the Holocaust famously produced not only new theological approaches to Judaism such as are present in the work of Jacques Maritain who inspired Dubois to go to Israel but the famous 1965 declaration *Nostra Aetate* composed—with the help of others like Bruno Hussar—by Cardinal Agustin Bea under the leadership of Pope John XXIII and adopted by the Second Vatican Council and Pope Paul VI. This highly progressive and influential declaration, while not dealing at all with Roman Catholic recognition of the State of Israel, denounced anti-Semitism in a wide variety of forms. Abasement and defamation of Jews, as well as attempts at converting them to the "true faith," were actively discouraged. Pope John Paul II fifteen years later explicitly overturned the supersessionism of earlier Roman Catholic tradition insisting that God's covenant with the Jews had "never been abrogated."<sup>7</sup>

While Dubois, following the lead of Maritain, did not associate Christian persecution of Jews with "true" Roman Catholicism, he never shied away from linking its proliferation to "real" historical Roman Catholic Christianity. Like Maritain who was influenced by the work of the Jewish scholar Maurice Samuel (1940), Dubois thought that National Socialism in Germany was born out of a deep hatred of authentic Christian values. For Maritain (1941:44), anti-Semitism was a form of "Christophobia." At the same time though, Dubois repeatedly echoed the sentiments of Pope John XXIII:

We are conscious today that many, many centuries of blindness have cloaked our eyes so that we can no longer see the beauty of Thy chosen people nor recognize in their faces the features of our privileged brethren. We realize that the Mark of Cain stands upon our foreheads. Across the centuries our brother Abel has lain in the blood which we drew, or shed tears we caused by forgetting Thy love. Forgive us the curse we falsely attached to their name as Jews. Forgive us for crucifying Thee a second time in their flesh. For we know not what we did.<sup>8</sup>

For Dubois, Roman Catholic guilt for centuries of persecution of Jews—in spite of the actions of some “good” priests in the Middle Ages who protected Jews from unruly masses<sup>9</sup>—must not be weakened. According to Dubois (1987a:502), the reason that Christians did not stand up against the Nazi genocide of the Jews was because of “the strong anti-Semitism of the West, one of the roots of which has been Christian teaching.” Dubois was extraordinarily upfront about his own credentials: “As a Dominican priest, I am a son of the inquisition.”<sup>10</sup>

Dubois, especially in his early years in Israel, primarily strove to fight against the anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism of the Latin Patriarchate in the Holy Land and the Roman Catholic Church abroad. This is exemplified in his 1975 remarks to Jewish colleagues in Jerusalem published in “A Christian View of Jews, Judaism and Israel” that *Nostra Aetate* did not go far enough—as it had not acknowledged “the seeds of truth” in Judaism as it did for all other faiths.<sup>11</sup> Even in 2003, Dubois argued, as seen in his article “Israel’s Election and God’s Silence: Jewish Destiny’s Peculiarity and Exemplarity,” that the comparison between anti-Semitism and “Christophobia” needed to be amended as it was a non-starter in Jewish-Christian dialogue.<sup>12</sup> Unlike Samuel and Maritain, and more recently Fr. Edward Flannery (1985), Dubois never to my knowledge attributed the origins of the Holocaust to the neo-paganism of National Socialists—an ideology which was deemed an assault on Christianity.<sup>13</sup> The neo-paganism dabbled in by some Germans of this time was certainly no more anti-Semitic than the centuries of actual dominant Christian teachings since at least the time of the crusades. More importantly, it was nowhere near as influential. While most of the population in Germany during World War II responsible for aiding, abetting, and implementing genocide were not members of the National Socialist party, they were almost always self-identified Christians baptized into

and members of Christian churches.<sup>14</sup> The argument that anti-Christian “neo-paganism” was responsible for the Holocaust is clearly defensive, the instinctive product of a partisan protective strategy that no critical historian would dare to make.

Dubois did not think that Christian responsibility for centuries of atrocities committed against Jews ought to be white-washed. As a result of his interactions with Israeli Jews, he knew that the difficulties inherent in Jewish-Christian reconciliation could not be easily overcome. The “beloved elder brother,” to quote Pope John Paul II’s words during his visit to the Great Synagogue in Rome in 1987, walked a historical path that was nearly impossible for Christians to comprehend. The “solitude of Israel”—regularly understood by Jews and Christians as the consequence of God’s election but also as the adverse result of separation from or abandonment by God<sup>15</sup>—was not only almost “incommunicable” to Christians but for the most part un-breachably by them. On several occasions Dubois attempted to bridge this gap, for example, in 1974 when he—like Pope John Paul II would later do at Mainz in 1980—would attempt in spite of serious reservations to express Christian understanding of the Holocaust via reference to the suffering of Christ on the cross.<sup>16</sup> In 2003, Dubois (2003:89), repeats some of his early misgivings in a stronger tone:

To compare the Shoah to the Cross! This cross brandished by the judges of the Inquisition and the pogroms’ assassins, and which has been, to the Jews throughout their history, the symbol of intolerance, condemnation, oppression and hatred! Words and signs no longer carry the same meaning and we are driven back to the silence.

In spite of the clear difficulties though, Dubois never stopped engaging in the difficult business of Jewish-Christian dialogue. Just because he thought that the experience of Jews during the Holocaust was unique did not mean that it constituted an incommensurable “final vocabulary” that could not be translated for or understood by others. Rather, following St. Thomas Aquinas and Maritain’s work (1932) on ecumenicism, Dubois (1983:87) maintained the need to “distinguish between” people and their faiths “in order to unite.” Underlying the rhetoric that insists upon fundamental differences between creeds, races, and gender was a commitment present in the Abrahamic, Gospel, as well as other sacred and secular traditions that all people were essentially the same—deserving of dignity, respect, and inalienable human rights. Through practical, respectful engagement with others and their special theological and

spiritual practices, he believed that the “dialogue of the deaf” (Dubois 1983:90) could be overcome.

For Maritain and Dubois, following the natural law tradition of Aristotle and most importantly St. Thomas Aquinas, human beings were defined teleologically via reference to “natural ends”—divinely imbued capabilities.<sup>17</sup> While people are not ultimately political beings, these ends have implications for how they should live in this world. (Maritain 1951; cf. 1947). They were the basis for universal human rights that extended to all people, Jews and Gentiles alike. Dubois understood that for centuries in Christian dominated countries Jews were neither treated as equals nor accorded these rights. Dubois, like Bruno Hussar and many others, believed that there was a pressing need for a Jewish State in Israel following the European Holocaust. While he and others in his community at Isaiah House following the “re-unification” of Jerusalem in 1967 actively considered the meaning of the “unveiling of the mystery of Israel,” Dubois never linked his support for Israel to the imminent second coming of Jesus.<sup>18</sup> Instead, Jews needed to understand that in their fight for basic human rights that they don’t stand alone. For this reason, Dubois argued like Maritain, especially before the 1980s but also in his publication “Israel and Christian Self-Understanding” (1992:66–67; see also Goldman 2009:198) when responding to early criticism of the birth of Israel, that “anti-Israelism is not so much different from anti-Semitism.” As I understand it, what this hard to swallow statement means is that as long as Israel serves as one of or the only reliably safe haven(s) for Jews, its existence as a democratic, Jewish homeland is vital. Christians in Europe and elsewhere, both during the twentieth century and on many other occasions not only ignored the persecution of Jews but were the cause of extreme Jewish suffering. Safeguards, in the form of “the State of Israel” and minority rights protection throughout the world *including in Israel*, must be in place in order for this never to be repeated.

### **MESSAGE TO ISRAELI JEWS**

In the second part of this paper, I am going to do two things. First, I will review Marcel Dubois’ unprecedented relationship with Israeli Jews and how he made this work. Next, I will outline what I glean from his writings to be suggestions for the way forward when it comes to Christian support for Israel. While Dubois’ “Christian Zionism” may be unlike that of Darby and his premillennial dispensationalist followers, it is none the less potent— promoting substantive Christian support of Jewish Zionism and Israel in the

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face of its detractors within and outside the Roman Catholic Church. This backing came to be, however, at least in one sense provisional.

Dubois, to cite an interview by Amos Oz (1983:186), believed that in today's Jerusalem "perhaps the central battle of our time, in universal terms" is being fought. It is from this line that I have taken the title of this paper. This battle for Dubois, however, has nothing to do with Armageddon or the end of the world. While it is a war for the hearts and souls of Jews, this fight has nothing to do with soldiers or missionaries. It does not involve conversion of Jews to Christianity. Dubois' appeal to Israeli Jews was based on his knowledge of their world, the "real" Jerusalem of at least half of its people. His concern for Israeli Jewish students and colleagues grew out of personal interactions, not a desire to convert Jews out of existence in order to hurry the return of Jesus.

For Dubois, the "mystery of Israel," its election, sufferings, solitude, and destiny culminating in a return to Jerusalem did have "an exemplary value for all human sufferings" (1992:79). Its' meaning, which crystallized after having spent decades in Jerusalem, was chiefly symbolic, ethical, and mystical. Jewish religious traditions at best recognized this, seeing in "Israel's grievous destiny—both singular and mysterious—a value for the salvation of the world" (Dubois 1992:78–80; see also, 2003:87–98). At worst, however, Jews would be indifferent to or fail the challenges of their mysterious, sacred return to Jerusalem—"a sanctuary, given to the Jews, but to which all nations are invited to come" (1992:81).

Oz wrote (1983:185):

Jerusalem, from Father Dubois's point of view, is, at least symbolically, still the center of the world. The heart of the world. And everything that happens in Jerusalem has "world significance." The struggle "*politique*" in Jerusalem, the violence, the brutality, the fanatical nationalism, even the blood spilled here, are all signs of a covert spiritual battle.

Responding to Oz, who queried whether this was a battle between Jews and Arabs, or Israel and the gentiles, Dubois responded:

First of all, a battle among the Jews themselves .... It is perhaps a battle of the interpretation of Jewish belief. The worldly element battles the spiritual element. The bitter and vengeful element battles the merciful

and forgiving element. The element *segregative* battles the universal element. The nationalist against the humanist.

Dubois' warnings about the battle for Jerusalem pitting Israeli Jewish nationalists against Israeli humanists recorded by Oz in 1983 seem, in 2015—like those of his partner in dialogue the Jewish philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz who regularly claimed the same—to be prescient. In 1992, Dubois explicitly argued that Israel and Jerusalem under the leadership of his friend, the mayor of Jerusalem Teddy Kollek, was generally speaking on the right track (1992:82). But he did not take this for granted and implied that things in Israel could change for the worse.

This does not mean that even if the battle for Jerusalem turned difficult for Israeli Jews, that Marcel Dubois would have abandoned them or their right to flourish in Jerusalem or the State of Israel. Central to his teachings and actions across his career was the commitment outlined above to never to again use Christianity as a weapon against the Jewish people or to allow them to stand alone in the face of the fate that awaited them. Jewish relations to Christians needed to be repaired and this could only be done through meaningful gestures of unflinching support. Dubois' many dialogues with Israeli Jews yielded fruit because he listened first and spoke as a well-known and trusted friend. Initially following a strategy similar to that of his colleague in ecumenical dialogue, the Lutheran "Christian Zionist" Bishop Krister Stendahl, Dubois felt this could in the short term only be accomplished through a "cooling off period" in which Christians disengaged from theological disagreements and political controversies with Jews. To quote Stendahl (1995:40), who used Paul's letter to the Romans on the "mystery of Israel" to not only circumvent Christian supersessionism but also contemporary Christian criticisms of Israel, people needed to "get off the backs of the Jews, and leave them in the hands of God."<sup>19</sup> In the long term, Christians needed to assure Jews that they were safe—and not only in the company of other Jews. Dubois understood that, especially in the aftermath of the European catastrophe, the need for Jews to have their own homeland was of critical importance.

The statements made by Dubois in support of Jewish Zionism, especially early on, are dramatic. They undoubtedly reach out beyond secular Jewish Zionist justification for the State of Israel. Dubois writes 1977 (83): "The bond between people and land, in the name of the book and of tradition, is much deeper and more mysterious than mere political Zionism." Fifteen years later in 1992 (74) after his awakening to the plight of the

Palestinian people, he still asserts the existence of a “synchrony” uniting “*Torat Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael, Am Yisrael*” in a “covenantal bond that is everlasting.” Dubois—like Robert Aumann, the winner of the 2005 Nobel Prize in Economics and religious nationalist so influential in contemporary Israeli politics—thought that Zionism devoid of sacred values was doomed to failure. As Aumann phrased it in his infamous 2006 address to a Bnei Akiva conference in Ramat Gan, “I fear the Satmars were right. As God did not build a home here, the Zionists’ work here is for nothing.” According to Aumann, atheism, secularism, and liberal democratic values have led Israel down a dark road that only the national-religious youth (Bnei Akiva yeshivas) can save them from. Dubois advocated no such theocracy though. The Judeo-Christian sacred values that he referred to were the foundation upon which liberal democracies were based.

If I read Dubois correctly, he came to think that Israel is in “deep trouble” but not for the same kind of reasons as Aumann or some Christian Zionists. According to Dubois, not only were respect for minority populations and individual rights based upon Torah values—where strangers are welcomed and every human is pronounced created in the image of God—but liberal democracies were the best protectors of religious liberty. This religious commitment to protecting human rights was central to Dubois’ preferred form of Zionism. As for Aumann, return to Zion meant return to God’s commandments (of course, formulated very differently) and not simply the land.<sup>20</sup> The primary difference between Dubois and Aumann, however, are the use of the religious teachings themselves. For Dubois, they undergird a human rights agenda. For Aumann, they legitimize occupation and the disenfranchisement of a very large number of Palestinians.

Dubois, spurning the past of his formerly inquisitorial order, compared righteous leadership over Jerusalem with what occurred in Moorish Spain when three faiths flowered prior to the fifteenth century. Jerusalem, like the Iberian peninsula prior to Ferdinand and Isabella, needed to be shared with “all people of goodwill” (1977:89; see also Venard 2006:126). The Jerusalem Dubois knew, however, was far from the ideal. Longstanding contentious historical relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims at the site of the Cenaculum (for Christians, the location of the Last Supper of Jesus) and Tomb of David (revered by Jews and Muslims) on Mt. Zion provided for Dubois a counterexample—an “*anti-sacrament of peace*” (Dubois 1992:83; also Venard 2006:128).<sup>21</sup> Once again, as late as 1992, Dubois clearly believed that Israel, generally speaking, fulfilled this responsibility in a way that other earlier rulers of Jerusalem had

not (1992:82). Throughout the 1990s and early part of the twentieth century, however, Dubois' assessment changed. Recent developments at the Cenaculum (Summer 2015) where barricades manned by national religious yeshiva students preventing Christians from officially worshipping in the Upper Room and the "Judaization" of David's Tomb (August 2013) would have confirmed Dubois' dim view of religion and politics on Mt. Zion. In his 2006 interviews with Olivier-Thomas Venard (150), Dubois went so far as to completely isolate the "mystery of Israel" —a part of his religious faith—from the State of Israel and its politics which was something entirely different. As is common across religious traditions, when literal understandings of sacred texts are called into question—such as those related to the destiny of Israel in chapters 9 to 12 of Paul's letter to the Romans—symbolic, poetic, and mystical readings proliferate.

Marcel Dubois' changing views about the policies of the State of Israel evolved out of a growing awareness of the plight of Palestinians and personal interactions with students, scholars like Yeshayahu Leibowitz, and especially the first modern day Palestinian Latin Patriarch of the Holy Land, Michel Sabbah. During his early years in Israel, Dubois was focused on—in addition to his academic pursuits in ancient philosophy—the Holocaust that had just taken place in Europe, Roman Catholic reform, and Jewish/Christian relations. Amidst the elation of witnessing the birth of a Jewish State out of the horrors of World War II in their Biblical homeland, Dubois stated that he and others around him had neglected "dispossession and violent occupation" (Venard 2006:36). Dubois, once again, was not like Krister Stendahl—his colleague in Jewish-Christian dialogue—who was reticent throughout his career to criticize Israel at all. Dubois was a Zionist who considered the birth of Israel to be legitimate. But he also believed, born of the conviction of his Christian faith, that a commitment to protecting the God-given, natural rights of every person was essential. Dubois fought anti-Semitism in the Roman Catholic Church and for the rights of Jews to flourish in Israel. All people, however, deserved basic human rights. For Dubois, this is extended to Palestinians regardless of their religious background and to Jewish Roman Catholics (and one must assume, "Messianic Jews") in Israel as well. It is not a coincidence that the St. James Vicariate for Hebrew-speaking Roman Catholics that Dubois so greatly contributed to, in Israel today is heavily involved in pastoral care for migrants and asylum seekers in Israel. Fr. David Neuhaus, the Patriarchal Vicar, prior to 2009 was also on the board of the

Israeli human rights group B'Tselem that has recently been repeatedly censured by Israeli officials and its historical links to the government severed.

For Dubois, certainly before the first intifada and likely afterwards, anti-Zionism was not so much different from anti-Semitism. It denied Jewish historical and spiritual connections to Palestine and practically speaking doomed Jews to live in potentially hostile environments like Christian Europe. But the greatest enemy of Zionism, both religious and political, came to be the actions of the State of Israel itself. Even as the election of the Jews as a “chosen people” did not mean that they deserved special human rights, there was nothing about being a majority Jewish state that made Israel and its inhabitants immune to foolish policies and grave mis-steps. As a true, concerned friend, Dubois began to speak out. Reconciliation between Arabs and Jews became as important to him as that between Roman Catholics and Jews. The “Israel We Longed For,” for Dubois, was different from the one he experienced especially during the last part of his life.

To Amos Oz (1982:186), it seemed that Marcel Dubois held Israeli Jews up to a higher moral standard than others. Israel needed to be better and more moral than everyone else. Why did they need to set an example to the nations? In principle, I am very sympathetic to Oz’s objection. Israeli Jews shouldn’t be held up to unrealistic, ideal religious standards. My defense of Dubois, however, is not a “theological” one at all. While I think Dubois is strategically correct to petition the support of religious Jews and Christians by appealing to their sacred values in support of a better Israel and Jerusalem, I don’t think we need to necessarily ascribe “universal” meaning to any specific religious vision in order to make the city and world a better place. The pursuit of self- and group-interest, secured through cooperation with other agents of equal status, is enough for me. Dubois’ appeal to devotees of higher Jewish and Christian religious values that work in tandem with a liberal democratic political agenda, especially in religious Jerusalem, minimally seems a wise tactical move in the battle for Jerusalem.

Avital Wohlman (2012), arguably Dubois’ closest student and long-time interlocutor, has also noted the difficulty the philosophy professor and Roman Catholic priest had in giving up his own Thomistic form of missionizing—or better, “reasoned counseling.” Dubois did think that Jews could be better Jews in the country of Israel, and counseled them on how this could be achieved. This did not mean, however, that for Dubois the ideal Jew was a “Christian Jew” (Yudelman 2014)—at least not in the same

way as intended by many pre-millennial dispensationalist Zionists. Judaism was constituted by its own distinct covenant with God and it had not been abandoned by the divine. In keeping with *Nostra Aetate* mentioned above, Dubois made no call for Jews whether they are Israeli, American, or otherwise to be proselytized. He simply held Israeli Jews up to their own sacred and democratic standards, embodied in both Torah and its own Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel proclaimed on 14 May 1948 where it is written:

[The State of Israel] will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

For Dubois, in addition to respect for every human being a Christian value, it was before this a central tenant of Judaism. As seen in the Declaration of Establishment, it was supposed to be an Israeli value as well.

Finally, I want to respond to Jonathan Yudelman (2014), who has argued that it was Dubois' "essential error not to have seen that holding Jewish existence up to a unique form of Christian scrutiny could never be acceptable to Jews." I would argue that while this is understandably the case for many Jews in the wake of hundreds of years of Christian anti-Semitism and the recent European Holocaust, that this response is highly problematic—and not only when it comes to Jewish and Christian relations. Is it healthy for Jews and Israelis of all backgrounds, or anyone else for the matter, going forward? When groups refuse to consider testimonies or respond to questions and even criticisms from "outsiders," for many social theorists and historians including this author, it is a very bad omen (Hutt 2013). Exclusive reliance upon "insiders" does not stop people from walking off cliffs. For this trusted friends who are unafraid to speak their minds and the active solicitation of external review are the only defense.

### **MESSAGE TO CHRISTIAN ZIONISTS**

Marcel Dubois, without reservation, was a Christian supporter of Zionism or, generally speaking, a "Christian Zionist." While his Zionism was not what most today would refer

to as “Christian Zionism”—that is, the Anglo/American Protestant pre-millennial dispensationalist variety— he defended and lent actual support to Jews in their return to Israel. In this concluding section, I am going to lay out Dubois’ advice to other Christian Zionists—particularly, the most common Anglo/American variety. To reiterate, Dubois’ Christian Zionism and support for Israel was rooted in his religious commitments which were the basis for, and did not contradict, advocacy for human rights. Self-determination for Palestinians came to be viewed in the same way. The protection of minority rights, such as advocated by liberation theologians and secular political liberals, was fundamentally Christian. Dubois never would have sacrificed Jesus’ ethical teachings that he believed had their basis in Jewish religious traditions on the altar of apocalyptic fanaticism. One of the biggest dangers encountered in pre-millennial dispensationalist forms of Christian Zionism is their retreat in the face of prophetic revelation from respecting the human rights of others. This phenomenon is, of course, not limited to Christian Zionist pre-millennial dispensationalists. In recent years, historians like Norman Cohn as well as social theorists such as Mary Douglas and Kenelm Burridge, have warned against the dangers inherent in the dynamics of apocalyptic groups.<sup>22</sup>

Dubois provides us with an example of not only a new breed of anti-dispensationalist and anti-supercessionist Roman Catholics, but a Christian Zionist unmotivated by any pre-millennial apocalypticism. While Dubois and many of his Roman Catholic colleagues at the St. James Vicariate studied and contemplated “the modern history of the Jews within the general perspective of salvation,” this pursuit was for the most part non-eschatological (Dubois 1992:70). For Dubois, supporting Israel was about the sacred value of all human life and not the certain, actionable, and imminent return of the Messiah. Christians should provide backing to and protect the Jewish people because it is a moral obligation, not a political stepping-stone to Jesus’ coming in glory. Dubois recommended Zionism in a very rabbinic way, *li-shemah* (“for its own sake”). One should not support Israel in order to be “blessed” by God, the first and primary reason supplied by John Hagee Ministries for their self-serving Christian Zionism.<sup>23</sup> Dubois did not “bless Israel” in order to be blessed himself, but simply because supporting the birth of the State of Israel was from the perspective of a twentieth century French Roman Catholic the right thing to do. In this way, Dubois’ Christian Zionism especially pre-1967 is more similar to Jewish Zionism than the Christian Zionism of the pre-millennial dispensationalist variety.

Dubois on several occasions lauded the increased interest that Christians, especially those that he encountered in Jerusalem, had in historical religious Judaisms, its practices, and teachings. He certainly understood that Protestants and even pre-millennial dispensationalists shared his interest in re-invigorating Christianity by studying the Jewish roots of their faith. Following *Nostra Aetate*, Dubois' respect for Jewish self-understanding went one step further than many who call themselves Christian Zionists today. Differences between Christians and Jews were to be respected. Jews who did not accept the dominant pre-millennial dispensationalist Christian Zionist worldview did not need to be converted or should not be vilified.<sup>24</sup> Christians should not force their religious practices or beliefs upon Jews individually or upon Israel. This, of course, does not mean that Jews should be forbidden from becoming Christians, or discriminated against because they have done so—for example, as occurred in the case of Brother Daniel Rufeisen.<sup>25</sup> Actively attempting to convert Jews to Christianity in order to usher in the Messianic age is not only disrespectful but indicative of the instrumentalization of the former by the latter. Pre-millennial dispensationalist Christian Zionists should take note of the recent words of the outgoing, longstanding head of the Anti-Defamation League. According to Abe Foxman,<sup>26</sup> the most important achievement in the fight against anti-Jewish prejudice in the last several decades was precisely *Nostra Aetate*. It was not a self-serving pre-millennial dispensationalist Christian Zionist love of the Jewish people and promises of “eternal” support for divinely mandated Israeli settlement activity in occupied territory.

Dubois came to champion the rights of all Jews and Arabs, as well as other religious pilgrims from outside the region, to worship in Jerusalem. While today pre-millennial dispensationalist Christian Zionists clearly enjoy the favor of the Israeli government and have benefitted on the ground in Jerusalem (Hutt 2012:51–53), there is no guarantee that this will continue in the future. In recent years, not only Palestinians have come under pressure from Jewish national-religious extremists in Jerusalem but also non-Arab Christian communities—from Armenians and Greeks to Messianic Jewish Christians. Churches in Jerusalem attended by Christian Zionists have also not been immune to “price tag” and other attacks motivated by religious zealotry.

Some today may think Dubois' vision of a Jerusalem, where the rights of minority religious and non-religious communities are protected by the descendants of Jews who experienced persecution in Christian dominated countries, is too idealistic or

naïve. It behooves us, however, to consider all possible paths forward through the battle that now rages—especially, the middle route advocated by Dubois between nationalist-religious, segregative Zionism and those opposed even to the humanistic establishment of the State of Israel. Short of the actual return of the Messiah, however, Dubois’ promotion of a religiously grounded humanistic political liberalism strikes this author as one of if not the only way for Israeli Jews and the other residents of the Holy Land to win the battle described by Dubois for a just Jerusalem. Guaranteeing the human and political rights of all of the Holy Land’s residents not only preserves the moral character of Israeli and Palestinian societies but secures future access to the city for Jews from all backgrounds, for Arab Christians and Muslims who will no sooner forget severed links to Jerusalem than Jews did, and even for pre-millennial dispensationalists who continue to flock to the city.

#### NOTES

1. Most recently, Dubois’ work was the topic of an international conference held at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem. Contributions from students, friends, clergy, and scholars are found in Wohlman and Schwartz (2012). See especially, in this volume, the compiled bibliography of Marcel Dubois’ writings (204–9).
2. I want to thank Fr. David, the present-day Latin Patriarchal Vicar of the St. James Vicariate for Hebrew speaking Roman Catholics and Migrants in Israel, for his informed and personal insights into the life and work of Marcel Dubois supplied in conversations held in Jerusalem on 9 May 2015 and through email.
3. Subbotniks, a Judaizing Christian spiritualist movement with origins in the Russian Orthodox church, were part of the “First Aliyah” to Ottoman Palestine in the 1880s. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, like other non- or *ad*dispensationists as well as post-millennialist Christians, was highly critical of the pre-millennial dispensationism of Darby that is so often identified with Christian Zionism today. See Swanson 1996: 207–8. On “mainline, liberal” Protestant support for Zionism in the U.S. see Carenen 2012. Krister Stendahl, famous for his three rules of religious understanding, was a dialogue partner with Fr. Marcel Dubois, Rabbi David Hartman and others in Jerusalem on topics related to ecumenical relations.
4. See especially Maritain 1965.

5. See Frans Alphons Maria Alting von Gesau's contribution in "The Testimony of a Catholic Christian Zionist" in Lückhoff 1988: 24–30.
6. Isaac 1964. Of course, there were many other "political" reasons behind the Roman Catholic Church's initial position opposing Jewish Zionism from concern over the protection of Holy Sites, Roman Catholics living in Palestine, and relations with Eastern Orthodox Churches.
7. These words from Pope John Paul II's visit to a synagogue in Mainz in 1980 are cited in section 86 of the 2002 Pontifical Biblical Commission, "The Jewish People and their Sacred Scripture in the Christian Bible."
8. See John XXIII's prayer in "Our Eyes Have Been Cloaked" in the *Catholic Herald* (5/14/1965).
9. Norman Cohn documents a few cases of where Roman Catholic and political leadership tried to protect Jews from violence. Cases where the opposite took place were of course much more common. See Cohn 1992: 68–69.
10. Dubois, as cited in the preface Burrell and Landau 1992: 2, commonly introduced himself self-describing in the following way: "As a Dominican priest, I am a son of the inquisition; now I teach Augustine and Aquinas to Jews, in Hebrew, at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem."
11. See Dubois 1977: 91 where he states that in *Nostra Aetate* the "seeds of truth" are found in "animism, fetishism, Buddhism, Brahmanism, Shintoism, Islam, even Marxism, hippies, atheism, with only one exception: Judaism."
12. Dubois 2003: 89.
13. See Flannery 1985: 334, n. 5 where he links Hitler's motivations with the neo-paganism of Hans F. K. Guenther.
14. To quote the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's *Holocaust Encyclopedia* on the topic of "The German Churches and the Nazi State"—"The population of Germany in 1933 was around 60 million. Almost all Germans were Christian, belonging either to the Roman Catholic (ca. 20 million members) or the Protestant (ca. 40 million members) churches." See <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005206> [accessed: 8/1/15].
15. See, for example, Lenhardt 2004.
16. In Dubois 1974, see especially the section titled "The Holocaust and the Cross." At Mainz, Pope John Paul II characterized Auschwitz as Golgotha (the Shoah as the

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crucifixion of the Jews.) At least on a couple of occasions, Dubois (1974, 1987b) forwarded an analogy to the solitude of the Jews via reference to that experienced by the Virgin Mary.

17. For more non-Roman Catholic versions of such an approach, see Nussbaum 2001 and Sen1985.
18. For a discussion of this time period, see Rioli 2013:29.
19. For more on Stendahl's approach to Jewish-Christian dialogue, see Verduin 2013.
20. Dubois wrote in 1977:89—"To come back to Jerusalem is not only, for the Jewish people, a matter of regaining the political capital of a nation which has finally won its territory and independence. To come back to Jerusalem, means for the Jewish soul, to assume the spiritual responsibility of a vocation which concerns the whole universe, its unity, its harmony and its peace."
21. For a history of interfaith relations at the Cenaculum/Tomb of David on Mt. Zion until 1967, see Bar 2004.
22. See the conclusion of Cohn 1992: 285–86. See Douglas 1996: 116–18 on the generation of metaphysical dualisms and millenarian outlooks in small bounded, sectarian communities such as that of John Nelson Darby. Burrige in his seminal analysis of millenarian movements (1969), highlights the danger of the "orgiastic," "no rules" stage that emerges from radically destabilizing traditions.
23. John Hagee is the founder and national chairman of Christians United for Israel. See —<http://www.jhm.org/Home/About/WhySupportIsrael>
24. See, for example, the characterization of Jews who have no interest in making *aliyah* to Israel in order to hasten the return of the Messiah by the "Apostle" Tom Hess (a Christian leader of the Israeli Knesset's Christian Allies Caucus) in Hess 1987.
25. See Marcel Dubois' comments on the evangelization of Jews in Venard 2006:195–211.
26. On 6/18/15, Foxman stated: "No effort has had a greater impact at fighting anti-Jewish prejudice than the 1965 declaration 'Nostra Aetate' from the Roman Catholic Church, which stripped away any theological justification for anti-Semitic beliefs." See <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/jewish-world-news/1.666644>

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