**Land, History, Bible: Towards the Land that I Will Show You**

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### David Neuhaus, SJ

Rev. Dr. David Mark Neuhaus SJ is Latin Patriarchal Vicar for Hebrew Speaking Catholics in Israel, a part of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Born in South Africa, he is a member of the Society of Jesus (Near East Province) and teaches Scripture at the Seminary of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Beit Jala and in the Religious Studies Department at Bethlehem University. He completed a BA, MA and PhD (Political Science) at Hebrew University, Jerusalem. He then completed pontifical degrees in theology and Scripture in Paris (Centre Sevres) and Rome (Pontifical Biblical Institute). His publications include *Justice and the Intifada: Palestinians and Israelis Speak Out* (edited with Kathy Bergen and Ghassan Rubeiz), New York: Friendship Press, 1991 and (in collaboration with Alain Marchadour), *The Land that I Will Show You…Land, Bible and History* has been published in French (2006), English (2007) and Italian (2007). See “A Declaration for the Jubilee of Future Brotherhood,” [www.catholic.co.il](http://www.catholic.co.il), neuhaussj@gmail.com.

* + - 1. Christian Anti-Semitism.

1. In the period before *Nostra aetate*, most Catholics and Christians viewed the Jews as Christ-killers, and in effect, deicides. Is there a “danger” of accepting the Jewish people today, or should we approach this with joy? Two issues:
   * + 1. The Holy Land.
       2. The salvific role of Jesus Christ.
2. Text for discussion: A Jewish response to *Nostra aetate*. Last week, in Paris, Jews in France offered a similar document to the Archbishop of Paris.
   * + 1. The [Dabru Emet](http://www.jcrelations.net/Dabru_Emet_-_A_Jewish_Statement_on_Christians_and_Christianity.2395.0.html) (“Word of Truth”) Statement.

Wikipedia: “In light of the [Second Vatican Council](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Vatican_Council) in 1965, the Dabru Emet was first published on September 10, 2000, in the [New York Times](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_Times), and has since been used in Jewish education programs across the U.S. While affirming that there are theological differences between these two religions, the purpose of *Dabru Emet* is to point out common ground and a legitimacy of Christianity, for non-Jews, from the Jewish perspective. It is not an official document of any of the Jewish denominations per se, but it is representative of what many [Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew) feel.

Eight major themes are expressed:

1. Jews and Christians worship the same God. This hasn’t always been clear, because some Jews (and others) believe that Christians are idolaters.
2. Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book. Is it the same as the TaNaKh? The OT differences
   1. The last book of the TaNaKh is Second Chronicles. We should remember the last phrase in 2 Chr. 26, a kind of epistle of Cyrus to the Exiles.
   2. The last verse: “All the kingdoms of the earth God has given to me. . . Let him go up” (aliya) to Jerusalem to build the temple.
3. Christians can respect the claim of the Jews on the land of Israel. This is difficult, and will be discussed below.
4. Jews and Christians together accept the moral principles of the Torah (Pentateuch).
5. Nazism is not a Christian phenomenon. [But Neuhaus says that Nazism cannot be understood outside of the context of Christianity.]
6. The controversy between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in scripture and no-one should be pressed into believing another’s belief. *This is, for Neuhaus, the Christian rejection of “two covenant” theology*
   1. The “humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians” – Jesus Christ – will be settled when “God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture.” (See Rom. 9-11). Paul sees the reconciliation to be accomplished in Jesus Christ. The branches of the gentiles have been grafted onto the olive tree of Judaism. God does not revoke his call.
   2. Romans 11:29. I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers, so that you will not become wise [in] your own estimation: a hardening has come upon Israel in part, until the full number of the Gentiles comes in,**[s](http://www.usccb.org/bible/romans/11" \l "53011025-s)**26and thus all Israel will be saved,**[t](http://www.usccb.org/bible/romans/11" \l "53011026-t)** as it is written:[**u**](http://www.usccb.org/bible/romans/11#53011026-u) “The deliverer will come out of Zion, he will turn away godlessness from Jacob; 27and this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”[**v**](http://www.usccb.org/bible/romans/11#53011027-v) 28In respect to the gospel, they are enemies on your account; but in respect to election, they are beloved because of the patriarchs.**[w](http://www.usccb.org/bible/romans/11" \l "53011028-w)**29For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.**[x](http://www.usccb.org/bible/romans/11" \l "53011029-x)**
   3. There were two covenants. But now, we can say, Pope Benedict has ended all efforts to convert the Jews. We are celebrating, not the fidelity of Israel, but the fidelity of God. God does not reject those (even of us) who are unfaithful.
7. A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice. *Dialogue with the Jews is not a form of Christian mission.*
8. Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace

Commentary by Neuhaus.

The significance of 2 Chr. 26. “Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given to me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has also charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. All among you, therefore, who belong to his people, may their God be with them; let them go up.”

The significance of Malachi 3. Remember the law of Moses my servant whom I charged at Horeb with statutes and ordinance for all Israel. 23[**m**](http://www.usccb.org/bible/malachi/3#47003023-m) Now I am sending to you Elijah[**\***](http://www.usccb.org/bible/malachi/3#47003023-1) the prophet. Before the day of the LORD comes, the great and terrible day; 24He will turn the heart of fathers to their sons, and the heart of sons to their fathers Lest I come and strike the land with utter destruction.

The significance of Matthew 5: **\*** “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.

Against a “Two Covenant” Theology.

1. What is this theology? Christians know and serve God through Jesus Christ and the Christian tradition. Jews now and serve God through Torah and the Jewish tradition.
2. But now, argues Neuhaus, there is only one covenant.
   * + 1. The Difficulty of Point Three and the “rabbinic revolution.”
          1. The Temple was destroyed and the land was lost after 70 AD, so Judaism was reformulated around the synagogue and the home or table.

Longing for the land has never disappeared. Aliya express the desire of Jews to “go up” to Jerusalem.

Second Chronicles: “Let them go up.”

* + - * 1. Text of Point 3 from the Dabru Emet Document. **Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel.** The most important event for Jews since the Holocaust has been the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the Promised Land. As members of a biblically based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised -- and given -- to Jews as the physical center of the covenant between them and God. Many Christians support the State of Israel for reasons far more profound than mere politics. As Jews, we applaud this support. We also recognize that Jewish tradition mandates justice for all non-Jews who reside in a Jewish state.

This is that Neuhaus criticizes most strongly.

The Diptych. For Jews, it is the holocaust and the reestablishment of the state of Israel. For Christians it is the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Gone is any reference to religion. When did the Jews start moving to the land of Israel? It is 1882, the beginning of modern Jewish immigration to the land. In 1881 there were pogroms as a result of the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. Some of the assassins were Jews. Tsar Alexander III adopted a harsh attitude against the Jews. The first settlement was near Tel Aviv. The Russians divided the Jewish population into three:

One-third must die, or be allowed to die out.

One-third must be driven out.

One-third must be subdued and converted to Orthodoxy.

In the Warsaw Ghetto, there were three Catholic Churches to serve the Catholics who were Jews. Jewishness is not primarily secular.

* + - * 1. What is important to Jewish history?

The “genius” of Zionism was to insert the creation of a political event (the Creation of the State of Israel) into salvation history. When we speak of “Israel,” we Christians assume we know what we are talking about.

Neuhaus takes issue with this sentence: “As members of a biblically based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised -- and given -- to Jews as the physical center of the covenant between them and God.”

The citizens of the State of Israel are “members of a biblically-based religion.” The land was “promised and given” to Jews as the center of the state. And we Christians are supposed to accept this.

Question: Do we believe that God gave this land to the Jews? If you say no, are you a Marcionite? Marcion, the son of bishop, concluded that “Jesus Christ has liberated us from the ‘Jewish’ God.” He rejected the language, inherited from Judaism, of how to speak of God. We do not reject that language. But to “appreciate” the claim of the Jews on the Land is not to “accept” the borders of the Partition or the 1967 war.

* + - * 1. Did God Give the Land to Israel?

What is the “land”? From what border to what border?

“In the beginning,” God created the heavens and *ha-eretz*. So is it all the land? There are no borders, originally.

From Genesis 1-11, there are no borders. *Ha-eretz* is “the face of the earth.” The borders get inserted because of sin.

* + - * 1. The Four Narratives of Original Sin.

Adam and Eve.

Cain and Abel.

Noah.

The Tower of Babel. “They don’t want to reach God, they want to replace God.” Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky,**[\*](http://www.usccb.org/bible/genesis/11" \l "01011004-1)** and so make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered all over the earth.”

1. Naming. “God named Adam. Adam named Seth.” Naming is about the relation of father to Son. The people of Babel want to become their own progenitors.
2. Christian tradition picks out passages that condemn the Jews. Prophets offered prophecies of consolation and condemnation. The central reality of the OT is the miracle of return. Nature leads to death but God does not accept death (or exile) as the last word.
3. The Jewish TaNaKh ends with Cyrus the Persian: “the messiah,” who opens the tomb to allow the sons of God to “go up” to the land
   * + 1. The Problem of Borders.
          1. We must not accept a bordered piece of real estate, given to one people, when there was a time when God “redeemed bordered land” in order to prepare a people, God’s people, out of which will come a messiah whose task is remove the borders.
          2. See Ephesians 2:11 ff. Therefore, remember that at one time you, Gentiles in the flesh, called the uncircumcision by those called the circumcision, which is done in the flesh by human hands, 12were at that time without Christ, alienated from the community of Israel**[\*](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2" \l "57002012-1)** and strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world.[**j**](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2#57002012-j) 13But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ.**[k](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2" \l "57002013-k)** 14**[\*](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2" \l "57002014-1)** For he is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh,[**l**](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2#57002014-l)15abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, that he might create in himself one new person**[\*](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2" \l "57002015-1)** in place of the two, thus establishing peace,[**m**](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2#57002015-m)16and might reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it.**[n](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2" \l "57002016-n)** He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near,**[o](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2" \l "57002017-o)**18for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.**[p](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2" \l "57002018-p)** 19So then you [gentiles] are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God [the Jews],**q**20built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,**[r](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2" \l "57002020-r)** with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone.[**\***](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2#57002020-1)21Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord;**[s](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2" \l "57002021-s)**22in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.**[t](http://www.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/2" \l "57002022-t)**

The writer of Ephesians is disparaging toward gentiles.

The apostles wanted Jesus to stay in Capernaum, but he said no, “I was meant to go out to the other side,” i.e., where the gentiles are. See Mark 5:1. They came to the other side of the sea, to the territory of the Gerasenes.2When he [not “they] got out of the boat, at once a man**[\*](http://www.usccb.org/bible/mk/5:1" \l "49005002-1)** from the tombs who had an unclean spirit met him.

He has broken down the border, the “dividing wall.”

Christ creates in himself one new person in place of the two. *The crucifixion has become an act of creation*. Out of the crucified body will come a new birth, in blood and water, i.e., the church.

The “one new human being” is not divided into Jews and gentiles. Jews and gentiles form a single temple.

* + - * 1. Acts 11:22 ff. The news about them reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas [to go] to Antioch. 23When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain faithful to the Lord in firmness of heart,24for he was a good man, filled with the holy Spirit and faith. And a large number of people was added to the Lord. 25Then he went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26and when he had found him he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a large number of people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.**[\*](http://www.usccb.org/bible/acts/11" \l "52011026-1)**

The “new body” does not recognize borders.

They are called “Christians.”

* + - * 1. In sum: there is one land, *ha-eretz*, without borders. White people, people of European origin, should be uncomfortable. For they have created borders and sanctified them.

Coffee Break

* + - 1. The Single Covenant.
         1. In *Deus Caritas Est*, Benedict XVI said, “Jesus taught nothing new.” The newness of the Bible is that God loves us, not that we love God. The ultimate newness of the Bible is the Old Testament (see Hosea 11). And then if “everything new” is implicit in the old, the newness is Jesus’s “concreteness” as the incarnation of God.
         2. God does not have a separate salvation for the Jews. In Neuhaus’ view, there are many covenants, and the covenant in Jesus’ blood is a reawakened, concretized covenant.
      2. Introduction to the Question of the Land.
         1. We are proclaiming something fundamental about the faith: there are no borders.

Christians have “sacralized” geographical borders since Constantine’s victory in 313. The Edict of Milan made Christianity a tolerated religion, and then the religion of the empire. Christianity became the “religion of borders.”

We tend to see the splinter in the other’s eye, not the log in our own. Islam divides the world into what has been conquered by Islam and what has not been conquered. Islam learned that from us.

* + - * 1. The Jews became the enemy within the borders of the empire.
      1. At first, the ghetto was a place to protect the Jews.
      2. Why did Christians want to kill the Jews? The Fathers spoke about the Jews as “the ungrateful people of the election who killed Christ and who refuse stubbornly to see Christ as the savior.”
      3. There was special clothing for Jews. The language of “purity of blood” was invented by Christians. Ignatius said no one with impure blood can be a Jesuit. That was revoked in 1949 (lest we think the Jesuits are ‘progressive’).
         1. Power. In 1948, the Jews assumed power, and we should say to them, “Power is a temptation” and “borders are a temptation.”

The gospel should attract by its light. It should not be imposed.

The “other victim” is Islam. Muslims adopted the idea of religions spread through empire, and they repeated what Christians have done. Read “In Praise of the Chivalrous Knight,” by Bernard of Clairvaux. He was sensitive to the Jews, and decried the killing of Jews. The crusaders wiped out “the people who had killed Christ” in Europe. Bernard (not Osama bin Laden) wrote, “Kill or be killed – in both cases, you will be right.”

* + - 1. The Question of the Land. If we say to Jews, “Let’s live in a land without borders,” Jews will laugh at us.
         1. We have made the Jews feel unwelcome, and the French Revolution of 1789 gave the Jews the hope that they might have religious freedom.

After the Revolution, religion was shifted to the margins (where Jesus, according to Neuhaus, believed that it should always be).

The Jews have more faith in reason (and thus church-state separation) than they do in a religion obsessed with borders.

* + - * 1. Zionism. There were successes for the Jews, such as the USA, in which Jews feel at home. This is terrible for Zionists. Jews must feel nowhere at home, and always threatened. The ADL, Anti-Defamation League, seeks to show that anti-Semitism is alive and well. See the film, “Defamation.” But the State of Israel is built upon Zionism and what Neuhaus called its “five axioms.”

The first axiom of Zionism is, “There is a Jewish problem.” This is the Euro-centric Jewish reflection. When Jews do feel comfortable (as they do in the USA), Zionism has a problem. It is no longer the solution to anti-Semitism.

The second axiom of Zionism is, “There is a Jewish solution to the problem.” The *Bund* aimed to fight Zionism. But the members of the *Bund* were burned in the death camps.

The third axiom: “The solution is ‘Get Out of Europe.’” The “golden state” in the 19th century was not Palestine, but the USA. According to most statisticians, there are more Jews in the USA than in Israel. Israel is uncomfortable with that. The USA poses a counter-narrative to Zionism.

The fourth axiom: “We go out of Europe to go to the land that God gave us.”

The fifth axiom: “In that land, we establish a sovereign state.”

* + - * 1. Unresolved debates in Zionism.

What is the place of the Palestinians?

What kind of government should it have?

* + - 1. The Roots of Zionism.
         1. Zionism was adopted by the Jews because they were marginalized in Europe.
      2. Theodor Herzl’s Zionism was a reaction to anti-semitism in Europe.
      3. Herzl as a young man regarded himself as a writer, intellectual, and playwrite.
      4. In the 1880s, he encountered the anti-Semitic rhetoric of the mayor of Vienna, who said, “The Jews will never be faithful to the state.” Herzl was a non-practicing Jew. He wrote a letter to the pope in 1881. He proposed an *Endlösung*. If the pope would condemn anti-Semitism as a sin, Herzl would lead the children of Vienna to St. Stephen cathedral and have them baptized. Herzl’s son, Hans, was baptized. Eventually, Hans committed suicide.
      5. In 1894, Herzl went to Paris and covered the Dreyfus Affair. Dreyfus was condemned. The Roman Catholic Church supported the view that Dreyfus was a traitor. The *Civilta Cattolica* proclaimed he was a traitor.
      6. Secular and anti-clerical intellectuals (Emile Zola’s “J’Accuse”) supported Dreyfus, but most Europeans condemned him.
         1. Herzl’s Awakening. There is no future for the Jews in Paris. They do not call out, “Death to Dreyfus.” They call out, “Death to the Jews.” Herzl publishes *Judenstadt*. Later he wrote another book, *Alt-Neu-Land*.

Herzl saw himself, not as Joshua, but as Ezra, as one who would organize those who returned to the land.

He founded the World Zionist Organization. But its members rejected him, because he was not inserted into Jewishness. New pogroms had broken out. He proposed to the WZO a temporary homeland in Uganda. It was scandalous to his Zionist brothers, who wanted only Palestine.

Romantic Philosophy. Hegel, Schelling and the poets brought the language of the homeland, of modern nationalism, and of the setting up of borders.

* + - * 1. Opposition to the Zionist Movement.

Before the Shoah, Zionism was opposed by:

The founding of the alliance of *Agudath Israel* in 1913, because they disliked false messianism. Herzl was a false messiah, because only God can bring about salvation and the restoration of Israel.

The secularism of Zionism was rejected.

Many rejected the idea that Jews needed its own land.

* + - * 1. The Balfour Declaration.

Origins.

Oct. 2, 1917. At that time, Britain was about to conquer Palestine. An armistice would be signed with the Turks. Palestine came under British rule.

Balfour and England looked with favor on the creation of a Jewish homeland. Chaim Weitzmann, the head of the WZO, contributed to the WWI effort in England and had the ear of Balfour.

Opposition by Lord Montague. He was responsible for India. He was outraged by the Balfour Declaration because he was Jewish. He was a Lord and a Minister. His homeland was not Palestine.

A Catholic professor, Michael Prior, rejected Arthur Balfour’s claim that there was a link between the Jews and the land of Palestine.

Balfour said that the rights of the indigenous inhabitants should be respected. There were 600,000 Palestinians in 1917, and 60,000 Jews.

The British made promises to the Arabs and the Jews, to turn them against the Ottomans.

There were two Aliyas (Zionist “returns” to the land), 1882-1904, and 1905-1914.

The Partition Plan (Nov. 29, 1947).

The British recommended that Palestine should be cut into two pieces, half to the Jews and half to the Palestinians.

In the 30s and 40s, Eastern Europe sent hundreds of thousands of Jews to Palestine. By 1947, there were 600,000 Jews (and 1.3 million Palestinians). They were mainly Europeans. Palestinians were dreaming of independence. They wanted to get rid of British rule and throw out those whom they saw as the European colonialists.

Jews cannot forgive the Palestinians for opposition to the two-state solution. There were supposed to be two states. The Jews accepted the two-state solution. But Palestinians did not. They wanted independence for themselves. The Europeans said, “You will get independence if you give half of your and to the Jews.”

The foundation of the State of Israel (1948). The Arabs declared war. 6,000 Jews died. Many thousands of Arabs died. In January of 1949, the State of Israel had 78% of the land of Palestine. Did military victory (supported by God) give Israel this land? No, it was the support of the Soviet Union and the USA. Israel eventually turned against the Soviet Union. By the time of the 1956 war, the Soviet Union was on the side of the Arabs. The Cold War defined the Jews. There was a massive expulsion of the Palestinian population from 1948-1966.

In June of 1967, Israel conquered the remainder of the land.

* + - 1. Christian Responsibility for Choices Made by Jews.
         1. Criticism of the State of Israel.

Noam Chomsky. He spoke in Tel Aviv and in Jerusalem. He said, “I am often asked whether the PLO is a terrorist organization. It is a terrorist organization.” The Palestinian students were upset.

Then Chomsky added, “The PLO is a small and ineffectual terrorist organization.” The State of Israel is much stronger. The biggest terrorist organization in the world is the USA.

* + - * 1. Today, Neuhaus says that the discourse of the Catholic Church since *Nostra aetate* is helpful.

The Vatican was slow to recognize the State of Israel. That was wise.

The Vatican was slow to recognize Palestine.

* + - * 1. Gospel Based Preaching. Vatican principles:

We are rooted in biblical language, OT and NT. “Blessed are the meek.” Benedict spoke brilliantly about the land in a dialogue with Jacob Neusner.

We need to constantly relate to our Christian brothers and sisters, especially the Palestinians. Michel Sabah, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, wrote a “Letter on Reading the Bible in the Land of the Bible Today.” He asked, “Are we Palestinian Christians the victims of our own history of salvation, because our Christian brothers and sisters want to hand our land over to the Jews?”

We have to have an interreligious dialogue. A large part of the problem in the Muslim world today (Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood) has to do with the festering wound of Palestine.

We must be concerned about Justice and Peace. The solution is not to be found in the Bible (Neuhaus say this against evangelical Christian Zionists), but to be found in the principles of intellectual law and reason. Paul VI recognized the Palestinian people in 1975. He said to the Jews, “I beg you, in the name of your own suffering, to recognize the Palestinian people.”

* + - * 1. The struggle proceeds from who we are, and what we have been in history. A lot of the resolution of the struggle depends on us.