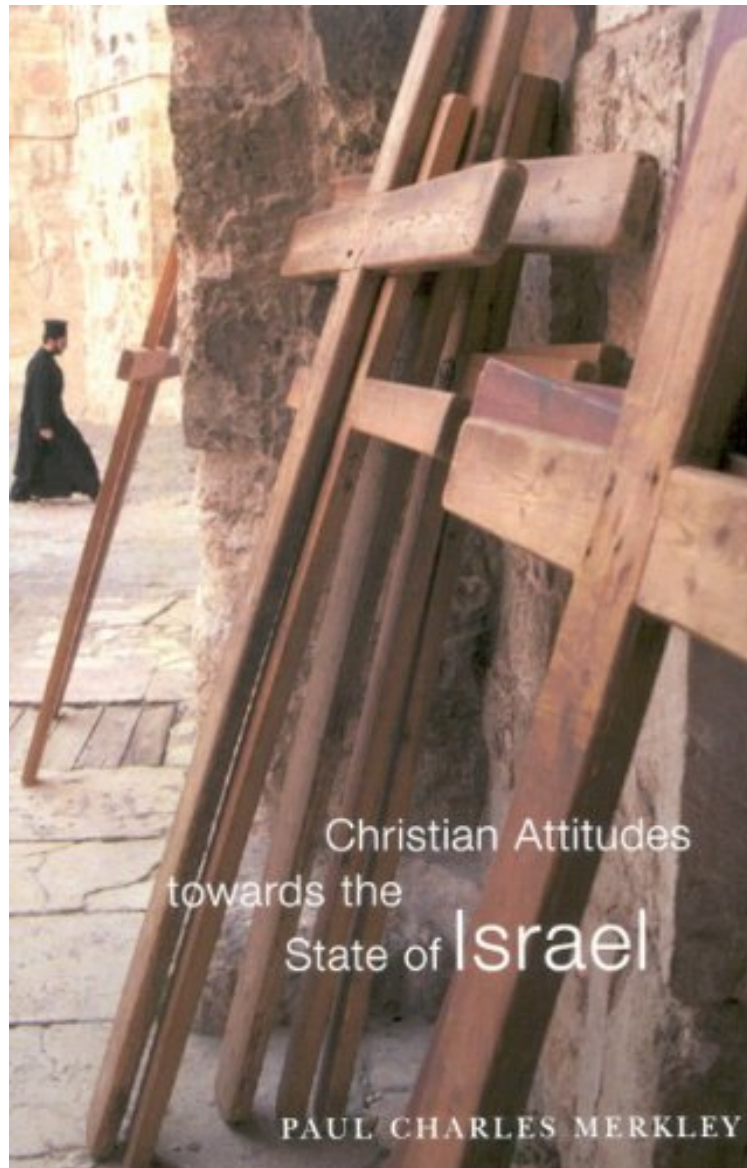


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## Christian Attitudes towards the State of Israel (McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Religion, Series Two)

*Paul Charles Merkley*

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**Paul Charles Merkley : Christian Attitudes towards the State of Israel (McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Religion, Series Two)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Christian Attitudes towards the State of Israel (McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Religion, Series

Two):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very useful. By Mr. History I expected this to be another dry and academic tome but it was really very interesting. I learned a lot about some Christian organizations about which I knew very little. I found Christian Attitudes toward the State of Israel very useful. 8 of 10 people found the following review helpful. well written, honest, thorough. By westwind I can't say enough good things about this book. In fact, I am going to buy several copies to give to friends, both Christian and Jewish. I'd like to give it to liberal Protestant friends, but sadly, having read the book I am older and wiser about the deep roots of liberal Protestant hostility to Israel (and Jews). I found the background on the World Council of Churches, the Vatican, and the Evangelicals really fascinating. Merkley is wonderfully frank and honest about difficult topics. I found him a trustworthy reporter. At times his exasperation shows, but on the whole he shows an admirable restraint. This book helped me understand some unpleasant interchanges I've had with people in my own community, for example the Presbyterian minister and the socially elite lady who works with Protestant missions in "Palestine." I have been deeply disturbed by their moral indifference to Jewish life (the minister) and outright anti-semitic slurs (the rich mission lady.) It is always helpful to be able to put personal experiences like this in a larger political/historical context and understand them at a deeper level. On a happier note, Merkley gave me information I did not know about the theology and policies of the main Evangelical groups. I was especially interested to learn that the often repeated comment they are only helping Israel so that all the Jews will be killed in Armageddon is actually a lie promulgated by anti-Israeli Christians eager to alienate Jews from their one group of dependable support (Merkley says this in a much more measured way, but that's the nub). I have to say this also fits my personal experience - the several evangelicals I have talked to in my community have only quoted Bible about 'those that bless you shall be blessed, those that curse you shall be cursed' in explaining why they think supporting Israel is a good idea (in both senses of the word 'good.')

I feel very grateful to Merkley for this book and I only wish it were more widely read. 2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Must Read. By Dexter Van Zile This book documents how liberal Protestants in the U.S. who have reworked their theology regarding the Jewish people have allowed the prophetic voices of their churches to be hi-jacked by groups like Sabeel and the Middle East Council of Churches and other church institutions that have embraced what can be politely described as a Judeophobic agenda. These institutions have portrayed Israel's efforts to defend itself against enemies intent on destroying it as a Jewish assault on Christian sensibilities and the mainline churches cooperate in broadcasting this narrative. Merkley offers enormously valuable background and history to the conflict. It also provides insight into how putatively progressive Christians have remained silent about the mistreatment of religious and ethnic minorities in the Middle East. A hugely important book that has not gotten enough attention. A must read for this interested in understanding Christian anti-Zionism.

Paul Merkley draws on the published literature of the World Council of Churches, the Middle East Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, and other Christian organizations that have an interest in the question of Israel's past, present, and future, and on interviews with numerous key figures within the government of Israel, spokesmen for the Palestine Authority, and leaders of all the major pro and anti-Zionist Christian organizations to demonstrate that Christian attitudes towards Israel remain remarkably polarized. To most evangelical and fundamentalist Christians, loyalty to Israel is a kind of second patriotism, nurtured by the conviction that Israel's restoration is a part of God's plan for history. However mainstream Protestantism champions "Palestinian nationalism" and, drawing on the rhetoric of the Middle East Council of Churches, does not hesitate to portray Israel as an Aoppressor." Merkley concludes that Christian attitudes towards Israel reflect fundamental theological attitudes that must be studied against the long historical background of Christian attitudes towards Judaism and Islam.

"This book is a remarkable achievement ... I am most impressed with the scope of Merkley's research. He is a diligent and thorough scholar who seems to have gathered all conceivable information on the topic and is very fluent with the literature on the different aspects of the subject ... his is the first comprehensive work on the subject." Yaakov Ariel, Department of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill