

Praise for *Living in the Shadow of the Cross*

Living in the Shadow of the Cross is a powerful, compassionate, yet challenging piece of work. This is a must read for anyone who is committed to social justice and ameliorating oppression. As a Pastor in the Christian church, I initially wanted to explain away or make excuses, but Paul offers a perspective that feels very familiar to me as one who has felt the impact of White Supremacy and patriarchy.

—Rev. Dr. Jamie Washington, Assistant Pastor, Unity Fellowship Church of Baltimore, and Founding Faculty, Social Justice Training Institute

Living in the Shadow of the Cross serves as a reminder of why the United States is not a Christian Nation and never was. Kivel illustrates why no religion should attempt to cram the First Amendment into an exclusionary theological straightjacket. Disturbing yet necessary truth-telling for those of us who are Christian or who follow any religious belief system.

—Chip Berlet, investigative reporter, scholar and co-author,
Right-Wing Populism in America

As a white Christian woman who has spent her life attempting to understand white privilege and white supremacy and to make change, Paul Kivel has upped my ante of personal work and understanding. Christian hegemony is an essential piece in the puzzle of systemic domination. What a gift!

—Frances E. Kendall, author *Understanding White Privilege*

We need this book. *Living in the Shadow of the Cross* helps us understand the many ways that ruling classes historically and today use Christianity to justify, implement and even celebrate, colonization, exploitation and oppression. Working for liberation requires us to decolonize our minds from the logic of the oppressor so that we can generate logics of liberation from which to create, live, love, and act from. Decolonize your heart, mind and soul, and study this book.

—Chris Crass, author, *Towards Collective Liberation: Anti-racist organizing, feminist praxis and movement-building strategy*

After more than 200 years, a book has finally emerged that validates Thomas Paine's concerns about Christian hegemony. *Living in the Shadow of the Cross* shows readers of all faiths how the ruling elite turned a doctrine of love into a doctrine of discovery that has ultimately kept us from embracing the spiritual wisdom of Indigenous cultures that Paine and other founding fathers of the U.S. saw as incompatible with Christian orthodoxy. This book is a must-read if we are to break through the illusions that continue to keep our collective heads in the hegemonic sands that are contained by Christian seas. Our very survival may require such an awakening as Kivel offers here.

—Four Arrows (Don Trent Jacobs, Ph.D., Ed.D.), author, *Teaching Truly, Primal Awareness and Unlearning the Language of Conquest*.

With *Living in the Shadow of the Cross*, Paul Kivel once again sets a high standard for investigating and making visible dominant group privilege, power, control, and domination, which are pervasive and deeply entrenched. By coming into the topic from multiple perspectives – historical, theological and philosophical, economic and political – Kivel exposes how the Christian cross has not merely cast a shadow across the globe, but more importantly, how it has operated like a coercive hammer (a weapon) in several spheres resulting in colonization, forced conversions, confiscations of property and resources, territorial expulsions, and, ultimately, to genocide. *Living in the Shadow of the Cross* puts to rest lingering false impressions and long-standing justifications for a supposed “naturalness” and “normalcy” of Christian hegemony.

—Warren J. Blumenfeld, co-editor, *Investigating Christian Privilege and Religious Oppression in the United States*, and Associate Professor, School of Education, Iowa State University

Paul Kivel courageously confronts Christian hegemony by addressing historical and present-day realities that few are willing and able to openly challenge. With careful detail, Kivel clearly delineates distinctions between systems of oppression and Christians who resist dominance due to their deep commitments to social justice and liberation. Moreover, he gives voice to those of us who are outside of the Christian religion and consistently subject to Christian hegemony by highlighting how we are forced to navigate realities that dramatically shape and impact our daily lives.

—Amer F. Ahmed, educator, social justice activist, poet

You may not realize it, but this is the book you have been waiting for! In the growing field of Privilege Studies, religious privilege has been under-examined. In his characteristically accessible style, Kivel provides us with a nuanced yet comprehensive volume that fills this gap. This will be an indispensable resource and teaching tool for anyone seeking to understand privilege, and the ways that religion intersects with race, class and gender studies.

—Abby L. Ferber, Director of The Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion, and Professor of Sociology and Women's & Ethnic Studies at University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.

Paul Kivel's deep and detailed analyses of Christian assumptions are both appalling and empowering. They name the historical and ideological problems that most students of oppression in the last 150 years have simply avoided. For me, Paul Kivel opens up whole new territories of pain, but shows that those of us who were raised in Christian traditions can lessen institutional Christian oppressiveness without disowning the soul itself and all the spiritual impulses that go into what Paul Tillich called "the ground of our being".

—Peggy McIntosh, Associate Director, Wellesley Centers for Women and Founding Director, National SEED Project on Inclusive Curriculum.

Paul Kivel has done it again; awakened us to a system of dominance that has been invisible for centuries. I found myself defending Christianity and arguing its “goodness;” seeing its dominance revealed by Kivel but still denying its hegemonic impact on the world. The success of this book will not be measured by one’s agreement or disagreement but rather the degree to which it helps change the discourse about Christian power and dominance. Can we be open-minded enough to engage in deep discourse and ultimately change the dominant paradigm and structures that lead to power and privilege?

—Hugh Vasquez, social justice educator and
Senior Associate at the National Equity Project