

Acknowledgments

In the time I have spent on this project, I have learned over and over that this kind of work depends on the goodwill and guidance of many people. First, I am grateful to the people and the organizations this book is about; they welcomed me into their homes, churches, classes, conferences, and their travels to Palestine and Israel. In most cases, they did not know me when they agreed to talk with me about things that matter deeply to them, and I cannot thank each participant in this research enough for taking that risk. I hope and trust that they recognize themselves in the narrative I tell in this book. They are members, leaders, and constituents of the four organizations that make up the case studies: Christians United for Israel, the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, the Perfecting Church, and the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference. Within these organizations and networks, I am especially grateful to Michael Stevens, Dumisani Washington, Kevin and Angela Brown, Christina King, Glenn Plummer, Taurean Webb, and Waltrina Middleton. These pastors and leaders went out of their way to introduce me to their colleagues, congregants, and constituents; and they invited me into the spaces of their religious communities and their activism. They helped me understand and tell the story of African American Christian engagement with Israel and Palestine from a wide range of perspectives. The people who opened their lives and experiences to me and became my guides in the world of Black religious politics are too numerous to name here, but I thank each one of them for their generous participation in this project.

I began thinking about this project at Yale University when I had only a handful of questions and curiosities. With patient mentorship and guidance from

many friends, colleagues, and teachers, I learned to extend those early questions into a research program and how to share what I found with a wide audience. Philip Gorski, Jonathan Wrytzen, Frederick Wherry, and Clarence Hardy contributed the most to this experience of learning by doing. I am also indebted to Julia Adams, Elijah Anderson, Ron Eyerman, Marcus Hunter, Matthew Mahler, and Elisabeth Wood for invaluable contributions at formative times in the process. When I think about my time at Yale working on this project, I realize that I learned as much from my many generous colleagues as I did from my dedicated teachers and mentors—especially Elisabeth Becker, Sorcha Brophy, Inkwan Chung, Shai Dromi, Jonathan Endelman, Stephanie Greenlea, Jeff Guhin, John Hartley, Todd Madigan, Billy McMillan, Nick Occhiuto, Gülay Türkmen, Hüseyin Raşit, Celene Reynolds, Sam Stabler, Luke Wagner, and Mustafa Yavas. These colleagues and others introduced me to the world of professional sociology and to a wide network of scholars in many organizations who became central to the development of this project and my professional trajectory. In the context of conferences and workshops, many people provided incisive and invaluable feedback on parts of this work. Beyond Yale, I am especially grateful to guidance from Ruth Braustein, Candace Lukasik, Brandon Martinez, Damon Mayrl, Daniel Winchester, Richard Wood, Rhys Williams, and Sara Williams. I am also grateful for financial and professional support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, the Louisville Institute, the Institution for Social and Policy Studies, the MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, and the George M. Camp fund at Yale University.

Finally, capturing my gratitude to my family in a few short lines feels incredibly inadequate. This project represents the outcome of a formative period in my personal and professional life that would not have been possible without them. I have always been surrounded by their unconditional love and support. Foremost from Elizabeth, my wife and partner in everything. Over the course of this decade-long project, she was a full-time clinical psychologist and, at every point, my most important editor, advisor, and supporter. When I was off doing fieldwork, whether for days or weeks at a time, she held things together for our family while simultaneously building a successful career as a therapist. She is all I could have ever asked for in a partner and more. My parents—Esther and John—provided me with a loving example from a young age of how to take a leap of faith and courageously follow an uncharted and uncertain path in life. And for the past twenty-five years, Wolfgang has been a constant source of help

and support. My sisters—Andrea and Kelly—have always been the most important extension of the circle of love and support that began with our parents. More recently, my in-laws—Pat, Sharon, Cecilia, John, and Anna—have similarly provided unconditional love and support. Finally, always at the front of my thoughts are my children—John, Chloe, and Andrew—all were born during the course of this project, and each one has stretched my heart and mind immeasurably. They are the reason behind everything I do, and this book is for them.

*BLACK VISIONS OF
THE HOLY LAND*

