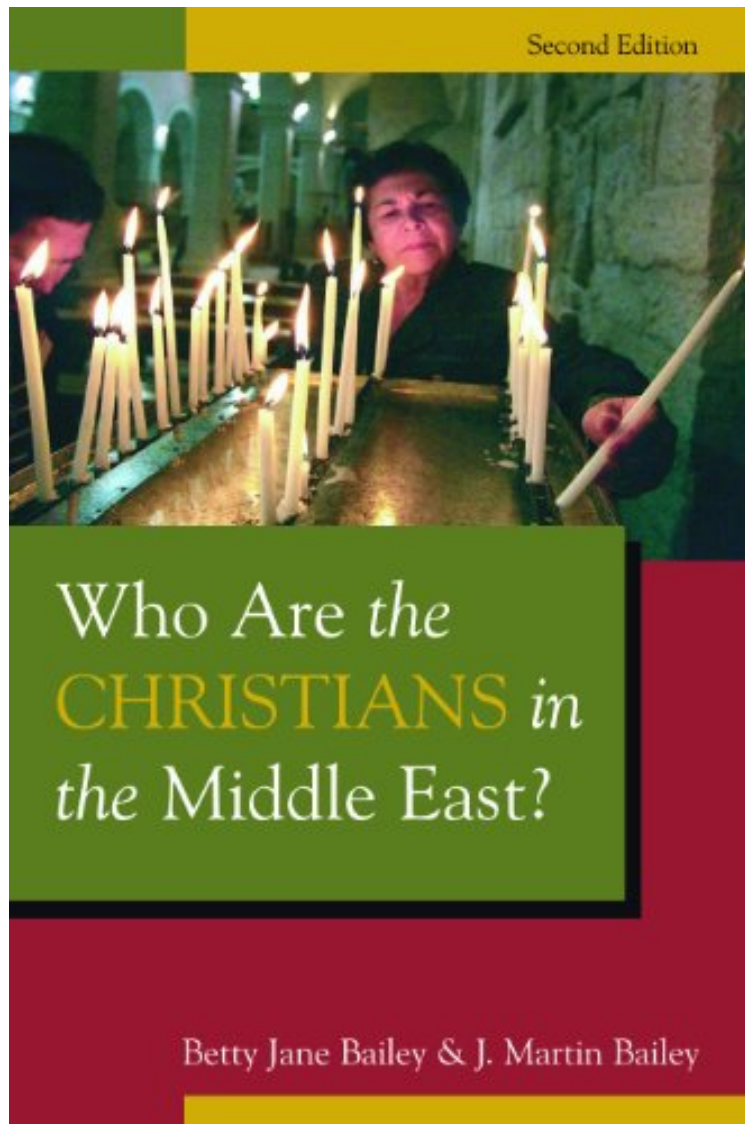


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Who Are the Christians in the Middle East?

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Betty Jane Bailey, J. Martin Bailey : Who Are the Christians in the Middle East? before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Who Are the Christians in the Middle East?:

36 of 38 people found the following review helpful. Unknown ChristendomBy FrKurt MessickThe Baileys, Betty Jane and Martin, have put together an important text on a little known and less understood population at the centre of a very volatile portion of the world. I recall several years ago seeing a spokeswoman from the Palestinian people on the Larry King Show, and was intrigued about half-way through when she challenged my assumptions - this woman, who

looked Arab and spoke Arabic (among other languages), and was an official spokesperson for the Palestinian cause, was in fact a Christian (and not only that, but was my 'kind' of Christian, an Anglican). This cast a new light on the entire conversation, and from that moment forward, my perceptions of the events and people in the Middle East changed - I would not go so far as to say it changed my opinions or beliefs in the matters, but it did make me question my long-term ideas, and made me always mindful that the situation there was broader and more complex than most assume. The Baileys write with a personal affection for the people and the region of the Middle East. For the context of this relatively slim volume, the Middle East includes not only the traditional nations surrounding Israel and Saudi Arabia (the context in which most Westerners think of the region), but goes as far north as Turkey, as far west as Morocco along the African coast, and includes the peripheral states of Iran and Sudan. In the first section of the text, a general overview of the situation, the Baileys are joined by David Kerr and Riad Jarjour, who each contributed a chapter. Kerr writes about the Western view of Eastern Christianity (often an overlooked subject, even in seminary and graduate education); Jarjour discusses the future of Christianity in Arab-dominated cultures. The authors give an historical timeline for Christianity in the region, as well as an overview of ecumenical cooperation in the area, particularly through the MECC - Middle Eastern Council of Churches. The second section looks at particular churches in the diverse realm of Christianity in the Middle East. This includes several varieties of Orthodox - Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, and various minor groupings; it also includes Catholic and Protestant/Evangelical churches, mostly implants from various missionary periods from the West. However, there are various Latin Catholic Churches that have existed since prior to the East/West split, who have remained in association (if not full communion) with the See of Rome. Each section also has contact information (often physical address, internet information, and telephone contact information as appropriate and available). The third section looks at the region nation by nation, examining the situation of church/state issues, as well as general cultural issues involved in the Christian churches' functioning, often in minority status with little or no official protections or authorisations. Each national chapter looks at composition of the Christian population, interfaith relations, historical circumstances and contemporary situations. There are literally millions of Christians in the Middle Eastern region, many of whose histories go back far longer than any Western Protestant Church, and have pedigrees as long as an institution in Christendom. They provide an interesting set of case-studies in historical and cultural development, as well as serving as witnesses to a broader definition of what 'to be Christian' can mean. This is an important book for anyone who wishes to be well-versed in current affairs.

The Middle East continues to dominate international news and global politics. From the perspective of religion, however, many Americans think of that area only in terms of Muslims and Israeli Jews and are unaware of the extensive Christian communities that still exist there. *Who Are the Christians in the Middle East?* chronicles the history and current state of Christianity in this highly volatile region of the world. Based on personal experience, official church documents, and extensive interviews, *Who Are the Christians in the Middle East?* looks at the conflicted Middle East region from a perspective that has received scant attention in the mainstream media.

From Publishers Weekly With the world's attention focused on ongoing conflicts in Israel, journalists, authors and scholars have examined the long-standing hostility between Jews and Muslims there. One group that is often omitted from the story, however, is the region's Christians, who constitute a historic minority not only in Israel but also in Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and other nations. In *Who Are the Christians in the Middle East?* Betty Jane and J. Martin Bailey explore the history of the region's various Christian groups, which include many different Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant traditions. This is a very practical reference book, with one section describing each denomination and another explaining the situation of Christians on a country-by-country basis. The format makes for some repetition of information, but the material is accessibly written and well researched. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. The definitive resource for understanding Christianity in the Middle East. Having been in the region on and off since 1969, the Baileys write from personal experience and acquaintance with their subject matter. . . . Recommended for libraries and all seeking an introduction to this topic. Religious Studies News may come streaming in daily from the Middle East, but there is hardly ever a mention of the Christians in the region. . . . This solid reference book should open up a new understanding of the Christian community abroad. Christianity Today We are indebted to the Baileys for this timely overview of the usually overlooked, frequently forgotten, and often misunderstood family of Middle Eastern churches tracing direct lineage to our early Christian forebears. Those who pick up the book hoping to find answers to the question posed by the title will not be disappointed. . . . A one-of-a-kind and sorely needed resource. Jonathan J. Bonk Overseas Ministries Study Center