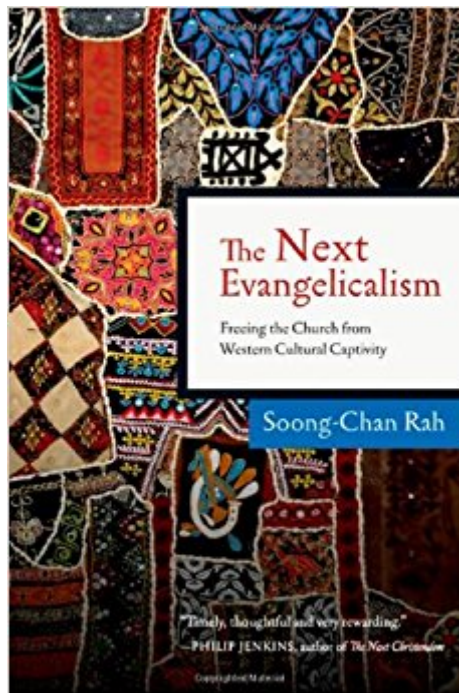


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The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing The Church From Western Cultural Captivity



Synopsis

2010 Golden Canon Leadership Book Award winner! The future is now. Philip Jenkins has chronicled how the next Christendom has shifted away from the Western church toward the global South and East. Likewise, changing demographics mean that North American society will accelerate its diversity in terms of race, ethnicity and culture. But evangelicalism has long been held captive by its predominantly white cultural identity and history. In this book professor and pastor Soong-Chan Rah calls the North American church to escape its captivity to Western cultural trappings and to embrace a new evangelicalism that is diverse and multiethnic. Rah brings keen analysis to the limitations of American Christianity and shows how captivity to Western individualism and materialism has played itself out in megachurches and emergent churches alike. Many white churches are in crisis and ill-equipped to minister to new cultural realities, but immigrant, ethnic and multiethnic churches are succeeding and flourishing. This prophetic report casts a vision for a dynamic evangelicalism that fully embodies the cultural realities of the twenty-first century. Spiritual renewal is happening within the North American church, from corners and margins not always noticed by those in the center. Come, discover the vitality of the next evangelicalism.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Soon-Chan Rah calls the North American church to open their eyes to the great evangelism possibilities of our time. While many mainline white Christian congregations are struggling hard to add just one member, our immigrant and multiethnic churches are flourishing. This book is well

written, comprehensive and the best of the subject. Mr. Rah is equal parts pastor, teacher and activist. He calls us to take a hard look at our sins against the immigrants and those not of white privilege." (Jan Arkills, *The Lamplighter*) "A needed wake-up call to Western Christians, many of whom have failed to come to terms with the implications of the drastic changes taking place. Pastors and leaders of immigrant congregations will be enlightened by the author's second generation insights. Although the primary audience is the Western Church, the author's message is relevant for the immigrant Church as well as for Christian communities in Asia, Africa and Latin America." (Roger E. Hedlund, *Dharma Deepika*, January-June 2010) "Rah skillfully tackles topics even those regularly engaged in racial reconciliation evade in public settings, and addresses how captivity to White privilege and Western cultural pressures (individualism, consumerism, materialism) have influenced the Church's theology, biblical priorities and interpretations, and ministry strategies. Rah's unique argument intersects with his call to mutuality and reciprocity, underscoring the importance of what Western Christianity must learn from immigrant and ethnic minority groups, and from the global South, in order to maintain a vibrancy in the next evangelicalism." (Deborah Hearn-Chung Gin, *Religious Studies Review*, March 2010) "Two unambiguous reactions will surely be provoked by Soong-Chan Rah's message in *The Next Evangelicalism*. Some people will embrace it enthusiastically; others will cringe and cover their ears. As I read through the book, I often compared Rah to a biblical-era prophet--people will either want to follow him or assassinate him. Rah's book does not seek to inspire the superficial reconciliation of people but to realize true reconciliation within the body of Christ." (Ning Zhang, *PRISM*, 2009) "An insightful and challenging book. I highly recommend it. *The Next Evangelicalism* is a good wake-up call for how we need change." (Thomas T. Turner, *Generate*, Autumn 2009) "The book is not a race-based rant but a heartfelt plea that Christians receive all the gifts God has for them, including those that don't confirm their culture's values. He also challenges American believers to examine critically the version of Christianity they are exporting to the world, sometimes with unfortunate results." (Steve Rabey, *YouthWorker Journal*, November/December 2009) "Rah's book does not seek to inspire the superficial reconciliation of people but to realize true reconciliation within the body of Christ." (Ning Zhang, *PRISM*, September/October 2009) "While Rah's tone is challenging, his message is ultimately one of hope. If we heed his message, a renewed vision for this kind of multi-cultural Christianity can bring new life to Christ's church in the United States." (Greg Taylor, *Leadership*, Summer 2009) "A strong read for those who want to prepare their church for cultural transformation." (James A. Cox, *Wisconsin Bookwatch*, August 2009) "Challenges North American Evangelical Christianity to throw off the chains of its oppression--what he calls the 'Western cultural

captivity of the Church'--and embrace a multi-ethnic and diverse evangelism that reflects the church's contemporary constituency." (Henry L. Carrigan, Jr., ForeWord Magazine, May/June 2009)"Stories of churches resisting ethnic change in communities, or learning from and embodying ethnic change, are a strong part of his analysis. Rah rocks the white evangelical citadel with this book." (Publishers Weekly, March 23, 2009)"Soong-Chan Rah doesn't just write about the changing face of evangelicalism; he is leading it. As a church planter, pastor, professor and scholar Rah is actively creating a path forward for Christians who have been caught in the traps of individualism, consumerism and racism. With real-world experience and depth of wisdom he paints a picture of church done differently and points to models, leaders and communities that are already blazing this trail. For anyone who wants to understand the future of the church in this new century, The Next Evangelicalism is a must-read." (Jim Wallis, president, Sojourners, and author of the New York Times bestseller The Great Awakening)"One of the most important changes now going on in American--and indeed world--religion is the profound transformation of evangelicalism, a movement which encompasses hundreds of millions of people. This book is the best and most balanced treatment of the subject now available. It is well researched, clearly written and comprehensive." (Harvey Cox, Hollis Professor of Divinity, Harvard University, and author of When Jesus Came to Harvard)"It's already shifted! America will soon be a minority-majority. Already some cities are. Who will lead the way into the future? You may be surprised to know there is a rising group of third-culture, liminal citizens forging paths of influence in every sector of society. Soong-Chan Rah in his book The Next Evangelicalism powerfully provokes us to take a hard look at our sins against the immigrants and this rising tide of the next generation of Christ-followers representing many tribes and nations." (Dave Gibbons, lead pastor of NEWSONG and author of The Monkey and the Fish: Liquid Leadership for a Third-Culture Church)"Equal parts pastor, teacher and activist, Soong-Chan Rah sounds a loving but prophetic call for reform and reconciliation. His passion should not be misconstrued as condemnation. Rather, this book is about family business. May the evangelical community listen and grow." (Edward Gilbreath, editor of UrbanFaith.com and author of Reconciliation Blues)"A confrontational and provocative book in the best biblical sense! Soong-Chan Rah's prophetic text is a must-read! Given the cultural captivity and decline of the Western ('white') church, and the reality of nonwhite global Christianity, this important book provides us both a serious biblical, theological, and sociocultural analysis and critique of the white church, while giving us a positive vision and models of the ever increasing nonwhite and ethnic church in America that we'd do well to emulate." (Rev. Eldin Villafañe, professor of Christian social ethics, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and author of Beyond Cheap Grace: A Call to Radical

Discipleship, Incarnation, and Justice)"Powerful, prophetic words. Rah's message about cultural captivity is one we need to hear and to share with others." (John Perkins, author, *Let Justice Roll Down*, founder, Christian Community Development Association)"In this important book Soong-Chan Rah provides a compelling case that the dominant forms of North American Christianity have become enslaved by the patterns and assumptions of Western culture to the detriment of the gospel. Rah seeks to liberate the church from this cultural captivity by inviting readers to learn from the wisdom of communities that have generally been marginalized by the traditional church. The future of Christian witness in North America depends on listening to these voices and learning the lessons they have to teach." (John R. Franke, Clemens Professor of Missional Theology, Biblical Seminary)"Soong-Chan Rah's *The Next Evangelicalism* is a book of amazing grace. It shows the American church how desperately blinded we are by Western colonization and white privilege. But more significantly, it helps us see God's liberation from this captivity, and how he's using churches of the marginalized to set us free." (Russell Jeung, associate professor of Asian American studies, San Francisco State University, and author of *Faithful Generations: Race and New Asian American Churches*)"Writing with uncanny nerve and refreshing candor, Rah 'captured' me from his first paragraph. As a fellow liminal Asian American evangelical pastor and leader, I too have been beckoned to join elite circles of white, wonderful Christians, only to wonder if they really valued my unique point of view or merely my appearance. Rather than just describing the problem, Rah offers a biblically infused, socioculturally informed take on the future of evangelicalism that deserves to be taken seriously by us all." (Ken Fong, senior pastor, Evergreen Baptist Church of Los Angeles)"Soong-Chan Rah has a strong and prophetic message for the entire church regarding the changing face of Christianity in the United States and throughout the world. If we are going to be faithful to God's vision of extending his love to the entire planet, it will take leaders from every ethnic group fully empowered to lead. In *The Next Evangelicalism* Soong-Chan provides us with important insights to help us see this diverse kingdom vision become a reality." (Noel Castellanos, CEO, Christian Community Development Association)"Behold, a prophet walks among us. With personal narrative, pastoral experience and excellent research, Soong-Chan Rah exegetes the present and calls the church to be released from its white, Western cultural captivity. After demonstrating how indeed the church is stuck, Rah draws from the experiences of African American, Native American, immigrant and second-generation churches to free the church so that it can become the multicultural and holistic community that God has called it to be. *The Next Evangelicalism* is biblical prophecy at its best, summoning God's people to reconciliation, justice and faithfulness. As such, it is guaranteed at once to disturb, challenge, encourage and inspire." (F. Albert Tizon, assistant

professor of holistic ministry and director of Word & Deed Network, Palmer Theological Seminary)"The Next Evangelicalism reminds me of July 4: there's plenty to celebrate and there are fireworks going off in all directions! But I kept asking myself: What will this next evangelicalism celebration do to us? Will we stay the same or will we follow the leading of God's Spirit into the next era of evangelicalism, one that will surely be unlike what we have now? Sit down, open this book, and get ready to duck!" (Scot McKnight, Karl A. Olsson Professor in Religious Studies, North Park University, blogger, JesusCreed, author, The Blue Parakeet)"In this manifesto for change, Soong-Chan Rah calls for the church to break free from limiting and exclusive paradigms and fully embrace the dramatic cultural diversity that is rapidly defining the twenty-first century in the United States. His powerfully persuasive pen engages and challenges the reader in ways that radically transform how church life is to be understood, shaped and lived. Everyone who cares about the Christian church in the United States needs to read The Next Evangelicalism. This book ignites hope for reconciliation in the world through the church." (Curtiss Paul DeYoung, professor of reconciliation studies, Bethel University)"Soong-Chan Rah explores the impact of ethnic and geographic shifts on the present and future state of evangelicalism. He gives us fair warning that parts of his heartfelt book are 'intended to provoke,' and they will. But that doesn't stop his book from being timely, thoughtful and very rewarding." (Philip Jenkins, Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Humanities, Pennsylvania State University, and author of The Next Christendom)

"In this manifesto for change, Soong-Chan Rah calls for the church to break free from limiting and exclusive paradigms and fully embrace the dramatic cultural diversity that is rapidly defining the twenty-first century in the United States. His powerfully persuasive pen engages and challenges the reader in ways that radically transform how church life is to be understood, shaped and lived. Everyone who cares about the Christian church in the United States needs to read The Next Evangelicalism. This book ignites hope for reconciliation in the world through the church."

I enjoyed reading this book, although it was incendiary as the author warned in the introduction. I was not offended, as I have been arguing against these similar issues for some time, but I can see how the book might not be well received. It does generalize the issue and ignore some sectors of evangelicalism where this is not the case. Rah is correct, however, in his basic thesis. I have seen and experienced this Western, white captivity plenty of times. My own denomination, the LC-MS, has been estimated to be some 99% white. As I write this, the Catalyst conference is going on in Dallas, which is massively white upper-middle-class speakers and attendees. I felt like Rah did a

good job of presenting his concepts while showing a bit of humility here and there by telling stories of not handling the challenges well. His writing style of asking a lot of rhetorical questions started to bug me after a while, as I felt like he wasn't always providing adequate solutions to problems or manageable progress steps. He was quick to critique and even condemn, while being slow to offer a lot of solutions. That being said, however, he has insightful messages in this book. I particularly enjoyed his academic explorations of some of the philosophical issues of individualism, materialism, church growth, and postmodernity. The focus on having a multicultural worldview is timely and much appreciated. I would like to strive to have more of that. Travelling helps, as does working with non-whites, but we all need more of it. I may use this book in my current ministry context soon. Toward the end of the book, he discusses immigrant churches, and my ministry is in the business of planting immigrant churches. By reverse-engineering some of his concepts, our ministry could work to apply his five core principles to our efforts in order to reach out to immigrants in our communities. I will keep this book and reference it and recommend it to people for reading on many issues.

As a first generation Australian who came to faith at the age of 19, this book reads a little like a script for my life. The challenges I face (and continue to do so) as an "outsider" in my own nation are succinctly, accurately and poignantly addressed in this book. This is a must for all interested in missiology and the future of the church. Much of the critique is readily applicable in Australia. Thanks for this valuable work.

It's about time someone wrote this book. But, if you are looking for a read that simply reinforces your previously conceived worldview, this is not the book for you. This book is factually based, honest and hopeful. This book lets no one off the hook, as should be.

What a reframing of the evangelical future; and its present!

For many, this will be one of the most challenging books they read about the future of the church in modern society. In this book, Pastor Rah discusses his observations on the "white" captivity of the American church and the negative consequences of its entanglement with a modernistic, westernized culture. Many Christian churches are trapped in materialism, racism and individualism. In today's new century of globalization, Christian leaders are challenged to examine how their understanding of scripture may be strongly influenced with a westernized bias. This book will be a

reality shock to many Christians locked into the Baby Boomer way of Christianity. I recommend this book to all Christian leaders and it is now part of my "Dantotsu" collection (Best of the Best). Danita
ByeSales Growth Specialists

This is an insightful look at the white captivity of evangelicalism and what we can learn from minority communities. Well worth reading

In the first part of the book, Rah shows how the American evangelical church has largely been captured by the dominant culture instead of transforming it. He shows how it is individualistic, consumerist, materialistic, and racist. And how despite efforts to fight these aspects, the mostly white evangelical church is not making much headway. One thing I found a bit grating is the repetition of the phrase "Western, white cultural captivity". If it were up to me I would phrase it more specifically as "western modern mindset". While there is still a considerable amount of white privilege that favors say Russian immigrants over Nigerian immigrants just because of the way their color, there is no such thing as white culture. White immigrants from Russia or from the Mediterranean region are nearly as far culturally from the WASP stereotype as any other culture, and no more or less likely to be individualistic, consumerist, materialistic, or racist than people coming from any other part of the world. Rah is right that America has long been marked by individualism, consumerism, materialism, and racism. But at least on racism, America's original sin, it has made large strides in the last two generations; while far from perfect it is doing better in this respect than any other country with the possible exception of Canada. Acknowledging the progress made so far would not be an invitation to rest on its laurels. I think Obama's speech on race from the spring of 2008 and his inauguration address struck a better balance in giving America credit for the progress made while not letting it off the hook. But on the other hand a prophet should not speak like a politician running for office, and Jesus was much harsher when critiquing the dominant culture in first century Palestine. Hopefully not many will stumble on these harsh terms but keep on reading. The most edifying part of the book is the third part, which shows how community oriented immigrant churches have blessed not just the immigrants, but the cities in which they live. And then goes on to envision how next generation bi-cultural Americans can go beyond immigrant churches, and enrich the country with multicultural churches; and how for the country as a whole multiculturalism can be better than a homogenous melting pot. What resonated with me personally (as one who also immigrated as a child) was his view of the liminal state of being between two cultures, belonging to neither as not a weakness but a blessing, even something that God can use to bless others.

extremely helpful in planning and strategizing for church plant

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