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Rapture Ready!: Adventures In The Parallel Universe Of Christian Pop Culture



Synopsis

What does it mean when a band is judged by how hard they pray rather than how hard they rock? Would Jesus buy "Jesus junk" or wear "witness wear"? What do Christian skate parks, raves, and romance novels say about evangelicalism -- and America? Daniel Radosh went searching for the answers and reached some surprising conclusions. Written with the perfect blend of amusement and respect, *Rapture Ready!* is an insightful, entertaining, and deeply weird journey through the often hidden world of Christian pop culture. This vast and influential subculture -- a \$7 billion industry and growing -- can no longer be ignored by those who want to understand the social, spiritual, and political aspirations of evangelical Christians. In eighteen cities and towns throughout thirteen states -- from the Bible Belt to the outskirts of Hollywood -- Radosh encounters a fascinating cast of characters, including Bibleman, the Caped Christian; Rob Adonis, the founder and star of Ultimate Christian Wrestling; Ken Ham, the nation's leading prophet of creationism; and Jay Bakker, the son of Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, and pastor of his own liberal, punk rock church. From Christian music festivals and theme parks to Passion plays and comedy nights, Radosh combines gonzo reporting with a keen eye for detail and just the right touch of wit. *Rapture Ready!* is a revealing survey of a parallel universe and a unique perspective on one of America's most important social movements.

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Customer Reviews

Mr. Radosh is a mid-thirties, liberal, New York Jew who hadn't a clue about Christian pop culture (entertainment, leisure, shopping) and set out to expand his horizons in this area. What he came up with is a funny, frequently sarcastic, informative and hugely entertaining book. Being a 51-year-old, agnostic, secular humanist (apparently in some circles, the bad guy), I understand quite a bit about American evangelicalism and how it historically evolved but I knew absolutely nothing about its insular pop culture. Mr. Radosh did a very good job covering many of these areas. The patrons of this stuff are almost exclusively white and fall into three sects. There are the traditionalists (fundamentalists), centrists and modernists. The author visits Christian trade shows, theme parks, book and magazine sales, gives a darned good assessment of the widely popular "Left Behind" book series, a superhero named Bibleman, Christian extreme skateboarding with Stephen Baldwin, rock music, raves (no kidding), comedians, pro wrestling (huh?), sex advice councelors, abstinence-only school programs and, finally, creationism and the quackery of Ken Ham's Creation Museum. Mr. Radosh is correct when he states that insularity breeds intolerance and much of Christian pop culture lives within that bubble. The book reenforces my belief that bridging the gap between Fundamentalists and secular humanists is an absolutely lost cause. However, the author does see some positive signs in all this stuff because of the Christian centrists and modernists and gives a pretty convincing argument that the times are a changin'. I can only hope so. I highly recommend Mr. Radosh's book. A real eye-opener.

Very interesting book. It's well written and Daniel is very witty. He had me laughing a bunch, but as a Christian and evangelical to boot, I disagree with his points he made at the end of the book. Still it's a worthwhile read to understand the weirdness of parts of American evangelicalism and an encouragement to be serious in my faith and too avoid the craziness that turns off non-christians from Christianity.

This was a fascinating exploration of the Christian Pop subculture. I like subcultures anyway, and was interested to learn about a group that thinks so differently from the way I do. This kept me interested, without taking potshots at anyone. I wouldn't call it exactly balanced given that the author

has some of the assumptions about Christian pop that one gets if you live in a secular and intellectual world, but he was respectful and thought carefully about quality. The book is well-organized and very readable. I learned something. I'd recommend it.

..., motherf----r."If the title of this post, taken verbatim from this book, offends you, you will not appreciate this book. The author's very creative use of f-bombs littered throughout the text will no doubt have the effect of placing Eskimos in a dunk tank filled with scalding, bubbling oil. No doubt, I am taking these words out of context, but then again, Radosh does the same thing to Stephen Baldwin in this book, so I guess he knew he was setting himself up for that.THAT SAID, Radosh gives a very fair and balanced examination of the unbearably tacky, of the politically volatile, and the... surprisingly good/effective elements within the Evangelical Christian pop culture bubble. The one reason why evangelical Christians (small 'e', incorporating all denominations) should weather the harsh language is that Radosh writes what we need to hear. We need to know where the zietgiest is, and Radosh, in his own way, contributes a voice to helping us understand how each side sees each other, and, in turn, how to make our voice in the culture that much more effective. Plus, as an attendee of both the Cornerstone Festivals and the Christian Comedy Association conferences--two of the extremely positive portrayals in his accounts--I can attest that what he writes is quite accurate and encouraging. I can only thank God that I escaped his scrutiny, for being in the Catholic side of things.

This book is a must for any Christian to read. It's more about the evangelical culture of which I was a part of for many years. The most relevant to me was his encounter with Christian music. I have been more "transformational" in my taste for quite some time and if I had the money, I would have my own radio station to include that type of music and many other genres. I laughed at loud when he describes a comic's take on the Christian fish symbols verses the Darwin fish! I would love to hear more of THAT kind of comedy. The only part that was a big dragged down was the authors views on abstinence... or his portayal of the Christian view. I was dissapointed in the lack of fairness to a more "transoformational" view that many of us have. I didn't think a "whole" view of that was given as some of the other chapters had. All in all, I loved this book and would again HIGHLY recommend it to other Christians! It will make some angry, others laugh, but definitely move us to think about how we live out our lives as believers.

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