



Ambivalent Miracles: Evangelicals and the Politics of Racial Healing (Race, Ethnicity, and Politics)

Nancy D. Wadsworth

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Over the past three decades, American evangelical Christians have undergone unexpected, progressive shifts in the area of race relations, culminating in a national movement that advocates racial integration and equality in evangelical communities. The movement, which seeks to build cross-racial relationships among evangelicals, has meant challenging well-established paradigms of church growth that built many megachurch empires. While evangelical racial change (ERC) efforts have never been easy and their reception has been mixed, they have produced meaningful transformation in religious communities. Although the movement as a whole encompasses a broad range of political views, many participants are interested in addressing race-related political issues that impact their members, such as immigration, law enforcement, and public education policy.

Ambivalent Miracles traces the rise and ongoing evolution of evangelical racial change efforts within the historical, political, and cultural contexts that have shaped them. Nancy D. Wadsworth argues that the stunning breakthroughs this movement has achieved, its curious political ambivalence, and its internal tensions are products of a complex cultural politics constructed at the intersection of U.S. racial and religious history and the meaning-making practices of conservative evangelicalism. Employing methods from the emerging field of political ethnography, Wadsworth draws from a decade's worth of interviews and participant observation in ERC settings, textual analysis, and survey research, as well as a three-year case study, to provide the first exhaustive treatment of ERC efforts in political science.

A 2014 CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title

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