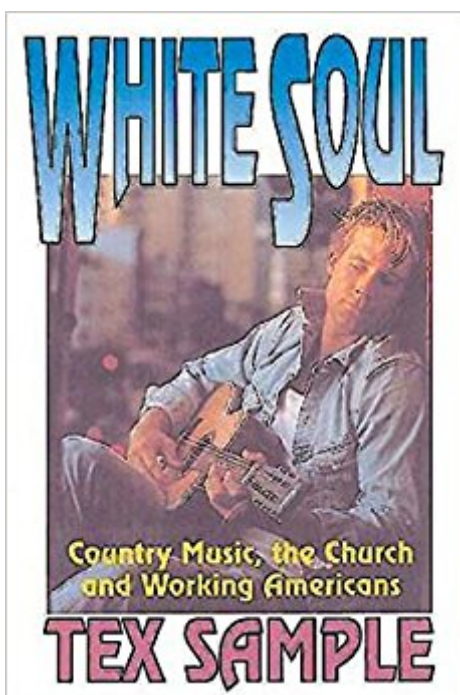


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White Soul: Country Music, The Church And Working Americans



Synopsis

White Soul examines the social, political, and religious foundations of country music as the soul music of white, working-class Americans. Country music gives voice to an economically battered subculture of hard-living and hard-working people who find self-expression in the music of honky-tonks and heartaches. It celebrates the "wild side of life" as a form of populist anarchism and escapist festivity. This unusual medley of sociology, theology, and country music history is also a compelling critique of the elitism of "good taste" in the dominant culture. Tex Sample challenges the church to reach out to working-class people, who have often been ignored and demeaned by churches held captive to the tastes and lifestyles of the upper middle class.

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Customer Reviews

White Soul examines the social, political, and religious foundations of country music as the soul music of white, working-class Americans. Country music gives voice to an economically battered subculture of hard-living and hard-working people who find self-expression in the music of honky-tonks and heartaches. It celebrates the "wild side of life" as a form of populist anarchism and escapist festivity. This unusual medley of sociology, theology, and country music history is also a compelling critique of the elitism of "good taste" in the dominant culture. Tex Sample challenges the church to reach out to working-class people, who have often been ignored and demeaned by churches held captive to the tastes and lifestyles of the upper middle class.

Tex Sample is a specialist in church and society, a much sought-after lecturer, storyteller, workshop leader and consultant. He is also the Robert B. And Kathleen Rogers Professor Emeritus of Church and Society at The Saint Paul School of Theology. He lives in Kansas City, Missouri.

Thank you.

Tex has some great insights, and his theological approach to Country Music is an important contribution to the Bible and Culture.

Humane, informed, and insightful. The author is trained in sociology and theology and draws on decades of practice as a minister among working-class congregations. His evidence for the observations offered here includes both the social science literature and a kind of long-term ethnography based on his years in the field. The aptness of the title "White Soul" becomes ever clearer as scholars like George H. Lewis (2001) and Karl Hagstrom Miller (2010) reveal the history of the music industry's segregated marketing of southern music (as "race" and "hillbilly" records) beginning in the 1920s. Despite industry suppression, the shared roots of R&B and country have long surfaced through artists from Jimmie Rodgers to Ray Charles, Tina Turner to Wynonna Judd. Country and its working-class devotees find a first-rate exponent in Tex Sample (for an excellent related work, see David Fillingim's "Redneck Liberation"). His combination of intellectual and ethical grounding is powerful here. "White Soul" brilliantly illuminates the artistic, social, and spiritual significance of country music for its working-class audiences.

Deeply insightful and intelligently presented, this is a fascinating read. It's an important book for anyone wanting to understand the social, political, and emotional landscape of the U.S.

Book is designed to use country music to give insight to the southern blue collar culture, however I found that in addition to accomplishing its task, it also gave me insight and awakening to my own values and heritage in ways I had not anticipated.

While Sample does provide an interesting insight into country music, his arguments about how it connects with 'blue collar' people is skewed. A lot of his 'connections' are based on personal anecdotes, which is a logical fallacy. I'm not saying that personal anecdotes aren't valid, but when presenting connections and claims as grand as the one in the book, there should be more than just

personal anecdotes. He also never mentions how country music is largely attributed to black culture, just like everyone else, I suppose. For example, he mentions Elvis Presley, but does not mention how he learned guitar from the black culture. And, at the same time that Sample tries very hard to identify with 'blue collar' people, he also is very condescending of them. It seems that he believes there are no people from the working class that are smart and can analyze philosophy and class, like he can. He is also condescending of upper and middle class Americans' tastes, as well, because they're not like the working class. Overall, I believe his arguments are faulty and that he does not seem to hold the connections to the working class that he believes he does.

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