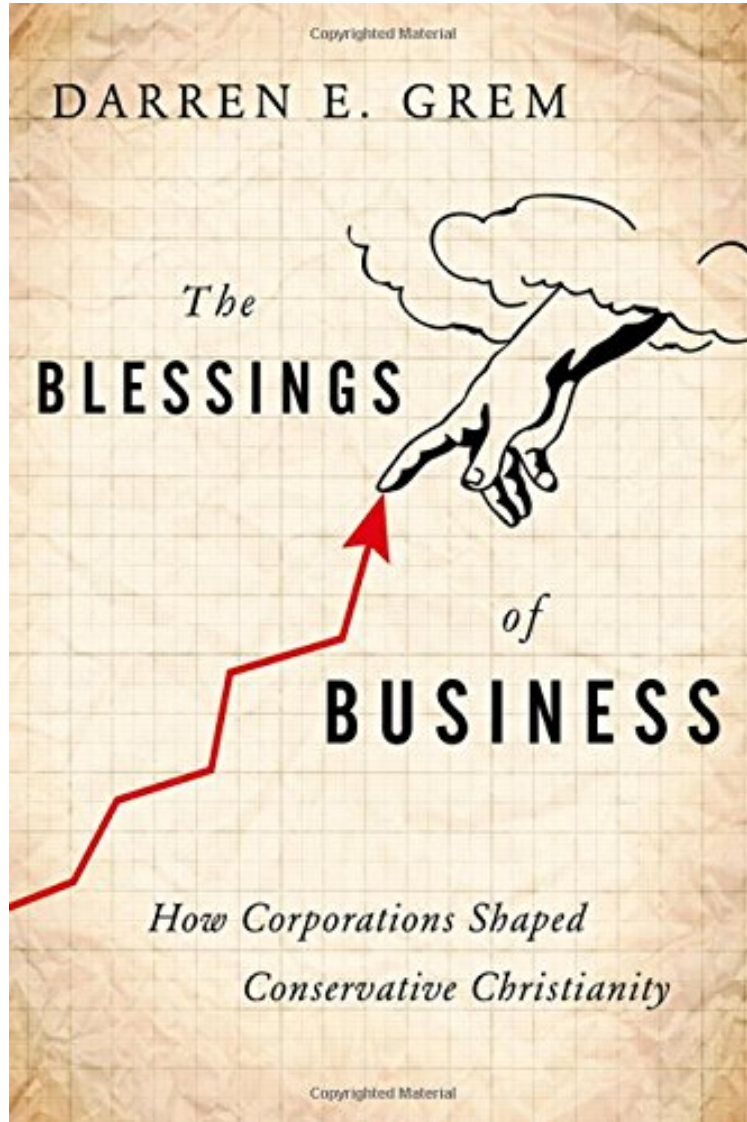


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# The Blessings of Business: How Corporations Shaped Conservative Christianity

*Darren E. Grem*

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**Darren E. Grem : The Blessings of Business: How Corporations Shaped Conservative Christianity** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Blessings of Business: How Corporations Shaped Conservative Christianity:

The Book of Matthew cautions readers that "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." But for at least a century conservative American Protestants have been trying to prove that adage wrong. In *The Blessings of Business*, Darren E. Grem argues that while preachers, activists, and politicians have all helped spread the gospel, American evangelicalism owes its enduring strength in a large part to private enterprise. Grem argues for a new history of American evangelicalism, demonstrating how its adherents strategically used corporate America--its leaders, businesses, money, ideas, and values--to advance their religious, cultural, and political movement. Beginning before the First World War, conservative evangelicals were able to use businessmen and business methods to retain and expand their public influence in a secularizing, diversifying, and liberalizing age. In the process they became beholden to pro-business stances on matters of theology, race, gender, taxation, trade, and the state, transforming evangelicalism itself into as much of an economic movement as a religious one. *The Blessings of Business* tells the story of unlikely partnerships between well-known champions of the evangelical movement such as Billy Graham and largely forgotten businessmen like Herbert Taylor, J. Howard Pew, and R.G. LeTourneau. Grem also shows how evangelicals set up their own pro-business organizations and linked the quarterly and yearly growth of "Christian" businesses to their social, religious, and political aspirations. Fascinating and provocative, *The Blessings of Business* uncovers the strong ties that conservative Christians have forged between the Almighty and the almighty dollar.

"Packed with fascinating biographical and institutional details. . . . Grem astutely details the increase in social, cultural, and political power resulting from the millions and millions of dollars [businessmen] donated to evangelical organizations. In this invaluable book . . . [are] gems . . . born of assiduous historical research [that] ought to secure for *The Blessings of Business* a lasting place on reading lists in twentieth-century religion, business, and politics."--*Journal of American History* "A worthy contribution[. . .] Grem is especially adept at teasing out the interconnections among these various individuals and groups, as well as pointing out the racism and homophobia that underlies many of these companies and the labor practices in their supply chains."--*American Historical* "Stellar... *The Blessings of Business* is, in short, a strikingly comprehensive synthesis, brilliant in its combination of sweeping and probing analysis."--*Business History* "In this welcome addition to the literature on Christianity and capitalism, Darren Grem shows that businessmen not only championed evangelical and fundamentalist causes but also changed them considerably, sparking a corporatization of conservative religious culture that spread from televangelist theme parks to Chick-fil-A restaurants." --Kevin M. Kruse, author of *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* "Few areas of scholarship are livelier than that addressing the Christian history of American business. Into this dynamic community of research, Darren Grem regales us with the uncanny abilities of evangelical businessmen in their negotiation of the marketplace. He demonstrates that evangelicalism doesn't just define the outlook of a minority of American businesses. Rather, he shows how born-again theologies and politics became embedded in corporate managerial strategies. Matters of business in America are, Grem demonstrates, always also matters of faith." --Kathryn Lofton, author of *Oprah: The Gospel of an Icon* "Faith in the market takes on a double meaning in Darren Grem's persuasive book of political and religious history, which explores the evangelical ventures sponsored by business leaders and the corporate enterprises founded by Christian evangelists. *The Blessings of Business* demonstrates that the fusion of conservative evangelicalism and corporate capitalism shaped American political culture throughout the twentieth century, demolishing the conventional wisdom that Religious Right backlash and Republican party elites first bridged the alleged gap between 'social' and 'economic' issues in the 1970s and 1980s." --Matthew D. Lassiter, author of *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* "The book's greatest strength is in its careful analysis of the records, and production, of Christian businesses...he successfully addresses southern religion, and the ways that many of the businesses he follows are both southern- and Christian-identified."--*Journal of Southern Religion* About the Author Darren E. Grem is Assistant Professor of History and Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi.