

Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel

Kate Bowler

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#97566 in Books Oxford University Press, USA 2013-06-05 Original language: English PDF # 1 6.50 x 1.10 x 9.40l, 1.30 #File Name: 0199827699352 pages | File size: 74.Mb

Kate Bowler : Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel:

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. When history and ethnography mix wellBy SuzannaCombining the two genres is never easy, but Kate Bowler does this masterfully. Insertions of first-person anecdotes are never self-indulgent distractions; rather, they serve to illustrate the larger interpretive points that Bowler makes throughout the book. A fantastic addition to the field and a fun read.0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy J. BumpGreat perspective.5 of 9 people found the following review helpful. the back story of the Prosperity GospelBy

Richard Dugan Tracing its evolution from 18th century New Thought, through Pentecostal, charismatic, and Word of Faith streams up to the present age of fashionable Prosperity Gospel, Bower provides an object history of the movement.

How have millions of American Christians come to measure spiritual progress in terms of their financial status and physical well-being? How has the movement variously called Word of Faith, Health and Wealth, Name It and Claim It, or simply prosperity gospel come to dominate much of our contemporary religious landscape? Kate Bowler's *Blessed* is the first book to fully explore the origins, unifying themes, and major figures of a burgeoning movement that now claims millions of followers in America. Bowler traces the roots of the prosperity gospel: from the touring mesmerists, metaphysical sages, pentecostal healers, business oracles, and princely prophets of the early 20th century; through mid-century positive thinkers like Norman Vincent Peale and revivalists like Oral Roberts and Kenneth Hagin; to today's hugely successful prosperity preachers. Bowler focuses on such contemporary figures as Creflo Dollar, pastor of Atlanta's 30,000-member World Changers Church International; Joel Osteen, known as "the smiling preacher," with a weekly audience of seven million; T. D. Jakes, named by Time magazine one of America's most influential new religious leaders; Joyce Meyer, evangelist and women's empowerment guru; and many others. At almost any moment, day or night, the American public can tune in to these preachers-on TV, radio, podcasts, and in their megachurches-to hear the message that God desires to bless them with wealth and health. Bowler offers an interpretive framework for scholars and general readers alike to understand the diverse expressions of Christian abundance as a cohesive movement bound by shared understandings and common goals.

From Booklist The most controversial aspect of the so-called prosperity gospel is its radical claim to transform invisible faith into financial rewards. Poverty and illness are signs of spiritual malaise, for God wants us to be wealthy, healthy, and live to our full potential in victory here on earth. Preached by Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, and others, the prosperity gospel teaches that Jesus' death and resurrection overcame not only sin and death but also poverty and disease. Believers, therefore, may claim wealth and health as part of their divine inheritance. Bowler argues the allure is actually optimism, not financial success. The message of the prosperity gospel channels America's can-do spirit and its belief that the future can be changed for the better through hard work. Her book is an important account of an audacious contemporary religious phenomenon, albeit one that scandalizes many. It also serves as an invitation to reflect upon the relationship of religion and money. --Christopher McConnell "[A] magnificent study." --Heath W. Carter, *Journal of Cultural Economy* "Highly entertaining...and deeply human." --David F. Ruccio, *Journal of Cultural Economy* "Very readable and engaging...*Blessed* is the best history of the development of the prosperity gospel written to date. It is an important addition to the library of pastors or scholars who regularly encounter the prosperity gospel in their ministry." --*Southwestern Journal of Theology* "Bowler shows how the prosperity gospel movement has drawn from multiple denominational, racial, ethnic, and even secular subtraditions. She identifies both the dazzling diversity and the common understandings that have given the prosperity gospel coherence" --*Christian Century* "Bowler's respect for her subjects and her ability to locate them in the larger American religious narrative mean that serious scholars dismiss the prosperity gospel at their own peril. Bowler shows us that its deep roots and vibrant future, even after the recent recession, place it solidly in the category of religious movements to watch." --*Church History* "Marvelous this is a stunningly empathetic book. By pushing far beyond caricature, Bowler has produced a must-read for anyone who wants to understand the prosperity gospel and how it is, even now, remaking the American religious landscape." --*The Christian Century* "An important account of an audacious contemporary religious phenomenon." --Booklist "[A] riveting historical account." --*Publishers Weekly* "The 'prosperity gospel' is as much despised by its detractors as it is embraced by its millions of adherents. Yet until Kate Bowler's *Blessed*, no one has attempted a balanced, informative, inquisitive survey. Her book is a metaphorical godsend for those with an outsider's curiosity about one of the fastest growing religious movements in contemporary America and a literal one for those inside." -- Mark A. Noll, author of *Protestantism: A Very Short Introduction* "Though often maligned and misunderstood, Bowler's comprehensive and exciting examination of the prosperity gospel demonstrates the ways 'health and wealth' has been a staple of American Protestant life since the 19th century. *Blessed* provides a thorough and nuanced account of the phenomenon, as it skillfully examines varying attitudes toward prosperity which emerged across racial, regional, and denominational lines. This is a grand contribution to the field of American religious history." -- Jonathan L. Walton, Plummer Professor of Christian Morals and Professor of Religion and Society, Harvard University "This book propels Kate Bowler into the first rank of younger historians of religion in America. The author's keen ear, her perceptive insights, and her command of history make this a remarkable and unforgettable book-and her conclusion that the 'prosperity gospel consecrated America's culture of optimism' rings very true." -- Randall Balmer, author of *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America* "*Blessed* is worthwhile reading for what it is-a history of the prosperity gospel and not a theology of the prosperity movement. I've benefited from time spent working through it and would recommend it to those seeking to learn about this topic." --The Gospel Coalition "*Blessed* is a good history of the rise and flourishing of the gospel." --

The Blade" ...[A]n unprecedented historical examination of health and wealth as spiritual subjects in American Christianity by tracing the rise, development, and transformation of the prosperity gospel in the United States." --
Religious Studies About the Author Kate Bowler is Assistant Professor of American Religion at Duke Divinity School.