Blessed by Kate Bowler

INTRO

1. Thesis: how millions of American Christians came to see money, health, and good fortune as divine. She aims to show this with three arguments: (1) Overviews major figures and features of 20th century PG; (2) Show how this movement was transformation of older orthodoxy of self-denial; optimistic to find a power from God. (3) Familiarize readers with four unifying themes—faith, wealth, health, and victory. Faith is power that turns spoken word into reality. The tangible result of said faith is wealth and health. It thus can be measured, material showing success of immaterial. Victory is result, as nothing should stop one from living in total victory on earth.
2. Hard prosperity judges faith by immediate circumstances, while soft prosperity judges believers with more roundabout assessment.
3. Result of eight years of research! Calls herself a Christian but not PG.

(1) Gospels

1. PG emphasizes the power of the individual mind.
2. This chapter "traces the development of this thinking about spiritual power in the metaphysical New Thought movement and its growth into more recognizably evangelical gospels of health and wealth." (11).
3. Says PG is divided into three streams: pentecostalism, New Thought, and an American gospel of pragmatism etc.
4. E.W. Kenyon leading guide.
5. Rather than asking, now they wanted to *demand* the supernatural for that they wanted.
6. Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian science, in her 1875 manifesto *Science and Health,* disavowed the reality of sickness and death. Suffering comes from mental errors, she argued.
7. New Though movement comes in as well, arguing we share in God's power to create by means of thought (14). Just as God created the world using thought, so could people. Positive thoughts yield positive circumstances.
8. Healing was at the center in the beginning. They were skeptical of orthodox medicine.
9. E.W. Kenyon
    1. Encouraged Christians to use their faith to dominate their circumstances.
    2. Embraced Keswick Theology early on, he and wife became faith healers and ministerial nomads.
    3. Christ secured not just sanctification in atonement but many other blessings (17)
    4. Big deal: William Durham's sermon "Finished Work of Christ."
    5. Satan took Jesus to hell to suffer for three days. Then, believers had authority to rule material world.
    6. "The World has not known that there is a superman in their midst today. They don't know that every new creation is a superman in the embryo."
    7. Faith healers (like Culls) taught healing was a provision of the atonement.
    8. Live out faith in contradiction to your senses.

9. John 1:1 and Gn. 1:1 sum up creation's most enduring feature: the spoken word. "The power of the spoken word simply carried faith to its desired end." (19)
10. Urged positive confessions to gave spiritual power. Faith never rises above confession.

10. Pentecostalism's Mind-Power
    1. Had four-fold gospel: healing, salvation, baptism of the Holy Spirit, and Christ's soon return.
    2. Kenyon had relationship with great pentecostal leaders of the day: Durham, McPherson, John G. Lake, Bosworth.
    3. Bosworth wrote bestseller *Christ the Healer,* arguing all right-thinking Christians may lay claim to perfect health. They were to believe they were healed even if their body said no. "Victorious Faith." Healing is a right and accelerated by positive confession. "If it by thy will" shows doubt. Had packed crusades.
11. John G. Lake
    1. Zion City Evangelist and missionary to South Africa. Laid out one of the strongest pentecostal cases for superhuman abilities (23).
    2. Pioneers of "God-men" theology. "God intends us to be gods (Jn. 10:34)" he argued.
    3. "There is a God-power…in the nature of man that God is endeavoring to bring forth…the true man that Jesus said was a god." (23)
    4. High opinion of spoken word begins at Azusa Street then emphasis on tongues.
    5. Pentecostalism required ecstatic utterance for full participation in the church.
    6. They began the talisman use of Jesus' name. They'd use the names for healing. High anthropology and high view of divine speech.
12. African-Americans
    1. Prophet James Jones known as "Messiah in Mink", loved money.
    2. Sweet Daddy Grace was the worst; celebrated his wealth; lavish lifestyle; long hair and fingernails to show no manual labor; picture everywhere!
    3. Clarence Cobbs invested power in objects to get money.
13. Gospels of Wealth
    1. In the beginning, most were poor and didn't talk much about money.
    2. Positive Thinking is not just optimism. Stresses mind over matter. Thinking right brings reward. Kind of a mixture of psychology, self-help and religion. High view of human nature and potential. Summed up on Andrew Carnegie's famous essay "Gospel of Wealth."
    3. Russell Conwell's (1843-1925) famous sermon "Acres of Diamonds" (also see "The Silver Crown" and "The Angel's Lily"), preached some 6000 times. Here, wealth will come to those who work hard in the atmosphere of capitalism. "I say you ought to be rich; you have no right to be poor." [*Interesting how PG today even removes the work and free market aspect; radical*] Muscular, American gospel of hard work and pragmatism. Strong emphasis on hard work.
14. Metaphysical Money
    1. Helen Wilmans *The Conquest of Poverty* (1899); Charles Fillmore's rendering of Psalm 23! "The Lord is my banker, my credit is good…" (*Prosperity,* 1936).

2. Trine's *In Tune with the Infinite* (1897; selling two million copies!) was a leading metaphysical teacher (first metaphysical best-seller), imploring readers to act as channels of divine energy and vessels of divine flow. Disease and hardship comes from bad thinking. Positive thinking leads to the abundant life. [*Amazing quotes from this book; get sample on Amazon]*
3. Theme was self-actualization and human potential. He was a motivator that anyone could be rich and healthy. Lured the masses with religions language so as not to raise eyebrows

15. The "Disappearance" of New Thought
    1. Tons of New Thought books now being published at opening of 20th century; think theologically but thick with guarantees of success; cheaply and poorly produced. Success literature. *Success Magazine.*
    2. William Walker Atkinson (*The Secret of Success; Mind-Power; Secret of Mental Magic);*
    3. Mind has the power to bring success and riches. Then comes Kenyon's *Sign Posts on the Road to Success (1938).*
    4. New Thought became more mainstream and morphed into positive thinking, which easily latched onto the church and their religious talk. "New Thought uncovered the hidden truth that Americans longed to hear—that divinity was lodged somewhere in their beings and that their secret powers demanded expression."
16. Corporate Metaphysics
    1. *The Man Nobody Knows* (1924) by Barton argued Jesus was a successful executive.
    2. *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill was similar to Carnegies book but more over: visualize wealth. Repetition and affirmations vocally were key.
17. Twice Blessed: The Gospel of Health and Wealth
    1. Prosperity movement about to dawn after WWII. Kenyon, grandfather of modern faith message, died in 1948, first year of healing revivals.

(2) Faith

1. PG grows from postwar pentecostal roots; Three significant shifts: (1) Mind power moves from minor to major theme; (2) Scope of blessings enlarged to include health, happiness and comfort (3) Audience increases among Protestants and Catholics. What was previously just pentecostal exploded across every denomination with books, schools, crusades etc.
2. Healing Faith: the 1950s
    1. *Healing Waters* (O. Roberts, 1947); Miracle was centerpiece of each service.
    2. O.L. Jaggers didn't pray for the sick, he commanded it to leave (*Everlasting Spiritual and Physical Health*); [*Seems like perfect storm for Africa, with three factors converging to create the PG explosion; the PG movement in the US, African independence in mid 20th century and Africa's nascent attraction to the big man, the chief who has power to change things.*]
    3. Hunger for miracles. A.A. Allen claims miracle oil. Franklin Hall (*Formula for Raising the Dead; 1960*); Bosworth's *Christ the Healer* said we have authority to confess and profess.
    4. Positive Confession huge; slogan for W.V. Grant is "He shall have whatsoever he saith." But what if someone says, "Go to hell"?

5. Kenyon said, “Hope says, ‘I will get it sometime.’ Faith says, ‘I have it now.’” Don’t say God *will* heal, for this implies he hasn’t already done it.
6. T.L. Osborn, “You will never rise above your confession.” Certainty, not hope, dictates actions. You don’t ask for healing, you command it. *Omnipotence if Yours* Jaggers wrote.
7. Faith is a power that turns the switch of divine power. What was the switch exactly? Father of PG or Word Faith Movement, Kenneth Hagin, systematized faith’s potency. Calling it law of faith from Rom. 3:27.
8. Believed salvation legally brought not just justification but protection from all circumstances. Safety, happiness and wealth is a right and privilege bought by Jesus on the cross.
9. The law of faith actually has the power to *create* reality. Just as gravity is an invisible law that makes the apple fall from the tree, the law of faith is the invisible force that *causes* …Also, Faith is an absolute law, and immutable law.
10. Implications of John 10:10 coming to light.
11. A.A. Allen, “I believe I can command God to perform a miracle for you financially. When you do, God can turn dollar bills into twenties.” Published book. Then published story “God Told Me to Mortgage My Home.”
12. O. Robert’s free pamphlet “God has a surplus for you.” Catch phrases: “God is Greater”, “Turn your Faith Loose” and “Something Good is Going to Happen.” Author: “Faith would cause the supernatural to bend miracles to the will of everyday believers.” [*You would think their University bball team would win every game.*]
13. Roberts said in his biography in 1952 that his discovery of 3 John 2 was the greatest discovery he ever made and was the foundation of his ministry. Promised sevenfold returns of donations *Success and Prosperity* (1956).
14. Their claims of divine reciprocity were vague and bad on scriptural interpretation, with texts like Luke 6:38; Mk. 10:29-31; Ml. 3:10-11; Phil. 4:19;
15. Fivefold offices (apostles, prophets, missionaries, pastors, teachers), later called Latter Rain from Joel 2:23, said this was last pouring out of Spirit until return of Christ.
16. Lindsay’s *God’s Master Key to Success and Prosperity* (1959). But around this time the showmanship of PG was losing steam. Gains in medicine and nutrition and fewer miracles seemed necessary. Vaccines too.

3. Positive Faith: the 1950s
    1. New Thought worked its way into thinking of popular Normal Vincent Peale. Publishes *Power of Positive Thinking,* sold a million copies and NTBS for three years, a record! One can determine and harness God’s power through positive thinking, which included high self-esteem. He quoted everyday people, not Scripture.
    2. Meanwhile, Roberts calls *How I raised Myself from Failure to Success in Selling* (Braxton) the most influential book he ever read.
    3. Pentecostals (unlike positive thinkers) loved concrete mediators of God’s power, like miracle water, handkerchiefs etc.
4. Prosperous Faith: the 1960s
    1. Book covers always had stuffed wallets, money sacks or gleaming golden keys.
    2. Leroy Jenkins, Three Easy Steps to Prosperity (1965); [incredible cover];

3. Tulsa, OK becomes the heartland of the prosperity Gospel. ORU founded in 1963 and Hagin's Rhema Bible Training Center in 1974. Most trying to duplicate this failed, but these two remained premier.
4. Lots of "proving God" campaigns and testimonies.
5. Hagin took Rom. 10:17 (Faith comes by…) to mean hearing and speaking activate faith. Hagin: "Our confessions rule us." A spiritual discipline was speaking positive things, thus releasing power and brining reality. Hagin used Mark 11:23 to show that faith is a force that actuates words.
6. Another key verse was Pr. 18:21. Speech creates reality. Thus, "name it and claim it."
7. Copeland emerges as new star. Pilot and former pop singer, moves to OK in 1966 with wife to attend ORU. Kenneth Copeland Ministries founded in 1967, heavily influenced by Roberts, Hagin's Word of Faith etc.
8. Reverend Ike (Eikerenkoetter) was another big player, a black, flashy spokesman with phrases like "you can't lose with the stuff I use" and "the lack of money is the root of all evil." Moved to NYC and converted theater into his church. "Don't wait for your pie in the sky by and by; have it now with ice cream and a cherry on top."

5. Charismatic Faith: 1960-1975
    1. "Glossolalia became the gateway drug for other gifts of the spirit."
    2. In the curious and experimental generation, the soil was fertile for the PG and charismania. Marilyn Hickey rose to fame as televangelist of the Happy Church.
    3. Roberts, Schuller and Hubbard became leading lights. Roberts pushes charismatic over pentecostal. He becomes a Methodist.
    4. Explosion of TV evangelists in 70s. Pat Robertson's CBN had the 700 Club and Jim and Tammy Show; Paul and Jan Crouch founded TBN in 1973.
    5. Charismaticism wained in late 70s. 1977 Kansas City charismatic conference tried to unite two factions of Pentecostals. Then, Pent. finds home in evangelical hybrid of John Wimber's Vineyard movement and Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel.

(3) Wealth

1. "The gospel to the poor is that Jesus has come and they don't have to be poor anymore!" - KC
2. "If a symptom of sickness came on my body, I would not stand for it….You should refuse lack just as quickly as you refuse sickness." GC
3. PG thrives in late 70's to late 80s only to falter after moral failures of some. In the 90s it refashioned itself as self-improvement and became foremost Christian theology.
4. Prosperous Movement
    1. WOF preachers now dominate the scene.
    2. Corny western PG movies come out starring evangelists.
    3. Aerobics craze of 1980s (Ten minutes a day…More victory!)
    4. Fredrick Price becomes theological heir of Hagin and Roberts and foremost black educator about God's money. Another black, Carlton Pearson. Roberts: "Giving is not a debt you owe; it's a seed you sow."
    5. Hagin Jr. says whatever was taught today was taught by those in the past.
5. Jehovah Jireh

1. Biblical wealth grounded in three things: (1) The cross abolished poverty and disease, not just sin. Poverty actually took on demonic persona. (2) Jesus was rich and thus, so should his followers. "Drawing wise men with gifts of gold, frank and myrrh. Those were not cheap gifts, either. Prosperity attached itself to baby Jesus immediately, and that same gift to prosper has been given to us as heirs of Christ." C. Dollar. *Heart of a Billionaire* (Thomas Anderson); *Rich God, Poor God* John Avanzini said Jesus had designer clothing. (3) Rooted in Covenant Theology as an extension of ancient promises God made to Abraham. Blessings came to Abe for obedience. Song "Back to Eden" (Lawrence): "Our families blessed; finances blessed…Jesus came now all is well."
2. Hard prosperity: nature yields proper use of divine principles. Clear line: show what you want and have the faith.
3. Capps HP. Amazing quote! Wrote *The Tongue*…three million sold!
4. Rigid rules: (1) Tithe; (2) confessions to remove debt; (3) divine wealth came with easy trigger.
5. Formulas now more ornate; License plates with messages common. [Like bumper stickers today];
6. Hundred fold blessing: famous line from Gloria Copeland.

6. Megaministry
    1. Church growth era. Churches resembled malls. Seeker sensitive. White churches moved casual, whereas African American churches moved the opposite, with lots of bling.
    2. Kingdom business. Pastors became CEOs.
    3. Robert Schuller became the self-help guru. Crystal Cathedral and Tower of Hope and lots of books; Peale like.
7. Televangelism/Testing Televangelism
    1. Emotion major part of broadcast; always pleading.
    2. Divided two categories: Before and After scandals. Bakker goes to jail for 5 years and Tammy files for divorce. Then Swagger and others fall.
    3. New faces presented suave, business-like image: Joel Osteen, Meyer, Jakes, Dollar and Eddie Long. this moved toward soft prosperity. No more begging, but now give tools and principles to bring in money.
8. The New Overcomers
    1. Blacks join the act, with Price opening Dome in LA, nation's largest worship center.
    2. PG spreads far beyond faith movement for four reasons. (1) Fitted economic mood. Black preachers speak to rising middle class. They grow in wealth and want to go where their hopes are reified. (2) Black migration. PG centered on big cities where high numbers were. (3) Postdenominational affections; crossing over. (4) Same thing, materialism and hyper-individualism of PG allows for cross-pollination of secondary beliefs, as long as money/miracles at root.
    3. Holy Ghost Prosperity
        1. Clarence McClendon
        2. Religion of Solutions; *Anointing for Acceleration* (Otis Lockett)
        3. Amazing Charles Ellis III sermon manuscript.
        4. This was a softer prosperity without the laws of sowing and reaping
    4. Prosperity and Black Neopentecostalism

1. TD Jakes, founder of Amerca's eleventh largest church, Potter's House. He rolled with HP but was more SP.

1. A.A. Allen
2. John Avanzini
3. F.F. Bosworth
4. William Branham
5. Paul Yoggi Chou
6. Pastor Chris
7. Russell Conwell
8. Kenneth Copeland
9. Creflo Dollar
10. Kenneth Haggin
11. Benny Hinn
12. Rev Ike
13. T.D. Jakes
14. T.B. Joshua
15. E.W. Kenyon
16. John G. Lake
17. Eddie Long
18. Joyce Meyer
19. Mike Murdock
20. T.L. Osborn
21. Joel Osteen
22. Oral Roberts
23. Robert Tilton
24. Paula White