

Settlement Agreement, in which tobacco firms paid \$206 billion to U.S. states for twenty-five years in exchange for an end to class-action liabilities. Wall Street greeted the settlement by running up stock prices for tobacco firms, while public health advocates bemoaned the agreement as a death knell for fundamentally transformative attacks on the cigarette business.

By decentering Big Tobacco, Milov's book provides a remarkably original way of understanding how Big Tobacco profited in the twentieth century. The book is thick with fascinating detail and is consistently sharp in its explanation and analysis of complicated political and economic contexts. Some readers will, however, find the book overly focused on the United States, and the state of North Carolina in particular. Indeed, Milov's exploration of the transformation of American politics and business in the twentieth century could have benefited from more comparative analysis and attention to shifting global economic contexts. We learn, for instance, that the United Kingdom banned cigarettes from television as early as 1965, and that Brazil and Malawi became at least as important tobacco producers as North Carolina somewhere along the line, but both points are raised as sidelines to the central U.S.-focused narrative. Nor do we learn how it came to pass that of the top six tobacco firms in the world today, just two are U.S.-based. Perhaps that will be the subject of another great book by Sarah Milov.

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Daniel Vaca. *Evangelicals Incorporated: Books and the Business of Religion in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019. 329 pp. ISBN 978-0-674-98011-2, \$39.95 (cloth).

Daniel Vaca's *Evangelicals Incorporated* is an in-depth exploration of the history of evangelical publishing and bookselling. To the uninitiated, this may seem like a niche topic, but Vaca compellingly argues that this industry has been a driving force in shaping commerce, politics, and religion in the United States since at least the nineteenth century. His book should be required reading for any scholar of these subjects.

Over the past century, Protestant fundamentalists and conservative evangelicals have come to play an outsized role in American culture and politics. Nevertheless, it is remarkably difficult to define these communities. This is because neither “evangelical” nor “fundamentalist” is a label that believers consistently use to describe themselves, and neither term is bound to a single denomination or even set of denominations. Every book on American Protestantism wrestles with these issues in its own way.

Vaca makes a significant contribution to this scholarship by examining the ways in which these imagined religious communities have been structured not only by loose theological affiliations—or by scholars applying their own taxonomies—but also by Christian booksellers seeking a market unbound by denominational identity or minor dogmatic disagreements. The complex relationship between religious identity and market strategies is a major theme of the book, and Vaca demonstrates how modern American evangelicalism was produced at least in part through negotiations between believers and Christian booksellers. Indeed, he argues that as evangelicalism became a kind of media buzzword in the mid-1970s, it was the “evangelical market’s success [that] allowed evangelicalism to appear socially coherent and limitless in its potential for growth” (123).

Vaca’s richly researched account encompasses the perspectives of publishing executives, bookstore owners, booksellers’ associations, interdenominational ministries, authors, pastors, readers, and congregants. In a manner that is both nuanced and accessible, Vaca explores how each of these stakeholders contributed to the complex and ongoing process of constructing American evangelical communities and identities.

The book begins in the late nineteenth century, tracing the convergence of evangelical celebrity and new evangelistic enterprises that helped to produce the first generation of Protestant publishing houses. The first two chapters focus on the founding of three early companies that continue to be significant players: Fleming H. Revell, W. B. Eerdmans, and Zondervan. In a pattern that continues throughout the book, Vaca expertly balances detailed accounts of specific case studies with rich contextualization. In these chapters, Vaca explores how Christian publishers sought broad, interdenominational markets even as they wrestled with concerns about the compatibility of piety and profit. He also analyzes the social assumptions embedded in publishers’ ideas about the “distinctiveness” of their audiences, which he argues undergirded their efforts to use Christian books to inculcate “correct” theologies as well as white, middle-class norms.

Chapter 3 focuses on the Christian Booksellers Association (CBA), founded in 1950, and its efforts to influence American presidents and popular culture. Here, Vaca offers a nuanced interrogation of the notion

that American evangelicals constitute a unique “subculture,” pointing out that, although this designation captures certain elements of evangelical culture (including the proliferation of Christian books and booksellers), it does not adequately contend with their desire for mass influence.

Chapter 4 traces the central role that women have played in the evangelical book market, as consumers, authors, and salespeople. Weaving together histories of missionary work, the development of the supermarket, and the rise and fall of niche bookstores, Vaca offers a complex portrait of women’s real and imagined work in the Christian book industry. He also offers a rich account of the role that Christian books have played in shaping conservative Christian ideas about gender and family roles.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on twentieth- and twenty-first-century histories of marketing and mergers. In Chapter 5, Vaca examines the late twentieth-century mergers of Christian booksellers and buyouts by secular publishing houses. He argues that these buyouts signaled Christian booksellers’ success in cultivating evangelical consumers into a profitable market segment, even as they raised new questions about the relationship between religious purpose and commercial success. In Chapter 6, Vaca focuses on the history of market segmentation and its use by evangelical booksellers to further expand audiences and sales. One particularly interesting strategy here is the development of various Bible translations and editions for different groups of consumers and different life stages (for example, the Teen Bible, the Mother’s Bible, and the African Heritage Bible). Another important strand is Christian publishers’ efforts to cultivate African American and Latino markets without alienating conservative whites.

This fascinating study will be of interest to scholars of capitalism and religion. It makes critical contributions to both fields while also being written in a compelling style that will make it accessible to nonspecialists. The book’s detailed research and significant analytical contributions make it a must-read for anyone interested in American religious history, book history, or the relationship between commerce and group identity.

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