

Chapter 1

Topic 4 Religion, renewal and choice

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Activity: Media

Supply-led religion

Learning objectives

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- Identify the links between televangelism and business.
- Examine supply-led religion in America, including the preaching of a 'prosperity gospel'.
- Assess the extent to which some churches are becoming businesses.

Supply-led religion is highlighted by the growth of televangelism. Televangelists preach to thousands and their message is one of prosperity. They compete for consumers and see themselves as selling a product. Their large congregations and business empires also ensure that they themselves are prosperous.

A. In pairs, watch the clip and answer the questions that follow.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGmLFSPkyhs>

1. How does TD Jakes refer to Jesus?
 2. How is TD Jakes referred to in the clip?
 3. How many members and employees does TD Jakes' church have?
 4. How much is TD Jakes' sanctuary worth?
 5. What is his other business?
 6. Write down the range of businesses and services that have Christian values at their core.
 7. What does Laura Nash say about early Evangelicals and the link between faith and commerce?
 8. According to Michael Cromartie, what characterises Evangelicals? (More information can be found at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelicalism>)
 9. What is the impact of larger congregations for the leaders of Evangelical congregations?
 10. As well as being a pastor of a church, what other business interests does Joel Osteen have?
 11. How does the promotional clip illustrate the 'prosperity gospel'? (More information can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosperity_theology)
 12. How many people are there in his congregation?
 13. What is the impact of Osteen's church on the local economy?
 14. Why does Osteen's book appeal to more than just Evangelical Christians?
 15. What message does TD Jakes give to his congregation about a work ethic?
 16. How does TD Jakes justify his lifestyle?
- B. Write a summary paragraph to show how the work of TD Jakes and Joel Osteen supports Stark and Bainbridge's religious market theory. How might the two examples in the clip be used as evidence of 'secularisation from within' (Topic 3)?