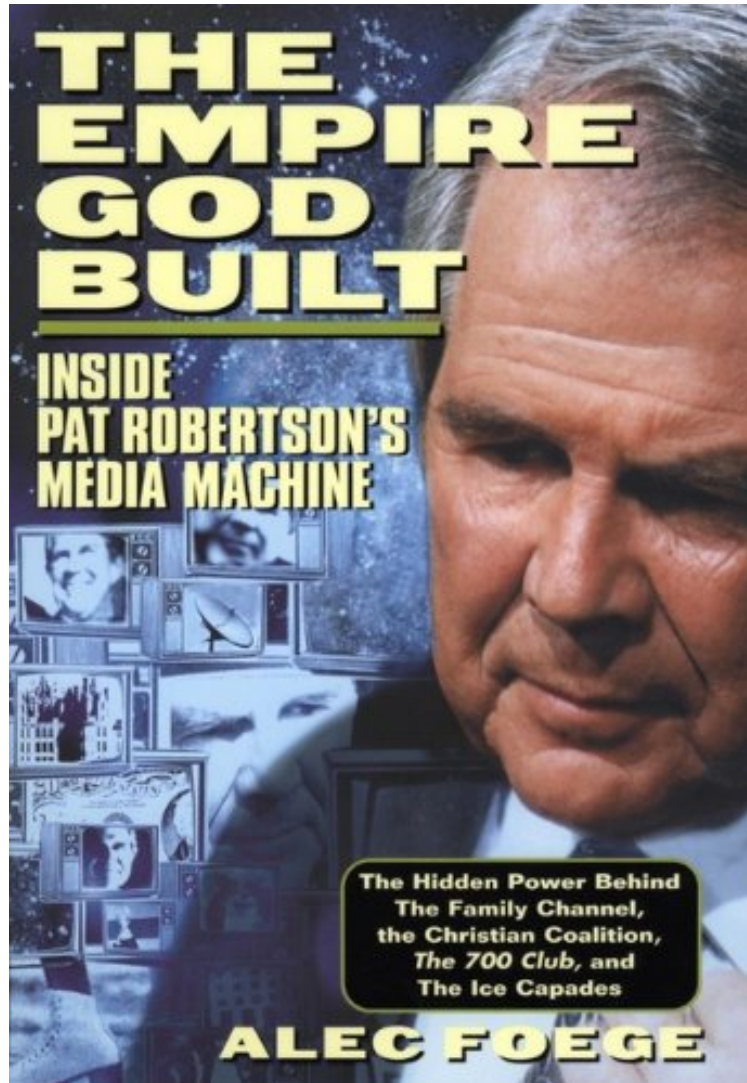


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The Empire God Built: Inside Pat Robertson's Media Machine

Alec Foege

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Alec Foege : The Empire God Built: Inside Pat Robertson's Media Machine before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Empire God Built: Inside Pat Robertson's Media Machine:

Say the name Pat Robertson to ten different people and you will get ten different reactions. To some, he's the televangelist host of The 700 Club, expounding a fundamentalist Christian philosophy. To others, he's a member in good standing of the American aristocracy, the son of a United States Senator and a descendent of the Duke of Marlborough. To savvy businesspeople, he's the CEO of International Family Entertainment, a publicly traded

company that owns The Family Channel, Mary Tyler Moore Productions, and The Ice Capades. He is a global businessman with media holdings in Asia, the United Kingdom, and Africa. He is the nation's number three cable operator, behind Ted Turner and HBO. Politicians know him as the head of the 1.7 million member Christian Coalition, widely considered to be the most powerful lobbying group in the United States. Pat Robertson is all these things and more, which makes him a media mogul of astonishing wealth, power, and influence. The Empire God Built takes you inside Pat Robertson's media machine, from the state-of-the-art television studios and telemarketing offices in Virginia Beach to the halls of Regent University to a Manhattan Christian Coalition meeting, complete with satellite feed from headquarters. Author Alec Foege pieces together the entire corporate puzzle, showing not only how Robertson assembled his empire, but how all the segments work together in pursuit of supremely ambitious goals measured by both fiscal and political bottom lines. It is a compelling examination of the power of television, technology, and big business, and how one man mastered all three to spread his message around the world. There's more to Pat Robertson than meets the eye "Robertson runs his personal business in as much secrecy as the law allows and as much obfuscation as he can create. But no one doubts his fortune. Overnight, he and his son Tim turned a \$183,000 investment into \$90 million." --William Prochnau and Laura Parker, Vanity Fair "A lot of advertisers really aren't even aware that Pat Robertson chairs The Family Channel." --Jon Mandel, Senior Vice President, Grey Advertising "The Family Channel is one of the most profitable television channels ever, religious or secular." --The New York Times "[Robertson] certainly [is] one of the visionaries in the [media] business." --Fred Dressler, Vice President of Programming, Time Warner Cable "A visionary and a smart businessman." --Ken Auletta, The New Yorker "[Pat Robertson] is viewed as a very smart businessman, along with his son Tim. Their results speak for themselves." --Jeff Sine, Morgan Stanley "He's a businessman. . . . The product he sells is religion." --Ed Rollins, political consultant

From Publishers Weekly Foege describes Robertson as "the archconservative equivalent of Madonna, the pseudo-outrageous pop icon." A better description, judging from this book, might be Elmer Gantry with a satellite dish. The son of a Democratic senator from Virginia, Robertson was married only after his first child was conceived, according to Foege. After a stint as a non-combat Marine in the Korean War, he attended Yale Law School, but failed to pass the New York Bar exam. He later attended a charismatic seminary, then had trouble holding down a job in New York as a minister. Returning to Virginia he purchased a TV station with financial help from his father, and established the Christian Broadcasting Network as a nonprofit corporation. He hired Jim and Tammy Bakker to host what soon became The 700 Club. He eventually hosted the show himself and used it as a springboard for his 1988 presidential campaign. He was subsequently fined \$25,000 by the Federal Election Commission for breaking a law that prohibits presidential hopefuls from fund-raising before declaring themselves as candidates. Foege, a contributing editor for Rolling Stone, aims to debunk Robertson's faith-healing and his claim that he commanded a hurricane to bypass Virginia. His involvement with the Christian Coalition and his establishment of Regent University are criticized as well, as being primarily cash cows for Robertson. Those who agree with Foege's take on Robertson will find this an eye-opening look at how to be an entrepreneur using tax-free donations as a fiscal base. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Rolling Stone contributing editor Foege views Pat Robertson's media and religious empire with the ironic detachment of an inveterate cable channel surfer. He admits that he pauses longer than usual when he happens upon The 700 Club on Robertson's Family Channel. Robertson strikes him both as a brilliant businessman and as a master manipulator of the media. Believing that "the medium is the message," he does not view Robertson with the alarm expressed in Robert Boston's *The Most Dangerous Man in America* (LJ 10/15/96) but with bemused admiration. He points out Robertson's inconsistencies and apparent hypocrisies with the same enthusiasm as does Boston and devotes a large portion of the work to Ralph Reed and the Christian Coalition. Unfortunately, his frequently glib writing style contains some jarring juxtapositions and detracts from an overall serviceable work. For pertinent collections. ?Richard S. Watts, San Bernardino Cty. Lib., Cal. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Foege, a contributing editor to Rolling Stone, casts an eye on televangelist and media mogul Pat Robertson, but he doesn't cast as many stones as one might expect. In some ways, Foege is downright admiring of Robertson, who started with one small television station and built an empire. By using his Christian Broadcasting Network and the Family Channel, Robertson has become an ever more powerful shaper of modern society, and Foege uses this surprising focus to develop an interesting new take on his subject. Foege's writing style is eminently readable and often wry, if a little rambling. His description of a Pat Robertson roast, hosted by Larry King, of all people, is utterly delicious. Yet the book's message, spelled out at the conclusion, is serious: don't stereotype those you disagree with; regard people who call themselves outsiders with healthy suspicion; gather news from a variety of sources; embrace technology--if you don't, someone else will. Ilene Cooper