



# Swaggart: The Unauthorized Biography of an American Evangelist

*Ann Rowe Seaman*

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## **Swaggart: The Unauthorized Biography of an American Evangelist** Ann Rowe Seaman

By 1987 Swaggart was one of the most popular video preachers in the world, with a weekly television audience of 2.1 million in the US and a worldwide audience of millions more in 143 countries. But then, in a cheerless motel west of New Orleans, Jimmy's life and ministry took a calamitous turn. This the tale of the rise of two intimately linked colossi of the American century: Pentecostalism, the fastest growing religious movement in the world, and its "evil twin", Rock 'n' Roll. A major theme of the book is how the religious ecstasy of Pentecostalism - the rousing music, the speaking in tongues, the reception of the Spirit - combined with its severe sexual repression leads to the kind of furtive acting out that brought down not only Jimmy Swaggart but also other evangelists. It is the story, too, of the rapid rise of the Religious Right, with its competing personalities and ideologies. In the end, the author sees Jimmy as a victim - like many others - of a primitive faith colliding with the forces of the late 20th century fame.

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