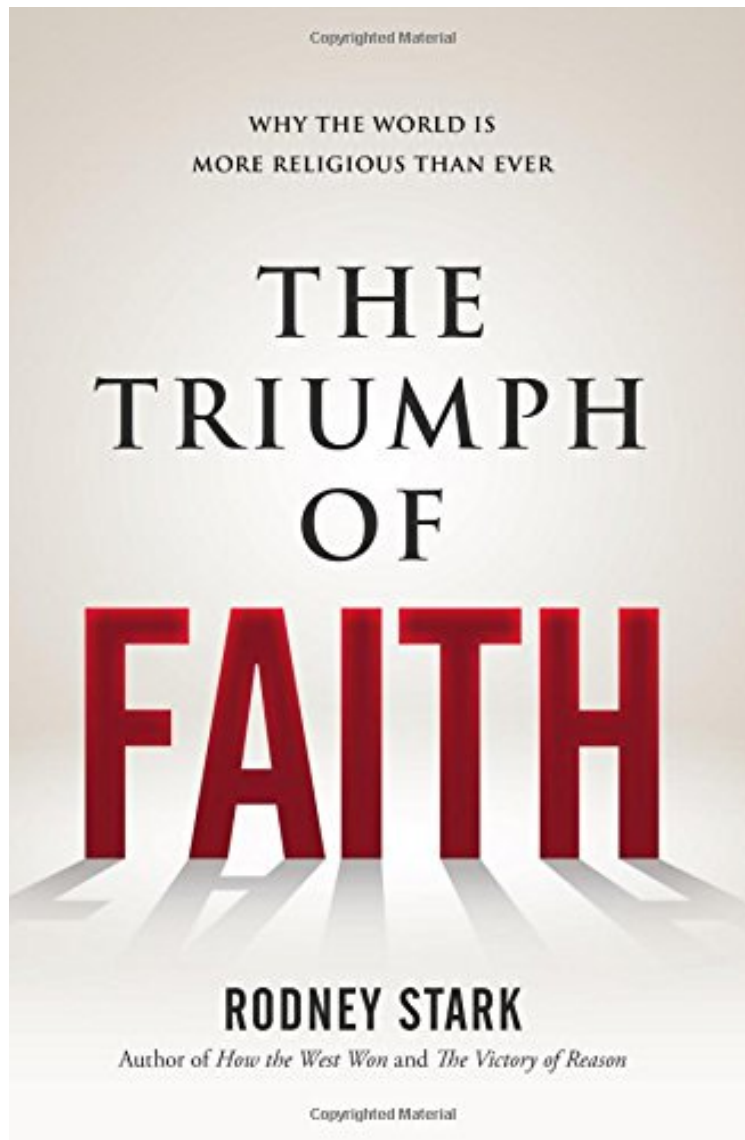


(Ebook free) The Triumph of Faith: Why the World Is More Religious than Ever

The Triumph of Faith: Why the World Is More Religious than Ever

Rodney Stark

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Rodney Stark : The Triumph of Faith: Why the World Is More Religious than Ever before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Triumph of Faith: Why the World Is More Religious than Ever:

28 of 28 people found the following review helpful. A convincing refutation of the secularization thesis By George P. Wood Fifty years ago, Anthony F. C. Wallace expressed the belief of many Western intellectuals when he wrote, Belief in supernatural powers is doomed to die out all over the world as a result of the increasing adequacy and

diffusion of scientific knowledge. The process is inevitable. Scientific knowledge, it was thought, would lead to material wellbeing, and material wellbeing would lead to a secular society. For mid-century Western intellectuals, the future looked godless. A funny thing happened on the way to secularity, however. As Rodney Stark writes in *The Triumph of Faith*, The world is not merely as religious as it used to be. In important ways, it is much more intensely religious than ever before; indeed, it is far more church-ed (emphasis added). To prove this point, Stark takes readers on a whirlwind tour of global religious trends. Stark notes that secularization theorists limit the focus [of their thesis] to major, well-organized faiths such as Christianity and Hinduism. Thus, five people who have ceased attending church and say they no longer believe in Jesus are counted in favor of the demise of the faith, despite the fact that they now are devoted spiritualists. He goes on to carefully define terms: Supernatural refers to forces or entities beyond or outside nature and having the capacity to suspend, alter, or ignore physical forces. Religion is a form of supernaturalism that postulates the existence of gods, conceived of as supernatural beings having consciousness and desires. Church-ed religions consist of relatively stable, organized congregations of lay members who acknowledge a specific religious creed. A creed is a set of beliefs to which all members of a religious group are expected to assent, and those who participate in church-ed religions are expected to do so regularly and exclusively. Both unchurch-ed religions and unchurch-ed supernaturalism lack organized congregations and usually lack a creed (emphasis in original). With these distinctions in mind, Stark is able to demonstrate, using survey data from the Gallup World Polls, that a massive religious awakening is taking place around the world. In many places, this religious awakening is occurring in the adherents of church-ed religions. He points to the growth of Christianity in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and China; of Islam in the Middle East and North Africa; and of Hinduism in India as examples of this trend. In other places, it is occurring in the adherents of unchurch-ed religions and unchurch-ed supernaturalisms, which persist in Europe, Japan, and the Asian Tigers despite their modernization. The proliferation of spiritualities in these places is evidence, Stark thinks, of the truth of the statement often attributed to G. K. Chesterton: When people stop believing in God, they don't believe in anything they believe in anything. The United States has always proven a challenge to the secularization thesis. Though one of the first and wealthiest modern nations, Americans have long exhibited high degrees of church-ed religious behavior. In a series of studies over the last decade, the Pew Research Center has argued that the share of religiously unaffiliated Americans—the so-called Nonesis growing at the expense of religiously affiliated Americans. Stark dismisses this as evidence for secularization by pointing out that most of the Nones used to be nominal believers. They didn't actually change their beliefs or practices, in other words. All they did was drop the religious name. Moreover, many of these people continue to pray, believe in supernatural forces, and even participate in organized religious activities. (Something similar could be said about secular Europeans.) Throughout the book, Stark hints at the reasons why the world is more religious than ever, as his subtitle puts it. He points out that too often secularization theorists have assumed that the primary social function of religion is to provide people with relief from their material misery. Karl Marx articulated this so-called deprivation theory when he wrote that religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature—the opium of the people. Unfortunately, the data don't bear out such a conclusion. For more than fifty years, studies in the United States and other Western nations have consistently found that the lower classes are conspicuously absent from the churches on Sunday mornings. Moreover, the major religious movements that have erupted throughout the centuries, in both the East and the West, were generated not by the suffering masses but by dissatisfied elites. If not material deprivation, however, what? Stark suggests spiritual deprivation. He writes, The overwhelming majority of people on earth do think about the meaning and purpose of life. In the conclusion, he writes: People want to know why the universe exists, not that it exists for no reason, and they don't want their lives to be pointless. Only religion provides credible and satisfactory answers to their great existential questions. The most ardent wishes of the secularization faithful will never change that. By way of concluding evaluation, let me make two points: First, Stark has identified a crucial flaw in both the secularization thesis and the deprivation thesis that underlies it. The data he cites don't seem to support either. Supernaturalism and religion, in both their church-ed and unchurch-ed varieties, haven't gone away and don't appear to be going away any time soon. Second, for Christians, triumph of faith is not the same thing as the triumph of the Faith. What we seek is not the growth of generic faith, general spirituality, or non-Christian religions. Rather, we seek more people confessing Jesus Christ as Lord. That is happening, of course, but until Christ returns, we still have a mission to be witnesses for Him to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good. Insightful. By Mike Beidel. Good. Insightful. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very well researched. By Carl Edward Vincent M. The author provides several theses, as much extremely evidence-based as it is in stark contrast to prevailing views, typically expressed by atheists (who tend to repeat the same tired and vacuous claims and predictions for two hundred years). Rodney Stark takes into considerations all sides of the debate, and takes us on a much needed tour de force.

God is not dead. Wall Street Journal Believe it or not, the world is more religious than ever before. Everyone seems to take it for granted that the world is getting more secular—that faith is doomed by modernity. Scientists, secularists, and atheists applaud the change; religious believers lament it. But here's the thing: they're all wrong and the bestselling

author and influential scholar of religion Rodney Stark has the numbers to prove it. *The Triumph of Faith* explodes the myth that people around the world are abandoning religion. Stark marshals an unprecedented body of data surveys of more than a million people in 163 nations to paint the full picture that both scholars and popular commentators have missed. And he explains why the astonishing growth of religion is happening and what it means for our future. Stark's bracing book is full of insights that defy the conventional wisdom. With vigorous prose he reveals: Why claims about Millennials lack of religion are overblown and historically ignorant Why Islam is NOT overtaking Christianity How 4 out of 5 people worldwide now belong to an organized religion How 50 percent have attended a worship service in the past week Why much-ballyhooed studies from the Pew Research Center and others get the religious landscape wrong Why atheists remain few, anywhere despite all the talk of the New Atheism As Stark shows, secularists have been predicting the imminent demise of religion for centuries. It is their unshakable faith in secularization that may be the most irrational of all beliefs. As the author of *How the West Won*, *The Victory of Reason*, and many other bestselling works, Rodney Stark has a richly deserved reputation for writing page-turning, myth-busting books. He is also a groundbreaking scholar who has so reshaped the social scientific study of religion that his work has become the basis of a new paradigm. Stark puts all those talents on full display in *The Triumph of Faith*. This book will change how you see both religion and the forces of secularization.

God is not dead. Despite the predictions of academics and liberal religious leaders, the world is becoming more faith-filled, not less.... [Stark's] real battle, though, is with intellectual elites of the West, who have been declaring the demise of religion for centuries and have been advancing a secularization thesis for decades.... Mr. Stark pushes back against the secularization thesis in several ways.... Indeed, religious fervor has taken hold in many countries where modernity is a settled fact. *Wall Street Journal* Stark [is] one of the most prominent, respected and consistently insightful sociologists of religion in the business.... I enthusiastically recommend this stimulating book to religious leaders and to those generally interested in what's going on in the minds of people around the world. It has much to offer, not only for understanding but also, in my judgment, for action. *Deseret News* Stark's clear writing he was a newspaper reporter before going to graduate school distinguishes him from most academics. His argument that Christian practice wasn't as common in the Middle Ages or in eighteenth-century America as we like to think distinguishes him from some church-oriented historians. The argument in his new book, *The Triumph of Faith*, that the world is more religious than ever, distinguishes him from new atheists who seem ready to take a victory lap. World If, in fact, religion is losing its influence and 72 percent of respondents to a 2014 Pew Research Center study say it is most people say that's not good.... But Rodney Stark, who holds the title of distinguished professor of social science at Baylor University, says in the new book *The Triumph of Faith* that *The End of Christian America* so proclaimed by a 2009 *Newsweek* cover and religions falling influence in the world aren't necessarily so. *Chattanooga Times Free Press* Reports about the death of religion in the United States are greatly exaggerated, sociologist Rodney Stark insists.... In a particularly provocative section, Stark takes issue with the much-reported rise of the nones in the United States. He cites data indicating the percentage of people who do not attend houses of worship remains steady, and the increase in nonaffiliated Americans appears to be drawn from that subset of the total population.... Readers will benefit from reading Stark's findings and conclusions that defy conventional wisdom. *Baptist Standard*