



Life's Too Short to Pretend You're Not Religious

David Dark

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David Dark admits to being “bummed out” by the way people talk about religion. These days being called “religious” is not likely to be taken as a compliment. But Dark doesn’t limit the word’s meaning to adherence to a creed, or to membership in a particular religious group. Instead, he reclaims and expands it to include all that connects and binds us and gives our lives their special flavor.

Dark, an assistant professor at Belmont University and a teacher at Riverbend Maximum Security Institution, writes that all of us, even declared atheists and the “spiritual but not religious,” express our own, authentic religion through what we do on a daily basis. Both the way we live out our stories and the “content of our devotion, our lives and our investments”—our “attention collection”—give clear witness to our true religion.

Dark admits to being a lover of sci-fi, and has an incisive grasp of contemporary popular culture. He writes with humor and wit about our “weird” religious backgrounds and our need to develop a “language of love” based on sharing the things that are most important to us. Saying to someone “I think you might like this” becomes a way of letting them know they have been seen, that we share common interests, and that we welcome their participation in something we hold sacred. Religion so handled is presented as a potent means of overcoming our isolation and building and sustaining community.

KRISTINE MORRIS (Spring 2016)

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