

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

**Rodney Stark**

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For centuries, philosophers have predicted that religion is going extinct. It's been called a "neurotic illusion" by Freud, and proclaimed "doomed" by many who believed it could not stand up to the findings of science. Recently, popular books by contemporary thinkers like Richard Dawkins have proclaimed the rise of a "New Atheism." Despite the doomsayers, author and noted scholar of religion Rodney Stark declares that the world is "not merely as religious as it used to be," but is "much more intensely religious than ever before" and that a "massive religious awakening is taking place around the world."

Calling upon an amazing body of data, including surveys of more than a million people in 163 countries, Stark shows us why the seemingly unshakeable faith in secularization may be "the most 'irrational' of all beliefs." It turns out that four out of five people worldwide belong to an organized religion, that Christianity is decidedly not being overtaken by Islam, and that there really are very few atheists in the world. In fact, his vigorous and insightful investigation considers current growth trends to predict an increasingly Christian world.

"What this century should tell us," Stark writes, "is that the message of the gospels is more powerful than human motives, and more gentle than human powers."

KRISTINE MORRIS (Spring 2016)

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