

Sociologist: “The World is More Religious Than It Has Ever Been”

Many of us assume that the world is increasingly secular and decreasingly religious.

But according to sociologist Rodney Stark, that’s just not true. His latest book, [*The Triumph of Faith: Why the World Is More Religious than Ever*](#), begins with the following claim:

“The world is more religious than it has ever been. Around the globe, four out of every five people claim to belong to an organized faith, and many of the rest say they attend worship services. In Latin America, Pentecostal Protestant churches have converted tens of millions, and Catholics are going to Mass in unprecedented numbers. There are more churchgoing Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else on earth, and China may soon become home of the most Christians. Meanwhile, although not growing as rapidly as Christianity, Islam enjoys far higher levels of member commitment than it has for many centuries, and the same is true for Hinduism. In fact, of all the great world religions, only Buddhism may not be growing.”

And what about in America, where the Pew Research Center [tells us](#) that Christians are now only 71% of the population, and 23% of people are religious “nones”? [According to Stark](#), “Pew is wrong about America”:

“For one thing, when surveys only manage to get about 10 percent of those originally drawn in their samples to agree to be interviewed (instead of at least 85 percent), it is impossible to put any confidence in the results. In fact, the

group known to be most willing to be polled (less education, less income), and thus far overrepresented in Pew surveys, is precisely the group that has always been least likely to belong to or attend churches. More importantly, the group who say they have no religion (and is said by Pew to be growing) are mainly those who once gave a denominational preference, but who did not belong to a local congregation or attend. That seems a trivial change – especially since the overwhelming majority of those who say they have no religion also affirm religious beliefs, and many of them report frequent prayer. For most of them, ‘no religion’ means no specific church membership, not that they are irreligious.”

Interesting... Is it possible that we need to alter the received narrative of increased secularization? In spite of modern technological and scientific advances, do we still live in a very religious world?