

[PDF] For The Glory Of God: How Monotheism Led To Reformation, Science, Witch-Hunts, And The End Of Slavery

Rodney Stark - pdf download free book

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Author: Rodney Stark

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Description:

For the Glory of God challenges numerous assumptions about how religion affected the course of history. As a professor of Sociology and Comparative Religions at the University of Washington, Rodney Stark () has a unique ability to write like a chatty social Scientist while delving into complicated theories on religion and history. Here he shows how beliefs in God--whether it was through the filter of Christianity, Judaism, or Islam--provoked and fueled human history. Of course many readers won't dicker with his evidence that religious fervor influenced the witch hunts. But

readers may be surprised by Stark's assertion that the persecution of witches actually had more to do with the conflicts between the world's major religions than the oppressive beliefs of fanatical clergy or sexist men. He also asserts that the same religious leaders who were the first to persecute witches were also the first to take a stand against slavery. And, contrary to many historical theories, Stark claims that religion may have been the driving force behind the emergence of modern science. Stark's fascinating conclusions may rile conventional historians. Indeed, Stark was dismayed to discover how many historians "dismiss the role of religion in producing [good] things such as the rise of science or the end of slavery, and the corresponding efforts to blame religion for practically everything [bad]." While certainly weighed in defense of religious beliefs, especially Christianity, Stark offers a respectable and intelligent argument for church leaders, theologians, and maybe a few history buffs to ponder. --*Gail Hudson*

From Publishers Weekly In One True God: Historical Consequences of Monotheism, sociologist of religion Stark examined the nature of God, the wrath of God, the kingdom of God, the grace of God and the "chosen" of God. In this follow-up volume to his ambitious magnum opus, Stark investigates the role of monotheistic religions in reformations, witch-hunts, slavery and science. Such efforts represent an attempt by monotheistic religions to preserve the idea of the One True God against corrupting influences inside and outside the religions themselves. Stark asserts that, contrary to traditional notions, no single religious reformation can be isolated in any monotheistic religion. Thus, Christianity has experienced not simply the Reformation of Luther but many and various reformations that resulted in a diversity of sectarian movements that practice the worship of the One True God in their own ways. Stark also argues that science could have evolved only out of a monotheistic culture that viewed the world as God's handiwork, and that the witch-hunts of Europe could have taken place only in a culture marred by religious conflict and motivated by the desire to displace heretical religious sects. Despite its purported general focus on monotheistic religions, however, the book devotes very little attention to Islam or Judaism, a serious omission in a study that claims to cover so much ground. In addition, Stark's turgid prose and social-scientific style mar what otherwise could have been an engaging study.

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