

Is Christianity Making a Comeback? It Is in Hollywood

Everywhere we turn today the “New Atheists” are proclaiming that religious belief is dead. After all (as they say), *no one in their right mind could actually believe in God anymore*. But while nonbelieving cultural elites in media, academia and entertainment may be the *loudest* voices in the room, a new Pew Research Study indicates they’re becoming the smallest group in the room. Among its findings:

- Of all U.S. adults, 73 percent believes Jesus was born to a virgin.
- Up to 81 percent believes the baby Jesus was actually laid in a manger.
- And 74 percent believes an angel announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds nearby.
- And just when you thought these numbers reflected the Bible Belt, it turns out that 54 percent of liberals believes in the virgin birth, and for adults with postgraduate degrees, 53 percent affirms the virgin birth of Jesus.

So the question is: In what seems to be a secular culture, where has Christianity been?

Early in the 20th century, the church embraced motion pictures and radio, then television and now the Internet and social media. But in the vast majority of cases today, we’re not using those platforms to engage the greater culture, but instead living inside a bubble. From the web, to publishing, to record labels, TV networks, universities and more, the last 50 years have seen a remarkable withdrawal from mainstream culture and a move back to a cloistered, protective bubble.

In all honesty, the church hasn’t been losing it’s voice, we’ve been giving it away. As a result, we’ve lost remarkable

influence in the culture. So while the majority of the population still professes religious belief, will Christianity ever regain its influence in the culture? I believe it can, and there are plenty of signposts:

- Vibrant churches are growing in major urban centers around the United States. Young pastors who have a passion for their cities find it difficult to locate facilities large enough for the crowds.
- A new generation of talented writers, filmmakers, musicians, and other artists are unapologetic about their faith. They're breaking out of traditional Christian-branded record labels, film distributors and publishers, and finding success with mainstream audiences.
- Episodic television programs like Mark Burnett and Roma Downey's *The Bible* series broke audience records in the United States. Their new series, *A.D. The Bible Continues*, based on the New Testament book of Acts, debuts this Spring.
- In 2017, the **Museum of the Bible** opens in Washington, D.C. The magnificent, state-of-the-art museum is under construction and will showcase the history, story and impact of the Bible in the world.
- I'm an executive producer of the movie *Let Hope Rise*, a concert feature film on the world's most popular worship band, Hillsong United. A major Hollywood studio—Warner Brothers—is releasing the film nationwide in April.

Honestly, it shouldn't be a surprise. When the Iron Curtain fell, we discovered that communism couldn't silence the church, and despite horrific torture and executions by ISIS militants, Christians refuse to recant. So it shouldn't be shocking that here in the West, for all the criticism and clatter from unbelievers or advertising campaigns from atheists, Christianity is actually growing.

In 2015, it will be obvious that Christianity is back. But

truthfully, it never left.

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