

Islam Will Become Dominant Religion, According to New Research

A new prediction from the Pew Research Center says that Islam could be the dominant religion by the end of the century, as the Muslim faith grows at record rates.

“Another way of thinking about it is Christianity had a seven-century head-start on Islam, and Islam is finally catching up,” Pew Director of Religion Research Alan Cooperman told NPR, who reported on the study.

But Southern Evangelical Seminary President and Evangelical leader Dr. Richard Land is not so sure this trend will hold true. Land recently wrote about world religion in an editorial, titled “Despite What You’ve Heard, World Is More Religious Than Ever,” Land states, “Everybody knows the world is becoming more secular, right? Wrong.”

The Pew study partly attributes the growth of Islam to a young Muslim population with high fertility rates. According to Pew, “Between 2010 and 2050, the world’s total population is expected to rise to 9.3 billion, a 35 percent increase. Over that same period, Muslims—a comparatively youthful population with high fertility rates—are projected to increase by 73 percent. The number of Christians also is projected to rise, but more slowly, at about the same rate (35 percent) as the global population overall.”

Land says this prediction may come true, if those demographic trends continue.

“The growth of Islam is partly due to Muslim families sharing their faith with their children,” Land said. “But these young families may not grow and increase at the rate many think,

especially as young Muslim woman have more opportunities and may choose not to have as many children. Also, Christianity is growing rapidly in China, the world's most populous country with 1.3 billion people. And despite news that 'nones,' or those unaffiliated with any religion, are increasing, let's not discount the fact that all religions are growing, as the world is perhaps not as secular as we once thought."

In his column, Land cites a new book by Dr. Rodney Stark titled *The Triumph of Faith: Why the World Is More Religious Than Ever*. Stark, Land says, points out what scholars have been demonstrating and publicizing for years—that religion is waxing rather than waning around the world.

"Dr. Stark documents voluminously the rapid spread of religion, particularly both Christianity and Islam, in the Second and Third Worlds, unfazed by the seemingly inexorable march of modernity," Land wrote. "Stark argues that even in Europe, where 'official' organized religion is clearly in steep decline, some would argue a 'death spiral' belief in the supernatural, both in more and less orthodox forms, persists and appears to even be flourishing."

Land observes that Stark's research forces each one of us to ask a critically important question.

"It appeals that Dr. Stark's research has found overwhelming evidence for what the apostle Paul calls the 'law written on the conscience,' which explains why we have never found a human society that did not have some form of religious observance. Can we conclude that human beings are 'incurably religious' because God made them that way?"