

Why has religion remained a force in a secular world?

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ABSTRACT

Religion could be a pale reminder of the past and also a source of hope for the future. Religion has been mankind's way of fighting against nihilism from time immemorial. In life, we are faced with many metaphysical problems, or problems that we cannot solve, and religion helps us to provide solutions. Human beings need a faith to help them answer all the questions about the unknown, and that faith is religion. It is true that some religious teachings are no longer in line with contemporary human thought, but it is undeniable that the core of his spiritual support for mankind will always remain the same. And in the new religions nowadays, by interpreting different versions of the New Testament to develop a point of view arguing that religion is in the process of atheism, and this is in line with the development trend of the world's universal beliefs, but also for the future of the people also provide new hope. In this paper, I will be arguing that religious adaptability to modern humanistic values and its enduring function as a source of existential meaning make it an indispensable framework for many. This is a philosophical and conceptual inquiry, drawing from theology, reform history, and contemporary philosophy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Faith functions as a fundamental dimension of human life, arising from the human tendency to transcend finitude and incompleteness in search of meaning, coherence, and continuity beyond the limits of material existence. Across cultures and historical periods, we, as humans, have persistently asked questions such as where we come from, where we are going, and why the world exists as it does. These questions—often described as ultimate or existential—do not have clear empirical answers that can be conclusively verified.

Religion, on the other hand, as one of the most systematic and historically enduring forms of faith, has long functioned as a medium through which human beings seek connection with transcendent meaning or higher power. Although many teachings of ancient religions no longer fully align with contemporary intellectual or moral frameworks, their core function has remained relatively stable: to provide moral grounding and spiritual support. Rather than disappearing under conditions of modernity, religion has always demonstrated an ability to adapt its interpretive structures while preserving its underlying existential role. For example, within the framework of Christianity, the teachings of the Bible show their followers how to address, understand, and deal with the central questions of life, death, sin, and the nature of man. The Bible, by answering the ultimate and existential questions, says, "Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being." (Genesis Chapter 2). Christianity tells us that human beings are creatures created by God mobilizing the energy of nature, that life is a gift from God, that we are divine creations, and that

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every life has a divine purpose and value. Through the narrative of resurrection, Christianity reframes death not as an endpoint but as a transformation, while doctrines of sacrifice and redemption provide a response to human moral failure and alienation.

For many individuals outside intellectual or cultural elites, religion has additionally served as a source of symbolic security under conditions of vulnerability, uncertainty, and powerlessness. When confronted with natural disaster, social oppression, or the instability of human life, religious belief can offer a sense of order and continuity that transcends immediate material conditions. By locating human existence within a broader, often eternal, framework, religion mitigates the anxiety produced by impermanence and change. In this sense, religion functions less as an abstract metaphysical system than as a lived refuge through which individuals interpret suffering and endure uncertainty.

In confronting questions of meaning, mortality, and the future, many people continue to seek guidance that extends beyond material explanation alone. While religion is not the only framework capable of addressing these concerns, it remains one of the few belief systems that has persisted across centuries while continuously reinterpreting itself in response to changing historical and cultural conditions. This combination of continuity and adaptability helps explain why religion has retained its relevance within an increasingly secular world.

II. DISCUSSION

Empirical studies indicate a steady increase in the number of individuals identifying as atheists or agnostics across many regions of the world (Brunel University Press Office, Media Relations). Rather than signaling the disappearance of religion, this trend suggests growing pressure for religious traditions to reinterpret their doctrines and practices in response to changing intellectual, moral, and social conditions. In this sense, modern secularization has not eliminated religion but has intensified its internal transformations, compelling faith traditions to renegotiate their relationship with authority, belief, and human agency.

Within Christianity, such adaptive transformation is not a recent phenomenon. On October 31, 1517, a central religious figure, Martin Luther, proved through his actions that even well-organized religions needed reform. Luther began the Protestant Reformation with the publication of his Ninety-Five Theses. In this publication, he attacked the Church's sale of indulgences. He advocated a theology that rested on God's gracious activity in Jesus Christ, rather than in human works (David M). He began the idea of the "Priesthood of all believers" (Martin L, 1520), this idea stated that all Christian believers have the right to be priests, have the same access to God as priests, and do not need priests as intermediaries in their communication with God.

Luther's reform did not abolish divine authority; rather, it re-centered the human subject within the religious framework. By emphasizing direct access to God, Protestant reform weakened the strictly unidirectional model in which divine command flowed exclusively downward through institutional mediation. In its place emerged a more interactive relationship between the human and the divine, one

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that emphasized personal accountability, interpretation, and moral agency. This shift reflects an early form of religious humanization—an internal adjustment through which Christianity aligned itself more closely with emerging humanistic sensibilities while retaining its theological foundations.

A similar form of internal reinterpretation can also be found in modern philosophical thought, most notably in the work of Slavoj Žižek. In his reading of Christianity as containing an immanent critique of transcendence, Žižek's interpretation centers on Christ's utterance on the cross—"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1)—which he understands not as a doctrinal claim but as a philosophical moment of divine self-negation. According to Žižek, this moment reveals a rupture within the traditional unity of the Trinity, exposing separation and abandonment as internal to divinity itself rather than merely a human condition. As he argues, humanity's separation from God is not external to the divine but becomes part of its very structure (Žižek, *Christian Atheism*).

Žižek provocatively describes this moment as one in which "God himself becomes an atheist," a formulation that must be understood as a philosophical metaphor rather than a theological assertion. In this reading, Christ's experience of abandonment signifies the collapse of an all-encompassing divine mastery and opens space for radical human responsibility. Freedom, in this sense, does not imply the absence of meaning but the absence of predetermined destiny. While traditional theological fatalism locates human destiny entirely within divine will, Žižek's interpretation emphasizes human agency within an open historical process. Individuals are born and will die, but the meaning of the trajectory between these fixed points is shaped through choice, action, and responsibility.

Salvation was not seen as a gift from God to passive recipients after the reinterpretation of the framework and, therefore, human participation was recognized as a requirement in the process. The connection between God and man changes from one of total dependence to one of mutual involvement, whereby people are given the task of taking up the challenge of meaning, moral conduct, and faith. The change from dependence to autonomy represents the fact that religion, instead of disappearing due to secularization, is developing in a way that is compatible with the new ideas of liberty, agency, and self-determination.

CONCLUSION

Religion remains a force in the secular world because of its broad compatibility with upward and downward mobility. Whether the renewed presence of religion functions as a reminder of the past or as a source of hope for the future depends largely on individual interpretation, and religion may serve either role. Religion itself is not uniform but internally diverse, shaped by individuals who approach it with different experiences, expectations, and understandings. As a result, the forms religion takes and the directions it evolves in are determined by those who engage with it. What remains constant is religion's capacity to serve as a meaningful source of inner support for many individuals, regardless of their social position or intellectual orientation.

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