

Hard-Wired to Crave God?

A wide-ranging and intensive study of cultures around the world, led by a team of respected sociologists and philosophers, finds that human beings are hard-wired to think and act "religiously." That means our gravitational pull towards God is instinctual, though the researchers (with Oxford University's "Cognition, Religion, and Theology Project") go to great pains to proclaim that this embedded response says nothing about the reality or unreality of God.

"We tend to see purpose in the world," says Oxford University professor Roger Trigg. "We see agency. We think that something is there even if you can't see it...All this tends to build up to a religious way of thinking."

Trigg helped pull together more than 40 disparate studies from around the world, condensing their results into a macro-picture of our corporate yearning for God. His research team discovered:

- widespread belief in an afterlife; and
- belief that natural phenomena happen for a purpose.

In a CNN interview, Triggs says: "Children in particular found it very easy to think in religious ways.... Religious people would say, 'If there is a God, then...he would have given us inclinations to look for him.' The secularization thesis of the 1960s—I think that was hopeless."

The "secularization thesis" Triggs is targeting may seem hopeless in the light of these findings, but not to one of the world's most-respected atheists, Stephen Hawking. In an interview with a reporter from Britain's Guardian newspaper, the famed theoretical physicist says: "I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There is no heaven or afterlife for broken-down computers; that is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark."