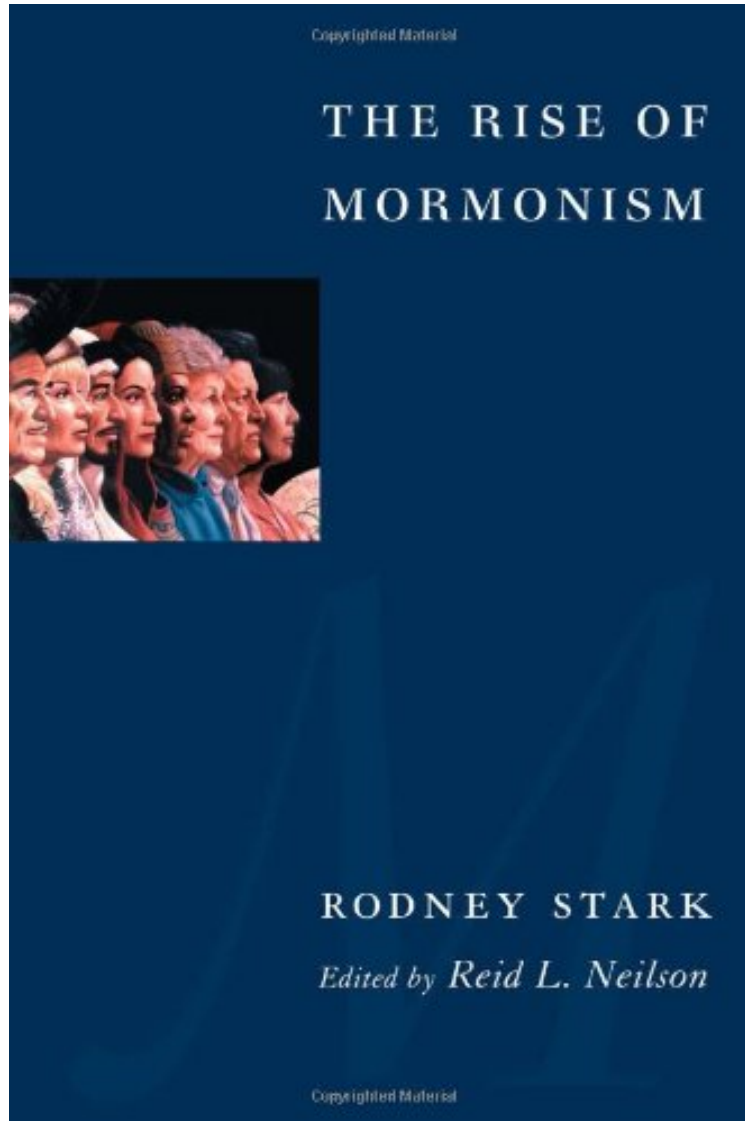


The Rise of Mormonism

Rodney Stark

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Rodney Stark : The Rise of Mormonism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Rise of Mormonism:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Leroy E. WhiteheadA very good, objective book by a non-Mormon scholar0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Stark on MormonismBy William H. Scarle Jr.Stark is at his best in giving an accurate picture of the rise of the Mormon religion. He does not tell us much about the teachings of this new belief system. What he does is explain its phenominal growth, and he does this well.1 of 1

people found the following review helpful. Interesting theory and introduction
By Will Jerom
This is a good book, though the title may be slightly misleading as it uses Mormonism as an example to demonstrate (very interesting) theories about religion, and religious conversion. Refreshingly, the author does not assert that religious founders had to be crazy, but could be rational actors. He also believes modernization does not necessarily mean secularization or the demise of religion. About 70-80% of the book deals with an analysis of Mormonism and its rapid growth in recent decades. The book is a collection of essays on the theme of Mormonism's rapid growth, with the theoretical expectation that Mormonism will be a major world religion someday soon. While not exactly an introduction to Mormonism, it will discuss some of the basics (e.g. Joseph Smith, Book of Mormon) of the religion. Those looking for a more straightforward introduction to Mormonism might be advised to look elsewhere (Richard Bushman, *A Very Short Introduction to Mormonism*). Those already familiar with the religion and looking for angle of theoretical study will profit most here.

Will Mormonism be the next world faith, one that will rival Catholicism, Islam, and other major religions in terms of numbers and global appeal? This was the question Rodney Stark addressed in his much-discussed and much-debated article, "The Rise of a New World Faith" (1984), one of several essays on Mormonism included in this new collection. Examining the religion's growing appeal, Rodney Stark concluded that Mormons could number 267 million members by 2080. In what would become known as "the Stark argument," Stark suggested that the Mormon Church offered contemporary sociologists and historians of religion an opportunity to observe a rare event: the birth of a new world religion. In the years following that article, Stark has become one of the foremost scholars of Mormonism and the sociology of religion. This new work, the first to collect his influential writings on the Mormon Church, includes previously published essays, revised and rewritten for this volume. His work sheds light on both the growth of Mormonism and on how and why certain religions continue to grow while others fade away. Stark examines the reasons behind the spread of Mormonism, exploring such factors as cultural continuity with the faiths from which it seeks converts, a volunteer missionary force, and birth rates. He explains why a demanding faith like Mormonism has such broad appeal in today's world and considers the importance of social networks in finding new converts. Stark's work also presents groundbreaking perspectives on larger issues in the study of religion, including the nature of revelation and the reasons for religious growth in an age of modernization and secularization.

a well-written thought-provoking compilation covering nearly three decades of scholarship (*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*) It's an excellent summary and a must-read... *The Rise of Mormonism* is a thoughtful and insightful look at the Church. (Jeffrey Needle *Irreantum*) Rodney Stark is one of America's pre-eminent sociologists of religions. (Gerald M. McDermott *Books and Culture*) An important voice in the sociological study of religion. (Kathleen Flake *The Journal of Religion*) I recommend this book to anyone with an interest in the social scientific study of Mormonism. (Henri Gooren *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*)
About the Author
Rodney Stark is University Professor of the Social Sciences at Baylor University. He is the author of more than twenty books, including *For the Glory of God* and *Exploring the Religious Life*.
Reid L. Neilson is the author and editor of several books on Mormonism. He is currently a doctoral candidate in religious studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.