



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 13, 2011

Study Shows Faith Is an Innate Human Quality

The study began in 2008, when the *Associated Press* [reported](#):

University of Oxford researches will spend nearly \$4 million to study why mankind embraces God. The grant to the Ian Ramsey Center for Science and Religion will bring anthropologists, theologians, philosophers, and other academics together for three years to study whether belief in a divine being is a basic part of mankind's makeup.



Evidently, it is. Human beings have a natural tendency to believe in God and an afterlife. CNN [writes](#) of the results, "Studies around the world came up with similar findings, including widespread belief in some kind of afterlife and an instinctive tendency to suggest that natural phenomena happen for a purpose."

Oxford University professor Roger Trigg explains, "We tend to see purpose in the world. 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."

As the co-director of the three-year Oxford initiative, Trigg adds, "Children in particular found it very easy to think in religious ways," including the belief in the omniscience of God. Likewise, adults were apt to choose explanations that involved an unseen agent at work in the world.

The study did not seek inquiries into the belief in God, gods, or an afterlife, however.

Justin Barrett, project co-director, states, "This project does not set out to prove God or gods exist.... Just because we find it easier to think in a particular way does not mean that it is true in fact."

According to Trigg, the study's findings could be supported by both atheists and spiritualists.

For example, Trigg indicates that secularist Richard Dawkins "would accept our findings and say we've got to grow out of it."

Likewise, Trigg adds, "Religious people would say, 'If there is a God, then...he would have given us inclinations to look for him.'"

The Blaze [indicates](#), "Arguably, the [latter] argument seems more compelling, especially considering the fact that religious beliefs remained consistent, despite major cultural differences. Clearly, a common thread connects the human search for a higher being."

Trigg notes that the results of the study should have a profound impact on religious freedoms:

If you've got something so deep-rooted in human nature, thwarting it is in some sense not



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enabling humans to fulfill their basic interests. There is quite a drive to think that religion is private. It isn't just a quirky interest of a few; it's basic human nature. This shows that it's much more universal, prevalent, and deep-rooted. It's got to be reckoned with. You can't just pretend it isn't there.

Trigg ultimately concludes that the result of the study "implies that religion will not wither away."



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