



CARE CONVERSATIONS

FORWARD
FROM
DR TINA LAMONT // Director TEC



Dear Friend,

We trust that you have continued to find our *Care Conversations* a welcome part of your week. The feedback has been encouraging. We want to keep supporting you in your important role in this ministry of Christian education.

In this next series of *Care Conversations*, Stephen looks at some important historical moments through the eyes of Rodney Stark, and in particular his *How the West Won: The Neglected Story of the Triumph of Modernity* (ISI Books, 2015). We trust that this gives you a fresh lens about some common themes in our world of education.

Please remember to contact us at The Excellence Centre if we can assist you with any of the topics raised in these Conversations.

Sincerely,

Dr Tina Lamont

Director TEC

The Excellence Centre

Series 3:

NOTIONS
OF THE
WEST



REFLECTION BY
STEPHEN J FYSON *PHD*
PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT



Number 2:

When is 'dark'
really 'dark'?



I have never been very good at remembering dates, names and other facts that are normally learned off by heart. If there is meaning to the piece of information, then it will stick. But otherwise, I need to rehearse a date to keep it fresh.

So I remember learning about the *Dark Ages* – they were ‘back then’. I also remember learning that they were dark because progress sort of stopped. Yet Rodney Stark says the following:

The “Dark Ages” never happened - that was an era of remarkable progress and innovation that included the invention of capitalism.(p.2)

How is it that in education, we develop these ideas that run contrary to

important facts (Stark makes a very good case for this claim in his book, as have other historians)? How then is it also that we manage to teach these things in a simplistic way to thousands of school students? Why do we continue to use labels that do not accurately describe reality from a Christian understanding?

It is a matter of belief. Because of certain people's beliefs, it suited their cause to have a 'Dark' ages. Stark notes that this (untrue) myth was *made up by the eighteenth-century intellectuals determined to slander Christianity and to celebrate their own sagacity* (p.70).

For us to avoid these mistakes, we need to teach our teachers to think deeply, to the level of their core beliefs. Then we can test out what we see and hear, in the light of God's word. Please, Lord, let it be so...

Grace and peace,

Stephen J Fyson PhD
Principal Consultant
The Excellence Centre



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