

Book Review by Ray Gooch
STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND
Living the Catholic Faith in a Post-Christian World
by Charles j. Chaput, Archbishop of Philadelphia

Much of this book, published in 2017, explores how our culture has drifted from truth. Chaput says "If the world taking shape around us today seems to make us strangers in a strange land - strangers in our own land - that's because it does" Our world is strange. (Exodus 2:22.)

We have become a nation departed from virtue, a nation of despair, wholly departed from the truth. For the Christian, truth is embodied in the person of Christ, John 14:6 "I am the way, and the truth and the life" the incarnate Word of God. Today our culture only retains a pretense of goodness. Our language still uses the language of morality but they are words of self deception.

We can't blame the culture as we ARE the culture. Using many references, Chaput traces much of our nations history through references to Tocqueville, Augustine, G.K. Chesterton, and others too numerous to list but well noted in the book. The author homes in on certain books, and the truth in them, such as Dr. Scott Peck's book "People of the Lie" and Alasdair McIntire's book "After Virtue". Many characteristics of our current culture are explored and much history of how we came here.

The drift of our culture over time means many things "If we don't believe in the devil, sooner or later we won't believe in God." "we can't cut Lucifer out of the ecology of salvation ... his existence is near the heart of this world's confusion, fears, sufferings and spiritual struggles." Our duty is not just to engage the world, but to convert it to Jesus Christ. "We're missionaries ...it's hardwired into our identity as Christians."

Our world as "post-Christian" is a lie. The gospel remains as the good news, the message of joy and hope. Alive and active.

Using Bonhoeffer and others as examples, Chaput explains that knowing about Jesus is not enough ... we as Christians need to engage Him with our entire life in Christian friendships, family, love, and with the Word of God as testimony to the goodness of creation, the gift of life. The author concludes that we, as Christians, are able to make a difference.

This book is available at the Abilene Public Library or from book sellers.