

Newsbytes

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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

Visa dreams of turning your entire home into a cash register And your hand into a credit card...

Kris Naudus (AOL/Engadget)

In a world where you can pay for goods with the tap of your phone, send money to anyone with an app and do most of your shopping online, credit cards seem a bit long in the tooth. Visa is looking to toss them almost completely, replacing them with a process that makes paying for stuff online as simple as tapping any internet-connected device in your house, no credit card terminals or filling in of forms needed.



Last year the company showed off a contactless ring that could be used to pay for items with a wave of your hand. The ring was distributed to Visa-sponsored athletes for use at the Rio Olympics, but there were no plans to make it commercially available. Since that initial proof of concept Visa has worked to make the technology even smaller and cheaper, putting it into a small plastic sticker that a company rep affixed to the back of my hand for a demo. It's so small and unobtrusive that it feels like we're not far from more-permanent subdermal implants.

The unobtrusiveness helps to make the technology something that you could theoretically keep on you at all times, including in your own home, which is likely populated with tons of connected devices. And it's not only phones or laptops we keep around but also an ever increasingly large number of smart devices like light bulbs or speakers like the Echo Dot. However, shopping with those means you're restricted to what you can buy from Amazon and other approved retailers. Visa's system ideally would let you use any of your connected gadgets to shop online and just tap to order from whatever site you want instead of having to whip out a credit card.

The Visa system is super easy to use, making it an easy sell to retailers looking for a better checkout experience. We only think of ordering from sites like Best Buy as simple because we've set up our credit card info beforehand. But ever tried to switch shipping addresses at Amazon? I do this fairly often to send packages to the office instead of my home or to my parents' house, and every single time I have to re-enter the credit card number for security reasons. In fact, I'm often hesitant to shop at new or unfamiliar sites due to the need to re-enter all of my shipping and billing info. Plus, it's one more place hackers could potentially target and scoop up my data.

Visa lightens some of these security concerns by using tokenization, which replaces all of your sensitive info with a randomly generated digital identifier. It's just tap and go, and if the ring or sticker or whatever that

contains the token is lost, you can easily turn it off using the Visa app. That's a lot easier than having to call a customer service number to disable a stolen credit card. Plus, you can turn it back on if you find it later. If a retailer is compromised, it never had any of your billing info in the first place: The digital identifier is useless by itself.



The sticker Visa gave me required little more than my name and address to set up, though the final product would come from a credit provider and be connected to an account. I was able to use it to purchase a coffee press and some time in a "hospitality pod" by tapping the back of my hand against a panel. It was a huge improvement over the ring, which was finicky about how it was pointed at a contactless reader, usually requiring a little effort and multiple tries to register.

It was a little too easy, actually: The demo didn't ask me to confirm the purchases, so I couldn't back out or otherwise change my mind once I tapped the terminal. In the wild there will probably be a few more steps or some further protection, just like how you can't repeatedly mash an Amazon Dash button to end up with duplicate orders.

I asked what kind of protections would be put in place to keep kids from swiping their parents' payment token and going on a spending spree. The ring, sticker and any other item Visa develops probably won't have biometric identification, because it makes the product more complex and more expensive. While there's no sure way to protect your account from errant purchases by children (or malicious thieves), Visa SVP Avin Arumugam pointed out that it's easy enough to temporarily turn off the tokens in the app.

Right now there's no set date for new token products or appliances with built-in readers. Visa is currently working with payment platforms to expand its reach so it's not just limited to Visa customers. This should make it more attractive to device manufacturers, encouraging them to build the tech into their new products. Maybe it won't be too long before you can buy bread with a wave at your toaster.



U.S. Schools 'Bowling' To Islam During Ramadan

www.prophecynewswatch.com/

High schools across America are being pressured to offer time off school, in-school prayer rooms, and special dietary demands by Muslim students observing the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

One campus in Brooklyn has agreed not to serve food at its prom until after sundown while another school in upstate New York is setting up prayer rooms to satisfy the demands of students who observe Ramadan.

Among the Muslim groups agitating for special privileges for Muslim students are the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the Muslim Student Association and Sound Vision.

Sound Vision offers on its website a "6-Step Guide" for Muslims on how to pressure their local schools into granting "religious accommodations" for Islam. The guidelines instruct parents to know U.S. laws about religious freedom and then "get the support of a teacher." The guidelines start with the following statement:

"Does your child need a prayer room to perform Zuhr in during lunchtime? Does he need time off for Juma? Or do you want to convince a teacher or principal to give your daughter the day off for Eid-ul-Fitr?"

"Whatever Islamic obligation you want accommodated at your child's school, it must be done in a methodical, clear and proper manner."

It also helps to get the local media on your side.

Brooklyn Tech seniors will gather at Pier Sixty in Manhattan for their prom on June 3, but not all their classmates will be able to attend, lamented the local ABC affiliate, WABC-TV.

That's because the party this year falls during Ramadan, a month-long time of fasting and prayer.

In an online petition started by the Muslim Student Association, an offshoot of the extremist Muslim Brotherhood, students are asking school officials to move the prom to another day.

In an effort to accommodate the MSA, school officials said they won't allow food to be served at the prom until after Muslim fasting ends at 9 p.m. The principal also met with the MSA Tuesday "to make sure this never happens again," WABC reported.

Learn how the influx of refugees and other Muslim migrants is transforming our schools and communities, one city at a time, in the investigative blockbuster "Stealth Invasion: Muslim Conquest through Immigration and Resettlement Jihad."

Special accommodations for Islam in U.S. public schools is a trend that is gaining steam. And it's happening at the same time schools are eliminating Christian holidays or changing them to generic time off. Christmas is now 'winter break' and Easter is 'spring break.'

Just last week the largest school district in Saratoga County, in upstate New York, announced it will open special prayer rooms on campus where Muslim students can pray during school hours during Ramadan.

The Shenendehowa High School Principal told CBS-6 that two classrooms are being set aside exclusively for Muslim prayer during the Islamic holiday.

One parent sent CBS-6 a letter of complaint, stating:

"Since prayer for other religions was removed from school years ago, I feel as [Shenendehowa] has crossed the line on allowing this on campus." The woman's complaint was in response to an email from the Shenendehowa High School Principal to students and parents addressing the month of Ramadan.

The letter states in part:

"Prayer occurs on a daily basis for practicing Muslims. This can be challenging in today's modern public high school. In an attempt to make reasonable accommodations for students and employees to meet their personal religious obligations, room 65 in High School West and room 109 in High School East have been set aside so students can incorporate this important aspect of their religion into their daily activities while at school."

A school spokesperson told CBS-6 the decision was made after the high school principal met with the leader of a local mosque in an attempt to improve the school's "cultural proficiency."

She said the school can't refuse a student's request to leave class for required prayer, and the on-campus prayer room allows Muslim students to return to class quickly after praying.

Required prayer? Required by who? If a Catholic student's priest required a student to say the Rosary during school hours would the school officials' comply by offering a special "safe space?"

These are all questions parents should be asking, say Christian counselors and activists.

Schools such as Liberty High School in Frisco, Texas, as well as high schools in Minnesota and Michigan have opened permanent Muslim prayer rooms, as previously reported by WND.

These cases demonstrate the breakneck pace at which America is "bowing before the demands of Islamic

sharia law," says Michele Bachmann, former congresswoman from Minnesota.

"Islamic law insists on societal domination everywhere, including in western Christianized nations like the US and the UK," she said. "Nowhere can anyone point to an example of an Islamic nation that allows the advancement of Christianity or Judaism, in fact our faiths are denigrated by them.

"In Islamic dominated countries Christians and Jews are persecuted and killed," Bachmann said. "In the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria in Israel, Arab communities post large signs saying 'no Jews allowed.' "Islam is neither tolerant nor willing to coexist with other religions, she said, yet it demands that other religions not only tolerate it but observe its holidays in the public institutions of non-Muslim societies.

It's no coincidence that schools are a particular focus, she said.

"At the epicenter of American growth and community life are American public schools," Bachmann said. "It is no coincidence our kids are the primary targets for Islamic civilization jihad. Advocates of turning the U.S. into an Islamic enclave are advancing and winning."

The advancement of Islam in public schools is not going to slow down unless non-Muslim parents take an active stance against it, says anti-Shariah activist Pamela Geller. "We need to hit this on all fronts. This should be a multi-pronged effort," Geller told WND. "I hope the Trump administration will get involved, but we will never overcome this without energetic grassroots activism."

University and college campuses have long been compromised and bought off with jihad millions. Now grade schools, junior and senior high schools are in the sights of the enemy. Common Core proselytizes for Islam, and the real history of jihadi wars, land appropriations, annihilations and enslavements is scrubbed from school textbooks. High schools offer senior electives called "Islam and the Modern World," requiring students to purchase the notorious Islamic apologist John Esposito's *The Straight Path*.

Geller gives parents a comprehensive plan of action against this in her book "Stop the Islamization of America."

"They need to be proactive and complaining to school boards, school district officials, and local representatives, and persisting until these injustices are eradicated."

Robert Spencer, author of the Jihad Watch blog for the David Horowitz Freedom Center, agrees that short of greater parental engagement with school officials, the Islamization of American schools will march forward. The ACLU, which has been at the forefront of many legal challenges to any vestige of Christianity in public schools, is nowhere to be found when it comes to fighting the presence of Islam.

"It's ironic that after fighting for decades against Christian prayers in public schools, the ACLU is AWOL regarding the increasing Islamic presence in public schools," Spencer said. "We need constantly to call attention to this hypocrisy and double standard, and call upon the relevant elected officials to take action or face the consequences at the ballot box. Of course, before that can be done, a great effort must be made to raise awareness of this issue."

Where is Betsy DeVos?

Spencer said lawsuits like the one filed recently against San Diego public schools may be effective and should be pursued but Trump's education secretary, Betsy DeVos, should also get involved.

"After all, the Trump administration is supposed to be dedicated to draining the swamp, and here is a particularly fetid one," he said. Bachmann said the forces advancing the traditional ideals of Western civilization are on the ropes in Europe and are under assault in the U.S.

"Watch out Western civilization, your apathy will kill you."

Bachmann said the U.S. Constitution promises every citizen a republican form of government. "Islam is at war

with freedoms we take for granted - freedom of thought, religious expression and expression of speech.

"If the government fails us at the public school level, then the U.S. will embrace and enforce Islamic laws on the rest of us faster than any of us could imagine, and be prepared to live as foreigners under assault in our own nation."

The message below is from Donald Flynt, Principal of Shenendehowa High School:

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

The school district recognizes the diverse religious backgrounds and values represented in the school community and the importance of being sensitive to the needs of all students and personnel.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. From Saturday, May 27 through Saturday, June 24, 2017, Muslims around the world spend the daylight hours in a complete fast. In addition to fasting, prayer occurs on a daily basis for practicing Muslims. This can be challenging in today's modern public high school.

In an attempt to make reasonable accommodations for students and employees to meet their personal religious obligations, room 65 in High School West and room 109 in High School East have been set aside so students can incorporate this important aspect of their religion into their daily activities while at school.

Please note that this is voluntary and student-initiated. Involvement of school employees is a non-participatory capacity. The allowance of this does not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school.

Students may arrange with Mr. Gutchell or Mrs. Lennon-McMahan at HSW to use room 65. Students in HSE may see Mr. Flynt or Mr. Smith to access room 109. Parents are encouraged to contact me at 881-0310, ext. 61415 or at flyndona@shenet.org with questions, comments or concerns.

As always, I appreciate your support of our high school students and programs.

*Sincerely,
Donald Flynt Principal*

Palestinian Official: Western Wall Belongs to the Muslims "Absolutely"

breakingnewsisrael.com

In another egregious step towards claiming the whole of Jerusalem for the Muslim world, two Arab leaders said on Friday that the Western Wall, or Kotel, belongs exclusively to the Muslims.

"It is an Islamic endowment that absolutely cannot belong to non-Muslims," Mahmoud Habash, a Palestinian Authority Fatah official and President Mahmoud Abbas's religious affairs advisor, declared during a sermon. "It is our property and endowment. It is impossible to concede one millimeter of it."

Sheikh Ikarma Sabri, imam of the Al Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount, echoed his words on Friday, claiming the Western Wall as part of the Islamic Waqf that controls the Mount.

Repeating the ludicrous Arab idea that Islam's claim to Jerusalem predated that of Judaism, Sabri said that Israel was attempting to "convince the world" to "create" its right to sovereignty in Jerusalem.

Both statements were likely a desperate attempt to walk back the damaging assertion of senior Fatah official Jabril Rajoub, who said last week on Israeli television that in terms of a peace deal splitting Jerusalem, the Western Wall "must be under Jewish sovereignty."

“We have no argument about that. This is a Jewish holy place,” he said in the Hebrew-language interview.

However, he quickly retreated from this statement after drawing fury from Hamas, who accused the Palestinian Authority of “liquidating the Palestinian cause” and “conceding its national and religious properties.”

Rajoub attempted to convince Palestinian media that he had said the words “Jewish supervision”, not “Jewish sovereignty”, although there is video footage of his original statement.

The Western Wall is the last remaining remnant of the Temple complex, and is cherished by Jews as one of the holiest sites in the world, after the Temple Mount itself. It has been completely under Israeli and Jewish control since the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967, and is a popular tourist site not only for Jewish pilgrims but people of all faiths.

Unlike the Temple Mount, which is controlled by the Islamic Jordanian Waqf, the Western Wall is safe, welcoming and open to all. The Mount, by contrast, is restricted to Muslims, with short visiting hours for certain quotas of non-Muslim tourists, none of whom are permitted to offer a prayer on the site.

It is also often dangerous. Despite dozens of security officers constantly patrolling the Mount, anti-Israel riots occasionally break out among Arab visitors, and Jewish and Christian tourists are often physically and verbally assaulted. Last month, Jordanian police themselves actually attacked Jewish visitors, leading to their arrest by Israeli security forces.

Southern Baptists Embrace Gender-Inclusive Language in the Bible

America's largest Protestant denomination has produced a revised translation that incorporates many features it had long condemned.

Rodrigo Garrido / Reuters JONATHAN MERRITT AND GARET ROBINSON JUN 11, 2017 theatlantic.com

Southern Baptists have long defended literal approaches to the Bible, but their recent translation of the Good Book might have them switching sides.

Last fall, the publishing arm of the 15-million member Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) released the Christian Standard Bible (CSB). LifeWay Christian Stores, America's largest Christian retailer, which is owned by the SBC, sells the translation at hundreds of its locations nationwide and touts it as a work of superior scholarship. But patrons are largely unaware that the denomination-approved translation is gender-inclusive.

Such news would presumably shock many in the evangelical body. The denomination has affirmed that the Bible commands wives to submit to their husbands and that modern notions of transgender identity blur the line between God-ordained masculine and feminine roles. The group has passed numerous resolutions since the late 1990s publicly condemning Bible translations that attempt to utilize gender-inclusive language.

Rewriting the Biblical 'Curse' on Womankind

When several revisions to the popular New International Version (1984) appeared to employ gender-neutral language, for example, Southern Baptists condemned the translation by name and chastised its publishers. A 2011 resolution even instructed LifeWay to cease selling the translation in its stores. (LifeWay has continued to sell the NIV despite the resolution to remove it; the translation remains the most popular among Southern Baptists with a 40 percent share.)

The rationale behind the rebuke was two-fold. First, inclusive translations abolish many gender-specific terms. For example, they may change “father” to “parent,” “son” to “child,” and “man” to “mortal.” And second, these translations added words and phrases not found in ancient manuscripts for the sake of inclusion. A common example is the translation of “brother” as “brother or sister.”

Some scholars defend translation decisions like these, arguing they most clearly express the meaning of each

passage. But the SBC disagrees, seeing such translations as part of a larger cultural push to erase distinctions between genders and diminish masculinity. It believes political correctness is threatening the integrity of its holy scripture.

In response to this perceived menace, the SBC commissioned its own Bible translation, the Holman Christian Standard Bible, which was finalized in 2003. It was intended “to champion the absolute truth of the Bible against social or cultural agendas that would compromise its accuracy.” The translation was well received and the Bible battleground quieted for more than a decade. But when a revision was released last fall, a number of the same “gender-neutral” elements that the SBC previously condemned were inserted into its own translation.

The CSB now translates the term *anthropos*, a Greek word for “man,” in a gender-neutral form 151 times, rendering it “human,” “people,” and “ones.” The previous edition had done this on occasion; the new revision adds almost 100 more instances. “Men of Israel” becomes “fellow Israelites;” when discussing Jesus’s incarnation the “likeness of men” becomes “likeness of humanity.” The CSB translates the term *adelphoi*, a Greek word for “brother” in a gender-neutral form 106 times, often adding “sister.” “Brotherly love” is translated “love as brothers and sisters.”

The gender-neutralizing pattern is also present in its translation of the Old Testament. For instance, where the NIV “gender-neutral” revision uses the term “human” or “humanly” for a masculine term, the CSB concurs with a “human” “humanly” or “human being(s)” 67 times. As the CSB translates the Hebrew term *’dm* (the word for adam), the generic “man, men,” it uses gender-neutral language of “human(s), humanity, human kind, people, person(s)” 242 times. The CSB also uses the term “mortal” or “mere mortal” to replace a masculine term 6 times. Numerous other instances of gender-neutral translations of masculine terminology exist across both testaments.

The FAQ page for the Christian Standard Bible explains that the translation committee “chose to avoid being unnecessarily specific in passages where the original context did not exclude females.” Such an approach is similar, if not identical, to those taken by inclusive Bible translators, and parallels the logic laid out on the New International Version website.

In email correspondence this week, Trevin Wax, Bible and Reference Publisher for Holman Bibles, defended the translation. He rejected the notion that the translation is “gender-neutral,” calling it “gender-accurate” instead. “It uses male pronouns for God, for pastors, and in places where its obviously male—and it uses male and female, where that’s what the author intended,” Wax said.

A gender-accurate approach often uses inclusive language, Wax said, but only in places “when the original would have been understood to refer to both males and females.” Such a defense of the CSB mirrors those offered by NIV defenders in years past.

Although the CSB’s translation isn’t totally gender-neutral, it’s difficult to deny its significant deviations from rigidly literal interpretation methods. Perhaps gender-inclusive would be a more accurate term. The examples listed here are not exhaustive, after all. In the CSB, there are hundreds of verses that fall within the “gender-neutral” category condemned in Southern Baptists’ own resolutions. Together, they provide an illustrative survey of the kinds of quietly progressive changes that have been inserted into this conservative denomination’s Bible translation.

Such changes in Southern Baptists’ Bible translation of choice are more than a mere denominational matter. The SBC is America’s largest Protestant denomination and one of its most conservative. If its leaders and members are tolerating a softer, more inclusive approach to gender, it might be a bellwether of things to come in the culture war over gender. This week, Southern Baptists will gather in Phoenix for their annual gathering. Whether they ignore or resist the new version of the Good Book may tell us much about the future of gender debates in American society.

