

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

Millennials Spellbound by the Occult

Witchcraft as Cheap Spirituality by: John Stonestreet & G. Shane Morris

Halloween is over, but a growing segment of millennials are still fascinated by witches, ghosts, and other expressions of pseudo-spirituality.

An increasingly heard description of 20 and 30 somethings these days is “spiritual, but not religious.” Ambivalence towards organized religion is near an all-time high. Barna reported in 2014 that over half of millennials hadn’t been to church in the last six months—many citing the irrelevance, hypocrisy, and moral failings of religious leaders. But by far the most common reason given was that they “find God elsewhere.”

What they mean by both “God” and “elsewhere” becomes a bit more clear when you consider the recent explosion of interest in astrology and the occult. Writing at MarketWatch, Kari Paul explains that young professionals and artists in Brooklyn are today less likely to ask, “Where do you live?” or “What do you do?” and more likely to ask, “What’s your star sign?”

The owner of one so-called “metaphysical boutique” in New York says business has never been better. Her occult accessories fly off shelves and into the apartments of educated, urban young people. For those who want to go even deeper, her establishment offers workshops like “Witchcraft 101,” “Astrology 101,” and “Spirit Séance.”

Another company sells mail-order kits containing crystals, bath salts purportedly infused with mystic, Japanese healing powers, and incense “customized to the unique energy of the current moon cycle.”

There’s even a phone app which lets you keep track of your horoscope, and—according to the app’s website—will predict when you’ll have a bad day and whether “you’re fated to fall in love with your crush(es).” The app was so instantaneously popular that its servers crashed the day it was launched. And no wonder. A study by the National Science Foundation found that a majority of American millennials believe astrology is a science, compared with just 8 percent of Chinese young adults.

All told, practices like astrology, aura reading, mediumship, tarot-cards, etc., generate a staggering \$2 billion annually.

So what do we make of this exodus from organized religion and into the arms of new expressions of old paganism? Well, for one thing, it shows young people have no idea what they’re actually buying into. As my colleague, Roberto Rivera, wrote at BreakPoint.org, witchcraft and occult spirituality has been marketed the last few decades as sanitized, consumer-friendly versions of the real thing. Sorcery and star signs may be in vogue now, but one need only look at the preserved bodies of human sacrifices from Iron-Age Europe to know what sort of world this worldview creates.

It was onto this scene that Christianity burst, bringing with it the rule of law, science, respect for individuals, and

“nearly everything that is truly humane about the world we inhabit.”

Even more importantly, the modern groundswell of pagan piety shows how inadequate secularism is. Two Harvard Divinity grads recently topped the charts on iTunes with a new podcast that treats the text of J. K. Rowling’s “Harry Potter” novels as scripture. They explain that a secular worldview “doesn’t speak to people’s hearts and souls” the way mythical magic does.

The fact is young people aren’t being won by atheism in significant numbers. In fact, by some measures, militant unbelief is dying. Rather, they’re trying to fill that deep spiritual longing they have with a faith that offers self-affirmation and a belief in something beyond our physical world—a spirituality that places no moral demands on its adherents.

Ultimately, what they’re searching for is an alternative to God, who, as St. Augustine famously said, made us for Himself. But God does make such moral demands of us, demands that point us to human flourishing—and to Himself, and His love for us that is fully revealed in Jesus Christ.

Until the hearts of this generation find what they are really looking for, you can expect to see plenty more restlessness instead of peace.

The article/testimony below is a bit different for Newzies but there are reasons I’m putting it in - not the least of which is the fact that multitudes of ladies hang on Beth Moore’s every word. There are many words written about Ms Moore out there in cyberland that serve to warn and indict - but primarily, I wanted you to see the tweet she put out recently that should show definitively that she has questionable understanding of how to rightly divide the Word and in fact is torturing the text beyond all reason. Translation: She’s making it up as she goes. I inserted the tweet near the end of the article.

Wisconsin ladies: Beth Moore, who is from Green Bay, will be speaking there in April at the Resch Center and I will get lots of questions on her between now and then so I will do my best to inform on her.

A Pastor’s Wife Breaks Free of Beth Moore: A Testimony

My name is Lauran. I am a Southern Baptist from Tennessee. I walked the aisle to accept Jesus at age 5 but I believe I was truly saved 12 years ago at the age of 21. I am currently the women’s Bible study leader at our church as well as the pastor’s wife. I have broken free of Beth Moore.

I grew up attending a flagship Southern Baptist Church in Tennessee. It was and is one of the most vibrant churches in the convention; its former and current pastors have been the President of the Southern Baptist Convention and both served on the Baptist Faith and Message Committee. At this faithful church, the Bible was proclaimed as God’s inerrant word. Growing up in a church like that, I was often involved in Bible study. One of my favorite Bible study authors was Beth Moore. I was heavily involved in her studies for years. I have seen her speak live multiple times, done countless numbers of her studies and own tons of her books. I’ll never forget the day five years ago when my husband informed me that Beth Moore may not be a sound teacher.

My husband had stumbled across the profile on Beth Moore at the Christian Apologetics Research Ministry (CARM) website. Incredulously, my Baptist husband read Matt Slick’s negative critique of Beth Moore. He was surprised to see that CARM, one of the most trusted online sources for Christian doctrine, did not recommend participating in Beth Moore studies. He knew she was the darling of Southern Baptist women’s studies and a

best-selling author at LifeWay. After studying the article, my husband couldn't help but agree with Slick's assessment. The evidence was right there. Beth Moore was not a sound teacher. Sheepishly, he informed me that Beth Moore may not be a sound teacher. I was aghast!

"What?!" I exclaimed. "No Way! Beth Moore is a godly woman." I had been growing in my knowledge of the word in leaps and bounds over the past few years. I had even attended Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary for a degree in Christian education. It had never been brought up to me in my long Baptist life that Beth Moore, this trusted woman, and leader, might actually be a poor teacher or even a wolf in sheep's clothing! I had always just assumed that what she was teaching was biblical. All of the churches I had ever attended had endorsed and done her studies as part of their women's Bible studies. How could they keep doing her studies if her teaching and actions were unbiblical?!

There was only one way to answer this question. I had really begun to study the Scripture heavily over the past few years and had really begun thirsting for knowledge and wisdom according to the word. I had to learn for myself, by studying Beth Moore and comparing her to God's word, if she was truly a sound teacher or if my husband was on to something. Every teacher should be compared to the Word to see if she measures up. I researched Beth Moore for countless hours. I watched her teaching clips online. I checked multiple reliable sources, comparing all I found to Scripture. It led me to a shocking conclusion -Beth was not teaching sound doctrine.

It felt as though I was breaking up with an old friend. Beth Moore and I had to part ways. Some old things I had heard her say over the years kept coming to my mind. I specifically remember the bizarre story that she shares about the handicapped man in the wheelchair. Apparently God "told her" she needed to go and brush the man's hair. That was the first time I remember hearing about her "special revelations" from God.

A more recent example was when God gave her a vision while sitting on her porch and a message to give to the whole body of Christ; she was supposed to tell the church this message, "my bride is paralyzed by unbelief."

According to Beth, she is God's divine instrument and He is giving her extra-biblical revelation to give to the whole church. The errors just continued from there. Aside from all the exegetical errors in her teaching and the extra-biblical revelations, she promotes the dangerous mystical practice of contemplative prayer. She claims Catholicism is part of the Christian church! She has no problem teaching men. She has even recently aligned herself with Joyce Meyer and Joel Osteen, attending and speaking at conferences at his Lakewood church.

Beth Moore seems to be on a downward slope and she is getting farther and farther away from Scripture. Let me remind you that there are parts of her teaching that are biblically sound. Additionally, the statement of faith at her church and her Living Proof mission statement make her appear as if she is biblical. Remember how Satan works. Just a little bit of false teaching, sprinkled in with a lot of biblical truth, can look good to the masses but it's ultimate a clever deception. As Paul told the Galatians, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." (Galatians 5:9)

Finding out that one of my favorite Bible study authors was a false teacher was bad enough. However, what was worse was the reaction I got from others when I shared the news. When I found out the truth about Beth Moore, I absolutely could not keep it to myself and let other women get swept away in her personality cult and false teachings. I wanted to obey Paul's command to the church – "take no part in the unfruitful deeds of darkness but rather expose them." (Ephesians 5:11) Yet, many of my Christian friends did not want to listen to my warnings. I received comments such as "you are hurting the body" and "you are hurting women." I was told that I was wrong and judgmental. These comments were not just coming from my local Christian circle of women but even by leaders at very large Southern Baptist churches. A youth pastor at the flagship church called me divisive! I wonder if he has even read any Beth Moore books. Who was I to call out a well-known teacher like Beth Moore?! Almost everyone seemed to immediately jump to Beth's defense without even checking the facts or looking at Scripture! Even close family and friends were very resistant and offended at the idea that Beth Moore was not a sound teacher. I knew there was no turning back, I had to take a stand even if it meant I was hated and shunned. That's part of deciding to follow Jesus. As the old hymn goes, "No turning back, no turning back."

If you are a woman who has discovered the truth about Beth Moore and chosen to speak out, be prepared to be shunned by the women and men at your church and possibly even your pastor. Though it seems more people have recently begun to acknowledge her errors, the vast majority of women are still on the Beth Moore band wagon simply because they have always done her studies at their church. People don't like to question what they have always done. Beth Moore has earned her spot at the top of every Christian book store and in every SBC church as part of the ladies' bible studies. When tradition is bucked by Scripture, it is never received well; just look at the example of Jesus and the Pharisees! I feel the teaching commonly accepted by women today is exceptionally bad. Maybe it's due to the fact that, as women, we like to connect with people on an emotional level; we like to hear people that touch us and motivate us. Beth Moore certainly uses her charismatic personality to do just that. She uses her personality to her advantage so that she can connect with women and in turn sweep them away.



I pray if you are a woman reading this article that you will not just take my word for it but will be discerning and seek the Scriptures and "test the spirits" as it says in 1 John 4:1 to see if Beth Moore lines up with God's word or if she is leading women astray. If you do, you will soon find she falls far short. No one is a perfect teacher, but Beth Moore is a bad teacher, and one who claims to be a prophet.

As the women's bible study leader at our church, I will not allow or promote any Beth Moore studies. We as teachers are held more accountable as to what we present to our sisters in Christ as acceptable, sound doctrine. My prayer in sharing this testimony with you is that women everywhere would not allow themselves to be swept away by Beth Moore or any other teacher that simply appeals to their emotions but does not conform to every part of Scripture. Let us break free from Beth Moore choose to only sit under those who rightly divide the Word!

Bart Campolo says progressive Christians turn into atheists. Maybe he's right

By: Sam Hailes | premierchristianity.com

Bart Campolo's process of adjusting his theology to match his experience, shipwrecked his faith. Sam Hailes reports

Fundamentalist Christians will sometimes warn that any deviation from historic evangelical beliefs (however small) is a stepping stone toward full-blown atheism. In other words, Christians must accept that hell is eternal, the Bible is inerrant and God created everything in six literal 24 hour days. If you remove any of these doctrines, it won't be long before you're denying your faith altogether!

Younger evangelicals like myself tend to reject this way of thinking. We see legitimate room to differ on how to interpret doctrines like creation and sovereignty. It's often only the core creedal statements about the existence of God and Christ's resurrection or divinity which are non-negotiable. Whether because of pressure from culture, or an honest re-reading of scripture, we're susceptible to changing our minds on other doctrines that previous generations of Christians have held dear.

But what's surprising is it turns out our older fundamentalist friends aren't the only people who think progressive Christianity can be a stepping stone to atheism. At least one atheist agrees with this theory!

Bart Campolo's story

Tony Campolo's son Bart is well known for his rejection of the Christian faith. Although he doesn't like the term 'atheist', he no longer believes in God and currently works as a Humanist Chaplain.

Speaking on a recent episode of the 'Holy Heretics' podcast, Bart explained his journey away from Christianity began when he was exposed to urban poverty.

"It messed with my theology," he explains. "I had a theology that said God could intervene and do stuff." But after a period of unanswered prayer, Bart admits: "I had to change my understanding of God. Sovereignty had to get dialed down a bit."

Campolo admitted that changing his view of God's sovereignty was "the beginning of the end" of his faith. Why? "Because once you start adjusting your theology to match up to the reality you see in front of you, it's an infinite progression. So over the course of the next 30 years...my ability to believe in a supernatural narrative or a God who intervenes and does anything died a death of a thousand unanswered prayers".

Campolo continued: "I passed through every stage of heresy. It starts out with sovereignty goes, then biblical authority goes, then I'm a universalist, now I'm marrying gay people. Pretty soon I don't actually believe Jesus actually rose from the dead in a bodily way."

Campolo doesn't think he's a special case. On the contrary, he believes the current world of 'progressive Christianity' (what he calls "the ragged edge" of Christianity) is heading towards full-blown unbelief. Speaking during the Wild Goose Festival (the American version of Greenbelt) Bart was clear: "What I know is if there's 1,000 people at Wild Goose today, then in 10 years from now three or four hundred of those people won't be in the game anymore."

Campolo is predicting that as many as 40% of progressive Christians will become atheists over the next decade. In his view, the process of abandoning Christian doctrines is almost addictive. Once you start, you don't know where to stop. It might begin with "dialing down" your view of God's sovereignty, but it could easily end with unbelief.

"When you get to this ragged edge of Christianity when people say 'God' they sort of mean 'the universe' and when they say 'Jesus' they sort of mean 'redemption' – they're so progressive they don't actually count on any supernatural stuff to happen, they've dialed it down in the same way I did."

When Campolo changed his theology to match his experience, it was the beginning of the end. Bart says he's "skipped over" the "progressive re-vamping" of Christianity and gone straight to the logical conclusion that God doesn't exist. He reckons that Progressive Christians should stop pretending God exists in the form of "the universe" or other wishy-washy language.

Campolo says there's a world of podcasts, books, events and more aimed at young evangelicals who are re-thinking historic evangelical doctrines on hell, sovereignty, biblical infallibility, sexuality etc. He believes progressive Christians have plenty of "neat, cool, fuzzy" leaders to follow and cites Rob Bell and Donald Miller as examples. But as a humanist chaplain, Campolo wants to offer similar guidance and help for young people who have rejected the entire concept of God.

"Out there in the world is a growing and increasing number of young people who don't believe in God...They have no communities or groups. They need chaplains, community builders, songwriters. They need someone to help them define this way of life that makes it possible for them to share with other people."

There's a lesson for Christians in Campolo's words. His statement "Once you start adjusting your theology to match up to the reality you see in front of you, it's an infinite progression" should make all of us think.

The conclusion Campolo came to was if "the reality" in front of you conflicts with your faith, then it's your faith which is wrong and must change in some way. But there are other explanations. What if your perception of "the reality" is wrong? What if "reality" as you perceive it isn't the whole truth? Maybe there's truth beyond what you and I experience.

I would argue that Bart has merely swapped one form of faith for another in embracing the ideology of secular humanism. He confidently states that we came from nowhere and are the chance product of an otherwise meaningless universe. That takes faith to believe. He asserts that since we only have one life then the best way a human can spend it is to maximise the welfare of others. Again, it's an article of faith since this belief of Bart's (and by no means shared universally) is dictated neither by science or logic.

I believe that any affinity we find in ourselves for love, goodness, beauty and truth aren't an accidental byproduct of an undirected evolutionary process but signs within us of the image of the God that Bart no longer believes in. I would argue that God is real both when I do experience him and when I don't experience him. My subjective experience doesn't lessen the objective reality.

When Campolo changed his theology to match his experience, it was the beginning of the end. This should serve as a warning to Christians, whether progressives or not. Adjusting your theology to match your experience might sound like an attractive idea, but it isn't always as wise as it might sound.

Plenty of progressive evangelicals will balk at what Campolo is implying. They'll argue they're a million miles away from atheism. But perhaps there's two equal and opposite dangers. Perhaps conservative evangelicals run the risk of being needlessly dogmatic on some issues, thereby alienating the next generation, while progressives are in danger of giving up so much historic doctrine that their faith is starting to look more like Campolo's humanism than historic Christianity.

Faith stripped of its fundamentals is looking increasingly anaemic. But perhaps that has always been the case. Bart Campolo believes his newly-embraced 'godless religion' of humanism allows him to love people better than his Christian faith did. That may be true for Bart, but in practise most of the good that gets done in the world is carried out by people who believe there's a God who made a world worth saving.

As CS Lewis put it: "If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next". Unusual beliefs about heaven, hell and eternity didn't stop Christians from righting wrongs in this world. Quite the opposite! So if progressive Christians want to get on with serving the poor and loving our neighbours, then history implies they should continue to hold fast to historic Christian doctrines - including the ones which are unpalatable to some in today's Western culture.

Saudi Arabia Hosts Arab Defense Summit, Aims to Create Military Coalition

jpost.com

RIYADH - Powerful Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman condemned the attack on an Egyptian mosque that killed more than 300 worshippers and said it would galvanize an Islamic military coalition he convened in Riyadh on Sunday.

Top defense officials from some 40 Muslim-majority countries met for a summit aimed at countering "terrorism." The alliance was announced two years ago by Prince Mohammed, who also serves as defense minister of the country which claims the mantle of leadership in the Islamic world.

This year he has pledged to restore the ultra-conservative kingdom to a more moderate and tolerant version of Islam.

"(The attack) was a very painful occurrence and must make us contemplate in an international and powerful way the role of this terrorism and extremism," Prince Mohammed said. Gunmen attacked a mosque on Friday in Egypt's North Sinai killing more than 300 worshippers, including two dozen children.

The coalition has yet to take decisive actions but officials have described it as a grouping that would allow member states to request or offer assistance among themselves in fighting groups they designate as terrorists.

Such assistance could include military force, financial aid, materiel or security expertise, and will have a

permanent base in the Saudi capital. The coalition will focus not only on a military, security and intelligence track but also efforts to combat terrorist financing and ideology.

"The biggest threat from terrorism and extremism is not only killing innocent people and spreading hate, but tarnishing the reputation of our religion and distorting our belief," Prince Mohammed said in opening remarks.

Iraq and Syria, which have been fighting Islamic State for the past three years, are not part of the coalition. Neither is Saudi arch-rival Iran, which Riyadh accuses of supporting terrorism.

Qatar, which has been isolated by Saudi Arabia and Arab allies for the past six months over alleged support of terrorism, was originally part of the coalition but did not appear to be in attendance at Sunday's meeting.

I think I'll hold out for Jihad Joe: MD

Hijab Barbie: Useful Idiots of Cultural Jihad

by Judith Bergman

<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/11451/hijab-barbie>



Far from being a symbol of empowerment, the new Hijab Barbie is an example of a cultural and civilizational jihad -- and the submission of a Western company, Mattel, to that jihad. Cultural jihad is the attempt to change and subvert Western culture from within, or more simply put: to Islamize it.

Rather than reminding girls of a world of opportunities, the hijab reminds them of all the things they cannot do in many Muslim countries. These include decisions about their own lives and bodies, such as not having their genitals mutilated, and generally not leading the free lives that women in the West -- including the ones working at Mattel -- probably take for granted

A new Barbie doll has been launched as part of Mattel's "sheroes" line. It is a doll in full hijab modeled after American-Muslim Olympic fencer, Ibtihaj Muhammad, the first American athlete to compete in the Olympics wearing a headscarf, which -- apparently -- Mattel felt was something for little girls worldwide to emulate. That and the possibility of selling millions of toys in the burgeoning Muslim market, of course.

"Barbie is celebrating Ibtihaj not only for her accolades as an Olympian, but for embracing what makes her stand out," said Sejal Shah Miller, Vice President of Global Marketing for Barbie. "Ibtihaj is an inspiration to countless girls who never saw themselves represented, and by honoring her story, we hope this doll reminds them that they can be and do anything."

The attempt to paint the new Hijab Barbie as a symbol of empowerment for girls is, however, quite disturbing. Girls "being and doing anything they want" is considerably different from what this hijab-clad doll represents. Hijab Barbie represents, on the contrary, the often violent oppression that Muslim girls and women experience throughout the Muslim world. It also represents the gender-apartheid the Quran mandates, which limits the freedoms of Muslim girls and women in the extreme.

Far from reminding girls of a world of opportunities, the hijab reminds them of all the things they cannot do in many Muslim countries. These include decisions about their own lives and bodies, such as not having their genitals mutilated; not being married off to older men at a young age; not being able to leave the house without male permission or accompaniment; not wearing the clothes they might like and generally not leading the free lives that women in the West -- including the ones working at Mattel -- probably take for granted.

The new Hijab Barbie was presented at the fashion magazine Glamour's Women of the Year awards. Unfortunately, this would appear fitting, given that terrorist sympathizer and pro-sharia activist Linda Sarsour -- who has threatened jihad against US President Donald Trump and said she wishes she could take away the vagina of prominent author Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who herself underwent female genital mutilation (FGM) -- was named one of its "women of the year," along with the other organizers of last January's Women's March.

"I hope that little girls of color across the heartland will be inspired to embrace what makes them unique," said Ibtihaj Muhammad at the launch of the new Barbie doll. But Muslims are not "girls of color". Islam is a religion and an ideology, not an ethnicity.

Far from being a symbol of empowerment, the new Hijab Barbie is an example of a cultural and civilizational jihad -- and the submission of a Western company, Mattel, to that jihad.

Cultural jihad is the attempt to change and subvert Western culture from within, or more simply put: to Islamize it. The Muslim Brotherhood's strategy for the United States, as spelled out in a foundational Muslim Brotherhood document from 1991, openly states:

"The process of settlement is a 'Civilization-Jihadist Process' with all the word means. The Ikhwan [Muslim Brotherhood] must understand that their work in America is a kind of grand jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and 'sabotaging' its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers..."

The document then goes on to list the Muslim Brotherhood organizations and the organizations of its friends: Organizations such as CAIR, ISNA, ICNA among others.

Another example of recent cultural jihad are the attempts, in the wake of the terrorist car ramming attack in downtown Manhattan on October 31, to claim the war cry "Allahu Akbar", a supremacist term for "Allah is greater" -- meaning, greater than all other deities -- as something innocent and benign. A spokeswoman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) wrote in a piece for the New York Daily News:

"The next time you hear Allahu Akbar, whether... on an airplane, or in a shopping mall -- remember that the phrase used by millions of Muslims and Christians daily to praise God regardless of their circumstances, can never be justified for use when harming His creation." The real purpose is more probably an attempt to condition people to the lie that "Allahu Akbar" is an innocent term -- so that the next time people hear it, they will not question its meaning, or fight or flee from a terrorist scene either from ignorance, or for fear of being labelled an "Islamophobe".

Another example of cultural jihad is the attempt to portray "jihad" as something other than what it really is -- war in the name of Islam against all non-Muslims. Instead, it is being portrayed as an "inner struggle" to "better oneself". All of this has as its purpose to condition people into believing that Islamist designs for Western society are benign and to distract from the fact that Islam is a supremacist ideology wishing to impose its rules of sharia upon the West, through peaceful or, if necessary, violent means [Sayyid Qutub, Social Justice in Islam].

Most successful of all the attempts at cultural jihad thus far has been the contention that Islam is a "religion of peace." In Islam, the phrase means that peace that will reign over the world after everyone has been converted to Islam. Nevertheless, many in the Western political, cultural and media establishment have accepted the inaccurate rendering to such an extent that years of evidence to the contrary and thousands of dead and wounded bodies from Islamic terrorist attacks have not been able to change this pretense. Furthermore, the constant repetition of this deception, just as the Muslim Brotherhood planned, has created a deep division between the establishment of the West and its citizenry.

Western civilization is indeed "destroying itself from within" by, among other things, giving in and submitting to Islam. Mattel's new Hijab Barbie is an example of Western regression -- a development that women, especially those who define themselves as feminists, should be ashamed to promote, let alone celebrate. If, despite this, they decide to celebrate it anyway, they should at least do so in the knowledge that, far from creating more equality for women, they have quite simply been made the useful idiots of cultural jihad.