

THE POWER OF THE STORY

Last November, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a former Muslim and an outspoken atheist, wrote an article entitled “Why I am Now a Christian.” This is a truly surprising development for those familiar with her work. Having lived and suffered under the oppressive Muslim Brotherhood in Somalia, Hirsi Ali had renounced her faith in Islam and took up company with the leading atheist intellectuals like Richard Dawkins for many years.

In this article, she presented two reasons for her conversion:

“Part of the answer is global. Western civilization is under threat from three different but related forces: the resurgence of great-power authoritarianism and expansionism in the forms of the Chinese Communist Party and Vladimir Putin’s Russia; the rise of global Islamism, which threatens to mobilize a vast population against the West; and the viral spread of woke ideology, which is eating into the moral fiber of the next generation....and atheism is too weak and divisive a doctrine to fortify us against our menacing foes...

“I have also turned to Christianity because I ultimately found life without any spiritual solace unendurable — indeed very nearly self-destructive. Atheism failed to answer a simple question: what is the meaning and purpose of life?”

Her two reasons are insightful and helpful, not just for Christians, but for all Americans. There does indeed seem to be a coordinated effort in the world to destroy Western Civilization and to create a new order of some kind (whether Communism or Islamism or something else entirely). These movements are powerful and highly influential because they have a story to tell. That is, they give answers to the big questions of life: Where do we come from? Where are we going? Why are we here?

Hirsi Ali realized that atheism is too weak to stand against “our menacing foes” because it has many theories, but no story to tell. According to atheism, we come from nothing, we are going to nothing and there is no ultimate reason for our existence. The world has no meaning and purpose and, therefore, I have no meaning or purpose. And this, she found to be “unendurable...very nearly self-destructive.”

At the end of the article, Hirsi Ali further clarifies her reason for embracing and promoting Christianity:

“The lesson I learned from my years with the Muslim Brotherhood was the power of a unifying story, embedded in the foundational texts of Islam, to attract, engage and mobilize the Muslim masses. Unless we offer something as meaningful, I fear the erosion of our civilization will continue. And fortunately, there is no need to look for some new-age concoction of medication and mindfulness. Christianity has it all.”

It was not the moral or religious codes or even the doctrines of Christianity that we need the most, but rather, the Story. The Bible, at its core, is not a rule book or a mystical text, it is the Story of the World. It is the powerful, meaningful, unifying and true Story that sets us free and keeps us free. It is the Story that every Christian, indeed every American, needs to hear and learn and tell.

So, do you know the Story? Have you ever actually read the Story for yourself? Reading the Bible is not an easy task. It is indeed a big book that can be hard to understand, but it is well worth the effort and it may very well save your life. If you’d like to give it a try, please let me know. We can read it together.

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