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Hallowed Secularism

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### October 9, 2010: What Will Future Secularism Be Like?

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What Will Future Secularism Be Like?10/9/2010—Elizabeth Drescher had a great piece in RD magazine yesterday (Gen X, Gadgets, and God). She drew a line among baby boomers, Gen-Xers and Millenials. These represent the generations born, respectively, from 1946-1959, 1960-1981 and then on through 2000. The research shows gradual decline in religious affiliation and thus a growing secularism, as you would expect from what we have been reading. But, surprisingly, (or maybe not), is that for the Gen-X and Millenials the intensity of religious commitment among those who have it, is “as strong as that of pre-Boomer believers.” And their religious beliefs and practices tend to be “fairly traditional”. If you assume that this just means that younger people divide among non-belief and orthodoxy, you would be wrong. Both groups of believers “churn” among religious traditions until they find a place they feel they belong. And they blend faith practices of different religions (I don’t know how that fits with traditional beliefs). There is here, according to Drescher, a tremendous degree of shared spiritual exploration using social media and other technologies. (Blogs like this one are old hat). No religious experts needed. What is unfortunate here is the lack of knowledge. I had envisioned, or hoped, that in the future a scientifically committed people would reinterpret the old myths in order to create a new kind of religious practice, without the supernatural, but with the wisdom of our religious traditions. What may happen instead, is that a very spiritually hungry people will create its own spirituality, much like we now try to create our own news, and will make the same mistakes that idolatry has always made.