

Popular Faith Concepts Rejected By Theologian

By LOUIS CASSELS
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What is faith?

Virtually every Christian writer since the time of St. Paul has offered a definition.

Despite the multiplicity of words already said on the subject, it is a notable event when Dr. Karl Barth undertakes to spell out the meaning of faith.

Barth's stature among modern theologians has been likened to that of "a giant among pygmies." Many regard him as one of the greatest Christian thinkers of all time.

In his latest book, "Evangelical Theology: An Introduction" (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, \$4), Barth devotes a whole chapter to faith.

First, he rejects as false or inadequate a number of concepts of faith which are widespread today, even among theologians.

Faith, Not Doctrine

Faith, he says, is not merely a matter of giving "assent to certain propositions and doctrines" which one has encountered "second hand" in the Bible or in the teachings of the church.

Such a "blind" acceptance of external authority is a "house of cards" in which one would be well advised to take occupancy. The first strong wind of doubt or adversity may blow it down.

Nor is faith a wishful opinion, or "hypothesis" which man formulates when he arrives at "the boundary of what he considers to be certain human knowledge." If faith were no more than a brave

human leap into the unknown, it would be "scarcely worth mentioning."

Finally, faith is not just a "mood or attitude" which helps men to cope courageously with the vicissitudes of life. This subjective view of faith as an end in itself, Barth notes, is one of the most popular heresies of modern Protestantism.

Book Describes Faith

Having cleared away the underbrush, Barth proceeds to give his own view of faith. And it is not so much a definition as a description.

Faith is a relationship between man and God which rests upon and is validated by first-hand experience. It occurs when man finds himself confronted by God, not as a proposition but as a reality. Man responds by "affirming, trusting and obeying" the reality which has laid hold upon him.

"No one can take such action by his own power," says Barth. "A man can only do this when he is overcome by God's word and its spirit of power."

And yet, the act of faith is always "genuinely and freely man's own." Man is sought by God; the initiative is always with God. But the "event" of faith does not take place until man responds with affirmation, trust and obedience.

The response is not made once and for all. Faith is "a history, new every morning."

St. Paul's Episcopal Observes Twelfth Day Of Christmas

The traditional Epiphany service, which falls on the Twelfth Day of Christmas, will be observed Sunday at 1 p.m. in St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Recognized on the official Episcopal Church calendar, the "Feast of Lights" has been celebrated at St. Paul's for more than 20 years.

Church Groups Set Conference

ALTURAS — Saturday evening, Jan. 12, is the date set for the annual meeting of the Modoc Larger Parish. Preceded by a potluck dinner, the meeting will be held in the parish hall of the New Federated Church in Alturas.

Featured speaker for the evening will be Dr. Shirley Greene of St. Louis, Mo. Dr. Greene is the United Church expert on rural life. His stop-over in Alturas will coincide with a tour he has made over the past month to churches throughout the western states.

Coordinating the plans for the meeting are Rev. Lloyd Bailey of Cedarville and Rev. Carl Olson of Alturas. Election of officers for the 1963 year will be held at the conclusion of the meeting.

The Modoc Larger Parish is made up of Federated Church groups from Likely, Alturas, Fort Bidwell, Cedarville, and Eagleville.

commemorate the manifestations of Jesus Christ as the son of God. These disclosures were made to the Magi at Bethlehem; at Christ's baptism by John in the Jordan River, when the voice from heaven proclaimed, "Thou art my beloved son in whom I am well pleased"; and at the marriage feast at Cana in Galilee, where Christ wrought his first miracle.

One of the oldest ceremonies in the Christian Church, the observance of Epiphany can be traced to an earlier period in the Eastern church than in the Western. In the Greek church, it was observed as early as the 2nd century, but the event commemorated by the Greeks was not the visit of the Magi to Nazareth, but the manifestation of Jesus at the Jordan as the Messiah.

The earliest records of the 2nd century show that even at that time, there was considerable speculation as to the origin of Epiphany, but evidence seems to indicate it was the survival of earlier customs and ceremonies relating to the birth of Christ. The festival does not appear to have been observed in the Latin church until the 4th century.

In England, the popular name for the festival is "Twelfth Day," meaning the twelfth day from Christmas.

SKATING SLATED

An all church skating party, sponsored by the First Christian Church, will be held from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at Skateland on Saturday, Jan. 5. All members are invited to attend and bring their friends.

Christmas. In other languages it is known as "Little Christmas," "Three King's Day," and "Day of Kings."

Epiphany is celebrated in different ways by the various church groups which recognize the festival. The simple and beautiful service used at St. Paul's was written by Bishop William P. Remington in 1936, especially for use in the Episcopal churches of eastern Oregon.

Now retired and living in Southern California, Bishop Remington states that he had a three-fold purpose in writing the service. These were "To honor our Lord as the Light of the World; to show how that Light came gradually to men as they were able to receive it; and to impress the missionary character of the church as it seeks to spread the Light."

The word "Epiphany" is derived from the Greek words, "epi" and "phainein," meaning "to show." Rev. Robert L. Greene, St. Paul's rector, explained that the name of the celebration arose from the coming of the wise men to Christ. He added that the three kings symbolize all people—not just the Hebrews—as they were shown the Saviour of all mankind.

The Christmas decorations in the church will remain in place for the service, designed to re-emphasize the true significance of the season. The prophetic messages of the Old Testament and the fulfillment in Christ's birth as related in the New Testament will be told by Rev. Greene and several parishioners.

The lighting of candles is another symbolic aspect of the ceremony. The Old Testament prophecies speak of the coming of the Messiah as a Light coming to the world. Light is again represented by the star which led the Magi from the east to Jerusalem and at length guided them safely to the place of the Nativity at Bethlehem.

Following a brief devotional by Rev. Greene, the entire congregation will participate in the lighting service, each lighting a candle to symbolize the act of receiving the Light and spreading it to all the world.

An Epiphany custom originated in England. Hidden in the service will be a ring, symbolizing the binding of the world together in the love of God; a thimble, denoting missionary efforts; and a dime, characterizing the earning and giving of money.

This old English custom is carried a step farther by St. Paul's Parishioners who find the items

will play a special role in next year's celebration.

Last year the ring was drawn by Mrs. Richard Bowers, and by virtue of her good fortune she will provide this year's cake and also serve as hostess for the Epiphany party.

Stephanie Guderian, who found the thimble, was supposed to use it to sew some articles which

can be used in the church or donated to missions or charity. She decided to make diapers to be sent to foreign missions.

The dime, which turned up in the slice of cake received by Dr. R. W. Bingham, has been put to work over the past year to earn more money. He will give a report on how he made it grow for the benefit of mission work.



EPIPHANY CELEBRATION — One of the oldest ceremonies in the Christian Church, the Epiphany service, will be observed at St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 7 o'clock Sunday evening. The symbolic candlelighting service on the Twelfth Day of Christmas to herald the "Feast of Lights" has been held at the church for more than 20 years. David Vaagen, left, and Mike Faught, right, will light the candles in the sanctuary which traditionally remains decorated with Christmas trees and evergreens. The congregation will participate in the cutting of the Epiphany cake following the service.

Klamath Falls Girl Leaves For Assignment With Brethren Volunteer Service Program

A new challenge and adventure awaits Jeanette Riffey, 18, who left Jan. 2 to join the Brethren Volunteer Service program. She will be assigned to a social or welfare project in the United States after completing two months of training at New Windsor, Md., and serve for one year as a volunteer worker.

The final decision concerning Jeanette's assignment will be made near the middle of the training period on the basis of project needs and openings, her qualifications and training, and her project preferences. Interested only in the opportunity to serve society, Jeanette stated, "Wherever they decide to place me will be all right. I have no preference as to work or locality."

The Brethren Volunteer Service began in June, 1948, when the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference authorized a "broad plan of volunteer service" for Brethren youth. The purpose of the program, as outlined by the Brethren Service Commission, is to "serve human need — physical, economic, educational, emotional and spiritual; and to serve the cause of peace by giving young people a unique opportunity to grow together in the philosophy and the skills of peacemaking."

The areas of service are numerous and varied. Jeanette may work with migrant farm camps to set up nurseries, clinics, and worship programs; in a city slum area to aid in recreational programs and community development; in a church as a secretary and leader in recreation and worship; in a home for the aged or a children's home; in a home missions church in an isolated area; or she might help process material aid for disaster areas of the world.

If she had applied for at least a 24-month period of service, Jeanette would have had the opportunity to receive an assignment outside the continental United States, perhaps working with refugee relief, village improvement, or a work camp. BVS projects now span five continents, more than a dozen countries, and a third of the states in the U.S. Although Jeanette now plans to serve for only a year, she will be able to extend her service should she decide to remain in the program for a longer time.

According to Jeanette, volunteers are required to be at least 15 years old and in good mental

and physical health. The majority of the volunteers in BVS are members of the Church of the Brethren, she added, but the program welcomes persons of other religious and denominational affiliations.

A 1962 graduate of Klamath Union High School, Jeanette has been working as church secretary and helping Rev. Carl Simmons with various church activities at the local Church of the Brethren, 1273 Bristol Avenue. She said this work helped her prepare for her volunteer service and confirmed her decision to enter BVS while waiting for her application to be accepted.

When she arrives in Maryland for her training course, she will spend about five hours each day in research, study, and discussion in such fields as Bible and basic beliefs; children, youth and club work; social problems; paci-

cessful completion of the course, she will be off for her assignment.

Jeanette said she will receive room, board, laundry facilities, official travel, medical expenses, and a small monthly cash allowance, but her housing will depend on the area and work to which she is assigned. If she enters a job with a Brethren church, she will probably live with members of the congregation. If her work is concerned with a hospital or community center, BVS will find her a suitable place to live located near her work.

Jeanette will receive a cash allowance of \$10 per month for her first year of service, and this will be increased to \$15 if she stays for a second year. However, she will have to pay all personal costs such as clothing and transportation not directly connected with her job. She will not be permitted

Upon terminating their service, volunteers are expected to attend an end-of-service conference. This gives the volunteers a chance to evaluate their service experiences, and also redirects them in constructive channels, beyond their term of service, to their home communities, home churches, for further education, for further church service, and to help them select avenues of employment in keeping with their ideals.

In a sense, BVS might be recognized as the forerunner to the Peace Corps because of the nature of the projects it offers and the way it is set up. According to information released by the Church of the Brethren General Offices, directors of the Brethren Volunteer Service program were consulted extensively by government officials at the time of the establishment of the Peace Corps.



TRAVEL PREPARATIONS — Packing a suitcase was only one of the last minute details which confronted Jeanette Riffey as she prepared to leave for the Brethren Volunteer Service program. After completing a training period in Maryland, she will be assigned to a one-year work project somewhere in the United States. Jeanette is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Riffey, 5244 Bristol Avenue.

ty; crafts and recreation; and intercultural relations.

After her project assignment has been made, she will spend the remaining weeks of training concentrating on actual work experience, with emphasis placed on the particular skills and knowledge she will need. Week-ends will be devoted to deputation trips to churches, which will give her an opportunity to test her communication ability in the fields she has been studying, field trips, recreation, and rest. At the ses-

ted to have a sur on the project, unless there is a need for one, and she will not receive a vacation during her year of service, but Jeanette doesn't really seem to mind these restrictions.

Jeanette feels the experience she will gain from BVS will be invaluable, as few programs can offer youths the opportunity to make a significant contribution to society while helping them to clarify their thinking regarding a vocational choice.

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