

Pondering the Journey by David VanCronkhite

Belief or unbelief?

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We can never forget that know-nothing girl who changed everything about life as we know it. Her level of faith and her willingness to walk out what she believed was supernatural. But then faith is always supernatural; it's not faith unless it's impossible in the natural. Few understood her degree of faith. Was this nobody-of-a-girl sadly deceived? Too gullible?

She was fearless enough to not care what man would think, or listen to the secret words whispered in the marketplace, at the village well, or in the synagogue. After all, she was a nobody, unmarried and pregnant. Who would ever believe she heard from God, much less that her pregnancy was an act of God? Nothing lined up with the guys who were the cops from heaven.

But she believed! When she heard an angel tell her she was chosen, she believed! She did not doubt His ability to perform miracles in her, or in the lives of other poor or disenfranchised, despised, lowly, or disrespected of man.

What if God called us on Mary or Abraham's faith journey?

Today we take this amazing faith of young girl named Mary for granted. But what if you were the one who saw the angel and heard him say something not even as astounding as "you're gonna get pregnant even though you've never known a man." But maybe something as impacting as Abraham's call to "get all your stuff and leave on a journey to a place you know not."

Abraham took off on a journey into the unknown and he was called righteous. Why, I ponder, had we rather stay within the boundaries of what man can perceive and only take off on trips within the boxes of the known. If we are successful we might well find our picture in a museum or hall of fame; or a have a statue in a park, honored by the men of the great systems of Commerce, religion and politics, all for giving our life for the systems while refusing to step into a journey of faith, into the mysteries of God as did Abraham.

The journey begins with I believe!"

As with Abraham, God asks us to risk all on the belief that there is something greater than the systems we trust in and give all of self to please. Today, as through every generation's life journey, we can find a Kingdom filled with losers of life (as defined by our systems). These losers refuse to believe the irrelevant academic studies of a God who is far beyond the concepts of man. As risky as it

seems, choosing the Kingdom of God and renouncing all the systems of man (idols) is always our best choice, our only real solution. And it all begins with a journey of "I believe, I believe, I believe."

We like to believe we, too, would be fearless enough to say, "I'm leaving the security and safety of the systems behind. I'm no longer looking to the approval of man or the systems of man; I'm getting out of idolatry (of the systems), fear of man, unbelief, cowardice, and vile living (it's very vile to be caught up in the worship of man-made systems, worse when you don't even know it). I'm gonna stop lying about how good the systems are and I'm gonna walk away and trust that there is a Kingdom where God will take care of me and mine and more as I seek first!"

Like that nobody of a girl who heard a voice, saw an angel and believed. She said, "Let it be done to me as you like," and the journey was on. She didn't have a clue! She just said OK.

Would we dare say, "Let it be done to me"? Would we be willing to be slandered and defiled by man and our systems in order to be honored by God? The critics will study it, then typically disapprove of it by pointing out the fallibility of man (we are), discounting all the infallibility of God (He is), and coming to the same conclusion--it's impossible!

Trading our destiny for security

Man in the 21st century has feared the journey. He has traded his destiny of life for a trip on a ferris wheel, never intending to leave his man-made safety and security. He plays "May I?" with the ruling classes of religion, Commerce and politics.

God says, "I have called you into a journey of life now and stretching into eternity beginning on earth and extending forever and ever. I have chosen to make you spirit so you can change the atmosphere and all the events of life just by daring to be who I created you to be."

In *Reveille for Radicals*, Saul Alinsky describes those who have the greatest opportunity for journey -- the youth and the poor -- as the systems begin to demand all of creativity. These youth and poor, whom we might even call unbelievers, have had supernatural destiny to believe stolen from them:

"There are many who go through the years without changing. But they are the ones who huddle on a chronological treadmill searching for an illusionary security and something called status. The senility of security and status even afflicts many of the so-called young. They never live. Life is an adventure of passion, risk, danger, laughter, beauty, love, a

burning curiosity to go with the action to see what it is all about, to search for a pattern of meaning, to burn one's bridges because you're never going to go back anyway, and to live to the end.

"Terrified by this dramatic vista, most people just exist; they turn from the turbulence of change and try to hide in their private make-believe harbors, called in politics conservatism; in the church, prudence; and in everyday life, being sensible."

Belief or unbelief? We have a choice. And all the while faith is crying out for us to declare: "Yo Creo! Yo Creo! Yo Creo!"