



Crossring Drama

THE ONE STOP FAITH SHOP

Phil Price

A drama asking if we were to go out and buy a faith like we would a car, what criteria would we use?

(Bill sits on stage wearing a greasy overall and holding a cup of tea. He sits down with a newspaper. Ben enters)

Ben: (apologetically) Oh I'm sorry, I didn't realise you were on your tea break, do forgive me, I can come back later...

Bill: (Standing up) No worries, what can I do you for?

Ben: Is this the place where you sell these 'made-to-measure' faiths?

Bill: You betcha! 'Made to measure' - that's us! You tell us your preferences and personality type and we'll match you up with the right faith!

Ben: Fabulous!

Bill: Just let me get my clipboard and we can put an order together for you.

Ben: OK.

(Bill walks over to the side and picks up a clip board, and then walks back over the Ben)

Bill: Right now, it makes it easier to match you up with a faith if you answer a few questions. Let's start off with worship style. We've got high, (by way of explanation) "bells and smells" (pause) or alternatively you can have low.

Ben: Well which would you recommend?

Bill: It's swings and roundabouts really. The high has shorter sermons...

Ben: I'll go with high then.

Bill: But on the other hand the low doesn't really have much chanting.

Ben: I see.

Bill: And high tend to have their services earlier in the morning.

Ben: Low it is.

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- Bill:** Sure?
- Ben:** Yes.
- Bill:** Right now, let's see, what's next? Predestination.
- Ben:** Predestination?
- Bill:** Yep, would you like to believe in it?
- Ben:** Hmm... I'm not really sure.
- Bill:** Well the advantage of believing in predestination is that you have an excuse for not doing anything with your life.
- Ben:** You do?
- Bill:** Well you just say that it was God's will that you ended up like you did.
- Ben:** I see. That sounds good.
- Bill:** Alternatively if you decide to reject predestination you can hold onto the vain belief that your actions have an effect on the entire universe, the upshot of which is that you can walk around an air of smug self importance.
- Ben:** I see... that sounds good as well. Which would you go for?
- Bill:** Doesn't make an awful lot of difference to be honest with you. It has absolutely zero effect on the way you live out your faith.
- Ben:** OK, I'll go for the first one then.
- Bill:** Fair enough. Now this next choice is quite an important one.
- Ben:** What is it?
- Bill:** How do you feel about Gifts of the Spirit?
- Ben:** Gifts of the what?
- Bill:** You know, prophecy, speaking in tongues, healing, that sort of thing.
- Ben:** Do I have to have them?
- Bill:** Well if you have them you can feel 'spiritual' and look down on those that don't.
- Ben:** That is true.
- Bill:** But on the other hand if you don't then you can keep your faith nicely packaged and boxed up without having to worry about new experiences.
- Ben:** Yeah I think the second one, tongues sound a bit scary.



- Bill:** Right you are. Now, what have we got next? Ah yes! Church leadership structure!
- Ben:** Church leadership structure?
- Bill:** Yep! There are several options, but we generally break them down into two.
- Ben:** Oh yes?
- Bill:** The first is an Authoritative Legalistic structure, where your vicar or minister tells you exactly what to believe and how you should behave. This is good because it means you don't have to think for yourself.
- Ben:** Right.
- Bill:** Alternatively you could have a Democratic Leadership system, whereby everyone in the church votes on different issues. This is a good one if you just want to talk about doing things rather than actually doing them.
- Ben:** OK, I'll go with that one!
- Bill:** Right. Just a few quick answer ones now. Do you want to be teetotal?
- Ben:** No.
- Bill:** Do you want to have women vicars?
- Ben:** Yes.
- Bill:** Do you want to see Harry Potter as a satanic book or a valuable evangelistic conversation starter?
- Ben:** The first one.
- Bill:** Do you want to eat quiche?
- Ben:** No.
- Bill:** Oh, sorry that was a trick question, you have to eat quiche. Now, was there anything else you specifically wanted to ask about?
- Ben:** The engine.
- Bill:** The engine?
- Ben:** What options have I got with the engine?
- Bill:** I'm sorry?
- Ben:** Well I mean can I have reincarnation, the Koran, circumcision?
- Bill:** Well there's only really one option with the engine.
- Ben:** What's that?
- Bill:** You can have one that works or one that doesn't work.



Ben: I'm sorry, I don't understand...

Bill: Well you see, this faith, it's all about a relationship with God which works because of a mechanism in the engine called the 'cross'. If you take the cross out of the engine then it's a faith that ain't going nowhere. You can play around with all of the exterior trimmings, with the worship styles and obscure theological arguments, but once you start taking the cross out of your faith these isn't anything left to attach the trimmings to.

Ben: I see.

Bill: Right I'll go and put this order in for you, in the meantime perhaps you'd like to have a look at your faith's manual.

(Bill hands Ben a Bible and then disappears offstage)

Ben: (reads) "Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

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