

# Could you share Jesus Christ with a friend? (August 2001)

by Peter Jensen

One of the most significant changes over the last thirty years is in the area of personal evangelism. When I first went to College to train for the ministry, many of us only had the vaguest idea about how to witness effectively. Most had never shared the knowledge of Christ, and felt unable to do so.

No longer. There are still people coming to College who have never had the joy of leading someone to Christ, but they are in a minority. Even more importantly, they now at least know how to do so and have tried to do it. Most people have at least had some training and experience in this important task.

This is how it should be. I don't doubt that there are people who are gifted as evangelists. Others find it much harder. But every Christian believer should have the knowledge and skills to introduce another person to the Saviour.

Knowledge is required. It is the simple knowledge of the profound gospel, 'the old, old story';. There is no formula for the gospel. Much depends on what a person already believes or knows. But we must be able to point to Jesus Christ as the Lord who took away our sins by dying for us on the cross. And we must remember the need for repentance and faith.

Small evangelistic tracts and courses are a big help here. We can actually learn what to say and how to go about sharing the gospel. Of course the methods themselves are not necessary, and they have the danger of becoming routine. But they give us confidence that we know what to do and how to do it. They are a great blessing.

Skill is required. Once again there are many courses and books which can help in this area too. In the end, the most important skills are friendliness and prayer. There is no excuse for being ignorant about how to go about personal evangelism.

What about you? Have you been trained? If given the opportunity, could you share the knowledge of Christ with a friend, or a grandchild, or a stranger? Of course I am not talking about religious bigotry and overzealousness.

If you cannot do this, perhaps you could ask your minister for help. It would be wonderful if every Christian in our Diocese was able to witness effectively to Christ. This is a fundamental bit of adult education, and I hope churches are giving themselves to it as a matter of course.

If we do this, I believe that blessing will follow. One of the first blessings will be that more people will have a better grasp of the gospel. There is nothing like being forced to teach the gospel to others to help us to grasp it for ourselves!