

METHOD 3

Personal witnessing

We have seen in the preceding pages that many people today do not even have a Sunday school knowledge of Jesus, the Bible or the gospel.

Also, we have noticed that the basic approach to witnessing and evangelism in many countries since the 1960s has been on the principle of the quick one-off gospel presentation. But because of the abject spiritual ignorance of so many, the average person simply cannot understand the gospel in so short a time. Even the 'simple gospel' will contain six or seven theological concepts, each of which may be second nature to Christians, but is radically new to the people who are not regular church-goers. Presenting the gospel this way is like asking a person to eat a seven-course dinner heaped on to one plate! He gets spiritual indigestion!

Most Christians today do not have any clear or logical way of presenting their faith to those outside the family of believers. Confronted with a non-believer, the average Christian simply does not know what to say and can only make comments about reading the Bible, coming to church, or talking to the minister, most of which they are unlikely to do.

It is hoped that *Christianity Explained* will provide a helpful tool to the Christian person keen to communicate the faith with neighbours, relatives and friends.

From time to time, most of us find ourselves in a discussion about our faith and the things we believe. Instead of calling for the minister, it is the believer's job to make the most of the opportunity as far as they are able. The enquirer may not want to talk to a stranger or some third party.

It is suggested that in such a situation, *Christianity Explained* may be used to turn a one-off conversation into an opportunity to present the gospel in a digestible way. We have seen previously how Jesus in his discussion with the Samaritan woman

began with a casual conversation round the village well:

'Give me a drink.'
'How is it you ask me...for a drink?'

By the end of the incident, however, what began with a chance meeting with one woman turned into a two-day stay, during which time Jesus taught a whole village about the kingdom of God.

Confronted with a similar casual situation you could say to your relative or friend something like this:

*I can see that you have got lots of questions about the Christian faith. I know a simple course called **Christianity Explained** which just goes over the fundamentals of what Christians believe. Would you be interested in doing it with me? I would be happy to help you in this way.*

Recently a friend who is not a believer came to stay for a week. On the first day of her stay she said to us, 'What have you two got that I haven't got?' meaning, of course, our faith in Christ.

As she was staying for a week, we suggested that each day we might, over supper, sit down and go through one unit of the course. This was a very fruitful time and by the end of the week she understood clearly what we believe. As we suspected, she had many misconceptions of the Christian way! She has not yet become a true believer but is weighing up for herself whether or not to take that step.

At a recent training seminar for the *Christianity Explained* material, a man shared that he was taking a couple of friends through the course. Although the man was in his late fifties and had been a Christian for many years, he revealed that this was the first time in his life that he had ever shared his faith with another person. We later heard that he was

training his minister in how to witness!

Many similar examples could be added of people who are effectively using the *Christianity Explained* course as a tool for personal witnessing.

Remember, however, that no tool alone will ever bring a person to Christ. There must be the backing of prayer, and a genuine concern for the state of people around us who are living without Christ. Unless we have the compassionate heart of an evangelist, any tool such as this will just be wasted ink!

*Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord,
we persuade men...for the love of Christ
controls us.*

Paul (2 Cor. 5:11, 14)