

FROM OUR MINISTER

Dear Friends,

During the World Cup, one of my friends wrote on Facebook that she was looking forward to the England-Norway quarter-final. However, she said, she drew the line at cricket.



My friend is a classical musician. She has appeared on TV, playing her flute as an accompanist on shows like Britain's Got Talent. And so I replied to her, 'You appreciate the intricacies of classical music, because you have played it. I appreciate many of the intricacies of cricket (and nothing better than a five-day Test match), because I have played it.'

I believe we can apply something similar to the life of faith. GK Chesterton said, 'The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried.'

It may be that one of the responses we can gently offer to those who doubt our faith is to say, why don't you try living by the teaching of Jesus for a month and see what happens?

A man called Peter Honey once laid out four main different learning styles that people use to find out what is true. Some of us live in our heads as *theorists* (that's me, by the way). Others consider what we can learn after an experience: they are *reflectors*. Still others ask, does it work? They are *pragmatists*. And finally, as I am advocating here, another group learns by doing: they are *activists*.

Historically, Methodism is *pragmatic*. Yet we train our ministers in *reflection* and then you get the odd *theorist* like me, who wants to stick to first principles. Might we do better in our evangelism if we incorporated the *activism*? There is plenty of biblical warrant: texts such as 'Taste and see that the Lord is good' and 'Go and do likewise' come to mind.

Maybe this is an invitational approach we could take with our friends when they express their doubts about faith. You don't have to be egghead to be a witness in this way.

And while we're at it, we would also do ourselves no harm if we considered whether there were parts of Jesus' teaching that we hadn't tried out in practice yet. For then, our Christian lives would undoubtedly grow deeper.

Your friend and minister,

Dave Faulkner