

Easy faith

By [Lisa Landoe](#)

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[Huffpost Religion](#) recently ran an excerpt from Desmond Tutu's new book *God is Not a Christian*. It begins:

They tell the story of a drunk who crossed the street and accosted a pedestrian, asking him, "I shay, which ish the other shide of the shreet?" The pedestrian, somewhat nonplussed, replied, "That side, of course!" The drunk said, "Shtrange. When I wash on that shide, they shaid it wash thish shide."

Tutu's point is that context determines perspective; he's implying that the strongest determiners of faith are accidents of birth. Other stories, like the one about [the blind men and the elephant](#), make the same point. Such parables are meant to discourage exclusive claims to truth.

Tutu's assertion points to Kierkegaard's timeless concern:

Truly, if at one time it was difficult to become a Christian, I believe now it becomes more difficult year by year, because it has now become so easy to become one.

Kierkegaard saw that the difficulty is that "now one is a Christian as a matter of course."

It's an incisive and personally convicting argument. It challenges us to testify to why we hold the faith that we do--without appeal to environmental factors such as family, geography and dominant culture. It challenges us to not be Christian only by virtue of a baptismal certificate, because one of the most tragic things Christianity can become is mere habit.