

# Christian Ambassador Training

## Tactics 1 – Week 7

**Intro Exercise--Discuss the goal of each of the Following**

Herald	Ambassador	Debater	Salesman
Clearly deliver the message of the sender/sovereign	Represent the sovereign to those whom they are sent.	Win people over to their point of view.	Close the deal.

We are called to be the two on the left; pride would have us try to be the two on the right. (Apologetics and debate are fine when used appropriately).

- What are the differences in required skills?
- ... in motivation?

### *Review*

- Definition of an ambassador- One who stands between two parties with a message to communicate: the Sovereign being represented is God and the foreign subject is the world.
- We already are ambassadors
  - Message of reconciliation (a.k.a. the *gospel*)
  - Clear parallels to being a witness/defender of the faith (apologist)
- Characteristics of an effective ambassador
  - Knowledge - an accurately informed mind ... need to know some things
  - Wisdom - an artful method ... need to know how to apply the knowledge to the culture (mission field)- *today*
  - Character - an attractive manner
- Knowledge - things an ambassador for Christ need to know
  - Source for knowledge about God (Bible + nothing) ... Sola Scriptura
    - Avoid Ouija hermeneutics – study God’s Word! (no substitute)
  - God’s message (of reconciliation)
    - Repent & Believe (focus: the Cross, Faith=Believing Trust)
    - NOT “Try Jesus, you’ll like Him” (life enhancement)
  - Language and Culture to whom you are called
    - Postmodernist perceptions of truth, authority, the supernatural
    - Language Barrier – important to explicitly define your terms and ask them to do the same (brings us to Columbo)

\*Most of this lesson comes from *ABC-Tactics in Defending the Faith* ©2002 Gregory Koukl and *Tactics in Defending the Faith* © 2005 Gregory Koukl, Stand to Reason, 1-800-2-REASON or www.str.org and is used by permission. The “Evangelism on-ramp” section and some of the examples are not from Koukl.

## Wisdom - “An artful method”

I hope by now you are confident that I am strongly advocating a biblical model for ambassadorship because today we will not be spending much time in Scripture. While the Bible is the authoritative source about God, the nature of man, sin, redemption, etc. , it is not the only source of knowledge and wisdom. [Before you take out stones to stone me...] you will not find the multiplication tables, instructions about how to be a shepherd, how to fight a battle (unless it is the opposite of worldly wisdom to demonstrate “there is a God in Israel,” etc.)

Today we will simply be learning some methods of communication and ways of maneuvering in conversation to keep it on track. They are simply tools that can be used for good or for evil. In the same way a hammer can be used to construct a home, it can also be used to harm someone, these methods can be used to guide someone towards truth or to humiliate them and bolster the user’s pride.

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<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:18-19** ... Christ ... gave us the ministry of reconciliation ... and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

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### *Strategy & Tactics*

**Strategy** involves the big picture: “God’s Eye View” ...

- Sovereignty of God and an understanding of God as the “agent” of salvation and us as the “instrument”
- Strategically superior position because we have the **Truth**.
  - Holds up under careful scrutiny
  - Best answers to life’s biggest questions

*Discussion:*

- Does this guarantee “winning” every encounter? Stop!
  - Is our goal to “win”?
- Does the more knowledgeable person always win the argument\*?
  - Why not? (good reasons/bad reasons)

*\*argument is not a bad word here (not a dispute but a contest of ideas)*

**Tactics** (literally refer to “**the art of arranging**”) entail the artful arranging of resources, specifically in maneuvering through conversations.

*“Often a clever commander has the advantage over a superior opponent through deft tactical maneuvering.”*

### *The Faithful Tactician*<sup>1</sup>

**Power & Fruit** -- Our power to be effective ambassadors comes through **the Holy Spirit**.

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<sup>1</sup> The Faithful Tactician section does not come from Greg Koukl’s materials.

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<sup>ESV</sup> **Acts 1:8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

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Self examination--Where the Spirit is, the fruits of the Spirit will be **evident**. Where the fruits of the Spirit are absent, the Spirit is not **working**. (*unless it is in spite of the minister--compatibilism...*)

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<sup>ESV</sup> **Galatians 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

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### *A Faithful Tactical Approach*

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<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Corinthians 4:1** Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart.<sup>2</sup> But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.<sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing.<sup>4</sup> In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.<sup>5</sup> For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.<sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

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- **Patiently**-- v. 1 – we do not lose heart.
- **With integrity**-- v. 2 – renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways.
- **With fidelity**-- v. 2 – refuse to ... tamper with God's word
- **Intelligibly**-- v. 2 – refuse to practice cunning ... but by the open statement of the truth
- **To the conscience**-- v. 2 – we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.
- **Humbly**-- v. 5 – For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord

*We must remember that the only difference between ourselves and an unbeliever is that God, in his mercy, has opened our blind eyes and illuminated our hearts by his Holy Spirit. This undeserved grace should compel us to promote Christ, not ourselves.<sup>2</sup>*

#### Tactical Approach-- Not:

- Resorting to tricks or slick ruses.
- Using clever ploys to destroy non-Christians, forcing them to submit to your point of view.
- Attempting to belittle or humiliate to gain notches in your spiritual belt.
- *We aren't to be abrasive, abusive, or alarming.*

#### Tactical Approach--

- Seek to present the truth clearly and cleverly.

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<sup>2</sup> *Christianity Explored Study Guide-Leader's Edition*, The Good Book Company, New Malden, U.K. 2003. p. ix

- Learn to maneuver to get a footing or an advantage in a conversation, helping you to navigate through the mine fields.
- Put you in the driver's seat.
- Allow you to, in many cases, stop a challenger cold and turn the tables.
- *We are to be direct, focused, and challenging.*

### Tactical Approach--Warnings

- These tactics are powerful and can be abused quite easily. It's not difficult to make someone look foolish with these techniques.
- Because the illustrations in this course are abbreviated accounts, they may appear more harsh, direct, or aggressive on the page than they were in reality.

### Tactical Approach--Goal

*The goal, is to find clever ways to exploit another's bad thinking for the purpose of guiding him or her to truth, yet remaining gracious and charitable.*

There are a number of tactics (methods) in the Stand to Reason ambassador training curriculum. I'll begin by sharing the simplest (and most useful) and move on from there.

### **The Columbo Tactic "The queen mother of all the tactics"**

- This is the one tactic I<sup>3</sup> use more than any other, and it's easily combined with other tactics.
- This is the simplest tactic imaginable to help you stop a challenger in his tracks, turn the tables, and get him thinking.
- It's an almost effortless way to put you in the driver's seat.

### **Columbo and His Method – disarming and asks a lot of questions**

Lieutenant Columbo comes across bumbling, inept, and completely harmless (Rumpled trench coat, bed-head, a stub of a cigar, a borrowed pencil, couldn't think his way out of a wet paper bag)

- "I got a problem. Something about this t'ing bothers me. Maybe you can clear dis up for me. I was talkin' to da wife the other day.... Do you mind if I ask you a question?"
- "Just one more thing."
- "Hey, I'm sorry. I'm making a pest of myself. Yes, yes, I am. I know it's because I keep asking these questions. But I'll tell ya, I can't help myself. It's a habit."

*This is a habit you want to get into...*

**Key to the Columbo tactic:** The Christian goes on the **offensive** in a **disarming** way with **carefully selected questions** to productively advance the conversation.

**Simple guideline:** *If you hit a roadblock or find yourself in the hot seat, ask a good question.*

- This can become second nature, especially if you plan questions in advance.

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<sup>3</sup> In most cases, the personal pronouns "I" and "me" in these notes refer to Greg Koukl.

- The simplest, most effective question you can ask in most circumstances is some variation of “How do you know?” or “Why should I believe what you believe?”
  - 1) “What makes you think that’s the right way to see it?”
  - 2) “I’m curious. Why would you say a thing like that?”
  - 3) “Why should I trust that your organization [Mormon Church/Joseph Smith, Watchtower, etc.] speaks for God?”

**This is a good tactic to use where you work.**

- Sometimes you’re discouraged from witnessing in the workplace. (that’s not what they are paying you for – give God glory by your excellence)
- Also, it’s often not fruitful to “preach” at others about your ideas.
- The Columbo tactic allows you to make good headway without actually stating your case.

**Columbo: three uses, three questions.** There are three basic ways to use the Columbo tactic that can tame the most belligerent critic, each launched by a different question.

- To gain information and stay out of the “hot seat”
- To reverse the burden of proof
- To indirectly exploit a weakness or a flaw in someone’s views

**Columbo Type I** -- to gain information -- learn what they think

What do you mean by that?  
(or some variation)

This is a clarification question, delivered in a mild, genuinely inquisitive fashion.

This question tells you what he thinks, so you don’t misunderstand or misrepresent him.

*Can you repeat their view back to them to their satisfaction? If not, you aren’t listening.*

Here is where you can begin to start scaling the language barrier.

This is the simplest application of Columbo, comfortable with absolutely *no pressure*.

It can be a casual conversation starter.

Examples:

- “There is no God.” “What do you mean by ‘God’?”
- “Reincarnation was taken out of the Bible.” “What do you mean it was ‘taken out’?”
- “All religions are basically the same.” “In what way are religions all basically the same?”
- “You shouldn’t be forcing your views on me.” “Specifically, how am I ‘forcing’ my views on you?”

It can be a casual conversation starter. *People are often “saying things” without talking...*

Example:

- “I noticed that cross [pentagram, yin-yang, Star of David, Virgin Mary] on your necklace [tattoo, t-shirt, bumper sticker, ...]. Does that have religious significance or is it just jewelry [decoration ...]?”
- *Other examples (from the class)? (see someone exasperated by a news report in a waiting room..)*

It accomplishes a few things.

- First, it immediately engages the person (non-believer? – don't make assumptions) in an interactive way.
- Second, it shows a genuine interest in the other's view.
- Third, it forces him to think more carefully about exactly what he does mean. This may be the first time... don't underestimate the power of this one type of question.

Staying **out of the "hot seat"**

- At times you may not be academically prepared or quick enough to deal with a challenge.
- Don't feel under pressure to immediately answer every question asked or every point made.
- Here's an easy way to buy yourself some thinking time: **Shift from argument mode to fact-finding mode.**
  - Say something like, "Carefully explain your view and your reasons for it so I get it right, then *let me think about it*. We can talk more later."
  - Ask probing questions (Columbo tactic), but don't try to win your case just then. Make sure you understand the challenge or the objection clearly, then *do some homework* on it and come back better prepared.

So now you know what he thinks... *how does he think?*

**Columbo Type II** -- to appropriately place the burden of proof--learn **how** they think

How did you come to that conclusion?  
(or some variation)

Alternates: "Why do you say/believe that?" or "What are your reasons for saying that?"

*This graciously assumes the non-Christian(?) has come to a conclusion, not just asserted or emoted.*

- The type I question ("What do you mean by that?") tells you what he thinks.
- The second question helps you to learn how he thinks, giving you valuable information on how to question further.

**Burden of proof:** the responsibility to defend or give evidence for one's view

- **Rule: the one who makes the claim bears the burden.**
- Don't allow yourself to be thrust into a defensive posture when the other person is making the claim.
- No more free rides. Christians should get out of the habit of trying to refute every story a nonbeliever can spin or every claim he can manufacture. *Don't accept a burden of proof where none exists.*

- Example from University or Arizona Campus (my first encounter with a postmodern deconstructionist): “We could be two bacteria in the intestine of a goat.” *How might I have responded?*

### **Legitimate burden of proof reversal – the self-evident**

- Some claims are self-evidently true (e.g., the laws of logic) and need no defense.
- Others are immediately justified because of the kind of claim being made. (*In these cases, the burden of proof is not on you but on the detractor.*)
  - You have no obligation to prove your own existence.
  - You have no obligation to prove the basic reliability of your senses.
- Unless there is evidence to the contrary, the way things appear to you is probably the way they actually are.
- Just because it’s remotely possible to be mistaken, doesn’t mean we have any reason to think that we actually are mistaken.

### **Illegitimate burden of proof reversal – the professor’s ploy**

The professor makes a claim (“The Bible is just a bunch of fables.”). When challenged, he turns the burden of proof back on the questioner: “Oh, so you must think the Bible is inspired by God. Then why don’t you prove that to the rest of the class?”

- Don’t take the bait.
- The rule in these kinds of confrontations is, the person with the microphone always wins.
  - Don’t get into a power struggle when you’re out-gunned.
  - He has the strategic advantage. Don’t play into it.
  - Instead, use your tactics.
- **He’s making the claim, not you.** It’s up to him to defend it. He’s the teacher, after all.
  - “Professor, I haven’t made any claims, but it seems you have. I’m just a student here to learn, but since you are the teacher, I was wondering if you could tell us how you came to that conclusion. Would you share that with us?”
  - If he does give an answer, simply thank him for explaining himself and either ask another question or let it go for the time being.

### **Columbo Type I & II Exercise**

I. (2 minutes) Alone or in a group, with of the following statements you might hear, give a type one response AND a type two response for each. Though you wouldn’t do both at the same time, this demonstrates two different directions you can take the conversation. You are in the driver’s seat either way.

II. (3 minutes) Pick one and go deeper. Speculate on how the conversation would proceed from each of your questions. Do they take you in direction where you can make some progress towards truth? Consider other questions that might be better.

- “Belief in God is irrational--there is no proof.”
  - Type I:

- Type II:
- “I could never believe in a God who allows so much evil in the world”
  - Type I:
  - Type II:
- “More people have been killed in the name of religion than anything”
  - Type I:
  - Type II:
- “No Creed but Christ” [or ‘just give me Jesus’ or ‘doctrine divides’]
  - Type I:
  - Type II:
- “Intelligent design is religion, not science”
  - Type I:
  - Type II:
- “I personally don’t believe in abortion, but I think it is wrong to force my view on others”
  - Type I:
  - Type II:

Do not underestimate the power of type I & II questions. Prompting a person to actually have to think through their reasons for their claims can often be enough to wake them up/ alarm them to the fact that they *haven’t* thought things through at all.

When in conversation with unbelievers, don’t forget your goal (*hint: Great Commission*): Is it more important to: win a person to Intelligent Design or to Christ?, or to the pro-life camp or to the Body of Christ?

Columbo tactics will help you steer the conversation. People will often make statements about bad people, mean people, etc. When possible take the on-ramp to biblical evangelism<sup>4</sup>.

**Evangelism On-Ramp** -- the good person test

Do you consider yourself to be a good person?

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<sup>4</sup> The evangelism section does not come from Greg Koukl’s materials.

Do you consider yourself to be a good person? *–very rarely will you get a “no”*

- May I ask you a few questions to see if that’s true? *–most are confident in their self-righteousness and say ‘yes’*
- God gave a standard of morality in the Ten Commandments... have you ever told a lie? [if asked back, admit that you have] ... *yes*
- Have you ever stolen anything (regardless of value)? ... *usually yes*
- Jesus said if you have looked upon a woman [someone] with lust, you’ve committed adultery in your heart, have you ever looked at someone with lust? *yes*
- Have you ever used the Lord’s name in vain or used it as a cussword? ... *often yes*

Remember, the Law brings a knowledge of sin ... *this is not legalism (where the law is taught as a means of salvation)*

- **Gently!** *“Help me out here. I’ve only stepped through four of God’s laws and you’ve broken [almost] every one of them. If you died today and God judged you by His standard, do you think you’d be found innocent or guilty?”*  
*“God would forgive, God is love ... “ “God is also holy and loves justice... innocent or guilty?” **\*if cannot admit guilt, they are not yet ready for the good news.***
- *“On that basis, do you think you’d go to heaven or hell?”*  
*“God would forgive, God is love ... “ “God is also holy and loves justice... heaven or hell?” **\*if cannot admit hell, they are not yet ready for the good news.***
- Does that concern you? (some say no because they don’t believe any of it **\*if so they are not yet ready for the good news)**

**\*To proceed to the cross with any of these is to throw a life preserver to someone happily splashing around in a pool, offer a savior to someone who neither wants nor believes he needs one. It is “casting pearls before swine.” **It may well be necessary to leave them under the conviction of God’s Law in the care of God’s Spirit... don’t worry, they are in good hands!****

- If they admit their sin, that they deserve God’s judgment, and they are troubled by it (the more troubled the better! – broken and crying out of control is a good thing here.) *It’s time for God’s Amazing Grace in all its sweetness--pour it on!* “You know, God has provided a way for you to be washed clean in His sight. Christ commands us to repent (and what that means is to turn away from our sin) and put our trust in Jesus Christ. Do you understand what He accomplished on the cross? ” ... explain the atonement ... explain adoption! ... [More comfort needed? Story of Saul of Tarsus (murder/persecutor of the church turned Apostle) and/or David (murderer/adulterer king remembered as “a man after God’s own heart” ref. Psalm 51 (repentance) and Psalm 32 (recollection).]

## Conclusion

As ambassadors for Christ it is important to represent him faithfully. It is important that we be able to clearly and accurately represent His character (what He’s like) and His message (what he has to say). Next we’ll begin our study of those to whom we are sent.