

Christian Ambassador Training

Tactics 2 - Week 8

When you are ready to go on the offensive... *(in an inoffensive way)*

Columbo Type III -- suggest an _____
_____?
(or some variation)

Third application of Columbo: to indirectly exploit a _____ or a _____ in someone’s views

Examples:

- o Have you considered...the difficulty of removing something like teaching on reincarnation from every existing hand-written copy of the New Testament being circulated in the Roman world by the 4th century?
- o Have you considered...that the lack of any evidence what-so-ever for abiogenesis (life from non-life – life arising initially from inanimate matter) might count against the General Theory of Evolution?
- o Have you considered...that the existence of evil is actually evidence *for* the existence of God, not against it? *(yes – we cover this later!)*

What if you don’t recognize the flaw or know an alternative to propose?

- Don’t go on the offensive... Stick with _____.

Homework Challenge: Look up the following texts to see if Jesus ever used questions to “go on the offensive” (take the initiative) in conversation: Luke 20:22-26; Matthew 21:28-32; Luke 20:2-8; also note the many instances he brought knowledge of sin by indirect use of the law (Go, call your husband... --John 4:16)

The Suicide Tactic -- exposing arguments that _____

These are commonly known as self-refuting arguments. For example...

Note that in self-refuting statements, the minute you say them they become _____.

Views that commit this kind of suicide are sometimes obvious.

1. “There are no absolutes.” Are you sure? “Absolutely.”
2. “You can’t know anything for sure.” Are you sure about that? “Yes.”
3. “There is no truth.” Is that statement true? “Yes.” (I.e., “It’s true that there is no truth.”)
4. “Don’t take anyone’s advice on that issue.” Is that your advice to me?

Sometimes suicide is a little subtler:

5. “You shouldn’t force your morality on me.” --“ _____?”
6. “Question Authority!” --“ _____?”
7. “Who are you to say?” --“ _____?”

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Suicide Tactic Exercise

In a group, work through the following statements you might hear. See if you can recognize the self-refutation. How might you *graciously* phrase a response? *Extra credit if you can phrase it as a Columbo question!*

“I’ll give you three good reasons you can’t use logic to find truth.”

“It’s wrong to try to change other people’s religious beliefs.”

“All religions are true.”

“I don’t believe anything unless it can be proven scientifically.”

“You can only know truth through experience?”

Think of others?

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A good example to be familiar with: “The problem of evil”

Phil Ryken video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNgT-PtM1S4>

Usually, the objection to the existence of God based on the existence of evil commits suicide.

- Ask: What is evil?
 - Don’t give me examples of evil (torture, murder, rape, etc.).
- Tell me why you would call those things evil and not good?
 - Evil is a violation of an objective standard of moral perfection (perfect goodness).
C.S. Lewis: “My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I gotten this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call something crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line¹.”
 - He points out that a portrait is a good or bad likeness depending on how it compares with the “perfect” original.
- Only God is an adequate grounding for objective moral good.
- God’s existence is necessary to make the notion of evil intelligible.
- Therefore, the existence of evil cannot be invoked to prove God does not exist.
 - Rather it indicates the opposite. Simply put:
 1. If the existence of God is necessary for the existence of objective moral good, and..
 2. Objective moral good is necessary for the existence of objective moral evil, then...
 3. The existence of God is necessary for the existence of evil.
 4. Therefore, evil cannot be used as evidence against the existence of God.
 5. Indeed, it is evidence in favor of the existence of God.

Sibling Rivalry – a special form of suicide

- Sometimes objections come in _____ that are logically inconsistent and _____ each other

Example: Post-moderns (relativists who don't believe in moral absolutes) and the problem of evil

What are the two inconsistent beliefs?

Relativism reduces the problem of evil to this: “How could a good God allow things that are contrary to _____?”

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 31. [as quoted by Koukl]

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“Taking the Roof Off” Tactic (condensed) (a.k.a. *Reductio ad absurdum*)

“reducing the argument to its absurd conclusion or consequence”

First you _____ the other person’s viewpoint for the sake of argument.

Then you press him to the logical _____ of his view.

- Can he live with the moral or intellectual consequences of his beliefs?
- Taking the Roof Off makes it clear that certain arguments *prove too much*.
- The goal here is to show that one has to pay too high a price to hold to his view.

Homework Challenge: Find and recognize the use of this “tactic” in the following Scriptures (Rom 2:1; Matt 12:24-26)

The “minimalist ethic”

- It’s okay as long as I’m not hurting anyone. “Have you considered peeping-Toms?”

“Modified pro-choice” position on abortion

“I personally believe abortion is wrong, but I don’t think there should be laws against it.” (This is the politicians’ favorite position.)

*Always ask: “Why do **you** think it’s wrong?” (Columbo tactic)*

He: I’m personally against abortion, but I don’t believe in forcing my view on others.

Me: Why do you, personally, think abortion is wrong?

He: Because I believe it takes the life of an innocent baby.

Me: Let me feed back to you what I thought I heard you say, and you tell me if I got it right [Taking the Roof Off]. You actually believe abortion kills innocent human babies, but mothers should be allowed to do that to their children. Is that right?

He: Well, when you put it that way....

Me: Put it what way? That’s your view. If I’m mistaken, please tell me.

Final Exhortations--Study and Practice!

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