



## Worldview:

## Practical Applications: Becoming Effective Ambassadors for the Truth

### Defining The Issue

The Apostle Paul reminds Christians that we have a full-time responsibility as ambassadors for Christ. He writes,

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20)

An ambassador does more than deliver a message or letter from one king to another. That's what couriers do. From ancient times, kings have sent ambassadors to take up semi-permanent residence in other courts and countries as an expression of good will, and, hopefully, as a living embodiment of the nature and character of the ambassador's home country. The best ambassadors represent the interests of their king and become skilled communicators of their nation's good will.

**Ambassadors for Christ are more needed now than any time since the first three centuries of the Christian era.**

In almost every part of the world, followers of Jesus face an increasingly hostile culture. The "faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3) is regularly publicly maligned and misrepresented. Traditional religious views are depicted by the world's thought leaders as ignorant, or worse, and Christians themselves are often unfairly smeared as mean or arrogant. Nevertheless, as Christ's ambassadors, our mission is timeless. Our friends and neighbours still need to hear of God's love established for all time in Christ's life, death and resurrection.

**Canadians need to translate the Gospel in ways that are meaningful in our context.**

The message of Christ is unchanging. Still, we must continue to find ways to explain our beliefs so that today's people can understand them. Just as missionaries to hidden peoples are taught to be sensitive to their different cultural expressions and practices, Christians in Canada need to translate the Gospel in new ways in order to make it meaningful in our modern context.

### Engaging the Issue

A good ambassador for Christ needs to develop **three traits** to effectively bring God's message to Canadians:

#### 1. Biblical Knowledge

**An effective ambassador knows their king's character and purpose.**

Christians need to know and understand Jesus' message. This means knowing the Bible, the establishment of its authority and how to apply its teachings to daily life.

Knowing these points, Christ's ambassadors can listen and learn about a non-Christian's worldview and translate the Gospel message for particular people in particular moments.

Understandably, this is a lifetime project. However, we all know some scripture, we all have some wisdom on how to apply it and we all have the commission and the command to be ready for a defence of the faith. With humility and love, trust that the Holy Spirit will give you the words you need if you are only willing to speak up (Matthew 10:19-20).

#### 2. Communication Skills

**An effective ambassador is an effective communicator.**

Good communication is always about active listening for understanding, not for winning arguments.

In practice, this means conversations are more focused on seeking understanding and drawing the interest of others. Respectfully and lovingly sharing the Gospel takes mindfulness. Consider the following conversation and relationship best practices.

- **Recognize the relationship first:** We best serve others when we don't treat them as projects. Treat people as individuals who need to be heard and who need to hear the message of hope.
- **Choose your battles:** We need to discern when and how to share the message. Be cunning as serpents and gentle as doves (Matthew 10:16).
- **Ask questions and hear the answers:** More often than not, comprehensive speeches on salvation are not received well. Ask simple questions about people's beliefs and perhaps you will leave them with something to think about.

- **Leave people wanting:** They say people won't remember what you said, they will remember how you made them feel. The Holy Spirit will convict people as we have conversations with them; our role is to speak truth with love and grace.
- **Meet people in their worldview:** With love enter the other person's perspective and find ways to demonstrate that the Christian worldview explains the world better than other views.
- **Contextual awareness:** Consider cultural sensitivities or societal events during conversations. It is extremely important to consider how you may sound to people based on context of what is happening at the time.
- **Pray:** We need to pray for ways to introduce biblical worldview ideas into peoples' minds and for the Holy Spirit to touch their hearts.

Moreover, Christ's ambassadors need to understand that HOW we share the Gospel is as much a part of the message as WHAT we share of the Gospel. As the famous Canadian communications theorist, Marshall McLuhan, famously stated, "the medium is the message." Meaning that people will judge the Gospel by you as well as your delivery of it. So, your lifestyle, your relationships, your words, will all be scrutinized by the world, as you deliver King Jesus' message.

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### 3. Consistency of Character

**An effective ambassador consistently lives the message of their king.**

The world is watching to see that an ambassador is consistent with their message. For Christ's ambassadors this means a character with the content of the Christian message.

An ambassador needs to walk the narrow path of being salt and light. Reflecting His full character without usurping His position.

A word of warning, this puts Christians in a difficult position. Because the Gospel message must be proclaimed, and must never be compromised, we need to be willing to risk our relationships if it means sharing a needed truth. Going to any length to avoid offence will make us ineffective ambassadors as the Gospel itself can be offensive to those who have no desire to follow Christ.

Nevertheless, we must always speak truth with grace.

Apologist Greg Koukl says, the Gospel is offensive enough (2 Cor 2:16); we should never add offense to it. Simply put, when necessary we should be willing to say offensive truths, but in loving ways and with a loving motivation.

These three concepts are all lifelong pursuits. Don't let the knowledge of your own shortcomings prevent you from delivering Christ's message. Only Jesus was a perfect blend of medium and message, and yet many of his hearers rejected the perfect message delivered by the perfect man. Still, a good ambassador for Christ will seek to show the world a Christ-like character.

## Scripture Speaks

You would have to go back hundreds of years to find a time when the western world was as opposed to public Gospel preaching as it is today.

Unfortunately, this anti-Gospel spirit has pressured many Christians to stop sharing the Good News. Here are Scriptures designed to encourage boldness among Christ's ambassadors.

### Our Lord's final words

"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." (Acts 1:8)

### Scriptures that express the attitude of the apostles

**Peter, to the High Priest:** "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

**Peter and John:** "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20)

**Peter to the High Priest:** "We must obey God rather than men... we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." (Acts 5:29,32)

**Paul to Timothy:** "Preach the word [lit. "herald" the word, the action of an ambassador]; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching." (2 Tim 4:2)

**Peter's description of Christians:** "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

**When the Spirit and the Bride (the church) speak with one voice:** "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price." (Revelation 22:17)

## Resources

### Books

Sean McDowell, *A New Kind of Apologist*

William Lane Craig and Lee Strobel, *On Guard*

Paul Copan, *When God Goes to Starbucks*

Rosario Butterfield, *The Secrets of an Unlikely Convert*

### Website

[www.theGospelcoalition.org](http://www.theGospelcoalition.org)

### Video

R. C. Sproul, The Classic Collection

[ligonier.org/learn/series/classic\\_collection](http://ligonier.org/learn/series/classic_collection)