

## Ambassadors for Christ

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*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:17-21).*

The above-cited passage encapsulates the meaning of Christianity. Those in Christ are new creations. By faith in Christ, a transformation of heart and mind is initiated. A new relationship is birthed between us and God by Jesus.

In addition to a new relationship, we are given a new vocation. New creations in Christ are entrusted with the message of reconciliation. This message, of course, is the Gospel. To convey the sensitivity of this task, Paul describes the vocational work of Christians as ambassadors.

An ambassador is an *“accredited diplomat sent by a country as its official representative to a foreign country”* ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)). But, what does this distinction imply about the vocation of Christians?

**1. Ambassadors speak on behalf of a ruler.** Ambassadors have the authority of the ruler they represent in advocating for their home nation. Our country sends ambassadors throughout the world to speak on behalf of the president.

Likewise, God makes His appeal to the world through His ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20). God has given us good news to announce to the world. As ambassadors, we only have the authority to teach God’s word: the Gospel. We have no right to amend the message. Regarding the message Paul brought to the Thessalonians, he wrote, *“For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts”* (1 Thess. 2:3-4).

**2. Ambassadors represent the values of their nation.** For example, American ambassadors generally work to promote the values of democracy and capitalism. As ambassadors for Christ, we are to promote love. Love is the law, moral, and ethic of God’s kingdom. Jesus often expressed the value of love in His teaching.

**Matt. 5:43-45:** *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

*so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”*

**Matt. 7:12:** *“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”*

**Matt. 22:37-40:** *“And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*

**Mark 10:42-45:** *“And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

**3. Ambassadors understand the culture of the country to which they are assigned.** The work of an ambassador involves more than just advancing the policy objectives of his or her home country. Ambassadors must learn and understand the laws, customs, and values of the nations to which they are assigned.

Diplomacy is a delicate work. Making one wrong move or saying one wrong word can be disastrous to the peace process. If not careful, ambassadors can humiliate themselves and the nations they represent. Worse yet, they can offend and do irreparable damage to relationships.

Paul was especially sensitive to this aspect of his vocation. He once wrote, *“For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them... To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some”* (1 Cor. 9:19, 22). Rather than forcibly impose his preferences or worldview on people, he sought to find common ground with people.

Diplomacy is all about building relationships. We must learn about people and their lives. We must prove that we genuinely care about them. Once we build a relationship of love and trust, then, we can more effectively appeal to them with the Gospel.

**4. Ambassadors facilitate peace.** The hostility of God’s enemies is not directed towards His ambassadors. Hostility is directed towards God. Ambassadors are the ones working behind the scenes to facilitate peace between God and man. When ambassadors properly do their work, the king and kingdom are glorified. Likewise, when we properly do our work as ambassadors for Christ, He is glorified.

For example, John devoted his life to preparing Israel for the coming Messiah. He sacrificially labored to lay a foundation of disciples for the arrival of the Messiah. Concerning the

transition which would occur between himself and the Messiah, John said, “...A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:27-30).

Our work is important. Our work is necessary. God has chosen to advance His kingdom in the world through His ambassadors. However, our work is to bring Him glory. He must increase and we must decrease.

### **Conclusion**

There are many challenges in our society today. There is a spreading pandemic. There is heightened racial tension. The political culture is increasingly divisive. Yet, this is the world in which we have been sent as ambassadors for Christ.

Diplomacy is desperately needed. How we engage with people will be highly consequential. We need to be thoughtful. We need to be cautious in our speech. What we say and or post on social media matters.

Despite the challenges we currently face, there is a great opportunity to promote the kingdom of God. We must not respond to our time with callous indifference. Christ's ambassadors are to be people of love, justice, and peace. Therefore, we must use love, justice, and peace to advance the goals of our King.