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By Robert J. Tamasy

ARE YOU A TOURIST OR AN AMBASSADOR?

Most of us have enjoyed being tourists, visiting new cities, even another nations. I have not been as well-traveled as some people, but have appreciated opportunities to visit nearly a dozen other countries. Being a tourist can take us to places we might have only heard people talk about or have seen in photos.

I vividly remember my time in several Hungarian cities, for example. My grandparents had immigrated from Hungary, so it was interesting to see “the old country” firsthand. I also enjoyed going to Germany, including the city of Giessen, my birthplace. Nobody there remembered me – not surprising, since I left for the U.S.A. when I was only a year old – but it was fun retracing my personal history a bit.

As tourists, visits are usually brief, and our commitment level is very low. We arrive to look around, maybe take some photographs, sample local cuisine, and perhaps buy souvenirs. Then we return to our homes. Contrast that with the role of an ambassador, someone who takes up residence in a foreign land for a span of time, representing his or her own native country. They have specific roles and responsibilities, acting with the authority entrusted to them.

I mention this because 2 Corinthians 5:20 offers a challenging description of all who follow Jesus Christ, including the marketplace. It declares, “We are Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.” To me, this says whether I am in a private office, conference room, making a sales call, finalizing a contract, or even traveling, my role is that of an ambassador for Jesus, representing Him to anyone I encounter. Whether I am interacting

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with supervisors, coworkers, customers, or suppliers, I am not only representing my organization but also Jesus Christ, as His ambassador.

Being an ambassador is a duty not to be taken lightly. Through our actions, as well as our words, we demonstrate for others what it means to be one of Jesus' followers. It is a sobering responsibility, as *2 Timothy 4:5 states: "But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."* This is written to all who profess to be "born again" through Christ, as He said in John 3:3. It does not sound like instructions directed to mere "tourists."

But in a practical sense, what does it mean to be "Christ's ambassadors"? We find part of the answer in the second part of *2 Corinthians 5:20, which says, "We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."* If we are "satisfied customers," persons who have experienced the peace, joy, forgiveness, grace, love and mercy of God through Christ, we have an obligation and responsibility to share what we have learned with others so they can experience that as well.

There is more. In another passage from the Bible, we read, *"For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9)*. We work to earn a livelihood; utilize our skills, talents and gifts; and to experience vocational fulfillment. However, we are also called "God's fellow workers," given the privilege of co-laboring with Him in carrying out His plans and purposes in this world.

As Christ's ambassadors, He desires to work through us to demonstrate what it means to live according to His principles and the biblical truths that guide us each day. This is no task for a tourist!

©2018, Robert J. Tamasy has written *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace; Tufting Legacies*; coauthored with David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, and edited numerous other books, including *Advancing Through Adversity* by Mike Landry. Bob's website is www.bobtamasy-readywriterink.com, and his biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

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Reflection/Discussion Question

1. What does the term “ambassador” mean to you? In what ways does being an ambassador differ from being a tourist?
2. As you approach each new workday, would you describe yourself as an ambassador for Christ, or as more of a “tourist”? Explain your answer.
3. When the Bible says we are to be “Christ’s ambassadors,” what do you think that means in a practical sense? What are some of the challenges – or obstacles – to being able to fulfill that role effectively?
4. Have you ever thought of yourself in terms of being “God’s fellow worker”? What difference does it make – or would it make – to regard yourself in that way?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Ecclesiastes 12:13; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 3: 23; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

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