CHAPTER FIVE

STEP THREE: USING COLUMBO TO LEAD THE WAY

UP until now, we have talked about using the Columbo tactic in a very particular way. We have used friendly questions to gather two types of information: a person's view and his reasons for it. One of the advantages of this approach, we noted, was that it is largely a passive enterprise. We put nothing on the line. Since there is nothing for us to defend, there is no pressure.

By contrast, the third use of Columbo takes us more on the offensive, yet in an inoffensive way. We ask a different kind of question, sometimes called a "leading question." As the name suggests, leading questions take the other person in the direction we want them to go. Think of yourself as an archer shooting at a target. Questions are your arrows. Your target will be different in different situations. Sometimes your goal will be to defeat what you think is a bad argument or a flawed point of view. Your questions will be "aimed" at that purpose. Or you may want to use questions to indirectly explain or advance your own ideas. Sometimes you will set up the terms of the conversation using questions to put you in a more beneficial position for your next move.

In each of these cases, questions accomplish two things that mere statements cannot. Every time you ask a question and get a favorable response, the person is telling you he *understands*

the point you're making and *agrees* with it, at least provisionally. He takes another step forward with you in the thinking process.

Ultimately, we want to win someone over to our point of view. But we don't want to force our opinions. Instead, we want to persuade. When the steps to a conclusion are both clear and reasonable, it is much easier to convince someone because he can see the route clearly. He can even retrace it on his own if he wants to. With each question, we lead him closer toward our destination. In this way, we bring him along on the journey.

> When you get approvals for each successive link in the process of reasoning, you move the conversation in the direction **you** have in mind. In that way, you carefully guide the other person to your conclusion.

There are a handful of ways that this third use of Columbo can work. Generally, your leading questions will be used to inform, persuade, set up the terms, or refute. Let me show you how this tactic plays out in specific examples.

THE QUESTION

As you step out as an ambassador for Christ, inevitably you will be asked what I call "*the* question." It's one of the most important questions anyone can ask, but it's also one of the most difficult because the correct answer—a simple "yes"—would be wildly misleading.

The leading New Age author Deepak Chopra put *the* question to me this way in a national TV debate: "You're saying that people who don't believe just like you are going to Hell?" Someone once said if you word the question right, you can win any debate. Dr. Chopra's was a classic case in point. A simple "yes" would be the correct answer, but it actually would distort the truth.

Dr. Chopra's question was not meant to clarify a theological point. Instead, in the gamesmanship of the moment, his challenge was intended to discredit me with the audience. If I answered directly — "Yes, people who do not believe in Jesus are going to Hell" — the debate would be over. Chopra's query would have succeeded in painting me with an ugly stereotype. Viewers would not hear Jesus offering reprieve and rescue from a judgment they each will face. Instead, they would hear conceit and condescension from a "fundamentalist" wishing Hell on anyone who doesn't see things his way.

The third use of the Columbo tactic helps us out of this dilemma, but there's a hitch. Remember from chapter 1 that the first responsibility of an ambassador is knowledge — an accurately informed mind. Knowing that people need to trust in Jesus or face judgment, though, is not enough. Since this truth does not give an accurate sense of *why* Jesus matters, God seems petty, pitching people into Hell because of some inconsequential detail of Christian theology.

The hitch is this: You have to know *why* Jesus is the only way before it is helpful to tell people *that* he is the only way. Without that knowledge, the third step of Columbo will not help you on this issue.

In Chopra's case, I decided to sidestep his challenge rather than try to resolve such a delicate issue with a sound byte. Instead, I used his question as a springboard to make a different point, one I thought was strategic to my own purposes.[1]

I addressed the issue of why Jesus is the only way again when the question came up during a book promotion at a local Barnes & Noble store. I met an attorney there who didn't understand why he, a Jew, needed Jesus. He believed in God, and he was doing his best to live a moral life. It seemed to him that those were the important things — how he lived, not what he believed. Here is how I used Columbo questions to lead him to a proper understanding of the cross.

"Let me ask you a question," I began. "Do you think people who commit moral crimes ought to be punished?"

"Well, since I'm a prosecuting attorney," he chuckled, "I guess I do."

"Good. So do I. Now, a second question: Have *you* ever committed any moral crimes?"

He paused for a moment. This was getting personal. "Yes," he nodded, "I guess I have."

"So have I," I offered candidly, agreeing with him again. "But that puts us both in a tight spot, doesn't it? We both believe people who do bad things should be punished, and we both believe we're guilty on that score." I waited a moment for the significance to sink in. "Do you know what I call that?" I asked. "I call that bad news."

In less than 60 seconds I had accomplished a remarkable thing with my two questions. I didn't have to convince this man he was a sinner. *He was telling me.* I didn't have to convince him he deserved to be punished. *He was telling me.*

I was tapping into a deep intuition every person shares: knowledge of his own guilt and a realization that his guilt should be punished. And I didn't do it arrogantly or in an obnoxious, condescending way. I freely admitted I was in the same trouble he was.

Now that we agreed on the problem, it was time to give the solution. (This is where the "knowledge" part of the ambassador equation is so vital.)

"This is where Jesus comes in," I explained. "We both know we're guilty. That's the problem. So God offers a solution: a pardon, free of charge. But clemency is on his terms, not ours. Jesus is God's means of pardon. He personally paid the penalty in our place. He took the rap for our crimes. No one else did that. Only Jesus. Now we have a choice to make. Either we take the pardon and go free, or we turn it down and pay for our crimes ourselves."

In this conversation I handled an awkward question by combining two things: my knowledge of what Jesus accomplished on the cross and the Columbo tactic. My questions led the attorney, step-by-step, to an answer to his question.

TELL THEM SOMETHING THEY KNOW

The most powerful questions — and the most persuasive — are the ones that help people recall what they already know. In the case of the attorney, I asked key questions to cause his own intuitions about guilt and punishment to rise to the surface. The approach was powerful because I didn't have to persuade him of some foreign idea. I merely connected the dots.

This was true of Shannon, an American college student living in Germany whom I met on a train from Normandy to Paris. Shannon had been raised in a Christian home. She'd been educated at a Christian college and had what she described as a "strong relationship with the Lord." Still, like the attorney, she was perplexed by the idea that others were lost apart from trust in Christ.

"What about someone who believes in God?" she asked. "What about the person who is sincerely following his own religion and trying to be the best person he can be?" I hear these kinds of questions from non-Christians all the time. But I also hear them with surprising frequency from believers. I suspected Shannon already knew enough to answer her own question. She simply had not pieced it together.

"Why should anyone become a Christian in the first place?" I asked. "You and I are Christians. What benefit does putting our trust in Jesus give us?"

"Jesus saves us," she answered.

"From what?"

"He saves us from our sins."

"Right. You might say we have a spiritual disease called sin, and Jesus did something on the cross that healed the disease." She nodded.

"Can simply believing in God heal that disease?"

"No," she said after thinking a moment.

"Can trying our best to be a good person heal it, or being really religious, or even being completely sincere? Can any of those things forgive our sin?" She shook her head. No, none of those

things in themselves could take away our guilt. "We'd still be dying from our spiritual disease, wouldn't we?" I said. She agreed.

Then I simply connected the dots for her. "If religion, or sincerity, or 'doing our best' cannot save *you and me*, then how can any of those things save *someone else*? Either Jesus rescues us by taking the punishment for our sin on himself, or we are not saved and we have to pay for our own crimes. It's no more complicated than that."

Notice two things about this conversation. First, I gave Shannon no new information. I just reminded her of things she already knew, but had not related to her own concern. Second, I did it almost entirely with questions.

TURNING THE TABLES

The third use of Columbo can help you get out of a different kind of tough situation. Sometimes you may need to use questions to set up the conversation in a way that is most favorable to you.

I have a friend who is a deeply committed Christian woman and whose boss is a lesbian. That in itself isn't the problem. My friend has the maturity to know that you can't expect non-Christians to live like Christians. The difficulty is that her boss wanted to know what my friend thought about homosexuality.

> If you are placed in a situation where you suspect your convictions will be labeled intolerant, bigoted, narrow-minded, or judgmental, use Columbo to turn the tables.

When someone asks for your personal views about a controversial issue, preface your remarks with a question that sets the stage — in your favor — for your response. Say, "You know, this is actually a very personal question you're asking. I don't mind answering, but before I do, I want to know if it's safe to offer my views. So let me ask you a question: Do you consider yourself

a tolerant person or an intolerant person on issues like this? Is it safe to give my opinion, or are you going to judge me for my point of view? Do you respect diverse points of view, or do you condemn others for convictions that differ from your own?" Now when you give your point of view, it's going to be very difficult for anyone to call you intolerant or judgmental without looking guilty, too.

This line of questioning trades on an important bit of knowledge: There is no neutral ground when it comes to the tolerance question. Everybody has a point of view she thinks is right, and everybody passes judgment at some point or another. The Christian gets pigeonholed as the judgmental one, but everyone else is judging, too, even people who consider themselves relativists.

I call this the passive-aggressive tolerance trick.[2] The key to understanding this trick is knowing that everyone thinks his own beliefs are correct. If people didn't think their beliefs were true, they wouldn't believe them. They'd believe something else and think *that* was true.

If you have already been labeled intolerant by someone, ask, "What do you mean by that?" This, of course, is an example of the first Columbo question. Though I already have a pretty good idea of what the person means when she says I'm intolerant, asking this question flushes out her definition of "intolerant" and sets the stage — in my favor — for the next two questions. Here's how it looks:

> "You're intolerant."
>
> "Can you tell me what you mean by that? Why would you consider me an intolerant person?"
>
> "Well, it's clear you think you're right and everyone who disagrees with you is wrong."
>
> "I guess I do think my views are correct. It's always possible I could be mistaken, but in this case I don't think I am. But

> what about you? You seem to be disagreeing with me. Do you think your own views are right?"[3]
>
> "Yes, I think I'm right, too. But I'm not intolerant. You are."
>
> "That's the part that confuses me. *Why is it when I think I'm right, I'm intolerant, but when you think you're right, you're just right?* What am I missing?"

Of course, *you* are not missing anything; she is. Her move is simple name-calling. Labeling you as intolerant is no different than calling you ugly. One is an attack on your *looks*. The other is an attack on your *character*. Neither is useful in helping you understand the merits of any *idea* you may be discussing.[4]

> The quickest way to deal with a personal attack is to simply point it out with a question. When someone goes after you rather than your argument, ask, "I'm a little confused about your response. Even if you were right about my character, could you explain to me exactly what that has to do with this issue?"

EXPLOITING A WEAKNESS OR A FLAW

You might have noticed something unique about how I dealt with the tolerance trick. My questions went beyond positioning myself in a more favorable way in our conversation. This time I also used Columbo questions to challenge the other person's ideas. Once you have a clear understanding of what a person thinks and why he thinks it, you can move on to this step: using questions to subtly expose a weakness or a flaw, or to uproot difficulties or problems you detect in his view.

I stumbled upon a wonderful example of this while reading *Icons of Evolution*, the fine critique of Darwinism by Jonathan Wells.

The following dialogue is an example of one student's gentle use of the third step in the Columbo tactic:

> Teacher: Okay, let's start today's lesson with a quick review. Yesterday I talked about homology [how different organisms show remarkable similarity in the structure of some of their body parts]. Homologous features, such as the vertebrate limbs shown in your textbook, provide us with some of our best evidence that living things have evolved from common ancestors.
>
> Student (raising hand): I know you went over this yesterday, but I'm still confused. How do we know whether features are homologous?
>
> Teacher: Well, if you look at vertebrate limbs, you can see that even though they're adapted to perform different functions, their bone patterns are structurally similar.
>
> Student: But you told us yesterday that even though an octopus eye is structurally similar to a human eye, the two are not homologous.
>
> Teacher: That's correct. Octopus and human eyes are not homologous because their common ancestor did not have such an eye.
>
> Student: So regardless of similarity, features are not homologous unless they are inherited from a common ancestor?
>
> Teacher: Yes, now you're catching on.
>
> Student (looking puzzled): Well, actually, I'm still confused. You say homologous features provide some of our best evidence for common ancestry. But before we can tell whether features are homologous, we have to know whether they came from a common ancestor.
>
> Teacher: That's right.

> Student (scratching head): I must be missing something. It sounds as though you're saying that we know features are derived from a common ancestor because they're derived from a common ancestor. Isn't that circular reasoning?[5]

Here's another example of how to use Columbo to expose a weakness or a flaw. Let's revisit the conversation with our professor from chapter 4. In that section, we learned to avoid being taken in by what I called the "professor's ploy" by asking for reasons for his own view, in this case that the Bible was just a bunch of myths.

He might answer, "I know the Bible is a myth because it has miracles in it." This bit of valuable information sets up the next series of questions:

> "And why does that mean the Bible is myth or fable?"
>
> "Because miracles don't happen."
>
> "How do you know that?"
>
> "Because science has proven that miracles don't happen."

Now, I happen to know that science has proven nothing of the sort, nor can it. Since science only measures the natural world, it is not capable of ruling out anything, even in principle, in the supernatural realm.[6] Armed with this information, I can now ask the decisive question: "Professor, would you please explain to me exactly how the methods of science have disproved the possibility of supernatural events?"

The professor has no place to go at this point because no such scientific proof exists. Science has never *advanced* any empirical evidence to show that supernatural events cannot happen. Instead, science (and the professor) has *assumed*, prior to the evidence (i.e., *a priori*), according to naturalistic philosophy, that miracles are impossible.[7] Thus, any "historical" reference to supernatural signs is either a myth or a fable. Your simple question—and the long silence that follows it—does all the work necessary to make your point.

> One of the advantages of the Columbo tactic is not having to assert something you want someone else to believe. You aren't taking the burden of proof on yourself. Instead, you accomplish your goal in an entirely different — and more powerful — way. You use questions to make the point for you.

This last step is more demanding because you have to be able to see some weakness in the person's argument before you can work with it. How do you find the flaw? There is no special formula for making this discovery. The key is to pay close attention to the answer to the question, "How did you come to that conclusion?" Then, ask yourself if the person's conclusion is justified by the evidence he gives.

Remember, an argument is like a house whose roof is supported by walls. In this step of Columbo you want to find out if the walls (the reasons or evidence) are strong enough to hold up the roof (the person's point of view).

Look, observe, reflect. Maybe your friend's comments have tipped you off to some problem with his view. Is there a misstep, a non sequitur,[8] a fallacy, or a failing of some sort? Can you challenge any underlying assumptions that might be faulty? Whatever you discover, be sure to address the problem with a question, not a statement.

STUMPED OR STALLED OUT?

Getting to the third use of Columbo requires insight that the first two Columbo questions do not. You need to know the specific direction you want the conversation to go, the precise purpose you want to accomplish with your leading questions. Do you want to use your questions to clarify a point? To convey new information? To expose a weakness? You have to know which target to aim at before you can continue.

This skill takes time to develop, so don't be surprised — or discouraged — if you find yourself stalled out at first. It's not always easy to flush out the error in someone's thinking or to maneuver in conversation using questions instead of statements. This takes a little practice, but in time, you'll improve. In the second half of this book, "Part Two: Finding the Flaws," I give you a handful of tactics to make this easier.

If you find you don't have the resources to go further in a discussion or if you sense the person is losing interest, *don't feel compelled to force the conversation*. Let the encounter die a natural death and move on. Consider it a fruitful, interactive learning experience nonetheless.

Remember, as an ambassador for Christ, you don't have to hit a home run in every conversation. You don't even have to get on base, in my opinion. As I mentioned in chapter 2, sometimes just getting up to bat will do. Your first two Columbo questions — "What do you mean by that?" and "How did you come to that conclusion?" — will help you get in the game. The rest will come in time.

> We may spend hours helping someone carefully work through an issue without ever mentioning God, Jesus, or the Bible. This does not mean we aren't advancing the kingdom. It is always a step in the right direction when we help others think more carefully. If nothing else, it gives them tools to assess the bigger questions that eventually come up.

INNOCENT AS DOVES

I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter that the third use of Columbo takes us on the offensive. The danger, of course, is that we *become* offensive when we go *on* the offensive. These are two

different things. Yes, we want to be able to point out weaknesses in a view (go *on* the offensive). But we don't want to seem pushy, condescending, or smug (*being* offensive). How do we maintain balance?

Jesus offered this advice: "Be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). I think one of the things he had in mind was that we should be clever in our approach, yet remain innocent in our appearance.

Here's how Jesus' insight might apply. Sometimes the best way to disagree with someone is not to face the issue head-on, but to soften the challenge by using an indirect approach. You can cushion your third use of Columbo a couple of ways.

For one, think about using the phrase "Have you considered" to introduce your concern, then offering a different view that gently questions the person's beliefs or confronts a weakness with his argument. Here are some examples:

- "Have you ever considered ... that if the Bible were 'merely written by men' it would be very hard to account for fulfilled prophecy? How would you explain that?"
- "Have you ever considered ... the difficulty involved with removing something like the teaching on reincarnation from every existing handwritten copy of the New Testament in circulation in the Roman world by the fourth century? How is this physically possible?"
- "Have you ever considered ... that the existence of evil is actually evidence for the existence of God, not against it?"[9]
- "Have you ever considered ... that if partial-birth abortion is okay, it's going to be hard to condemn infanticide, since the baby's location — partially out of the womb (partial-birth abortion) or completely out (infanticide) — is the only difference between the two? Doesn't location seem irrelevant to the baby's value?"
- "Have you ever considered ... that if Jesus was wrong about being the only way of salvation, it is difficult to call him a good man, a prophet, or a wise religious teacher? What do you think about that problem?"

Another way to soften your challenge is to phrase your concern as a request for clarification. Begin by asking, "Can you clear this up for me?" or "Can you help me understand this?" Then offer your objection in a way that gently challenges the belief or confronts the weakness you think you see in the argument. Consider the gentle approach of the following questions:

- Can you clear this up for me? If Jesus' divinity was an invention of the church in the early fourth century, how do you explain all the references to a divine Christ in literature written before that time?
- Can you help me understand this? If there is no evidence that life came from non-life (abiogenesis) — that life spontaneously arose from inanimate matter to kick off the sequence of evolution — and there is much evidence against it, how can we say that Darwinian evolution is fact?
- Can you help me with something that confuses me? How does having a 'burning in the bosom' about the Book of Mormon give adequate evidence that this book is from God when people have similar reasons — a strong conviction from God in response to prayer — for rejecting it?
- Can you clear this up for me? If homosexuality is truly natural, then why did nature give homosexual men bodies designed for reproductive sex with women and then give them desires for sex with men? Why would nature give desires for one type of sex, but a body for another?

One of the reasons this approach is so attractive is that it emphasizes respect for the person you disagree with. First, you have made an effort (with your first two Columbo questions) to understand her viewpoint. Next, you ask, "Do you mind if I ask a couple of questions about what you've told me?" or "Would you

consider an alternative, or be willing to look at another angle?" By soliciting permission to disagree, you make the encounter more amicable. You also stay in the driver's seat.

There is one more way to soften your approach that, strictly speaking, may not involve Columbo (because it doesn't always use a question). Even so, it may serve a valuable tactical purpose. You may find yourself in a situation where either you can't think of a question or where it would seem awkward or contrived to use a question rather than simply stating your view.

In these circumstances, you need a genial way to introduce your point. Here are some recommendations you might want to consider:

- Let me suggest an alternative, and tell me if you think it's an improvement. If not, you can tell me why you think your option is better.
- I wouldn't characterize it that way. Here's what I think may be a better or more accurate way to look at it. Tell me what you think.
- I don't think that's going to work, and I'd like to suggest why. Is that okay with you?
- I'm not sure I agree with the way you put it. Think about this ...

These statements protect you in an additional way. When you say something like, "It's my understanding that ..." or "This is the way it seems to me," then explain your position and invite a response, you indicate you are provisional in your claims. Yes, you have convictions, but they are open to discussion.

This is not only an implicit act of humility, but it also gives you a margin of safety. It may turn out that you have missed something that your friend uncovers in the process of conversation. If you discover that your own ideas are compromised in some way, this could be embarrassing if you expressed them in a dogmatic, uncompromising way to begin with. Furthermore, you have little psychological liberty to adjust your views.[10]

NARRATING THE DEBATE

Many people you talk to will struggle when you turn the tables by asking them to give evidence for the claims they make. When a person has not thought much about his own assertions, dodging your questions may be his only recourse. He may try to change the subject or reassert his point in other ways.

When this happens, it may be helpful for you to "narrate the debate." Take a moment to step outside of the conversation, in a sense, and describe to your friend the turn the discussion has taken. This will help him (and others listening in) see how he's gotten off course.

You can say something like, "I want you to notice what has just happened. First you made a fairly controversial statement, and I asked you a couple of questions about it. So far, you haven't answered them. Instead, you have taken off in another direction. Before we move on to a new topic, would it be okay with you if we finish the old one? I really am interested in your response."

Don't let your friend get off the hook by dodging the issues. This approach keeps the burden on him while keeping the conversation cordial. Encourage the other person to clarify himself. Forcing him to face the music may be the first step toward a change of mind.

> When a cherished view is at stake, it's not unusual for people to raise empty objections — objections that initially sound worthwhile, but simply can't be defended once examined. Questions aimed at undermining the view often reveal a lack of substance behind the bluster.

WHAT WE LEARNED IN THIS CHAPTER

In this chapter we learned how to employ Columbo to take us in an entirely new direction. Instead of using questions to gather information, we discovered that questions can be very effective

to lead someone in the direction we want the conversation to go. Such "leading questions" often work better than statements to explain our view, to set up the discussion in a way that makes it easier for us to make our point, to soften our challenge to another's view, or to indirectly expose a flaw in the other's thinking.

Unlike the first two uses of Columbo, this one requires knowledge of some kind. When we know what we want to accomplish (e.g., to inform, to persuade, to set up the terms, or to refute), we can use leading questions to achieve our purpose. This is a skill that develops over time, so if you stall out at first, don't be discouraged. Instead of trying to force a conversation you don't have the resources to pursue, you can simply move on, knowing you have done the best that you could for the moment.

If someone's thinking is flawed, the key to finding the error is to listen carefully to the reasons and then ask if the conclusions follow from the evidence. Point out errors with questions rather than statements. You might soften your challenge by phrasing your concern as a request for clarification or by suggesting an alternative with the words "Have you considered ..." before offering your own ideas.

CHAPTER SIX

PERFECTING COLUMBO

WE have spent quite a bit of time focusing on a single tactic. I have taken this time because Columbo is so important. It is central to every tactic that follows.

If you have been practicing what we have covered, you have already discovered how handy Columbo can be. You're learning how to advance the dialogue for spiritual ends without seeming pushy. You're realizing that asking simple questions is an almost effortless way to have courteous conversations with others, even if you strongly disagree with their ideas.

You might have noticed, though, that it is difficult to be clever on command. Sometimes it is hard to think of new things on the spur of the moment. You may be able to get conversations started, but then you get bogged down.

To perfect any new skill takes time and practice. If you were just beginning to learn a sport such as tennis, some of your time would be spent practicing the basics (a forehand or a volley, for instance). Then you would get feedback from someone else who could help you improve your technique. Similarly, as you begin to implement your tactical game plan using Columbo, you might wonder if there is something you can do to improve your technique, a way to practice before the pressure is on.

You might also notice something else. You might discover that you are not the only one who can use questions to navigate tactically in conversations. Others — including those who

disagree with you — know how to do this, too, and some are very skilled at it.

In this chapter, I would like to coach you in specific ways to improve your Columbo skill. I also want to show you how to defend against the Columbo tactic when someone else uses it on you. Finally, I will recount a conversation I had with a waitress at a Seattle restaurant because it is a good example of how the various elements of Columbo come together in a single encounter.

IMPROVING YOUR COLUMBO SKILL

Initially, you will not be quick on your feet with responses like the ones in the examples I have given in previous chapters. Instead, you may find that your best ideas come when your head is clear and you are not under pressure to respond immediately. In any encounter, there are two different times when the pressure is off: before the conversation begins and after it's over. Those are perfect times to focus on improving your technique.

Peter reminds us to always be "ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). There are three specific things you can do to "ready" yourself to respond. You can *anticipate* beforehand what might come up. You can *reflect* afterward on what took place. And in both cases you can *practice* the responses you think of during these reflective moments so you will be prepared for the next opportunity.

First, think about conversations you might have about your convictions and try to anticipate obstacles you might encounter. Then think of Columbo questions in advance. Work on an issue or a question that people frequently ask you about or that has stumped you in the past. Brainstorm a handful of straightforward response questions that might put you in the driver's seat of those conversations. Imagine what it would look like to have a dialogue using your questions. This small bit of advance preparation takes a little work, but can be very effective. The next time you face those challenges, the responses will be right at your fingertips.

> Always try to anticipate the rejoinders or counterarguments the other side might raise. Take these rejoinders seriously, stating them fairly and clearly — even convincingly. Then refute them in advance. This tactic removes the objections before they're raised. It's as if you're saying, "I know what you're thinking and it's not going to work. Here's why."

Second, after each encounter, take some time for self-assessment. I have made it a habit to immediately reflect on how I could have done better. It has become second nature. How did I do? Could I have asked better questions or maneuvered differently in the conversation? What were my missteps? How could I improve? With the pressure off, alternatives occur to me.

This is where the Ambassador Model from chapter 1 comes in handy. When I ask myself about the three skills of an ambassador — knowledge, an accurately informed mind; wisdom, an artful method; and character, an attractive manner — I have something specific to focus on. Did I know enough about the issue, or do I need to brush up on something for next time? Could I have maneuvered with more tactical wisdom in the conversation? Was my manner attractive? Did I act with grace, kindness, and patience?

You can do the same thing. Ask how you could have phrased questions more effectively or conducted yourself differently in the conversation. If a friend was with you during the encounter, enlist her help. As a bystander in the conversation, how did she think you were coming across?

This kind of assessment is not hard at all and can be a lot of fun. When you go back and think about an encounter, it prepares you for your next opportunity. The next time around, these new ideas will quickly come to mind.

Finally, when you think of a new idea or approach, practice it out loud. I do this constantly. I try to anticipate the twists and turns my new approach might take and how I would respond to possible

comebacks. If I think of something, I practice it out loud. I say, "I could have said this . . . ," and then I play out the alternative. Often I'll write down my thoughts and review them later. If I'm with a friend, I ask him to role-play with me. He may think of moves on either side of the conversation that haven't occurred to me. Also, when we work on it together, we both learn from the experience.

Sometimes I practice this way when I'm alone in the car listening to talk radio. After listening to a few comments by the host or a caller, I turn the volume down and then pretend it is my job to respond to what was said. It's almost like being on live radio, except if I say something foolish, no one hears it.

Practice like this increases your practical experience. It places you in an actual dialogue in a way that is completely safe. Then, when these issues come up in real-life encounters, you'll be ready because you have already rehearsed your responses.

This is the way I prepare every time I'm interviewed on radio or TV, or every time I'm in a campus debate or a public "cross-fire" situation. It may sound to listeners like I am clever or quick on my feet, but this is not the case. Usually, my answers are not spontaneous at all, even when the conversation takes an unpredictable turn. If I have predicted the turn in advance and prepared for it, then I am not caught by surprise.

This is the same way political candidates prepare for televised debates or comedians prepare to be "spontaneously" funny on late-night talk shows. You will probably never be in a situation quite like one of these, but that doesn't mean you can't learn from their methods.

> When you think of improving your Columbo skill, remember this important truth: Even people who don't usually like taking tests don't mind them at all when they know the answers to the questions.

As you work on developing your own proficiency, I think you will discover something that I have learned. There are two things

that will help generate the courage you'll need to face a challenging situation: preparation and action. Being prepared will give you confidence, but eventually you must engage. Interacting with others face-to-face is *the most effective way* to improve your abilities as an ambassador.

Let me give you some examples of things I wish I would have said during a conversation, but didn't think of until after I'd worked through the steps I described above.

In chapter 1, I mentioned a conversation I had with an actor's wife about animal rights. Here is how that evening ended. As I stood at the door thanking the hosts, I asked one last question about our discussion. It is a question I ask all animal rights advocates if I get the opportunity: "Where do you stand on abortion?" I had no intention of arguing further. I just wanted to know her views, for the record. To my way of thinking, the answer to this question is a measure of an animal rights person's intellectual integrity.

She gave me the same answer I have received from every single person I have asked who held her views. "I'm pro-abortion," she said. Then she clarified, "I'm not actually *for* abortion, I just don't believe any unwanted children should be allowed to come into the world." I thanked her for her candid answer and departed.

Driving home, I couldn't help thinking about her final comments. I was sure I had missed an opportunity, but what was it? Suddenly I realized what was wrong with her response. Not wanting to bring unwanted children into the world may be a legitimate reason for birth control, but it has nothing to do with abortion. When a women is pregnant, the child is already "in the world," so to speak. The human being already exists; he or she is just hidden from view inside the mother's womb. This woman's response assumed that before making the journey down the birth canal, the baby simply does not exist.

This was a weakness that could be exploited with a question. I could have responded to her comment by asking, "Do you think children ought to be allowed to *stay* in the world if

they are unwanted?" The answer to this question must always be "yes," unless someone wants to affirm infanticide, something I'm sure this woman would never do. The door is now open to a final query, the leading question that properly frames the debate: "The issue with abortion, then, isn't whether the child is wanted, but whether or not a woman already *has* a child when she is pregnant, isn't it?"[1]

Here's another example of an opportunity I missed. Once in a dorm lounge at Ohio State University, a student asked me about the Bible and homosexuality. When I cited some texts, he quickly dismissed them. "People twist the Bible all the time to make it say whatever they want," he sniffed.

I don't recall my specific response to him that evening. I do remember, though, that I was not satisfied with my answer. On the drive back to my hotel, I gave the conversation a little more thought. I realized it made little sense to argue with his comment as it stood. It was uncontroversial. People *do* twist Bible verses all the time. It is one of my own chief complaints. Something else was going on though, and I couldn't put my finger on it at first.

Suddenly it dawned on me. The student's point wasn't really that *some* people twist the Bible. His point was that *I* was twisting the Bible. Yet he hadn't demonstrated this. He had not shown where I'd gotten off track. Rather, he didn't like my point, so he dismissed it with a some-people-twist-the-Bible dodge.

I quickly wrote out a short dialogue using questions (Columbo 1 and 2) intended to surface that problem. I also tried to anticipate his responses and how I would use them to advance my point (Columbo 3).

Here is what I came up with:

"People twist the Bible all the time to make it say whatever they want."

"Well, you're right about that. It bugs me, too. But your comment confuses me a little. What does it have to do with the point I just made about homosexuality?"

"Well, you're doing the same thing."

"Oh, so you think *I'm* twisting the Bible right now?"

"That's right."

"Okay. Now I understand what you were getting at, but I'm still confused."

"Why?"

"Because it seems to me you can't know that *I'm* twisting the Bible just by pointing out that *other* people have twisted it, can you?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that in *this* conversation you're going to have to do more than simply point out that other people twist the Bible. What do you think that might be?

"I don't know. What?"

"You need to show that *I'm* actually twisting the verses. Have you ever studied the passages I referred to?"

"No."

"Then how do you know I'm twisting them?"

A word of caution here. Once you learn Colombo, you'll realize how incapable most people are to answer for their own views. The temptation will be strong to use your tactical skill like a club. Don't give in to that urge.

As a general rule, go out of your way to establish common ground. Whenever possible, affirm points of agreement. Take the most charitable read on the other person's motives, not the most cynical. Treat them the way you would like others to treat you if you were the one in the hot seat.

TURNABOUT: DEFENDING AGAINST COLUMBO

The proper use of Columbo depends to a large degree on the goodwill of the person using it. The purpose of our questions is not to confuse but to clarify — to clarify the issues in the discussion, to clarify our point, or to clarify some error we think the other person has made.

What do you do, though, when someone else begins to use Columbo against you, especially when you suspect that his motives are not so noble? How do you respond when you think another person's questions are intended to trap, manipulate, or humiliate you?

Before I answer this challenge, let me make a clarification. There is no risk when someone asks you either of the *first two* Columbo questions. We welcome the opportunity to clarify our views and then give our reasons for what we believe. The danger we need to guard against is the misuse of the *third* application of Columbo — leading questions.

The key to protecting yourself from what may be a Columbo ambush is to remind yourself that *you are in complete control of your own side of the conversation*. You have no obligation to cooperate with anyone trying to set you up with leading questions. Simply refuse to answer them, but do so in a cordial way.

Politely respond to unwelcome queries by saying, "Before we go further, let me say something. My sense is that you want to explain your point by using questions. That confuses me a bit because I'm not sure how I should respond. I think I'd rather you just state your own view directly. Then let me chew on it for a while and see what I think. Would that be all right with you?"

Notice, this is essentially the same maneuver discussed in chapter 4 to get you out of the hot seat. This response forces the other person to change his approach. He can still make his point, but you avoid being trapped.

WHEN A QUESTION IS NOT A QUESTION

Sometimes you will be asked a question that is not a question at all. Instead, it is a challenge in disguise. Consider this comment made to me by a UCLA graduate student: "What gives you the right to say someone else's religion is wrong?"

This is the kind of remark that can catch you completely off guard, leaving you slack-jawed and dumbfounded. There's a reason for your confusion. Even though the statement is *worded* like a question, you are pretty sure it isn't one. Instead, it is a vague challenge of some sort. Now what?

People ask questions for different reasons. Sometimes they ask a question because they're curious or confused. They want information they think you can provide. Other questions are "rhetorical," tossed out simply to stimulate thinking or move the conversation forward. No response from you is necessary, nor is one expected.

"What gives you the right . . . ?" is different. It's not really a question at all. There's no curiosity involved. Instead, it is a statement disguised as a question, a kind of goal-line stand meant to stop you in your tracks. "Who are you to say?" is another example, along with its cousin, "Who's to say?"

These challenges can easily put you on the defensive because it's pretty clear they are not requests for information, nor are they harmless rhetorical probes. The question from the UCLA student was in that category. It wasn't rhetorical, nor was it a mere pursuit of facts. It was a challenge. She was making a point with a question, but what was it?

The best way to navigate in this situation is simply to point out that the question is confusing. Our trusty "What do you mean by that?" is perfect here. You might also say, "I get the impression you think I've made a mistake here. Where did I go wrong?" This will force the person to rephrase her question as a statement, which is precisely what you want.

In my case, I told the UCLA student her "question" was confusing. Did she really want to talk about rights? Did she really want to

know what my credentials were, or what authority I had to speak on these things? Clearly not.

Anyway, I wasn't laying claim to any authority, nor was I promoting my pedigree, academic or otherwise. The only rights I was appealing to were rational rights. I offered an argument that stands or falls on its own merits, not on the authority of the speaker.

> Who's to say? Ultimately, **the person who has the best reasons** is in the best position to say what is true and what is false. This is the way sound thinking has always worked.

I wanted the student to think about what she was really saying with her "question," then rephrase it in the form of a statement. The most important thing to remember about these questions is that behind them lurk strong opinions that are open to challenge if they can be flushed into the open. That's what I was after.

For example, "What gives you the right to say someone else's religion is wrong?" can be restated as "No one is justified saying one religious view is better than another." "Who's to say?" means "No one could ever know the truth about that," or "One answer is just as good as another." "Who are you to say?" usually means "You're wrong for saying someone else is wrong." (This last one is obviously contradictory, but you might not have noticed that problem if the claim remained hidden behind a question mark.)

Each of these is a strong assertion. And each is open to challenge, which is my point. The statement-question has power only when it's allowed to be played. If you force the implicit claim to come to the surface, the objection loses its luster, and you can address the real point lurking in the shadows.

A WORD ON STYLE

There are two basic executions of the Columbo tactic. The first is the bumbling approach of Lieutenant Columbo himself—halting,

head-scratching, and apparently harmless. This tack should be easy for most of us because that's often how we feel when we're trying to gain a foothold in a conversation. The second is more confrontational and aggressive. It's the technique a lawyer uses in a courtroom.

The style you adopt in any conversation will depend on your goal. Do you want to persuade the other person, or do you want to refute him? Persuasion comes across as more friendly because your goal is to win the person, not necessarily to win the argument. By contrast, lawyers want to win the argument. In order to convince the jury, they must refute the defendant.

Since my goal is usually to persuade, in most conversations I adopt the genial approach of Lieutenant Columbo himself. I soften my challenge by introducing my questions with phrases like, "I'm just curious . . . ," "Something about this thing bothers me . . . ," "Maybe I'm missing something . . . ," or "Maybe you can clear this up for me. . . ."

Sometimes, though, my purpose is not to persuade the person I differ with, but to persuade the ones who are listening. This is the situation I face in a debate. I realize there is little hope of winning my opponent. The audience, though, is generally more open-minded. If I can prove my challenger wrong, I can win many of those who are on the fence, as long as I mind my manners.

In informal debates, I can use either style, depending on the situation. If someone is squaring off with me when others are listening in, I might choose a refutation style for the sake of the bystanders. This is especially true if my challenger is belligerent and I have little confidence that he will be moved. Prudence dictates that I refute him and persuade the crowd. In a classroom setting, I usually have a better chance of influencing the students than I have of changing the professor. Even so, because I am a student in his class I would usually take a more indirect, laid-back approach as an act of courtesy.

SHEEPISH IN SEATTLE

Once in a restaurant in Seattle, I got into a chat about religion with the waitress serving my table. My general comments in favor

of spirituality were met with an approving nod, but a shadow of disapproval crossed her face when I mentioned that some religious beliefs seemed foolish to me.

"That's oppressive," she said, "not letting people believe what they want to believe."

Now, much could be said about this challenge. For example, notice that she took my judgment on religious belief as a threat to personal liberty. I ignored that problem, though, and zeroed in on a more fundamental flaw.

"Do you think I'm wrong, then," I asked, using a variation of the first Columbo question.

At this she balked, unwilling to commit the same error she had just accused me of making. "No.... I'm not saying you're wrong. I'm just trying to ... to understand your view."

I chuckled. "It's okay if you think I'm wrong. Really, it doesn't bother me. I just wonder why you don't admit it? Look, if you *don't* think I'm wrong, then why are you correcting me? And if you *do* think I'm wrong, then why were you oppressing me?"

Of course, *I* didn't think her comment was oppressive, but now I was playing her rules against her. Boxed in, she faltered for a moment, then changed the subject. "All religions are basically the same, after all."

It was a parry—a stock retort. I suspect it had worked for her before, and now she was trying it on me. But I noticed something about the comment. She had just made a claim, and it was up to her to support it. It was time for another Columbo question.

"Religions are basically the same? Really? In what way?" I asked.

My question had a remarkable effect. I was amazed at the impact those simple words had on her. Her jaw fell slack, and her face went blank. She didn't know what to say. She had obviously not thought much about the details of other religions. If she had, she'd have known they are worlds apart. Why the empty claim, then, if she had no idea of its truth? I suspect she'd gotten away with it before.

Finally, after a long pause, she came up with one similarity: "Well, all religions teach you shouldn't kill people; you shouldn't murder."

In point of fact, many religions aren't concerned with morality at all. A distinctive of the great monotheistic religions is their concern about ethical conduct, but that's exceptional, not standard. All religions aren't basically the same. Instead of lecturing her about it, though, I used my questions.

"Consider this," I said. "Either Jesus is the Messiah or he isn't, right?"

She nodded. So far, so good.

"If he *isn't* the Messiah," I continued, "then the Christians are wrong and the Jews are right. If he *is* the Messiah, then the Jews are wrong and the Christians are right. So, one way or another, somebody's right and somebody's wrong. Under no circumstances can they both be 'basically the same,' can they?"

It was a straightforward line of thinking that yielded what should have been an uncontroversial conclusion. Yet she ignored my question, regrouped, then continued: "Well, no one can ever know the truth about religion."

This is another assertion that should never go unchallenged, so I calmly asked, "Why would you believe a thing like that?"

The turnabout caught her by surprise. She was used to asking this particular question, not answering it. I was violating the rules, asking her for a reason for her beliefs, and she wasn't prepared for the role change.

I waited patiently, not breaking the silence, not letting her off the hook. Finally, she ventured: "But the Bible has been changed and translated so many times over the centuries you can't trust it."

Notice two things about this response. First, she had changed the subject once again. The alleged corruption of the Bible had nothing to do with the possibility of knowing religious truth. Even if the Bible vanished from the face of the earth, knowledge of God could still be possible, at least in principle. Second, her dodge was in the form of another claim, an assertion that it was her job to defend, not my job to refute.

"How do you know the Bible's been changed?" I asked. "Have you actually studied the transmission of the ancient documents of the text of the Bible?"

Once again, the question stalled her. "No, I've never studied it," she finally said. This was a remarkable admission, given her confident contention just moments before. But she didn't seem the least bit bothered.

I didn't have the heart to say what I might have said in a case like this—"Then you're saying you are sure about something you really know nothing about." I might have added, "If you've never studied this, how do you know the Bible has been changed as you say?"

Instead, I simply told her I had studied the question extensively and the academic results were in. The manuscripts were accurate to over 99 percent precision. The Bible hadn't been changed.

She was surprised. "Really?"

By this point the waitress was running out of comebacks. She watched her options evaporate one by one and began to get uncomfortable. "I feel like you're backing me into a corner," she complained.

I wasn't trying to be unkind or to bully her intellectually. I listened to what she said and took her points seriously. Yet with each claim she made, I asked fair questions that she had no answers for. Apparently, she'd never given any thought to the opinions she held with such certainty. She was dumbfounded by the challenges and complained she was being cornered.

This young lady was like so many I have encountered. She knew all the popular slogans, but when fair Columbo questions eliminated foolish options, the truth began closing in on her. This dear person was speechless, not because I was clever, but because, I suspect, she'd never had to defend her own responses before.

When she says to Christians, "Your narrow views are oppressive," or "The Bible's been changed so many times," or "All religions are basically the same," they retreat in silence. They haven't been taught to simply raise their eyebrows and say, "Oh? How do you know?"

Critics rarely are prepared to defend their own "faith." They have seldom thought through what they believe and have relied more on generalizations and slogans than on careful reflection. To expose their error, take your cue from Lieutenant Columbo. Scratch your head, rub your chin, pause for a moment, then say, "Do you mind if I ask you a question?"

As with the emperor and his imaginary clothes, all it takes is one person to calmly say, "You're naked." That's the power of Columbo.

WHAT WE LEARNED IN THIS CHAPTER

In this chapter we focused on what happens *after* you have a conversation and are now looking back, trying to appraise your effectiveness as an ambassador. We started out by exploring three specific ways you can improve your skill at Columbo.

First, try to anticipate objections you might face, and then think of questions in advance. This allows you to formulate responses before the pressure is on. Second, take some time for self-assessment after each encounter. Ask how you could have phrased questions more effectively or conducted yourself differently in the conversation. Enlist a friend in the process, especially if he was with you during the dialogue. Finally, if you think of anything new, role-play your ideas—and potential rejoinders from the other side—out loud.

Next, we learned how to defend against the Columbo tactic when someone uses it against us. Remind yourself that you are in control of your side of the conversation. Politely refuse to answer the person's leading questions. Then, ask him to simply state his point and his reasons for it so you can give the issue some thought.

We also learned to be alert for questions that are not really questions at all, but assertions in disguise (e.g., "Who are you to say?"). When you encounter this situation, point out that the question is confusing. Then ask the person to rephrase it in the form of a statement. Or simply ask your first Columbo question, "What do you mean by that?"

6. I believe in such arguments and even offer them (e.g., "Has God Spoken?"), but I don't think this is the most effective way to persuade on this issue.

CHAPTER 4: COLUMBO STEP TWO: THE BURDEN OF PROOF

1. I first heard this quip from apologist Phil Fernandes.
2. When neighborhood evangelists knock on your door, you might also ask, "Why should I trust that your organization — e.g., the Mormon Church, the Watchtower, etc. — speaks for God?"
3. Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (London: W.W. Norton, 1996), 89.
4. Philosopher Richard Swinburne calls this the "principle of credulity," a notion accepted by most philosophers and by all ordinary folk.

CHAPTER 5: STEP THREE: USING COLUMBO TO LEAD THE WAY

1. Incidentally, I rarely use Columbo in an on-air, crossfire environment because the clock is always ticking. The more time the other person is given, the less opportunity I have to make my points. I do not want to surrender valuable airtime to my opponent by asking questions he may take a long time answering. It is difficult to get the floor back once I've given it away. The exception to this rule is when *I* am the host. In that case, I am "the man with the microphone" and can keep the conversation from becoming too one-sided.
2. This phrase was suggested to me by Frank Beckwith.
3. They might attempt to sidestep this challenge by saying, "I think my views are right *for me*. You're trying to force your views on others; I'm not." I call this the "postmodern two-step" because I think it is intellectually dishonest. The whole reason the other person is engaging you is to correct you. He thinks you should adopt his more "tolerant" view instead of the "arrogant" and "intolerant" view you hold. He wants to change your mind because he thinks his view is correct and yours is wrong, the very same thing that brings his charge of intolerance against you.
4. These are classically known as *ad hominem* attacks, literally "to the person." They are attempts to distract from the main issue by attacking the messenger in some way instead of addressing the message.

5. Jonathan Wells, *Icons of Evolution — Science or Myth?* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2000), 79–80.
6. The professor has made what is known as a *category error*. This mistake is made when trying to assign a certain quality or action to something that does not properly belong to that category of things. If I were to ask, "How much do your thoughts weigh?" or "What does the color yellow sound like?" I would be guilty of this error.
7. The term *a priori* refers to that which is known before, or "prior to," a process of discovery, in particular, discovery by sense experience. It is often used to describe philosophical commitments that are brought to the table as defining elements of a debate before other relevant evidence is considered. These commitments determine how the evidence will be viewed or whether it will be considered at all. *A priori* is contrasted to *a posteriori*, that which is known *after* looking at the evidence of sense experience. The deliverances of science can properly be based only on *a posteriori* evidence, not on *a priori* assumptions.
8. The phrase *non sequitur* literally means "it does not follow." It describes a reply that has no relevance to what preceded it, a conclusion that does not follow from any earlier statements or evidence. To claim that the Gospels are unreliable because they were written by Christians is a non sequitur. It does not follow that simply because the Gospel writers were disciples of Christ they distorted their descriptions of him. In fact, just the opposite might be argued. Those who were closest to Jesus were in the best position to give an accurate record of the details of his life. This is not a non sequitur, but a reasonable conclusion.
9. C. S. Lewis opens with this argument in *Mere Christianity*, his fine introduction to the Christian faith. I develop this idea in more detail in chapter 6.
10. Of course, I'm not suggesting we never take a strong stand, only that as a tactical consideration, we present our views in a way that keeps our options open. Since our own understanding of truth is fallible, it is wise not to press our point beyond what our evidence allows. This is appropriate epistemic humility.

CHAPTER 6: PERFECTING COLUMBO

1. I call this approach to abortion "Only One Question" because answering a single question about abortion is the key to cutting the Gordian knot on this controversial issue. Here is that question: What is the

unborn? As I have argued elsewhere (e.g., in *Precious Unborn Human Persons*), if the unborn is not a human being, no justification for abortion is necessary. However, if the unborn is a human being, no justification for elective abortion is adequate, because we do not take the lives of valuable human beings for the reasons people give to justify their abortions. My theoretical question to the actor's wife trades on that strategy.

CHAPTER 7: SUICIDE: VIEWS THAT SELF-DESTRUCT

1. I heard this line from my friend, philosopher David Horner.
2. More precisely, "A" cannot be "non-A" at the same time, in the same way or, in Aristotle's words, "One cannot say of something that it is and that it is not in the same respect and at the same time."
3. This quip came from my clever friend Frank Beckwith.
4. These last three are memorable malaprops of Yogi Berra.
5. The argument fails, though, as many have shown. There is no inherent contradiction between God's goodness and power and the existence of evil.
6. This is not a meaningful limitation on the Divine, however. God's omnipotence ensures that he can do anything power is capable of doing. Yet no amount of power can make a square circle. It would be a limit, though, if God's rational nature were compromised by contradiction.
7. According to postmodern thinking, truth does not exist in the sense most of us use the word. There are no claims about the way the world really is that we can know to be accurate. Instead, there are many socially constructed accounts of reality, and each one is literally "true" for those who believe it.
8. C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 272.
9. Empiricism, the claim that knowledge is restricted to that which can be perceived by the senses, self-destructs in the same way. The truth of empiricism itself cannot be perceived with the senses.

CHAPTER 8: PRACTICAL SUICIDE

1. For the full transcript, see "A Conversation with Lee" at www.str.org. It's a delightful lesson in the use of the Suicide Tactic.
2. Alvin Plantinga, "Pluralism," in *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity*, ed. Philip Quinn and Kevin Meeker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 177.
3. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 5.

4. Gregory Koukl and Francis Beckwith, *Relativism — Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 143.
5. Jeffery L. Sheler, "Unwelcome Prayers," *U.S. News & World Report*, 20 September 1999.

CHAPTER 9: SIBLING RIVALRY AND INFANTICIDE

1. Incidentally, in the Christian view the conflict is resolved because God's love is not sentimental, but sacrificial. He can execute justice while also making provision for mercy and forgiveness.
2. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 31.
3. G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959), 41, as quoted in Ravi Zacharias, *Deliver Us from Evil* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1996), 95 – 96.
4. I don't think this is a sound way of reasoning because it commits the is/ought fallacy. I am only adopting this claim for the sake of argument (see chapter 10, "Taking the Roof Off").
5. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 31.
6. Richard Taylor, *Ethics, Faith, and Reason* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1985), 83 – 84.
7. *The Quarrel*, directed by Eli Cohen, distributed by Honey and Apple Film Corporation, Canada, 1991.
8. This problem could also be stated as a Sibling Rivalry: (1) God does not exist as moral lawmaker. Therefore, there are no moral laws to break. Therefore, evil does not exist. (2) Evil exists. Therefore, transcendent moral laws exist. Therefore, a transcendent moral lawmaker exists. Therefore, God exists. Either there is no God and no evil, or evil exists and so does God. The option that does not seem possible is that evil exists, but God does not. These notions are in conflict, victims of Sibling Rivalry.
9. If the atheist does not affirm the existence of objective evil, but is merely pointing out what appears to be a contradiction in the theist's worldview, he escapes this particular dilemma. Usually, however, the atheist raising this objection actually believes in genuine evil.
10. J. P. Moreland, *Christianity and the Nature of Science* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 104.

CHAPTER 10: TAKING THE ROOF OFF

1. Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, in *The Complete Works of Francis Schaeffer* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), 1:138.