

Mahon Prayer Dispatch # 09 02.19.08 Uniform of the Day

In this dispatch...

I Corinthians 9:19-23

"For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it."

I Corinthians 10:32-33

"Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved."

II Corinthians 6:3-4

"giving no cause for offense in anything, in order that the ministry be not discredited, but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God..."

I. The "uniforms" of our ministry

II. Comfort levels and the ministry of the gospel

III. An eye opening experience

IV. Prayer Requests

A. That the truths of I Corinthians 9:19-23 would be found at work in our lives.

19 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more.

20 And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law;

21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law.

22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some.

23 And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

B. That we would remain flexible amid the many changes and adjustments that regularly present themselves on mission trips such as this. - *"I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it"*

C. That we would accept the hardships associated with the mission field as part of our calling to the ministry - *"though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more"*

- D. That as we mature in years we would also mature equally in our walk with God becoming more loving, more sacrificial and more pliable in the hands of God - that nothing we do nor say would come between those to whom we minister and the Word of God which we are called to teach and preach - doing *"all things for the sake of the gospel"*.
- E. That in every situation we would *"by all means save some"*.

Dear Prayer Warriors,

The above passage (I Corinthians 9:19 - 23) gripped me early in my ministry experience. The phrase, "I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some" jumped off to page at me as a college student seeking to reach the many and varied international students in my dormitory and on my campus.

Change is a part of all ministries and it seems especially so of the mission field. As you receive our prayer dispatches you may notice that I appear in many different "uniforms". At the Reformed Seminary of St. Petersburg the instructors wear clerical colors.

- The Russian officials in specific and the Russian people in general expect that ministers should look "ministerial" - in addition I often find myself in church settings where the clerical collar is not only accepted but expected of ministers - I am happy to do this. (see picture #1).
- In Nigeria formal occasions, such as church on Sunday call for the national attire. When teaching and preaching in many countries this is true and I am happy to do this as well. (see picture #2).
- In Belarus as in many countries of the world pastors are expected to wear a coat and tie when they preach and again, I am happy to do this. (see picture #3)
- In the US informal attire is becoming more and more popular among ministers and I am often asked to dress informally when speaking or presenting the Family Discipleship Seminar to churches in the US - again, I am more than happy to comply (see picture #4)

As I "mature" in my years I find myself more and more easily associating what is comfortable with what is God's will when very often the exact opposite is true. As I "mature" in my years I find in reality that what is uncomfortable is very often God's will. The Apostle Paul neither associated comfort with God's will nor with the gospel.

For Paul, when it came to the discomfort of suffering, not even the doctrine of election freed the Christian from this sacrifice for the sake of the gospel. From his prison cell in II Timothy 2:10 he writes, *"For this reason I endure all things for the sake of the elect, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus together eternal glory."*

For Paul, when it came to food, dress, customs, you name it, no sacrifice was too great if it created an opportunity for the gospel. Yet, as the years go by there is a tendency with maturity to come inflexibility and a new and recent addition to my prayer notebook has been that God would keep me flexible and pliable as my years mature.

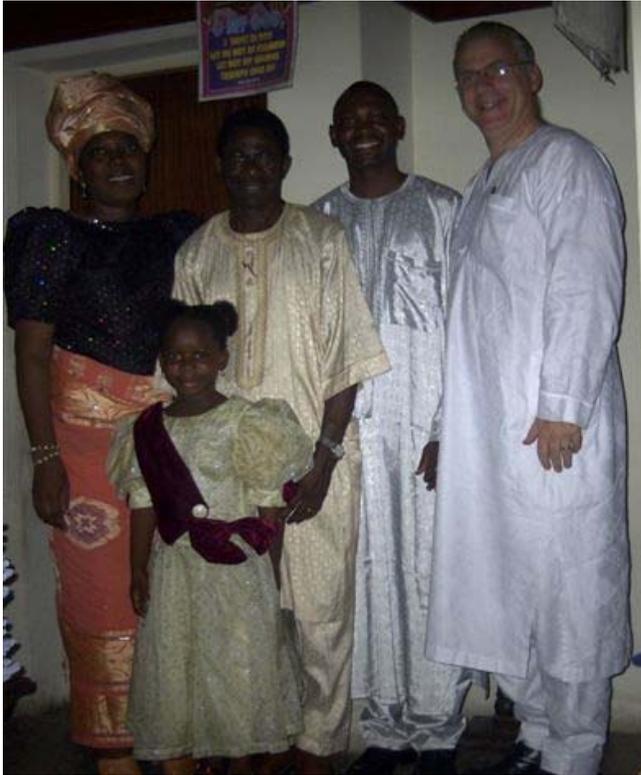
I experienced this principle early in my ministry in Houston. My son Sam had been witnessing to a Jewish boy who was in his class at school. When this boy went through his Bar Mitzvah he invited Sam and the rest of our family to the ceremony. It was an orthodox, very conservative synagogue. During the reception I noticed one of the men from our church, attired in orthodox garb talking excitedly and laughing with members of this synagogue. I immediately jumped to the conclusion that he was caught up in some type of sect or legalism and later asked him about it. His reply was that in I Corinthians 9:20 the Word of God commands, ***"to the Jews I became a Jew that I might win the Jews"*** he then made this statement to me "this is what I do to become a Jew to win the Jews, what do you do?" Once again God was challenging me to not allow my own comfort level come between me and the effective presentation of the gospel.

In the coming weeks, months and by God's grace years we will continue to minister throughout Eurasia, Russia, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. As you pray for us ask that God would keep us flexible and responsive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the to peoples and cultures around us, that we would, ***"become all things to all men that we might by all means save some."***

By His mercy,
II Corinthians 4:1
Rev. John S. Mahon
Grace Community Int.



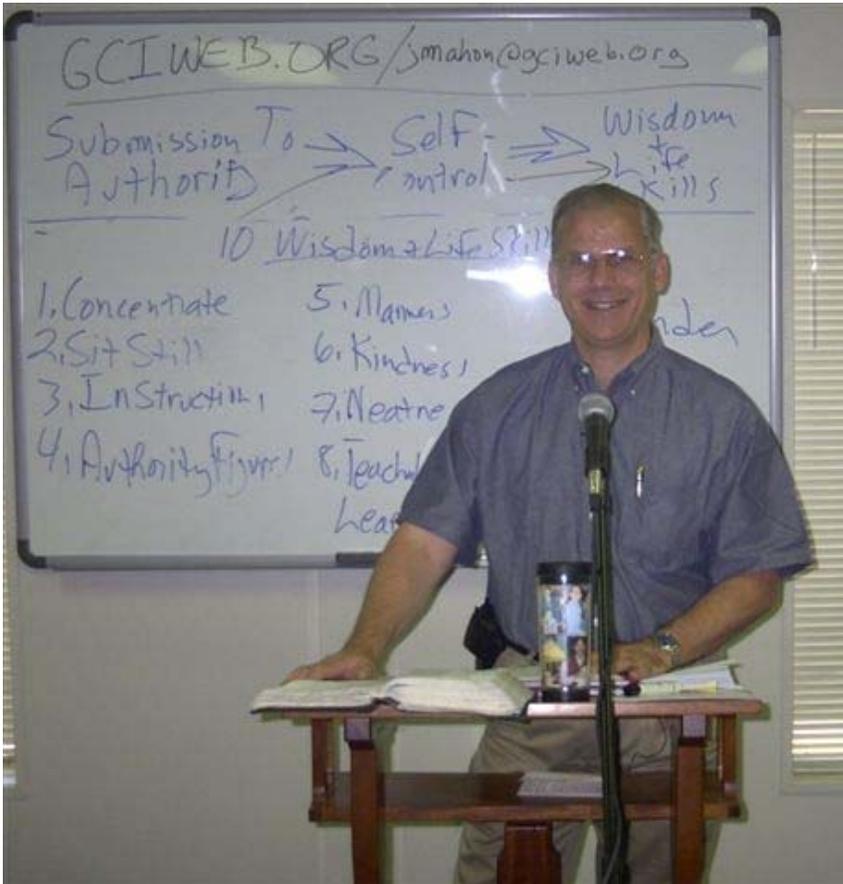
Tuymen Marriage Covenant Seminar



Sunday Night in Nigeria



Coat and Tie in Belarus



Casual Conference in San Antonio Texas