

## Mahon Russian Dispatch #08 10.15.09 Uniform of the Day

### Pictures

- 1\_Clerical Collar - Marriage Seminar Tyumen Pres Russia
- 2\_Clerical Collar Reformed Presbyterian Church St. Petersburg
- 3\_Sunday in Nigeria John and Idemotor
- 4\_Coat and Tie Belarus
- 5\_Coat and Tie - Sunday Service Ngong Hills NPC Kenya
- 6\_Coat and Tie - Heritage Baptist Church Missions Conference
- 7\_Causal San Antonio TX Conf SA

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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 commanding 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 collars.

- > 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 & #2).
- > 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 #3).
- > In Belarus , Kenya , Japan 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 #4 & #5)
- > In the US both formal and informal attire is the norm. As I minister, especially in the western states, 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 #6 & #7)

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

Please allow me to close with dispatch with two hymns from my prayer notebook that has been especially meaningful to me...  
***(Psalms 104:33-34 “I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. Let my meditation be pleasing to Him; As for me, I shall be glad in the LORD.”)***

### Take My Life

Take my life and let it be Consecrated, Lord to Thee;  
Take my hands and let them move At the impulse of They love, At the impulse of Thy  
love.

*Take my feet and let them be Swift and beautiful for Thee;  
Take my voice and let me sing Always, only for my King, Always, only for my King.*

Take my lips and let them be Filled with messages for Thee;  
Take my silver and my gold, Not a mite would I withhold, Not a mite would I withhold

*Take my love, my God, I pour, At They feet its treasure store;  
Take my self and I will be Ever, only , all for Thee, Ever only all for Thee*

(Frances Ridley Havergal *Born*: December 14, 1836, Astley, Worcestershire , England . *Died*: June 3, 1879, Caswall Bay, near Swansea , Wales . Daughter of hymnist [William Havergal](#), Frances was a bright but short lived candle in English hymnody. She was baptized by hymnist [John Cawood](#). She was reading by age four, and began writing verse at age seven. She learned Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and memorized the Psalms, the book of Isaiah, and most of the New Testament. She died of [peritonitis](#) at [Caswell Bay](#) on the [Gower Peninsula](#) in [Wales](#). Her sisters saw much of her work published posthumously. [Havergal College](#) in [Toronto](#) is named after her.

### I Surrender All

All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give;  
I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live.

*Refrain: I surrender all, I surrender all, All to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.*

*All to Jesus I surrender, Humbly at His feet I bow,  
Worldly pleasures all forsaken; Take me Jesus, take me now.*

All to Jesus I surrender, Make me, Savoir, wholly Thine.  
Let me feel the Holy Spirit, Truly know that Thou art mine.

*All to Jesus I surrender, Lord I give myself to Thee;  
Fill me with Thy love and power, let Thy blessing fall on me.*

**(Judson W. Van DeVenter,** Born: December 5, 1855, near Dundee , Michigan ; Died: July 17, 1939, Temple Terrace , Tampa , Florida . Van DeVenter attended Hillsdale College, then taught art in Sharon , Pennsylvania . After several years, though, he decided to switch to a career in evangelism, working with [Wilbur Chapman](#) and others in America and England . Toward the end of his life, he lived in St. Petersburg , Florida , then moved to Tampa , Florida , around 1923. He was professor of hymnology at the Florida Bible Institute (now Trinity Bible College ) for four years. **“The song was written while I was conducting a meeting at East Palestine , Ohio , in the home of George Sebring (founder of the Sebring Camp meeting Bible Conference in Sebring, Ohio , and later developer of the town of Sebring , Florida ). For**

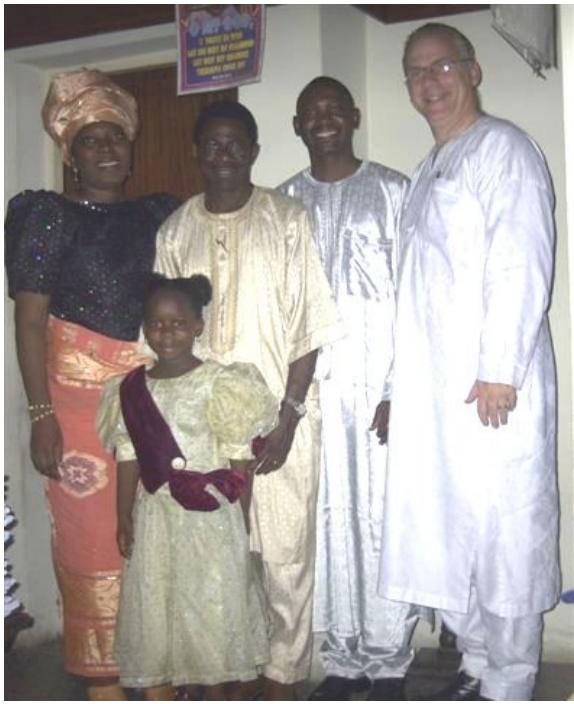
some time, I had struggled between developing my talents in the field of art and going into full-time evangelistic work. At last the pivotal hour of my life came, and I surrendered all. A new day was ushered into my life. I became an evangelist and discovered down deep in my soul a talent hitherto unknown to me. God had hidden a song in my heart, and touching a tender chord, He caused me to sing.”



Picture One



Picture Two



**Picture Three**



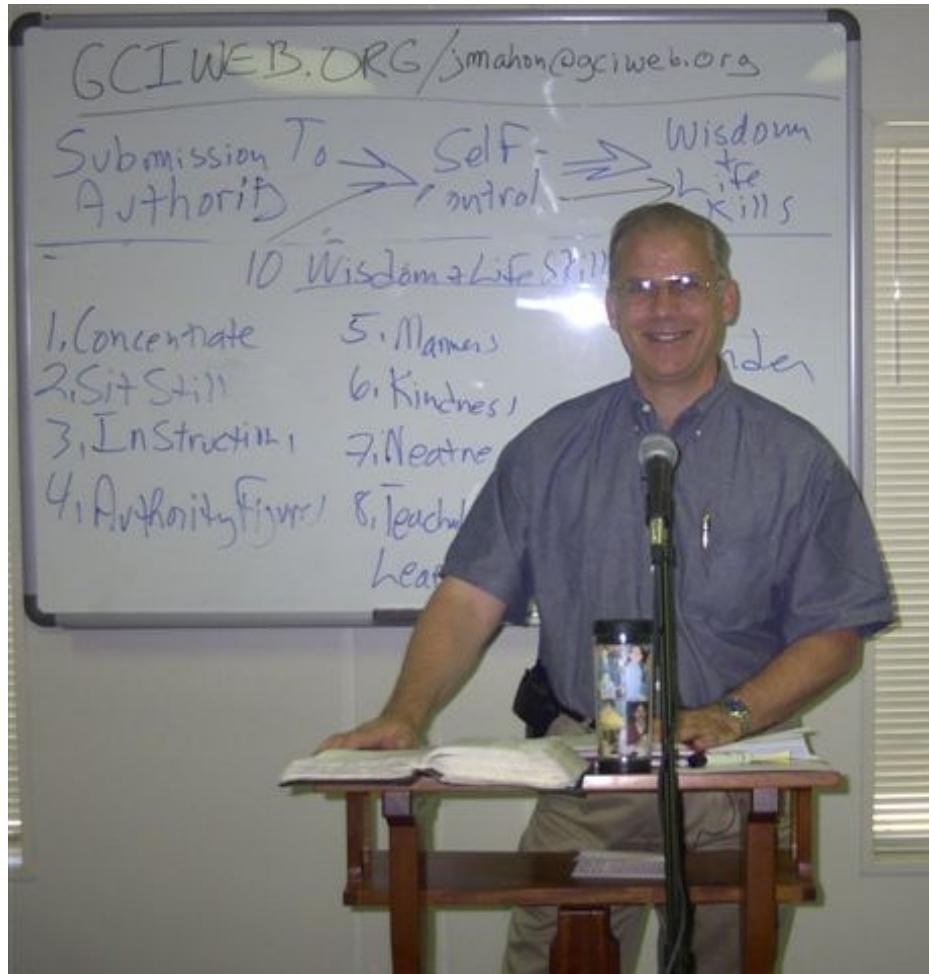
**Picture Four**



**Picture Five**



**Picture Six**



**Picture Seven**