All Things to All People: An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 with Application to North American Outreach

Daniel P. Leyrer

"For even though I am free from all people, I made myself everybody's slave in order to gain most of them. That is, to the Jews 1 became like a Jew in order to gain Jews. To those under the law 1 became like one under the law, even though I myself am not under the law, in order to gain those who are under the law. To those who are without the law 1 became like one who is without the law, even though I'm not lawless toward God but rather subject to the law of Christ. 1 did this in order to gain those who are without the law. To the weak 1 became weak in order to gain the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all means I might sane some. I do all things for the gospel's sake, in order that I might be a sharer in it."

The Apostle Paul
Corinthians 9:19-23
(translation by author)

When exactly did you want to become a pastor? Some of us thought of it as little boys and pursued it doggedly throughout the years of our schooling. Some of us only seriously considered the pastoral ministry once we had followed our buddies to Mequon. It went something like this for me: as a boy I respected the fact that my father, who was also my pastor, spoke the Word of God to large groups of people. It made me feel good that, apparently, he could make others feel good by speaking the Word of God to them. He could help people in a special way. I wanted to do that too. That's when I first wanted to become a pastor.

Then this Word got hold of me—this Word we're studying—and I wanted to be a pastor even more. Truth be told, I stopped wanting to be my father and started wanting to be the apostle Paul. The way he characterized gospel ministry in this little paragraph captivated me. To move freely and lovingly in every stratum of society; to embrace the differences between cultures; to be at home with all sorts of different people; to meet folks where they're at all for the sake of putting the gospel on their hearts so they can be saved—how cool is that?!? And I was right. Enjoying the differences among all the individual souls over whom you have spiritual influence is one of the great privileges of pastoral ministry.

As a young man I thought being all things to all people sounded cool. It is cool. What I've learned as a not-so-young man is how hard it is. Though I'm willing to confess that God's ways are higher than my ways, I still like my ways. I like my friends. I like my language. I like my music. In short, I've developed a comfort zone and I like my comfort zone. You probably like yours. But if this Word, this Pauline paragraph, is to get hold of us, we will have to expand our comfort zone in the way we minister to our neighbors with the gospel. We will have to rethink our assumptions about accommodating ourselves to different people without preaching a different gospel. We will have to reconsider our strategies (or whether we have a strategy) for placing the gospel on as many hearts as possible. Above all, by God's grace we may recommit ourselves to Paul's motto for ministry: "so that by all means I might save some."

Before we begin our verse-by-verse look at Paul's inspired words, it would be good to consider the broader context of 1 Corinthians and the narrower context of chapter nine. Even a cursory study of this letter

reveals the church in Corinth to be a troubled congregation at the time Paul wrote to it. God had used Paul to found the congregation during his second missionary journey, probably around AD 50. He stayed there a year and a half (Ac 18:11), his longest ministry in one place during the first two journeys. Probably during his third journey, while he was in Ephesus, Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthian congregation that is no longer extant (1 Co 5:9). In that letter Paul addressed the problem of the Corinthian Christians getting too close to the sexual immorality that ruled the day in the swinging boomtown of Corinth. Paul's letter occasioned a response from the Corinthians (1 Co 7:1) in which they asked about a number of issues. Apparently that letter from the Corinthians, along with a report from Chloe's household (1 Co 1:11), alarmed Paul concerning the moral and doctrinal problems that plagued the church. Thus, he wrote a second letter, the one we call 1 Corinthians. Later Paul would call this letter a sorrowful one of great distress and heartfelt anguish (2 Co 2:3,4).

It is not our purpose in this study to review the long list of ills Paul had to address when he wrote 1 Corinthians. But it is necessary to see our "all things to all people" passage in the context of one particular problem: the questioning of apostolic authority. Apparently there were some in and around the Corinthian congregation who were leading new Christians to doubt Paul's right to do what he had done in Corinth. What he ate and drank, with whom he associated, even his practice of not receiving a salary were all being called into question. For the sake of the gospel he proclaimed, the apostle felt compelled to defend his apostolic rights (1 Co 9:3), even though he set aside many of these rights in order to preach the gospel (1 Co 9:15). In fact, Paul was so excited about being able to bring the gospel to people freely and without being under some sort of financial obligation, that he called his non-remunerated preaching a "payment" (μισθός) in and of itself (1 Co 9:18). So it is in this context of a gospel minister voluntarily setting aside his rights that we find our beautiful little paragraph. After looking at the Greek of each verse, along with my translation, we shall seek to expound and apply these words to our ministries today.

> Ελευθερος γαρ ων εκ παντων πασιν εμαυτον εδουλωσα, ινα τους πλειονας κερδησω
>
> "For even though I am free from all people, I made myself every body's slave in order to gain most of them."

Exposition

Freedom has been a dominant theme in the previous verses. Whether speaking of how the Christian limits the expression of his freedom for the sake of a weak brother (8:1-13), or his own freedom as an apostle (9:1), Paul writes in a way so as to establish freedom as a key principle for gospel ministry. It's no surprise that Ελευθερος takes the lead, emphatic position in our paragraph. The γαρ connects our paragraph with the previous verse and helps us understand exactly what freedom Paul is talking about. With these words he seeks to explain (γαρ) his preaching the gospel free of charge (αδαπανον, 9:18). He will do this by giving numerous examples of how he has set aside many other rights for the sake of winning souls, even though he is not bound by any financial obligation to those souls. Thus, in context, it is best to understand Ελευθερος as "free from any sort of financial obligation" though other sorts of freedom from restriction are also in the picture.

Both παντων (that from which Paul is free) and πασιν (that to which he has enslaved himself) could be either masculine or neuter. Since Paul speaks of his ministry to people and not things, it is best to take these substantives as masculine. The participle ων sets up a strong contrast. It is concessive. Since it is a present participle, we note Paul's ongoing freedom from having gospel ministry dictated to him by financial dependence on anyone. He's free, and he will keep on being free. The tense of the second verbal (εδουλωσα) is also significant. Aorist is the tense of fact. It's the tense that emphasizes that something most definitely happened. When Paul speaks of making himself the slave of everybody, he's not talking theory. He's not giving us *the modus*

operandi that he plans for the future. He's saying: "This is the way I did it. This really happened." We see δουλος in εδουλωσα. By making himself everyone's slave Paul was subordinating his own will, his own way of doing things, to the needs of everyone else. At first glance, we may only see contrast between ελευθερος and εμαυτον εδουλωσα. We also need to see how Paul's freedom really defines his self-imposed slavery: That's the point. He has every right in the world to carry out gospel ministry in many different ways. But more important to Paul is his freedom to enslave himself for the sake of others. This "free slavery" would have staggered the pagan philosophers of the day. But it's right in line with the One who makes us ελευθεροι (Jn 8:36) to be παντων δουλος (Mk 10:44).

At the end of the verse Paul begins a pattern he will continue through the paragraph: a ινα purpose clause that closes with κερδησω (the alternate aorist subjunctive form κερδανω is employed in verse 21). By means of this emphatic repetition Paul drives the point home that the ultimate goal of all this pre-evangelism is evangelism that gains souls for the kingdom. The verb κερδαινω normally speaks of making a monetary profit (perhaps Paul is playing off the pm0os in verse 18?). But because it is parallel to σωζω at the end of this section, as well as its usage in Mt 18:15 and 1 Pe 3:1, it's clear that the "gaining" in this verb is for God's kingdom. While the verb speaks primarily of winning a previously unbelieving soul, it can also refer to keeping a believing soul in the Shepherd's fold (cf Mt 18:15). Paul sets his sights high with τους πλειονας. Literally "the more," the substantive came to mean any large number. It's good to remember that it is the comparative form, however. For Paul is really saying that by making himself everyone's slave his purpose is to gain "more" people for the kingdom than would be possible through some other strategy.

Application

One of the quotations on the pentagonal base of the Luther statue at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is adapted from his The Freedom of a Christian (1520):

"A Christian is a free lord over all things, subject to no one."

"A Christian is a ministering servant in all things, subject to everyone."

Leave it to Luther to best summarize the seeming paradox of "free slavery" presented by Paul in this opening verse. Sons of the Lutheran Reformation like us are acutely aware of our gospel freedoms in matters of ministering with the gospel. Are we just as aware of that freedom's power to liberate us from serving ourselves so that we may serve people who are different from us? No pastor or congregation can hope to grasp the idea of healthy change in ministry methods without first understanding that we have the freedom to do it. Paul had that freedom. He cherished it. And he put it to use for a divine purpose: to touch as many different people with the gospel as possible. Any church body emphasizing outreach across social and cultural lines in North America must so put her freedom to use.

According to our seminary's statement of purpose, one of the objectives we seek as we train pastoral candidates is to instill in them an attitude of being "appropriately flexible." To be flexible is not to be spineless. In fact, when you think about it, you have to have a strong spine in order to be truly flexible. We need pastors who stand firmly on every truth God has revealed in his Word, and at the same time understand that things which God has neither commanded nor forbidden may (and perhaps should) change for the sake of spreading the gospel. Of course, wisdom, unity, and good order must be considered before we start changing our gospel ministry methods. We must also remember Paul's stated goal of winning souls for Christ. Freedom is not the goal. Nor is setting aside freedom the goal. When we examine our ministries for their outreach emphases, the goal of winning souls must be clearly before everyone's eyes.

> και εγενομην τοις Ιουδαιοις ως Ιουδαιοις, ινα Ιουδαιοις κερδησω
> τοις υπο νομον ως υπο νομον, μη ων αυτος υπο νομον, ινα τους υπο νομον κερδησω
>
> "That is, to the Jews I became like a Jew in order to gain Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law, even though 1 myself am not under the law, in order to gain those who are under the law."

Exposition

By way of explaining (και epexegetical) the previous thought of making himself everyone's slave in order to gain as many as possible for God's kingdom, Paul now begins a list of four case studies from his ministry in Corinth. The aorist form of γινομαι (repeated in verse 22) tells us that these were very real changes that Paul made in order to accommodate the people he was trying to reach. The first group of people he mentions, fittingly, are Jews (cf. Ac 13:46). This is the only place in Paul's writings where the article is used with Ιουδαιον. Paul is referring to the specific Jews to whom he had the privilege of bringing the gospel in Corinth (cf. Ac 18:4). How does one who is a Jew become like (ως) a Jew? That little ως is very important to our understanding of what Paul says in this paragraph. It shows us that while Paul made very real changes in how he ministered to different groups of people, he never changed who he was. As a new creation (2 Co 5:17), Paul no longer thought of himself as a Jew or a Greek (Gal 3:28), even though he had strong connections to both those cultures. He was a Christian. That's how he thought of himself. But he also used his gospel freedom to appreciate that there were other people who primarily identified themselves by their national origin, like the Ιουδαιον. Paul did not ridicule their national identity. He honored it, and all for the sake of gaining them for Christ by the gospel.

"Those under the law" (τοις υπο νομον) are a second case study. Paul simply uses a different way of describing the Jews he had ministered to in Corinth, a phrase that emphasizes their religious observance over their national identity. Throughout Paul's writings νομον usually means the Mosaic code whether it is articularized or not. When Paul wanted to reach Jews with the gospel, he understood that they lived their lives recognizing the Mosaic ceremonial law as an authority (υπο). They kept kosher. They practiced circumcision. They observed festivals. Paul did not feel he had to denigrate their practices. In fact, he was willing to go along with them himself (cf Ac 16:3; 18:18; 21:26) rather than offend. Yet, if Paul had determined that any of these practices militated against the clear gospel teaching of Jesus as only Savior, he would never go along with it (cf. Gal 2:3-5). Accommodating an observance in such a case would hardly be δια το ευαγγελιον (verse 23). It was never Paul's intent to change a Jewish prospect's practice of ceremonial law. It was always his intent to destroy that prospect's confidence in the law for salvation.

Let us not forget the wonderful little parenthetical remark "even though I myself am not under law" (μη ων αυτος υπο νομον). The Textus Receptus omits this clause, but its overwhelming support in the most ancient and widespread manuscripts seems to indicate its omission was a case of *homoeoteleuton* (the eye of the scribe skipped from a word or phrase to the same word later in the text). By means of another concessive participle (ων), Paul makes sure we understand his motivation for living as he lived among Jews. It certainly was not because he was under some sort of legal obligation (μη...υπο νομον). No, he kept kosher and observed ceremonies while ministering to Jews with one motivation: he loved them enough to want to gain them and keep them for Christ.

Application

To whom may we compare the Jews and those under the law in Paul's day? How about Jews who live under the authority of Old Testament ceremonial law today. There are many lines of culture and custom to cross

if we are going to do North American outreach. A passage like this one is a reminder not to write off our Jewish neighbors as being impossible to evangelize. Our efforts to reach them will be sensitive to the observances and festivals that are important to them. Let's remember that the Jewish couple next door has God's Word in the Old Testament but their Judaism has emptied that Word of Jesus. To "become like a Jew" today means that we will not hesitate to love Jewish people enough to become familiar with their customs and look for opportunities to introduce the Messiah through those customs. Jewish people are part of North American outreach.

I believe there is also broader application of Paul's use of two terms for the same group of people, one to emphasize national origin and one to emphasize ceremonial observances. The gospel minister must recognize both. We will not shy away from differences in nationality and the accompanying differences in customs, but rather will embrace those differences and in fact use them in bringing the gospel to the people of our communities (not neglecting, however, to beware of "ceremonial observances" that may carry with them false religious connotations). Such an attitude calls for an eagerness to become knowledgeable about folks different from ourselves, as well as an eagerness to enjoy those differences.

> τοις ανομοις ως ανομος, μη ων ανομος θεου αλλ' εννομος Χριστου, ινα κερδανω τους ανομους
>
> "To those who are without the law I became like one without the law, even though I'm not lawless toward God but rather subject to the law of Christ. I did this in order to gain those who are without the law."

Exposition

With a play on words Paul introduces the third case study of people groups to whom he ministered in Corinth. First he uses the substantive ανομος in a neutral sense: a person who does not know the Mosaic ceremonial code and does not care to live by it. There is no criticism in this use of ανομος. As Paul remembers this specific group (note the article) of people in Corinth, he recalls how they felt there was no benefit for them in keeping kosher, etc. They did not feel compelled to follow the customs their Jewish friends may have followed. As much as it must have felt odd for a "Hebrew of Hebrews" (Php 3:5) to set aside his cherished observances, Paul was more than willing to do so. And it all boiled down to the same overriding purpose (ινα) for all these changes Paul made in his lifestyle. He desperately wanted to win souls for Christ, even souls that did not show their reverence toward God in the way Paul was accustomed to.

The play on words occurs when Paul refuses to apply that same term ανομος to himself. With another parenthetical remark Paul in effect says: "to the ανομοις I became like an ανομος even though there's no way I'm ανομος." In the concessive clause Paul uses the term ανομος in a decidedly negative way to mean someone who totally disregards God's laws, a lawless person. This is the term he uses for the most rank unbelieving sinners in 1 Tm 1:9. Paul's point is clear. By accommodating his lifestyle to those who did not observe ceremonial law, Paul by no means thumbed his nose at God's moral law. He had the liberty to live without the law like his Gentile prospects. But that liberty was never license to sin against God (I understand the genitive to have an objective sense). Paul wants his readers, and I would think especially his Gentile readers, to know this. Christians are not antinomians. Note how Paul repeats the point, this time stating it positively: αλλ' εννομος Χριστου. Setting aside the Mosaic ceremonial law never removes a Christian from the Savior's law, of love.

Application

To whom in our day may we compare the ανομοι of Paul's day? Any non-Jewish person would qualify. Aren't we all ανομοι since we understand Old Testament ceremonial law to be a shadow whose reality has come

in Christ (cf Col 2:17)? Therefore it may seem that there is no free slavery for us to perform in this area since there are no ceremonial laws for us to set aside. Yet, we all know that there are plenty of church-related customs and traditions we may need to limit in order to relate to the unchurched. It is self-evident that the most likely place for an unchurched person to feel out of place is church. Some of that is good; there's nothing wrong with a church service having a counter-cultural feel so that the unchurched know something special is going on. But much of the discomfort the unchurched feel as they contemplate going to church is the question of fitting in and knowing what to do. In that sense they are outside our traditional customs. They don't know them. In other words, they are the ανομοι around us. By going out of our way to explain how we worship, how we "do church," and by being willing to suspend some customs so as to accommodate the unchurched's mindset without compromising God's Word—it is then that we become τοις ανομοις ως ανομος.

As we make ourselves slaves to these people, however, it is imperative that we remember Paul's parenthetical remark: "even though fm not lawless toward God but rather subject to the law of Christ." This is a word of warning. Becoming part of the dominant culture never means taking a vacation from godly, Christian conduct. Just because Paul mentioned the altar to the unknown God in his Areopagus address (Ac 17:23) doesn't mean he bowed down and worshiped at it. Sinning is no way to "fit in" with the unchurched. Addressing the sins peculiar to the surrounding community as well as proclaiming specific forgiveness through the One who has the whole community in his hands—that's fitting in. Better yet, that's helping unchurched people fit in with the people of God who need the same hospital for sinners they do.

> εγενομην τοις ασθενεσιν ασθενης, ινα τους ασθενεις κερδησω
> τοις πασιν γεγονα παντα, ινα παντως τινας σωσω
>
> "To the weak I became weak in order to gain the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all means I might save some."

Exposition

With the previous two people groups Paul had implied the verb εγενομήν. In connection with the fourth and final group, "the weak," Paul restates the aorist to remind us that he's talking about real things that actually happened, not just theory. This is what he did, not just what he talks about. And what he did was to become weak to the weak. Note that there's no ως here. Because there's no ως here, I have a hard time understanding ασθενης as "weak in faith" as it is used in 8:9. If ασθενης were to mean "weak in faith" here, without the ως we would have to understand Paul to say that he had actually weakened his faith. This makes no sense. I prefer to take ασθενης here the way Paul uses the term in 1:27 and 2:3, namely, "weak in the eyes of the world." Rather than put on airs as God's gift to the church, even though he was God's gift to the church, Paul was content to identify with the people society considered weak and insignificant. In fact, by preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified, Paul was preaching "the weak things of the world to shame the strong" (1:27). Perhaps the Greek philosopher wannabes in Corinth would not give these weak folks a passing glance. But Paul was right there with them. He was one of them-a beggar boasting in the weakness of Christ's cross.

In the second half of this verse Paul breaks a couple of patterns, so we stand up and take notice. First, he uses the perfect tense of γεγονα rather than the aorist. Second, he uses the aorist subjunctive of σωζω in the ινα purpose clause rather than κερδαινω. By breaking these patterns Paul masterfully draws attention to his conclusion: "I have become all things to all people so that by all means I might save some." The perfect γεγονα reflects Paul's commitment to continue his past ministry pattern into the future. He does not plan on stopping his free slavery to all in order to win souls for Christ. The sheer effort and exertion with which Paul will carry out this strategy comes through in the powerful paronomasia πασιν...παντα...παντως. The article before πασιν

indicates that each specific group of people he mentioned earlier received the "all things to all people" plan of pastoral care. The παντα tells us there's no limit to Paul's willingness to carry out this plan. And the παντως suggests that the goal (ινα) of getting people saved through faith is worth the most extreme effort. Even then, Paul knows that only τινας will be saved. Rather than predicting a number of souls harvested, he leaves the final result to the Harvester, and instead focuses his energy on sowing as much seed as possible.

Application

The evangelist Matthew tells us that Jesus, through his compassionate ministry, fulfilled the words of Isaiah: "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out" (Is 42:3; Mt 12:20). What an example for evangelical pastoral practice we have in these words! When Paul says he became weak to win the weak, it reminds me of the same thing. To reach out more and more we must remember more and more that many of our prospects are weak in the eyes of the world. This makes them weak in their own eyes too. To gain souls as Paul suggests means never overlooking these weak souls who may be on the fringes of society. In our efforts to exercise the strong we must not run over the weak. Nor should we fall into the trap of thinking strong leadership demands forgetting the weak. I would imagine that was one of the charges leveled against Paul in Corinth. "He spends too much time with the weak." Paul's reply? We're all weak in our own way. And I am honored to identify with the weak in every way if it means they're won for Christ.

To take to heart Paul's words about becoming all things to all people is to take our stand on the gospel of Jesus Christ. Like Paul, we will defend the theology of the gospel to our dying breath. Like Paul, we will never compromise the Christian morality motivated by the gospel. But also like Paul, we will be willing to change in every other area in order to place that gospel on more and more hearts. In so doing, Paul's goal will be our goal, the salvation of many souls. The Lord who called Paul to faith and apostleship prayed it the night before his death: "That they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (Jn 17:3).

> παντα δε ποιωδια το ευαγγελιον, ινα συγκοινωνος αυτου γενωμαι
>
> "I do all things for the gospel's sake, in order that I might be a sharer in it."

Exposition

Thus far Paul has stated one main reason for his adapting his ministry to fit the people he's serving: he wants to gain souls for the kingdom. In this concluding verse he gives us two more reasons. The δε serves to connect the final verse to the previous four, continuing the thought. Paul uses the word "all" a fourth time in quick succession to reemphasize how he will ascend or descend to any level of society and perform any task, provided it is not sinful, to proclaim the gospel to people. The παντα in this verse is anarthrous. It includes all the things he's mentioned in verses 19-22, but also any kind of ministering he did not mention. With the present tense ποιω Paul stresses how his "all things to all people" attitude does not let up and leads to ongoing action.

We might expect Paul to say at the end of this paragraph "I do all things to gain as many souls for the kingdom as possible." But he does not. His first conclusion is that all things in ministry must be done for the gospel's sake (δια το ευαγγελιον). Earlier Paul had stated that he would put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel's spread (9:12). We have much the same thought here. The reason (δια + the accusative) Paul made all those changes in lifestyle and ministry method was because he had a heart for the gospel's progress in the world. Such an attitude assumes that Paul would do, say, or teach nothing to change the gospel message. That would hardly be δια το ευαγγελιον. Rather, his attitude was one of changing his behavior in order to bring the changeless gospel to more and more people. These gospel-powered changes no doubt included communicating

God's truths in the language style best understood by the group he was speaking to. But this paragraph has really been less about changes in language and more about changes in life, all for the sake of the gospel.

One clause remains. Paul brackets the thought of the paragraph with one last ἵνα clause. Its content may surprise us a bit. Again, we might expect this last ἵνα purpose clause to mimic all the others and speak of winning souls for Christ. But it does not. Now, at the very end, Paul adds another purpose for his enslaving himself to others in order to preach the gospel. The divinely ordained purpose is that he himself gets to benefit from the gospel he proclaims. This benefit comes through in the phrase συγκοινωνος αυτου, "a sharer in it." When he calls himself the gospel's partner, Paul is not saying he adds to its power. Nor is he primarily referring to himself as one who partners with others in the preaching of the gospel. Either of those two thoughts would be expressed by συγκοινωνος + the dative. The genitive αυτου speaks of Paul's relationship with the gospel as a beneficiary. He receives blessings when he brings the gospel to people by all possible means, the greatest of which is own salvation (cf. the following paragraph, 9:24-27). Thus, Paul does not boast of his all-things-to-all-people method of proclaiming the gospel; he rather thanks God for it. For in so doing, he gets to rejoice both in the saving of others' souls and the saving of his own (cf 1 Tin 4:16).

Application

The words "I do all things for the gospel's sake" are a challenging call for every gospel minister, as well as the congregation he shepherds. Do we have the love to make real changes in the way we do things when changes are necessary to reach more people with the gospel? Do we have the wisdom to stop short of changing the gospel message, or making it unclear, with our changes in methodology? Paul has made abundantly clear that we have the freedom to make many changes for the gospel's sake. How will we use that freedom? For ourselves? Or for others and the advancement of the gospel? Perhaps the most startling revelation in this whole paragraph is that we can have it both ways. By serving others with the gospel we serve ourselves. Such is God's grace. Paul tells us this happens in the atmosphere of Christians who are willing to adapt themselves to the people and community in which God has placed them.

"If you cannot preach like Paul. . ." (CW 573:2). In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 Paul is inspired to relate to us the way he ministered with the gospel in Corinth. We may feel that we pale in comparison. To be sure, Paul was uniquely gifted by the Savior who commissioned him. He was uniquely qualified to be all things to all men since he was a Jew by birth, a Roman by citizenship, and a Greek by adopted culture. Who are we to match his abilities when it comes to reaching out with the gospel across this continent?

This Word was not given to us that we might compare aptitudes with Paul. It was given us to check our attitudes. None of us has exactly the same personality or gift set. But no one specific gift set is vital to our doing North American outreach in the way Paul describes. No, becoming all things to all people will flow from one faith that is fed on the gospel and longs to speak the gospel. It will flow from one conviction that what God says to us through Paul in this passage is the foundational attitude for any church that wants to cross a street, a river, a set of train tracks, or a culture with that gospel. To make Paul's ministry motto our ministry motto doesn't take extraordinary gifts. It will take a willingness to be open to change. It will take a charitable attitude that supports brothers and sisters who are making their own changes to lay the gospel on more hearts in their community. It will take, not Paul's gifts, but Paul's heart—his heart for all the people Jesus loved and all the good news Jesus proclaimed. God grant us the heart to tell people the good news "by all possible means."

S.D.G.