



## Making ourselves servants for the Gospel's sake

By David H. Snyder

The title of this editorial is the 2014 theme of Baptist International Missions, Inc. It is our desire to be Christ's servants for the sake of the Gospel. The idea for this theme comes from 1 Corinthians 9:16–27, which challenges us about our *Commission*, our *Choice* and our *Crown*.



David H. Snyder  
President/General Director

First, there is a *Commission to be obeyed*. In Mark 16:15 Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the **gospel** to every creature” (emphasis added). The message we are to proclaim is the Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Paul stated that he carried a sanctified burden—an urgent *necessity* to preach the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:16). He knew he had

*nothing to glory of* in preaching the message of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Paul's message was not about himself but about his Savior Who became a servant to

all the world so *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life* (John 3:16).

The Gospel is the message of hope to a lost and dying world. Unlike the message of false teachers, Christians have a message that actually brings eternal life. Because Christ lives, mankind can live. Thus, it is crucial that we take upon ourselves the sanctified burden of the Apostle Paul. We must be obedient to the Great Commission—proclaiming the wonderful truth of Christ's Gospel to the entire world.

Second, as we are reminded about the *Commission to be obeyed*, we understand there is a *Choice to be made*. Paul made the deliberate choice to become a *servant*. He said, “*I made myself servant unto all*” (1 Corinthians 9:19). Obviously, this meant sacrificial service. No matter whom Paul was with, he wanted them to be saved. This truth can be seen in the following verses:

*And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to*


*them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some* (1 Corinthians 9:20–22).

Being a Jew himself, Paul could easily relate to the Jewish people. To the Gentiles, Paul would emphasize the fact that he was a Roman citizen. Becoming *all things to all men* meant that he gave up his own “rights” in order to win the lost—that he *might by all means save some* (1 Corinthians 9:22).

We live in a day when it seems that so many Christians are concerned about their “rights.” However, Paul was concerned about the salvation of lost souls. When he made a conscious choice to be a servant of Christ, he gave up his own rights. Obviously, choosing to be a servant does not come naturally to anyone. As human beings, we would rather be served by others than be a servant to others. God does not force us to serve Him, but He gives us a choice. However, if we choose to serve Him, we can be confident that there will be a reward.

This brings us to our final thought—a *Crown to be obtained*. This third consideration should catch our attention. Paul admonishes us to *run so that we may obtain* (1 Corinthians 9:24). He reminds us that temperance and self-discipline are absolutely necessary in order to win the prize. The crown we seek to win is not *corruptible* but it is *incorruptible* (1 Corinthians 9:25). Eternal rewards are the goal. Additionally, we do not run *uncertainly*, since every runner who does not disqualify himself may obtain a crown (1 Corinthians 9:26–27).

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize 1 Corinthians 9:23 where Paul states, “*And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.*” Paul desired to be a “partaker” of the Gospel with the Corinthian believers. By this, Paul was saying he wanted to not only share with them in the blessings of the Gospel itself but also share in the blessings of reaping a harvest of souls. As they together became servants for the Gospel's sake, many people would be saved and they could rejoice together in gaining *the more* (1 Corinthians 9:19).

Let me invite you to join with us as we focus on *Making Ourselves Servants for the Gospel's Sake*. We would count it a privilege to be a *partaker together with you* in the blessings of the Gospel. 

**When Paul made a conscious choice to be a servant of Christ, he gave up his own rights.**