

Chameleons or Missionaries?

Scripture Reading — 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

I have become all things to all people so that ... I might save some ... for the sake of the gospel ...
1 Corinthians 9:22-23 —

How can you be “all things to all people” in your life today? Consider the approach of the apostle Paul. His sermon to the Greeks at the Areopagus in Athens (see Acts 17:16-31) was vastly different from his message to the Jews of Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:13-47).

The good news of Jesus is unchanging. But the way we share and express that message through our lives, music, art, and worship must change and be adapted to the persons and people groups where God places us. Our commitment, like that of Paul, is to make the great truth of the one gospel understandable in every cultural context.

Some years ago, God gave us the privilege of planting a new church in Nanaimo, British Columbia. Through immersing ourselves in the community culture there, we soon learned that jazz music was deeply embedded in the culture of that city (several well-known jazz musicians got their start there). We often featured gospel jazz in our early-morning service of worship. Among our greatest evangelistic events was a jazz funeral service for a beloved jazz musician/teacher.

This is what makes the gospel of Christ so exciting, beautiful, and inviting. It translates into every language, culture, and musical form. Jesus’ challenge to us not only permits but requires us to be students of local cultures and people.

Prayer

Lord, remove our blind spots and fears that prevent us from translating the gospel into the cultures around us. Help us remember that you came for all peoples. Amen.

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