

The Conversion of Paul



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: Acts 26:9–11, Deut. 21:23, Acts 9:1–20, 1 Cor. 9:1, Gal. 1:1, Acts 9:20–30.

Memory Text: “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel” (Acts 9:15, NIV).

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus (who became Paul) was one of the most remarkable events in the history of the apostolic church. The importance of Paul, however, goes way beyond conversion itself, for Paul is certainly not the only enemy of the church to have become a genuine Christian. The issue, instead, relates to what he ended up doing for the sake of the gospel. Paul had been an incorrigible opponent to the early believers, and the harm he could have done to the infant church was enormous. He had both determination and official support to destroy the church. Yet, he responded faithfully to God's call on the road to Damascus and became the greatest of the apostles. “From among the most bitter and relentless persecutors of the church of Christ, arose the ablest defender and most successful herald of the gospel.”—Ellen G. White, *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, p. 9.

Paul's previous actions in persecuting the early church always would bring him a deep sense of his own unworthiness, though he could say with a still deeper sense of gratitude that God's grace to him had not been in vain. With Paul's conversion, Christianity changed forever.

* Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, August 4.

Persecutor of the Church

Paul was a Hellenistic Jew. His birthplace was Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia (*Acts 21:39*). Notwithstanding, to a certain extent he deviated from the Hellenistic stereotype, for he was brought to Jerusalem, where he studied under Gamaliel (*Acts 22:3*), the most influential Pharisaic teacher at the time. As a Pharisee, Paul was strictly orthodox, though his zeal bordered on fanaticism (*Gal. 1:14*). This is why he led Stephen to his death and became the key figure in the ensuing persecution.

Read Acts 26:9–11. How did Paul describe his actions against the church?

Paul says elsewhere that the gospel was a stumbling block to the Jews (*1 Cor. 1:23*). Besides the fact that Jesus did not fit the traditional Jewish expectation of a kingly Messiah, they could by no means accept the idea that the One who had died *on a cross* could be God’s Messiah, for the Scripture says that anyone who is hung is under God’s curse (*Deut. 21:23*). To the Jews, therefore, the crucifixion was in itself a grotesque contradiction, the clearest evidence that the church’s claims about Jesus were false.

Acts 9:1, 2 shows Saul of Tarsus in action against believers. Damascus was an important city about 135 miles north of Jerusalem, and it had a large Jewish population. The Jews living outside Judea were organized in a kind of network whose headquarters were in Jerusalem (the Sanhedrin), with the synagogues functioning as supporting centers for the local communities. There was constant communication between the Sanhedrin and such communities through letters normally carried by a *shaliah*, “one who is sent” (from the Hebrew *shalah*, “to send”). A *shaliah* was an official agent appointed by the Sanhedrin to perform several religious functions.

When Paul asked the high priest, the Sanhedrin’s president, for letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, he became a *shaliah*, with authority to arrest any followers of Jesus and bring them to Jerusalem (*compare with Acts 26:12*). In Greek, the equivalent to *shaliah* is *apostolos*, from which the word *apostle* derives. Thus, before being an apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul was an apostle of the Sanhedrin.

When was the last time you were zealous for (or against) something you later changed your mind about? What lessons should you have learned from that experience?

On the Damascus Road

Read Acts 9:3–9. What happened when Paul was approaching Damascus? What is the significance of Jesus’ words in Acts 9:5 (see also Acts 26:14)?

As Paul and his companions neared Damascus, the unexpected happened: about noon they experienced an intensely bright light from heaven and a voice speaking. This was not merely a vision in the prophetic sense but a divine manifestation, aimed somewhat exclusively at Paul. His companions saw the light; yet, only Paul was blinded; they heard the voice; yet, only Paul understood it. The light was the divine glory of the risen Jesus, who personally appeared to Paul at that moment (*Acts 22:14*). Elsewhere Paul insists that he had seen Jesus, which made him equal to the Twelve as a witness of His resurrection and apostolic authority (*1 Cor. 9:1, 15:8*).

The ensuing dialogue with Jesus struck Paul infinitely more than the light itself. Paul absolutely was convinced that, by attacking the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, he was doing God’s work in purifying Judaism from that dangerous and dreadful heresy. To his dismay, however, he learned not only that Jesus was alive but also that by inflicting suffering on His believers he was attacking Jesus Himself.

When speaking to Saul, Jesus used a proverbial saying supposedly of Greek origin that Paul certainly was familiar with: “ ‘It is hard for you to kick against the goads’ ” (*Acts 26:14, NKJV*). The image is that of a yoke ox trying to move against the sharp stick used to guide it. When that happens, the animal only hurts itself even more.

This saying may point to a struggle in Paul’s mind—the Bible refers to this as the work of the Spirit (*John 16:8–11*)—that could go back to what happened with Stephen. “Saul had taken a prominent part in the trial and conviction of Stephen, and the striking evidences of God’s presence with the martyr had led Saul to doubt the righteousness of the cause he had espoused against the followers of Jesus. His mind was deeply stirred. In his perplexity he appealed to those in whose wisdom and judgment he had full confidence. The arguments of the priests and rulers finally convinced him that Stephen was a blasphemer, that the Christ whom the martyred disciple had preached was an impostor, and that those ministering in holy office must be right.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 112, 113.

Why is it wise to pay heed to your conscience?

Ananias's Visit

When he realized he was talking to Jesus Himself, Saul asked the question that would give Jesus the opportunity He was looking for: “‘What shall I do, Lord?’” (*Acts 22:10, NKJV*). The question indicates contrition in view of his actions up to that moment, but more important, it expresses an unconditional willingness to let Jesus guide his life from then on. Taken to Damascus, Saul was to wait for further instructions.

In Acts 9:10–19, the Bible reveals how the Lord was working to prepare Saul of Tarsus for his new life as the apostle Paul. In a vision, Jesus gave Ananias the assignment to visit Saul and lay his hands on him for the restoration of his sight. Ananias, however, already knew who Saul was, as well as how many of the brethren had suffered and even lost their lives because of him. He was also well informed of the very reason why Saul was in Damascus, and so, surely, he did not want to become Saul's first victim there. His hesitation was understandable.

Yet, what Ananias did not know was that Saul had just had a personal encounter with Jesus that changed his life forever. He did not know that, instead of still working for the Sanhedrin, Saul—to Ananias's astonishment—just had been called by Jesus to work for Him, which means that Saul was no longer an apostle of the Sanhedrin but Jesus' chosen instrument to take the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles.

Read Galatians 1:1, 11, 12. What special claim does Paul make with regard to his apostolic ministry?

In Galatians, Paul insists that he received his message and his apostleship directly from Jesus Christ, not from any human source. This does not necessarily contradict the role performed by Ananias in his call. When visiting him, Ananias just confirmed the commission Saul had already received on the Damascus road from Jesus Himself.

In fact, the change in Saul's life was so dramatic that no human cause can be assigned to it. Only divine intervention can explain how Jesus' most obsessive opponent would suddenly embrace Him as Savior and Lord, leave everything—convictions, reputation, career—behind, and become His most devoted and prolific apostle.

In what ways does Saul's conversion illustrate the operation of God's wonderful grace? What can you learn from his story concerning those in your life whom you doubt will ever come to true faith?

The Beginning of Paul's Ministry

Acts 9:19–25 gives the impression that after his conversion, Paul remained in Damascus for a while before returning to Jerusalem (Acts 9:26). In Galatians 1:17, however, Paul adds that, before going to Jerusalem, he went to Arabia, where he apparently lived in seclusion for a certain period. “Here, in the solitude of the desert, Paul had ample opportunity for quiet study and meditation.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 125.

Read Acts 9:20–25. How does Luke describe Paul's ministry in Damascus? How well did it go?

Paul's original target when he left Jerusalem with letters from the high priest was the Jewish believers who had presumably sought refuge in the synagogues of Damascus (*Acts 9:2*). Now, after coming back from Arabia, he finally made it to the synagogues, not to arrest believers but to increase their number; not to slander Jesus as an impostor but to present Him as the Messiah of Israel. What must have gone on in the minds of those who, having heard of him only as one of their persecutors, now hear him witness about Jesus? What could they do but marvel at what Saul of Tarsus had become and at what he was doing for the church? (They probably had no idea of the influence this new convert would eventually have!)

Not able to contradict Paul, some of his opponents conspired together to take his life. Paul's account of the episode (*2 Cor. 11:32, 33*) suggests that his opponents denounced him to the local authorities in order to achieve their intent. However, with the believers' help, Paul was able to escape in a basket, possibly through the window of a house built on the city wall.

Paul knew from the start that he would face challenges (*Acts 9:16*). Opposition, persecution, and suffering from various sources would be a constant in his ministry, but nothing would shake his faith or sense of duty, despite the hardships and trials that he faced practically at every step of his new life in Christ (*2 Cor. 4:8, 9*).

Despite struggles and opposition, Paul didn't give up. How can we learn to do the same when it comes to faith—that is, how to persevere amid discouragement and opposition?

Return to Jerusalem

Having escaped from Damascus, Paul returned to Jerusalem for the first time since he had left as a persecutor. This happened three years after his conversion (*Gal. 1:18*). It was not an easy return, as he faced problems both inside and outside the church.

Read Acts 9:26–30. What happened to Paul when he arrived in Jerusalem?

In Jerusalem, Paul tried to join the apostles. Though by that time he already had been a Christian for three years, the news of his conversion sounded so incredible that the apostles, like Ananias before them, were rather skeptical. They feared it was just part of a carefully elaborated plot. It was Barnabas, a Levite from Cyprus (*Acts 4:36, 37*), thus a Hellenist, who broke the apostles' resistance and introduced Paul to them. They, too, must have marveled at what God had done to Paul; that is, once they realized that he was genuine.

Such resistance, however, would never entirely disappear, if not because of Paul's past actions in persecuting the church, then at least because of the gospel he preached. As in the case of Stephen, the Judean believers, including the apostles, were quite slow to understand the universal scope of the Christian faith, a faith no longer based in the Old Testament ceremonial system, especially in the sacrificial system, which had lost its validity with Jesus' death on the cross. Paul's closest circle of relationship within the church in Judea would always be the Hellenistic believers: besides Barnabas himself, it included Philip, one of the Seven (*Acts 21:8*), and Mnason, also from Cyprus (*Acts 21:16*). Several years later, the Jerusalem church leaders would still accuse Paul of preaching basically the same doctrine Stephen had preached before (*Acts 21:21*).

During the fifteen days he stayed in Jerusalem (*Gal. 1:18*), Paul apparently decided to share the gospel with the same unbelieving Jews whom he had incited against Stephen some time before. As with Stephen, however, his efforts met with strong opposition, posing a threat to his own life. In a vision, Jesus told him to leave Jerusalem for his own safety (*Acts 22:17–21*). With the help of the brethren, he went down to the city port of Caesarea and from there to his hometown in Cilicia, where he would stay for several years before starting his missionary journeys.

Further Thought: “A general slain in battle is lost to his army, but his death gives no additional strength to the enemy. But when a man of prominence joins the opposing force, not only are his services lost, but those to whom he joins himself gain a decided advantage. Saul of Tarsus, on his way to Damascus, might easily have been struck dead by the Lord, and much strength would have been withdrawn from the persecuting power. But God in His providence not only spared Saul’s life, but converted him, thus transferring a champion from the side of the enemy to the side of Christ.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 124.

“Christ had commanded his disciples to go and teach all nations; but the previous teachings which they had received from the Jews made it difficult for them to fully comprehend the words of their Master, and therefore they were slow to act upon them. They called themselves the children of Abraham, and regarded themselves as the heirs of divine promise. It was not until several years after the Lord’s ascension that their minds were sufficiently expanded to clearly understand the intent of Christ’s words, that they were to labor for the conversion of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews.”—Ellen G. White, *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, p. 38.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 Dwell more on Jesus’ question to Paul on the Damascus road: “‘Why do you persecute me?’ ” (*Acts 9:4, NRSV*). For Paul, this question was an indication that Jesus of Nazareth had indeed been resurrected from the dead. But, more than that, it was also an indication of the spiritual identification that exists between Jesus and His church (*see also Matt. 25:34–45*). The implication is obvious: any harm done to the church is harm done to Jesus Himself. In practical terms, what does this mean to us today?
- 2 Witnessing for Jesus involves suffering for Jesus. It is not by chance that the Greek word for “witness” (*martys*) came to be associated with “martyrdom.” What does it mean to suffer for Jesus?
- 3 There’s an old Latin saying, *Credo ut intelligam*, which means, “I believe in order that I may understand.” How does this idea help us understand what happened to Saul of Tarsus? That is, before his conversion, before Paul became a believer in Jesus, he didn’t understand. Only after his experience was he able to comprehend. What lesson can we draw from this for the times when we may find ourselves frustrated with those who don’t believe in truths that seem so clear to us?

Facebooking the Gospel

By Andrew McChesney, Adventist Mission

South Koreans are among the most diligent Seventh-day Adventist gospel workers. Visit the Middle East, and you will find faithful Koreans in Turkey and Lebanon. Koreans live in Africa and South America. Even remote places in Bangladesh and India have an active Korean presence.

But despite this mission spirit, some young people in South Korea are struggling. The problem is connected with a cultural generation gap and career challenges in a country where Saturday is a workday. But derision from other Christians also hurts. While more than a quarter of South Korea's population of 51 million is Christian, Adventists represent a tiny minority. The Adventist Church is dismissed as a cult, and members are mockingly referred to as "sdas," a play on the church's acronym, SDA.

Six Adventist university students decided that they had seen enough. They created a Facebook group and an online radio station aimed at nurturing young fellow Adventists. "Our focus is to reach young people who feel that they don't belong to mainstream Adventism," said project cofounder Hansu Hyun, 27, a graphic design student at church-owned Sahmyook University in South Korea's capital, Seoul.

Young Adventists have taken notice. The Facebook group, opened in 2014, has about 900 followers, a significant number for the Adventist Church in South Korea. It offers colorful memes with vegetarian recipes and testimonies. For the testimonies, administrators interview young adults or sometimes a national actor who is Adventist, and the testimony is spread across five or more memes. A big hit was made with memes about Adventist war hero Desmond Doss during the theatrical release of *Hacksaw Ridge*.

"We have found that informal content like this is easy for young people to embrace," said project cofounder Taegyun Bong, 25, a theology major at Sahmyook University. "Young Adventists who have left the church have told us that they are finding healing through our ministry."

The radio station, linked to the Facebook group, has the cheeky name RadioSda in a nod to the slur toward Adventists, and it offers a two-hour weekly broadcast. Topics have included church youth leaders talking about how they spend Sabbath afternoons and a law school student discussing Sabbath challenges. Some 700 to 2,000 people tune in every week.

"Our whole project can be described in one word: *willingness*," said cofounder Hyunho Kim, 27, an English literature student. "It's easy to become passive in our Christian life, but we are young people who are willing to act to have an impact on the Adventist community."



The Lesson in Brief

▶ **Key Text:** *Acts 26:8–19*

▶ **The Student Will:**

Know: Identify the steps in the conversion of Saul.

Feel: Appreciate the responsiveness of Saul to the directions of God.

Do: Share the resoluteness of Saul in the service of God.

▶ **Learning Outline:**

I. Know: The Steps in the Making of Saul

A What were the primary motives directing the life of Saul before his conversion?

B What made it possible to turn the life of a persecutor into the life of an apostle?

II. Feel: The Responsiveness and Obedience of Saul

A What led to Saul’s responsiveness to God’s call?

B What is the connection between God’s command, “ ‘Arise and go’ ” (*Acts 9:6, NKJV*) and Paul’s later declaration, “ ‘I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision’ ” (*Acts 26:19, NKJV*)?

C How did Saul remain truthful to God’s declaration that he was His “chosen vessel” (*Acts 9:15*)?

III. Do: Serving God Resolutely

A How can you be a chosen vessel for God in the community where you live?

B What are some things you need to give up and other things you need to take on in order to experience true conversion?

▶ **Summary:** The transformation of the most intense persecutor of Christianity into its most passionate advocate illustrates that total change is available to all of us.

Learning Cycle

►STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: *Gal. 1:1, 1 Cor. 9:1*

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: Paul was a man of great faith, assurance, and courage—all because of his unreserved commitment to Jesus, whom Paul encountered on the road to Damascus. That single incident had a lifelong impact on Paul. It made Paul the courageous and Spirit-filled messenger he was. So, Paul could write with confidence to the church at Corinth about the Source of his strength in the midst of conflict: “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?” (*1 Cor. 9:1, NKJV*). Today’s lesson shows us that our Christian confidence and courage come only from our obedience to the calling to be Jesus’ disciples.

Just for Teachers: Paul described himself as “the least of the apostles” (*1 Cor. 15:9, NKJV*). But no single person was as influential as Paul in taking the good news about Jesus to the world. This “least of the apostles” crossed the most frontiers to spread the gospel, established the most churches, and wrote the most texts in Christian theology. Paul testifies to his calling as “not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father” (*Gal. 1:1, NKJV*). It was Jesus who, confronting Paul on the road to Damascus, changed Paul’s life forever. The making of that great apostle is the focus of our lesson today.

Discussion Questions: Even though Paul excelled in so many areas of life and service, why did he describe himself as “the least of all the saints” (*Eph. 3:8, NKJV*)? What role does humility play in being effective followers and witnesses for Jesus? Think of someone who has left an indelible impression on you. How are you a better person because of it?

►STEP 2—Explore

Just for Teachers: “When Christ revealed Himself to Paul, and he was convinced that he was persecuting Jesus in the person of His saints, he accepted the truth as it is in Jesus. A transforming power was manifested on mind and character, and he became a new man in Christ Jesus. He received the truth so fully that neither earth nor hell could shake his faith.”—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 346.

Today's lesson explores Saul the persecutor, the convert, and the apostle.

Bible Commentary

I. Saul the Persecutor *(Review Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3; 26:9–11 with your class.)*

The first four references to Saul in Acts trace his life as a persecutor of the early Christians. In the first reference, Saul stands guarding the clothes of the men who dragged Stephen off to death (*Acts 7:58*). Second, *Acts 8:1* records that Saul gave consent to Stephen's death—an act that led to his election as “a member of the Sanhedrin council.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 102. The search for power often begins with silent compromise and then speedily moves to embrace the path of self-promotion. One act of evil leads to another even more daring act. Each act of evil, step by step, leads to the sale of one's conscience to the highest bidder. Third, in *Acts 8:3*, Saul makes his diabolic move in Jerusalem, making “havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison” (*NKJV*). Fourth, *Acts 9:1* shows that Jerusalem was not enough to satisfy the young Pharisee's oppression of the believers. Saul's zeal for wiping out the church propels him to go to Damascus, where a sizable number of the followers of Jesus lived. His mission of death has now the seal of the high priest in Jerusalem (*Acts 9:1*). “For a time he [Saul] was a mighty instrument in the hands of Satan to carry out his rebellion against the Son of God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 102. Then came that blinding vision on the Damascus road.

Consider This: Gamaliel was a leading Pharisee and a renowned teacher of Judaism. It was Gamaliel who restrained the Pharisees from their plot to kill the apostles by his sane advice that if Christianity “is of God, you cannot overthrow it” (*Acts 5:39, NKJV*). Saul was Gamaliel's brilliant student. What, then, caused Saul to go against his teacher's counsel and pursue his death mission against Christians?

II. Saul the Convert *(Review Acts 9:1–19, 22:1–10, 26:12–18 with your class.)*

When God needs a person to fulfill a mission, He finds His chosen one. Hence Abraham out of Ur, Moses in the wilderness, Daniel in Babylon, Esther in Media-Persia, the Baptist in the wilderness, Peter from Galilee's fishing trade. And Saul of Tarsus. The conversion of Saul from being the destroyer of Christianity to being its foremost evangelist and

global missionary is of rare importance. The Jesus encounter and the blinding vision on the road nearing Damascus turned Saul from Christianity's sworn enemy to its foremost advocate. The Damascus road swerved from becoming a pathway to murder to becoming instead an appointment with the risen Jesus. " 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' " came the voice from heaven (*Acts 9:4, NKJV*). " 'Who are you, Lord?' " the persecutor wanted to know (*Acts 9:5, NKJV*). The answer astounded Saul: " 'I am Jesus' " (*Acts 9:4, NKJV*). Jesus is ever the Interrupter in human life—from the life of Nicodemus the Pharisee, Jairus the synagogue ruler, the widow of Nain, the nameless woman at the Samaritan well, the centurion with a sick servant, Lazarus and his sisters, Simon the leper, Annas and Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate, to the life of Saul and innumerable others. Blessed is the one who yields to that divine interruption. Saul did yield to Jesus, asking that most important question in life, " 'Lord, what do You want me to do?' " (*Acts 9:6 NKJV*). Saul's conversion was over, and in Damascus he was to be told of his future.

Consider This: The risen Jesus asked Saul the pointed question, " 'Why are you persecuting Me?' " (*Acts 9:4, NKJV*). The question's implication is far ranging: any activity done or any word spoken against a person that diminishes that person is viewed by Jesus as done against Him. How does Jesus' question to Saul inform the relational aspects of your life?

III. Saul the Apostle (*Review Acts 9:26–30, 26:12–19 with your class.*)

The transformation of Saul from being the most feared persecutor of the church to becoming its most passionate defender is a story without parallel. What happened after the Damascus road encounter with Jesus can be gathered from the accounts in Acts 9 and Galatians 1:15–24: (1) When Ananias utters those warm welcoming words, " 'Brother Saul,' " Saul the persecutor's hostility against Christians collapses (*Acts 9:17*). Ananias baptizes Saul. (2) Saul preaches in Damascus convincingly about Jesus. (3) Saul goes to Arabia (*Gal. 1:17*) for prayer and reflection and for divine revelation on how best to serve his Lord. (4) Saul goes back to Damascus and ministers there for three years. (5) Saul returns to Jerusalem to join the disciples (*Acts 9:26*). (6) The apostles are not sure of Saul's conversion, and it takes another convert—Barnabas—to declare to the apostles how Saul "had seen the Lord on the road . . . and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus" (*Acts 9:27, NKJV*). (7) Saul stays in Jerusalem, preaching boldly, but the Hellenists are after his life. (8) Saul flees to his native place, Tarsus. (9) Perhaps Saul would have been the forgotten man of Christian history, except for the wonder of how the Holy Spirit works. The apostles, hearing of a marvelous, multicultural growth taking place in the Antioch

church, sent Barnabas to investigate. Barnabas’s arrival further expanded the church, and Barnabas traveled all the way to Tarsus to recruit Saul to assist him at Antioch (*Acts 11:25, 26*). Soon the Saul-Barnabas team marched out on the first missionary journey of the church—a journey that still keeps circling the globe, awaiting the Master who promised to return when the “ ‘gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world’ ” (*Matt. 24:14, NKJV*).

Consider This: The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church. Take a few moments to discuss how the martyrdom of Stephen, and the persecution that followed, helped facilitate the fastest possible growth of the early church.

►STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: In the book of Acts, Luke uses the name “Saul” 25 times (*NKJV*) and “Paul” 129 times (*NKJV*). What is the significance of the two names? The apostle himself gives a clue in *Acts 26:14*: “ ‘I heard a voice speaking to me, saying in the Hebrew language, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” ’ ” (*NKJV*). As a Pharisee, Saul was well versed in Hebrew (or the more common form, Aramaic), and in that language his name was Saul. But the Greek name is Paul. Given that his call is to be an apostle to the Gentiles, many of whom spoke Greek, the apostle seemed to have preferred to take the Greek form of the name. The apostle was a master in contextualization: “I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some” (*1 Cor. 9:22, NIV*).

Thought Question: What are some of the ways we can contextualize the preaching of the gospel?

►STEP 4—Create

Just for Teachers: After narrating his conversion story before King Agrippa, Saul laid out the compelling motto of his life since the Damascus road experience: “ ‘I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision’ ” (*Acts 26:19, NKJV*). This one brief sentence packages the entire life, witness, and martyrdom of the great apostle. Encourage each student to say or write down a single statement that summarizes his or her life and purpose as a Christian.

UNITED BY MISSION



Kurihara Kimiyoshi



Soyloo Serjkhoo



Ki-Jo Moon

What do these three people have in common? They are united by a desire to see the gospel spread in their countries in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division.

Read about Kurihara Kimiyoshi; a Global Mission pioneer in Japan; Soyloo Serjkhoo, a 14-year-old girl in Mongolia; and Ki-Jo Moon, a Sunday pastor who became an Adventist in South Korea, in this quarter's Youth and

Adult Mission quarterly (bit.ly/adultmission) and Children's Mission quarterly (bit.ly/childrensmission).

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