

# **THEME 4**

## **The Early Church**

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The early church went from being a sect within Judaism to reaching out to a largely Gentile audience. The average Roman citizen viewed Christianity in the same way an average North American might view a cult. To the Romans, Christians were atheists who did not believe in the gods. Persecution was a persistent part of the early church experience.

The early church proved to be versatile and effective in communicating the message of Christ to other cultures. In spite of misunderstandings and persecution, the Christian witness spread throughout the urban centers of the Roman Empire and beyond.

In this context of trial and testimony, the Christian Scriptures were born. The books of the New Testament were commonly accepted. They had great teaching value and encouraged believers in the midst of suffering and persecution.

Constantine gained control of the Roman Empire in the first part of the fourth century. The church drastically changed when Constantine decided to organize the vast empire around the God of the Christians. The persecuted church became the church of power and prestige.

Unit 12: Spreading the Good News

Unit 13: Three Hundred Years

## Grade 6—Unit 12

# Spreading the Good News

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At first, the small band of Christians was viewed as a sect within Judaism. This tiny group of people spread the message to all who would listen. They readily shared the good news (*gospel*) and their love. The message spread across the hostile Roman Empire at an incredible rate.

### **LESSONS**

1. God's Family
2. A Bridge for the Gospel

# Unit 12: Spreading the Good News

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## Unit Information

### SUMMARY

Jesus told his followers to “go and make disciples of all nations.” The incredible burst of energy that brought the church into being is evidence of how the resurrection and coming of the Holy Spirit transformed a band of discouraged disciples into courageous missionaries.

Their preaching and response to the Spirit’s leading resulted in a new community focused on Jesus. This new community brought together people from many different backgrounds. The first Christians were not static in their methods for communicating the good news. Peter, Paul, and others communicated in ways that all persons who listened could understand.

### KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Acts 8, 10, and 15  
The letters of Paul

### BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

#### A New Community Focused on Jesus

The story of how fearful disciples became a courageous band that proclaimed the good news is exciting and revealing. What is more amazing is that Christianity, which began as a sect within Judaism, soon spread its message far beyond Judaism, across the vast Roman Empire.

The Jews had long believed that the era of the Messiah would be closely related to the spiritual transformation of Israel. Now the followers of Jesus proclaimed that this spiritual renewal was freely available to anyone who recognized Jesus as Messiah and accepted forgiveness of sins in Jesus’ name (Acts 2:38-40). God was forming a new nation with people who acknowledged Jesus as the Christ. Eventually, it became clear that this nation was not simply made up of those who were born as Jews. The Holy Spirit was bringing together people from many different backgrounds.

At Pentecost, Jews from many parts of the Roman Empire assembled in Jerusalem. Along with commemorating the giving of the Law and offering thanks at the great temple in Jerusalem, they witnessed the coming of the Holy Spirit. People heard the followers of Jesus praising God in their native tongues. Peter proclaimed the message of Jesus, and 3,000 people believed (Acts 2).

Acts 2 gives us a glimpse of the bringing together of God-fearing Jews from many different language groups within the Roman Empire. The story of Philip and the Ethiopian takes the story beyond the boundaries of the empire. The Ethiopian was none other than the minister of finances in the government of Queen Kandake, who ruled a vast kingdom stretching from Aswan to Khartoum, in present-day Sudan. His interest in the God of the Jews had taken him to Jerusalem. By special intervention of the Holy Spirit, Philip was at the right place at the right time to tell the Ethiopian the good news of Jesus.

The apostles also preached the gospel to the Samaritans (Acts 8). They had

been with Jesus long enough to know that no one was to be excluded from the kingdom. A special vision prepared Peter to preach to Cornelius, a Gentile. Years of training and experience had taught Peter that Gentiles were unclean and not worthy of his friendship. This particular Gentile was a centurion, a leader in the hated Roman army of occupation. Peter was called by God to invite this centurion to full participation in the new community of believers (Acts 10:1-48).

The community of Jesus continues to bring together people from many different backgrounds. Today Christianity is growing rapidly in East Asia, Africa, and Latin America. As Christians, our first loyalty is to Christ as king and to the worldwide people of God to whom we belong. This loyalty supersedes the loyalty we owe to the government of the particular part of the earth where we live.

### **A Universal Message within a Cultural Context**

The early church understood that it had a message for the world. Under the Spirit's leading, the church proved itself capable of transcending culture by offering a vital message to Gentiles. Christianity is universal in that it is not tied to one particular culture. Both the sharing and the living out of the good news must become a part of each culture in which it is found. The apostle Paul set an example for this.

Paul made tremendous contributions toward moving the good news beyond Judaism and into a Gentile world. He was a Diaspora Jew who had grown up in the multicultural city of Tarsus. He could, therefore, serve as a bridge into the Gentile world. Paul did not plop the gospel haphazardly onto a Gentile audience. He spoke Greek and understood the mindset of the GrecoRoman world. He sometimes quoted Greek poets to make a point (Acts 17:16ff). We see in Paul the importance of taking seriously another's worldview when communicating the gospel.

For Paul, it followed naturally that the good news would express itself in ways specific to the culture. In other words, asking Gentiles to keep Jewish rules did not make sense. Others felt just as strongly that Gentile believers needed to become Jews (*and be circumcised*). The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) wanted to resolve this problem. The official decision freed Gentiles from most Jewish rules.

Paul's letters to Christians reflected his concern that the gospel should make a difference in how people lived. He spoke of new values and new ways to treat each other (2 Corinthians 5:17-20; 1 Thessalonians 4; Galatians 5:22-26).

Christians still believe they have a message for the world. Communicating that message still requires listening and taking another's worldview seriously. In modern missions, some have paralleled the thinking of the circumcision party at the Jerusalem Conference. Western culture has sometimes been considered almost synonymous with Christianity. On the other hand, there are encouraging signs. Christians all over the world are beginning to express their faith in forms distinctive to their own cultures.

Throughout the world, many people have been bridges to other cultures. Their lives reflect sensitivity to others and willingness to suffer many hardships for the sake of the gospel.

Living out the good news varies with cultural contexts. For the early Gentile Christians, it meant refusing to eat meat offered to idols and rescuing infants (*usually female*) thrown onto the city trash heap by pagan neighbors. For African Christians in traditional societies accustomed to *shamans (witch doctors)*, Christianity means an emphasis on the healing ministry of the church. For Japanese Christians, it means infusing the traditional tea ceremony with spiritual significance so that it

becomes a refreshing time of Christian hospitality. In every culture, living out the good news also means discerning and challenging those aspects of culture that conflict with the gospel.

## ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- The community of Jesus brings together people from many different backgrounds.
- Paul was a bridge in communicating the gospel to Gentiles.
- For the gospel to make sense, it needs to be communicated in ways people understand.
- Christianity addresses cultural assumptions and offers new values.

## WORSHIP

Use any of the following songs from *Hymnal: A Worship Book*:

“For we are strangers no more” (Lesson 1), #322

“In Christ there is no East or West” (Lesson 1), #306

“Holy Spirit, come with power” (Lesson 1), #26

“I love to tell the story” (Lesson 2), #398

In each lesson, pray for the peoples of all continents of the world.

## MEMORY PASSAGES

Matthew 28:18-20 (Lessons 1 and 2)—main memory verse

1 Peter 2:9-10 (Lesson 2)—bonus memory verse

### Matthew 28:18-20

*And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

### 1 Peter 2:9-10

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

## MEMORY VERSE CONNECTIONS

In 1 Peter 2:9-10, we read about a chosen people. In the Old Testament, the Jewish people were this chosen group. But now, the gospel is intended for all peoples, and each believer is part of the chosen people. In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus gives the command to take this gospel to all peoples.

## ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

It is essential for students to recognize that Christian faith is not tied to their own particular culture. There are Christians living all over the world, in many different cultures. The students are asked to express this understanding in the unit quiz.



And Jesus came and said to them,  
"All authority in heaven and on earth  
has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples  
of all nations, baptizing them in the  
name of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit,  
and teaching them to obey everything  
that I have commanded you.  
And remember, I am with you always,  
to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

# Spreading the Good News

## LESSON 1: GOD’S FAMILY

### Objective

Students will recognize that God’s family includes believers from all over the world.

**Text:** Acts 2; Acts 8:26-40; Acts 10:1-48; Matthew 28:18-20

### Key Concepts

- The Holy Spirit led Jesus’ followers to spread the good news about Jesus to people from many different backgrounds.
- Christians today come from all nations, languages, and races.

### Essential Questions

- Who is part of God’s family?

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 45 minutes

### Materials

- *National Geographic* and/or other magazines featuring people of various cultures
- Scissors
- Staplers
- Student Bibles
- 3 blank overhead transparencies, non-permanent markers
- Overhead projector

### Teacher Preparation

- Prepare a bulletin board entitled “God’s Family.”
- If you are using Extend the Lesson, option one, students will need access to computers for Internet research.

## INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**Distribute scissors and magazines.** Instruct students to cut out pictures of people who could be part of God’s family. Staple them to the bulletin board, creating a “God’s Family” collage.

## LESSON STEPS

**1. Bible story skits.** Divide the class into three groups, and assign each group one of the following passages:

- Acts 2
- Acts 8:26-40
- Acts 10:1-48

Each group should read their passage aloud and create a brief skit of the story. Some students in the group will create the script, others will act it out, and others will use the markers and transparency to draw a background scene.

**2. Use the overhead projector** to display the background scene as each group performs their skit. Identify the presence of the Holy Spirit in each story. How was the Spirit bringing people from many backgrounds into God’s family in these situations?

**3. Read Matthew 28:18-20.** This is the memory passage for the unit. Students begin to memorize it for the assessment at the end of the unit. Emphasize Jesus’ instructions to “make disciples of all nations.” No one is left out of Jesus’ invitation. Today Christians come from all nations, languages, and races, just like the pictures that the students posted on the bulletin board. Close with prayer for Christians in the six inhabited continents of the world.

### **EXTEND THE LESSON**

*(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)*

- **Research quest.** Send the students on an Internet search to find current statistics on Christians around the world. Begin by researching a variety of individual countries to discover the number of professing Christians there. Compare the number of English-speaking Christians to that of other languages. After sufficient data is collected, students can create a pie chart or other graphic tool to represent the information.
- **Create motions to Matthew 28:18-20,** keeping the same groups used for today’s skits. Have the groups perform their motions for the class. These can be used to help students memorize the passage.

# Spreading the Good News

## LESSON 2: A BRIDGE FOR THE GOSPEL

### Objective

Students will recognize that it is appropriate for Christianity to have different expressions, depending on the cultural context, with Jesus remaining the center.

**Text:** Acts 15:1-21

### Key Concepts

- Paul was a bridge between the gospel and the Gentiles.
- We need to communicate the gospel in ways that make sense to people who do not share our worldview.

### Essential Questions

- How is Christianity expressed within different cultures?

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 45 minutes

### Materials

- Sticky notes
- Student Bibles
- “Worthy Is the Pig that Was Slain” (p. 364)
- “Mother of the Taiwan Tribes Church” (p. 365)
- “Why Did He Do It?” (p. 366)
- “Bishop Irineos of the Island of Crete” (p. 367)
- “Lena Graber, Nurse and Teacher” (p. 368)
- “Take Off Our Shoes” (p. 369)

### Teacher Preparation

- You will divide the class into four groups to read and discuss four missionary stories. Make enough copies of each story, from pages 365-368, for the students in the group that will read it.
- Write the following questions on the board:
  - In what way were the cultures of the people in the story different?
  - How were the missionaries in the story sensitive to the differences?
  - Did anything surprising happen in the story?
  - In what way might the missionary have been like a bridge?

### INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**Distribute one sticky note per student.** Instruct them to write the name of their favorite restaurant on the note and stick it on the board. As students bring the notes forward, organize them into categories such as American, Italian, Mexican, etc. Just as the students have a variety of food preferences, so Christians around the world have different ideas about expressing their faith. Ask these rhetorical

questions: Can North Americans decide what kind of music Latin American Christians should sing? Should European missionaries decide for African Christians what shape to build their church houses?

Remember together the Christmas molas made by the Cuna, from Unit 8, Lesson 3. Those people integrated faith with part of their culture. Although it is difficult to recognize, we do the same in ours. Ask the students to name examples of ways we apply cultural practices to our faith expression. (*These might include things such as the way we dress for church, the format our worship takes, the way we collect the offering, etc.*)

## LESSON STEPS

**1. Review the memory passage, Matthew 28:18-20.** Then read “Worthy is the Pig that Was Slain” to the class. Ask students to suggest the connection between Jesus’ command to “make disciples of all nations” and the story. They should recognize that we need to communicate the gospel in ways that make sense to people who do not share our worldview.

**2. Paul, the bridge.** Explain to the students about how Paul was a bridge from Jewish Christianity to the rest of the world:

The followers of Jesus knew they had a message for the whole world, especially after the Holy Spirit made it clear that Cornelius, a Gentile, was also called to be a follower. Jesus’ followers were Jewish. What they needed was someone to be a bridge—someone who understood the gospel in this Jewish setting and could explain the gospel to a Greek-speaking world. The apostle Paul was that bridge. He understood Greek thought, because he had grown up in Tarsus. Everywhere Paul and his team went to tell about Jesus, people believed. Then some Jewish believers said these new Christians should be circumcised and follow the Jewish laws. They thought their rules and ways of doing things should be for everyone. But Paul said, “No! Gentiles should not have to become Jews in order to be Christians.”

**3. Read Acts 15:1-21** to find out what they decided.

**4. Missionary stories.** Modern missionaries are also bridges between the gospel and those who do not know Christ. They help to build understanding between people who worship in a different way.

Divide the class into four groups. Give each group one of the missionary stories. (*You will need enough copies so that each student in the group may have one.*) The group should read the story together, and then discuss the questions on the board. (*See Teacher Preparation.*)

**5. Now form four new groups.** Each of the new groups should have a person from the four previous groups. (*If there are too many students, it’s okay to put several people from the same previous group in a new group together.*)

Have the students take turns (*or work with a partner, if there are several from the same original letter group*) summarizing their stories for the rest of the group.

If there is time, have a short discussion on each story as a whole class. Ask the first groups how they answered the questions on the board.

**6. “Take Off Our Shoes.”** Ask a student volunteer to read this poem. Then read 1 Peter 2:9-10 as an affirmation that all people are chosen to be part of God’s family. Explain that students may choose to memorize the 1 Peter passage as bonus work.

## **EXTEND THE LESSON**

*(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)*

- **Ask a missionary to come** as a guest speaker. Before they begin, read 1 Peter 2:9-10 aloud, suggesting that people in every nation belong to God's chosen, then introduce the speaker. Invite your guest to share about experiences as a mission worker in another culture. He/she should focus on ways the gospel was expressed differently in that context than in North America. Allow time for questions, but keep focused on this topic.
- **Pray for missionaries.** Ask your mission board or Mennonite Central Committee for information that would help the class pray for specific mission or peace development workers.

# Worthy Is the PIG that Was Slain

*(This story is based on an actual account.)*

There once was a young man named Hughes  
Who, during the course of a snooze  
Got word from the Lord  
To sell his prized Ford  
And start preaching 'bout the Good News.

Said God, "You will go to Rodenya;  
That's where I've decided to send ya.  
So pack up your bags;  
Prepare for some snags;  
This job is just likely to bend ya."

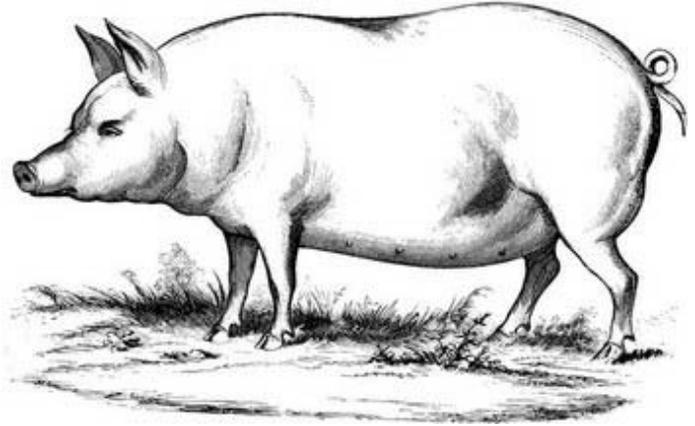
Now Hughes as a good Christian brother  
And putting his faith in no other  
Did just what God told  
(Unlike Jonah of old)  
Weren't no place to go that he'd ruther!

No sooner had our friend Hughes landed  
In Rodenya (where God had commanded),  
Than standing up strong  
He preached loud and long  
'Bout what Jesus the Crucified Lamb did.

He spoke of the gate to the fold  
Of Jesus, the Shepherd foretold,  
Of flocks and of rams  
(Like those of Abram's),  
Of stranded sheep out in the cold.

Of rods, staffs, and herding devices,  
Of offering and burnt sacrifices,  
Of blood and sheepskins,  
The pardoning of sins,  
And how Christ the Lamb now suffices.

And when Hughes had finished expounding,  
He noticed blank looks all around him.  
As most turned away,  
One man came to stay,  
Confusion on his face abounding.



Said he, "Mister Hughes, I do fear  
Your message to us was not clear.  
You told us of lambs,  
Of sheep and of rams.  
Well, such don't exist around here.

"In these parts we've only one creature  
The PIG, which we faithfully feature.  
He's Life, he is All  
For him do we call  
When offering our sacrifice each year."

(It didn't take long to discern  
If these folks, of Christ were to learn  
Then one must begin  
With words that sink in,  
and not with a language they'll spurn.)

So Hughes called the crowd as before,  
And knowing not what was in store.  
Said, "God's Pig was slain;  
For us suffered pain,"  
and everyone pled, "Tell us more!"



## *Mother of the Taiwan Tribes Church*

The people of the Tyal tribe in the mountains of Taiwan had never heard the good news that Jesus loved them. There was no Bible in their language. The missionaries in Taiwan, who knew only Chinese, could not speak to them.

But God had prepared a way. Years ago, a girl of the Tyal tribe had married a Chinese merchant in the plains. Her name was Chi-o-ang. She soon learned the Chinese language. She read the Chinese Bible. In time, Chi-o-ang became a Christian.

The missionaries heard about Chi-o-ang. They went to her and said, “You know both Tyal and Chinese. Come to our Bible school and learn how to tell the story of Jesus to the Tyal people.”

Chi-o-ang was middle-aged and frail by this time, but she felt this was a call from God. She went to school for two years. Then she went up into the mountains that were home to her and began to teach. She went from village to village. The people loved and respected Chi-o-ang and began to listen to the gospel. Many of them became Christians.

But then trouble came. The Japanese had conquered the island of Taiwan. They wanted all the people to speak Japanese, and they wanted all the people to believe in the Shinto religion. They came to Chi-o-ang and said, “You are teaching the religion of another nation. It is not permitted. You must stop going from village to village and telling the people about Christ.”

Chi-o-ang was not allowed to travel anymore. But the men and women, boys and girls who had heard her wanted to know more about Jesus. Chi-o-ang could not come to them, so they decided to come to her. Late at night, one at a time, they would come and slip into her house. Sometimes a man would walk 20 miles from his village, and after an hour or two of listening, he would leave and reach home before dawn. Even though they were very careful, the Japanese still suspected something was going on. But Chi-o-ang did not care. She knew she was doing what God wanted her to do.

As the days went by, Chi-o-ang continued to teach and comfort and support the Christians, who suffered much persecution.

Finally the war was over, and the Japanese had to leave the island. The Christians were safe. Down to the churches in the lowlands came the secret Tyal believers. They joined the Christians there and asked for baptism.

After the war, the missionaries came back to Taiwan. They found, to their amazement, more than 4,000 Tyal people who had become Christians through the faithful service of Chi-o-ang.

*Note: This story took place in the 1940s.*



## Why Do They Do That?

The Mennonite church in Indonesia needed someone to help work with people who had never heard about Christ. So the church asked Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to send them a couple from North America to work with an Indonesian couple in an outlying village. Luke and Dorothy Beidler heard the call and went to Indonesia. Soon they became good friends with the Christian Indonesian couple. They did everything together.

One day, the Indonesian man suddenly became very sick. He needed to be taken to a hospital at once. But in Indonesia, someone always had to go along to the hospital to take care of the patient, to cook his meals, wash him, carry out the bedpan, and attend to all his needs. The hospital did not do that.

The big question was: Who should go along with the sick man? His wife couldn't go, because she had a baby to care for. Both the man's parents and the woman's parents lived far away on a different island. There wasn't even time to send them a message. As Luke and Dorothy talked it over with the other couple, it became clear to all that Luke was the person who should go with his coworker.

The other people at the hospital were surprised when the American man stayed by the bedside of the Indonesian. They were amazed when he cooked the patient's supper. They couldn't believe their eyes then they saw him carry out the bedpan.

They started whispering. They had never seen anything like this happening before. A white American stoop this low and serve an Indonesian? Never! What could this mean?

Now they were all wondering what would happen at night. Since the hospitals were always so crowded, the relative or friend taking care of the sick person slept under the patient's bed. Would this strange white man do this also?

Yes he did! Luke calmly crawled under the bed of his co-worker and lay down to sleep, just like the Indonesian helpers did.

Word of this event spread through the whole island like wildfire. People started asking questions. Who were these Americans who would do such a thing? And why were they doing it?

When the sick man was well, and both he and Luke were at home again, the two couples, American and Indonesian, received calls from surrounding villages saying, "Come and tell us about Jesus."

*Note: This event took place in 1976. During colonial times Indonesians grew accustomed to European rulers who treated them as though they were less valuable people. Hopefully, the Indonesian people of these villages now understand that we are all equal, all created by God and called to serve God.*



## *Bishop Irineos of the Island of Crete*

Bishop Irineos lived on the island of Crete. He needed help. More and more young people were leaving the island, because they had no work and no job skills. Nobody was there to train them. Bishop Irineos wanted the young people to stay; pretty soon there would only be old people left.

Bishop Irineos talked to Peter Dyck, from Mennonite Central Committee. Would Peter be able to send somebody to teach the young people some job skills? The bishop said, "Perhaps you have an electrician, or someone who understands engines and cars. We could also use someone who works with iron. He could teach our young people how to weld and make iron grills, railings, all kinds of things."

Peter said he would pray about it and tell his MCC friends. He would let the bishop know. But the bishop thought of a difficulty. He turned to Peter and said, "My people love the church." Peter said, "That's wonderful! My people love the church too."

"But you're different," the bishop continued. "You're not Orthodox Christians. If you send us your people, I suppose they'll be against Mary, the saints, and our traditions. You Mennonites don't talk about Mary the mother of Jesus in the same way we do. You don't have pictures and icons of her. You don't pray to her. But my people do. For us, Mary is very important. It just occurred to me that if you send us your teachers, they might say things against Mary that would offend my people."

"The same thing is true about the saints. You don't pray to saints, do you? If you send us teachers that speak lightly about our saints, my Orthodox people won't like it. You see, we even have saints' days. Celebrating the birthday of a saint, like St. Paul or St. Peter, is more important than celebrating our own birthdays." The good bishop wanted the Mennonites to come to Crete, but he couldn't see how they could work happily together if they believed so differently.

"Bishop Irineos," Peter said, "you are right. We don't worship Mary or the saints. We have different ways of worshiping. But why talk about something we are against? Let's talk about things we are *for*, the things we have in common. We all love the church, and we love Jesus just as your people love Jesus. Let me make a proposal. If we send teachers to Crete, they will understand that they are not to speak against your beliefs. They are to speak of Jesus Christ. He's the one we all love and serve. We don't need to disagree."

So Peter and MCC sent teachers to Crete to help Bishop Irineos. Klaus Froese came to teach how to work with iron, and Richard Kaufmann came to teach about electricity. Orpha Zimmerli came and taught home economics. The bishop was so pleased that he worked to get the government to recognize this as an official school. Students that graduated from the classes would receive an official diploma. In fact, the government gave the bishop money to run the school, and for new and better buildings, tools and equipment. The students were happy, the parents were grateful, and the MCC teachers were overwhelmed. The bishop's prayers had been answered. Now young people could stay on the island.

*Note: This story took place in the 1950s. It is adapted from the book A Leap of Faith by Peter J. Dyck (Herald Press, 1990).*



## *Lena Graber, Nurse and Teacher*

Lena Graber had worked in India for many years as a nurse and missionary. Then she received a call to go to Nepal, a mysterious country that some people called the “Closed Land” or “The Roof of the World,” because it was home to the Himalaya Mountains and Mt. Everest.

Very few foreigners, and no missionaries, had been allowed into Nepal for hundreds of years, until 1950. Then Dr. Fleming, principal of a Christian school in India, got permission to come and study the birds of Nepal. His wife, a doctor, came along, and they brought two more doctors with them. These doctors helped the people with treatments and medicines. Soon after, the government of Nepal gave the doctors this invitation: “Would you and your people want to start a hospital for us in Nepal? Nepal is Hindu in religion, and we do not want our people to become Christians, but if you can come to help us with a hospital we would be glad.” Within three years, many missionary societies had together formed the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) to bring medical help to the people. Lena was invited to come as Superintendent of Nursing and to start a nurse’s training school.

Lena helped many people, but she asked herself a question, “Am I really a missionary? Or am I only a nurse away from home? I do lead devotions and prayer meetings sometimes, but I have not baptized converts for Jesus. Am I a missionary?” At such times she often thought of her favorite Bible verse: “God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other . . .” She thought of the thousands of sick people she had helped over many years in India and now in Nepal, giving them back health and hope. She thought of how she truly loved many of them, simply because Christ loved her and them both. And she knew deep in her heart that she was a missionary, because she was trying to walk in the steps of Jesus, healing and helping and loving in his name.

Dr. Robert Fleming often said, “If Christianity is any good, it will speak for itself to these people.” As Lena worked with the student nurses, she knew they were watching her. “Therefore,” she wrote, “we are constantly faced with the importance of walking before them as we ought.”

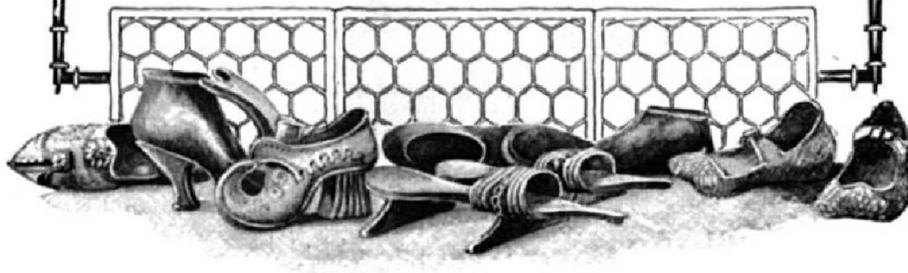
Lena knew that it was forbidden to win people for Christ in Nepal. But she also knew that the power of God was at work everywhere. The church was growing, even without doctors and nurses preaching to the people. When it was time for Lena to retire, the hospital gave a celebration in her honor and made it clear that she was welcome back to service at any time. Lena responded, “I have only done what any Christian would do for Jesus and His children in need.”

*Note: This story about Lena Graber is adapted from the book Twelve Becoming by Cornelius J. Dyck (Faith & Life Press, 1973).*

## *Take Off Our Shoes*

Our first task in approaching  
Another people,  
Another culture,  
Another religion,  
Is to take off our shoes,  
For the place we are approaching is Holy.  
Else we may find ourselves treading  
on people's dreams.  
More seriously still, we may  
forget that God was  
there before our  
arrival.

—John Taylor



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Spreading the Good News

## Unit 12 Quiz

### Part 1: Memory Passage

*Write on the back of this page, or recite to your teacher, the memory passage for this unit. Be sure to include the reference. You may write the bonus memory work for extra points.*

### Part 2: Short Answer

*Briefly answer each question in the space provided.*

1. How did Paul serve as a bridge for the gospel?

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2. Choose a missionary from one of the stories read in class.

- How was this person a bridge for the gospel?

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- How was this person sensitive to another culture?

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3. Think about the three skits that were presented in class from the book of Acts. Choose one story and describe how the story shows that God's family includes people from all around the world.

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4. List three things that are part of your faith experience that would not be necessary for someone in another culture to do.

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## ANSWER KEY

# Spreading the Good News

## Unit 12 Quiz

### Part 1: Memory Passage

Write on the back of this page, or recite to your teacher, the memory passage for this unit. Be sure to include the reference. You may write the bonus memory work for extra points.

### Part 2: Short Answer

Briefly answer each question in the space provided.

1. How did Paul serve as a bridge for the gospel?

Paul was a Jew who knew Greek. He could speak to both the Jews and the Gentiles about Jesus.

2. Choose a missionary from one of the stories read in class.

- How was this person a bridge for the gospel?

Answers will vary, but should show an understanding of how the characters from the stories brought Christ's light into their work.

- How was this person sensitive to another culture?

Answers will vary, but should show awareness that the missionaries' actions spoke louder than words. Pushing the Bible at people was not acceptable. Much more was accomplished in being kind and sensitive to the culture.

3. Think about the three skits that were presented in class from the book of Acts. Choose one story and describe how the story shows that God's family includes people from all around the world.

Acts 2 tells the story of Pentecost and how people from many nationalities heard the word of the Lord. About 3,000 were baptized.

Acts 8:26-40 tells the story of Philip and the Ethiopian who was baptized.

Acts 10:1-48 is the story of Peter and Cornelius. It becomes clear to the disciples that Gentiles are also to be welcomed into the family of God, not just Jews.

4. List three things that are part of your faith experience that would not be necessary for someone in another culture to do.

Answers will vary, but could include: singing hymns or praise songs, fellowship meals, stained glass windows in the church, Sunday school before worship or after worship, passing offering plates, etc. Accept reasonable answers.