



"And now I am no more in the world,  
but these are in the world..." (John 17:11).

Use this recent news story to help your students see the relevance  
of this week's lesson from the Standard Lesson Commentary®  
or Standard Lesson Quarterly®.

### **THE NOISE OF VIOLENCE**

Gunshots reverberated through a restaurant in Waco, Texas, last weekend. Members of competing motorcycle gangs had gathered to find agreement on working for biker's rights and to discuss other mutual concerns. But old rivalries sparked a brawl in which nine were killed and at least 18 were injured. Police arrested 170 people for murder and other charges related to organized crime. Although the gathering was intended to produce unity, it degenerated into violence.

### **THE SOUND OF PEACE**

The sound that echoed through Jerusalem on Pentecost was the sound of a peaceful Spirit bringing unity to a disparate group of people. Some were Jesus' disciples, some had been his enemies, and all had been witnesses of the violent events that happened some 50 days before. But the Spirit at work on that day moved 3,000 of them to turn their lives around in agreement that Jesus was the Messiah.

Nevertheless, the gift of speaking in languages unknown by the speaker became a source of division in the church in Corinth. Paul needed to intervene to curtail this conflict and to help restore unity.

1. What do you think motivates people to divide into competing groups like the gangs in Waco? Though violence because of such division is relatively rare, what are some other destructive results of cultural divisions?
2. Although the gift of languages brought people together on Pentecost, why do you think spiritual gifts can be a divisive topic in the church to this day?
3. What steps can Christians take to find agreement on spiritual gifts?
4. What other issues cause division in the church today? How have you seen believers effectively address divisive topics and bring about unity?

—Charles R. Boatman

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