



"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®
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A CLASH OF VISIONS

Charlottesville, Virginia, erupted in violence last week in a clash of visions. The riots came in response to the city's plans to remove the statue of a Confederate general from a city park. Individuals variously referred to in the media as white nationalists, white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and members of the alt-right gathered to protest the city's intentions in what was called a "Unite the Right" rally. A large group of counterprotesters also gathered, and soon racial taunts and name-calling turned into a riot. Tragically, a young man drove his car into the crowd of counterdemonstrators, killing one and injuring 19 others.

A SINGULAR VISION

The purpose of the vision God gave Ananias was to heal, not to hurt. He was called to heal the blindness of Saul, a man who was committed to destroying the church. Initially Ananias balked, sensing a great risk to himself, but he obeyed the divine call. In so doing, he played a key part in the apostle Paul's conversion and subsequent preaching that helped to heal the division between Jews and Gentiles.

1. What purposes do our society's memorials serve?
2. Does our worldview as Christians call for viewing those purposes differently? If so, in what way?
3. Paul was converted from being a violent persecutor to being a peacemaking preacher. How can that transformation inform and inspire us in light of cultural tensions today?
4. Have you ever experienced God calling you to follow a life-changing vision as Paul did? Explain.
5. What vision is God giving you now in regard to being an agent of change in our mixed-up, polarized society?

—Charles R. Boatman

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