Dear Center for Creative Ministry,

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Paul Richardson, Director
Center for Creative Ministry

Contemporary Comments

"Paul: Background and Call"
September 9, 2015

Texts: Acts 9:1-22; 26:16-18; Philippians 3:6, 8; 1 Corinthians 15:9, 10; Galatians 2:1-17

In less than a month the Nobel Prizes for 2015 will be announced. Beginning on Monday, October 5, news media will reveal the recipients of this year's prizes in physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, and peace. Each year much of the world awaits these pronouncements declaring which individuals have contributed the most to humankind.

The commencement of this prestigious award has an interesting history. As the inventor of dynamite, Alfred Nobel had become extremely wealthy. In fact, he had amassed a fortune. When Alfred's brother, Ludvig, died in 1888, the press wrongly reported the death as Alfred's. As he read his own obituary, Nobel thought about how he would be remembered. His legacy would be that of devastation and death. Not wanting to have his name forever associated with destruction, he changed his will. Upon his death eight years later, it was found that he had given his fortune to the establishment of these Nobel prizes which honor those who have contributed to the betterment of humankind. The prizes we anticipate in the coming weeks are the result of someone who turned his or her life from one focal point to another.

In our lesson today, we see a similar turn-around in the experience of Saul of Tarsus. Saul was determined in what he did. He upheld the Jewish laws and was on a mission to eradicate anyone who was a threat to the laws of God. He followed his Jewish heritage with precision and dedication. His goal was to protect the laws and that meant threatening, stoning, or imprisoning anyone who was against these laws--especially those who called themselves followers of Christ.

Paul did his work with painstaking effort, with meticulous accuracy. His defining moment did not come by reading an obituary, as did that of Nobel, but rather as he was struck with blindness on the road and spoken to by the very One he was trying to destroy. Because Saul's desire had been to follow God, once the truth was revealed to him, he changed his focus from destroying Christians to telling the story of Christ.

As this transformation took place over a very few days, we become acquainted with Paul, the Latin, or Roman name for Saul. His mission had changed. Where before he was intent on destroying anyone who seemed to be a threat to the Jewish laws, he now was intent on carrying the Gentiles with the story of Jesus. Paul was still on a mission with the same dedication and fervor he had exhibited before, but this time it was to reach Gentiles and to work with Christian churches.

~ jv

1. nobelprize.org
2. chabad.org
3. wikipedia.org
About Us

Since 1988, the Center for Creative Ministry has been serving local church leaders and individuals around the world. Formerly known as the publishers of ABBA Newsletter and the Baby Boomer Ministries Resource Center, we have now broadened our generational/ministry focus to include our children. The Center for Creative Ministry took on its new name on June 1, 1996.

The Center for Creative Ministry, formerly Baby Boomer Ministries, is a privately funded and managed para-church ministry fully recognized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. We are dedicated to supporting the local church in outreach and nurture ministries by providing resources, information, training, and consulting.