This issue of the *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* looks at topics from Theology of Mission. Paul, the missionary to the Gentile world has much to offer when thinking of how to communicate the gospel to those in cultures different from our own.

Context is important. Paul had different approaches for different groups of people. For the Jews he often began with the prophecies and other Old Testament information that would help them see in Jesus the hoped for Messiah. For Gentiles he tailored his message to their situation and talked about wisdom, the cross, the unknown God, and used their poets and scholars as bridges to his message.

Flexibility is also important. Think of the many metaphors and images Paul used to describe the salvation process. There was no one-size-fits-all approach, but a constant searching for appropriate ways of explaining Jesus and his work to the varied groups in the Mediterranean world. A modern theology of mission must demonstrate that same flexibility and must constantly seek the exact cultural form that will communicate the biblical meanings.

While context and flexibility were important, Paul never lost sight of his reference point—what God had done through Jesus Christ—truth that is anchored in Scripture. Any theology of mission must maintain that deep commitment to the biblical message. Contextualization is never an excuse for deviating from the Word of God. Without this anchor any theology of mission is adrift and dangerous.

Adventists bring a balanced approach to their theologies of mission with an emphasis on the unity of Scripture. Both the Old and New Testaments must be part of any theology that seeks to describe God’s missionary purposes in its totality.

The whole purpose of theology is to present the biblical message in understandable terms. Context, flexibility, commitment to the Word, and the effort to communicate biblical truth in ways that result in the local people hearing God’s Good News with the same impact it had on first century people must always be the goal. Join us for the discussion.

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