

## “Keep Telling Stories in a Foreign Land”

### ◆ Acts 18:1-11

Paul's mother church was the church in Antioch of Syria. Yet he considered missionary work among the Gentiles—that is, cooperative evangelism—his own calling. Thanks to his efforts, Christianity has grown into the world's largest religion some 2,000 years later. Paul's decision to “go to the Gentiles” and his ministry in Corinth became a world-historical event.

Upon arriving in Corinth, Paul met Aquila and Priscilla, a Christian couple. Both were likely former Diaspora Jews. Having received an expulsion order from Rome (the emperor sought to remove Jews for some reason), they had come to Corinth and made their living as tentmakers. Paul worked the same trade while diligently preaching the gospel to the Jews. When Silas and Timothy arrived to assist him, they likely supported his livelihood. This allowed Paul to devote himself fully to preaching. However, when he boldly declared in the Jewish synagogue, “Jesus is the Messiah,” he was viciously reviled. Paul resolved anew to focus on preaching to the Gentiles, not the Jews. Then many in Corinth, including the God-fearing man Justus

and the prominent citizen Crispus, were baptized. Encouraged by Jesus in a vision, Paul continued proclaiming the gospel.

Hananoi Baptist Church began its missionary 40 years ago, primarily through people sent from Kurigasawa Baptist Church. Approximately 70% of the funds for purchasing the old church building and land came from financial support by the Japan Baptist Convention and our mother church. Our church was built through the cooperative evangelism by various churches. In Japan's aging society with a low birthrate, many JBC churches continue bearing the burden of missionary. During this Cooperative Evangelism Week, let us sincerely pray for the operations of other churches and God's blessing upon them.