

Why the Great Commission and Pentecost Are Inseparable

Does it matter that we're here? Are we making a difference?" These are questions I recently asked the members of the General Council of the Church of God—a movement rooted in the power of Pentecost, where I'm honored to serve as general overseer.

Think for a moment. How would you answer these questions?

The world in which we live is broken. A deep sense of desperation grips people of every nation. Countless issues are screaming to be resolved: poverty, terrorism, racism, immigration, school violence, substance abuse, abortion, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, the disintegration of family. I could go on and on. Yet while these issues are of grave importance, I believe the greatest issue in the world today is a lukewarm church—a church that is listless and unable to effectively make a difference in the world.

Many of God's people are seduced by the idea that if we "fix" this or that, everything will be fine. However, it doesn't work that way. While we should certainly help bring practical solutions to the troubles plaguing humanity, our primary calling as the church is to proclaim the gospel in its purest form. We can only be effective in this world if we recommit to Jesus' mission—to live and speak the truth in love through the wisdom and power of His Holy Spirit.

As the body of Christ, we are a channel through which the Holy Spirit can flow and bring healing to a world in desperate need of redemption. We are called to live the gospel, share the gospel and contend for the Christian faith.

Please hear my heart. We are a Pentecostal church, and Pentecost must not be viewed apart from the Great Commission,

nor the Great Commission apart from Pentecost. They are inseparably intertwined.

We were not filled with the Holy Spirit for our enjoyment but for our employment. That is, we're not Spirit-filled so we can sing louder, feel more goosebumps, or engage in more vigorous worship. We have been filled with the Holy Spirit to effectively fulfill Christ's mandate in Acts 1:8a: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you shall be My witnesses."

God is not looking for better methods of reaching people. He's looking for men and women, young and old, married and single, who will lean entirely on His Spirit moment by moment for the opportunities, the wisdom, the words and the anointing to be His witnesses—to be Jesus to the hurting and the heartbroken.

Now more than ever, hurting people need the time-tested truth of the gospel presented practically in the power of the Holy Spirit. We must never forget, making a difference is "not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. 4:6b).

In this hour, I believe the church needs a recalibration of the heart and mind. We need to acknowledge and reaffirm total dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself said, "without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5b) and "It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing" (John 6:63a).

How can we reach people in every nation? By relying on the anointing of the Holy Spirit. How can you reach the person in the cubicle next to you at work, the student in the seat behind you at school or the broken family living next door? The answer is the same: by relying on the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Sure, let's continue to search for and find unreached people groups, intercede in prayer, invest in church planting and network with others who are effectively advancing God's

kingdom. But most of all, let's get back to the simplicity of the gospel—sharing the Good News of Jesus in the power of His Spirit. It's time to get our voice back and proclaim that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17b).

Friend, take time to soak in His Spirit and His Word, continuously inviting Him into every moment, task, meeting and conversation. Join me in praying, *Lord, forgive us for attempting to do things in our own strength. We need You and invite You to direct and empower our every step. Show us what to do and how to do it.*

Manifest Your Spirit through us with renewed relevance and power in these last days. We pray this in Jesus' name!

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