

How to Ignite Millennials to Be Like Stephen

The church must move from passivity to a wholesome extremism to shake things loose in this hour. The world and the devil are getting bolder and the church needs to be bolder still. The faith of God's people has been at an all-time low, but it must rise to new heights, so that exploits may be done in the name of the Lord.

I travel and speak in churches and am witnessing a large drop-off in the number of young people under 30 in many congregations across the land. My experience has been that in the majority of churches, the number of people over 40-50 years of age is dominant. Although I admire churches who are making it a focus to reach youth and young adults, many are compromising the living Word and the Spirit to do it. We can't do that, because the way you win them is the way you're going to have to keep them.

The Holy Spirit yearns to move in the opposite direction of compromise. Studying the Scriptures will easily reveal that fact. He is the great soul-winner (John 16:7-11) and the great teacher and trainer sent to help us accomplish the task of the Great Commission. He will always lead us into utter abandonment for Christ's sake. We must have a radical departure from the usual conventional standard methods of training believers, especially our youth.

Stephen, one of the seven (Acts 6), was such an abandoned one. As with many martyrs throughout the centuries, Stephen was killed by the religious establishment.

"They stoned Stephen as he was calling on God, praying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' Having

said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:59-60).

Those who passionately stand for the cause of Christ are always persecuted by those who have built their own idea of God. After Christ Himself, Stephen is considered the first Christian martyr.

Stephen spoke the truth of Jesus Christ. However, his words offended the listeners, so they put together a council that brought false witness to the things Stephen was saying (Acts 6:11-13). He proclaimed that God's own people, the Jews, were at fault for suppressing the prophets' call to righteousness, and he boldly told them they were the ones who killed the holy one, Jesus Christ.

Their reaction was to gnash at him with their teeth. They ran Stephen out of the city and stoned him. Yet Stephen patiently accepted the persecution against him, and he asked the Lord not to hold them guilty who had stoned him, but to forgive them instead. He essentially repeated Christ's words on the cross.

This was an extreme act of love. But it takes this sort of extremism to move things for God, especially in this last hour.

Extremism

Stephen was greatly impacted by the lives and preaching of the early apostles. He is a prototype of a last-days preacher modeled in the final part of our book, *Passing On the Move of God to the Next Generation*. I would love for every minister, young and old, to have a copy of it and read it reverently. This message is not about the sale of a book (frankly, that's small stinking thinking), but it is the burden of my life of passing on the baton of the move of God to the next generation. It is what I live, eat and drink.

Years ago, I was part of an apostolic team of fathers who

mentored, equipped, and empowered radical youth. We believed then and still do now that spiritual fathers must define, exemplify, and lead a countercultural movement. It must be our passion to upset the sinful status quo of society and the Church. Youth are key! Just watch the video above to see what a group of young people can do.

In 1933 Hitler said, "If I can separate the youth of Germany from their parents I will conquer this nation." He started a movement called the Brown Shirts, in which 100,000 youth stood in Berlin with their right hands raised, screaming. "Hitler, we are yours!" Imagine our youth pledging that kind of allegiance to King Jesus!

Around that same time period, the communist leader Joseph Stalin made the following statement concerning youth:

If we can effectively kill the national pride and patriotism of just one generation, we will have won that country. Therefore, there must be continued propaganda abroad to undermine the loyalty of the citizens in general and the teenagers in particular. By making readily available drugs of various kinds, by giving a teenager alcohol, by praising his wildness, by strangling him with sex literature and by advertising to him and her psycho-political preparation, [we can] create the necessary attitude of chaos, idleness and worthlessness.

This is happening now right before our eyes. Does this quote not describe the heightened state of our nation and the battle for its soul?

If demonically inspired men can affect our youth this way, imagine what divine inspiration will do!

Sin has wasted our youth. We've not given them something worthy to live for and something worthy to die for. To do anything below what they were created to do will bore them.

That is the reason many of our young people turn to drugs, alcohol, immorality and other sensual thrills. That is why they need to be awakened to their ultimate purpose in Jesus Christ.

In revolutionary countries, youth are trained in combat and weapons. They are taught principles of communism and the tenets of militant Islam. They give themselves wholeheartedly to the goal of world domination. Someone once said that Satan is preparing his army, but the church is entertaining her children. As I stated, we need a radical departure from the standard method of training young men and women for ministry. We need a touch of wholesome extremism to launch a counterculture Jesus revolution.

Yes, just as a certain kind of passivity limits the ministry of God's kingdom, a certain kind of extremism will expand it. The Bible is a book of extremes. Extreme acts of God and history changing events (like the dividing of the Red Sea and the resurrection of Jesus Christ among so many others); extreme characters (men and women who changed the world); extreme demands to follow the Lord (denying yourself, taking up your cross daily, etc.); extreme blessings for obedience (Mark 10:29-30); extreme consequences for unrepentant sin and disobedience (Luke 13:3, Matt. 7:21-23).

Listen to the compelling words of Donald Gee:

There has to be an extremism to move things. We need the extremist to start things moving, and we need balanced teaching to keep them moving in the right direction. We need extreme fervor to launch a movement, but we need the repudiation of extremes to save it from self-destruction. It takes Pentecostal genius to know when and where an extreme doctrine or practice must be modified to a more balanced view; and where on the other hand, the broad lines of truth must temporarily be narrowed into an extreme emphasis upon one point to ensure a dynamic powerful enough to move things

for God. The possession of that uncommon genius marks the God-sent leader who emerged in truly great periods of revival.

May God send revival to His church, and may we see the emergence of God-sent leaders in our day.

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