

The Real Answer to These 2 Misguided Extremes in the Church

It's hard to pick a favorite, but certainly, my top five of Bible books includes the one titled "The Acts of the Apostles." It is the book of the history of the Holy Spirit working in, among and through the church. It not only chronicles the happenings in the early church but sets the pattern for the church era.

I believe that the title given to the book in our Bibles is a misnomer. It shouldn't be titled the Acts of the Apostles, because it chronicles the work of the Spirit in the lives of many who were not apostles. Because of this, some suggest it should be called, "Acts of the Holy Spirit," but I believe it would more aptly be titled, "Acts of Spirit-Filled Believers." It is, of course, the Holy Spirit who does the work, but it is redeemed people He chooses to work through.

Regardless of the title we give it, Acts is undeniably a book of action. The action in the book highlights the essence of Christianity: faith in action. Christianity is about believing and doing! Believing always leads to action. A belief that doesn't lead to action isn't believed. James said it this way, "... I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:18).

Grab the Pendulum

It seems that a significant portion of today's church is too cerebral, whereas another is far too emotional. The pendulum seems to swing violently between the headiness of higher-learning and the swooning of emotional highs. On the one side, supposed grasp of knowledge produces cold, calculated, dead religion. On the other hand, the emphasis on emotional experience delivers highs followed by hard crashes and people

ever searching for the next “fix.”

Meanwhile, a generation is hungrily looking for something more. This generation hungers for that which is beyond the ordinary, beyond the norm. The giant leaps in technology with instant access to a myriad of possibilities make everyday living more and more of a chore. Millennials are groomed for the supernatural. Just look at the books, TV shows and movies that raised them: *Harry Potter*, *Twilight* and others ensure that this generation is open to a dimension beyond the one they know. The church must wake up, step in and fill the vacuum. Today is the church’s hour to grab the pendulum, stop viewing the issue as an “either/or” and understand it is “both/and.” We must step in and answer the cry of hungry hearts and searching minds.

Return to the Pattern

Truly reaching this generation requires a return to the pattern of the Acts: the pattern of Christians rooted in truth and ever-growing in the knowledge of the Lord while at the same time ever-increasing in the freedom of the grace of His Spirit. The church should shine with such brightness that we turn this generation from false teaching and the manifestation of counterfeit spirits to the truth and the genuine works of the Holy Spirit. To do this, we cannot be a “cereal” church, filled with fruits, flakes and nuts. Being Spirit-filled doesn’t mean you check your brain at the door! It isn’t either being smart or anointed – the Church is called to both.

But being intelligent doesn’t mean we are led by our heads. Our generation deserves more than a hard-shell, stuffy gathering of those who think themselves intellectually brilliant but possess no life-giving power. Much of the modern church seems content to pat ourselves on the backs and applaud how advanced we are from the old saints, but it much of what we have is a shallow pool of feel-good inspirational self-talk that doesn’t produce the transformation promised by the

gospel.

I believe it is time for a Jesus awakening in the church. It's time for a return to authentic Spirit-filled living like what we see in the Acts. The church life of the first century isn't meant to be the exception to the rule; it is the rule. What Jesus began to do and teach as recorded in the Gospels, He desires to do through His body, His people, His church in our generation.

His instruction to the first disciples is our instruction as well, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ... Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them. ... teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you ... These signs will accompany those who believe: In My name, they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; if they drink any deadly thing it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:15-18, Matt. 28:19-20). His last words must always be our first priority. We are to go into everyone's world with the proclamation, explanation and demonstration of His good news.

Witness the Power

No one should go until they receive the Holy Spirit. Jesus instructed His followers to go, but before they were to go, they were to wait for the promise of the Father. Luke records His words in Acts 1:8a, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you." The word power is *dynamis* and means "miraculous ability." Jesus said when the Holy Spirit comes on us, we receive ability beyond our ability. He adds the super to the natural. The Holy Spirit adds the extra to the ordinary. Our mission is to witness the power of Jesus personally and corporately and then witness this new life to the generations. The power of Pentecost is first the power to live beyond self. It is the power to live for Christ and make Him known. Every other aspect of the power revealed at

Pentecost flows out of the foundation that we are called to His witnesses.

My prayer is that the church will again live out the book of Acts. I pray the actions of Spirit-filled believers in the 21st century will again impact our culture as the first-century believers impacted theirs. Awakening is our prayer. Jesus is our message, and Holy Spirit-enabled action is the proof. {eo}

Keith Nix is the founding pastor of a thriving congregation, The Lift Church in Sevierville, Tennessee. He has traveled as an international evangelist since 1993 carrying a unique prophetic message of awakening to this generation. The year 2018 marks his 21st year of leading an impacting youth camp: for information. He and his wife, Margie, have one daughter, Isabella. To learn more and get a free audio download you can visit [here](#). You can connect with Keith on Twitter [here](#):