

Cross-Cultural Perspectives



They Continued...

After the dynamic, initial blastoff of the New Testament Church in Acts 2 there are four words that have brought us from then and there to here and now. They are simple but directional: “And they continued steadfastly...” (Acts 2:42). Need it simpler than that? “They continued!” The advancing church did not stop in Acts 2. It started there. It continues from there.

I did a Microsoft Word synonym check on “steadfastly.” I like the treasures I found: persistently, consistently, with conviction, unwaveringly, unflinchingly, loyally, and faithfully. Dr. Luke’s placement of two twin words in rapid fire is strategic. “Continued” means sustained, constant, continual, continuous, nonstop, unrelenting, unremitting, and persistent.

Acts-missionaries were men and women of perseverance. They refused to quit. They would not retreat. Forward ever, backward never. They held high the banner of truth with unwavering, unflinching, unrelenting, unremitting conviction.

It wasn’t that they didn’t have reason to turn back. One overarching reason caused them to press forward in the face of persecution, sacrifice, and alienation from their family and society. They unyieldingly believed that the promise (Acts 1:8) extended “to all that afar off” (Acts 2:39). They had one goal in mind. They were forever pressing to the ends of the earth. I trust the “whole Gospel to the whole world” never becomes a well worn cliché but remains our undying passion. I unflinchingly assert; it is your only reason for continuation in your field of service. It’s the only thing that will keep you focused as you navigate the interstates and back roads after prolonged months on the deputation trail. Lose the focus—whether at home or abroad—and you will begin to waver, flounder, falter and be tempted to pull out the white handkerchief of defeat and surrender.

So, what do you do when the guts to continue diminishes in the daily drudgery of difficulties? What do you do when passion is depleted? Paul said it best: "Stir it up!" (2 Timothy 1:6). Fan it into flame! The spark of excitement and enthusiasm will be reignited. Peter added, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Peter 5:10). Prayer changes things. Prayer changes you! God will establish you through restoring your vision and giving you renewed direction. You will not waver. You will be steadfast! He will strengthen you; placing you on a firm foundation, and will securely ground you. He will settle you; support you and confirm your calling. You'll be perfect; nothing defective will be in you. He will set right what has gone wrong. He will put things in order for you. He'll give you the needed courage regardless of what happens. Harvesters, remember: "So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit" (Galatians 6:9, *MSG*).

"O may all who come behind us find us faithful, may the fire of our devotion light their way. May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe, and the lives we live inspire them to obey. O may all who come behind us find us faithful."(Jon Mohr)