



# ***IMPULSE***

**MOTIVATIONS OF THE NEWBORN CHURCH**

# **AN IMPULSE OBSERVED**

1. a sudden strong and unreflective desire to act.
2. a driving or motivating force; an impetus.

## **AN IMPULSE OBSERVED**

“Oh, I know a place, Ain't nobody cryin', Ain't nobody worried,  
Ain't no smilin' faces No no, Lyin' to the races  
Help me, come on, come on  
Somebody, help me now  
(I'll take you there)  
Help me, ya'all  
(I'll take you there)  
Help me now  
(I'll take you there)  
Oh!  
(I'll take you there)  
Oh! Oh! Mercy!  
(I'll take you there)”

# ***IMPULSE***

## **MOTIVATIONS OF THE NEWBORN CHURCH**

Reminder of the primary motivations of the Church

1. Gospel Proclamation
2. Gospel Community

# ***IMPULSE***

**MOTIVATIONS OF THE NEWBORN CHURCH**

**THE IMPULSE OF PROVOCATION**

**ACTS Chapters 15-17**

## “Provoke” - Root

...from the Greek paroxusmos, from paroxunein, a compound of para - ‘beyond’, & oxunein - ‘sharpen’ (from oxus - ‘sharp’).

## Provocation - Definition

*noun.*

a sudden attack or violent expression of a particular emotion or activity-A '*Paroxysm*'



'Paroxysm' - Usage

*Acts 15:38; Acts 17:16*

## **ACTS 15-17: OUTLINE**

>Acts 15:1-35: The 'Great Debate'

>Acts 15:36-16:5: The 'Great Divide'

>Acts 16:6-17:15 The 'Hard Stop'

>Acts 17:16-34 The Spiritual 'Gut Punch'

## **ACTS 15:1–35 THE 'GREAT DEBATE'**

Provocative thought (PT): Sharp differences lead to Gospel clarification.

1 But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” 2 And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.



## **ACTS 15:1–35 THE 'GREAT DEBATE'**

PT: Sharp differences lead to Gospel clarification.

6 The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. 7 And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, 9 and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.

## **ACTS 15:1 – 35 THE 'GREAT DEBATE'**

PT: Sharp differences lead to Gospel clarification.

10 Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 11 But **we** believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as **they** will.”



## **Acts 15:36–17:5 THE 'GREAT DIVIDE'**

PT: Sharp disagreement leads to mission multiplication.

36 And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” 37 Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. 39 And there arose a **sharp disagreement**, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

## ACTS 16:36–17:5 THE 'HARD STOP'

PT: Sharp resistance leads to mission direction.

6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been **forbidden by the Holy Spirit** to speak the word in Asia. 7 And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, **but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them**. 8 So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of **Macedonia** was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 And when Paul had seen the vision, **immediately** we sought to go on into Macedonia, **concluding that God had called** us to preach the gospel to them.



# THE MACEDONIAN CHURCHES





## **ACTS 17:16–32 THE SPIRITUAL 'GUT PUNCH'**

PT: Sharp revulsion leads to Gospel relevance.

16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.

## **ACTS 17:16-32 THE SPIRITUAL 'GUT PUNCH'**

PT: Sharp revulsion leads to Gospel relevance.

"It was said that there were more statues of the gods in Athens than in all the rest of Greece put together, and that in Athens it was easier to meet a god than a man."

"The intellectual capital of the world was producing idolatry."

"Paul was about as at home in Athens as a bust of Luther would be in the Vatican."

"The greatest pretenders to reason are the greatest slaves to idols."

## **THE SPIRITUAL 'GUT PUNCH'**

Paul's response to spiritual provocation

17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there...19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean."...22 So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said:



## **ACTS 17:16–32 THE SPIRITUAL 'GUT PUNCH'**

A culturally relevant expression of God's love

- (i) God is not the made but the maker; and he who made all things cannot be worshipped by anything made by the hands of man. It is all too true that men often worship what their hands have made. If a man's God be that to which he gives all his time, thought and energy, many are clearly engaged in worshipping man-made things.
- (ii) God has guided history. He was behind the rise and fall of nations in the days gone by; his hand is on the helm of things now.
- (iii) God has made man in such a way that instinctively he longs for God and gropes after him in the darkness.

## Psalm 100

*4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.*

*5 For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.*