

Flash in the pan

Do you know where that expression comes from? This particular colloquialism has specific meaning in the world of human relations today, while it finds its roots in the world of firearms in the days when “flintlock” firearms were used.

These relatively complex devices had a number of external parts that made them fire their projectile. The description of the weapon, *flintlock*, comes from one of the components that tightly holds a little chunk of flint stone.

- When the gun’s trigger is pulled, the spring-loaded flintlock moves at high speed, striking the *frizzen*; a device designed to throw a little iron spark when struck by fast moving flint stone.
- The spark is thrown into the *pan*; a device designed to hold a charge of gunpowder which is to be ignited upon receiving the spark from the *frizzen* and *flint*.
- The gunpowder in the pan ignites, and it flashes through a small hole in the side of the barrel in order to ignite the gunpowder inside the barrel, behind the shot.
- Shortly after one pulls the trigger, the gun fires!
- ... or not.

Sometimes, everything works perfectly and the projectile exits the barrel, moving toward the intended target at a high rate of speed. Sometimes, all you get is a flash in the pan, and nothing more. There is all the motion, all the parts doing their job, all the flash, all the hope, but no projectile; no power; no effect, thus rendering the firearm useless.

Ever known someone who could be called a flash in the pan? There’s a lot going on, but nothing positive seems to be getting accomplished? Some organizations can be like that, too. They can go through all the right motions, seem to have all the necessary components, perhaps even seem to be working together! But what is the end result of those components working together... power and accomplishment, or a flash in the pan?

In the Church of Jesus Christ, as we involve ourselves in our flurry of year end activities, and even begin contemplating and planning next year’s activities, let’s pay closer attention to what we are doing regarding our ultimate goal... powering the firearm so to speak, to accomplish that goal. Oh, and lest there be any confusion about the goal, let’s define it.

We have been commissioned by Christ to go into all the world, to make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Let’s focus on accomplishing Christ’s commission, and measure our year-end activities in light of that charge.

All else is just a flash in the pan.

Pastor