

# Trouble In Paradise

## Acts 6:1-6



# Observations

- In the book of Acts we find that the church grew amazingly, from a small band of men to an army of believers, in a short period of time
- In Acts 2:41 we are told that 3000 people were added to the Church of Christ on day one
- In Acts 4:4 we are told that another 5000 men were added, not counting the families of the men who were added
- Acts 5:14, we are told that multitudes of believers were added to Christ
- It is only natural, then, that problems would develop with that many Christians originating from the same source that caused the execution of the church's founder, Jesus Christ



***Is It Strange That The Death  
Of The Founder Caused The  
Growth Of The Church!***

***(As Jesus Died, So Should  
We!) Galatians 2:20***



# The Problem, Acts 6:1

*“Now in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenist, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.”*

- The Grecian Jews lived in different areas of Asia Minor. Their ancestors had been captured by the Greeks during the advancement of the Greek Empire
- Many later returned to Israel, and some intermarried with Greeks, which of course was a “no-no” in Jewish culture
- The Hebrews had been able to evade Greek culture and remained in Israeli-occupied territory. They prided themselves on being “pure and undefiled.”





## The Basic Theme of Their Togetherness:

***When Members Of These Groups  
Became Christians, They Tried To Put  
Their Differences Aside And Become  
One In Christ!***

***“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ. And if you are Christ’s then you are Abraham’s seed , and heirs according to the promise.”***

***Galatians 3:28-29***

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- **The Grecian Jewish Christians felt like their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of resources.**
  - **In those days there was no social security, welfare, or pensions. A widow with no family, was in a very difficult situation**
  - **The Apostles were apprised of the situation and took swift action**
  - **They didn't ignore the problem, hoping it would go away**



## The Apostles Tackled The Problem “Head-On” With Shared Responsibilities, Acts 6:2-5

*“Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, who, we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of God’s word.”*

- Up to this time, ministering to God’s people’s needs had been largely an Apostolic responsibility
- God was now allowing the Apostles to delegate and to share responsibility and ministry with other members




# This Was Paul's Emphasis to the Ephesians

*“And He Himself gave some to be Apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting ,*

*Ephesians 4:11-15*





.... *“but, speaking the truth in love ,may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ”*

**Paul Says That:**

- **Sharing Duty and Delegating Responsibility Produces  
Unity,  
Faith,  
Knowledge,  
Maturity**



Paul Says That:

**Centralizing or Monopolizing  
Responsibility Produces**


**Immaturity**

**Unstable Churches**

**Un-fundamentally sound memberships**

**Crooked Leaders**

***The Layers Of Leadership Are Protective  
From Apostasy!***



Look At The Qualities That The Apostles  
Asked For:

## **Could You Make The Cut?**

**#1 Honest Report-His behavior in and out of the Church should “reportedly” reflect Christ**

**#2 Full of the Holy Spirit- This doesn't mean, he has got to be a “tongue speaker or faith healer”**

**Those were manifestations of the Holy Spirit that would phase out as the church matured,  
1Corinthians 13:8-13**



# All Believers When Baptized Receive The Holy Spirit

- This is the automatic and non-voluntary gift according to Acts 2:38
- I think that the apostle's criteria for a man to fulfill this office has to do with a man who is "spirit controlled"
- People who are filled with the Holy Spirit consistently in their lives manifest the "fruit of the spirit"

Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, Galatians 5:22-23

- These are attributes of God, that would be necessary for a man to have, who assumed this influential job in the early church



# **The Third Criteria Was Wisdom**

**This is the skill of knowing what God would do in a given situation**

**Having Godly insight and the willingness to execute it**





# How Do You Get This Skill?

By becoming a student of God's Word!

2 Peter 1:3 Peter says that *“his divine power had given unto us (the apostles) all things that pertain to life and Godliness...”*

Ephesians 3:1 Paul says that, *“when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.....”*



## Finally, Notice This:

### **All Of the Seven Men Chosen Had Greek Names!**


- **Stephen, Phillip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch (not ethnically a Jew, but a gentile convert to Judaism)**
- **All Grecian Servant Leaders under the direction of the Apostles**
- **This would be tantamount to a Church of Christ with a majority white membership and a minority of African Americans, which when the African Americans Christians complained about discrimination of resource distribution, the Church chooses 7 African American men to lead the ministry and one of the men would be a black man from Africa itself!**



You Can See Now Why The Church Grew!  
Acts 6:7

***They Were Out To  
Please The Lord First  
And Themselves  
Second!***





Verse 3 “You Choose Them And We Will Appoint Them”

The Apostles, who were the head of the new local church, had the final word on the appointments



# The Plan Of Salvation



Hear the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Believe the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Repent Of Sins

Acts 17:30

Confess Christ

Acts 8:37

Be Baptized

Acts 8:38