



## “Blessed Conflicts!”

*<sup>1</sup>In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. <sup>2</sup>So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. <sup>3</sup>Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them <sup>4</sup>and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” <sup>5</sup>This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. <sup>6</sup>They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. <sup>7</sup>So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”*  
Acts 6:1-7 NIV

Up to this point, we may have perceived the early Church as living under the unbroken, daily, blessing of God. Today, we discover that they, like us, had issues to overcome!

- I. The conflict of the people.
  - A. The conflict arose because of growth!
  - B. The conflict was very practical in nature, not spiritual.
    - Hebraic Jews
    - Grecian Jews
  - C. At its root, this was an attack on unity.
  
- II. The counsel of the Apostles.
  - A. The Apostles gathered the people together and made an administrative decision to address the problem.
  
  - B. The Apostles held fast to their calling which was ministry of the Word and prayer. However, this was not a higher calling but simply what they knew they were to do. (see Matthew 25:34-40, Ephesians 4:13)

III. The consequence of their action:

- A. the Church grew even more. Unity attracts!
- B. We must never allow internal conflicts, to keep us from our primary mission which is to “free people to follow Jesus!”

Conclusion: Three take-aways:

- 1. We will take on conflicts, not cover them up.
- 2. We will seek to be part of the answer and believe that God can and will use every one of us!
- 3. We will expect God to keep increasing the number of people that come to Jesus because of our unity!

### **Small Group Questions**

- 1. Describe a time in your spiritual journey when you were turned off by disunity or conflict in the Church. What was the result of that in your own life?
- 2. Do you have a clear idea as to what your calling and/or spiritual giftedness is? Yes, no, maybe (what can you do to clarify this most important matter?)
- 3. Do you see the importance of maintaining unity by addressing issues and not ignoring them? DO you know who to go to when you see a problem that concerns you?
- 4. Do you see the wisdom of freeing those called to minister the Word and to pray from being pulled into daily pragmatic issues that others can solve? How might you affect this going forward?
- 5. How can you maintain your boldness in inviting others to share in the faith you discovered while maintaining the unity that God has called us to?