

Acts 6

Vv. 1-7 leadership in the community

A new challenge in the community has arisen. Hellenists, Greek-speaking Jews in the community, believed their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of goods.

The early church continued the long tradition of care for the poor within the synagogue. But the church is growing and the distribution is becoming unmanageable.

The Apostles cannot keep up with the work load – more leadership is needed. So the 12 called a meeting of the disciples. – good Presbyterian way!

The Message translates what the apostles said this way – it wouldn't be right for us to abandon our responsibilities for preaching and teaching the Word of God to help with the care of the poor.

They weren't too important to feed the poor; they just had a different responsibility.

So 7 were chosen who demonstrated the qualities needed – trustworthiness, Spirit-filled and wise.

After the disciples chose the 7, the apostles were called to “ordain “them to their work.

What may we infer from these actions about leadership in the church?

- 1) Leadership in the church arises from the community’s every day, ordinary but necessary needs. Jesus called the 12. They call others – to specific functions in the church.
- 2) Leadership arises from “below” not from “above.” Leaders arise from the needs of God’s people for guidance and service. At the same time, leadership is a gift from God.
- 3) Ordained ministry today is an adaptation of the church to its leadership needs. The present orders of clergy and leaders are a product of the church and its particular needs at a given time. Therefore, the church may change

Vv. 8 – 15

From reporting the appointment of the 7 Luke now draws out 2 to move to the forefront - Stephen and Philip.

Stephen appears to be one who is able to work wonders and signs like the apostles themselves.

The response of the Hellenists – Synagogue of the Freedmen - is strongly reminiscent of the way the apostles and even Jesus himself were treated – even to the point of setting up false witnesses to testify against him.

The chapter ends leaving the reader hanging – “his face was like the face of an angel.”