

The Sacred Family has Growing Pains: Acts 6: 1-7

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When I got this assignment, I wondered why Mike had given me a seven verse topic....and then, oh dear....here we are back to the power and importance of xenophilia. To share a sense of how confusing and frustrating it can be to address this issue in a mixed culture community I will share with you some issues connected with:

1. The Location of Time: describing the past and the future
2. Food: particularly at holidays.
3. Story Telling - Semitic and Hellenic
4. Gen Z use of language. (I could impress you with how *slay* it is to teach you this topic but will stick to simple terms about gender and attraction)

As an object lesson of working with mixed cultures, every text I use will be from *The First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament*.

Since this is about **hospitality** here's the list we have used from other discussions of the topic:

1. Hospitality welcomes the outsider, the stranger, or the vulnerable traveler.
2. In every story but one there is a possibility of some sort of danger or disaster
3. Beings who are hospitable make a choice to take personal risks.
4. A primary core value of a hospitable person, locale, or choice is that they are safe for the guest but also for others of the environs.
5. Nurture is involved.
6. Guests can be any sort of being.
7. There are often unexpected results or blessings.

I believe it is important to remember the importance of and need for hospitality in Hebrew history, beginning with Genesis.

The Problem

In those days, when the sacred family was growing in number, the Tribal Members who spoke the language of the Wisdom Seekers grumbled against the Tribal Members who spoke their own language. They complained to (the twelve) that their widows were being overlooked during the daily meals. The twelve message bearers invited everyone to a council meeting.

1. What does it say about the situation that, who got fed at the daily meals, was an issue in a Hebrew culture?
2. What do you think Luke (a physician and a probably a Greek) was feeling as he researched and wrote about this issue in the early church?

3. What do you think about the process of *gongystes* (grumbling, complaining, muttering and whispering) that brought this issue to the twelve message bearers.
4. Why do you think the message bearers invited everyone to a council meeting?

The Solution

They said to all, "It is not a good thing for us to give so much of our time to seeing over these meals. This gives us little or no time to teach about the Creator's message. We want you to choose seven men of good reputation who are filled with the Creator's Spirit and wisdom who will serve in our place. Then we can give ourselves to prayer and to the teaching of the Creator's message. This seems like a good thing to all the people and so they chose:

Stephen: (victor's wreath or many feathers)

Philip (lover of horses)

Prochorus (leader of the dance or presides over choirs)

Nicolas: (victor over people)

Parmenas: (steady, reliable)

Timon: (precious, valuable)

Nicanor: (victory)

They stood these men before the message bearers, who then placed their hands on them and sent their voices to the Great Spirit.

1. If they were supposed to just wait on tables, what was Stephen doing preaching the sermon that gets him killed in next week's lesson?
2. What do you think the job description of the seven men included?
3. Do you think their names or the meaning of those names were part of the solution; if so, in what way?
4. What, to you is the meaning of the message bearers placing their names on the seven?

The Result

Creator's message was told far and wide. In the Village of Peace the number of followers continued to grow, and many holy men believed and began to walk in this new way.

1. What do you think there was about this event/process that allowed the message to be told far and wide?