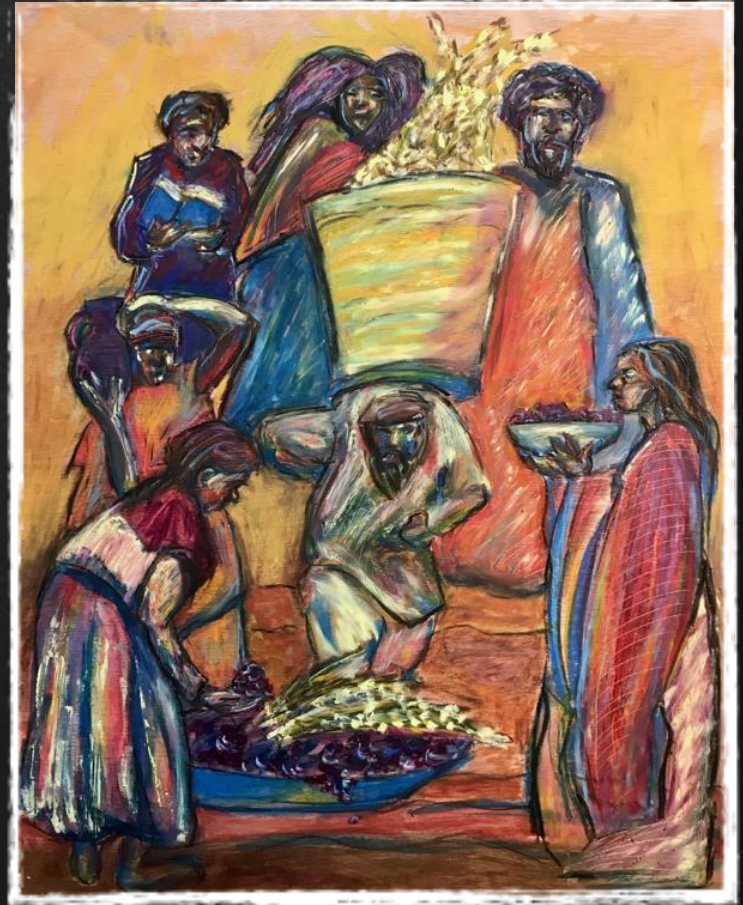


*Problems,
Power, & the
Priesthood of
All Believers*

Acts 6:1-7



“Those who love their dream of a Christian community more than they love the Christian community itself become destroyers of that Christian community even though their personal intentions may be ever so honest, earnest and sacrificial. God hates this wishful dreaming because it makes the dreamer proud and pretentious. Those who dream of this idolized community demand that it be fulfilled by God, by others and by themselves...”

“They enter the community of Christians with their demands set up by their own law, and judge one another and God accordingly. It is not we who build. Christ builds the church. Whoever is mindful to build the church is surely well on the way to destroying it, for he will build a temple to idols without wishing or knowing it. We must confess, he builds. We must proclaim, he builds. We must pray to him, and he will build. We do not know his plan. We cannot see whether he is building or pulling down...”

“It may be that the times which by human standards are the times of collapse are for him the great times of construction. It may be that the times which from a human point are great times for the church are times when it's pulled down. It is a great comfort which Jesus gives to his church. You confess, preach, bear witness to me, and I alone will build where it pleases me. Do not meddle in what is not your providence. Do what is given to you, and do it well, and you will have done enough.... Live together in the forgiveness of your sins. Forgive each other every day from the bottom of your hearts.”

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Acts 6:1-2

1 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. 2 And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables."

Acts 6:3-4

3 “Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

THE PROBLEM

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- Why?
 - Societal brokenness

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- Hellenist widows are starving.
- Why?
 - Societal brokenness
 - The apostles were limited.

POWER

- The apostles get defensive, but in God's kingdom not all pushback is disloyal opposition.

POWER

- The apostles choose to share power and delegate authority. They give those who would otherwise not be heard a decisive voice in all matters pertaining to the life of the Church. They lean into the priesthood of all believers.

PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

- “And Jesus gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds/teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up the body of Christ.”
(Ephesians 4:11–12)

PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

- “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light... You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:9, 5)

Acts 6:5-6

5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

Acts 6:7

7 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

