

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Taking part in the solution

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Regardless of the progress churches make in winning souls to Christ, conflicts among members in the church can arise. According to FACT (A Faith Communities Today) study, 51 per-cent of U.S. religious bodies, including churches of Christ, have experienced a serious conflict in the previous three years. Conflicts due to the behavior of a member, worship practices and doctrinal disagreements come to the forefront according to this study in threatening peace in local churches.

Conflict in local churches is not new to our times. Soon after the church of Christ was established in Jerusalem, murmuring begin to be heard. “Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.” (Acts 6:1).

Conflict arose in the church at Jerusalem even though many were becoming followers of Christ. Jews were being converted to Christ in great numbers. But among the Christians, Jews who had lived in Grecian societies, speaking Greek, began to

murmur against the “home born-and raised” Hebrews. While needy widows among the Christians were being helped daily, the daily ministration apparently reached only the needy believing widows who were Hebrews. The local church had a problem with a conflict. What happened next?

It is interesting to note first what did not happen. The apostles who were the leaders in the church did not ignore the problem. They did not chalk it up to a mere perception problem among those who do not feel quite at home yet. They did not subscribe to the lazy mindset of “ignore a problem and it will go away”. Quickly, they sought to solve the problem. Accusations of favoritism were not allowed to foster further ill feelings in the hearts of those who should be one in Christ. Instead of finger pointing, the apostles sought to find a solution to the problem.

A wise plan was quickly implemented. Seven spiritually minded men were appointed by the multitude of disciples to provide needy believing widows among the Grecian speaking Jews with daily food and provisions. Those chosen, had Grecian names. One of them, Nicolaus, was a Greek of

Antioch who had been converted to Judaism—“*proselyte*” before coming to Christ. Favoritism could no longer be moving beneath the surface as a murmuring undertone. The problem of neglected widows was to be solved through the helping hands of Grecian Jews.

The problem would not have been solved, if these men refused to go to work. The neglect would have continued with murmuring following in its wake. No plan to solve a problem will be successful if there is no one to work the plan. The apostles did not ignore the problem, but implemented a plan. The disciples did not complain about the plan of action, but they worked out the plan. All were part of the solution.

The early church was growing when a problem arose. When the problem was honestly addressed and solved, the cause of Christ continued to prosper (Acts 6:7). It is not a matter of “if” a conflict is going to arise in a local church but “when”. When it occurs, let us all resolve to be part of the solution. Let us not ignore problems, but solve them according to God’s Will.