

# Ministry Growth and Multi-Ethnicity

## ACTS 6:1-7

Now during those days, when **the disciples were increasing in number**, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. **2** And the Twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. **3** Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, **4** while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." **5** What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. **6** They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them **7** The word of God continued to spread; **the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem**, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.



What is the friction between the Hebrews (Jews from Judea who spoke Hebrew as a first language) and the Hellenists (Jews from outside Judea, who spoke Greek as their first language)?

What are some of the "Godly but risky aspects" of the decision of twelve apostles?

What are the traits and characteristic of the seven men the community selects?

What is the fruit of this decision?

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# Ministry Growth and Multi-Ethnicity



## CONSIDER :

- What are some of the ethnic communities that exist on your campus but are not a part of your fellowship?
- If fellow Christians from those communities came to your fellowship's leadership team desiring to participate in the fellowship, what might they say about their feelings of exclusion? What might they be asking for?

## DO SOME RESEARCH :

- What is the ethnic make-up of your fellowship? Of your campus? How does your campus website present and represent ethnic issues of your campus?
- Check out the school paper and/or your student union— what groups are represented there by their articles and ads? What ethnic-related events are going on?

## TAKE A GODLY RISK IN SOMEONE ELSE'S WORLD :

- Find an evangelistic Christian event run by an ethnic community not your own – go to it, watch, and learn;
- Find a campus event run by an ethnic/cultural community not your own (Black History Month? Cinco de Mayo? Chinese New Year? Pan-Hellenic Party? Etc?) – go to it, watch, and learn;

## DO SOME PRAYERFUL SELF-ASSESSING, AND TAKE A GODLY RISK IN YOUR OWN MINISTRY :

- How could your large group meeting be more welcoming to peoples of various ethnicities (speakers, music, topics, talk examples, etc.)?
- Who are the students with cross-ethnic experience who might be helpful leaders or influencers for the fellowship?

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What is the friction between the Hebrews (Jews from Judea who spoke Hebrew as a first language) and the Hellenists (Jews from outside Judea, who spoke Greek as their first language)? How could this have happened?

- ▶ Perhaps the distribution was informal: you just had to know the people who had the food, and the Hellenists didn't know the right people.
- ▶ Perhaps the Judean widows just know how the system works.
- ▶ It wouldn't have to involve overt intentional racism, but rather neglect.

What are some of the "Godly but risky aspects" of the decision of twelve apostles?

- ▶ They entrust the decision to the group who is complaining.
- ▶ They empower and authorize those chosen to serve as leaders.
- ▶ They are willing to assert the priority of their most important work.

What are the traits and characteristics of the seven men the community selects?

- ▶ Good standing, all likely Hellenist Jews
- ▶ Full of HS and wisdom
- ▶ This seems like overkill, but these men are lifted into responsibility and leadership, and prominence (Acts 7 and 8).

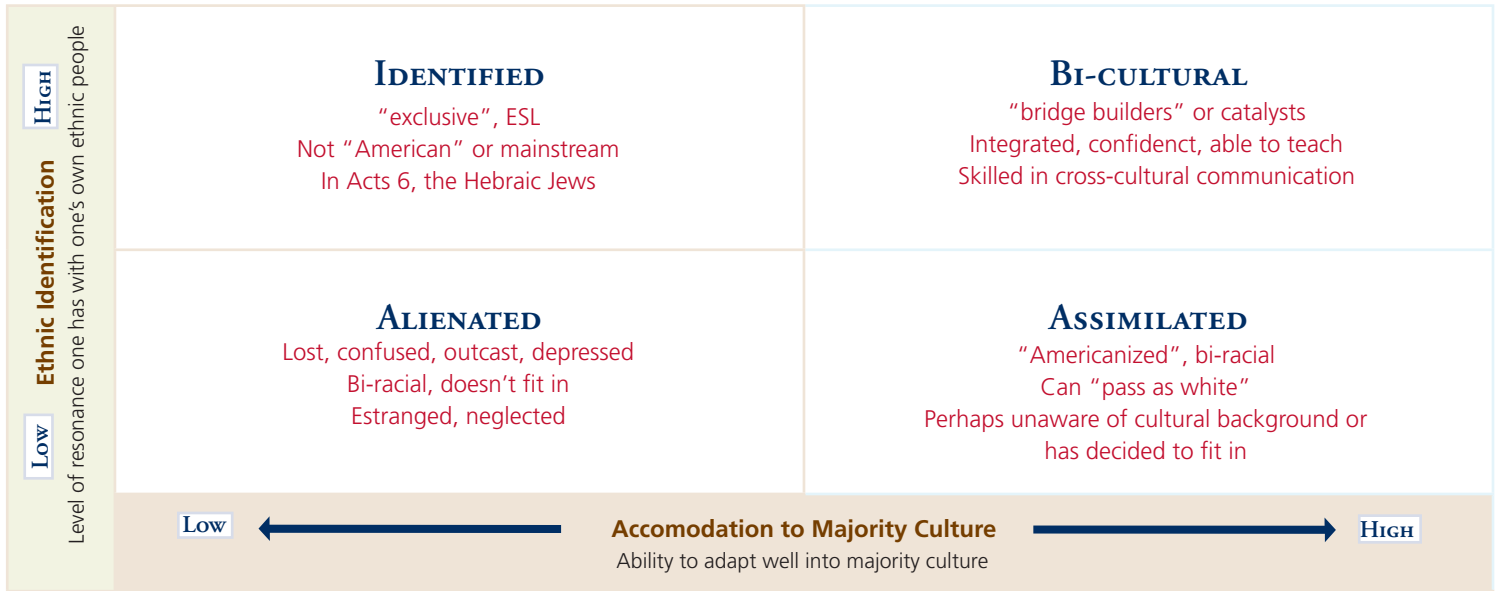
What is the fruit of this decision?

- ▶ More people are brought into leadership/ownership
- ▶ Complainers become partners
- ▶ Disenfranchised are given power
- ▶ Ministry spreads and makes significant strides

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