1. **Intro:**
   1.1. Dave LeCompte – (formerly director of IHF) *Mission International* (Bill Agius)
   1.2. **Philanthropy!** - I used to look down my nose on those who were “philanthropic” … *then* I looked up the word!
      1.2.1. It is a beautiful word. Philanthropy comes from 2 Greek words *philos & anthropos*. (“Loving” “Human beings”) {or, “man-lovingness”} [*philanthropos*]
      1.2.2. Being “Philanthropic” means, “showing kindness, charitable concern, and generosity toward other people”.
      1.2.3. So by adding one word in front of it “Christian Philanthropy” it helps point to where our kindness, love, & generosity is drawn from.
      1.2.4. 1 definition for Christian in the dictionary is: “showing qualities such as kindness, helpfulness, and concern for others.”¹
      1.2.5. Christian Philanthropy – “Christians loving their fellow man”.
   1.3. The Mazatec Indians in Southwestern Mexico have an odd behavior which stems from their concept of “limited good.” They believe there is only so much good, so much knowledge, so much love to go around. To teach another means you might drain yourself of knowledge. To love a second child means you have to love the first child less. To wish someone well - “Have a good day” - means you have just given away some of your own happiness, which cannot be reacquired.
      1.3.1. PTL we have a vast reservoir we can dip into; a well that will never run dry; brimming with Gods love, His knowledge, & His goodness.
   1.4. **PRAY:** Ty there is no limit to good/knowledge/love.
      1.4.1. Lord you & your attributes are: limitless, boundless, immeasurable, infinite, vast, inexhaustible, never ending!
   1.5. Well, we’ve seen how the church weathered its 1st storm of persecution from the outside, & then hypocrisy on the inside, now let’s see how well they did on Problem solving.
      1.5.1. For the 1st time a major division confronts the church.
      1.5.2. This describes how to face & meet crisis in the church.

2. **PROBLEM SOLVING 101!** *(1-7)*
   2.1. **PROPER CARE!** *(1)*
   2.2. Hellenist – Those who language & culture was Greek.
      2.2.1. *Hellas* = Greek word for their mother land Greece.
         2.2.1.1. [*Hellen Gk deity, son of Zeus*]

¹ Microsoft® Encarta® Reference Library 2005. © 1993-2004 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
2.2.2. **Hellenist** (Grecian Jews) & **Hebraists** (Aramaic speaking Jews)

2.2.3. Hellenist migrated from their homeland to various other nations (aka the Jewish Dispersion).

2.3. One of the ministries of the **synagogue** & for the **church** is to provide **food** & or **financial assistance** to those **widows** & **children** not supported by relatives.

2.4. **SERVING!** (2-4)

2.5. Serve – In Mark’s gospel the **Key Verse** is Mrk.10:45 “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to **serve**, and to **give** His life a ransom for many.”

2.5.1. The 2 verbs that identified **Christ** was **Serving** & **Giving**.

2.5.2. The 2 verbs that identify the **Christian** is **Serving** & **Giving**.

2.5.2.1. We are not saved **by service**, but are saved **for service**.

2.5.2.2. It’s what Peters mother-in-law does immediately when she gets healed, “**she stood up & began to serve**”.

2.5.3. One church in China welcomed new believers by saying, “Jesus now has a new pair of **eyes** to see with, **new ears** to listen with, **new hands** to help with, & a new **heart** to love others with.”

2.6. (2) The **tables** (trapezaïs) may refer to tables used for **serving food** or to **money tables**, that is, banks.

2.6.1. Probably it was used here to refer to the place where **funds** and **supplies** were administered for the widows.

2.7. I love how the **leadership** summoned the **whole church** for help; **not** the church summoning the **leadership** to do it.

2.7.1. They showed leadership by coming up with the solution.

2.7.2. They also seem to recognize their gift was **spiritual leadership**, & not necessarily **administrative matters**.

2.8. (3) What was most important about those chosen? Their **spirituality** & **wisdom**.

2.8.1. **Spirituality** is important whether you are **doing a bible study** or buying someone **lunch** or giving someone $5 for **gas**.

2.9. Why **full of the Holy Spirit**? So He could **illuminate** their natural wisdom; **help** to control their feelings; **direct** their wills; & **possess** every faculty.

2.10. **What is wisdom**? Knowledge rightly applied.

2.11. **Why is wisdom necessary**? They had to distinguish between cases; administer charity; use money with impartiality & integrity. They couldn’t be weak, nor prejudiced.

2.12. Q: Would any of these hold **you** back from serving? How is your reputation? Would your friends consider you full of the H.S.? Do you rightly apply knowledge in your life?

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2 Rick Warren; Purpose Driven Life; pg.230
2.13. (4) Were the Apostles **too good** for this work? Were they saying, “We don’t do tables!” *No!*

2.14. **There is no ministry that is unimportant** for a *Christlike servant*!

2.14.1. For Jesus said, “I am among you as the One who **serves**.” Lk.22:27

2.15. **In serving tables, the men released the apostles for their ministry of Prayer/Word.**

2.15.1. On Wednesday evenings...because many come out to serve at the feeding ministry, I'm released to finish up my notes 4 the eve service.

2.15.2. People filled with the Spirit see no *small jobs* or *big places***!!!

2.15.3. They see only their **Master & the opportunity** to **glorify Jesus**.

2.15.4. **No ministry is less** of a ministry than another...just **different**!

2.16. **THE SELECTION!** (5)

2.17. Though they are not called **deacons** here, they seem to be the **prototype** of this office later revealed by Paul.

2.18. **Now, you know who blesses me here? The Hebrew Jews! - Why? Their beautiful faith move here.**

2.18.1. Faith move? Yep, all 7 guys have a **Greek name!**

2.18.2. To advert further trouble they basically say, “**we fully trust these 7 Greek speaking Jewish believers.**” 😊

2.19. **Stephen** is named 1st. He becomes the primary character in the following narrative.

2.20. **Philip** becomes a major figure in the early church.

2.21. **Nicolas** is none other than *St. Nicolas* (just kiddin) 😊

2.21.1. He was **not** born an ethnic Jew. He was born a Gentile & later chose to become a Jew. A Jew by adoption, not by birth.

2.22. **Prochorus** later becomes a **bishop**, according to history.

2.23. The other 3 – play no further role in *Acts*.

2.24. Many groups who work in missions have adopted a **4-stage concept** of missionary work, 1st suggested by *Harold Fuller*.

2.24.1. **[1] Pioneer** - 1st contact w/a people group. He must **lead** & do much of the *work*, as there are no believers yet.

2.24.2. **[2] Paternal** – Expatriates (those who have left their native land for a time) **train** national leadership. It is like a *parent/child* relationship. But, the *parent* must avoid *paternalism* (i.e. when the desire to help, advise, & protect neglects their individual choice & personal responsibility)

2.24.3. **[3] Partnership** – National leaders work as **equals** w/Expats. Now it is an adult/adult relationship. The desire is for the church to become a mature “adult”.

2.24.4. **[4] Participation** – Expatriates are no longer equal partners, but only participate by invitation. The mature church assumes **leadership**.

2.25. **Why did I share all of that? I believe that’s what we see starting to take place here.**

2.25.1. Right from the beginning they try to help the church towards being **self-governing; self-sufficient; & self-propagating.**
2.26. **THE INSTALLATION!** (6)

2.27. So the Church identified them & brought them to the Apostles.

2.28. The Apostles confirmed the churches decision by praying & laying hands on the 7.

2.29. The 7 did not become leaders as a result of an election; they had obviously already emerged as leaders.

2.29.1. **We** don’t create leaders in the church by choosing them; **God** has already created, chosen, & gifted them…**We** simply recognize what God has done in them!

2.30. **THE RESULTS!** (7)

2.31. Conflict resolved by the leadership acting, the church helping, & these 7 men serving.

2.32. The result here was an increase in conversions(7).

2.33. Priests – not to be confused with the high priests who joined the Sadducees in persecuting the disciples.

2.33.1. Joachim Jeremias calculates the number of priests in Jerusalem at the time to be approximately 8000, along w/some 10,000 Levites.³

2.33.2. There was a great gulf fixed between the ordinary priests (poor) & the class of ruling & wealthy high priests. Richard Rackham.

2.34. The narrative about Stephen is a major turning point in Acts:

2.34.1. It ends a series of 3 trials before the Sanhedrin.

2.34.2. And will culminate the witness to the Jews of Jerusalem.

2.35. **Wrap Up!**

2.36. [1] Church problems are inevitable! [It's not “if” the come but “when”!]

2.36.1. Problems in church come in many different shades of “dark”, because we are imperfect beings.

2.37. [2] Church problems are not invincible!

2.37.1. They should be shown that a solution is possible, & should be met fairly & firmly.

2.38. [3] Church problems should be handled by love!

2.38.1. By setting aside differences; seeking the good of all; realizing the need for each other; & by honoring diversities of gifts & division of work.


³ Peter Wagner; pg.152