

time the offense gets to the ears of the offender he is under attack. Instead of apologizing or correcting the mistake, he takes issue with the harsh tone of the brother's clique. The hard feelings increase. The suppositions and accusations become exaggerated. It will not be long before someone leaves the church or organizes a split.

The church in Jerusalem was over 8000 members when the conflict arose. Things are going to happen in any group of people. Someone is going to say or do something that is offensive to another. The offense may be an actual error, or it may be an exaggerated reaction by an overly sensitive member. The offenses cannot be avoided (Luke 17:1, James 3:1-2). But how we handle the conflict will determine the development or the demise of the congregation where we attend.

Although no one could go to another congregation is Jerusalem, they could have started a new one. Many congregations exist because of a conflict that was not resolved. Instead of approaching the issue like Christians should, someone decides to leave and take a number of members with them. They form a new congregation across town established on hurt feelings. Both churches may speak ill of the other one for a long time. (How does this aid evangelism?) After a number of years the people who had the initial controversy die off. This may produce a reuniting of the two congregations, but it usually does not. The hard hearted members died in their hateful state. The congregations may learn to peacefully coexist, but many times they will carry the animosity into the final judgment.

It would be so much better if we identified the problem, dealt with it quickly and fairly, and moved forward in faithfulness. Sometimes an offense requires repentance. Sometimes it simply requires clarification. But in any case, the issues that develop within the church should be dealt with in love and in accordance with the teachings of the New Testament. Amen *(Ron Roberts)*

# Mooreville church of Christ

720 N. Indianapolis Road

Mooreville, IN 46158

**July 14, 2019**

## **Sunday:**

9:30 a.m. Bible Study

10:30 a.m. Worship

5:00 p.m. Worship

## **Wednesday:**

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

Editor: Ron Roberts

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Elders: Randy Allen and  
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## **Announcements**

Mary Rose went to St. Francis Hospital on Monday. She had fallen and was dehydrated. She developed some trouble breathing while in the hospital and was placed in ICU. She was doing much better at the time of this writing (Wednesday).

Reva has been hospitalized at IU West for stomach pain. She went home on Wednesday. Surgery was not necessary at this time.

Pray for all those who are ill: Mary Rose, Reva, Jill, Jerry, Julie, and Sandy (Shelby's daughter).

Braden will be preaching for us tonight. See you at 5:00.

We need a substitute teacher for the adult class and a song leader on the 24th. The Roberts will be gone on the 28th. Randy will preach in the morning and offer the invitation for the singing night.

**Love: It is not  
always convenient,  
but it is always  
good.**

# A Complaint Arose

*Frank Himmel (slightly edited)*

*“Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food” (Acts 6:1 NASV).*

Complaints at church are nothing new. They have been around as long as the church has because the church is people, and people tend to complain. Some complaints are legitimate and constructive: they point out real problems and lead to resolutions and better performance. Others can only be described as petty gripes. It would be instructive for all of us to look at how this complaint was handled.

## What Was Not Done?

Before we examine what was done, consider what was not.

**No one quit.** That sometimes happens. Brethren become disenchanted over some circumstance and quit. We call it quitting the church, but it is actually quitting the Lord. What does that say about one’s commitment, his discipleship? A friend of mine calls it getting mad at your brother and taking it out on your Father.

**No one went to another congregation.** In this case they couldn’t because there was no other congregation. This was not just the only one in Jerusalem, it was the only one anywhere! And I can’t help but wonder if that wasn’t in one regard a blessing. While there is much to be said for having several churches in an area, one drawback is that it gives folks an option they would not otherwise have - to run away from problems instead of working them out. That solves nothing.

**No one started a move to fire the preacher or oust the elders.** It is uncertain whether Jerusalem had elders at this time. The Apostles were in the lead. The brethren duly respected them. They did not attribute sinister motives. There were none of those privately circulated

surveys or petitions, no secret meetings, nor a so-called “vote of confidence.” No one tried to use irrelevant matters such as Peter’s personal weaknesses or Mathew’s former occupation as a means to discredit them.

No one quit, no one split, no one pitched a fit!

If only brethren today would abandon these unfruitful practices.

## What Was Done?

Actually, the solution to this complaint was quite simple. First, the Apostles gave it an objective hearing and found it valid. Leaders must be listeners. As is usually the case, no purposeful wrong had been intended, it was just a simple oversight.

The Apostles responded promptly, not allowing the problem to fester. They instructed the congregation to select some qualified men whom they could put in charge of the task. Seven were appointed. They must have done their jobs because this problem is never mentioned again.

How easy. How productive. How worthy of our imitation.

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In Acts 2:44-45 and 4:34-37 brethren donated money to the church for the care of poorer members. This accumulation of funds led to the distribution we read about in Acts 6:1. The distribution led to the problem, and the problem led to the complaint, and the complaint led to the solution, and the solution led to the strengthening of the church.

*“And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).*

As Frank points out, this is not what always happens. Often an inadvertent misstep leads to a brother’s hurt feelings. The wounded person then shares the offense with others instead of the offender (Matt. 18:15). The informed group forms a coalition against the brother who made the mistake and anyone who is deemed supportive of him. By the