

The Well-Led Church

Rich Nathan

August 8, 2010

Acts: The Irresistible Church Series

Acts 6:1-7

As we survey the landscape of 21st Century America, there is absolutely no doubt that we as a people have lost faith that virtually any institution will act in the public interest. You see the cynicism growing regarding political institutions. Most Americans believe that the most important concern of politicians is simply getting elected; and that politicians will basically say and do whatever needs to be said and done in order to keep getting elected. So raising money and catering to special interests becomes the goal, not serving the common good.

And this cynicism is not confined just to politics; people are cynical about business. Think about the corporations in the last ten years that have betrayed the public trust; Enron, AIG, Tyco, BP, WorldCom or just think about the scandals that have afflicted our leading accounting firms; Arthur Andersen comes to mind. There are scandals involving Pricewaterhouse, and Ernst & Young, and Deloitte & Touche. And of course you've got the problems with all of the big investment banks in the last few years- Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch. Goodness, just read the accounts of what Goldman Sachs was doing in betting against investments that it was selling to the public.

Non-profits have had their share of scandals. United Way's long-time CEO and other top officials were convicted back in the 1990's of stealing funds from United Way to support their lavish lifestyles. There were major problems with the Red Cross following 9-11 as money raised for victim relief went to support other operations.

There have been major press scandals as reporters from the New York Times and CBS and USA Today have been found guilty of either plagiarizing their reports or just making them up wholesale. Then there has been baseball, and track & field, and bicycle racing stars who cheat by using performance enhancing drugs and then lying about it.

All of this institutional malfeasance doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of more personal acts of betrayal- broken marriage vows, and broken promises, sexual abuse in families. So as a country, we collectively don't believe anybody's word. It's as if everyone is presumed guilty until proven innocent. And our response, along with cynicism, to all of this breach of the public trust is to say we need more regulation. We can't trust people anymore to not hi-jack or blow up planes so we spend millions of hours and billions of dollars doing full body scans. We all stand in long lines at the airport with our shoes off, having our tickets checked and re-checked. We can't trust people to not hurt our children so every church, and every school, and every Boy Scout troop has to do

fingerprinting and criminal background checks in case someone is a molester. And we see in public debate this continual pull of the pendulum from those who argue that what we need to do is de-regulate American life, to let people do what they want to do in the area of sex, and money, and power and those who argue for re-regulation. People can't be trusted; we've got to protect society from criminals. What's the answer? How do we deal with all of this cynicism? What's the answer?

I recently read something from an investment banker that made a lot of sense to me. He said:

“The government can introduce as many new regulations as they like. Yes, we do need guidelines to be put back in place; we went too far, allowing people to gamble with huge sums of money and do crazy deals. But any banker or mortgage broker can easily hire a smart accountant and lawyer to help them check all the boxes that the government tells them to, and then go around the back of the system and do what they want. What's the point of that?”

When he was asked, what's the answer then? This banker said,

“Character. Keeping rules is alright as far as it goes, but the real problem in the last generation is that we've lost the sense, especially for leaders, that character matters; that integrity matters. The system is only really healthy when the people who are running it are people you can trust to do the right thing, not because there are rules but because that's the sort of people they are.”

I'm going to apply what this banker said to church today. I believe that one of the crying needs not only in society but in the church is finding leaders we can trust. I'm continuing in a series that I started a number of weeks ago in the Book of Acts, that I titled *The Irresistible Church*. What will draw people to the Christian Church, the one thing is leadership that a person can trust. I'm calling today's message, “The Well-Led Church, Acts 6:1-7”.

Acts 6:1-7

1 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented them to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. 7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Let's look back at verses 1 and 2:

Acts 6:1-2

1 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.

The first thing that I see in good leadership is that

Good leaders respond to problems.

Here's the deal, problems don't simply go away by ignoring them or by sweeping them under the rug. Always avoiding conflict is no way to manage a business, and always avoiding conflict is no way to conduct a marriage, and always avoiding problems and conflict is no way to raise kids or to lead a church. Problems are way easier to deal with when they are small than when they get big. Talk with anyone who has ever raised a child. Dealing with mouthiness is infinitely easier with your five year old than with your fifteen year old. You have a child who is under ten listen to the wisdom of the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 19:18

"Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death."

Challenging a spouse's spending habits is way easier when the issue is a \$100 credit card charge than when you've got a \$10,000 credit card bill. Tackling problems early in your marriage when there is still a high degree of hope is way easier than tackling problems after 20 years of hurt and disappointment. Conflict is always unpleasant and cleaning up messes is always inconvenient. But avoiding problems, avoiding the mess always almost makes things harder in the end. And the Apostles were not conflict avoidant. Good leaders deal with problems.

Now there are at least four reasons that I can tell that the problem in verse 1 occurred:

Acts 6:1

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

Success creates problems.

We often think that all of our problems are the result of some failure on our part or some sin on our part, or failure on the part of other people. Well, we made a bad decision, we made a foolish choice or someone stabbed us in the back, that's why we're facing the problems that we are. But sometimes the problems that we face are the result of trying to handle too much success or sudden unexpected growth. Your wife comes home from her appointment with the OB and she says, "Honey we just looked at the ultrasound. Guess what? You're having triplets!" Suddenly, you've experience too much success. Your house has instantly become too small; one crib is not going to do it! All of your carefully laid plans get thrown out the window when you have an overabundance of growth, or an overabundance of success.

In the book of Acts, God kept growing the church. Any church that is rapidly growing or has faced rapid growth is going to immediately experience massive administrative problems. Not because of sin, not because of bad choices, but because of an overabundance of success. Financial systems that used to be adequate get overwhelmed. Building size and parking, at least here in the United States, that used to be ok, suddenly become a major problem. There are going to be staffing issues, and leadership development issues and multiplied marital problems, and multiplied pastoral issues. How do you disciple hundreds of baby Christians?

The church in the book of Acts went from 120 to 3,000 new Christians in a day. And then in Acts 4 it says, "The number of men grew to 5,000." And then we read here in Acts 6:1:

Acts 6:1

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

Can you imagine the pressure that came on the Apostles in trying to just provide basic care for thousands and thousands of baby Christians? Every system broke down. And of course, we have two issues that immediately arose. One was, peoples' needs weren't being met, certain widows were neglected and the leaders, in this case the Apostles, were overwhelmed. They were pulled in every direction and they were being drawn away from their primary vocation of preaching and prayer.

So when we're diagnosing problems in church or any system, sometimes the problem is success. But secondly here we find that

Diversity creates problems.

From Acts 3: 1, the text talks about a dispute that existed between the Hellenistic or Grecian Jews and the Hebraic Jews concerning the treatment of the Grecian Jewish widows. Basically, Hellenistic Jews or the Grecian Jews were likely drawn from other parts of the Roman Empire who either primarily or exclusively spoke Greek in their homes and whose synagogues were run in Greek. They also likely had adopted a Greek mindset concerning culture and philosophy. Then there were Jews who were called Hebraic Jews. Many of these probably came from Palestine; they may have been folks like the Apostle Paul who lived in other places in the Roman Empire. These Hebraic Jews conducted their synagogue services not in Greek but in Hebrew and their language in their families was not Greek but Aramaic, which is a Middle Eastern language closely related to Hebrew. These Hebraic Jews were folks who rejected a Greek cultural mindset and did not embrace the whole Greek lifestyle and Greek philosophy. This culture clash as Jews from different places speaking different languages and different cultures were suddenly thrown together in one church. There's a fascinating new book on bringing about diversity in a business setting that I just read, titled *The Loudest Duck* by Laura Liswood. She is the former managing director for Global Leadership and Diversity at Goldman Sachs. Laura Liswood begins her book with a discussion of what most businesses aim for concerning diversity. She calls it the Noah's Ark approach; you need to have two of everything on the Ark. She said in her book real diversity begins with empirical diversity- having a workplace that is representative of the community, but it has to extend to cognitive diversity.

In other words, real diversity is not just counting numbers but also involves welcoming the ideas of people of different groups especially the perspectives and ideas of people that are not part of the dominant majority. Now the title of the book, *The Loudest Duck*, is borrowed from an illustration of what Laura Liswood means by cognitive diversity. Here in America we have an old saying, "the squeaky wheel gets the oil." If you want something in your department you complain. We need more people; we need a new computer; we don't have enough resource. The squeaky wheel gets the oil.

In China there is a saying, "the loudest duck gets shot." Let's say a company is an American multi-national business with an office in China, and the American leaders of the company are working with a Chinese executive who never complains. The American leaders interpret that as, "he must be happy. He must have everything he needs. Otherwise he would be acting like us, speaking up." The Chinese person's cultural rules are that you don't speak up until you are invited to by your leaders.

When you try to form a church with people from different cultural backgrounds, which I believe biblically ought to be the aim of every church that exists in an ethnically and racially diverse community, when you try to form a church that is racially diverse, you're going to have some challenges.

By the way, we recently completed a survey of our church. About 10 years ago we said that we want to have a church that reflects the racial and ethnic make-up of our community. This year, for the first time in Vineyard's history, that is exactly true. Our racial composition here at Vineyard Columbus exactly matches that of Franklin County. Seventy-four percent of our church is non-Hispanic Caucasian; twenty-six percent is African-American or African, Asian and Latino. Our percentages exactly mirror Franklin County. Now, we face challenges and will face challenges of having real diversity because each of us comes in with our own cultural background, our own way of thinking about life, our own assumptions about the way that you behave. That's what the Apostles faced in the first century. Diversity creates problems.

Christian Faith creates problems

Often when a person yields their life to Christ and makes the decision to become one of Christ's followers, they immediately face significant backlash especially when they convert from another religion, from Judaism, or Islam, or Hinduism or Buddhism. Part of the reason that there was this financial need on the part of Grecian widows is that many of these women may have been cut off from their non-Christian Jewish families once they came to Christ. And all of the Jewish-Christian widows would have been cut off from the welfare system that was administered by the Jewish temple. There was, in the first century, a basic welfare system administered by the temple, which was the government of the day. And folks would line up, especially widows and paupers, and they would get a distribution of food twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening. It's very possible that the Jewish temple cut off the Jewish Christians from receiving any allocation of food. So the burden of caring for all of these widows fell on the church. Christian faith can often create backlash for a person. I have friends who were cut out of their parents wills once they came to faith in Christ. I was repeatedly screamed at and cursed by my own father for turning to Christ. You experience rejection from friends; many of you have had backlash in your workplace. Some of you experienced great opposition in your own marriages because you are a follower of Christ. True Faith creates problems. And finally

Satan creates problems

We always need to remember that when we are experiencing problems there is another team on the field. We're not playing the game of life by ourselves. Christians don't just get to run up and down the field throwing the ball, and catching the ball, and scoring touchdowns; there's another team on the field. Whether you are aware of it or not, whether you are spiritually in tune or not, the bible clearly tells us we Christians face demonic opposition. Something called

spiritual warfare. And in chapter 4 of the book of Acts, Satan stirs up persecution against the early Christians. In chapter 5, a chapter that I may come back to later on in this series, Satan stirs up corruption in the church. And in chapter 6, Satan stirs up disunity in the church.

So many things that the enemy just throws in our way to make life more difficult and to hinder the progress of the church. And whatever the source of the problem, good leaders address problems. Here's the second thing about good leaders:

Good leaders are flexible

Acts 6:2-4

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

Leaders, in other words, are able to adjust and roll with changing circumstances. You know, sometimes we get so locked into a way of doing something. Do you know why US Standard Railroad gauge that is the distance between the rails is 4 feet, 8.5 inches? Why are railroads all 4 feet, 8.5 inches wide- an exceedingly odd number. Why was the gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England. And many of the early lines were built to fit the standard gauge locomotives that were manufactured in England. And why did the English build them that way? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways and that's the gauge they used. So why did they use that gauge? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Well why did wagons have this odd spacing of 4 feet, 8.5 inches? Well, if they tried any others spacing the wagons would break on some of the old long distance roads because that's the spacing of the old wheel ruts. And who built these old rutted roads? The first long distance roads in Europe were built by Imperial Rome for the benefit of its legions. These roads were used ever since and the ruts? Roman war chariots made the initial ruts which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagons. Thus the standard US Railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches derives from the specifications for Imperial Roman army war chariots. Talk about being stuck in a rut?!

Now I say this with all affections, but most churches run like this. They are just repeating the same pattern of life year after year without ever asking, "Does this structure, does this pattern, does this behavior or practice continue to have any relevance in meeting the needs that we're trying to meet today?"

The Vineyard national movement had a consultant come in to one of our national meetings and this consultant said after looking at a number of Vineyard churches, “I’ve come to the conclusion that the Vineyard movement is well positioned to reach people if the 1980’s ever roll around again.” Ouch, that stings! Its’ better than some churches that are well positioned if the 1940’s ever come around again, but good church leadership is flexible. What that means to me is that church leaders who are trying to lead in a rapidly changing cultural context need to know what to hold onto with a death grip and what to hold with a loose hand.

Biblical doctrine, you know who is God? Who is Jesus? How do we come to know God? What does it look like to walk with God? Issues of integrity, that your word is your word, how we handle money, how we handle sex, faithfulness in keeping our marital vows, giving to promote the Kingdom of God, these are things that we hold onto with a death grip. But how the church is structured, and the kind of building we meet in and what our worship style is and even how you give. You know whether in the past you used give by putting cash in an offering plate, and then we gave by writing a check, and now more and more people give by giving online. All of that we can just hold with a loose hand.

The problem today friends I’ll tell you is this: people have a loose hand on things that we ought to have a death grip on and we fight like the devil on things that we can be absolutely flexible about. Folks fight over worship style, are we going to sing Gospel or Contemporary worship songs, or hymns, or what you’re supposed to wear to church. The Apostles were incredibly flexible when it came to administration and figuring out how to meet people’s needs. They were inflexible when it came to the Gospel. Here’s what we read in Galatians 1:8-9

Galatians 1:8-9

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let that person be under God's curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let that person be under God's curse!

And here’s what the Author of 2 John says in 2 John 1:9-11:

2 John 1:9-11

Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.

Here’s the question for our church, what is it that we need to hold onto and say, “Here’s where we draw the line, no matter what’s happening in larger society, this is who we are. This is what it means to be a committed Christ follower.” What

are the things that we might have enjoyed in our past but are no longer relevant for our future? Where do we need to restructure? Where do we need to change? Here's the third thing,

Good leaders know who they are and who they are not

Years ago I was interviewed by someone who was working on their doctorate in the area of church growth. So this pastor was interviewing pastors of rapidly growing churches and he came and interviewed me and he asked, "Why is your church growing?" I said, "Well, I don't know. Lots of churches pray as much as our church does and lots of pastors seem to be as faithful to Christ as I am. I don't know, God has blessed us."

He said, "I'm holding a gun to your head and I'm saying to you, 'every church has God so what makes Vineyard Columbus different?'" I said, "I really don't know exactly but there's one thing I've noticed about pastors. Many pastors do not know who they are and so they are trying to be who they are not. I have found that when people discover their own created identity before God, who God has made them to be, the gifts and talents that God has given them - when those things are put through the refining fire of God's sanctifying process, God cleans us up. Every person I've ever met is delightful when they know who they are.

What makes pastors and leaders less than delightful is when folks are trying to be what they're not. They're trying to be Billy Graham or their favorite radio preacher or they're trying to be an intellectual when they're not an intellectual. They're trying to be prophetic when they're not particularly prophetic." The Apostles understood what their calling was and what their calling was not. They were called to preach the word and to pray.

Now when this problem hit in the church, certain widows weren't being provided for, it would have been the easiest thing in the world for the Apostles to have taken control; many leaders do that. Many leaders are afraid to delegate away authority, afraid of other power bases growing in the business or growing in the church, many leaders refuse to delegate. The Apostles could have been insecure and said "Goodness, we don't want anyone to think that we think we're too good to serve widows; that we live in some ivory tower of study and prayer. We don't want anybody to think anything poor of us. We're going to wait on tables."

The Apostles knew that there were various kinds of service. Read this with me in Acts 6:2 The Apostles speak about,

Acts 6:2

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.

Luke uses the same word for “the ministry” of the Word. The word is for “to wait on tables” diakonia, which means service, it’s where we get our English word “deacon”. The Apostles understand that you can serve the church by preaching the word; you can serve the church by feeding the hungry. There are 1000 ways to serve and the Apostles discovered God’s calling regarding their particular form of service. Now that’s great leadership. Leadership is not a one-man show. But strong preaching and praying is essential for the health of any church. I tell you, what the American church needs today is more and more men and women leaders who are set free from administration to fulfill their primary calling of preaching and praying.

Last thing,

Good leaders are tested

The Apostles give us three tests of choosing a church leader in Acts 6:3

Acts 6:3

Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them.

It’s not as clear in the NIV or TNIV as it was in the original Greek. The New American Standard brings it out pretty well, where we read

Acts 6:3 (New American Standard Translation)

"Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

Here are the tests for selecting church leadership. A leader must have a good reputation, be full of the Holy Spirit and be full of wisdom. The Message version of the bible puts it this way,

Acts 6:3 (The Message Translation)

So, friends, choose seven men from among you whom everyone trusts, men full of the Holy Spirit and good sense, and we’ll assign them this task.

One of the major problems in the church today, is that we neglect the tests of leadership that are laid out here in Acts 6:3. When we first began this church in we celebrated communion every week as we currently do, but we had different lay people lead us in communion. Well there was a bright young man who came into the church and he was a seminary grad; I was impressed by all that he knew. And so, after being in the church for a few weeks, I asked him to lead communion a month later.

Well he called me up a few weeks later, and he said, “Rich I’ve got a whole production. I’ve got music and I’ve choreographed it with photos and I’ve got

these different slides of quotes regarding communion and church history.” And I said to him, “Gosh, how long is this going to take?” And he said, “I don’t know, maybe a half hour. Why?” And I said, “OH, I’m so sorry. Maybe we could have a special communion service some other time.” I was trying to be really nice and accommodating. I said, “We actually only take about 3 minutes for communion.” He said, “3 minutes?!”

He got off the phone real quickly. He called me back a little while later and he said, “I just talked with John Cook and John said that communion takes 5 minutes, but you said 3 minutes. You guys have no idea what you’re doing! One person says 5 minutes, another person says 3 minutes, and I went to all this work!” I said to him, “Look, I’m really sorry that you went to all of this work. I think that what John and I are both saying is ‘short’. But I want to ask your forgiveness for not communicating clearly at the front end.” You know what he said to my asking forgiveness? He said, “That’s not good enough.” I said brother, “Asking forgiveness is the best that I’ve got.” That experience taught me a lifelong lesson. You don’t put people into positions of leadership until they are tested.

What are the tests? First of all,

Leaders must have a good reputation

All through scripture we are taught about the importance of maintaining a good name, having a good reputation. Proverbs 22:1 says,

Proverbs 22:1

A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.

Here’s what we reading Ecclesiastes 7:1

Ecclesiastes 7:1

A good name is better than fine perfume...

Having a good reputation is a constant requirement of leadership in the bible. So we read this in 1 Timothy 3:7:

1 Timothy 3:7

⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Let me ask you a question. What is the first and second thing that people think or say about you when your name is mentioned? They think, “Oh, she’s a great person.” They think, “He’s a Christian.” “He is such a hard worker.” “She’s always so positive.” “He is the most faithful person that I know.” “Helpful. I’d hate to lose her at this job.” Or “I’d hate to lose her from this group.” “She’s so valuable.”

What's your reputation? "Totally unreliable. She can't be trusted." "Moody." "She never stops talking." "He's a really angry person." I'd never rehire her.

What is your reputation? When people say your name is it said with a blessing? You're a bright spot in an otherwise gray day. I thank the Lord for you. Or is your name basically a curse? Having a good reputation is essential for Christian leadership.

How do you know if you have a good reputation? It doesn't matter, by the way, what your mother thinks of you. It really doesn't matter what you think of yourself. Think of what your reputation is with your employer. What would your co-workers, who work near you, say about you? What do neighbors think about you? How about customers or clients? Former teachers, teammates? Or how about people who have waited on you at a restaurant or servers at Starbucks or other drivers on the road, what would they say about you? What is your reputation?

Here's a couple of ways to test your reputation. What's your credit score? Do you pay your bills on time? Do you borrow more than you can repay? Not only your credit score, but what about your resume? If you look back over the last 10 years, those of you who have been working, can you point to several jobs in the past 10 years where your employer would say, "I would hire that person back in a heartbeat. They did a great job for us."

You know, if you have a bad name and a bad reputation; if you're listening to this and you say there are things that I've done, patterns of behavior that make me ashamed and have given me a bad name and a bad reputation, the bible says that God can change your name.

As you yield yourself to God and really make a choice to walk with him, He will change your name; he will change your reputation. Second test,

Leaders must be full of the Holy Spirit

I met recently with a pastor of another church. He was asking about what we do here at the church and then I asked him what he did. We got into talking about how he selected leaders for his groups. He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well do you have a class in which you train leaders? Do you require them to go through any kind of selection process? Do you require any recommendations?" He said, "Well in our church if you are a leader or a manager in the business world, you can be a leader here. So if you're a manager at Nationwide, we'll make a leader of a Bible study."

The Apostles never confused secular leadership with spiritual leadership. This is a massive problem in the church. Just because you're a manager and you've made a ton of money in the business world, doesn't make you a leader in the Christian Church. The requirement of Christian leadership is that you be Spirit filled. It means you are a person who is regularly yielding your will and your mind

and your emotions to the control and direction of the Holy Spirit. You are regularly saying yes to God. Spirit filled means that you are regularly welcoming the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life, in you decision making, in your relationships, in your spending, in your giving. You are a Holy Spirit dominated woman or man. Can you say that's true of you? That you make it your aim to be controlled by the Spirit. And finally, Acts 6:3:

Acts 6:3

Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them.

Leaders must be wise

Now the Apostles show great wisdom in this whole selection process. They understand that the issue is culturally sensitive, it's racially sensitive so they don't pick the leaders; they just set the tests out for leadership. They tell the folks to pick the leaders themselves. One of the criteria they suggest for choosing a leader is someone who's wise. When we went through our series in Proverbs, we discovered that wisdom in the bible essentially means having skill in living. A person has skill in relating to God. They have skill in relating to all kinds of other people. They have skill in responding to circumstances. Skill in managing their money. Skill in offering advice to others. Skill in living. As a leader, when we're choosing leader we ought to poke around in a persons' life and say, "Does life generally work for this person?" Is their marriage working? Is their family life working? Are their friendships working? Is there an ease and absence with other Christians? Are they somebody who is sought out for advice? When other people need to negotiate tricky situations are they sought out for help? Or are they like a bull in china shop, just crashing into things. There's conflict everywhere; every place they go is a mess, relationships are a mess, finances are a mess. Are they wise? The results of good leadership are found in verse 5:

Acts 6:5

This proposal pleased the whole group.

Acts 6:7

So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

The Apostles were freed up to fulfill their primary calling, to not live crazy lives, out of balance lives, distracted lives. The Apostles were freed up, the church was satisfied, and peoples' needs were being met. And the word of God spread. See the church and the Gospel flourishes under good leadership. Here's what I'd like to do:

Former Leaders' Gathering

What's the purpose of the gathering?

To gather former leaders who are seeking the Lord for next steps in their life of discipleship and leadership here at Vineyard Columbus

Who should come?

Anyone who has served in a leadership role in this or another church in the past, but who is not presently serving as a leader at VC. Former VC leaders who are looking for new assignments from the Lord; former leaders from this or another church who are hurt or tired from life and leadership and who could use some help processing that; leaders who are wanting to shift leadership roles at the church; or any former leader who fits broadly in any of these categories

Who will lead the meeting?

Andy Saperstein, Pastor of Co-ed Small Groups and International Ministries

When and where will the meeting be?

This Monday evening, August 9, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Chapel

What will we do at the meeting?

We will talk and pray together to explore ways that former leaders can find the next steps to help them process past leadership experiences, determine new leadership involvements, and find the right people to pray and talk with in that process. We will talk and pray together in both larger and smaller groups at the gathering.

Anything else I should know about the gathering?

We will close the meeting promptly at 8:30 and will not be putting pressure on anyone to lead if they are not ready to do so.

The Well-Led Church

Rich Nathan
August 8, 2010
Acts: The Irresistible Church Series
Acts 6:1-7

I. Good leaders respond to problems

- A. Success creates problems
- B. Diversity creates problems
- C. Christian Faith creates problems
- D. Satan creates problems

II. Good leaders are flexible

III. Good leaders know who they are and who they are not

IV. Good leaders are tested

- A. Leaders must have a good reputation
- B. Leaders must be full of the Holy Spirit
- C. Leaders must be wise