

Sunday Meditation  
Retreat 2008, Sky Ranch  
September 28, 2008  
Scriptures: Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-11

## ***“Familiarity Breeds Contempt”***

Two weeks ago I preached about the Acts passage  
using it to talk about church structure  
as we approached our moment of decision.  
I pointed out that there are at least two critical insights  
that should inform any church structure.  
I also pointed out that there were also at least two indicators  
of whether or not an organization’s structure is the Spirit’s doing.  
The two critical insights were;  
That each group or leader has their limits. And...  
that there are always folks, “full of the Spirit and wisdom,”  
who are available to address the needs of the church.  
The two indicators I noted that show the Spirit’s involvement are...  
First a process that results in unity.  
And the other proof of the Spirit’s presence is that  
the word of God spreads through growth in discipleship.  
In the end I concluded that our structure should always be secondary.  
Secondary to our growth as disciples of Jesus and to  
the setting free of our gifts to serve each other and the world!  
Our structure must always be our servant.  
and it must enable us to grow and to reach out.  
But this passage is also about the selection of leaders.  
As I mentioned a couple weeks ago,  
the structure is inanimate, neither holy nor profane.  
No in the end it is people, us, who make it holy or profane.  
We are the ones who animate any structure, make it work  
We, you and me, we are the hands and feet of God!  
In Acts and in I Timothy we are given the qualification of church leaders.  
Acts says to select those who are of good standing,  
full of wisdom and of the Spirit!  
I Timothy gets a little more specific:  
“Deacons... must be..” (read I Tim 3:8-13)  
Hmm... But there’s only one problem...  
The problem is right here in this group.

As I look around the circle, as I look at myself...  
I wonder who can meet such qualifications.  
We know too much...  
We're small enough to know each other's strengths and limitation.  
Were too smart to have heroes anymore  
and perhaps we're too jaded to trust others too much?  
Familiarity breeds contempt,  
At least so we are told?  
But can this also be our strength?  
Can strength truly grow out of weakness?  
So how do we then call imperfect folks to the necessary job of leadership?  
Anne Stuckey's book, "Training Ministry Teams" is helpful  
in guiding our choices of leaders (read pp. 36 and 37)  
Carefully and prayerfully I believe the leadership will become apparent.  
Carefully and prayerfully God will also make apparent  
what each of us is being called to do.  
For Anabaptist, and this may not be unique to us,  
we believe that all are called to a life of ministry  
what we call discipleship; discipling others and being disciplined  
We believe all are called to a priesthood of daily service in God's kingdom!  
No part is too small and that there is a roll for everyone.  
I think we can also agree that there is enough work for us all!  
So as you consider the selection of our leadership this morning,  
also ask the question, where do I fit in?  
And if you do not feel God is calling you to be an elder  
then prayerfully listen to what you are being called to.  
Maybe your being called to pray more for FCMF...or its pastor!  
Or maybe to something else...?  
but make no mistake  
And listen, because God is Calling!  
God is calling you!