

Power and Decision Making in the Early Church

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Abstract

In this article, there is the intersection of biblical principles into the teaching and learning of organizational behavior. It examined the crisis in the early Church, as told in the Luke account of Acts of the Apostles Chapter six, and how the leaders decided to resolve the conflict. The exegetical analysis method revealed the lessons learned from the apostolic leaders' decision-making strategy and the power play in their leadership style. The results included the need for decision making for conflict resolution, decision and empowerment, power distance advantage, and power-sharing advantage in the early Church. The decision-making style for resolving the conflict in the Church was then recommended for contemporary church leaders, in teaching organizational leadership behavior in Christian schools, and in practice in other organizations. The study results suggest that the Bible is a rich source of data for teaching organizational behavior.

Keywords: Low-power distance, conflict resolution, decision making, church, power-sharing.

Introduction

Power and Decision Making in the Early Church: Acts 6:1-7

The extent to which individuals or groups can affect decision-making shows the amount of power acquired (Konopaske et al., 2016). Their position implies that in decision-making the amount of power allotted to leaders is critical in the organization. Many of the activities of managers and administrators involve making and implementing decisions (Yukl, 2013).

Lonergan (1999) claimed that decision-making is much more than just concluding what is best. Yount (2014) suggested that decision-making contains within it the element of bringing the decision to action and enacting a conclusion; as such, responsibility is the level of deciding and doing, and the level at which one discovers that one can respond. Indeed, there is the action of deliberation: that is one cycle of “doing” judgment, which is about knowing what is true, good, and deciding is acting on that knowledge (Yount, 2014). Lonergan (1999) is of the view that most scholars would agree that decision leads to action and that decision is, in itself, action at

multiple levels. Lonergan (1999) further argued that decision indicates an act of will, and also that decision either consents or refuses. Lonergan also claimed that most definitive for our purposes here, that judgment is concerned to complete people's knowledge of a certainty that already occurs; while the decision is concerned to confer certainty upon a course of action that otherwise will not occur.

In Acts 6: 1-7, the early church leaders were faced with the conflict between the Jews and Grecians. This study examined how they decided on a conflict resolution strategy to restore a healthy relationship and the leadership lessons learned from it. In doing this, an exegetical analysis method of Acts 6:1-7 was employed to generate data to explain known organizational leadership theories.

Literature Review

Evans (2014) asserted that influential political theorists suggested that religious differences in political life are overcome through a shared commitment to political processes. Evans subjected the underlying assumptions of this proposition to empirical inquiry and found a general willingness to defer to a legitimate political process, even if it results in an undesirable outcome that violates religious (or other) political preferences.

Ramseyer (1986) proposed a criterion for decision-making that human culture pulls toward the "closed" end where decisions are dependent on precedent and tradition, logic, and consistency. Ramseyer claimed that the God of the Bible, a law unto himself, is at the other "open" end, Jesus and the early Christians were near the open end, where considerations about people are always more important than precedent, logic, and consistency when making decisions. that human beings are always being pulled by culture toward the opposite end of the continuum. A model of incarnational decision-making is outlined, modeled on the example of Jesus in the Gospels, wherein decisions are made by those fully involved in the situation rather than those who are disinterested (Ramseyer, 1986). The passage Acts 6:1-7 showed a challenge with the first-ever early Church of the first century's Apostles.

The situation of the Church: As one can see from Acts 6:1-7, the early Church had a challenge that involved the Grecians and the Hebrews. The twelve apostles saw this as a cross-cultural challenge capable of stalling the Church's growth. It was the neglect of the Grecian women in daily food supplies. It resulted in a Church rivalry, which looked like a significant distraction to the early church leaders. It led to murmuring in the Church. Murmuring is something that God frowns about (King James Version, 1769/2017, Numbers 14:27). Murmuring is also capable of causing friction in the Church. The Grecians saw the neglect of their widows as a case of deprivation, and it became a source of conflict in the Church (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:1).

Hull (2001) described the enormity of the decision in the text as Luke reports it. The decision to allow Gentiles to enter the messianic community and, more importantly, to allow them entrance without the requirements of circumcision and Torah's ritual obligations is the single most important decision ever made in the history of Christianity's self-definition from its beginning until now. He claimed that the decision defined Christianity in its first generation as an inclusive and worldwide religion and had its corollary the perception of Jesus not merely as a Jewish messiah but as the beginning of a new humanity. In appreciating this, Hull (2001)

claimed that one must remember the ancestral antipathy between Jews and Gentiles. For most pious Jews in the first century, an association with Gentiles was, at best, a necessity and, at worst, a profanation (Hull, 2001). Hull (2001) claimed that the Gentiles were regarded as the pigs before whom pearls should not be cast. In Torah, to be sure, there are intimations of universality, of a “light to the Gentiles,” but this was always conceived in terms of adherence to Israel and always involved coming within the symbolic and ritual world of the Law (Hull, 2001). Likewise, the Jesus movement had stayed within the bounds of Judaism, and the earliest followers of Jesus after Pentecost thought of themselves as Israel’s restoration (Hull, 2001).

Sell (2010) claimed that local churches are challenged by cultural and community changes that require the flexibility of response. The interpretation offered in Acts 6:1-7 allows greater flexibility for churches to appoint ministry teams for a limited duration to deal with various needs and opportunities (Sell, 2010). Tyson (1983) argued that Acts chapter six should be seen as a part of Luke’s presentation about the revision of Jewish dietary regulations. Tyson went further to say that the kashrut laws prohibited the earliest Christians from maintaining peace and harmony, for they prevented Gentile widows from participation. To be sure, the historicity of a common Christian meal that would exclude Gentile widows, but not other Gentiles, is problematic (Tyson, 1983). However, historical facts do not determine the view that Luke might take; Luke’s general view appears that the dietary regulations had to be revised to take place for the Gentile mission (Tyson, 1983). Tyson believes that Acts 6:1-7 is the initial presentation of that viewpoint. One can say that early church leaders knew that they needed to address the issue on the ground for things to return to normalcy or for progress to be made. Hertig (2004) described this step as a cross-cultural mediation from exclusion to inclusion.

Methodology

Exegetical Approach for the Study: Narrative Criticism of Acts 6:1-7)

In the study of Acts 6:1-7, a narrative exegetical analysis was done. By the “read them” method (Osborne, 2006, p. 202). Osborne (2006) argued that it is when one sits down and simply reading the text that one catches the drama and power of the stories as they fit together to form a comprehensive panorama. Also, Osborne (2006) explained that literary critics came up with a method to narrative analysis that can contribute by an extensive reading of a text. Osborne suggested that as the text is read, one should note structures such as: character tension, plot, dialogue, point of view, setting, and narrative time to gain the relevant insight.

The espousal of this narrative method of analysis could enable a reader to spot the flow of the chosen text and see the hand of God as He inspired the biblical author to develop the story (Osborne, 2006). So, the study of the book of Acts 6:1-7 was exposed to this narrative analysis to see what lessons one could have from the story told and how it can assist with leadership studies. By using this methodology, one ensured a merger of literary and historical efforts in such a way that they adjust to one another, magnifying the strengths and evading the weakness of the other (Osborne, 2006). The pericope has seven verses that indicated a crisis between the Grecian and the Jewish members, the Apostle’s interaction with all the members, the choice of seven second-tier leadership, and the empowerment by the Apostles. The narrative analysis approach used had to do with the point of view, ideology, the narrative world, plot, structural analysis, theological analysis, characterization, and contextualization.

Point of View, Ideology, and the Narrative World

A vigilant look at the periscope from the point of view reveals accordingly: Evaluative or ideological point of view: a) On the concept of right and wrong, the Grecians felt their people widows were deprived (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:1), the apostles found it not right to leave the Word of God and serve tables (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:2); b) On the spatial perspective of the bible narrative, the passage showed that the narrator seemed to be “omnipresent” (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:1-7); and c) On temporary perspective, one would find actions such as instructions for chosen second-tier leaders, and the people doing the assigned task (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:3 and 5). Spencer (1994) assumed that Luke adopted a Hebrew-Hellenist conflict tradition to fit his idealistic portrait of the primitive Church. He argued that Luke acknowledged the schism (it was presumably too well known to be ignored altogether), he minimized its extent radically and exaggerated its resolution in the pericope.

Plot

Osborne (2006) presented the plot as conflict, which can be God versus Satan, good versus evil, or discipleship versus rebellion. The periscope under examination shows a) the Grecians murmuring against the Hebrews because of the neglect of their widows (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:1). Spencer (1994) argued that Acts 6:1-7 narrative paints a picture of a community characterized by extraordinary unity and generosity in the face of external persecution suddenly exhibits signs of internal division and deficiency. Osborne claimed that the whole group of one heart and soul who pooled their resources to ensure that “there was not a needy person among them” (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 4:32,34) became two groups—Hebrews and Hellenists—embroiled in conflict arising from the neglect of certain needy persons in the community (Hellenist widows).

Structural Analysis

Osborne (2006) described structural analysis as looking for the narrative flow and getting a preliminary idea of a plot. The pericope Acts 6:1-7 revealed the early Church’s various activities to solve the Grecians and the Hebrews’ crises. They include:

- A record of the plot of the Grecians against the Hebrews because they felt their widows were deprived of the daily supplies (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:1).
- The decision of the twelve to call the multitude to let them know who will resolve the crises (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:2).
- The 12 assigned the multitude with the task of choosing men that will henceforth handle supplies issues in the Church (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:3).
- The 12 made it clear what their roles would be the ministry of the word and prayer and delegated food supplies issues to the second-tier leadership (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:4).
- The people were pleased by the apostles’ decision to involve them, and they chose seven-second tier (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:5).

- The public presentation and empowerment through laying on of hands on the new second-tier leaders (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6: 6).
- The result of the decisions to resolve the crises was increase of the Word, multiplication of the disciples and conversions of the Priest to Christianity (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:7).

Tyson (1983) described the narrative in Acts 6:1-7 as conforms precisely to the four-part pattern that is observed in other descriptions of threatening situations, such as (a) Peace: The number of disciples is increased (King James Version, 1769/2017, 7 Acts 6: 1a). (b) Threat: The Hellenists grumble against the Hebrews because their widows are being overlooked in the daily service (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6: 1b). (c) Resolution: The twelve call the community together and propose a plan. The community accepts the plan, and the seven are ordained (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:2-6; (d) Restoration: The number of the disciples continues to multiply, and priests become obedient to the faith (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:7b).

Theological Analysis

One may say that God's interest was central to the whole crisis resolution process. The apostles saw the need to give preference to God's Word (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:2), they saw the need to consult the Holy Ghost while chosen new leaders (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:3), and the outcome of their choice of leaders had a resultant effect on the Word of God which increased (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:7).

Characterization: The 12 Apostles

In Acts 6:1-7, the 12 Apostles were the leaders in charge of the Church (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:2), the leadership that was ready to find a solution to the crises on the ground (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:2), the leadership that decided to delegate the selection of new leaders to the multitude (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:4), the leadership that re-emphasized their role to the hearing of the Church (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:4), and the leadership that empowered the selected second-tier leaders openly by laying on of hand (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:6). Tyson (1983) claimed that this narrative's primary purpose appears to be to trace the apostles' succession. He argued that it served to introduce Stephen's preaching and the Samaritan mission of Philip, thus legitimizing their work by connecting it with the 12 Apostles.

Contextualization

The study showed the lessons that can be learned from Acts 6:1-7 as: the crisis with people of diverse cultures, the Apostle's decision to empower their followers to choose second-level leaders whom they publicly empowered, and the corresponding increase in the Church. Spencer (1994) claimed that the widows in Acts 6 and elsewhere in Luke-Acts are consistently characterized as destitute, dependent women, vulnerable to neglect and abuse, and alienated from basic economic, practical, and social-emotional support systems. The twelve apostles, led by Peter, exemplify the latter pattern (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:1). In the penultimate Lucan widow scene (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6), the Twelve react to the Hellenist widows' complaint with some ambivalence. They proposed a suitable plan for assisting the

widows, but at the same time, they made praying and the Word a priority (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:2-4).

Results of the Exegetical Analysis

The exegetical analysis of Acts 6:1-7 led to leadership principles such as the need for decision making for conflict resolution, decision and empowerment, power distance advantage, and power-sharing advantage in the early Church. These are explained in details below:

The Need for Decision Making for Conflict Resolution

The 12 Apostles identified the crisis regarding the food supply issues in the early church and decided to ensure that something was done about it. The pericope indicated that the congregation received the opportunity to choose those to take care of the daily ministrations, a decision that pleased the people (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:2-5).

Decision and Empowerment

The exegetical analyzed data also showed that a decision was made to choose second-tier leaders, and there was a practical presentation of these men to the whole congregation. The result indicated that hands were laid on them; this is proof that they were empowered (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:5-6). One may say that the open presentation suggests that the chosen seven had the authorization of the leaders.

Power distance advantage

The results indicate that the church leaders seem to be close to the people, to the extent that they could easily permit them to choose who will be the second-tier leaders (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:3). It appears that the early church Apostles could trust the followers with some measure of power to act in the community.

Power-sharing advantage in the early Church

The study results also indicate that the early church leaders believed in participatory leadership, which involved participation and empowerment (Yukl, 2013). So, in the crisis situation, what is seen is a situation where the Apostles allowed the members to participate in the choice of their leaders, while they were involved in the empowerment (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:3-6).

Discussion

One may say that the task of resolving the crisis of the early church as seen in the text Act 6:1-7 was an enormous one that the Apostles could not do alone. So, the results obtained showed the Apostles allowing the followers to participate in the conflict resolution process. The involvement of the followers and the Apostles role are discussed in details below:

The Need for Decision Making for Conflict Resolution

The early church leaders needed to decide to resolve the racial crises that were hinged around daily supplies. They came together and decided these resolutions will enable them to remain focused on mainstream ministry and give themselves to the ministry of the word and prayers. They decided that second-tier leadership should be chosen to investigate the issues of daily supplies. A decision that the followers were happy with (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6: 3). Konopaske et al. (2018) argued that leaders of organizations (managers) are afraid to empower their followers to take up responsibilities because of fear of loss of power, control, authority, inability to make decisions, and failure from previous opportunities. Other reasons they provided include information mismanagement and the fact that not everyone wants to be empowered. The apostolic leaders seem to think differently from Konopaske et al. (2018). One can say that the church leaders seem to believe the solution is with the people, through the people, and for the people. The early church leaders then decided on a conflict resolution strategy that would restore a healthy relationship. They empowered the followers to choose leaders among them and recommended criteria for selection (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:3). The followers were pleased with the leader's conflict resolution strategy, the second-tier leaders were selected, and the Church began to grow again (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:3-6).

King (2016) argued that theology needs a better understanding of the role of feelings in decision making. He claimed that theology needs to update its emotional psychology from the thirteenth century to the twenty-first, emphasizing the need for a contemporary understanding of feelings in decision making. King further suggested that with this greater understanding, the work of theologians in reflecting on character, virtue, and conscience can be more effective and, thereby, better support those pursuing Christian discipleship. The implication here is that leaders should consider the people's feelings in willingness to and not to take decisions on issues. In the pericope under examination, the Apostles' refusal to make a decision might have consequences, so they opted for the decision option.

Wiggins and Braun (2011) modeled ethical decision making that incorporates several factors: (a) the philosophy of universalism, including the principles of altruism, responsibility, justice, and caring; (b) reciprocal empathy; (c) the context of power; and (d) the process of acculturation. The authors demonstrated through a case study on how the model could be applied. Perhaps in the model there is the possibility of being multicultural and ethical simultaneously, implying that it is possible to make ethical decisions in a multicultural environment, as exemplified by the early church leaders.

Hirsh (2001) showed the tact employed by Jewish Rabbi in decision making by distinguishing between decisions that affect individuals and issues that affect the congregation. He claimed that when working with individual congregants, rabbis make decisions in response to the individual's circumstances, careful to operate with an awareness of congregational policies and procedures. Also, Hirsh (2001) claimed that the rabbi might inform the congregational president of such decisions; they do not require congregational leaders' input. He further stated that when rabbis are engaged with issues that affect the entire community's culture, policies, and practices, they convey their positions and exercise their leadership by teaching or attempting to persuade others. However, they usually will not have final decision-making authority (Hirsh, 2001). The difference between this approach and the apostles in Acts six is that the Apostles

carried the people (church members) along. The early church leaders allowed the church members to be part of the decision-making process on how the conflict was resolved.

Kaak et al. (2013) posited that good Christian decision-making needs to be multifaceted. The approach to faith-based decision making outlined in their work incorporated three elements and recommended the church leaders' integrated application. They began by drawing on Aristotle and Aquinas's insights concerning the virtue of prudence and its relevance for decision-making. Secondly, they worked with organizational theory resources, in particular models for decision making from Charles Kepner, Benjamin Tregoe, and Victor Vroom. Finally, they drew upon the Church's discernment traditions and described congregational practices that might be embraced concerning decision-making. They suggested that such an integrative approach offers the best possibility for making thoughtful and God honored decisions.

Decision and Empowerment

The Acts 6:1-7 text showed that it is one thing to make a decision; it is another thing to implement the decision. Any decision that is not backed up with power for implementation may be of no effect. The early Church demonstrated that power is needed for decisions to function (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:6). The decision to choose seven men was followed by openly setting them before the Apostles and hands laid on them for spiritual vigor to function in their offices (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:6). Apart from spiritual empowerment, the public presentation of the elected leaders was a form of empowerment (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:6). One can also describe the laying on of hands by the twelve Apostles as a transfer of leadership grace on the second-tier leadership.

Yukl (2013) argued that delegation is a distinct type of power-sharing process that occurs when subordinates are given responsibility and authority for making some types of decisions formerly made by a manager (Leader). Empowerment involves the perception by members of an organization that they can determine their work roles, accomplish meaningful work, and influence essential events (Yukl, 2013). Yukl's description seems to explain the early Church leaders' approach in selecting the second-tier leaders.

Power Distance Advantage

Yukl (2013) argued that power distance has to do with the extent to which an organization's leadership is willing to share power with the followers. Power distance involves accepting an unequal distribution of power and status in organizations and institutions (Yukl, 2013). In high power distance cultures, people expect the leaders to have greater authority and are more likely to comply with rules and directives without questioning or challenging them (Dickson et al., 2003). In the pericope under examination, it is evident that the early church leaders did not impose the second-tier leadership on the people though they were in power. The leaders allowed the participation of followers in critical decision making (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:3). Participative leadership is viewed as a more favorable leadership attribute in low power distance culture (Dickson et al., 2003). Once the leaders were able to devise a solution that would work, they decided to involve (share power) the followers in implementing the decision. One can say that the early Church's power distance was low or termed a low power distance culture (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6: 3).

Han et al. (2017) examined the relationship between power distance belief (PDB), the tendency to accept and expect inequalities in society, power, control over valued resources, and charitable giving. Results suggested that the effect of PDB depends on the power held by the donor. In low-PDB contexts, people high (vs. low) in psychological power tend to be more self-focused (vs. other-focused), leading them to be less charitable. However, in high-PDB contexts, people high (versus low) in psychological power tend to be more other-focused (versus self-focused), leading them to be more charitable. Sheng-min and Jian-qiao (2013) claimed that power distance directly involves social and perceptual distance, shaping followers' reactions, such as speaking up to leaders.

The Power-Sharing Advantage in the Early Church.

Konopaske et al. (2018) showed that leaders could increase their effectiveness by empowering others. They believe that this can be done by delegating authority. As one finds in the early Church (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:3), and the leaders were willing to share power with the followers, they were given the responsibility to choose and the authority to do so. Lienhard (1975) claimed that the redactor of the chosen pericope focused attention on the fact that the process of choice takes place in two steps: the community chooses the candidates, and "the twelve" (the authoritative body in the community) commissioned them into their offices. To him, that is the extent the twelve were able and willing to share their power as the Church's main leaders. The early church leaders showed the entire congregation that they were willing to share power with the second-tier leaders by empowering them openly before the people and empowering them by sharing the grace of leadership that was on them through laying of hands (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:5).

Heller (2003) suggested that there is very little distribution of influence and power in most modern organizations. Heller argued that it is possible to attribute the lack of influence sharing in modern organizations to a failure to identify significant contingencies, such as competence. In the Apostolic leaders' case, they gave the followers the power to search for competencies such as men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:3). Having decided to share power with another level of leadership, they set the standard to be meant (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:3). In other words, the men to be selected should possess certain competencies (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:3). On the issue of contingencies, one might not tell if the Apostolic leaders anticipated that. However, the fact that it was possible for seven leaders to be chosen and their contribution impacted the Church positively showed that they might have prepared informally for a time such as the crisis period the Church was involved in at that time.

De Sousa Carvalho (2016) argued that the two main objectives of power-sharing are promoting sustainable peace and serving to structure the foundations for growth and development. One found in Acts 6:1-7 that the decision to share leadership responsibilities with the second tier led to the Church's peace and growth. The conflict between the Hebrews and the Greeks became a thing of the past, and the scriptures record that the number of disciples multiplied (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:7).

One may then advocate the need for power-sharing in the Church, realizing everyone has varied abilities to be a blessing in Christ's body. One can also suggest that devolution of power

would be a solution to allow everyone to be a critical player that can harness the different giftings in both the leaders and the led. The Church has men and women with ministry gifts (King James Version, 1769/2017, Ephesians 4:11-16); there are those with spiritual gifts (King James Version, 1769/2017, 1Corinthians 12:8-10) and natural endowment (King James Version, 1769/2017, Romans 12:3-8). When Stephen, Philip, and others have allowed serving with their gifts, the impact of what they can do became evident (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:7). One can advocate that Church leaders do not need to wait for the contingency period before they ‘forcefully’ share power with their subordinates. Also, one can suggest that leaders should realize that sharing the power and roles they have can help allow others to make much work done at a better turnaround time.

The Acts 6:5 account showed that the decision to involve second-tier leaders pleased the people. It implies that participation in what is going on in a church or organization would please the followers. The Apostles’ decision to include the followers in the choice of second-tier leadership can also be described as a participative or inclusive form of leadership. It is also a form of power-sharing approach in leadership (Yukl, 2013). Yukl (2013) argued that participative leadership, delegation, and empowerment are subjects that bridge the power and behavior approaches to leadership. The research on participative leadership and delegation emphasized the leader’s perspective on power-sharing and emphasized follower empowerment (Yukl, 2013). The two different perspectives provide a better understanding of effective leadership in organizations. Hogg (2007) claimed that participative leadership is the interactions between the leader and the follower. He argued that participative leadership is the same as democratic leadership—a leadership style where leaders influence the followers vigorously and accept feedback from them.

Furthermore, one might claim that the two objectives of leaders’ use of participative leadership, as outlined by Yukl (2013), are evident in the pericope under examination in Acts 6:1-7. They use downward consultation to increase the quality of decisions by drawing on subordinates’ knowledge and problem-solving expertise. The other objective is to increase subordinate acceptance of decisions by providing a sense of ownership (Yukl, 2013). One can see from the Acts 6:1-7 text that the leaders went to the followers (downward), and the follower’s participation could have possibly provided them with a sense of belonging; no wonder they were pleased (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:5).

Conclusion

The decision to empower second-tier leaders was found to have worked out well in the early Church. Yukl (2013) claimed that a subordinate who is closer to the problem than the manager (Apostolic leaders in this case) and has more relevant information could make quicker and better decisions about resolving a problem. Also worthy of note is that the chosen second-tier leaders were openly empowered to perform. The result was the resolved conflict, the Church’s growth, and new additions from difficult territories (King James Version, 1769/2017, Acts 6:7). One can confidently recommend this decision-making approach, power-sharing lessons, low power distance, delegation, and participative leadership approach of the early Church in Acts 6:1-7 to contemporary Christian leaders and other organizations.

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