

The man who has authority

A YOUNG PASTOR MOVED to a new church and during his first week was called upon to have a funeral. The day arrived for the service and the church was full. The time came in the service for the eulogy. Since the new and young pastor did not know the individual, he asked if someone would like to say some good words about the deceased. He waited and no one came. He waited until the sweat was running down the back of his neck.

Finally, when the silence was almost unbearable, an old farmer in the back row lifted himself up to full stature and said with a voice of authority, "His brother was worse."

Has there been an occasion when you have had to stand up and give a eulogy or a speech. Were you nervous, scared or did you speak with authority.

THE SOCIOLOGIST and philosopher Max Weber distinguishes three types of authority—charismatic, traditional and legal-rational—each of which corresponds to a brand of leadership that is operative in contemporary society.

First, charismatic authority points to an individual who possesses certain traits that make a leader extraordinary. This type of leader is not only capable of but actually possesses the superior power of charisma to rally diverse and conflict-prone people behind him. His power comes from the massive trust and almost unbreakable faith people put in him.

Second, traditional authority indicates the presence of a dominant personality. This leader is someone who depends on established tradition or order. While this leader is also a dominant personality, the prevailing order in society gives him the mandate to rule. This type of leadership, however, is reflective of everyday routine and conduct.

Third, legal-rational authority is one that is grounded in clearly defined laws. The obedience of people is not based on the capacity of any leader but on the legitimacy and competence that

procedures and laws bestow upon persons in authority. Contemporary society depends on this type of rationalization, as the complexities of its problems require the emergence of a bureaucracy that embodies order and systematization.

IN AN ARTICLE *BY MICHAEL HOLLAND* he outlines 5 Types of Authority Available to Managers.

As a leader, you have authority over critical resources. What's the basis of that authority? Generally, authority could be defined as: the power, the right, the clout to influence people and get them to do what you want and need them to. But in active leadership we can delineate that definition a bit further. Here are several types of authority that can be leveraged.

Legal – based on the ability to influence others based on your official authority and position.

Expert – based on the ability to influence others based on your knowledge and expertise

Reverent – based on the ability to influence others based on your behaviour, manner and approach

Reward – based on the ability to influence others by giving or withholding rewards

Punitive – based on the ability to influence others by imposing a penalty for fault, offense or violation

IN THE FIRST BRIEF SECTION (1:21-22), Jesus and his newly called disciples enter Capernaum. On the Sabbath Jesus enters the synagogue and begins teaching. The people who heard him teach were astonished, "for he taught them as one having authority (*exousia*), and not as the scribes." The data in 1:21b and 1:22a are closely paralleled in Mark 6:2, where Jesus enters the synagogue in Nazareth and preaches. The people are again astonished at his teaching. Thus, 1:21b and 1:22a represent a traditional way of describing Jesus' teaching and

its effects on hearers (cf. also Luke 4:22). But whereas Mark 6:2 highlights Jesus' wisdom and his deeds of power, the emphasis in 1:22 is on Jesus' "authority."

In many ways the scribes and the Pharisees used all five types of authority viz. legal, expert, reverent. Reward and punitive to gain power and control over the people.

Jesus enters the scene with a brand new form or type of authority.

THE WORD FOR AUTHORITY, *exousia*, is related to the verb *exesti*, meaning "it is free" or "it is permitted." In other words,

exousia

is the "sovereign freedom" of one who acts without hindrance. Jesus' teaching in sovereign freedom is contrasted with the teaching of the scribes. The difference is that the scribes' teaching authority depends on their knowledge of and adherence to tradition--especially the traditional interpretation of the Torah. However, Jesus teaches with an independent authority--or rather, on the authority of God (cf. 11:28-33). Whereas the scribes are bound to tradition, Jesus is relatively free--free in the way that only one who lives directly from and to God's authority is free.

MARK DOES NOT GIVE us the content of Jesus' teaching, but we can find examples of the difference between Jesus' teaching and the teaching of the scribes elsewhere in the gospel tradition. For example, in Mark 12:35-37, Jesus asks why the scribes say the Messiah is the Son of David when Scripture indicates that David called the Messiah "Lord."

Scripture itself suggests that the scribes' traditional interpretation is inadequate. Jesus is suggesting that who or what the Messiah is may break the traditional Jewish mold. Again, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus does not hesitate to suggest that the traditional interpretation of the commandments is inadequate. What God demands of us goes far beyond what the scribes require (cf. Matthew 5:20).

IN THE NEXT SECTION (Mark 1:23-28), the focus on Jesus' authority continues. We have here a typical exorcism story. Notice the description of the possessed man as having an unclean spirit, his asking Jesus, "what have you to do with us," Jesus' rebuke to the spirit and command to come out, and the account of the spirit's convulsions, loud cries, and exit from the man. Each

of these characteristics can be found in other exorcism accounts (cf. Mark 5:2, 7, 8, 13; 9:25-26).

Other elements in this story have parallels to the story of the stilling of the storm (Mark 4:35-41). Jesus' rebuking (*epetimēsen*) the spirit and the command to "be silent" (*phimōthēti*) in 1:25 are parallel to Jesus' rebuke (*epetimēsen*) of the wind and the command to "be still" (*pephimōso*) in 4:39. The response of the crowd in 1:27, "what is this (*ti estin touto*)...he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey (*hypakouousin*) him," is parallel to the response of the disciples in 4:41: "Who then is this (*tis ara houtos estin*), that even the wind and the sea obey (*hypakouei*) him?"

These similarities suggest that, for the early Christians who formulated and transmitted these stories, the exorcism and the stilling of the storm illustrate a similar point: Jesus has power over both the natural world (winds and sea) and the supernatural world (demons). So his authority include the power over all things.

THIS BRINGS US BACK to the issue of Jesus' authority. The most prominent element in 1:23-28 that does not have parallels to other exorcism or miracle stories is the declaration in 1:27: Jesus' teaching is a "new teaching--with authority (*exousia*)!" Apparently, Jesus' powerful exorcism is a confirmation of his teaching authority. What Jesus teaches is new (*kaine*)--unlike the scribes who teach the "same old stuff"--and his (divine) authority to teach is attested by his deeds of power.

In fact, the issue of Jesus' (divine) authority is the major theme from Mark 1:21 to Mark 3:6! For example, in 2:10 when the man was lowered through the roof, Jesus says that "the Son of Man has authority (*exousia*) on earth to forgive sins," openly declaring divine authority for himself.

THE WHOLE SECTION (2:1-3:6) portrays Jesus as the one who brings something so radically

new that it threatens to break the old mold, as the similitudes of 2:21-22 make clear. Jesus' new practices bring him into deadly conflict with the worldly authorities, who represent the old (3:6). Furthermore, it is Jesus' claim to act on divine authority that leads to his death (14:62-64).

Thus in 1:27, Mark has already set up a major theme of his gospel--THE ISSUE OF JESUS' DIVINE AUTHORITY, his bringing of something radically new, and the eventual result of which will be his death. Just as putting new wine into old wineskins causes the wineskins to break and the new wine to be lost (2:22), so Jesus' bringing of the radical newness of the kingdom will lead to the breaking of the old (cf. Mark 15:38) and the spilling of his "wine" for the sake of many (14:24). The world resists God's reign, and the world's sinful resistance will lead to the death of God's own Son. Yet despite; or rather through; that death, God will fulfill his purposes.

THE ONE WHO CAME with authority continues to come today with a new teaching, a fresh word to break the mold. It is not just new information but a new power that can achieve what has been said.

FOR MANY OF US OUR LIVES fit into a mold. We have become set in our thinking and rigid in our behaviours. We have routines and patterns that we follow. We have thinking that remains the same. We are reluctant to change because our life is comfortable and safe. The sadness is that even sick people find their sickness, comfortable and safe.

IF PEOPLE WOULD HAVE been asked in 1968 which nation would dominate the world in watch making during the 1990s and into the twenty-first century the answer would have been uniform: Switzerland. Why? Because Switzerland had dominated the world of watch making for the previous sixty years.

The Swiss made the best watches in the world and were committed to constant refinement of their expertise. It was the Swiss who came forward with the minute hand and the second hand. They led the world in discovering better ways to manufacture the gears, hearings, and mainsprings of watches. They even led the way in waterproofing techniques and self-winding models. By 1968, the Swiss made 65 percent of all watches sold in the world and laid claim to as much as 90 percent of the profits.

By 1980, however, they had laid off thousands of watch-makers and controlled less than 10 percent of the world market. Their profit domination dropped to less than 20 percent. Between 1979 and 1981, fifty thousand of the sixty-two thousand Swiss watchmakers lost their jobs.

WHY? The Swiss had refused to consider a new development—the—the Quartz movement—ironically, invented by a Swiss. Because it had no main-spring or knob, it was rejected. It was too much of a paradigm shift for them to embrace. Seiko, on the other hand, accepted it and, along with a few other companies, became the leader in the watch industry.

FOR MANY OF US, IN OUR LIVING, we are like the Swiss watchmakers. We can tinker and refine our life but what is needed is a radical shift in our thinking and our behaviour.

Our work life, our marriage life, our church life, our Christian life, our everyday life can fall into the trap of tinkering and refining when what is needed is a radical overall and a breaking of the mold and routine that we have fallen in to.

For people who are suffering with sickness, they can get into a way of thinking and behaving that they struggle to get out of. They too end up in a mold or groove.

SOMEONE HAS SAID that a groove is just a grave without the ends.

We ask for help from Jesus but we do not realize that when he comes with a fresh word, a word of authority, he comes with a desire to break the mold of our living so that a new way can be formed.

THE EMPHASIS OF JESUS' teaching is that he comes to make all things new and as such new wine needs new wineskins. The old cannot contain the new. It only breaks the old and spills out.

THIS LEADS ME INTO THE second part of our gospel reading. The presence of Jesus and his word of authority exposes the demon that has a hold on one of the synagogue/church goers. There is a clash of kingdoms and Jesus sends the demon packing but instructing the demon not to reveal who Jesus was. The people in the synagogue are agog at what is happening in their synagogue.

It was not that a demon was present nor that the demon was attached to a person. For this was an everyday occurrence for many of them as can be seen by the many accounts of people being demonised in the gospels.

WHAT WAS AMAZING was that the demons obeyed Jesus. This was not their reality for the demons controlled people and now they were being controlled by this man Jesus.

We have grown up in the western world where the reality of evil, Satan and demons have been relegated to our movie and TV screens. WE HAVE EITHER SANITISED EVIL with TV series like Bewitched and Buffy the Vampire Slayer or we have gone the horror path with the series the Vampire Diaries or movies like Rosemary's Baby or recently Exorcism of Emily Rose and Sinister.

We have relegated demons to our TV and picture screens to avoid the reality of demons influencing and controlling our lives.

EVEN IN THE CHURCH WITH the advent of the Enlightenment and Biblical Criticism, we have seen the gospel accounts being watered down as something that is not relevant today because we know better. How arrogant we are in thinking that modern medicine and psychiatry have all the answers and we relegate Jesus and his authority to the side as a fairy tale.

Two 6 year olds struggled with the problem of the existence of the devil. One boy said, "Oh, there isn't any devil." The other, rather upset, said, "What do you mean, there isn't any devil? It talks about him all the way through the Bible!" the first replied, "Oh that's not true, you know. It's just like Santa Clause, the devil turns out to be your dad."

MUCH OF OUR MENTAL ILLNESS, addictions and disease (emotional and physical) does not get better because the demonic stronghold that is there is not addressed and so holds the person in captivity.

The demonic stronghold is there because of some form of sin either done by the individual or done to the individual. Then everything becomes mixed up and confused and messy.

THE REAL REASON WHY this person is like what they are is covered over. But the mess is like a fishing line that has been tangled and knotted. To unravel the fishing line, one must carefully find the knots and untie them.

Or put it another way, there is a legal right that has been given for the demon to be there. If you remove the right then the demon has no might.

In the early days of deliverance, there would be many long sessions that exhausted both the individual and the prayer team. For they entered into a fight with the demon that was very powerful. Many times, they would fail after a long session because the legal right was not addressed.

Remove the right then Satan has no might!

FINALLY THE EARLY CHURCH BELIEVED that they were to continue in that same authority of Jesus. The disciples had a taste of it while Jesus was with them. Now they remember the words of Jesus *"All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of every nation."*

IN LUKE'S ACCOUNT OF ACTS we see the ministry of demon deliverance being carried out by the apostles including Paul.

THROUGHOUT CHURCH HISTORY demon deliverance was common. It became legitimate in the Roman Catholic church with the ministry of exorcism. In the Protestant church, the ministry ebbed and flowed through individuals.

But this ministry was seen to be the ministry of Christ's disciples and the authority to do it came from Jesus alone.

BEFORE YOU ENGAGE in deliverance ministry, the first thing you need is a revelation of who you are in Christ and, more specifically, your authority in Christ. See, Jesus commands us to cast out devils in Matthew 10:8, "As you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."

OF COURSE, YOU WON'T have much success casting out demons if you are afraid of them or don't understand your authority. It's important to fully understand Luke 10:19, in which Jesus said, "Look, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. And nothing shall by any means hurt you."

THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF protocols written to help you in this ministry. But the first one is *Do you understand your authority in Christ?*

It is not a head understanding but a heart knowing that He that is in Jesus is stronger than he that is in the world.

ANY DEMON WILL CHALLENGE YOU and you will need to stand on your authority in Jesus and do not let him bluff you. Fear is his major weapon. Our faith in Jesus must be bigger than the fear that the demon creates in you. We have the authority but we must stand upon it.

WHEN CHRISTIAN HERTER was governor of Massachusetts, he was running hard for a second term in office. One day, after a busy morning chasing votes (and no lunch) he arrived at a church barbecue. It was late afternoon and Herter was famished. As Herter moved down the serving line, he held out his plate to the woman serving chicken. She put a piece on his plate and turned to the next person in line.

"Excuse me," Governor Herter said, "do you mind if I have another piece of chicken?"

"Sorry," the woman told him. "I'm supposed to give one piece of chicken to each person."

"But I'm starved," the governor said.

"Sorry," the woman said again. "Only one to a customer."

Governor Herter was a modest and unassuming man, but he decided that this time he would throw a little weight around.

"Do you know who I am?" he said. "I am the governor of this state."

"Do you know who I am?" the woman said. "I'm the lady in charge of the chicken. Move along, mister."

When we stand on our authority in Jesus we can say *Move along Satan. Amen.*