

## **The Leadership Style of Jesus: A Case Study in Apostolic Leadership**

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What was Jesus' leadership style? While this is undoubtedly a good question, it is worth noting that it has been asked in this form only recently. Because the phrase is a neologism that has arisen through modernistic social and behavioral science studies of leadership, one would search in vain through the literature of the first twenty centuries of the church for reference to Jesus' leadership style. The word *leadership* does not exist in the original biblical languages. The concept of leadership that guides scholarly efforts to understand individual influence on the actions of individuals or social groups rises from an English cultural concept that has to be exported back into the Bible in order even to ask the question of what leadership style Jesus employed in his life and ministry. For those who are historically and exegetically inclined, it may seem that a better question would explore how Jesus' manner of influencing social groups compared to those of Jewish and Roman cultures in the First Century.

Nevertheless, because leadership theories are having a large influence on ministerial activity in today's church and "leadership style" is a term that has gained wide acceptability, the question is worth asking. It is not enough simply to do exegesis that explores Jesus' activity in the context of the first century. We

must always contextualize the message of the Scriptures, seeking to explain the message to people here and now in language they use.

This article will seek to interpret the ministry of Jesus in terms drawn from late twentieth-century, North American academic studies of leadership. Specifically, it will treat the question "What was the leadership style of Jesus." To define the question more sharply, it will survey various theories of leadership style and will propose a new theory of leadership style based on French and Raven's taxonomy of social power.<sup>1</sup> It will then proceed to a consideration of New Testament texts that illustrate how Jesus used each of the five types of social power French and Raven defined. After a consideration of how the use of these five types of power may be seen as defining leadership styles, the article will conclude with a discussion of the repeatability of Jesus' "leadership style" for twenty-first century ministers.

### **What is Leadership Style?**

The term "leadership style" apparently first entered the vocabulary of leadership studies in 1939 when Kurt Lewin led experiments on decision making among a group of children. He and his colleagues identified three different

styles of leadership among the children: autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire.<sup>2</sup> The problem with such research-based approaches to identifying leadership styles is their pseudoempirical pretension. While the study did involve empirical features, the theory generated from the observation does not necessarily share the rigor of the experiment. There is simply no way to define scientifically a concept as slippery as “style.” As a result, Lewin’s model has been modified, expanded and increasingly replaced. The literature of leadership studies now contains a bewildering variety of definitions of the term “leadership style.”<sup>3</sup>

A number of Christian authors have employed the concept of leadership style. Ted Engstrom expanded Lewin’s categories to include autocratic, bureaucratic, democratic, benevolent-autocratic, autocratic bureaucratic and laissez-faire.<sup>4</sup> Another example comes from Bill Hybels, who identifies ten different styles (i.e. visionary, directional, strategic, managing, motivational, shepherding, team building, entrepreneurial, reengineering and bridge building) without any reference to scholarly literature on the concept.<sup>5</sup>

Other writers have applied the concept directly to analysis of Jesus’ ministry with even less precise definition, adopting a casual use of the term without reference to research-based social or behavioral theory.<sup>6</sup> One recent book attempts to define Jesus’ leadership style by analyzing such leadership traits as humility, commitment, focus, compassion, integrity, peacemaking and endurance.<sup>7</sup> While such trait-analysis books may be helpful, they do little to

help develop a convincing approach to understanding leadership style.

Given the fact that the term “leadership style” has lost precise definition due to indiscipline in its use in popular literature, it would be easy to conclude that the term has lost its usefulness. This article represents an effort to recapture a meaningful definition for the term. Recently Andrew DuBrin defined leadership style as “the relatively consistent pattern of behavior that characterizes a leader.”<sup>8</sup> Such a definition illustrates what G.A. Yukl called the “behavior approach” to leadership studies.<sup>9</sup> Yukl divided the growing body of leadership theory into four categories, including power-influence theories (how leaders use power), behavioral theory (what leaders do), trait theories (what character aspects leaders have) and situational or *contingency* theories (what environmental factors influence leadership behavior). All of these approaches to leadership are illustrated in the literature on leadership style, as we have just seen.

It would seem more methodologically appropriate to Lewin’s original work to follow the same category of analysis that gave birth to the term “leadership style.” The basic categories derived from Lewin’s seminal research (autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire) are based on the use of power. The categories, however, seem to be too tight to describe the complexity and variety of leadership styles adequately. Rather than focus on behavioral, situational or character trait factors, this article seeks to build on Lewin’s original insights by considering the issue of power in greater depth. Such an approach is especially appropriate in

discussing Jesus' leadership style. If Jesus' style is seen to be based on his behavior or on contingent circumstances, then it would not seem to be repeatable. Similarly, it is unlikely that anyone will be able to put together all of the character traits of Jesus effectively. If, however, leadership style is seen as a description of how Jesus exercised power, his style would seem to be accessible to anyone and, therefore, highly worth describing.

### What Are the Bases of Social Power?

#### Taxonomy of Social Power French & Raven (1959)

- reward power
- coercive power
- expert power
- legitimate power
- referent power

One of the most important contributions in the power-influence category of leadership studies was French and Raven's taxonomy of social power, first published in 1959. The taxonomy identified five bases of social power: reward, coercive, expert, legitimate and referent. This theory has been subjected to extensive empirical verification studies over the years and has shown itself to be well founded. Reward power comes from being able to promise (and deliver) rewards to people for accepting one's influence. Coercive power, correspondingly, is the ability to punish those who do not accept one's influence. Legitimate power comes from people's

perception that one has a right to exercise power over them. All kinds of cultural and societal codes dispose people to perceive the legitimacy of other people's power. In Western society, elected office serves as a legitimate form of power. Ownership also gives legitimate power. Within established hierarchies or bureaucracies, delegated power usually is seen as legitimate as well. Expert power is derived from people's belief that a person has special competence in a particular area. Finally, referent power comes from people's willingness to be influenced by someone with whom they want to identify. If people want to be like someone else, they will voluntarily submit to that person's influence. Referent power may be based on what is often called *charisma* or personal magnetism. It can be tied to things as superficial as good looks or as profound as strong character.

Except for referent power, all forms of social power can have the negative effect of creating resistance or alienation. In short, people do not want to do something they would not otherwise do because (a) they were paid to do so, (b) they will be punished for not doing so, (c) the boss said so or (d) someone else knows more than they do. This is especially true if the so-called expert is trying to transfer power from his or her area of expertise to an area people perceive to be outside their expertise. Although people may submit to these forms of power, such submission is not purely voluntary. They submit to the influence because they *must* submit. On the other hand, referent power is always purely voluntary and self-defined. As such, it does not create resentment or alienation. On the contrary, it usually has an inspirational effect.

## How Did Jesus Use Power?

An analysis of Jesus' use of power in the New Testament narratives demonstrate that he used each of the five bases of power identified in the French and Raven Taxonomy. It also suggests there may be a sixth form of social power—spiritual power—that is not listed in social scientific categories.

### Reward Power

Jesus apparently used the promise of rewards to motivate his disciples on several occasions. In Mark 10:29, 30, he promised:

“No one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life” (NIV).\*

Undoubtedly, some interpreters of this text may object to the notion that Jesus offered any temporal rewards to his followers, but Mark goes out of his way to repeat homes and fields in the list of rewards that will be granted in the present age. Interestingly, Luke leaves out the mention of fields, and Matthew 19:29 leaves out the phrase “in this age.” Regardless of whether the rewards Jesus offered his followers were for the present age or the age to come, he undeniably used the promise of rewards. In Matthew 19:28, Jesus promised the disciples that at the “renewal of all

things, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” In John 14:2, 3, Jesus promised:

“In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

In these passages, Jesus directly promises specific rewards to his followers. It might also be argued that Jesus used a form of reward power in feeding the crowds of 4,000 and 5,000 who had set out to hear him without taking provisions. He also healed “every disease and every sickness” (Matthew 9:35) among the crowds that thronged to him. In several passages, it would appear that such healings were a reward for the faith of those who came to him (Matthew 9:29). While it is true that Jesus did such healings out of the compassion he felt for those who were suffering, it is also true that those who received such acts of compassion perceived them as a form of reward or benefit. When Jesus began to offer hard teachings, the crowds correspondingly declined (John 6:60,66). The crowds' fickleness in abandoning Jesus when he began to speak of radical costs demonstrates that, even for Jesus, reward power is highly volatile and does not persist if people perceive that direct rewards will no longer be forthcoming. The disappearance or diminishing of rewards can create profound alienation and even enmity between leaders and followers.

## **Coercive Power**

The opposite side of reward power is coercive power—the power to punish those who do not submit to one’s influence. While Jesus did not often engage in coercion, he was capable of using force. In the cleansing of the temple, he drove out the salesmen and moneychangers with a whip (John 2:13-16). One of the main ways in which Jesus used coercive power was the threat of (or warning against) Hell. The Aramaic word *geenna*, or “Hell,” is found more often in the Gospels than in any other New Testament source. The word is found in the mouth of Jesus in eleven verses (in seven settings, sometimes repeated in parallel passages) of the NT, while only twice in other contexts (James 3:6, 2 Peter 2:4) and never in the Pauline writings. The Greek word *hades* occurs four times in the Gospels (in four occasions), but only twice in Acts (one occasion) and four times in the Revelation (three occasions). In all, Jesus mentions what may be seen as the ultimate coercive threat far more often than any other person in the NT. Nevertheless, Jesus did not depend on coercive power as his primary source of power.<sup>10</sup>

## **Expert Power**

Jesus was widely seen among his followers and others as a rabbi (Matt. 26:25, 49; Mark 9:5, 11:21, 14:45). His knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures and deep and creative insight into them often led followers to yield to his teaching influence. Nicodemus the Sanhedrin member (John 3:1), the rich ruler (Luke 18:18 and parallels), and many other people, learned and unlearned, recognized Jesus’ status as an expert on the Law of Moses. In Luke 4:16, we

learn that it was Jesus’ custom to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath and read from the scrolls, commenting on their meaning. His famous “Sermon on the Mount” in Matthew 5-6 is also testimony to his use of expert power in sitting to teach the crowds.

## **Legitimate Power**

Jesus’ use of legitimate power is seen in his adoption/acceptance of the apocalyptic title “Son of Man” (used 82 times in the Gospels); the messianic title “Son of David” and the divine title “Son of God.” In the case of the “son of David” title, New Testament scholar Craig Keener has commented, with regard to the Canaanite woman of Matthew 15:22, that “by acknowledging Jesus as Son of David—Messiah—she also acknowledges the right of the kingdom of David . . . over the land.”<sup>11</sup> The title had political meaning as well as religious import. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the temporal implications of this title were not lost on the temple authorities: “But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ they were indignant” (Matt 21:15). Keener states that such “messianic claims threatened the stability of the temple hierarchy as much as overturning the tables (of the moneychangers) would.”<sup>12</sup> It is clear that the adoption of such titles gave Jesus a form of temporal legitimate power that would have translated into influence over those people who accepted the legitimacy of his claims.

## **Referent Power**

The most important social power through which Jesus gained influence

over others was referent power. The disciples' association with Jesus always had a strong voluntary nature. They were attracted by his servant attitude, great compassion, wisdom, pure moral example and fully-realized humanity. Philippians 2:6-11 demonstrates Jesus' attitude toward power. Although he could have ruled by the legitimate power that was his, "being in the form of God," he did not consider such authority as something to be grasped. Rather he:

"Made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!"

It is precisely Jesus' radical identification with humanity that gave him referent power among his first disciples and continues to draw people to him today. It is the desire to be like him, to identify with him, that draws true disciples into his sphere of influence. As a result, "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). No one follows Jesus because of coercion, and those who follow him merely for rewards cannot persist very long as disciples. Jesus' legitimate power as Son of God and his expert power of omniscience ultimately do not create ongoing influence over his followers. It is referent power that inspires followers to walk with Jesus despite the abnegation of rewards, the embrace of persecution, the resistance to some "legitimate" human authorities and the rejection of human wisdom and

expertise that following Jesus inherently implies.

It is important to note that postmodern times have amplified the importance of referent power for leaders. In an age in which people are taught to question authority, referent power is the only social power that is seen as truly legitimate. Max Weber referred to the power of such things as age, intelligence, caste and physical characteristics as "the eternal yesterday" which disposes people to accept legitimate power.<sup>13</sup> The antihistorical revolution, brought about by the successive modern and postmodern world cultures, has weakened significantly the power of tradition to guarantee legitimate power.

The extent to which this focus on referent power applies to postmodern religion can be seen in the words of Joan Osborne's hit song, "What If God Was One of Us?" (Available at <http://www.lyricsondemand.com/onehitwonders/ifgodwasoneofuslyrics.html>). The song suggests, at least in the ears of this interpreter, that people today find credible only a God who would be like one of us. The cinematic *Matrix Trilogy* also seems to cry out for a savior who is like us. Such longings—especially in Osborne's case—are a rejection of the idea that God is mediated through institutions such as the church or the Pope. Only a God who has become one of us has credibility. Given the fact that God's plan of salvation centered on the incarnation of Jesus, the postmoderns seem to have stumbled upon a universal truth. The only way God can establish his authority over free-willed beings without destroying them is to involve their free will in their duty to accept God's influence.

## Spiritual Authority

The French and Raven taxonomy is based on empirical studies conducted by social scientists. The Bible indicates, however, there is a form of power that sociologists know not of. Jesus' use of the title "Son of Man" provides an interesting segue into a sixth form of power—spiritual authority. In Matthew 9:1-8, Jesus responds to a paralytic man by pronouncing that his sins were forgiven. When the teachers of the Law objected and accused him of blasphemy, Jesus responded by proving that he had the divine authority to forgive sins:

“Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, ‘Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, “Your sins are forgiven,” ‘or to say,’ “Get up and walk?” But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . .’ Then he said to the paralytic, ‘Get up, take your mat and go home.’ And the man got up and went home. When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to men.”

This sixth type of power involves authority over spiritual realities. It involves the authority to forgive sins (John 20:23), heal the sick and cast out demons (Matt. 10:1), ask for divine provision (Matt 18:18) and bind and/or loose heavenly realities on earth (Matt 18:18). A wide variety of miraculous

powers would be included in this category.

The question is whether this sixth power is termed properly a social power. It might be observed that miraculous spiritual authority does not always result in people's accepting a leader's influence. In Jesus' case, the link between miracles and influence over people's lives often was seen to be extremely fragile—as in the case of the healing of the ten lepers, only one of whom returned to give thanks (Luke 17:12-17). In the technical terms of NT theology, it must be recognized that *dunamis* power and *exousia* power are not the same thing and *dunamis* (Acts 1:8) does not necessarily imply *exousia* (Acts 1:7).

Careful examination of spiritual authority suggests that it does not work independently of other forms of social power. To the extent that spiritual authority—expressed perhaps in a ministerial calling—involves a right to lead congregations, it may be a form of legitimate power. To the extent that it may involve the ability to strike someone along the lines of Peter's declaration of the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:9), it would seem to be a form of coercive power. In the sense that the ability to perform miracles may create a segue between charismata and personal charisma (in the Weberian sense), it may be a type of referent power. To the extent that it may involve some form of revelation or power to teach the Word, it may be a variant of expert power. Perhaps it is best to see spiritual authority as an intensifier of mundane forms of social power rather than a separate category. At any rate, this article recognizes the existence of spiritual authority, and there can be no

question that the unlimited spiritual authority that Jesus possessed was part of his leadership style.

### **How Does the Use of Social Power Define Leadership Style?**

The first usage of the term “leadership style” involved empirical studies of the use of power among children, and three styles were identified: autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. These categories, however, are too broad to be useful. This article proposes that by defining social power in greater detail—as do French and Raven—more specificity can be brought to the categorization of leadership styles. Applying the taxonomy of social power to expanding the categories of leadership style suggests the following leadership styles: patrons, tyrants, teachers, managers and magnets.

#### **A Taxonomy of Leadership Styles**

**Patron:** relies primarily on reward power

**Tyrant:** relies primarily on coercive power

**Teacher:** relies primarily on expert power

**Manager:** relies primarily on legitimate power

**Magnet:** relies primarily on referent power

**Apostle:** relies on the Holy Spirit to direct what power will be used on what occasions

Each of these leadership styles is determined by the primary social power the leader uses. The **patron** primarily depends on rewards to gain influence over people. The negative term

“patronizing” demonstrates the kind of alienation this style of leadership ultimately produces. The **tyrant** depends primarily on punishment to motivate followers. The dark side of such a leadership style is obvious. The **teacher** depends primarily on his or her expertise to hold influence over people. The downside of such a style is that its influence is narrow, limited to the leader’s area of expertise. The **manager** depends on bureaucracy and hierarchy for influence. The limits of this style are indicated in Warren Bennis’ dictum: “Managers are people who do things right, and leaders are people who do the right thing.”<sup>14</sup> While managers are needed, dependence on legitimate power for influence leaves out important moral dimensions of leadership. Finally, the **magnet** is a leader who depends on referent power, especially charisma, to draw people and maintain influence over them.

In addition to these categories suggested by the French and Raven taxonomy, a sixth category of leadership style can be identified. The **apostle** is a leader who depends on spiritual authority and the leading of the Holy Spirit to indicate which type of power is appropriate for different occasions. While this article briefly has compared the noble qualities of referent leadership to the other forms of social power that create alienation, it would be a big mistake to assume that contingencies that necessitate the use of the other forms of power do not arise. The analysis of Jesus’ use of power demonstrates he used all forms of social power in conducting his ministry. Indeed, it was his dependence on spiritual authority, mediated by the Holy Spirit, that gave him the wisdom to know how to respond to different situations.

In the biblical concept, apostles are people who have been sent (from the Greek *apostolos* > *apostello*, I send) to do a task. Jesus was God's own apostle, sent into the world so the world through him, might be saved (John 3:17, Heb 3:1). As God's apostle, he functioned in the spiritual authority God had delegated to him and he sent out other apostles with authority delegated from him. True apostles know they function not in their own authority but in the authority Christ delegates to them.

A revealing case is found in Acts 1:4-8. As Jesus was spending time with his disciples after his resurrection, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem until they had received the promised baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Hear the echoes of reward power here.) The disciples' response indicates the degree of importance they had placed in a more tangible kind of reward: "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Jesus responded, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority *exousia*" (Acts 1:7). Jesus makes clear that all authority belongs to the Father. Every kind of authority is delegated by God and ultimately belongs to God. In the Great Commission, however, Jesus makes clear that the Father had given him the same authority:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:18-20).

The Jesus' leadership style was that of an apostle sent by God, empowered by the Spirit and equipped with all power (whether social or spiritual). The salient features of that style were:

1. Appointment by the Father as an apostle, sent on a salvific mission
2. Reception from the Father of delegated authority over spiritual realities
3. Empowerment (*dunamis*) for the task of cross-cultural witness to fulfill the Father's mission
4. Primary dependence on referent power for gaining influence among followers who voluntarily identify with him
5. Wisdom for the use of alienating powers (reward, coercion, expert and legitimate) in situations where they were warranted

An important test for this theory of apostolic leadership style is its application to the ministry of the Paul of Tarsus. We know the most about this apostle because of his prominent role in writing at least thirteen books of the New Testament. The fact that Paul was forced to defend his apostolicity against opponents provides special help in determining whether the theory is appropriate.

Like Jesus, who ministered in constant awareness and fidelity to his appointment as God's apostle, Paul constantly refers to his **apostolic appointment** by Jesus as an apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 1:1, 11:13; 1 Cor. 1:1, 9:1-2, 15:9-10; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 2:8; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim.

1:1, 1:11; Titus 1:1). He began the majority of his letters with this assertion. The appointment was tied to his first personal experience of Christ, where he was struck down but not put to death by Christ for his persecution of the church (Acts 9:15). His calling to apostleship was an act of grace closely tied to his salvation itself. Evidence of Paul's **spiritual authority** is found in his regular encounters with evil spirits and his assertions and demonstrations of authority over them. Two texts are of particular interest:

“God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them” (Acts 19:11,12).

“The evil spirit answered them, ‘Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?’” (Acts 19:15,16).

### Aspects of Apostolic Leadership Style

1. divine appointment as an apostle
2. delegated authority over spiritual realities;
3. empowerment (*dunamis*) for the task of cross-cultural witness
4. dependence on referent power for gaining influence
5. wisdom for the appropriate use of alienating powers

In the first of these texts, Paul acted in the authority Jesus gave his disciples in Matthew 10:1, to heal the sick and cast out evil spirits. In the second text, the seven sons of Sceva were trying to cast out a demon. The evil spirit answered them by recognizing the authority of both Jesus and Paul. It is clear that the two shared the delegated authority from the Father.

As for **empowerment for cross-cultural witness** by the Holy Spirit, Acts 9:11-19 makes it clear that immediately after the Damascus road experience, Jesus sent Paul into the city to meet Ananias so that he might “be filled with the Holy Spirit” (9:17) and become Christ’s “chosen instrument to carry [his] name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel” (9:15). The empowerment Paul received is manifested in his exercise of spiritual gifts such as tongues and prophecies (1 Cor. 12). It is also demonstrated in Paul’s pattern of preaching, based not on “wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power (*dunamis*),” so that the faith of his converts “might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power (*dunamis*)” (1 Cor 2:4, 5).

Paul’s encounter with Jesus and subsequently with Ananias also set the pattern of **primary dependence on referent power** that would serve to establish Paul’s apostolic influence. In Acts 9:16, Jesus announces to Ananias, “I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” Although Paul claims the title of apostle based on his appointment by Christ, he bases the defense of his apostolicity on the moral example he had set for his churches. He reminds the churches (especially the

Corinthians) of his arduous manual labor in supporting himself by tent making so that he would not be a burden on the churches (1 Thess. 2:6, 9; 1 Cor. 4:12, 9:6; 2 Cor. 11:7-9, 12:13); the sufferings he endured on behalf of the gospel (1 Cor. 4:9-13; 2 Cor. 11:23-30; 12:10; 13:4); his spiritual parental care of the churches (1 Thess 2:7-8, 11-12; 1 Cor 4:14-15; 9: 1; 2 Cor 3:2-3, 12:14) and his moral example (1 Cor 4:16-17, 11:1; Phil. 3:17, 4:9). Paul apparently understood that anyone can insist upon the title of apostle or even super-apostle, but the real test of an apostle is fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, an exemplary moral life and tender care of the churches as a spiritual parent (2 Cor. 11:13, 12:11). Paul knew that insisting on the legitimacy of his calling, which the churches had not witnessed, would never establish his apostolic influence unless his life and work inspired people to identify themselves with him and thus voluntarily accept his apostleship.

Finally, we see in Paul **the wise exercise of alienating forms of social power** where such forms were necessary. He demonstrates the use of both reward power and coercive power in his doctrine of the judgment of human work at the final day (1 Cor 3:11-15) and in his assertion that God “will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger” (Rom 2:6-9). Paul also threatens to punish disobedient believers among the Corinthians (2 Cor 10:6). He offers (at least theoretically) to reward Philemon for setting Onesimus free and sending him to help with his needs (Philemon 1:18-19). He appeals to the

Ephesians and Colossians to serve the Lord wholeheartedly, because they “will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward” (Eph. 6:8; Col. 3:24). He presents his credentials as an expert in the Law by reminding his audience in Jerusalem that he had studied under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). He reminds Festus of his life in the strictest sect of Judaism, living as a Pharisee (Acts 26:4-5). He recalls to the Galatians that, before he met Christ, he was “advancing in Judaism” beyond many Jews of [his] own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of [his] fathers (Gal 1:14). He also reminds the Philippians of his expertise in the law (Phil 3:5-6). Finally, he appeals to legitimate authority in asserting his role as founder of the churches and in using the title of “apostle,” which had been conferred on him by Jesus. (Note that the legitimate authority that comes from founding the work also functions as a form of referent authority, although on a different moral plane.)

In these examples, it is clear that both Paul and Jesus operated in the leadership style that we have termed “apostolic.”

### **Is the Leadership Style of Jesus Repeatable?**

It would appear that any discussion of the apostolic leadership style of Jesus would be utterly moot if such a style were not repeatable in the present age. While cessationist thinkers might conclude that dependence upon the Holy Spirit for power died out with the apostolic age, such a position is unbiblical, destroying any notion that Jesus was a model for his present-day disciples to follow. If the ministry of Jesus is still intact through the church, his leadership style must also be intact

and the apostolic leadership style must still exist for the church. The same Jesus who gave the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in the Early Church still delegates spiritual authority to men and women today for these same purposes in his church.

In recent years, a widespread debate over the nature of the apostolic gift in the church has arisen. Peter Wagner and David Cartledge are among those who insist the office of apostle is valid in the present-day church.<sup>15</sup> On the other side, an official position paper of the General Council of the Assemblies of God has countered that while the apostolic function is still valid and needed in the church, the fullest reality of the office of the apostle (and the prophet as well) was limited to those special “Apostles of Christ” who received their commissions directly from Jesus in the first century. Nevertheless, the Assemblies of God does not forbid the use of the title “apostle,” but does not see it as necessary in any case nor advisable in most cases: “While we do not understand it to be necessary, some church bodies may in good faith and careful biblical definition choose to name certain leaders apostles.”<sup>16</sup>

A thorough consideration of this debate is beyond the scope of this article, but the concept of an “apostolic leadership style” is compatible with whichever of the two positions readers may find ultimately convincing. This article would agree with the Assemblies of God position paper, which states:

“The title of apostle should not be lightly granted or assumed. Historically, apostles have been persons of

recognized spiritual stature, stalwart character, and great effectiveness in the work of the church. Paul’s warnings about ‘those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about,’ his assertion that ‘such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ,’ and his further association of them with ‘Satan [who] himself masquerades as an angel of light,’ (2 Corinthians 11:12-14) are sobering—reminders that unfettered human pride in seeking church leadership can blind one to the machinations of the devil. Persons lacking character may attach the title of apostle to themselves in order to assert dominance and control over other believers, while leaving themselves unaccountable to the members in their care or the spiritual eldership of their own fellowship.”

Following the analysis of social power presented in this article, it would seem that insistence upon the use of the title of apostle gravely tempts the present-day minister to try to assume by an appeal to legitimate power (that is, the legitimate authority of the original apostles) that which they have not gained by referent power. It would seem that, aside from the issue of spiritual authority in the heavenly realms, the social power of the

apostle among earthly humans must be gained by the sacrifice, example and spiritual parenthood. Paul's example shows that even when these characteristics are in place, people sometimes will reject the apostle, even as some of Jesus' own disciples rejected him. Still, the social power of the apostle must be earned anew. In vernacular terms, it may be said that apostolic social power is a "what have you done for me lately" proposition. People are always free to reject the power of an "apostle" who they perceive has failed in sacrifice, example or spiritual parenthood.

In the end, this article would argue that the apostolic leadership style modeled by Jesus and Paul is still available to believers whom God has called for salvific purposes, delegated with spiritual authority over spiritual realities, baptized in the Holy Spirit and continually filled with the Spirit's power to walk in close communion with God, called to the cruciform life of Christ as an example to the churches and filled with wisdom for the wise and proper exercise of social power. It would seem to be an uphill argument to assert that God desires anything less than such a style among his ministers. In view of this, it would seem that every minister at every level is called to such a leadership style. To the degree that the ministers of the church walk in such style, they may properly be seen as *apostolic*, whether they be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers.

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<sup>1</sup> J. P. R. French Jr. and B. Raven, "The Bases of Social Power" in *Group Dynamics*, eds. D. Cartwright and A. Zander, (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 607-623.

<sup>2</sup>K. Lewin, R. Lippitt, and R.K White, "Patterns of Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created Social Climates. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 10 (1939): 271-301.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Rowe and Boulgarides have proposed a model including directive, analytic, conceptual, and behavioral styles of leadership. See Alan J. Rowe and James D. Boulgarides, *Managerial Decision Making* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1998), 28-30. John Beck and Neil Yeager assert that the four archetypal leadership styles are director, problem solver, developer, and delegator. See John D. W. Beck and Neil M. Yeager, *The Leader's Window: Mastering the Four Styles of Leadership to Build High-Performing Teams*: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994. Another model posits seven categories of leadership style, including dynamic aggressive, dynamic assertive, dynamic supportive, adaptive aggressive, adaptive assertive, adaptive supportive and creative assertive types. See Jeffrey Glanz, *Finding Your Leadership Style: A Guide For Educators* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 2002). One reviewer on Amazon.com described this latter book as follows: "The marked lacking of scientifically sound theories and verifiably measurable data makes Finding Your Leadership Style, at its best, a chicken soup for educational leader-wannabes." See [http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0871206927/qid=1096249283/sr=1-7/ref=sr\\_1\\_7/103-0522196-7132635?v=glance&s=books](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0871206927/qid=1096249283/sr=1-7/ref=sr_1_7/103-0522196-7132635?v=glance&s=books). Perhaps the ultimate dissolution of the concept can be found in Deborah Himsel, *Leadership Sopranos Style: How to Become a More Effective Boss* (Chicago: Dearborn Trade Publishing, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Ted Engstrom, *Discovering and Using Your Leadership Skills* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1984).

<sup>5</sup> Bill Hybels, "Finding Your Leadership Style: Ten Different Ways to Lead God's People." *Leadership*, 19:1 (Winter 1998): 84-89.

<sup>6</sup> See Michael Youssef, *The Leadership Style of Jesus: How to Develop the Leadership Qualities of the Good Shepherd* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986); Mark Ashton, *Leadership Jesus Style* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Wayne Hastings and Ron Potter, *Trust Me: Developing a Leadership Style People Will Follow* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2004). For another work focusing on Jesus as a leader, see *Jesus CEO, Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership* (New York, NY: Hyperion, 1995).

<sup>8</sup>Andrew J. DuBrin, *Leadership: Research Findings, Practice, Skills* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), 377.

<sup>9</sup>G. A. Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989)

<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting that coercive power, like reward power, depends on people believing that the person making the threat or promise is able and willing to follow through. It would seem that the threat of hell is not one that seems truly credible to most people, since it has so little deterrent power. It would further seem that such threats have even less power in the mouths of personages less imposing than Jesus.

<sup>11</sup> Craig, S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 88.

<sup>12</sup> Keener, 102.

<sup>13</sup> French and Raven, 265.

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<sup>14</sup> Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> Peter Wagner, *Churchquake: How the New Apostolic Reformation is Shaking Up the Church As We Know It* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1999); *Apostles and Prophets: The Foundation of the Church* (Ventura, CA: RegalBooks, 2000); *Changing Church: How God is Leading His Church into the Future* (Ventura, CA: RegalBooks, 2004); David Cartledge, *The Apostolic Revolution: The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets in the Assemblies of God in Australia* (Chester Hill, NSW, Australia : Paraclete Institute, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Available: [http://ag.org/top/beliefs/position\\_papers/4195\\_apostles\\_prophets.cfm](http://ag.org/top/beliefs/position_papers/4195_apostles_prophets.cfm)