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Challenging authority

Aim:

- To show that challenging authority is OK as long as you follow the rules in a democracy

Introduction

Saying no

Last week Manchester City played Bayern Munich in the Champions League in Germany. Now for those of you who do not know about the Champions League let me explain. In England as in almost all European countries there is league football. The top clubs in England play in the Premiership. Other European countries also have league football. The top teams from each country play in a competition to find out who is the best team in Europe. The final of the competition is the most watched televised annual sporting event worldwide, with over 145 million television viewers.

So it's quite a big deal for football clubs, their fans, countries and the TV networks.

So it came as a bit of a surprise when Carlos Tevez refused to play, when asked by his manager, in the Manchester City game against Bayern Munich. He's quite good at scoring goals and Manchester City was losing 2-0 at the time.

Also last week the BBC carried this headline. **"Death plea case rejected by judge"**

The person that this case is all about cannot be identified publicly. It was her family who brought the case to court. She can only be referred to by the letter 'M'. Some eight years ago she became brain damaged and, for a time, was thought to be in a vegetative state – where she had no consciousness. All her other vital organs are working perfectly apart from the conscious part. Further tests

indicated that there was a very small amount of consciousness and so she was said to be minimally conscious. Her family claim that she is suffering and that the force feeding (she cannot feed herself) should stop and 'M' be allowed to die.

The Judge, Mr Justice Baker, disagreed and said, "'M' had some 'positive experiences' and there was a 'reasonable prospect' that those experiences could be extended . . . The factor which does carry substantial weight, in my judgment, is the preservation of life. Although not an absolute rule, the law regards the preservation of life as a fundamental principle." There is a connection between these two stories.

Looking Deeper

Challenging authority

Both of these stories show people challenging authority. In the Tevez story he is challenging his manager's authority. In the case of 'M' her family is challenging the doctor's authority.

So is it right to challenge authority?

In a democracy most people would say yes. In a dictatorship people would say no. As we live in a democracy then it's alright to challenge authority, isn't it?

Tevez, 'M's family and the rioters of August would say, yes, it is OK to challenge authority. So why are the rioters being locked up for their challenge to authority, and the others aren't?

In any society you need rules so that you are as free as the next person, so long as you don't squash his/her freedom. These rules say what you can and cannot do so that you don't 'squash' anyone else's freedom. We have rules which say you shouldn't steal. Some of these rules come from the Bible, 'Thou shalt not steal' is one of the ten commandments.



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So the rioters broke the rules, challenging authority by stealing. 'M's family has played by the rules and Tevez has played by the rules of the country (he's broken no law) but will almost certainly have broken the rules of the Manchester City Football Club.

So, yes, it's OK for us to challenge authority, because we live in a democracy. It's the method by which you challenge authority which determines whether it's a good challenge.

The Bible begins with a challenge to authority. Christians believe that free will was given by God to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In picking the apple from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve were breaking the one rule God had set, not a good challenge to God's authority.

Reflection

So, will you challenge authority?
If so, will you do it by the rules of society?
If not, will you accept the consequences of your actions?

Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.

Thought of the day

Proverbs 29:2 When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan.

Proverbs 29:16 When the wicked thrive, so does sin, but the righteous will see their downfall.

Keywords

Consciousness
Authority
Challenge