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The house swept clean : a biblically balanced pattern for the diagnosis, exorcism, and pastoral care of the victims of demonic possession

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THE HOUSE SWEEP CLEAN

A BIBLICALLY BALANCED PATTERN FOR THE
DIAGNOSIS, EXORCISM, AND PASTORAL CARE
OF THE VICTIMS OF DEMONIC POSSESSION

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE, CHAPTER 10, vv 17-20:

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (NIV)

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE, CHAPTER 11, vv 24-26:

When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, “I will return to the house I left.” When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. (NIV)

Acknowledgments (Assuming that Jesus goes without saying):

I'm told it's amateurish and bad form to thank too many people. So, characteristically, here goes:

Mom, Dad, Grandma . . . too much to say. I love you. Aunt Lucille, Uncle Doyle, Cousins too numerous to bind into one book. Granny, sorry I'm taking so long to get up there to Heaven with you, but thanks for waiting. My brother Louis Arredondo. Every time I look at you, I see Him. My best friends Steve and Frank, Sarah E, and my little brothers Daniel D, Chris T, Mark J, and Joel W. You too, Meesh. For an only child, God sure gave me lots of brothers & sisters.

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PREFACE

Preface

This was a difficult project to undertake for a number of reasons. First of all, for various reasons it became expeditious to self-publish, and that is a bit of a nightmare. Second, there is little in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod to which it may be compared. Thus, any doctrinal comparison to pre-existing teachings might be problematic in some places. Third, my biggest fear is that this work would be seen as an accusation or an indictment of the LC–MS. It is not intended as such. Any hyperbolic moments herein are not to point a finger of blame, but to call for discussion. Fourth and most importantly, this is a subject that makes people uncomfortable.

In this book there are a lot of strange things. I myself greeted some of them with skepticism and incredulity when I first heard them. In fact, there are even a few things in here (particularly in the use of consecrated objects) which I set out specifically to debunk. My theory was that these things are mere superstition. But as has been said, “a ‘theory’ is a nice little idea ganged up on by a brutal bunch of facts.” In some cases, that’s what happened. As an orthodox Protestant Confessional Lutheran, there was a lot in here that assaulted my sensibilities. Unfortunately, it turns out that there are things I just didn’t know. I *hate* it when that happens. So when you read these things and something gives you the willies or strikes you as uncomfortable, please know that I felt that too, quite a lot when writing this. But truth is not only stranger than fiction, it’s better for you. So just take what is in these pages, look in your Scriptures, and then if you still have questions consult the source material for yourself. After that, if you happen to find something in here that needs correcting, I would be pleased to make the change.

Much of the Church of Jesus Christ overdoes the subject of Satan, demons, and possession. Much of the rest of the Church does not talk about these things at all. It is this latter category in which the LC–MS finds itself at the moment. I say “at the moment” because sometimes things like this are cyclical. They certainly have been in our western culture. In the late 19th century, American and British dilettantes were enthralled by spiritism and the Occult. By the 1930s and ’40s, though, good old-fashioned morality and plain vanilla faith was back in vogue. By the 1960s, Satanism became popular again as part of the culture of rebellion against “the Establishment.” Now, in the beginning days of the 21st century, the fascination with occultism, eastern religions, and New Age spiritual practices is on the rise. Though there is not usually an exact parallel between the culture and the Church as a whole or any given denomination, they do share in common a sort of cyclical rise and fall of interest in various subjects. This is what C.S. Lewis eloquently called in his book *The Screwtape Letters*, “The Law of Undulation.” Appetites and interests change, going up and down and up again. In other words life, and especially desires, are cyclical.

Right now, the LC-MS is at a low point of “undulation” in the handling

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of demonology. This work is offered in hopes of getting the pendulum swinging back the other way. Maybe we can find a biblically-balanced happy medium from which there is as little deviation as possible. It is also hoped that this work will help in getting the debate started. Perhaps the interest of someone will be piqued to the point that research studies are begun. There are no figures available on the number of genuine, or even suspected, cases of possession in this country. No one but God knows how many attempted exorcisms are successful. Maybe someone would want to pursue these questions.

If this work adds fuel to a debate, and if the need for a balanced, biblically solid approach to demonology and exorcism becomes widely known, I would be delighted. If the subject of exorcism and demon possession moved from something whispered late at night and prefaced with “don’t tell anybody, but . . .” into something that could be examined in congregational Bible studies and open forums without committing acts of sensationalism, then I would consider this a successful work.

Though many, many people have been of tremendous help with this book, any flaws in it are mine and mine alone. The nature of the work as described above made this very much a hands-on project, and the decision to produce it within the borders of the campus have multiplied the opportunities wherein I could mess something up. So I hope that the reader will graciously look past any flaws contained within and take it for what it is: an attempt to seriously address an area of ministry in which there is much the LC-MS could offer the world, but which to date mostly has not.

This is not to say that the LC-MS is alone in reluctance to engage demonology on a synod-wide level. Nor for that matter is the tendency unique to Lutherans. I used to attend a seminary operated by the Mennonite Brethren. Wonderful people though they were, they too had no classes or detailed theology of Satan and his demons to educate for educating their future pastors or missionaries. The LC-MS has no monopoly on silence. Congregations or church bodies which have a perfect balance of caution and serious engagement, if they exist at all, are few. It can, I think, be safely said that if a denomination or church body in the United States is not either over-reacting to, or under-teaching about, demons and exorcism, and are teaching good solid biblical positions, they are very much in the minority.

The LC-MS has the resources, the brilliant minds, and the mature Christian souls not only to engage in the discussion, but to take the lead. We can bring to bear a rich tradition of biblical competency and a pastoral spirit. We have much to offer. Now we have the chance to, as Paul said, *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.* (2 Timothy 2:15)

Billy Graham once referred to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as

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a “sleeping giant” within Christendom. As regards demonology and exorcism, perhaps we are being given the opportunity by God to wake up and smell the coffee.

PART ONE:
THE THEOLOGY
of EXORCISM
and DEMONOLOGY

Introduction

In 1949, the Rev. Dr. Louis B. Sieck, then President of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, conducted an exorcism in what is now called the Chapel of the Holy Apostles. He was assisted by Rev. Alfred Doerffler, a local pastor in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. Having had no previous personal experience with the demonic, Dr. Sieck was at a loss on how to proceed. Unfortunately, the only Lutheran work on exorcism he could find was written in 1684-in Latin. After several unsuccessful attempts to expel the unclean spirit from the adolescent boy, Dr. Sieck gave up and turned the boy over to the Jesuits at Alexian Brothers Hospital. Although the Roman church shares some of the same embarrassment with the demonic that afflicts the Lutheran Church and Protestantism in general, they do have the advantage of having more experience and more reference works. The Jesuits utilized the Catholic rite of exorcism, known as the *Rituale Romanum* (Roman Ritual). After several intense efforts, the exorcism was successful. The boy is now a grandfather, still healthy, a devout Catholic, and has never been bothered since by the demonic.

The simple fact is that in 1949 the Lutherans were caught with their cassocks down. They had no training, no experience, and no easily understandable reference material. And although the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has placed many overseas missionaries who have successfully dealt with demonic situations on the mission field, there is still no standard reference work to which Lutherans can apply for help.

In a very dangerous situation such as exorcism, there is plenty of opportunity to make mistakes. People may be permanently damaged, both spiritually and physically, or even killed. There is no margin for error. In this day of channeling and interest in the New Age Movement, the chances of a Lutheran pastor or worker crossing paths with a real demon should not be underestimated. How the demonic is to be dealt with is the proper question, not if. At this writing, Concordia Seminary in St. Louis offers no course or seminar, not even so much as a pamphlet, to train its clergy to deal with demons. The fact that the 1949 Sieck -- Doerffler case has not repeated itself is an expression of the grace of God The Holy Spirit. He has given us time to prepare and educate ourselves so that this failure does not happen again. We have squandered this grace for 50 years. He will not be patient with us forever if we willfully choose not to engage the Enemy. After all, it is He who empowers us to fight Satan in the first place. How pleased can He be with us if we refuse the duty to which we are called?

Swept Clean and Put in Order

When Jesus described the condition of a possessed man in Luke 11:24-26, He chose the metaphor of a house to represent the “inside” of a victim of possession. The man who is not indwelt by demons is described as “*swept clean and*

put in order.” By extension, then, the man or woman who is possessed would be mentally cluttered, slightly lost, and in need of spiritual cleansing.

The metaphor also works for organizations. In English, we talk about “getting one’s house in order.” This means to be in a well-prepared condition and functioning smoothly. Applying this metaphor to exorcism in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, the house is in need of cleaning and being put in order, though the basics are certainly already there.

The clutter begins with the fact that there is a dearth of written sources of any length or depth on the subject in the Synod’s coffers. In a word, resources.

This is little wonder, because the Synod has never officially addressed the question one way or the other. On the Synod’s official website, there is a section dedicated to Frequently Asked Questions (“FAQs”). The question and brief answer are as follows:

Q. Does the LCMS hold an official position as to the existence of demonic possession? Does the LCMS retain the Rite of Exorcism as practiced in the Roman and Eastern Orthodox churches? Does the LCMS have special clergy assigned to this task?

A. The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod certainly believes in the existence of Satan and of demonic beings, and individual LCMS pastors have participated from time to time in rites of exorcism. The LCMS has no "official position" on "demonic possession," however, nor does it subscribe officially to any formal rite of exorcism or have "special clergy assigned to this task."¹

This section of our “house” is not only out of order, it hasn’t even been occupied yet!

A general lack of education of both clergy and laity would also be another sign that the house needs to be made ready. Many believers both inside and outside the LC-MS are largely unaware of how much subtle demonic influence has come in “under the radar.” They may not know, for instance, that psychic John Edward has a genuinely supernatural source of information, but that source is not of God. They may not realize that “ghost” sightings are actually demons and that the Scriptures say clearly that dead people do *not* come back to the realm of the living. Consequently, they are unprepared to give a biblical truth and comfort when a loved one says they already receive that comfort from the apparition of a dead husband or parent. In short, we have not systematically trained our people to defend themselves.

¹www.lcms.org

It is hoped that, at the conclusion of this work, there may be a clearer idea of a house truly “swept clean and put in order.” Once that idea is firmly in mind, then perhaps the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod can begin, with God’s help, to do some housecleaning.

Catholicism’s Shortcomings

The Roman Catholic Church has usually been considered the “guardian of the flame” of genuine exorcism. While sometimes they are too slow to perform an exorcism in a genuine case of possession, it is also true that at least they do have a way of dealing with the problem, putting them a step ahead of most Protestant denominations. Unfortunately, the Catholic Church’s manual for exorcism, called the *Rituale Romanum* (“Roman Ritual”), has a number of problems which render it largely unsuitable for use. A misunderstanding of the role of the exorcist in the process is also a weakness in how the Roman church deals with possession. Few Roman Catholic priests come out of an exorcism psychologically or spiritually unscathed. There is an understanding amongst Catholic theologians that when an exorcist engages in battle with a demon, even if he is successful, a little part of him is lost or dies. Father Michael Strong’s painful experience was cited by Martin as an example. He notes, however, that to a lesser extent some harm comes to every exorcist:

The exorcist is the centerpiece of every exorcism. On him depends everything. He has nothing personal to gain. But in each exorcism he risks literally everything that he values. Michael Strong’s was an extreme example of the fate awaiting the exorcist. But every exorcist must engage in a one-to-one confrontation, personal and bitter, with Pure Evil. Once engaged, the exorcism cannot be called off. There will and must always be a victor and a vanquished. And no matter what the outcome, the contact is in part fatal for the exorcist. He must consent to a dreadful and irreparable pillage of his deepest self. Something dies in him. Some part of his humanness will wither from such close contact with the opposite of all humanness--the essence of evil; and it is rarely if ever revitalized. No return will be made to him for his loss. This is the minimum price an exorcist pays. If he loses in the fight with the Evil Spirit, he has an added penalty. He may or may not ever again perform the rite of Exorcism, but he must finally confront and vanquish the evil spirit that repulsed

him.²

While it is true that there are risks to the exorcist should he make a mistake, it is also true that this need not necessarily happen. There is no “trade-off” of one piece of an exorcist in exchange for a victim. It is admirable that most Catholic exorcists see this as sacrificial and are quite willing to do it anyway to help another human being, but it is not necessary. The exorcist can only lose if he gets in between Jesus Christ and the demon.

Fundamentally, all exorcisms are between Jesus and the demon. The exorcist and the victim are incidental to the great Struggle of the Ages and the individual battle at hand. If an exorcist ever comes to think that he can defeat the demon, and Jesus is just sitting on the sidelines in case of emergency, he will discover to his detriment how incidental he really is. In Catholic exorcisms, this “death” of a part of the exorcist is a frightening and unnecessary component.

But the biggest problem with Roman Catholic exorcisms is the *Roman Ritual* itself. This point may reflect an expected Protestant viewpoint on the part of this writing, but the *Roman Ritual* is replete with references and prayers to the Virgin Mary and Michael the Archangel. While Michael’s assistance in any given situation would be most welcome to any sensible Christian, it is nonetheless to his Boss that any prayers are properly directed. This of course applies to saints, too, including the Blessed Mother. Mary was a godly and admirable woman, often sold short by Protestants in their efforts to distance themselves from Rome; however, neither she nor anything else in Creation is a proper target for prayer. It is to the Lord Himself that we must go. However Blessed she may have been, she is waiting for the Resurrection of the Dead just like we are. Roman Catholic people, surely devout and sincere, go to Mary and ask her for assistance. In the Rite of Exorcism, she is petitioned for her help. But the real Mary, the Mary of Scripture, gave the best advice ever given in reference to her Son: *Do whatever he tells you.* (John 2:5b)

In addition, there is much extraneous repetition in the *Roman Ritual*. For example, it is not necessary to pile up Satan's names and titles when addressing him, as the *Ritual* does. While it is necessary to fully address the one to whom the exorcist is directing his commands, excessive use of Satan’s titles can sound less like a rebuke and more like a resumé!

Hear, therefore, and fear, Satan! Enemy of the Faith! Enemy of the human race! Source of death! Robber of life! Twister of justice! Root of evil! Warp of vices! Seducer of men! Traitor of nations! Inciter of jealousy! Originator of greed! Cause of

²Martin, Malachi. Hostage to the Devil: The Exorcism and Possession of Five Contemporary Americans. San Francisco: Harper, 1992, p. 10

discord! Creator of agony!³

There is no doubt during an exorcism, in Heaven or on Earth, whom the exorcist is addressing. Much beyond “Satan, you Evil One” is mere theatrics at worst and a waste of time at best. The longer any conversation or interaction takes, the greater the risk to the exorcist and the longer the victim’s affliction. However when the Lord is being praised, as the exorcist is moved to do so, using the many names and titles of the Lord is not improper, though it too can be taken to an unnecessary extreme.

The *Roman Ritual* is also very lengthy. One English translation has 6,737 words!⁴ While an exorcism may take a long time over many sessions, the liturgy itself should not be excessively long.

Protestantism’s Shortcomings

Protestantism does not fare much better by comparison. While a consensus amongst Protestants might be too much to hope for, there are some commonalities in the areas in which Protestant understanding and practice of exorcisms falls short of the mark.

Within Christianity in general and Protestantism in particular, there seem to be two extremes. These were eloquently set forth by C.S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters*, a fiction work that is nonetheless quite helpful for the Christian life. Lewis noted the dichotomous nature of Christian attitudes toward demonology when he wrote in the preface:

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.

Despite the fact that the Roman Catholic Church has maintained a systematic procedure for exorcisms, it nevertheless falls into the first category along with the LC-MS, most of Lutheranism, the mainline denominations, and some Anabaptists. Much of the rest of Protestantism, especially non-denominational groups with little doctrinal accountability, falls into the second category. And while there is a profusion of literature from independent or non-denominational Protestant sources (usually without the imprimatur of their denomination) much of it has shortcomings which make it well-nigh useless to the

³Ibid., p. 465

⁴ From the home page of the Eternal Word Television Network (Roman Catholic): <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PRAYER/ROMAN2.TXT>

seriously searching pastor or theologian.

One of the more common problems found in Protestant literature is that it often seeks to engage the demon rather than expel it. While the more thoughtful and careful writers correctly caution the would-be exorcist to keep interaction with the demon to a minimum, there is also a temptation to “milk it” for information. Some sources say to ask it when it will leave. Some will try to find out about “territorial spirits” in the area or if the demon has been interested in the family of the victim for generations.

Although there is some legitimate information that needs to be gleaned from the intruding spirit, the exorcism should not be treated as an opportunity to question a captured enemy soldier. The temptation for a Christian to sit across the table from a creature which has stood in the very presence of God and ask it what He is like, and what the demon itself is like, is almost irresistible. Nonetheless, that temptation must be fought. Satan is happy to give out information by the bushel, and sometimes it is even true; but if God has kept this knowledge for Himself, it is important for whatever reason that we not have it. In the Garden of Eden, part of what Satan told Eve was true: her eyes were opened, and she *did* come to know Good and Evil. Still, this was knowledge God did not want her to have, and it would have been better for her if she had never known the things Satan told her. Likewise, the reason God forbids Ouija boards, necromancy, astrology, and other forms of divination is not just because the knowledge gained from them might be wrong, but also because it might be right. And knowing certain things, even though those things might be correct and true, can destroy us.

Another difficulty with the extant literature is that there is nothing standardized. Other than the *Rituale Romanum*, there is no widely-known work on exorcism. Also, while theologies may share commonalities, there does not seem to be a consensus on any practical application of that theology.

Documentation of the case studies is also scant. With the major exception of former Jesuit priest Malachi Martin’s *Hostage to the Devil*, there are usually only enough details given in the case histories to make them more dramatic. They are recorded with an eye towards giving a compelling account of the incident. They are generally not written with future research in mind. Without compromising privileged information, more details in these case histories could be given. Ages, habits, biographical background . . . all of these would be of use, especially as the cases are analyzed as a group in the search for underlying patterns or commonalities.

Sensationalism is also a common problem in the presentations produced by modern Protestant writers on the demonic. While the subject is by its very nature sensational, it need not be *sensationalized*. This only makes the quest for credibility harder. When Robert Tilton goes on television and rebukes the “demons of poverty” and Roy Masters has people cough up demons into satanic “barf bags,”

it is little wonder that the collective eyebrows of both believers and non-believers are raised. Bob Larsen goes on the radio and berates people for being possessed before he has even heard them speak. In all this, there is a sense that there is as much sideshow going on as there is ministry. The situation is only made worse when the so-called “professionals” in the field are not themselves credible. They make it harder for non-sensationalistic Christians to maintain enough credibility to help people who genuinely need it.

Finally, there is outright charlatanism. A faith healer or demonologist who is crooked may tell a person that they are under demonic attack when what is really under attack is their wallet. While stereotypically this is the territory of palm readers and other occultists, it is not absent from the field of demonology.

Shortcomings of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

One of the biggest problems in the Lutheran understanding of this subject is the fact that there is no groundwork laid on conducting exorcisms. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has liturgies and guidelines for Baptism, Ordination, and the Lord’s Supper, but nothing for Exorcism. No idea is given to the needful pastor how to proceed, how long it might take, or even a way of telling if an exorcism is warranted. The 1949 Sieck-Doerffler event is a case in point. No reference works could be found. To be fair to these two men, they had been given not even the most rudimentary education in the subject when they were seminary students. There was no officially approved, theologically sound background material upon which they could rely. In the dogmatics text most frequently used at Concordia Seminary, Francis Pieper’s monumental three-volume, 1,689 page work *Christian Dogmatics*, Pieper sees fit to devote only 14 pages--0.82%--to the combined subjects of Angelology, Demonology, and Demonic Possession. In fact, to narrow it down even further, the latter two subjects must share the last three pages of Pieper’s elephantine effort. It is representative of the deafening silence of the reference works of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod on this subject that it comprises less than one percent of Pieper’s efforts. No mention of exorcism is really made in any meaningful way; certainly no discussion on how to do such a thing is there. Pieper gives no modern case histories at all! It is as though he feels that demonic possession is not of particular concern, at least amongst Lutherans.

The great Lutheran scholar Edward W. A. Koehler wrote his magnum opus *A Summary of Christian Doctrine* in 1939. For years it was a standard theological source of the dogmatics taught in Lutheran seminaries and colleges. Koehler devotes less than 3½ pages in his 328-page text to angels and demons. He says nothing of exorcism or possession at all, and apart from the following two sentences has nothing to say on demonic activities or tactics:

They are assiduously plotting to disturb and to destroy the Church, by scattering heresies, by hindering the work of pious

ministers, by turning the minds of the hearers from the meditation on God's Word, from prayer, and the practice of the divine truths, and by inciting persecutions. They tempt men to sin, keep them in ignorance and unbelief of the Word, and molest them in their bodies.⁵

Other reference works are not much more complete. C.F.W. Walther's Pastoral Theology is slightly more helpful, though more in the sense of general advice than anything specific. The Book of Concord has few references to demons and nothing about Satan or possession that is on point. Some of the writings of Martin Luther contain scant mentions of the subject of exorcism, though there is much about how to deal with Satan himself in one's life. There are a few theses available by students of Concordia Seminary on demons and related subjects. Apart from these instances, there isn't much in the symbols of the Lutheran Church---Missouri Synod for guidance.

This is not to say that the LC-MS is entirely without resources, however. One of the great untapped resources on the subject of demonology is former and current missionaries. Many will have some experience dealing with demons, as some have been posted to countries or cultures where demons are not only taken for granted but believed to be active in the lives of people. Some former missionaries have conducted exorcisms, and those this writer has interviewed have often expressed disappointment with the lack of guidance or source materials from the Synod. If input from these people could be harnessed it would be an invaluable resource for training others to deal with demonic situations.

Another problem faced by the LC-MS is the lack of anyone designated to perform such a function. The Catholic Church has several dioceses with official or unofficial exorcists. According to Church historian Philip Schaff, in the ancient Church there were seven "offices": presbyters, deacons, subdeacons, acolytes, exorcists, lectors, and ostiarii, or door-keepers. Of the exorcists he says:

The Exorcists likewise constituted one of the inferior orders of the clergy; but although we find exorcism very frequently referred to by the Fathers of the second century, there seems to have been no such office until the third century, the present being the earliest distinct reference to it. In the fourth century we find the office in all parts of the Church East and West. Their duty was to take charge of those supposed to be possessed of an evil spirit; to pray with them, care for them, and exorcize the

⁵Koehler, E.W.A. *A Summary of Christian Doctrine*. St. Louis: Concordia, 1939

demon when possible.⁶

It would not be untoward to have ordained and trained exorcists in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Any pastor could perform an exorcism when needed; but how much better might it be for the victim and the exorcist if the person was well-trained rather than simply put out in the field to figure everything out for themselves.

Embarrassment is another hurdle. Simply put, demons are embarrassing to the Church. No matter how credible, trusted, or godly a person is, the moment they say, "Last night I saw a demon in my bedroom," they are suspect. This is ironic, especially amongst the secular population; since if a person said "I saw the ghost of my uncle at the foot of my bed last night," they would be the object of more interest and attention than disbelief. (Doubly ironic, since demons appear as "ghosts" to lead people astray from what the Word of God says!) One of the reasons that the participation of Dr. Sieck in the 1949 case was not widely known or discussed is that the Seminary and Synod risked embarrassment and loss of credibility. Demons aren't "modern." Enlightened people, even enlightened Christians, don't go in for that sensationalistic Fundamentalist nonsense.

Yet with the explosion of interest in the occult and the proliferation of television programs such as the Psychic Friends Network, Crossing Over With John Edward, Miss Cleo and others, encounters with the supernatural-and therefore the demonic-has correspondingly risen. When one encounters a genuine psychic, a real ghost appearance, or an actual witch, one has already encountered a demon. A real one. Not every appearance of a demon will entail a full-blown exorcism with dramatic telekinesis or levitating victims; some people want to be possessed, and actively seek it. Like a remora riding on the belly of a shark hoping for scraps of meat from the shark's kills, these people are in active symbiosis with the demon (though most often they don't realize that more than one careless remora has itself become a meal for the shark.)

With all this "cultural occultism" invading our homes on every channel, it will be a rare pastor in the LC-MS who doesn't encounter a demonic challenge sometime in his ministry.

A survey was conducted by this writer between September 1 and December 1, 2001, of first-call pastors in the LC-MS. Each of them received their first assignments in the Spring of 2001 from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.⁷ They were asked to report anything they would term "demonic" or any

⁶Schaff, Philip. *History of the Christian Church*, Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997 (Electronic)

⁷For the purposes of this work.

situation in which there was believed to be “involvement” by a demon. Among all the graduates of the Class of 2001 at Concordia Seminary, there were three *reported* cases of possession. None of the cases was in fact a genuine bodily possession by evil spirits. Unfortunately, however, in one case an exorcism was performed anyway. This mis-diagnosis only accentuates the need for training of LC-MS clergy and missionaries in the diagnosis, exorcism, and pastoral care of the possessed.⁸

The Theology of Possession

Demons possessed and afflicted people in Old Testament times, they did it during the earthly ministry of our Lord, and they continue to do it now. People seek information from supernatural sources other than God, and this is one of the premier entry points for demonic possession. In addition, anything which lowers or impairs a victim’s ability to say “NO!” to satanic “wooing” can lead to possession. Alcoholism, drug addiction, or any form of chronic substance abuse can make a person easier to wear down and more susceptible to a demon wedging its way into their life.

Ultimately, even though we live in the 21st century, the need to be able to successfully engage the demons directly is just as intense now as it was when Jesus walked the Earth. Although the dramatic Gerasene-like scene is less common today than it was two thousand years ago, equally dramatic and oppressive afflictions still afflict the sons of Adam.

Demons still possess people. Although each individual case needs to be judged individually, the fact that there are so many incidents reported lowers the possibility that they are all non-genuine. Walter Martin observed that in dealing with the Occult there is roughly a 1:1:1 ratio. About one third of the cases reported are outright hoaxes. Another third are explainable by natural events or coincidence or misunderstood but fully “normal” causes. But there is a hard core of about one third of reported cases of supernatural phenomena that cannot be explained away and in which hoax is more or less ruled out.

Demonic possession is often a result, often a *sought-after* result, of occultic practices such as channeling, genuine psychics, Ouija boards, and other forms of interactive divination. The world of belief is rife with attempts to in some way ascertain future events, the most common of these being some form of divination. (In America, the daily newspaper horoscope might be the most

⁸Within three days of the conclusion of the study, two apparently genuine cases of *Affliction* (see the section entitled “Levels of Possession”) were reported within the group of participants. The reports came from two different participants in different states.

popular.) But divination is trying to obtain knowledge that God has reserved for Himself. Joseph told Pharaoh's officials: *Do not interpretations belong to God?*⁹ Case studies show again and again that occultism and substance abuse are two conduits through which possession may commonly take place. Sadly, in our society these two activities are not becoming rarer.

Demonic Affliction and “Supernatural” Healing

Short of possession, demons can also physically and emotionally afflict their victims. We know from the Book of Job and the Gospels that Satan and his demons can, under certain circumstances, cause illness. It is not beyond the pale of credibility to believe that when they stop actively causing the illness, it will go away. Thus a genuinely supernatural healing takes place, and someone other than God gets the credit. Since Satan caused the illness, he is able to manipulate the circumstances to make it look like he can cure it as well. For example, a demon may afflict an unbelieving man with severe back pain. Neither physical therapy nor drugs work, because they cannot touch the source of the pain. This unbeliever goes to an occultic “healer” or shaman, who tells him that he is being attacked by a demon unleashed upon him by a rival. For much money the shaman goes through machinations designed to remove the demon. The demon strategically obliges, making it look exactly like everything the shaman said was true. Now the man is a confirmed spiritist who will never feel the need to open the Bible when afflicted. He will simply go to the shaman for a “talismán” or for folk faith healing.

Malachi Martin’s book *Hostage to the Devil* details a number of physical ailments that were side-effects of the root cause of all symptoms--demonic possession. Blindness, deafness, coma . . . the Satanic repertoire of caused damage is limited only by the Satanic imagination and the grace of God. Apostates can seem to cure miraculously as well as saints; a *supernatural* healing is no proof of the involvement of God. Demons still cause illnesses. When they cease, the appearance may be one of supernatural healing.

But where do these sicknesses come from in the first place? There are only three possible causes of genuine physical and mental human sickness.

The first cause is simply our own frailty: we just aren’t very durable. The fallen human nature of our bodies and minds guarantees that they will break down and fail us. Our weak human bodies just do not perform up to the original pre-Fall factory specs. These human mental and physical weaknesses are simply inherent in our nature. Thus the only source which can deal with these serious illnesses is the God who created these bodies in the first place. True, Satan is capable of pulling off small moments of relief or repair that may look miraculous; however,

⁹Genesis 40:8

he is not God. Satan can cause statues to cry salt tears, but only God can part the whole Red Sea. Satan may be able to perform the spiritual equivalent of pulling out a splinter, but only God can raise the dead. Anything else should be relegated to the realm of “parlor tricks.” Similarly, though Satan may be able to “cure” minor irritations, there is no Scriptural evidence that he can control or cure any disease for which he is not responsible. In Exodus the Lord tells us: אֲנִי יְהוָה רֹפֵאֶךָ: (“*I am the Lord who heals you.*”)¹⁰ If Satan gives a person physical healing, one may be quite sure it is for the purpose of destroying that person’s eternal soul. No, if the cause of the disease is simply our weak human bodies, only God can heal that body.

The second possible cause for sickness is God Himself. As appalling as that prospect might be, the old axiom is true: sometimes the only way God can get a person to look up to Him is to lay them flat out on their backs in bed. He gave Hezekiah an illness, which at first was even supposed to be fatal!¹¹ What Hezekiah didn’t understand is that if God causes an illness in us, it is for our own benefit if we are Christians, and for the benefit of others if we’re not.¹²

*But what can I say? He has spoken to me, and he himself has done this. I will walk humbly all my years because of this anguish of my soul. Lord, by such things men live; and my spirit finds life in them too. You restored me to health and let me live. Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.*¹³

There is no Biblical record of Satan being able to undo the miraculous works of God. Thus if an illness is supernaturally caused and originates with God, it stands to reason that only God can cure it.

The third possibility is that the illness is caused supernaturally by Satan or one of his demons. As noted above, when Satan causes an affliction he can always, if he so chooses, stop “working on” that victim. It seems to follow that in at least some of the cases, the symptoms would disappear. Much of Jesus’ ministry was undoing the works of the Evil One, curing people who had been afflicted by

¹⁰Exodus 15:26

¹¹Isaiah 38

¹²The case of Elymas bar-Jesus, the sorcerer, on the island of Paphos is a prime example. God the Holy Spirit struck him blind as a testimony to others in Acts 13:6-12

¹³Isaiah 38:15-17

Satan and freeing them from his oppression. Therefore, when an illness is caused by Satan or a demon, either God or Satan can cure it.

In sum, illnesses that are caused by human frailty can be cured by God only; those caused by God can be cured by God only; and those caused by the demonic can be cured by either God or the Adversary. The point of all this is that just because an illness has been cured supernaturally does not mean that the healing came from God, because demons still afflict people to this day. And if Satan gives the cure, it is not to *help* the victim but to *hinder*.

With the advent of the New Age movement, the growth of cultural and religious occultism, and the increase in substance abuse and the pursuit of “altered states of consciousness,” the number of genuine cases of possession may well increase in the future--often with the willing participation of the victim!¹⁴ Thus the need for this material is increasing. The additional factor of the possession often being voluntary and actually sought after may add to the increase.

The Systematic Theology of Demonology and Possession

Demons and angels have exploded into the American culture. For both better and worse, the Christian and non-Christian public are showing more interest in these spirits, created by God. Starting with Billy Graham's book in the '70s, *Angels: God's Secret Agents*, Americans became interested. One can now hardly go into a bookstore without finding some new publication (rarely by a Christian!) on angelology or demonology. For the most part, this new interest is confined to angels and their ministries, since demons have certainly had the limelight for a long time. Like much of the rest of American Protestant culture, Missouri Synod Lutherans have sometimes had more exposure to Frank Perretti, Della Reese, and Billy Graham's teachings than those of writers like Pieper or Walther (or the Apostle Paul, for that matter.)

The Definition of “Possession”

Before continuing any further it is prudent to define the major term with which we will be dealing. “Demonic Possession” and its synonyms (obsessio

¹⁴Just because a person wants to be possessed is no excuse for not conducting an exorcism. The possessed Philippian slave girl in Acts 13 is a good example. She never expressed a desire to be freed; and those around her actively opposed it. Paul was still obligated to engage the demon. More will be said about this later

corporalis,¹⁵ indwelling, demonized, “having a demon,” etc.) refers to the physical, mental and spiritual control by a demon or demons of a human being while indwelling that human being. Control of the victim may be constant or it may be intermittent with periods of relief. The demon may come and go as it pleases in some cases, especially situations where genuine psychics are involved. But the body essentially becomes the “temple” wherein the demon dwells.

The Christian's body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit wherein He dwells, (hopefully) controlling the Christian and influencing his or her speech, activities, moods and feelings. Though He is sometimes “quenched”¹⁶ to varying degrees, He is always in the background, subtly working to bring the entire human being under His control and influence so that ideally, when perfected and mature, every word coming out of the person's mouth is reflective of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Every thought in their mind has been taken captive¹⁷ for Christ. There is so little of the original carnal, sinful human left that all anyone outside that person can see is Jesus Christ. The servant is a reflection of the Master.

Likewise in the possessed human being, the victim's body becomes a “temple” where the demon dwells. It often controls the victim and influences his or her speech, activities, moods & feelings, sometimes “repressed” to varying degrees but always in the background, subtly working to bring the entire human being under its control and influence ideally so that by the end, there is little left of the victim's original personality. Everything the outside world can see is either directly from or a reflection of the demon inside.

The person may have their eyes closed and their ears plugged; nevertheless it is usually the case that the demon can *perceive*, if not actually *see*, with the victim's sensory organs or without them. There are cases where a cross was brought up to the victim from behind while the victim had their eyes closed, and the demon protested its presence even though the human victim could not have known the object was there. Thus possession is defined as *the bodily indwelling of a human being by one or more demons*.

The Lutheran Understanding

Up to the present, a “Lutheran” understanding of demonology and angelology has been tenuous. As mentioned previously, there is a scant 14 pages

¹⁵“Bodily Possession,” as opposed to an attack from without, which is called *obsession*, “*obsessio spiritualis*”

¹⁶1 Thessalonians 5:19

¹⁷2 Corinthians 10:5

devoted to the subject in Pieper. C. F. W. Walther's Pastoral Theology has only a handful of references to the subject, and even they leave something to be desired. In some areas, traditional Lutheran demonology is quite solid. In one area (“*possessio corporalis*”), it is outright shaky. In still other areas, it is absent altogether.

One strength of current Lutheran theology is that it recognizes the absolute subjection of Satan and the demons to God. Some exorcism sources, including the *Rituale Romanum*, speak of a titanic struggle between the forces of Good and those of Evil, citing as evidence the fact that even successful exorcisms can take a long time. There is a subtle sense of dualism. Satan is seen not as the chief adversary of the human race so much as the chief adversary of God.¹⁸ They state outright that God is stronger than Satan, yet upon reading they give the sense that he gives God a run for His money. Lutheran theology, however, is very clear on this point:

The evil angels are stronger than men; the devil holds all unbelievers securely captive in his kingdom, while the believer can withstand the attacks of Satan only in the power of God. However, the power of the angels is not unlimited, but is rather at all times subordinate to the power of the Exorcists likewise constituted one of the inferior orders of demon when possible.¹⁹

Unfortunately, there are aspects of “official” Lutheran demonological dogmatics in need of re-examination. One of the most important ones is the belief that Christians can be possessed by demons. Conventional wisdom has held that demonic forces use roughly two forms of attack: **Obsession** and **Possession**. While this thesis will expand and define these categories later,²⁰ for now suffice it to say that it has been generally recognized that demons can attack either from without (obsession) or from within (possession.) Obsession is usually defined as anything a demon can do to a human being short of actually taking over and inhabiting the body. The assault the Apostle Paul endured to keep him humble,²¹ the woman

¹⁸Martin, M. 413

¹⁹Pieper, I:501-502

²⁰Of the herein re-defined categories of Affliction, Familiarization, Habitation, Obsession, and Complete Possession, only two of them are applicable to believers.

²¹2 Corinthians 12:7. Though much debated as to the *meaning* of the text, the actual *wording* of the text is “ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ, ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ,” meaning literally “An angel of Satan to pummel me.” The word κολαφίζῃ is the

crippled by a demon,²² beatings, annoyances, poltergeist phenomena, etc. are real examples of attack from without. Christians are certainly susceptible to this, as witnessed by Paul's "thorn in the flesh." Virtually all the sources are agreed on this point. However, there is a difference of opinion as to whether or not Christians can be bodily indwelt by a demon.

Those who say that Christians can be indwelt by demons include Pieper, Walther, and others, citing as the rationale that God may do it in order to discipline a recalcitrant Christian. In other words, God may allow a Christian to be bodily possessed as discipline, to teach them to stop doing whatever it is they were doing. Walther, quoting J.W. Baier, writes:

Satan's works also include physical possession, by virtue of which Satan dwells essentially in the bodies not only of godless persons but sometimes even of devout persons, and works in them by divine permission. Namely when God either directly or indirectly permits people to be subjected to Satan. For although the purpose of this possession from Satan's side is harm and corruption . . . yet from God's side, Who permits it and is thereby either visiting severe sins (despising God's Word, carnal security, blasphemies, conspiracy with the Devil) with His serious judgment or is rebuking and testing devout persons through physical chastening.²³

However, Walther gives absolutely no Scriptural support for his position or Baier's. Pieper notes after his discussion on obsession, which he calls "spiritual possession" or "obsessio spiritualis" that bodily possession (obsessio corporalis) presents an entirely different case. Also children of God may suffer this affliction; by it the Devil, under God's sufferance, takes possession of a man by personally dwelling in him, so that the demoniac, bereft of the use of his reason and will,

^{3rd} person singular present active subjunctive form of *κολλάφίζω*, meaning to strike or punch with a closed fist. With Luther, then, one "cannot get past the plain meaning of the text." This "angel of Satan" and the "beating" Paul received should not be allegorized into some form of "eye trouble" or opposition within the Church, as is often done. This is an instance where a literal understanding of the text is not only viable but indeed clearly the best choice. The "angel of Satan" and the "beating" should both be understood literally.

²²Luke 13:11

²³Walther, C.F.W. *Pastoral Theology*. New Haven, MO: Lutheran News, 1995 Edition

becomes the involuntary instrument of Satan. The human personality no longer functions; the Devil in person becomes the acting subject. The demoniac is no longer responsible for his actions.

Pieper cites only two Scriptures in support of this point, both to be found in the account of the Gerasene Demoniac. Mark 5:6, 18, 19 and Luke 8:28, 38, 39 are the parallel passages he cites as evidence for the possession of Christians. So that the reader may judge their relevance to the point, they are reproduced in their entirety below:

Mark: *When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him . . . As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."*

Luke: *When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" . . . The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.*

As can be seen from an examination of these passages, they have nothing whatsoever to do with whether or not a Child of God can be possessed. Simply running up and kneeling in front of Jesus does not make you a child of God; indeed, even Satan will have to bend his knee to the Lord at the consummation of time²⁴ but he will never be called "Child of God!" The Gerasene Demoniac was manifestly not a child of God before the exorcism. Afterwards, the fact that he had become a child of God, which might be inferred from the text, and that he wanted to go with Jesus afterwards bespeaks nothing in regards to his salvation in his former state.

In fact, there is Scriptural support for the opposite position. Once a person is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, that person becomes the Temple of the Holy Spirit. God would no more permit joint tenancy with demons in this Temple than He would the one which stood in Jerusalem.

What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."²⁵

The Greek word *συμφώνησις* (translated "harmony" in the NIV) means

²⁴Philippians 2:10-11

²⁵2 Corinthians 6:16

“concord” or “agreement.” The word translated “agreement” is συγκατάθεσις, meaning a “putting together or joint deposit (of votes).” The idea of joint occupancy in a location seems to be inherent in συγκατάθεσις. Thus the idea of a sort of “joint tenancy” between the Holy Spirit and a demon is ruled out by this passage. In practical terms, even if the Holy Spirit were to allow some sort of satanic “roommate” for His own purposes, would it not make sense that the *demon* would decline such a domestic arrangement?

Dr. Norman Nagel of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis eloquently and succinctly puts forth this argument for mutual exclusivity of indwelling:

Where Jesus is Lord there can be no others. Where His spirit dwells, there is room for no other spirits, and certainly not the spirit who tempts us to imagine that we belong to ourselves (1 Cor. 6:19; Col. 1:13).²⁶

What, then, of the argument by the other position of the possibility that God would allow such a thing to happen to discipline one of His intransigent children? The cases of Saul and Job are often cited as evidence of this. However, in the case of Job, two things need to be kept in mind. First, Job was not actually *possessed* by Satan. He was, in the modern terminology, “obsessed,” meaning that he was attacked from without. Second, what happened to Job was not to teach *Job* anything, but to teach Satan and us. *In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.*²⁷ As for Saul, though he was afflicted mightily by a demon, there was never a time when both this demon and the Holy Spirit were with Saul simultaneously. In fact, the text expressly says just the opposite: *Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.*²⁸

God does not deal with His children the same way He deals with those who are not saved. A case in point was described by Dr. Walter Martin. A minister of his acquaintance came from a family of spiritists. For years he had tried to share the Gospel with his sister and convince her that her Ouija board was an instrument of satanic contact, but to no avail. One night, he told his wife, “I’m going to go convince her once and for all that this thing is devilish.” They went to see her, and in an attempt to show his sister the true nature of the board he and his wife joined her at it. A frightening give-and-take with the spirit of the board ensued. It

²⁶ Lutheran Worship: History and Practice, St. Louis: Concordia, 1993. Fred L. Precht, Ed. Page 271.

²⁷ Job 2:10

²⁸ 1 Samuel 16:14

indicated that it had seen the Resurrection of the Lord and experienced great fear. The minister asked the spirit its opinion of him, and it spelled out “H-A-T-E.” It spelled out an obscenity when he asked its opinion of the Bible. Finally, he stood up, said, “I’ll have no more of this thing!” and thumped his Bible down in the middle of the board, at which it levitated and flipped the Bible across the room. As the three of them were standing there staring at the Bible, the minister was suddenly struck hard in the chest and thrown backward. The breath was knocked out of him, and all he could say was “Jesus . . . Jesus . . . Jesus . . . HELP!” His sister thought he was shamming, but he was so convincing that after a short while she went to attend to him as his wife had done immediately. When they lifted up his shirt, a round red welt was clearly visible where he had been struck. After he related this story, he asked, “What do you think it was that hit me, Dr. Martin?” Martin answered in his forthright style, “The seven sons of Sceva²⁹ probably had the same question; you played with fire and you got burnt!” His point was, as Paul said, we should not engage in sinful activity even if our intentions are good. “Why not say - as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say - ‘Let us do evil that good may result’? Their condemnation is deserved.”³⁰ In this classic example of the road to Hell being paved with good intentions, the minister had engaged in an activity-divination-forbidden in Scripture. His intentions were good, but God allowed him to be struck to teach him that there are ways of showing sin to a sinner other than sinning. If it were true that God allows His children to become possessed for “flirting” with Satan, there would be no better time to do it than with this minister; instead, God allowed a demon to get at him, but only just so much. God indwells the believer; Satan can knock, but he can’t come in!

It is sad that, with such a strength of doctrine to offer, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has allowed the rest of Christendom to take the lead in the demonological discussion. With the careful exegesis of Scripture for which we have become known, we could have made a great contribution in a field which cries out for a balanced, Biblical perspective that takes demons and their activity seriously without giving in to sensationalism.

As of this writing, there is no class on demonology, not even so much as a seminar, offered to students at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. There are a few teen-oriented study materials available from Concordia Publishing House. This is a blessing, since teenagers are often on the “front lines” of spiritual warfare. They are much more likely to run into open Satanism and demon worship than their

²⁹ Acts 19:14-17

³⁰ Romans 3:8

parents on a day-to-day basis. But regarding resources for adults, there is precious little available which does not require doctrinal filtering.

There is also currently no form of exorcism or rite of deliverance sanctioned or distributed by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Unfortunately, pastors and missionaries--who are in the most immediate need of such a liturgy--are "cut loose" to figure such things out for themselves. No guidelines or structure is available from by Lutherans for Lutherans.

And in a Synod whose quality writings are prolific on such doctrines as the Lord's Supper and Baptism, there is no single recognized "go-to" book or corpus on the subject, though there are a few good resources to be found. The total amount is small, and there is no authoritative text on exorcism to parallel Kolb's *Book of Concord*, Voelz' hermeneutics text or Walther's work on pastoral care.

The Origin of Angels and Demons

Both angels and demons have a common beginning. Created beings, they are innumerable. The time of their creation is a matter of some debate, there being two schools of thought on the subject. One position is that they were created like everything else on the six days of Creation. Those holding this position (including Pieper) do so on the belief that since they are in the created order they must have been made on one of the days before they all shouted for joy at the creation of the Earth.³¹ The other position maintains that they were created sometime before the Earth was; before the six days of Genesis I. Those holding that position note that nowhere is the creation of angels mentioned in the Genesis account. Those supporting this position say that the Genesis account depicts the creation of the physical world, not the dimension inhabited by angels or demons. The Heaven that is the Throne of God existed before any of the physical world was created.

Both sides believe strongly that their position is supported by the Genesis account. However, those who hold that angels were created during the Genesis account are hard-pressed to say exactly when such a momentous event might have taken place, and their argument is based on assumption that it just *had* to be during the six days of Creation. Their opponents are in just as difficult a position, their point of view being largely based on an argument from silence. They reason that since angels are not mentioned in the Genesis account their creation could not have been during that time period. Such an argument is logically fallacious.

Either position might be right, but neither can be unequivocally proven from the Genesis text. Until Jesus returns, we shall have to make do with not knowing for sure.

³¹Job 38:7

The Appearance of Angels and Demons

It should be noted that the accounts of a human actually seeing a demon or an angel undisguised are very rare. The ones that *do* exist are suspect, and should be treated as such. However, the subject is worth some passing attention, at least so that such claims may be given fair analysis.

As for their appearance, before the fall of Satan there was beauty amongst the angels; after the fall, however, there is some debate. Anecdotal accounts and case studies often describe demons as ugly. However, there is nothing in Scripture to confirm that their physical appearance conforms with their spiritual standing before God. We do know that Satan can appear as an "angel of light,"³² but if that is how he *can* appear, what does he look like when he is *not* trying to deceive by appearance? The demons in Revelation are truly hideous, but they vary in description. The only thing the Revelation descriptions have in common is unpleasantness. Do all other demons share that characteristic? Again, this is a point on which we may have to wait until we can ask the question personally of Him who created them in the first place. It seems at least possible that they can choose a form that is most appropriate to the purpose they are trying to accomplish. If they are trying to deceive, they may appear as beautiful angels. If they are trying to frighten and intimidate, or "play up" to a person's stereotypes and expectations, they may choose to look fearsome.

The Capabilities of Angels and Demons

Angels and demons have different abilities. Scripture tells us in the epistle of Jude that Michael the Archangel was careful not to slander Satan for fear of retribution, giving the impression that Michael felt he was less powerful than Satan. *But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the Devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation* (οὐκ ἐτόλμησεν κρίσιν ἐπενεγκεῖν βλασφημίας) *against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"*³³

The word ἐτόλμησεν is from the verb τόλμαω meaning: "(as being bold enough to defy danger) dare to, be brave to, have the courage to, presume to." Michael didn't dare to insult Satan.

Jesus also says in Mark that a particular demon was not able to hear or speak:

When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him

³²2 Corinthians 11:14

³³Jude 9

again.”³⁴

(The oddity of a demon responding to Jesus' words even though it was deaf is not so strange as it may seem at first glance. He who opened the ears of the deaf *will* be heard. When Jesus Christ speaks their name, even the deaf hear His call.) This is the event in which Jesus says of the demon, *This kind can come out only by prayer*.³⁵ Scripture speaks of both Cherubim and Seraphim, two orders of angels. There are the demons which look like frogs in Revelation. There may be many more kinds of angels and demons than we are told of in the Scriptures, and these types may by their nature reflect different abilities. Satan was a Cherub;³⁶ but of the types of the other angels in the Bible aside from Seraphs and Cherubs, we are not told. There is certainly a heavenly “ranking” and division of labor with angels; it may be presumed that since they shared the same nature, the same might be said for demons as well. Michael is called the “Archangel,” meaning the “Ruler of” angels or “Chief Angel.” If that is true, then even if his nature is the same as his companions, he outranks them.

Case history bears out the idea of different demons having different abilities. Malachi Martin’s description of the demon calling himself “Uncle Ponto” is a case in point.³⁷ This demon, of an apparently lesser type Martin calls a “familiar,” displayed an almost mentally retarded intellect at times. Martin notes that the degree of intelligence and knowledge that generally seems to characterize ‘familiars’ is very low, sometimes approaching the level of half witted children. ‘Familiars’ seem to have only a small quantum of factual knowledge and very little power of foresight or anticipation. They appear to be bound by cast-iron rules and to be in strict dependence on a ‘higher’ intelligence about which they talk frequently and to which Ponto [the demon in this case], for example, had to have recourse at every crisis.

Every other creature created by God is an individual, distinguishable in one way or another from its fellows; it is not a stretch to reason that God may have done the same thing with angels.

Division of Labor Among Spirits

With angels and demons having differing abilities, it is conceivable that

³⁴Mark 9:25

³⁵Mark 9:29

³⁶Ezekiel 28:14, 16

³⁷Martin, M. *Hostage to the Devil*, p. 30

they have different duties. The case accounts seem to support this idea. Some demons, when prompted for their names, reply with names that sound more like assignments: “Demon of Lust,” “Demon of Anger,” “Demon of Gluttony,” etc. Though Scripture does not claim that every sin has a demon or demons attached to it, nevertheless the idea of a demon attempting to bring a certain particular sin into the victim's life is a common thread in many of the anecdotal accounts.

The idea of demons and angels having particular duties is in fact found in Scripture. In the book of the prophet Daniel, the angel Gabriel describes the angel Michael as *the great Prince who protects your people*.³⁸ The Apostle Paul³⁹ echoes Moses⁴⁰ in saying that when pagans sacrifice to idols, they are actually sacrificing to demons. These demons “stand in” and may even take on the role of these gods to keep the attention of the worshippers.⁴¹ Though there is no Scriptural evidence for this belief, the idea of a “guardian angel” or even a “guardian demon” (C.S. Lewis’ character “Wormwood” in *The Screwtape Letters*) has been present in the lore of demons and angels for a long time. Though the idea of a guardian angel may give comfort to those who choose to believe it, and that of a guardian demon may provide an explanation for some of life’s troubles, there is no Scriptural evidence one way or another for either concept. There is an inherent danger, though, in being too wrapped up in paying attention to the workings of a guardian spirit in one’s life. The angel can come to take the place of God in one’s prayers, as has happened in the *Rituale Romanum*. Prayers which should be directed toward the God of Heaven are directed to one of His creatures. But since we may now approach the throne of Grace thanks to the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the

³⁸Daniel 12:1

³⁹1 Corinthians 10:20

⁴⁰Deuteronomy 32:17

⁴¹It has been claimed by pagans and neo-pagans that the so-called “miracles” and supernatural events associated with their gods, such as at the turn of the last century when statues of the Hindu god Ganesh actually drank milk in incidents all over the world, are proof that their gods are real. Videotapes and films from all over the world of Ganesh statues seeming to drink milk were numerous. Real these “gods” truly are, but they are not what they claim to be. Demons pretending to be gods could account for the genuinely supernatural nature of some of these events.

Cross,⁴² having an angel as an intermediary--even one as powerful as Michael--is unnecessary.

Theology of Angels

As they relate to the subject of demonology, angels are the “control group.” They are what demons were, and what they could have been. Demons started out as holy angels, following Lucifer in his rebellion against the authority of God. However, what most concerns this study is how different their activities are (differences in nature aren’t quite as important.)

The Bible tells us much about what individual angels do. The word “angel” and its various forms occur 283 times in the King James version and 289 in the New International Version of the Bible. Almost always it refers to the holy angels which served God before the fall of Satan and continue to serve Him, rejecting the leadership of Lucifer. The major exceptions to this are 2 Corinthians 12:7 where Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” is called in the Greek “an angel of Satan” (ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ), and Revelation 12:9, which says that Satan “and his angels” were thrown out of Heaven down onto the Earth. In context these are clearly references to demons.

We know from the book of Daniel that at least one of the jobs of Michael the Archangel is to protect the people of Israel. There is nothing in Scripture to indicate that this job has ended. Gabriel carried announcements from God to Daniel and to Mary. However, whatever the many activities they carry out at the command of God, Scripture does give us the one overarching activity for which they were created:

*Aren't they all ministering servants, being sent out as a service for the sake of those who are going to inherit salvation?*⁴³

The basic purpose of angels, the overarching goal under which all their activities fit and to which they are all ultimately geared, is to serve Christians.

This is an overwhelming proposition! God created an entire race of sentient beings--myriads of different types of creatures of greater beauty, strength, and intelligence than we humans--whose job is just to look out for and to serve us humans. This is mind-boggling. Note, though, that this service is connected explicitly by the Hebrews text to religious subjects by use of the Greek word λειτουργικός (“leiturgikos” from whence the word “liturgy” comes). It is often translated “ministering,” and it is specifically related to the performance of

⁴²Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 4:16

⁴³Hebrews 1:14, author’s translation

religious assistance. Strong⁴⁴ and Thayer⁴⁵ both define it as “relating to the performance of service, employed in ministering.” Thus angels are not created to sweep our floors and wash our cars; they are specifically created for the purpose of assisting us, usually in religious matters. In the pursuit of these duties, however, we may encounter them and even mistake them for human travelers:

*Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.*⁴⁶

Much questionable theology has been made out of a simple exegesis of this verse, but from the text itself all we can say is that some first century Christians took in strangers (just like Abraham on the Plains of Mamre and Lot in Sodom) and mistook them for humans when they were really angels. We cannot tell from this text whether or not things like this still happen today. We don’t know if the angels were there specifically to minister to their hosts, or merely on their way to doing some other task. Logic dictates we take no more from a passage than it legitimately has to offer. Thus we cannot know for sure if the same thing is practiced by angels today, much less if demons do it too, or anything else about the nature of angelic activity. It is not too far afield to think that one of the reasons the author of Hebrews put this in the present tense is because it was still relevant to his time and might still be true for us. All we can say dogmatically from this passage is that angels *may* still visit Christians from time to time, and in doing so they *may* appear as humans rather than heavenly creatures.

This, however, does bring up an important question: from their actions, can one easily tell whether a spirit is from God or from the “other team?” The clear and unequivocal answer is a good solid: “Sometimes!” One of the main doctrines of the demons is to distract humans from the truth of the Word of God. One of their favorite ways of doing this is to pretend to be a dead human being who has returned from the grave with a vital message, or to “re-live” a traumatic moment in their life as some ghosts are said to do in hauntings. But this is impossible. The Bible clearly states that, once you cross that threshold of death, there's no turning back. No “return visits” are allowed. There are only a couple of Biblical exceptions to this rule: Samuel speaking to Saul in the shocked presence of the Medium at

⁴⁴Entry #3010 in the Hebrew, Greek, and Chaldee Lexicon.

⁴⁵Thayer, Joseph Henry. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Regency, n.d. p. 376

⁴⁶Hebrews 13:2

Endor,⁴⁷ and Moses talking to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.⁴⁸

Holy angels, however, do not play these “Who-am-I-really?” identity games. They do not play “dress-up” and pretend to be some Civil War soldier walking around an old fort late at night waiting for some tourist or paranormal investigator to snap a fuzzy photo. They do not contact either curious teenagers or dedicated spiritists via the Ouija board and pretend to be the ghost of a little boy who died in the house decades ago. Angels, since they represent God, do not lie. They will either remain silent as to their true nature or they will tell the truth. The appearance of a so-called “angel” must be tested by the Scripture just like anything else. Does it confess Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh? Does it admit the Triune God? Does it proclaim Satan's ultimate defeat and humiliation by the Lord of the Universe? Does it say that there is but one way to God, specifically, through the Lord Jesus Christ? If the answer to any of these questions is “no,” or if the thing tries to re-define biblical terms or if there’s a lengthy explanation or hesitation on the part of the spirit in question, it is a false spirit and not to be trusted.

There is no Scriptural or case evidence to date of holy angels ever attempting to possess a human being. The reason for this is fairly straightforward. When evil angels attempt to do this, they are trying to thwart any contact between God and the human. Holy angels work on God's behalf to bring about this contact. Thus a demon will possess with the intent to keep the victim as far away from God

⁴⁷1 Samuel 28:12, possibly. Some, including Martin Luther, taught that this was not in fact Samuel but rather was a demon impersonating Saul, much as Christian theologians believe they do with psychics and mediums of modern times. Others (Walter Martin, John Montgomery, et al) hold that God Himself intervened in this seance and permitted the *real* Samuel to appear. This position maintains that the Hebrew text implies the person really *was* Samuel and that the “Witch of Endor” got the shock of her life when she realized that it was not the “familiar spirit” she was used to conjuring for people to imitate the dead. The Hebrew text itself says that it really was the dead prophet Samuel, not just some demon or familiar spirit: “And when the woman saw *Samuel*, she screamed . . .” (אַחַ־שְׁמוּאֵל וַתִּזְעַק, verse 12.) It also says that Samuel himself spoke to Saul: “Then *Samuel* said to Saul . . .” (וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל־שָׂאֻל, verse 15.) It also seems unlikely that a demon would prophesy the Word of the Lord to Saul. However uncomfortable it may be to accept, the text in fact says several times that it was actually Samuel in this strange encounter.

⁴⁸Luke 9:30. Note, though, that Elijah should not really be considered to have come back from the dead since the OT text says he was taken bodily to Heaven (2 Kings 2:11.)

as possible. The angel, however, has as his goal the possession of the person by the Holy Spirit. There is no reason for an angel to take over the mind and body of a human being in a case of “angelic possession” to get them to do what God wants. God is God—He can get people to do anything He wants! He needs no angel to force a human to do anything, and He will not indwell a human who resists Him. Though a human cannot of their own power say “yes” to God and choose Him unless He first gives them the power,⁴⁹ they certainly have the power to tell Him “no.”

So any spirit requesting entrance into the life (or heart or mind or whatever term they use) of the person is certainly not an angel of God. This is not to say that the New Age and some neo-pagan groups do not advocate the taking over of a human medium by their “guardian angel,” and claim that it happens for them regularly; it is just that this “guardian angel” is not what it claims to be. It’s lying. It’s not an angel but a demon.

Theology of Demons

As for the fallen angels, some care needs to be taken in discerning what they can and can’t do. Scripture is the best source of information, of course. Carefully investigated case histories may also be useful. However, it is difficult to tell whether demons might act differently than angels because their natures are different or because they have different goals. For example: demons possess people, but there’s no real evidence that the holy angels do. Is this because angels, by virtue of their abilities and natures, *cannot* possess humans? Or is it because they just *do not* possess, because they simply don’t work that way? The answer to this will have to wait until more information is received from God. Scripture doesn’t tell us, and the case histories are silent on the matter. In the long run, it probably doesn't matter if they can. As far as pastoral care goes, all that matters is knowing if they do. The same is true with demons. Trying to figure out more than Scripture and the case histories tell us is unimportant as long as we have enough knowledge to deal with them.

First of all, demons can teach. Paul cautions us thus: *The Spirit flatly states that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow misleading spirits and doctrines of demons.*⁵⁰

If a spirit can have doctrines (teachings), then it must be able to teach. The late Walter Martin of Christian Research Institute put out an audiocassette lecture called “The Doctrines of Demons,” in which he lists several demonic teachings of

⁴⁹John 6:44

⁵⁰1 Timothy 4:1, author’s translation.

the modern age.⁵¹ It is well worth having for the average Christian. Much of the teaching of demons is geared to deceiving us away from the perfect teachings of God. “Deception” is the key word.

Another demonic activity is the causing—and subsequent healing—of diseases. Strange as it may sound, the healing of diseases is one of the keys to demonic deception. If they cure an illness, the person receiving or witnessing the cure is receptive to whatever the demon may suggest to them afterward. The fact that the demon may have actually *caused* the disease only to cure it to gain credibility is never considered. For example, a person receives a visit from a medium and the person is cured of a painful illness due to the actions of that medium. The medium now has great influence with the healed person. “He was right about my healing; maybe I should trust him on . . .” Thus by setting up the disease and then curing it, the demon may gain control over the victim and his or her family. An example of this would be the miraculous and genuine cures offered by the late Edgar Cayce, known as the “Sleeping Prophet.” In a trance, Cayce recommended to those seeking cures some rather odd combinations and concoctions which ultimately proved efficacious, genuinely curing the victim. Thereafter, these victims often became adherents of Cayce's teachings on, among other things, reincarnation. This same demonic strategy is just as effective today as it has been for the last two thousand years. Another tragic historical example is Rasputin, the so-called “Mad Monk,” who had such influence over the Tsar of Russia and his family that he was considered a threat to the nation. He gained credibility by appearing to miraculously cure the prince of a deadly illness and by revealing knowledge that he could not possibly have come by naturally.

Though demons cannot perform genuinely miraculous deeds such as the resurrection of the dead or the parting of the Red Sea, they can do minor feats which appear supernatural to humans. These so-called “parlor tricks” include the telekinesis and teleportation of small objects, levitation, and other poltergeist-type phenomena, events such as the opening and closing of doors, moving objects, hurling crockery, sounds, smells, etc. In other words, things which might be considered a cheap magician’s trick. While these things might be impressive when taken as proof of the supernatural, they should not be taken as convincing demonstrations of a “friendly” spirit’s benevolence, truthfulness, or power. These occurrences, only if conclusively shown to be genuine, might be evidence or proof of the supernatural; but that’s *all* they are. Not impressive at all. As one victim of these “parlor tricks” put it, “So it can knock something off a bookcase—big deal! My siamese cat does that all the time.” These little manifestations are nothing

⁵¹Martin, Walter R. The Doctrines of Demons. Audiocassette. San Juan Capistrano, CA: Vision House, 1977

compared to the might and power and majesty of the living God. Compared to His miracles, they are mundane little mediocrities. It is the difference in power and majesty between the words spoken by Neil Armstrong as man first set foot upon the Moon (“That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for Mankind”) and Alexander Graham Bell’s words, the first ever spoken over a telephone (“Mr. Watson, come here; I want you”), after he spilled something on his pants.

Also included in this category are deceptive tricks with religious overtones such as weeping or bleeding statues, mysterious stains on walls or trees that look like Jesus, apparitions of the Virgin Mary, and other pseudo-religious events. In the presence of these parlor tricks, one must always ask, “What is its purpose? What does it accomplish?” In the instance of a weeping statue of the Madonna, for example, scientific tests may reveal that real human tears are flowing from the statue. Yes, it’s supernatural and amazing, but so what? If the effect is that people set up an altar at the foot of this plaster statue and prayers to the Virgin are offered, the demon has accomplished idolatry for a very small investment. It must be remembered at all times that the mere presence of the supernatural does not automatically signify the presence of God. On a smaller scale or with deception, Satan can do miracles too.

Demons can also give information. Many psychics have made their livings this way for thousands of years thanks to demons. Paul encountered one in Philippi: *Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.*⁵²

Demons feed their human “host” information which makes them look like they’re in communication with the dead. Often when a grieving person has been to a necromancer (one who claims to be able to speak with the dead) they are given information of a very personal and specific nature. A great example of this is John Edward, a very convincing psychic whose show *Crossing Over with John Edward* appears on the Sci-Fi Network. Edward gives incredibly precise information which is far and away superior to the blunt, generalized “fishing” answers many fake psychics use. This man, however, comes across as a very stable, average Joe with no freaky characteristics. He does not dress in sequins or have a funny accent (his hometown of Queens, NY notwithstanding.) He is very charming and sincere. *And almost always right*. Instead of a general question such as “you were thinking of your father today, weren’t you?” that a lesser or fake psychic might use, Edward will get extremely specific. He once asked a member of the gallery watching his show if she had considered bringing a body part of the dead person with whom she was hoping to make contact, but changed her mind. Flabbergasted, she reported

⁵²Acts 16:16

that she and her mother had debated bringing the tooth of the person to the studio but decided it would not be appropriate. This kind of specificity is a clear indication that at least some of the information Edward gets is genuinely from a supernatural source.

There is little which is more damaging to the cause of Jesus Christ than this man and the type of things he does. He makes the Occult look convincing, accurate, respectable, and reasonable. Now if the woman who experienced the “tooth” episode, for example, looks in her Bible and sees the words of Job:

*As a cloud vanishes and is gone, so he who goes down to the grave does not return. He will never come to his house again; his place will know him no more.*⁵³

she might conclude that in this one small thing the Bible is just plain wrong. Consciously she may think that it’s no big deal, but the seed is planted and the damage done. Once the Bible is “just plain wrong” in one thing, a thinking person will realize that the rest of it is not guaranteed to be true. If it can’t be trusted in Job about what people can and can’t do after they die, then why should we trust Jesus when He says He can raise us from the dead? If I can come back as a spirit, why do I even *need* a body or a resurrection? From one tiny thread, a person’s faith in Christ can unravel. It might never become woven at all.

This is all the more distressing when one considers that these people listening to John Edward and his ilk never ask the question: “Just because the information I get from him is true, does that mean those giving him the information are who they claim to be?” Why do people assume that the source from which Edward gets his information is telling the truth? Once they accept that such knowledge *is* given to the “reader,” they buy the rest of the reader’s shpeel hook, line, and sinker. But any good lawyer (or parent of a teenager, for that matter) will tell you that just because a witness answers *one* question truthfully is no proof that they will answer *all* of them truthfully. Accepting the psychic’s claims as to the source of information just because that information is accurate or convincing is foolish. For years after my grandfather passed away in 1973, I received mail from my grandmother with his return address labels on it. This fact was something that I and grandma knew, but my mailman could not have known. Should I then have assumed that when the mailman said, “Looks like you got a letter from your grandpa,” he was right just because he correctly delivered it to me? *Of course* not. Yet it is exactly this type of leap of assumption that believers in genuine psychics make all the time.

Sometimes people are impressed because the information they get is so accurate and they think it’s unknowable by anyone on the outside. Some people say, “John could never have known which song my papa used to sing to me as a

⁵³Job 7:9-10

child; only papa could have known that!” Well, on the first statement they might be right, assuming that Edward is a genuine necromancer and not a talented fraud. However, the last part of their thought might *not* be right. Even assuming that no other *human* could have known the fact a necromancer gave them, this does not rule out that a *spirit* might not have been watching. Many people believe in guardian angels that watch over them all their lives. If this is true, then maybe these angels would know these intimate and special details of their lives. It is not a leap of faith to think that a “guardian demon” (such as in C.S. Lewis’ *Screwtape Letters*) or other spiritual involvement might not provide information to evil spirits for the very purpose of discrediting God and His Word.

Another question that never seems to be asked about some of this information is, “What’s the big deal about *that*?” By this I mean that some of the exchange between “this world and the next” may be fascinating in its presentation, but beyond that really is not very impressive. For example, a genuine psychic could sit for hours telling some poor sucker every detail of his or her life, causing both a raising of the person’s interest and a lightening of their wallet. But people enthralled with the presentation of modern-day psychics rarely ask the question, “So what?” All the spirit has done, even if it is real, is tell the person something they already know. “Predicting the Past,” which is often the bread-and-butter of genuine psychics, is (from a miraculous point of view) a no-brainer. If these so-called deceased friends and relatives want to show their love and give special guidance from the Great Beyond, they haven’t really accomplished much by telling the subject all about his childhood. He was there, after all; they’ve given him nothing he didn’t already have. Ditto with telling people of their lives in the present. Big deal; if it could talk, they could get the same information out of their house cat. The only thing of interest here is the *source* of information, not its *content*. If these spirits could say with equally detailed accuracy who will win the third race at Golden Gate Park, it would be more impressive—*slightly*. Even then all the spirit is doing is giving the same educated guess that any skilled elderly alcoholic bookie with 30 years experience could give them. A Christian is entitled to be unimpressed by such “psychic predictions.” Our God made dozens of prophecies in the Old Testament about the coming Messiah. Where He would be born, to whom, how it would happen, what He would do and not do, and how He would die and rise from the dead. One calculating writer⁵⁴ cited a Christian apologist who has done work on the statistics of biblical prophecy:

Statistics experts estimate the probability of all prophecies [about the Messiah] coming true in ANY one man is about one

⁵⁴Muncaster, Ralph O. The First Christmas: Investigation of the Evidence. Mission Viejo, CA: Strong Basis to Believe, 1996

chance in 10⁹⁹ . . . less than the odds of correctly selecting one electron out of all the matter in the Universe.⁵⁵

When a demon can match *that*, a Christian can be impressed. But if it can only tell of one's childhood or past, or what one is doing in the present, what's the big accomplishment?

Demons can possess human beings. Reluctance to deal with this activity is the major shortcoming of the demonology of the LC-MS. The Gospels are full of accounts of demons possessing persons, and there is one account of the possession of a herd of pigs.⁵⁶ This raises an interesting question: can demons, at will, possess animals? The Scriptures are silent on the subject, and there is little on point in the case histories. One may reason that if demons could possess animals at will, the demons called "Legion" in the demoniac of Gadara would not have had to request permission from Jesus to take up residence in the herd of swine. They would merely have done so. Additionally, demons could have wreaked much havoc over the centuries with effective impunity if animal possession was a tool in their arsenal. In other words, probably the best indication that demons can't possess animals at will is that they don't seem to have done so in history. However, on this point it is wise not to be too dogmatic. Just because demons don't seem to possess animals at will does not logically prove that they cannot do so. It just might not be a profitable activity for them.

Jesus tells us that demons like to bring in backup. In a very unambiguous discourse on the activity of demons, He said:

*When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.*⁵⁷

The Greek word which the NIV translates as "arid" is ἀνύδρος, literally meaning "without water," i.e. dry. It is where the English word "anhydrous" comes from. Jesus tells us that a demon goes to dry places when it is cast out. However, too much can be deduced from the passage. It does not logically follow that demons prefer deserts all the time, or that they only go to deserts, or that they hate water, or even that angels like deserts, or even hate them. Logically, all the text

⁵⁵McDowell, Josh, and Wilson, Bill. *A Ready Defense*. San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1990.

⁵⁶Luke 8:32-33

⁵⁷Luke 11:24-26

says is that when they have been expelled from a human being, demons generally wander around dry areas on Earth. This does *not* therefore mean that going out into the desert puts you in the demons' domain. One great exegetical problem throughout the history of the Church is that too much has been extrapolated from texts which simply don't support whatever contention the exegete is trying to buttress. This is one of those cases.

This text also does not say that the demon *always* does these things. Jesus may be speaking here in generalities. Thus perhaps His use of the number "seven" is a generality; or maybe it isn't. All we can definitely get out of this text is that demons generally prefer ἀνύδρος places when they've been expelled and that they will bring in larger forces if given the chance.

The last important key to demonic behavior in Scripture is a verse that most Christians know well:

*Sober up! Look out! Your opponent, the Devil, like a roaring lion, is walking around just looking for someone to gobble up!*⁵⁸

Satan is a hunter of opportunity, just like a lion. He will pick off a weaker or smaller member of the herd. A Christian who is weak is more susceptible to the temptations of the Devil. Likewise, a non-Christian human in a weakened condition--say from alcohol, drugs, mental illness, or anything which impairs the person's ability to refuse the intrusion of the demon into their life, can be easier pickings. Case histories are full of instances where demons "wanted in," and the human refused permission until their resistance was weakened by chronic drug use, drinking, or occultism. More will be said about this "permission" later.

The Theology of Satan

Satan, according to the Scriptures, was once the chief angel. He was second only to God in power, beauty, and intelligence. But sometime between his creation and the creation of Mankind, his pride got the better of him and he rebelled against God. He spoke the famous five "I Wills" recorded in Isaiah 14:

*You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."*⁵⁹

As it was with the Fall of Mankind, so also there were consequences to Satan's actions: his nature was damaged. Just as Adam lost something in his very being

⁵⁸1 Peter 5:8, author's translation.

⁵⁹Isaiah 14:13-14

when he fell, so did Satan. Ezekiel's diatribe against the king of Tyre is also an account of Satan's fall:

Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendour. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings."⁶⁰

One of the most intriguing paradoxes concerning Satan is that he seems simultaneously to be wise and foolish. On the one hand he is the most intelligent of creatures, knowing all there is for a created being to know. He schemes and plots, and often pulls off his plans successfully. On the other hand, one wonders how he possibly could *not* know what was going to happen when Jesus was crucified and afterward, when it is so clearly written in the Scriptures. For that matter, how could he, being so intelligent, ever rebel against God in the first place? He *must* have known what the consequences would be! And when Jesus was on the Earth, did Satan and the demons not even know what He was here for? The demons in the victim of Gadara and others spoke as if they didn't know what brought Jesus there:

"What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"⁶¹

Even though we are used to the *disciples* being as thick as two short planks, it seems inexplicable that *Satan* would not have understood. After all, Jesus kept saying that He had to be crucified and then rise from the dead. Jesus even said that the Crucifixion and Resurrection were both clearly written in the Old Testament.⁶² How could Satan, knowing the Scriptures as well as he is said to, have

⁶⁰Ezekiel 28:12-17

⁶¹Matthew 8:29

⁶²Luke 24:46; Paul repeats this point before Festus in Acts 26:23

missed what in hindsight seems so clear to us?

The answer may be found in the above passage from Ezekiel. There is a plethora of human examples of people who have the intelligence to know that an action will lead to disaster but do it anyway. Pride, deliberate blinkered ignorance, or just plain contrariness lead to the failure they know will come. This we chalk up to the fallen, corrupt human nature. Satan's nature--specifically his wisdom, according to Ezekiel--became corrupted when he rebelled. Hence with the combination of pride, corrupted wisdom, damaged reason, and sheer self-absorbed ego, Satan's actions reflect an almost human combination of wisdom and foolishness, long-range planning and incredible short-sightedness. Once he got Jesus crucified, was Jesus' resurrection a surprise to him or did he expect it? And if he expected it, why even go through with the plan to crucify the One who, by His very death and Resurrection, would defeat you? The way to defeat the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, in hindsight, would have been for Satan to safeguard the life of Jesus with every means at his disposal! Since Christ came to offer Himself as a ransom for the many, one would think that Satan would have tried to thwart that by seeing that Jesus of Nazareth died in His bed at a ripe old age. This would, one might think, better prevent what would have been from Satan's point of view the greatest cosmic disaster possible: Jesus, the God-Man, entering into the Holy of Holies in Heaven with His own blood to reconcile these sinful humans to the God on whom he had turned his back.

Satan, unfortunately, is not stupid. Christians who treat him like a fool do so at their own peril. However, there is a corrupted quality to his reason which may prove to be the tool which God will use to bring about his downfall. He is playing right into God's hands.

Satan is also powerful. Jesus called him the Ruler of this World.⁶³ Even though the world remains the property of God,⁶⁴ Satan runs it. Satan even brags of this to Jesus during the temptation:

And he said to Him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been

⁶³John 14:30

⁶⁴Cf. Psalm 24:1. Kenneth Copeland and the Word-Faith cult claim that because Satan tricked Adam out of the "title deed" to the Earth, it no longer belongs to God. Thus God cannot do anything in this Earth realm. This heretical position is clearly documented in the Hank Hanegraaff book and audiotape *Christianity in Crisis*, published by Harvest House (see Bibliography).

given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.^{65, 66}

The authorities, the offices, the positions of this world, are ordained by God for the benefit of mankind; however, God may not always be consulted about who fills the vacancies.

Satan is also the Bringer of Death. One of the most distressing things a pastor can tell a grieving person is “God took her; we don't know why.” Ridiculous! God did not bring sickness and death into the world--Satan did. The blame for deaths and sicknesses and every other bad thing that happens to mankind lays squarely on the Devil's doorstep, not on God's. Indeed, even though there are times when God in His justice has taken lives, that is an extreme rarity. It is generally the job of Satan, directly or indirectly, to bring death. When a drunk driver hits a family car and kills a child, it is irresponsible and wrong for the pastor to say, “Well, God took him for reasons of His own.” NO! God is *not* responsible for that death; it was Satan who enslaved the drunk driver to alcohol, Satan who tempted him to get behind the wheel, and Satan who taunted him into exceeding the speed limit. The human took the drink, the human got behind the wheel, and the human pushed the speed limit and lost control of the car. God did not do these things, nor did He cause them to be done. It is Satan who holds the power of death over mankind. The author of Hebrews speaks of this in his discourse on the Incarnation:

*Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the Devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*⁶⁷

Telling a grieving person that God took their loved one for reasons unknown is not only unscriptural, it can alienate the person from a God who they

⁶⁵ Though it has often been posited that Satan was bragging during the temptation of Christ and not telling the truth about his authority, it is unlikely that he thought he could fool Jesus, of all people, with a lie. The two persons in the whole Universe who would be most aware of Satan's abilities—and limitations—would be Satan and Jesus. But Jesus never contradicted him. Every other time in Jesus' ministry that He encountered someone telling a lie, He confronted them with their hypocrisy and labeled it as such; here He did not. This statement of the Devil's fits in precisely with what Jesus and Paul both said Satan's role was on Earth.

⁶⁶Luke 4:6

⁶⁷Hebrews 2:14-15

think has unjustly robbed them of wife, husband, child, brother or sister. But the Gospel tells us that God does not *visit* death upon His beloved children; He *reverses* it. He *nullifies* the work of the Devil, restoring that which sin has taken away. Better to lay the blame for death where it belongs: with Satan. The God of the Bible is the God of *Life*. It is His work to give life, not to inflict death. It was death He came in the flesh to conquer.

Satan's Place Now

There is a common misconception about the present location (if that is the right word for a non-corporeal entity) of Satan. Dante's Inferno has him shaking his fist at God, saying, “It is better to rule in Hell than serve in Heaven.” These, however, are not his options. Satan is not serving in Heaven; neither, however, is he in Hell; and he's certainly not “ruling” there. It is most vital to understand that Hell is not Satan's kingdom. It is his prison. He does not reign there, He wants with all his being never to see it. According to the Scriptures, Satan is on Earth. That is his kingdom. Three times in the Gospel of John,⁶⁸ Jesus calls him the “Ruler of This World.” The first mention of Satan's habitation comes from the book of Job, where Satan twice answers God's question of what he's been up to: *The LORD said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answered the LORD, 'From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.'*⁶⁹ Ezekiel agrees: *So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.*⁷⁰

Thus there is every reason to believe that this locating of Satan on the Earth is as valid today as it was when Ezekiel wrote down his prophecy.

As noted earlier, Peter warns Christians to be careful because Satan is right around the corner, lurking. There will be a day when Satan goes to his eternal punishment. But it is sheer dualism to see Satan currently on some throne ruling in Hell, set up as the counterpoint to God who rules in Heaven. There is no “Balance of Power” or “Equality of Kingdoms” in which God is in charge of Heaven and Satan is in charge of Hell and they fight over the Earth in the middle. Nothing could be further from the truth. In Hell, Satan will wear not a crown but shackles; he will not sit on a throne but in a cell; and he will not reign in Hell, he will be reigned over. His eternal role is not that of prince, but of prisoner. Committing cosmic treason to proclaim himself to be like the Most High, he will forever be the Most Low.

⁶⁸John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11

⁶⁹Job 1:7

⁷⁰Ezekiel 28:17

The Theology of Humans and Their Proper Place

As it relates to exorcism and demonology, an appropriate Biblically-centered anthropology is vital. There are cases both in Scripture and in the case histories wherein human exorcists have forgotten their proper place and their power—or to put it more accurately, their lack thereof—and disaster has followed.

There is no freedom of speech in the spiritual realm. Jesus told us that, Christian or not, each human being is made in the image of his or her Creator. Therefore, since we all bear the signature of God's craftsmanship, there are certain types of insults or rebukes which we are not allowed to hurl at each other. *But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.*⁷¹ We may rebuke a man for his works and for what we find in his heart, but we may not rebuke him for having something which his Creator put in every member of the human race: The image of God. To criticize the *nature* of a fellow man rather than his deeds is to critique the craftsmanship of the Creator. And good or bad, every human is the work of the Creator.

Likewise, there are certain things which we humans say to celestial beings at our own peril. Christians are saved and redeemed and thus sinless in the eyes of God, His workmanship. But it is easy for us to forget that both angels and demons are also God's handiwork. Just because an angel has rebelled against the Most High God does not mean that it has become inferior to humans or is a proper target for disrespect and insults. While it is certainly proper to call a demon "evil" or a "liar" (because these are indictments of its actions rather than its nature), one must always be mindful that they too are God's workmanship. He created them stronger, wiser, and more beautiful than we humans. While attacking their disposition and deeds is certainly biblical, we may *not* chastise them for their natures. Jude teaches us this valuable lesson in his epistle, where he addresses this very point:

*In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!' Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals—these are the very things that destroy them.*⁷²

If we insist on hurling gratuitous insults at the demons instead of

⁷¹Matthew 5:22

⁷²Jude 8-10

legitimate rebukes, we not only insult them but the God who created them. In the Jude passage, the Greek says that Michael did not "dare" to bring an accusation against Satan. According to Strong's Lexicon, the word *τολμάω* ("tolmao") comes from the word for "boldness." It means "being bold enough to defy danger . . .", "(in a negative sense with a component of fear or anxiety) dare to, be brave enough to, have the courage to," or "(in a negative sense with a component of boldness or insolence) dare to, be brave enough to, presume to." In other words, Michael was afraid to level an improper accusation against Lucifer for fear of what might happen to him if he did.

Jude relates that some people, in their foolishness and arrogance, slander these spirits. God might just let one of them have a shot at us as discipline, to teach us this lesson. At Concordia Seminary, a graduate of the class of 2001 is convinced that he learned this lesson the hard way. Due to an old injury, he suffered from occasional debilitating back pain. It seemed to get worse sometimes when he had some of the Lord's work to do. He came to the conclusion that Satan seemed to be aggravating the condition to keep him from doing his duty. He responded not in prayer to God for relief or protection, nor even in accusing Satan of attacking him and then going on the offensive in prayer. Instead, being a straightforward, guileless, Alabama good ol' boy, he would say things like, "Satan, you lousy son of a gun, you jerk, you idiot, who do you think you are? I am a child of God; you're just a loser and a fool so stop harassing me and go pick on someone your own size." Some classmates warned him of the danger involved in this, but could not convince him to let up on the insults and instead rebuke Satan's actions. This man went through what he described as "two of the most miserable weeks of my life." Finally, he agreed that he might have been sinning by slandering celestial beings. He and his friends prayed together and he repented of his slander of God's creatures, even the fallen ones. He reported the next day that he felt much better. Though the pain never did go away completely, it did subside back down to its previous level.

Anecdotes like this are extremely hard to verify. All that can be said is that this now-pastor was firmly convinced that he learned Jude's lesson. It is possible that this is the sort of thing that the Apostle Paul was referring to when he wrote to Timothy about *Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.*⁷³ Angels and demons are real beings with real power and real characteristics that reflect their Creator, fallen or not. The exorcist must not fall into the trap of committing the same sin that Satan commits against us: slanderous accusation. Like a child who has wandered outside of the boundaries of his front yard, God may allow Satan to chase us back into His arms nipping at our heels if

⁷³1 Timothy 1:20

we do not return voluntarily. When one exceeds one's spiritual authority, only disaster can follow.

There is often a misunderstanding on the part of Christians as to the difference between power and authority. The former we do not have, the latter we have been given by Christ regarding the demons. True, in one instance when Jesus sent His disciples out to preach and heal, He gave them both authority and power;⁷⁴ however, this is one of those instances where what was given to the Twelve is not necessarily the right of each believer throughout the ages. Indeed, the above-cited passages indicate that we are not more "powerful" than the demons. In every ability which is part of their nature they are our superiors. The following illustration will serve to make clear the difference between authority (ἐξουσία) which we have been given, and power (δύναμις), which we have not in ourselves, but use that from the Lord.

If a police officer stands in the middle of a busy intersection conducting traffic, he does so by virtue of his *authority*. He holds up his hand to stop the flow of traffic, and gestures forward to make the cars move. He has authority to stop the traffic, but no power. Then a man who is not a police officer rushes into the street, pulls out a gun, and shoots one of the drivers. This brings all traffic movement to a halt. The man has the *power* to stop the traffic, but no authority to do so.

By virtue of the grace of God the exorcist, though in and of himself having no power greater than that of the demons, nevertheless has been given the authority to use the power which belongs to Jesus Christ. In His Name, not in the name of any human exorcist, there is power. God is most kind in letting us use it.

Individuality and Corporate Identity Among Spirits

Much has been written on the activities of Satan and his demons. However, there is something of value to the exorcist in also examining the subject of the individuality and corporate identity of spirits, and how demons and Satan relate to each other. Sometimes when a person is possessed, it is said that they are "possessed by the Devil" as though it were the Prince of Darkness himself. Sometimes it is even a demon itself which makes that identification. The close identification of demons with Satan himself is a point which can cause a great deal of confusion and unnecessary fear. Take the demoniac of Gadara. When Jesus asked the demon its name, it replied enigmatically, *My name is Legion, for we are many*.⁷⁵ An entire herd of pigs was destroyed.

As human beings, we have a concept of unity and individuality in which

⁷⁴Luke 9:1

⁷⁵Mark 5:9

one body equals one person and one individual. There is no concept of corporate existence. God, on the other hand, is triune: the three Persons are the one true God. It is difficult for a human to wrap his or her mind around this concept of corporate existence. True, one can say that "Americans are one behind their President" and similar statements, but these all refer to a unity of purpose, not nature or identity. However, Malachi Martin eloquently addresses this subject. He notes that the idea of a corporate existence is one which the exorcist would do well to master.

In Christian thought, "personality" is another word for the total individuality of the person. The diminution or reduction of this internal and self aware center of responsibility of the self to a tidy bundle of arbitrary divisions something called "thinking" and something called "willing" and something else called "acting," etc. etc. - is itself insanity. For these concepts of "person" and "personality" are applied to God and to bodiless spirits as well as to humans. In our human condition the individual and personal spirit is destined to exercise its willing and thinking and all its power by means of psychophysical activity, rarely by passing that quantifiable arena. The evil spirits in question are not personal in that sense. Being bodiless, there individual identities do not depend on a bodily identity . . . In virtually every exorcism, at a crucial point, the possessing spirit will refer to itself interchangeably as "I" and "we," and as easily refer to "my" and "our" . . . The fact that the spirits described in the exorcisms of this book finally responded to names is no indication of separate identity. They are names assumed apparently in view of the means or the strategy used by the spirit as it possessed the person in question . . . nevertheless, the behavior of spirits, in endless variations, in exorcism after exorcism, does suggest some kind of coagulating, and identity of a kind that leaves evil spirits distinct in their personalities while unified and, indeed, one in their responsibilities and intentions.⁷⁶

Swiss theologian Karl Barth may also have something to offer the discussion here. He spoke of angels as

individual figures [which] exist only as they are specifically summoned and separated from the rest with a specific commission and in specific relationship to the earthly history of salvation, disappearing again into the general body as soon as

⁷⁶Martin, M. *Hostage to the Devil*, pp. 418-419

their work is accomplished.⁷⁷

If true, this “corporate existence” would presumably, though not definitely, be true of both angels and demons. This can’t be dogmatically stated, however, because the effects of sin and fall on demons may or may not have changed their natures in this area (even assuming it’s true in the first place. How difficult it can be to examine this subject!)

The Possibility of Multi-Presence

Closely related to the idea of individuality mentioned above is the idea of multi-presence. The concept is purely conjectural, and is presented herein as a possibility which may account for how Satan is able to accomplish as much as he does, not as a certainty.

One of the attributes of God is omnipresence. This is defined as God's essence being in all places simultaneously, in and around His creatures but apart and transcendent from His creatures. He is not material in that He occupies time and space, yet He is everywhere. Luther put this most eloquently:

Nothing is so small, God is still smaller; nothing so large, God is still larger; nothing so short, God is still shorter; nothing so long, God is still longer; nothing so wide, God is still wider; nothing so narrow, God is still narrower; in short, God's being is so far above and beyond words and thought that it is simply indescribable.⁷⁸

On the other end of the spectrum are human beings and other corporeal creatures, who are limited by their flesh. They cannot be in more than one place at one time.

Though there is no Scriptural evidence for or against the idea, it is possible that there is an intermediate state between the two. For reference it will be called “multi-presence.” Angels and demons often fall in between humans and the Creator in their abilities: they are smarter than us but not smarter than God; faster, wiser, stronger, etc. There is a possibility that their ability to be multi-present might similarly place them between God and humans on a continuum. For example, it is conceivable that Satan is, by virtue of his created nature, able to be in two places at once, or even three, ten, a thousand. Fewer than God, but more than humans. If he has this ability it might account for the idea that he is personally responsible for every human temptation and sin that comes from without. Perhaps demons and

⁷⁷Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1932, III/3, p. 455

⁷⁸Quoted in Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, I:444

angels have varying degrees of multi-presence depending on what attributes or abilities God created in them. However, it must be stressed that this is put forth merely as a possibility on which the Scriptures seem to be silent, not as a fact.

Hauntings and Apparitions

So-called “haunted” places are very common, and people who are vulnerable to deception may buy the full legend about “lost love and suicide” or “Civil War soldier” or “drowned child” or whatever the history of the place may offer. However, Scripture is *very* clear about the possibility of people coming back from the dead to visit places they once knew in life. In the book of Job, the suffering man tells very clearly what happens to people when they die. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Job says:

*As a cloud vanishes and is gone, so he who goes down to the grave does not return. He will never come to his house again; his place will know him no more.*⁷⁹

This is one of the most dogmatic statements in the Bible on the disposition of the dead. And regardless of whether Uncle Fred ended up in Paradise or Torment, *wherever* it was, it’s not back home telling Aunt Ellie where he hid the will!

Every so often someone will posit the thought that there is some sort of “recording” of happenings in history that somehow get “re-played” for the living. Anything from electronics to magnetism to radiation has been put forth as a possible “natural” cause. One person who held this position said that since humans can record things onto magnetic tape, it is not a big leap to think that some natural form of this artificial phenomenon might happen in the presence of just the right geological formations.

There are two problems with this theory. First of all, the apparitions and other phenomena occur in places where there is demonstrably no electromagnetic or magnetic activity. For example, ghostly soldiers have been seen on English and Scottish battlefields long before humans started to harness electricity. The surrounding terrain contains nothing that might be helpful to the process. There are accounts of “ghost ships” going back hundreds of years in New England. These ships, of course, appear on the ocean. One could certainly not claim proximity to magnetic stones.

But the main reason that apparitions cannot be some form of natural recording is that many of them are *interactive*. They may respond to address, they may react negatively to religious provocation, and they may give the impression of awareness of living people in the vicinity. The moment something stares at you or responds to words, the theory of an impersonal recording is erased.

⁷⁹Job 7:9-10

So whatever these spirits are, they certainly aren't the souls or spirits of the dead people coming back to be seen by the living. Since it is clear that these apparitions are not God, that leaves only two possibilities: these spirits are angels, or these spirits are demons.

They aren't angels. People may not always know an angel when they see one, but angels, even if in disguise, never do pointless things or play deceptive tricks. Angels don't lie, and appearing to be someone you aren't to deceive people is a lie.

Demons, however, *do* lie. They lie to the interested, the vulnerable, the untutored, the intellectually arrogant, and anyone else they can. And if appearing as the joyful laughter of a recently-departed child can get the mourning parents to disbelieve the Word of God, demons are cruel enough to do it gleefully. They are so full of hate for people made in the image of God that they will do whatever they can to give comfort in this life if it leads to not knowing God in the next one.

This calls for the pastor with a loving heart and a mind with wisdom. A recently-bereaved widow may take a great deal of comfort in the fact that her dear departed husband still watches over her. After all, she tells the minister, she can see him standing next to her bed from time to time. A child who has lost a mother may be given a good deal of relief from grief because "Mommy still tucks me in at night." (Yes, demons are just that despicable and they play just that dirty. Cruelty is their stock-in-trade.) A pastor who comes loping in with an exorcism manual in one hand and the Bible in the other and who can't wait to immediately and dramatically divest these poor souls of their misconception will only cause resentment, damage, and alienation—first from himself, then from God. He must lovingly and gently lead the person through whatever comfort he can share from the Word of God. The widow can be told that her husband may indeed see her from Heaven, and Jesus watches over her in ways even her heavenly husband could not. Perhaps her minister could have her read the Job passage out loud, asking her what she thinks about it. Then he could gently lead her to realize its truth. Then and only then, when the person can *handle* being told the rest of the story, might the pastor tell them that they are being most cruelly deceived. He will have to use his best prayerful judgment to make 100% sure when the person can handle all the facts. Having said all this, whenever possible, this information *should* be told to the person. However painful it might be, it is always better when a person can be told the truth and freed from a lie. But it must be done in a loving and gentle way that respects the person's fragility and how much they are comforted by this false apparition. Satan is cruel and vicious, and this sort of lie is among the most evil and mean-hearted things he does to vulnerable and hurting people. He does not play fair, and an exorcist or minister must be prepared to show the Enemy all the merciful quarter he deserves, which is none.

Degrees of Demonic Assault and Types of Possession

In some of the contemporary demonology literature, two types of demonic activity in the life of an individual are described: possession and obsession. Others add a third: oppression. The former is said to be demonic control from within, the latter an attack from without. Possession happens to unbelievers, obsession can happen to both Christians and non-Christians.

Francis MacNutt believes that the term "possession" should be used rarely, and only in reference to what he calls "the Charles Mansons of this world."⁸⁰ By this he means people who are completely controlled by demons from the inside. He prefers the terms *demonization* or *infestation*. His belief that demons can have various levels of involvement in the lives of Christians and non-Christians compel him to make this distinction:

There are various levels of demonic activity, ranging all the way from temptation and other outside attacks; to demonization, in which we are influenced from the inside; on up to possession, in which we are under compulsion to perform evil.⁸¹

Pieper⁸² distinguishes between "bodily possession" (*obsessio corporalis*) and the "intensified operation of the devil in individuals" (*obsessio spiritualis*), which is a lesser form of control from without. He says that Christians may be subject to both. MacNutt agrees, using the analogy of a city. There may be part of a Christian's life, he says, which may be under the control of Satan and that this part of a Christian is actually possessed.

The city hall of my village may be clean and uncorrupted, but how about the streets with the bars, brothels and pawnshops?"⁸³

The possibility of Christians being bodily possessed in whole or in part is covered in detail in another portion of this book, but in brief it seems that Scripture says the possession of Christians does not happen. If a person *seems* to have been a Christian and then becomes possessed, this might be a textbook example of the "tare in the wheat field."

Overall, the current consensus is to favor both "possession" (attack from within) and "oppression" (attack from without) and occasionally "obsession" (a

⁸⁰MacNutt, Francis. *Deliverance From Evil Spirits: A Practical Manual*. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1995, pp. 68-73

⁸¹Ibid., 73

⁸²Pieper, I:509-511

⁸³MacNutt, 73

milder form of oppression.) However, it might be time to re-think these categories, in light of Biblical and anecdotal evidence. There are a number of levels of demonic infestation and involvement, some requiring exorcism and some not. The following are not to be considered authoritative, but are submitted for discussion and examination in light of biblical and other evidence.

1. Intrusion

This is potentially the mildest form of demonic activity in a life, and often happens to either believers when they gain the attention of the Adversary, or unbelievers when they begin to toy with Ouija boards and other forbidden forms of divination. In this latter case, it can be merely the beginning point of the “wedging” into a human life of a demon, or can occur in the beginning stages of the infestation of a locality rather than a person. It usually follows some kind of “invitation,” either by seance or Ouija board or other occult game. In the case of a believer, it might be that actions taken by the believer anger the Adversary. The Adversary lets the believer know that, though God has built a protective hedge around them, they are still being watched. This activity often falls under the category of “parlor tricks,” such as disappearing items, phones ringing when unplugged, minor questionable acts of telekinesis, and other small-potatoes activities. One common manifestation of this is commonly called “night Terrors,” in which a believer wakes up in the middle of the night feeling an oppressive evil presence in the room, almost always accompanied by a tremendous fear. Paralysis and a feeling of “being weighed down upon” are also components of night terrors. Usually, a sustained effort at prayer and a command to leave are sufficient for a restoration of peace and the ending of the “attack.” A believer should take joy in, and gain faith from, the fact that they have angered the demons, and that God is protecting them. Prayers for protection and dispersal of the offending spirits should be sufficient to deal with the situation.

2. Affliction

This is an attack from without, and may happen to either a believer or unbeliever. It involves the torture, harassment, and disease-causing activities of demons upon the victim. Several instances of this can be found in the anecdotal evidence, and in the case of a human victim it often leads to possession. However in the case of a believer, it may be nothing more than the will of God permitting the demon to attack the Christian in order to teach the Christian something important. When the Apostle Paul was allowed to see Heaven, 2 Corinthians 12:7 says, *To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.* The Greek literally says, “an angel of Satan to smack me around.” The verb *κολαφίζω* means “lit. as beating

or striking w. the fist *box on the ear, cuff, buffet* (Mt. 26:67).⁸⁴ This is a *ἵνα* + subjunctive clause (*ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ*) meaning “with the purpose that it might punch me.” In other words, God let a demon have at Paul to keep him from getting conceited. This is also what happened to Job. In these cases God allowed—and also kept a rein on—the evil spirits who were attacking these believers for *His* own purposes. But with Affliction, an unbeliever has no such protection and is at the mercy of the evil spirit. A Christian in this situation may pray and ask for mercy, but if God is allowing it to happen, prayers will not be answered until His purpose is accomplished. An unbeliever may be treated with prayer and, in extreme cases, possibly an exorcism.

3. Familiarization

In this type of activity, the human and the demon have a symbiotic relationship. The demon and the person communicate and the demon feeds the human information. This is the kind of activity found in “genuine” psychics, where the information is accurate and supernatural, but not from God. Often, the spirit is financially aiding the person, who merchandises the information and gets paid for it. The “Familiar” appears to be as much a servant as anything else, though the term “facilitator” or “guide” may be used. In actual fact, though, the human is the one enslaved. They often are dependant on and addicted to the information received. This type is often found in New-Age fairs, and since the demon does not actually (or always) possess the person, exorcism must be attempted with discernment. Since the demon has come-and-go privileges, there is no reason for it to barricade itself within a person and fight for that house to which it has willingly been given the key! The so-called “Witch of Endor” in 1 Samuel 28 had this kind of familiar spirit. She expected her familiar, not Samuel himself, so she got the shock of her life when she saw that it really *was* Samuel! The only seance in the Bible, and God intervened and brought destruction on the perpetrator. He takes a *very* dim view of such things. The girl in Philippi also had a familiar spirit.⁸⁵ It should be noted again that just because the person *wants* to be possessed is no reason to let the demon go on about its business. Since the “fight” is ultimately between the demon and Jesus Christ, we are not given the option of choosing not to do an exorcism when it is possible and necessary. We are to engage the Enemy on all fronts, not let him stay in his occupied villages just because the villages want him.

4. Habitation

In Habitation a person becomes demon-possessed *voluntarily*, usually falling for

⁸⁴Bushell, Michael S. *BibleWorks for Windows*. Version 3.2.009, 1995, containing Thayer’s Lexicon (Electronic Version.)

⁸⁵Acts 16:16

some lie about who or what the demon really is. “Ascended Masters,” “Spirit Guides,” and the like are often found in New-Age channelers. These people don’t fight the spirit but actually *welcome* it! The demon can come and go as it pleases because the person is always receptive. In this case, the exorcist should not be at all deterred by the fact that the person *wants* to be possessed. Again, engagement of the enemy’s troops should take place whether the ones being conquered are willing or not. Not to belabor the point, but whether or not a person wants to be possessed should make no difference to the exorcist: he should cast it out. The conflict is between Christ and the demon, not Christ and the victim. Once the person is free and can think clearly, and knows you have authority over their demon, they may be open to the Gospel. If not, and if they seek out the demon again, then at the very least they are no worse off than they were before and the demon has been given a bloody nose. But be aware that, if the person cooperates with the demon against the exorcist, this situation can become even more dangerous than normal.

5. Obsession

This is the “attack from without” directed at a person in which the victim hears the voices, sees manifestations, and can even be assaulted, but is not themselves possessed. This kind of activity is often seen in homes that are “haunted,” and the person does not know how to deal with the encroaching entity. An exorcism of the place may be in order, along with prayers for God to protect the people living there (from *both* harm to themselves *and* their property, the destruction of which in these cases can be quite devastating to a family.)

6. Full Possession

This is the classic loss of control to an invading demon whereby the creature indwells the person and takes over their functions, including speech and thought. Although there may be moments of lucidity in which it’s unclear if the demon *yields* or *loses* control, for the most part the unclean spirit has the reins of behavior. Usually there is some invitation into the victim’s life via a Ouija board or other occultic practices or substance abuse. “Full Possession” may also take the form of an inanimate object. To put it another way, living creatures are not the only things that can be “possessed.” Sometimes an idol or other object can appear to be the source of a demonic presence. The object may be the focus of demonic attention because it was treated by the victim as though it had a personality of its own. Once undue attention is paid, it becomes a situation of idolatry. The demons may step in then and “become” the object, seemingly taking on a life of its own.⁸⁶ Ed and

⁸⁶The demonic tendency to “become” the personality of the object is alluded to by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:19-20. The sacrifices offered to idols by pagans are actually being offered to demons.

Lorraine Warren⁸⁷ document an instance of this phenomenon in the account of the rag doll “Annabelle,” which began doing things no respectable rag doll should do. Whatever the point of contact, it must be discerned and stopped. In these cases, the victim is little more than an interested bystander and needs all the help they can get. An exorcism and prayer of protection may be in order.

Summary

The subjects of exorcism and demonology are fraught with danger in their misuse. It is easy to fall into the traps of sensationalism on the one hand or disbelief in the necessity of the subject on the other. If one does not acknowledge the necessity of the subject, then Satan's activity goes unchallenged by God's servants and, more tragically, the suffering of people who need the freedom and grace offered by the Lord Jesus Christ is not taken seriously. Their agony is allowed to continue. On the other hand, ridicule and disrepute are brought to the name of Jesus Christ when the subject is not treated with the seriousness and Biblical care it requires.

Taking what is hoped will be a sharply skeptical eye to anecdotal evidence while at the same time believing that demons are as real and may be as active now as they were in the first century, this book will offer options that will serve to educate, equip, and prepare both clergy and lay people how to deal with the flaming arrows of the Wicked One perhaps more effectively than they have been able to in the past. There is indeed much we do not know, much that *cannot* be known this side of Eternity, and much that we may guess and reason about demons and angels without ever being sure one way or the other. But there is often as much wisdom in knowing what one *doesn't* know as there is in what one *does*. About that which one cannot be dogmatic, hopefully the wise Christian will use the common sense God gave him and not engage in bold assertions without realizing that they are without direct Scriptural evidence.

In his preface to the *Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis noted that he used some caution in what he said. This same care must be given when demonology and exorcism are taught, even at a seminary. Enough information should be shared with the laity to forewarn and forearm them against the wiles of the Devil while being done in such a way as not to provoke what Lewis called “ill-disposed or excitable people.” Nevertheless, there is a great need in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and especially in the institutions which prepare its future pastors, to train and educate on the subjects of exorcism and demonology from a balanced, biblical

⁸⁷Brittle, Gerald. *The Demonologist: The Extraordinary Career of Ed and Lorraine Warren*. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1980. Softcover edition by St. Martin’s Press, 1991. pp. 41-56

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perspective. It is only common sense to train soldiers not only in the techniques of combat but also the strengths, weaknesses, and nature of their enemy. As Walter Martin pointed out, there is a special name for soldiers who go into battle with no knowledge or education about their enemy. They're called "casualties."

TWO: THE DIAGNOSIS of GENUINE CASES of DEMONIC POSSESSION

There are basically three “parts” to a biblically-conducted exorcism: the *Diagnosis*, the *Exorcism Proper*, and *Pastoral Care*, which may actually begin before the exorcism but is mostly concerned with its aftermath.

Each of these three parts is critical; however, circumstances do not always permit systematically pursuing these stages in order and giving each the attention it deserves. For example, the exorcist might not have the opportunity to conduct extensive interviews before a critical moment is reached when the Rite can no longer be postponed. Perhaps after the exorcism the victim disappears or declines pastoral care, or it is done by someone other than the man who conducted the exorcism. In any case, the exorcist should do the best he can to “cover all the bases,” while at the same time realizing that God does not always allow circumstances to be arranged in such a way as to permit following a set pattern. Assuming, however, a best-case scenario, the following guidelines should suffice to provide the exorcist with some guidance.

Much of the following work is gleaned from contemporary literature on the subject, including writings and case studies. The Roman Catholic *Rituale Romanum*, though doctrinally questionable in some places, nevertheless has the advantage of having been built on nearly two thousand years of experience. Its opening paragraphs of caution to any would-be exorcist are not only accurate but brilliant, and make their points very clearly. The Orthodox and Anglican communions also have much to offer. Much is also taken from *ancient* Christian sources. The doctrinally orthodox Ante-Nicene Fathers may have lived in a different culture and time from ours, but the Adversary is still the same. More importantly, our Lord is the same: *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*⁸⁸

Determining Those at High Risk for Demonic Possession

Much of what puts a person at risk for possession has to do with the potential victim’s activities. The following list is certainly not exhaustive, and some of the items on it may be debated. Much of this evidence comes from anecdotal sources (case histories, as opposed to Scriptural) and therefore must be taken with care and healthy skepticism. Nevertheless, each of the things listed occurs in the accounts with a frequency which makes it worthy of examination.

Once a person has gotten a demon’s attention, it is possible for the demon to say or do things which will result in the person’s agreeing to a deeper level of “commitment” or a more permanent relationship with the entity. In Malachi Martin’s book *Hostage to the Devil* there are a number of terms which the demons use, all with the common thread of giving the spirit permission of some sort of

⁸⁸Hebrews 13:8

come deeper into the person’s life. Not to be flippant, but the situation seems somewhat similar to the legend in vampire movies that the creature cannot actually enter a house unless it is invited. It may lie, pretend, threaten or bribe, but it cannot enter of its own accord until it has been granted permission. With demons, there seems to be a kind of parallel situation. They have asked to be “let in,” or even suggested a sort of non-corporeal “marriage.”⁸⁹ The terminology varies, but the substance of the request—a greater level of involvement or participation in the life of the victim—remains the same.

There are a number of practices or situations which can attract the attention of demons. Of course, engaging in these activities does not guarantee that a person *will* become the focus of demonic attention. After all, millions of people all over the world read their horoscopes in the newspaper every day.

The following list, though by no means exhaustive, may serve to pass on the basic idea.

1. Involvement in Magick or the Occult

This one is really a no-brainer. Engaging in a religion which actively seeks interaction with or service from spirits, whether recognized as demons or not, is a good way to get their attention. And once they are attending to a person, there is a possibility that they will not stop until they achieve a greater level of participation in the person’s life.

2. Conscious Invitation to Satan

Even said in jest or frustration, this may serve to attract the attention of spirits. A half-hearted invitation may be enough to put a person at high risk.

3. Persistent Substance Abuse

When a person might otherwise be able and willing to reject the “wooing” of a demon, chronic and severe substance abuse may lower the person’s ability to resist, or make them more susceptible to deceit or trickery on the part of the evil spirit. Having unimpaired judgment might make the difference between possession and freedom, and substance abuse may cloud that judgment.

4. Participation in Tribal, Nature, or New Age Religions or Culture

Many of these religions take the existence of both evil and good spirits for granted. Interaction with these spirits sometimes leads to temporary or permanent possession. This may also be true, to a lesser extent, when living in a culture where these practices and religions are prevalent. Any of these practices may engage the demons on a level which voluntarily or not could increase their level of

⁸⁹For example, Martin, M. *Hostage to the Devil*, where the spirit “familiar” named “Uncle Ponto” told his victim Jamsie that “the hour of decision is approaching.” (278) He first asked to be allowed to live with Jamsie (251), then proposed a sort of “marriage.” (281)

involvement in the person's life.

5. Animal Sacrifice, Torture, Bestiality

One example of this is the Caribbean cultic practice of Santeria. When a person has something go wrong in their life or health, the cause is often attributed to either a curse or other cause of demonic interference. The Santeria practitioner may conduct either an exorcism or a "cleansing" ritual, ostensibly expelling the demon from the life of the victim. Such practices may involve animal sacrifice,⁹⁰ which is considered to be extremely powerful by its practitioners. Such activities do not "control" or "defeat" the demons, as their adherents believe, but the demons may act as though the rituals were effective to get the people to believe all the more in their reality.

Sometimes in the "dabbling" form of Satanism practiced by loner high-school students with an unhappy home life, animals are tortured in their made-up rituals. This is often a prelude to get the rest of the group jazzed up about their own power and the next activity, usually some form of sex or violence. Just the same, the level of cruelty involved may appeal to observing demons. A number of high-school cult killings have been linked with alleged cases of possession. In the case of these "mini-cults," however, claims of possession should be viewed with even more suspicion than usual: it is a handy defense in court, and if the people are in service to Satan already, what benefit is there for the demon to force its way in? Nonetheless, it may sometimes happen. Therefore the person making the diagnosis should, as always, consider all the indicators carefully.

6. Family History of Occult Practices

A history of occultism in the family may be enough to attract the attention of demons. The person who has attracted the demon need not even be one of those who has engaged in occultism. Some case histories indicate that demons may attach themselves to families which have a history of occultic practices. The thought that "it runs in the family" may not be too far from the truth.

7. Use of Occultic Tools and Other Items

These tools of the occult may include, but are not limited to, pendulums, Tarot cards, crystal balls, Runestone games, Ouija boards, horoscopes (even cheap newspaper ones), talismans & amulets, palmistry, automatic writing, etc. In a lesser sense, participation in witchcraft-themed or occult-based role-playing games may be considered a "tool of the occult." The reasoning is that even though none of these forbidden items is actually used in the game or even present when it is played, the role-playing often requires that the players *pretend* to use them. A roll of the dice determines the outcome of tarot cards, for example, rather than actually

⁹⁰*First Church of Chango v. ASPCA* (1987); *Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye v. City of Hialeah*, 508 U.S. 520 (1993), et al.

using the cards themselves. Anything used to predict the future or engage in any sort of divination may attract the attention of demons and put a person at risk. Even such folk practices as the use of a pendulum to determine the sex of an unborn baby falls under this category. It is true that these things are usually seen to be innocuous on the part of the user, and he or she may even be a Christian (or claim to be). However, all sorts of painful experiences may become possible if a Christian engages in these practices, not the least of which is God's discipline. It's better for you than punishment; but a whip is just as painful whether it is wielded in love or in anger. Just because a Christian cannot be possessed if he or she does these things does not rule out the possibility of a *location* or *poltergeist* infestation, or an external affliction of some kind permitted by God.

8. Idolatry

This may not take the commonly expected form of building a little shrine and praying to the statuette (though in fact it might, as America becomes a more pluralistic culture and ethnic restaurants continue to thrive!)⁹¹ According to some case studies, there is a more subtle and indirect form of idolatry which has in a number of instances led to either hauntings or poltergeist phenomena. A person may give an unhealthy amount of attention to an object or statue, even conversing with it and ascribing personality traits to it. This is the beginning stage of idolatry, which can be picked up on and exploited by a demon. The entity will take on the persona ascribed to the idol, and may begin to make things happen to string the person along and make them think that, to some extent, the item or spirit it represents is alive. This, Paul says, is what demons did in the ancient world when they masqueraded as the classical gods.

*Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?*⁹²

A famous example of this has been described earlier in this chapter, when Ed & Lorraine Warren dealt with the rag doll "Annabelle." In this author's

⁹¹This is not meant to be flippant. In many Chinese restaurants there is a small but ornate Buddha on display, and in Indian restaurants idols are often part of the decor. If members of the staff are actually adherents of that religion as well, the statuettes become actively worshipped idols. An American need not go to India to find idol worship. He or she need only go to a nearby foreign-food restaurant.

⁹²1 Corinthians 10:19-22

experience, a high-school friend was given a grotesque statuette by his brother, a class project in ceramics. From its appearance it would have been more at home on the cover of a '70s heavy metal album than on a bookshelf—just the thing a young metalhead would love. He gave it a name and ascribed to it a personality. Soon the figure began turning up in places into which it could not have gotten without help. There were sounds believed to be coming from its direction at night. Then came one experience with the thing that was never fully discussed or described. All that could be gleaned was that it had done or said something that it shouldn't have. The statue was destroyed and prayers rapidly and fearfully made for protection and forgiveness.

This subtle, gradual form of idolatry need not actually be overt “worship.” All that needs to happen to trigger spiritual danger or demonic infestation is to treat it like a living thing and act as though it has a personality. Now this is not the same as having a favorite plant that one talks to, or the conversations a pilot might have with his jet fighter when he goes into combat. A little girl need not give up adolescent conversations with her favorite teddy bear or doll to protect herself against demons. There is a qualitative difference in how these things are treated and what attributes are credited to them. Sometimes a “trial balloon” will be sent up by the enemy: the object will appear to do something that the demon hopes will be attributed to the object of attention as personality or sentience. Then once some other event is anticipated or even hoped for by the humans, a relationship is established.

9. Pornography

Though much has been written by Christian sociologists and counselors about pornography's corrupting and destructive effects, its connection to demonic affliction is unique and little-known. Many of the cases, most especially involving young people, also have a sexual component. If it is a cult of high-schoolers, it is often a prelude to the real goal of their “fellowship,” which is violence, sex, or exciting rituals. However once pornography becomes an addiction, it can catch the attention of the Evil One. When a person is deeply involved in pornography, Satan takes notice. Fantasizing takes place in the mind, and as mental inhibitions are shed (inhibitions that, left to their own devices, the person may never in a million years actually shed anywhere but in their mind) it becomes easier to say “yes” to the surrender of barriers keeping the demon out. When that happens, the person is not fully able to resist the entreaties of the demon. Then with impaired resistance, possession occurs.

The Diagnosis of Genuine Cases of Possession

There is much debate over diagnosing the victims of suspected possession. Much of it up until now has centered on telling the difference between a case of genuine demonic possession and some similar-appearing psychological difficulty.

However, in this litigious and over-cautious day and age, there is another factor that must first be considered: whether or not the victim is even *willing* to be exorcized.

With many people dabbling in the New Age practices which have become part and parcel of modern culture, some who are genuinely possessed may not wish to be rid of their “tenant.” Although it is growing as a modern consideration, the idea of being a willing vessel for the demonic is certainly not new. When Paul entered Philippi he was followed by a slave girl who was demonically possessed, and made a living by being so:

*Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.*⁹³

There are modern equivalents. John Edward's show on the Sci-Fi channel called “Crossing Over” is a vehicle in which he performs necromancy to a supernatural degree of accuracy. Several television occultists, using anything from Tarot cards to psychometry to astrology, tap into forbidden knowledge to tell the future, or even the past or present. In any given good-sized New-Age fair, there might be a few genuinely demonically-aided people in with the plethora of charlatans or people who mistakenly believe they are genuinely supernatural. Very, very few of these would acknowledge the existence within their lives of a real live demon; even fewer would want it removed. After all, demons can be profitable!

Rodger Bufford believes that the full cooperation of the victim is necessary:

It is imperative to insure the full, voluntary cooperation of the person involved unless he or she is so incapacitated as to be unable to choose to cooperate. To do less is to go beyond what even God would do (also, informed consent is a basic principle of professional ethics). In these ways we may more readily and promptly recognize demonic influence when it is present.⁹⁴

However, Bufford's main thrust is the counseling of patients, and he does not seem to have much more than a fuzzy distinction, if any, between counseling and exorcism. He tends to think of them as one single process. He is quite right that any *counseling* should be done according to the above guidelines, but he does not seem to have a clear sense that an exorcism is fundamentally different. It is a

⁹³Acts 16:16ff.

⁹⁴Bufford, Rodger K. *Counseling and the Demonic*. Volume 17 of *Resources for Christian Counseling*. Gen. Ed. Gary R. Collins. Dallas:Word, 1988, p.180

conflict between God and the demon, and the exorcist and the victim are not nearly as vital to the process as they might think they are. By this it is meant that the exorcist should never believe that the “contest” is between himself and the demon. If he does, he’s in deep trouble. And his assertion that “to do less is to go beyond what even God would do” is absurd. The Gospels and Acts are *full* of people who don’t want to be exorcized but are freed anyway. The Philippian girl in Acts 16:16-19 did not consent to exorcism. Yes, the victim’s cooperation is a valuable and blessed thing to have, and obtaining it before an exorcism takes place should be attempted whenever possible. But it is not necessary.

Thus for the exorcist, it is important to remember that the willingness of the victim is *absolutely irrelevant*. Whether or not a person expresses a wish to undergo exorcism makes no difference, for the following two very important reasons.

The first reason is that there is never a place in the New or Old Testaments where a believer is told, “leave the demons be; do not engage or challenge them.” To even posit such an idea is ludicrous. They are enemy soldiers! They must be challenged with the authority of the believer in the name of Jesus Christ *wherever* and *whenever* they are found. God does not give the Christian the option to fight or not fight. We fight. True, no Christian should willy-nilly break into spouting the *Roman Ritual* every time he meets someone casting a horoscope. Battles must be picked and times chosen. However, there is *no* time when the Christian is allowed to let a demon inside a person go unchallenged. Prayer, gentle questioning, witnessing, and in rare circumstances exorcism, are all things a Christian might be called upon to do by the Lord. When confronted with direct evidence of the demonic, the Christian does not have the option of leaving the field of battle. We are at war with the demons, not sitting across from them at the negotiating table. If we really, truly believe that God knows what He is doing and that He controls all circumstances and situations, then we are relieved of trying to discern the answer to the question, “Did God put me in this situation to say or do something, or not?” If God puts one in a situation, that’s our clue that we *are* to act or speak. No Christian need ever wonder if something that he notices needs doing by some Christian is for him to do, or for someone else to do instead. If God put that Christian and that need together at the same time; take the hint.

Similarly, when God allows a properly-trained person with spiritual wisdom and a gift of discernment to be challenged by a genuine demonic presence, that Christian need not wonder if the task is theirs or not. If God controls the situation, and if He wanted someone else to do the job, He would’ve arranged for someone else to be there to do it. This is not just true of things demonic, this is an axiom in the Christian life. If present when the clear need is comfort, aid, food, prayer, preaching, rebuking, exhorting, witnessing, sharing, caring, loving—whatever Jesus Himself would have done at that time and place—the

Christian is there to do the work of the Master, empowered by His Spirit.

This is, of course, *not* a license to start tossing out demons during the lunch rush at the local McDonald’s or to allow public sport to be made of the cause of Christ. Some activities are properly done in some venues and not in others. While an *exorcism* would be inappropriate at McDonald’s, witnessing to and praying for that person in a public place certainly would not.

The second reason that a necessary exorcism should be done whether the victim expresses enthusiasm or not is because if there is a genuine demon within them, their statements cannot be taken at face value. This is self-evident: you don’t ask a demon-possessed person if they want an exorcism, because it might be not the victim but rather the demon which says, “No!” If you *happen* to get them in a lucid and cooperative moment wherein they agree (and even maybe sign a release) count your blessings, but it is not necessary. A court couldn’t lay a finger on you later if this logic is followed: If the victim was *not* possessed, then nothing was lost or cast out and there was no harm done. If the court, however, agrees that there *was* a demon, then the state of mind of the human victim when asked their desires is not reliable. Either way, an exorcist could justify his rationale for going forward regardless of the victim’s declared desire to be freed.

Perhaps the biggest challenge to diagnosis is separating the genuine case of possession from someone who is suffering from psychological illnesses which may mimic some symptoms of possession. Literature from the very earliest realization that there were such things as mental illness indicates that the Church and its exorcists were aware from the start that mental disease might be mistaken for demonic affliction. One Roman exorcist recognizes the need to correctly discern between the two: Since 1583, when [the subject] appeared among the decrees of the Synod of Reims, the Church gave warning about the danger of mistaking mental illness for diabolical possession.”⁹⁵ While it is absolutely true that the differentiation between the demonic and the psychological is critical, much of the extant literature does not address the possibility that a victim may be afflicted with *both* mental illness *and* possession. It is even possible that demons are drawn to the mentally unstable, or that being attacked by a demon may make one unstable. In any case, it is critical for both the exorcist and the victim to understand that *mental illness and demonic possession are not mutually exclusive*.

Some possessed people hear voices. Some schizophrenics also hear voices. But treating one does not affect the other. In other words, if treating a victim with both schizophrenia and possession, an exorcism will not cure the victim of schizophrenia any more than drug therapy will chase off a demon. The exorcist

⁹⁵Amorth, Gabriele. *An Exorcist Tells His Story*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999. Tr. Nicoletta MacKenzie

should be aware that a victim may be afflicted by both conditions. It might also be noted that in an attempt to mask their presence and avoid an exorcism, a demon may either keep a lower profile or mimic genuine mental symptoms, attempting to divert attention from itself.

Of course, all of this is to assume that nothing “odd” has been occurring. However much a problem may look like mental illness rather than possession, once a plate levitates off the dinner table the debate is over. Any manifestation of supernatural phenomena should, once verified as genuine, be considered conclusive proof of a demonic presence. While “hearing voices” or other symptoms might be caused by mental illness or even faked, psychic phenomena (once determined not to be a hoax) should be considered conclusive proof of a demonic presence.

There should be an initial interview with the exorcist whenever circumstances permit. During this interview (which should be very carefully documented), the exorcist must endeavor to separate out the genuine cases of possession from those which are *merely* mental illness. Perhaps the best rule of thumb for discerning the difference is to pray with the person, laying hands and attempting to get a rise out of the demon, if there is one there. This technique is called “religious provocation,” and more will be said about it later.

If the exorcist ascertains that there is no genuine demonic presence, and therefore the victim is suffering from a mental illness, he should immediately either begin pastoral counseling himself (if he is qualified to handle the victim's particular problem) or lead the victim and their family to a qualified *Christian* mental health practitioner. This practitioner should be aware that what the Apostle Peter said about Satan is just as true today as it was in his time: *Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*⁹⁶ Just like a lion, then, Satan will attempt first to “pick off” the weaker members of the herd, those least able to defend themselves. As a lion might try for a very old or very young animal, or one slowed down by sickness or injury, so also Satan will first go for the weak. In the style of human cowards who will not pick a fight with someone more able to defend himself, he will first go after the mentally ill, the chronic substance abuser, or others who are not as able to say “NO!” or see him for who he really is. Thus even if the victim is not at the moment possessed, and is suffering from a physiological or psychological problem “only,” the counselor should be aware that this in itself may put the person at high risk for a possession attempt at some time during their course of treatment.

Symptoms of Demonic Possession

Although there is no one common characteristic to look for to tell if

⁹⁶1 Peter 5:8

someone is possessed, there are nevertheless a number of indications which have occurred in a number of genuine cases throughout the history of the Church. The presence of any of these should be taken extremely seriously as a sign of a genuine demonic presence. Of course, no one case will manifest *all* the symptoms. Just like any disease, there are common factors and yet each case is unique. A general thought underlying all these, however, is the idea that the victim is acting in ways which ordinary humans are unable to duplicate. There is a vast difference between a human nature and the nature of a pure spirit being, especially a fallen angel. There are some things both can do (communicate, perceive, etc.); there are things which humans can do that spirits can't (reproduce, die, etc.); and there are abilities which demons and angels have which humans don't (non-corporeal existence, rapid mobility, what we would call “extra-sensory” knowledge, etc.) Keeping this in mind, if a human being ever begins to exhibit abilities or actions which humans by nature can't ordinarily do, this is a sign that someone or something else is at work. Most of the symptoms of possession are expressions of this principle in one way or another.

Following is a list of the most common symptoms of demonic possession. Though compiled from a number of sources throughout the ages, this list is by no means exhaustive. Demons are nothing if not innovative. The number of the works of Satan cannot be listed. But these should give a prudent exorcist an idea of what to look for when attempting to diagnose a victim of genuine possession.

1. Unusual Strength

A manifestation of strength above and beyond what might be expected from the person, considering size, age, physical condition and other factors. Remember, though, that in situations of extreme stress a person may display unusual strength that should not be mistaken for a *supernatural* strength. This symptom should not be taken by itself as proof of possession.

2. Rage

Sudden, extreme bouts of rage directed at anyone or anything, most especially those to whom the victim is close or who are trying to offer help or comfort to the victim. This also may be mimicked by those either oppressed by psychological rather than demonic problems, or faking. This “lashing out” is an ambiguous indicator at best, and should not be taken as proof by itself; nonetheless it is present in a larger percentage of cases than some of the other symptoms.

3. Splitting of Attitudes and Desires

In this case the victim vacillates between wanting and eschewing help, resistance and cooperation, appreciation and resentment. Sometimes it might seem that the victim is working at cross-purposes to what they would normally want or need at any given moment. A Biblical example of this is the Demoniac of Gadara (Mark 5:1-20) who first ran from the tombs and fell at Jesus' feet, then begged not to be tortured. Consistency would dictate that he would run to Jesus and ask for help, or

beg for mercy and run *away* rather than *toward* the perceived source of torture. However, as there are two (or more) separate agendas in the possessed person, these may sometimes manifest themselves in actions that are apparently at odds. These split attitudes should be looked at in a way that judges the apparent self-interest of the victim or his/her demon. As with the Gadarene man, there are accounts of possessed people running up a church aisle to confront a pastor or seeking them out after a service. Though this may seem nonsensical to us, we need to keep in mind that demons (and angels, for that matter) may think differently than we do. Add to that the corruption of their mental processes caused by their rebellion, and this may account for their unusual pattern of behavior.

4. Opposition to God

Disgust with, or intolerance for, anything having to do with the true triune God of the Bible. Distaste, fear, and hatred for religious paraphernalia might be signs of this, especially towards items sanctified and set apart for holy use or dedicated to God. But note that there is no “magic item” that will drive them away. It is their distaste, not the item’s power, that fuels this aversion to crosses, etc. But this distaste and fear *can* be used in techniques of religious provocation to “flush out” an adversary that wishes to keep its presence hidden.

5. Hyperaesthesia

Heightened sensory ability. Most especially, vision, smell, or hearing above and beyond what would be expected from the person in that situation. Being privy to conversations and events that the person should not have been able to perceive. For example, if a person’s eyes are closed and facing one way, and they protest when a cross is brought up to them from behind as though they could see it, this is an example of hyperaesthesia. Recounting to the Exorcist what he said in the car on the way over to meet the victim, claiming to be able to see someone half a world away and accurately describing them, and knowing what is in sealed envelopes are all manifestations of this symptom. The presence of hyperaesthesia, once verified as genuine, should be taken as a strong indicator of a demonic presence in the victim.

6. Multi-Voice or Multi-Person Manifestations

The victim produces two or more voices or personalities simultaneously. Note that this is *not* just “switching back and forth” but genuinely simultaneously-occurring events and sounds. It differs from schizophrenia and similar situations in that the sounds and voices occur all at once, in a way that a human being cannot ordinarily do.

7. Transference

The moving of the manifestation to another person or location, such as the demons moving into a herd of pigs in Mark chapter 5, or the manifestation of a presence from one locality to another, possibly moving with a particular victim. This is of course usually seen once the fact of an entity's presence has been established. This

symptom is one that is often noticed by excessively “jumpy” people involved in exorcisms. There is a tendency, once a demonic presence has been established, to credit the demon with any unusual occurrence. While that is certainly a possibility, it is not necessarily a demon's doing every time a picture falls off the wall in the exorcist's living room.

8. Previously Unknown Language Skills

Speaking or understanding an unknown language. Note that a person, under certain conditions, may recall a language that they heard in their childhood and may be able to use it, though they have not experienced any use of that language for many years. This symptom is often over-diagnosed, or at least the possibility of a natural cause is often overlooked. The person may genuinely not remember ever having heard the language. An exorcist, therefore, should at least be familiar with whatever ancient languages are possible (and modern tongues as well) so as to facilitate the correct diagnosis of this symptom.

9. Spiritual Metanoia

Possession is said to never occur in people “diligent in striving toward moral and religious perfection.” Whether true or not, Spiritual Metanoia a sudden reversal of an outwardly “spiritual” but unsaved person into one in obvious spiritual distress. This occurs often in New Agers and spiritists who were previously “spiritual” by inclination, who then suddenly show distaste for the supernatural or spiritual or the things of God that once may have fascinated them. The Greek word *μετάνοια* (“metanoia”) was originally a military technical term. There is a more or less exact equivalent in English. When a drill sergeant orders a soldier to not only “regret” the direction in which he is moving but to go one step farther and actually *change direction* and flip 180°, this sergeant yells, “About FACE!” This was the meaning of *μετάνοια* in earlier literature. By the time of Paul, this word had come to be a metaphor for moral repentance in addition to the original military reference. In this context, then, if a person shows “a complete 180°” in attitude, they are displaying this symptom.

10. Connection to Magic or Occultism, or Resistance-Lowering Activities

Either currently or in the recent or distant past, a connection (not always personal, but also possibly familial) to spiritism and occult activities. This is the most common “in” that demons have, though drug use, alcoholism, non-Christian meditation, and anything else that can alter the consciousness may be used by the Adversary to gain entrance into and control of a human life.

11. Telekinesis

The movement of physical objects with no visible cause, or the creation of sights, smells, and sounds with no visible cause. Note, though, that this has been successfully faked many times in the past, using a variety of techniques. Don’t be too quick to ascribe such phenomena to the demonic; investigate carefully. A person with a split consciousness may be faking it and then not remember, when

another “side” is present, that they have done so. However, once the phenomenon of telekinesis is found to be genuine, the odds that there is a genuine demonic presence in the situation are pretty good. One piece of flying crockery is worth ten sudden rages when trying to diagnose a victim's problem.

12. Changes to the Immediate Environment

In some of the case histories, especially when a locality is infested as opposed to a person, members of the exorcism team will occasionally report sudden coldness in a highly localized area of the room in which the rite is taking place. This is often something more “measurable,” documented by parapsychological teams and “ghostbuster”-type researchers. It is also easier to discount or attribute to sources more physical than metaphysical. The usual hypothesis of the unbeliever for this phenomenon is that the coldness is caused by some sort of untraceable draft in the house. Another manifestation that falls under this category is a very, *very* bad smell. This is sometimes described as having come directly from Hell. Decomposition, offal, dung, and other disgusting adjectives have been used to describe the sensation. Often at the successful conclusion of an exorcism, one of the signs given is a most appealing floral scent, sometimes described as what “the Gardens of Heaven” must smell like. Background sounds such as animals or screams or voices might also be noticed.

13. Increased Sexuality or Sexual References

It should be noted that several psychological illnesses may manifest this symptom, too. One should not be too quick to assume that just because a once-prudent person is spouting sexual material with great enthusiasm that there is necessarily a demonic cause. However, there is often a sexual component to the actions or words of the possessed person. The Exorcist, and as far as is possible the whole team, should not react when this symptom presents itself, because it can be something of an unnerving experience. Often it is designed only to do just that: disturb and get a rise out of the Exorcist. He and the rest of the team should not fall for the bait.

14. Absence of Normal Social Graces

This symptom is manifest by the deterioration or absence of normal, acceptable social behavior. A Biblical example of this is the Gerasene demoniac. *For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs.*⁹⁷ In addition to going about naked, other embarrassing social manifestations may serve to drive the person away from others into solitary life, where help cannot easily be found. This symptom might include lack of hygiene or coprophilia.

15. Possessing “Hidden” Knowledge

The victim knows and states information to which they could not possibly have had access. Knowing details of the exorcist's childhood, pet nicknames, scientific data

⁹⁷Luke 8:27

beyond the age or mental capacity of the victim. An example might be a possessed child discussing advanced physics, a victim describing the exorcist's old college dorm room in detail, etc. This too is one of the strongest signs of possession. It should be given great credibility and weight once it is shown not to be trickery.

16. Change in Physical Appearance

This symptom is harder to verify objectively, but some reports have been made to the effect that the victim of possession “looks different” than they did before. This is quite apart from the change in appearance caused by poor hygiene, clothing differences, or lack of sleep. The face somehow “changes,” and the victim, often in ways hard for the viewer to articulate, seems to appear in a way sometimes described as “rougher,” or “dark,” or a number of other unflattering descriptions. Note, though, that it is rare but not unheard of for a person's appearance and demeanor to change, at least temporarily, for the *better* following possession. Once the struggle with “letting the demon in” is over, the person may actually feel some relief from the conflict and their appearance might reflect that.

16. New Abilities or Skills

A sudden ability such as musical, computer, craftsmanship, or work skills which the person did not have before and has had no reasonable source of gaining these skills. Sudden beautiful or horrific carvings or paintings, showing a skill with the medium, should be held with suspicion. This is especially true if the subject matter is blasphemous or of “evil” appearance.

Observation

The Exorcist should not rely on the accounts of others before deciding if an exorcism is warranted. It is incumbent upon him to verify the case with his own eyes insofar as is possible. However, he must also be aware that one of the most common tactics used by demons to avoid a dramatic confrontation is to lay low and pretend not to be there. In the perverse way that house pets only perform a trick when no one is watching or children speak their first words until the parent tries to show it off to grandma and grandpa, so often demons will manifest dramatically to only one person or family, and rarely in front of a skeptic. This accomplishes two things: the tactic keeps the demons out of view of those who are able to challenge it in the name of Christ, and it serves to undermine the credibility of the witness so that no one around them believes that they are really experiencing something. This, more than any other factor, has helped to tear apart families who are victimized by possession or a spirit in their house. Those who do not see anything amiss feel that the witnesses are either making it up or losing their minds. Those who do see manifestations are offended when no one believes them and may develop a persecution complex. They feel afflicted as much by isolation and skepticism than they do by the demon itself. They may even be accused of being the cause of any damage done by spirits.

With this in mind, the exorcist must be careful to walk the fine line between giving a beleaguered person the benefit of the doubt, and not falling for a hoax perpetrated by a sympathetic “victim.” To that end, the exorcist himself must observe and test to the point that he feels convinced one way or another.

Religious Provocation

But when the demon is “laying low” and seems unwilling to manifest itself, what can be done? This is where the technique called “Religious Provocation” comes into play. As has been mentioned before, demons may react violently to the name of Jesus and things associated with Him. As humans can be provoked to a point at which they cannot bear to keep their mouths shut, so also a demon might under some circumstances be “flushed out” by religious provocation. They *hate* God and things dedicated to Him. There are case histories in which the possessed react violently to the presence of a cross, prayers, or statements concerning Jesus. In Malachi Martin’s *Hostage to the Devil*, one particularly bothersome demon was grinding down its human host and trying to get him to assent to “let me in,” in other words to agree to possession. (More about this “wooing” by the demon will be said later.) The host, under the pseudonym “Jamsie” in the book, had been told by a priest named Father Mark that demons do not like the name of Jesus Christ, and that he could get some relief from the constant onslaught by irritating it right back using the Name. The demon would appear to Jamsie at various times, calling itself “Uncle Ponto.” The following exchange recorded by Martin is an example demonstrative of this tactic:

The sight of that gash Ponto passed off as a smile roused Jamsie’s anger again. He could not restrain himself. “You’re the son of the Father of Lies!” he shouted poisonously at Ponto. “That’s what Mark said Jesus called him . . .” Jamsie’s ears were split by a high pitch scream from Ponto. “DON’T!” Ponto shouted. “Don’t mention that person’s name in my presence. Don’t mention that!” Ponto’s queer face was contorted in utter misery . . . All Jamsie could think of was the counterstratagems Mark had tried to teach him that evening. “Jesus,” he muttered under his breath. Then he began to spell the word out letter by letter. “J-E-S-U-S, J-E-S-U-S, J-E-S-U-S.” About 20 times. Next he spelt the name out by running down the alphabet from A to J, from A to E, from A to S, from A to U, from A to S. Then he started all over again . . . The internal pressure started to lessen. He could breathe again. . . . “Jamsie,” came the horrified squeak of Uncle Ponto. “You know I don’t like that. I don’t like that at all. You know very well. I can’t stand that. Stop it this minute, or I can’t go on . . . My friends and relatives won’t like this at

all,” squeaked Ponto . . . He did not know why that name disturbed Ponto. But Jamsie laughed from sheer relief nearly all the next 32 miles.⁹⁸

This “Ponto” is a bit different from most demons encountered in exorcisms, but the reaction to the Name of Jesus Christ is often the same. There are even accounts of the demons begging for mercy and relief from the discomfort and irritation they show at the name of Jesus.

This distaste for the things of God can be used to an exorcist’s advantage in diagnosis by provoking the demon, if one is there. Getting the alleged victim to pray has been particularly effective. Even if that doesn’t happen, taunting and testing with the name of Jesus has shown to be most useful in getting demons to reveal themselves. Commanding it in the name of Jesus Christ to reveal itself, the application of anointing oil or water, and the presence and physical application of a cross or copy of the Scriptures may also have the desired effect. It is important to remember, though, that a person who is (knowingly or not) producing the symptoms themselves may react this way too if they think that a reaction is “expected” of them.

The late Walter Martin was involved in the exorcism of a teenage girl in southern California during his ministry. He was accompanied to the girl’s house by a Christian psychologist who did not believe in the existence of demons. They had a perfectly calm chat with her after which Martin asked if they could pray together. She pleasantly agreed. He stood behind her and prayed, with his hands on her shoulder. He commanded the demon to manifest itself. He felt a shaking and when he looked down, the girl had her fist jammed into her mouth so as to make speech impossible. The psychologist lifted her eyelids only to discover that her eyes were rolled far back into her skull. From behind, Martin quietly produced a cross and brought it close to the girl. She took the fist out of her mouth and screamed that it hurt, demanding that he take it away. The psychologist, shaken, said, “How did she know? She can’t possibly see it!” Martin replied, “No, but *they can!*” In this case, Martin was able to verify the presence of a demon by provoking a textbook example of hyperaesthesia. She could not possibly have seen the cross, facing the other way with her eyes rolled up into their sockets; yet she was able to perceive it, and the demon was so irritated by its presence that it gave itself away, and a successful exorcism was conducted.

Father Gabriele Amoth, Roman exorcist whose life and ministry is recorded in the fascinating autobiography *An Exorcist Tells His Story* (see bibliography) has recorded instances of clothes, having been blessed without the knowledge of the alleged victim, causing great discomfort and strong reaction

⁹⁸Martin, Hostage to the Devil, 253-254

when put on. Baptismal water, if available, may serve well. Anything that is dedicated to the use and service of the Lord may work. Often when it is a place rather than a person that seems to have a demon, there is little else *but* religious provocation that will reveal the presence of a spirit.

The Interview

The victim and, if possible, members of the victim's family, should be interviewed by the exorcist. Any information gleaned should then be added to anything he himself sees and any information the victim's pastor can contribute should all come together to help the exorcist make a decision.

In the interview (more than one, if necessary), the exorcist has to evaluate the credibility of the witnesses, the accuracy of the accounts, any agendas held by anyone in the process (including himself!) and the religious history of the person in question. His main goal should be to find out what the victim may have done or left undone that allowed the demon entrance into the life. Were they involved in occultic activity? Is there a substance abuse or violence problem in the home? Was there open idolatry or Satan worship going on? Does the family have a history of spiritism or necromancy? These and many other questions should be answered before any decision is reached, much less any exorcism performed. There must also be similar interviews with members of the family and relevant friends whenever possible.

At some point in the interview process, the interviewer may want to offer the victim an opportunity to sign a consent form. Although the consent of the victim is not, strictly speaking, necessary for a successful exorcism, obtaining signed consent may prevent a multitude of legal problems in the future. In this litigious society, people sue other people not only for real, but also for perceived, offenses. Christians have been accused of everything from religious oppression (just for having a Bible on their work desk) to assault to psychological and emotional abuse just for telling people that they will go to Hell if they don't avail themselves of the salvation won for them by Jesus Christ. The exorcist may wish to have a legal professional examine or suggest a consent form. In this way, it may be possible to head off any attacks from a legal venue. After all, if Satan is not above the cruelty of possessing children to torture the saints of the Most High, he certainly isn't above using lawyers!

One final thought in the diagnosis process: there are three things which will serve the exorcist both in the long run and the short run. These are *documentation, documentation, and documentation*. The exorcist must go out of his way to clearly document the interviews, question answers, any phenomena present, and keep a careful, detailed case file on the victim. This will not only protect him should unfair accusations arise, it can also help the person victimized to recognize patterns of behavior that may put them at high risk for possession.

This file would include perhaps a journal or log kept by the victim(s), a chronological list of events, and any photographs, recordings, or videos taken of both the interview and any incidents connected with the case.

Making The Final Decision

Once the diagnosis process has been completed and as much data as possible has been gathered, it is time to prayerfully weigh it all together and come up with an answer. Though general guidelines may herein be given, the exorcist will always be smart to rely on the leadings of the Lord, his own good sense, and advice from others he trusts insofar as victim confidentiality allows. Each case will be different and should be treated individually, within a broad framework of guidelines.

One caveat: in *The Exorcist*, Father Karras requests permission from the bishop to perform an exorcism. He has been recommended to the family by their psychologists, who do not believe that the girl is possessed, but believe that *she believes* she's possessed. They suggest that an exorcism might have the power of suggestion, and the girl might come to *believe* that she's been freed. In other words, curing a psychosomatic "possession" illness with a placebo exorcism. Father Karras himself is not convinced that the girl is possessed, but suggests the exorcism anyway because it fits the criteria for the ritual, which criteria he also doesn't believe in. He soon learns he was wrong, to everyone's detriment. There should be *no* circumstance in which an exorcist performs an exorcism if he does not believe there is a real demon present. Exorcism is not to be used as a placebo or for its power of suggestion. The authority to exorcize demons is a gift of grace given by the Lord Jesus Christ to the Church. It is not to be "pretend performed" because a highly suggestible person might believe it and think themselves cured. That is as despicable a blasphemy as faking a communion so that the distraught sinner might *believe* they've been forgiven. Sin is real, and the forgiveness and grace offered in the Lord's Supper is real. Demons are real, and the deliverance from these creatures in exorcism is real. If the exorcist goes through the process of diagnosis carefully and prayerfully, and in his heart does not believe the person to be possessed, it would be a gross blasphemy to go through with the Ritual. (This is not to say that parts of the Ritual may not be used to *diagnose* possession, to provoke the demon into revealing itself, if its presence is yet unproven. That is a different matter, and a proper use of the gift of exorcism in the process of diagnosis when there is uncertainty.) Play-acting at exorcism, even if one's motives are to help the "victim," is to cheapen the gift of deliverance. If there is no demon present but the person shows disturbing symptoms, they need *real* Christian counseling, not a *fake* exorcism.

Having said all this, generally there are three basic questions to be answered in order to make an informed, biblically-based decision.

1. Is there genuinely a demon present? Weighing all the evidence, the exorcist must decide if the victim's problem is a hoax, purely psychological, both psychological and demonic, or simply demonic. Not everything that looks like a demon actually *is* a demon. Much of the Church refuses to see a demonic presence where one exists, and much of the rest of the Church sees them where they are not. The exorcist must be careful to guard against both errors.

2. Does the exorcist believe that God is both willing and able to free the victim?

Before you say "Of course!" too hastily, remember this: it is one thing to assent to the existence of demons and the power of God intellectually in the safety of one's own home or church; it is quite another to *act on* that faith with the full assurance that He can and will take on this ancient power and win. Fear is not an unreasonable reaction to a demonic presence, even for an experienced pastor or missionary. For that matter, a certain amount of fear for what a demon could do to a person if permitted is probably a good thing. But that fear must be expressed in a healthy respect for the Adversary's power, not in his ability to overcome the Lord Jesus Christ. Fearing the power of the demon is understandable. Fearing that God is not *more* powerful makes you vulnerable. Think of the exorcist as a frightened and timid rabbit, cowering behind a tiny bush out of sight of the hunter and his dogs. Terror-stricken though he may be, the rabbit instinctively knows that if he steps beyond the cover of the bush, he is dead. If he stays under the protective canopy where he cannot be seen, he will survive. Similarly, a Christian may be afraid of the power of the Wicked One, but the moment he bolts from the protection of God and tries to escape injury or attack on his *own* power, he is vulnerable. Little can prepare a pastor or missionary for the first time he encounters a real live demon. If he is not grounded in faith that God will overcome, he has no business conducting an exorcism in the first place.

3. Will the exorcist commit to seeing this ordeal through to the end? An exorcism may not take very long at all, or it may take several sessions over a long period of time. Part of this is an expression of the will and mercy of God, part of it is a function of the number and strength of the demons, part of it a function of the training and experience and wisdom of the exorcist, and part of it is wholly unpredictable. It is better to never start an exorcism than to start one and leave off halfway through. The exorcist must be willing to put in the necessary hours and trouble to free the person. Even if a pastor took years to conduct an exorcism, with much time and breakage and lost sleep and fear and emotional distress, what is that compared to the eternal disposition of a victimized soul which can end up either in the arms of God or the depths of eternal Hell? One single soul *is* worth all that. Jesus died for the whole world, which means He died for each *person* in that world. If the Lord of the Universe found the victim worth living and dying and rising for, he or she is certainly worth some trouble to a pastor serving the Lord. And even if they see the actual Rite through to its end, some pastors, when they minister to

people, dust off their hands at the conclusion of a crisis and leave the person to fend for themselves. Whenever possible, an exorcism *must* be followed up with evangelism, education, and Christian growth, or "*the final condition of that man is worse than the first.*"⁹⁹ If the exorcist himself is not able to give long-term pastoral care, then the pastor or other qualified person(s) should take up the task. Anyone conducting an exorcism and then never bothering to make sure that pastoral care is being given is irresponsible.

If these three questions can all be answered in the affirmative, then an exorcism is probably warranted.

Pre-Exorcism Counseling

Whenever possible, the pastoral care of both the victim and his or her family should begin the moment the genuine nature of the problem is ascertained. Comfort must be given, but not false comfort. Sometimes the over-worked cliché "tough love" is appropriate here. A person needs to be told what their problem is and how dangerous the situation in which they now find themselves really is. The exorcist should impress on the victim with great force the fact that "this (whatever it may have been) in your life caused the possession; if you continue on in it, you will end up in even worse shape than you are in now." As noted above, when the person exorcized continues on in the activity which is believed to have caused their possession, Jesus warns that the second instance will be worse than the first. Remind them that, no matter how bad they may feel from time to time and how much distress they are in both emotional and spiritual, that it will be many times worse if the problem recurs. The only 100% sure prevention of this re-infestation is Jesus Christ as Lord of the person's life. Let them know from the outset that while they have been given the freedom to walk away from the offered grace of God, to do so would result in much more pain. God may extend His grace two, ten, a hundred times; but it is possible that there will come a time when willful disobedience will result in such a bad demonic possession that something could go horribly wrong. Failed or botched exorcism, no matter whose fault, can result in injury, pain, physical death, or insanity.

Having said all this, the situation is not an opportunity for Law but for Gospel. Once the dangers have been impressed upon the victim, they should be made to understand that *no* demon, not even Satan himself, can stand in challenge to Jesus Christ and His power. The authority to use that power against Satan has been given to the Church. The exorcist is trained and will, by virtue of the power of Jesus, engage the demon successfully. Remind the patient that it is not the holiness or obedience, even the Christianity, of the exorcist; it is Jesus. It's all

⁹⁹Matthew 12:45

about *Him*.

The patient (assuming that there are lucid moments in the situation in which the person can listen and understand) may be made to realize that the Lord Jesus, He who wields this power and even created the Universe, is willing and able and ready to use it *for their benefit* even though they may have sinned grievously. There may be a temptation to beat the victim over the head with Law here in reminding them that they made the bed, and now they are the ones who have to lie in it. But this temptation should be avoided, once they grasp the idea. At that point, broken by the weight and consequences of their own sin, it is time for Gospel.

Many people, crushed by the weight of their own guilt, will not even wish to pray to God under such circumstances, feeling that He cannot love one who has done what they have done. I have heard broken sinners absolutely unable to ask forgiveness, protesting, “But *I’m* different! What I have done is so bad He can’t ever forgive *me!*” In that situation occasionally two things have proven useful.

The first is an appeal to the humility that they may be feeling for the first time in their lives. This humility makes them see their sinfulness more clearly than perhaps ever before. It may serve to remind them that their belief that Jesus can cleanse anyone of sin *except them* is sheer arrogance. Paul committed mass murder. Peter denied even knowing Jesus. Many blessed Christians committed the most terrible of blasphemies before they were saved. What makes *them* so special?! One has to have a pretty high arrogance to assume that they are strong enough in their sin to stop Jesus from keeping His word. If He could save Jeffrey Dahmer, Leonid Brezhnev, Golda Meir and others before they died (and He did!) then whatever the victim has done Jesus is certainly big enough to save *them*.

The second is to *taste and see that the Lord is good*.¹⁰⁰ By this I mean that the victim may be convinced that Jesus would never forgive them enough to deliver them from the demonic affliction that may have ruled them for many years. The person ministering to them can say in this situation that, “Jesus wants to *show* you He loves you. If He delivers you from this demon by His power, that will be proof positive that He cares for you and wants you to be saved. If He didn’t care about saving you, He wouldn’t bother to free you from His enemies.” When one takes the Lord Jesus Christ at His word, one is never disappointed. Don’t phrase it in a “Let’s see what Jesus does” way, but rather communicate the idea that “He *will* free you by His power, and that proves His love for you.”

Sometimes in the sheer drama and excitement of a genuine exorcism, the purpose of such a thing is temporarily forgotten. Pure human nature, of course, though somewhat understandable in the heat of the moment. Yet it should never be far from mind that the reason Christ gave His followers the authority to act in His

¹⁰⁰Psalm 34:7

name and use His power in exorcism is to free one of God’s precious creations from the victimization by another. Exorcism is a kind mercy to the victim, not a spiritual high for the exorcist. Exorcism was given so that the suffering of people (note that the term used is not “innocent victims;” no one is an innocent victim before God when it comes to sin) might be alleviated even though none of us deserve it. Exorcism, like grace or like salvation itself, is not merited. No one, not even a small child fooled into possession by the lying spirit of a Ouija board, “deserves” deliverance. So when Jesus Christ offers it to the victim in question, that deep Gospel fact should be accentuated to them whenever possible. Jesus Christ will set them free from Satan. He promises His believers that when we call upon Him, He will give us victory in direct confrontations with demons. Stand on that promise, believe it, and communicate that belief to the victim. Let them *taste and see that the Lord is good*.

PART THREE: EXORCISMS and LITURGIES

Types of Exorcism

Generally speaking, there are two types of exorcism: *liturgical* and *extemporaneous*. The liturgical exorcisms are based on a formal, standardized, pre-written liturgy. They often go back hundreds of years. These include, of course, the *Roman Ritual*, the forms called “Exorcism and Blessing of a Place” and “Exorcism and Blessing of a Person” put out by the Anglican church in 1972, the Mozarabic and East Syrian Rites, and exorcisms in the First Prayer Book of Edward VI.

The extemporaneous exorcism is done without resorting to a written liturgy, and has somewhat facetiously been called the “Protestant Freestyle” approach. It is often done by Protestant non-liturgical traditions who have an institutional discomfort with established liturgies.

The benefit of using a liturgy is that there is little chance of making any mistake unless it is contained within the pages of the rite. It cuts down on the chances of giving the demon an opening. It may also prevent the unfortunate bravado that can sometimes come with a surge of feeling power, and can result in injury or death. There is, however, a major drawback, and that is that there may be a temptation to ceremonialize, trivialize, or even idolize the ritual. While it is true that in exorcisms, generally the more things reminiscent of Jesus Christ the better, it is also a danger that tradition may be substituted for the Word of God and for prayer. It is easy to become theatrical if a person of intemperate nature uses the liturgy. All of these are objections to liturgies in general, but that is not a fight within the scope of this book.

An extemporaneous exorcism can “cut through the red tape,” getting directly at the heart of the matter: the identification, numbering, and expulsion of the demon(s). After all, the argument goes, Christ Himself did not use a prepared liturgy; apparently, neither did the apostles. Therefore it is not only unnecessary, it is a detriment to substitute the traditions of men for the power of the Living God. While this is an argument for which the author has some sympathy, like any other it can be taken too far. There are no guidelines in an extemporaneous exorcism; therefore, the burden is entirely on the shoulders of the exorcist. *He* must remember the major parts of an exorcism. *He* must not make a mistake. *He* must keep his wits about him and remember at all times and with perfect clarity what he is doing. Unless he has an awful lot of experience, the risk may be too high to risk not having *some* form of written guide and prayers.

Both extemporaneous and liturgical exorcisms are also of two general kinds: the exorcism of *persons* and the exorcism of *places*. Though the actual exorcism of both are similar, there are greater difficulties involved in a place exorcism and greater dangers in the exorcism of a person.

In the exorcism of places, there may be a tougher time telling whether or not there is a case of possession. There is no victim who can be asked or evaluated. However, if there weren't *some* indications up front, most exorcism of places

would not be requested. Items may move around the house, things jump off the walls, unexplained electrical phenomena, strange smells and disturbing noises, particularly harsh nightmares and the strange behavior of animals may be indicators of activity in a house. There is, of course, a very strong need for exorcism if apparitions, clearly paranormal sounds, or telekinesis are experienced. Remember, though, one of the cruel things demons do is to only manifest to one or a few people, making the others in the household doubt the words of the others. This can cause a rift between family members. In the famous Pennsylvania case of Jack & Janet Smurl, documented in the book and movie *The Haunted*, this is precisely what happened. It almost tore the family apart. The demon may also choose to keep a low profile when the exorcist or a clergyman come over to evaluate the situation.

At this point, the technique called “religious provocation” may be helpful. In order to “flush out” the demonic presence, it must be poked and prodded and inflamed until it reveals itself. The Roman Catholic exorcists often use this technique by going from room to room and pronouncing blessings, issuing challenges (which must be done with care not to violate the injunction in Jude 8-9 on slandering celestial beings), and asking God to make plain any spirits that are there. Sooner or later, the demon will not be able to contain itself and will make clear its displeasure. As for how long to keep this up, that will have to be left to the discernment of the exorcist.

It is also more difficult in the exorcism of places to tell when the exorcism has been successfully concluded. Sometimes there is a dramatic crescendo followed by a feeling of peace. However, this may be genuine or it may be deception on the part of the demon. Some of the signs that the exorcism of a place is finished may be subjective, so again the exorcist must use his discernment.

1. Sense of Peace

The exorcist, the victim, and other people may report a sense of well-being or peace. A previously-noted feeling of evil or oppression may be gone. As this is highly subjective, the separate questioning of people present such as “What are you feeling now?” should be asked. Use care not to make the question leading, which can elicit the desired response which might be more due to suggestibility than success. Questions like “Do you feel that?” or “Are you feeling the same sense of peace that I am?” should be avoided.

2. Crescendo of Activity Followed by Calm

Some case histories include accounts of a sudden violent burst of poltergeist activity and, in the case of possessed people, a more violent bucking or screaming of a previously-unknown level. Be mindful that this may be a sham attempt by the demon to fool the exorcist into thinking that the possession is over. Religious provocation may be in order here.

3. Change in Victim’s Ability to Participate

The Apostle Paul said that persons cannot acknowledge the lordship of Jesus Christ if they are not filled with the Holy Spirit: *Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.*¹⁰¹ Thus a person who is not possessed is able to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ, which is something no demon will do unless absolutely cornered and defeated. Usually by the time a demon admits that Jesus is Lord, they are on their way out. Therefore getting the victim to the point where they can pray to “The Lord Jesus Christ” is an important goal. “Coming to the Lord” or “choosing Jesus” or “making a decision for the Lord” are all signs that the exorcism is over, because it means that God has *already* created faith in that person and freed them. This is a point of contention between some Protestant groups. However, the Scripture is clear that no one can make a “decision for Jesus” unless God has *already* made faith in that person:

*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.*¹⁰²

Thus if someone “comes to” Jesus, the Father has already called them and empowered them to do so. So if this point in an exorcism has been reached, the person may well have already been delivered.

4. Pleasant Aroma

In the book *Hostage to the Devil*, Malachi Martin notes this phenomenon in one of the exorcisms. This is taken by Catholic exorcists to be a sign of the presence of holy angels and the absence of demons. The thinking is that demons do not value anything of beauty, and are known to create stench when present. Thus if a floral smell is perceived, it is said to represent the absence of the demon and the participation of angels. However, one should be on the lookout for counterfeit signs, and this one seems like it would be an easy one for demons to duplicate.

5. Receding Sounds

Sometimes a defiant scream or the receding sounds of clamor accompany the last moments of an exorcism. As they are flung out by Jesus Christ, there may be an audio sensation of dwindling or receding sound.

The Use of Consecrated (Sanctified Objects)

Some objects are set aside (sanctified, consecrated) for a holy or sacramental use, and these things seem to have a deterrent, or at least a disturbing,

¹⁰¹1 Corinthians 12:3

¹⁰²John 6:44-45

effect on demons during exorcism. Communion implements, crosses, and other physical objects used in worship fall into this category. There is nothing in the nature of these objects that has power over spirits. It is because these things are specifically dedicated to the use of the Lord, rather than mundane or household duty, that evil spirits hate them and often react violently to their presence. It is what these things stand for and represent, rather than what they are. Imagine the revulsion caused by a swastika painted onto a synagogue: though the graffiti has no power in itself, people would avert their eyes, express disgust at the sight of it, and be apprehensive in worship until the offending object was removed. On some level, this is the kind of effect some items have on demons, because they are set apart for the Lord's use.

The use of these *consecrata* (objects which have been "sanctified" or "set apart" or "reserved for God's purposes") has been part of a large number of exorcisms. Most especially, consecrata are used in Roman Catholic and Orthodox rites, though Protestant exorcisms sometimes make use of them. (In the context of Catholic and Orthodox exorcisms sometimes these objects are called "sacramentals." However, because doctrinal baggage the term "consecrata" is suggested as an alternative.)

Three items are most commonly used as consecrata in exorcism. These are water (so-called "holy water")¹⁰³ salt, and oil. In addition to these things, a cross or crucifix, the *action* of crossing a person's forehead or heart, and the bread and wine of the Eucharist are used, the latter two mostly in Roman Catholic exorcisms.

Is it proper to use consecrata, and if so, what good do they do? This is a thorny issue. On the one hand, there is little guidance from the New Testament which neither explicitly condones nor explicitly forbids such things. On the other hand, this proves nothing as there is little guidance on how to conduct *any* exorcism (or baptism or communion, for that matter) in the New Testament. (There are accounts of these things *being* done, but no explicit instructions on *how* to do them. That was left up to the Spirit and the Church. If that were not true, there'd be no debate at all over "sprinkle, dunk, or pour" or "wine or grape juice." Perhaps it is because, to God, the important thing is that these things be done, not the minutiae of how and when. For example, the Didache¹⁰⁴ offers a best way to do baptism—a cold running river—but almost any situation will do so long as the baptism gets *done*.)

¹⁰³“Holy water” is a misnomer. It is not the water that is holy, but the God who sanctifies it. However, perhaps the term should be retained until a consensus for more descriptive one comes along.

¹⁰⁴Didache 7:1-3

Those who believe that the use of such sanctified objects is not improper¹⁰⁵ sometimes cite the passages in the New Testament where contact with inanimate objects such as Jesus' clothing¹⁰⁶ and Peter's shadow¹⁰⁷ brings healing. But this is not exactly on point.

Herein the general principle of exorcism applies: when the Scripture does not provide a clear-cut answer one way or the other, consult the case studies and early Church history for examples or a consensus. In this instance, there is some guidance. Though some such as Tertullian give mixed signals,¹⁰⁸ there is a surprising amount of agreement among the case histories and early sources. This consensus indicates that early exorcisms responded, and modern cases will likely respond, to consecrated objects. Specifically, the application of these items can help in diagnosis and exorcism both.

During exorcism, the application of a sanctified implement seems to drive the demons nuts, even to the point of causing (so it claims) excruciating pain. Touching a cross, sprinkling with water or salt, anointing with oil can all appear to cause pain and distress to the demons. However, an exorcist would do well to remember that demons are lying spirits. They may be shamming any apparent pain. An exorcist will have to use his best judgment as to whether or not consecrata are of any genuine help.

As far as diagnosis, the secret application of a sanctified object may reveal the presence of a demon. If the person is given a seemingly harmless drink of what is actually blessed water, or eats something which unbeknownst to them contains blessed salt or oil, or is approached from behind with a cross, and reacts violently or protests, this should be considered good evidence of the presence of an unclean spirit. The Linn brothers, both Jesuit priests, cite a case in which clothes were blessed without the victim's knowledge. When he put them on, much pain and

¹⁰⁵Fr. Gabriele Amorth, Malachi Martin, The 1972 Commission of the Bishop of Exeter, Francis MacNutt et al.

¹⁰⁶Matthew 14:35-36

¹⁰⁷Acts 5:15

¹⁰⁸A.D. 210: "The flesh is signed [with the cross] so that the soul too may be fortified." A.D. 205: ". . . when you sign your bed or your body [with the cross] . . . will you not be thought to be engaged in some work of magic?"

screaming revealed the presence of a demon.¹⁰⁹ Walter Martin came up behind a suspected victim of possession with a cross, which the girl couldn't see because her eyes were tightly shut and she was facing the other way. As he was about to touch her with it, the girl screamed, "Take it away! It burns!" A psychologist in attendance, a skeptic about the possibility of possession, said, "How did she know that was there? She couldn't see it!" to which Martin replied, "No, but *they can!*" Martin humorously notes that after this case the psychologist "re-evaluated" his position on the existence of demons. "It changed his whole ministry! It only takes one experience with the Holy Spirit, and a good shot of the Devil, and you're in business."¹¹⁰

There is hardly an account of an exorcism or exorcist which does not mention either the use or the presence of a cross. (It doesn't seem to be important to favor an empty cross over a crucifix unless one has moral objections to the image of Christ on the crucifix touching too close to the possibility of idolatry. For many Christians, a crucifix is a reminder of the suffering—and therefore of the atonement—of Christ. For others, an empty cross is a reminder of the empty tomb and Jesus' resurrection. As long as the association in the person's mind is to those doctrines and one does not start praying to either object or praying "at" them, then the use of either item is acceptable.) Indeed, a cross is most useful for causing distress to the demon. It can be used as a visual reminder of Satan's greatest blunder: getting Jesus crucified. In doing so he thus fulfilled God's plan for the salvation of mankind and set the stage for the greatest moment in history to date: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are also accounts in the case histories wherein the application of the cross to the skin of the victim appears to cause pain to the demon. If the exorcist in a given situation sees indications that this seems to work, he would be well-advised to use every advantage he can get. As to *why* a cross seems to effect demons this way, there are a boatload of conjectures but no proof of anything. Certainly, one cannot trust what the *demon* says about it! In fact, it may not even hurt the creature at all. It could be just pretending for some reason of its own. Thus an exorcist would be wise not to rely on any one thing that seems to cause the demon difficulty.

There is sometimes a desire for an exorcist to try to commune the victim. The reasoning is that the bread and wine, meaning what they do, will force the demon out. But whether the exorcist is Roman Catholic, Lutheran or other

¹⁰⁹Linn, Matthew and Dennis, S.J. Deliverance Prayer. New York: Paulist Press, 1981. p.23

¹¹⁰Martin, Walter R. Exorcism and The Exorcist. Audiotape. Ventura, CA: Vision House, 1977

Protestant, attempting to commune the victim is not a proper goal. All three groups would have different reasons for coming to this conclusion, but the final answer is the same.

For Catholic priests, the presence of the host is discouraged because of the possibility of desecration. While a cross runs the same danger of desecration, the bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ in the eyes of the Roman Catholic church, and thus open to being defiled by the demon in a way that a cross is not. While other church traditions disagree, the Roman Catholic and Lutheran positions are that the bread and wine actually are the body and blood of Christ, albeit there are differences of opinion as to the Scriptural specifics. In any case,¹¹¹ a Roman Catholic priest who sees what *he* believes is the body and blood of Christ desecrated may be shaken up and become less effective. An orthodox Lutheran pastor would not offer Communion to one who cannot examine himself and properly confess sins and seek absolution. Certainly, a possessed person under the most tangible and direct Satanic control imaginable falls into that category. Other Protestant traditions would withhold communion from non-believers under the age of consent. In all of these cases then, but for different reasons, it is inadvisable to offer communion to the victim either before, during, or immediately after the exorcism.¹¹² A Catholic should not do it to avoid desecration of the host. A Lutheran should not do it because the person possessed cannot examine himself or herself and is not in their right mind. Other Protestants should not offer communion because the person is not under the control not of Christ but of Satan.

All of this brings us to the question of *why* these things seem to work. The reason for this boils down to one word: *sanctification*. These things are set apart ("sanctified") for a holy use, the freeing of a victim of Satan and the blessing and gift of salvation. They also have a wonderful symbolic meaning which, when remembered by the exorcist and hammered over the head of the demon, can be a blessing to the victim and a torturous and painful reminder of defeat to the interloping spirit.

The salt reminds us that we are the salt of the Earth and thus we represent

¹¹¹To be fair, it must be stated that the author's bias is toward the orthodox Lutheran position. However, that is irrelevant to the point above, which is that *whatever* one's confession, communion should not be offered during an exorcism.

¹¹²Even if it was desirable, it might not be possible: during the 1949 Sieck-Doerffler case, one session at a local church included an attempt to commune the boy. This proved to be problematic as the communion elements kept moving all over the altar when the exorcists tried to use them!

Christ as His ambassadors on Earth. It also reminds us that there is a metaphorical use of salt as representing peace amongst Christians. In addition, it can remind the demon of what is coming to it. Jesus told of the fires of torment at judgment using salt as a descriptive term:

*And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.' Everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other.*¹¹³

To prepare the water, oil, and salt, prayers are used. These include an “exorcism” of the item. Not an exorcism proper, but some of the same terminology is used. Regular tap water is fine, though for obvious reasons baptismal water may be more effective.

The commission convened in 1972 by Robert Mortimer, Bishop of Exeter, was to provide Anglican clergy with information of a sound biblical nature to their vicars who might need to do an exorcism. Among the fascinating things in their report are some of these “exorcisms” for the preparation of salt and water. The fear that the use of salt, water, or other sanctified items may result in the perception of a sort of mystical “Christian magic” is eloquently and succinctly explained in this section.

It is well, when a house or place is being dealt with, to carry out this blessing in the presence of those concerned so that they come to understand that Holy Water is not a ‘Christian Magic’ but the symbol of the prayers that are offered to God as it is blessed.¹¹⁴

This shows that it is not the salt or the water that have power in and of themselves. Rather, it is what they represent. For the salt, Christ’s presence in His body the Church here on Earth; and for the water, Holy Baptism and the living water of the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer. If a Christian sees the water used as a symbol of the baptism by which God brought him into the Church, then it will be efficacious. If a Christian expects the water to have magical powers, he will be at best disappointed, at worst injured. When the proper attitude toward consecrated objects—that they are representative of the blessings and workings of God and His grace—is understood, then they should be used.

¹¹³Mark 9:47-50

¹¹⁴Petitpierre, Dom Robert, Ed. Exorcism: The Findings of a Commission Convened by the Bishop of Exeter. Saffron Walden, Essex: Talbot Press, 1972, p.40

In the Commission’s report, first the salt is “exorcised,” then blessed with the following brief prayers:

I exorcize you, creature of salt, by the living God, so that you be fit for the healing of mind and body of all who use you. Wherever you are sprinkled may all evil and wicked thoughts depart, all works and deceits of the evil one be driven away, and all unclean spirits be cast out, by him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. Amen . . . Almighty and eternal God, graciously bless and make holy this creature of salt. May it give health of body and mind to them that use it. Let all touched or sprinkled with it be protected against all that is sinful and against all attacks of spiritual wickedness. Through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Following this, a similar pair of prayers is offered for the water. Then comes the prayer for mixing the two:

May this mixing of salt and water be done in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The entire process is finished with:

Almighty Father, look with mercy on this your creature of salt and water and of your loving kindness sanctify it. Wherever it shall be sprinkled with the invocation of your holy Name may the attacks of evil spirits be repelled and the fear of evil be kept far away.

When properly done, then, the use and proper understanding of salt and water may be helpful in exorcism and occasionally in diagnosis. A similar process, and a similar use, is found in the sanctification and anointing of oil.

Items & Equipment Needed for an Exorcism

To be fair, it must be said that an exorcism may be successfully performed by Christians using absolutely nothing. Just a victim and an exorcist and a demon and the Savior. The Apostle Paul often did this kind of exorcism.¹¹⁵ However it must also be stated in the interest of fairness that, while demons don’t change and certainly God the Holy Spirit has not changed, in many ways things will never be what they were. This goes not only for the Church but for history in general. Paul didn’t use electricity, but we do. So exorcisms have changed, if not in their basic structure & purpose, at least in their trappings and surroundings. Some Christians would have us look back to the first century as the only legitimate source of Christian practice. Easy to say *now*; but Paul might have been able to do his job

¹¹⁵Acts 16:16-18, for example.

better and reach more people if he had used some of the “trappings” we use in modern evangelism or other Church activities. For example, an electric light for preaching at night; or a cell phone so that he could instantly coordinate efforts with other Apostles. Maybe Philip could have used Hermeneutika© to show the Ethiopian eunuch more Scriptures on the road to Gaza.¹¹⁶ God means the Church to be unchanging in *doctrine*, not in equipment and skills.

So the “newfangled” things we might use during an exorcism, the so-called “trappings” that the Church of Jesus Christ might not have used widely or for long, are not in and of themselves bad. Like anything else, they can be put to a beneficial or detrimental use. One example of this might be a pectoral cross. If the exorcist uses it to irritate the demon and remind it that it was on the Cross where Jesus won His great victory and completely humiliated the forces of darkness, then it is a very useful item. If it is there because the exorcist thinks it looks good on him and he thinks it’ll give him power over the demon, then he shouldn’t use it. The general rule, then, is this: if an item is distinctive in its association with Jesus Christ and His power, or used to represent the Gospel and remind us of salvation or biblical doctrine, its use is permitted (though not mandatory). The exorcist will have to use his best judgment as to whether a given item will be included or not. *None* of these items are “necessary” for a successful exorcism. A better word might be “useful.” New items such as those listed here are trappings in the true sense. The only necessary thing for a rightful exorcism is the Word of God.

Once the proper understanding of any “new” item and its use is reached, then the exorcist can begin to compile a few things which might be of assistance. While it might be a good thing to keep a few of these in one place so that--God forbid the need arises--they can be found, we are not talking here about some sort of “Doctor Van Helsing--*Vampire Slayer!*” handy-dandy exorcism kit. (One exception would be if an exorcist has been working on a particular case and he might be called on a moment’s notice, and the confrontation has either already begun or is imminent.) Avoiding making a full-blown “Exorcism Kit” might be a good thing for a couple of reasons.

First of all, not everything that might be handy would be feasible to put in one bag. Specifically, video and audio recording equipment can be bulky. The items could become damaged themselves, or damage something else.

Second, some of the items might need to be attended to from time to time. Batteries will need to be fresh, water might need to be changed, etc.

Third and most importantly, though, is the subject of *credibility*. There are already a large number of people who will scoff at, make rude remarks about, or

outright ridicule anything about exorcism. They will also denigrate and belittle the exorcist if given the opportunity. If they hear about an “exorcism kit” it will fuel the fires of flippancy. No exorcist needs this. If he is going to assemble anything together in order to be prepared, it should be unobtrusive, low profile, and put away somewhere.

Now that all this is said, if the exorcist has been given the grace and mercy of God to be able to prepare, then the following items may be of use. Be aware, though, that demons *do not* like things to be used for God’s purposes. A \$500 video camera which has been sanctified for the Lord is going to be every bit the object of attack as a \$2 metal cross from a five-and-dime store—but harder to replace.

Scripture. The Scripture is of course the first item to be present. It is the first line of defense and the best weapon. A sturdy copy which can withstand being thrown around the room is best. As long as it is a faithful translation, the version is not as important.

Liturgy. A prepared liturgy (or notes if a liturgy will not be used) is advisable. In the heat and stress of the exorcism, no chance should be taken that he will forget where he is or what a next step might be. Perhaps lamination to protect from damage.

Crosses and Clerical Vestments. A fairly good-sized cross for each member of the team is good to have. It reminds one and all whose side the paltry humans are on. In addition, crosses cause demons distress. As Walter Martin put it: “I found out demons don’t like [big crosses]; and whatever they don’t like, that’s what I want around my neck!” Clerical attire, too, not only signifies the setting aside of those in the service of God, they also are associated with Christianity and Christ’s followers.

Restraints. If there is a possibility of the victim of possession trying to flee or assaulting members of the exorcism team or even injuring themselves, some reasonable restraints might be in order. A member of Law Enforcement who can be trusted might recommend some form of restraint that might avoid legal problems. If, in a lucid moment, the victim may be asked for their consent to the restraint should it become necessary, this would be the best course of action. This is something that should be very carefully considered. The risk of injury (which is very possible during an exorcism) should be weighed against the discomfort and other effects on the victim. *Nothing* but ankle and arm restraints should be used, though. Every so often newspaper articles are written about someone dying in the course of an exorcism, sometimes from improper restraint and suffocation. This should never happen.

First-Aid Kit. In an exorcism, bites and scratches can occur. These may need to be taken care of right away, so a med-kit should be nearby.

Consecrated Objects. Salt, water, and some sprayer or device for sprinkling may prove effective to irritate the demons; and that might help make things

¹¹⁶Acts 8:30-34

uncomfortable enough on them to dislodge them.

Nourishment. If the exorcism goes on a long time and there does not appear to be any “stopping place” in the near future, some water and something like granola bars or other compact form of nourishment might be advisable. Fruit is fine, if there is no risk of spoilage. Sometimes a person, when finally delivered, may benefit from a cold drink and something small to eat until they can be more adequately attended to.

Cassette Recorder. One of the best things an exorcist can do for the present and for posterity is thoroughly document the case. This includes a small audiocassette recorder with a couple of sets of fresh batteries and an adapter. In addition, three or four blank cassettes—unwrapped and ready to go on short notice—should be nearby. In order to minimize distractions, the cassettes should be of as great a length as possible. It is also important that the tapes be factory fresh, and not re-used. This will avoid the accusation that anything found on the tapes is a leftover from an old recording. Every time a tape is changed, the first sound heard on the new tape should be an assistant’s voice giving a time check, down to the second. Thus the time check from the other side can be compared with the length of the recording so that the amount of time the recording was off can be calculated. This is very important.

Video Recorder. The same general guidelines for audiotapes as to length of tape and time markings apply to videotapes as well. But note that the camera should not be hand-held. A place should be chosen where the camera can be placed to get a good view and not constantly checked or re-focused. A sound check should be done before the Rite, and the focus should be checked as well. One final thought: please note that demons love to cause damage, either through poltergeist phenomena or getting the victim to do it for them. In either case, expensive things may be broken. This should be kept in mind.

Layman’s Prayer for Intervention

There may be occasions when a pastor or trained exorcist is not available. In such instances, a prayer may be offered by a lay person. There is precedent for this in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. In the case of imminent need, any Christian may baptize someone if no pastor is present.

It should be made clear that God gives no special measure of grace to clergy, no “special powers” inherent in the person. Though the Pastoral Office was instituted by the Lord, being a holder of this office does not make you a better Christian. Any Christian may perform a baptism, but for the sake of order it is usually done by the pastor unless he is not able or present. Similarly, the authority over demons is given to *all* the Church. However, the duty for an exorcism should be reserved if at all possible for those who are trained in the needs and dangers of the situation. (There are dangers inherent in an exorcism that are not common to

a baptism, so the precautions should be different.) However, instances may arise in which a pastor or exorcist is not present or available. In those cases, even though the layman has the *authority* to exorcise, he or she should not do so unless they also have the training. But a Layman’s Prayer for the deliverance of the victim and an end to their suffering is certainly a viable option until such time as a trained person may be brought in.

John Bajus suggested such a prayer nearly sixty years ago:

O most merciful Lord Jesus Christ, we humbly pray Thee on behalf of this afflicted person, who is troubled by an evil spirit. Thou art able to do all things, and all things must obey Thee. In answer to the prayer of the Syro-Phoenician woman, whose daughter was grievously vexed with a devil, Thou didst miraculously heal her with Thine almighty Word. Thou didst come to destroy the works of Satan. Have mercy upon this person, who is also troubled by an evil spirit. Lord, remember that thou didst cleanse this person, created in the image of God, with Thy precious blood. Remember that the Holy Ghost has sanctified him and made him a child of God. Cast him not from Thy presence; rather remember Thy mercies, which are of old. Thou, O God, art faithful, and wilt not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but wilt with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. Oh Lord Jesus, God of our salvation, strengthen him by the power of Thy might, that he may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Simply speak the word and Thy servant shall be healed. Lord Jesus, show Thy divine power with which Thou didst cast out devils, that even in this evil spirit may know that Thou rulest over all and hast power even over the hosts of hell. Hear us, O holy, almighty, eternal God; hear us, O Lord and King, for the sake of Thy great mercy and the glory of Thy name, blessed forever and ever. Amen.¹¹⁷

An updated version of a Layman’s Prayer for Deliverance, in contemporary language, is included with the Rites of Exorcism.

Why Use a Liturgy?

Those members of the Body of Christ who believe implicitly in the ability of the Holy Spirit to guide the believer in times of crisis, and who believe that the

¹¹⁷Bajus, John, in *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XV, March 1944, No. 3, pp. 164-165. Translated from the original Slovak.

more unnecessary traditions and trappings that are present the greater the chance of Phariseeism and encumbrance to the Faith, often ask the question, “Why is a *liturgy* necessary for something such as exorcism? Aren’t you falling into the same trap as the *Roman Ritual* by putting in formal word-for-word prayers and thereby quenching the movement of the Spirit?”

This is a perfectly valid question. And it is very true that excessive ceremony, even if not openly heretical, can clog the arteries of worship and growth. Many of the objections to a formal exorcism liturgy are valid, but there are benefits to a liturgy for exorcism that may not be present in other rites, ceremonies, or sacraments of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Among the valid objections is that any liturgy carries with it a temptation to embellish and over-ceremonialize and add excessive pomp in the Name of Jesus Christ. This is true, and the fact that this has occasionally happened over the last two thousand years among people claiming to be Christian cannot be denied. The *Roman Ritual* itself is a case in point—much symbolism over substance; much sound and fury, signifying nothing.

The answer to this objection, of course, is not to discard liturgies entirely but to do them properly and with a mind to the orderly worship commanded in 1 Cor. 14. To do otherwise is to throw the baby out with the bath water. In the same way that some people refuse to condone any marriage because they have seen a bad one, or when people refuse to discuss the possibility of supernatural healing from God because of the foolish charlatans on some Christian television networks, some skittish Christians wish to remove anything resembling a liturgy from the life of the Church because it is hard to do it right. So is raising children, but that doesn’t mean it should not be done at all. Indeed, a *properly-done* form of creed or liturgy goes back to the earliest days of the worship of Adonai Elohim of Israel. In Deuteronomy 6:4, the credal quality of the *Shema*:

שמע ישראל יהוה יהוה אחד:

“Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is One”

was recognized already by the first century, and practiced as such by Christ Himself.¹¹⁸ This is a pretty good example. The hymnal quality of the second chapter of Philippians is another early use of regular, fixed hymns and prayers. The first or second century Church document called the *Didache* contains the earliest form of Eucharistic liturgy extant outside of the New Testament.¹¹⁹ The Lord’s Prayer has become something of a liturgy, even to non-liturgical Protestant

traditions. When the entire congregation reads or recites the Prayer together, it becomes a liturgy. This realization should not force these traditions to abandon saying the Lord’s Prayer together but allow them to see that liturgies are not in and of themselves wrong. It is only the ungodly embellishment or misuse of them that should be avoided.

Another objection is that all of this claptrap avails nothing. In some ceremonies and times, there may be a case to be made for such an accusation. However, in exorcism the rules seem a bit different. Such things *do* seem from the case histories to have a benefit during exorcism. Demons hate and are unnerved by anything that has the slightest whiff of the Lord Jesus Christ, His service or His servants. They are bothered by “trappings” and decor which, though having no power over these spirits in and of themselves, can serve to remind them of their loss, failure, and temporal and eternal defeat. A cross, an alb, a clerical collar . . . all these things are associated with Jesus Christ and His Church. Good or bad, right or wrong, when a human sees a clergy collar on a man he or she thinks, “Christian,” whatever that means to them. They may hate or love Jesus or His people, but a collar-wearer is associated with Him. This seems to be how it also works with demons. There is no real Biblical mention of this phenomenon one way or another, but the case histories, which sometimes have little in common, often describe this phenomenon as a fact. At worst, it can’t hurt. At best, it might help. If something is believed to bother a demon and irritate and disturb and frighten it, I *want* that thing around my neck during an exorcism!

The last and perhaps most important reason for using a prepared liturgy during exorcism is that there is less chance of making any mistakes which might come from a situation of having to “ad-lib” an exorcism. The case histories are rife with examples of missteps by exorcists, resulting in failure of the exorcism at one extreme to injury and death at the other.

The 1949 Sieck-Doerffler case is a prime example of the former. Though both of the would-be exorcists were good, godly, biblically-educated men who had managed to make a correct diagnosis, they were wholly unprepared to deal competently with the situation. They tried, in the absence of a solid liturgy, to “wing it.” The effort was a dismal failure. The boy suffered for weeks longer than was really necessary because nobody had bothered to prepare a liturgy for such a contingency.

An example of the latter danger is the case of Fr. Gerald in Malachi Martin’s *Hostage to the Devil*. Father Gerald strayed from the prepared liturgy and ended up engaging the demon under his own power. His horrific injuries will not be described here for the sake of decorum, but suffice it to say that they were of a nature that they seemed designed to cause not only the maximum pain to the human body but the maximum humiliation and sense of violation to a shy and celibate priest. The exorcism had to be interrupted for several weeks while Father Gerald

¹¹⁸Edersheim, Alfred. The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah: New Updated Version in One Volume. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993, p. 572

¹¹⁹McCulley, Darrell. The Didache: A Handbook for the Body of Christ. Fresno, CA: Darrell A. McCulley, 1995. Didache 9:1-10:6

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made a painful physical and emotional recovery in the hospital.

It should be noted at this point that there are exorcists who object to the use of a liturgy on the grounds that adhering to it blindly means ignoring moments when it would be wiser to deviate from a prepared Rite. Sometimes, something will come up in the situation that requires flexibility and quick thinking. Demons are unpredictable. And though the points are well-taken, what these voices are objecting to is not a liturgy but the *misuse* or *overuse* of a liturgy. It would indeed be foolish to be so (pardon the expression) “hell-bent” on a liturgy that one failed to see what needed to be done *outside* that liturgy. Here the objection is to blind adherence for adherence’s sake, not the concept of a liturgy in and of itself. And they are quite right. Even when using a liturgy, an exorcist must be aware that there may come times in any exorcism when he must act outside the boundaries of a written ceremony. Caution and wisdom dictate that both the judicious use of a prepared rite, *and* the wisdom to know when to deviate from it, be components of a wise stewardship.

The use of a liturgy is, in short, a historical heritage dating from the primitive days of the Apostolic Church. It is an advantage to the exorcist and an irritation to the demon. Properly but flexibly followed, it can prevent a foolish addition to or extemporization of an exorcism that could have serious repercussions. While a very well-trained and biblically-based person can perform a successful exorcism without a liturgy, why not take the safer and more prudent route by using one when it is possible to do so?

PART FOUR: PASTORAL CARE

Involvement of Family, Friends, and Congregation

Once the exorcism is over, the often long and difficult task of recovery begins. There is some truth to the idea that what happens now is between the recovering victim and God. It is *also* true that this path of the victim may be made much easier, and new Christian growth facilitated, by a skilled and caring pastor, a loving family, and supporting friends. A congregation which stays involved in the person's life in a loving way can also make a great difference. This is especially true if the way in which the demon wormed its way into the victim's life has a familial connection (such as a family of spiritists, or a family history of substance abuse). In such cases, the family may be unwilling or unable to help. It may be harsh to say, but in such cases if the family attempts to help in any way other than offering love, it may do more harm than good. The pastoral care-giver will have to decide this prayerfully and do his best to open doors to family involvement, or for that matter sometimes protect *against* it.¹²⁰ But in lieu of (or in addition to) family support, the pastor may seek the supervised participation of a loving and caring congregation. This could be a golden opportunity for God's people to show the love and healing care of God Himself. This kind of love can be a blessing not only to the victim, but also to the congregation itself. .

If the family wishes to keep the incident a secret, their wishes must be respected. But it might also be pointed out that demons only keep secrets when it suits *them*. If they think it will help their cause, the facts surrounding a "quiet" exorcism can be blared from the rooftops, or even by another demon during another exorcism. And of course, there's always good old-fashioned gossip. In other words, there are plenty of places for the demon to blow the secret, so maybe it's best to be honest and head off any embarrassing revelations by a pre-emptive disclosure.

Here it must be noted that there is a fine line between conceding that it is God who gives the healing and the growth, and things people can do to make such growth easier or harder. One certainly does not want to get in the way of the Holy Spirit and start trying to do His job. Nonetheless He *did* tell us in several places in Scripture that helping people grow and not hindering them is also *our* task as

¹²⁰The famous Smurl case (portrayed in the movie "The Haunted") contains an example of how family can be a hindrance. At first, the demon only manifested itself in the presence of Janet Smurl. This caused her husband Jack to doubt her and even believe she was making things up. She began to feel that he was seeing her as a liar, which made her ordeal all the more emotionally devastating. Such tactics have nearly broken up families living in infested houses. Finally, it did its activities in front of the whole family, and credibility was restored.

believers. It is God who gives the increase;¹²¹ but He has given to the Church the tasks of planting and watering. We can do it well, or do it badly. True, God can withhold growth to even the most well-tended plants if He wishes, and give miraculous growth to even those plants who have never had water at all; however, the way He *usually* does things is to give more growth to well-tended plants and less to those untended.

All this boils down to this: God is the one who will give recovery and Christian faith to the victim, as He wills. But it is for us to prepare that person as best we can to receive that growth, and do what we can to keep the blight away. The pastor must labor in love like it all depends on him, while never for a moment believing that it actually does.

Law and Gospel

Having said all this, what can be done for a person who has just undergone the most invasive, violent, and dignity-robbing experience a human can ever have? The answer, at first, is the age-old paradigm which has been the foundation of Christian ministry for two thousand years: *Law and Gospel*, separately and properly applied.

The "Law" part comes in reminding the person that what happened to them was due to human action, usually their own. Whether it happened because of gullibility, or through open rebellion, or whether a familial climate or actions of others caused it, is irrelevant. This problem was not God's fault. It was caused by some human opening the door to something he or she ultimately could not control. Most often this will be something done by the victim. Occult activities, substance abuse, idolatry, New Age or other false beliefs . . . any combination of these may have led to the affliction. Thus the first step is to point out the following vitally important fact:

Merely being freed from demons by Jesus Christ Himself is no guarantee that possession will not occur again if nothing is done to prevent it. Jesus Himself was very blunt in pointing this out:

When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, "I will return to the house I left." When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this

¹²¹So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 1 Corinthians 3:7

wicked generation.¹²²

The weight of the Law in this passage should not be minimized or soft-peddled to the victim. However bad their experience was, let them know in no uncertain terms that it'll be many times worse if it happens again. The pain, the fear, the sense of violation and injury . . . all will seem like nothing compared to a second infestation if it takes place. And Jesus makes it clear that it will be no easy going to clear out the nest a second time. Maybe He is talking about the increased difficulty of sheer numbers, or maybe He's talking about purposely making it harder to teach someone a lesson. In any case, He says that the second bondage *will* be harder to endure than the first.

What makes the victim vulnerable to a worse case of possession is that, upon its return, the demon finds the person *unoccupied*. This is where the Gospel comes in. The solution is, of course, for Jesus Christ to take up residence where a demon once dwelt. Contrary to the opinion of some exorcists, when Jesus Christ is Lord of the Manor, Satan is not allowed so much as a fold-out couch in the garage. Where He dwells, He does not share that dwelling with Evil. Thus every effort should be made to facilitate the conversion of the person. Again, the pastor or counselor *cannot* create faith in a person. A human cannot wake up one morning and all of a sudden "decide" for themselves to get, have, or exercise faith that day. Faith is not a choice or a creation of a human being—the only place faith comes from is God, as a free gift.¹²³ It can't be earned, can't be decided, can't be chosen. It is simply created in the person (entirely un-merited) by God for His own reasons, which He doesn't tell us.

We can, however, pray for it. The pastor/exorcist should ask the Lord to create faith in the former victim. And as the Lord is both true to His Word and eager to forgive and restore people to fellowship, there is no reason to think that the prayer will be in vain. When God makes a promise, it can be relied upon: *As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be*

¹²²Matthew 12:43-45

¹²³Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 12:8-9; Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:8; 6:23; 1 Timothy 1:14; 2 Peter 1:1. Faith is to be exercised, added to, contended for, grown, tended, and shown to be genuine . . . after *God* gives it to the believer. It is *not* something one "decides" to have. If a person "makes a decision for Christ," it is because God has given them the ability to do so; thus faith already exists in the person.

saved."¹²⁴

Now, the Gospel. Having let the person know that the possession was a consequence of their own actions (to varying degrees), they can now be "let off the hook" by the Gospel. There is nothing that they have done which God cannot or will not forgive. Sometimes a person who has been involved in occult or Satanic activities may feel that there are things they have done which are so heinous that God could never forgive them. This is a difficult feeling to dislodge, but the forgiveness passages in Scripture will speak more loudly and clearly to them than any other person ever could. The forgiveness of God to Moses, David, Manasseh, even Paul can be shown to them. Whatever they've done, they haven't run from God as long as Moses,¹²⁵ they haven't squandered God's favor as much as David,¹²⁶ they haven't have done as many occultic or idolatrous things as Manasseh,¹²⁷ and they haven't killed as many people as Paul did when he was a Pharisee.¹²⁸

Yet all these people were forgiven. Moses was given the incredible gift of such intimate fellowship with God that "*the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.*"¹²⁹ God said that He "*found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart.*"¹³⁰ and God even built him a dynasty. When Manasseh repented, "*the Lord was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so He brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God.*"¹³¹ The Apostle Paul was *caught up to the third Heaven,*¹³² into "Paradise. He

¹²⁴Romans 10:13, citing Joel 2:32

¹²⁵Acts 7:29-30

¹²⁶2 Samuel 12:7-9

¹²⁷2 Chronicles 33:5-6

¹²⁸Acts 26:10-11

¹²⁹Exodus 33:11

¹³⁰Acts 13:22

¹³¹2 Chronicles 33:13

¹³²2 Corinthians 12:2

*heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.*¹³³ And every Christian, even those formerly possessed by demons, will experience exactly the same things: We will see God face-to-face and be restored to fellowship with Him. He will create in us clean hearts after His own. When we confess our sins, He brings us back from eternal exile, restores us to *His* kingdom, and will even enthrone us in the New Jerusalem. We will spend eternity with Him in the Third Heaven, Paradise, where we will hear and see things that are so wonderful that they cannot even be expressed this side of Heaven. This is the Gospel of our Lord—thanks be to God.

Post-Exorcism Considerations

The very fact that Jesus Christ freed the former victim from a demon should be proof enough of His attitude toward them. If He wasn't willing to forgive and restore them, why would He bother to remove the demon? His mercy can be shown to them by the very experience of their own exorcism! They must be told, in graphic terms, what will happen to them—in life *and* afterwards—if they do not accept the salvation of the Lord. If they don't, there is nothing more you can do for them but pray. Send them on their way, to fend for themselves as best they can, because the demon *will* come back.

Once the person is freed and is given faith and thus comes to be a believer in Jesus Christ, they are no longer vulnerable to possession. What then?

There are still a lot of pieces to pick up. First of all there may still be fear on some level that another possession will take place. The victim can be reminded that there is nothing that Satan can do to them without the permission of God. As with Job, Satan is limited in what he can do a believer. God treats believers and unbelievers with different methods. For example, there is an account¹³⁴ of a believer who was a pastor—a man who should have known better. He came from a family of spiritists, and his sister was still a practitioner. He decided to show her once and for all that her Ouija Board was evil. So he sat down with her at the board and asked it questions. When they finally got down to interrogating the spirit of the board on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the Bible, the session turned violent and he was struck and thrown across the room. Of course, he was a believer; but he was using an item and performing a practice forbidden by God. So God allowed him to be struck to teach him a lesson: no matter how good your intentions, it's still a sin to engage in occult practices! Had the man been a *non*-believer, he might well

¹³³2 Corinthians 12:4

¹³⁴Martin, Walter R. Tools of the Occult. Audiotope. Ventura, CA: Vision House, 1977

have opened himself up to full demonic possession. As it was, though, God disciplined him but did not punish him. And this is a mistake the man will never make again. The once-possessed person who is now a believer can be told that they are absolutely protected by the Lord Jesus Christ. The demons *fear* and *hate* the Holy Spirit—they do *not* become “roomies” with Him!

Thus Jesus' fearsome admonitions on the subject should be taken seriously, but should hold no fear for a believer. Assure the victim of their forgiveness in Christ and their salvation and His love and mercy.

Who should do this? To whom should be entrusted the all-important task of seeing that a proper balance of Law and Gospel, mercy and forgiveness are given to the former victim at every opportunity? The “Right People.”

The first “Right Person” is, of course, the Lord. First and Foremost; Him only and above all. If the person is left an unbeliever, all the exorcist has done is to provide a moment of relief followed by a worse condition than that in which they started! The human being is constructed to hold the indwelling of a spirit or spirits. Most humans are hollow; those who are Christian are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and He will not share His house. Those possessed are filled with a demon or demons. But when a demon is cast out, if that void is not filled with the Spirit of God and faith in Jesus Christ, the exorcist has not helped but greatly harmed the victim. The moment the victim is out of immanent danger, and medical concerns are tended to, the Gospel *must* be preached to the victim.

The second “right person” is the person's pastor, or whoever is providing pastoral care to the victim. To a lesser extent, congregational leaders and lay members may also be helpful. Even if the pastor is not the exorcist (which would be very desirable if true), whoever has the regular duty of seeing to the person's spiritual growth and well-being is probably the right person for the job. For example, if a teenager has experimented with the occult and needs spiritual counseling, but has rarely set foot in his parents' congregation, it is still best if his “family pastor” works with him.

Assuming that the person accepts the Gospel, they must continue on in fellowship and pastoral care in a good, biblical, doctrinally sound congregation. Humans are social and community creatures, deriving mutual support from each other. This is especially true in the spiritual realm, where people can worship together, teach and learn from one another, and pray for and comfort one another. This is especially critical for the recently-possessed, who are weak and raw and need strengthening and protection, like new skin after an accident.

People who have gone through demonic assault are also likely in need of counseling from a good Christian counselor, even if they weren't before. They have been assaulted at the most basic level, virtually having their spirits raped. If there was need for counseling *before* the possession, so much more the reason for getting counseling afterwards. An excellent resource for pastors and counselors is

Rodger K. Bufford's contribution to Word Publishing's series on Christian counseling (see bibliography). Bufford outlines five necessary preparations for a Christian counselor who would help victims of the demonic: 1) Acknowledge that people are assaulted by demons; 2) Know the indications of demonic influence; 3) Know that false worship and sin can make one vulnerable; 4) Insure full voluntary cooperation of the victim unless they're unable to give consent; and 5) Be spiritually prepared to deal with demons.¹³⁵ Although Bufford's focus is less one of exorcism and more one of counseling, his work is extremely valuable and one of the best resources available. He outlines methods and goals of counseling which include evaluations from medical and psychological as well as spiritual points of view. He tries to maintain modern psychological concerns without compromising the truths of biblical teaching, including the sin nature of Man (a point often missed by other modern psychologists.)

Summary

These, then, are the recommended steps for pastoral counseling after a person has been freed from demonic possession:

1. The pastoral counselor must explain that the reason this terrible thing happened to them was *Sin*. They need to understand that they made themselves vulnerable, and that unless they get protection it *will* happen again, and the second time will be more violating and painful than the first. This is a moment of Law.
2. The counselor must tell them that this protection is now offered in the Lord Jesus Christ and none other. They need Someone, some Power, greater than themselves and the demon to protect them from enslavement in the future. Jesus Christ now offers to be this Power. If they reject His salvation, they *will* be possessed again, but that will be *nothing* compared to what eternity without God will be like. However, Jesus Christ now offers them this salvation, unmerited and nothing they can reach for. They can reject salvation by themselves, but can only accept it if the Father gives them the ability to come to His Son.¹³⁶ He is eager for them to have this salvation. He even works in them what they could not accomplish in themselves: faith to ask for, and receive, what He sets before them in the person of His Son. So if they are at a point where they can ask for salvation, God the Father has *already* given them the faith to come to His Son. It is His gift, not their decision. Being "good" doesn't get you into Heaven and being "bad" doesn't keep you out; all that determines Heaven or Hell is the grace of God, and they are being offered it. They can't be forced, but must be told in plain terms what happens if

¹³⁵Ibid., 180

¹³⁶John 6:44-45, 65

they do, and what happens if they don't. This is a moment of both Law and Gospel.

3. The counselor should emphasize the importance of growing in the faith, which is best done by joining an orthodox Christian congregation near their home and attending regularly. They need to grow in Christian maturity and the understanding of the Gospel and of the Bible. Good, solid, supporting and godly Christian friends may be vital to this process. Remind them that even though they have been possessed by a demon, there comes a time in the life of a mature Christian when the demons are afraid of *you*. (All Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and *He* frightens the demons; but some Christians are probably considered by Satan more of a threat than others. One humble Billy Graham preaching the Gospel is worth a million self-aggrandizing Kenneth Copelands or buffoonish Benny Hinns.)

4. The former victim may be in need of a Christian counselor to discuss a biblical understanding of what happened to them and how to prevent it from happening in the future. The counselor may wish to provide the referral to a good The effects of sin should be made clear, and also the effects of the *cleansing* of sin. This is a moment of Gospel more than one of Law.

5. Keep in touch with the recovering victim, respecting the bounds of any recommendations made by their Christian counselor. This may provide continuity and a sense of ongoing support.

6. The counselor can recommend a change in the lifestyle which may have led to possession. When we repent, Jesus Christ forgives every sin. While reaching perfection in this "new life" may not be possible, the pastor can help the victim to know that there are some actions which are consistent with the Lord's indwelling and therefore much preferred. Although a certain change in a person's life hopefully comes with conversion, extra attention should be paid to the person who has been entrapped by the demonic to make sure that the point of entry, the activity which allowed the demon(s) entrance into the victim in the first place, stops. No more substance abuse, occult activity, divination, or whatever it was can be permitted. When a Christian participates in borderline pastimes, he or she may have some urgent lifestyle changes to make. But even more pressing is the need to deal decisively with all forms of idolatry or occultism (when these were the proximate cause of their possession) and remove these things from the person's life.

Clearly these are preliminary recommendations, meant only to get the process rolling. Undoubtedly things have been left out, and maybe there are things that should have been left unsaid. Soon someone will come up with a paradigm of pastoral care better than anything mentioned above. When that happens, it should be used. However, *some* sort of pastoral care, even an imperfect one, is warranted right now. After experienced exorcists in the Church weigh in with a consensus, a gaping hole in the Church's ability to minister to people will be filled. This calls for more research and open discussion. Let those in the Church with a pastoral heart and love of the victims of Satan now step forward and tell us what to do.

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Regarding demons and exorcism, there are things we know for sure, things we suspect and for which we have evidence, things we think might be true, and things about which we're just guessing. And as much as Christendom always hates to admit it, there is a lot more territory under the flag of the latter three than we're comfortable with. One of the reasons for this is the fact that Scripture says little (but it's all solid and usable) and the case histories say much (of which much does not agree). Nevertheless, the lack of information or evidence does *not* absolve us of the responsibility to address the subject as best we can.

Perhaps the main point of this work is that we, the Church of Jesus Christ, and especially we in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, need to educate clergy and layman alike. They must be equipped to protect themselves and minister to each other. This equipping is the job of the seminaries, publishing houses, educators, and other workers. Some may feel that dealing with demons and exorcism is not a proper study for individual Christians or a Church organization. However, the first time a pastor reaches out for help because a member of his small flock is hooked on the Ouija board, the debate as to the necessity of this information should be over.

Satan is getting more active, not less. One need not be a Hal Lindsey to see that Satan *is* alive and well on planet Earth. Until now, the LC-MS has been largely unprepared to deal systematically with demonology and exorcism on an official, district- or Synod-wide scale. But we are a church strongly grounded in Scripture, recognizing the value of good, solid teaching. We have been blessed with great teachers and brilliant theologians. We have the resources to scripturally “work the problem” and then disseminate the information, not just amongst ourselves but to the entire Body of Christ. We are in a position not just to begin participating in the Church-wide discussion, but to actually take a leadership role. Once our house is swept clean and put in order, we will have the tools to deal with the problem.

So with all this having been said, what would a “house swept clean and put in order” look like?

First, it would have an education program in place to teach the laity Satan's tactics and how to oppose them. Witnessing techniques, prayer, and a standardized Synod-wide curriculum which would cut across age lines to teach young and old alike how to deal with the Occult. If we don't, Miss Cleo and John Edward and Dionne Warwick and the Sci-Fi channel and Parker Brothers' Ouija boards *will*.

Second, there would be a system in place to recognize those who are at high risk for demonic possession. We would establish intervention protocols for these potential victims, just as we would for someone at risk of suicide or domestic abuse.

Third, there would be a trained exorcist available to every parish pastor on short notice. Often demons do not give fair warning. When a situation explodes, the victim should have a qualified exorcist ministering to them just as they would

CONCLUSION

be sent for marital counseling if there were a sudden moment of crisis.

Fourth, there would be literature available for not only the Synod's members but for the Church at large, written by the top theologians in the LC–MS. We not only have a contribution to make to the debate, we are potentially in a position to frame that debate. The LC–MS has been blessed with some of the greatest godly minds in Christendom. What a blessing it would be to the Body of Christ if we had the benefit of their wisdom on demonology as we do on the Lord's Supper and Baptism!

Fifth, there would be counseling available for everyone touched by a case of possession. Just as a pastor helps his sheep through bereavement or illness, he should be able to facilitate healing from the trauma of possession.

And finally, we need to encourage *all* Christian seminaries to teach proper, balanced biblical doctrine on demons. Not just their existence, but how to deal with them, anticipate their moves, cast them out, steal back what they've stolen from our Lord, and overall just mess them up. No rolling-in-the-aisles "spirtchll wawfaih," which is more theatrics than theology. Instead, they could teach good solid biblical truths which train against sensationalism while taking seriously the reality and implacability of the Enemy.

Underpinning all this must be a firm reliance on God the Holy Spirit as the only source of strength, wisdom, and power. We may desire to roll up our sleeves and get to work, and that's admirable; but the farmer must never forget that *neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.*¹³⁷ While working hard, we must never forget that it is His work, His power, and His protection.

This materiel is presented in the hope that the Missouri Synod might officially and publicly address the question of exorcism and the demonic. We need to take preparedness and education very seriously. Our missionaries are in one of two conditions: either they already *have* conducted exorcisms in the field without training and information, or they have been placed in a situation where they *will* need to be trained in demonology and the tactics of the Adversary. They deserve more support.

Discussing demons and angels needs to be taken out of the closet and dragged into the light. It is neither shameful nor a danger to credibility to bring this subject to the fore. Indeed, it is shameful and a danger to credibility *not* to. Just because fools and charlatans openly discuss demons does not mean we should not.

So, then, where does that leave us? How do we start?

We need to shed that shame and reluctance that comes with the public discussion of demons and angels. In all the world, *only Christians* can deal with

these situations. We should step forward in front of the whole of humanity and say, "We, the Church of Jesus Christ, have the answer!" Tibetan monks have ceremonies; tribes in jungles in deep Africa deal with spirits; the cultures of the Pacific know what demons are; in most rural Appalachia, the superstitions of "things that get you" runs deep-rooted and wide; Middle Eastern legends of the djinn are ancient; Hindu gods are innumerable and varied; and malicious sprites and faeries still demand appeasement in deep forests of northern Europe. But out of all of these, *only the Church of Jesus Christ can control, command, root out, and expel the demons behind these creatures.* As a gift from the Lord God, victory over the demons is ours for the taking. We should proudly and boldly and without a flinch of embarrassment tell the rest of the world that we can bring them freedom from the demonic oppression under which their cultures have suffered for millennia. We can bring them the Word of the Master, who will make them free indeed.

It has, as of this writing, been 53 years almost to the day that Dr. Sieck and Rev. Doerffler failed in their attempt to exorcize a victim of possession entrusted to their care. But as tempting as it might be, the blame for that failure should not be laid on them. They consulted the vaults of the Synod and found them empty. They did the best they could, but they failed. They had been neither educated nor prepared. Because of that, a child who by rights should have been presented to the Lord left this place still possessed by Satan. We were not prepared. Our lamps were without oil.

May God grant that the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod never again be caught with its house out of order. With God's help, let us now pick up the broom and go to work.

¹³⁷1 Corinthians 3:7

APPENDIX A: THE EXORCISM LITURGIES

Notes on the Rite of Exorcism for Persons

1. Circumstances permitting, as much preparation as possible should be made before the Rite of Exorcism. In some instances, though, little or no preparation is possible. The Lord, however, is still the Lord; and the Exorcist and his team must trust that He will protect them throughout, and they must be careful not to attempt to engage the adversary outside of that protection. Whenever possible, a place associated with Jesus Christ should be chosen for the rite, such as a church building or seminary. Breakables should be removed, and ecclesiastical implements should be placed where they cannot be befouled by the demon in its violent disrespect for Jesus Christ.
2. Vestments and other implements are adiophora; however, any visual indication that a holy rite of the Church is taking place will serve to irritate and unnerve the adversary, reminding it of its eventual fate. This advantage may be pressed by the use of alb, surplice, stole, cross . . . anything signifying to the eye that the service of Jesus Christ is being done.
3. An exorcist must use extreme care not to unnecessarily deviate from the liturgy because it has been carefully constructed to remove anything extraneous or false. However, the exorcist *also* should be aware enough to know when it is wisest to adhere to the Rite and when it is wisest not to do so. It is a rare exorcist who has all the dangers, all the important cautions, and all the possible contingencies committed to memory, but there are some. Experience is the best teacher in this matter, along with common sense. For the safety of all involved, though, it is strongly recommended that a person with little experience in exorcism stays with the prepared liturgy.
4. At the beginning of the Exorcism especially, the demon(s) may keep quiet and “lay low,” in an attempt to trick the Exorcist into thinking either that they have gone or never were there in the first place. Thus it may be necessary to use techniques of “religious provocation” to provoke the demon into manifesting itself. The Exorcist, if he is able, may pray or address the demon in a language which he is sure the victim does not know. (Because of their association with the Church and the Bible’s languages, Greek, Hebrew and Latin may be particularly provocative and irritating to the demon.) If he then receives a reply indicating that the demon understood when the victim could not possibly have done so, the Exorcist may take this as a sign that a demon is genuinely present. Remember, though, that even when a victim does not respond in kind, this is not proof that there is no demon present.
5. Though breaks for rest and refreshment may be taken if necessary, there should never be a failure to finish the rite. In the case of the incapacity of the exorcist, the

assistant should take over and complete the expulsion of the demon.

6. In case of injury done to anyone during the exorcism, medical treatment should be given immediately unless the exorcist feels that there is more danger in stopping than in continuing. The assistant must monitor the exorcist with particular care, as he may be less concerned about his condition than he should be at the most intense moments of the rite.
7. If the victim is female, one or two strong women should be present to restrain the victim should she thrash about or attempt to flee, as these are common occurrences during exorcisms. The exorcist should allow no room for accusations of excessive force or improper physical contact. Demons may attempt sexual provocation, so to avoid the appearance of impropriety restraint should be by Christian women.
8. The demon(s) will lie. It will have no mercy on the exorcism team and give no quarter. The exorcist must be prepared to likewise not yield to entreaties for mercy or requests to be left alone. If certain phrases seem to antagonize the demon, lean on them. If one thought or prayer or threat of the exorcist seems particularly effective or upsetting to the demon, it should be used without mercy or letup. If given the chance, the demon would try to injure or kill the victim and the team, so great is its hate. If the exorcist feels that there is an advantage he must press it. The demon will make most pathetic pleas, possibly in loving or begging tones, that it is hurting or that the victim is hurting. No heed must be paid this tactic or any other. Threats and diversions, even to the revealing of deep and embarrassing secrets (true or fictitious) will be used. The demon should be commanded to speak only when addressed by the Exorcist with a command or question. Under no circumstances should anything be allowed to interrupt or end the rite until the victim is set free.
9. The Rite of Exorcism is not a contest between the exorcist and the demon; nor is it between the demon and the victim. Fundamentally, the conflict is between the *demon* and *Jesus Christ*. The exorcist must never forget this or try to do anything at all by his own ability or power, or he could be injured severely. Yet he must speak with strong authority, because that is what he has been given. It is the *believer’s authority* to call upon *Christ’s Power*; the believer in himself is powerless. There is no magical power in any particular liturgy; the Exorcist must decide if he wishes to use it or go “unscripted;” however, if he chooses the latter, he must remember all the necessary cautions and the important parts of any exorcism. If he does not know by rote what he must do and how he must conduct himself, sticking close to the accompanying Rite or another is recommended.
10. The Cross may be made over the victim, on the forehead or over the heart. Anointing oil is for the head or forehead, and the Water is sprinkled or used for making the Cross upon the victim’s heart or forehead.
11. If the spirit(s) are not immediately obedient, a prayer to God should be offered.

The Exorcist should ask God to force the demon(s) to manifest itself in an unambiguous manner (*without causing anyone injury*). The Exorcist may ask God to send angels to harass it and provoke it into revealing itself.

KEY:

- E Exorcist
- A Assistant
- V Victim
- T Exorcism Team as a Group
- + Cross Self
- + Cross Victim (or Location)
- Use of Consecrata (Water or Oil)

The Invocation

- E In the name of the Father +, and of the Son +, and of the Holy Spirit +
- A Amen.
- E Hear our prayer, O Lord
- A And let our cry come unto Thee
- E We by our own selves can do nothing
- A Only You, O God, are powerful and merciful.

The Petition

E God of Might and Power, we beg your mercy at this critical moment. Your child _____ has been afflicted and possessed by a fallen angel, a demon in service to Satan. You are patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but wanting everyone to come to repentance. Lord God, your child is perishing. We come before your holy throne to ask you to free _____ from this evil, and to grant him/her repentance and salvation. In Your gracious generosity you have promised your disciples the authority to call upon you for your power to cast out demons. We thank you for this promise, Lord, and ask that in _____ you might fulfill it now. Let no harm come to your servants, or this place, or this afflicted soul, Lord, for as long as this takes. Protect us in your might from all the tricks, attacks, assaults, lies, plans, and retaliation of the Evil One. As you put a hedge around your servant Job, so that the Evil One could not touch him, likewise surround us here in this place with the hedge through which no evil may pass. Guide us in wisdom and caution, and surround us with your holy angels. Spirit of God, please fill this place with the glory of your presence, for before you no evil can stand. Jesus said, *“the Father will give you whatever you ask in my Name.”* We ask you, Holy Father, in the Name of your Son Jesus Christ, by the promise He thus gave us, to grant this prayer.

- A Amen +

T *Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. +*

Prayer for Protection

E Lord of Hosts, King of Kings, Ruler and Creator of the Universe: though you created Mankind in your own image, compared to demons and angels we are weak and unable to defend ourselves. We do not even have the power to protect ourselves from other people; how much more are we exposed and vulnerable and helpless against the Forces of Darkness. So we come to You, Lord God, for you alone can protect us from the Evil One and his soldiers. Let us not step outside of your protection, speaking at all times in YOUR name, with YOUR authority, having been given permission to call for YOUR power. Keep us always mindful that without your protection, we would be killed by those who hate you and who hate us for being saved by you. Let no harm come to your servants, this victim _____ + and his/her family, and those who even now are praying for victory in your Name. Protect us also, Lord, from our own foolishness. Help us to be wary of and prepared for the tricks of the Enemy. If he preys on our weaknesses, please strengthen us and make us careful and wise. Expose him for the liar he is; but help us to remember that even Satan, because he is your creation, is not to be slandered but instead rebuked for his actions. As your servant St. Jude wrote, *“even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’”* But in your might, Lord, your people and your angels CAN withstand the Evil One and his demons. Lord God, please send your holy angels, angels with power and strength, to join battle with the enemy within this victim, your creation. Let them harry, harass, and worry those who have afflicted your child _____ +, that the offending spirits may find neither comfort nor rest until they depart from _____ + never to return. Lord God, let them find neither rest nor peace until they depart and leave _____ + in peace, never to return. Holy Spirit, please fill this place with your presence, and fill your imperfect servants with boldness and with your power, that we may have the tools and gifts to deal with this offending entity. Give it, we pray, pain and fear and distress until it leaves once and for all. Remind the demon, Lord, that to you every one of them will bend their knees, and their tongues will one day confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, Adonai Eloheinu, to the glory of God the Father. Remind them that even as we are spending eternity in Heaven with you, the Devil and all his demons, having been thrown into the Lake of Burning Sulfur, will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. We stand strong in the Lord, and in the power of your might. You

became human to destroy the Devil's works. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One. Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the World. The God of Peace will soon crush Satan under our feet. If we resist the Devil, he will flee from us. May we always resist him, steadfast in the faith. May we never give the Devil a foothold. We put on the full armor of God so that we can stand against the Devil's trickery. Guide, protect, defend, and comfort us, O Lord. We claim these promises in the Holy Name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

A Amen. **+**

E The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke, chapter 4: *Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people. They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority. In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, "Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are -- the Holy One of God!" "Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him. All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!"* This is the Gospel of the Lord

A Thanks be to God **+**

Addressing the Spirit(s) Present

These spirits often are quite reluctant to answer questions the first time they are asked. They will remain silent, obfuscate, lie, answer in other languages, and use every possible tactic to avoid the answers. They must be pressed with prayer, Scripture, and command in the Name of Jesus Christ. If they are obstinate, sanctified items and prayers for God to send holy angels to force the issue may be used. But these questions *must* be answered. However, engaging in other dialog and other questions gives the demon another chance to deceive. It is recommended that only these questions should be asked.

Manifestation

E Evil Spirit(s), you who occupy this creation made in the image of God: in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has out of His grace given me, an imperfect creature of flesh, the authority to use His holy Name, in that Name I command you to reveal yourself. Without causing harm to this child _____ **+**, I command you in the Name of Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, to manifest your presence without harming this child _____.

Silencing the Demon(s)

E Demon(s), you who are usurping the right to possess this child of God, I command you in the name of Jesus of Nazareth to be silent unless you are directly commanded to answer a question. When in Jesus' name I order you to answer a question, you *will* obey, for greater is He that is in me than you, who are in

_____ **+**. Jesus conquers *you*. He expels *you*. He orders *you*. He defeats *you*. He will be obeyed by *you*.

Number

E In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, God in human flesh, and by His power I command you to tell me how many of you are inside of this person.

Name(s)

E I command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom you *must* obey, and by His power which is greater than yours, tell me the names of all of you who have taken up residence inside of _____ **+**.

Entrance Into Victim's Life

E In the name of Jesus, born of a virgin and risen from the dead, I order you to tell me how you came to be in _____'s **+** life. In the name of Jesus Christ, by what practice or trickery or weakness or sin did you come into possession of this creation of God Almighty? In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who at the Cross defeated your master Satan and all of you, *Answer me!* When and how did you come to possess this person?

Exorcism

To be done with each demon by name.

E Evil Spirit, you who are called _____, in the Name of Jesus Christ I command you to leave this person! I command you in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, to leave _____ **+** without causing injury or further distress to this victim of your evil deeds, to leave without causing injury or any ill effects to this group of mere people here today who are protected by the Lord God Almighty, against whom you cannot stand. From now until you leave, I command you in the Name of Jesus Christ to cause no injury and have no effect upon any human being upon leaving. You *must* surrender to the will of God. God the Father commands you. God the Son commands you. God the Holy Spirit commands you. By His power and by the authority He gave His followers to do so, I command you in His name to leave, to depart without causing injury or any kind of damage, and *never* return. Go where God may allow you, but in the name of Jesus Christ I command you to never afflict or attend this child _____ **+** nor anyone associated with this exorcism. Your end is near, your destiny the Lake of Fire. Jesus Christ will reign forever and you will suffer eternal torment for turning your back on God Almighty. Therefore, in the Name and by the Power of Jesus Christ, the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, I command you, _____, to leave *now*.

If the spirit(s) are not immediately obedient, a prayer to God should be offered. The Exorcist should ask God to force the demon(s) to manifest itself in an unambiguous manner (*without causing anyone injury.*) The Exorcist may ask God to send angels to harass it and provoke it into revealing itself. Anything that may cause the demon fear, pain, or distress should be asked from God. In His mercy, He is gracious

enough to do so. Among the things that may cause the demon pain are properly prepared salt, water, and oil. Continued commands to the evil spirit should be given in a manner and tone consistent with the authority given the believer by God. Pray for God to bring about deliverance and salvation for the victim, and pray that He might prevent the spirits from ever coming back. His Word is powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword. This is literally true: in an exorcism it is both a shield and a weapon, and the most gracious gift the Lord has given Mankind. Much use should be made of this blessing. It is efficacious.

Renunciation of Satan

Once the exorcism is complete and all the demons removed, the last step is for the victim to verbally renounce Satan and all his works and the activities which brought him into the victim's life. At this point it may or may not become visible that God has created faith in the victim. If that is the case, they may ask for Holy Baptism. This is sometimes a moment of conversion. The exorcist must keep his eyes open at this point for indications that God has given His saving grace and faith to the victim and act as his best judgment dictates.

Creation of God Almighty, _____, you have been the enslaved property of Satan. God has now, out of His mercy and kindness, freed you. Do you renounce Satan and all his works and ways?

I do.

Will you endeavor with the help of the Lord Jesus Christ to flee from Satan, resist him, reject him and all he stands for?

I will.

The person should answer and pray as they feel appropriate. This is a moment for cleansing and catharsis which the exorcist may facilitate. Such as God chooses to provide, this may be a moment of opportunity.

Final Prayer

Almighty God, you have given deliverance to _____, whom you have freed from the bondage of the Evil One. We praise and thank you for your unending and undeserved mercy.

Victim may pray here.

Now, Lord, as we leave this place, we ask for your continued protection and blessing. Please keep us grateful that you used your power on behalf of _____, your creation. Keep us safe in your hand, protected by your might. Thank you for your many blessings. Please grant us ever-stronger faith, that we might spend eternity in Heaven with you, joyful in your love. Thank you, God our Father, for your temporal and eternal mercy. In the Name of Jesus Christ, who is alive, and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for all eternity. Amen.

Prayer of Conversion

Humans can only "reject" God under their own power. To "accept" Him is outside their ability unless the Father gives them that ability. A "decision for Christ" cannot

be made unless God gives them the faith necessary to come to Him. However, sometimes He chooses to do just this after an exorcism, especially if this end is something which has been prayed for. If this is the case, and the victim clearly expresses a God-given desire to live the life of faith in Jesus Christ, the following may serve. Holy Baptism should be encouraged, of course. All this is to assume the victim is mentally mature enough to be able to make an informed decision. In the case of a child or person unable to express themselves to this end, the pastor or exorcist will have to use his best prayerful judgment.

Do you confess to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit that you have caused offense with your sin, by what you have done and by what you have left undone?

I do.

That you have sinned against the King of Heaven in thought, word, and deed?

Yes.

The person may elaborate here if they wish. Enumeration of the sins weighing most heavily on the conscience may be a blessing, but should not be forced. A person victimized by possession and having just endured an exorcism may be in an even more fragile spiritual and emotional condition than most sinners who see the magnitude of their sins for the first time.

Do you ask forgiveness from Almighty God for the sins you have committed, because you are a sinner in need of His grace and salvation?

I do.

The Gospel according to St. John, chapter six, verses 43-44:

"Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Thanks be to God.

Have the person here ask God simply and directly for forgiveness and salvation.

The Word of God from 1 John, chapter 1, verse 9:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Thanks be to God.

If God the Father had not called you to come to His Son, you would not have been able to ask for forgiveness and salvation. But you *have* asked. The Father *has* called you, and created faith in you to ask Him. The Lord of the Universe has forgiven all your sins—past, present, and future. You have confessed your sins and they have been removed. Eternal life has been granted to you. God in His mercy has made you His own. Enter into the joy of your Master. **+** In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Spirit and the Father is one God. Amen.

Notes on the Rite of Exorcism for Places

The exorcism or blessing of a location is a little more problematic than that of a person, because a place cannot tell you what it's feeling. However, the use of sacred objects and asking of God prayers to reveal any problems in the home are one way of finding out if there is a genuine demonic infestation. This technique of roaming around the house challenging the demon in the Name of Jesus Christ and praying to God to make it manifest itself is called "Religious Provocation." There are a number of permutations of this: the application of a little blessed salt to the clothing of a suspected victim to see if they react to what they can't see is sometimes done. When the victim is praying and has their eyes closed, bringing a cross up behind them where they can't possibly see it and having the demon react is another technique. And applying the salt and water to a home suspected of infestation may also cause a reaction, some kind of telekinesis or poltergeist phenomena. Thus the use of sanctified objects in the case of the infestation of non-living things is terribly valuable.

Addressed to any entity, done in a central room such as living room or kitchen:

E In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit + Amen. Gracious Lord: We come into your presence today to ask for a blessing for this, the home of _____. Please bring peace and joy to all who enter here, Lord, and keep any evil spirits from dwelling in this place. May this place have your holy angels bringing your protection to all its tenants. Please keep evil spirits, thoughts and desires at bay and allow this place to be a refuge for your people, where evil cannot enter. Through the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

A The Word of God from Romans 16:20

E *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*

A The Word of God from James 4:7

E *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

A The Word of God from 1 John 4:4

E *You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

A The Gospel according to St. Luke 10:17-20

E *The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

A Thanks be to God.

E You Evil Spirit(s), you who occupy this home: in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has given this imperfect creature of flesh the authority to use His holy Name, in that Name I command you to reveal yourself. In the name of Jesus Christ,

you are commanded to cause no harm, damage or fear to anyone or anything here, forever. I command you in the Name of Jesus Christ to now show us if you are present.

To be repeated in each room:

E O God, Father Almighty, we humbly ask your favor for this home; for all who live here or ever will live or visit here; and for all things in it. Grant, Lord, to those living here such earthly and heavenly blessings as are necessary for the maintenance of life and fellowship with you; and so control what they desire that they may be able to receive thy mercy. Please remove and keep at bay all evil influences, desires, and spirits, that this place and its people might know your peace and evil's absence. Bless and hallow this home +, and let it be a place where angels keep guard and demons keep away. May holy angels protect and shield your people +, and please make this an abode of your peace and joy. In the Name of Christ our Lord. + Amen

A Glory to God in the highest, and praise to you, O Christ.

E You Evil Spirit(s), you who occupy this home: in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has given this imperfect creature of flesh the authority to use His holy Name, in that Name I command you to reveal yourself.

Exorcism

E Evil Spirits, in the Name of Jesus Christ, Lord of Lords, King of Kings, who has had mercy and grace on His servant, in His Name I command you to leave this place never to return! In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, leave now and cause no harm or damage to anyone or anything as you leave! God the Father commands you. + God the Son commands you. + God the Holy Spirit commands you. + In the Name of God the Son, the Living Lord Jesus Christ, get out of this place and never come back. + The Lord Jesus Christ Himself gave all of His followers the authority to stand against you under His protection, in His Name. Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. Resist the Devil and he will flee from you. We are protected by the Lord God Almighty, against whom you cannot stand. You *must* surrender to the will of God. God the Father commands you. God the Son commands you. God the Holy Spirit commands you. By His power and by the authority He gave His followers to do so, I command you in His name to leave, to depart without causing injury or any kind of damage, and *never* return. Go where God may allow you, but in the name of Jesus Christ I command you to never to return to this place again. In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, born of a Virgin and raised from the dead, I command you to leave without injury or damage to this place or its people. Your end is near, your destiny the Lake of Fire. Jesus Christ will reign forever, while *you* will suffer eternal torment for turning your back on God Almighty. Satan will be thrown into the Eternal Fire and you will share his fate. Therefore, in the Name and by the Power of Jesus Christ, the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, I command you to leave *now*.

In Conclusion:

☐ Let us now live in peace, in the light and protection of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and until the day of His coming and our Resurrection.
Amen.

APPENDICES

Notes on the Prayer for Deliverance by Lay Persons

1. In the same way that any believer may baptize someone, especially in emergency situations, any believer also has the authority in the name of Jesus Christ to cast out a demon. However, *unlike* the situation of baptism, an attempt at exorcism without some training may result in harm, to either the victim or to the believer making the attempt. It may be that the only Christian in attendance are new believers, and have not yet grown in maturity and knowledge to the point that they feel comfortable with an exorcism. Thus it is recommended that, whenever possible, exorcisms be left to those trained for the task.

2. However, on rare occasions, a person who is clearly possessed may have an episode of manifestation when there is no access to a pastor or exorcist, and none can be called for. When this manifestation becomes particularly severe, the believer(s) present may use this Prayer for Deliverance. It may be that God will give immediate deliverance to the victim. He may also bring about a relief or remission of the episode, permitting the victim to be transported safely to a pastor or an exorcist. In any case, prayer to God for the victim is always appropriate.

Jesus Christ, Son of God, we ask you for mercy and deliverance on behalf of your creation _____, who is being attacked by an evil spirit. You are all-powerful, Lord, and every creature must obey your command. You cast out demons with your Word. Please have mercy on _____, who is also being made to suffer terribly by a demon. Lord Jesus, we do not have the ability to choose to come to you under our own power. You told us that, “*no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.*” Father in Heaven, please now enable _____ to come to your side and call (him/her) to come to your Son Jesus Christ to be saved. Holy Spirit, please sanctify _____ and make (him/her) a child of God. Do not banish this creation from your presence; but remember (him/her) in your many mercies. Lord Jesus, God in Human Flesh, strengthen _____ by the power of your might. If you will just speak the word, your servant _____ will be set free. Please extend your saving grace to this creation of yours, Lord of Grace. Please show your divine power, the same power you used to cast out demons during your days on the Earth, so that this particular offending spirit may know that you truly rule over all Creation, even over the demons and over Satan himself. Hear us, O God of Power and Might. Please free _____ from this demonic power and give (him/her) your saving grace, that your mercy might be shown to all and so that _____ might spend eternity in Heaven with you. Holy, Mighty, and Eternal God, O Lord and King: hear us, for the sake of your great mercy and the glory of your Name, which even the demons and Satan must obey, and which is blessed forever and ever.
Amen.

Preparation of the Salt and the Water (May also be adapted for oil)

Prepare in advance appropriate containers for the salt, the water, and the container into which they will be mixed. That container should be appropriate for sprinkling or spraying. None of the containers need be fancy, but should be free of commercial or colloquial markings. They should not have been set apart or used for any other purpose, and they should never be used for any other purpose but consecrated once the prayers are finished. Amounts need not be exact. The water should be close to a point of saturation.

E In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **+**

A Amen. **+**

E Our Father which art in Heaven,

A Hallowed be thy name.

E Thy kingdom come

A Thy will be done

E in earth as *it is* in Heaven

A Give us this day our daily bread.

E And forgive us our trespasses

A As we forgive those who trespass against us.

E And lead us not into temptation,

A but deliver us from the Evil One;

E For thine is the kingdom,

A and the power, and the glory,

E for ever. Amen

A The Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 5, verse 13:

E *You are the salt of the Earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.* This is the Gospel of our Lord.

A Praise to you, O Christ.

A The Word of God from Colossians 4:6

E *Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

E Creation of Salt, by the Living God I expel from you all evil, **+** that you would be holy and set apart for the sole use of the Living God. Be used for the sustenance and protection of the people of God. Almighty and everlasting God, please set aside and sanctify this your creation Salt, that it may be used only for your purposes according to your perfect will. May all who use it be blessed in mind and body. Let all evil beings, and heavy and ill thoughts, flee at its use. Wherever it is applied in your Name, may all the flaming arrows of the Evil One, all the schemes and attacks of Satan and his demons, fail miserably. May its use be accompanied by your blessing and the joy that comes from the very presence of the

Lord God with His people. Let man's schemes and Satan's wiles all fail, and God be true. In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ we ask for this blessing. Amen **+**

A The Gospel according to St. John, Chapter 7, verses 37 and 38:

E *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."*

This is the Gospel of our Lord

A Praise to you, O Christ

A The Word of God from 1 Peter 3:21-22

E *And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into Heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to Him.*

E Creation of Water, by the Living God I expel from you all evil, **+** that you would be holy and set apart for the sole use of the Living God. Be used for the sustenance and protection of the people of God. Almighty and Everlasting God, please set aside and sanctify this your creation Water, that it may be used only for your purposes according to your perfect will. May all who use it be blessed in mind and body. Let all evil beings, and heavy and ill thoughts, be washed away just as evil flees before the Living Water of the Holy Spirit. Wherever it is applied in your Name, may it extinguish all the flaming arrows of the Evil One. Let it wash away all the schemes and attacks of Satan and his demons. May its use be accompanied by your blessing and the joy that comes from the very presence of the Lord God with His people. Let man's schemes and Satan's wiles all fail, and God be true. In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ we ask for this blessing. Amen **+**

The two are mixed in the third container.

Lord God, in your mercy sanctify this creation of water and salt, **+** so that wherever it is used in your Name, the Evil One, his demons, and all evil of all kinds would flee. Give failure to the flaming arrows of the Evil One, and may comfort and joy and your salvation follow you and your people. Protect and defend, Lord, your children. In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. **+**

"It is well, when a house or place is being dealt with, to carry out this blessing in the presence of those concerned so that they come to understand that Holy Water is not a 'Christian Magic' but the symbol of the prayers that are offered to God as it is blessed."

Rt. Rev. Robert Mortimer, Bishop of Exeter, 1971

APPENDIX B: REFERENCE LISTS

Degrees of Demonic Assault and Types of Possession

1. Intrusion

Merely the beginning point of the “wedging” into a human life of a demon, or can occur in the beginning stages of the infestation

2. Affliction

Attack from without, may happen to either a believer or unbeliever. May involve harassment, annoyances, and disease-causing activities

3. Familiarization

Human and the demon have a symbiotic relationship.

4. Habitation

Voluntary possession of willing occultist, who may have been lied to about who or what the demon really is.

5. Obsession

This is the “attack from without”

6. Full Possession

Classic loss of control to an indwelling demon

Symptoms of Demonic Possession

Greater weight in diagnosis should be given to genuine supernatural occurrences.

1. Unusual Strength

2. Rage

3. Splitting of Attitudes and Desires

4. Opposition to God

5. Hyperaesthesia

6. Multi-Voice or Multi-Person Manifestations

7. Transference

8. Previously Unknown Language Skills

9. Spiritual Metanoia

10. Connection to Magic or Occultism, or Resistance-Lowering Activities

11. Telekinesis

12. Changes to the Immediate Environment

13. Increased Sexuality or Sexual References

14. Absence of Normal Social Graces

15. Possessing “Hidden” Knowledge

16. Change in Physical Appearance

17. Sudden New Abilities or Skills

Post-Exorcism Pastoral Care

1. Law: Explain that this happened because of Sin, and if it isn’t remedied it will happen again, worse.

2. Gospel: Salvation is in Jesus only, and He offers to save them. Eventual goal: Faith, repentance, Baptism, Communion.

3. A solid local congregation should be joined, for guided growth in Christ.

4. A Christian counselor should be found to help the victim and their family work through the grief and scars. The effects of Sin and its removal.

5. Continuity by keeping in touch with the exorcist. Assess the need for further exorcism, if any.

6. Change in lifestyle of whatever the proximate cause of their possession.

High-Risk Activities Leading to Possession

1. Involvement in Magick or the Occult

2. Conscious Invitation to Satan

3. Persistent Substance Abuse

4. Participation in Tribal, Nature, or New Age Religions or Culture

5. Animal Sacrifice, Torture, Bestiality

6. Family History of Occult Practices

7. Use of Occultic Tools and Other Items

8. Idolatry

9. Pornography

APPENDIX C: A SUGGESTED CONSENT FORM

Before using this or any other consent form, the exorcist would be wise to check with a Christian member of the legal profession.

I, _____, am an adult of legal age in the State of _____
In consultation with spiritual counselors, I recognize the possibility of genuine demonic possession or activity in my life. I therefore give full consent to _____ and whoever other members of his team he may deem necessary to engage in religious provocation for the purposes of diagnosis, and to perform this Rite of Exorcism in one or more sessions until such time as he sees fit to discontinue. This consent may be revoked at any time *unless the Ritual has begun*, in which case I may be unable to make an informed decision because of outside influences upon me. I realize that in some instances physical restraint may be necessary, and I hereby give my informed consent to _____ to take such steps as he deems necessary to prevent injury to myself or others, or to prevent flight before the Rite is finished, which flight I am informed may be most dangerous. I hold no human being responsible for any injury or the final success or failure of the exorcism(s), having been instructed by _____ that this Rite is fundamentally a conflict between demonic influences and the Lord Jesus Christ. I realize that it is these evil spirits who are trying to injure or distress me, and that any injury is not the fault of the exorcist or members of his team. They are hereby relieved of any responsibility for the ultimate outcome of this spiritual event. I believe it is possible that I am a victim in a conflict between evil spirits and God, the outcome of which conflict is not under the control of the exorcist _____. I realize there are grave physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual risks involved in having this condition. I accept these risks solely and with informed consent. Given this _____ day of _____, 20_____, in the State of _____ and the municipality of _____.

Name of Person to be Exorcized

Name of Chief Exorcist

I believe that _____ is capable of giving informed consent to this Rite, and I testify that such consent as above was given in my presence this _____ day of _____, 20_____, at _____ AM/PM

Witness

I believe that _____ is capable of giving informed consent to this Rite, and I testify that such consent as above was given in my presence this _____ day of _____, 20_____, at _____ AM/PM

Witness

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