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And deliver us
from evil...

...will be needed. There is to be among God's
people no spiritual stupidity. Evil spirits are actively
engaged in seeking to control the minds of human beings.

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Cover quote taken from Ellen G. White, *True Revival* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2010), 55.

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Pastors, these two articles identify and provide responsible and reasonable suggestions that come from people who have earned the right to say, “Here’s what you can do that will be helpful to others.”

Anthony M. Green’s article “The End—and the Beginning” (December 2019) provides evidence that life after divorce need not be mired in permanent hostility and alienation. The possibility that two people who once expressed love for one another, and produced children, can develop and maintain an amicable relationship, offers hope to those who have experienced a fractured marriage. What the author shared may not work for everyone, but there is, in the theme addressed, a positive possibility and, for some people, that assurance is the nudge that will bring a modicum of reconciliation. The fracture remains, but the kids and other family members will benefit from the willingness of two, who were once lovers, to demonstrate mature and responsible behavior. It is fortunate, as Green states, “when circumstances bring us to a painful end, God sometimes surprises us with a beautiful beginning.”

The author touched on another matter that invites further discussion: spiritual abuse. When well-meaning people use religion and

religious force to control, demean, and direct violence, whether emotional or physical, toward another, these are behaviors that damage the recipient. When clergy are perpetrators of the negative practice, the effect is especially heinous. The damaged individual carries the scars for the remainder of his or her life. It is not uncommon for those who have experienced spiritual abuse to eschew the church, religion, and God. The effects of spiritual abuse are carried with them into later relationships, including marriage. The result often is not happy. Thank you, Anthony, for inviting us to benefit from your experience.

In the same issue of *Ministry* were two other notable articles: “What Every Pastor Should Know About Disabilities” (Patrick Johnson) and “Hannah in the Temple: a Spiritual Care Response to Involuntary Childlessness” (Sikhumbuzo Dube). Pastors, these two articles identify and provide responsible and reasonable suggestions that come from people who have earned the right to say, “Here’s what you can do that will be helpful to others.” Thank you, gentlemen, for

your thoughtful and practical suggestions.

—Lawrence G. Downing, DMin, professor, retired, Pacific Union College, Angwin, California

Patrick Johnson in “What Every Pastor Should Know About Disabilities” (December 2019) makes excellent points. I have a friend who recently has been using a wheelchair. She wants her friends to relate to her as the creative, vivacious person that she always has been, and not focus on being so sad that she sits in a wheelchair. The author calls us to listen, include, and relate to persons who have a physical or a developmental disability. “People with disabilities are people first. They are not ‘the handicapped’ or ‘the disabled.’ Using People First Language is a must—No Labels!”¹

—Arleen L. Downing, MD, F.A.A.P., medical director, retired, Santa Ana, California, United States

¹ “Partners in Policy Making,” Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc., 1987, fddc.org/node/3035.



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SCAN FOR AUDIO

If the Son shall set you free . . .

During the late 1970s, an interest in the area of demon possession and deliverance ministry developed within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Although the Adventist Church believes in the existence of demons, it did not offer a particular method for deliverance.

An array of deliverance ministries emerged within the Adventist Church, causing some concern among the leaders. Some deliverance ministers would spend hours communicating with demons and extracting information from them, such as their names and how and when they possessed the individual. Was there any legitimacy to these ministries?

In 1987, I had my first encounter. While I was writing a paper on exorcism in the Gospel of Mark, my supervisor invited me to accompany him to a prayer meeting with a church member who was experiencing some spiritual problems. He had suspected a case of demonization and wanted me to assist him in this prayer session. Having never encountered this kind of ministry before, I was overwhelmed by the whole experience. The physical manifestation of the demons, as seen on the contorted face of the member, was accompanied by their low, guttural voices, speaking through this woman. I observed with keen interest as the demons departed from the woman with reluctance, as a direct result of my professor calling on the name of the Lord. At the end of the session, which lasted approximately 90 minutes, the lady refreshed herself and left.

I shared my testimony in church. In no time, I was receiving phone calls from members experiencing similar problems. As my name passed from person to person, I was in danger of having this aspect of ministry consume all my time.

Scripture is clear. There *is* a cosmic battle between good and evil. Jesus refers to a literal devil and “unclean spirits” or demons (see Matt. 6:13; 10:7, 8; Mark 6:7; John 14:30). These demons can harass, oppress, and even possess human

beings. One may then ask, how does somebody become demonized?

In February 2018, I was invited to join a group of missiologists and theologians to study this very subject. Our findings were published in the book *Finding Freedom in Jesus*. In the book, Bruce Bauer lists a number of ways a person can become harassed by evil spirits and suggests demonization takes place when one chooses the following:

1. To dabble in spiritualism or the occult, providing an entering wedge for demons
2. To follow an intemperate or frivolous lifestyle, giving Satan a foothold
3. To willfully reject biblical truths, allowing false teachings to gain a stronghold
4. To verbalize doubt and unbelief, attracting the attention of Satan and his angels
5. To knowingly contravene God’s commandments, coming under the control of Satan.
6. To permit unrestrained thoughts and feelings, inviting influences from evil angels¹

Nonetheless, we must hold fast to the indisputable truth that the devil is a defeated foe. Speaking about Jesus’ victory, the apostle Paul writes in Colossians 2:15, “Having spoiled principalities and powers, he [Christ] made a show of them [Satan and his demons] openly, triumphing over them in it [the cross]” (KJV). Once we recognize our identity in Christ, we can claim the freedom He gives us over the power of the enemy (John 8:36).

Today, I do not go around casting out demons from those who call me. Rather, I encourage people to know who they are in Christ, and call on *Him* to be set free from Satan and his demons.



¹ Bruce Bauer, ed. *Finding Freedom in Jesus: A Deliverance Ministry Manual* (Lincoln, NE: Department of World Mission, Andrews University, with AdventSource, 2018), 30.

“COME OUT, IN JESUS’ NAME!”

Does demon possession mean that a demon owns a person?

Deliverance ministry (DM) is a complex topic, fraught with potential areas for conflict, misunderstanding, and misapprehension.¹ To the victims of demonic harassment, the debate about the validity of DM can often ignore their desperate need for freedom in Jesus Christ.

What is deliverance ministry?

Three terms are used in the New Testament (NT) for demons: demon (Matt. 8:31), unclean spirit (Mark 1:23), and evil spirit (Luke 11:24). These terms are used interchangeably to refer to fallen angels (i.e., demons). The King James Version often translates “demon” as “devil,” which can be misleading. The English word *devil* comes from the Greek word *diabolos*, which means “slanderer,” which has no relation to the underlying Greek word for demon, *daimonion*.

Conrad Vine, DMin, is president of Adventist Frontier Missions, Inc., Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.



SCAN FOR AUDIO

Derek Prince argues that the NT repeatedly uses the verb *daimonizo* to refer to the influence of an evil spirit or a demon on a human being (Matt. 4:24; 8:16; Mark 1:32).² This verb is often taken as referring to “demonic possession,” whereas this verb only occurs in the passive form, and the best translation for it is “to be demonized.” The English language phrase *demon possession* can erroneously imply that an individual is fully possessed by, owned by, and subject to, a demon. However, there is no basis in the NT Greek to make this conclusion. *Daimonizo* is best understood as referring to someone who is subject to demonic influence (which may happen in varying degrees).

The most common verb in the NT for delivering individuals from demonic influence is *ekballo*, which means “to drive out” or “to cast out” (Matt. 10:1). However, this should not be taken to imply that demons possess or own an individual but, rather, it should be understood that the minister of the gospel is acting under the authority of Jesus Christ to cast out the demon, with its malign influence, from the life of the individual who turns to Jesus for help. In this context, DM may be best understood as delivering an individual from the influence of personal, malevolent, fallen angels.

What are demons?

Demons are fallen angels (Rev. 12:3, 4; see also Rev. 9:1; Luke 10:18) operating under Satan’s leading. They were originally unfallen angels in heaven who joined with Satan in his rebellion against God (Rev. 12:7; see also Job 38:7). Angels are called spirits in Scripture (Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:14), and so are demons (Matt. 8:16; Luke 4:36). Demons are often referred to in Scripture as being with Satan: “the devil and his angels” (Matt. 12:24; 25:41; Rev. 12:7). Like Satan, they are able to enter and control people to differing degrees, depending on the situation (Matt. 17:14–18; Mark 9:17–27; Luke 11:14, 15; 22:3).

Demons are creatures with characteristics of personhood. They are referred to by Jesus using personal pronouns (Luke 8:30). They refer to themselves using the first-person personal pronoun (Luke 11:24). They communicate with each other (Luke 11:24–26) and through humans (Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–10). They live in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12); however, they prefer to reside in a human and will reside in animals also (pigs, for example, Mark 5:12). They have a will and can make decisions (Matt. 12:44). They experience emotions (James 2:19). They have an intellect (Mark 1:24) and self-awareness (Mark 5:9).

Distance poses no problem for demons to carry out their mission of deception. Recall how Satan was able to be in heavenly councils (Job 1:6). Demons may even enter and remain in houses of worship with the physical presence of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:21–28). Mark 5:1–12 and Luke 11:24–26 indicate that demons can act separately and in cooperation with each other and have varying degrees of wickedness. Both fallen and unfallen angelic beings appear to be highly ordered. The fallen angels speaking through the demoniac referred to themselves as “Legion” (Mark 5:9), suggesting a military-type organization and possibly a hierarchy of angels on both sides that may match military formations (2 Kings 6:17; Matt. 26:53; Rev. 19:14).

The witness of the Old Testament

The apostle Paul referred to the pagan sacrifices of his era as being made to demons (1 Cor. 10:20, 21), and church members were not to participate in any such pagan rituals. By implication, Old Testament (OT) pagan idolatry may also be understood as being the worship of demons. This implication is reflected by both Moses in Deuteronomy 32:17 and the psalmist in Psalm 106:37. Interestingly, the Septuagint (LXX) references the pagan gods as being “demons,” and Psalm 106:37 speaks of the sacrifice of sons and daughters to pagan idols.

Leviticus 17:7 refers to the pagan deities before whom the Israelites prostrated themselves, and to whom they prostituted themselves, as being “goat-demons.” The false worship established by Jeroboam included high places, golden calves, and “goat-demons” (2 Chron. 11:15). Isaiah referred to goat demons inhabiting the desolate places of Babylon and Edom after God’s judgments had fallen (Isa. 13:21; 34:14). Given the constant tendencies of the Israelites to fall back into idol worship, we may conclude that they were, in fact, prostrating themselves before demons in the physical form of the idols. Thus Dagon, Ashtoreth, Moloch, and Baal are, in fact, names for demons worshiped by Israel and the surrounding nations.

Saul lost God’s favor because he consulted the witch of Endor (1 Chron. 10:13). Manasseh sacrificed his son before demons (2 Chron. 33:6). Micah rebuked the practice of witchcraft among God’s preexilic people (Micah 5:12). The tendency among Israelites to contact demons in the form of worship, child sacrifice, divination, sorcery, and mediums, lasted from the Exodus to the Babylonian exile (Ezekiel 11; Jeremiah 44), and

disappeared from the Israelite experience only in the era of the postexilic prophets.

Paralleling this constant demonic contact by the Israelites, God repeatedly warned against any involvement with witchcraft, mediums, idol worship, and divination (Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut. 18:10–14; 1 Sam. 15:23; Isa. 47:8–14). Reforming kings of Judah would periodically destroy the physical cult manifestations of idol worship and draw the people back to YHWH. These periodic cleansings and rededications to YHWH within Judah functioned as a form of DM, for in destroying the idols and high places, the kings were removing the physical manifestation of demons from the nation's life.

Ministry in Jesus' name

The Gospels present general summaries of Jesus' DM, often in transition points, from one specific narrative to another (e.g., Matt. 4:24; 8:16; Mark 1:32, 34, 39; 3:11; 6:13; Luke 4:41; 6:18; 7:21). The Gospels also present detailed narratives of seven specific instances of DM (Matt. 8:28–34; 9:32–34; 12:22–29; 15:21–28; 17:14–21; Mark 1:21–28; 3:22–27; 5:1–20; 7:24–30; 9:14–29; Luke 4:31–37; 9:37–43; 11:14–22; 13:10–17).

The repeated transitional summaries and narratives of specific deliverances indicate that the ministry of Jesus consisted of proclaiming the good news, healing diseases, and casting out demons. The deliverance of Satan's captives was a tangible sign of the truth of Jesus' preaching: the kingdom of God had arrived! That arrival meant that the "strong man" (Satan) had been bound in the wilderness showdown, and Jesus could, therefore, deliver Satan's captives (Mark 3:27). The deliverance of Satan's captives was a confirming sign for the Jewish community of the Messianic authority of Jesus' teachings (Mark 1:27, 28).

In His teachings on prayer, Jesus taught the disciples to pray, "Rescue us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:13, NRSV). We are to pray for deliverance from a personal, malevolent evil being—Satan—who makes war on God's children (Rev. 12:9, 17; 1 Pet. 5:8). Jesus gave the Twelve explicit authority to cast out unclean spirits (Matt. 10:1, 7, 8; Luke 9:1; Mark 6:7), which they then did (Mark 3:15; 6:13; 9:14–29, 38). He also commissioned the Seventy to prepare communities for His arrival, a task that involved DM (Luke 10:1–20). In His final commission to His disciples, Jesus specifically stated that DM, in His name, was to be an ongoing feature of their ministry (Mark 16:17).

Apostolic ministry to the demonized

The book of Acts presents the ministry of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8) as being the prototypical pattern for NT evangelism. To the Ethiopian eunuch, Philip preached Jesus (Acts 8:35). To the inhabitants of Samaria, he preached Christ (Acts 8:5). Luke records Philip's evangelism in Samaria in Acts 8:5–8, where his preaching was accompanied by the signs of healing and deliverance, resulting in belief, baptism, and the establishment of new congregations of disciples. The apostles cast out unclean spirits (Acts 5:16) in Jerusalem and on their evangelistic journeys (Acts 16:16–18). In Ephesus, Paul was unsuccessfully imitated by Jewish exorcists (Acts 19:14–17). Clearly, success in the ministry of deliverance does not depend on a formulaic approach but on the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Paul lists the "discerning of spirits" as one of the gifts of the Spirit to His church.

Faith is the victory

Every disciple will face attacks from demons on what the apostle Paul calls "that evil day" (Eph. 6:13, NRSV). Evil in the form of personal, literal, fallen angelic beings does reach into the lives of Jesus' disciples and seeks to "steal, kill and destroy" (John 10:10, TLB). The apostle Paul counsels disciples of Jesus Christ to put on the armor of God precisely so that we can withstand "that evil day" when it comes (Eph. 6:13, NRSV). Spiritual preparation before and faith during the "evil day" are, therefore, the keys to surviving spiritual battles.

Commenting on the admonition, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7, KJV), Vaughn Allen writes, "The gospel is to be preached right up to the second coming of Christ, or at least until probation closes just before Jesus returns. Since the gospel commission applies until the second advent, the signs that accompany the preaching must also apply until Christ comes. And among the signs and promises is the one that says devils will be cast out wherever the gospel is preached."³ Victory in the battle today is possible—but not in our own strength.



- 1 For deliverance ministry from an Adventist perspective, see setfreeinchrist.org for Christian resources.
- 2 Derek Prince, *They Shall Expel Demons: What You Need to Know About Demons, Your Invisible Enemies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1998), 16.
- 3 Vaughn Allen, *Victory on the Battlefield: Setting Captives Free* (Brushton, NY: Teach Services, 1993), 17.



“You have no authority over me!”

In December 2014, I traveled to a city in Portugal for a leadership retreat. My friend Samuele and I decided to explore the city.

As we approached the entrance of a famous cathedral, I noticed a bewildered-looking woman being held by a worried-looking man. A nervous-looking Catholic priest stood next to them, talking on his phone. I immediately felt uncomfortable. But we were in Europe. You mind your own business and move on. We did just that.

We entered the church and attempted to enjoy its architecture. I could not shake the feeling that something was very wrong. I shared my thoughts with Samuele, and we decided to leave. As we stepped outside, we saw the man and woman where we had left them. We walked briskly past them when suddenly I had an incredibly strong impression urging us to go back.

We stopped to pray, asked God to direct us, then turned and walked straight back to the church. I had no idea what I was doing, but I would not deny this clear command. I could only ask God to guide me because I didn't speak a word of Portuguese.

The priest was still on his phone, so I approached the man holding the woman. I asked him, in English, “Is everything OK?” It was abundantly clear that he did not understand. He gestured for me to go away. I looked at the woman, who had remained more or less calm. Her eyes registered fear, struggle—and something very dark. Trusting God for my word selection, I exclaimed, “Believe in Jesus, and He will help you!”

As soon as I mentioned Jesus, she began to scream. In English, we heard, “No, no, get away!” There was no doubt. A demon was controlling her. I kept praying. Aloud. I told her, “Trust in Christ, He will deliver you!” Her face grimaced strangely. She moved about wildly. The man held her tightly.

The demon made her cover her ears so that she wouldn't hear the simple gospel truth of salvation in Christ. As I prayed out loud for God to free her from this demonic possession, I could

physically feel an invisible pressure around and against me. A spiritual war was taking place that was not going unnoticed by the tourists. Their reactions were mixed.

“Leave her alone!” shouted one of them. A police officer walked over to stop me from praying and was intercepted by the priest. The priest told him what I was doing was right. I continued praying aloud and the demon, with its distorted voice, declared through the lady, “You have no authority over me!”

I responded, “But Jesus does.”

Samuele and I continued interceding for this afflicted woman. We did this for a few minutes when suddenly we felt a release of tension in the

It was God who had arranged for us to meet this lady. It was God who had freed her from her dark troubles. All praise goes to God.

air around us. The demonic oppression had ceased.

We looked and saw the woman was calm but very weak. The priest and the other man put her arms around their shoulders and started walking her into the church. As they entered, the woman turned and looked at me. Her face was completely changed as she motioned a thank you.

We stood there, trying to process what we had just experienced. It was God who had arranged for us to meet this lady. It was God who had freed her from her dark troubles. All praise goes to God. We were not special. We were simply two young Christians with the Holy Ghost audacity to believe in the power of prayer and trust in the power of God.

“These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons” (Mark 16:17, NASB). 🙏



Dealing WITH THE demonic

KELVIN ONONGHA

Our calling is not to pursue demons;
it is to resist them. But how?

Some time ago, *The Economist* featured a story indicating an upsurge in cases of exorcisms in France and some other neighboring nations.¹ It reported about an exorcist who earned up to about \$182 per hour for his services and another who made a living entirely from this business of exorcism. Apparently, demonic and spiritualistic activities in diverse forms, from witchcraft to the occult and psychic phenomena, are on the increase across the world.²

This growing culture of the occult, dubbed occulture, is embraced by statespersons and celebrities. The occulture menu includes beliefs from Wicca to New Age, witchcraft, and paganism.³ *The New York Post* reported that in the United States alone, the number of persons who self-identify as Wiccan has doubled within the last decade.⁴ As many have observed, part of the reason for this explosive spiritualistic growth is attributed to the popularity of various television shows and movies that glorify witchcraft, magic, vampires, and the occult.

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SCAN FOR AUDIO

Position

Curiously, some even in theological circles are uneasy about attributing any mental or physical condition to demonic influences. Persons may be found at both ends of the spectrum, some believing that every disease condition has demonic origins and others holding that all illnesses have a physical cause and natural explanation. What position should the Christian take?

Because the symptoms of mental illness and demonization are seen to be similar and the lines are often blurred, it is important that the true nature of a patient's condition be discerned before an effective therapy is administered, leading to healing.⁵ In general, healing is effectual when the exact cause of the ailment is known, whether physical, spiritual, or psychological; often, it is, in reality, a combination of two or more of these causes.⁶

It could be direct demon possession, where Satan takes over someone's life, body, and mind, or Satan could be attacking from outside by trying in different ways to influence a person's behavior, health, and life and control them through different means, such as discouragement, doubt, illness, and tragedy (Eph. 6:12). Then there are some people who have chemical imbalances and medical hallucinations that would need professional medical care.

One of the clearest demonstrations of the power of the devil to cause physical and physiological devastation is seen in the experience of Job (Job 1:13–2:10). The connection between demons and illnesses is also seen in the New Testament, when Jesus casts out evil spirits from the lives of Satan's victims, leading to their healing (Matt. 9:32, 33; 12:22, 23; 17:14–18). Besides physical conditions, such as epilepsy and hearing and speech impairments, demon possession can induce psychological effects, leading to suicidal behavior and depressive, manic, and homicidal conditions (1 Sam. 18:10, 11; Mark 5:1–5; 9:14–22).

Ellen G. White comments forcefully, "The fact that men have been possessed with demons, is clearly stated in the New Testament. The persons

thus afflicted were not merely suffering with disease from natural causes. Christ had perfect understanding of that with which He was dealing, and He recognized the direct presence and agency of evil spirits."⁷ She adds, "None are in greater danger from the influence of evil spirits than those who, notwithstanding the direct and ample testimony of the Scriptures, deny the existence and agency of the devil and his angels. So long as we are ignorant of their wiles, they have almost inconceivable advantage; many give heed to their suggestions while they suppose themselves to be following the dictates of their own wisdom. This is why, as we approach the close of time, when Satan is to work with greatest power to deceive and destroy, he spreads everywhere the belief that he does not exist. It is his policy to conceal himself and his manner of working."⁸

Process

The question is, how do humans become domiciles for demons? It needs to be understood that this is a process that occurs ever so subtly and progressively. Satan seeks to gain access, control, and ultimate domination of the will and abilities of humans. In order to do this, he begins by seeking entry, a foothold in the lives of his victims. This usually begins when emotions or passions are not brought under the control of God's Spirit and subjected to His will. So opens the access portal, the point of entry for the devil.

Paul comments insightfully on this modus operandi of the devil: "And 'don't sin by letting anger control you.' Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil" (Eph. 4:26, 27, NLT). Regarding how Satan gained total control of Judas, Ellen White observes: "Evil desires, covetousness, revengeful passions, dark and sullen thoughts, were cherished until Satan gained full control of him."⁹

Other habits that provide the devil access to human wills and minds include the use of drugs, alcohol, and illicit sexual practices. Avenues through which demons invade people's lives

include alliances with the occult by possessing charms, tokens, talismans, and amulets or by engaging in occult practices, using Ouija boards, tarot cards, and horoscopes or by participating in séances and even the rock music culture.¹⁰

The devil employs another strategy leading to the establishment of strongholds in the minds of his victims. Paul states, “For the weapons of our warfare are not human weapons, but are made powerful by God for tearing down strongholds. We tear down arguments and every arrogant obstacle that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to make it obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:4, 5, NET). Such strongholds may take the form of “ideas, opinions, . . . even policies”¹¹ in opposition to the counsels of God. They may also include worldly ideologies or philosophies that seek to replace the sovereignty of God in the human heart, whether they be atheistic, paganistic, or secularistic.

But note: while the devil’s strategy is to establish strongholds or fortresses in human hearts, God’s strategy is to demolish these spiritual strongholds and subordinate them to the divine will. The assurance given to the believer is that the Christian’s weapons of warfare are powerful enough to destroy every satanic stronghold.

Possession

Demonic control over human lives can be understood as a continuum. At one end of the scale, demons are found active in the lives of all humans—harassing, influencing, tempting; seeking to gain access and control over their victims. At the other end is a state where the victims’ faculties and abilities are largely under demonic control; this is possession.

The New Testament reveals several degrees of influence by demons in people’s lives, ranging from temptation and influence to oppression, obsession, and finally, possession.¹² When one yields to the temptations of demons, the demons can have varying degrees of control over that person. In order to avoid being subject to such control of demons, Christians must be ever watchful, heeding the counsel of Scripture: “Guard your heart with all vigilance, for from it are the sources of life” (Prov. 4:23, NET).

Power

When Christ commissioned and sent out His disciples early in His ministry, He gave them authority over demons and the power to heal all manner of illnesses (Luke 9:1–6, 10; Matt. 10:1–15).

Because the symptoms of mental illness and demonization are seen to be similar and the lines are often blurred, it is important that the true nature of a patient’s condition be discerned before an effective therapy is administered, leading to healing.

And the risen Jesus again promised power and authority over demonic agencies and the power to heal (Mark 16:17, 18; Matt. 28:18). Writing to the church at Colossae, Paul demonstrated the superiority and excellency of Christ over every principality and power (Col. 2:15). Christ’s victory is our victory, so long as we are in a covenant relationship with Him and living in harmony with His Word. As a result, in His name, power, and authority demons can be put to flight, expelled and displaced by the Holy Spirit via the Christian who appropriates Christ’s victorious power and perfect sacrifice on the cross.

Precaution

Inasmuch as any Christian believer could in the name and power of Jesus set at liberty those oppressed by demons and bring healing/deliverance to those possessed, it needs to be clearly understood that engaging with the demonic is by no means a trivial matter. A few practical counsels are in order.¹³

- Pray intensely, with full heart-searching spiritual preparations before engaging in any deliverance ministry.
- Carefully and prayerfully choose the time and the place where the deliverance ministry will take place.
- Pray intensely and invite the Holy Spirit to take absolute control of the arena.
- Never work alone; work in a team.
- Be alert. Some even recommended praying with eyes open, just to be aware of any possible disruption. The devil likes nothing more than disrupting your prayer session. Or at least have one team member watch over the prayer group, lest something unusual occurs.
- Apply a combination of the three encounters in Christian witnessing:¹⁴
 - Power encounter—Rebuke the evil spirits and exercise authority over them in the name of Jesus.
 - Truth encounter—Apply the Word of God to show God's power and love to the victims and help them understand their identity in Christ.
 - Allegiance encounter—Discover whether there are existing or previous allegiances or connections with the occult, and pray for deliverance from such allegiance. Lead the person in prayer to declare a new allegiance to Christ and a cessation of any connection with the past life.

Preparation

Preparation for the encounter includes living a life under the control of the Holy Spirit and in harmony with the Word of God. Help may be sought at any time, and the minister needs to be ready to assist. Knowledge and an appreciation of power in the Word of God are central to success in these endeavors. Also significant is the power of hymns that saturate the environment with the divine presence. It is also helpful to trace the origin or what the connection may be between the individual and the demonic. Where there is garbage, you can expect to find rodents.¹⁵

It must be understood that each encounter is unique to the context, circumstance, and person involved. Some deliverance sessions may take a shorter time, while others may take longer.

Among the things not to be done is to engage in conversation with the demons. While the laying on of hands to heal the sick is a common practice, it is not encouraged to lay hands on the victims of demonization until they are delivered.

Promise

Scripture admonishes us to do the work not of exorcism but of evangelism (2 Tim. 4:5). Our calling is not to pursue demons; it is to resist them (James 4:7). The prophet declares, “‘Can spoils be taken from a warrior, or captives be rescued from a conqueror? Indeed,’ says the LORD, ‘captives will be taken from a warrior; spoils will be rescued from a conqueror. I will oppose your adversary and I will rescue your children’ ” (Isa. 49:24, 25, NET). Wherever demons are encountered in the course of one's ministry, Christ has empowered us to dispense with them and set the captives free.



- 1 A. R., “Why Exorcisms Are on the Rise in France,” *The Economist*, July 31, 2017.
- 2 For a fuller, more comprehensive study on this subject see, Kelvin Onongha and Bruce Bauer, eds., *Dealing With the Demonic in the African Context* (Berrien Springs, MI: Theological Seminary, Adventist University of Africa, 2019); and Bruce Bauer, ed., *Finding Freedom in Jesus: A Deliverance Ministry Manual* (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 2018). For additional support, contact Adventist Frontier Ministry or visit setfreeinchrist.org.
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- 14 See Charles H. Kraft, “Three Encounters in Christian Witness,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 4th ed., eds. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 445–450.
- 15 Charles H. Kraft, *The Evangelical's Guide to Spiritual Warfare: Scriptural Insights and Practical Instruction on Facing the Enemy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2015), 39, 40.

Prepared and protected

Learn how to be alert to the devil's persuasions in the last days.

Before I became a pastor, my wife and I owned a clothing business in Romania. On the way home one day, I noticed a big crowd. Curious, I walked over and saw a man claiming to be a prophet. He urged people to return to God, go back to church, and read their Bibles. He asked them to pray, care for the poor, and love one another. All good.

He then called the sick to come forward. A lady with chronic back pain came right away. He put his palm in front of her forehead, without touching her. He claimed to be casting out the demon of sickness. In that instant, she was thrown by an invisible force to the ground. When she got up, she exclaimed that the pain was gone. Then one person after another came. All were thrown violently to the ground, and all came up without pain.

Afterward, he told the crowd, "What matters most is your relationship with Jesus. It's not about keeping the commandments. You will all be saved regardless. It's not about anything you



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do; it's about Jesus' love for you." I was young and inexperienced and decided to engage the man in conversation.

"So, you are saved by grace, not by works? But if you really love Jesus, you don't go around stealing, killing, cheating, lying, and worshiping other gods." Reflecting on Isaiah 8:20, I asked whether I could take his car or wife.¹

He said, "You cannot do that; it is a sin."

"And what is sin?" I asked. "Isn't it the breaking of the law? Doesn't Jesus say that we should beware of the false prophets and that we will know them by the way they live, by their fruits?" (Matt. 7:15, 16)

At this, he got angry, approached me, and put his hand in front of my forehead, expecting me to fall prostrate. I remained upright. He then said, "I have no power over you."

I answered, "Because He who is in me is greater than he who is in you" (1 John 4:4).

He told me to leave. Those around him murmured in agreement. They wanted healing more than they wanted truth.

Spiritual challenges

This experience has remained with me throughout my ministry. It clarified for me how, in the last days, there could be a deception of "even the elect." It will be because "false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders" (Matt. 24:24). It will be because people will choose what they see over what they know.

According to Daniel 12:1, in the last days, "there shall be a time of trouble such as never was." Jesus counseled us to pay particular attention to the prophet Daniel, for while there have always been periods of economic collapse, conflicts, wars, natural catastrophes, and religious apostasy, as we approach the end of time, these are predicted to intensify greatly. Jesus said, "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21). Satan is the instigator.

The Bible says, "by your *sorcery* all the nations were deceived" (Rev. 18:23; emphasis added). The

Greek word translated "sorcery"—*pharmakeia*—refers to "the use of medicine, drugs or spells."² Whatever medicates or confuses the mind—distortions in teaching, diversions in media, and distractions in entertainment—is used by Satan to deceive. "The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform marvelous works in our sight."³ The greatest battle is not with armies and arsenals aiming their artillery at human bodies; it is with principalities and powers pointing their panoply at human minds.

Spiritual protection

In this warfare against deception, what is our defense? Scripture offers four indispensable strategies:

Be in Christ. "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6:10). Our own wisdom, experience, or education can do nothing in this spiritual battle. We are safe only when we are continually in the Lord. John Stott states, "The commonest description in the Scriptures of a follower of Jesus is that he or she is a person 'in Christ.' The expressions 'in Christ,' 'in the Lord,' and 'in him' occur 164 times in the letters of Paul alone, and are indispensable to an understanding of the New Testament. To be 'in Christ' does not mean to be inside Christ, as tools are in a box or our clothes in a closet, but to be organically united to Christ, as a limb is in the body or a branch is in the tree. It is this personal relationship with Christ that is the distinctive mark of his authentic followers."⁴

Jesus said, "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Ellen White comments, "The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart. . . . Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist."⁵

Be in prayer. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18). Biblical role models are people of prayer. Scripture says, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:16). Prayer is vital in this battle because "at the sound of fervent prayer, Satan's whole host trembles."⁶ To guide us through this warfare, we need more than

human help. “Go to God for yourselves; pray for divine enlightenment, that . . . you may distinguish between the genuine work of God and the imitative work or the powers of darkness.”⁷

Be in His Word. “*And take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*” (Eph. 6:17). Jesus used the Word as His strongest defense against the enemy. He responded to Satan with “It is written . . .” This remains our only safety against Satan and his deceptions and our help and support through daily trials. “So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures.”⁸

Be in His armor. “*Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day*” (Eph. 6:13). The Greek word used here, *panoplia* (English, *panoply*), means “a complete set of defensive and offensive armor (weapons), i.e. everything needed to wage successful warfare; (figuratively) the full resources the Lord gives to the believer so they can successfully wage spiritual warfare. In this

way they do not fight *for* victory—but *from* His victory!”⁹

Heavenly fire

Revelation 13:13 states that at the end of time, Satan “performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.” Fire has various meanings in Scripture.

When Israel departed from God, Elijah was sent to urge the nation to return to the worship of Yahweh. Elijah prayed for fire (1 Kings 18). Fire reveals the true work of God. Fire can represent our zeal, dedication, and passion for God’s work. It can also represent revival. Counterfeit fire can signal Satan’s way of substituting a true revival with a false revival. Counterfeit fire gives the illusion of authenticity to augment the delusion of deception.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is symbolized by fire (see Matt. 3:11; Acts 2:3). When believers become filled with God’s Spirit, they stand on fire for God—passionate to have His presence and willing to do His work. Satan will try to counterfeit this experience.

THE SOLDIER’S ARMOR (EPH. 6:10-18)

The belt and strips (of truth) keep the soldier’s back straight and protect the intimate parts of the body. Truth and integrity protect God’s soldiers against immoral things.

The breastplate (of righteousness) protects the heart, lungs, and bowels. The heart symbolizes love. What do we love and value the most (Matt. 6:21)? Bowels in the Bible symbolize emotions, which need to be under God’s control and protection. Lungs symbolize prayer. “Prayer is the breath of the soul.”¹¹ We must keep breathing. “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17).

The shoes (of the gospel of peace) help our daily Christian walk, our actions, and the direction of our life with God’s guidance.

The shield (of faith) represents spiritual protection. Attacks may come from temptation, hardship, or other types of satanic attack.

The helmet (of salvation) represents mental protection. Our mind is the origin of everything, whether good or bad. Faith or doubt, humility or pride, victory or defeat, all begin in the mind.

The sword (of the Word of God) is our defense and offense. “It is written...” (see Matt. 4:4-11).

¹¹ White, *Messages to Young People*, 249.



Essential preparation

Scripture admonishes, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7b). If we are to resist the deceptions of the soon-coming final crisis, we must focus on God, on His Word, on prayer, and we must be covered by His armor. We should not imitate the foolish virgins, postponing preparation until the coming of the crisis. The quality of our daily walk with God now will determine the level of our victory then. “Those who make Christ their daily companion and familiar friend will feel the powers of an unseen world around them; and by looking unto Jesus they will become assimilated to His image. By beholding they become changed to the divine pattern.”¹⁰

In these last days, it will be difficult to discern between the false and the true. Paul declared, “For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:14b, 15a). We cannot trust human explanations or human beings. Paul stated his fear that “when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:27b). This informs us that even the ones God used to lead us to Christ may become suspect. Our hope does not rest in a preacher, teacher, or prophet. Our only hope lies in a “thus saith the Lord.”

On March 4, 1977, there was a 7.2 magnitude earthquake in Romania. Thousands were killed. Living on the top floor of a five-story building, my dad had located a small area where he believed my mom, sisters, and I would be protected. Buildings were collapsing all around us. People were running desperately down the stairs. Screaming and crying could be heard everywhere, but through the noise, I could hear my father. He was singing, “Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee.” Our next-door neighbor with her entire family knocked on the door asking to come in. When my father asked why they didn’t run out like the others, she answered, “I did my homework ahead of time. I know the options for my family and me. This is the safest place to be.”

Joshua said, “And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Josh. 24:15). Joshua had done his homework. He knew the options for his family and himself. He chose the safest place to be.

*The greatest battle is not
with armies and arsenals
aiming their artillery at
human bodies; it is with
principalities and powers
pointing their panoply at
human minds.*



- 1 “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20, NKJV). The NKJV is used throughout this article.
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- 3 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1950), 593. See also page 464 of *The Great Controversy*; Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 2 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), 96; and Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 302.
- 4 John W. Stott, “‘In Christ.’ The Meaning and Implications of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” *Knowing and Doing*, Summer 2007, cslewisinstitute.org/In_Christ_page1.
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- 10 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 616. See also Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1932), 252.

DELIVERANCE MINISTRY— A BIBLICAL IMPERATIVE

Cases of demonization involving Seventh-day Adventists are found worldwide.¹ The church has attempted to issue clear guidelines on the subject.² Notwithstanding, uncertainty persists surrounding the pastoral ministry of healing and deliverance in the church, leaving some members seeking deliverance in Pentecostal and charismatic churches. In response, the church has affirmed the biblical reality of demon possession, stating, “Seventh-day Adventists, as believers in the Bible, should, therefore, believe in the genuine casting out of demons as they go out to fulfill the gospel commission.”³

Participation in ministry

The Bible says that different ministries of the Holy Spirit are bestowed on church members for the “perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12, KJV). Deliverance ministry (DM) is presented as an ongoing ministry after Jesus’ resurrection (Mark 16:17). DM takes serious commitment and prayer, searching of the soul, and fasting, all in the name of Jesus alone through His presence and power. Many believers who encounter these situations have developed a sensitivity to spiritual warfare and a mentality that recognizes the need for preemptive prayer when visiting certain places of evil.

In order to face the widespread incidents of demon activity, it is recommended that all church leaders (pastors, elders, deacons and deaconesses) receive training in this area (see James 5:14; Acts 6:1–4). The training should also be open to any church member who desires greater preparedness (Mark 16:17, 18).

Ministry training will need to be contextually relevant. People of traditionally animistic societies will have terminology and practices different from those of modern and postmodern societies, who will be “less inclined to engage in animistic practices, but they are also less experienced in engaging the powers of darkness.”⁴

Preparation for ministry

In order to discern these situations, one must seek the Holy Spirit’s presence. The Greek words *diakrisis* (1 Cor. 12:10) or *diakrino* (1 Cor. 14:29) imply judicial estimation. Discerning of spirits also means discernment between the symptoms of mental illness and the symptoms of demonic manifestations. In general, mental health problems are corrected when the right treatment is administered (eating better, getting sleep, hormonal therapy, appropriate medication, etc.).

Because it is difficult, if not a waste of time, to try to pray for the deliverance of a demonized person who does not want to be set free for one reason or another, it is crucial to have a sincere desire, even the explicit consent of the demonized person for deliverance before undertaking any ministry of deliverance. The Scripture says, “Let him call for the elders of the church” (James 5:14, KJV).

Both the demonized and the ministering team (between two and five persons are suggested) should set aside days to fast and pray. The fasting could be for one day or more according to the conviction and disposition of both parties. The nature of the fasting could be liquid fasting or total fasting. Fasting from sunset to sunset is generally recommended. In order to pray with knowledge, as much as possible should be known about the person requesting deliverance. In ideal circumstances, the use of a questionnaire to give the ministering team added information on the spiritual history of the demonized person should be encouraged.

Place of ministry

Team members should include both genders to prevent the possibility of scandal when ministering to a member of the opposite sex. If possible, allow team members to rest. Consider engaging in short sessions using different team members, as long, drawn-out deliverance sessions are often emotionally and physically draining.

With Scripture as your guide, develop a sensitivity to spiritual warfare.

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A dedicated church building is an ideal setting for a deliverance session, as are the hours of the Sabbath, from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. The Lord Jesus Christ presents the Sabbath as a day “made for man” (Mark 2:27). It was on the Sabbath that Jesus healed two extreme cases of deformity and oppression (John 5:1–16; Luke 13:10–16). However, it will not always be possible to meet in a church building or conduct the deliverance service on the Sabbath. Thank God He hears our prayers, wherever the place and whatever the time.

Weapons of warfare

In my years of experience, I have observed that certain Bible texts are powerful in exposing Satan and demons in their activities. Scripture texts describing the power the Lord Jesus Christ over evil spirits are particularly effective (see Matthew 8:29; 10:1; 17:21; Mark 16:17; Luke 10:18, 19; Acts 10:38; Revelation 12:7–11).

The team may read them aloud and, if possible, the demonized person can repeat them as a prayer to God.

In addition to Bible texts, hymns or short

Many believers who encounter these situations have developed a sensitivity to spiritual warfare and a mentality that recognizes the need for preemptive prayer when visiting certain places of evil.

choruses on Christ's resurrection and victory over death and Satan can be used to build faith and assurance on the part of the victim.⁵

Facing resistance. When facing resistance, the team should take a break in order to spend time fortifying the demonized person or team members by ensuring there are no strongholds or unforgiven sins that are giving some right to the evil spirits to resist. Author Ellen White writes that "Satan and his angels are unwilling to lose their prey. They contend and battle with the holy angels, and the conflict is severe."⁶ In some cases, demons have tried to resist our Lord's power. Scripture admonishes, "let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back, and especially those sins that wrap themselves so tightly around our feet and trip us up."⁷

Prayer with spiritual authority. The Bible generally presents Jesus speaking with authority to Satan or demons: "'Be gone, Satan'" (Matt. 4:10, ESV); He "rebuked the demon" (Matt. 17:18, ESV); He "did not allow the demons to speak" (Mark 1:34, NKJV); "'Come out of the man, you unclean spirit'" (Mark 5:8, ESV); "I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him" (Mark 9:25, KJV); "Hold thy peace, and come out of him" (Luke 4:35, KJV); and He "commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man" (Luke 8:29, KJV). Christ issued His orders with an authoritative, even militaristic tone. As a consequence, Scripture declares, "Then the spirit cried out, and convulsed him greatly, and came out of him" (Mark 9:26, NKJV).

Healing prayer. It is quite clear from Scripture that demonic attacks could be the cause of some disabilities (Matt. 9:32; 12:22). Thus, the combination of healing (either inner or physical) and deliverance (Mark 9:17–26; Luke 11:14) is "the key to wholeness for the demonized."⁸ Here there is great need for spiritual discernment. An ailment may be a chemical imbalance requiring not deliverance by a church leader but treatment by a medical professional.

Growth in Christ

In deliverance ministry, there is always the risk that expelled demons will return to their former habitation, find it empty, and invite in more evil spirits, causing the person's condition to be worse than it was before (Matt. 12:45). Thus, those set free from Satan's bondage need the hallmarks of growing in Christ: (1) a life born of the Spirit (John 3:5); (2) a life of love and unity (John 13:34); (3) a life of study (2 Tim. 3:16, 17); (4) a life of prayer (Eph. 6:18); (5) a life of fruit bearing (John 15:4); (6)

a life of spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:12, 13); and (7) a life of worship, witness, and hope (Acts 2:42–47).⁹

Impediments to mission

Five important impediments to DM are as follows: (1) the danger of using the name of Christ without a relationship with Him (Acts 19:13–17); (2) triumphalism and self-sufficiency (Luke 10:20); (3) sensationalism or using magical approaches (Acts 5:15; 19:11, 12); (4) seeking information from demons (Luke 11:18a); and (5) using practices that could hurt or harm the demonized.

It is important to have an organized and biblical response that would engage the church leader in ministering to cases of demonization. At this time of global spiritualism, such a response is both a great challenge and a huge opportunity for ministry among fellow Adventists, the wider Christian world, and members of other world religions.



- 1 A version of this article was published in *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 11, no. 2 (2015): 115–138. It is reprinted here with modifications. Used by permission.
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- 6 Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1930), 60.
- 7 Heb. 12:1 (TLB). See also Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1942), 91.
- 8 Charles H. Kraft, *The Evangelical's Guide to Spiritual Warfare: Practical Instruction and Scriptural Insights on Facing the Enemy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Pub. Group, 2015), 188.
- 9 *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 155–161.

Dual allegiance:

A reflection on venerating ancestral spirits

Yomi Adegoke tells us the story of Michelle Yaa. “Yaa, like increasing numbers of the African diaspora, decided to stop practicing Christianity in favor of a religion of African heritage. Raised a Seventh Day Adventist [*sic*], she spent her childhood questioning Christian doctrine. When she didn’t receive the answers she sought from church, she stopped attending.

“It wasn’t until the end of university that Yaa reconnected with any form of religion. One day, she says, she began hearing voices. Rather than

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call her doctor, she called on her ancestors, writing down the names of those she could remember and surrounding herself with the slips of paper. She claims that this took place before she knew what the practice of ancestral worship was. . . .

“She began communicating with her ancestors frequently through rituals.”¹

In this case, Michelle called on her ancestors after she stopped going to church. With dual

Psalm 139:10

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- 10 Even there Your hand will *lead me. And Your right hand will lay hold of me.
- 11 If I say, “Surely the *darkness will *coverwhelm me. And the light around me will be night.”
- 12 Even the *darkness is not dark ¹to You. And the night is as bright as the day. ²Darkness and light are alike to You.
- 13 For You *formed my inward parts; You *wove me in my mother’s womb.
- 14 I will give thanks to You, for ¹I am fearfully and wonderfully made; ²Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.
- 15 My ¹frame was not hidden from You. When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the ²depths of the earth,
- 16 Your *eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in ³Your book were all written The *days that were ordained for me. When as yet there was not one of them.
- 17 How precious also are Your *thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!
- 18 If I should count them, they would *outnumber the sand. When ¹I awake, I am still with You.

10 ¹Ps 28:2, 3; 11 ¹Lit. *bratias*; *constrastatione*; read *cover* + Job 22:13; 12 ¹Lit. *from* + Job 34:22; Dan 2:21; Job 1:5; 13 ¹Lit. *Alleya*; +Ps 117:73; Is 44:24; Job 10:11; 14 ¹Some ancient versions read You are fearfully wonderful + Ps 40:5; 15 ¹Lit. *bones* were + Job 10:4; 10; Eccl 11:5 + Ps 43:9; 16 ¹Job 10:8-10; Eccl 11:5 + Ps 56:8; Job 18:5; 17 +Ps 40:5; 42:5; 18 +Ps 40:5 +Ps 55

19 ¹Ps 114 +Ps 6:8; 119:115 +Ps 96; 26; 20 ¹Use of *Some* class read *He* themselves *in* against You; +Isa 63:11; 20:7; Deut 5:11; 2 ¹2 Chr 19:2; Ps 26:5; 31:6 +Ps 119:158; 28 ¹Job 31:6; Ps 26:2 +Ps 79; Prov 17:1; Jer 11:20; 1 Thes 2:4; 24 ¹Lit. *use* of pain +Ps 146:9;

- 19 O that You would *slay the wicked, O God; *Depart from me, therefore, *men of bloodshed.
- 20 For they *speak ¹against You wickedly. And Your enemies ²take Your name in vain.
- 21 Do I not *hate those who hate You, O LORD? And do I not *loathe those who rise up against You?
- 22 I hate them with the utmost hatred. They have become my enemies.
- 23 *Search me, O God, and know my heart; *Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
- 24 And see if there be any ¹hurtful way in me. And ²lead me in the *everlasting way.

Psalm 140

For the choir director. A Psalm of David.

- 1 *Rescue me, O LORD, from evil men; Preserve me from violent men
- 2 Who *devise evil things in their hearts; They *continually stir up wars.
- Prov 15:9; 28:10; Jer 25:5; Jer 5:8; 143:10 +Ps 16:11; 140:1 +Ps 17:13; 59:2; 71:4 +Ps 18:48; 86:14; 140:11; 2 +Ps 7:14; 36:4; 52:2; Prov 6:14; Is 59:4; Hos 7:15 +Ps 58:4

by referring to its two extremes (merism), vv. 8–9 specify all spatial reality, the whole creation.

139:10 *lead me . . . lay hold of me.* Though this language occurs in 73:23–24 to indicate God’s solicitous care, it here denotes God’s inescapable supervision, not unlike the thought of v. 5.

139:11–12 Just as the whole creation offers no hiding place (vv. 8–9), neither does even the darkness.

139:13–16 You Yourself put me together in the womb and ordained the span of my life before I was born.

139:13 *inward parts.* Lit. “kidneys”—in Hebrew idiom, the innermost center of emotions and of moral sensitivity—that which God tests and examines when He “tries” a person (see note on 7:9).

139:14 *fearfully . . . wonderfully . . . Wonderful.* You know me as the One who formed me (see vv. 15–16), but I cannot begin

139:17 *Your thoughts.* As expressed in His works—and in contrast with “my thoughts” (v. 2).

139:18 *When I awake.* The sleep of exhaustion overcomes every attempt to count God’s thoughts/works (see 139:119, 148), and waking only floods my soul once more with the sense of the presence of this God.

139:19–22 My zeal for You sets me against all Your adversaries.

139:19 *O that You would.* Jealous impatience with God’s patience toward the wicked—whose end will come (v. 11, 14). But the psalmist leaves it to God.

139:20 *take Your name in vain.* Perhaps by calling down God on those trying to be the faithful servants of God.

139:21–22 A declaration of loyalty that echoes the pledge required by ancient Near Eastern kings of their vassals (e.g., “With my friend you shall be friend, and with my enemy you shall be enemy,” from a treaty between Mursilis II, a Hittite king and Tute of Nubassi, 14th century B.C.).

- 3 They *speak against me like a serpent; *Poison of a viper is under my tongue.
- 4 *Keep me from the wicked, O LORD. Who have lifted up their feet against battle.
- 5 The proud and the arrogant have despised me. They have despised my prayer.
- 6 I *said in my anger, “I will not give supplication.”
- 7 O God, the LORD, strengthen my salvation, You have *covered my head in the day of battle.
- 8 Do not grant, O LORD, the desire of the wicked; Do not promote *his evil device, lest they not be exalted.
- 9 As for the head of those who hate me, May the *mischief befall them.
- 10 May *burning coals be set against them. Into the fire let them be cast, which they have despised.
- 11 May *their tongue be cut off, and they may speak no more. May their *speedily

that the LORD will cause of the afflicted. And ¹justice for the poor. Surely the *righteous will praise Your name, and their right will dwell in justice.

Psalm 141

A Psalm of David.

- I call upon You; *do not let my voice be heard. My prayer be ¹counted before You; *do not let my handning offering. Guard, O LORD, ¹my mouth; Keep watch over the ²door of my mouth; *Do not incline my heart to practice deeds ¹of wicked men who *do iniquity. And *do not let me eat of delicacies.

- 5 Let the *righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me. It is ¹oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse. ²For still my prayer is ¹as stuckle deeds. Their judges are ¹thrown aside of the rock,

Ps 141:1, 3; 1; Prov 18:3; 21:23 +Ps 141:1; 141:3; 141:4; 141:5; 141:6; 141:7; 141:8; 141:9; 141:10; 141:11; 141:12; 141:13; 141:14; 141:15; 141:16; 141:17; 141:18; 141:19; 141:20; 141:21; 141:22; 141:23; 141:24; 141:25; 141:26; 141:27; 141:28; 141:29; 141:30; 141:31; 141:32; 141:33; 141:34; 141:35; 141:36; 141:37; 141:38; 141:39; 141:40; 141:41; 141:42; 141:43; 141:44; 141:45; 141:46; 141:47; 141:48; 141:49; 141:50; 141:51; 141:52; 141:53; 141:54; 141:55; 141:56; 141:57; 141:58; 141:59; 141:60; 141:61; 141:62; 141:63; 141:64; 141:65; 141:66; 141:67; 141:68; 141:69; 141:70; 141:71; 141:72; 141:73; 141:74; 141:75; 141:76; 141:77; 141:78; 141:79; 141:80; 141:81; 141:82; 141:83; 141:84; 141:85; 141:86; 141:87; 141:88; 141:89; 141:90; 141:91; 141:92; 141:93; 141:94; 141:95; 141:96; 141:97; 141:98; 141:99; 141:100; 141:101; 141:102; 141:103; 141:104; 141:105; 141:106; 141:107; 141:108; 141:109; 141:110; 141:111; 141:112; 141:113; 141:114; 141:115; 141:116; 141:117; 141:118; 141:119; 141:120; 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allegiance, a person contacts their ancestors while still professing to be a practicing member of the church. Paul Dosunmu acknowledges that “dual allegiance is a state of mind that is subsequently played out in practical ways.” It can be described as “an internal or psychological system of inconsistencies, doubts, and fears that eventually become manifest in the lives of the religion’s adherents.”²

John Mbiti laments, “Africans are notoriously religious.”³ However, this lamentation extends beyond the boundaries of Africa. Dual allegiance is implicitly or explicitly worshiping the spirits, and it is found regardless of how evangelized or educated a person may be. The inclination to dual allegiance is prominent among many believers, especially concerning the worship, or veneration, of ancestral spirits.⁴

Ancestors beliefs

In my ministry context, when a person dies, the community ensures that everyone adheres to the veneration of ancestral spirits or risks being charged by community leaders or banished from the village. The community believes that the dead are still alive. This kind of thinking poses a big challenge to helping the community to understand their condition in death and assisting believers to comprehend their purpose in life, leading Paul Dosunmu to comment, “There has been little biblical reflection or no satisfactory missiological consideration of the phenomenon of dual allegiance in the Adventist Church.”⁵

The belief in ancestral spirits is real and strong. Meyer Fortes declares, “Ancestors are considered vested with mystical powers and authority.”⁶ Richard Gehman maintains that these are “senior elders of the clan who are responsible for guarding the family traditions and life.”⁷ These spirits are feared in many communities. It is believed that when “the living fail to follow the customs of the fathers, it becomes the duty of the living dead to correct their mistakes.”⁸

Ancestors are believed to be living in a community with their descendants. They are also consulted for assistance in times of need and trouble. This agrees with Richard Gehman’s assertion that the living dead may serve as intermediaries between man and God.⁹ When there is a disease in the family, the blame is on the ancestral spirits who are said to be turning over in their graves. This justifies why they are venerated by giving sacrificial offerings, constructing extravagant tombstones, and erecting houses for them on the gravesite.

Critical dimensions

How does one assess a religion’s validity? Scholars generally recognize three major categories of religion: traditional religion, Western Christianity, and biblical Christianity. Seeking to evaluate the spiritual potency of these categories, Charles Kraft identifies three dimensions: (1) truth—the understanding that comes from continually experiencing divine truth; (2) power—the spiritual power that is received to bring freedom; and (3) allegiance—the allegiance/relationship with God and all the love and obedience that it entails.¹⁰

Kraft states that traditional religion has wrong allegiances, counterfeit truth, and satanic power. He maintains that Western Christianity has true allegiance and God’s truth but nothing to address the power issue. He believes that biblical Christianity has true allegiance, God’s truth, and God’s power.¹¹ A deeper consideration of these dimensions is warranted.

Truth dimension

The truth dimension was embodied by Jesus Christ when He declared, “I am the [only] Way [to God] and the [real] Truth and the [real] Life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6, AMP). Kraft states that this has “to be an experienced truth, not simply intellectual truth.”¹²

Caleb Kim identifies truth categories that may be common among various religions: “the beginning of the universe, God and supernatural beings such as angels and demons, the origin of people, the reason for existence, moral problems such as sin, causes of sufferings, deliverance from sufferings such as salvation in Christianity.”¹³

However, Christianity unreservedly asserts, “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among people by which we must be saved [for God has provided the world no alternative for salvation]” (Acts 4:12, AMP). All who have joined Christianity must be aware that the focus of veneration is not dual allegiance but God and God alone.

Power dimension

In certain parts of the world, people have been power oriented, and when they are converted, they shift their focus to a power far superior to ancestors or practitioners like shamans, *ngangas*, and healers. That is the reason why prayers are expressed as if they are physically fighting with the devil.

While converts fellowship with other believers only once or twice a week in church, they are continually with family and community in their daily activities. These believers have learned from their parents and community about the importance of venerating ancestral spirits.

However, conversion demands that we regulate the power even of family in our lives. “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” (Matt. 10:37, AMP).

Allegiance dimension

Every culture has values by which “it judges human relationships to be moral or immoral.”¹⁴ This concept certainly underlies the veneration of ancestral spirits. Scripture admonishes, “ ‘They worship Me in vain [their worship is meaningless and worthless, a pretense], teaching the precepts of men as doctrines [giving their traditions equal weight with the Scriptures].” You disregard and neglect the commandment of God, and cling [faithfully] to the tradition of men’ ” (Mark 7:7, 8, AMP).

God demands that we present ourselves as living sacrifices and not be conformed to this world (Rom. 12:1, 2). Our allegiance cannot be cajoled, corrupted, or compromised, lest we too hear from Christ, “ ‘So you nullify the [authority of the] word of God [acting as if it did not apply] because of your tradition which you have handed down [through the elders]. And you do many things such as that’ ” (Mark 7:13, AMP).

Authentic religion

The practice of dual allegiance permeates the hearts of many professed Christians. For those venerating the ancestral spirits, let them see that the Bible does not endorse the immortality of human beings; it denies it. God is the only One who is immortal (Ps. 90:9–14, 1 Tim. 6:15, 16).

The Bible teachings confirm that the dead are not conscious and have no part in the activities of life under the sun (Eccl. 9:5). Ellen White states, “Multitudes have come to believe that it is spirits of the dead who are the ‘ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.’ ”¹⁵ She comments that from a scriptural point of view, these spirits are not tangible spirits of dead persons but agents of darkness.

In many communities, people may appear to be very religious like those in Athens, as outlined in Acts 17:22–34. They were ignorant about God, the Creator of the universe. Paul then outlines the

character of this God of whom they were ignorant. James Dunn declares, “The personal pronoun *ego* is emphatic; it stresses the apostle’s resolve to proclaim the unknown God as the only God.”¹⁶ Simply to be religious can never suffice, especially if tied to a wrong religion.

The veneration of ancestral spirits is hugely influential, even in Christianity. Reverence for Christ, however, must replace respect for culture. Fear must fall before faith. Truth must triumph over tradition. “Therefore God overlooked and disregarded the former ages of ignorance; but now He commands all people everywhere to repent [that is, to change their old way of thinking, to regret their past sins, and to seek God’s purpose for their lives]” (Acts 17:30, AMP).



- 1 Yomi Adegoke, “ ‘Jesus Hasn’t Saved Us: The Young Black Women Returning to Ancestral Religions,” *Vice*, Sept. 13, 2016, [vice.com/en_us/article/bjgxx4/jesus-hasnt-saved-us-young-black-women-returning-ancestral-religions](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/bjgxx4/jesus-hasnt-saved-us-young-black-women-returning-ancestral-religions).
- 2 Paul Adekunle Dosunmu, *A Missiological Study of the Phenomenon of Dual Allegiance in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Among the Yoruba People of Nigeria* (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2011), 34, digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1028&context=dissertations.
- 3 John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, UK: Heinemann Educational, 1990), 1.
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Dealing With the Demonic in the African Context

edited by Kelvin Onongha and Bruce L. Bauer (Berrien Springs, MI: Theological Seminary, Adventist University of Africa, 2019).

Dealing With the Demonic in the African Context “seeks to present members, ministers, teachers, and administrators not only the theological challenges, but appropriate missiological responses specifically dealing with issues of the demonic” (1).

This book’s examination of the biblical worldview of the origin and operations of the demonic bodes well for the issues under discussion. Juxtaposed with a philosophical worldview informing the African conception of demonization, the book deepens the understanding of satanic operations on the continent and offers helpful proposals.

After establishing the framework for the book in the preliminary chapters, comparing biblical worldviews with African philosophical worldviews, the remaining chapters, 4–11, offer helpful approaches for addressing cases of demonization in the African context.

Boubakar Sanou’s chapter analyzes New Testament perspectives on discipleship. He examines witnessing and discipling, emphasizing the holistic use of the truth, allegiance, and power dimensions of the gospel. He suggests that addressing these concepts in an appropriate social and cultural setting—the African cultural context—will result in disciples who are free from African sociocultural and religious ideologies that drench them in fear. This approach assures the African that the God of the gospel is more powerful than the forces behind the demonic operations that engulf them.

Onongha complements this proposal with his chapter, “Authority and Position in Christ.” He stresses the need for believers, battling demonic operations, to acknowledge and accept that the “new privilege and status Christians have in Christ as a result of the cross and His

victory over the totality of demonic hosts has the potential to bring transformation to life and ministry” (110).

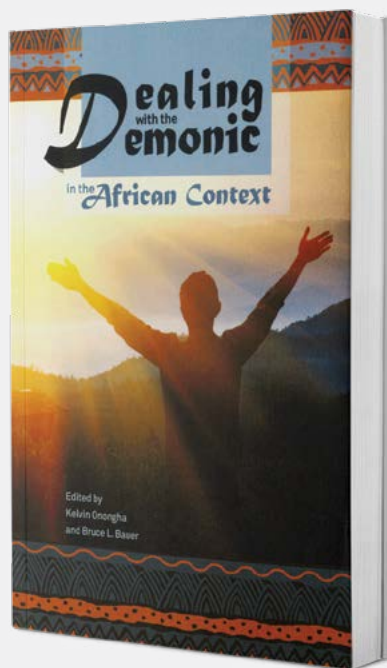
In Chapter 9, from his review of biblical cases, Eriks Galeniaks shares the case study of a fraudulent healing ministry, advising that the thin line between genuine and counterfeit healing can be discerned only by the Word of God.

One crucial question that arises concerns distinguishing between physical illness and demonic activities. The African view of causation attributes every occurrence to the actions of spirit beings. In light of this, many physical diseases have been treated as demonic afflictions, with unfavorable conclusions. The opposite is also true. Demon-possessed or oppressed individuals have often been treated medically for months, without any improvement.

In chapter 5, Ugochukwu Elems outlines principles that help in discerning the differences between physical illness and demonization to allow for the right diagnosis and treatment.

Finally, Onongha discusses the question of whether Christians can be demon possessed. He establishes that the enemy and his entourage may harass and obsess Christians, but he cannot possess them.

Although written to address demonic problems on the continent of Africa, it is thought-provoking that no comment is made regarding how demonization on the African continent relates to demonization in other parts of the world. Authors in the book analyze the universality of demonization, stating, “Many people believe that spiritualism and witchcraft form an integral part only of African culture and religion. However, they are wrong, as the myriads of demonic activities in countless forms and sub-forms establish themselves globally through witchcraft, fortune



Reviewed by
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 at Valley View
 University Accra,
 Ghana.

telling, the New Age movement, voodooism, *obeah*, werewolves . . ." (112).

While the authors accept the reality of the universal nature of demonization and echo the conviction of many theologians and missiologists concerning demonic beings, the book would benefit from a discussion of the concept of demonization in Africa compared to other parts of the world.

One chapter that will no doubt receive considerable attention is "A Field Manual for Dealing With the Demonized." Michée Badé believes his proposed descriptive and prescriptive guidelines for deliverance from demonic operations are biblically grounded and fit "best the convictions and identity of Seventh-day Adventist Christians" (87). However, if healing and working miracles are gifts (1 Cor. 12), is there really a need for a manual for dealing with demonic activities?

This question is crucial, as the manifestation of the ministry of deliverance is often a money-making enterprise preying on an individual's need for freedom. A manual for dealing with demonization should be received with caution, ensuring that cooperation with the Holy Spirit is fundamental to the process.

Irrespective of this and other questions raised by the authors, the book is essential for our era with its increase in demonic deception and the need for Seventh-day Adventist leaders, pastors, and teachers as well as church members to step up their responses to diabolical activities. 📖

For more information . . .

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Pastors praise God for deliverance

LUANDA, ANGOLA

Seventh-day Adventist Church leader **Ted N. C. Wilson** met with Angola's president, **João Lourenço**, to thank him for intervening in a horrific case in which six Adventists were falsely accused of kidnapping and extortion.

"From the day that I was put in prison, I prayed that God would use the situation to glorify His name to all Angola," said **Burns Musa Sibanda**, treasurer of the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission, who spent 62 days in prison. "God has done just that."

Four pastors, including Sibanda, and two laymen were falsely accused of kidnapping and extortion in a case that church leaders and the government have linked to epidemic corruption in the country. One of the laymen died after being brutally assaulted in police custody in an attempt to force him to testify against the others. Angola's Supreme Court fully acquitted the Adventists in 2019.

Wilson thanked Lourenço for cracking down on corruption and urged him to keep up the fight, saying, "God is on your side." With Lourenço's consent, he shared three Bible verses, including Philippians 4:8, which he said would offer special encouragement in his fight against corruption.

The 30-minute meeting ended with Wilson praying for Lourenço, his family, the government, and the people of Angola. National television channels featured the meeting on their news broadcasts that night and on regular news bulletins throughout the next day, emphasizing Wilson's encouragement in the fight against corruption and highlighting the Bible verses that he shared with the president. The main front-page headline in the country's largest newspaper, *Jornal de Angola*, read, "Adventist World Church Leader Backs Fight Against Corruption." The accompanying news article quoted the entire text of Philippians 4:8.

Wilson also expressed appreciation to the country's attorney general, **Hélder Pitta Grós**; parliamentary speaker, **Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos**; and interior minister, **Eugénio César Laborinho** for their assistance in the case of the falsely accused Adventists.



Ted N. C. and Nancy Wilson speaking with President João Lourenço of Angola

PHOTO: THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE

Ganoune Diop, director of the Adventist General Conference's Public Affairs and Religious Liberty department, said he was grateful to God for the support and work of the attorney general and ministers during four trips to Angola during the ordeal. "I still keep praying that our Lord will help our brothers and their family heal from this traumatic experience," he said via WhatsApp.

Wilson, recounting the government meetings during his Sabbath sermon to 35,000 people gathered in a sports stadium, called on all Adventists to be honest and mission minded. He noted that the instigators of the false accusations were Adventists.

"It doesn't matter which tribe you come from, which local language you speak, or which people group you are from," he added. "All of us who love Jesus are one in the Lord, and we ought to be focused on one thing: the mission of the church. I want to ask all of you in Angola to unite in the mission of telling others that Jesus is coming soon!"

On Sabbath afternoon, Wilson comforted the widow and other family members of **João Alfredo Dala**, the Adventist layman who died at age 45 from internal injuries suffered as a result of the violent police interrogation.

"Our hearts are heavy," he said. "He died as a martyr for Jesus."

The church plans to create a trust fund for the widow and her 10 children.

Sibanda, the union treasurer who was jailed for 62 days, also described Dala as a martyr for Jesus. "If he had agreed to tell a lie against us as he had been asked to do by the authorities, we would still be in prison," he said. "I owe him the freedom that I am enjoying today." [Andrew McChesney]

COVID-19: Generate health in the community

PUNTA CANA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Aware of the current global situation due to the threat of the coronavirus COVID-19 and the possible repercussions it brings, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the territory of the Inter-American Division (IAD), with headquarters in Miami, Florida, is working with the Adventist World Church to implement any contingency plan required with regard to different activities and/or possible scenarios.

Elie Henry, IAD president, stated, “Our priority is the health of persons. We recommend that our employees, leaders, and church members increase hygiene measures, take necessary precautions, and stay informed, doing everything possible to help prevent the spread of the virus. We ask you to continue to pray for those affected, the efforts to eradicate the virus, and encourage you to keep faith in God in these key times in the history of mankind.”

The Division has maintained a proactive approach to community health. On January 23, 2020, **Tricia Penniecook**, vice dean for education and faculty affairs and associate professor in the College of Public Health at the University of South Florida in the United States, addressed church administrators and health leaders during the IAD Health Summit in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

Penniecook, MD, MPH, former dean of the School of Public Health at Loma Linda University, and former vice president for academic administration at Oakwood University, stated, “If you think the role of the health promoter is about celebrating activities on World Health Day, presenting health nuggets each Sabbath, or holding health fairs or expos in the community once or twice a year, waiting for people to come to us, you’re wrong. Your role is to generate health in the community.”

The first step is to find out the causes of death in the country, she explained, as she led the group to search online at the Pan American Health Organization’s webpage. Looking at the different age groups in the population will help in your research to find out more about your community, she explained.

Penniecook advised health leaders to join the community’s local health commission, its disaster commission, the waste management commission, and a public school that can have an impact on children. “Encourage this generation to study public health and get academic training so that laws can be changed and effective, long-lasting impact can occur.”

It’s about getting members involved, too, she said. Programs like “I Want to Be Healthy,” which teaches the eight natural remedies for a healthy lifestyle, can have lasting positive effects in generations to come, Penniecook said. “We must connect with the fabric in the local community. As a church, we have a vast range of action. But if we lack compassion, love, and grace, our health message will not help anyone.” [Libna Stevens, Inter-American Division, *Adventist Review* and Jeffrey Brown, *Ministry*]

COVID-19 Pastoral Support Resources

- **Generating community health**—<http://healthministries.com/coronavirus>
- **Caring without visiting**—<https://www.christiancentury.org/blog-post/guest-post/10-guidelines-pastoral-care-during-coronavirus-outbreak>
- **Worshipping without congregating**—<https://www.nadadventist.org/news/help-i-need-do-virtual-church-best-practices-taking-your-church-service-online>
- **Support your families**—<https://preventchildabuse.org/coronavirus-resources/>
- **Help your parents**—<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-parenting>
- **Watch your marriages**—<https://www.hopetv.org/shows/athome/episode/ml/-/family-in-quarantine-with-drs-willie-and-elaine-oliver/>
- **Outreach in the outbreak**—<http://www.nadministerial.com/stories/ministering-to-people-through-the-pandemic>
- **Ministry uninterrupted**—<https://www.wheaton.edu/academics/academic-centers/humanitarian-disaster-institute/covid-19/>
- **Mental health alert**—<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/get-help/w-to-care-for-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus/>
- **Self-care is not selfish**—<https://influencemagazine.com/en/Practice/Pastoral-Self-Care-in-a-Pandemic>



Mental, emotional, and spiritual health of clergy is the focus of New AdventHealth Study

ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES


Highly publicized resignations and reports of distress and burnout among pastors and faith leaders have raised concerns about the mental and emotional health of those who serve in ministry. A new study led by AdventHealth University, in conjunction with Florida-based AdventHealth, aims to better understand the health and well-being of clergy.

The research study is open to clergy and faith leaders across the state of Florida. The survey consists of questions about the respondents' social support and occupational distress as well as their emotional and spiritual health.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), one in five US adults experiences mental illness each year. NAMI also

notes that 43 percent of adults with mental illness received treatment in 2018.

Martin Shaw, lead researcher for the study, stated, "While clergy is a somewhat understudied group, it is critical that we gain greater insight about their mental and emotional well-being and ways to mitigate issues where present. Our ultimate goal is to better understand how best to care for and support our clergy and the communities they serve."

Clergy interested in learning more and participating in the research study can do so confidentially by visiting the Clergy Wholeness Study web page at clergywholenessstudy.wordpress.com. [Globe Newswire] 

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Demons and demonic activity

One of the victims of our modern worldview is the belief in the reality of demons and demonic activity. Evil spirit beings are reinterpreted psychologically as complexes, psychoses, libidinous pressures in our minds,¹ or, at best, powerful social forces and structures.² Simultaneously, and perhaps as a reaction to naturalistic scientific rationalism, there has been a renewed interest in the subject of demons and demonic activities.³

Five facts about demons are clear from Scripture.

1. Demons are real

In the Old Testament, while we do not find one single word used consistently to represent demons, the term *shêd* in Deuteronomy 32:17 and Psalm 106:37 has the primary meaning of “demon.” The 63 occurrences of the word *daimonion* in the New Testament are applied to spirit beings that are evil in nature, thus underscoring the evil nature of demons.⁴

2. Demons are fallen

The combined evidence from Ezekiel 28:14–18; John 12:31; and Revelation 12:4, 9 points to the fact that demons are the angels that rebelled with Satan and were thrown out of heaven during a primordial war. Additionally, Matthew 12:24–26 suggests that these fallen angels constitute a kingdom with Satan as their ruler. It is a kingdom that is fundamentally opposed to the kingdom of God and works to subvert it, thus suggestive of a war between good and evil (the great controversy).

3. Demons are active

The work of demons in the world may manifest itself in several ways:

Demonic possession. Questions remain as to whether the phrase *demon possession* should be applied to all cases of demon invasion or attack or only to the most enslaving forms, such as in the case of the demoniac of Gadara (Mark

5:1–20). The word that is usually translated “demon-possessed” is the Greek participle *daimonizomenos*, which is indicative of passivity (as in influence) more than possession (as in ownership). One who bears the name Christian but maintains no true connection with Christ (cf. John 15:1–7) risks the possibility of demonization.

Harassment. Sincere Christians may expect to be the object of demonic attacks, which may come in forms such as persecution, illness, or discouragement. Paul speaks of “a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me” (2 Cor. 12:7, KJV). Speaking of herself and her husband, Ellen White wrote, “I saw that we had been the special objects of Satan’s attacks, because of our interest in and connection with the work of God.”⁵ Such demonic activity may be termed demonic harassment, carried out by fallen angels or perpetrated by persons practicing divination, witchcraft, sorcery, and magic (Deut. 18:10, 11; Num. 23:23).⁶

4. Demons are defeated

Demons are real, but they are not omnipotent. James wrote, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7, NIV), and Paul admonishes Christians to put on the whole armor of God so that they can “stand against the devil’s schemes” (Eph. 6:11, NIV).⁷

5. Demons are secondary

Programmatic approaches to demonic deliverance tend to involve particular strategies and methods. Some include interrogating the demons, using concoctions, hitting or pushing victims, and participating in questionable rituals that are difficult to justify biblically. “The apostles called upon Jesus’ name to free people from demons.”⁸ Scripture offers us prayer, not a prescription and faith, not a formula.

Ángel Manuel Rodríguez states, “In the New Testament exorcism is not listed among the spiritual gifts. No one was called by Jesus to establish a ministry of exorcism. He gave His disciples power

and authority over demons, but not once did He suggest that would be their primary role. Their responsibility was the proclamation of the kingdom of God, the good news of salvation. He explicitly said: 'As you go, preach this message: "The kingdom of heaven is near." Heal the sick, raise the dead, . . . drive out demons' (Matt. 10:7, 8, NIV; cf. Mark 6:12; Luke 9:2). The proclamation of the kingdom of

God is the mission of each believer. When in the fulfillment of that mission we confront demoniacs, we have been empowered by Christ to face them. But our primary call is to proclaim the gospel of redemption through Christ."⁹

We conclude by emphasizing that the apostles called upon Jesus' name to free people from demons. We can do no less.



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- 5 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 347.
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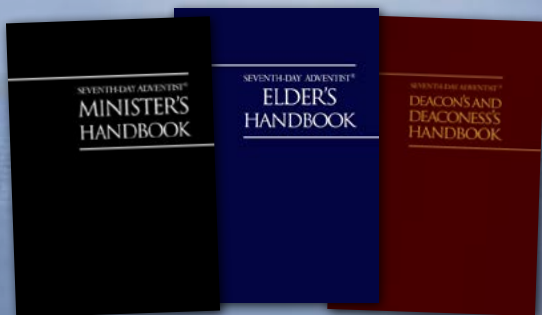
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