

## A MISSIOLOGY OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

1. We must be prepared for spiritual ministries that include healing and exorcisms, but we should not focus chiefly on them. Deliverance ministries are most effective when they are part of a holistic pastoral care ministry. Our central purpose is that people be saved and grow into Christian maturity. We must avoid the sensationalism commonly associated with healing/exorcism ministries.
2. The critical issues is discernment. We must not confuse ontology with phenomenology. Satan is a master of deceit and wants as much to fear he is there when he isn't as to believe he isn't when he is.
  - 2.1 Discernment is very difficult because of the complexity of the human person and our tendency to self-deception.
    - The person who is psychologically ill may suffer from delusions of being demon possessed.
    - Demonized persons rarely refer to being demonized.
  - 2.2 M.J.Sall notes five differences between demonization and mental illness:
    - a demonized person reacts negatively to Jesus and his followers (Matt. 8:29), whereas the mentally disturbed are often devoutly religious, even developing delusions of grandeur thinking themselves to be Jesus.
    - demons what bodies to inhabit and appear as distinct, separate personalities associated with people. Psychotics have the opposite desire, seeking to withdraw and confusing reality and fantasy.
    - demons respond in a specific, rational manner, and speak coherently. The mentally ill tend to be incoherent in speech and have illogical mental processes.
    - demons have a strong, objective ego identity. The mentally ill have weak ego structures, and uncertain self-images as a result of their loss of object reality.
    - treatment of the mentally ill is often a long process.

That of the demonized is more immediate, dramatic and **lasting** in its cure.
3. Preparation for Exorcism:
  - 3.1 It is important that the counselor be prepared. He/she must take careful stock of personal attitudes and relationship to the Lord. Deliverance ministries should never be done merely out of curiosity or experiment. The demons, too, know hidden sin and inner secrets of the counselor (Act 19:13ff). Complete honesty and openness is needed, and a right heart before God. Unconfessed sin, resentment and an unforgiving spirit block the ministry.
  - 3.2 Care must be taken to avoid undue emotional involvement, and to maintain as

much objectivity as possible, because such ministries are already very subjective and lend themselves readily to excesses and sensationalism. We do not enter such ministry joyfully or triumphantly.

- 3.3 Some part of the counselee's personality must want deliverance. God does not deliver people against their will.
- 3.4 The counselors should work as a team including a medical doctor and a Christian psychologist. A wrong diagnosis and exorcism can cause great damage to the counselee.
- 3.5 The team should look first for biophysical and psychological causes. Only when all these are ruled out, should spirit possession be considered as the cause.

#### 4. Ministry

- 4.1 Ministry must be conducted surrounded by prayer for protection, discernment, and ministry. Speak primarily to God.
- 4.2 Do not converse with the spirits. Simply seek to discover its identity, and then order its departure under the authority of Christ. It is not important to know the name of the spirit to cast it out.
- 4.3 Avoid all magical tendencies in the deliverance. It is not dependent on the use of any special words, or gestures. The deliverance is by Christ and the Holy Spirit, not by our actions.
- 4.4 Follow-up and incorporation of the counselee in a small, understanding Christian community is essential. Deliverance is only a small part of overall pastoral care. Help the church deal with the stigma of "possession."

- 5.5 Most misfortunes and illnesses are not directly caused by demonic sources. They are part of our fallen estate and the judgment of sin.
- 5.6 It is human nature to be fascinated by the novel, the inexplicable, the miraculous. They also want to have control. Consequently they have a basic tendency towards magic that enables them to control the supernatural. When the people wanted miracles and not the message they brought, Jesus ceased doing them.

## 6. The Nature of Spiritual Warfare

- 6.1 The battle between righteousness and evil, God and Satan is real and serious.
- 6.2 The issue is not one of power, but of authority. God seems to have given Satan authority over the earth before his fall. The question is how does God remove Satan from the position He gave him without being unjust and arbitrary Himself. - in Jesus' temptation he placed himself under God's authority by appealing to Scripture (Luke 4:1-13, cf. Dut 8:3, 6:13, Ps. 91:11).
- 6.3 Jesus' exorcism of spirits and healing of the sick took place as part of his ministry. He did not go seeking these, but when people came he ministered to them. His central purpose was to declare the coming of the Kingdom of God in salvation, righteousness, peace and justice.
- 6.4 Scripture absolutely forbids Christians from pursuing demonology and magic (Isa. 8:19-22; Jer. 27:9-10; Gal. 5:20, Rev. 21:8).