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# REFLECTIONS ON THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF DEMONOLOGICAL BELIEFS AND PRAXIS AMONG BRITISH PENTECOSTALS

Keith Warrington

## 1. Introduction

Although British Pentecostals hold diverse views concerning the demonic and exorcism, they have fundamentally sought to maintain a sanguine stance with regard to these issues. They have been reticent to follow the latest trends and have generally sought to be guided by the biblical narrative for their beliefs and praxis. This has often resulted in very cautious assessments and assertions concerning exorcistic practices. After providing an historical survey of these beliefs and practices, this article will conclude with an assessment of the potential development of British Pentecostal demonology.

British Classical Pentecostal denominations accept the existence of a personal devil and influential demons though this is not stated in their denominational fundamental beliefs as neither is the practice of exorcism. Similarly, the very few British Pentecostals who have written concerning these topics have generally done so from a practical perspective. [1] Popular Pentecostal beliefs concerning demonological issues have been generated, by and large, through preaching and a historical context in which the belief in demons has developed mainly through people who have ministered in or been delivered from demonised situations. For many Pentecostals, the popular view of demons owes as much to medieval art and popular fiction as it does to

[1] D. Woodfield, "The total and absolute victory of Jesus over Satan," *Bread* 9 (Sept.-Oct., 1980), pp. 4-5; P. Sanderson, "The Occult," *Bread* 9 (Sept.-Oct., 1980), pp. 6-7; J. Henson, "Warfare in the Spirit," *Bread* 9 (Sept.-Oct., 1980), pp. 8-9; F. Royal, "Know your enemy," *Bread* 9 (Sept.-Oct., 1980), pp. 18-19.

the New Testament.[2] Similarly, visual experiences and phenomena[3] associated with exorcisms or demonized activity have often been the catalyst for beliefs concerning demons rather than the largely veiled description of the New Testament.[4] Fundamentally, they believe that casting out demons is part of the gospel commission,[5] the authority contained therein being available to believers.[6]

## 2. Developments and Dissimilarities in Demonology

In general, the impact of Satan upon believers and non-believers has been assumed to be the result of demonic activity and has popularly been subsumed under two categories, possession and oppression[7] though little critical analysis has been undertaken with regard to this classification. A

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[2] F. Peretti, *This Present Darkness* (Minstrel: Eastbourne, 1989).

[3] Thus J. Edwards, "Delivered from Evil," *Redemption*, Feb. 1990, pp. 13-14 changed his mind concerning demonic activity in believers after seeing "demons manifest...in those I knew were faithful believers, serving God, exercising spiritual gifts, yet needing to have evil spirits cast out."

[4] G. Canty, "Demons and Casting out demons," in *Pentecostal Doctrine*, ed. P. Brewster (Cheltenham: Elim, 1976), pp. 241-57 (254) states, "There is nothing in Scripture about coughing or spitting out demons...nor are we given any encouragement to hold conversations with demons...they should be told to leave." Though offering no evidence, he suggests, "Demons themselves enjoy having attention paid to them and tend to turn up where they are talked about a great deal. There is simply no sense, nor any Scripture, for long battles with a demonised person, battles lasting for many years."

[5] Matt 10:8; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 9:1, 2; 10:1, 17; Acts 10:38

[6] P. Stormont, "Authority," *Elim Evangel*, Nov. 18, 1961, pp. 723-24 (723).

[7] L. G. McClung, Jr., "Exorcism," *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements (NIDPCM*), eds. S. Burgess, et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), pp. 624-28 (626) suggests "oppression, obsession and possession"; P. Parker, *Elim Bible College Correspondence School* (n.d., n.p.), 29.8 states, "Obsession means an evil spirit...influencing...with the object of possession...when a foothold is gained...it is possession"; R. E. Wright, "Demon-possessed Christians: A contradiction of terms," *Paraclete* 7:3 (1973), pp. 24-28 (27) notes, "Demon possession...does not mean that the demon is giving expression of himself 24 hours a day; ...rather, the demon is at the helm of that human life"; cf. V. Cunningham, "Can a Christian Have a Demon?," *Redemption Tidings*, Nov. 15, 1973, p. 3; G. W. Gilpin and T. W. Walker, *Elim Committee on Demon Possession Report* (Cheltenham: Elim, 1976), p. 2.

number of books and articles exploring these issues have been produced by individuals. Thus, Barrie confirms, "there is a definite doctrine of demonology taught in Scripture"[8] and Richards defines demons, on the basis of the New Testament, as being "real,"[9] "unclean,"[10] "hostile"[11] and "powerful."[12] Cunningham affirms that a clear distinction should be preserved between those illnesses caused by demons and those which are not,[13] confirming his view that no particular disease is exclusively related to demonic activity.[14] Although Satan, always under the authority and in the context of the sovereignty of God, is the cause of all suffering in its broadest sense, most Pentecostals would separate sickness from demonic elements,[15] though accepting that sickness/suffering may be caused by the presence of demons that need to be exorcised, as a result of which, the suffering would be expected to cease.[16] Wright notes, "The Bible differentiates between mental derangement and demon possession (Matthew 4:24)...all mental disorder cannot be attributed to demon

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[8] R. Barrie, "The Discerning of Spirits," *Study Hour*, Jan. 15, 1948, pp. 14-17 (14).

[9] W. Th. H. Richards, "Demon Possession," *Redemption Tidings*, Oct. 11, 1973, pp. 10-13 (11). Also Mark 1:24, 5:7ff; Acts 19:16; James 2:19.

[10] Mark 1:23; 5:8; 7:25; 9:17

[11] Matt 12:22; Mark 1:26; 9:20; Luke 11:14; Acts 19:15

[12] Mark 5:3; Acts 16:17-18

[13] Cunningham, "Can a Christian Have a Demon?," p. 5 (Matt 8:16; 10:1; Mark 1:32; Luke 7:21; 13:32; Acts 8:7; 19:12).

[14] Cunningham, "Can a Christian Have a Demon?," p. 4 writes, "The epileptic son (Matt 17) is cured by having a demon cast out of him. But in Matt 4:24 'epileptics' are listed separately from 'demoniacs'."

[15] Canty, "Demons and Casting out Demons," p. 250 states, "In all cases, the healing of the sick and the deliverance of the possessed are kept quite distinct." See Matt 4:23; 8:16; Mark 1:32; Luke 7:21; 13:32; Gilpin & Walker, *Elim Committee on Demon Possession Report*, p. 1.

[16] Canty, "Demons and Casting out Demons," p. 249 states, "The idea of a demon residing in a joint and so setting up an arthritic condition or setting himself in the skin and creating an infection or irritation finds no support whatsoever in any Bible verse." M. J. C. Calley, *God's People* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 94 notes that West Indian Pentecostal groups "believe that illnesses (though not perhaps all illnesses; nobody is clear about this) are caused by spirit possession." Thus, in healing rites, the "spirit of sickness" is instructed to "leave...in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

possession for much of it has purely physical causes."[17] Nevertheless, the implication of the latter statement is that there is the possibility that some mental problems can be due to demonic involvement as is the case of physical sickness.

However, the lack of biblical support for much that has been written often makes the practice of exorcism and associated demonic investigation subjective and even suspect, leaving a trail of speculation and, at worst, confusion for the readers.[18] As an example of this tendency, Hughes speculated, "evil spirits specialize...spirits of infirmity...deaf and dumb spirits...unclean spirits...manifesting uncleanness through mind, speech and action."[19] Similar attempts have been made to discern the names and activities of demons by some.[20] Gerver believes that the different descriptions of demonic spirits or powers in the Bible represent different demons.[21] Canty, however, rejects the view that "a particular demon can hold sway over certain geographical areas," describing it as "a curiosity of the 'lore' of current demonology."[22] He also notes, "no hovering demon can spread an

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[17] G. Wright, *Our Quest for Healing* (Cheltenham: Grenehurst Press, 1981), p. 36.

[18] J. Richards, "The Church's Healing Ministry and the Charismatic Renewal," in *Strange Gifts*, eds. D. Martin, P. Mullen (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp. 151-58 (151) describes, "an over-awareness of spiritual warfare, leading to an inflated demonology" which exists in some Pentecostals.

[19] R. T. Hughes, "Demon Possession," *Study Hour*, May 15, 1948, pp. 95-97 (96).

[20] See McClung, "Exorcism," p. 626; Livesey, "The Ministry of Casting out Demons" p. 8 describes them as "multitudinous and multifarious," differing "in capacity and capability to do evil."

[21] Gerver, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 12-13 identifies different demonic entities including unclean spirits (Mark 5:7-13; Luke 9:41; Acts 5:16), spirits of divination (Acts 16:16), a prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), seducing spirits (1 Tim 4:1), wicked spirits (Eph 6:12), evil spirits (Acts 19:15), spirits of fear (2 Tim 1:7) spirits of jealousy (Num 5:14) and spirits of infirmity (Luke 13:11), though Linford, "No Entry," p. 16 describes these terms as indicating "a figure of speech"; V. Cunningham, "The Claims of the Exorcist," *Redemption Tidings*, Nov. 27, 1973, pp. 3-5 (3) rejects the idea of "demons of uncleanness...of fear...of nicotine."

[22] Canty, *The Practice of Pentecost*, p. 193.

irresistible miasma around...such as a 'demon of resistance' in a neighbourhood."[23]

It is not surprising that Hollenweger described demonic activity as "an unsolved problem in Pentecostal belief and practice."[24] There are still many unsolved issues concerning the demonic including the cause of demonic activity in an individual though many varied reasons have been offered,[25] including hereditary links,[26] occult activity,[27] lust,[28] shock,[29] drugs,[30] rebellion,[31] negative thoughts[32] and physical weakness.[33]

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[23] Canty, *The Practice of Pentecost*, p. 194.

[24] W. J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM, 1972), p. 379.

[25] Gilpin & Walker, *Elim Committee on Demon Possession Report*, p. 1 suggests it may result from occasions of low resistance such as "ill health, moral delinquence, or impaired reasoning and a subsequent weakening of the will"; Hughes, "Demon Possession," p. 97 suggests that demons can force their way into a person by pressure of superior numbers, using Matt 12:43-45 as support.

[26] K. Gerver, *Spiritual Warfare* (London: Peniel, n.d.), p. 18, providing Exod 20:5 as evidence.

[27] J. Barr, "The Christian and the Occult," *Elim Evangel*, Oct. 31, 1987, pp. 3, 11 (3) suggests, "In some cases, it is enough merely to have been present when an occult contact took place or to have read a book on the subject. That alone can give ground to oppressing spirits." He also accepts the possibility of occult curses being "laid on them (people) or their ancestors"; R. Parker, "The Occult," *Redemption*, Oct. 1991, pp. 36-37; M. Banks, *Healing Secrets* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986), p. 90 states, "past association with the occult is very often a contributory factor" to demonic activity; Gerver, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 18 offers Deut 18:10-12 as evidence, commenting also on the significance of divination (18-21), magic (21-23) and spiritism (23-26) to demonic influence in the life of a person.

[28] R. T. Hughes, "Demon Possession," *Study Hour*, June 15, 1948, pp. 110-13 (111).

[29] Gerver, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 26; Hughes, "Demon Possession," p. 97 describes a situation where he claims "shock was the moment of possession, the victim being not the mother but the unborn child within."

[30] Gerver, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 28.

[31] Gerver, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 27.

[32] G. Cove, *How to Make Your Healing Permanent* (Sandbach: Wrights, 1956), p. 52; they "attract evil spirits."

[33] Hughes, "Demon Possession," p. 110.

Not all have agreed with these views. Barrie, for example, argues, "Christ...never treated the possessed as morally responsible for their condition."[34] Furthermore, Cunningham notes that the New Testament never ascribes the causes of sin in Christians to demons "nor is the remedy for them in the Christian's life the casting out of a demon."[35] Richards agrees, writing, "Many are ascribing every fault, mistake, sickness etc. to the work of demons...they fail to see the difference between 'works of the flesh' and 'evil spirits'."[36] It is of interest to note that Jesus never provided any reasons for a person being afflicted by demonic forces neither did he indicate that the sufferer was responsible for the demonic attack or the expulsion. Similarly, Paul does not blame the demonized girl (Acts 16:16-18).

### 3. Demons and Believers

Pentecostals have, in general, refused to accept the possibility of a Christian being "possessed" by a demon,[37] Conn describing such a theory as "one of today's most dangerous suggestions."[38] Kay concludes that in the 1970s, neo-Pentecostals, in general, confirmed that a Christian could be possessed while "the classic Pentecostals, after some debate, said a firm no."[39] Linford argues, "such an invasion...is anti-God," accepting that while Satan "may oppress us, even obsess us, he can never possess us," adding, "this must be doubly so with those who are baptised in the

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[34] Barrie, "The Discerning of Spirits," p. 35.

[35] V. Cunningham, "Demons or the Old Nature?," *Redemption Tidings*, Nov. 22, 1973, pp. 3-5 (3).

[36] Richards, "Demon possession," p. 10.

[37] *Elim Bible College Correspondence Course*, 11.3; Orloff, "The Christian and Evil Spirits," p. 12 deduces, "no true believer can be possessed by an evil spirit"; the official position of the Assemblies of God printed in *The Pentecostal Testimony*, June 1975, pp. 16-18 rejects the view that a Christian may be demon possessed; so Gilpin & Walker, *Elim Committee on Demon Possession Report*, p. 3.

[38] C. W. Conn, "Can a Christian Be Demon-possessed?" *Elim Evangel*, Sept. 29, 1962, p. 612 states that such a view would demand that the demon owned the person it possessed, a view he describes as "unreasonable and anti-scriptural," basing his belief on 1 Cor 6:19-20 (p. 613).

[39] W. Kay, *Inside Story* (Mattersey: AOG Bible College, 1990), p. 337.

Holy Spirit."[40] It is impossible that the Spirit of God and demons can "occupy the same body." Canty writes, "There is no Scripture...for the possessed believer teaching.... The idea must be rejected...it makes nonsense of almost the entire theology of the Church on the subject."[41]

Cunningham examines three New Testament narratives, sometimes viewed as supporting the possibility of Christians being demon possessed, and rejects them all.[42] Furthermore, he offers Romans 8:9[43] and Canty provides 2 Cor 6:16 as proof of the safety of Christians from demonic possession.[44] The latter notes that even Job's suffering, "needed a special dispensation from the Lord to allow Satan even to touch Job." Furthermore, Canty argues, "[As] the preaching of the Gospel is deliverance...it would be absurd to think of a great conversion of a man leaving him with demons still in his heart. Can a man be saved through faith in the Gospel and then need a second experience to save him from Satan? From what was he saved in the first instance?... We are delivered at conversion and do not require further special deliverance since we belong to God."[45]

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[40] Linford, "No Entry," p. 16 uses Rom 8:38; Eph 4:30 as support. He views the experiences of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:3) and Judas (Luke 22:3) as Satan taking "possession of the mind" (p. 17).

[41] G. Canty, "Do Demons Cause Sickness," *Elim Evangel*, Feb. 2, 1968, pp. 66, 67, 78 (78); so Livesey, "The Ministry of the Exorcist" pp. 8-9; Carr, "Can a Christian Be Demon Possessed?," p. 24; Cunningham, "Can a Christian Be Demon Possessed?," p. 3; Gilpin & Walker, *Elim Committee on Demon Possession Report*, pp. 1, 2.

[42] Cunningham, "Can a Christian Be Demon Possessed?," p. 4 argues that the woman (Luke 13:11) was a daughter of Abraham, and not necessarily a believer in Christ; while in the cases of Judas, Ananias and Sapphira, he writes, "none of them remained in a state of grace; they were totally possessed by Satan; and in becoming sons of Satan ceased to be sons of God"; P. Lyne, "Spiritual Enemies," *Bread* 9 (Sept.-Oct., 1980), pp. 21, 22 (21) however, views the woman (Luke 13:11) as "a picture...of so many Christians" and suggests that Christians should learn to recognize and repent of sins that have resulted in demonic problems, including possession.

[43] Cunningham, "Can a Christian Be Demon Possessed?," p. 4.

[44] Canty, "Demons and Casting out Demons," pp. 248-49.

[45] Canty, "Demons and Casting out Demons," pp. 248-49.

Wright concurs, noting, "A demon-possessed Christian is an impossibility—biblically, theologically and practically."[46] Cunningham offers a relatively popular rationale for people, who are Christians, who, at a later date, are "'delivered,' fell on the floor, cried with a loud voice...," as a result of which it may be claimed that they were possessed by demons. He offers three options. Either, "they really do have a demon...in which case they cannot have been real Christians, or they have lapsed from the faith" or "they are very new professing Christians (who are still getting straightened out and are effectively still in the throes of conversion) who need deliverance from evil spirits as part of the cleansing from sin" or "they have done what they were told to do...the trouble is that many Christians and especially Pentecostals...are extremely suggestible."[47] Some have contradicted his model.[48] Thus, Hughes states, "under certain conditions people who have known the forgiveness of sins may become victims of enemy possession...there can be a ministry of spiritual gifts and yet that person may need deliverance... (1 Samuel 10:1; 2 Peter 2:16)."[49]

For many Pentecostals, the answer to the question concerning the relationship of the demonic to believers has been assumed to be contained in the biblical narrative. If it is to be concluded that there is no evidence that a believer in the New Testament was possessed by a demon, then it is accepted by many that there is no reason for assuming a different scenario today, though there are exceptions to this general rule and belief.[50]

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[46] Wright, "Demon-possessed Christians," p. 24; similarly, he records (p. 26), "The idea that Christians can be possessed by demons both calls in question the nature of the Holy Spirit and disavows the sanctifying work in the life of believers...what communion could He possibly have with evil?... Intrusion of evil spirits into the inner life of one who wills to follow God is not merely an unscriptural concept—it is antiscriptural!" He rejects (p. 25) the following verses that are sometimes used to support the view that Christians can be demon possessed: 2 Cor 2:11, "Nothing in this passage refers to demon possession"; 2 Cor 11:3-4, "Verse 1 indicates that the mood of the passage is irony."

[47] Cunningham, "The Claims of the Exorcist," p. 8.

[48] Edwards, "Delivered from Evil," pp. 13-15 views Acts 19:11 as evidence of a believer needing exorcism (p. 15); since sickness can inhabit the temple of the Holy Spirit, he argues, "to be consistent" so can demons (p. 14).

[49] Hughes, "Demon Possession," p. 95.

[50] H. Carter, "Demon Power," *Study Hour*, Aug. 16, 1941, pp. 2-4 (2) refers to people who have been hindered from receiving the baptism in the Spirit as a

## 4. Developments and Similarities in Demonology

Partly as a result of the great variation in belief concerning demonic issues within British Pentecostalism, in 1975, a Committee was formally appointed by the Executive Council of the Elim Pentecostal Church to consider these topics and a number of papers were presented and discussed. One of the major results of the documentation provided was to present a cautious response to some of the more unguarded current beliefs and practices. Thus, Walker noted the danger of blaming demons for sinful tendencies instead of being "a persistent, developing, on-going disciple."[51] He advocated dealing with demoniacs in a private manner. Similarly, Gilpin, on the basis of the New Testament, noted the rarity of exorcisms, suggesting that they may have been particularly "associated with the earthly ministry of our Lord and interpreted as an outburst of demoniacal opposition to the work of Jesus."[52] Despite the variety of opinions, a number of constants remain:

1) The devil and demons are antagonistic foes of the church.
2) They have been eternally overcome by Christ.
3) They still affect individuals malevolently.
4) They can be resisted and overcome by and through Christ.

Similarly, although forms of exorcism vary,[53] a number of features would be recognized as being important to many Pentecostals involved in exorcistic ministry:

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result of previous occult experiences. He advises that they "wrestle for victory...that the binding power be broken." J. Barr, "The Christian and the Occult," p. 3 sought to show that occult involvement in the past can produce an influence in a person that is not automatically removed by Christ at conversion, writing, "We are not automatically released from the effects of occult involvement when we become Christians...We must appropriate our freedom... God requires us to renounce every occult contact individually," offering a prayer, "I renounce in the name of Jesus Christ, all psychic inheritance I may have and I break any demonic hold or bondage affecting me or my family line for the past 10 generations on both sides of my family." Similarly, in "The War Is on," *Direction*, Feb. 1991, pp. 24-25 (24), he writes, "demons do not meekly leave because we say the sinner's prayer."

[51] Gilpin & Walker, *Elim Committee on Demon Possession Report*, pp. 1, 2.

[52] Gilpin & Walker, *Elim Committee on Demon Possession Report*, pp. 1, 2.

[53] Parker, *Elim Bible College Correspondence Course*, p. 9 states that music can "for a time hold off the influence of the evil spirit"; Canty, "Demons and Casting out Demons," p. 254 notes, "The particular method is of very small consequence."

1) Preparation including prayer,[54] and possibly fasting[55] and the recognition of the importance of the gift of discernment.[56]
2) The use of the name of Jesus.[57]

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[54] J. Hurt, "Mattersey Hotline," *Redemption*, June 1993, p. 15 states that prayer is sufficient in confrontation with demonic forces for Christ has already bound the strong man; M. Livesey, "Demons," *Redemption Tidings*, Jan. 17, 1980, pp. 4, 5 (4), a missionary often involved in the ministry of exorcism while in India, writes "we did not have long sessions of prayer with them but in private we...would bring them before the Lord in prayer and fasting." The emphasis on private prayer is mentioned in a subsequent article, M. Livesey, "The Ministry of casting out demons," *Redemption Tidings*, Jan. 24, 1980), pp. 8, 9 (9); cf. anon. "Wiseowl," *Direction*, Sept. 1995, p. 9 (9) recommends that others pray for the one(s) involved in the exorcism, with the recommendation that the exorcist work with others; Gilpin & Walker, *Elim Committee on Demon Possession Report*, p. 1 states that those ministering should prepare by prayer and dedication, advocating working with "two or three for strength and balanced judgment," although the Committee (p. 2) noted, "the use of an expression as a kind of formula to be repeated is not really necessary," whilst encouraging that those ministering should seek protection "through the blood of Jesus Christ," rebuke the demon and command it to come out in the name of Jesus "many times if needed until the command is obeyed."

[55] Gerver, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 31.

[56] Canty, *The Practice of Pentecost*, pp. 194-97; Canty, "Demons and casting out demons," p. 255 warns, "Discernment should not only detect demons but also where there are no demons"; Gilpin & Walker, *Elim Committee on Demon Possession Report*, p. 1 advocates careful analysis suggesting, "some sort of clinical analysis and prolonged probing"; D. Orloff, "The Christian and evil spirits," *Elim Evangel*, Oct. 31, 1987, pp. 6, 11 (6) notes, "Our protection and power base...is the armor of Eph. 6:10-18"; Gerver, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 15 identifies those "able to deal with such spirits are...submissive to God...supernaturally endued with power...set in the local church...self denying...sent with authority...seeing their victory in Christ"; J. Barr, "The War Is on," p. 24 offers seven suggestions that might indicate the need of deliverance in a person: "disturbance in the emotions...thought life...uncontrolled use of the tongue...recurring unclean thoughts...addictions...certain bodily afflictions... religious error"; Gilpin & Walker, *Elim Committee on Demon Possession Report*, p. 2 suggested as possible symptoms of demon possession, speaking "in a voice totally different from the normal and often powers of telepathy or clairvoyance"; Cunningham, "The Claims of the Exorcist," p. 3 rejects the following claimed symptoms of demon possession including schizophrenia, sudden change of mood, bad breath, talkativeness, glazed eyes noting, "these symptoms can't be authoritatively proved or not, they depend on arbitrary assertion."

3) The incorporation of a command that the demon leave its victim.[58]
4) A recognition of the authority of Christ that is also invested in the Christian.[59]
5) The belief that permanent relief "is obtained only by and in the power of Christ."[60]

Other elements that have little biblical precedent, vary depending on the religious, social and cultural context of the people concerned and have received limited comment by Pentecostal writers. Such aspects

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[57] Mark 16:17; Acts 16:18. Canty, "Demons and Casting out Demons," pp. 253-54 states, "The vital element is not the formula but the presence of Jesus in the life of the person casting the demons out.... The pronunciation of the name...was partly a testimony to those who observed what was happening.... The fact is that demons left people when the name of Jesus was not uttered.... The casting out of demons does not require a barrage of words with the voluminous repetition of the word 'Jesus' or 'Christ'"; Gerver, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 14, 30, however, states that the name of Jesus is of vital importance for demons "refuse to confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (1 Jn. 4:2ff)" advocating the use of the phrase "Jesus is the Lord (1 Cor. 12:3)"; he also encourages reference to "the precious blood" though for the latter, he offers no text as evidence; Livesey, "The Ministry of Casting out Demons," p. 8 confirms, "we used the name of Jesus" though notes, "I do not think that long periods of prayer and calling the name of Jesus repeatedly for hours in the presence of the victim and the public is essential." However, she also "claimed the power of the precious blood of Jesus."

[58] Livesey, "The Ministry of Casting out Demons," p. 9 notes, "the actual command of the demon to leave...is...of short duration"; Gilpin & Walker, *Elim Committee on Demon Possession Report*, p. 2 noted, "The Bible word is 'command' not 'coax'" with regard to exorcism.

[59] Richards, "Demon Possession," p. 13; Canty, "Demons and Casting out Demons," p. 252 concludes, "on the whole, the power of Satan over believers is vastly reduced through Christ's victory"; Orloff, "The Christian and Evil Spirits," p. 6 states, "We must not fear Satan...the victory of Christ over Satan is total and complete"; thus, M. Banks, *Healing Revolution* (Basingstoke: Marshalls, 1985), p. 151 advocates commanding the demon to depart; Hughes, "Demon Possession," p. 111 speaks of "the word of authority."

[60] Parker, *Elim Bible College Correspondence Course*, p. 9; Livesey, "Demons," p. 5 warns people "that if they continued their idol worship after they had been delivered...and the devils returned to them, it would be difficult to pray for their deliverance again"; Gilpin & Walker, *Elim Committee on Demon Possession Report*, p. 2 advocates, "the liberated one should be encouraged to surrender fully to Christ and His claims."

include inviting people to be exorcised,[61] the laying on of hands on those needing deliverance, [62] physical manifestations of the sufferer, [63] conversation[64] with and identification of demon(s),[65] forms of actual expulsion,[66] longevity of the exorcism[67] and post-exorcistic care of the person concerned.[68]

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[61] Richards, "Demon Possession," p. 11 notes, "there is no warrant in Scripture for this procedure."

[62] Gerver, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 31 accepts the possibility of this on the basis of Luke 13:11.

[63] A. Linford, "No Entry," *Redemption*, Feb. 1990, pp. 17, 18 (17) states, "the choking, spitting and vomiting manifestations (bags supplied) are all farces...the victims are not demon possessed but...brainwashed with deceit. Seducing spirits are adept at deceiving...those who propagate these anti-Scriptural ideas are themselves, albeit unconsciously, agents of evil"; similarly, Richards, "Demon possession," p. 10 describes the practice of bringing bags in which to spit demons as being "revolting"; Cunningham, "The Claims of the Exorcist," p. 3 rejects any association of demons with breath as a result of which some have taught that they manifest themselves via the mouth; Livesey, "Demons," p. 4 comments, "there was no outward evidence that they had been delivered when we prayed for them."

[64] Livesey, "Demons," p. 4 comments, "we refused to hold conversations with demons"; Carr, "Can a Christian Be Demon Possessed?," p. 25 rejects the need to know details concerning the sufferer or the demon in exorcisms.

[65] Livesey, "Demons," pp. 4-5 acknowledged, "there are many kinds of demons. Some cause women to be barren...other demons came upon women when they were advanced in pregnancy and slew the baby in the womb." However, she states, "to give names to demons such as envy, etc. is bordering on the frivolous"; Cunningham, "The Claims of the Exorcist," p. 7 however remarks, "I cannot find where authority to command demons to name themselves is delegated to any minister of Christ. Jesus only asks once...on every other recorded occasion where unclean spirits wanted to speak, Jesus refused to allow them."

[66] Gerver, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 31 advocates the use of "an anointed cloth," on the basis of Acts 19:12.

[67] Livesey, "Demons," p. 4 notes, "some were delivered immediately...for others it took weeks or months."

[68] Gerver, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 33-34 recommends, "baptism of the Spirit with the clear evidence of speaking in other tongues...fellowship...live a disciplined life...worship...recognition of the truth of the Word...ministry to the possessed...preoccupation with Jesus."

## 5. Reflections

Pentecostals have consistently held to a belief in the demonic and the ministry of exorcism though very few have witnessed an exorcism and an even fewer number have participated in one, though increasingly some have been to Asian or Africa where they have been exposed to such phenomena. Exorcism has been uncommon in Pentecostal experience for most of its history in Britain,[69] most recorded instances describing events that have taken place abroad and some have sought to provide reasons for this.[70] Thus, Canty suggests, "demons were strategically strong in Christ's days on earth to thwart salvation's scheme...but casting out demons even then did not occupy anything like the priority given it today by some."[71] It is true that the main reason for the exorcistic ministry of Jesus, other than to announce the presence of the kingdom, was to make it possible for those demonized to accept the message of the kingdom, an option unavailable to them during their demonic bondage.[72] Thus, it may be more apparent in some individuals where similar activity occurs today.

In recent years, there has been much less written about these matters by British Pentecostals (and other Christian writers) while the practices of other Pentecostals and Charismatic believers that include methods for exorcism and the identifying of hierarchies of demonic structures have been largely ignored, if not rejected. This may be as much due to the significant demise of exorcistic activity in the UK rather than the provision of more appropriate exorcistic models. Although the 1970s saw a flurry of popular literary activity concerning demons and exorcism in particular, the focus has drifted away from such issues in recent decades. Very few articles or books are now published concerning these subjects.

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[69] Gilpin & Walker, *Elim Committee on Demon Possession report*, p. 3 notes, "Until recent years, even months, the topic of demonisation has not been prominent."

[70] *Elim Evangel*, Mar. 6, 1965 reports on South Africa; June 12, 1965 on Brazil; Nov. 15, 22, 1969 on Congo; Oct. 3, 1987 on Thailand; Similarly, *Redemption Tidings*, Jan. 17, 1980; *Joy*, Feb. 1995 on India.

[71] G. Canty, *The Practice of Pentecost* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1987), p. 192.

[72] A. Carr, "Can a Christian Be Demon Possessed?," *Direction*, Sept. 1993, pp. 24-25 (24) records that exorcism "was not a major preoccupation in the early church."

A number of reasons account for this, one of which is a reaction to the tendency to unthinkingly ascribe demonic activity to many problems that have affected people. In the same way that many British Pentecostals were led to expect the return of Jesus during the last decades of the twentieth century, resulting in a demise in preaching and teaching concerning the second coming when it did not occur, so also there has been a tendency to guard against repeating similar mistakes caused by previous gullibility with regard to demonic activity. This has often resulted in a lethargy resulting from an over exposure to such issues in the past and a reticence to be similarly misled in the present.

Another reason appears to be largely due to the limited expressions of overt demonic activity in the western world, including Britain, in forms that are traditionally associated with diabolical expressions as they have been experienced in the past and as they are described in the Gospels. Most British Pentecostals have had limited practical experience concerning overt demonic activity, resulting in a literary vacuum in which little exploration is undertaken. There is an unspoken assumption by many that an absence of such phenomena may be evidence that a concentration on such issues in the past may have been unnecessary and even sensationally motivated, albeit often unwittingly. At the same time, there is an increasing awareness that demonic activity may be less obvious and overt but as ever present and dangerous. Thus, although there may be less evidence of individuals being affected by demons in ways reflected in the New Testament, that does not mean that demons have ceased their malevolence. This should result in a greater awareness of appropriate ways of responding to these more subtle manoeuvres of the enemy.

There has also been a reticence to accept that which is not clearly reflected in the New Testament, whether it refers to expressions of the demonic or exorcistic practices. This is largely due to an assumption that only that which is recorded in the New Testament should be affirmed as a basis for belief and praxis. This matrix may need to be reconsidered as there is much concerning these issues that is not reflected in the New Testament and the latter was not provided as a comprehensive statement of all spiritual activity.

Thus to look to Acts 16:16-18, the only recorded exorcism outside the Synoptics, for guidance for contemporary exorcistic procedures may be inappropriate as it is not clear that Luke ever intended that this narrative should function as a paradigm for the expulsion of demons. Other reasons motivated his inclusion of this narrative. Similarly, the exorcisms of Jesus are not clearly presented by the authors as offering

step-by-step guidance for ridding individuals of demons. Similarly, Richards cautions that Jesus "did not seek to cast the devils out of everyone who was controlled by them...but when He was confronted with demon power then Jesus dealt with it."[73]

Neither are the many questions concerning the demonic answered in the biblical text. Scholars and practitioners argue opposing positions from the Bible including the viability of a demon residing in a believer, the relationship of sickness and the demonic, exorcistic procedures, varying degrees of demonic bondage of an individual and the sources of demonic intrusion into a person's life. McClung notes that, a review of the literature, history and oral "stories" of Pentecostalism reveals the centrality of the practice of exorcism in the expansion of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements but also "a broad diversity in specific beliefs and ministries surrounding exorcism.[74] A basic issue is still in need of resolution and it relates to the source of guidance in relation to demonic issues, especially concerning the identification and expulsion of demons for the lives of individuals.

Of course, there needs to be sensitivity and care in such a quest. Although Pentecostals do not distinguish between leaders/clergy or laity functioning in exorcism, they have generally expressed wisdom in areas relating to the demonic, partly driven by an awareness of the dangers associated with getting this ministry wrong. Thus, Richards writes, "there is no place here for the novice or for any Christian believer to act presumptuously.[75] This is a sphere for apostolic ministry." Few would claim to have a gift of exorcism and the role of exorcist has not been adopted within Pentecostalism. [76] However, issues related to the formation of appropriate exorcistic methodologies need to be addressed; otherwise, Western Pentecostals may be in danger of holding to a belief that is rarely observed in reality. Two sources of guidance are available for ongoing support with regard to ministering in the context of the demonic: the Bible and the Spirit in the church.

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[73] Richards, "Demon Possession," p. 13.

[74] McClung, "Exorcism," pp. 626-27.

[75] Richards, "Demon Possession," p. 11.

[76] Canty, "Demons and Casting out Demons," p. 255 states, "Nobody manifested a ministry exclusively for dealing with demons...nobody was ever given a special gift of exorcism" in the New Testament.

## 6. Listening to the Bible

Belief in the existence of evil spirits was widespread in the worldviews of Jesus' contemporaries, and both Jews,[77] pagans[78] and later Christians [79] recognized exorcism as a valid means of achieving deliverance. [80] However, there is limited information in the Old Testament that would indicate a developed demonology or satanology and scant evidence concerning the practice of exorcism.[81] Even the word "Satan" is less of a proper name and more the description of a role undertaken by someone.[82] He is created by God (Gen 3:1), operates as his servant (Job 1, 2) who can tempt (1 Chr. 21:11-13) and accuse (Zech. 3:1-3), though is a poor competitor to God. Evil spirits are referred to though even these are seen to operate under the authority of God.[83] There are references that indicate the fact that the Jews believed in demons and sacrificed to them.[84] However, the demonic is largely marginalized in the Old Testament and none of the demons of the non-Jewish world (Lillith, Resheph) are referred to as demonic beings. God is seen to be in complete control.

Other Jewish literature provides some information which suggests a more developed demonological structure though this is located in apocryphal literature. Tobit links sickness and death with demons while 1 Enoch 16:11ff describes the malevolent nature of demonic spirits, suggesting that they derived from illegitimate sexual activity between

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[77] 1QGA 20:1-29 (based on Gen 12:10-20, this Qumran document, records the sickness of Pharoah as being caused by an evil spirit); the prayer of Nabonidus links demonic spirits with the sin of an individual (4QNab 1:3f); cf. E. Yamauchi, "Magic or Miracle? Diseases, Demons and Exorcisms," in *Gospel Perspectives 6*, eds. D. Wenham and C. Blomberg (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), pp. 89-183 (115-21).

[78] E. A. Leeper, "Exorcism in Early Christianity" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1991), pp. 8-73.

[79] Leeper, "Exorcism in Early Christianity," pp. 125-347.

[80] Josephus (*Wars* 6.3) believed that illness was caused by demons and eradicated through exorcism and magic.

[81] V. A. Miranda, "A Cristogia dos Demonios," *VoxScrip* 10:1 (2000), pp. 3-18.

[82] Job 1:6-12; 1 Chron 21:1 (cf. 2 Sam 24:1 where the same individual is identified as Yahweh); Zech 3:1, 2.

[83] 1 Sam 16:14-23; 1 Kings 22:17-23

[84] Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37

heavenly beings and earthly women, they oppress and destroy and are hungry though never eat.[85] The Book of Jubilees provides a more elaborate demonology (ch. 10) in which they are described as subject to Satan, called evil spirits and demons, lead astray the sons of Noah, and bound by the good angels, though one tenth are left for Satan to use as he wishes.

Although exorcisms are included in the Synoptics, it is significant to note that John's Gospel does not record any.[86] The author chose to use a selection of signs to enforce his teaching and it may be that the exorcisms did not achieve his purposes.[87] The paucity of exorcisms in the Acts of the Apostles and the absence of exorcisms in the rest of the New Testament are also of interest. It may be that exorcisms were more prominent in the ministry of Jesus, given the dynamic nature of his person and his radical message concerning the new kingdom, and resulted as a violent backlash from his demonic foes. Jesus' exorcisms were clear proof of his initiation of the kingdom and demonstrated his ability to control its development.

Outside the Synoptics, the guidance offered by other New Testament writers[88] relating to the demonic is that the most appropriate ways of

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[85] 6:7, 16; 8:1-3; 11:8-15; Josephus (*Ant*. 6.166) believed that demons caused strangulation and suffocation.

[86] Though see E. K. Broadhead, "Echoes of an Exorcism in the Fourth Gospel?," *Zeitschrift NTWiss* 86:1-2 (1995) pp. 111-19.

[87] For further, see G. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), pp. 222-24. He suggests that to have presented Jesus as an exorcist may have associated Jesus with contemporary exorcists and provided an unhelpful context for his description of Jesus as the Son of God; also, insofar as John does not concentrate on the kingdom of God, it is understandable that the clearest sign of the kingdom (exorcisms) are omitted; as exorcisms in the Synoptics demonstrate the demise of Satan, in John, this is achieved in the cross; E. Plumer, "The Absence of Exorcisms in the Fourth Gospel," *Biblica* 78:3 (1997), pp. 350-68 also understands them as being inadequate vehicles of the Johannine kerygma.

[88] Social scientific theories concerning demonization are not discussed here as they have been presented elsewhere: S. Davies, *Jesus the Healer* (London: SCM, 1995), pp. 79-89 suggests that those exorcized by Jesus were people who found themselves "in intolerable circumstances of social subordination" in which "becoming a demon is normally a mode of response, a coping mechanism and not a supernatural event per se" (p. 86); cf. E. Bourguignon, *Possession* (San Francisco: Chandler and Sharp, 1976), pp. 53-55; C. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp.

responding to such forces are through being filled with the Spirit, receiving the word (Mark 4:15-20) and resisting temptation (1 Pet 5:8).[89] In Romans 16:20, Paul encourages Christian behavior, as a result of which God will crush Satan under their feet. Similarly, self control (1 Cor 7:5; Eph 4:26-27) and forgiveness (2 Cor 2:11) are viewed as antidotes to Satan's measures against the believer. Indeed, Paul deduces that all principalities are subservient to Christ (Col 2:10), were originally created for him (Col 1:16) and were disarmed at the cross (Col 2:15; cf. Rom 8:38-39). At the same time, he is aware of demonic malevolence (Eph 2:2; 6:12) and calls for the believers to resist them, mainly through the ministry of love within the Christian community (Eph 4:1-6:9). Thus, Paul asserts that his readers are supported by the powerful Spirit in their battle with evil. Rather than explore secondary questions related to demons, he identifies the resources of believers to undermine the role of evil in their lives and contexts. Indeed, he implies that the influence of a demon on a believer is largely determined by the believer.[90]

Thus, although the biblical text provides information relating to the combat between the believer and demonic forces, it offers little by way of guidance for the implementation of a normative exorcistic procedure, let alone answer many of the questions that have been asked in recent years concerning issues relating to the demonic. Indeed, outside the ministry of Jesus in the Synoptics, there is only one successful exorcism recorded in the rest of the New Testament that is carried out by anyone other than

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141-52, 243-47; H. C. Waetjen, *A Reordering of Power: A Socio-political Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), pp. 113-19; S. A. Galipeau, *Transforming Body and Soul: Therapeutic Wisdom in the Gospel Healing Stories* (New York: Paulist, 1990), pp. 23-28. Also, insofar as the above authors often conclude that demonic issues are of limited relevance to contemporary Christianity due to their assumption that they are based on the worldview which undergirds the beliefs of the first-century Jew and therefore of little relevance to modern life, their conclusions are of limited value to our purposes.

[89] See further D. Hamm, "The Ministry of Deliverance and the Biblical Data: A Preliminary Report," *Deliverance Prayer,* eds. M. Linn and D. Ramsey (New York: Paulist, 1981), pp. 49-71.

[90] Canty, "Demons and Casting out Demons," p. 250 notes, "It is the yielding of the will to evil more than anything else which makes it easy for the devil to obtain entrance." He suggests, "It is the will of a man which makes a way for the devil and therefore repentance is required as well as exorcism…. It is wrong to assume that a particular evil in a man's life is the result of demon control. It is more likely that the evil was there first, permitting the entry of satanic power."

Jesus. Acts 16:16-18 provides a unique insight into an occasion when Paul exorcised a demon and is worth considering in a quest to determine how much the biblical narrative can offer guidance in the process of conducting an exorcism.

Luke describes a demonized girl as having a spirit of divination (*puthōna*). [91] The god Apollo, who was associated with the pronouncement of oracles, was worshipped at Delphi as the Pythian god. Puthon was the name of the snake that inhabited Delphi, functioning as a symbol of the underworld and of Apollo in particular.[92] It was believed to have been killed by Apollo who was thus named Pythian Apollo. Plutarch describes the people who devoted themselves to this god as those whose utterances were beyond their control.[93] Page suggests that this description may reflect the desires of the owner to claim that her prophecy was as reliable as the oracle at Delphi.[94]

Dunn assumes that she spoke on the basis of having "picked up phrases used of and by the missionaries."[95] However, this overlooks the conflict nature of the scene as presented by Luke in which the (evil) spirit attempts to demonstrate its authority by revealing its ability to identify Paul as the servant of God. It is unlikely that this was an involuntary affirmation of the gospel by the demonic source; it was not supporting the mission of Paul. It was intending to damage it, perhaps by linking it with the occult in the minds of the listeners or by simply being a constant and irritating, affirmatory heckler.

The force of emotional outburst on the part of Paul is strong (16:18). [96] The term *diaponeomai* is also used in 4:2 to describe the annoyance felt by the priests and Sadducees due to the continuing preaching of the Apostles. The irritation felt by Paul is probably because this activity on the part of the girl had been continuing for many days

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[91] Whether she is a slave or a prostitute/slave is discussed in C. K. Barrett, *Acts 15-28* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), p. 784.

[92] Barrett, *Acts 15-28* explores the derivation and meaning of the term, noting that it may have been translated, "to inquire" though he establishes its meaning as being linked with the cognate form that refers to the art of ventriloquism.

[93] *The Failure of the Oracles*, 9.414e.

[94] S. H. T. Page, *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), p. 210. The authority of the oracle of Delphi was well attested in ancient sources (Herodotus, *Persian Wars,*1.51, 66, 67; 5:42, 43).

[95] J. D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Peterborough: Epworth, 1996), p. 221.

[96] Barrett, *Acts 15-28*, p. 787 suggests, "I have reached the end of my patience."

though he may have suddenly got tired of the constant intrusion, especially galling because the source was demonic.

Why Paul did not exorcise the demon earlier is a question not addressed by Luke. Ferguson suggests that Paul did not want to accept testimony from such a source,[97] though this does not explain why he took so long to deal with the situation. It is probable that he dealt with the spirit only when it began to hinder his ministry. Indeed, it may have unwittingly served a valid purpose, attracting people to him. Given the worldview of the people which entertained the possibility of truth being related to such diviners, the proclamation may have encouraged people to listen to Paul as one who was apparently being affirmed by an authentic source associated with the great Oracle at Delphi. However, there came a time when Paul decided that the purpose had been fully served and the (evil) spirit was cast out. The fact that this is the only recorded exorcism in Acts is worthy of comment and a number of conclusions may be proposed.

The ministry of Jesus with regard to demonic activity does not appear to be replicated in the early Church as far as the record of Acts is concerned. Neither are individual exorcisms recorded elsewhere in the New Testament, including James 5:13-18, nor the charismatic gift lists in the Pauline literature. Wright writes, "They therefore stand out, by the criterion of dissimilarity, as being part of a battle in which Jesus alone was engaged."[98] Though he goes too far, on the basis of the evidence, nevertheless, it is appropriate to note the dissimilarity. It is probable that exorcistic activity of Jesus was recorded as being a more appropriate manifestation of his authority for it acted as a powerful and clear sign of the inbreaking of the kingdom of God (Matt 12:28//Luke 11:20). It is also possible that demonic phenomena were more pronounced because of the presence of Jesus.

In the light of a great deal of interest in the demonic by some Christians, it is instructive to note the paucity of such comment by the writers in the New Testament outside the ministry of Jesus. That is not to suggest that exorcisms did not occur; they did and Luke records this in 8:7 and 19:12. It is even conceivable that they occurred regularly, but were not commented on individually. A parallel may be drawn with some contemporary African and Asian contexts where exorcism is a frequent phenomenon, and as such, warrants little comment because of its

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[97] E. Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1984), p. 8.

[98] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK, 1996), p. 195.

regularity. The one incident in the book of Acts need not be taken to indicate a rare example of exorcism in the early church.

However, rather than simply recording an exorcism, Luke demonstrates a more sobering fact that has timeless application concerning supernatural opposition leveled against the church. Although the exorcism is recorded in one verse, the following 22 verses record the consequences of the exorcism. This is not a story recording the demise of one evil spirit; it is a story recording the potential death of the Apostles and the demise of their mission in Philippi. The focus of the story is not on the authority of Paul to cast out a demon but on the authority of God to overcome all obstacles placed before the mission of his delegated messenger, whether they be demons (16:18), mobs (16:19), rulers (16:20-21), physical abuse (16:22-24) or prison (16:24). The supremacy of the Lord over these (demonically inspired) obstacles is demonstrated in the expulsion of the demon, the occurrence of an earthquake which shakes all the doors off their hinges and unfastens the fetters of the prisoners (16:26), the expression of faith by the jailors (16:31-34), the apologies of the rulers to the apostles (16:39) and the encouragement of the believers (16:40).

The question hangs in the air as to whether Paul should have carried out the exorcism. Would his ministry have been unimpeded, if he had ignored the demonized girl? Luke presents the subtlety of the opposition force against Paul and his potential dilemma. If he ignores the spirit, it will act as a constant irritant; if he exorcises it, it will result in the truncation of his mission in Philippi (and, unbeknown to him, result in the Apostles being beaten and imprisoned). The exorcism appears to have indicated that the spirit had won a decisive battle in its intrusion in Paul's mission. In removing the girl from bondage, the apostles are themselves bound. However, the story ends with the jailer's family becoming believers and being baptized. Although the opposition forces seem to have won the battle, Luke is desirous of demonstrating that they are pawns in the hands of the one who is supervising the destiny of Paul. This is less a story of an exorcism of a spirit; more a record of the malevolent mastermind which seeks to destroy the mission of Paul; but of much greater importance is the confirmation that Paul is guarded by a superior power. Any lessons to be gleaned from this narrative of relevance for exorcistic procedures must be sourced after first exploring the purpose of the author in recording the narrative in the first place. Luke is less interested in the former and more interested in demonstrating the authority of the Lord who guides Paul and who supervises the mission to the Gentiles.

Some lessons may be learned for exorcistic practice from the Acts 16 narrative in that the name of Jesus was instrumental in the procedure followed by the immediate restoration of the girl concerned. However, to suggest that this is the only legitimate way of responding to demons is to misunderstand the purpose of the narrative in Acts which is not to portray an exorcistic method.

What may be concluded from this brief overview of the biblical narrative is that demonic activity is not a central focus of its message. That is not to say it did not occur much then nor to assume that it is marginal today. But neither should one assume, in the light of the limited information available in the text, that the Bible was intended to provide comprehensive guidance for responding to demonic activity when one experiences it. Paul refers to the possibility of Satan functioning in the guise of an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14) armed with an array of schemes and plots (2 Cor 2:11). Such a foe may not be guarded against on the basis of a pre-determined battle plan but in cooperation with the Lord who is aware of the changing strategies of the enemy and can influence the outcome by guiding believers in their fight.

It is possible that Pentecostals have been too reliant on the information provided in the Bible as if it was the only guidance available to them for identifying demonic activity and responding to it. Instead, they should be increasingly realizing that an enemy who may change his strategies to accommodate different contexts and cultures needs to be guarded against and responded to with supernatural guidance available from the dynamic Spirit as well as that which is contained in the text. Too often, western Pentecostals have looked for evidence of the demonic as it is described in the Synoptics when different practices and strategies may have been devised by those forces. The unobservant will have missed these changes and, more worryingly, have assumed that the demons are dormant. Without making the devil and his minions the central focus of our activity, it is also necessary to recognize that the biblical narrative does not describe all the ways in which they can function. Our role is to be aware of their potential intrusion into our lives and to combat it; it is in this regard that the role of the Spirit and our readiness to listen to him individually and through the church is crucial.

## 7. Listening to the Spirit through the Church

As well as an awareness of all that may be gleaned about the demonic from the biblical narrative, it is necessary for believers to listen

to the Spirit, who dynamically functions in the present, as he offers guidance that is appropriate to particular contemporary contexts, including the identification and expulsion of demons and the restoration and counseling of those who have been delivered. It is in this context that mistakes are regularly made, often because individuals have functioned without the safety mechanisms provided by a supportive circle of mature colleagues. However, to reject the successful ministries of some simply because their practices are not located in the Bible may be inappropriate; they may be following the leading of the Spirit. It may be that their practices are extra-biblical but not necessary unbiblical; if the former, caution is advised but also an awareness of the voice of the Spirit in that evaluative exercise.

Also, although the Pentecostal church in the West which exists in the context of a western worldview may not need to change its worldview necessarily, it does need to be open to the beliefs and practices of Pentecostals elsewhere who function in the context which may view the demonic differently from a British Pentecostal would. Similarly, their identification of and confrontation with the demonic may differ than that in western societies. To determine which is the most appropriate on the basis of the New Testament may be less helpful and even inappropriate as it is not clear that the latter was intended to function as a textbook for correct exorcistic practice. Neither should it be assumed that evil functions similarly in different world contexts and cultures. However, listening to the Spirit and exploring the contemporary experience and praxis of others, even where it may differ from ones own, are necessary elements in the developing of a practical strategy with regard to demonic issues.

Furthermore, the experiences of those in Africa and Asia who are aware of these issues partly as a result of their religious and cultural contexts but also because of their experience in dealing with them are to be resourced by those in the West. African and Asian Pentecostals have much light to shed on this topic.[99] At the same time, the contextualization of some of those experiences and practices will help guard against an inappropriate and presumptuous ministry that may be less valuable in settings where the demonic presents itself in a differing guise.

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[99] O. Onyinah, "Deliverance as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa: Ghana as a Case History," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 5:1 (2002), pp. 107-34.

## 8. Conclusion

It is possible that the role of the demonic in many western contexts is more subtle and disguised than elsewhere. Rather than assume that the limited number of exorcisms indicates an absence of the demonic, it may be more appropriate to acknowledge the opposite and to be led by the Spirit in considering other ways in which it may be functioning. It is probable that demonic activity in the West is even more dangerous by its devious nature and believers need to be aware that the battle is not always overt but also subliminal and no less undermining. The Bible, but more so, the Spirit and other believers need to be recognized as potentially playing a significant part in combating it.