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Editorial: Spiritual Warfare and the Frontiers

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (Eph. 6:10,11) This well known Scripture indicates that the apostle Paul had first hand knowledge of the exigencies of spiritual warfare for the church. He pointedly reminds his readers of “the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2). He exhorts them “not to give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:27), and urges the whole church that “the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places,” all of this was in accord with “the eternal purpose which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Eph. 3:10,11) Best of all Christians must know that the Lord “disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them...” in the cross. (Col. 2:15).

These and other passages of Scripture clearly indicate that spiritual warfare is not only a fact of life but that it is a very serious matter which we as Christians need to heed lest we fail to stand. For this reason Paul mandates believers to “take up the whole armor of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.” (Eph. 6:13)

The Schemes of the Devil

One of Satan’s deadliest tactics according to E.K. Simpson’s commentary is by “shamming dead,” as he says by “eliminating the frontier-lines of truth and falsehood under colour of broadmindedness, and in securing the ascendancy of ‘scientific thought’ or rather its counterfeit, that has paved the way for his most signal inroads of unbelief on the pale of true religion in modern times.” (*Commentary of the Epistle to the Ephesians*, E.K.Simpson, 1957:145)

Few can doubt that Satan has made great inroads in our modern world, including infiltrating our churches and playing havoc with our world view. This has been accomplished largely by means of a slow but persistent shift of

thinking regarding our view of reality, through the so called “scientific thought” that would see our world as a closed, self-contained natural system which would postulate Satan’s nonexistence, along with other supernatural beings, and somehow reduce our problems and the battles we face to a natural plane of reality.

It must be stated clearly, that this is *not* Paul’s view nor is it in anyway in line with his theology, nor consistent with biblical theology generally. Paul would want to correct many of us in our “modern times” and show us that we do “not contend with flesh and blood,” that our conflict is not in the natural—with people and forces in the visible realm of things—but rather is with spiritual beings in the supernatural and invisible plane of reality. Paul understands this spiritual reality and the battle fought there. What many of us do not see—perhaps because we cannot see— Paul clearly sees. It is none other than the startling fact that we as Christians individually, as well as the Body of Christ corporately, are in a war, doing battle against the principalities (rulers), against the powers (authorities), against the world rulers of darkness, against the spiritual hosts of evil and wickedness in the heavenlies. (Eph. 6:12)

A Fierce Ensuing Battle

We could safely conclude that we in the West stand in need of a major shift of perspective regarding ultimate world and life view issues. We along with Paul, in accord with the whole biblical record, need to see the invisible non-empirical reality of our existence and the relentless battle in which all of us as God’s people are in fact involved, whether we like it or not. Also the warning stands: That unless we do experience a radical supernatural “paradigm shift” of a deep proportion, we are in for serious trouble. What trouble? Great portions of the church stand to loose the war! How? Because it will further erode our faith even to the degree that the Lord’s warning may well apply in our times. He warned “Will the Son of Man find any faith on the earth at his coming.” (Luke 18:8) If the secular world view condition prevails, who can

deny that we have lost the war?

And what about world missions? It would be safe to deduce that if the battle rages fierce for even the “normal Christian,” how much more in the arena of world missions as we seek to penetrate areas and peoples held in bondage for centuries by “the prince of the power of the air.” World missions, and in a special sense frontier missions, must know as none other, and as never before, that we are at war, that it is a conflict with “principalities and powers” of evil supernatural world-ruling spirit beings that must be taken seriously by all engaged in world missions. This systemic evil needs to be disarmed in the authority and power of our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished by the full armored soldiers of the cross who know how to wield the sword of the Spirit.

The Theme of This Issue

Because of the great import of this subject and its significance for world missions we are dedicating this entire issue to spiritual warfare. Virtually every article is focused on this theme. In this light we could ask ourselves the question why so many peoples are still unreached even in this late hour? Could it be because we today, and those who have gone before, have misunderstood the spiritual nature of our mission and supernatural conflict of the task? Have Western missionaries been influenced for secularism among many peoples of the world as some Christian anthropologists claim? Whatever our answer, the truth is that we today, undoubtedly as never before, will be involved in warfare with rulers and powers and authorities of wickedness that must be conquered in order to finish the task of world evangelization and plant the church of Christ among every unreached people on the face of the earth.

Focus and Direction

The direction of this issue is set by a fresh look at the letter of Paul to the Romans and how the whole letter, including its weighty theology, is focused on missions, specifically frontier missions, of reaching the unreached peoples of the world. Although Shirmacher’s presentation is

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not specifically focused on spiritual warfare, his article nevertheless sets the tone as we begin to look at the exigencies of spiritual warfare vis-a-vis the unreached nation-peoples and their evangelization.

Two articles by Murphy and Van Rheenen concentrate on the foundational concern of the world view issue, including a comparison of Western and non-Western world views, and comparing them with the biblical Christian one. Truly there is a "world view clash" of deep proportions. We need to make every effort that our world view as Christians be aligned with a thorough-going Christian-biblical-theistic view of reality.

Subsequent articles by John Robb and Viv Grigg take up the subject of the tactics and schemes and organizations Satan uses to advance and maintain his kingdom of darkness here on earth, including his tactics in controlling the urban centers of our world. We need to know our enemy and his ploys at every hand engaged "to steal, kill and destroy." (John 10:10)

A major article is written by Howard Brant on SIM's position on spiritual warfare, power encounter and the miraculous as it pertains to missions. SIM realizes that by the very nature of their task as a mission they will inevitably enter enemy territory, a virtual war zone, as Brant sees it, to engage in combat with the evil one. SIM realizes this to be of vital importance to them both individually and corporately. We might add that the same is true for every other missionary and mission agency involved in world missions.

Towards the end of this issue we are challenged by Charles Laughlin's article on the question whether spiritual warfare should be included in a mission

curriculum or training program. This article, as well as the article by Van Rheenen were originally presented in March of this year to the Evangelical Missiological Society, at a Southwest Regional Conference in Dallas, Texas. Laughlin makes the case for including spiritual warfare in a mission curriculum since, among other things, in our day there is a marked increase in demonic activity. He reminds us of Paul's warning "that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons." (II Tim. 4:1) Laughlin concludes that for this reason alone we should provide curriculum on spiritual warfare in our theological as well as missiological training programs.

Concerted Prayer and Intercession

Last but not least, we will be challenged to pray and intercede for another people still unreached with the gospel—the Bihari of India—deceived and held in bondage for centuries by the false religious powers and authorities. The full color photo (front cover) of this issue represents two young boys of the Bihari people who are waiting for the liberating gospel. We are indebted to Caleb Project for the use of this great photo. For the data on the prayer profile in the article on the Bihari we are indebted to the Adopt-A-People Clearinghouse in Colorado Springs, CO.

As editor I wish to encourage every subscriber of the IJFM, and every Christian who receives this special issue of the Journal, to pray in an extraordinary concerted effort for the Bihari people with the view that they may be reached in this decade with the gospel, it being the very power of God unto salvation for them as well as for

all the other peoples of the earth.

The Adopt-A-People Consultation

Frank Kaleb Jansen, the director of the Adopt-A-People Clearinghouse, writes the final article giving a report on the Second Adopt-A-People Consultation held this Summer in Colorado Springs. It is worthy of note that this Conference was a huge success and of significant influence, advancing the Adopt-A-People concept. Though the number of actual participants of this conference may seem small, compared to former meetings of the past, in which thousands gathered, the truly significant feature of this conference was that all the participants were leaders in the mission industry focused to a large degree on the final frontiers of reaching the remaining unreached peoples of the world by the year 2000. David Dougherty present a response to Jansen in the form of a second perspective on this same consultation.

It is with much prayer and confidence that we send out this very special issue on spiritual warfare. We pray that it may find wide dissemination in the Body of Christ, both at home and internationally. May it help us all to understand the nature of the cosmic spiritual war in which we are all engaged as well as to provide authentic support and strategy direction to all world mission efforts. May we all remember that although we are at war, perhaps as never before, nevertheless, we are not alone for the battle is the Lord's.

*Hans M. Weerstra
October 1993
El Paso, Texas*

Romans as a Charter for World Mission

A Lesson in the Relation of Systematic Theology and Missiology

The biblical record leaves little doubt about the fact that theology is interrelated with classical missiology focused on the unreached peoples of the world. We need to hear the Word of God afresh on this important issue.

By Thomas Schirrmacher

What is the topic of Romans? "It is God's plan for the world and how Paul's mission to the gentiles fits into this plan." (Stendahl 1978:42, retranslated from German)

This close relation between the letter to the Romans and the missionary work of Paul has only rarely been taken into account by exegetes. Emil Weber did not get beyond Romans 3 in his important study *The relation of Romans 1-3 to the Missionary Practice of Paul* (Weber, 1905) while other authors outlined the topic only (e.g. Russell 1988; Minear 1971, esp. appendices pp. 91-110; Alstrup 1977; Stendahl 1978; McClung 1989). Nils Alstrup writes :

Paul has been acclaimed as the first Christian theologian and the greatest Christian missionary of all times. Scholars have, however, often failed to realize how closely these two aspects are interrelated. (Alstrup 1977:70)

At the same time, Romans played a major role in the history of Protestant missions (see examples in Walls 1970). Especially Romans 10:14 ff. has been one of the most frequently used texts for missionary sermons (Walls 1970: 346-347). Through the Calvinistic Puritans of England, and the USA of the 16th to 18th centuries the missionary spirit of Romans gained access to the exegetical literature. But this was an exception. Normally exegesis of Romans and the use of Romans in the missionary movement never were integrated and stayed miles apart.

The Forgotten Frame of Romans

Paul wrote his letter to the Romans probably circa 57 B.C., sometime during the three month of Acts 20:3 prior to his journey to Jerusalem. Thus the letter was written after he had

collected money in the churches to help the church in Jerusalem. From Jerusalem he wanted to travel to Rome to use this church as the base for the next step of his missionary strategy, i.e., evangelization of Spain (Romans 15:27-31).

Paul does not take much time in his letter to get to his future plans (Romans 1:8-15). He wants to preach the gospel to all men without exception. He does not accept barriers of culture and race ("Greeks and Barbarians," Romans 1:1-14), of education or social stratum ("wise and unwise," Romans 1:14) and therefore wants to go to Rome (Romans 1:15). From this practical topic Paul switches immediately to the 'proper' topic of Romans. The famous verses of Romans 1:16-17 start with a "therefore ...". So Paul wants to prove through biblical teaching what he is going to do according to Romans 1:8-15. There is no hint that Paul is changing the subject. Romans 1:1-15 is not just a redundant introduction but tells us the very purpose of Romans: proving to his readers that the expansion of world mission is God's very heart and plan.

One can see the same purpose at the end of the body of direct teaching in chapter 15. Here Paul switches directly from a list of quotations from the Old Testament, which proves that all people will hear the gospel, to his practical plans of missionary strategy repeating several item he already has mentioned in the introduction of the letter.

This is even more impressive if one compares the whole concluding part of Romans 15:14-16:27 with the introduction. This frame of Romans explains the occasion and purpose of the whole letter and provides the platform of the topic of the letter in its first and last verses (Romans 1:1-6; and 16:25-27):

i.e., that the "obedience of faith" must be preached and be established among all peoples, as the Old Testament has prophesied (compare e.g. the context vv.15-25 with Is.52:15 quoted in Romans 15: 21). The parallels between Romans 1:1-15 and 15:14-15,27 are striking and show that Paul did not forget his mission plans during the main body of the letter.

Too often Romans has been interpreted as a theoretical- theological treatise without taking the underlying missiological frame into account. Walter B. Russell III writes: "Most writers virtually ignore the introductory and closing statements and focus on the theological exposition of the letter's body." (Russell 1988: 175)

World Mission and Theology

I wrote a commentary on Romans as a missiologist (Schirrmacher 1993), on which this article is based. The reason for this was that the most systematic and theological letter of Paul has been written with missions in mind including practical plans to spread the gospel to new frontiers. Paul in Romans wants to establish the right and necessity of world mission through systematic theology and through an intensive study of the Old Testament. In this light it is warranted to draw the following conclusions from this letter:

1. *Whoever wants to do missions and in the process renounce theology, because this might hinder the practice, is doing mission in his own commission and does not really care what God says about it.*
2. *Whoever teaches systematic*

theology, which does not focus on world missions and does not lead to practical steps to reach the unreached, teaches in his own commission and does not really care why God gave us his word and teaching in the first place.

3. *Biblical and practical world mission always will start with sound and thorough biblical teaching and sound and thorough teaching will always lead to biblical and practical world mission.*

The Fulfillment of the Old Testament: World Mission

Recently we have begun to speak about ‘world missions’ and reaching ‘all peoples’. At this point we want to highlight two important messages from Romans 15-16 which further explain what world mission is all about. The first is the importance of the Old Testament for providing world mission with a solid biblical basis, the second is that world mission first of all is to reach the unreached peoples of the world, which is the main goal of the letter to the Romans.

Paul reminds the non-Jewish Christians in Romans 15:8, that “*Christ has become a servant of circumcision*” holding to the ceremonial law of the Old Testament. Thus he “*confirmed the promises made to the fathers*” (15:8). But Paul immediately speaks about the same promises of the fathers concerning non-Jewish peoples in the Old Testament: “*so that the gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written ...*” (15:9). As in Romans 9:11, Paul reminds the Christian that salvation for the Jews and gentiles cannot be separated.

In Romans 15:9-12 Paul cites five quotations from the Old Testament proving that all the nations will one day praise the Lord. (2 Sam. 22:50; Ps. 18:50; Dtn. 32:43; Ps. 117:1, Jer. 11:10). This is the final rapid sequence of quotations from the Old Testament, which Paul uses to prove that the gospel and world mission does not stand against the Old Testament but is backed up by it. Adolf Schlatter

writes about this quotation in Romans 15:9-12:

The common praise of God in which all peoples take part, is the goal of God that Scripture proclaimed. In 2 Sam. 22:50 Paul probably heard Christ speaking who will confess God among the nations and sing the psalm to his glory. It is the work of Christ through the Church doing this. Dtn.32:43 is quoted because this verse calls the peoples together with Israel to the

Parallels Between Romans 1:1-15 and 15:14—16:27		
1:1-6	The gospel has been foretold in the OT	16:25-27
1:5	The obedience of faith has to be preached amongst all nations	15:18;16:20
1:7	Grace be with you	16:20
1:8	The faith of the Christians in Rome is known in the whole world	16:19
1:8-13	Travel plans: from Jerusalem to Rome	15:22-29
1:11-12	Paul wants to be made strong spiritually by the Christians in Rome	15:14
1:13	Paul has been hindered to come to Rome inspite of his wishes	15:22
1:13-15	The gospel must be preached to all peoples	15:14-29;16:26

common praise of God. Ps. 117:1 proclaims that all peoples without exception are invited to the praise of God. Is. 11:10 establishes the worship, which the nations will bring, by their being under the lordship of Christ ... Paul builds his prayer on the promise of Scripture. (Schlatter 1975:383)

Although many quotations from the Old Testament speak to Jews – and this till today (see Schirrmacher 1991) – they are also meant for the gentile Christians who not only rejoice that they received salvation but are commissioned to spread the gospel to all other gentile peoples. C.E.B. Cranfield writes:

... neither the constant engagement with the O.T. to be seen throughout the epistle, nor the use of the words ‘I speak to those, who know the law’ in 7:1, proves that Paul was writing to a predominately Jewish-Christian church; for the O.T. was the Bible of the Gentile, as well as of the Jewish-Christians, and it is significant that Paul also assumes familiarity with, and reverence for, the O.T. in his letters to the Galatians and the Corinthians. (Cranfield 1989; see also Michel 1978:36 and Murray 1984)

Proving of the great commission – to preach the gospel of Jesus to every people of the earth – from the Old Testament is quite common in the New

Testament. When Paul and Barnabas wanted to prove that from now on they should preach the gospel to the gentiles instead of the Jews they did not quote the great commission Jesus had given recorded for us in the Gospels, but the great commission of Isaiah (Acts 13:46-49 quoting from Is. 49:6). Likewise Peter defends the conversion of Cornelius by saying that all prophets of the Old Testament give testimony that the heathens will be saved (Acts 10:42-43). James also finished the council of Jerusalem on the subject of missions to the gentiles not with a quotation from Jesus, (or the Gospels) but from the Old Testament (Acts 15:13-21 quoting Is. 61:4; Ps. 22:27-28; Sach. 8:22; Am. 9:11-12). The promise to the patriarchs, that all people will be blessed through their offspring

(Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:17; 26:4; 28:14), is again and again quoted and mentioned as proof for world missions (Luke 1:54-55, 72; Acts 3:25-26; Romans 4:13-25; Eph. 3:3-4; Gal. 3:7-9,14; Hebrews 6:13-20; 11:12).

Finally Jesus himself not only gave the great commission in the well-known versions according to Matthew, Mark, John and Acts, but in the version according to Luke proving the world-wide preaching mandate of the gospel from the Old Testament (Luke 24:43-49): “*And he opened their minds, that they might understand the scriptures...: Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem...*” (Luke 24:45-47, emphasis mine).

Reaching Unreached Peoples

It was not just any kind of “mission work” that made Paul write the letter to the Romans. World missions for Paul was frontier missions, was missions reaching the unreached regions, not just

reaching single unreached persons in an otherwise reached area. Of course there were fulltime people nurturing the new churches like Apollos or Timothy. Also there were local evangelists. But the missionary apostle Paul (apostle and missionary having the same meaning 'the one sent', the former word coming from the Greek, the latter from the Latin) did not stick to the local church or 'his' region but moved on as long as there were regions and peoples without Christ's salvation.

Listen as Paul argues why he needs the church of Rome as a new base for his mission to Spain: "So from Jerusalem all the way around Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ." (Romans 15:19); "But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions..." (Romans

15:23). Was every man and every woman in the provinces where Paul and his coworkers had been working a professing Christian? Had everyone heard the gospel? Of course not, but Paul had established churches everywhere which were able to continue the work of Christ in those regions.

Paul states it beyond doubt: "It has always been my honor (or glory) to preach the gospel where Christ is not being named, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation." (Romans 15:20).

Reaching the unreached was for Paul the honor the glory, the pride (this being the meaning of the Greek word) of the missionary and continues so today. The unreached are not simply the non-Christians within reach of an established church, but rather non-Christians in areas and people groups (*ethne*) where there is no one naming and praising Christ, where there are no biblical witnesses at all i.e., where the church does not yet exist.

The missionary strategy and vision of Paul was to start churches in the bigger cities of regions and among peoples which did not have any church and to pass on the task to reach everybody within the region to the new churches while moving on to new regions. So the Christians in the city of Thessalonica

reached two whole provinces, Achaia and Macedonia (1Thess. 1:7-9). Nobody less than Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) saw it as part of Paul's mission strategy to make the local church self-governing and self-propagating as soon as possible and – what is often forgotten – to free the missionary to start work in new frontiers (see Schirmmacher ed. 1993).

Again Paul proves this from the Old Testament: "Rather it is written: Those

and yet a lot of people want to have it sooner! At the same time I can see the mission societies, like, Gospel Recordings International, speeding up the process of recording the languages and dialects of the unreached peoples. (4273 languages and dialects being recorded at the moment, see Schirmmacher 1992). This and hundreds of other examples do not only show that world missions is getting back its proper place but also – if we take into

account the purpose of Romans – that the theological base is properly being laid.

What was and is the purpose of the letter to the Romans including its heavy theology? Paul wanted the Roman church as he said "to join me in my struggle" (Romans 15:30) to reach the

unreached peoples which had no church in their midst. The best way to get the church going was to show them from the Old Testament that world mission is the essence of God's love and is the purpose of Christ's Church.

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What is the purpose of the letter to the Romans? Paul wanted the Roman church to join him in his struggle to reach the unreached peoples which had no church in their midst. The best way to get the church going was to show them from the Old Testament that world mission is the essence of God's love and is the purpose of the Church of Christ.

who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand." (Romans 15:21, emphasis mine). Why is it the honor, pride and glory of every missionary that he/she is reaching the unreached (e.g. those who cannot be reached by a church)? Because it is God's plan in salvation history to bring salvation ultimately to all peoples.

I am happy to witness the development of a new conscience within the worldwide church that frontier mission is not just a new hobby for adventurers among the missionaries, and that mission is not just the self-chosen job of some mission societies. In 1979 I attended the International Conference on Frontier Missions (and its student counterpart) in Edinburgh 1979, where we as Germans started the German Center for World Mission together with a network of similar institutions all over the world. I remember that 'frontier mission' and 'hidden people' were just foreign words and concepts in German missiology at that time.

But things have changed since then and the success of the German edition of *Operation World* adapted by the German Center shows that frontier mission is widely accepted today. The new German edition will appear only two months after the English edition

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World View Clash

A Handbook for Spiritual Warfare

Which is closer to reality, a traditional animistic world view or a Western naturalistic one? What is a biblical view of the world and how should it affect our spiritual warfare in world missions? This article is an excerpt from Murphy's exhaustive study from his book entitled: The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare.

By Edward F. Murphy

The World Vision organization planned to dig a well for a needy African village called Walamo.¹ They were warned not to go to the village because the most powerful *marabout*, or witch doctor, of the region had cursed it. They were told something bad would happen to them or their machinery if they tried to dig a well in the village under so strong a curse that people from other villages would not go there.

The team went anyway. In time they dug a well which filled with sweet, pure water. The people of Walamo were ecstatic. Nearby villages heard of it and, convinced the curse had been broken, resumed trade with Walamo. When asked why nothing evil befell the workers or their equipment, they responded, "Francois's god is more powerful than the *marabout's* god."

Francois, who led the drilling crew, was tempted to dismiss their views as pure superstition. The well had come in by understanding and working with the relevant scientific laws. The people, however, saw it as evidence of the superior power of Francois's god. Two world views had clashed.²

World View Clash

I am a missionary. A missionary leaves behind his own familiar culture and seeks to contextualize himself within a foreign culture.³ He does this for the sake of the gospel and out of love for God and for the people to whom he is sent. As fully as possible, he seeks to understand their world view. He faces a serious problem, however: He carries with him his own world view. James W. Sire

in *The Universe Next Door* defines world view as "a set of presuppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or unconsciously) about the basic make up of our world."⁴ The working definition of world view I will use is even more basic: World view refers to "one's basic assumptions about reality."

Everyone holds world view assumptions whether or not they are reflective persons. All persons believe their own assumptions about reality are the correct ones, or at least the best ones, for the present. All persons' beliefs and behavior, in that order, are based upon their world view, whether or not they are conscious of that fact.

While world view is closely related to religion, the two are not identical. Paul Hiebert affirms that "a world view provides people with their basic assumptions about reality. Religion provides them with the specific content of this reality."⁵ If one holds to an atheistic world view, then atheism functions as a religion.

Aside from the agnostic position, only two conceivable world views exist. The *spiritualistic world view* affirms that ultimate reality is spiritual: immaterial, not physical or material. According to this view, whether ultimate reality is looked upon as personal or impersonal, it is spiritual. The vast majority of the world's more than five billion inhabitants hold to some form of a spiritualistic world view. Intellectually convinced atheists are very rare even in Western and in Marxist societies. Ours is not a world of philosophical materialists, but rather one of

convinced spiritualists.

This common spiritualistic world view gives the church a beginning point with most of humanity. Even the present occult explosion within the Western world is advantageous at this point. We can say to the occultist, "You are basically correct in your view of reality at one major point. Humans exist as spiritual beings, and not merely as material ones."

Second, the *materialistic or naturalistic world view* affirms that ultimate reality is material or physical, not spiritual. This view assumes that all life generated spontaneously from non-life and that by this process primitive single-celled life forms evolved over vast periods of time into the vast range of life as we know it today.⁶

Five important implications result from this view of reality:⁷

1. The universe is a cosmic accident that has no ultimate purpose.
2. Human life is a biological accident that has no ultimate significance.
3. Life ends forever at death for each individual life form.
4. Mind has no separate existence or survival apart from brain.
5. Humanity's intuitive, historic belief in an ultimate mind, spirit, or God behind, within, and outside of the physical universe is a form of self-deception. Thus, humanity's corresponding belief in human uniqueness, dignity, purpose, and survival beyond death is a non-real view of reality.

No wonder life is so empty to intellectually convinced but honest

World View Clash

atheists. The word *honest* is important here because most atheists do not want to honestly face the nihilistic implications of their naturalistic world view. When they do, death would be better than life because it leads to eternal non-existence.

Western theology has been influenced by the Western world view more than most of us are aware. By *Western theology* I mean the broad, generally accepted interpretations of Scripture embodied in mainstream works of systematic theology, covering the broad range of theological viewpoints and ecclesiastical groupings one finds among all believers who hold to a high view of Scripture and propagate a common historic Christian faith.

By *Western world view*⁸ I mean the view of reality that arose out of the historical movement of the eighteenth century called the Enlightenment. It is often summed up in one word, *naturalism*. Sire traces the historical swing from theism to naturalism, and by way of deism, to nihilism.⁹ One scholar defines methodological naturalism as “the name for that characteristic of scientific method which constructs its pattern of thought on the basis of natural causation as distinguished from a supernatural or occult explanation.”¹⁰

This Western world view arches over all of the scientific method. Such a method, when adopted as one’s *model* for reality, views the universe as a uniform system based strictly on the cause-and-effect relationships between its constituent parts, each in a determinate relationship one to the other, utterly closed to any dimensions of reality that transcend the natural. Sire observes that history thus becomes a “linear system of events linked by cause and effect but without an overarching purpose.”¹¹ Thus, naturalism explains everything on the basis of impersonal natural and therefore predictable causes that account for and explain all of reality.

Spiritual Warfare

How does all of this affect our study of spiritual warfare? Although we Christians have rightly rejected naturalism as an acceptable view of ultimate reality and hold faithfully to historic theism, naturalism nonetheless deeply influences our view of the daily events of our lives. This influence helps shape our view of the world of spirit beings, both benevolent

level of supernatural this-worldly beings and forces from my own world view. As a scientist I had been trained to deal with the empirical world in naturalistic terms. As a theologian, I was taught to answer ultimate questions in theistic terms. For me the middle zone did not really exist. Unlike Indian villagers, I had given little thought to spirits of this world, to local ancestors and ghosts, or to the souls of animals. For me these belonged to the realm of fairies, trolls

and other mythical beings. Consequently, I had no answers to the questions they raised.

In “The Excluded Middle,” an article published in the *MARC Newsletter*, Bryant Myers expands Hiebert’s concept of a two-tiered world. He points out that “the most important feature of this Enlightenment world view is that the spiritual and real worlds do not touch.... This is the major difference when we compare the Western world view to how traditional people understand their world.” Myers further

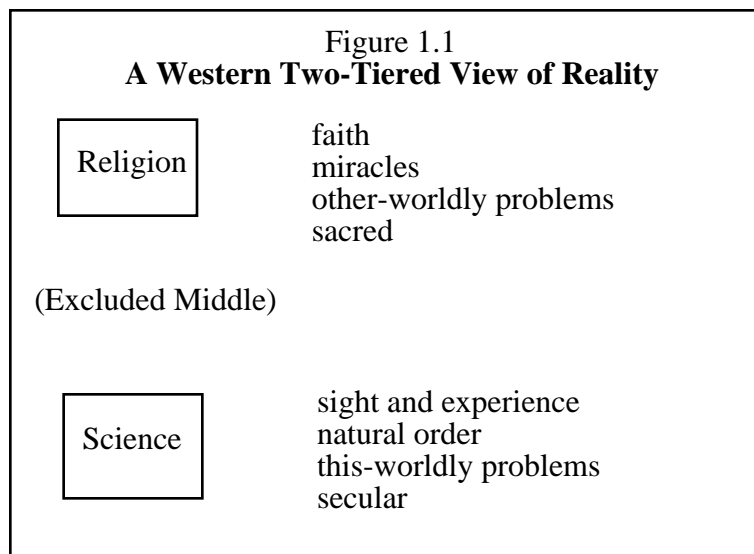
explains that most traditional religions

believe the world is a continuum between those elements of the world which are mostly spiritual in nature and those which are mostly material.... There is no gap between the two worlds. The spiritual and physical co-exist together as inseparable parts of each other.¹⁴

According to Myers, there is a “middle part” of the traditional world view, a level of reality comprising witch doctors, shamans, curses, idols, household gods, and the evil eye. This spiritual part of reality operates in the material world and is rejected, or excluded, by the Western world view.

To traditional peoples there is no natural-versus-supernatural dichotomy. The supernatural directly relates to the natural. Traditional peoples live in the middle zone. That is why much of our preaching and teaching seem to have little relevance to their daily life. For instance, we explain sickness on the basis of germs, nutrition, and related factors. They on the other hand explain sickness on the basis of curses, the evil eye, witchcraft, or

Figure 1.1
A Western Two-Tiered View of Reality



and evil. Anthropologist Paul G. Hiebert of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School writes of his own struggles in this area in an article entitled “The Flaw of the Excluded Middle.”¹²

John’s disciples asked, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?” (Luke 7:20). Jesus answered not with logical proofs, but by a demonstration of power in the curing of the sick and casting out of evil spirits. So much is clear. Yet when I read the passage as a missionary in India, and sought to apply it to missions in our day, I had a sense of uneasiness. As a Westerner, I was used to presenting Christ on a basis of rational arguments, not by evidences of His power in the lives of people who were sick, possessed and destitute. In particular, the confrontation with spirits that appeared so natural a part of Christ’s ministry belonged in my mind to a separate world of the miraculous – far from ordinary everyday experience.

Hiebert then presents a diagram which clearly reflects the Western Christian view of reality, a by-product of our Western theology: (see figure 1.1) He comments:¹³

The reasons for my uneasiness with the biblical and Indian world views should now be clear. I had excluded the middle

karma, all of which are set against them.

Myers then applies this difference in world views to evangelism and missions. He writes¹⁵

Christians in the west believe that God and Jesus Christ are part of the world of high religion, and that others are wrong to believe in Allah or some other high god. This means we believe that the critical question for evangelism is “Whose god is the true god?”...

For people who still hold a largely traditional view of the world, the critical question is not “What is true?” but rather “Who is the most powerful?” After all, it is the stuff in the excluded middle that affects their lives for good or ill. This means that news about a god whose Spirit is more powerful than curses, witch doctors and demons is very attractive. This is one of the reasons the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements are growing as fast as they are today.

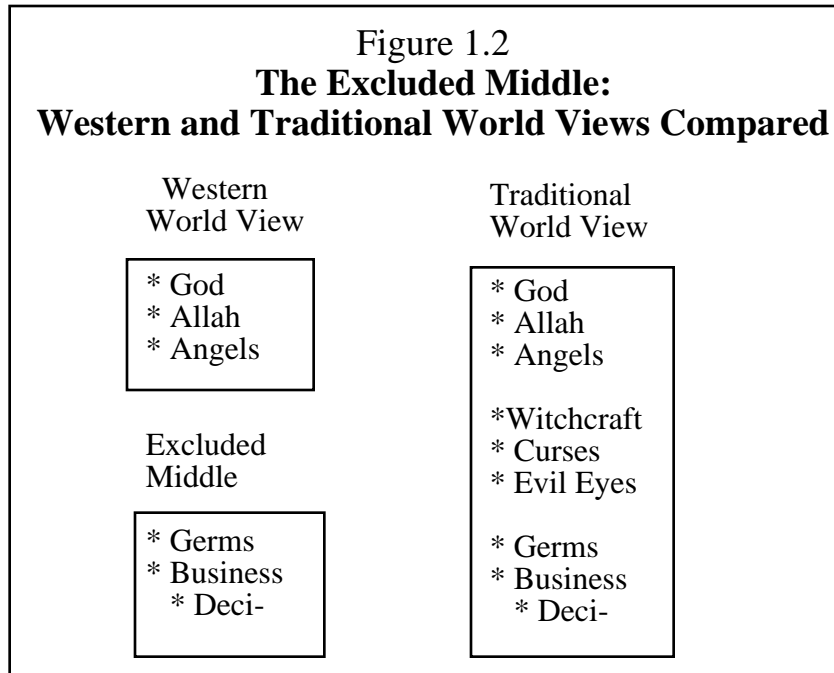
Francois, whom we met at the opening of this article, found himself in the excluded middle in the well-drilling incident. He could have reverted to the two-tiered view of reality in explaining the well of pure water to the people of Walamo. He could have told them that God was not involved because the well was part of the natural world of science, natural laws and technology. He could have dismissed their view as pure superstition. He could have tired to impose his secular Western world view upon the traditional world view held by the villagers. He could have, but he didn’t.

Francois understood the excluded middle. He realized that the people probably now saw him as a shaman more powerful than the sorcerer. He had to bridge the two world views and help the people understand, in Myers’ words, the “difference between the idea of ‘Francois’s god’

and ‘the God of Francois.’ Their world view, needed to be challenged by a biblical or kingdom framework, not a secularizing Enlightenment one.” Francois explained that he did not own a god or have any power of his own. He was not a shaman; he had no magic. He was only a servant of the one true God, who was more powerful than the shamans *and* Western science. This God created a world that was rational and understandable,

and his followers engage evil supernaturalism intensely and triumph decisively. Nor did awareness of such dimensions of the spirit world and of conflict with evil spirits die with the apostolic church. The post-apostolic fathers took the realm of the demonic so seriously that they automatically took new converts from paganism through rites of deliverance from evil supernaturalism, a practice we have lost to our own detriment.¹⁸

Effective ministry in our day demands that we must recover the knowledge and experience of the spirit world that the early church possessed. We must relearn the forgotten art of spiritual warfare. Probably not since the days of the apostolic and patristic churches has there occurred the present revival of evil supernaturalism that we are experiencing today. The Western world is being shaken by what Michael Green has called an “occult



and created human minds with the ability to figure out where the water was likely to be.”¹⁶

In his explanation, Francois challenged both the Western world view and the traditional world view of the Walamos. Neither is completely harmonious with the biblical world view. The traditional world view, while closer to the biblical view, is like the Western world view, also filled with error.¹⁷ It is polytheistic, pantheistic, magical, and animistic, and in these ways completely contrary to biblical revelation. In spite of these errors, the traditional view stands closer to the biblical world view because it fully acknowledge the reality of the spirit world.

In the Bible the spirit world is real, alive, and everywhere invading daily life. It is portrayed in both the Old and New Testaments but more vividly in the New, where Christ

explosion.”¹⁹

In missions the story is the same. Western missionaries gave birth to most of the mother churches of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania. These missionaries by and large believed that demons were automatically kept in check by Christ’s defeat of Satan on the Cross and by His resurrection. Evil supernaturalism, while recognized, was seldom openly challenged and defeated through power encounter.²⁰ In missionary work among animists or spirit worshipers, the first generation of converts was and is often won through power demonstrations on the part of God through His servants. Following conversion, however, no biblically nor culturally relevant theology of the demonic world or power encounter is usually developed for the new converts. Most of the intuitive recognition of and fear of the world of

World View Clash

evil spirits, ghosts, and the spirits of the ancestors or of animals held by the host cultures is regarded as “superstition.” It is thus relegated to the unreal and becomes something to be ignored in Christian living and evangelism. National Christians often feel timid in speaking of “the old ways.” Usually they did not receive from their spiritual fathers, the missionaries, an adequate biblical and functional theology of the spirit world, power encounter, and spiritual warfare. Essentially they were left unprepared for the spiritual warfare into which they were being thrust as Christians.

But today national Christians everywhere are asking questions for which adequate answers are not forthcoming: “Can true believers be demonized? If so, what can be done to set them free? What can Satan through his demons (Eph. 6:10-20) do against true believers? Can believers be hurt by demons? Can Satan severely injure believers physically, emotionally, and even spiritually? Can he kill believers? What about our churches?” they ask. “Can evil spirits work their way into positions of power and quench the flow of the Spirit and His gifts? Can they counterfeited the gifts of the Holy Spirit? How can such demonic strongholds be recognized and broken? What about the place of evil supernaturalism in evangelism? Do high level spirit princes of evil rule territorially? Can they so oppress and control individuals, communities, peoples, and even nations that the Word of God does not take root, but rather is rejected or expelled?”²¹

These questions spring out of a host of concrete experiences of our Christian brothers and sisters in other cultures. The answers, however, can not only help non-Western Christians but also awaken us in the West to the cross-cultural reality of evil supernaturalism, whose manifestation in the current occult explosion has surprised many of us. Our surprise only reveals our world view blindness.

To see people who are immersed in demonized cultures be set free by the gospel; to truly and completely deliver men, women, and children from the kingdom of Satan and bring them into the kingdom of God and to

minister to believers who are still subject to abuse by the spirits, we Christian leaders must relearn the spirit world. We must remove our Western-world view biases, which blind us to the biblical view of the spirit world, and be willing to become incarnate into the same world into which our Lord entered – a world of spiritual warfare, often deadly spiritual warfare.

References

1. See Bryant Myers. “The Excluded Middle.” MARC Newsletter, June, 1991
2. World view has to do with one’s personal or a group’s collective view of reality. There are really only two basic realities. There is reality as God has made it and sees it. Then there is reality as we finite and imperfect human beings perceive it. My friend Charles Kraft writes that “we see the world (both physical and all aspects of it) as we have been taught to see it. It is part of our world view to assume that our way of seeing the world is right.... We from Western nations bordering the North Atlantic have been taught or allowed to assume that our perception of reality is the same as the absolute REALITY itself.... This is the problem of world view.” *Christianity With Power: Your World View and Your Experience With the Supernatural*, Ann Arbor, Mich.: Vine Books, 1989, 23-24.
3. *Contextualization* is the process of adapting to a lifestyle or point of view different from our own to such a degree that our behavior becomes normal for the new context in which we find ourselves. It is an essential part of cross-cultural living and ministry.
4. James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, Downers Grove, Ill. InterVarsity, 1976, 371.
5. Paul Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1976, 17.
6. For an excellent and scholarly presentation and critique of this process by a reputable Christian scientist, see A.E. Wilder Smith. *Man’s Origin Man’s Destiny*, Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1975.
7. For a critique of this view see Arthur C. Custance, *The Mysterious Matters of Mind*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1980.
8. For an excellent discussion of the inescapable tension between one’s limited personal or group world view, Western world views and key elements of a biblical world view, see Charles Kraft, *Christianity With Power*.
9. Sire, 66.
10. Vergilius Ferm, ed., *An Encyclopedia of Religion*, New York: The Philosophical Library.
11. Sire, 66.
12. Paul Hiebert, *The Flaw of the Excluded Middle*, *Missiology* 10, January, 1982, 35-47.
13. Myers, 3.
14. Myers, 3.
15. Myers, 4.
16. Myers, 4.
17. Traditional world view is often described as not believing in germs or science of any form but only in spirit forces operating directly, every moment of the day, in “nature” until nature has become almost totally unpredictable. Bronislaw Malinowski in his classic *Science and Religion*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1951, 17-36, denies that the traditionalist holds to a totally mystical world view. On the contrary, he says, traditional people understand the difference between religion, magic, and science. By observation they have created a true science by which they also live their lives. While admitting malevolent spirits can interfere in the course of nature, they do not attribute all negative experience as necessarily coming directly from evil spirits or angry ancestral ghosts.
18. J. Warwick Montgomery, “Exorcism: Is It For Real?” *Christianity Today*, July 26, 1974. Jeffrey Burton Russell of the University of California in Santa Barbara, California, traces the development of satanology and demonology up through the 5th century A.D. In his book *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987, he begins with the apostolic fathers – Clement of Rome, Igna-

tius, Polycarp, Papias, and others –and post-first century Church of the Order of Exorcists.

19. Michael Green, *I Believe in Satan's Downfall*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981, 112.

20. Power encounter is a crisis point of encounter in the on-going spiritual warfare between supernatural person-ages in which Christians are directly involved. Its goal is the glory of God, the defeat of the “no-gods” (Gal. 4:8-9), and the obedience of men to the one true God and His only

begotten Son, the lord Jesus Christ (John 1:14,16; 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10). Much is being written today about power encounter.

21. The question of territorial spirits seems to be causing considerable controversy and opposition among Christians today. Some of it is justified by the careless, unscriptural, and shallow way these spirits are dealt with by some Christian leaders. However, the Bible does speak of spirits who exercise control over peoples and geographical areas.

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Animism, Secularism and Theism

Developing a Tripartite Model for Understanding World Cultures

What do African Animists, Japanese Shintoists and American Secularists have in common? How do they differ from one another? Here is a preliminary discussion draft suggesting that theirs and the world views of others can be classified by summing their animistic, secularistic and theistic components.

By Gailyn Van Rheen

In my book *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts* I contrast animism and secularism and evaluate both on the basis of Christian theism (1991: 95–102). After studying these concepts in my course on Animism, a creative group of graduate students suggested that all world cultures could be categorized by the extent to which they are secular, animistic, and theistic. They worked with me to construct what we called a tripartite model for categorizing worldviews. This model, first suggested by Yukikazu Obata of Japan, will be diagrammed in this presentation. Before the model is presented, however, I will describe and contrast the secular, animistic, and theistic worldviews.

Secularism

Secularists believe that God is either non-existent or irrelevant to affairs of this world. They divide the world into two large slices, the natural and the supernatural. Only natural powers, which can be empirically analyzed, are thought to operate in the natural world. The secularists' world is a "closed universe" because natural powers are thought to operate with no interference from any spiritual realm. Secularists, consequently, tend to live for the here and now; are absorbed by material, this-worldly concerns; are extremely busy with earthly distractions; and are career consumed. Even Christians within secular societies reflect this thinking. They often seek medicine and therapy for illness without relying on the Great Physician. In other words, prayer and healing are divorced as if God has little to do with life as a whole. Many study the sciences without reflecting on the Creator who created and sustains the universe. Science and religion are thus disconnected. This can

lead to the belief that humanity, with its scientific understanding, is self-sufficient, able to handle all obstacles in life, without any need of God. But Jeremiah's words call the secular person to dependence on the Creator God: "I know, Oh Lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

Four presuppositions of this secular thinking are described by Diogenes Allen in *Christian Belief in a Post-modern World*: (1) The world is studied without any reference to God; (2) Morality and ethics are rooted in reason rather than in a compassionate, holy God; (3) Progress is inevitable and would free humanity "from social bondage and vulnerability to nature"; and (4) Knowledge is considered to be inherently good. But in what Allen calls the postmodern age each of these secular assumptions is being called into question (Allen 1989:3).

Animism

Animism is "the belief that personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces have power over human affairs and that humans, consequently, must discover what beings and forces are impacting them in order to determine future action and, frequently, to manipulate their power" (Van Rheen, 1991:20). This definition assumes that an interaction exists between the divine and the human, the sacred and the profane, the holy and the secular. Personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces are thought to be everywhere shaping what happens in the world. Humans with this worldview employ divination to determine what powers are impacting their lives and manipulate this power for their own benefit. The essence of

Animism is power—power of the ancestor to control those of his lineage, power of an evil eye to kill a newborn or ruin a harvest, power of planets to affect earthly destiny, power of the demonic to possess a spiritist, power of magic to control human events, power of impersonal forces to heal a child or make a person wealthy.

Animists perceive that they are living in an interconnected world. They are intimately connected to their families, some of whom are living and some of whom have already passed on to a spiritual realm. They are also connected to the spiritual world; the ambivalent yearning of gods, spirits, ancestors, and ghosts impact the living. Animists feel a connectedness with nature. The stars, planets, and moon are thought to affect earthly events. The natural realm is so related to the human realm that practitioners divine current and future events by analyzing what animals are doing or by sacrificing animals and analyzing their livers, entrails, or stomachs. Animists also believe that they are connected with other human beings. They access the thoughts of other human beings through ESP or other types of thought transfer. Thus the animist believes that no person can live as an individual separate and apart from his extended family, spiritual powers, nature, or thoughts of other human beings. While secular assumptions are increasingly being called into question in this post-modern age, various forms of animism have become viable options.

In many ways animism is the total opposite of secularism. Animists perceive that all of life is controlled by spiritual powers; secularists

believe either that there are no spiritual powers or that these powers seldom intervene in the natural realm. Animists live in fear of spiritual powers whose activities must be divined and frequently manipulated; secularists believe they can chart their own courses by human inventiveness, and resourcefulness and through reason. Animists seek to live in harmony with their world believing that the forces and powers of the world are interconnected; secularists manipulate their world by means of science and technology.

Amazingly, however, many similarities exist between animism and secularism. Both are philosophies rooted in power. While animists believe in spiritual powers, secularists believe in human power. This emphasis on power leads both worldviews to be essentially manipulative. Animists seek to manipulate spiritual powers by means of magic; secularists manipulate their environments by means of technology. Both animism and secularism are amoral systems. Animists erect taboos to control power or believe that some force, such as *karma*, will make one pay later for the sins of today. Secularists seek, by reason, to erect logical fences of morality, but all such fences eventually fall before the strong winds of cultural forces. Both animism and secularism are extremely adaptable to the ebbs and flows of cultural tides. Neither believe that there is such a thing as ultimate truth. Animism is continually changing form: one generation worships polytheistic gods, the next seeks answers to life's problems by following the patterns of the stars, the third believes that the stars and planets which their fathers followed are really personifications of the personal gods of their grandfathers. Secularism is equally adapted and relativistic. One paradigm of truth takes the place of another paradigm which is displaced by still a third.

Christian Theism

Christian theism stands in stark contrast to both animism and secularism. Theism presupposes the God who created the heavens and the earth has always been a personal loving active God. God has raised up judges to deliver the Israelites (Judges. 2:10–19), instituted priests to intercede for the people of Israel (Exod. 28–29; Lev. 8–9), sent

prophets to proclaim his message to kings and the people (Jer. 1:5–6; 15:19; Amos 7:16; Ezek. 3:17), and gave his son Jesus Christ, the Messiah, to die for humankind (John 3:16). He elected Israel to be his priest to the nations (Exod. 19:5) and now works through the Church as his chosen people to call the nations out of darkness and into his wonderful light (1 Pet. 2:9).

Contrary to the secular and animistic worldviews, a theistic worldview acknowledges that God “is always at his work to this very day” (John 5:17). While not denying the reality of spiritual powers, Christian theism acknowledges God as the incomparable one, the God of gods and the Lord of lords. Moses’ confession of incomparability describes how God’s nature is distinct from that of other gods: “Who among the gods is like you, Oh Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?” (Exod. 15:11). Even though God is perfect, just, faithful, and upright (Deut. 32:4), Israel followed various gods, who were demons in disguise (Deut. 32:17). These powers variously are called gods in the Old Testament, demons in the Gospels, or principalities and powers in Pauline literature. My contention is that, although these powers take different forms and manifest themselves in different cultural ways, their essence is the same in all ages. The names of powers who oppose God vary in different biblical contexts, but their origin and essence are one (Van Rheezen 1991: 99–124).

The predominant attributes of God, his love and holiness, demonstrate the central qualities of Christian theism. God is characterized by “steadfast love” (*hesed*). He is “compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness” (Exod. 34:6–7). This attribute is demonstrated continually by God’s saving actions throughout the Old Testament (Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Psa. 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). In the New Testament this attribute is attested in the sending of his divine Son to become flesh and die for sinful humankind (Rom. 5:8). God’s eternal nature is love (1 John 4:7–8). God, who is love, is also holy.

A theistic worldview poses a moral God in charge of His universe. Isaiah called him “the Holy One of Israel (43:8). God speaks through Isaiah to say, “I am the Lord, your Holy One, Israel’s Creator, your King” (Isa. 43:15). The heavenly host reflect this quality of holiness by proclaiming, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty” (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). The sacrificial system described in Leviticus is based on a holy God desiring to unite sinful people with Himself. Therefore, God identifies Himself as “the Lord, who makes you holy” (Lev. 20:8). These two qualities—love and holiness—make God distinct from all other spiritual beings.

God, although reigning as sovereign Lord over his universe, allows people the freedom to choose their allegiance in life. This is a main tenant of the theistic view. In the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve could choose the way of life or the way of death—the way of the tree of life or the way of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Human freewill is a testimony of God’s love. He desires that people follow him because they love and adore him.

A Radical Difference

As the above discussion illustrates, the essence of Christian theism is radically different from either secularism or animism. First, Christian theists acclaim a personal loving, holy God. Secularists either deny God or believe that he is not actively involved in the world. Animists understand God to be (1) a distant, unapproachable Creator, (2) the Supreme Being whose nature is refracted in lower spiritual beings to whom prayers and sacrifices are made, or (3) the impersonal power that permeates all of nature (Van Rheezen 1991: 243–246, 298).

Each of these perspectives is a contrast to the true nature of the Creator God. Second, theists hold to objective reality as defined by God who stands above changing earthly cultures. Secular and animistic perspectives change rapidly as old paradigms are replaced by new paradigms of reality. Third, theistic morality is rooted in the eternal nature of God, who rules over human cultures and societies. Although moral issues change, God’s attributes of love and holiness provide eternal

principles for Christian morality. Secular morality, on the other hand, is drawn from human philosophies, and animistic morality is based upon human taboos and fear of spiritual retribution.

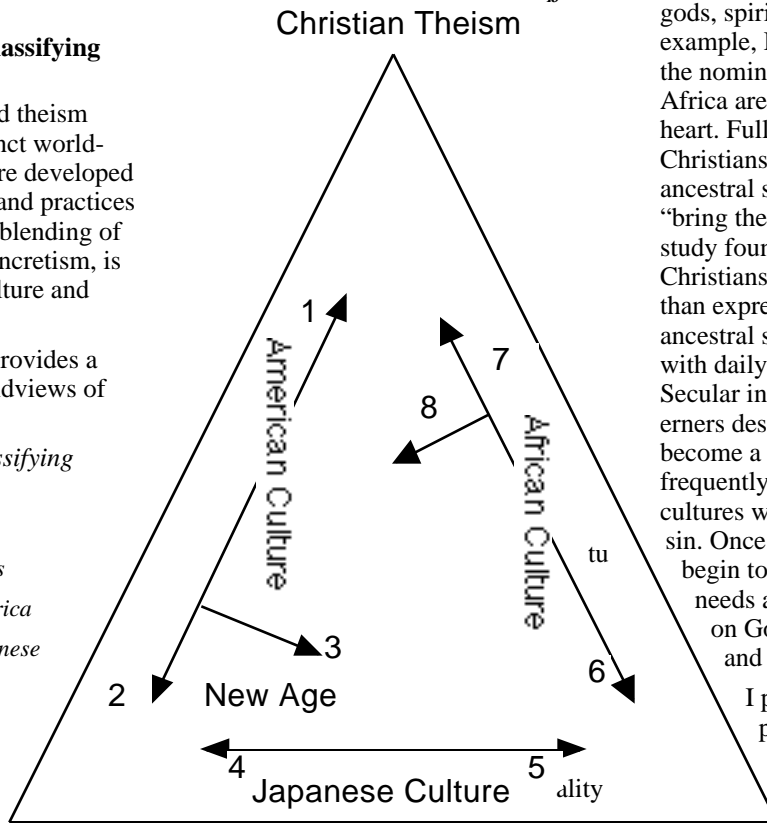
A Tripartite Model for Classifying World Cultures

Secularism, animism, and theism seldom stand alone as distinct worldviews. These worldviews are developed by mixing together beliefs and practices from various sources. This blending of cultural elements, called syncretism, is common to every world culture and religion.

The triangular diagram provides a model for charting the worldviews of various cultures:

A Tripartite Model for Classifying World Cultures:

- 1— American Christians
- 2— American Non-Christians
- 3— New Agers in North America
- 4— Western-Influenced Japanese
- 5— Shintoists
- 6— African Traditional Religionists
- 7— African Christians
- 8— Secular influences radiating out of Christianity



of conversation and is increasingly less isolated from life. People, however, are cynical about traditional religion which has empty forms but little spirituality. This desire for spiri-

honor and praise.

Even in the lives of these Christians, however, the acceptance of God and other beliefs of the Christian faith has not necessarily displaced beliefs in gods, spirits, and ancestors. For example, Dal Congdon has found that the nominally Christian Zulu of South Africa are still largely animistic at heart. Fully 69.6% of all professing Christians continue to believe that ancestral spirits “protect” them and “bring them good fortune.” Congdon’s study found that “fewer professing Christians affirmed the deity of Christ than expressed dependence upon the ancestral spirits for problems connected with daily living” (Congdon 1985:297). Secular influences introduced by Westerners desiring to help Africa have also become a reality in Africa. All too frequently Christianity revitalizes cultures which have been broken by sin. Once revitalized, however, many begin to seek to satisfy their own felt needs and no longer are dependent on God or have time for worship and prayer to Him.

I pray that this model, although preliminary, might stimulate significant discussion and become useful in the theology of missions and missiological training and strategy.

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yet rejection of the forms of traditional religion, has opened the doors to New Age perspectives, frequently introduced as true Christian spirituality.

Japanese have difficulty perceiving God as personal, loving, and involved in human life. This inability to comprehend the personal Creator God partially explains the resistance of the Japanese people to the Gospel. Their worldview runs along the secular—animistic line. Shintoists are highly animistic while those influenced by the West have turned to secularism.

African worldviews on the other hand follow the animistic—theistic line. Thousands of Africans South of the Sahara have become Christians. They accepted the Christian message that God is not distant or unapproachable, as they had supposed, but is the great I AM, the ever-present Creator who is dependable and faithful, the Incomparable One deserving of all

Satan's Tactics in Building and Maintaining His Kingdom of Darkness

Why are the unreached peoples still unreached? Is it because we haven't understood Satan's strategy, his schemes to blind and enslave whole peoples? If so, this article will help us understand our enemy and effectively hold his power in check and to liberate whole peoples on the face of the earth.

By John Robb

Most Christians feel a kind of reticence in considering the operation of Satan and his kingdom. There is a hesitation, a kind of trepidation on our part to delve into this unknown dark area of reality we would prefer to avoid. Nonetheless, it is part of the spiritual warfare with which we must daily contend as believers, and so we would do well to understand as much as we can since, in war, it may prove disastrous to be without accurate intelligence of the enemy and his forces. Granted that we do not want to give way to an unhealthy fascination with this realm, we must still be willing to venture into it with the light of Scripture, the leading of the Holy Spirit and without fear because we have nothing to fear. Jesus said, "I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and *nothing* shall be able to hurt you" (emphasis mine Lk. 10:19). His disciples returned from their first encounter with the demonic realm joyfully exclaiming, "Even the demons are subject to us in your name!" (Lk. 10:7) And the Apostle John encourages us that "Greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world" (1Jn. 4:4). True, we can live in blissful ignorance of our enemy and his tactics like children too afraid to venture into a darkened attic, but with the light of God's word and faith in his guidance and protection, we will discover in a new way the power and prerogatives Jesus has given his followers to joyously and victoriously deal with the forces of darkness. In this article we will endeavor to better understand this opaque dimension in order to more effectively combat it in light of Scripture and the Spirit around the world.

Satan's Overall Program

Satan is a highly organized, intelligent spirit being dedicated to destroying human beings made in the image of the Creator he hates. He is the master deceiver and the author of idolatry, seeking to bring the whole world under his dominion by undermining faith in God, twisting values, and promoting false ideologies. He does this through infiltrating institutions, government administrations, communications media, educational systems, and religious bodies. He seeks to divert humankind from worship of their Creator through substitution of money, fame, power, pleasure, science, art, politics, or religious idols. His three-point agenda is deception, dominion and destruction. The ultimate objective is to gain such control over nations and governments so that eventually he can turn them against one another through the destruction of war and/or to turn them against their own citizens in selective murder. We might think of the genocidal crimes of Hitler, Stalin and Saddam Hussein, or the massive killing of the unborn through legal abortion practiced increasingly in our own and other societies.

Satan Works Through Controlling Spirits

Although Satan is not omnipresent or omniscient, he is a master networker who works through a vast organization of spirit beings who apparently communicate with each other and work in some sense cooperatively to undermine humanity's encounter with the kingdom of God in every way they can. Towards this end evil spirits attempt to get influ-

ence over government leaders, legal systems, educational systems, and religious movements. Admittedly, Scripture is not entirely lucid as to how these spirits are organized or how they operate, but there is enough Scriptural warrant to make some conclusions regarding this.

Both Israel and the early church perceived that God had given his angelic hosts a special role in the administration of human affairs. The Septuagint rendering of Deuteronomy 32:8 says, "He set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the angels of God." Biblical scholar F.F. Bruce writes, "The biblical evidence for the angelic government of the world is early: it goes back to the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32. . . . This reading implies that the administration of the various nations has been parcelled out among a corresponding number of angelic powers."¹ In Daniel, these powers reveal themselves as both good and evil. Michael the Archangel is "the great prince" who has charge of the people of Israel, looking after their interests in the unfolding of history (Da. 12:1). The messenger of the Lord, presumably Gabriel, is detained by the "prince of Persia" against whom he must fight. The prince of Greece is also mentioned. Apparently these last two high-level angelic powers were standing in resistance against the revelation made to Daniel about the future of God's people Israel. Theologian Walter Wink wonders at the power of these evil beings who are able to hold God's messenger back for 21 days:

The angels of the nations have a will of their own and are capable of

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resisting the will of God. God is perhaps omnipotent but certainly not able to impose the divine will on recalcitrant powers due to God's own self-limitation: God will not violate the freedom of creatures.²

How and why did some of the angels turn against the Lord their Creator? We don't know exactly but may surmise that they joined Satan in his rebellion and since that time have become foes of God and the nations of humankind whom they seek to hinder rather than to help. In much of the Old Testament we probably see their baleful influence as the false "gods" of the nations the gods of Egypt, the Amorites, Canaanites, Edomites, etc. whose worship, Israel was warned, would bring oppression, slavery, foreign invasion and poverty (Judges 6:6 and 10:6-16). The Lord is portrayed as bringing judgement upon the gods of Egypt under Moses (Ex. 12:12) and "driving out nations and their gods" from before Israel during the conquest (2 Sam. 7:23). Of course, in relation to Yahweh, the incomparable Creator, they are not really gods but only demons impersonating deities worshipped through the medium of idols. "For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens" (Ps. 96:5), and in 95:3, he is referred to as "... the great God, the great King above all gods." Later the apostle Paul acknowledges the reality of these spirit beings and their deception of the Gentiles (the nations), whose sacrifices to idols are made to demons (1Co. 10:20) and who are "slaves to those who by nature are not gods" (Gal. 4:8). Scripture, therefore, seems to indicate that these corrupted angels have joined Lucifer in seeking to deceive the nations so that they will not recognize the true God.

Their Agenda: Achieving Dominion

Domination and control appear to be the main objectives of these demon "gods" which the apostle Paul appropriately calls "principalities," "powers," "thrones," "dominions." The acquisition of power and influence over human beings and their societies seems to be their obsession. This dominating nature may be revealed in their very names. For example, the

meaning of Molech, god of the Ammonites, is "ruler." He managed to get such control over the people of Ammon that they offered their first-born children to him as sacrifices by fire.³ Chemosh, the national god of Moab, possibly means "subduer," perhaps a reflection of the degree of dominion he had obtained over this people, as well as of the successes he gave Moab in wars against their enemies.⁴ Heinrich Schlier writes of these fallen spirit beings:

Principalities do not merely possess power; they are power. . . pure power. . . capacity, dominion in person. . . these principalities exercise their being by taking possession of the world as a whole and of individual men, the elements, political and social institutions, historical conditions and circumstances, spiritual and religious trends.⁵

In referring to Paul's teaching in Romans 8, Hendrik Berkhof concurs with the idea that the principalities and powers seek a totalitarian form of control:

Paul observes that life is ruled by a series of Powers. He speaks of time (present and future) of life and death; of politics and philosophy; of public opinion and Jewish law; of pious tradition and the fateful course of the stars. Apart from Christ man is at the mercy of these Powers.⁶

Missionaries of today can also give testimony to the kind of control that these spirit beings have over pagan peoples. The late Ernest Heimlich, formerly a pioneer missionary to the Hmong tribe in Thailand, described for me how the chief spirit of the tribe dominated it for centuries, using the fear of sickness, death, attack by evil spirits, and also opium addiction to keep the people in his grip.⁷

Lest we think these demon gods, or these controlling spirits, these principalities and powers are only still operative in far off pagan tribes, we need to take a hard look at our own society and culture. Aside from Charles Manson, Jim Jones and the Branch Davidians which seem more obvious examples of demonic deception, what about our own national policy and culture? Theologian Walter Wink urges us to discern the demonic installed at the heart of our own national policy, infiltrating the CIA, government administration, and

armed forces to ensure continued American political and economic dominance over weaker nations. Commenting on the blind allegiance so many citizens give to their national self-interest, he writes,

What makes nationalism so pernicious, so death-dealing, so blasphemous is its seemingly irresistible tendency towards idolatry. In the name of this idol, whole generations are maimed, slaughtered, exiled, and made idolaters. One hundred million lives have been offered on the altar of this Moloch, thus far in the 20th Century.⁸

Wink, Berkhof and others help us to see that the powers of evil are still very much with us, injecting their influence upon and in our culture, public opinion, ideology, coloring our assumptions, worldviews, values, and behavior. As Christians who want to rightly discern the activity of the powers of darkness in our society, Berkhof helpfully suggests "The church's great question is always which Powers are now attempting to get life under their control."⁹

Are They "Territorial Spirits"?

We might ask whether these spirit powers are "territorial spirits" as they have been described in current literature. Certainly geographical territoriality is part of how Scripture describes their influence. The Canaanite god, Baal, who was a continual scourge to Israel because of Israelite involvement in Baal worship, had several localities named after him, e.g., Baal-Peor, Baal-Gad, Baal-Hermon, etc. "The etymology suggests that Baal was regarded as the *owner of a particular locality*. . . . [Since] these local Baals were believed to control fertility in agriculture, beasts and mankind. It was highly important to secure their favor"¹⁰ (emphasis mine). This was accomplished through ritual prostitution, child sacrifice and other detestable activities. (Ju. 2:17; Jer. 7:9 and 19:5)

Continually the Lord warned Israel through his prophets to forsake worshipping foreign gods like these if they wanted to remain in their land, otherwise God would bring the peoples against them in judgment "against this land and its inhabitants. . . this whole country will become

a desolate wasteland” (Jer 25:9). When judgement finally came upon them, a primary reason God gave for this judgement was that “*they have defiled my land* with the lifeless forms of their vile images and have filled my inheritance with their detestable idols.” (Jer. 16:18) Other nations who were guilty of enshrining false gods on their territory also incurred his wrath. The prophet Zephaniah mentions how God will be awesome to the Moabites and Ammonites when he “destroys all the *gods of the land*” (Zep. 2:11). Philistine lords were told that if they returned the Ark of the Covenant to Israel, the Lord might “lift his hand from you and *your gods and your land*” (1Sam. 6:5). At least in the understanding of Yahweh’s prophetic spokesmen there was a link between the “gods” and the land which was activated by or reinforced by the worship of false gods.

In the New Testament geographical territoriality is only hinted at. The mob of demons speaking out of the Gadarene demoniac begged Jesus that they “not be sent out of the country,” perhaps because that was the territory to which they had been assigned. (Lk. 8:26-39) In Acts 19:35 the Ephesian city clerk attempted to quiet the screaming mob by affirming: “The city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image which fell from heaven.” The fact that the mob had been shouting in irrational unison for about two hours, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians,” may indicate some kind of collective possession by a “territorial spirit” though Scripture itself does not make this analysis.

Other cities mentioned in the Bible are described as having connections with Satan or demonic gods. Pergamum, location of one of the seven churches of Revelation, was “where Satan has his throne” and “where Satan lives” (Rev. 2:13). It was a known center in the ancient world for the worship of the spirit of Rome. In declaring allegiance to the emperor, citizens burned incense at the foot of his statue. Also, Dionysius, god of vegetation, and Asklepios, god of healing, were worshipped locally.

Snakes and the handling of reptiles were associated with the cults of both these gods. An ancient coin from Pergamum shows the emperor, Caracalla, standing before a great serpent twined around a tree and saluting it in the manner for which the Nazis later became known.¹¹ Spiritual territoriality probably does take an urban form but a more subtle form than is often recognized in the spiritual warfare movement. Whether we can identify the spirits over cities as

“greed” for New York City, “power” for Washington, or “pornography” for Los Angeles, as one American evangelist recently did, is

**Satan and his henchmen do not care
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highly questionable. After all, aren’t these just the sins of some of the people who live in those places? Couldn’t greed be equally applied to Los Angeles as to New York? Or pornography to Washington as well as to Los Angeles? Undoubtedly, much of the discerning of “territorial spirits” is both oversimplified and naive. Satan may be having a good laugh on us!

Are They Organized Hierarchically?

I believe we must be careful of making unwarranted assumptions about the way in which the principalities and powers are organized. One of the most frequent of such assumptions is that they compose a hierarchy in a pyramidal sense with Satan at the top and various gradations of spirit beings ranked in descending order down to “ground-level” spirits, the kind that oppress and possess individuals. The idea of a possible hierarchy stems from attempts to decipher the apostle Paul’s understanding of the principalities and powers. Berkhof argues that the apostle was influenced by Jewish apocalyptic writings which conceived of classes of angels on

higher and lower levels who influenced events on earth. He also points out that Near Eastern nature religions of Paul’s day also believed in a hierarchy of demonic beings arrayed at various levels between God and the world. But he stops short of identifying a definite hierarchical structure in Paul’s depiction of the powers since the functions and names of the various terms Paul uses (“principalities,” “powers,” “thrones,” “dominions”) are never clarified: “We rather have the impression that Paul means to suggest broadly by the variety of expressions the number and diversity of the powers.”¹³ F.F. Bruce agrees.

Commenting on Colossians 1:16, he says, “They probably represent the highest orders of the angelic realm, but the variety of ways in which the titles are combined in the New Testament warns us against the attempt to reconstruct a fixed hierarchy from them.”¹⁴

Walter Wink has demonstrated that the terms Paul used in describing the powers were the same ones used to describe human authority in the New Testament.¹⁵ Because human authority is generally organized in a hierarchical manner, perhaps Paul also conceived of the spirit world in an hierarchical manner, but we must not categorically assume this to be the case. Are there other models which may give us a better handle at understanding their organizations? Given their anarchic self-centeredness and total depravity as fallen spirit beings, could they instead operate like a band of unruly guerrillas or an urban street gang, terrorizing, vandalizing, and running on to the next place where an opportunity presents itself to vent destruction? In this case they would be constantly deploying and redeploying to take advantage of unfolding situations. Just as terrorists or vandals’ activities are affected by the arrival of soldiers or the police so these roving bands of evil spiritual forces are put to flight by the intervention of God in answer to the prayers of his people. Does not this fit more with the apostle Peter’s description of Satan as “prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1Pe. 5:8-9)?

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Clearly, as Heinrich Schlier has demonstrated, the apostle Paul had no interest in speculating about the spiritual powers' organization and operation. (Perhaps that should serve as a caution to us as well.) He finds that the names Paul gives to the powers are "to a large extent interchangeable," that is, principalities, spirits, demons, gods, princes, etc. are all used of one another. Schlier finds only one distinction emphasized among them. Whether demons, spirits or principalities, they are all subordinate to Satan and manifest his power: "The numerous powers all derive from one fundamental power which is called Satan; they may be regarded as emanations and affects of that power."¹⁶ He may be right. Perhaps we should think of Satan and the demons as being more closely joined together. Most likely, given their extradimensionality, they can be both many and one at the same time. How else could up to 6,000 demons (the size of a Roman legion) inhabit the Gadarene demoniac and speak with one voice "My name is Legion for *we* are many" (emphasis mine, Mk. 5:9)?

Though we must be careful of constructing a theology of the spirit world based on pagan belief systems, the possibility of a hierarchy of spirits may be borne out by the perceptions of animistic peoples. Animists believe in a hierarchy headed by a supreme god, who is remote and unknown, and in a pantheon of lesser deities, superior spirits who exercise great power over a wide range of affairs. Beneath these are the lesser and the more immediate spirits of their ancestors, and finally, the evil spirits.¹⁷ The Burmese, believe in *nats*, supernatural beings arranged hierarchically with control over natural phenomena, villages, regions, and nations.¹⁸ The cult of guardian spirits in northeast Thailand involves both village and regional spirits, the village ones being subordinate to the regional.¹⁹ In India, Hindu goddesses serve as "guardians" of villages and regions. They are often associated with disease, sudden death and catastrophe.²⁰ Kali, goddess of destruction, is a regional deity widely recognized to be over West Bengal and the Bengali people.

A missionary in Thailand believes he

has identified the national principality that reigns over the whole country. It is a being known as Phra Sayam Devadhiraj, which means "greatest of the guardian angels of Siam." It is believed this deity has kept Thailand from being overrun by invaders. The king and queen preside over a royal homage-paying ceremony, with the whole nation joining in the worship of this spirit, whose image resides on a throne in the royal palace.²¹

We can conclude that Satan works to exercise dominion through a vast organization of other spirit beings. But whether he and his spirit henchmen operate as a network, hierarchy or a more free-flowing operation, we cannot definitively surmise from Scripture, though the beliefs of animistic peoples support a hierarchical point of view. Certainly, they are "territorial," but I prefer to use the term "controlling" since the achievement of control is the essence of their purpose and since they seek control not primarily over geographical areas, but first and foremost over *people* and all that concerns them politically, institutionally, culturally, religiously, etc. In other words, they do not care about real estate per se, but are extremely interested in those who own and live on it. Both as many and as one, they participate in the destructive agenda of the one Jesus said was a "liar and murderer from the beginning." For this reason alone we need to gain a better understanding of how they get control over individuals and societies and peoples.

Active Compliance of Human Beings

Since the original episode in the garden (Gen. 3) where the original humans allowed Satan to get control over them through deception, sadly the whole history of our race attests to human cooperation with Satan and his evil spirits to gain control over individuals and societies. Indeed, one theologian places the blame for the fall of angels on humanity rather than the other way around: "The fall of angels must not be seen independently from the sin of man. . .the two are interwoven. The angels fell because they were tempted by man

who was prepared to sell his soul to authorities other than Yahweh."²² Instead of saying "the devil made me do it," we may need to change the saying to "we made the devil do it!"

The Israelites not only forgot their God and served the Baals and Ashteroth, the gods of other nations, they refused to listen to God's prophets, despised His statutes and covenant and stubbornly opened the door for satanic occupation of their society. The Bible lays the blame squarely upon the Israelites themselves rather than on Satan:

All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God.... They worshipped other gods and followed the practices of the nations.... They did wicked things that provoked the Lord to anger. They worshipped idols though the Lord had said, You shall not do this. They would not listen and were stiff-necked.... They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made.... They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless.... They forsook all the commands of the Lord their God.... They bowed down to all the starry hosts.... They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sorcery and *sold themselves to do evil* in the eyes of the Lord (2 Ki. 17:7-17 emphasis mine).

The same principle is operating today. John Dawson writes:

Satan is an invader and usurper operating in our territory. God did not give demons authority over your city. Demons have infested the earth's atmosphere since before the creation of mankind, but they can only extend their authority into a town or institution when people sin.²³

One Christian worker who served in Mauritania thinks the people there have opened the door to a "spirit of divorce" through serial polygamy and adultery. The tragic result is child abandonment, leading to severe malnutrition and death of many children. The main obstacle to spiritual growth for the tiny number of Christians is temptation through divorce and adultery. Three national believers of the estimated twenty in the country have already fallen away from the faith for this reason, and the marriages of expatriate Christians have also been troubled.²⁴

After World War II, German pastors mentioned the role of the demonic in the events which befell

their fatherland: “You cannot understand what has happened in Germany unless you understand that we were possessed by demonic powers... *We let ourselves be possessed.*” (emphasis mine.) Theologian Walter Wink believes that demons became “the actual spirituality of Nazism manifested in the political forms of the Hitler Youth, the SS [Hitler’s bodyguard], Gestapo, the unwitting cooperation of churches, the ideology of Aryan racial purity, and the revival of Norse mythology.” He also mentions the “collective possession” prevalent in modern times in which “the demonic has taken the form of mass psychosis,” when humankind en masse gives itself up to evil.²⁵

The reverse of the above is also true. McCandlish Philips writes: “Fidelity to God and his Word breaks the power of evil spirits and erects barriers to Satan. This can be true in a life, in a home, in a nation.” He relays the story of the failed attempt by the Theosophical Society in 1926 to bring the Hindu guru, Krishnamurti, to prominence in America as a “world teacher” who would combine all religions into one and make radical changes in American civilization. After he arrived in New York harbor, he complained of “electrical atmospheric intensity” and said he doubted he would be able to meditate successfully. Plans to speak throughout the country were cancelled when he became incoherent, stripped of the powers that had worked for him in India, and complained of “bad atmospheric conditions prevailing in this country.” He ultimately went into seclusion and renounced his pretensions as a new messiah. God had put a hedge about America with his people’s faithfulness and general commitment of the wider society to keeping His ways.²⁶

Would that this were still the case in our society! Unfortunately the general unfaithfulness and disobedience to God’s ways have opened the way for a literal invasion of evil spirits in various forms of Eastern mysticism, the New Age Movement, and especially through declining moral standards relating to honesty, integrity and sexual purity.

Through Deception And False Mindsets

In keeping with his character as the arch liar and the father of lies, Satan’s major strategy for the world involves massive deception. “He has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” (2Co. 4:4) His most pernicious attacks are directed at the minds of people, and in this effort he “masquerades as an angel of light” (2Co. 11:14). *Time Magazine*, in reviewing the film *The Exorcist*, observed that the devil

**Far more dangerous
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human beings live.**

presented therein was an “easy devil.”²⁷ Far more dangerous and destructive are the shared wrong notions about reality with which hundreds of millions of human beings live. The apostle Paul warns both the Galatians and Colossians about being “taken prey” by deceptive philosophies and becoming slaves again to the “elemental spirits” (Gal. 4:3 and Col. 2:8-9). The book of Revelation depicts worldwide Satanic deception which results in gathering all the nations for that last great battle of Armageddon. (Rev. 16:12-14)

Richmond Chiundiza describes how in Zimbabwe the demonic powers came to inhabit the Shona people’s legends concerning the Nehanda and Chaminuka, two of their heroes from the past. Through the phenomenon of spirit possession, the spirits of these heroes are now being consulted by Zimbabwean government officials. Other demonic spirits inhabit the legends of the Shona clans requiring animal sacrifices, festivals and the possession of individuals to

speak their will. Clan members fear to leave the clan territory without asking the permission of these spirits and must wear charms for protection, and continue appeasing them daily wherever they happen to be living.²⁸

Referring to 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Francis Frangipane says, “There are satanic strongholds over countries and communities. There are strongholds which influence churches and individuals. Wherever a stronghold exists it is a *demonically induced pattern of thinking* (emphasis mine)... a ‘house’ made of thoughts which has become a dwelling place of satanic activity.”²⁹ Culture is made up of many commonly held patterns of thinking, developed through generations and passed down to children as the normative way in which a society operates. For example, the Japanese, though outwardly highly technological and materialistic, are still bound up with occultism. Two-thirds of the population attend Shinto shrines, every school child carries an amulet, and Shinto priests dedicate each new building.³⁰ The recent coronation for the new emperor called for ritualized intercourse with the sun goddess, the national deity of the country.³¹

The Bozo people of Mali believe it is necessary to sacrifice animals and deformed people, such as albinos, to ensure the blessings of the spirits for abundant harvests. When twins are born, they kill one or both of them since, in their belief system, two people cannot share one spirit. An animistic Bantu population in Somalia believe the land will not yield an abundant harvest without the shedding of human blood. To guarantee the fertility of a field, all the men rush to meet each other at its center to beat each other with clubs. Thus, numerous injuries and deaths provide enough blood to bring a good harvest.³²

Cindy Jacobs, a noted intercessory prayer leader, characterizes the Western mind-set as being:

a stronghold that Satan has built within the culture of the United States and other countries that denies the supernatural and relegates reality to what can be proven scientifically or what can be known by the physical senses. The result upon the Western church is one of disbelief of the

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work of territorial spirits, thus Satan's kingdom is protected from attack by disbelieving Christians.³³

Indeed, this may be one of the devil's most effective subterfuges, blinding Western Christians to the way he operates by getting us to buy into an unbiblical, materialistic worldview valued by the rest of our culture.

Specific Ways Satan Maintains And Strengthens His Control

1. *Through Animistic Practices*

Animism, which Philip Steyne calls the "basic underpinning of all non-biblical religions," is the search for power sources by which man may manipulate the spirit world to get what he wants and to control his environment and destiny so that he becomes, as it were, his own god (cf. Gen.3). In all religions and cultures animists manipulate spirit beings to make rain, get abundant crops, get a new job, get healed, become fertile or pass school exams. Employing shamans, charms and rituals, they seek protection from disease, evil spells, catastrophes, and witchcraft. Baal worshippers of old, and modern-day New Agers alike, seek success, happiness and security through the involvement and manipulation of spirits, often not realizing they are the real ones being manipulated.³⁴

2. *Through Human Intermediaries*

Satan uses political leaders to carry out his agenda for a whole society. Leaders of Israel such as Jeroboam "drove Israel from following the Lord and made them commit great sin" (2 Ki. 17:21-22). On the part of his people he created an idolatrous cult involving the worship of two golden calves which launched the northern state of Israel into a downward spiral, culminating in its destruction by Assyrian invaders. It was widely known that Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos of the Philippines were deeply involved in the occult through daily consultations with a soothsayer and that Cory Aquino did not want to live in the same palace because she felt there were evil spirits there. Is it any wonder then that the Marcoses exploited their own people of billions of dollars, intensifying the poverty and suffering of millions.

Pol Pot exterminated two million of his own Cambodian people. Hitler, Stalin, Saddam Hussein, Jonas Savimbi, Slobodan Milosevic and many others could also be mentioned.

Spirit mediums are Satan's "hatchet men," human instruments by which he extends his dominion and tightens his control in a society. Simon the sorcerer was an instrument of Satan to get control over the people of Samaria. "All the people both high and low gave him their attention and exclaimed 'this man is the divine power known as the great power' as he amazed them with his magical powers" (Ac 8:10). Elymas, a sorcerer and false prophet, used his influence to oppose proclamation of the Good News to the proconsul of Paphos by Paul and tried to turn him from faith in Christ (Ac 13:6-11).

Peter Wagner mentions the case of a former high ranking occult leader in Nigeria known as "St. Thomas the Divine" to whom Satan assigned control of 12 spirits, each of which controlled 600 demons, a total of over 7,000. Occult practitioners played a part in the early rise of Hitler and Nazism. Erik Hanussen was a dealer in astrology who ran "The Palace of the Occult" and was known as the "prophet of the Third Reich" because of his influence over its development.³⁶ Filipino shamans or *babylon* are experts in things relating to spirits. They claim the power to heal or kill, to prepare amulets for warding off evil spirits and procuring blessings.

According to Cindy Jacobs, Satanists and witches, a Western form of spirit mediums, send people to purposefully seduce pastors and leaders of Christian churches. In so doing they use spells, love potions and charms. They use magic to "hunt the souls of men" (Eze 13:17-23) through divination. They also use the tools of unholy intercession and the unholy fast to unleash demonic powers to distress Christians. Very dedicated to their lord, they serve him either through fear or a desire for power. The higher their rank in the satanic church the more demonic powers they control. In cooperation with the spirits they can bring curses upon the unsuspecting, even harming the physical body.³⁷

Ed Silvano mentioned a spiritist group in Argentina who made a pact to break up a church by praying for strife among its leaders. In my own community of Upland, California, efforts have been made by spiritists connected with a New Age cult to curse local churches and their pastors in order to bring division or other harm to the congregations in this area.

Fortunately, the presence of praying Christians interrupts, or breaks altogether, the link of mediums with their controlling occult powers. Mediums in the Malaysian town where I served as a missionary were unsuccessful in calling the spirits to possess them during the period a Chinese Christian worker was waiting for the bus outside their festival grounds. The mediums eventually came out and appealed to her to leave the area so that the spirits could come into them! A Ghanaian pastor told me that the witch doctor in the area they were evangelizing lost his occult abilities once the local Christians began to pray in unity for the area. More will be said about the power of this kind of praying.

3. *Through Places or Objects Set Apart for Infestation by Spirits*

A missionary friend from Thailand, Joy Boese, described the increasing spiritual oppression she felt, accompanied by an inexplicable apathy on the part of the people with regard to the gospel. "Spirit pillars" had just been erected in her town. She writes,

From our local people I've learned that many cities have a protective and ruling/controlling spirit residing in a recognized pillar. The provincial governor decides to erect a pillar and invites a spirit to come and inhabit that pillar to protect his city or province.³⁹

Pam Seaward, another missionary friend from Nepal working among Tibetan Buddhists, described her confrontation with a "god" of Tibetan Buddhism, who appeared to her as she was praying for the people. She rebuked its ugly image, but it remained because as it explained, "My things are here." Seaward discovered Tibetan Buddhist religious paraphernalia which her landlord had left in a nearby closet. Until she got rid of the demon's "things," it would not leave.⁴⁰

An Argentine woman during a deliverance session revealed how spirits had obtained a right to control her. Her doctor had sewed microscopic fetishes inside her flesh through which spirits connected with the Brazilian Macumba temple influenced her by “spiritual remote control.”⁴¹ Peter Wagner concludes, “Real demons do attach themselves to animals, idols. . . trees, mountains, and buildings as well as to any number, or variety of manufactured and natural objects.”⁴² If spirit beings are “extradimensional” as we saw above, attaching themselves to any number of objects at the same time because they have been set apart for this purpose, should present no problem to them.

No wonder God through Moses commanded Israel not to bring any detestable things into their homes because of the destructive effects they would bring upon them. The ruthless actions of reformer kings like King Josiah to rid the land of the high places, shrines and other occult objects used in the worship of foreign gods now become fully understandable. (Dt. 7:25-26 and 2Ki. 23)

4. *Through Rituals of Worship—At Times Involving Human Sacrifice*

Rituals of worship to the spirits are one way their control is strengthened. In parts of West Africa, human sacrifice is sometimes used to gain stronger power with the spirits. The Lebu of Senegal are believed to make such sacrifices on an island off the coast. They are perceived by other tribal groups as having, as a result, inordinate degree of political, economic and spiritual power. The Dionka tribe of Mali worship Komo, the god of killing. Local Christian workers told me that in some areas strangers have been killed in sacrifice to this god.⁴³

Lest we think that our culture is more advanced or immune from such practices, Dianne Core, founder of Child Watch, writes of Devilfish, a coven of satanists connected with the Ordo Templi Orientis, a national organization in the United States with over 40 branches. Their book, the *Secret Rites of OTO*, gives instructions on how to do human sacrifice in

order to increase Satanic power.⁴⁴

Ted Gunderson, former FBI director for Los Angeles, shocked the participants of a seminar on occult crime with his claim that the FBI has over 100,000 “missing persons” in their files, half of which he estimates have ended up as victims of occult sacrifice.⁴⁵ Even if he is only ten percent correct, it is cause for grave concern.

5. *Through Blocking God’s People from Interfering With His Dominion*

As we have already noted in passing, the prophet Daniel faced a “great conflict” as powerful spirit

the lives of several of his first converts.⁴⁶

In order to keep us from interfering with his dominion, Satan seeks to neutralize the power of God’s people by attempting to “wear out” the saints through discouragement, infirmity, discrediting ministers and ministries, and especially bringing division in the church. He also seeks to destroy our family relationships. As Hector Torres, an Arizona pastor puts it, “I believe Satan’s tactics are to destroy the three institutions established by God: the family, the church and the nation.” Torres especially emphasizes Satan’s attack on families since they are “the foundation for all relationships.”⁴⁷

Prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit are used by God to overthrow demonic forces seeking to gain or maintain control over individuals and societies.

beings sought to prevent his receiving a revelation which would cast a spotlight on the purposes and plans of the principalities and powers in their future interaction with political realms. It was a word which also revealed God’s sovereignty over all these future events, as well as a warning to his people Israel regarding the dangers of deception and the need to prepare for persecution (Da. 10-12).

As we have already intimated, the controlling principality of Ephesus worshiped as Artemis may have stirred Demetrius the silversmith and his trade union members to provoke a riot in order to hinder the spread of the truth. Also, Satan is spoken of as hindering Paul’s mission plans (1Th. 2:18) and throwing Christians into prison and tribulation (Rev. 2:10). And in 1 Peter 5 he is portrayed as the roaring lion, who brings suffering to the saints.

A YWAM missionary from Principe, Sao Tome reported an encounter with a demonic prince. This spirit being threatened him and the fledgling church to stop their missionary activities in his area. Subsequently, an outbreak of cholera tragically claimed

Ways to Overcome Satan and His Tactics

More than one Biblical expositor has interpreted the book of Joshua as portraying in the physical realm what the church is to do in the spiritual. Just as Joshua and the people of Israel took the “territory” which God had given them in the land of Canaan, so God’s people today are to take back “territory” from Satan and the forces of darkness. Jesus has told us, “Occupy till I come.” The implication is that we are to be an influence for him in our jobs, in our communities, wherever we find ourselves. As Kraft has put it:

We are involved in the battle. Jesus enlisted us to fight taking territory away from the evil one. This fight is, however, primarily on the individual level. There is also territory to take relationally, socially, organizationally, geographically, and perhaps in other transindividual areas.⁴⁸

Joshua’s question could well be asked of us also, “How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land that the Lord has given you?” There are at least four ways which we as Christians can overcome Satan and his tactics in order to take back territory from his domain.

Through Intercessory Prayer

There is considerable evidence both biblical and in the history of the

Satan's Tactics

church that prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit are used by God to overthrow demonic forces seeking to gain or maintain control over individuals and societies. One key to Joshua's victory over Israel's Canaanite enemies, all of whom relied upon demonic gods, was his prayerful dependence on the Lord's intervention on Israel's behalf at Jericho, Ai and in other crucial battles. It was the intercession of Samuel that brought God's thunderous response against the Philistines, throwing them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. The territory the Philistines had captured from Israel as well as neighboring territory was restored to God's people (1Sam. 7:7-14). Judges like Gideon, and kings such as David, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah experienced God's deliverance and the reclamation of territory due to their dependence on God through prayer.

Prayer in the power of the Holy Spirit always undergirded and extended the missionary outreach of the early church. In the book of Acts alone prayer is mentioned over 30 times, usually before major breakthroughs in the expansion of the first church. Looking back over the history of Christianity, Robert Glover observed, "All the mighty spiritual revivals which constitute the mountain peaks of missionary annals had their roots in prayer."⁴⁹ Jonathan Goforth, missionary to China, described the powerful spiritual awakenings which brought many tens of thousands to Christ in Korea and China during the early part of this century. It was "intense believing prayer that had so much to do with the revival which in 1907 brought 50,000 Koreans to Christ. We are convinced too that all movements of the Spirit in China which have come within our own experience may be traced to prayer." He relayed how one missionary remarked to him, "Since the Lord did so much with our small amount of praying, what might he not have done if we had prayed as we ought?"⁵⁰ Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, wrote to Goforth, as he was planning to launch a new work in Honan Province in China, "Brother, if you are to win that province, you must go forward on your knees."⁵¹

Wesley Duewel described to me the agonizingly slow work of his mission's church-planting efforts in India during its first 25 years. Only one church per year came into being as a result of all the missionaries' efforts. As a result of heart-searching evaluation, the mission recruited 1,000 people in their home countries to pray 15 minutes per day for the work. He reports that this prayer effort turned the tide, and in the next few years, the number of churches went from 25 to 550 and the number of believers from 2,000 to 73,000. One national leader told him afterwards, "All of us are seeing results beyond anything we could have imagined!"⁵²

The great revival and ingathering among the Telugu "outcastes" of India is linked with what happened on "Prayer Meeting Hill," an elevated area overlooking the city of Ongole. In 1853, when their mission board was on the point of abandoning the work for lack of response, a missionary couple and three national coworkers spent the night in prayer for the Telugus. They battled through to a sense of shared assurance that their prayers had prevailed. Gradually the opposition to the gospel broke and when the outpouring of the Spirit took place, 8,000 came to Christ in a six-week period. In one day over 2,000 were baptized and the church there became the largest in the world.⁵³

David Yonggi Cho, pastor of the world largest church, recounts the demonic oppression over the Korean village where he pioneered during his early ministry. The key to the breaking of spiritual bondage was months of prayer, culminating in the casting out of a demon from a woman who had been paralyzed for seven years. With her healing and deliverance, the church exploded with growth. As he puts it, "The sky above the village was broken open and the blessings of God began pouring down."⁵⁴

Why does God Require Prayers?

We learn from Scripture that the prayer of intercession is key to the fulfillment of God's gracious purpose for the peoples of the earth. He

invites us, "Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance and the ends of the earth your possession" (Ps. 2:8). Ezekiel reveals that God looks for someone to "stand in the gap" for the land. (Eze. 22:30) And through Isaiah the Lord says he has posted watchmen on Jerusalem's walls who will "never be silent day or night," giving themselves and the Lord no rest "till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth" (Isa. 62:6-7).

Why does God, the Almighty, "limit" himself by reliance on his people's prayers? Admittedly, it is a mysterious matter, but I believe it goes back to his giving humankind dominion of the earth. This dominion, as we have seen, both at the fall of man and subsequently, has been surrendered to Satan and his demonic cohorts. But through Christ's redemption, this dominion is being restored. And through prayer, we as his redeemed people, reassert our God-given dominion over the world, ruling and reigning with Christ "far above all authority and dominion" (Eph. 1:21 and 2:6). Through believing prayer, we open the door for God's intervention in our troubled world. The Holy Spirit shows us how to pray, indeed, prays through us in accordance with God's will. (Rom. 8:26-27) Indeed, Jesus has given us a virtual blank check to exercise through united prayer with other believers: "Again I tell you, that if two of you on earth agree about *anything* you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven." And "I will do *whatever* you ask in my name. . . . You may ask me for *anything* in my name and I will do it" (Mt. 18:19 and Jn. 14:13-14, emphasis mine).

In Mark 9, when confronted by the need to exorcise an evil spirit, Jesus told the disciples, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but by prayer." (v. 29) If this holds true for the demonization of individuals, does it not also hold true for the spiritual oppression of societies? That is why united, believing prayer by God's people is so important for the breaking of demonic bondage over cities and nations. In this connection, Hendrik Berkhof speaks of the gift of the discerning of spirits which God gives to his people as they pray:

“This involves especially the discerning of the Powers which hold the hearts and actions of men under their sway in specific times and places.”⁵⁵

Dick Eastman described the part focussed prayer played in a literature distribution effort which Every Home for Christ carried out. In one community where they distributed literature, they experienced a ten percent response without prayer.

Another place where the staff prayed for the community as a whole, there was a 55 percent response rate. In a third community, where the staff prayed for each home as they distributed the literature, eight out of ten families responded.⁵⁶

A Word of Caution and Critique

Though we mention the importance of the discerning of spirits in connection with intercessory prayer, we need to exercise caution when it comes to focusing offensively against or “binding” principalities and powers. Scripture never explicitly teaches that we do this nor do we see examples of this in the ministries of Jesus, Paul or other biblical figures. Tom White, a writer on “spiritual warfare,” shares his own hesitation about this aspect:

I am aware of no explicit model from Scripture that depicts a servant of God moving in direct confrontation with a high-level supernatural power. In light of this, I come at the topic with more questions than answers.⁵⁷

B.J. Willhite, of the National Prayer Embassy, has written:

It does not seem that the apostles spent much time teaching people about these unseen forces. Not once that I am aware of did Peter, Paul, James, or John . . . instruct that Christians were to identify these spiritual forces and command them to be bound. . . . How can we account for this lack of understanding on the part of the early disciples? Had Jesus left them in the dark about such things? Were they too immature for the Holy Spirit to reveal things of this nature to them? Or did they perhaps believe that Satan’s power had been broken

by the cross of Jesus? . . . that when a person turned to Jesus the power of Satan was bound in that person’s life. That when a city experienced revival Satan could no longer rule in that city.⁵⁸

It seems reasonable that such an exceedingly important matter would have been taught more openly and modeled clearly for us somewhere in the New Testament. Instead we see Jesus and the early disciples focusing their energies on ministry to *people*

Spiritual warfare for Paul meant a battle for the souls and minds of human beings that they might be saved, brought from darkness to light and made into all that God meant them to be.

and only when necessary dealing with demons as they manifest themselves, normally in individuals. Their focus is never intentionally on the demonic. It always seems incidental to their main mission, the proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom to human beings. Paul urges that the subject of prayer be people, especially for kings and others in authority so that “all men will be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1Ti. 2:2,4). As we have seen above, this kind of praying has brought astonishing results in terms of spiritual revival and the reclamation of individuals and whole societies from the dominion of darkness.

The pain-free, easy approach to putting “territorial spirits” to flight advocated by some Western, especially American, prayer leaders who see themselves as operating on the “strategic level” can be presumptuous and dangerous. Presumptuous because we can make unwarranted claims for a one-to-one correlation of our prayers and a specific political or historical change, taking credit for that change, when in reality the dynamic interplay between Divine, human and demonic factors involved in every such change is much more inscrutable. And the danger of spiritual pride, the very sin of which Lucifer was guilty, is always present. For example, some American intercessors have declared that they

bound territorial spirits over Russia during special prayer meetings at Red Square and, by implication, made possible *glasnost*, *perestroika* and the great Russian revival! Glamorous stories of this kind often appear in glossy newsletters usually sent out to raise funds for the activities they describe.

The downfall of Communism in the former Soviet Union and the

amazing spiritual openness involving millions is, I am convinced, God’s sovereign answer to the prayers of tens of thousands of Russian Christians who suffered and prayed for decades while imprisoned in Stalin’s gulags.

One of these, Pastor Nikolai, told me of his many long years in a cell without sunlight and without a Bible or book to read. When I asked what he spent his time doing, he said, “I prayed for this city.” Is it any wonder that the city for which he poured out intercession is now an epicenter of spiritual revival?

Of course, the Lord can and will use the prayers of American jet-setters as he will those of any of his people who pray. However, let us not be guilty of oversimplifying the deliverance of spiritual bondage, providing instant, easy solutions so in keeping with our American culture of convenience when local believers have not only travailed in prayer but also suffered great hardships over many years.

We should also carefully heed Jude’s warning about those who “slander celestial beings” (Jude 8). Even the Archangel, Michael, spoke respectfully to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you,” not daring to “bring a slanderous accusation against him” (v.9). If God leads us to bind principalities of evil in prayer, it must be done carefully and respectfully. The safest posture in the absence of clear Scriptural warrant is to take a cue from the Archangel. Like him, ask the Lord to do the binding and the rebuking. After all he is “Lord of hosts,” the only one whom Satan and the demons fear and must obey.

Satan's Tactics

Proclaiming Christ's Good News

It is clear from the Gospels that the primary purpose of Jesus' ministry was the itinerant proclamation of the Good News of the kingdom. He was always hastening to move on to other towns which had not yet heard his message for, as he explained to the disciples, "That is why I have come" (Mk. 1:38-39). It was only in the course of preaching and out of compassion for their victims that he took on the demonic realm. His work of exorcism usually happened in a reactive, responsive way when demons manifested themselves and in order to free those who were held in bondage. His focus was clearly on liberating people, not getting embroiled in a "strategic level" confrontation with the powers of darkness. The Indian missionaries of the Friends Missionary Prayer Band told me they never go looking for the demonic, it always finds them as they busy themselves with proclaiming the Good News. When it confronts them, as it invariably does, they deal with it in the course of their evangelism efforts. B.J. Willhite agrees:

What is this war about? Is it not taking souls which have been held captive by Satan? We do not release them by speaking to Satan. We release them when we tell them the truth about Jesus... . It seems to me that there is a danger in making the binding of such spirits the prerequisite for harvest. Jesus did not tell his disciples to go into all the world and bind demonic powers in the heavenlies. He said preach the Good News to every person.⁵⁹

The apostle Paul had a similar approach to ministry. He spent two years in preaching and teaching at Ephesus until "all the Jews and Greeks living in the province had heard the word of the Lord" (Ac. 19:10). This preaching led to deliverance of people from the power of darkness when many burned their sorcery books and articles publicly. Only later, when Demetrius and the other craftsmen felt threatened and were provoked into rioting against the Christians was there anything approaching a confrontation with a "high-level spirit" (vs. 23-41). The apostle's concern was to proclaim the gospel of Christ and spread the knowledge of him everywhere.

Spiritual warfare for him meant a battle for the souls and minds of human beings that they might be saved, brought from darkness to light and made into all that God meant them to be (Ac.26:17-18 and 2Co.2:12-15). In this pursuit, the aim of Paul's preaching was to demolish "strongholds," wrong patterns of thought in his hearers which were due to Satanic deception (2Co. 10:3-4). This task involved persuading people through reasoning with them from God's truth.

Jesus made it clear that filling the vacuum in a person's life after an evil spirit is evicted must happen to avoid worse demonization in the future (Lk.11:24). Tom White reflects,

What good does it do to push back the enemy if the territory is not occupied? Penetration of strongholds that loosens the grip of false gods and proclamation of the truth that leads to salvation must go hand in hand.... Before we plunge into active resistance and weakening of 'territorial spirits' (in the hopes that success here will inevitably result in a positive change in the human populous), we must consider that the greatest point of bondage may rest with the wickedness of the human heart itself.⁶⁰

Charles Finney, the American revivalist, often insisted that prayer together with the sharing of Christ's truth is the combination that God uses to bring spiritual revival. God uses our prayers to restrict forces of evil and our proclamation of Christ's Good News to fill the vacuum left by their departure.

It is through preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ that the principalities and powers are exposed for what they are. Their power of illusion by which they seek to control humanity is broken. As Berkhof states:

Unmasked, revealed in their true nature, they have lost their mighty grip on men. The cross has disarmed them; wherever it is preached, the unmasking and the disarming of the Powers takes place. Though they are still present, where Christ is proclaimed and believed in, they are limited in what they can do.⁶¹

Richmond Chiundiza agrees that our focus must be on reaching people: "The mistake churches sometimes make is to attack the system and struc-

ture of the territorial spirits. . . The church must preach a liberating gospel and be involved in the subsequent power encounter."⁶²

Living God's Way

Obedience to God and his standards is a potent part of spiritual warfare. Often we define spiritual warfare in too narrow a sense. Actually, Scripture seems to take a much broader, more holistic view. The apostle Paul looked back on his entire life as a servant of Christ as being a "good fight" (2Ti. 4:7). He describes his struggle to serve God as requiring "great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights, in hunger; in purity, understanding, patience, and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; *with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left* (emphasis mine); through glory and dishonor; bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors. . . beaten and yet not killed; having nothing and yet possessing everything" (2Co. 6:4-10). Spiritual warfare for Paul encompassed all these things as all were necessary in his war against the prince of darkness to win the peoples to Christ.

The apostle enumerates here in 2 Corinthians, and elsewhere in his epistles, his manifold struggles. These demonstrate the costliness of true spiritual warfare as opposed to the very narrow idea that has recently been promulgated by some American prayer leaders who have it down to essentially a "no fuss, no muss" approach. In their thinking spiritual warfare consists only of "strategic level" praying against spirits. But in taking this line, could we be guilty of oversimplifying and overspiritualizing the matter of spiritual warfare in a way it was never meant to be? Isn't it strange that we hear of no "high-level intercessors" being dispatched to the areas of the world which are being most ravaged by the murderous schemes of the principalities and powers, namely Somalia, Sudan, Angola, or Bosnia? These are the kind of difficult places where the apostle

Paul would have been found in his day. Rather we hear much about warfare going on in safe, easy areas such as Argentina, North America, and other relatively comfortable, secure environments.

Israel was continually told their primary responsibility was to obey the Lord, to be careful about following his ways, and he would take care of their enemies. "If my people would listen to me, if Israel would follow my ways, how quickly would I subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes" (Ps. 81:13-14 cf Ex. 14:14 and Dt. 1:30). McCandlish Phillips believes that obedience to God and his word is the main bulwark of defense Christians have against the devil. He notes that satanic takeover of a nation begins with its people being drawn away from faith in God and his word. Secondly, it moves on to increased indulgence in sin; thirdly, false worship and supernaturalism; and fourthly, tyranny and dictatorship. He suggests that America is in the third stage now. How important it is for us as Christians to live as God would have us live. It may be the most potent form of spiritual warfare we can practice! As Heinrich Schlier puts it:

The struggle against the principalities fundamentally begins with and in myself. If I am to resist and drive out the devil and not merely to strengthen his power, the struggle can only be waged by denying myself to him, and choosing and abiding in truth, justice, peace and hope.... The evil one is powerless against the sacrifice of ourselves in godly living and, if necessary, in death for Christ's cause.⁶⁴

Conclusion

In C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*, four children crawl timorously through a wardrobe into a whole new dimension of reality they were not aware of before. It is a world dominated by the evil White Witch, who holds all its creatures in bondage through the cold winter of fear. The four children themselves initially feel intimidated by her dominion. But later they realized that Aslan, the great lion, has the ultimate power and is their friend, ready to deliver them and to gift them so that they can join him in the battle against the witch

and her cohorts.⁶⁵

Like the children of Lewis' imaginative series, we also have nothing to fear because our Lord has "all power in heaven and on earth" and gifts and enables those who join the fray against the dark powers of our world. There is no doubt who has ultimate power and control and where true victory lies in spite of the tactics employed by the evil one. May God give us true discernment and childlike boldness in taking up these weapons he has put at our disposal. Hallelujah! Christ is Victor!

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Power Encounter

Toward an SIM Position

The intent of this article is to spell out SIM's position on spiritual warfare, power encounter and the issue of the miraculous in their ministry. SIM will not withhold the request that God would stretch out His hand "to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders" in Jesus' name.

By Howard Brant

Like many other mission societies, the Society for International Ministries (SIM) has been raised up by God as a religious mission order to plant the church of Jesus Christ throughout the world. By the very nature of our ministry, we are called upon to enter enemy territory and engage in spiritual warfare. In this war zone we often find ourselves challenged by the spiritual forces of darkness. How we deal with spiritual power encounter is of vital importance to us individually and corporately. C.S. Lewis, author of *Screwtape Letters*, commented that there are two common mistakes that one can make in dealing with the enemy. The first is in giving him too much emphasis; the other is in not giving him enough.

The dilemma which faces the evangelical world in general and conservative evangelical missions like SIM in particular is precisely that of which C. S. Lewis warned. For on the one side, if we ignore our enemy, we cannot wage war effectively. But on the other, if we become unduly preoccupied with these issues, we will find ourselves detracted from our ultimate purpose or embroiled in paralyzing controversies.

The related subject of the miraculous in Christian ministry is currently receiving unusual attention. Contemporary Bible colleges and seminaries are rapidly adding courses on spiritual warfare, power encounter, and sign and wonders to their curriculums. Current Christian books and magazines of both popular and scholarly variety are flooded with discussion on this topic. Popular lecturers crisscross the continents to expound the issue. A new denomination, Vineyard Christian

Fellowship, focusing on signs and wonders, is growing rapidly. Indeed, a movement identified as "The Third Wave" calls upon the evangelical world to accept that signs, wonders, and miracles, as seen in the miracles of Jesus and the apostles, are to be expected in today's church.

It is the intent of this paper to spell out SIM's position in these areas. To this end, we have studied the Scriptures and sought input from a study group composed of SIM missionaries and SIM-related national church leaders. Our findings were carefully scrutinized by a group of SIM theologians as well as by several prominent pastor-teachers who are deeply involved with SIM. This paper was then approved by SIM's International Council and noted by the Board of Governors. What is represented in this paper is an attempt to clarify SIM's position on this important topic.

PART 1: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

In SIM, we do recognize the reality of the spirit world. One phrase in our doctrinal statement states that we believe in "the personality of Satan, who is called the devil." No one can be a member of SIM without accepting that reality. Furthermore, SIM missionaries and related national church leaders are not strangers to spiritual encounters with the demonic world. National church leaders report incidents of spiritual attacks on national Christian workers. Our missionaries relate case studies in which they have seen those once bound by Satan delivered from demonization through the powerful name of Jesus.

Dealing with the Demonic

From our collective experience and study of Scripture, several important principles emerge:

* The ability to expel demons is not related to any spiritual gift, but has to do with the believer's position in Christ and His authority over the principalities and powers (Ephesians 1:19-21; 2:4-6). We deny anyone's claim of being especially gifted as an exorcist.

* We do not actively seek out opportunities to exorcise demons, but when confronted in ministry, we should not hesitate to respond (Acts 16:16-18).

* Because Jesus "disarmed the powers and authorities" at the cross, and because we are granted a position over them in Christ, we believe that ultimately they must obey direct commands given in the powerful name of Jesus (Colossians 2:15, Acts 16:18).

* We recognize that there may be incidents when an individual may have to deal with such encounters alone. We strongly advise, however, that this should be a group ministry (Matthew 17:21).

* Sometimes the demonized have more than one evil spirit troubling them. For this reason, it may be helpful to discern the name of the dominant spirit and deal with it first (Luke 8:30).

* Great care must be given to those who have been delivered. They must be urged to confess Christ as their personal Savior. They should be taught how to pray in the name and authority of Jesus. They should be surrounded by loving Christians who are aware of their spiritual authority (Luke 11:24-26).

* Those involved in this ministry

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should do so realizing that all ministry is through the grace of God. They should examine their own hearts to see if there is unconfessed sin, any desire for self-exaltation, or any gap in their spiritual armor through which they can be attacked (Ephesians 6:10-19). They must beware lest they be lifted up with pride and thus fall into the temptation of the devil himself (1 Timothy 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:7).

* If such incidents are recounted publicly, great care must be taken to give all the credit and glory to Christ, at whose name the demonic world trembles (Acts 14:15; 15:12).

Influence, Control and Possession

Within this consensus there are areas where we have honest questions among ourselves. For instance, not all of us are agreed as to the degree to which evil spirits can affect believers, particularly those in a back-slidden condition who knowingly, or unknowingly, dabble in the occult.

We all agree wholeheartedly that every believer receives the Holy Spirit at conversion and is indwelt by Him (Romans 8:9). But we also note that Paul and John encouraged church leaders to “test the spirits and see if they be from God” (1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 John 4:1). Is it possible that some believers, while claiming that they had spiritual gifts from God, were unwittingly manifesting the influence or control of evil spirits?

One of our number related that when he applied such a test to a person claiming spiritual utterance an evil spirit manifested itself and was cast out in the name of Jesus. Do we then question the salvation of the person so afflicted?

Several members of our study group have witnessed incidents in which evil spirits spoke through professing believers and openly confessed that these backsliders belong to Jesus, and that the spirits had come back to trouble them because they had become involved again with worshipping Satan. When such persons repented and confessed their sin, they were immediately released.

From a practical point of view, if one is confronted by such a situation it must be dealt with even if all the theological implications are not understood. But in

theological terms it is difficult to determine the exact degree to which an evil spirit can influence, control, or possess a believer. On this continuum, some would draw the line between influence and control. Others would draw it between control and possession.

Note the three words which we have used: possess, influence, control. We resolutely deny that Satan or any evil spirit can possess a believer in the sense of ownership. Believers belong to God. Jesus knows His own (John 10:14). No one can take them out of His hand (John 10:28, 29). But no one would doubt that Satan and his demons do have power to influence believers, at least to the degree of serious temptation (Acts 5:3ff). Where believers are not walking in fellowship with the Lord, where they are not filled with all the fullness of God, where they have given place to the devil, we know that the demonic can gain a strategic foothold (Ephesians 4:27). Whether this can include outright control is an area of question.

As in other issues where controversy could threaten our unity, those who entertain such questions must agree not to make them a point of division.

One further word of clarification: When we speak of someone being demonized, we are speaking of an evil spirit taking control of someone in such a way that the evil spirit speaks through or otherwise affects the faculties or person of that individual.

We know of those who see demonic manifestation in all sorts of sins and shortcomings of the flesh. But we see no Biblical precedent for casting out demons of anger, lust, hatred of one's mother-in-law, etc. We know of deep crippling damage which has been done to Christians who have been dealt with in this way. We believe that the Biblical method for dealing with such sins is to repent and confess them to God. Any other teaching relieves sinners of their personal responsibility to confess their own sins to God (1 John 1:9).

Spiritual Warfare at a Deep Level

Even though many within SIM have had experiences and theological insights of the type discussed, this was not an area of major emphasis or concern. In fact, dealing with the demonized is not where most of us feel the heat of spiritual battle.

For in dealing with the demonized, we are usually dealing with isolated incidents. Dramatic as exorcism may be, our missionaries and church leaders are involved essentially in turning the hearts of whole ethnic groups from “darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.” (cf. Acts 26:16-18) Indeed, exorcism as described above may be seen only as one visible expression of the much larger cosmic battle.

Far more serious are the pervasive powers of darkness which have blinded whole people groups to the light of God. We are concerned about those “powers and authorities,” about those world forces of darkness, those spiritual forces of wickedness which stand opposed to the advance of the gospel and the spreading of God's kingdom on earth (Ephesians 6:12).

We want our missionaries, our related churches, and all Christians everywhere, to recognize that there are dark spiritual forces which have enormous power over entire clans, villages, towns, ethnic groups, and even over nations (Daniel 10:11-13). It is as we learn to take up the weapons of our warfare and attack these strongholds of wickedness that God's Spirit will be released to turn men and women to himself, bring salvation to the lost, and revive His church.

Biblically, spiritual warfare includes both resisting the devil as well as standing firm in our faith (1 Peter 5:8,9). Often our struggle is not so much a deliberate focusing on evil powers in conscious resistance as in living a life of disciplined responsiveness to the Lord, who has power over them. In Ephesians chapter 6, the Christian's resistance to evil powers is effected by the disciplines of truth, a life of righteousness, readiness to witness, faith, and giving attention to the Word and intercessory prayer.

We are called to take up the weapons of our warfare, which are really God's weapons of warfare (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:4 and Ephesians 6:11). We should be greatly encouraged as we see that these weapons are the same ones with which our blessed Lord did battle while upon the earth. (Note Isaiah 11:5; 39:2; 52:7; 59:17.) It should encourage us to know that He used these weapons when sharing our humanity so that “... he might destroy him who holds the power

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of death” (Hebrews 2:14).

At the cross, Jesus “disarmed the powers and authorities” (Colossians 2:15). We are challenged to get into the battle, to take up God’s full armor against a naked and defenseless foe, and wield the offensive weapons of praise, the sword of the Spirit, and intercessory prayer. Through faith, mighty faith, and by prevailing prayer, we shall be numbered among the overcomers (Ephesians 6:16, 1 John 2:13,14).

PART II: SIGNS, WONDERS AND MIRACLES

“Powers encounter” is a general term which includes “spiritual warfare” as well as “signs, wonders, and miracles.” Spiritual warfare refers to the confrontation which takes place between a believer, as God’s agent on earth, and the forces of demonic darkness. In signs, wonders, and miracles (works of power), the focus is not so much on direct confrontation with the demonic as on supernatural displays of God’s power over the natural elements of our fallen world. In either case, God’s power is visibly displayed.

The Purpose of Signs and Wonders

God’s purpose in signs, wonders, and miracles (the miraculous) appear to be many:

* In the days of Moses, God displayed His power in signs and wonders in order to convince Pharaoh of His sovereign reality as well as to draw attention to Moses as His servant (Acts 7:26).

* In the days of Elijah, God demonstrated himself by fire to show himself as superior over all the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18).

* God used Naaman’s healing through the word of Elijah to prove that no god in all the world is equal to the God of Israel (2 Kings 5:15).

* In the days of Daniel, God spared the three Hebrew children to cause Nebuchadnezzar to recognize His sovereign power (Daniel 4:2). Daniel was

spared from the lions that Darius might know that the Lord reigns in heaven (Daniel 6:27).

* On the day of Pentecost, Peter reminded the multitude that the ministry and message of Jesus was attested to by signs, wonders, and miracles (Acts 2:22). In the same discourse, he stated that many signs and wonders were performed by the apostles immediately after the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:22,43).

* In the early church, the people prayed: “Sovereign Lord... enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and

wonders in their ministry among the Gentiles. It would seem that they used this argument to prove that the Gentiles were just as much a part of the church as were the Jews. (See Acts 15:12)

* Similarly, when Paul’s authority as a true apostle was challenged, he went to great lengths to explain how he had preached the gospel freely, suffered for the gospel intensely, and had performed signs and wonders among them, as any true apostle would have done (2 Corinthians chapters 11 and 12, especially 12:12).

* From 1 Corinthians 12:9 and Galatians 3:5 it would appear that miracles were not uncommon in the early

church; and not necessarily at the hands of the apostles only, but rather as part of the spiritual gifts which God gave sovereignly to believers.

* Finally, God will use signs and wonders in the future. Joel prophesied about “wonders in the heavens and on the earth” (Joel 2:30; cf. Acts 2). Many of these are yet to be fulfilled. Further, we are warned that when the “lawless one will be revealed,” he will come displaying counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

It would appear that God uses the miraculous in many ways. Sign and wonders validate His message and His messengers. They can create a sense of awe in believers and foster faith in unbelievers. They can also be used to chasten those who attempt to obstruct His purposes. They come at particular times and seasons when God, for whatever reasons, chooses to make himself manifest.

Some have attempted to give precise definitions to the use of signs and wonders and then go about showing why God must or cannot do such things today. But any attempt to confine or limit their use would require a full understanding of all that God is doing. In this regard, Paul exclaimed: “Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?” (Romans 11:33, 34).

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wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus” (Acts 4:24-30).

* Stephen the deacon and Philip the evangelist both performed signs and wonders (Acts 6:8; 8:6). We learn from the latter account that, whatever the purpose of signs may be, it certainly is not something to be purchased with money for personal gain. Peter sternly rebuked Simon the sorcerer, who sought such power with money and warned him, “You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God” (Acts 8:21).

* Signs of power were present as Paul, Barnabas and Silas went their missionary journeys. They were used to silence the opposition of Elymas the sorcerer and so amazed Sergius Paulus that he believed, “for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord” (Acts 13:12). Later when Paul and Barnabas addressed the Jerusalem Council, they told how God had used signs and

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Perhaps the most we should say is that God performs the miraculous when it suits His purposes and when He chooses to reveal His own glory. We do need to make the point, however, that the miraculous is not always overt. There are periods in sacred history when the waters of the miraculous go underground only to spring up again at some other time and in another place as God sovereignly directs the flow of His eternal plans. (cf. 1 Samuel 3:1)

The Spiritual and Natural Worlds

If we believe that Christians are positioned in Christ with authority over the demonic world, what about authority to heal, work miracles, and demonstrate God's power through signs and wonders in the natural or fallen world about us?

The point of departure for some modern practitioners is not through "gift" theology, or through "healing in the atonement" theology, or in the popular "prosperity" theology. Rather, it is through "kingdom of God" theology and more particularly through the issue of "spiritual authority."

With regard to God's kingdom, some assume that because Jesus came to set up the kingdom of God, and since we believers are part of that kingdom, we already have all the rights and privileges of that kingdom. This has led to confusion over what some theologians refer to as "already" in God's kingdom and what is "not yet."

We need to recognize that our world is still under the Adamic curse. Though Christ came to inaugurate His kingdom, that kingdom is yet to be fully implemented. Jesus acknowledged this when He taught us to pray, "your kingdom come."

The apostle Paul teaches that all fallen creation is presently "groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time" (Romans 8:22). Though our world is subjected to frustration, it is subjected in hope (Romans 8:20). We eagerly await the day when all sorrow, suffering, pain, and death will be done away as God establishes His eternal kingdom. But it is not until the new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven that the loud voice from the throne cries, "There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

The claim of this new movement is that today's disciples have the same authority to heal, cast out demons, and work other miracles as did the earth disciples in the days of Jesus. They argue that as Jesus gave authority to the first disciples to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the leper, and cast out demons in His pre-resurrection commission, (cf. Matthew 10:8) that same authority is to be passed on to all believers as part of their birthright today. They point out that the same disciples who received authority in Matthew chapter 10 were later instructed to teach their disciples all that the Lord had commanded them. (cf. Matthew 10:8 and Matthew 28:19-20) Thus, we, who are Christ's disciples today should expect the miraculous in our ministries.

This teaching, however, needs to be balanced by the fact that those pre-resurrection commands to the early disciples are specific as to their time and situation. In Matthew chapter 10, those early disciples were also instructed not to take money with them, to take no change of clothes, to stay in one place only and not to move from house to house. Moreover, they were commanded not to go to the nations (*ethos*) but only to the "lost sheep of Israel" (Matthew 10:5). No honest interpretation of these passages could assume that all these commands would apply to the missionaries (apostles are "sent ones") of our day.

Suffering in our Fallen World

Another error we need to avoid is believing that all pain, sorrow and calamity can be directly attributed to the evil one. The division between the demonic and the fallen aspects of our world is not always clear. We know, for instance, that sickness is part of our fallen world. Some sicknesses, as in the case of Job, can be inflicted by Satan. Even there, permission had to be obtained from God himself. It certainly does not follow that all sickness is demonically induced. Paul encouraged Timothy to take medicinal wine for his stomach's sake. He did not prescribe exorcism. The man born blind in John chapter 9 was afflicted, "that the work of God might be displayed in his life." At the burning bush God said to Moses, "Who makes (man) deaf or dumb? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I the Lord?" (Exodus 4:11).

Suffering is a fact of our fallen world. God's incredible wisdom is displayed when He uses suffering as a tool to refine character, teach us truths about himself, and, as in the case of Paul, make us weak so that His grace and power may be all the more evident in us. We must not forget that it pleased God to bruise His own Son on the cross: "It was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer" (Isaiah 53:10). From His suffering comes our salvation. Our theology is often colored with the desire to escape the disciplines of the cross and reach too quickly for the crown. Paul, however, reminds us that we shall rule with him, if we suffer with Him (2 Timothy 2:12). Any theology which fails to recognize God's purpose in suffering is sub-biblical.

Spiritual Dimension in Various World Views

Much of the current literature on this topic points out that our Western world-view tends to be highly rationalistic and secularistic. Conversely, in our non-Western world people are much more aware of the spiritual dimensions of life and are more open to accepting supernatural phenomena. This is certainly true, but as we consider this we need to beware lest we fall into the trap of becoming animists ourselves, that is of adopting practices and beliefs of the animistic world-view which sees everything as related to the spirit world.

Animists try to manipulate their world through placation of the evil spirits. Western rationalism tries to control its world through the application of certain laws of science. Both systems overlap in their attempts to control their world. Animistic spiritualism and Western secular rationalism both need to come under the judgment of Scripture.

If we are not careful, we can become like the animists who see spirits behind everything. Like: the copy machine doesn't work; so you need to cast out the demon. The car won't start; and there's another demon. You run the red light because the devil made you do it. And worse, you are ticketed by a policeman – a messenger of Satan to buffet you! This kind of thinking gives altogether too much emphasis to the demonic. It causes one to treat every natural phenomenon as if it were of diabolic origin.

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We Christians, and missionaries in particular, will pave the way for syncretism if we teach that we can manipulate God's Spirit to do our bidding (Prior 1987:38-40). All we would be doing would be substituting the manipulation of evil spirits for manipulation of the Holy Spirit. God forbid! The harmful effects of such doctrine could be enormous, especially in animistic societies.

A Key Theological Distinction

Our position is that believers do, indeed, have authority over demonic principalities and powers because of their position in Christ (Ephesians chapters 1 and 2).

But it needs to be debated whether and to what extent that same authority extends into our natural world into areas such as healing and performing miracles in the same ways as the pre-resurrection disciples to whom Jesus gave such authority!

One thing is sure: all authority in heaven and earth now belongs to Jesus (Matthew 28:19). We move at his command. We do not command Him. Jesus taught us to pray, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Too many people today want to change that prayer to read, "My will be done in heaven as I want it on earth." We must never become confused over who is master. God will not be manipulated into doing our will. Even the Lord Jesus, prayed "Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39).

How is it then, that a believer may have authority to expel evil spirits, but may not have the same authority to heal and perform other miracles? The distinction is that in Christ we have been granted a position above the principalities and powers (Ephesians chapters 1 and 2). We have authority over them and command them in the name of Jesus. But we are not placed in a position of authority over God to command *Him*. The prophet Isaiah declared:

This is what the Lord says – the Holy One of Israel, and its maker: Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands? (Isaiah 45:11).

The obvious answer is, "You'd better not, for *He* is God."

When we desire to see God intervene

miraculously in the affairs of men or nature, we come to our sovereign Lord and present our requests, not our commands, before Him. We are not demanding our *rights*, but rather exerting the *privilege* which He has given us to come before Him confidently in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

PART III: THREE TIMELY PRINCIPLES

Seventy years ago, SIM founder and first General Director, Rowland

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Bingham, took issue with the teaching of his day that divine healing was in the atonement and therefore "every true Christian had a right to take healing in the same way as they accepted salvation." According to this teaching, if true Christians were sick, they were living "below their privilege." Thus healing was taught as the right of the believer.

In his book, *The Bible and The Body*, Bingham argued that though the motive of wanting to see healing for a suffering world was commendable, this doctrine simply was not supported in Scripture nor in true experience of ministry. Indeed, Bingham argue, that such teaching was really a deterrent to the gospel because it held out false hope. He cited numerous incidents where such teaching left behind a wake of disillusioned people whose faith was crushed when God chose not to provide the miraculous.

This does not in any way imply that Bingham, or SIM, deny God's power or willingness to heal and perform miracles. Bingham's point was that God can

and does heal, but on the basis of His sovereignty, not on the basis of our authority.

With regard to the question of the place of the miraculous in our ministry, SIM bases its position on three timely principles of Scripture: the sovereignty of God; the primacy of the gospel; and the unity of the body.

The Sovereignty of God

The principle of God's sovereignty is absolutely fundamental to our understanding of all signs and wonders and distributions of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Paul listed nine spiritual gifts, including "gifts of healing" and "working of miraculous powers," i.e., miracles, and then concluded by saying,

All these are the work of one and the same spirit, and he gives them to each man, just as he determines (1 Corinthians 12:11).

In Hebrews 2:1-4, the writer speaks about our "great salvation" and then proceeds to explain how this salvation came down to us:

This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

In our discussion of signs and wonders we must avoid extreme positions on both sides. On the one side there are those who deny God performs signs and wonders today. Conversely, some give them such emphasis that they are in danger of neglecting other important aspects of Scripture.

We do well here to recall that heresy is not so much the acceptance of error as it is the taking of a doctrinal truth to an extreme position. With regard to the topic at hand, it is a dangerous thing to tell God what He *must* do. By the same token, it is undoubtedly equally as dangerous to predetermine what He *cannot* do.

SIM has chosen a position "between the shoals of denying the possibility of miracles in our day, and the rocks of presumption that demand miracles according to our need and schedule." (Smedes 1987:17) We acknowledge that God can and will do whatever pleases Him in any given situation.

SIM's stand is like the three Hebrew children who told Nebuchadnezzar:

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by the Lord Jesus himself.

It is argument and rebuttal like this which have caused some to take strong issue with the assumption that all such demonstrations were limited to the authentication of Scripture. In fact, some current writers declare that there is nothing in Scripture that indicates that signs and wonders were meant to stop after the early days of Christianity. They contend that theories about the termination of certain spiritual gifts all come from human interpreters under the influence of Western world views and not from God's Word.

Others make the same point by suggesting that theories of cessation are theological judgments rather than historic observations.

The historical evidence would seem to indicate that signs, wonders, and miracles of all kinds did not end with the death of the apostles or with inscripturation. Some writers press this point by quoting extensively from Irenaeus who, about 180 A.D. wrote:

In Christ's name the Christians are driving out devils...Others have foreknowledge of things to come; they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remain among us for many years. (Against Heresies by Irenaeus as quoted in Williams 1989:134)

It is well known that Tertullian, Cyprian and Origen, all of whom lived in the third century, after the canonization of Scripture, testify to the miraculous in the early church. Origen (200-258 AD) wrote that he personally witnessed "many delivered from serious ailments, and from mental distraction and madness, and countless other diseases, which neither man nor demons had cured." (Quoted in Smedes 1987:36)

Some of the greatest revivals of history have had displays of signs and wonders very similar to those being claimed today, especially the revivals of Wesley, Whitefield, the Great Awakening of the 18th century and the Welsh revival. (Cf. John White, *When the Spirit Comes with Power*, especially chapters 2-6.)

SIM founder and the first General Director, Rowland Bingham, had much to say about the role of signs, wonders,

and miracles in his book, *The Bible and the Body*. He wrote:

...miracles of healing, however much they may have decreased after the Apostolic age, never entirely ceased, and that in the records of the Church, and the memoirs of her saints, accounts of supernatural healing are by no means uncommon. (Bingham 1921:13)

Bingham also readily affirmed that signs are present in our world today:

In most of the foreign fields there have been such displays of His power for a sign. Missionaries could duplicate almost every scene in the Acts of the Apostles during the past hundred years of their activities. Where, for the glory of the Christ, for the establishment of his Word, for the furtherance of the Gospel, signs are necessary or expedient, there He gives the signs, according to His own will. (Bingham 1921:66)

Note that Bingham saw no cessation of signs when God saw it would be useful for His purposes. The bottom line with Bingham, and with SIM today is the sovereignty of God.

We would like to make it clear that although there may be some who feel that such signs have no place in our present day, SIM has never taken any official position that signs, wonders, miracles, or any specific gifts have ceased. Today, seven decades after Bingham took this stand, we affirm his words as our position:

Where, for the glory of the Christ, for the establishment of His Word, for the furtherance of the Gospel, signs are necessary or expedient, there He gives the signs, according to His own will.

The Primacy of the Gospel

Faulty theology is to be avoided, but equally dangerous is a faulty emphasis. Many proponents give such emphasis to signs and wonders that they overlook the real purpose to which Christ's followers are called. (Recall C.S. Lewis's concern, lest we give the enemy too much emphasis.)

As we compare the Gospel record we see that there is only one comment regarding the place of signs and wonders in evangelism. That is the disputed passage in Mark 16:17 where we read, "And these signs will accompany those who believe...." Though the textural debate is beyond the scope of this study, we make the point that whether or not this passage was opened by Mark, and not added later as some

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, Oh king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Oh king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up (Daniel 3:17,18).

Some argue that signs and wonders and miracles were authenticating signs and limited to those through whom God was granting "normative revelation," i.e., the Scriptures. They say, such signs and wonders terminated with the inscripturation of God's special revelation in the New Testament.

Some who take this position hold that the "signs and wonders" were certain enablements given to certain believers for the purpose of authenticating or confirming God's word when it was proclaimed in the early church before the Scriptures were penned. They believe that these sign gifts were temporary. Once the Word of God was in Scriptures, the sign gifts were no longer needed and they ceased.

This position, however, has come under increasing attack from both exegetical and historical perspective. For instance, some take 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 to show that gifts such as prophecy, tongues, and knowledge would "cease" and "pass away" "when perfection comes." They argue that "perfection" must refer to the completion of revelation and thus think they have proof that certain gifts have ceased.

The problem, however, is that equally competent Bible scholars have argued that "perfection" does not refer to inscripturation at all, but rather to the second coming of Christ. If that position is correct, it would argue strongly that such gifts are indeed valid throughout the whole church age and prove exactly the opposite of this negating position.

Others point to Hebrews 2:4 to make the case that it was only at the first, i.e., at the beginning of the church age, that God used signs, wonders, miracles (work of power) and distributions of His Holy Spirit to confirm the word.

The problem here also is an exegetical one, for there is no certain proof that the word "first" applies to the signs and wonders. Many would interpret it as applying only to the fact that our great salvation was "first announced"

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suggest, the thrust of the text is not signs and wonders are necessary to bring people to faith, but that the life and ministry of the new community of believers will be confirmed (“demonstrated to be standing”) by supernatural signs.

This phenomenon is not uncommon in the mission fields of the world today. Many times, when the gospel comes into a stronghold of Satan, those who first accept it are held suspect by the unbelieving majority. Sometimes God allows the miraculous to take place so the rest of the community can see that the new teaching about Christ is indeed something of divine origin. As time passes, the life and testimony of the believers becomes its own authentication. SIM can point to numerous places where large numbers of people have believed after they have had time to watch the first converts and see the power of God in their transformed lives. The gospel’s greatest attestation is a transformed life.

While it is true that some have ignored the possibility of the miraculous, others argue that evangelism should be preceded and undergirded by supernatural demonstrations of God’s presence, so that resistance to the gospel is overcome by the demonstration of God’s power.

Though no one should deny that God is able to bring spectacular displays of His power to bear at the time of preaching the gospel, we should not fall into the trap of thinking that displays of power will automatically accompany the gospel. They may or they may not. If we follow our first principle that signs are given sovereignly, it must follow our first principle that signs are given sovereignly, it must follow that God alone decides if and when signs are useful to encourage faith.

Signs, wonders and miracles can be used as a temporary means to enhance faith. But that which is lasting and builds faith is the preaching of God’s Holy Word. “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the world of Christ” (Romans 10:17). It would be a huge mistake to assume that God must work miracles to cause receptivity and foster faith. On one occasion Jesus said, “They will not be convinced even if someone rises

from the dead” (Luke 16:31). On another occasion He said it was a “wicked and adulterous generation” that was always looking for a miraculous sign (Matthew 16:4). Paul said, “Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:22-24).

We need to concentrate on and emphasize what God has given us to do. It is given to us to preach the gospel. That must be done whether or not there are signs and wonders. If God sovereignly chooses to perform signs and wonders, that is wonderful and we will thank Him. If He chooses not to perform signs, we will also thank Him, for the gospel itself is the power of God through faith unto salvation. Whichever way He chooses, we will concentrate on what he has told us to do: preach the gospel, disciple believers, and teach His Word.

If evangelists go into a town or village thinking, “If only a miracle would occur here, the whole town would come to Christ,” their emphasis is on the miraculous. Rather, they should go saying, “Christ has commanded us to preach the gospel. We will do that with all the energy and enabling which He gives us. And if He should grant some miracles of power, all the better. We will thank Him for that.”

The Unity of the Body

What then shall SIM Do? Should we encourage the use of signs and wonders in ministry? Should we forbid it? We can gain some perspective from Paul’s instruction to the Corinthian church in the use of spiritual gifts, for there were people who considered themselves “spiritual” and yet were abusing the gifts. (cf. Hemphill 1988:43ff)

Paul avoided what may have seemed the easy road: outlawing the use of specific gifts in the church altogether. Under the guidance of the Spirit he chose the delicate balance of not quenching the Spirit by forbidding the use of genuine gifts, and by giving clear teaching that would correct errors and direct the proper use of gifts in the

church. Here is what he laid down for the Corinthians in his First Epistle to them:

1. Recognize that God gives all His gifts sovereignly (12:11,18).
2. Gifts in public must be for the edification of all (14:3-5).
3. All should be done in peace and without confusion; properly and in an orderly manner (14:33,40).
4. Those who are acting outside Scriptural guidelines should be ignored (14:37,38).
5. All gifts, miracles, or signs should be open to the examination of others (14:29-32).
6. Genuine gifts and ministry should not be forbidden (14:39).
7. Everything should be done undergirded with selfless *agape* love which never fails (chapter 13).

It is of interest that Paul made a distinction between what was done privately and what was done in public or in the church. As a Mission we have no desire to make rules which preclude the possibility that God may indeed work in miraculous ways. Rather, we must make sure that what happens within our Mission family or in the church body at a public level conforms to our common understanding of that which pleases God.

As SIM missionaries we are all volunteers who have set aside our particular doctrinal distinctive to work in an interdenominational mission. We have rallied around the common goal of preaching the gospel and planting the church throughout the world. The diverse nature of our organization means that its members must agree to allow one another liberty in expression and experience.

By the same token, being a member of such a mission means agreeing to work within a broad consensus. If a person’s conviction or over-emphasis threatens to break our consensus, the mission’s unity is threatened. We must never allow that to happen.

SUMMARY

*We encourage our missionaries and all true saints of God to put on the

Power Encounter

armor of God and to take up the weapons of spiritual warfare and get into the battle for the souls of lost men and women.

* We believe that God is sovereign over all. When it serves His purposes and brings glory to His name, He has performed and can perform signs, wonders, and miracles according to His will. We do not believe, however, that we as believers and His servants have the right or the authority to demand such miracles.

* We believe that God has clearly commanded us to preach the gospel, disciple the nations, and teach His Word. We will continue to make this our emphasis. If God in His sovereignty allows the miraculous to take place, we will praise Him. If not, we will still praise Him, for the gospel itself is the power of God unto salvation.

* We believe that God has called us to disciple believers into churches equipped to fulfill Christ's Commission. As an interdenominational mission, we cannot allow any one to over-emphasize secondary or tertiary distinctives of doctrine or practice in such a way as to threaten our unity or bring division to our Mission. We do welcome, however, all who can work within our consensus.

* In short, we accept the miraculous in ministry where:

1. It is in harmony with the Word of God.
2. It brings glory to the Lord Jesus and not to an individual.
3. It calls attention to the gospel and not to a person.
4. It does not impinge on the sovereignty of God.
5. It is subject to the judgment of others.
6. It does not pursue or over-emphasize in a manner which could threaten the unity of our Mission.

In Conclusion

We believe with all our hearts in a God who is powerful and willing to show himself mighty in His good time. We will preach the gospel with fervor for it is the "power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile" (Romans 1:16). We will pray, as did the early church, that He would enable His servants to speak the Word "with great boldness." Nor will we fear to include the request that God would stretch out His hand "to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders" through the name of His holy servant Jesus (Acts 4:29,30). In so doing, we will also make every effort "to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

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Intercessors and Cosmic Urban Spiritual Warfare

Taking our cities with the Gospel is one of the greatest challenges facing us in the '90s. It will require intense intercession, sacrifice and prolonged spiritual warfare. Although this article focuses on cities rather than peoples, the author believes "the warfare for the unreached peoples will largely be fought in the cities."

By Viv Grigg

This morning my friend, a political leader in exile from an Asian city, told me that God wanted him to destroy the prostitution trade in his city. I wept to myself in the quiet of my office. For eight years *I had waited for God to answer prayer* (1) and raise up such a man.

It had been eight years since I first entered that city. On that day I had sat on my bed in the guest house and *waited in the presence of God* (2)¹ He took my hands and used them to form the shape of the spirit over that city. A spirit that was deeply sensuous, and one giving power to the very kingdom over the land had entered. Later I went out, and there on the sidewalk saw the images of this goddess.

We read that "Jesus became a man and dwelt among them." Peter, later in life said simply "we touched him." *Out of the incarnation, came the warfare* (3). There is no intercession unless we die for a people. So *I asked God for a person* (4) for someone who would go to this city and rescue the victims of the prostitution trade—for the Kingdom of God is manifest in service to the poor.

And God spoke to a woman. Within a few months of her arrival, and the beginning of her evangelistic ministry, the wives of some of the rich in the city came to her asking how they could help. For their husbands were part of the structures that perpetuated the trade, and they were ashamed. Spiritual encounters now moved to a second level, beyond the victims to the people in power in the structures. *A level of authority had been earned through incarnation, evangelism and service to the poor* (5). Gradually other ministries formed. A city prayer movement was developed.

But I asked where was a national leader of sufficient political standing to carry the spiritual warfare into the very centers of power. This morning I wept for I had my answer. *Eight years of carrying the burden of a city in my spirit* (6).

This paper is about intercession and its impact on issues of completing the unfinished task of reaching cities. For many years it has been a privilege to walk with my family behind the Lord in the dark side of the mega-cities slums of the third world and to intercede for many of these cities.

Out of intercession has come the emergence of movements, missions and churches. These have not been the result of any particular charisma, nor because of massive resources, for we have lived as poor people, *without significant resources, just daily bread* (7) and what he has provided to catalyze each new work. *These movements are the result of the sovereign hand of God moving in answer to prayer* (8).

Strategic Focus for Intercessors in the Next Decades

Where do we strategically focus prayer? As coordinator of the Cities Resource Network of the AD 2000 Movement, some very simple comparisons of existing research has resulted in an estimate of 1736 such unevangelized cities. By AD 2000 there will be over 400 cities over 1 million, and over 300 of these could be classified as unevangelized. Some 30-90% of the population of each of these live in highly responsive slums, *colonias, favelas, bustees, bidonvilles, shantytowns, squatter areas...*²

The exciting thing as data has come

in from around the globe is that almost every one of these cities already have churches. The gospel must go to the ends of the earth. But none of these cities have sufficient numbers of believers and churches to effectively evangelize each major sector of the city.³

Today we are moving into what Dr. Paul Pierson calls the fourth era of the modern missions - reaching the cities. In the last decade over 1 billion people have careened down rural roads into multiplying concrete highways to be disgorged and disoriented into the city and its slums.

Most mission leaders are aware that almost all population increase in the next decades will be both urban and urban migrant (rural population growth will remain static), that the majority of this will be in the slums and squatter areas and that these will increase far faster than the rate of industrialization of these cities.

Therefore, the penetration of these cities and these receptive urban poor communities define the target of missions for the next decades and will probably require more energy and more suffering than has been seen in the whole of the modern Protestant era. We can foresee that the future of missions is urban, and that it is to the poor.

Intercession Involves Entering the Sufferings of the Poor

Any cursory look at worlds A, B, C, or the 10/40 Window, shows that the least evangelized are the poor of the earth. As Bryant Myers has pointed out, "the poor are the lost."

As an intercessor, I have to call you

Intercessors and Cosmic Urban Spiritual Warfare

to enter into the poverty of the poor, for that was the model of him who now intercedes for us. As a strategist it is evident that the responsive migrant poor are the key to the cities - biblically, historically, sociologically, and in terms of church planting and growth.

The Great Mission of Jesus

Given these contexts of massive urbanization, globalization and impoverishment of city populations, what is our goal in praying? Let us look to our Master to find the answers.

He came preaching the Kingdom of God. Preaching, teaching, healing and delivering were his primary activities. He trained his disciples in the same central issues of methodology. *We are to pray for laborers who can do the same* (9) (Matthew 9:37,38).

In Luke 4:18 He declares His mission and ours, the great mission. It is to preach good news *to the poor*. The central activity is not giving bread. The central focus is not the middle class. *An apostolic focus, on the poor, in a holistic context and manner* to the apostolic ministry needs to be central. Luke 4:18 is the heart of the great commission of Matthew 28, and Mark 16 which define *the extent* and further expand on methodology.

Penetrating the Least of the Least Evangelized Cities

He had been a language helper for a foreign man of God. One day he refused to give money for the *puja*, the celebration of worship of the goddess, "I have been reading this holy book and it says we are to have only one God." Then he fled from the *bustee* (*slum*). He gave his life to the only one God. During those days a train smashed into the community, two houses caught on fire. The people said it was because he had turned against their goddess – perhaps it was, they would know.

The one to whom he taught language was *a man of prayer, and a man who walked among the poor, and in prayer God spoke* (10,11) to take flowers and

fruit to the families of those hurt by these events. As he did the people saw God come among them.

And the first *bustee* in another city is penetrated with the gospel. What was the cost of initial penetration? One worker lost her hearing, one worker lost her health, fifteen workers gave from three to seven years of their lives with severe *sicknesses, frequent demonic activities* (12) surrounding them. And behind it, *several hundred people praying* (13). Today in six *bustees* there

are emerging groups of worshipping people. And what will be the cost of a movement? Somebody giving 15 to 20 years of their lives for this people, building upon the penetration. *Every step bathed in prayer* (14).

In this city of 12 million we estimate there are 150 movements needed to penetrate each major sector of the city. So far in the last 18 months we have prayed in three pioneer teams. Some 60,000 people have prayed for a month for the city. Every month we have asked God to send in an *intercessory team of pastors*. He has answered in diverse ways.

How Long Has it Been Since Someone Took a City?

Wagner has popularized the work done by Ed Silvano and Harvest Evangelism⁴ with stories of cities that evangelistically have had significant city-

wide responses. Wagner and others

A lot of people are talking about taking cities today.

- * What do they mean?
- * How do we measure success?
- * What do we mean by closure in this comic urban warfare?
- * What is the role of intercession?

relate the *success to spiritual mapping* (15), and spiritual warfare.

R.A. Torrey, preached back in 1904 in my home city of Dunedin, New Zealand. It was a city founded by a shipload of Presbyterians to be a city of God. When he preached, the city closed down. Shops were closed with signs "gone to the crusade." Trams full of people would burst out into singing of hymns. Torrey saved a city by a revival in the power of the Holy Spirit. Old men *kept a city under the sovereign grace of God by their consistent prayers* (16). Is this taking a city?

Nehemiah, *soaking in the word of God* (17), prayed for a city. God gave him the opportunity of rebuilding Jerusalem after a godly manner. Is this what we mean by taking a city?

Jonah was reluctantly spewed up to a city. *His prophetic word* (18) stayed the hand of God for 400 years, all repented from king to slave. The story is told of St. Francis of Assisi, that wandering Pentecostal evangelist of earlier years, as to how he saved Assisi. The city was in civil war. He sent Bernardo ahead of him to *declare to the spirits over the city* (19) that Francis of Assisi was coming and to depart and to gather the leaders of rich and poor. They then sat down and negotiated a contract that saved the city. The Wesleys saved cities and nations through preaching a holistic gospel of the Kingdom to the poor. Is this taking a city for God?

Jesus, like Abraham, looked forward

to a city but was thrown out from a city for which *he did battle in prayer* (Matt. 23:37), and to which he *prophesied* (20). The outcome was its destruction 40 years later. Did he take a city? Did Abraham when he prayed for Sodom take a city? We cannot preempt the judgments of a sovereign God by some model of success in how we take cities.

Intensive Goals for Prayer

I would propose specific prayer goals for cities that have different levels of spiritual life and resources:

**Penetration evangelism* in cities less than 0.5% evangelical.⁵

**Kingdom movements* (including discipling movements, churches, and new denominations) within major sectors of cities less than 3% evangelical.

*Saturation evangelization of cities resulting in *revival movements* in every major sector and urban poor mission-sending thrusts in cities from 3-20% evangelical.

*Discipling of whole cities, bringing whole cities under the socio-economic-political principles of the Kingdom of God, *transforming the very structures and culture* of the cities where there are more than 10% evangelicals (Jesus and Paul did not have this opportunity, but many through history have).

Extensive Goals for Prayer:

*3500 cities over 100,000.

*Focus in on 1736 Cities Less than 3% Evangelical.⁶

*Primary focus on 51 cities over 1 million and less than 0.5% Christian.

brought to the notice of the Western nations the strategic place of Iraq (Babylon) and Iran (the Kingdom of Persia) in the Biblical end time scenarios, as being strongholds of two immensely powerful spirits. While hesitant about George's unique interpretation of Revelation, the reality of these two powerful spiritual centers seems verifiable. There are other centers of tremendous power in the 10/40 region. I would identify

at least five - Calcutta (center of Kali and Brahmanic Hinduism), Varanasi, Iraq, Iran and the Tibetan region. *Penetrating these is done only through death* (21). These powers are centered in cities, control countries or whole regions and extend their influence through the "isms" of philosophy and religion. The level of demonic activity in the context of these centers of principalities could be far greater than that of past Protestant missions focused on tribes. It is certainly greater than in easily accessible countries or Christianized or Catholicized contexts.

At the same time as we face a higher level of intensity of opposition, the world is moving to the cities, where all the depravity of man coalesces in giant grotesque forms that enable the spiritual powers to wreak great destruction in increasing levels. And so in general, reaching and transforming the cities becomes increasingly difficult.

A Biblical Theology of Cosmic Spiritual Urban Conflict

Biblical history is a history of a cosmic spiritual conflict between two cities – the city of God, and the city of man – of power struggles taking place in two centers of demonic powers – (the rich and the poor): The principalities over the military elites who rule the world's city-states from the mega-cities (for most countries have only one city

High Intensity Intercessory Warfare

Not only demographically but theologically many are aware that the final Biblical battles are battles between cities, between God's people in the cities (the bride of Christ, which is the city of God) and biblical Babylon as it represents the emerging interglobal network of cities – the global city itself.

The casualties will be greater than even in these least unreached cities. The level of direct confrontation with the powers will be more intense. George Otis⁷ in his artistic style has

to which the nation's resources flow. There are few true democracies even today). The powers are manifest in the urban slums, where the victims of the oppression, violence, corruption and mismanagement of countries and cities find their dwellings.

Cities as Covenants Between Peoples and God

Jerusalem was a city built from a covenant with a patriarch whose eyes were fixed on a heavenly city. Cities today frequently retain some of the effect of covenants made in former days.

When I was a child, there was a group of old men who used to pray for our city in York Place Hall in the center of the city. They were the fruit of the revival led by R.A. Torrey in 1904. In my 14th year they died. That year the Presbyterian churches of the city founded by migrant Presbyterians to be a city of God. Later however, sensuous dancing was started in the churches. By the end of the year the youth were dancing into sexual relationships in the town hall, and had left the churches.

That year the spiritual life of the city died. The city has never recovered. Even today I can count on one hand the spiritual churches in that city. God upheld covenants made with Torrey and with these men throughout their lifetime as they prayed. It was here I was first struck to the floor by the Holy Spirit into a wonderful sense of his presence. They were praying in another room, nevertheless, such was the power of Holy Spirit in their prayers.

Taking cities has to do with *re-establishing the covenants of the cities* (22), destroying the covenants made with devils and re-establishing covenants with God. As for Torrey it began with the preaching of the gospel which is the power of God for salvation.

Cities As Centers of Demonic Principalities

Jacques Ellul⁸ in perhaps the most significant theology on the city since Augustine's *City of God*, grippingly portrays this theme from the first city built by Cain in rebellion against God. His descendants built Babylon. Which, in the Scriptures begins as the name of a city but takes on the meaning of a principality far larger than any city, and becomes representative of a world urban system warring against God. In a similar manner, Jerusalem comes to represent not just the geographical location of the city of God, but a picture of the universal city where God dwells.

Today in the same manner, we find Bangkok, the "city of the angels" and in regular daily ceremonies, every portion of its land is dedicated to the spirits, for whom small houses are constructed. Kalikata or Calcutta, is named after a goddess. This city of death, is a servant of the goddess of death and destruction.

Discernment of these spiritual powers helps in preparation for the battle. It occurs by the preaching of the word, the word of our testimony, the signs that follow, and "loving not of our lives unto death." As Luther understood, "He who would true valour see, let him come hither...there's no discouragement can make him once relent his first avowed intent to be a pilgrim."

While the nature of principalities dwelling over territories may be inferred from the Scriptures, Berkhof, Walter Wink,⁹ and others coming from a variety of theological perspectives, indicate that the primary biblical categories are not simply geographical thrones and dominions but the warfare is against the philosophies and religions of the people. Thus Hollywood has been the name not only for a place but for a demonic intrusion into the homes of millions, propagating licentiousness, adultery, immorality and undermining

many forms of restrictions on human sexual practices that are necessary for holding the family together. New York is known for the financial philosophies and the structures they produce around the globe, while Washington is known around the world for the misuse of power and oppression of poor nations.

It seems that each city has a philosophical focus that defines it. Frequently the powers are "*isms*" that seem to have a territorial center. This seems logical when considering the finite nature of demonic beings in contrast with the omnipresence of our God.

Through the proclamation of the gospel, the Kingdom impacts the very structures of the cities. The Scriptures are consistent that working for justice in society is both part of a righteous person's lifestyle and lays the basis for intercession. Colossians tells us that Christ is the integrator of the structures of the universe.¹⁰ He holds cities together. Romans tells us to obey the instituted authorities for they have been appointed by God.¹¹

But what of the institutions not founded by God, such as slavery of much of North Africa and many Asian cities, or the structures of prostitution or child labor and abortion? This tension of "City of God, City of Satan" to use Robert Linthicum's term¹² is one that requires constant discernment. Structures are not usually neutral. They may be ethically corrupted, or ethically good. Or they may have life birthed into them at points by the Holy Spirit, or death by demonic powers.

For example we may break down into components the educational structure of a city-state. The policy (1) set by the governing parliamentary chamber (2), under the leadership of a secretary of education (3), is then set into operating procedures (4) by bureaucrats (5), and implemented (6) by educators (7). At any point demonic

activity or the life of the Spirit of God can enter into individuals and through individuals into the policy, philosophy, or administration. Aspects of this structure can be demonized.

Cities may be ethically good (1), bad (2) or neutral (mixed (3)), governed by godly people by God's principles (4) or infiltrated on the other hand by demonic powers (5) operating through people and philosophies.

Strategic Issues in Intercession for Cities

1. Common Progressions in City

Partnering Processes

For each city God has a purpose. And for each city God has a battle plan. It is our task to discern it. It then is our task in unity to walk with him in the obedience. Listening, unity and timing are crucial factors.

We need to know the processes involved in partnering churches together for establishing of the Kingdom in every sector of a city. Every step in such a process is of necessity the working of the Spirit, as we work with him. Every city is different and will follow a different pattern with a different time frame and style. Every battle is different.

2. Spiritual Unity of the Church Key to Spiritual Warfare

In most evangelized cities (with a significant number of churches), there will be a movement of the Holy Spirit that brings pastors of the city together. There may be many networks of pastors, Christian interest groups, prayer networks, women's networks etc., scattered across the city. Linking the leaders of these together around some common goals is a central element of reaching a city.

This must be birthed by the Holy Spirit. The spiritual unity of the leaders of the Church is a key to spiritual power (see Acts 2, 4). The Holy Spirit may not work significantly in a situation where he is grieved due to their disunity.

3. A Shared Theology of Brokenness

If there is not significant unity, the first step is to bring together the pastors in prayer or in renewal and teaching until there are reconciliations and brokenness occurs between each other.

A few weeks ago as I spoke with the pastors of one city, and as I looked around the room, I realized I had heard negative stories about every one of them. In their culture people say nice things about others but then end with cutting comments. As I began to talk about this, some 50 pastors then covenanted together to never cut down another. It had taken seven years of suffering and work to bring us to this point.

The riots in Los Angeles were the key to catalyze the unity of the church of that city. After the riots Korean and Black pastors, Hispanic and Afro-Americans and Anglos *publicly confessed their sins to each other* (23) and began to work on issues of transformation of the city together.

4. Prayer Movements

Prayer births visions of what God can do in the city (24), and *builds mutual trust and relationship* (25). It is a common denominator around which many diverse Christian groups can work in unison.

Citywide prayer, prayer walks, prayer marches, neighborhood prayer strategies, prayer triplets (26) are some of the components of such movements of prayer, that are included in the *Cities Strategy Manual*.¹³ Concerts of Prayer are effectively working in many cities. The Intercessory Prayer Manual developed by John Huffman of "Christ for the Cities in Latin America" is one of the best tools for integrating prayer and research at a local church level.

5. Released From Worldly Powers

Many sins prevent effective intercession (27). Some stand out. Penetrating centers of affluence (cities), requires the *Biblical renunciation of wealth* (28). St. Francis of Assisi has been the universal model of apostolic poverty. It was his release from the powers of greed of his times that enabled him to move into levels of spiritual power and save whole cities.

6. The First Issue In Spiritual Authority

Out of our sufferings God has given a level of authority for part of the warfare in this city. Jesus gave an absolute principle that "unless the grain of wheat dies it does not bear fruit". He modeled it, for, "Jesus became a man and dwelt among us..." Incarnation among the poor releases the power of

the Spirit. Choosing suffering with the poor produces the character of the Spirit, enabling an outflow of his power.

7. Intercessory Leadership Begins In Reaching The Poor

From the ministry of preaching among the poor emerge those with truly pastoral hearts. Again and again we find the spiritual leaders here of the city began with planting the church among the poor. We find that God raises up those who work among the poor to be the spiritual leaders of the pastors of cities. Jackie Pullinger-Chan began with drug addicts in Hong Kong and today thousands in that city owe spiritual life to the ripples of her ministry. Roger Forester began by taking needy people into his home and is being used across London and the world.

"Why?" we might ask. One reason is that a qualification of an elder is that they not be greedy.¹⁴ Perhaps also other pastors see that these are not hirelings but truly care for the sheep. Thirdly, being among the poor proves to be a training ground for understanding the structures of the city, which oppress the poor, and cause poverty, and leads us into the emergence of a prophetic powerful ministry. Luke 4:18 tells us that God unleashes his Spirit especially on such servants.

8. People Group Thinking: Necessary but Not Sufficient

We need to mobilize massive movements of prayer (29) in Latin America for the unevangelized cities in Asia. To do this requires city profiles, profiles of "peoples in cities" and profiles of "the cities of the mega-peoples" to be developed and disseminated along the lines of people profiles.

It also requires changing the format of people group profiles so that the cities of the peoples become focal, for they are the entrance point to most peoples. For while the people group movement has picked up steam, (and rural peoples will remain a major item for world evangelism), the unreached people groups have been moving to the cities. The warfare for the unreached peoples of the world will largely be fought in the cities.

Some would contend that people group thinking is all that is needed to strategically reach them. But this is a

Intercessors and Cosmic Urban Spiritual Warfare

reductionist error. Citywide thinking is required to reach cities. Part of this is to develop an analysis of the people groups in each city. But while cities have linguistic groups, and ethnic communities, they also have networks, economic and class, and caste barriers and many other forms of social groups. Diversity, not reductionism, is the way to urban evangelization.

Is There Still a Place for Western Missions?

There is new power in the "Charismatic" leaderships from the West. Unfortunately they do not know the issues of poverty. They have heard the Lord speak about the poor, and are seeking to obey, but so far have been unwilling to pay the price of changing their lifestyles, structures and message. Decadence and greed take their toll. Yet there are pockets of significance – such as the commitment of the New Zealand churches to the poor that has resulted in seven missions now sending long-term teams to the slums of Asia.

Apart from teams in the slums of Manila with International Teams and the commitments of Action International, and the growing focus of YWAM and O.M. on the urban poor, it is difficult to find a large U.S. mission society with a strategy for sending teams of church planters in to the slums of the cities. If they do not reach the poor of these cities, how will they know the issues of the city? *And if they do not suffer with the people, how can they pray for a city? and so how will the cities be reached?*

The Lord is turning to others. Perhaps the future is with missionaries from newly developed countries to the cities of the poorer nations. People

who know how to plant the church among the urban poor in the power of the Spirit and are able to live simply, going from economies that are beginning to have sufficient support base to sustain them. In such a statement I am also predicting that the Lord will stabilize several Latin economies as the church begins to move from simple evangelism to transform the structures of those nations, and that they will have the economic base for sustained mission sending.

The resources are available. The potential workers are available. Presence among the poor, proclamation with power and prevailing prayer remain the methodologies to bring about closure, to bring about a discipling movement in every major sector in 3500 cities on the globe. We need to move from *Penetration to Church-planting to Movements of Transformation* of these cities, and before the Lord returns. Mobilized, strategically focused, informed, trained and incarnational intercession is our starting point.

End Notes

¹Principles of intercession are in italics and with a (number) beside them.

²See Grigg, Viv, "Cry of the Urban Poor," chapter 2. MARC, 1992, for a more extensive summary of research on the extent of the slums.

³As a rule of thumb we are looking at major sectors as any people group (as defined by a people themselves) consisting of over 100,000 people. This is generally based on language and ethnic background, but also by occupation, and to some degree by economic status (e.g. street children, slum communities), and to some degree by

community in the city (e.g. suburbs in America).

⁴Wagner, Peter, *Warfare Prayer*, Regal Books, 1991.

⁵The percentage levels are purely rule of thumb. It seems that around 3% evangelical in a city some kind of sustainable processes begin to take shape. It seems that beyond this point increasing levels of transformation of society begin to occur.

⁶We could redo this ranking on the basis of Barrett's % Christian. His figures are based on an integrity of sociological definitions. Percentage Evangelical from Patrick Johnstone is an estimate, also with integrity but measuring a variable more readily perceived by front-line evangelists. Basing a ranking on Barrett's model gives roughly the same rankings but leaves out re-evangelization of Catholic and Orthodox cities.

⁷Otis, George, *The Last of the Giants*, Chosen Books, 1991.

⁸Ellul, Jacques, *The Meaning of the City*, Eerdmans, 1977.

⁹An excellent summary can be found in McAlpine, Thomas, "Facing the Powers: What are the Options," MARC, 1991.

¹⁰Colossians 1:16-20.

¹¹Romans 13:1-7.

¹²Linthicum, Robert, *City of God, City of Satan*, Zondervan, 1991. A Biblical theology of the city from the perspective of Christian community organization.

¹³Available from Urban Leadership, 127 N. Madison Ave, #20, Pasadena, CA 91101 (\$20 incl. tax, P&H).

¹⁴1 Timothy 3:3.

The Bihari Of India:

A People

*Still Unreached
with
the Gospel*

Prayer Profile Supplied by the AAPC

“I had a vision that the spirit of darkness sits on a throne and waits to see your weakness,” a missionary writes about Bihar. “This is different from anywhere in India. This spirit is shrewd and cunning. You can’t tell when it will hit or where it may come from.”

A Religious Past

The home of the Bihari people is bisected by the famous Ganges river and is the birth place of enumerable tribal beliefs and three world religions. Pilgrims of Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism flock to Bihar in Eastern India to worship at numerous shrines and holy sites. *Jainists*, an offshoot of Hinduism, claim Pavapuri as their center, while Hindu’s worship at Gaya as a holy place. *Sikh’s* revere Patna City as the birthplace of the 10th and final *Sikh* guru, Gobind Singh and Bodhgaya is the holiest site for *Buddhists* – where Buddha allegedly gained enlightenment under a Bo tree.

Bihar became the center for the spread of Buddhism throughout Asia when King Ashoka (269-232 B.C.) ruled over all of the Indian subcontinent. In the 1850’s Bihar was a hub for mutiny against the British. Mahatma Gandhi launched his passive resistance movement, *satyagraha* from Champaran in Northern Bihar.

A Hopeless Present

Bihar has a proud and powerful history and her capital city of Patna (2 million) is the third oldest in India. The state is one of the most densely populated in India; it has seen empires rise and fall; has spawned major religions, yet Bihar is regarded as the backward and depressed stepchild of India. (90% of Bihari’s are rural, with only 26% adult literacy). Bihar is long ceased to be an advanced culture or center of power.

The Muslim Majority/Minority

Some 50% of Bihari’s are Muslim. Although the majority live in the state of Bihar you will find them scattered all over India as well as in Nepal and Bangladesh. There are three main groups: Wealthy Sunnis, the middle class and poor Sunnis and Shiites.

One million Bihari Muslims fled India to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) when it was set up as a Muslim State in 1947. They sided with Pakistan during the civil war which gained Bangladesh its freedom and are now considered traitors to Bangladesh. They live in refugee camps and have waited in vain for 20 years for help from Pakistan. Today only 20% of Patna and 12% of the state of Bihar are Muslim so they have little power to unite as a people. A dominant 85% of the state of Bihar are Hindu.

A Confusion of Languages

The Bihari speak three major languages: Bhojpuri (46 million), Mithili (25 million) and Magahi (12 million). The majority also speak Urdu or Hindi. Mixed with the languages are countless religions. Bihar and Patna are strongholds of the “god obsession” of India.

Little remains of their past glory – all that is left are broken down buildings, while their children play in littered streets. The lowest female literacy rate and the highest infant mortality rate in India reveals a picture of a people in spiritual darkness, deep bondage and enslaved by poverty.

Bihari Unreached with Christianity

The introduction of Christianity has been nearly impossible – the price is too high. Bihari believers write:

“My family disowns me and neighbors persecute me,” “My grandfather refers to me as his dead son,” “I cry and cry because I am all alone!” A Christian faces the loss of social solidarity and oneness with his people. Seemingly the small church and nominal Christianity cannot make up for the loss of support provided by the extended family. It is not surprising that 9 out of 10 Muslim converts revert back to Islam.

The church is scattered, weak and fragmented. (Less than 20,000 or 0.02% of Bihari’s are Christian) Bihari’s reputation as a *graveyard* of missions is well earned.

Bible Status

Only the Magahi language has a portion of the Bible. But it was translated in 1826 and is now out of print. There are translations currently in progress for the other two major languages: Bhojpuri and Mithili. Very few Scriptures are available in Urdu or other Indian languages.

The Bihari of India

For Further Study

R.R. Diwakar (ed), *Bihar Through The Ages*, 1959,

Caleb Project, *That They May Know Him*—Prayer Booklet For Muslims in Patna, India, 1989,

Sir John Houlton, *Bihar: The Heart of India*, 1949,

Church Growth Research Center, *A Portrait of India*— Study Material for Lausanne II, 1989,

William S. Ellis, “Bangladesh Hope Nourishes a New Nation,” *National Geographic*, Sept. 1972, p. 295-333.

The State of Bihar

- * Area: 173,877 Sq Km— a little smaller than Sweden.
- * Capital: Patna.
- * Average Rainfall – 40-60 inches.
- * Bihar is divided by the Ganges River.
- * Bihar is a leading industrial area of India.
- * Bihar accounts for 40% of the mineral production of India.
- * Cash crop are chili, sugar and tobacco.

The Bihari People

Population:

- * 83 million.
- * Besides the three major languages, 90% speak Urdu (the official Muslim language) and 44% speak Hindi (the official language of India).
- * Literacy – 26%.
- * Minority populations include: Muslims, Jains, Sikhs, Christians, and numerous tribal peoples.

Life in Bihar:

- * 10% urban, 90% rural.
- * Bihari have voting rights, though Muslims and other minorities lack

power.

- * Muslims rarely have white collar jobs or good pay.

Religion:

- * 56% Muslim.
- * 40% Hindus.
- * 4-12% Tribal.
- * Less than 0,02% Christians.

Pray for the Bihari

- * Pray that the power of *principalities* (the gods of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam) keeping the people in spiritual bondage will be broken. (Read Dan. 9:11-19; 10:10-14; 2 Cor. 10:4-5)
- * Pray that the churches in Patna will be *strengthened and revived* so they will reach out and become evangelists and missionaries to their own people. (Eph. 6:10-20)
- * Pray for *unity* among the churches of Bihar. Pray that the Bihar church can be the source of peace between Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists. (John 17:6-23)

- * Pray that as Bihar has been seedbed for other world religions it will in the last days become a *fountain* of Christian awakening in India and a sign to Hindus everywhere. (2 Samuel 7:18-26; Neh. 6:15-16)
- * Pray for *Christian workers* in Bihar by name, that they will not grow weary in the spiritual war they wage. (Isa. 62:1-9)
- * Pray that the religious Bihari will see that *salvation* does not come by law or works, but only through the Lord Jesus Christ and faith in him. (Gal. 2:16)
- * Pray for *new missionaries* who would bring the gospel in its fulness to the poor and needy in Bihar, as well as to the poor in other Indian states and in Bangladesh.

“After this I beheld a great multitude, which no man could number from all nations, and kindreds, and peoples and tongues.” (Revelation 7:9)

Reflections on the Adopt-A-People Consultation II

Colorado Springs, August 16, 1993

By Frank Kaleb Jansen

Will history repeat itself? It was a fairly courageous statement that the 230 participants from 107 organizations made when they, at the Adopt-A-People Consultation II earlier this year, made their unanimous declaration: "*An Appeal to Disciples Everywhere*" echoing the petition from D. L. Moody and A.T. Pierson at the mission conference in Northfield 1885.

The declaration from Colorado Springs 1993 was even more daring than the original, because, we knew that these great men failed in their attempt to see the world evangelized before the turn of the century. In 1895 A.T. Pierson had to announce - "I despair of hope!" The reason was the lack of prayer and unity in the Body of Christ. The bloodiest and most destructive of all centuries, that was about to dawn did prove him right. Although for many other reasons, the twentieth century caused a whole mankind to despair of hope.

Back then was there a link between the failure of the church and the global rise of evil? We shall of course never know, but I tend to believe that Christian unity and a global mission thrust might have resulted in a revival that would have changed the history of our century.

The April Consultation

What happened at the April Consultation that made the present group of mission executives standing, in defiance of both history and our giant forefathers, to declare that we believe it is possible to proclaim the Gospel to every person and to see a viable church established among all peoples, even before AD 2000? The conclusions of the meeting carrying the same title as the declaration from a hundred years back came in one accord, with no

dissenting votes. Truly it is a rare document of unity in spirit, purpose and goal. (Note: that document was printed in *extencio* in the summer issue of *IJFM*.)

The center piece, and actually the main reason for AAP Consultation II, was the presentation of the compilation of a comprehensive list of "unreached and adoptable peoples" and the consequences this would bring about for mission agencies and churches. The survey is called: "A Church for Every People" and carries on the back cover Jesus' words (John 17:21):

...that they may all be one;

...that the world may believe...

These words became in many ways the spiritual theme for every presentation, and undergirded the whole consultation. Several intercessors had been praying and fasting 40 days for the gathering, one group prayed day and night during the entire time we were meeting. Point #4 of the "Appeal" says: *We recognize that we have not done all that we could in making Christ known to the unreached peoples. For this we repent.*

It was therefore just natural as Dick Eastman (EHC) lead in prayer that the conference ended on bended knees, in repentance, seeking new strength before we were dismissed with E.V. Hill's powerful poem:

Go on!

Go ON!

GO ON!

Some things were done differently at this conference compared to others we have hosted. First of all, much effort was put into making it a consultation, not only for the Adopt-A-People Clearinghouse, but also for churches and

mission agencies. A group consisting of Luis Bush (AD 2000), Bruce Camp (Ev. Free Church), Ron Rowland (SIL), Clark Scanlon (Southern Baptist, FMB) and Ralph Winter (WCIU) with Frank Kaleb Jansen (AAPC and the MC for the meeting) *ex officio* labored through the whole gathering as an editorial committee. Another group of about 30 acted as a "review committee" while the AAPC board members were collecting input from everybody. The final draft was then discussed in a plenary session before the final edit. It was exciting to see the unity among the participants when the "Appeal" was endorsed unanimously.

The 230 participants at the Conference might seem few and insignificant compared to the 6000 at the conference in Northfield. However, when one looks at who this consultation represented and their sphere of influence, they by far surpass the influence of the first meeting some 100 years ago.

The Format

Another noticeable difference was the format of the conference. Because it was planned and executed as a live TV production, every presentation was shorter and more "visual" with graphs and illustrations. Everyone kept within their time frame and mission leaders did in ten or fifteen minutes what normally might have taken forty-five. All the speakers were informed beforehand of the content of everyone's presentation. Therefore the consultation was run like a relay race with minimal overlaps, with one speaker passing the baton to the other. The "TV format" with its short and to the point presentations also made it possible to

produce a nearly complete, condensed version of the whole unreached peoples concept as it is viewed by our leading missiologists and mission executives of today. (As a matter of fact, when we tried to edit this conference to one hour presentations it was not possible simply because every speaker packed so much wisdom and knowledge into every sentence that it was hard to delete anything.)

When historians are going to view this conference in hindsight they will appreciate the videos which make it possible to see even the facial expressions when a point is made by “tongue in cheek” humor - and there were a lot of those.

How I wish I had made videos of Ralph Winter’s speech at Lasagne’ 74, or the meetings called Dallas I and II, Chicago 1982, GCOWE 89, the constitution of AAPC 89 etc. Then the many misconceptions and even unsolvable conflicts based on differences in opinion on what really took place at their meetings could have been avoided and the God given inspiration that created those events could have been preserved for posterity. The quality speeches delivered at the AAPC are now available for everyone, and they really will serve as a resource in every mission library. For the AAPC these tapes have become our guidelines for the future and historic documents to which we feel obligated and accountable.

A third point was that the participants expressed their appreciation for the low price and that they could walk away with documents like the book “A Church for Every People” and a database for Unreached and Adoptable Peoples. After years of loose numbers and guesstimates many felt that they were given something tangible that they could focus on. One participant said: “The fog has finally lifted. I feel that I can see the targets now!”

The exhibits, that were all carefully selected and invited to the conference, were done so because they represented the practical hands and feet to what was presented by the speakers. They therefore became much more an integral part of the conference than usually has been the case. We tend to forget that it is often the exhibitors that carry conferences through both with regard to practical content and finances.

Highlights

To select highlights from this meeting is like presenting golden nuggets from Fort Knox, one can just pick and choose from almost every presentation and speaker. But here are some outstanding points: Joy Crawford opened by saying: *“I’m just an ordinary housewife and I feel terrified standing before you guys with all your knowledge and expertise”*.

Then she went on to present a brilliant case study on how her church had selected, adopted and sustained the adoption until they had really “reached” that people group. Down to earth, void of missiological “slang” she gave us all a lecture on how God

**Local churches in
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in His sovereignty can and will lead those who honestly seek to serve Him. To me she was a voice of the future of mission and mission mobilization.

Along the same line Stan Yoder from the Missionary Church gave us

the exiting story on how a smaller congregation of 250 members had adopted the Susu of West Africa. These two cases studies are in and of themselves sufficient for anyone to grasp the whole idea of our goal of A Church for Every People by AD 2000.

Seeing events like the above happening at an ever greater speed, I felt led to share right from the opening of the conference that the concept of adopting people groups has reached its point of critical mass. It is an idea whose time has come, and it will change the face of mission forever. As I see it, it was meant, not so much a prophecy, but as a statement of fact. Local churches in network with national Christians will partner with mission agencies and take a *LEADING ROLE* in reaching the unreached peoples of the world.

The mission agencies that understand this will thrive, those who don’t will barely survive. “The times they are achanging,” sang Bob Dylan. Western mission and missiology will be changed as well.

Clark Scanlon, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and Rick Stroller from Interdev emphasized the paradigm shift taking place through the non-resident missionary program (CSI) and regional Partnerships. Their summing up of years of practical experience and highly professional presentation of networks and partnerships put “flesh on the skeletons of theoretical missiology” and will probably be the language that launch the baby boomers into missions.

Terry Riley, presented the AAPC follow up, a practical application with global, regional and local networks. The AAP Challenge is that American churches are assigned a people according to their zip code. This is one way we can secure every people to be adopted, even though it will only be one of many ways the concept of adopting peoples will be promoted. Although Riley’s presentation was virtually drowned between the “big guns” and never was debated, it will nevertheless be a working plan for AAPC how to best serve our constituency and the unreached peoples of the world.

Also it can be said that the high quality workshops were practical and

down to earth. Five different workshops were repeated every hour on the hour during the conference, but even so it was difficult for every one to participate. Marv Bowers (ILS) and Kent Schroder (SIL) covered data programs on the writing of Peoples Profiles. Mark Patterson (GMI) lectured on E-Mail and from Galcom we learned how to facilitate portable FM radio stations.

The workshop that especially captured my attention was Jay Gary's presentation, where he showed us from the literature on the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement, five trends on what to expect at the turn of the millennium. Jay is probably the most versed person in our Christian community on this subject regarding the future as he leads the organization Celebration 2000. My special interest in his lecture was because I spoke on the same topic entitled: "The 15 Trends at Work Today and Where Will They Take Us in The Year 2020?" I am a little ashamed because I was the only speaker (even though as MC I had made the rules) that spoke too long, I had no visual aid and I only touched three of my intended fifteen points. Even so after a 12 hour day with massive information input, one could literally hear a needle drop and minds

buzzing when I closed by challenging our popular theology which is our greatest hindrance to meet the challenges of the future.

What about the "big guns" like Luis Bush, Don Kammerdiener, Dale Kietzman, Ralph Winter and Ron Rowland – the keynote speakers? First of all when the experts are asked to speak they all come prepared and bring with them oceans of wisdom. This consultation was no exception. Don Kammerdiener gave us the background and development of the concept of unreached peoples and the cooperation among Evangelicals from Lausanne '74 to Colorado Springs '93. Most interesting though was his insight in how this has changed and still is changing the Southern Baptist Convention and their Foreign Mission Board, regarding their thinking, strategy and actions – even their research which from now on will be submitted to their theology. He made us all rejoice when he in the spirit of "glasnost and perestroika" declared that their research was for the whole Body of Christ to use.

Luis Bush in his unique way revealed to us how he as a "dreamer was related to the dreamers of the

Bible", and then documented from his global vantage point why he had reasons to believe that his dream of a church for every people by the year 2000 would come true. Ralph Winter illumined us with his State of the World Address, and Dale Kietzman echoed D.L. Moody as he gave a 1990 version of:

*It can be done.
It must be done.
It will be done!*

Ronald Rowland and his presentation of the Peoples Information Network and the research that gave the scientific foundation for the listing of all the 12,000 ethnolinguistic peoples of the world, as well as the 5,310 unreached ones, was one of the two pillars of the whole Conference.

A panel of a newbreed of mission executives, Dave Dougherty (OMF), Paul Filides (YWAM) and Gary Corwin (SIM) probably was the most provocative and challenging as they opened up the conference for interaction from the audience by asking questions like: Are mission agencies a blessing or a bottleneck? What about facts and fictions in our research. Are we manipulating the truth to fit our

Spiritual Warfare:

Should It Be Included In A Missions Curriculum?

From biblical, missiological and contemporary perspectives should we train missionaries, especially ones from the secularized Western world, in the art of spiritual warfare? Professor Laughlin makes a good case for the point that "we should do nothing less."

In their introduction, the editors of *Wrestling with Dark Angels* state that, "If the real battle for the advancement of the kingdom of God is spiritual, we need to learn as much as we can about the rules of the war, the battle plans, the nature of our enemy, the resources at our disposal and the best tactics for employing them."¹

Few, if any, would debate this assertion. Yet we know that issues exist related to spiritual warfare that generate debate. One debate-generating issue among Christian educators centers on the need to design a curriculum which would include spiritual warfare.

This paper affirms that such a need exists today. Three sections are presented: First, a review of biblical imperatives and objectives, second, the contemporary necessity, and third, the specific placement of such a curriculum within a mission orientation.

Biblical Imperatives and Objectives

LeRoy Ford states that, "A curriculum design reflects appropriately the great foundation disciplines."² From a Christian perspective, nothing is more foundational than the Scriptures. Therefore, one of the first steps in considering a spiritual warfare curriculum is the consideration of biblical imperatives and objectives related to such a curriculum.

The task of theological/missiological education is captured in two imperative statements the Apostle Paul makes to Timothy. First, Paul exhorts Timothy to be diligent in presenting himself to God as a laborer who handles the Word of God precisely.³ The objective here is careful exegesis of the discernment of the

Scriptures and their applications.

When we connect this imperative with Paul's command to the Ephesians to, "... take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,"⁴ we can sense how essential it is to successful spiritual warfare that the believer understands and applies God's Word with discernment. In fact, the context in which Paul encourages Timothy's diligence describes the consequences of not precisely handling the Scriptures. Ruined hearers and ungodliness are not the goals of the servant of Christ and are counter-productive to successful spiritual warfare.

Theological education, therefore, must equip students to handle precisely God's Word so they understand and apply the Scriptures with discernment. Successful spiritual warfare depends in great part on this discernment for it is the Word of God that provides our armament for battle.

The second imperative with which Paul exhorts Timothy calls for him to entrust to faithful men those things which he had learned from Paul.⁵ The larger objective of this imperative is to transmit truth from generation to generation.

Paul follows this imperative with the image of a soldier engaged in warfare. The spiritual warfare of the believer demands, among other requirements, that what is learned is to be entrusted to others. Therefore, it is crucial that what is taught to students who will teach others must reflect the eternal truth of God.

Continued success in spiritual warfare requires the faithful transmission of God's truth from generation to generation. Theological and missiological

education provides the atmosphere in which students can be equipped to be those transmitters of truth.

These two imperatives with their objectives, in harmony with other biblical imperatives and objectives relating to spiritual warfare, find their ultimate objective in pleasing our Heavenly Father. We are to be diligent in precisely handling God's Word so we may be "... approved by God," and as soldiers be able to discharge our duties so that we, "... may please him who enlisted us ..."

Contemporary Necessity

Once biblical imperatives and objectives are ascertained, we seek to understand the contemporary necessity of including spiritual warfare curriculum in Christian education. All would agree that spiritual warfare has been, and will continue to be, a necessary topic to be taught.

Traditionally spiritual warfare has been incorporated into other related courses like Spiritual Life or a course in Angelology. For some, this is sufficient. But others believe that contemporary necessity warrants designing a curriculum that addresses the current trends, practices, and teaching associated with spiritual warfare.

SIM Position Paper

We read the following from an SIM position paper on power encounter:

The related subject of the miraculous in Christian ministry is currently receiving unusual attention. Contempo-

Spiritual Warfare: Should It Be Included in a Missions Curriculum?

rary Bible colleges and seminaries are rapidly adding courses on spiritual warfare, power encounter, and signs and wonders to their curriculums. Current Christian books and magazines . . . are flooded with discussion on this topic. Popular lecturers crisscross the continents to expound the issue. A new denomination . . . is growing rapidly. Indeed, a movement identified as “The Third Wave” calls upon the evangelical world to accept that signs, wonders, and miracles, as seen in the miracles of Jesus and the apostles, are to be expected in today’s church.⁶

Observations of the contemporary church informs us that the demand for credible training and application of truth is multiplying. Today’s church faces a new epistemology, a new secularism, and new definitions of familiar terms.⁷ With such an infusion of new ideas and ways of thinking, it is my belief that a specialized class on spiritual warfare is necessary.

Another reason I believe such a curriculum is needed is that as worldliness increases, there is a correlating increase in demonic activity. Paul warned, “. . . that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”⁸ Living in a post-Christian era in America it becomes essential we prepare for increased demonic activity and train believers for authentic biblically based spiritual warfare.

In addition to determining the contemporary necessity of designing such a curriculum, it is vital to evaluate what objectives the curriculum should seek to fulfill. These objectives will reflect why the curriculum is being designed in the first place: contemporary trends in epistemology, secularism, and terminology.

Another objective to be carefully considered relates to the practice of what is learned in the classroom. In one controversial situation, a prominent seminary discontinued a class on spiritual warfare because the practice of what was taught became disruptive.⁹ This experience serves to alert us to issues that are very much a part of the rationale for designing this curriculum.

One advantage of such a curriculum is that it can restrict its focus to material relevant to spiritual warfare. Determination of biblical parameters, discussion of related issues, and development of practical strategies can be

better generated from this focused approach.

Biblical parameters as to what constitutes genuine spiritual warfare should be determined by exegetical study and integration with other theological disciplines. Exegesis enables the student to better understand what God says, and does not say, about this issue. Exegesis informs and validates our experience. Rather than relying on the “arm of flesh” which will fail, we lay a strong foundation with the truth of God’s Word.

Integrating what one believes about spiritual warfare with other areas of systematic mission theology enables the believer to see the effect of that teaching on other doctrines. Hence the determination of biblical parameters establishes the plumb line by which the discussion of related issues and the development of practical strategies must be measured.

The discussion of related issues will be, to a large degree, open-ended. However, two important issues to include are the role of various theological viewpoints and their effect on understanding spiritual warfare (e.g. pentecostalism, dispensationalism) and the dynamic relationship between mission activity and spiritual warfare in other cultures.

Developing practical strategies prepares the student for the application of the lessons learned through this curriculum. Strategizing provides for the effective integration of Scriptural truth with particular issues and needs which the student could encounter in cross-cultural settings as well as in the student’s personal life. The study and evaluation of case studies can assist the student in developing strategies that are true to God’s Word in responding to the mandate to evangelize the lost and equip believers for a life of victory.

Contemporary necessity, then, favors the designing of a spiritual warfare curriculum that will respond to current needs and anticipate future developments with biblically sound strategies.

A Mission Orientation

From the standpoint of both biblical imperatives and contemporary necessity, I have sought to demonstrate

the need for designing a curriculum focused on spiritual warfare. If we answer affirmatively the question, “Should there be a spiritual warfare curriculum,” then the question which the title of this paper raises remains. The question assumes that a relationship exists between spiritual warfare and the equipping of men and women for mission. I believe that this assumption is correct.

Although this curriculum could very well fit into a theology or pastoral orientation, the missions orientation is entirely appropriate. Both in Scripture and in church history, when men and women involved themselves in mission, they were spiritually opposed and needed to do spiritual battle.

Christ was opposed, the apostles were opposed, ministers and missionaries have been, and are, opposed. Responses to that opposition have differed in different periods of God’s work. Nevertheless the principle stands: Mission begets spiritual opposition as Hesselgrave observes,

. . . the sobering fact is that the twentieth century has been characterized by a terrible outcropping of opposition to the cause and people of Christ. Moreover, there are few signs of abatement . . . Rather, there are many signs of an increased opposition directed especially to those involved in the spread of the Christian faith.¹⁰

In addition to this principle, three reasons suggest that inclusion of spiritual warfare curriculum within a missions orientation is appropriate.

First, mission agencies support this assertion. Position papers, requests for help, and concern for present and future missionaries evidence the need for a curriculum that focuses on spiritual warfare within the context of mission.¹¹

Second, the intensity of demonic activity in areas of mission ministry support this assertion. “Work among the unreached peoples reveals at least one reason why the unreached peoples have been unreached—acute spiritual bondage . . .”¹² Therefore the effects of long term occult practices among the “hidden peoples” require that those who reach out to them are adequately equipped for what they will encounter.

Third, contemporary missions have been a major contributor to the shift in the way many think about and

practice spiritual warfare. To be certain that this change, or any change, is biblical rather than just pragmatic or expedient, or more Western cultural baggage requires adequately trained mission leadership. Such training must include two basic elements: a grounding in the Word of God and an understanding of contemporary missions. A failure to equip leadership with a proper biblical foundation can result in mission which runs the risk of being built on sand instead of the solid rock.¹³ A failure to equip leadership with a proper understanding of contemporary missions can result in mission which inadequately engages in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Believing that missions begets opposition and recognizing the increased requirements in missions for confronting spiritual opposition today, I believe that a curriculum for spiritual warfare fits best within a mission orientation and training program.

Conclusion

Thomas Ice writes,

The call for today is to let the Bible tell us who our enemy is, what our battle plan involves, and how to carry it out. As believers we must be completely submissive to Jesus Christ and His Word.¹⁴

I believe the imperatives and objectives of Scripture, the contemporary necessity, and the character of mission necessitate the designing of a curriculum focused on spiritual warfare offered in the context of a mission orientation. In view of Satan's increased and persistent attacks, we should do nothing less.

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1. C. Peter Wagner and F. Douglas Pennoyer, ed., *Wrestling with Dark Angels*, (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990), 10.
2. LeRoy Ford, *A Curriculum Design Manual for Theological Education*,

(Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991), 36.

3. 2 Timothy 2:15

4. Ephesians 6:17 (NKJV)

5. 2 Timothy 2:2

6. Howard Brant, "Toward an SIM Position on Power Encounter" (Charlotte: SIM, n.d.), 3.

7. The new epistemology is really the old existentialism masquerading in evangelical cloth. Rather than Scripture being sufficient for knowing truth, some evangelical leaders appeal to experience and other extra-biblical disciplines for authoritative teaching as well. Empiricism and pragmatism vie with Scripture as the basis for what is believed.

The new secularism, "... stressing that God is peculiarly present in this (the miraculous), as distinct from natural healings, borders dangerously on an unbiblical dualism." Ben Patterson, "Cause for Concern," *Christianity Today* (August 8, 1986): 20. There is a rethinking as to what is "sacred" and what is "secular".

New definitions of familiar terms produce confusion. Important distinctions have been blurred. Attempts to define demon possession confront one with several choices. Which is right? See Thomas Ice, "Demon Possession and the New Clinical Deliverance," *Biblical Perspectives* (May-June 1992): 2.

8. 2 Timothy 4:1 (NKJV)

9. Ben Patterson, "Cause for Concern," *Christianity Today* (August 8, 1986): 20.

10. David J. Hesselgrave, *Today's Choices for Tomorrow's Missions*, (Grand Rapids: Academie, 1988), 199.

11. Admittedly, opposition to mission is not a new and novel idea. Opposition has always existed to the mission of God. However, due to changes in the way evangelicals think about spiritual warfare, the apparent increases in overt satanic activity in areas not thought to be problematic, and the outreach to the unreached peoples who exhibit acute spiritual bondage, a renewed emphasis on the biblical response regarding this matter is necessary. Michael Pocock, Class Lecture Notes, Mission 847,

Summer 1992.

12. Michael Pocock, Class Lecture Notes, Missions 847, Summer 1992.

13. Matthew 7:24-27

14. Thomas Ice, "Demon Possession and the New Clinical Deliverance," *Biblical Perspectives* (May-June 1992):

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AAPC Consultation II

A Second Reflection

By E. David Dougherty

It was a privilege to participate in the April Consultation on the Adopt-A-People movement in Colorado Springs. The timing of the meeting was especially appropriate in moving toward a comprehensive approach to world evangelization based on frontier missiology. Earlier meetings had to focus on other aspects of the task—now we are ready to focus on mobilization—the specific purpose for which Adopt-A-People has been designed.

- * In the 1970's and early 1980's the theoretical foundations of people-group-based strategies for world evangelization were established.
- * In the decade of the 1980's frontier missiology became the dominant force guiding strategy and tactics for evangelization for both mission agencies and churches—largely through the efforts of Dr. Ralph Winter and the U.S. Center for World Mission, as well as the efforts of IFMA, EFMA, World Vision's Marc, and others.
- * Now, in the decade of the 1990's the application of frontier missiology to the mobilization of resources (prayer, personnel and funding) has captured the imagination of many churches and mobilizers led by the Adopt-A-People program, APMC, the AD 2000 Movement in the U.S. and others.

In his report Kaleb Jansen has already highlighted many of the benefits and blessings of the consultation—which occupied his time and energy for many months. All those attending owe a debt of gratitude to him for undertaking this herculean task on relatively short notice. I would like to emphasize some of the points in retrospect, and perhaps provide an alternate perspective on aspects of the conference.

Audience

Though Kaleb noted that Colorado Springs 1993 attracted a different kind of audience than Northfield 1885, he did not point out explicitly what that difference was. At Northfield, the meeting consisted mostly of pastors gathered from throughout the Northeastern U.S. At Colorado Springs, it was mission agency executives, denominational leaders and key mission mobilizers who came from across the U.S. and around the world to consult about mobilizing the churches for a major assault on the final frontiers of missions.

The involvement of key leaders sets this meeting apart from previous meetings, and emphasizes the strategic importance of its conclusions. It would be good to note that the AAP Clearinghouse has scheduled a meeting more like the Northfield meeting, designed specifically for local church leadership, in April 1994.

Format

Although Kaleb found the “television” format of the meeting highly positive in adding focus and clarity to the proceedings, as well as preserving the presentation for posterity, many participants however felt the format was unnecessarily restrictive. A major impact of the format was to totally eliminate interaction and discussion from all but two sessions. There was very little opportunity for “consulting” in this consultation.

Continuity

In the sweep of recent history, there have been a number of national and international consultations focused on the idea of the final frontiers of missions. From Dr. Winter's presentation at Lausanne 1974 to Edinburgh 1980, through the AD 2000 meeting in Singapore 1989 there has been substantial agreement on the dimen-

sions and thrust of frontier missions.

In his reflections, Kaleb refers to “misconceptions and even unsolvable conflicts based on differences in opinion on what really took place at the meetings.” My observation is that many of those so called “misconceptions and conflicts” arose from unshared assumptions, more than from failure in the communication process, or the lack of videotapes of the meetings, etc. Second, these differences sometimes originate in the personal and organizational agendas of those involved. And finally, highly committed, strongly gifted and powerfully effective leaders can be expected to experience personal conflicts as they work together to effect a major paradigm shift in the way we “do missions” as evangelicals.

What is different in this instance is that, while there has been differences of opinion and conviction—without which previous consultations would have been sterile and boring—the major directions and definitions have been developed through consultations and consensus.

However, it should be noted that at the April meeting, some major changes in definition and direction were introduced, not through the consultation process, but arbitrarily by the conveners. One of these major changes relates to the definitions behind production of the list of “unreached and adoptable” peoples. For instance, it appears that these arbitrary changes do not necessarily move AAP forward, in the frontier missions movement, but may lead it backward in terms of clear thinking about the target for church planting.

It seems to me that the conceptual breakthrough which made frontier missiology the dominant force it is today was due to defining the target for proclaiming the gospel in terms of the *desired result* (a viable, indige-

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nous, evangelizing church) rather than in terms of the *necessary activities* (presence, proclamation, persuasion, etc.) to achieve the result. In missiological terms, this has implied defining the audience in terms of culture and society, the structures and channels through which communication flow, rather than defining the audience in terms of language and location—the boundaries which define the missionary’s activities of preaching, meeting, sharing, etc.

However, on page i-iii of the list published by the AAP Clearinghouse and introduced at the consultation, Kaleb provides his rationale for redefining the concept of unreached peoples in terms of ethnicity and location, rather than in terms of social structure and culture. Instead of being a breakthrough on the cutting edge, this change appears to me to be a reversion to the mission thinking which dominated the scene in the pre-frontier-mission era. For example, my own agency (OMF-formerly the China Inland Mission) has pamphlets and articles, dating back 100 years which listed target audiences for our ministry in terms of ethnicity and location. While the new list is certainly more comprehensive than anything produced to date, it does not reflect continuity with current frontier missiology, so much as continuity with a by-gone previous generation of missions thinking.

The addition of the concept of “adoptable” groups to the idea of “unreached peoples” is another

example of changing the ground rules by fiat, apparently without the benefit of consultation or mission consensus. I understand that Kaleb’s own background and organization is *Bibles for All* end that he has a particular concern for translation and publication of the Scripture in every language. However, I’m not sure that the addition of these elements is very helpful to the concept of identifying unreached people groups for world evangelization.

AAP Strategy

Kaleb describes the AAP challenge proposed by Terry Riley, Associate Director of the Clearinghouse, in which each U.S. church is assigned an unreached people group according to its zip code, as “the working plan for AAPC, how we can best serve our constituency and the unreached peoples of the world.” Kaleb notes that “Terry’s plan was... never debated.” However, as a new member of the Clearinghouse board, I distinctly recall that Terry’s proposal sparked animated debate and discussion among the board members. It is my further recollection that the board explicitly agreed not to pursue this strategy, at least not at this time.

The problem with the zip code strategy is that it not only ignores, but essentially counters the basic principle of *partnership* which has become so important for churches and mission agencies. In other words, the strategy ignores the very principles which frontier missiology is founded on—that of using existing

social structures and communication networks rather than operating on the basis of geographic location. If it took us 150 years to learn the importance of this in our evangelism strategy and planning, let’s hope it won’t take us another 150 years to apply the same principle to our mobilization strategy and planning.

To one observer, a key leader of a mobilization organization—the consultation had a negative impact—losing much of the excitement and enthusiasm for reaching the peoples of the world for Jesus Christ in the clutter and woodenness of “staged” speeches. However, on balance, I saw a spirit of contagious optimism throughout the meetings. The worship team made a tremendous contribution to the meetings, as did the opportunity for interaction and encouragement between sessions, at mealtimes and at breaks. But there just wasn’t enough time allotted for these essential components.

Adopt-A-People is no longer an unproved strategy for mobilizing resources for world evangelization and the Colorado Springs consultation has helped this program grow toward maturity.

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