

EVANGELICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGY

VOLUME 16

Volume 16 • Number 4 • October 1992

Evangelical Review of Theology

*Articles and book reviews original and selected from
publications worldwide for an international
readership for the purpose of discerning the
obedience of faith*

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Published by
PATERNOSTER PERIODICALS

of God. None can deny that for Jesus, the Kingdom of God was in deadly conflict with the kingdom of Satan and his spirits and that the Cross was the moment of his triumph over all demonic powers. Jesus was careful not to attribute every human event or sickness directly to demon possession, a lesson the enthusiastic charismatic Christian needs to learn today. Moving from extreme scepticism to extreme credulity is no solution to the human dilemma. Scripture reminds us that Satan is both a deceiver, a wolf in sheep's clothing and a roaring lion 'looking for someone to devour'. We are all dependent upon the wisdom of God to discern the spirits, whether they be of God or of Satan.

Just as Christ's mission involved power encounter in furtherance of the truth claims of the gospel, so the Church today is increasingly aware of the same power encounter. As the pastor of an Indian church I found myself confronted with situations where I had to discern the boundary between mental ill-health and demon possession. Alas, my theological training in the West did not prepare me for this eventuality! More Hindus and Muslims come to faith in Christ through experiencing that the power in Jesus Christ is greater than the power of their own deity or prophet than by any other means. Instances of healings, exorcisms, guidance and visions are more powerful than is preaching isolated from living. Our gospel must meet the needs of the whole [p.341](#) person, whether explicitly or implicitly expressed. Justification by faith cannot be separated from the just living by faith. Power encounter with cosmic evil calls for a renewed emphasis on unceasing prayer, personally and corporately expressed. Those directly engaged in confronting naked evil, whether in religious or secular contexts need protection and empowering support through the prayers of God's people. Mission is always a costly task, a dangerous entry into enemy territory. [p. 342](#)

Christ Cleanses Buildings and Delivers People: Four Case Studies

Vivienne Stacey

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Cosmic spiritual warfare is a common experience of those who live in situations pervaded by occult and demonic practices. The author, who has been given special spiritual gifts of discernment and exorcism shares her experiences in this warfare, trusting in the protective and conquering power of Christ's work on the Cross. With hesitancy she shares these experiences motivated only by the desire to glorify her risen Lord. Readers are urged to pray for her on-going protection.

Editor

A friend of mine once told me of an incident when she was a child growing up in South America. Her father was away on an evangelistic tour and her mother was alone in the house with the children. Some thieves planned to rob the house but when they came near it they saw several men in white guarding the house and so they desisted from their evil plan. Later they enquired from my friend's parents about their guards. There were no

human guards. The occupants of the house never saw them. Presumably they were angels—‘ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation’ ([Heb. 1:14](#)). In the United Bible Training Centre, where I worked for twenty years we had no regular watchman. Generations of students prayed diligently that God would send his guardian angels to protect us and I am sure he did. With our physical eyes we are not often permitted to see the hosts of the Lord but the Bible gives clear teaching about their presence.

In the book of the prophet Zechariah, chapter [2](#) verse [5](#), we read about a wall of fire around Jerusalem: ‘For I will be to her a wall of fire round about, says the Lord, and I will be the glory within her.’ Once I saw a wall of fire. Three of us were living for ten days in a village near Rahim Yar Khan conducting evening meetings for Christians and visiting Muslim and Christian homes during the day to share the good news about the Lord Jesus Christ. We were aware of opposition to our message and learned that some local people were using magical powers to bring to nothing our efforts. The conflict between good and [p. 343](#) evil, light and darkness, the hosts of the Lord and the powers of hell grew very fierce. We were acutely aware that we were not fighting ‘against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places’ ([Eph. 6:12](#)). We knew the victory was the Lord’s and we asked him for grace to stand during those evil days. One night at about 2 a.m. I went outside to the bathroom. At the door of our one-roomed house I stopped and gazed. I could see a wall of fire. I knew that it was not a light of this world and I deliberately noted details about it. The wall was six feet high. One portion of it could not be seen, as a building in the middle of the village square blocked the view. The wall of fire continued for several feet on the other side of the building. Thus, I estimated the length of the wall of fire and noted where it started and where it ended. Some minutes later when I returned to the room the wall of fire was no longer visible.

In the morning one of my companions and I went to see whose compound it was that had had this divine protection. We had been praying especially for a family engaged in devil worship that they would repent, come to Christ and be saved. Unknown to us they had left their former house and walled garden and were now living in the area marked by the wall of fire. We visited the home and announced that salvation had come to this house. One of the family then and there accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. One by one other members of the family did so over a period of months. One might enquire why such a vision was given. Perhaps it was so that in the fierce conflict with satanic forces which involved sudden and severe illness, black shapes going through our room, the shaking of my bed, a horrible nightmare, strange knockings and inexplicable bloodstains, we might know that all was not evil and that ultimate victory belonged to God. Sometimes the Lord encourages his servants with visions as he did the apostle Paul in Corinth ([Acts 18:9, 10](#)), and the servant of Elisha ([2 Kings 6:15–17](#)). Sometimes Christians do not seem to be so protected or encouraged. We are in an area of mystery. By faith we know that ‘the angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them’ ([Ps. 34:7](#)) and that whatever happens occurs only by God’s permission as the story of Job so clearly shows ([Job 1:11, 12](#)).

CASE STUDIES IN EXORCISM

1). A Haunted House

Sometimes a building is so invaded and infested by evil powers that a radical exorcism is needed. My most outstanding experience in this [p. 344](#) area was in connection with a house in Muscat in the Sultanate of Oman. The house was purchased by Peter Zwemer,

brother of the famous missionary Samuel Zwemer, in about 1893 for a very small sum as the local Arabs thought it was haunted and did not want to live in it. Through the years some of those who lived in the house had troubles which might have had satanic origins. Peter died at the early age of 29. One missionary died under strange circumstances, perhaps having committed suicide. Another was mentally ill and had to leave. Another couple departed greatly discouraged. The Arabs until recently still considered the house haunted, saying that evil spirits frequented the main staircase and the roof in particular. When I heard that Muslim Omanis reckoned that a house occupied by Christian workers was possessed or haunted I was full of indignation. Some months later when I was flying into Muscat on my second visit the Lord clearly commissioned me to deal in his name with this situation.

How does one set about fulfilling such a commission? My visit was to last eight days and I would be staying in the 'haunted' house with an American nurse. At supper the first evening I broached the subject. I asked my hostess to tell me more about her house and why the Arabs considered it to be possessed. She was surprised that I raised this subject as she herself was planning to ask my advice about some demon-possessed patients. I said I would pray for her and with her about the patients but that I had no commission to deal with people but only with the house. I explained that I could proceed only if we were in complete agreement and on condition that if either of us needed the other's help we would call each other by day or night. Also when we were free from our other work we would take all possible opportunities for prayer and Bible study together. We generally managed to spend two or three hours each day praising God, praying and reading the Bible. We read through the whole of Isaiah. Muscat is surrounded on three sides by mountains and on the fourth side by the sea. One evening my companion and I were praying on the roof when suddenly she called out: 'Look at that rock. It is illuminated.' I could see nothing except the black outline of the rock. Three times she saw it illuminated. The third time I also saw the rock illuminated by a heavenly light. Immediately I said: 'Yes, despite the presence and power of evil, these mountains are full of the hosts of the Lord' ([2 Kings 6:15-17](#)).

My first task had been to find out what was really wrong with the house. Diagnosis is all-important. I asked the Lord to show me and I took practical steps to find out where evil particularly dwelt. I meditated and prayed in various parts of the house—in the kitchen, the p. 345 sitting room, on the stairs. Several nights I was driven out of my bedroom by satanic forces. Even kneeling by my bed I found it too terrifying to stay. One night I called my companion. We prayed together and I spent the rest of the night sleeping on the floor in her room. Throughout the eight days I rarely slept for more than an hour at a time and never for more than five out of twenty-four hours. The Lord gave me extra strength and I was able to pray and meditate and carry out my normal programme of Bible teaching and evangelistic meetings with Pakistanis in the areas around. One night all hell seemed to be let loose and I decided that I would read in the sitting room Isaiah's servant song about the death and victory of the Lord Jesus Christ ([Isa. 52:13-53:12](#)) and praise God whatever happened. I knew that the local people claimed that sometimes they 'saw' spirits on the roof and so another day I set out to watch and pray on the roof.

At that moment the Lord clearly warned me that if I went on the roof I would be killed. Then the words of the communion service came to my mind: 'Preserve thy body and soul into everlasting life' and I knew I was safe provided I did not go on the roof at that time. For some days I had prayed specifically that I might know what spirits inhabited the house and its environs (it had a small garden). The answer was clear—spirits of suicide, depression and fear. I commanded them in Jesus Christ's name that they should go. There was no clear proof that the spirits had gone and there were still other manifestations of

demonic activities. One night I found my companion nearly choking. I asked her permission to put my hands on her throat and neck and to pray in Jesus' name. Immediately she was all right. She had heard a strange noise between her bedroom and the sitting room. The next day I dusted all the objects in the wall cupboard of the sitting room, some of which were souvenirs from Africa. She enquired what I was doing and I explained that I was praying over each object that it would be cleansed through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. She then joined me in this exercise. Some weeks later she wrote to explain that she had found one object that was probably the cause of some of the trouble in her room—a curved Omani dagger which had been used to ward off evil spirits from a mother and baby. She had taken it from the patient, hidden it in her room and forgotten about it.

Before I left Muscat I was able to tell her that the house was cleansed through the power and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and that any subsequent evidences of evil would be attacks from outside and could be repudiated and repulsed in the name of Jesus Christ. No longer would the Arabs have reason to note that a Christian home was the dwelling place of evil spirits. On return to Pakistan I wrote confirming [p. 346](#) this and quoting [Isa. 60:18](#) in regard to her house: 'You shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates, Praise.' The Lord also had his therapy for me after this long struggle. I had the opportunity to go weekly for six consecutive weeks to a communion service. The Lord ministered to my body, soul and spirit as I heard again the words when I took the bread: 'The body of the Lord Jesus Christ which was given for you preserve your body and soul unto everlasting life.' Truly Jesus Christ protects and cleanses.

The following principles clearly emerge from the incidents I have just recorded:

1. The Lord's commissioning is needed for each episode of such a ministry.
2. The ministry is a team ministry and is built on the Lord's commissioning, prayer, praise, Bible study and obedience.
3. The Lord gives discernment and guidance when he sees it is needed.
4. The deliberate challenge to Satan and his demons brings a backlash and fiercer conflict for a while.
5. The victory is Christ's and rests on his word, his authority and faith in who he is.
6. The Lord sometimes gives visions to encourage and strengthen his servants.
7. The glory is the Lord's alone. He alone will be exalted. His glory he will not give to another ([Isa. 48:11](#)). Praise was an integral part of the whole episode.
8. It is not wise to talk unnecessarily about such happenings. Only now after more than eleven years have I shared this experience apart from a few occasions when I was especially constrained to speak.
9. Obedience to Jesus Christ's command and the cleansing which followed proved to be the basis for future fruitfulness and blessing in Oman. A year later I returned to Oman for a Bible teaching ministry and stayed in the same house. There was great peace and serenity and much freedom to expound the scriptures.
10. The Lord strengthens us physically and spiritually for what he commands.

2). A Sick Girl Healed

In Saudi Arabia I was once the guest for dinner of a Christian Pakistani couple and their two small children. They had lived in Riyadh, the capital, for several years and had all kept fit and well. A few months [p. 347](#) previously they had moved to their present house and had all been sick off and on. The little girl was especially unwell. My host and hostess asked me what I thought about the situation. I replied that the sickness could be due to natural causes like a contaminated water supply or that it might have a satanic origin due

to evil powers inhabiting the house. At this one of the other guests laughed and I knew that I could not proceed to explain more. I promised to pray for the family. I shared the problem with the couple with whom I was staying and we specifically prayed for healing and for the Lord's victory. Unexpectedly I visited the home the next day. The scoffer was not present. The little girl was still ill. I suggested to the parents and the three other visitors that we should join together as a team and pray for cleansing in each room of the house.

Accordingly we went from room to room and prayed for the casting out of evil and for cleansing through the blood of Christ. We then praised God and prayed for those who used the particular room and for its special uses. In the kitchen we prayed for the one who cooked, for those who ate the food etc..

A Muslim neighbour visited this house a few hours after this service of exorcism. She exclaimed in astonishment: 'Your little girl is now well and your home has a different atmosphere. What has happened?' The lady of the house told her of the power of the Lord Jesus Christ and how a group of believers had prayed and that all evil had been expelled. This proved an effective way to share with her the good news of Jesus Christ's victory over sin and evil.

Suggested prayers for exorcism for places

1. God, the Son of God, who by death destroyed death, and overcame him who had the power of death, beat down Satan quickly. Deliver this place (room, house, church) from all evil spirits; all vain imaginations, projections and all deceits of the evil one; and bid them harm no one but depart to the place appointed for them, there to remain for ever. God, Incarnate God, who came to give peace, give peace. Amen.
2. In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, Son of the Most High God, I bind you, evil spirit(s), and command you to leave this place (etc.), to harm no one, and to go to your own place, never to return. Amen.

3). A Demon-possessed Girl

In 1977 I was a guest for a few days of some expatriates in a large city of Pakistan. As two of us were sitting at lunch the Christian **p. 348** headmistress of a girls' school rushed in and said: 'Please come and help us straightaway. One of the girls is demon-possessed and I don't know what to do.' My hostess asked me to come. We found the Pakistani matron at the bedside of a fourteen year old girl who was one of the schoolchildren living in the girls' hostel. Her parents were away working in the Middle East. I asked for some background information and was told that the family had been involved in some occult practices and that sometimes the girl was troubled by evil spirits. Sometimes she would behave normally. At other times she would behave like a very young child and her speech would be slurred. Sometimes she would be hysterical and at other times apparently unconscious but with her eyes open and staring. I was informed that she was possessed by four demons. The group looked to me for leadership and guidance in this situation which was having a disturbing influence on the school and hostel.

First, I wanted to make my own diagnosis. The girl was not fully herself. Her speech was somewhat slurred but she was able to comprehend what was said to her. I asked her a few questions and then requested her to read a few verses from 1 John chapter **1**. When she came to verse **7**: 'but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin,' her speech slurred even more and she read like a six year old child. She had particular difficulty in reading about the blood of Jesus and there was a kind of involuntary jerk when she came

to this phrase. After several efforts she finished reading the verse. She was gradually being taken over by other forces and was nearly unconscious. I decided to speak to the demons. To test them I said: 'You are five'. I had already been told she had four demons. Immediately in a voice totally different from the girl's the answer came back: 'We are four.' I then commanded the demons to give their names which they did. One was called Matthew, another was Pharaoh, another Parkash and the fourth was Kanta. These names generally belong to members of three distinct religious groups—Christian or Jewish, ancient Egyptian and Hindu. I was convinced that the girl was demon-possessed. As we prayed and praised God singing hymns of praise around her bedside she became more violent and hysterical. She had more than usual strength and I realized that two people should stay with her.

In such a situation one needs a team of committed Christians. I had little previous knowledge of two of the group. The matron had already shown her superstitious frame of mind by wanting to light candles and p. 349 sprinkle water. I did not know anything about the spiritual state of the headmistress but she had asked for help. However, the Lord gave me the conviction that I was to mobilize the people he had sent. Accordingly I requested the missionary and the headmistress to go through all the rooms in the school and hostel and to pray for the casting out of evil and for the Lord's blessing. The matron and I stayed with the girl and were later joined by another missionary. We praised God in song and word and the girl grew more violent. After an hour or so she quietened down. Although she regained consciousness she was not fully herself. I asked her to say the refrain in each verse. Her concentration gradually improved but when we came to verse 15: 'but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea', she gave a violent start. We then remembered that one of the evil spirits was called Pharaoh but we had not chosen this psalm for that reason or even remembering that that particular verse occurred in the psalm. We chose the psalm because repetition was easier for someone in her state than reading alternate verses or a passage. We talked to the girl and asked her if she wanted to be delivered from these evil spirits. She was terrified of them. They gave her knowledge of future happenings, for example, that a certain person would come at a certain time later in the day even though he was not expected. These 'foretellings' were generally correct to the minute. The next night the spirits told her that she would die at 2 a.m. and she believed them on the basis of their previous accuracy. We told her that this was a lie and that they were trying to terrorize her but that she should trust in Jesus Christ who had overcome death and the powers of darkness on his cross for ever. We explained to her that we were all going to pray for the demons to leave her. We each commanded them to leave and to go to the place reserved for them unto the day of judgment. However, there was no sign that they had left. We promised to watch and pray with her through the night and assured her that she would be alright.

Her state had created an atmosphere of fear in the school and hostel. I asked the headmistress if I might speak to the whole school. I explained to the staff and pupils that this girl was being oppressed by Satan but that nothing could stand against the power of the name, the blood and the praise of the Lord Jesus Christ. I urged those in the hostel to praise God in their dormitories at any time when they were afraid. I taught them to say as many things as they could remember about Jesus and after each saying to declare 'Jesus is King'. Accordingly one would say 'Jesus is Saviour' and the others would respond 'Jesus is King'. Then another would say 'Jesus is the Good Shepherd' and all would say 'Jesus is King'. We counselled several schoolgirls and some p. 350 accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. They were all from the Christian community but most were without personal living faith.

Two of us stayed with the girl through the remainder of the day, all night and through the next day and night. We took it in turn to watch and pray. She still had attacks. We knew that the victory belonged to Jesus and realized that there were three possible explanations for these attacks fresh possession by other spirits, counterfeit attacks or else that the original four demons had not yet left her. We had no doubt about Jesus' ultimate victory. However, although the girl was responsive to biblical teaching it was not until weeks later that she accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour and entered into a personal relationship with him. This delay together with the influences from her family background and the fact that there has been a history of magical and occult practice on the compound of the school and hostel probably made this a very stubborn case of demon-possession. There were other struggles to be endured and other cleansings to be done and other victories to be demonstrated and for several months the Lord's servants were tested. Eventually all was clean and calm.

4). Jesus Heals a Man With an Unclean Spirit

Let us first look at the principles which emerge from a study of the Lord Jesus Christ's deliverance of the man with an unclean spirit in [Mark 1:21-28](#). Then we can turn to a study of his dealings with other evil spirits. Finally we analyze a few contemporary case-histories of people troubled by evil spirits to see what we can learn for the exercise of the church's ministry of deliverance today.

Mark writes of the Lord Jesus Christ and his disciples: 'And they went into Capernaum; and immediately on the sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God'. But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him'. And the unclean spirit, convulsing and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, 'What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him'. And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee' ([Mk. 1:21-28](#)). p. 351

From this incident recorded in the gospel according to Mark we should note the following points:

1. Jesus Christ taught and acted with evident authority ([Mk. 1:22, 27](#)). All authority in heaven and on earth had been given to him by God ([Mt. 28:18](#)). The ordinary people of Capernaum were astonished at his authoritative teaching and commands.
2. Probably this authority in Jesus Christ's teaching and presence drew the possessed man to the synagogue and precipitated a power encounter ([Mk. 1:23, 24](#)).
3. The man had an unclean spirit or 'the spirit of an unclean demon' ([Lk. 4:33](#)). Evil spirits can generally be categorized e.g. a dumb spirit ([Lk. 11:14](#)); a spirit of divination ([Acts 16:16](#)); a spirit of infirmity ([Lk. 13:11](#)).
4. The unclean spirit within the man, not the man, spoke to Jesus Christ ([Mk. 1:24](#)).
5. The unclean spirit recognized who Jesus was—Jesus of Nazareth, the Holy One of God ([Mk. 1:24](#)).
6. The unclean spirit tormented and severely troubled the man he possessed. He convulsed him and cried with a loud voice when he was rebuked ([Mk. 1:26](#)).
7. Jesus Christ commanded the unclean spirit to be silent, that is, to be muzzled, and to come out of the man ([Mk. 1:25](#)).

8. The conflict was intensified but the unclean spirit came out ([Mk. 1:26](#)).
9. Jesus Christ knew that he was dealing with one spirit not several, despite the spirit's reference to 'us' ([Mk. 1:24, 25](#)).
10. Jesus Christ had to face the question of publicity ([Mk. 1:28](#)).

A study of the seven other accounts of the deliverances by the Lord Jesus Christ of possessed individuals endorses these principles and adds to them. The accounts, sometimes found in only one or two, or in all three of the synoptic gospels, are:

- a. The record of Mary of Magdalene from whom seven devils were cast out ([Mk. 16:9](#); [Lk. 8:2](#)).
- b. The healing of the woman bent double ([Lk. 13:10-17](#)).
- c. The deliverance of the epileptic boy ([Mt. 17:14-21](#); [Mk. 9:14-29](#); [Lk. 9:37-43](#)).
- d. The casting out of the dumb spirit ([Mt. 9:32-33](#); [Lk. 11:14](#)).
- e. The deliverance of the man with a blind and dumb spirit ([Mt. 12:22](#)).
- f. The deliverance of the man with many demons ([Mk. 5:1-20](#); [Lk. 8:26-33](#)). p. 352
- g. The casting out of an unclean spirit from a Syrophenician girl ([Mk. 7:24-30](#)).

Further principles emerging from a study of Jesus Christ's ministry and not noted in the analysis of the first incident ([Mk. 1:21-28](#)) are:

1. The repetition of the command to the evil spirit to come out of the person. In Greek the imperfect tense of the verb 'come out' is used in [Mark 5:8](#) to indicate repetition.
2. New Testament exorcisms were mostly carried out publicly wherever the need for them became apparent, for example, in the synagogue ([Mk. 1:23](#)) or in the open air. One exorcism was carried out when the sufferer was absent ([Mk. 7:24-30](#) compare [Mt. 15:21-28](#)).
3. The necessity of a person's being filled with the Holy Spirit after being emptied of evil. The Beelzebul controversy as recorded by Luke implies this ([Lk. 11:14-26](#)).
4. Jesus' exorcisms relate closely to faith and prayer ([Mk. 9:19, 29](#); see also [Mt. 17:17, 20](#); [Lk. 9:41](#)).
5. Jesus' rapid, accurate diagnosis is a striking feature of his authority, and his 'doing all things well' ([Mk. 7:37](#)).

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Principalities and Powers: Opponents of the Church

P. T. O'Brien

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We are printing this longer-than-usual article because in interpreting the Biblical concept, 'principalities and powers' for our contemporary world, it lucidly shows the influence of the