



Deliver Us from Evil Consultation Statement

Introduction

Spiritual conflict is an emerging, yet uneasy, frontier in taking the whole gospel to the whole world. Enthusiasm and concern rest side by side. Trying to come to grips with the many complex issues, thirty practitioners, missiologists, pastors and theologians gathered in Nairobi, Kenya from 16 to 22 August, 2000. Together we discussed issues of spiritual conflict in a consultation, "Deliver Us From Evil," convened by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the Association of Evangelicals in Africa. The consultation objective was to seek a biblical and comprehensive understanding of 1) who the enemy is; 2) how he is working; and 3) how we can fight him in order to be most effective in the evangelization of all peoples.

Our group included practitioners of deliverance and prayer ministries from Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia, and the United States; pastors and evangelical leaders from Africa and North America; an executive of a relief and development agency; an African psychologist working in North America; theologians from Asia, Europe and North America; missionaries working in Africa and Latin America; mission executives from Europe and North America; and missiological educators from North America and Europe. Among us were Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Methodists, Anglicans, Lutherans, Baptists, and members of the Evangelical Church of West Africa, Church of South India, Berachah Prophetic Church, Evangelical Covenant Church, Brethren Church, Christian and Missionary Alliance, and Bible Church (United States).

We noted with interest that most of the consultation participants from Western societies had come to recognize the realities of the unseen or spiritual realm as a result of their cross-cultural experience. Those from the Two Thirds World frequently reported their experiences with Western missionaries, who were unaware of these spiritual realities, and were thus unable to minister to the spiritual realities that Two Thirds World people experience on a day-to-day basis.

As we have met in Nairobi, we have learned from the insights of sisters and brothers from East Africa and the East African revival. We particularly affirm how our East African sisters and brothers lift up Jesus and him crucified in the face of spiritual conflict. We realize afresh that the only way to break the power of Satan in everyday life, in society and in culture is by walking in the light so that Satan may not bind us in the darkness.

As we pray the prayer "Deliver us from evil" we pray to be delivered from personal sin, natural evils, evil spirits and powers, and evil in society.

Origins

Our point of departure includes the Lausanne Covenant, the Manila Manifesto, and the 1993 LCWE Statement on Spiritual Warfare, all of which state the reality of our engagement in spiritual conflict:

We believe that we are engaged in constant spiritual warfare with the principalities and powers of evil, who are seeking to overthrow the Church and frustrate its task of world evangelization. (Lausanne Covenant, 1974)

We affirm that spiritual warfare demands spiritual weapons, and that we must both preach the word in the power of the Spirit, and pray constantly that we may enter into Christ's victory over the principalities and powers of evil. (Manila Manifesto, 1989)

We agreed that evangelization is to bring people from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God (Acts 26:17). This involves an inescapable element of spiritual warfare. (Lausanne Statement on Spiritual Warfare, 1993)

The Consultation and participants recognize the relevance of spiritual conflict to world evangelization. We are not trying to side with any particular view but to expand evangelical thinking in an emerging area that has controversy. This statement indicates areas of common agreement, areas of unresolved tensions, warnings, and points to areas needing further study and exploration. Our intention is to encourage churches of all traditions to use this statement to stimulate forthright discussion, serious reflection, and practical ministry on spiritual conflict to the glory of God.

Common Ground

Theological Affirmations

We affirm the biblical witness that humans were created in the image of God to live in communion with him, in fellowship with other humans, and as stewards of God's creation. The relationship between God and humankind was broken through the mysterious entry of evil into God's creation. Since the Fall evil has influenced all aspects of the created world and human existence. It is God's plan to redeem and restore his fallen creation. God's redemptive purpose is being revealed and realized in the history of salvation, and fully in the Gospel of the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and return of his son, Jesus Christ. We are called to participate in God's mission of fighting evil and the evil one in order to restore what was destroyed as a result of the Fall. We live in a world with tension between the Kingdom that has already come in Christ and the continuing realities of evil. God's mission will be completed when Christ returns, the Kingdom of God comes in power, and evil is destroyed and eliminated forever.

1. Calling people to faith in Christ, inviting them to be delivered from the domain of darkness into the Kingdom of God, is the missionary mandate for all Christians. We affirm a holistic understanding of evangelization that finds its source in our relationship with Christ and his call to us to become intimate with him in the fellowship of believers. The Holy Spirit empowers us for world evangelization through the interrelated ministries of word (proclamation), deed (social service and action), and sign (miracles, power encounters) all of which take place in the context of spiritual conflict.
2. Satan is a real, personal spiritual and created being. Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, sought to destroy him, and yet in light of the resurrection morning found himself defeated. Satan continues to oppose actively God's mission and the work of God's Church. (1)
3. The powers and principalities are ontologically real beings. They cannot be reduced to mere social or psychological structures. (2)
4. Satan works by taking what God has created for human well-being, and perverts it toward his purposes, which are to destroy and devalue life by enslaving individuals, families, local communities and whole societies. Satan contextualizes his efforts differently in various societies and cultures.
5. Satan uses deception in an attempt to redirect human allegiances to anyone or anything other than God. In addition to the personal level, Satan does this with regard to all institutionalized forms of religious or ideological allegiance, including the Church.
6. Satan and "the rulers, authorities, the powers of this dark world, the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" are at work through: (3)
 - Deceiving and distorting
 - Tempting to sin
 - Afflicting the body, emotions, mind, and will
 - Taking control of a person

- Disordering of nature
- Distorting the roles of social, economic, and political structures
- Scapegoating as a means of legitimizing violence
- Promoting self-interest, injustice, oppression, and abuse
- The realm of the occult
- False religions
- All forms of opposition to God's work of salvation and the mission of the church.

7. A primary purpose of the life and ministry of Jesus was to expose, confront, and defeat Satan and destroy his works.

- Christ has decisively defeated Satan at the cross and through the resurrection.
- Jesus confronted Satan through prayer, righteousness, obedience, and setting the captives free.
- In the way he ministered to people, he mounted an enormous challenge to the institutions and structures of the world.
- Christians share in Christ's victory and are given the authority of Christ to stand against the attacks of Satan in the victory we have in Christ. (4)

The model for spiritual authority is Jesus and his obedience and submission to God on the Cross.

8. While we acknowledge that God is sovereignly in control of his creation, the biblical evidence indicates a variety of causes of illness and calamity: God, Satan, human choices or trauma and a disordered universe are all cited. We understand that we may not know with certainty the exact cause of any particular illness or calamity.

9. The elements of a world view that is Christian within our respective cultural contexts must include:

- God is the creator and sustainer of all that exists, both seen and unseen. This creation includes humans and spiritual beings as moral creatures.
- People were made in the image of God, in which the aspects of the human person are inseparably connected.
- Body, soul, emotions and mind cannot be separated.
- God remains sovereign over all his creation in history, and nothing happens outside God's ultimate control. Thus, the world cannot be conceived of as a closed universe governed merely by naturalistic scientific laws. Neither can it be considered a dualistic system in which Satan is understood to be equal to God.
- Because we reject a dualistic world view, the blessings of God and the ministrations of the angelic host, the consequences of sin, and the assaults of Satan and demons cannot be isolated solely to a spiritual realm.
- Any teaching on spiritual conflict that leads us to fear the Devil to such an extent that we lose our confidence in Christ's victory over him and in God's sovereign power to protect us must be rejected.
- All matters concerning spiritual conflict must be viewed first and foremost in terms of our relationship with and faith in God, and not simply in terms of techniques that we must master.
- The return of Christ and the ultimate consummation of his victory over Satan gives us confidence today in dealing with spiritual struggles and a lens through which we are to interpret the events in the world today.

10. The person and work of the Holy Spirit are central in spiritual conflict: (5)

- The empowering of the Holy Spirit, the exercise of spiritual gifts, and prayer are prerequisites for engaging in spiritual conflict.
- The exercise of spiritual gifts must be accompanied by the fruit of the spirit.
- The work of the Spirit and the Word must be held together.

Spiritual Conflict in Practice

1. We listened to reports on the history of the church's dealing with Satan and the demonic and noted:

- There are striking similarities between what happened from the history of the ancient church to what is happening in demonic encounters and deliverance today.
- Deliverance from Satanic and demonic powers and influence in the ancient church was used as proof of the resurrection and the truth of the claims of Christ by the church fathers.
- Preparation for baptism included the renunciation of the Devil, the demonic and prior religious allegiances from the life of the convert as well as repentance. This practice continues in some churches to this day.
- The unwillingness/inability of the contemporary western church to believe in the reality of the spiritual beliefs and engage in spiritual conflict arose out of a defective Enlightenment-influenced world view, is not representative of the total history of the church in relation to spiritual conflict nor has it been characteristic of Christianity in the Two Thirds World in contemporary history.
- Every Christian has access to the authority of Christ and demons recognize Christ's power when exercised by Christians.
- The history of evangelism is replete with examples in which the response to the Gospel was accompanied by power encounters, but power encounters in and of themselves are never a guarantee of a positive response.
- Church history also points to a link between idolatry and the demonic.

2. Working for positive strongholds for God through a "gentle invasion" that overcomes evil with good and wins people by love is as important as breaking down Satanic strongholds. We thus affirm the importance and primacy of the local church and its life of faith.

3. Worship is spiritual conflict. It is not aggressive, spectacular spiritual conflict; not a strategy nor a means to an end; but involves mind, body, and spirit responding with all that we are to all that God is.

4. Spiritual conflict is risky and often costly. While there are victories, there is often a backlash from the Evil One in various forms of attack such as illness and persecution. Nonetheless we do not shrink from spiritual conflict since to avoid it is costly to the Kingdom of God.

5. The ministry of spiritual conflict is grounded in the transformative power of relationships, not techniques or methods.

6. The point of departure for spiritual conflict is our relationship with Jesus and listening to the Holy Spirit.

7. We affirm the complexity of the human person. We need to distinguish the psychological from the spiritual when it comes to ministry and counseling. Deliverance ministries and psychological counselors often fail to recognize this distinction. Failure to do so can do harm.

8. Holiness is central to the Christian response to evil:

- In the exercise of spiritual authority those who do not give adequate attention to character and holiness truncate the whole biblical picture of spiritual growth and sanctification.
- To practice spiritual conflict without adequate attention to personal holiness is to invite disaster.
- The pursuit of holiness applies not only to the individual, but to the family, the local church, and the larger community of faith.
- While holiness includes personal piety, it applies to social relationships as well.

9. Engaging the Evil One is not the work for heroic individuals. Those engaged in this ministry must seek the support of a group of intercessors.

10. Following up on individuals who have experienced freedom through spiritual conflict must be an inseparable part of the ministry. The local church must be encouraged to incorporate people into the Christian community and to disciple them. Not to arrange for this is sin.

11. We were saddened by stories of people, emboldened by self-assured certainty and money, who come from outside and overwhelm local Christians and carrying out hit-and-run ministries of spiritual conflict 1) that presume superior knowledge of the local reality; 2) that treat local Christians as inferior or unaware, 3) that claim credit for things that local Christians have been praying and working toward for years, and 4) that leave uneven results and sometimes pain, alienation, and even persecution of the local church, while claiming great victory.
12. Spiritual conflict involves more than one enemy; it must engage the flesh, the Devil and the world:
 - We view with alarm social evils such as injustice, poverty, ethnocentrism, racism, genocide, violence, environmental abuse, wars, as well as the violence, pornography, and occult in the media.
 - These social evils are encouraged or supported by human institutions in which the principalities and powers work against God and his intention for humankind.
 - The task of the Church in combating the principalities and powers in the socio-political context is to unmask their idolatrous pretensions, to identify their dehumanizing values and actions, and to work for the release of their victims. This work involves spiritual, political, and social actions.
13. We fail to find biblical warrant for constructing elaborate hierarchies of the spirit world.

Warnings

1. We urge caution and sensitivity in the use of language when it comes to spiritual conflict. While biblical, the term "spiritual warfare" is offensive to non-Christians and carries connotations that seem contradictory coming from those who serve a Lord who died on a cross. Additionally, there is a large range of meanings attached to various spiritual conflict terms such as healing, deliverance, power encounters, possession, demonization, powers, and so on. Additionally new terms are constantly being coined (e.g., Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare, deep-level healing, etc.).
2. We call for watchfulness to avoid any syncretism with non-Christian religious beliefs and practices, such as traditional religions or new religious movements. We also affirm that new believers are reasonable when they expect the Gospel to meet their needs for spiritual power.
3. We call for discernment concerning magical uses of Christian terms and caution practitioners to avoid making spiritual conflict into Christian magic. Any suggestion that a particular technique or method in spiritual conflict ministry ensures success is a magical, sub-Christian understanding of God's workings.
4. We encourage extreme care and the discernment of the community to ensure that the exercise of spiritual authority not become spiritual abuse. Any expression of spiritual power or authority must be done in compassion and love.
5. We cry out for a mantle of humility and gracefulness on the part of cross-cultural workers, who having recently discovered the reality of the spirit realm, go to other parts of the world where people have known and lived with the local realities of the spirit realm world and the struggle with the demonic for centuries.
6. Because spiritual conflict is expressed in different ways in different societies, we strongly caution against taking ideas, methods, or strategies developed in one society and using them uncritically in another.
7. Because we must resist the temptation to adopt the devil's tactics as ours, we warn practitioners to take care that their methods in spiritual conflict are based on the work of Christ on the cross:
 - Submitting to God through his substitutionary death on the cross, Christ deprived Satan of his claim to power;
 - Christ's willingness to sacrifice himself in contrast to fighting back is a model for spiritual conflict;
 - When we separate the cross from spiritual conflict, we create a climate of triumphalism.
8. We call for actions that ensure that our approaches and explanations of spiritual conflict do not tie new converts to the very fears from which Christ died to free them. Being free in Christ means being free from fear of the demonic.
9. We warn against an overemphasis on spirits that blames demons for the actions of people. Demons can only work through people-and people can actively choose to cooperate. Spirits are not the only source of resistance to the Gospel.
10. We warn against confusing correlations or coincidence with causation in reporting apparent victories as well as the uncritical use of undocumented accounts to establish the validity of cosmic warfare.
11. We warn against using eschatology as a excuse not to fight against all forms of evil in the present.

Areas of Tension

1. In the early church, demonic encounters were most often seen where the church encountered non-Christians. The history of evangelization frequently links power encounters with the evangelization of non-Christian people. The biblical text reveals that while it is possible that a believer may be afflicted physically by a demonic spirit, (6) there is no direct evidence that demons need to be cast out of believers. On the other hand, we also heard the testimony of brothers and sisters in every continent to the contrary. This raises the question of how we are to understand the effect of the demonic in the lives of Christians. We were unable to resolve this tension in our consultation, but believe the following are helpful to note:
 - We are aware that in many cases new Christians today have not gone through processes of renunciation of pre-Christian allegiances, processes that have been normative in the pre-Enlightenment Church. Some Christians may have lost their faith; there are others who call themselves Christians but are only Christians in a nominal sense. Some claim that these might be reasons that Christians might appear to be susceptible to the demonic.
 - While affirming that being in Christ means the Christian belongs to Christ and that our nature is transformed, just as with sin and our need to deal with sin in our body, mind, emotions and will, we wonder if the demonic, while no longer able to claim ownership of Christians, may not continue to afflict them in body, mind, emotions, and will unless dealt with.
2. While it is possible that Satan manifests himself more strongly in certain places than in others, and that some spirits seem to be tied to certain locations, we agreed there seems to be little biblical warrant for a number of the teachings and practices associated with some forms of spiritual conflict which focus on territorial spirits. We experienced tension over whether there is biblical warrant for warfare prayer against territorial spirits as a valid tool for evangelization. We agreed, however, on the invalidity of the claim that warfare prayer against territorial spirits is the only key to effective evangelization.
3. Tension exists concerning the extent to which we can learn and verify things from the spiritual realm from experiences not immediately verifiable from Scripture in contrast to limiting our understanding of the spiritual realm from Scripture alone. Some have maintained that experience is crucial to understanding spiritual conflict; this is a point to be explored in ongoing dialogue.
4. We are not agreed as to whether or how the truths about spiritual realities and spiritual conflict methodologies can be verified empirically. Some engage in active experimentation in spiritual conflict ministry as a means of developing generalities concerning spiritual conflict, while others are not convinced of the validity of this way of learning.

Frontiers That Need Ongoing Exploration

1. While affirming the Lausanne position on the Bible, there is an urgent need for a hermeneutic that:

- Allows culture and experience to play a role in the formulation of our understanding and theology of spiritual conflict. The basis and test of such a theology is Scripture as faithfully interpreted by the Spirit-guided hermeneutical community of the global church.
 - Allows an examination of issues which arise in Christian experience not directly addressed in Scripture.
 - Accepts the fact that the Holy Spirit has surprised the Church by acting in ways not explicitly taught in Scriptures (Acts 10 and 15) and may be doing so again.
2. There is an urgent need to incorporate the study of spiritual conflict into theological curricula in schools and training centers around the world.
 3. There is an urgent need to develop criteria and methods that allow us to evaluate ministry experience in a verifiable way.
 4. The emerging understanding of the complexity of the human person needs significant exploration and examination. Specifically we call for:
 - A sustained dialogue between those engaged in deliverance ministries and those in the medical and psychological professions.
 - Urgent sharing worldwide with deliverance practitioners of the current state of knowledge of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), formerly called Multiple Personality Disorder.
 - A diagnostic approach that allows practitioners to discern the difference between DID personalities and spiritual entities.
 - A dialogue between theologians and the medical and psychological professions that develops a holistic understanding of the human person, inseparably relating body, mind, emotions, and spirit as they function individually and relationally.
 5. We call for a more interdisciplinary approach to the description of spiritual conflict drawing on the insights of relevant disciplines.
 6. We call the churches to develop an understanding of sanctification that addresses all of the human person: our spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical selves. Such a holistic understanding of sanctification will include the development of spiritual disciplines, inner healing, and deliverance. All need to become tools supporting the sanctification of Christians through the Word by the Holy Spirit. (7)
 7. There is a need to explore the role in spiritual conflict of the practices of baptism, holy communion, confession of sin and absolution, foot-washing, and anointing with oil.
 8. We would like to see a serious examination of the deception and seductive power of advertising in terms of its role in fostering envy, consumerism, and false gods.

We praise God, that, while we represented various theological, cultural and church traditions and positions on spiritual conflict, we have been blessed and inspired by learning from each other. This encourages us to believe that it is possible to develop an understanding of spiritual conflict and its practice within the Christian community so that in time it becomes part of the everyday life of the Church. We invite the Church to join us in continuing study and incorporation of appropriate ministries of spiritual conflict into the life of the Church. We particularly call the churches in the West to listen more carefully to the churches in the Two Thirds World and join them in a serious rediscovery of the reality of evil.

Notes:

1. [Job 1-2](#); [Zech. 3:1f](#); [1 Chron. 21:1](#); [Matt. 4:1-11](#); [Matt. 12:23](#); [Luke 8:12](#); [Luke 22:3](#); [John 13:2](#); [12:31](#); [16:11](#); [Col 2:15-22](#).
2. [Mark 3:22](#); [1 Cor. 2:6-8](#); [15:24-26](#); [Col. 2:15](#); [Eph. 1:21](#); [3:10](#); [6:10-18](#).
3. [2 Cor. 2:11](#); [1 Thess 3:5](#); [1 Tim. 2:14](#); [Rev. 12:10](#); [Matt. 8:16](#); [Matt. 9:32](#); [Mark 5:1-20](#); [Mark 9:17](#); [Luke 8:30](#); [Job 2:7](#); [Matt. 9:32-33](#); [12:22-23](#); [15:22-28](#); [Job 1:16-19](#).
4. [John 12:31](#); [16:11](#), [33](#); [Col 2:15](#); [Heb 2:14](#); [1 John 3:8](#); [Rev 5:5](#); [Eph 6:10-18](#); [Jas. 4:7](#); [Luke 9:1](#); [Matt. 28:18](#); cf. [Matt. 12:28f](#); [Eph 6:11,13](#).
5. [Gal. 5:22-23](#); [1 Cor. 13:4-7](#); [Eph. 6:17](#).
6. [Luke 4:38-39](#); [13:10-13](#); [2 Cor. 12:7-9](#).
7. [John 15:3](#); [17:17](#).