

never eaten onions in my life.' One woman said that she had 18 allergies; she surrendered her conflicts to God and how has conquered all those supposed allergies but two." E. Stanley Jones, *The Way to Power and Poise*, Nashville: Abingdom Press, 1949, p. 152.

6. At Saul's anointing (1 Samuel 10), at the ordination of the 70 elders (Numbers 11), at the beginning of the Apostles' mission (Acts 2), at the baptism of the first converts in certain areas (Acts 10, Acts 19), and in the infancy of the Corinthian church (1 Cor 12-14; note 3:1, 13:11). Likewise, the history of charismatic phenomena in the Seventh-day Adventist Church (tongues-speaking, prostration, visions, healing, etc.) centers around its infancy.

Exorcism and Possession as Rebellion

by Stanley G. Sturges

Spectrum (Vol. 14, No. 2) recently published a description of Adventist ministers who specialize in casting out demons. Pastors should be wary of the impact of what is becoming, within Adventism, an increasingly acceptable means of dealing with unexplainable behavior: demonology. In another article, in *Adventist Review*, a woman reported an abused childhood, a bad marriage, and then described how a demon within her picked up a butcher knife and threw it at her husband. The woman tormented by marriage deserves more than an endorsement of her excuse for her threatening behavior. Even though it is a short-cut to join forces with her and find even more demons, would it not be better to quietly restore her sense of responsibility and self esteem?

Unexplained, troublesome behavior is a problem for all of us, but simply accusing the troubled person of evil doesn't help. Many individuals continue to act out of step, unable to live normal lives. When the actions of others create anxiety and torment, the issue is no longer abstract and can become the personal conviction that evil is intruding from outside. From this point it is but a short step to feel the evil has been

personified or to feel under the control of a powerful external force.¹ In these circumstances we not only feel evil directed toward us, but we fell evil ourselves. On occasion we project these unacceptable impulses on some other object or person which then relieves us of the responsibility for our own unacceptable thoughts.²

A person "demon possessed" can be deviant while at the same time socially approved. Behaving possessed enables him or her to express, without retribution, express hostility toward spouse, family, or community. When the personality deteriorates, and the individual attacks or even injures others, then the condition may even be excused as beyond the individual's control. Behavior described as demon possession or harassment may be eeked out in small increments to explain accidents, economic reversals, trauma, disease, or personal misfortune.

There are several psychiatric syndromes or disorders whose symptoms sound remarkably similar to cases to demon possession. Multiple personality disorder most closely approximates the appearance of demon possession. Modern day methods of diagnosing this disorder include the hypnotic trance, which is used to establish the qualities and psychologies of the personalities.⁴ This technique brings to mind "calling out the demons," or establishing a hierarchy of demons, as in the Bubek method.⁵ As in demon possession, females with multiple personality disorder far outnumber males, and just as there seems to be a growing multiplicity of demons in the possessed, so those with multiple personality disorder come up with more and more personalities. A test has been developed, using the electroencephalogram, which measures a differential response of the brain to the different dissociated states, and there are now group therapy techniques used to resolve conflicts among the warring personalities.^{6,7} Those with multiple personality disorder have a history of being abused as children, a history also common to the "possessed."

Confusing demon possession with the vile obscenities, barks, screams, and violent body contortions of a person with Gilles de la Tourette syndrome is also easy to understand. Most Tourettes patients have electroencephalogram abnormalities, indicating a central nervous system defect. The patient responds quite well to haloperidol, an anti-psychotic drug. The novel and film *The Exorcist* are thought to represent a Tourettes case.⁸

Those suffering from temporal lobe epilepsy exhibit behavior that might also be labeled demon possession. The condition may show electroencephalographic abnormalities, and is characterized by seizures, strange sensations, periodic amnesia, paranoid thinking, and auditory hallucinations.⁹ Anti-convulsant drugs can help control these symptoms.

Paranoid schizophrenia includes in its broad range of symptoms magical thinking, superstition, and even the conviction that demons are selecting the individual for persecution. Unfocused anger and violence may result when the delusions are acted upon. Cultural variations of schizophrenia are occasionally seen and described as "running amok." In Malaya, this variation of schizophrenia is characterized by a person brooding quietly and then losing control, jumping up with a terrifying yell, attacking individuals and often killing them. Amnesia often follows.¹⁰

Hysteria is a baffling condition first described in detail by Paul Briquet in 1859. The symptoms include a bizarre constellation of spasms, seizures, pseudoparalysis, and strange gait disturbances. Hysteria is usually not characterized by personality deterioration, but can be contagious, as in the nuns of Loudun who felt they were possessed by the evil genius of their confessor, Urbain Grandier.¹¹ They portrayed uninhibited self-exposure, and overt sexual movements attributed to the devil himself. The nuns were not held responsible for their behavior because the phenomenon was seen as caused by external forces.¹²

When demon possession is claimed, the

demon's identity and activity are determined by the person's own history, religious background, and belief system. Even though possession states may be associated with various toxic conditions affecting the nervous system, the reaction of the individual still reflects the subject's own personality, and the immediate problems and tensions of his society.¹³ Exorcists also shape and reinforce the "possession" through questioning and conversing with the demons.

Sometimes this questioning trains the individual in demon possession. One exorcism technique, the creation of excitement to the point of trance, induces marked suggestibility in the victim. If an exorcist asks leading questions, and deprives the subject of sleep over an extended period of time, a suggestible individual may admit possession. The exorcist, in effect, supplies answers to him or her for various unacceptable activities and supports the victim's simplistic excuse, "the devil made me do it."¹⁴

Exorcists have their payoffs: they can claim the authority to call upon God to attack the devil. They are viewed with gratitude as victims are made to feel worthy of God's attention. Their special knowledge places them in an elite group outside of that offering ordinary pastoral services. Just as the demon-possessed person finds aggressive activity culturally acceptable, so the minister practicing "deliverance ministry" finds rebellion against the church establishment socially acceptable.

Today, in American or Adventist cultures, capitalizing on feelings of dependency and anxiety, and further assuming the role of a powerful mediator between the sick and the supernatural, is not responsible. Understanding and dealing with evil in our society should not become a ritualistic exploitation of people with problems.

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On Church Structure

Don't Eliminate the Unions

by Earl W. Amundson

The Association of Adventist Forums (AAF) is to be commended for its contribution to the current discussion on structural change in the Adventist church. This writer welcomes organizational studies by other groups as well, e.g., the Pacific Union Conference, the North Pacific Union Conference, and the General Conference. I anticipate that a synthesis of these studies will reveal the truth about our church's administrative performance. The church needs to be known for its search for the truth about ourselves, instead of by our avoidance of it. When a people openly discuss ideas, commitments, concerns, and expectations, and searches together for mutually satisfying answers, we see a people who are active, vigorous, and energetic. This kind of activity is in itself a witness for others.

The church has struggled with its

organizational problems since apostolic times. While I Corinthians 12 declares the dependency of the parts upon each other and upon the head, Jesus Christ, for wholeness and health, too frequently the various members rush in all directions, duplicating functions, wasting resources, and ignoring the needs, skills, and resources of the entire body.

The sentiment of church membership in North America clearly calls for leadership to help laity reflect about the church itself. This call cannot be dismissed with a "let's close our debate and get on with the work" answer. Leaders and members alike should be agents of institutional change in order to more appropriately express our distinctive faith and doctrines. The church does not have a mission—but it must care for itself as well as for the world. In fact, it must care for itself in order that it may care for the world.

Max Weber wrote a description of the Prussian Army and the Roman Catholic Church that characterizes other church organizations. He described a mechanical, hierarchical, impersonal organization in