

DELIVERANCE MINISTRY:
A CONSENSUS STATEMENT
FROM PENTECOSTAL, CHARISMATIC AND HISTORIC EVANGELICALS

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The following paragraphs represent a sixth draft of a statement of principles developed by a diverse group of pastors and professors representing various evangelical traditions. I am the primary author of this document, but it has been developed with extensive interaction in the group. The group has taken the name Rogue Fellowship. Under the initiation of Doug Shearer, senior pastor of New Hope Christian Fellowship of Sacramento, CA, we are unofficially representing a broad section of evangelical traditions to address various practices and beliefs in the churches. Our common burden is to address such contemporary church issues as demonic deliverance, political involvement, inner healing, modern day prophecy, worship styles, etc. One goal is to make statements where we all agree on both rights and wrongs in these areas. We intend to address issues and practices rather than specific groups. We are amazed to find how much agreement we can get on issues such as binding demons, an area where there are vast differences within the group.

The name "Rogue Fellowship" may come from the character of the participants, the character of the heterodoxies and heteropraxies we hope to define, or from the fact that we first met in Ray Stedman's house overlooking the Rogue River in Grants Pass, Oregon.

The members of the Fellowship include Zenas Bicket, president of Berean College (Assemblies of God); Glen Cole, pastor of Capitol Christian Fellowship in Sacramento and executive presbyter of the Assemblies of God; Richard Paradise and Douglas Shearer, pastors of New Hope Christian Fellowship in Sacramento; Bob Bonner, pastor of Calvary Crossroads church in Grants Pass; Garry Friesen, dean of faculty of Multnomah School of the Bible; Ray Stedman, pastor emeritus of Peninsula Bible Church; and myself. None of us come with official support of any organization nor does our participation necessarily imply that the organizations listed agree with our statement of principles.

The principles listed below represent areas where we have consensus among ourselves. Silence in any area means neither support nor lack of support for a particular belief or practice. In some cases we say nothing because our work is not yet complete. In others we say nothing because we do not agree among ourselves.

1

God reigns supreme over the whole universe, governing it to His ultimate glory (Ps. 33:10-11; 103:19; Isa. 14:24-27; Eph. 1:11). He decisively defeated the powers of darkness, disarming and triumphing over them at the cross (Col. 1:16; 2:13-15; 1 Pet. 3:22). God is ultimately in charge of all affairs of His universe and we are not to fear a satanic victory (Rom. 8:38-39; Eph. 1:20-22).

2

Satan and demons are frighteningly real. They are personal, evil, supernatural spirits. These fallen angels are at constant warfare against the cause of Christ and His church. They are subtle, crafty, malicious, and unrelenting in their attacks. One cannot reduce the demonic in Scripture to primitive explanations of psychosis.

3

As prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph. 2:2), Satan exerts his power against believers and unbelievers. Jesus Christ advances His kingdom against that of Satan through a combination of prayer, evangelism and edification. Believers share in His victory and authority over demons (Col. 2:9-15). In the case of demonized persons, exorcism is one means of accomplishing this kingdom purpose (Matt. 12:28; Luke 10:1-11).

4

In spiritual warfare believers seek 1) to redeem unsaved persons from the realm of Satan by proclamation of the gospel (Acts 26:16-18; 2 Cor. 4:4-6); 2) to resist demonic assault against themselves and the church by submitting to God, standing firm in the faith, and putting on the armor of God, i. e., prayerfully practicing the essential disciplines of spiritual growth within a local body of believers (Eph. 6:13-18; Jas. 4:7-10; 1 Pet. 5:6-9).

5

At conversion God redeems people, transferring them out of Satan's realm, the dominion of darkness, into Christ's realm, the kingdom of the beloved Son of God (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13). At the time of conversion, they become children of God, fully justified, fully forgiven, sharing the inheritance from Christ. Their lives begin to become conformed to that of Jesus Christ as they respond to the Spirit's leading (Rom. 8:29; Phil. 2:12-13). Therefore, believers in Jesus Christ are never possessed by demons, i. e., are never the property of Satan and his minions, are never totally controlled by an evil spirit.

6

Some say that believers are immune to demonic assault. The examples of Jesus and Paul as well as such specific statements as 1 Pet. 5:8 prove this a fatally dangerous lie.

7

Believers are to be aware of Satan and his schemes so that we may stand against them. However, we must be cautious that we not give Satan undue attention by excessive study of him or his schemes (2 Cor. 2:11). This can lead to a fascination, fearfulness, overestimation of his power or even a form of Satanic worship. We acknowledge his existence, study, think and speak of him but only as pastorally necessary, and always to renounce and resist rather than respect him. Believers' focus should be on Christ's power and provision to resist evil forces, giving all glory to God alone.

8

Believers may be tempted, deceived, accused by Satan and may yield to these attacks (though they do not have to). If they do not resist Satan (Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8-9), they may become entangled in the behavior so deeply that they cannot escape it without special help from other believers (1 Cor. 5:1-5; Heb. 12:1-13). A person, believer or non-believer, could be dominated by a demon in a way akin to a wife being dominated by an abusive husband. It could be to

the point of alteration of their personality and loss of a sense of personal control. However, such a person will never be abandoned by the Holy Spirit or left to merely human resources as in the case of an unbeliever (Psa. 27; 90; Isa. 41:10-16).

9

Believers are commanded to avoid every form of contact with demonic practices including astrology, divination, new age meditation and mantras, demonic movies and books, satanic music, magic, seances, seeking after spirits of the dead, ouija boards, etc. (Lev. 19:26,31; 20:6,27; Deut. 18:9-13; Jer. 27:9-10)

10

Demons are properly expelled only by the power of God based on the triumph of Jesus Christ through the potency of the Holy Spirit. No magic, divination, bargaining, or ritual, no matter how effective it may appear to be, can replace reliance on the name of Jesus Christ and the power of His work at Calvary (Col. 2:10-15). The use of sacred objects, holy water, crosses runs the risk of being viewed as Christian magic.

11

Some say that a believer cannot be delivered of a specific sin or obsession from a demonic source except by a deliverance prayer rebuking the demon. Such warfare prayer directed toward Satan and demons has no precedent in Scripture and is contrary to the nature of prayer as family fellowship with God. Rebukes are directed to Satan and demons as a part of deliverance (Matt. 16:22; 17:18; Mk. 1:25; Luke 4:41), but they are not prayers. Prayer to God for power to resist temptation, for wisdom and strength to stand firm in face of Satan's attacks is a vital part of warfare against the world, the flesh and the devil.

12

Nowhere does the Bible command or describe exorcism or casting out of a demon as a solution for such sins of the flesh as anger, bitterness, envy, or lust. Deliverance is not a shortcut to spiritual or personal maturity. While demons may tempt a believer to commit such sins, as Satan did with Jesus, God will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able to bear and overcome (1 Cor. 10:13). Moral failure is ultimately the choice and responsibility of humans rather than Satan (Jas. 1:12). Giving a demon credit for causing a sin may lead to an erroneous sense of helplessness or defeat. No believer can correctly say, "The Devil *made* me do it."

13

Repeated demonic possession may be possible but many so-called repossessions are really the reoccurrence of a sin of the flesh.

14

Contemporary deliverance procedures usually involve finding the name of the demon, what sin allowed it to invade, the demonic hierarchies involved, and rebuking it before casting it out. Such procedures contain many elements that are not described in scriptural exorcisms. Any practice or technique of spiritual warfare that has no scriptural warrant is always suspect. Other elements appear only once in Scripture. They are not established as normal practices in exorcism. The difference between the common contemporary practices and the biblical descriptions gives us considerable concern.

15

In the Bible demonization involved easily recognizable phenomena which were supernatural and evil in both source and appearance. There was no need for extended or mysterious discovery procedures to uncover hidden demons. Contemporary deliverance methods, which rely heavily on such techniques, differ significantly from biblical patterns.

16

Biblical exorcisms delivered unbelievers completely from the demons that had possessed them. Their former habitation and dominion was thereby rendered open to the powerful indwelling of the Holy Spirit through the new convert's faith in Jesus Christ (Matt. 12:43; Luke 8:35; 9:42-43).

17

While demons are one possible cause of sickness as the book of Job indicates, it is not generally caused by demonic attack. Jesus clearly distinguished between the healing of sickness and the casting out of demons. When sickness is caused by willful sin or natural causes, then attempting to cast out demons will not bring a cure.

18

Warfare prayer may degenerate into a magical formula where specific phrases such as "binding Satan" or "placing a hedge of thorns" or "by the blood of Jesus" are deemed necessary or take on an effectiveness by use of the words themselves. The power of the prayer is in the truth of the concept rather than in the phrases spoken. It is a mistake to believe that apart from specifically worded prayers to bind Satan from tempting, or attacking persons or even entering a room, believers are unprotected and helpless. A prayer binding Satan is no more effective or necessary than prayer to God for his power and protection. Another mistake is to assume that believers become virtually divine, fighting spiritual battles by the power prayer generates with little need for God's involvement. The power of prayer comes from strengthened relationship with God and the cleansing and sensitivity to godliness it brings.

19

It is neither biblical nor wise for ministers of deliverance to invite a demon into themselves in order to get it out of a demonized person. The rationale for this practice is that the trauma of exorcism will be eased because transferring a demon into another body is less difficult than casting it out into bodiless existence. Nowhere is there warrant in Scripture for willfully inviting demons to enter a person. Jesus' allowing the demons in the Gadarene demoniac to go into pigs in no way validates the practice of transferring demons into people.

20

There is no scriptural warrant for coughing up, choking out or spitting out demons as a pattern for exorcism though there may be some physical reaction to deliverance (Mark 9:20, 26).

21

Scripture is the only reliable source of information about demons. The contemporary demonologies, including such matters as demonic hierarchies, motives and methods of

demons, are largely composed from information gathered from the demons themselves. Satan and his demons are liars by nature (John 8:44). At best information from them will be tainted by untruth and evil motive or half truths in a misleading way. Believing demons' reports will often bring great harm to the cause of Christ. Therefore information gained from demons should not be used for any purpose.

22

Under no circumstances should Christians carry on conversations or arguments with demons. Such contact is prohibited in Scripture (Lev. 19:26,31; 20:6,27; Deut. 18:9-13; Jer. 27:9-10) and it is patently unwise since it increases the opportunity for demons to counter attack. The only attention demons should receive is that of rejecting, refusing or resisting them. The brief interchange in Mark 5 is quite different than contemporary practices involving extensive fact finding.

23

There is spiritual warfare on the cosmic level between holy angels and demonic spirits (Dan. 10; Jude 9). However, the Bible neither describes nor mandates believers' involvement in that battle. Discerning the names, assignments, hierarchies of these spirits and praying against them has no scriptural warrant. We are commanded to deal with the demonic at the personal level.

24

Demons often work effectively within ungodly families who have a wicked influence on their offspring, but there is no scriptural warrant for so called "ancestral" or "generational bondage," i. e., inheriting personal demons from ancestors apart from personal involvement by the child. Passages such as Exodus 20:4-5 speak of the consequences of sin being visited to the third and fourth generations, but never of inheriting demons. The consequences of sin may be the natural result a sinful lifestyle, such as babies born with AIDS. They may be the judgment of God falling on relatively innocent persons such as the babies who starved in the siege of Jerusalem. Children raised in an occultic environment will normally come into contact with the demonic and may be influenced toward personal demonic involvement as a result of their environment. However, the believer is delivered from all demonic authority by the triumph of Christ. The protecting and empowering work of the Spirit is sufficient for all believers no matter what their family background.

25

Spiritual warfare should always glorify God rather than the human minister.