

FRANCIS AND JUDITH MACNUTT

*Revised  
and  
Expanded*

# DELIVERANCE FROM EVIL SPIRITS

*A Guide to Freedom from the Demonic Realm*

“This new edition of *Deliverance from Evil Spirits* is a brilliant and substantial revision and expansion of earlier editions, beautifully integrating insights from both Francis and Judith MacNutt’s decades of experience. It shatters misconceptions, offering understanding and practical advice for anyone wishing to learn about or pursue this central aspect of gospel ministry.”

Candy Gunther Brown, PhD, professor of religious studies,  
Indiana University

“My favorite book on the subject of deliverance. I love the scholarship in Dr. MacNutt’s books. He deals with the problem our society has with the subject of deliverance. He explains how and why this reluctance to believe came about, and how the Bible, psychology, history and experience don’t fit with the rationalism of the old science of a closed worldview that precluded a supernatural in-break from God. The book is the most comprehensive I have ever read on the subject of deliverance. The illustrations are captivating, and the personal experience removes the book from the ivory towers of academia and sets it right into the middle of real life. The chapter on curses was most interesting. The practical steps and prayers for deliverance will be a help and blessing to many who wonder how to get started in this area of ministry, and how to remain balanced in a ministry that has not always seen sanity or balance. I highly recommend this book.”

Randy Clark, president, Global Awakening

“The devil does not want you to read this book, so read it! And may the blood of Jesus sprinkle you as you read it.”

R. T. Kendall, minister of Westminster Chapel, London (1977–2002)

“This relevant book grows out of a lifetime of study and decades of experience in deep-level inner healing and deliverance. The MacNutt’s have provided a biblically based understanding of the existence and works of evil spirits along with practical tools for ministering through the power of the Holy Spirit to gain victory over them.”

Charles H. Kraft, PhD

**DELIVERANCE**  
**FROM**  
**EVIL SPIRITS**

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*A Guide to Freedom from the Demonic Realm*

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*Revised and Expanded Edition*

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**FRANCIS AND JUDITH MACNUTT**



**Chosen**

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To Francis,  
my beloved husband and partner in ministry, whose voice is now  
silent but whose message of healing and deliverance continues.  
Francis, you devoted your earthly journey passionately and tirelessly  
to encouraging believers to reclaim Jesus' ministry of healing.

To our children, Rachel and David,  
who shared us generously with those seeking healing.  
Thank you for your understanding and constant support.  
You are our treasures!

To our dedicated staff,  
prayer ministers, faithful friends and donors to Christian Healing  
Ministries, who have generously devoted their time, energy and  
resources to healing the sick and setting the captives free. Thank  
you for your love and zeal to establish the Kingdom of God.

Lord Jesus, restore the Church that bears Your name. . . .

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# FOREWORD

C. S. Lewis, the literary genius, had the unique ability to take giant subjects and make them understandable by children. For this reason adults read the *Chronicles of Narnia* as often as children do. But Lewis's gift enabled him to go even further: He was able to make the journey fun. It is a rare communicator who can do both. And while *Deliverance from Evil Spirits* is far from a children's book, I found myself comparing the outcome with that of Lewis. Francis and Judith MacNutt are able to take the big and impossible and make it small and doable. In all the right ways, reading this book makes me feel like a child again enjoying the process of learning.

Francis and Judith take us on a journey—their journey. Through their unusual candor, we see how simply being willing to learn is the right place to start in our invasion of the impossible. It is refreshing to realize that I do not have to know everything to be used by God! This approach to life and ministry is both humble and childlike. It draws the attention of our heavenly Father. But many throughout history have been kept from success in the difficult areas of life and ministry through an awareness of their own ignorance.

Yet there is one thing that has affected many of us more than our ignorance in the subject of deliverance: It is our awareness of past abuses. Some actually have to get delivered from their last deliverance. For this reason many have reacted to the errors of others, creating an equally devastating error, which is to ignore this God-given assignment to *cast out devils*. This

book can play a huge role in destroying the fear of failure in multitudes of people who shy away from deliverance, or reject the ministry altogether.

When I was asked to write this foreword, I was greatly honored. When a Spirit-filled Episcopal priest came into my office for a visit, he noticed the copy of the book on my desk. He commented, pointing to it, “There’s the classic book on deliverance.” He went on to tell me that this book had changed his life and launched him on a journey that defines his life and ministry to this day.

I was amazed at God’s timing as He helped me see firsthand the impact of this book before I even picked it up to read. But now I understand for myself. This book *is* a classic, deserving to be read by every believer who considers Jesus’ commission to His disciples to be his or her own: “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8 NASB).

This is the hour when this material is needed most. The rise in occult practices in the Western world is making it harder and harder for the Church to ignore the subject of deliverance. We are surrounded by people crying out for the freedom that only Jesus can give. Now is the time for us to consider and reconsider the profound message of *Deliverance from Evil Spirits*.

Bill Johnson, senior pastor, Bethel Church, Redding, CA;  
author, *When Heaven Invades Earth* and *Face to Face with God*

# PREFACE

Never has the need for healing and deliverance been more critical than now. This new revised and expanded edition of *Deliverance from Evil Spirits* provides the information and tools that will meet the increased demand to combat rising evil. Comprehensive and biblical, this foundational resource is full of prayers, practical application and invaluable new content, such as how to

1. discern between psychological problems and demonic oppression;
2. understand the scriptural basis for deliverance and inner healing;
3. minister in power and authority in Christ;
4. listen, love and pray for those under the enemy's influence;
5. empower Christians in their identity in Christ;
6. resist the enemy: invitation or intrusion;
7. practice warfare essentials: protection, breaking vows and judgments, and the importance of forgiveness;
8. pray using anointed prayers and scriptural resources.

Early in my career as a psychotherapist, I became aware of the absolute need for inner healing and deliverance, and I include my story here, along with two new chapters on essentials in ministry. Most of the book remains in Francis's voice, as it should be.

This life-changing book is a compilation of the extensive wisdom of Dr. Francis MacNutt, who devoted his life to normalizing and restoring to Christians the ministry of the Holy Spirit in healing and deliverance. He accomplished this by dedicating his time and energy to writing invaluable ministry resources and teaching around the world. Together we founded Christian Healing Ministries, an international healing and training center in Jacksonville, Florida.

Francis' body of work flowed from his ardent love for God and those suffering and in need. His distinguished theological education and anointed ministry spanning sixty years serve as the solid foundation for this book.

Francis, a pioneer during the early days of the charismatic renewal, was one of the greatest voices of his time. His groundbreaking work, combined with that of others, created deep wells from which the current resurgence in deliverance and healing emerged. This book contains historical glimpses into the explosive beginnings of the charismatic renewal, a movement that generated radical change worldwide. Francis ministered across denominational lines in order to learn everything he could about the role of the Holy Spirit. As a result, his comprehensive, ecumenical books have been used extensively as trusted resources in every major denomination, by seminaries and by the medical and therapeutic communities.

Currently around the globe, there is a lively renewed interest concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit, especially in deliverance and healing. Each month at Christian Healing Ministries we receive more than twenty thousand prayer requests for deliverance, inner healing and physical healing. The ministry of healing and deliverance, which has been largely neglected in churches, is needed desperately to set the captives free. As a result, many turn to parachurch ministries for freedom and healing. Others get entrapped in New Age, which offers healing but leads to dangerous results.

At the heart of the deliverance ministry is the love of Jesus Christ for His children. "He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for captives" (Isaiah 61:1).

Judith MacNutt  
April 2023  
Jacksonville, Florida

# INTRODUCTION

Since this book was first published in 1995, I (Francis) have seen many dramatic signs that the deliverance ministry is being resurrected. It is exploding!

Great numbers of people all over the world are becoming Christians, and many who are already believers are being baptized with the Holy Spirit and becoming more active in ministry. In fact, while writing this, I received an e-mail from a friend with a medical team visiting Africa. Here is part of her report:

We saw a record of 140 patients today. There are one thousand on the list. The evangelism is the best we have ever had. The patients wait for hours. After seeing the dentist, they are given a chance one on one to hear the Gospel. This is a very Muslim area. Several of them gave their hearts to Jesus today—maybe 25 decisions out of 140 patients. Praise God!

More and more I hear this kind of story—people in Africa, Asia and Latin America being evangelized by the method Jesus advocated:

“As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”

Matthew 10:7–8

The movement to evangelize the world is being accomplished largely by Christians filled by the power released by the Holy Spirit—such a dramatic

and visible development that scholars like Philip Jenkins are writing about it and calling attention to its extraordinary importance for Christians in the so-called first world.<sup>1</sup> Much of this change is happening outside traditional churches that keep trying to operate as usual. And some of this change is being energized by healing and exorcism.

When I preached in Guatemala in the 1970s, almost all the attendees were Catholic. (Much of the religion was cultural and mixed with superstition.) But today nearly half of Guatemalans have left the Catholic Church and belong to a growing number of independent charismatic churches.

All over the globe, in newfound excitement over the rediscovery of healing, deliverance and other gifts of the Spirit, leaders and laypersons alike (including several friends of mine) have taken the time and expense to visit Mozambique. Out of that impoverished nation in southeastern Africa, where missionaries Rolland and Heidi Baker have been working since 1995, Iris Global has expanded to 65 locations in 34 nations. Some 14,600 children in Africa and beyond are loved, cared for and kept safe. Girls are freed from lives of prostitution on the streets. More than 3,500 people have been trained and equipped through nine schools. Even resurrections from the dead have been witnessed and corroborated. And deliverance is part of this ministry.

Heidi writes,

[One woman] had been very ill with acute asthma for ten years. Her husband was sure she was a prostitute and was going to divorce her. Recently, she came to our church in Pemba, as demonized as anyone we have seen. She was healed of asthma and set free instantly by prayer and a hug filled with the love of Jesus. Her husband was amazed by her transformation, although he continued to drink and fly into crazy rages. One day he had a demonic fit and died. After he was pronounced dead at the hospital, his wife began to pray in Jesus' name. In a little over an hour, he was raised from the dead—and came straight to the church to ask Jesus into his heart! At the same time he was set free from the demons who had tormented him for years. This morning he announced with a huge smile that he has not had a drink of alcohol since that day.<sup>2</sup>

The power of the Holy Spirit to heal and deliver is being seen not only in Africa. In China the number of Christians is growing exponentially, largely

in house churches that attract people by signs and wonders demonstrated on a regular basis. As in the early Church, ordinary people interpret the Bible literally and have no intellectual problem casting out evil spirits and asking Jesus to heal the sick.

The dimensions of the explosive growth of deliverance and healing have gained the attention of Christians living in Europe, where the faith of many has grown cold, and in the United States, where faith in Jesus Christ may be growing. Part of this is due to remarkable changes in the acceptance of exorcism during the past few years, which has helped free many from the influence of evil spirits.

## **The New Openness**

I am encouraged by the extraordinary increase in the acceptance of exorcism. My main experiences have been with the Roman Catholic Church.

More and more we see the restoration of the deliverance ministry. In 1990, for example, a small organization, the International Association for Exorcists, was formed in Europe by an Italian Catholic priest. The Reverend Gabriele Amorth estimated that when he began praying for exorcism, there were only twenty exorcists in Italy. In 2018 there were 240.<sup>3</sup> Father Amorth believed that any bishop who does not provide an exorcist for his people is committing a serious sin.

Another priest, Father Rufus Pereira of India, started an association for those engaged in deliverance ministry. He traveled all over the world speaking to priests about exorcism and leading healing services for thousands. Father Pereira, a Bible scholar who taught on the seminary level, had a fine reputation and was used to restore the deliverance ministry to the Catholic Church.

Another remarkable sign of a shift in thinking and acting was an invitation that our Christian Healing Ministries team received in 2002 from the Church of Scotland. This national Presbyterian church, shaped by the Scottish Reformation, invited us to give a clergy retreat on the topic of deliverance from evil spirits. I welcomed this invitation for several reasons, in part because reformer John Calvin did not believe that a Christian could be attacked by Satan, whom he regarded as a thoroughly defeated enemy.

As a result, Protestants in the Calvinist tradition have not learned to pray for deliverance.

Why, then, had we been invited? The Church of Scotland had distributed a questionnaire and received responses from more than a thousand ministers. They were requesting ministry for ordinary Scots asking what to do about haunted houses and frightening apparitions and requesting prayer to cleanse their homes from demonic infestation. Such ministry had not been covered in the ministers' seminary preparations! But because of these requests, and because the leaders of the Scottish Church had heard about our ministry, they decided to invite us. Honored to be asked, we brought a team to Edinburgh to teach a weekend seminar on deliverance.

Some dramatic deliverances actually occurred on the platform. The conference culminated with a healing service for four hundred people at the historic Parish Church of St. Cuthbert, lying below Edinburgh Castle. The ministry would have been impossible a few years earlier. But it was one more sign that established denominations and churches are coming alive to the reality of demonic influence in their lives and the need to do something about it.

## **A Remedy for Today's Problems**

Forty years ago I experienced real difficulties when asked to pray to free people from demonic influence. Some religious authorities forbade me, mainly because they were convinced that a belief in demons was primitive superstition and that what was considered "possession" two thousand years ago was simply a psychological problem: "Call a psychiatrist, not a priest."

Simple, uneducated people had no difficulty believing in evil spirits because they experienced the demonic realm firsthand. The media were fascinated. (Remember *The Exorcist*?) On the academic level, by and large, profound skepticism remains. But even this has begun to change. Although a great amount of ignorance and fear remains, the deliverance ministry is becoming more accepted.

This growing awareness is occurring not just in churches but in the healing professions, too. I have observed a major change in the past thirty years as the medical profession opens to healing prayer and even, to a certain



extent, deliverance. Increasing numbers of counselors and psychotherapists now consider the possibility of demonic influence as at least a partial cause of certain psychological problems.

The seminars on spirituality sponsored by the Templeton Foundation in medical schools have been helpful in this regard. Studies, even degrees, are now offered in psychology and counseling, with prayer for inner healing and deliverance as part of the course.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is another common problem in our society for which inner healing and even deliverance are now recognized as possibly effective, even life-saving, solutions. A friend of mine, the Reverend Nigel Mumford, a former Royal Marine stationed in Belfast, Northern Ireland, directs conferences offering prayer for inner healing and deliverance for veterans returning from war suffering from deep inner scars.

At a time when it is estimated that one out of four young women in the United States, and one out of five young men, suffer sexual abuse, psychotherapists are learning to pray for inner healing and sometimes even deliverance. What was once not worth considering is now becoming an area of research and treatment.

Deliverance can be the answer to other major problems in our society as well. Lifelong addictions can be cured by deliverance prayer. My wife, Judith, knows this firsthand: She was freed from smoking, and even the desire to smoke, by prayer from a colleague in Israel forty years ago!

In recent years I have met more victims of severe trauma linked to cult activity than ever before. The answer to helping these victims lies in prayer for exorcism, followed by prayer for generational healing. Thank God Christians are waking up to this often hidden problem, and a few are learning to pray wisely for the suffering survivors.

## **The Need for Discernment**

Thoughtful Christians realize they need to discern between psychological problems—for which the patient needs counseling, psychiatric help or medication—and the presence of a real demonic entity in the person, in which case deliverance is called for. I have written this book to help bring balance into the ministry of deliverance/exorcism, which can harm

suffering people when it is not ministered wisely. I see a desperate need for balanced, wise ministry.

We must discern the times to put on the full armor of God (see Ephesians 6:11) and take our stand against Satan by engaging in combat. A major reason Jesus took on human flesh was to free us from demonic influence. For Him it was no side issue, no minor ministry. His title is *Savior* because He came to free us from evil: “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work” (1 John 3:8). Jesus saw exorcism as one of His major missions. When told that Herod wanted to kill Him, here is what He replied:

“Go tell that fox, ‘I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.’ In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day.”

Luke 13:32–33

And we, too, must go on!

Francis MacNutt  
August 2009  
Jacksonville, Florida



PART 1

# NECESSARY BACKGROUND

Clearing Away Misconceptions

# 1

## How I Got Involved in Casting Out Demons (Francis)

A Parable for the Church

Like all my friends who have become actively involved in casting out evil spirits, I got involved through experience, not theory. Pushing me beyond the bounds of what was theologically respectable was my desire to help wounded, struggling people. In those days in the late 1960s, the only practical instruction I received as a Roman Catholic priest came from a few Protestant friends and from my own trial-and-error experiences. Inevitably I made mistakes, through which I hope I have learned some valuable lessons.

Praying for deliverance has been very different from my experience in the healing ministry. I can honestly say I have known thousands of people who seem to have been healed through prayer. Not all were healed physically, but even those who were not were blessed spiritually. But in my ministry of deliverance, closely connected with healing, I know a few persons I was unable to help, either because of my ignorance, or because I did not have time to follow through, or because I attacked the most obvious problem, the demonic element, when increased “capacity” or inner healing was needed first.

By capacity, I mean the ability of a person’s brain, non-biological mind and spirit to handle intensity without a disconnect or meltdown, much

like an electrical circuit designed for a certain amount of current. We have all marveled at how much pressure some people can handle. Conversely, people with low capacity due to developmental trauma (unmet needs and a lack of love) find it difficult to navigate life's intense challenges. We will talk about this more as we go along.

We are all aware, I think, of the problems involved in deliverance ministry. It is the most dangerous ministry I know—not only for the exorcist, as Malachi Martin observes in *Hostage to the Devil*,<sup>1</sup> but for the sufferer who needs to be freed. We need to learn how to pray for deliverance without repeating the same old mistakes, so the oppressed will be freed in increasing numbers. But refusing to help hurting people by restricting or even forbidding exorcism is far worse than the mistakes we make, for it abandons multitudes of the oppressed to suffer for the rest of their lives or, worse yet, to commit suicide when they see no hope of ever getting better. I see no reason, as we learn more and rely more on the Lord for guidance, to be overly fearful.

Although I love to pray for healing and see the joy on people's faces as they experience the love of Jesus washing away their pain, I have also discovered that healing prayer is not always enough. I might be conducting a healing service in a chapel, for example, praying quietly for the people who come forward asking for physical healing, when suddenly, with no outward provocation, a man's face contorts and he shouts out something like, "We hate you!" On one occasion a young woman tried to strangle me, and several times I have seen people reach for their throats as if to strangle themselves.

There are not many of these bizarre occurrences, to be sure; but usually when we pray for a sufficiently large number of people, several erupt with disturbing behavior. (In a recent healing service of about four hundred people at a church, for example, a woman started screaming and her face contorted grotesquely when I started to pray for her.) Sometimes when I continue praying, the person falls to the floor, then starts rolling around and shouting, reminiscent of individuals in the gospels like the epileptic demoniac: "When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth" (Mark 9:20).

We might pass these off as psychotic episodes, except for puzzling factors that simply do not compute, such as these:

1. At other times these persons act normally. Often this is the first time something like this has ever happened to them.
2. The atmosphere is usually not highly charged emotionally. These incidents occur during a quiet service characterized by love and gentle prayer. If these are hysterical outbursts, what could be their cause?
3. When these people say something, it is often spoken in the plural: "We will kill you!" Where did the *we* come from? Sometimes they roar like lions or bark like dogs. How do we explain that?
4. Usually these tormented people have not seen others behave like this, so where have they learned it? It amazes me that demonized people all over the world behave in the same ways when we pray for them.

I tried over the years to figure out what to do when these bizarre episodes took place. Most of my ministry in those early days was ad hoc. What *do* you do, after all, when you are praying with a person for healing and she starts screaming at you and topples over in convulsions? How do you help a person like that? Do you just send her home the way she came? Where are we supposed to learn what to do?

On the occasions when I was praying for such a person, I would take her, along with a prayer team, to a side room. After a period of prayer, during which I would command the spirits to depart, they would seemingly leave, often through coughing or some other external manifestation. Afterward the person would almost always say that she had felt the tormenting entity leave.\* And she would appear to be at peace and often radiantly transformed.

I noticed several unusual things. Paradoxically we on the team usually felt exhausted while the freed person appeared full of life, exhilarated and joyful. Also, these liberated persons could often remember nothing that

\* This sense of total relief, of "It's completely gone," is significantly different from what we see in inner healing, where there is usually a process that takes place in stages over a period of time.

went on from the time they came forward in line until the process was over and they were freed. It was as if the demonic spirits had taken over for a time, even speaking through the person. It was like a possession, but a temporary one, during which the person had apparently been submerged, which was why she could not remember anything that had happened. These scenes reminded me of the story of the Gerasene demoniac, in which the “Legion” of demons shrieked until Jesus sent them into the pigs. Then at last the wild man rested, in his right senses (see Mark 5:1–20).

I tried to steer clear of all these difficulties by emphasizing the love of Jesus in the healing services we held, because I did not think I knew enough to pray for deliverance. (Out of the mouth of one of the first persons who ever asked me to pray for deliverance came these embarrassing words: “You can’t drive us out; you don’t have enough experience!”) But in 1972 a case was thrust upon me that forced me to learn more.

## **Roberta**

A young married woman (let’s call her Roberta) came to me seeking advice during a conference. She had a history of mental illness and had spent much time in hospitals. She wanted my help yet was not eager for me to pray. Later, when she came to my office and allowed me to pray for her profound depression to lift, no evident healing took place.

I noticed two strange things about her appearance: She had a beautiful but haunted face and rows of patterned burn marks arranged neatly up and down her arms like tattoos. She had inflicted them on herself, she told me, by sticking a lighted cigarette to her flesh. When I asked if that had not hurt, she answered, “No!” The lack of pain seemed strange, but I ascribed it to some mysterious kind of psychological blocking out. She also told me she liked to wander around in cemeteries, and felt most at home in settings that reminded her of death. She left my office pretty much the way she came; I simply did not know how to help her.

A few months later some of her friends brought Roberta to where I was speaking at a large conference. At that point I began to suspect I might be dealing with something more than a mere psychological problem. Every time she started to approach me to talk, she turned around again

and disappeared into the crowd. Her friends finally calmed her down and brought her forward to tell me that, when she was a young girl, her father had consecrated her to an evil spirit in a satanic ritual in Brazil. She had become a priestess of Satan. But now she was trying to live a normal life. She asked me to free her.

Realizing I was in over my head, I introduced Roberta to a leader at the conference with a lot of experience in praying for deliverance. Aside from my own lack of experience, I did not have much time to spend with her because I was a main speaker and 350 other people were attending the conference. I told her I would be available to start the prayer, but that my friend would do the actual casting out. She pleaded with me to stay and lead the entire deliverance prayer, but I felt that my more experienced colleague would do better at praying for her deliverance.

So around ten o'clock one night I initiated the prayer, then turned the session over to the other leader, who took over and prayed vigorously for several hours while I watched. Finally, around two in the morning, I decided to leave since I was scheduled to speak the next morning and was becoming exhausted. It seemed like wisdom for me to leave to get some rest.

Before dawn I was awakened by a knock at my door. A man told me to get up, that Roberta had tried cutting her wrists. I stumbled to my feet and got dressed. But what could I possibly do that I had not already done?

Roberta and I sat outside as the sun came up. She told me she had just called her husband two hours away to come pick her up and take her home. Then she threatened to commit suicide when she got there.

*Is Satan using guilt to keep me up night and day?* I thought.

"You're a priest," she went on pointedly, "and you don't even believe in who you are. You're the only one at this conference who has the spiritual power to free me. I came to you, and you turned me over to somebody who can't do it."

This hit me hard. Suppose God did want me to pray for her? If it was the devil, on the other hand, what better way to wipe me out as a speaker than to get me trapped? By telling me I was the only one who could pull it off, was she just appealing to my vanity?

I finally promised to try to help her, provided that she, in turn, did everything possible to cooperate. She agreed. And as a first step she confided that she had been consecrated to a particular demon mentioned in the



Bible, and that a Scripture verse had been pinned to her dress by a satanic high priest when she was consecrated to Satan. She was not familiar with the Bible, but asked if there might not be a book named “Jope.”

“That sounds like Job,” I said.

“That’s it!”

By the time of our appointment later that morning, she had spent hours preparing and had found her verse, Job 18:14: “He is torn from the security of his tent and marched off to the king of terrors.”

“King of Terrors is the one I was offered to,” she said.\*

For the next hour I led her through repentance and forgiveness of sins, then asked her to renounce all her involvement in the occult realm. After that I prayed to break any curses and cast out the King of Terrors. The beautiful conclusion came when Roberta consecrated her life to Jesus Christ, was baptized with the Holy Spirit, prayed in a tongue and interpreted it herself.

“Just as Satan has been using you for his purposes,” went the interpretation, “I will now use you for My own glory.”

At the end of our prayer time, which was quiet and lasted about an hour, Roberta looked different, not to say transformed.

Her original reason for coming to see me, as it turned out, was her shock when one of her daughters had asked her if she was a devil. Also, she had been addicted to various drugs, which I had not known about when I prayed, yet the addiction was broken during our prayer. Thereafter she was able to begin a radically new life with her husband and children.

## The Human Need

Roberta’s story is a parable of what is happening to the Church in a variety of ways. Here are two lessons that spoke to me then and still speak to the Church today.

The first lesson that leaps out is that I was forced to take action simply because I was confronted by an immediate, deep human need—a case of life and death. Ignorant as I was, I simply could not stand by with folded

\* The King of Terrors is a Ugaritic god of death. Some current translations, such as the NIV, downplay the element of personal evil by lowercasing *king of terrors*; but the New Jerusalem Bible capitalizes it: King of Terrors.

arms and watch her move toward destruction. I did not know much but finally decided to risk praying.

This is the way most of us get involved in praying for deliverance. We are the only ones around, so we finally decide we have to do something. It is possible we will make mistakes, but it seems certain that the results will be disastrous if we do nothing.

For most of us, I think, learning about deliverance begins not as some cosmic intellectual question about the cause of evil, but as a puzzling pastoral dilemma about how to help the person standing in front of us who seems to be under demonic attack.

Now I see the need for deliverance as a common, not a rare, problem. Deliverance affects the well-being of the Church and must be addressed because multitudes of hurting people are looking for the help that can come only through prayer for deliverance. If people are suffering from psychological problems, fine; they can receive help through counseling and prayer for healing. But if the source of the problem is demonic, they will not be helped notably through ordinary psychological intervention. The Church will either have to take action or else continue in denial, asserting that the problem of satanic oppression is either rare or unreal.

The second lesson that leaps out from Roberta's story is that just as I tried to turn her over to someone else—an action that at the time I considered wise and prudent—I think most of us have been trained to seek help for difficult cases from anyone but ourselves. By and large, people who need deliverance come first to their minister or priest. The minister often refers them to a psychiatrist. If the problem is emotional, the psychiatrist should be able to help; but if the problem is demonic, the sufferer will probably not be helped, and may well end up institutionalized—out of harm's way but also out of commission, perhaps for a lifetime.

Roberta's rebuke—"You're the only one who can help me. Don't you believe in who you are?"—can be addressed to thousands of ministers and priests, while we rest contentedly, having given the afflicted person the phone number of a local psychiatrist and confident we have done the best we could. But how can this help when most counselors and psychiatrists do not operate out of a frame of reference that enables them to recognize the presence of the demonic, even when it is there? It is not in *their* training, either.

Many patients, including those in mental hospitals, can be cured or helped through prayer for inner healing or deliverance. This proposition, admittedly, is impossible to prove; I present it simply as a heartfelt belief.

I once prayed for a young woman who had been confined in a mental hospital for twelve years, suffering from schizophrenia. After two hours of prayer for healing and deliverance, the glazed look in her eyes left and she was able to converse in a normal way. Several weeks later the doctors, recognizing a dramatic change in her behavior, released her from the hospital.

I could cite many more examples from a steady stream of supplicants unable to find help from psychotherapy, or from those who are ministers of the faith who had not learned to deal with the demonic. My great desire is to encourage Christians to learn more about deliverance—and then, when necessary, to pray for it. My interest is not academic; to me the issue is life and death. (“If I don’t get help, I’m going to end it all!”) Some people *will* die, spiritually or even physically, if no one is there to free them from the torment that may drive them to kill themselves.

Ministers of the Gospel need to stop passing the buck by denying that demonic oppression exists or by simply referring people to psychiatrists or counselors, when what is needed is deliverance. Counseling and medication may also be needed; and we should by all means cooperate with mental health professionals. But ministers must not continue to deny responsibility in their own field. When my wife, Judith, a psychotherapist, worked on staff in an excellent psych unit in Boston, she had some patients she believed needed prayer to free them from oppression, patients she referred to their chaplains. But the chaplains, she found, knew as little about spiritual warfare as she did. They were good at encouraging people and were a helpful adjunct to counseling, but they were unable to help in the spiritual realm, their own chosen field, where the patient needed them most.

## **A Woman Who Found Help**

Here is a story with a happy ending that comes from an educated woman who sought help unsuccessfully from both a psychiatrist and a priest. In her desperation she finally found deliverance from an unexpected source.

Dear Francis,

Never before have I written to someone I knew only from reading his book. [She had read the chapter on deliverance in my book *Healing*.<sup>2</sup>] . . . I pray that you may be able to give me the advice I need. Only in the last five weeks have I put a tag on my trouble, and I still have a problem using words that sound out of the Dark Ages and go against my educational background.

About three years ago I began to reach for a closer relationship with God. At the same time I became chronically depressed and actually suicidal. I didn't understand, and talked with my priest and told him I needed help. I am 37 years old, well educated and analytical. I majored in psychology, and hated to admit it, but something was wrong with me, and a mental health center seemed the answer.

I began psychotherapy, worked hard and did all the right things, but still felt no better—nothing changed inside me. I was being driven. My doctor couldn't understand why we couldn't change things.

But there is a voice in my head (we called it a parent-tape then) that said I couldn't live. Two years ago I tried twice in one week to kill myself. I went from intensive care to the psychiatric unit of the hospital. I told my doctor and also my priest that it wasn't me; I didn't want to feel that way. But I sounded crazy so I stopped saying it.

I prayed and prayed but felt even worse.

At this time God sent Teresa [name changed] into my life; she is an intelligent, well-read, down-to-earth woman. She said that perhaps I should pray for deliverance. Finally, to please her, I agreed, so we went to see a couple for prayer. While there I realized for the first time in my life the evil I am dealing with. I was asked to renounce all my occult activities. It sounded simple (I had long ago relegated them to the level of the unnecessary), but I found them extremely difficult to renounce.

I have had the voice in my head since I was about three years old. It was in my head, so I assumed it was me, even though I knew it wasn't. It told me what to do and how; I felt it took care of me. It told me how to make things happen and how to read the future or see the past. I told fortunes when I was older, but people were frightened because I could tell so much. I am what Sybil Leek [astrologer and clairvoyant] calls a "born witch."

After the couple prayed with me, the voice in my head was quiet, but I could still feel its presence and knew it wasn't gone.

The next week was awful. This thing no longer pretended to be my voice or me. It attacked me almost continually. I was desperate, so Teresa and I went back again to pray with the couple. This time it was very hard. I could not talk, and they restrained me physically. The voice kept saying, *Make the "connection"; let me do it. They can't hold you if you do; they don't know how.* I was so afraid someone would be hurt that I didn't let go, and we didn't expel it.

This brings me to my problem. I am trying to be rational in the light of my twentieth-century upbringing, but I know this is a very powerful demon who is tormenting me. I want to be free; I want to give my whole will to God. I will try deliverance again, but only if I feel I am protected. I don't want to be part of an exhibition that leaves me the same way afterwards. I feel like a battleground. I have talked to my priest and he is sympathetic. He tells me to go to confession, but it is not enough. I need help. Can you give me any advice?

This is really a question asked of the whole Church, isn't it? How can we help people who, in desperation, write or phone even from distant places? Here we have what I now see as a common pastoral case: an intelligent person who has already turned to both traditional sources of help, the Church and psychiatry, but who has gotten no help from fine, well-intentioned priests and doctors.

How many ministers or priests do you know to whom you might turn for deliverance prayer?

So desperate was this woman that she telephoned me several times to see if I could see her. I just could not. The only thing I could think of was to refer her to a priest I knew who lived fifty miles from her home.

Two weeks later she wrote again:

As soon as I mailed my letter to you, the demon began to push and torment me harder than ever. My friends took me to the emergency room because I had overdosed. The sister in charge of the psychiatric unit asked me if I was trying to separate myself from the voice by killing myself. I felt the only way I could separate from it was to die. My psychiatrist came and told me I had to be admitted. I refused because I knew I could not get the help I needed in a hospital.

When I finally traveled to meet your priest friend, I liked him at once. He is intelligent, well read and very pleasant. I talked with him and was open

and honest. He seemed to avoid the subject of the voice and the demon. After talking and talking, he said in essence that I was a nice, confused lady who needed a psychiatrist. That hurt, not because I hadn't heard it before, but because I hadn't come all that way to hear it. Then I asked him point-blank about the voice. He was very distressed but said he thought the voice was mine.

I cannot describe to you how I felt. I felt God was being very cruel. I had bitter tears running down my face and told him I didn't know what to say except that I knew the voice wasn't me.

"How do you know?" he asked.

She went on to describe how she roamed around in desperation that night, until at last she ended up in a retreat house to see a Catholic sister she knew. Another sister in the retreat house ended up helping her:

I wasn't sure if she thought I was sane or not, but she was nice. I must have looked as if I were about to leave, because she asked me to stay while she got her Bible. She sat still, looking at the Bible for a moment, then looked at me and said, "The Lord wants me to pray with you."

I wasn't surprised; after all, she is a nun. First we prayed together, then she read Mark 9:14–29 [the healing of a boy with an evil spirit] and said, "I believe that's how it is with you." I agreed and she said, "Let's pray."

She began praying that God would be with us and guide us. Then I started to realize she was praying for deliverance.

Her voice was very low and she didn't look at me. She took authority, bound the spirit, and commanded it to leave and never return. I felt the evil spirit, but that little room was full of God. The sister was open and God was pouring through her. I was not afraid. I let go completely and the demon left. God held me very gently. I told the sister it was gone. She looked at me and her eyes were full of tears. She said, "Let's go to the chapel and thank God and praise Him."

Then my friend Teresa saw me and commented that I looked different.

"It's gone," I told her.

"When did that happen?"

"Just now. The sister prayed for deliverance."

"I didn't know she could do that."

Well, I don't know if she had ever done that before; I didn't ask. But I think she is beautiful to let the Lord use her in such a special way.

### Necessary Background

It feels strange, but good, just to be me. The voice and the connection in my head are gone. Thank you for helping me! God used you, too.

All this is to God's glory.

Peace!

I am writing this book, then, to answer the question I have faced in my own ministry: How do you help people like this woman and like Roberta? If we are not to send them home the way they came, but offer them the kind of help they need, we need biblical and practical guidelines. I am writing to share what I have learned.

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