DEMONOLOGY, MISSION AND THE GLOBAL CHURCH

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We have no right to send people on missions, especially in cross-cultural or multicultural contexts, without giving them an understanding of demonology!
Category: Observations

I'm aware of the irony in posting on this subject on the run up to halloween, but here are a few quotes from Demonology for the Global Church. A full review will appear eventually. If you want a spoiler, it's a good book. The emphasis in the quotes is mine.

> *However, one issue again demands attention as we consider the practicality of demonology. Just as exclusivism is a soteriological outworking of demonology, evangelism is likewise a practical outworking of demonology. With the demonic as the backdrop, evangelism is an operational extension of exclusivism, and Christian salvation supplies us with defenses against the demonic. Freedom is found in Christ, while those outside of Christ are bound by sin and death. While Jesus Christ is certainly the author and finisher of salvation, his redeemed people are his agents of reconciliation proclaimers of the gospel message. Evangelism is at the core of Jesus's soteriological purposes, and he involves the redeemed in his saving mission among the nations. If Christ is only the way to God, then those who cling to their own religions stand separated from the true God. Therefore, all religions are not equal. The church must proclaim the message about Jesus to all peoples and declare the way of deliverance from demonic, spiritual bondage.*
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> *Yes, Jesus came to set people free. Yet while the atonement is complete, he never intended to act alone in spreading his message and growing his kingdom. "The unreached people of his world need more preachers and ministers of the gospel. Jesus can personally encounter only a small number, so he will commission his followers to begin to reach the rest.?" The compassionate ministry of the kingdom personally involved Jesus's disciples, and his sending activity culminated at the Great Commission the conclusion to Matthew's gospel. May we have a heartfelt affection to pour out the gospel and compassionate service on the unconverted. Let us work to help break Satan's shackles of sin from the peoples.*
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> *Evangelicals ought to uphold a robust yet restrained demonology, and balance may encourage better relationships within the contemporary sociological phenomenon of multicultural society many cultures inhabiting and integrating within the same space. This social phenomenon is a growing norm across the globe. If we compromise, omit, or overemphasize demonology, Christianity*
> *can quickly fall into treacherous waters.*
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> *First, if we omit demonology or treat it as an unimportant subject, we can harm relationships in multicultural Christian communities including churches, seminaries, and parachurch*

organizations. A dismissive posture risks alienating Christians who have experiences and cultural backgrounds that support the reality of the demonic. As Ferdinando says, "Most peoples, for most of history, have believed in spirits, witchcraft and sorcery," and since the Scriptures refer to the activity and reality of those spirits, we should not shy away from the subject.

Second, if we compromise our demonology and repackage it according to a cultural philosophy, we communicate a message of arrogance. Instead of the Bible speaking, one culture takes precedence over others. This attitude is catastrophic when attempting to establish and maintain healthy multicultural unity among believers. One common example is how Majority World believers discover an unbiblical hollowness when they join a church with Western roots. Little teaching, if any, is provided concerning demons, and whatever is shared about the demonic is sanitized and minimized so as to not disturb the Western worldview's focus on the physical world. But when a crisis arises from the unseen world, many will pursue counsel from elsewhere, instead of seeking assistance from their own church.

Third, if we overemphasize demons by sensationalizing and exalting their influence in the world, we risk transforming the Christian theology of triumph over the demonic into a pagan dualism a form of Manichaeism. We could invalidate the holy Christian community itself, creating a dogma that does not represent the Scriptures. While retaining outward forms and terms, Christianity could disappear into the haze of pagan preoccupation and overemphasis on the

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The Bible sets the proper foundation for theologizing in the multicultural context, especially for demonology which is often a culturally conditioned subject. In our demonology, we must not attempt to insert our own cultural framework into Christianity. Rather, we must try to represent the scriptural material, and use it both to rebuke and affirm our cultural beliefs. If we wish to be sensitive and encouraging to the multicultural Christian community, we must present a truly biblical demonology.

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The New Testament concept of mission has little in common with the numerous practices that fall under that category of mission today. Mission involves preaching the gospel, discipling believers, training leaders, and planting churches. The book of Acts provides convincing model of the missions in which Jesus expects his followers to engage.

> *We cannot state this sentence too forcefully: We have no right to send people on missions, especially in cross-cultural or multicultural contexts, without giving them an understanding of demonology**!** Since demons are behind the religions of the world and confrontations with those spirits can occur in evangelism, for example as Paul experienced in Philippi, we need people who are entering new contexts to have open eyes to the spiritual dimensions of mission. Are we properly equipping people for the struggles they will encounter? Many missionary sending churches, agencies, and seminaries give minimalinstruction on this subject. Thankfully, some missionaries from the Majority World have personal training they can fall back on to counter the lack of formal guidance from various institutions.*
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> *p.155*

I apologise if any of these quotes are slightly mangled. I captured them using an app on my phone and it got some words out of order. I think I corrected everything, but I may have missed some.