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**THE BONDAGE MAKER:
EXAMINING THE MESSAGE AND METHOD
OF NEIL T. ANDERSON**

**Part Four:
Spiritual Warfare and the Myth of Satanic Conspiracies
and Ritual Abuse**

by Bob and Gretchen Passantino

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SUMMARY

Neil T. Anderson's promotion of unverified demonic activities permeates his book *The Bondage Breaker*, which describes in vivid, gripping terms at least 75 different episodes of overtly demonic phenomena. Careful research by law enforcement officials, including the FBI, social scientists doing primary research, and investigative journalists has produced abundant evidence that his view of satanic activity is not true.

Neil T. Anderson and his Freedom in Christ Ministries promotes serious errors concerning satanic conspiracies and satanic ritual abuse (SRA) that impact many thousands of unsuspecting Christians. The problem is exacerbated by the numerous Christian luminaries who endorse him, including Campus Crusade for Christ founder and president Bill Bright, Dallas Theological Seminary president and author Chuck Swindoll, Josh McDowell, Dr. D. James Kennedy, Multnomah School of the Bible president Joe C. Aldrich, and Jack Hayford, pastor of the Church on the Way in Van Nuys, California.¹

Anderson draws on his academic roots and personal experience to encourage people to trust his teachings: "In more than 20 years of ministry as a pastor, counselor, seminary professor, and conference speaker, I have met and ministered to more Christians in bondage to the dark side of the spiritual world than you may believe."²

Anderson's objectivity is compromised by his reliance on unverified personal stories and his credulous acceptance of the reality of widespread, multigenerational, nearly invincible satanic conspiracies that routinely engage in torture, sexual abuse, and murder. Anderson's books and materials are almost wholly bereft of objective research, but replete with undocumented,³ mostly sensational stories. Anderson refers for substantiation to the many stories he is told by those who attend his conferences or write him, or by those who are relating someone else's story.⁴

ANDERSON'S ASSUMPTIONS

1. A Vast Satanic Conspiracy. Without any evidence, Anderson declares, "There are breeders⁵ out there. I will even encounter people who are doctors and lawyers and pastors who are Satanists, disguising themselves as ministers of righteousness."⁶

Anderson's teachings assume that what his counselees tell him is generally true, even though there is no objective verification for their stories, and the overwhelming consensus of research and evidence refutes the conspiracies he believes and promotes. That Anderson bases his beliefs on dubious sources is made painfully clear in his book *The Bondage Breaker*:

After I led Harry, the former high priest of Satanism, to Christ, I began to learn from talking with him more about the extent and organization of Satanism. He told me that he was not a priest in a local coven, but a member of the council of 50 in a worldwide coven. He shared with me that the organizational structure in Satanism corresponds to the four-level hierarchy of demonic rule under Satan mentioned in Ephesians 6:12. "Rulers" is linked to the royal court of Satanism. There are seven major covens in the world which are presented on the royal court. "Powers" corresponds to host-level priests, and "world forces" to legion-level priests. "Spiritual forces" identifies the circle covens or local covens.

The Satanist organization is massive and extremely secretive. When you hear of satanic priests or rituals, you are hearing only about activities at the level of the circle coven. However, you need not concern yourself too much with what you see or hear, since the Satanist activity which you read about in the newspapers or which is recorded in most police reports is usually the activity of mere dabblers. It's what you *don't* see that is pulling the strings and arranging events in Satanism. I have counseled enough victims of Satanism to know that there are breeders (producing children expressly for sacrifice or for development into leaders) and infiltrators committed to infiltrating and disrupting Christian ministry.

To illustrate how human and spiritual forces of wickedness work together, ask any group of committed Christians this question: "How many of you have been awakened for no apparent reason at 3:00 A.M.?" ...Satanists meet from 12:00 to 3:00 A.M., and part of their ritual is to summon and send demons. Three in the morning is the prime time for demon activity, and if you have awakened at that time it may be that you have been targeted. I have been targeted by demons numerous times.⁷

This could be a phenomenal exposure of the intricate depths of spiritual warfare if it were true, but Anderson provides absolutely *no* evidence for the accuracy of "Harry's" report. In fact, Anderson admits that Harry eventually dropped out and Anderson never heard from him again.⁸

Anderson's promotion of the unverified activities of the demonic snakes through *The Bondage Breaker*, which describes in gripping terms at least 75 different episodes of overtly demonic phenomena. Careful research by law enforcement officials, including the FBI, social scientists doing primary research, and investigative journalists has produced abundant evidence that this view of satanic activity is *not* true.

2. Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD or Dissociative Personality Disorder, DID) and Satanic "Memories." Anderson's paradigm incorporates widely disputed theories of dissociative disorders, repression and recovery of memories (e.g., of childhood abuse), and satanic ritual abuse (SRA). Anderson at times appears to divorce his views of repression and revelation from the MPD/repression/therapeutic recovery paradigm. This seemingly protects him from having to defend theories that are disputed by a wealth of evidence and professional opinion, although it doesn't exempt him from criticism by biblical and theological authorities. In truth, he *doesn't actually* disavow the therapeutic paradigm. For example, he explains and then modifies the common assumptions regarding MPD in Lesson Eight of his *Spiritual Conflicts and Counseling* manual,⁹ concluding that through biblical counseling and therapeutic knowledge one can lead a suffering Christian into memory "retrieval" and freedom from demonic bondage. In his teaching videos he observes, "But boy, all across the country, the rise of victims of SRA are just appearing everywhere. They're just loading up our hospitals and our clinics. How do we respond to this atrocity and how do we come to terms with the concept of spiritual conflict, but as well as the psychological dimension that comes because people disassociate?"¹⁰

Anderson's credulousness is similar to that of many therapists. According to psychologist Paul Simpson, who once believed in and practiced repressed memory/abuse/SEA therapy, "An astounding 57 percent of therapists nationally report they do nothing at all to differentiate truth from fiction when working with hypnotic images of abuse."¹¹

3. Demonization of Christians.¹² Some spiritual warfare teachers attribute any sinning by Christians to demonic power, but even teachers like Anderson who stress personal moral responsibility teach that “once a stronghold is established, you have lost the ability to control your behavior in that area.”¹³

The current term preferred over “demon possession” by Anderson and others is “demonization” and refers to a continuum of influence and/or control by demons.¹⁴ Arguments for “Christian demonization” is based on personal or clinical experience rather than on strong biblical exegesis.

The Anderson continuum model argues that the Christian is *positionally* or *legally* free from the bondage of sin, the world, and Satan through *justification*, but that since *sanctification* is an ongoing process, we are *ontologically* or in reality gradually coming out from the domination of sin, the world, and the devil in our maturing Christian life.¹⁵

Given Anderson’s belief that demonization of Christians is along a continuum, it is not surprising that he describes *relief* from demonic strongholds in gradual terms as well. Concerning the apparent recalcitrance of some demons to leave as commanded in the name of Jesus, Anderson says, “God may be bringing you through a growth process in which you are gradually dealing with all the entrances of Satan into your life. I (Neil) refer to this as the onion effect. The Lord is peeling off one layer at a time.”¹⁶

THE SATANIC CONSPIRACY DISMANTLED

Despite the tens of thousands of reports of satanic crime and abuse that have blanketed therapists’ couches, television talk show stages, tabloid front pages, and the pages of Anderson’s books, there has been no corroborative documentation that there is any widespread, multigenerational, multifamily, organized, nearly undetectable, almost invincible satanic conspiracy propagating murder, mutilation, cannibalism, and other criminal activities. Investigation by law enforcement agencies, mental health professionals, journalists, academic researchers, and historians here and abroad has conclusively shown that the satanic alarm of the 1980s and 1990s was a hysterical myth, a genuine witch hunt.

Anderson’s lists of certain “symptoms” of demonic bondage or stronghold range from the universal foibles of human experience such as sleepiness, headaches, and thoughts of despair¹⁷ to explicit and alarmingly evil experiences, including willful participation in such occult practices as trying to contact the dead and worshipping Satan.¹⁸ His “shopping list” is nearly identical to lists developed by therapists who also find pseudoendorsement for their suspicions by spreading a net wide enough to include everyone, genuine victim or not. Simpson catalogs some of the characteristics commonly listed:

One of the most common is from E. Sue Blume’s book, *Secret Survivors*. Blume offers thirty-five categories, with over 180 “symptoms” a person can read through to discover if he or she has repressed memories. A few of them are: fearing the dark, having nightmares, not liking your body, having spontaneous vaginal infections, getting headaches, arthritis, wearing lots of clothes, preferring privacy when using the bathroom, being scared of different things needing to be invisible, not being funny, doing what others want, blocking out memories between the first and twelfth years of life, being in denial, not enjoying sex, not liking gynecological exams, avoiding mirrors, avoiding making noises, or stealing things....

You might also find yourself feeling guilty, shameful, valueless, worthless, abandoned, different, unhappy, crazy or wanting to change your name. You might abuse or not abuse drugs, think you’re perfectly good or perfectly bad, have constant anger or don’t get angry, can’t trust others or trust too much, take too many risks or don’t take risks, are controlling or fear losing control, feel real or feel unreal, don’t like particular sex acts or like particular sex acts, are seductive or not interested in sex, are sexually aggressive or not, or your relationships are ambivalent or they’re conflicted.¹⁹

Simpson concludes that it is so all-inclusive that “it literally predicts that everyone alive is the victim of abuse.”²⁰

There are few areas of contemporary psychology and psychiatry that are more contested than that of dissociative disorders, most commonly known for sensational publicized cases of “multiple personality

disorder (MPD).”²¹ The definitive publicized cases that began this almost exclusively American phenomenon, Sybil and Michelle, have both been brought into serious disrepute by evidence gathered long after their stories became common knowledge.²² The accounts that fueled the Christian fascination with this have also been discredited, including sources cited for support by Anderson,²³ such as Lauren Stratford’s *Satan’s Underground* (Harvest House Publishers, 1989), which we carefully investigated and disproved shortly after it spawned stories from other Christians who became persuaded that whatever was wrong with them must have been caused by SRA.²⁴

The Courage to Heal remains the “Bible” of SRA therapists, victims, and support groups, *Christian as well as non-Christian*, and is also listed by Anderson for support.²⁵ It is tragic that Christians would embrace a book written by authors with no degrees in psychology, from a decidedly non-Christian perspective, a book that “promotes erotic regression theories, lesbian lifestyles, and the need to sustain and nurture one’s hatred and anger against parents.”²⁶ Christians such as Anderson should not trust a book that affirms: “At one point or another, many survivors have strong feelings of wanting to get back at the people who hurt them so terribly. You may dream of murder or castration. It can be pleasurable to fantasize such scenes in vivid detail. Wanting revenge is a natural impulse, a sane response. Let yourself imagine it to your heart’s content. Giving yourself permission to visualize revenge can be satisfying indeed.”²⁷

“Repressed memory” theory is comprehensively refuted by reality. As Dr. Paul Simpson notes, “Their theories don’t work in the real world. When we know that a traumatic event has occurred, we find that victims don’t repress their traumatic experiences. Instead they are plagued by recurring memories of their trauma, sometimes resulting in *post-traumatic stress disorder*.”²⁸ Simpson then recounts four notable studies that contradict repressed memory theories:

One study found that children who had witnessed the murder of a parent didn’t repress their memories; rather, they were pre-occupied with the murders and they were continually flooded with disturbing emotions. Of the dozens of children kidnapped in Chowchilla, California in 1976, none were found to have repressed their memories of the event.

Paul McHugh, Director of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University Medical School, has worked extensively with Cambodian refugees. Based on the theories of multiple personality we would expect to find some portion of these children having developed MPD. But despite experiencing the horrors of war as children [not to mention the horrific “Killing Fields” of the Khmer Rouge regime], McHugh has not found one case of repression or multiple-personality disorder (MPD).

In another study, researchers interviewed seventy-eight Holocaust survivors forty years after the end of World War II. Though each of the people had experienced normal memory decay, none had repressed memories of their prison camp experience, and all but one quickly remembered forgotten details with simple prompting.²⁹

Anderson declines to say that he is providing “recovered memory therapy.” He throws some Bible verses into the mix, calls the mental dysfunction of repression God’s gift to protect young victims of trauma, and then credits God with “revealing” the memory once the victim is in a safe, supportive situation. After all, if it’s a miraculous intervention from God, many believe, one doesn’t need to have any evidence, research, or documentation. With such an unfalsifiable paradigm, Anderson can blithely recount “revealed” memories from people’s own birth experiences.³⁰ This flies in the face of contrary scientific evidence concerning preverbal memory retention and recall, and draws on irrational suppositions that must be adopted to believe one can actually remember one’s own prebirth, birth, or early infancy experiences.

Using an actual story involving “Gale’s” “memories” of her mother digitally raping her during her infancy, Simpson recites the incredible assumptions one must swallow to believe this is possible:

As an infant Gale would have to distinguish between someone changing her diaper, taking her temperature rectally, cleaning and washing her, a difficult bowel movement, and digital rape. After such an advanced sensory awareness, she would then need to

transfer this short-term memory into long-term storage. But she won't have a developed hippocampus, completed myelination process, or language to encode the event for the next couple of years. Next, she would need to go for several decades without rehearsing the memory and then bring it up pristine and perfect at the prompting of her regressionist, in defiance of all we know about forgetting.³¹

Anderson's repression/recovery paradigm and the therapeutic version lack *any* credible evidence to support them, while they run up against substantial counter evidence. Simpson remarks, "There is no scientific or biblical technique that can safely and accurately unlock 'repressed' events. In fact, the hypnotic techniques that are promoted are consistently shown to create highly suggestible delusional states of mind in which clients have: 1) a decreased ability to accurately recall historical events, 2) increased experiential fantasy, and 3) increased levels of confidence in the accuracy of their recall, even though they have no reason for this."³²

The general unreliability of memory has been demonstrated many times by sound research. Even preschool children can be induced to "remember" events that never happened.³³ Simpson recounts an experiment conducted on young adults at Emory University by Dr. Ulric Neisser. The day after the Challenger explosion in 1986, Neisser had 106 students write down their accounts of where, when, and how they saw or learned about the Challenger disaster. Three years later he was able to find nearly half of the students and had them repeat the assignment. When he compared the "fresh" memory records with the three year postevent memory records, he found that fully one-third were "wildly inaccurate" and yet, those same students, according to Simpson's summary, "expressed as much certainty about the accuracy of their memories as those who were more correct,"³⁴ *None* of the students was completely correct, and many were seriously wrong, although not up to Neisser's standard of "wildly inaccurate."

Even those who believe that early childhood traumatic events, especially repeated and prolonged SRA, can be repressed and then recovered with valid content admit that error, misinterpretation, and fabrication abound. Psychologist Jim Hopper notes some of the issues that should be addressed: "Every instance of recall is a *process of reconstruction*, and therefore involves some, degree of distortion.... There is strong evidence that people can sincerely believe they have a recovered memory or memories of abuse by a particular person, but actually be mistaken. There is strong evidence that such memories have led to accusations about particular events that never happened and accusations of people who never committed such acts" (emphasis in original).³⁵

The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect sponsored the definitive study on ritual abuse. The study was conducted by University of California at Davis psychology professors Gail S. Goodman and Phillip R. Shaver, in conjunction with Jianjian Qin of UC Davis and Bette L. Bottoms of the University of Illinois at Chicago. The study investigated more than 12,000 accusations and surveyed more than 11,000 psychiatric, social service, and law enforcement individuals and agencies.³⁶

The study found *no* evidence of the SRA scenario supported by credulous Christians such as Anderson and by naive and often biased therapists. The overwhelmingly convincing conclusions discounting the satanic scare are summarized by Simpson:

The researchers...noted, "Over the last decade, accusations of molesting by cults have been made in thousands of cases and in retrospective claims by adult patients in psychotherapy who say they were abused as children. Combined with sensationalistic press coverage, these lawsuits and other reports have led many people to believe that there is a nationwide network of satanic groups preying on the young."

The survey found occasional cases of lone abusers who used ritualistic trappings. There was "convincing evidence of lone perpetrators or couples who say they are involved with Satan or use the claim to intimidate victims." But in the thousands of cases investigated, not a single case related to well-organized satanic rings was shown to be true. "After scouring the country, we found no evidence for large-scale cults that sexually abuse children." The survey showed that "*there was not a single case where there was clear corroborating evidence for the most common accusation, that there was a well-organized*

intergenerational satanic cult, who sexually molested and tortured children in their homes or schools for years and committed a series of murders.” (emphasis added)³⁷

Many of the criminal cases once heralded by the therapeutic and Christian communities have ended in acquittal for lack of evidence.³⁸ Others that resulted in convictions have been or are being reversed or overturned on appeal.³⁹

Numerous professional organizations have also evaluated “recovered memory therapy” and have warned of its unreliability. These include the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the British and the Australian Psychological Societies, the American Academy of Psychiatry, and the Canadian Psychiatric and Psychological Associations.⁴⁰

An investigation by a San Diego, California Grand Jury (1991-1992) was unable to find evidence proving several contemporary cases alleging SRA, saying, “There is no physical evidence of satanic ritual child abuse in San Diego County. There is evidence and considerable professional testimony that the existence of satanic ritual abuse is a contemporary myth perpetuated by a small number of social workers, therapists, and law enforcement members who have effected an influence that far belies their number. These ‘believers’ cannot be dissuaded by a lack of physical evidence.”⁴¹

The State of Washington ordered a study of ritual abuse cases that resulted in compensation from the state Crime Victims Compensation Program. The dismal statistics and strong doubts generated by the careful study led the state to exclude from payment any other victims who were involved in therapeutic services that focus on the recovery of repressed memories.⁴²

England’s most extensive child-abuse case was thoroughly investigated by the Nottinghamshire police and the director of social services. They produced a 600-page detailed report (unpublished) uncovering a bungled investigation and concluding that *the ritual abuse never took place*.⁴³

These are but a few of the studies that conclusively show the witch hunt nature of, and social hysteria foundation for, the SRA scare.⁴⁴ Twelve thousand reported accusations, and *not one substantiated case* of what Anderson claims is “everywhere”!

THE FACTS ABOUT DEMONIZATION OF CHRISTIANS

Most of the Christians who have contacted us believing that they were encountering the demonic had no expectations of particular forms of demonic activity until they had been led to expect them through their exposure to popular Christian literature, seminars, conferences, and speakers on spiritual warfare. This is consistent with how those who follow Anderson’s teachings also come to believe that they have repressed memories of early childhood abuse and SRA, and that they suffer from dissociative disorders.

During one videotaped counseling session, for example, Anderson prompts the woman he is trying to help, telling her that any distraction she may be experiencing is or may be a satanic block. When she says that she doesn’t remember any SRA from her childhood, Anderson assures her that *absence* of memories can be an indication of repression: “Almost everybody I’ve walked through this doesn’t recall it. Sometimes memories come up afterwards.” As they progress, he further assures her that “there is a possibility if there has been something dramatic there that some of that stuff may come back even as flashbacks just a little bit later on.”⁴⁵ With such leading, it is not surprising that many of those Anderson counsels come to interpret mental images as “revealed” memories of early childhood SRA.

How do Christians become so convinced that they are in demonic bondage? The power of suggestion can greatly influence what one experiences. People who are highly suggestible often respond to provide the initial examples of the expected behavior. They are then followed by others. Learning by example and trusting experience in spite of reason or Scripture are two of the most compelling factors drawing people into the spiritual warfare movement. They believe the authority figure, are given the parameters of the behavior expected of them, and then watch those they look to as role models in their own groups who

seem to experience the same thing. They naively believe others and their own experiences rather than first testing everything by the Word of God (1 Thess. 5:21-22; Acts 17:11).

When we turn to the Bible on the issue of the demonization of Christians, we search in vain for clear scriptural support of the features of Anderson's demonology. In fact, we see that in the passages where Jesus dealt with demonized individuals, there is no indication that they were genuine, spiritually regenerate believers before they were delivered.⁴⁶

Not only is there no positive evidence that Christians can be demonized, there is positive evidence that they *cannot*. When the Jews disputed about Jesus' words and works, some said, "He is demon-possessed and raving mad" (John 10:20). But the others, recognizing no possibility of a genuine believer "having" a demon, responded, "These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" (v. 21).

Anderson's procedure is not the pattern we see when we survey biblical passages that show Christians in association with demonic activity or action.⁴⁷ In Jesus' temptation by Satan in the wilderness, Jesus provides us with an example of how we are to respond to demonic temptation: by a confident use of the Word of God in all of its power (Matt. 4:1-11; cf. Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13).

When Jesus instructed His disciples how to pray, he taught them to say, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:13). His meaning is clear: temptation — not covert kidnapping or mind control — is the demonic *modus operandi* for exerting influence on humans.

In Matthew 15:19, Jesus does not attribute evil thoughts to demons or Satan, but to the individual's moral alienation from God: "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander" (cf. Mark 7:21-23). He expresses a parallel thought in Luke 6:45: "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart."

Throughout the New Testament, instead of finding a pattern of Christian demonization, we find a consistent pattern of protection for the Christian from direct invasion or control by demons. Scripture also posits a moral and spiritual division between Christians and non-Christians, characterized as the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of Satan."

Nowhere is this better exemplified than in Matthew 12:43-45. Jesus compares unbelieving Israel to a demonized man, and then compares the man to a house:

When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, "I will return to the house I left." When it arrives, it finds the house *unoccupied*, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of the man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation (emphasis added).

The word "unoccupied" leaps off the page. *The demon could come back only if the man's "house" was unoccupied.* But the Christian's "house" is *occupied* — by the Holy Spirit. This destroys the argument that the Christian is "owned" by God, but under the "control" of the demon. Not only is God the owner, He (the Holy Spirit) is the *occupier* as well.

If the Pharisees had watched Jesus' ministry of healing and exorcism, they would have seen that the Lord God Almighty was glorified and the powers of the devil were broken in every case. Never was an exorcism or healing used as an excuse to bring glory to Satan. Jesus argues that if He were to cast out demons by the prince of demons in such a manner that the prince of demons would be put to shame, then the prince of demons would be "divided against himself." In such a case, as the learned Pharisees knew, Satan's kingdom cannot stand. Obviously then, unless Satan is self-destructive, he could not be giving Jesus the power to cast out his own servants.

There can be no compromise. One is either in covenant relationship with God, or in covenant relationship with Satan. One cannot make contradictory covenants without nullifying one or the other.

Some may argue that Jesus mentions only one of the possible conditions of the man when the demon returns — his “house” is “unoccupied.” Some might say that one cannot argue anything about a “house” that is occupied, since Jesus simply doesn’t address such a condition. They would clarify that it is the condition of a man who is “occupied” by the Holy Spirit, but giving a “foothold” to Satan, that they are concerned with when they speak of demonization of a Christian.

This argument misses the entire context in which the analogy appears — that of the Kingdom of God overcoming the kingdom of Satan through Christ Himself. Although the “occupied” house is not addressed directly by Jesus, it is implicitly as strong as if He had, just as His rhetorical question to the unbelieving Pharisees (“By whom do your people drive them out?” v. 27) is answered implicitly (“Demons can be driven out only by the power of the Holy Spirit”). In the demon-occupied house analogy, Jesus allows only two alternatives, one addressed explicitly, one addressed implicitly. The empty house remains empty and is subsequently occupied by even more demons; or the empty house does not remain empty, but becomes occupied by the Holy Spirit, and cannot be reoccupied by one demon, much less seven or eight.

The two key concepts from this passage are: (1) in order for a house to be taken over, the “strong man” of the house must be bound first; and (2) a “strong man” can only return to a house that remains “unoccupied.” When we apply these two concepts to our question, “Can Christians be demonized?” we understand that (1) If the Holy Spirit is the “strong man” of our house, He cannot be bound, therefore an invading demon cannot come in (even though Jesus identifies the “strong man” as the devil, the principle applies equally to Christ or the Holy Spirit as “strong men”); and (2) If our “house” remains or becomes “occupied” by Jesus, reinvading demons (who could only have been “strong men” of non-Christian houses) cannot come back in to the now Christian “house” (Matt. 12:22-37, 43-45).

No Christian can be demon-possessed or invaded and controlled by a demon. This is not merely a legal or positional freedom or adoption — it is an actual freedom and adoption guaranteed by God, not by ourselves. We don’t need Anderson’s “seven steps to freedom in Christ” — we have been freed already by Christ’s one act of sacrifice on the cross (Rom, 6:18). We are not in *bondage* to sin, even though we sin; neither can we be in *bondage* to demons, even though they may attack us. Answers in Action researcher Michael Martin exhorts us to adopt this biblical concept:

Whatever adversity we may endure, or any encounter we may have with a power or principality that is opposed to God and our peace in his Son, they have been rendered powerless by his cross. This is a matter of authority. Jesus said to his disciples after he had risen from the dead, “All authority in heaven and in earth have been given unto me” (Matt. 28:18). Too many Christians are forgetting this truth and surrendering to a disarmed and defeated enemy. They regard the emotional weight of an experience to be more truthful than the word of God, and they stumble in their fear and confusion....The scriptures tell us that we are not our own, that we have been purchased with the blood of God’s own Son. If the creator of the heavens and the earth says you are free, you can discount any experience that might lead you to believe the opposite.⁴⁸

Neil Anderson’s approach fails to be credible when it is measured against the Scriptures, evidence, and rational inquiry. Popularity, persuasiveness, and earnest conviction do not justify poor work. Nevertheless, his lurid anecdotes, years of self-sacrifice to help those he designates as victims of spiritual warfare, and often novel interpretations of Scripture have produced unqualified support from Christian leaders as well as individuals who have been helped by his work. Some, such as his own publisher, have gone so far as to say that they are more concerned about Christian unity than about what’s right or wrong in this issue!⁴⁹ On the contrary, we must reject any unity that is based on what is false or wrong and that spawns the destructiveness we see from teachings such as Anderson’s.

Anderson's approach lacks clear-cut evidence, violates proper hermeneutics (method of interpretation) regarding key Bible passages, gives far too much credit and power to the demonic, spawns an atmosphere of fear and paranoia, provides legitimacy for the often-heard criticism that Christians are credulous regarding the supernatural, and fails to do justice to Scripture's underlying theme about occultism: Christ has destroyed the power of the devil by means of the cross (Col. 2:14).

We can be confident that if we resist the devil, he will flee from us (James 4:7); that greater is he who is in us (God the Holy Spirit) than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4); that Christ's death on the cross made a mockery of Satan and his demons, actually triumphing over them through his sacrifice for our sin (Col. 2:10-14); and that in Christ we have the power to cast down the strongholds of spiritual opposition, and to refute every false argument contrary to Christ (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

Spiritual warfare is not the mumbo-jumbo incantation of spooky experience, but the Christian's daily (and often rather mundane) battle to die to self and live for Christ (Rom. 12:1-2). Paul gave the Philippians the formulae for vanquishing the enemy: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

The dangers of sensationalizing spiritual warfare beyond its biblical paradigm can devastate a person's life — spiritually, emotionally, and, all too often, even physically. Scholar Sydney H. T. Page lists some of the most significant dangers: "First, given the susceptibility of some to the power of suggestion, one may unconsciously induce simulated possession. Second, one may encourage exaggerated views of the power of the demonic and an unhealthy paranoia. Third, one may provide those who are inclined to deny personal responsibility for their actions with a convenient scapegoat."⁵⁰

Martin agrees, remarking,

Human moral depravity is not laid at the feet of unseen devils but in the human heart. If you belong to Christ, the devil can't make you do anything you may not already be considering yourself. The apostle Paul says, "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5)...This is not an overnight remedy but a difficult transformation of one's previous wicked nature into the image and likeness of Christ.⁵¹

When all is said and done, the contemporary spiritual warfare movement model promoted by Neil Anderson is committed to a paradigm that is vulnerable to unbiblical sensationalism, fear, superstition, and dependency. Biblical spiritual warfare, by contrast, endows us with power, confidence, submission to God's will, and the certainty of the Lord's protection. David Powlison summarizes the scriptural position nicely:

Reclaiming spiritual warfare means learning afresh how God pursues his glory in our lives. It means gaining an understanding of progressive sanctification in a Christian culture habituated to look for quick fixes. It means learning to see heroic dramas played out in tiny corners of life. It means becoming human, renewed in the image of Jesus Christ — the pioneer and perfecter of faith. It means learning how to become Christians....

As in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the country Galilean, so in spiritual warfare today: strength is subverted by weakness, worldly wisdom by truth, riches by poverty — and the powers of darkness are best felled by the small, weak words and works of faith and obedience.⁵²

NOTES

1. <http://www.ficm.org/endorsement.htm>
2. Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1990, 1993), 10-11.
3. In a letter to Christian Research Institute (CRI) president Hank Hanegraaff, Anderson's own publisher agreed that Anderson's "evidence" of satanic ritual abuse "is anecdotal" (5 June 1996, on file at CRI).

4. "The Freedom in Christ Ministries" web site, for example, advertises for stories on its home page, noting, "Thank you for all of the responses we have received from our request for personal stories. We are now looking for personal testimonies of those who struggle or have struggled with perfectionism, control and Obsessive [sic] Compulsive Disorder (OCD)" (<http://www.ficm.org>). Stories recounted without documentation are found throughout his books, such as in *Victory Over the Darkness: Realizing the Power of Your identity in Christ* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990, 168-69 and 175-78), *The Bondage Breaker* (22, 29-30, 41-42, 72-73, 86, 95-98, 101-2, 111, 116, 121, 148-51, 171-73, 220-21, 228-29, 232-35), and *Stomping Out the Darkness* (coauthored by Dave Park, Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1993, 152-53).
5. "Breeders" supposedly give birth to infants who are then sacrificed in satanic rituals.
6. Neil Anderson, *Spiritual Conflict and Biblical Counseling* (videotape on file at CRI). In fact, one wonders why, if Anderson has personally met (encountered) some of these sadistic, criminal abusers and murderers, he has not turned them in to the appropriate authorities.
7. *Bondage Breaker*, 101-2. Anderson promotes this "test" in other books, noting in one, "At least one-third of the audience will respond that they have. Chances are they are being targeted, as Satan sends demons to terrorize and harass." (Neil T. Anderson and Charles Mylander, *Seeing Your Church Free* [Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1994], 233.) A familiarity with basic statistical, sociological, and psychological research data would enlighten Anderson to the fact that "night-tenors" are common and come, not from demons ordinarily, but as a physiopsychological by-product of sleep. (See, for example, information available from the National Sleep Foundation, 729-15th St. NW, 4th Floor, Washington D.C. 20005.)
8. *Bondage Breaker*, 114.
9. Neil T. Anderson, *Spiritual Conflicts and Counseling* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992).
10. *Spiritual Conflicts and Biblical Counseling*.
11. Paul Simpson, *Second Thoughts: Understanding the False Memory Crisis and How It Could Affect You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 17.
12. This subject was covered in Part Two by Elliot Miller, but it is treated briefly in this article since it is a cornerstone of Anderson's view of satanic activity in the world and among Christians.
13. *Bondage Breaker*, 54.
14. C. Fred Dickason, *Demon Possession and the Christian* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1987), 38.
15. Neil T. Anderson and Robert L. Saucy, *The Common Made Holy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1997), 332.
16. <http://www.ficm.org/questions/ques07.htm>.
17. For example, he urges, "Consider the problem of falling asleep in a church service. Some people, of course, are so exhausted that they sleep any time they become quiet and relaxed. But others sleep only in church, not other settings. In these cases, it is not exhaustion at all, nor is it a boring sermon, but rather a deceitful ploy of the devil." (*Setting*, 246.)
18. See, for example, *Bondage Breaker*, 173; *Stomping*, 148; Neil T. Anderson and Dave Park, *Busting Free! Helping Youth Discover Their Identity in Christ* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light Publications, 1994), 7, 117, 119, 159-60.
19. Simpson, 94-95.
20. *Ibid.*, 95.
21. Much of the available research and information regarding dissociative disorders goes beyond the main focus of this article. Comprehensive information is cited and/or referenced in many of the books listed in a research bibliography available from Answers in Action, P.O. Box 2067, Costa Mesa, CA 92628-2067.
22. The story of *Sybil* (Flora Rheta Schreiber [New York: Warner Books, 1973]) brought the term and the condition of MPD into American culture. Newfound tapes of the collaboration between the psychiatrist and the book author "suggest these personalities were actually created during therapy, through suggestions to a pliable young woman" (Associated Press, "Newfound Tapes Suggest Story of Sybil Was False," 17 August 1998). The same is true of the story publicized in *Michelle Remembers* (Michelle Smith and Lawrence Pazder [New York: Congdon and Latles, 1980]), said to be the first person tale of a psychiatrist treating a young woman who had escaped from her multigenerational Satanism-practicing family.
23. In supporting documentation Anderson submitted to CRI through his publisher, on file at CRI.
24. See our article coauthored with Jon Troll, "Satan's Sideshow," *Cornerstone* (18:90), 24-28, our "The Hard Facts about Satanic Ritual Abuse," *Christian Research Journal*, Winter 1992, 20-23, 32-34, and our "Satanic Ritual Abuse in Popular Christian Literature," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* (1992:20:3), 299-305.
25. On file at CRI
26. Simpson, 27.
27. B. Bass and L. Davis, *The Courage to Heal* (New York: Harper & Row, 1928), 128.
28. Simpson, 45. Simpson discusses the evidence *against* ascribing posttraumatic stress disorder in cases of recovered memory therapy in pp. 64-65.
29. *Ibid.*, 45-46.
30. *Spiritual Conflicts and Biblical Counseling*.
31. Simpson, 66.
32. *Ibid.*, 52.
33. "False Memories Can Be Created in Preschoolers, Studies Find," American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 16 June 1997 press release.
34. Simpson, 57.
35. Jim Hopper, "Preface," *Recovered Memories of Sexual Abuse: Scientific Research and Scholarly Resources*, <http://www.jimhopper.com/memory>, 16 September 1998.
36. A free summary is available from the National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect at (800) 394-3366. The full report may be ordered for a small fee.
37. Simpson, 84-25.

38. The McMartin Preschool case is the most famous. It was the most expensive series of trials (\$15 million of government money, not counting the costs to defendants and others) regarding early childhood satanic ritual abuse ever conducted and each jury returned verdicts of “not guilty” or were stalemated, unable to convict on any of the charges. Another case, also in Southern California, has seen most of those convicted freed by the courts with prosecutors declining to refile charges. (See, for example, Mark Sauer, “Mending a Broken Trust,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 17 December 1995.)
39. The most well-known was the Little Rascals Day Care in Edenton, North Carolina, which finally ended at the end of May 1997 with the prosecutor dropping oil charges. Previous convictions in the case were overturned.
40. http://www.religioustolerance.org/rmt_prof.htm
41. San Diego County Grand Jury (1991-1992), *Child Sexual Abuse, Assault, and Molest Issues* (San Diego: County Printing Office, 1992).
42. See “Outcome of Recovered Memory Therapy” at http://www.religioustolerance.org/rmt_outc.htm.
43. Although the report was never published, it is available on various Internet web sites. See, for example, <http://www.news.com/News/Item/0,4,11209,00.html>.
44. See, for example, the excellent information and referrals from The Ingram Organization, P.O. Box 7465, Spokane, WA 99207 (<http://www.IngramOrg@aol.com>) and the secular Religious Tolerance Organization (http://www.religioustolerance.org/rmt_outc.htm).
45. *Spiritual Conflicts and Biblical Counseling*.
46. See, for example, Matt 4:24; 8:28-34; 9:32-33; 12:22-23; 15:22-28; 17:14-21; Mark 1:23-26, 32; 5:1-5; 16:9. Concerning Luke 13:10-18, see Elliot Miller’s comment in Part Two, n. 50. Also, being called an offspring of Abraham didn’t necessarily make someone a believer — frequently it merely meant someone who was a Jew, physically descended from Abraham.
47. In addition to arguments from these passages and those in Miller’s article, arguments can be derived from many other passages, including various verses in John 8.
48. Michael Martin, “Spiritual Warfare,” *Answers in Action Journal*, Spring 1996, 6.
49. Letter to Hank Hanegraaff from William T. Greig, Gospel Light Publications, 9 July 1996, on file at CRI.
50. Sydney H. T. Page, *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995), 181. Psychologist Rodger K. Bufford adds, “More seriously, there is abundant evidence in medical and psychological research literature supporting the conclusion that nonspecific effects of the treatment process (such as receiving attention, the concern of others, or the arousal of hope) result in improvement in many cases. This is known as the placebo effect.” (*Counseling and the Demonic* [Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1988], 146.)
51. Martin, 5.
52. David Powlison, *Power Encounters: Reclaiming Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995), 151-52.