



Pastor Kurt Lehman



Psychologist Janet Krause



Rev. Harold Edwards

Exorcism accepted "in rare cases"

By Nancy Stohs

"And he appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons." Mark 3:14-15.

This is only one reference the Bible makes to exorcism or possession by the devil. There are more. The question is, should the words be taken literally? On record the Roman Catholic Church does. Many Protestant churches, however, do not and therefore have never taught a rite of exorcism.

And, like trying to reconcile Creation and evolution, theologians today face skepticism from psychology and science.

The Rev. Harold Edwards, Southview Christian Church, said he accepts exorcism only "in very rare circumstances."

"But I attribute it to a negative energy or force a person has attracted because of

his personality—not necessarily to a spiritual being," he said.

No clear stand

The Rev. Edwards has studied psychic phenomena from ESP to astrology and teaches a parapsychology course at the Nebraska School of Religion.

As a denomination, his Church hasn't a clear stand on exorcism, he said, but tends to ignore it out of disbelief.

He said he isn't sure he believes the devil even exists. "I don't rule him out, but neither do I affirm him."

On this point, Christian Scientists are clearer; there's no such thing as a devil or as demon possession.

The "exorcised" person is suffering a mental condition, their doctrine says, and is being freed from false thoughts, not "things" like devils. So explained Arthur Danielson of Lincoln, who chairs the

Christian Science Committee on Publication for Nebraska.

Only extreme cases

Pastor Kurt Lehman said his church, the Berean Fundamentalist, has no doubts Jesus cast out demons in his day, but today he too accepts exorcism only in extreme cases.

According to Richard Thill of Omaha, the "extreme case" hasn't any meaning.

"A person may be angry and out of control and vomit a lot," he explained, "but this could be an extreme case of mental illness, too, or a growth exerting pressure on the brain."

Thill is a German folklorist and has taught a course at UNO, "Things that go bump in the night."

He said if a person told him he was possessed by a demon, he'd ask: How was it, if the demon was in complete possession, that person could get to a priest in the first

place? What medical authority certified it was not a neurological, psychological, or physiological illness? and, What medical tests had been performed on him?

"That doesn't mean I completely reject it as a possibility," he said, "but to date I have seen no firm evidence proving that symptoms couldn't mean some other condition than possession by a demon."

Exorcism accepted

Pastor Charles Reimnitz of Christ Lutheran Church said his doctrine also accepts the possibility of driving out devils in people through Christ, but added, "I wouldn't try it myself."

Neither would Janet Krause. But because of her Christian upbringing, she said she does believe in supernatural forces. And she doesn't think it conflicts with her career, a counseling psychologist at the UNL Counseling Center.

"As a counselor, I wouldn't try to impose my own values or beliefs on anyone who believed he was possessed," she said.

"The person could have an enormous guilt complex," she said, "a need to find an excuse for a behavior that doesn't fit his concept of himself. Something like 'The devil made me do it,'" she said.

Schizophrenics are highly susceptible, too, she said, as they teter between reality and unreality.

At any rate, people seem to think the movie "The Exorcist," overpublicized the issue and created unnecessary fear.

"People now seem to have the idea the devil is behind every bush, underneath every chair, ready to strike them anytime," the Rev. Lehman said. "I've talked to many people in recent months who are fearful."

CO-OPS COMBINE EXPERIENCE WITH COLLEGE STUDIES

Jeff Miller and Tom Grothe have a lot in common.

They're both from Omaha and attend the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Both are in junior standing, studying civil engineering.

One more similarity: Jeff and Tom are two participants in Valmont's Cooperative Education Program.

The plan, a work-study program with time divided between college academics and on-the-job experience with Valmont, began in early 1974. Academic studies relating to Valmont's needs, as Engineering, Technology, or Business, are encouraged.

The program seeks students from midwest area colleges and universities. Ideally, participants should be in junior standing and will work through graduation, applying their academic studies to an actual job situation.

"This is a great beginning job," says Jeff. "It really is a practical application and a chance to become totally familiar with engineering."

"Being a Co-op has reinforced my desire to become an engineer. And, it will help me decide if I should specialize in any one part."

Tom Grothe agrees that, "The plan coordinates and applies educational principles to work." Right now, I'm primarily doing drafting, but I get to see the whole engineering process."

Initially, students are placed in jobs related to their college work. As academic learning and job experience increase, succeeding job assignments also



Both Tom [1] and Jeff agree that being a Co-op has many advantages.

increase in difficulty and responsibility.

"Although I'm doing drafting work, the project still involves a certain amount of money. That means trust has been placed in me — and it's up to me to show my supervisor he can have confidence in my work," says Jeff.

Upon completion of the program, students enter the job market with a 4-year degree and over one year of job experience. Even though there is no guarantee of continued employment at Valmont, the student's chances in the job market are sharpened.

"The main reason I entered the Co-op Program was for the physical experience. I plan to stay on at Valmont, if possible. But, in looking for another job, this experience will sure look good on my transcript," says Tom.

"No question about it," says Jeff. "It

helps a great deal to have experience behind your degree. Everyone wants experience, which is a big 'plus' for the program."

Jeff touched on an additional benefit. "I have to pay my own way through school. The money I earn in six months pays for one year of school."

In addition to wages with regular increases in pay, the Co-ops also participate in the majority of the Company's regular benefit program. Valmont benefit coverage is even continued during study periods.

"The advantages here are tremendous," says Tom. "And, if I ever run into problems with my work, I'm readily assisted by fellow employees."

Jeff adds, "The people here are so helpful. Everyone is willing to answer questions I might have."



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Valmont Representatives will present a briefing Thursday, January 30 at 4 p.m. in Room 192, Nebraska Hall. Additional information on the Valmont Co-Op Program may be obtained from: Larry Kauffman at 472-3181 or write to Allen Hunt, Valmont Industries, Inc., Valley, NE 68064.

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