



Confidential Case Studies of Demonic Strongholds in Congregations

1. **Deliverance Ministry when the Client is a UK Church**
by Elaine Pierpont
2. **When a Wolf in Sheep's Clothing became the Pastor**
by Judy Cook

Deliverance Ministry When the Client is a UK Church

Please note that names have been changed.

Background

My church had had prayer ministry available after most services for many years. Then, at the suggestion of the new minister, David, who had done the Dunamis Project, several members went to Dunamis events. This eventually led to the possibility of expanding this ministry to include longer prayer ministry sessions separately from services and drawing on Dunamis teaching so as to deliberately cooperate with the Holy Spirit. After a few sessions of Dunamites practising on each other and a few close friends, there was a sudden glut of serious long term and lifestyle limiting health issues among us (including different people with stroke, serious lung damage, and heart disease requiring surgery all within a month or so of each other) and the expanded ministry was stopped dead.

Initial discernment and setting up the cohort

Some time later, I was at the Dunamis Fellowship Britain and Ireland (DFB&I) Annual Fellowship Gathering, including the “pre-event” which was effectively a tailored form of the Discerning The Times (DTT) course that could be applied to churches, workplaces, and similar organisations. Others with more experience than I had quickly discerned there was probably a spirit of infirmity operating in the church. As an exercise in the DTT course, myself and two others discerned that this spirit of infirmity had three entry points or grounds for remaining and that these were:

- Something that happened when the church experienced an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the 1970s
- A previous minister, who was also a victim of this spirit of infirmity
- Something linked with the Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) that led to this United church being formed

Conversations at these events led to a cohort being set up, consisting of me and another Dunamite, Carol, praying together monthly over Skype, with another Dunamite, Joanne, providing offsite prayer cover for these meetings. Neither of them are from my church. I'm not sure when Joanne discerned there had been a specific sin at some point in the church's past, but it was another clue in the spiritual detective trail. It was sensed I should ask Erica, a Dunamite from my church, but she were dealing with many family issues and could not join the cohort. Even later on, when things had settled down, she made it to only one meeting before family issues erupted again and she had to stop.

Accountability and ongoing prayer: the first entry point

I made myself accountable to David as soon as I could when I arrived home after the Annual Fellowship Gathering, then supported his prayer binding the spirit of infirmity and asking God for wisdom and discernment for us all. He included in the accountability arrangements another key leader within the church, James, who has not been to Dunamis but has related experience. It also turned out that there was a lot of serious illness among clergy in one part of the Methodist Circuit, so the influence of this spirit of infirmity was not necessarily confined to one church.

Over the next few months, the tiny cohort met and prayed, I maintained accountability with David and James, and I was led to ask questions of a few of the older members who were in the church in the 1960, 1970s and 1980s. I found out that there had been adultery between a church member and a visiting preacher at around the time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This was the specific sin, and it fitted one of the discerned timescales. So in one of the cohort meetings, in obedience to God, I prayed through a series of steps while Carol covered me in prayer, mostly in tongues:

- personal confession of any similar thoughts I may have had
- intercessory confession for the adultery
- broke soul ties between the adulterers and the church
- blessing over the adulterers, their wronged spouses, their families, the clergy who had to deal with the

situation, “onlookers” and others who were around at the time, especially those who were still in the church

Carol then prayed a seal over it all, I read Scripture and saw small demons trembling and kneeling at the Name of Jesus as the larger spirit that had been forcing them to stand could no longer do so, and we sang “Jesus is Lord!” before doing a safe shutdown.

Accountabilty and ongoing prayer: wider implications of the first entry point

We continued to meet, but there was a few months of less intense prayer on this topic before engagement ramped up again. This time it was a sense of needing to pray for the Circuit, but to do that I needed to have the agreement of the Superintendent. God was on the case. The Superintendent “just happened” to be leading a service at my church, and I had a very brief conversation after the service. I still have no idea whether or not the Superintendent has the faintest idea of what they agreed to, or whether their spirituality even accommodates such things! Nonetheless, I had the consent I needed and the Superintendent was satisfied with my being accountable to David and James, and so in another cohort meeting I obediently prayed through the same points for the Circuit as I had for my church. As well as breaking soul ties I prayed to break curses, and Carol's praying in tongues became more guttural.

I had a growing sense that too many people in my church were blissfully unaware of the fact we are in a battle and of the spiritual implications of things they do. So I suggested to David after a service that there should be a preaching and fellowship group study series drawing on DP5 to help people with spiritual self-care, and we briefly prayed about it. From time to time the cohort prayed about it, and I prepared a series outline. For various reasons it was nearly 18 months before the series happened, but more of that later.

Accountabilty and ongoing prayer: the second entry point

About this time, Carol sensed she was to step back as the church needed to take greater ownership of the process. However, this isn't the sort of thing that you put in the church notices, so Joanne agreed to pray with me via Skype. I discussed it with David, but we still did not get any more people in the cohort. Even so, God assured us He was on the case.

Shortly afterwards, the tiny cohort discerned it was time to deal with the next root, a previous minister. When I broached this with David, he clearly had been praying a lot about this already but had sensed there were still tentacles reaching into the church. In prayer there was a lightbulb moment of the tentacles being hurts and unforgiveness – and there “just happened” to be a service about forgiveness coming up about a month later in the preaching plan. The need to preach on this and to pray to cut this root was confirmed by a comment made by someone in a small group meeting about a week after the lightbulb moment. Even so, for various reasons it was still nearly four months before David, James, and I could meet, first to discuss exactly what I sensed was needed and any pastoral implications of it, and then to pray through it all. In the meantime, David was trying to keep the other church leaders aware of what was going on, but with them having very diverse worldviews and understandings of spiritual matters this was no mean feat! Also the tiny cohort continued to meet monthly and be accountable to David. I so nearly jumped too early more than once, but God restrained me and reassured me each time.

At last the meeting came around, and there were enough travel near misses to show that Satan did not want the meeting to happen, but God is sovereign. I and David did most of the praying, while James covered us onsite and Joanne covered us offsite – only God could coordinate diaries that well! We prayed through a series of topics which may look familiar to Prayer Ministers:

- Opening prayer as safe setup
- Personal confession and repentance connected with that previous minister
- Intercessory confession and repentance connected with that previous minister
- Personal and intercessory forgiveness
- Renouncing lies
- Proclaiming truth from Scripture
- Breaking curses said by that person, to that person, or about that person

- Breaking soul ties with that person for various individuals and for the church as a whole
- Praying blessings on all involved
- Cleansing and refreshing prayers as safe shut down

These were interspersed with frequent times of listening to the Holy Spirit, but I am not going into any more details of how these shaped the prayers for each heading above. At one point I felt something break in the spirit realm and David felt lightness and freedom. Over the next few weeks God affirmed in various ways that this root had indeed been torn out. The next few cohort meetings were times of worshipping God for what He had done that day, and of simply being in His Presence in awe.

During the few months after the meeting, God used my daily Bible notes to affirm I was doing the right things even though it was taking a long time. I outlined the prayer work to another intercessor in the church, Phillippa, even though I knew she couldn't possibly join the cohort. She told me there had been a lot of prophetic warnings about various spiritual attacks on the church, but nothing was done because nobody really knew what to do.

Accountability and ongoing prayer: the third entry point and church self-care

Also during that time, I was watching a PRMI video on intercession when the teacher spoke about the importance of the history of a place and it leapt out at me. What was in that place before the church building? I raided the local libraries for anything I could find about the location, the area, and notable families, but nothing seemed to fit. I sensed I had to go back further, and wondered if I had stepped out in my own strength instead of relying on the Holy Spirit. In a cohort meeting, God assured me that work and effort are OK because we are not going to get the answer just handed to us without effort. So even though I had found nothing, this at least ruled out certain lines of enquiry.

There followed a few months of more general prayers for the church, and prayer preparation for the upcoming preaching and study series on "Spiritual Battle". This had been drawn up by our minister, David, and a preacher who had not done Dunamis – to make sure no assumptions of prior Dunamis knowledge slipped in. It did not rigidly adhere to DP5, but heavily relied upon it, and I am deeply grateful to key people in DFB&I and in PRMI who permitted the use of electronic copies of the DP5 manual as source material. I ended up preaching on parts of the Battle Within and the Battle Without (both from DP5), using the Four Basic Works of the Holy Spirit (from DP1) as a framework. The Holy Spirit prompted me to name some specifics and drop very heavy hints about some of the other things people were mixed up in, possibly without even realising the implications of what they were doing. I have never preached for so long! God sustained me. Some people were clearly challenged and spoke to me after the service, while others congratulated me on tackling the topic. From the battles before and after the service, I knew Satan did not want this service to happen, but God is sovereign.

Meanwhile, David was getting the church leaders more involved in praying through what was happening and in praying for me, although the cohort itself was still me and Joanne. Nevertheless, it was increasing ownership of the process by the church.

About a month later I had an a-ha moment during personal prayer. Many ancient pagan rituals were carried out on hilltops, which is where the church building is. I knew I would have to rely solely on the Holy Spirit as there were very unlikely to be maps going back that far and I was not going to get permission for an archaeological dig! But research showed that the original settlement was very old and was based along the ridge-shaped hilltop.

Lockdown!

At about the same time, the first lockdown began and services moved online, so the cohort prayed a guarding prayer over the land and buildings as we sensed the evil that had been held down by regular on-site worship would seek to exploit the situation. We spent a few months carefully discerning the spiritual background and what needed to be done, working out how I was to explain it to David and any other church leaders, and asking God for the opportunity to do so and for Him to prepare their ears, hearts,

and minds. When I emailed David, one of the things I knew we had to do was pray around the boundaries of the land. Separately two of the church leaders, Irene and Kim, had suggested this would be a good idea, even without the discernment received via the cohort. This was hugely encouraging. Even so, waiting and interceding through the lockdown and then the Summer when people were seizing the opportunity to be away while they could, was incredibly difficult for me. At the right times, God reminded me that He was holding all of us, that He had the issue in hand and I did not have to carry it alone, that David's initial binding prayer was achieving all that it needed to, and that the meeting would happen in God's timing. I also consulted with an experienced Dunamite, Lydia, about what sort of prayers were applicable, and read the section in the DP5 manual on the land. Lydia offered to give prayer cover for the meeting with the church leaders, and suggested a few others I could draft in. Cohort meetings were a mixture of discernment and worship, both vital in preparation for the meeting which was nearly six months after the lockdown started, during which time there had been one or two funerals and a handful of services at the church building.

The meeting

God took care of the weather – dry and pleasantly warm. On the way there my bike tyre had a complete blow-out, so I knew Satan did not want me there, and we started late, which added time pressure. I wore red, in obedience to the Holy Spirit, thereby carrying an intercessory representation of Christ's blood without using flags as these could have been misunderstood or viewed as showy. David had invited Irene and Kim. After safe setup, I began with a short talk on worldview followed by a brief history of this piece of work and why we are meeting, then answered questions. That was when I found out the most contentious issue in the LEP that formed the united church was the name, which was decided based on the buildings' location at the top of a hill, thereby linking with the initial discernment at DTT. Next, I outlined the process, with prayers as led by the Holy Spirit:

- pray round the boundaries
- in various locations in the grounds and the buildings
 - explicitly rededicate them to God
 - nullify any other dedication and anything arising from that
 - pray blessings

I emphasised that I wanted everyone to join in with the discernment and prayers because I do not have the monopoly on such things. Irene said the buildings and land would have been dedicated to God when the church first opened and as buildings were added. I replied it was good to rededicate them, and it was possible that any dedication of the land prior to the church buildings being there had not been nullified because of the worldview of the people at the time. As led by the Holy Spirit, prayers included breaking curses, renouncing language such as “my church” because it is God's church, confession, repentance, worship, blessings, and inviting the Holy Spirit to come and fill all the buildings and land. We concluded with safe shutdown and cleansing prayers. I asked David to quickly check me over, and he prayed extra cleansing as I had been carrying all this for a while. Kim commented it might be good to rededicate the land and buildings to God on a regular basis. I had a near miss on the way home – Satan clearly was not pleased, but God protected me. Once home, I offered an email debrief of what we had done. The response was that praying around the boundary and in the buildings, asking for God's healing, claiming His lordship, and seeking His blessings felt so normal.

The eviction

In my prayer times and in the tiny cohort we discerned the grounds had been removed, and the spirit of infirmity could be evicted. At around the same time, plans were announced for a Dunamis online event that would prevent the tiny cohort from meeting after mid-October, and we concluded that the task was almost complete. I emailed David as usual, who contacted Irene and Kim. However, with a worsening Covid-19 situation and mid-October approaching, I struggled with the waiting, and eventually asked at very short notice to meet David after I'd done something else at the building. By God's grace, David was available and led the prayers of safe setup, then we both prayed about the place and the people before he explicitly named and banished the spirit of infirmity. Such is the power and authority of the Name of Jesus, and the completeness of His triumph on the Cross, that I saw the spirit of infirmity place its neck at the feet of Jesus and look utterly pathetic. We prayed further, including inviting the Holy Spirit to fill every part of

the church – building and people – and asking that we would not return to folly. Finally, David led in safe shutdown.

A sign from God?

As I stepped out of that meeting, I found myself called upon to pray with someone about a friend who had had a miscarriage and was now potentially having another. I sensed this was a call of what God wanted to make the church – a place and people bringing His healing, His life, and His wholeness to those around. Within hours there was a message of good news, and the baby was born about seven months later.

Postscript

A few days after the eviction, based on a picture and words she'd had during the meeting for rededicating the land, Phillipa and I prayed and laid to rest the troubled souls of the victims of human sacrifice, then offered the perpetrators to God, before sensing completion, at which point we invited the Holy Spirit to cleanse and fill the space, and did safe shutdown. We sensed this work linked up with pictures and words that had been received over several years that nobody had understood at the time.

So the final cohort meeting was a time of thanks and praise to God, of praying cleansing, refreshing and protection for all who had been part of this assignment, and a safe standing down and shutdown of the assignment.

Key learning points

- Accountability is vital.
- Operating under the appropriate line of human authority is vital, and God will provide a way of getting the necessary authority regardless of who holds it.
- The cohort can be very small, but do not go it alone.
- God's timing is always right, even if it is frustrating and hard at times. It is also often not quick! This took about 2 ½ years.
- There may need to be teaching to help people realise that we are in a spiritual battle, and to try to avoid repeating past mistakes.
- God can speak through different people, whether or not they realise it.
- Relying on the Holy Spirit does not rule out the need for investigations in the earthly realm.
- Since, unlike Personal Prayer Ministry, you can't ask the client how they are feeling, there is far more reliance on physical observation and spiritual discernment.

When a Wolf in Sheep's Clothing Became the Pastor

Please note that names have been changed.

"Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!" declares the LORD.

A church of some 30 families in a small town in rural America was targeted by the enemy for destruction. But in the beginning weeks, no one was aware of the encroaching evil or the existing conditions in the church that made it vulnerable to this attack. (All names have been changed in this report.)

This non-denominational, independent church had been looking for a senior pastor for over a year. During the interim, a known retired pastor Allen began volunteering to fill in after a previous supply pastor had quit. Because the previous full-time pastor had been let go with the threat of a vote of no confidence after less than 2 years, the church was discouraged and anxious to have a pastor. And because the church had no denominational structure or hierarchy to appeal to, they were searching by word of mouth and personal connections. The church board consisted of only 3 people with no designated leader, though a young man with a strong personality and leadership ability was in fact leading. There were underlying tensions in the congregation over their past history of pastors leaving, and there were undercurrents of blame and hard feelings, especially in the founding family which had 4 generations in attendance. These conditions were all exploited by the enemy.

When Pastor Allen brought his nephew Luke with his wife Ann to church after a fishing trip, Luke asked if he, "could toss his hat in the ring" for the position of pastor. He was very personable, quoted scripture freely, spouted plans to create a retreat center outside the town and grow the church. Vetting was minimal because of the relationship to Allen, and only done by the leader of the church board who had formed an instant liking for Luke and his wife and thus kept the adverse information and red flags to himself, excusing the new applicant and believing he would indeed pump new life into the church. With evangelistic zeal, Luke preached at the Fellowship of Christian Athletes' Fields of Faith where many responded, bringing new people into the church. Follow-up was discussed but never implemented. The new candidate began preaching once a month while promising to sell his business and house in another state and move to the small town. This never happened.

Luke took charge of the worship team, leading with his wife from the front. The previous worship leader was a youth who was easily moved into a support role. Luke brought in new people who formed a tight team around him and bought expensive equipment and lighting. Within 2 months the church had voted Luke and Ann in with a unanimous vote, people with reservations keeping quiet and not voting. No one wanted to cause dissention. Once installed, though Allen had been asked to mentor Luke and Luke had assured everyone that he welcomed such help and accountability, Allen's advice was ignored, and then he was privately and summarily dismissed. Allen quit attending our church. Luke changed the name of the church, presented his own by-laws which gave him complete control, and set up a supposed accountability structure which looked good but was far away in another state.

Luke and Ann called an "organizational meeting" to explain why the budget was unhealthy and to propose a new one that doubled his salary. Luke and Ann continued to travel for months, buying first class tickets on short notice and charging the church all expenses. They also began remodeling projects. The intimidated treasurer simply wrote the checks.

There was charm, much flattery, and many words and gifts of love and appreciation

doled out. A lonely elderly lady gave them a place to stay. They called her "Mama Lilly." She was obviously taken in and gave her heart to them, defending them at every turn. They had her placed on the board after a single vacancy (the only candidate allowed) after holding a one-hour membership meeting so that all new people he'd brought in could vote.

Luke quizzed each parishioner point blank at an organizational meeting asking if they trusted him to lead the church. When a mature believer, a member of the founding family who did much of the work at the church stated that she didn't know him very well, but that she would follow him as he followed Christ, he took immediate offense, but covered it over. The next day he called her privately and told her she was relieved of all duties in the church. He became angry and yelled at her, ultimately telling her she would be happier in another church. She left. This incident split the founding family.

Soon a few others were dismayed at the obvious lies and the smooth talk, and some unbiblical teaching from the pulpit. (For example, when Luke taught on tithing, he told the people that if they didn't tithe, God would curse the 90%.) A few people (all mature, core members) went to the board and the pastor, but their concerns were ignored or pacified with lies and they began leaving. He accused some of having a Jezebel spirit.

Luke angrily called out gossiping, spreading of lies and misinformation about himself when it came to light that he and Ann had had a domestic dispute which ended with her calling the police. He glossed it over.

Ultimately the money trail was becoming pronounced. Luke and Ann spent large portions of the church's savings, got their names on the bank accounts by lying at the bank saying Ann was a board member, and tried to pressure the elderly founding pastor's widow to have their own names put on the deed to the property. They talked one family who had been excited about the promise of establishing a retreat center into giving them all their savings of \$75K for a down payment on the land. The payment was never made. This couple eventually filed a lawsuit to try to recover the funds. Luke and Ann borrowed the church credit card for a "few small purchases," but spent \$8000.

Over time, the truth began to emerge as the few began to research his past and character. But even so there seemed an impenetrable wall. People were afraid to judge or be seen as causing division. They were told not to gossip and were attacked privately if they did. Lies were spread about dissenters from Luke and Ann. Numerous times he stated, "I am not perfect; I never said I was." His past was filled with bad fruit -dishonesty, arrogance, rages, past adultery with subsequent divorce, womanizing, and poor relationships with his adult children from the previous marriage. There was more. He had led a church split and later was given a large severance package to leave that church. None of this was known by the majority.

Luke had obvious spiritual gifting -spoke in tongues, could hold a crowd, knew all the right things to say. But depth was lacking. Sermons were drawn from the internet, and no personal examples from his life given. Luke's life didn't match his talk.

It became obvious that Luke loved power and never empowered others. Nor did he submit to spiritual authority or take constructive criticism. He used people, manipulating with flattery and charm and lies, and actively got rid of anyone who didn't rubber-stamp his proposals.

His spiritual life was thin, all talk, but he could play his role so believably that many who left at first believed that he was simply immature. Six of us who left began to meet weekly in a home for worship and prayer. We were led to forgive them from our hearts, return blessing for cursing, and present our petitions to God. We believed God had called these meetings. This

continued for 4 months. We all began attending other churches, but wanted to keep our fellowship going, certain that God would do something.

Because of family and friend relationships, we knew many things that were going on at the church, and we discussed various strategies at our Wednesday night prayer and worship times. I believe our support of godly members who were being attacked and used as scapegoats was essential. We prayed for truth to be obvious and lies and treachery to be exposed. We prayed for a quick resolution--for Luke and Ann to change or be removed. We identified our enemy and prayed for Luke and Ann to be released from his grip. We prayed healing for those injured and scattered. We were led to send letters to his spiritual advisors in another state, the same letters we had previously sent to the pastor and the board. Nothing changed. Then one night we were led to pray for a board meeting and the only member Lisa who determined to call Luke to account for what he was doing. She had a list of 12 questions. Later she told us, "I knew you were praying for me. I felt a boldness rise up in me and suddenly I was no longer afraid of him. I only got to item 3 when he exploded, said he was resigning, and ultimately he threw us all out of the building, holding the door open and screaming at us.

Later Luke wanted to take back the resignation, but the board said, "No." He demanded to be able to say, "Good-bye" to the congregation, but upon discovering that he had been packing a gun (concealed carry is legal in our state) and knowing he had a violent temper, the board was advised to either have police presence or to cancel services. The latter was decided upon rather than run the risk of an ugly encounter. Luke sent out a message to all inviting them to another location. We don't know who or how many went. Then Ann sent out a scathing 3 page diatribe to everyone bemoaning how a small contingent had forced their departure and rejected the anointed pastors God had sent us. She declared curses upon the church members for our actions, saying that the Holy Spirit would leave the church, blamed the family and took no responsibility for their actions. The lies had an effect as did the upheaval. Weekly attendance dropped from 50-60 to 15-20. The youth group was gone, the ladies' weekly prayer group split. Many blamed others and failed to see the true enemy. The prayer group had been praying for division of the enemies' camp and unity in the church. We reaped the division.

At the congregational meeting the following week where Luke's resignation was announced, the leader of the board gave very minimal information to the congregation as to the real reasons Luke left, took no responsibility for the debacle, and all resigned except for Lisa. Lies went uncorrected.

Our small group of 6 gave thanks to God that Luke and Ann left after less than a year with us. This was a victory for God. However, there is still much healing needed, even 9 months later as of this writing. Wonderfully, the peace and presence of the Lord has returned to the church services, and those remaining are pulling together.

Lessons learned

1. The board was too small and initial decisions made too quickly and without transparency. A better process should have been in place officially and followed.
2. Expenditures were made without board approval, and the treasurer kept quiet. Again official policy needed to be in place and followed so that Luke was reined in earlier, and given definite amounts for discretionary spending.
3. The church needed to be educated about discernment and have a forum for discussion and discernment of issues that troubled congregants.
4. A small group of intercessors who worshiped together, prayed and discerned was a key element that God was able to use to effect Luke's ouster. The unity of this group, the love we share, the exalting of God, and the necessary corporate forgiveness, repentance, and faith all contributed to create a context for God the Holy Spirit to use us to rectify the situation.

5. Upon doing some research online regarding detecting a wolf in sheep's clothing, I found the following 5 articles, not all Christian sources, but all described Luke perfectly. I wish we had done this type of research earlier. I list these for your edification and protection. Please read.

www.lifehack.org/648887/how-to-detect-a-wolf-in-sheeps-clothing

www.powerofpositivity.com/how-to-spot-wolf-in-sheeps-clothing

www.charismamag.com/spirit/spiritual-warfare/33732-7-recognizable-traits-of-wolves-in-sheep-s-clothing

www.christiancounseling.com/blog/counseling/three-ways-to-spot-a-wolf-in-sheeps-clothing

www.thewardrobedoor.com/2015/08/5-ways-to-spot-the-wolf-in-sheeps-clothing